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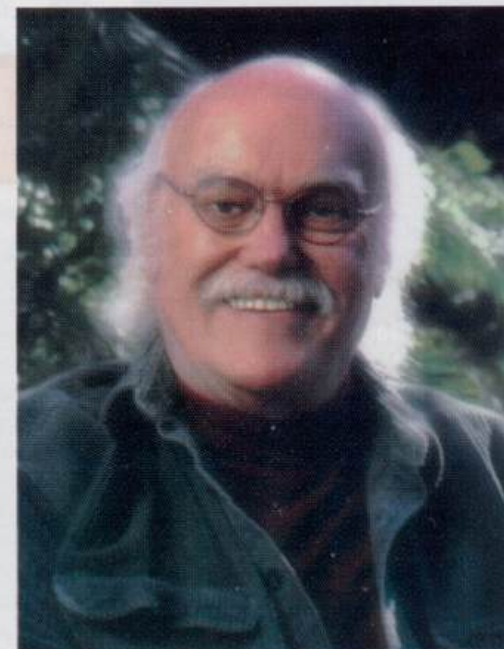
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In&Out

News IN our community & OUT in the nation

Briefs compiled by Ann Walton Sieber

HOLY FOR ALL

After years of a little-known policy disallowing gay unions, the Rothko Chapel has decided that all marriages within its sacred space will be treated equally

by Ann Walton Sieber

"The Rothko Chapel is like a big tree: it has a mysterious beauty and offers hospitable shade to everyone."

—first line in the Rothko Chapel brochure

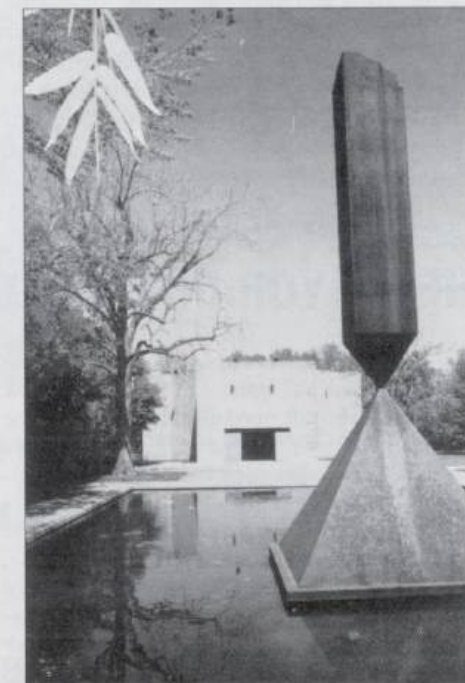
I'm happy to report that on Saturday, March 17, 2001, the board of the Rothko Chapel voted to include same-sex commitment ceremonies, so that the same guidelines for heterosexual marriages will now apply to gay unions.

"It will be just the same thing," says Rothko Chapel board president Sissy Farenthold. "No difference."

Most people did not realize that Rothko Chapel *didn't* permit same-sex unions—and most who found out were aghast and confused, for it so conflicts with Rothko's reputation as a far-sighted leader in international human rights, with the (Jimmy) Carter-Menil Human Rights Prize and the Rothko Chapel Oscar Romero Award bringing to Houston such international heroes as South African Archbishop Desmond M. Tutu and Nelson Mandela. The memorial for Matthew Shepard was held at Rothko, as were far-too-many memorials for community members who died from AIDS.

Because the chapel is combination museum and religious setting, the 30-year-old guidelines regarding marriage are quite restrictive, according to Sissy, who has had two sons get married at Rothko. "Only 75 people," she says. "No candles because all the smoke alarms go off, the ceremony can't exceed 30 minutes—no flowers. And," she adds, "the marriage has to be performed by an ordained minister."

The decision not to include gay marriages was made by Dominique DeMenil back in the '80s. "She thought long and hard about it," says Suna Umari, current executive director



Rothko Chapel has always been a place of peace and sanctuary. Below: Gafly activist Gene Harrington (left) and Rothko board president (and gay hero) Sissy Farenthold.



of the Rothko Chapel. Suna explains Mrs. DeMenil's rationale: When she and her husband, John, were first contemplating establishing a religious place, they traveled the world consulting and gaining the benediction of religious leaders. "They did not feel they had the authority to dictate religious matters," Suna says. They decided that although the chapel would be ecumenical and non-denominational, aligned with no particular religion, all religious/spiritual activity conducted at the chapel should be within one or another religious tradition, be it Buddhist, Moslem, Jewish, or Christian. In this way, they wanted to offer the chapel as a sacred art place in which religious institutions could come together, but not as an independent religious institution in and of itself.

It was within this reasoning that Mrs. DeMenil decided not to include same-sex unions. "She was very very supportive of gay people and very much in favor of gay unions and supported them wholeheartedly," Suna explains. "She just didn't see the chapel as the place for that. In a similar way, she didn't think baptisms should be done in the chapel. Or people who wanted to get married without a minister. She didn't see it as discrimination."

The person who first found out that gay unions were barred and started agitating for change was citizen provocateur Gene Harrington, who is a longtime law professor at Texas Southern University. Gene is well known for his decades of activism; he expended great effort in earlier challenges to Texas section 21.06, the so-called sodomy

statute, and was perhaps the leading HIV activist in the early '90s, challenging the health department to cease its hands-off attitude in funding HIV treatment. Gene has a style that is quick-witted and biting, outspoken and humorous—endearing if he's with you, possibly provoking if he's not.

Back in December 1998, Gene started calling and writing the Rothko Chapel, asking if they allowed same-sex commitment/marriage ceremonies. In one of his letters to the chapel, he wrote: "To allow gay/lesbians to memorialize their dead in your hallowed place but to deny them the right to commemorate their loving commitment would appear hypocritical and unconscionable." (Privately, Gene jokes, "My God, no gay man would want to get married there anyway, because they don't allow flowers.")

Gene says he had trouble getting a response of any type from the chapel. Gene spoke of the situation to his friend Sissy Farenthold, who was on the Rothko board, and who has been a longtime champion of gay rights, going back to when she was the keynote speaker at the historic gay Town Meeting in 1978.

Sissy brought the matter up at the next board meeting, which was in March 2000.

Because the board has quite a few famous national members (such as Atlanta mayor Andrew Young), it meets only once a year. An ad hoc task force was appointed to look into the gay marriage issue, with members Rabbi Robert Kahn of Congregation Emanu El, Rev. Bob Schnaibly of the First Unitarian Church, the Rev. Helen Havens of St. Stephen's Episcopal, and Sissy. The committee came back with the recommendation to change the guidelines to include same-sex commitment ceremonies/marriages, but the final decision

"My God, no gay man would want to get married there anyway, because they don't allow flowers."

had to be made by the board at their 2001 annual meeting. At the board meeting this March 17, they decided "overwhelmingly" to change the guidelines to include all couples under their marriage guidelines.

This has been an issue that I'd known about almost since I came to *OutSmart* in fall 1999. Soon after I started as editor, I was befriended by Gene Harrington, whom I already knew by reputation as the firebrand leader of

much of the AIDS activism of the early '90s. Energized by Gene as well as other behind-the-scenes insiders, I steeled myself to go confront Suna Umari, the executive director of the chapel, and who, I was told, had treated Gene and others badly when they approached her on the subject of same-sex marriage. Although not generally a conflict-oriented person, I've done my share of in-your-face investigative reporting, and I plotted what would be the best way to take Suna by surprise so that she would talk to me, for I feared that if I tried to approach her and set up an interview, she'd turn me down. I thought I'd try dropping by the Rothko Chapel office and asking for an "on the spot" interview.

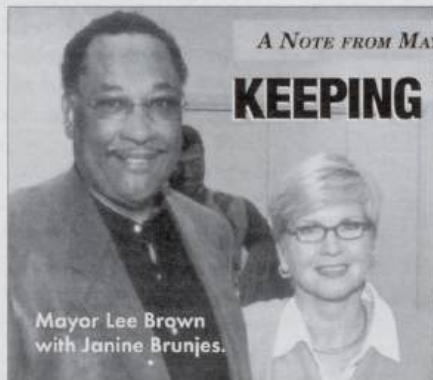
I was discussing the matter with a trusted older friend of mine, May Mansoor Munn, who is in my Quaker meeting and is Palestinian (and who was herself married at Rothko Chapel). In her early 60s, May has a gentle yet persistent character. "The Arab way," she said diplomatically when she heard of my plans to confront Suna, "is to break bread together." She suggested I ask Suna to lunch—"we'll call it a fact-finding mission," she said—and agreed to come along. To my

continued on page 18

A NOTE FROM MAYOR BROWN'S GLBT LIAISON

KEEPING THE MAYOR INFORMED ABOUT OUR ISSUES

by Janine Brunjes



Mayor Lee Brown
with Janine Brunjes.

On January 30, 2001, I gladly accepted the appointment by Mayor Lee P. Brown to the position of mayoral liaison to the GLBT community. Over the past month I have been asked on several occasions what being the mayor's liaison to the GLBT community really means. When I interviewed with the mayor, he shared with me that the liaison position was a position that was evolving. Basically, his heartfelt interest was that he be kept informed of all the issues that were of importance to our community, for only then could he be responsive to them.

I can't tell you how gleeful I was that I was not handed a job description, for in job descriptions I feel there can be limits or boundaries. The mayor gave me license to

be as creative as I wanted to be, and that how I sought to be informed about the pulse of the community was to be my responsibility, as well as by what means I chose to communicate with him and his office.

My work as liaison is something that matters deeply to me. We have a mayor, Mayor Brown, who has been very supportive of our issues. I still am touched and respectful of the mayor's issuing an executive order denouncing discrimination at the city level; a lawsuit ensued and he has stood firm. I have not lost sight of this, and it is why I am thrilled, impassioned, and honored to be serving our mayor as liaison. He has been the first mayor to ride in our Pride Parade and the first to say he believed that no one would be discriminated against. That is exactly the type of individual I want to keep informed about our community and whom I am proud to serve.

As a "for decades closeted executive," no better time exists for me than now to be involved in one of the greatest challenges of our lifetime. The ballot initiative that is under way could create our next battle cry. Our city

must support nondiscrimination issues for the sake of city economics as well as that of simple human rights, putting out a clear message to those who can't bear to see us have equal protection under the law.

In an effort to maintain a true understanding of what our community is facing, I am committed to attending various community meetings. I have also scheduled a monthly roundtable at the Lesbian and Gay Community Center, held the second Monday of each month. On the Wednesday following the meeting at the center, Han-Net has arranged a monthly chat for me to converse with those who were unable to attend the meeting. My goal is to be in touch with as many as I can so as to offer to our mayor and our city an accurate representation of the priorities of the GLBT community. ■

The next meeting with Janine Brunjes is Mon., April 9, 5-6:30 p.m., at the Lesbian and Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne, 713/524-3818. It will be followed by an online chat Wed., April 11, 9:30 p.m.; go to <http://www.talkcity.com/>, sign in and go to room HoustonGLBTforum.

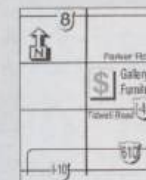
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A REPORT FROM THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

"Don't compromise yourself. You are all you've got." —former Port Arthur resident Janis Joplin

BUSTED FLAT IN PORT ARTHUR

Rainbows barred from Mardi Gras parade

—by Ann Walton Sieber—



LUGLA made sure everyone got beads. "They knew these children could not tackle those who would cut in front of them just to get beads," said Angie Alvarado, pictured here.

The Beaumont/Port Arthur gay community has been making strides in small-town gay visibility—most recently, the Lamar University Gay and Lesbian Association (LUGLA) decided to make their most public statement yet by riding on their own float in the February 25 Port Arthur Mardi Gras parade. The activists were ready to be out there and proud, and the crowd seemed ready for them... but parade officials gave the gay group a difficult time, that so far has only galvanized this growing community.

It started when Angie Alvarado sent in an application for a LUGLA float to the Mardi Gras of Southeast Texas association, and she was told it would have to be put to special scrutiny. The LUGLA group had already made the decision not to spell out their acronym. "We were afraid that people weren't ready for us," Angie said. "So we left out the 'gay' and 'lesbian.'" But in a meeting with MGST president Floyd Marceaux, he told LUGLA members that in order to ride in the parade, they also had to take the rainbow off the LUGLA banner. Marceaux told the (Lamar) *University Press* that he was concerned that the crowd along the parade route would react negatively.

"The other concern is that, at Mardi Gras of Southeast Texas, we really and truly strive to be a family affair, and we didn't find that their making a public statement as to what

they stood for was consistent with that," he told the school newspaper.

In the same article, the mayor of Port Arthur, Oscar Ortiz, echoed this ridiculous sentiment:

"I have to agree with Floyd, because we said from the very beginning that the Mardi Gras parade was strictly a family function, and when you think of family, of course, you think of man, a woman and her children."

Such "family"-oriented prejudice rings especially false to Angie, whose children have become a familiar sight at LUGLA and PFLAG meetings. "Just remember, Scott," she said that she jokes with her son, "You have no family." What gets me is Ortiz, he's Hispanic," she continues. "You'd think he'd know about discrimination."

The day of the parade, the LUGLA crew arrived in all their resplendent finery, their float decorated to the hilt—the only place they *didn't* have rainbows was in the logo, as stipulated. "We wanted to be smart asses, so we put rainbows everywhere else," says Caleb Hutchins, who is president of Beaumont PFLAG and secretary of LUGLA, as well as working as a counselor at the Triangle AIDS Network, "including me, who was wearing a rainbow flag."

The 10 or so in the LUGLA float waited around with all the other parade entrants, but just before it was their turn to push out,

they were pulled out of line and told they had to take all the rainbows down because they were in violation of the agreement whereby they were permitted to ride in the parade. Oh, and also, no "cross-dressers" they were told by the parade officials, who meant the two drag queens who had come from the Copa, a local gay bar. The two float riders who were transgendered were okay.

After that showdown, the actual parade went much better than expected, with the crowd cheering on LUGLA's float and guys shouting out, "I'm straight, but throw me beads!" As the drag queens made their way through the crowd, they were asked by on-lookers why they weren't allowed to participate, and generally shown sympathy and support.

"To be honest," said Angie, "we were shocked that the public received us so well. Even if it is our last parade, it was worth it. ... At first I was so frustrated and down. But then several people came up to me and said 'You made it possible.'"

"My girlfriend's not out—her family's big in Jehovah's Witnesses—and she came up and said, 'I'm so proud of you. You did something that others can't do. They want to but they can't.' That made it perfect."

The Beaumont/Port Arthur gay scene is growing, but still largely a behind-closed-doors situation, according to Angie and Caleb.

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Right: Members of LUGLA, PFLAG, and CKS show their eagerness at being the first GLBT group to participate in Port Arthur Mardi Gras.

Below left: LUGLA float being trailed by Mayor Ortiz' trolley. Below right: Albertson's showed a rainbow and was not harassed about it.



Although Beaumont is larger in population, Port Arthur has a bigger gay community, with quite a few gay-owned businesses, although few feel secure enough to be out — especially since Floyd Marceaux is also president of the Golden Triangle Merchants Association.

"Port Arthur is still kind of a little podunk town," Caleb said, who's spent all his life here. "It's more than tolerant, but less than accepting."

"We lose a lot of good people because they just can't deal with the backdoor life," Angie says. "You can go to the clubs at night, but in

the day you have to put on a different suit and pretend to be somebody else."

The principle gay organizations are LUGLA, PFLAG, and the gay Church of Kindred Spirits, which meets at the Unitarian Church. Beaumont has three gay bars, the Copa, the Crocker Street Station, and Dion's. There are two HIV-testing and -treatment centers. Lamar University is somewhat accepting, especially in the more gay-friendly departments, such as theater and nursing.

Angie, Caleb, and the other activists in the area are still trying to figure out what to do next about the Mardi Gras controversy.

They consulted lawyer Mitchell Katine, but said he didn't think their chances were good for a suit against the parade commission. What has happened is that the controversy has helped bring the gay community together with greater urgency. The three gay organizations are starting to meet under the umbrella of the Gay Alliance of Southeast Texas, with the goal of making gay life more visible.

"We put ourselves in the closet," Angie said, "because we're so afraid of making waves. But if we get together, we can do something about it. We don't need to take this anymore! That's our new slogan."

Although small in numbers, the Golden Triangle activists have started putting themselves out there. They had three representatives at the Millennium March on Washington last April, they came to Empower in Houston last fall, and several marched in the Austin lobby day at the end of March. You can show your support for our brave comrades in Beaumont/Port Arthur, because they're going to be bringing their censored float to Houston to participate for the first time in the June Pride parade—and the more rainbows, the better.

Briefs continued on page 15

WEAR FLOWERS IN YOUR HAIR-DO

New York City's legendary drag festival Wigstock celebrates its 17th year with an official soundtrack release. Mixed by New York DJ Steve Trivolta, *Wigstock* contains cuts from past festival performers including Crystal Waters, CeCe Peniston, and more. As hostess Lady Bunny says, "It's going to be a very good hair day!" *Wigstock* is out now on Nervous Records.



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VIRACEPT is indicated in combination with other antiretroviral agents for the treatment of HIV infection. The most common side effect of VIRACEPT is diarrhea, which can usually be controlled with over-the-counter treatments. Some prescription and non-prescription drugs and supplements should not be taken with VIRACEPT, so talk to your doctor first. For some people, protease inhibitors have been associated with the onset or worsening of diabetes mellitus and hyperglycemia, changes in body fat, and increased bleeding in hemophiliacs.

Refer to the important information on the next page. For more information, call toll free 1-888-VIRACEPT or visit www.viracept.com.

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VIRACEPT®

(nelfinavir mesylate)

Information for Patients

about VIRACEPT® (VI-ra-cept)

Generic Name: nelfinavir (nel-FIN-na-veer) mesylate

For the Treatment of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection

Please read this information carefully before taking VIRACEPT. Also, please read this leaflet each time you renew the prescription, just in case anything has changed. This is a summary and not a replacement for a careful discussion with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss VIRACEPT when you start taking this medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when taking VIRACEPT and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

WHAT IS VIRACEPT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

VIRACEPT is used in combination with other antiretroviral drugs in the treatment of people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Infection with HIV leads to the destruction of CD4 T cells, which are important to the immune system. After a large number of CD4 cells have been destroyed, the infected person develops acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

VIRACEPT works by blocking HIV protease (a protein-cutting enzyme), which is required for HIV to multiply. VIRACEPT has been shown to significantly reduce the amount of HIV in the blood. Although VIRACEPT is not a cure for HIV or AIDS, VIRACEPT can help reduce your risk for death and illness associated with HIV. Patients who took VIRACEPT also had significant increases in the number of CD4 cell count.

VIRACEPT is usually taken together with other antiretroviral drugs such as Zidovudine (ZDV), Zalcitabine (ddC), or Zalcitabine (ddC). Taking VIRACEPT in combination with other antiretroviral drugs reduces the amount of HIV in the body (viral load) and raises CD4 counts.

VIRACEPT may be taken by adults, adolescents, and children 2 years of age or older. Studies in infants younger than 2 years of age are now taking place.

DOES VIRACEPT CURE HIV OR AIDS?

VIRACEPT is not a cure for HIV infection or AIDS. People taking VIRACEPT may still develop opportunistic infections or other conditions associated with HIV infection. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, Mycobacterium avium complex (MAC) infections, and Kaposi's sarcoma.

There is no proof that VIRACEPT can reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

WHO SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT TAKE VIRACEPT?

Together with your doctor, you need to decide whether VIRACEPT is appropriate for you. In making your decision, the following should be considered:

Allergies: If you have had a serious allergic reaction to VIRACEPT, you must not take VIRACEPT. You should also inform your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist of any known allergies to substances such as other medicines, foods, preservatives, or dyes.

If you are pregnant: The effects of VIRACEPT on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known. If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

If you are breast-feeding: You should discuss with your doctor the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that it can be transmitted through breast-feeding. **Women should not breast-feed if they have HIV.**

Children: VIRACEPT is available for the treatment of children 2 through 13 years of age with HIV. There is a powder form of VIRACEPT that can be mixed with milk, baby formula, or food like pudding. Instructions on how to take VIRACEPT powder can be found in a later section that discusses how VIRACEPT Oral Powder should be prepared.

If you have liver disease: VIRACEPT has not been studied in people with liver disease. If you have liver disease, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

Other medical problems: Certain medical problems may affect the use of VIRACEPT. Some people taking protease inhibitors have developed new or more serious diabetes or high blood sugar. Some people with hemophilia have had increased bleeding. It is not known whether the protease inhibitors caused these problems. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have hemophilia types A and B, diabetes mellitus, or an increase in thirst and/or frequent urination.

Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking protease inhibitors. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the face, legs and arms may also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.

CAN VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER MEDICATIONS?

VIRACEPT may interact with other drugs, including those you take without a prescription. You must discuss with your doctor any drugs that you are taking or are planning to take before you take VIRACEPT.

Drugs you should not take with VIRACEPT:

Hismantol® (astemizole, for allergies)
Propulsid® (cisapride, for heartburn)
Cardorone® (amiodarone, for irregular heartbeat)
Quinidine (for irregular heartbeat, also known as Quinaglute®, Cardioquin®, Quinidex, and others)
Ergot derivatives (Cafergo® and others, for migraine headache)
Halcion® (triazolam)
Versed® (midazolam)
Mevacor® (lovastatin, for cholesterol lowering)
Zocor® (simvastatin, for cholesterol lowering)

Taking the above drugs with VIRACEPT may cause serious and/or life-threatening adverse events.

Rifampin (for tuberculosis), also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®
This drug reduces blood levels of VIRACEPT.

Dose reduction required if you take VIRACEPT with: Mycobutin® (rifabutin, for MAC); you will need to take a lower dose of Mycobutin.

A change of therapy should be considered if you are taking VIRACEPT with:

Phenobarbital
Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
Carbamazepine (Tegretol® and others)

These agents may reduce the amount of VIRACEPT in your blood and make it less effective.

Oral contraceptives ("the pill")

If you are taking the pill to prevent pregnancy, you should use a different type of contraception since VIRACEPT may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

Special considerations

Before you take Viagra® (sildenafil) with VIRACEPT, talk to your doctor about possible drug interactions and side effects. If you take Viagra and VIRACEPT together, you may be at increased risk of side effects of Viagra such as low blood pressure, visual changes, and penile erection lasting more than 4 hours. If an erection lasts longer than 4 hours, you should seek immediate medical assistance to avoid permanent damage to your penis. Your doctor can explain these symptoms to you.

It is not recommended to take VIRACEPT with the cholesterol-lowering drugs Mevacor® (lovastatin) or Zocor® (simvastatin) because of possible drug interactions. There is also an increased risk of drug interactions between VIRACEPT and Lipitor® (atorvastatin) and Baycol® (cerivastatin); talk to your doctor before you take either of these cholesterol reducing drugs with VIRACEPT.

Taking St. John's wort (hypericum perforatum), an herbal product sold as a dietary supplement, or products containing St. John's wort with VIRACEPT is not recommended. Talk with your doctor if you are taking or are planning to take St. John's wort. Taking St. John's wort may decrease VIRACEPT levels and lead to increased viral load and possible resistance to VIRACEPT or cross resistance to other antiretroviral drugs.

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER ANTI-HIV DRUGS?

Taking VIRACEPT together with other anti-HIV drugs increases their ability to fight the virus. It also reduces the opportunity for resistant viruses to grow. Based on your history of taking other anti-HIV medicine, your doctor will direct you on how to take VIRACEPT and other anti-HIV medicines. These drugs should be taken in a certain order or at specific times. This will depend on how many times a day each medicine should be taken. It will also depend on whether it should be taken with or without food.

Nucleoside analogues: No drug interaction problems were seen when VIRACEPT was given with:

Retrovir® (zidovudine, AZT)
EpiVir® (lamivudine, 3TC®)

Zenit® (stavudine, d4T)

Videx® (didanosine, ddI)

If you are taking both Videx (ddI) and VIRACEPT:

Videx should be taken without food, on an empty stomach. Therefore, you should take VIRACEPT with food one hour after or more than two hours before you take Videx.

Nonnucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs):

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:

Viramune® (nevirapine)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be reduced. Studies are now taking place to learn about the safety of combining VIRACEPT with Viramune.

Sustiva™ (efavirenz)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be increased. A dose adjustment is not needed when VIRACEPT is used with Sustiva.

Other NNRTIs

VIRACEPT has not been studied with other NNRTIs.

Other protease inhibitors:

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:

Crixivan® (indinavir)

The amount of both drugs in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

Norvir® (ritonavir)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

Invirase® (saquinavir)

The amount of saquinavir in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIRACEPT?

Like all medicines, VIRACEPT can cause side effects. Most of the side effects experienced with VIRACEPT have been mild to moderate. Diarrhea is the most common side effect in people taking VIRACEPT, and most adult patients had at least mild diarrhea at some point during treatment. In clinical studies, about 15-20% of patients receiving VIRACEPT 750 mg (three tablets) three times daily or 1250 mg (five tablets) two times daily had four or more loose stools a day. In most cases, diarrhea can be controlled using antidiarrheal medicines, such as Imodium® A-D (loperamide) and others, which are available without a prescription.

Other side effects that occurred in 2% or more of patients receiving VIRACEPT include nausea, gas and rash.

There were other side effects noted in clinical studies that occurred in less than 2% of patients receiving VIRACEPT. However, these side effects may have been due to other drugs that patients were taking or to the illness itself. Except for diarrhea, there were not many differences in side effects in patients who took VIRACEPT along with other drugs compared with those who took only the other drugs. For a complete list of side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

HOW SHOULD I TAKE VIRACEPT?

VIRACEPT is available only with your doctor's prescription. Your doctor may prescribe the light blue VIRACEPT Tablets either as 1250 mg (five tablets) taken two times a day or as 750 mg (three tablets) taken three times a day. VIRACEPT should always be taken with a meal or a light snack. VIRACEPT tablets are film-coated to help make the tablets easier to swallow.

Take VIRACEPT exactly as directed by your doctor. Do not increase or decrease any dose or the number of doses per day. Also, take this medicine for the exact period of time that your doctor has instructed. **Do not stop taking VIRACEPT without first consulting with your doctor, even if you are feeling better.**

Only take medicine that has been prescribed specifically for you. Do not give VIRACEPT to others or take medicine prescribed for someone else.

The dosing of VIRACEPT may be different for you than for other patients. **Follow the directions from your doctor, exactly as written on the label.** The amount of VIRACEPT in the blood should remain somewhat consistent over time. Missing doses will cause the concentration of VIRACEPT to decrease; therefore, **you should not miss any doses.** However, if you miss a dose, you should take the dose as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose and future doses as originally scheduled.

Dosing in adults (including children 14 years of age and older)
The recommended adult dose of VIRACEPT is 1250 mg (five tablets) taken two times a day or 750 mg (three tablets) taken three times a day. Each dose should be taken with a meal or light snack.

Dosing in children 2 to 13 years of age
The VIRACEPT dose in children depends on their weight. The recommended dose is 20 to 30 mg/kg (or 9 to 14 mg/pound) per dose, taken three times daily with a meal or light snack. This can be administered either in tablet form or, in children unable to take tablets, as VIRACEPT Oral Powder.

Dose instructions will be provided by the child's doctor. The dose will be given three times daily using the measuring scoop provided, a measuring teaspoon, or one or more tablets depending on the weight and age of the child. The amount of oral powder or tablets to be given to a child is described in the chart below.

Pediatric Dose to Be Administered Three Times Daily				
Body Weight Kg	Lb	Number of Level Scoops*	Number of Level Teaspoons†	Number of Tablets
7 lb <8.5	15.5 lb <18.5	4	1	—
8.5 lb <10.5	18.5 lb <23	5	1 1/4	—
10.5 lb <12	23 lb <26.5	6	1 1/2	—
12 lb <14	26.5 lb <31	7	1 3/4	—
14 lb <16	31 lb <35	8	2	—
16 lb <18	35 lb <39.5	9	2 1/4	—
18 lb <23	39.5 lb <50.5	10	2 1/2	2
≥23	≥50.5	15	3 3/4	3

In measuring oral powder, the scoop or teaspoon should be level.

* 1 level scoop contains 50 mg of VIRACEPT. Use only the scoop provided with your VIRACEPT bottle.

† 1 level teaspoon contains 200 mg of VIRACEPT. Note: A measuring teaspoon used for dispensing medication should be used for measuring VIRACEPT Oral Powder. Ask your pharmacist to make sure you have a medication dispensing teaspoon.

How should VIRACEPT Oral Powder be prepared?

The oral powder may be mixed with a small amount of water, milk, formula, soy formula, soy milk, dietary supplements, or dairy foods such as pudding or ice cream. Once mixed, the entire amount must be taken to obtain the full dose.

Do not mix the powder with any acidic food or juice, such as orange or grapefruit juice, apple juice, or apple sauce, because this may create a bitter taste.

Once the powder is mixed, it may be stored at room temperature or refrigerated for up to 6 hours. Do not heat the mixed dose once it has been prepared.

Do not add water to bottles of oral powder.

VIRACEPT powder is supplied with a scoop for measuring. For help in determining the exact dose of powder for your child, please ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

VIRACEPT Oral Powder contains aspartame, a low-calorie sweetener, and therefore should not be taken by children with phenylketonuria (PKU).

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE STORED?

Keep VIRACEPT and all other medicines out of the reach of children. Keep bottle closed and store at room temperature (between 59°F and 86°F) away from sources of moisture such as a sink or other damp place. Heat and moisture may reduce the effectiveness of VIRACEPT.

Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Be sure that if you throw any medicine away, it is out of the reach of children.

Discuss all questions about your health with your doctor. If you have questions about VIRACEPT or any other medication you are taking, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. You can also call 1.888.VIRACEPT (1.888.847.2237) toll free.

Call 1.888.VIRACEPT

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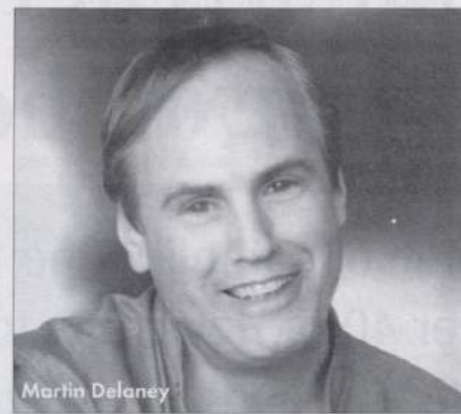
In&Out

Briefs continued from page 12

A CURE FOR AIDS BY 2010 . . . "AT THE LATEST"

Martin Delaney—the man who may be in the best position to bring about that hopeful scenario—is coming to Houston

by Paul Simmons



Martin Delaney

For most Americans, the red, angry scowl of playwright Larry Kramer is the public face of AIDS activism. Even though Kramer long ago retired from the work, his hostile, controversial style left an indelible impression.

But for Americans living with HIV/AIDS, another figure is better known and arguably more important: former Jesuit seminarian Martin Delaney. If Kramer is the Darth Vader of AIDS advocacy, Delaney is the chief of its Jedi council.

Delaney is founding director of San Francisco's Project Inform, the nation's most influential HIV treatment information and advocacy organization. Although half a dozen other groups nationwide do similar work, with a staff of 25 and annual contributions of more than \$2 million, Project Inform is the powerhouse. (By contrast, the Center for AIDS in Houston, the flagship treatment advocacy organization in the southern United States, has a staff of five and annual receipts of slightly less than \$500,000.)

While well briefed on the particulars of AIDS research and clinical care—he sits on the federal panel that issues treatment guidelines—Delaney generally eschews the detailed policy work efforts pursued by other activists; instead, he focuses on painting a broad vision of the future, coloring it with sunny California optimism. In a January 2001 essay for *POZ* magazine, he declared flatly that science would produce a "functional cure" for HIV by 2010—"at the very latest." At public presentations, he delivers the same message with a full-throated buoyancy that connects readily with HIVers.

The Annual Retrovirus Conference—which convened in Chicago this past February—is the largest meeting of AIDS researchers in the United States. At the 2001 conference, federal authorities backed off from their treatment mantra of "hit hard, hit early" that had pushed almost every HIVer into anti-HIV drug therapy. (In addition to their high costs, anti-HIV drugs are inconvenient and toxic.) The new recommendation is for infected people to wait until the CD4 count, an important measure of immune function, has dropped to 350 before starting a treatment regimen. Delaney calls this one of the most important recent developments in AIDS, saying this new approach is a rejection of the "sink and drain" model of therapy.

Also at this year's conference, Anthony Fauci, M.D., the federal government's top AIDS researcher, presented early information on a one-week-on, one-week-off treatment plan. Using data from a small study, Fauci showed how it might be possible for HIVers to cut their time on drugs in half. "I

find that very intriguing," Delaney says. If Fauci's experiment pans out in the long run, "it's a major finding." But Delaney holds out for something even more startling for his functional cure: "I think it needs to go even further than that. Ideally, I'd like us to get to the place where you could take people off treatment and leave them off it." It may be, Delaney says, that Fauci's approach is the "best you can do. But I'm jazzed on the notion of . . . viral control without drugs."

An integral component of that notion is interleukin-2 (IL-2), an immune booster. Researchers, including some in Houston, are now investigating IL-2 in two large studies. But those studies will take several years to complete, and some people are anxious to have IL-2 on the market sooner. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) routinely grants accelerated, or early, approval to anti-HIV drugs. But there's no precedent for giving early approval to immune boosters for people with HIV, and it's unclear if the FDA will make an exception for IL-2. But Delaney would. "In terms of accelerated licensure, I think they [the makers of IL-2] have got as good data as we've seen from some other drugs. The only downside of IL-2 use, obviously, is the side effects during those days the person takes it. Beyond that, I think the case is inarguable that it produces genuine, lasting improvements in CD4 . . . well beyond what we get with antivirals alone."

His comments mark the first time a U.S. AIDS activist has publicly declared support for the early approval of IL-2, which may put him at odds with advocates who want to wait until the studies are complete. But Delaney counters: "Why is it that only people with the right insurance or a clever doctor [have access to IL-2]? . . . Why isn't it more widely available?"

If many people with HIV lack the right insurance, it may be because the demograph-

ics of the epidemic have changed sharply in the last several years. What was once a disease almost exclusively associated in the public mind with gay white men has now spread to include significant numbers of black heterosexuals. Yet high-powered treatment activism remains largely the province of Anglo gay males. "Well," Delaney says, "the activists that are there aren't just going to disappear and go away, so maybe that makes it a little harder for new people to break in. But the obstacle [to more minority activists] is that their own agencies don't support them to do this kind of work. So to bring more people of color in as activists, you're going to have to see a change of heart on behalf of their agencies, and you're going to have to see a willingness on our part to act as mentors to bring them on board."

Although not a minority, one new player already on board is George W. Bush, winner of a close and contested November presidential election. Delaney suggests, tentatively, that HIVers may have less to fear from Bush than previously thought. "This guy is an enigma so far. He says one thing, but he tends to be doing things that are more favorable, or look more favorable, than we've expected so far. It seems like he's getting the conservatives more angry than he is us. If that's the case, I'm not nearly as worried as I thought I'd be." In a recent address to Congress, President Bush reaffirmed his support for doubling the budget of the National Institutes of Health, which is the federal agency responsible for federal research on AIDS.

Houston's HIV-infected population includes a large segment with advanced disease and few remaining treatment options. But Delaney's optimism covers them, too. "Don't be so sure you're left behind. We were writing people off for dead in 1996, but they're still with us."

Delaney's brand of treatment and policy optimism will be on display in Houston at a community workshop hosted by the Center for AIDS on Wednesday, April 18, at the Houston Museum of Health and Medical Science, 1515 Hermann Dr. A light buffet reception begins at 6:30 p.m., with a treatment update from Delaney at 7 p.m. Free and open to the public.

Paul Simmons, a registered nurse certified in HIV/AIDS nursing, is director of treatment information and advocacy at the Center for AIDS. He also chairs the Houston advisory board for the Community Programs for Clinical Research on AIDS, a federal program for HIV research. His e-mail address is paul@centerforaids.org.

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In&Out

Briefs continued from page 15

PORTRAIT OF THE IRISH SENATOR AS A GAY ACTIVIST

*The man responsible for reversing antigay laws will perform
his one-man James Joyce show as part of the Houston International Festival*

—by Alan Davidson and Ann Sieber—

As part of the Houston International Festival's focus on Ireland this year, the I-Fest is bringing to Houston a most remarkable man, who has been one of the major factors in promoting gay rights in Ireland over the past 30 years.

The first openly gay person ever to be elected to public office in Ireland, Senator David Norris was the driving force behind the repeal of Ireland's laws against what they termed "buggery." He and some friends founded a group called the Irish Gay Rights Movement in 1974, which operated a gay disco by night, and worked for gay rights by day in offices above the disco, all while Norris was a professor at Trinity University and a member of Parliament. As if this weren't diverse enough for one human being, while in Houston, Norris will be performing his one-man show *Do You Hear What I Am Seeing?*, in which he dons white suit, dark glasses, and cane and channels author James Joyce—based on his avid studies of Ireland's favorite son as chairman of Dublin's James Joyce Cultural Centre.

An articulate sharp-witted man, Senator Norris started our conversation by giving a rousing overview of Ireland's repressive laws against gays through the years.

Ireland inherited the British laws against homosexuality, which were first put into the criminal courts when Henry VIII took over jurisdiction from the ecclesiastical courts, with the punishment for the crime being death. This English law did not extend into Ireland until a Bishop James Aperton decided to exploit antigay sentiment, and successfully campaigned to have the law extended into Ireland. "But he was more successful than he perhaps wanted," Norris explained with black glee, "because on Christmas Day 1640, having been found guilty of the abominable crime of buggery himself, he was hung by the neck until dead outside Christ Church Cathedral."

The wretched law stayed on the books for centuries, the punishment being reduced to life imprisonment in 1861 (which, in modified

form, was the law under which Oscar Wilde was sentenced).

"So that is the context in which I was brought up," Norris said. "There were a few people who were known to be gay, although the word wouldn't have been used."

In the early '70s, Norris got involved in a Southern Irish civil rights association, "and it suddenly struck me that we were being very self-congratulatory in the South in trying to suggest that there was no discrimination, but we were a very homogenous society: Everyone was assumed to be white, heterosexual, Republican, and Catholic. Well, I was white, but I wasn't heterosexual, I wasn't particularly Republican, and I was an Anglican."

That's when he and some friends formed a group to campaign specifically for gay rights, which they decided to call the Irish Gay Rights Movement. "By putting that out front, we would deal with one problem, which was that the majority of people thought that that was a paradox, that it was impossible, that the two things were mutually exclusive and contradictory—you could not be both Irish and gay."

When they started their discotheque/political organization, "we were amazed at the number of people who came," he said. "This was a way of harnessing energy for the infant gay movement. It gave an outlet for the social life of gay people in a community where there was absolutely no social life for gays at all. And we could raise the funds necessary to launch a political campaign."

Norris became the natural leader because he was one of the few people who felt safe being out. "I was employed by Trinity, which was the old university started by Queen Elizabeth I to convert the Irish to

Anglicanism, and civilize them, and all that sort of thing. So it was supposed to be liberal. Also, both of my parents had been dead for quite some time. So, I had quite a bit of room to maneuver." Norris encountered opposition from within the group, which became divided between those who wanted to be a political organization, and those who wanted to serve as a social outlet. "So I said, 'That's grand, I don't have to run discos anymore,' and I started a new thing, which I called the Campaign for Homosexual Law Reform."

Although he said this august-sounding entity mostly consisted of half a drawer in his filing cabinet at the university, he was able to recruit some highly placed friends, none of whom were gay, to join a patrons committee and he could put them on his letterhead. This tactic met with tremendous success, he said, "because the extreme right-wing Catholic groups got into a panic when they saw the notepaper, and we were denounced from a height as being a front for an international conspiracy funded by Jewish money from America." He laughed heartily. "It was great fun, because it gave us a credibility that we otherwise would never have had. And once we started being taken seriously, we started putting out press statements."

Given this momentum, Norris sued the state of Ireland, saying that the sodomy laws

were against the constitution. Although he lost in the high court, he gained an important forum for opening minds, because he brought in witnesses from all over the world, including the then-president of the American Psychiatric Association. The judge said he accepted their evidence that there was a "surprisingly" large number of gay people in Ireland—although they were invisible—and that they were

not mentally retarded, nor were they less intelligent than the general population, nor were they child molesters. Nevertheless, the judge said that "because of the Christian and democratic nature of the state and the constitution, he had to find against me," Norris reported. When the case was appealed to the



Senator David Norris



Norris at a Bloomsbury breakfast.

In&Out

Supreme Court, it likewise upheld the antigay laws.

Norris then took the case to the European Court of Human Rights, taking as his lawyer Mary Robinson, who is now the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, and who had been a friend from college. She was able to win the case in 1993.

At first the Irish government dragged their feet in putting it into Irish law, and tried to put in an amendment that would have made the age of consent higher for gays than for heterosexuals. To counter this, Norris contacted a woman who was then a powerful backroom political figure and who had a gay son; he arranged for her to meet with the cabinet minister of justice, Maire Geoghegan-Quinn, "as one mother to another."

"I think it was that kind of human understanding," Norris said. "Maire, who had four sons, she felt that any of them might turn out to be gay, and what kind of world would she be delivering them into? . . . And she refused to accept the amendment, and she made a splendid speech saying that in the Irish Republic, she as a cabinet minister would require clear, cogent, and convincing argu-

ments and evidence to compel her to introduce discrimination against any citizen, and it had not been introduced by the opposition. . . . It was really on that basis that we got a really civilized law."

Nowadays, as a senator, Norris said his attention is not primarily on gay issues, but more on local issues like urban transport and international issues of human rights. However, because he's built such credibility in other areas, when he does speak out on gay issues, he finds many more people are likely to listen to him than if he was a one-issue politician, especially when he's invited to travel to many countries around the world where conditions for gay people are quite grim.

"Because I am on the bureau of the foreign affairs committee," he said, "I'm asked to visit places that normally I would not get to. And certainly people with an interest in gay rights would not get there. Places like, for example, Tehran, where I've had quite open and direct confrontations and arguments with people like the foreign minister and the president on the subject of gay rights. . . . And also recently in Iraq, and India, places like that. So it

means I am able to go there and say things that other people cannot risk their lives to say. Because I come from outside the country, I have the opportunity to raise these issues and at least make these people aware that there are outside sources bearing witness to the discriminations and humiliations."

Senator David Norris will be in town as part of the Houston International Festival's spotlight on Ireland. I-Fest and the University of Houston Theater Department present Senator David Norris and his show *Do You Hear What I Am Seeing?* Thursday, April 19, at 8 p.m., at the UH School of Theater. (Call 713/654-8808, ext. 400; \$7 tickets available at the door.) Senator Norris will then kick off I-Fest as grand marshal of the International Artists' Parade on Sat., April 21, noon. That same Saturday, he will join local celebrities, academics, and actors in a marathon reading of Joyce's *Ulysses*, 2-6 p.m. in the auditorium of the Julia Ideson Library (located in Chase's Emerald Isle in the Heart of the Festival, across from the downtown library). The Houston International Festival will be Fri., April 20-Sun., Apr. 29; see their website at www.ifest.org for complete information.

Rothko Chapel

continued from page 8

great surprise, Suna agreed. Here was this supposed Muslim foe to gay causes having lunch with the editor of the gay magazine!

We met at Riva's and it was very pleasant. Suna was politely willing to discuss the matter of the gay marriages, explaining how Mrs. DeMenil had arrived at her position. It was also clear that Suna was under quite a bit of pressure in trying to guide this esteemed organization now that its patron had passed on. She told me to be patient, that the board needed time to sort matters out. I said I could understand needing time, but that we would be watching the issue, and I would check in with her occasionally about its progress. I wanted her to know I was a watchdog, a friendly watchdog, but one that was monitoring them nonetheless.

Meanwhile, *OutSmart* had been benefiting from Gene's assistance in connecting us with intelligent writers and sources. But while we were enjoying the benefits of Gene's assistance, I felt ashamed that I was doing nothing in the magazine for his cause celebre—especially after he sent me a Xerox of a letter he'd written to the chapel, writing across the top by hand, "Am I the only one who thinks this homophobic practice deplorable?"

I wasn't sure if my decision to hold back on publishing anything in the magazine was sound news judgment, or merely timidity and cowardice. I wasn't sure if the chapel really

was moving forward in navigating a sensitive political terrain behind closed doors, or if they were just stalling and hoping we'd all go away. "Power concedes nothing without a struggle," I thought on the one hand. But then "you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar," I thought on the other. I stopped calling Gene for lunch because I felt too embarrassed and confused. I tried to do some behind-the-scenes pot-stirring, to no avail.

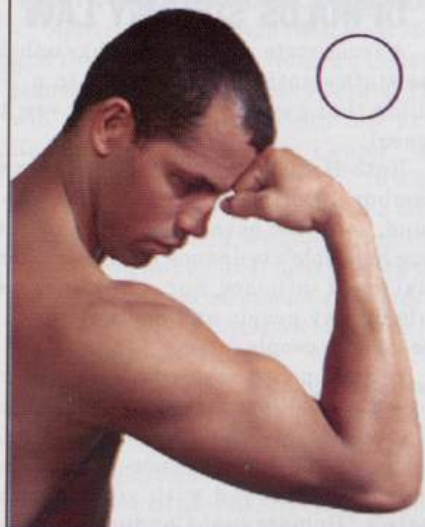
When the board meeting was about two months away, Gene put his campaign decrying Rothko's policy into hyperdrive, gathering letters and signed statements from State Reps. Jessica Farrar and Garnet Coleman, the Stonewall Lawyers Association, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, even one signed by every Unitarian minister in Houston. The letter that Gene wrote and that many signed was rather shrill, saying things like, "To claim that the policy is being reviewed and to continually ask patience (for years) while this basic violation of human rights is held in place is to add cowardice to the original act of intolerance." When I called up Suna to discuss a possible article, she asked me not to contribute to the "polarization." I could understand her feelings. Of course I thought the policy was wrong, but I also understood that real change takes time. Whenever I called Suna up, she was always cordial and seemed to speak frankly with me, whereas other community members reported a different experience.

The outcome to this story is a happy one, thank goodness. Sissy says, "I told Gene I was going to make sure this happened come hell or high water," and she did. It's hard to know how this progress was actually accomplished. Did Gene's amassing of the troops help give Sissy the leverage she needed to bring the change to pass? Or did it make more difficult an already touchy situation? I give this background account only because it explores a question that is forever on my mind: How can we most effectively bring about change? What's in the best interests of coming together and creating conditions of respect and understanding for all humans?

After the decision, I called Suna one last time, and she sounded pleased and relieved about the outcome. Now that this controversy is satisfactorily settled, does she see a role for the gay community at the chapel?

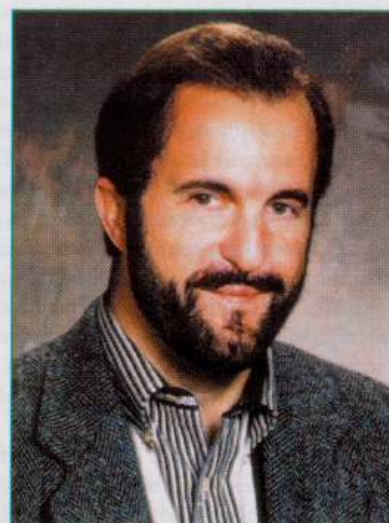
"They've always had a role," she says a little exasperatedly. "They've always been part of the chapel. It's very difficult when people start separating themselves off and saying I'm over here and you're over there. She [Mrs. DeMenil] saw the chapel as a place to introduce people to each other in a way that would bring understanding. Let's be human first. I think that's what the chapel's about. Let's come together in this space and just be ourselves. That's the power of the chapel and that's what makes it holy." ■

Briefs continued on page 20



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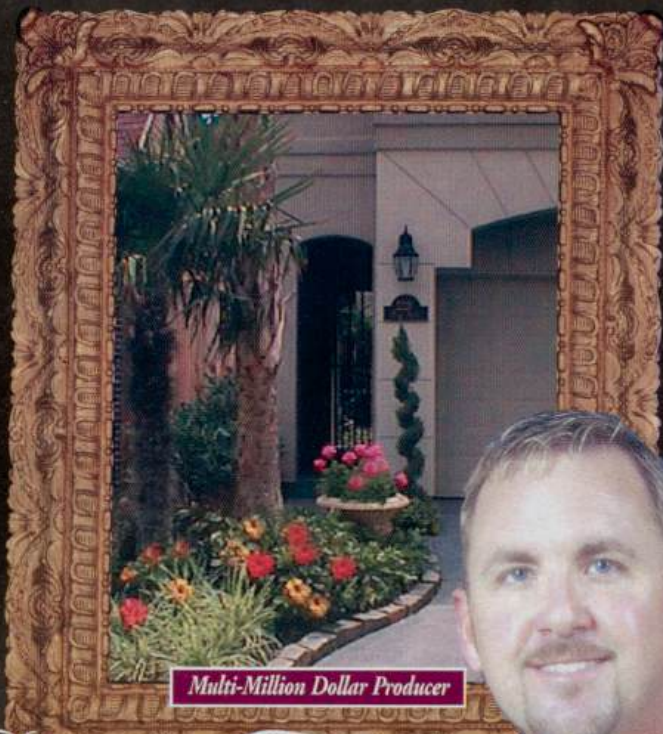
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APPEALS COURT UPHOLDS SODOMY LAW

A Texas state appeals court has upheld the state's antigay sodomy law in a 7-2 ruling that gay rights advocates vow to appeal.

Ruth Harlow, legal director with the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, said "the government does not belong in people's bedrooms policing consensual adult intimacy, nor can it have one rule for gay people and another one ... for nongay people."

In 1998 police answered a call reporting an armed intruder at an apartment where the found two gay men—John G. Lawrence and Tyron Garner—having sex. They were charged with violating the state's "Homosexual Conduct" statute, which Lambda has challenged in an ongoing court case.

Last year a three-judge panel of the appeals court ruled the state law violates the Texas state constitution because it punishes homosexual sodomy but not heterosexual sodomy. The state appealed to the full court and the case is now likely to be appealed to the state supreme court.

Three other states—Arkansas, Kansas, and Oklahoma—also bar sex between same-sex partners, and 12 other states also prohibit oral and anal sex between all adults.

BECOME AN HIV ADVOCATE

The People With AIDS Coalition-Houston announces the start of Project L.E.A.P., an intensive training program for HIV positive individuals and others who want to advocate for HIV/AIDS related services and funding.

Standing for "Learning, Empowerment, Advocacy and Participation," participants in Project L.E.A.P. intensive 100-hour, six-month-long program will learn about the different funding sources for HIV/AIDS programs, providing all of the knowledge necessary to serve on committees and councils that prioritize and allocate money for HIV/AIDS, such as the Ryan White Planning Council, the Texas Department of Health Care Consortium, the Community Prevention and Planning Group as well as various boards of directors of area HIV/AIDS agencies.

Classes for Project L.E.A.P. begin in mid April, with a limited number of spaces are available. If interested please contact Rich Arenschioldt, project coordinator at 713/522-5428, ext. 28 or 1-800-999-0325. Applications are also available online at projectleap-houston.org.

Local Briefs

NO MORE SEXUAL ASSAULT

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month and the Houston Area Women's Center is planning several community events. There will be a community health fair at the Kashmere Multi-Service Center, 4802 Lockwood Dr., on Fri., April 27, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. They have also commissioned a mural, "Imagining a World Without Sexual Violence," designed by local artist Krista Guss and painted by sexual assault advocates and survivors; it will be displayed at various locations throughout Houston.

Finally, they are providing an extensive system-wide training to physicians and nurses throughout the Memorial Hermann Healthcare System on sensitivity issues surrounding sexual assault and violence against women. For more information on any of the events, call 713/528-6798.

BASIC BROTHERS HAS A NEW OWNER

After 19 years under the expert hand of Richard Wiederholt, Basic Brothers came under new ownership in February, when Cody Holt bought the Montrose landmark from Richard's sister Patricia O'Connor and his daughter Karie Kelly, after Richard passed away April 28 last year.

The BB tradition will continue under Cody, who has been part of the operation since it opened, and was general manager under Richard, according to news sales manager Bryan Icard.

"It's not like an outsider has come in and taken over," says Bryan. "He's been here and knows what the needs are."

Bryan says that Basic Brothers will continue to be a community mainstay, both supporting gay organizations and supplying tight-fitting and skimpy Pride outfits.

"The store's doing great," Bryan says. "Cody's brought all kinds of new lines, tripled the underwear selection, expanded the swim line and club wear, brought in more shoes. ... But we'll never forget our roots."

CENTER FOR AIDS NEW PUBLICATION

The Center for AIDS has just started a new publication: *HIV Treatment ALERTS!*, intended specifically for HIV patients. Published three times a year, the newsletter contains reports and highlights from various conferences, important anti-HIV drug updates and warnings, a patient/doctor question and answer section, information on Internet and community resources, and much more. →

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ALERTS! is edited by Thomas Gegeny (who is on staff at the Center for AIDS, and is a periodic *OutSmart* columnist), who also edits the CFA's other publication *Research Initiative / Treatment Action! (RITA!)*, which focuses more on HIV research and policy. Both publications are available online from The CFA website (www.centerforaids.org) at no charge.

National Briefs

HRC INCLUDES TG

After six and a half years of protest and negotiation, the Human Rights Campaign announced they are amending their mission statement to include transgenders. Their new mission statement reads, in part: "HRC is a bipartisan organization that works to advance equality based on sexual orientation and gender expression and identity, to ensure that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Americans can be open, honest and safe at home, at work, and in the community."

LESBIAN CIRCUIT PARTY?

We were interested to hear about the premiere of a Memorial weekend event put on by Wild Women Productions called the Santa Fe

Women's Weekend. The wild weekend involves several high-profile DJ parties (including a Latin dance party with Bocado's Theresa Flores); literary salons with best-selling lesbian author Claire "Detective Inspector Carol Ashton" McNab and lesbian erotica writer Bett Williams; comedy with Karen Williams (didn't get enough of her at the TLC?) and Mimi Gonzalez, pool parties, and a concert that may feature k.d. lang. Weekend packages with three-night hotel and VIP Events Pass start at \$499/person. For more info call 505/466-6194 or e-mail swomensweekend@yahoo.com, or see the website at www.wildwomenproductions.com.

GREAT GAY AND LESBIAN COOKOFF

The Second Great Gay And Lesbian CookOff invites you to enter your favorite original recipes and be judged America's best gay or lesbian cook. The national contest will take place in partnership with San Diego Lesbian and Gay Pride, July 28 and 29. Ten preliminary winners chosen in regional contests will be awarded trips to the national contest in San Diego, plus \$300 in Calphalon

cookware. The Grand Prize is an RSVP cruise for two. There is no cost to enter: submit your recipe by June 22 to The Great Gay and Lesbian CookOff, 3707 5th Ave., #354, San Diego, CA 92103 or e-mail to gaycookoff@aol.com. Complete rules are available at <http://www.gaycookoff.com>.

SAN ANTONIO TRANSGENDER SHERIFF'S DEPUTY

SAN ANTONIO—Bexar County Sheriff Ralph Lopez says he has approved plans by one of his male deputies to dress as a female and has ordered other deputies and department staff not to harass him while he prepared to undergo a sex-change operation.

"We should be supportive of a person who is making a drastic individual choice in his life," Lopez said. "We have to support the legality and his right to do that. We want to think we are professionals, and we want to deal with each other, of whatever gender, in a professional and proper manner."

The unnamed deputy is believed to be the first county sheriff's officer in Texas on the job to begin the sex-reassignment process.

RUSSIANS ACKNOWLEDGE HIV

MOSCOW—After years of denying high reported numbers of HIV infections by international health agencies, Russian officials have finally agreed with a UN estimate of the epidemic in the country. Russian officials recently told the Itar-Tass news service that UN estimates of 300,000 infections in Russia since 1987 are correct.

Health authorities in the country have in the past rejected such figures and instead insisted that officially reported figures of HIV infections—which have always been under 30,000—were accurate.

NY BOY SCOUTS DENOUNCE ANTIGAY BAN

NEW YORK—Several members of the Greater New York Councils of Boy Scouts criticized the national antigay policy as "stupid" and "repugnant" with one local BSA board member saying the members of the national BSA board were "no more than a bunch of rednecks from Texas." The signs of the rift between the local and national organization came during hearings held by the



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April 15 - Easter Sunrise Service at 6:30 a.m.

April 15 - Easter Services at 9 a.m. & 11 a.m.



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New York City Council on whether or not to sever the city's ties with the youth group.

New York chapter members who testified before the City Council said the antigay ban should be lifted and that they are ready to lobby the national youth organization to end the policy.

The City Council gave the local scouting chapter 120 days to "review their policies" concerning the antigay ban.

The potential rift with the New York chapter would mark the largest and most influential the youth group may have to confront over the policy.

OHIO ACTIVISTS UPSET OVER CIVIL RIGHTS APPOINTMENT

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Ohio Gov. Bob Taft has named Charles Winburn to the state's civil rights commission in a move that has angered many gays and lesbians in the state.

Nancy Minson, former head of the Cincinnati and Ohio Women's Political Caucus, told the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* that Winburn's "outspokenness over fighting equal rights for gay, lesbian and transgender people is notorious. He has never supported our issues, and

certainly his action have not shown any sense of need for equality for women."

Winburn, an ex-councilman from Cincinnati, fought against a 1995 civil rights measure that would have barred antigay discrimination.

He also called on the state legislature to prohibit same-sex marriages and fought against a 1999 hate crimes ordinance.

PENTAGON: NEW DIRECTIVES COMING SOON

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Responding to a report of little change in antigay violence and harassment in the nation's armed forces, Pentagon spokesman Adm. Craig Quigley said Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld would issue a directive on dealing with the problems soon.

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN) released its survey which concluded "reports of death threats, assaults and verbal gay bashing continue almost unabated."

C. Dixon Osburn, head of SLDN, said the organization welcomed Adm. Quigley's reply, but that "the question remains when will the

Pentagon release the new orders and what are the specifics of those orders?"

The Defense Department has been working on a directive dealing with antigay harassment for nearly a year, but some activists have wondered if the Bush administration would approve of policies developed mainly under President Clinton.

In addition to SLDN's annual reports on the country's armed forces, an Inspector General's study two years ago also found extensive and widespread antigay harassment in the nation's military forces.

"VILLAGE PEOPLE" LEATHERMAN DIES

LOS ANGELES—Glenn Hughes, best known as the leatherman in the disco group Village People, has died following a long illness. He was 50 years old at the time.

The arch-camp Village People surprised much of the music world when several of its songs topped music charts, including hits such as "YMCA," "Macho Man," and "In the Navy."

Before his death, Hughes asked to be buried in the leather outfit he wore in the sing-

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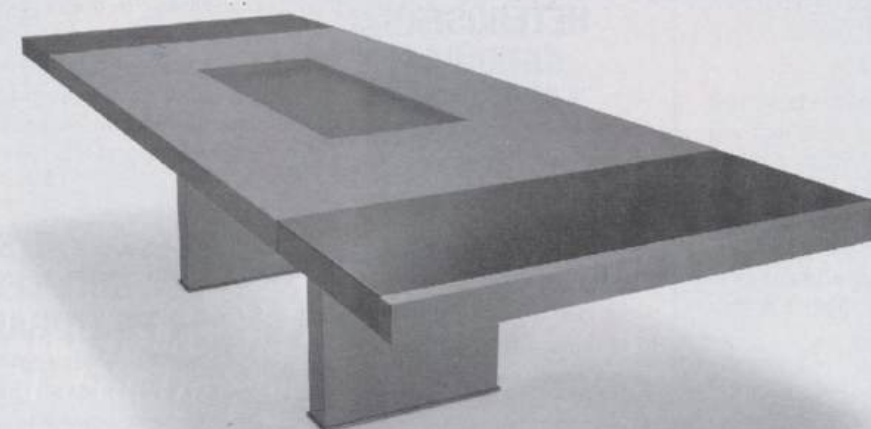
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ing group, along with the chains he sometimes sported on stage when performing.

"ONLY HETEROSEXUAL CANDIDATE" LOSES IN FLA.

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla.—Larry Gierer has won a seat on the Oakland Park city council, the first openly gay member elected to the suburban body.

Gierer's run for a council seat prompted Roger Mann, the incumbent, to run a rather ugly campaign in which he touted himself as "the only heterosexual candidate."

That effort backfired on Mann with voters apparently deciding it was irrelevant and electing Gierer to replace him on the council.

Gierer said after the election, "People just did not like the issue. It was a non-issue that should never have been brought up."

PROPOSAL TO BAR HIV DRUG ADS AT SAN FRANCISCO BUS SHELTERS

SAN FRANCISCO—Prompted in part by reports of increasing unsafe sex among younger gay men, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors has called hearings on a proposal to bar public advertising of HIV medicines.

The board—with the support of the city's public health department and most AIDS organizations—has expressed concerns that the ads at city bus shelters depict attractive, young, healthy men enjoying life.

But Tom Ammiano, the board president, says such images may be leading "people to think they can have unsafe sex, pop a pill, and be fine."

Preliminary results of a survey in San Francisco, Ammiano says, indicates that younger gay

men who had seen the ads regularly were more likely to think that the drugs make HIV less serious and were more likely to participate in unprotected sex than those who didn't see the ads often or at all.

At the very least, Ammiano says, the drug manufacturers should include safer sex and HIV prevention messages in the ads.

NEW RIGHTS FOR COUPLES IN PORTUGAL

LISBON, Portugal—Portugal's government has approved a measure that would extend to gay and lesbian couples who have lived together for at least two years the same legal rights and tax benefits enjoyed by common law couples already.

The move was strongly opposed by conservatives, and even a number of the governing Socialist Party members of parliament had at first been reluctant to approve the proposal.

Changes in the bill's tax benefits, however, persuaded enough members of parliament to back the measure to win its approval.

ASTONISHING MEDICAL MIRACLE

In 1973, when the American Psychiatric Association decided that homosexuality wasn't abnormal anymore, it was hailed as one of the greatest cures in the history of medicine/psychiatry. Overnight, roughly four million Americans were cured!

In 2001, now that the Chinese psychiatrists have decided the same thing, that's *really* a medical miracle.

If one-half of one percent of their 1.3 billion people are homosexual, then 65 million Chinese have been cured overnight! Wow! Wonderful!!!! —Pokey Anderson

continued on page 28

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REV. FRED PHELPS AS GAY FUNDRAISER?

Turning swords into plowshares (and banknotes) in Ann Arbor

by John Stiles

When the Reverend Fred Phelps came to town, the gay community in Ann Arbor decided not to get mad. They decided to get rich. Among the Ann Arbor locales the Kansas-based Phelps and his band elected to picket was the /aut/ BAR, a gay-owned restaurant, bar, and community gathering place. When co-owner Keith Orr heard that his establishment was being targeted, he wanted to respond constructively. He and his partner, Martin Contreras, did not want to promote a counterdemonstration, feeling that Phelps gains the most attention—and hence is most effective—when he provokes anger and outrage from his opponents. Rather, Orr decided to use his Phelps visit to the community's advantage.

Phelps's plans to picket the bar came to light only two days prior to his scheduled February 17 demonstration. With little time, Orr used the Internet to organize a unique fundraising scheme. In an e-mail message to customers, supporters, and friends, he proposed that people pledge money to the Washtenaw Rainbow Action Project (WRAP), a local gay advocacy group and community center, for every minute that Phelps picketed the bar. In this way, Orr explained, the longer Phelps stayed to spew hate, the more money he would raise for WRAP. He and Contreras kicked off the drive by pledging \$1 per minute.

Contreras explained why he felt it was important to organize a response to Phelps.

"When I was first coming out 15 years ago, people told me, 'You've got to watch out for this so-called reverend from Kansas named Phelps. He's out to wage war against the gay community.' He had been showing up at funerals of people who had died of AIDS with signs claiming that gay people would burn in hell. At the time he was just a blip on the radar screen. But when he protested at Matthew Shepard's funeral he became a national menace."

At the same time, Orr continued, "I didn't want to give Phelps what he wanted," meaning a counterdemonstration. "But just ignoring him seemed wrong."

Only two minutes after Orr sent out his e-mail message, pledges began to pour in, not only from Ann Arbor, but from as far away as New Hampshire, Texas, and California. The pledge drive gained such momentum that by the day of Phelps's demonstration—only 48



Thanks to Rev. Fred Phelps's years of self-promotion, a savvy Ann Arbor gay businessman was able to make use of the gay hate-monger's infamy to raise money for gay causes. (Phelps shown here outside a vigil for Billy Jack Gaither, who was brutally murdered in 1999.)



Left: Bar owner Keith Orr. Center: The crowd sings, "If you're gay and you know it. . . ." Right: The small group of Phelps's protesters outside in the freezing cold raising money for Ann Arbor's gay community.

hours after Orr and Contreras kicked off the drive—friends and supporters of Ann Arbor's gay community had promised to contribute a total of \$107 for every minute Phelps picketed the bar.

"When I began the pledge drive I wasn't necessarily expecting anything big," Orr said. "I just wanted to give people an opportunity to turn Phelps's message of hate into something positive for our community."

Even so, the size and speed of the response surprised him. "Normally a fundraising event of this magnitude takes months of planning and a lot of upfront costs. In 48 hours we raised over \$6,000 without spending a dime. I was astonished."

Pledges arrived in diverse amounts and from a wide range of sources. They varied in amounts from as little as 10 cents per minute to as much as \$5 per minute. "The great thing about this kind of fundraiser is that no one is excluded. People can participate at any economic level," said Orr.

The range of contributors included neighboring business owners, a high school Gay/Straight Alliance, and individual members of the Ann Arbor police force. On February 17, the day of the protest, Phelps's band numbered only four adults and two small children. Instead of confronting the hate-mongers and giving them the attention they craved, over 100 community members and supporters gathered in the bar on a Saturday afternoon, celebrating while they counted the minutes that Phelps's cronies stood outside in the bitter cold raising money for Ann Arbor's gay community.

"We view this as a form of economic containment," Orr said. "Phelps is free to spread his message, however perverse we find it, wherever he wants. The First Amendment protects his right to do that. But we turned what could have been a negative into a positive. This has been an incredible community-building experience for us. We hope that cities and towns across the country will do this everywhere he goes. I get a charge thinking that every time he hits the road he will help us build our communities and fund our organizations."

John Stiles is a doctoral student and bartender at the Ann Arbor /aut/ BAR. (This is not the same John Stiles who lives in Houston and is a contributing writer for OutSmart.)

Editor's note: After word of the /aut/ BAR's inspired response to Rev. Phelps started getting out, similar fundraisers have been instigated in Las Vegas, where Phelps was picketing the UNLV and the Liberace Museum, and in Madison, Wisconsin. Also, Keith Orr has been talking with folks in San Antonio, Portland, Maine, and San Francisco. Maybe we should invite the reverend to Houston. . . .

Briefs continued on page 48

PHELPS: JIM SMOTHERS/THE DAILY HOME; ALL OTHER PHOTOS: UNCREDITED

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Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting SUSTIVA. They tend to go away after you have taken the medicine for a few weeks. A small number of patients have had severe depression, strange thoughts, or angry behavior. If you have these symptoms, you should contact your doctor immediately to discuss your therapy. There have been a few reports of suicide, but SUSTIVA has not been established as the cause. Mild to moderate rash is a common side effect of SUSTIVA. Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA, because birth defects have been seen in animals given SUSTIVA. SUSTIVA should not be taken by patients who are also taking any of the following: Hismanal® (astemizole), Propulsid® (cisapride), Versed® (midazolam), Halcion® (triazolam), or ergot derivatives as there is the potential for serious and/or life-threatening side effects.* See Patient Information about SUSTIVA on the following pages.

* The brands listed are registered trademarks of their respective owners and are not trademarks of DuPont Pharmaceuticals Company. ¹IMS National Prescription Audit, Total Prescriptions fourth quarter, 2000.

References: 1. DPC Study 006, Sustiva/ZDV/3TC versus IDV/ZDV/3TC. 2. Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in HIV-Infected Adults and Adolescents. Panel on Clinical Practices for Treatment of HIV Infection, Dept of Health and Human Services, February 2001.

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What is SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is a medicine used to help treat HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). SUSTIVA is a type of HIV drug called a "non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor" (NNRTI).

How does SUSTIVA work?

SUSTIVA works by lowering the amount of HIV in the blood (called "viral load"). SUSTIVA must be taken with other anti-HIV medicines. When taken with other anti-HIV medicines, SUSTIVA has been shown to reduce viral load and increase the number of CD4 cells (a type of immune cell in blood). SUSTIVA may not have these effects in every patient.

Does SUSTIVA cure HIV or AIDS?

SUSTIVA is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking SUSTIVA may still develop other infections associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important that you remain under the care of your doctor.

Does SUSTIVA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

SUSTIVA has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others. Continue to practice safe sex, and do not use or share dirty needles.

How should I take SUSTIVA?

- The dose of SUSTIVA for adults is 600 mg (three 200 mg capsules, taken together) once a day by mouth. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower (see **Can children take SUSTIVA?**).
- Take SUSTIVA at the same time each day. You should take SUSTIVA at bedtime during the first few weeks or if you have side effects, such as dizziness or trouble concentrating (see **What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?**).
- Swallow SUSTIVA with water, juice, milk, or soda. You may take SUSTIVA with or without meals; however, SUSTIVA should not be taken with a high fat meal.
- Do not miss a dose of SUSTIVA. If you forget to take SUSTIVA, take the missed dose right away. If you do miss a dose, do not double the next dose. Carry on with your regular dosing schedule. If you need help in planning the best times to take your medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- Take the exact amount of SUSTIVA your doctor prescribes. Never change the dose on your own. Do not stop this medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop.
- When your SUSTIVA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to SUSTIVA and become harder to treat.

Can children take SUSTIVA?

Yes, children who are able to swallow capsules can take SUSTIVA. Rash may be a serious problem in some children. Tell your child's doctor right away if you notice rash or any other side effects while your child is taking SUSTIVA. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower than the dose for adults. Capsules containing lower doses of SUSTIVA are available. Your child's doctor will determine the right dose based on your child's weight.

Who should not take SUSTIVA?

Do not take SUSTIVA if you are allergic to SUSTIVA or any of its ingredients.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor right away if you:

- Are pregnant or want to become pregnant
- Are breast-feeding
- Have problems with your liver, or have had Hepatitis
- Start or change any medicine
- Have side effects while taking SUSTIVA
- Have a history of mental illness, substance or alcohol abuse

What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?

A small number of patients have had severe depression, strange thoughts, or angry behavior. Some patients have had thoughts of suicide and a few patients have actually committed suicide. These problems tend to occur more often in patients with a history of mental illness. You should contact your doctor immediately if you think you are having these symptoms, so your doctor can decide whether you should continue to take SUSTIVA.

Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting treatment with SUSTIVA. These feelings may be less noticeable if you take SUSTIVA at bedtime. They also tend to go away after you've taken the medicine for a few weeks. If you have these side effects, such as dizziness, it does not mean that you will also have severe depression, strange thoughts or angry behavior. Tell your doctor promptly if any of these side effects continue or if they bother you. There is the possibility that

these symptoms may be more severe if SUSTIVA is used with alcohol or mood altering (street) drugs. You should avoid driving or operating machinery if you are having these side effects.

One of the most common side effects is rash. These rashes usually go away without any change in treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. If you develop a rash, call your doctor promptly.

Other common side effects include tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, and diarrhea. However, this is not a complete list of side effects reported with SUSTIVA when taken with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss a more complete list of side effects with you.

Please contact your doctor immediately before stopping SUSTIVA because of side effects. Tell your doctor or other healthcare provider if you notice any side effects while taking SUSTIVA.

What about birth control, pregnancy, or breast-feeding?

Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA. Birth defects have been seen in animals treated with SUSTIVA. It is not known whether this could happen in humans. You should use a condom or diaphragm in addition to other methods of birth control while taking SUSTIVA. Inform your doctor immediately if you are pregnant. If you want to become pregnant, talk to your doctor. Do not take SUSTIVA if you are breast-feeding. Talk to your doctor if you are breast-feeding your baby.

Can I take other medicines with SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Your doctor may change your medicines or change their doses. For this reason, it is very important to:

- Let all your doctors and pharmacists know that you take SUSTIVA.
- Tell your doctors and pharmacists about all medicines you take. This includes those you buy over-the-counter and herbal or natural remedies.

Bring all your medicines when you see a doctor, or make a list of their names, how much you take, and how often you take them. This will give your doctor a complete picture of the medicines you use. Then he or she can decide the best approach for your situation.

The following medicines may cause serious and life-threatening side effects when taken with SUSTIVA. You should not take any of these medicines while taking SUSTIVA**:

- Hismanal® (astemizole)
- Propulsid® (cisapride)
- Versed® (midazolam)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Ergot medications (for example, Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

The following medicines may need to be changed or have their dose changed when taken with SUSTIVA**:

- Crixivan® (indinavir)
- Fortovase® (saquinavir)
- Biaxin® (clarithromycin)

How should I keep SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is available as 50 mg, 100 mg, and 200 mg capsules.

Keep SUSTIVA at room temperature (77°F) in the bottle given to you by your pharmacist. The temperature can range from 59°-86°F.

Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children.

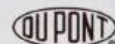
How can I learn more about SUSTIVA?

Talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider if you have questions about either SUSTIVA or HIV. For additional information you can visit the SUSTIVA website at <http://www.sustiva.com>.

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

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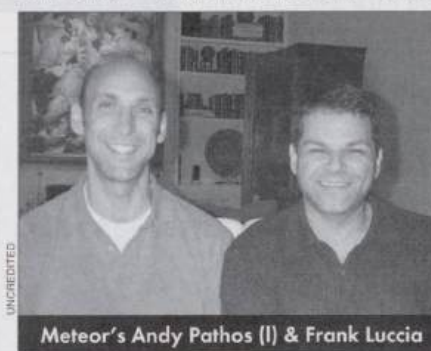


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6495-03/Rev. February, 2000

Business News

Liberation Publications Inc. (LPI), and **PlanetOut Corp.** announced the termination of their previously announced letter of intent to merge the two companies. In the joint announcement on March 8, the companies said that during the period of time in which the letter of intent was in effect, the companies had made substantial progress in plans to integrate their resources. • However, the changes in the investment environment and the subsequent announcement of the merger of PlanetOut with **Online Partners** (Gay.com) caused both LPI and PlanetOut to first put their merger discussions on hold, and now to formally terminate them. "Offering quality media and services to our customers is our main goal, and we believe that working with LPI in a variety of ways continues to make sense in furthering that goal," said **Megan Smith**, CEO of PlanetOut. "While our current priority is a successful merger with Online Partners, we intend to continue working with LPI so that we all benefit from our shared mission of serving the gay and lesbian community." • In the meantime, LPI



and PlanetOut will continue to work together on a number of fronts, such as providing *The Advocate's* headline news content to PlanetOut, and various cross-promotion and joint-marketing efforts. Liberation publications distributes more than eight million copies of its magazines a year. Its titles include *The Advocate* and *Out* magazines as well as other magazines, books, and websites. PlanetOut, an Internet media and service company, receives over 1.7 million visitors per month and has more than a million registered users.

Coldwell Banker United, Realtors kicks off spring with its annual "A Spring Full of Open Houses." Coldwell Banker United sales associates from each of the 12 offices in and around

Houston will be holding literally hundreds of homes open on Sunday, April 8, and Sunday, April 22. "This event has proven to be a great opportunity for us to bring home buyers and sellers together during the real estate high season," said **Wallace Perry**, president and chief operating officer for Coldwell Banker United, Realtors. "This year we'll have approximately 200 Coldwell Banker open houses in Houston, Galveston, and Lake Jackson for potential buyers to preview during this year's 'A Spring Full of Open Houses.'" Coldwell Banker United, Realtors, a d.b.a. of **Richard Smith Company** since 1986, has 12 offices in the Houston and surrounding areas. Richard Smith Company is the second-largest Coldwell Banker affiliate in the nation. For more information on home locations in the event, call 281/895-5714.

In May, Houston's gay club scene will collide with a meteor, creating a new evolution in the Houston club scene. Or at least that's what **Andy Pathos** and **Frank Luccia** hope to achieve with their new club **Meteor**. • "It's happening. All over the country, our communities' bars are shedding the darkness of the past and striding into an age of pride, self-confidence, and enlightenment. Now it's Houston's turn," they say. Incorporating elements of renowned gay clubs like **G** in Manhattan, **Sidetrack** in Chicago, and **ManRay** in Seattle, the owners are seeking to create a cosmopolitan design, unique unto itself. "Me-

eteor pledges to provide Houston's gay community with an upscale, vibrant venue in which to relax, sip expertly-made cocktails, enjoy the latest in music videos, visit with friends, and make new ones." • Located at 2306 Genesee (where Fairview curves and becomes Tuam Street), the club will feature state of the arts audio systems for the best in sound and video, a triple capacity air-conditioning and ventilation system to keep the air as clean and smoke-free as possible. And most importantly they say, "Meteor has been created for Houston's gay community. It isn't another one of those bars marketing itself to the gay community for one 'special' night of the week. Meteor will be your place seven nights a week, all year long!" So brace yourself, Meteor hits Houston this May. ■



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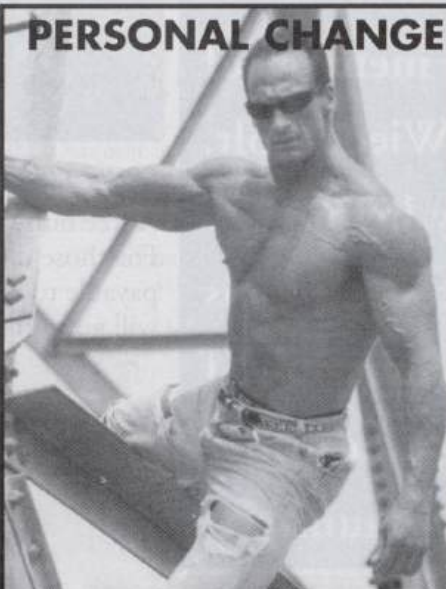
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UNBELIEVABLE

The "reasoning" behind the court's ruling that the Texas anti-sodomy statute is constitutional . . . even though it only applies to gays

On June 8, 2000, in a 2-1 decision, a three-judge panel of the all-Republican Fourteenth Court of Appeals ruled that section 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code (the Anti-Sodomy Statute) is unconstitutional. Immediately after the court issued its opinion, Harris County Republican Party Chair Gary Polland orchestrated a letter-writing campaign calling for the two judges who declared the statute unconstitutional to step down. Then, at the State Republican Convention last summer, Polland had them singled out and censured for their legal ruling because it was directly contrary to the Republican Party platform's position on homosexuality and homosexual conduct. (So much for the concept of an "independent judiciary.")

After the ruling, and after Polland had made his and his party's position clear to all of the Republican judges sitting on the Fourteenth Court of Appeals, the nine-judge court agreed to reconsider its opinion. On

March 15, it issued a new opinion. And, lo and behold, in a 7-2 opinion issued, the court reversed itself and declared that the Anti-Sodomy Statute is constitutional after all because it "advances a legitimate state interest . . . namely, preserving public morals."

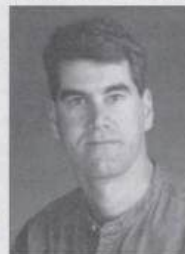
It took the seven-member majority of the court 22 pages of judicial smoke and mirrors to conclude that "deviant sexual intercourse, when performed by members of the same sex, is an act different from or more offensive than any such conduct performed by members of the opposite sex." Along the way to finding gay and lesbian sodomites "more offensive" than their heterosexual counterparts, the majority wandered through the Magna Carta, the Emancipation Proclamation, Dr. Alfred Kinsey's report on sexuality, and the Bible. The majority, however, never did manage to explain how permitting individuals of the same sex to privately engage in acts of sodomy would undermine public morals, but

permitting individuals of the opposite sex to privately engage in acts of sodomy somehow promotes public morality.

While it's hard for me to find much of *anything* in the majority's opinion that's well-reasoned, I think the most absurd holding in the opinion is the majority's conclusion that the Anti-Sodomy Statute does not distinguish persons by their sexual orientation. Indeed, the majority actually wrote that "while homosexuals may be disproportionately affected by the statute, we cannot assume homosexual conduct is limited only to those possessing a homosexual 'orientation.'"

continued on p. 26

Writing from the liberal end of the spectrum, Houston attorney Daryl Moore has a general practice and is board-certified in civil appellate law. He can be reached at DarylMoore@outsmartmagazine.com.



POLLING THE PEOPLE

What does America think about gays and gay issues? What do we think of ourselves?

A new survey sponsored by the non-partisan Gill Foundation reinforces some common ideas about the gay civil rights movement and suggests new directions for organizational emphasis. It also leaves much room for further study.

The survey offers some interesting insights into gay opinion. Alas, there is not much good news for gay conservatives. A healthy plurality of gays (43 percent) consider themselves politically "moderate." But the next largest group is self-described "liberals" (36 percent), followed by "conservatives" (11 percent). Compare those numbers to the figures for the general population, which is 40 percent moderate, 35 percent conservative, and only 19 percent liberal.

It could be that the self-described "moderate" category actually includes many people with conservative policy preferences who refuse to call themselves "conservative" because they associate the word with people

like Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC). It would be useful for future poll-takers to measure gays' political self-identification against their actual positions on taxes, defense policy, capital punishment, and the like. Then we'll know how conservative gays really are.

On specific gay issues, there is some encouragement for those who emphasize the importance of same-sex marriage. On a ranking of issues "most important" to the gay community, legal recognition of same-sex relationships finished first, with 35 percent. Laws prohibiting employment discrimination placed second on the list, with 27 percent. Hate crimes laws finished third at 22 percent. Gays in the military finished dead last (tied with gay adoptions), with only eight percent of respondents considering it the top priority. These findings may suggest a need for gay organizations to re-order their priorities, putting more emphasis on legal recognition of gay relationships and less on hate crimes laws.

Perhaps more interesting is the survey's findings on the attitudes of the general population.

First, the good news: A full 91 percent of Americans now say they know someone gay. The continual exhortation to individuals to come out of the closet appears to have worked. It's unimaginable that a pre-Stonewall survey would have found such a high number of Americans familiar with gays. Of "familiar voters"—those who know an openly gay person—36 percent know a gay co-worker, 26 percent know a close personal

Writing from the conservative end of the spectrum, former Houston resident and law professor Dale Carpenter began his column for OutSmart in 1994 and has won three Vice Versa awards for excellence in gay writing. Now living in Minneapolis, he can be reached at OutRight@aol.com.



**We at
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the memory of
Richard Wiederholt,
by helping to
continue his
life mission of
creating a healthier
community...**



I will cherish all the friendship I was fortunate to find, all the love and all the laughter in the place I left behind. All these good things will go with me. They will make my spirit glow. And that light will shine forever in the next place that I go.
—Warren Hanson in *The Next Place*

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LeftOut continued from page 24

In other words, the majority concluded that since it is possible for heterosexuals to engage in homosexual conduct, a statute that outlaws only homosexual conduct does not single out homosexuals. It keeps straight people from committing homosexual sex acts, too.

Right. And a government ban on Christian prayer does not single out Christians because it also prevents Jews from invoking Jesus' name. And an employer's practice of firing "persons" with breast cancer does not single out women.

Amazingly, upon reconsideration by the full court, only the two judges who originally declared the statute unconstitutional could agree that a statute that permits "deviant sexual conduct" between same-sex persons, but permits "deviant sexual conduct" between heterosexual persons, cannot in any way promote public morality. So, these two lonely judges dissented.

In their dissent, they called "bull----" on the hypocrisy of the majority opinion by pointing out that "sodomy is either immoral or it is not. . . . The Legislature's removal of the prohibition on heterosexual sodomy while retaining it for homosexual sodomy cannot be explained by anything but animus toward the persons it affects."

Unfortunately, we will never know whether one or more members of the majority upheld the Anti-Sodomy Statute because they have "animus" toward gay and lesbian persons. Was this decision reached because they truly believe the statute is constitutional? Or because they were afraid that they, too, would be singled out, censured, or targeted by their own party if they sided with the minority and declared the statute unconstitutional? What we do know is that seven Republicans declared that it is constitutionally acceptable to criminally punish those who privately commit an act of consensual sodomy with another member of the same sex.

The Texas Legislature defines "sodomy" as the commission of "deviate sexual intercourse with another individual of the same sex." "Deviate sexual intercourse" is defined as "any contact between any part of the genitals of one person and the mouth or anus of another person; or . . . the penetration of the genitals or the anus of another person with an object."

I hope the four men and three women who signed onto the majority opinion remember these statutory definitions the next time they have to undergo a prostate or gynecological exam. Because, under the statutory definitions that these seven judges deemed constitutionally acceptable, a prostate or gynecological

exam by a member of the same sex is an act of sodomy that warrants criminal punishment in the name of public morality.

Hopefully, the Fourteenth Court of Appeals will not be the last word on this issue as the two "criminals" convicted of sodomy plan to appeal the ruling to the all-Republican Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. Then, if they lose there, it will be up to the United States Supreme Court to decide whether heterosexual sodomy promotes public morals, but same-sex sodomy demeans them. ■

OutRight continued from previous page

friend who is gay, and 21 percent know a gay family member.

The survey also reinforces the common view that coming out powerfully affects the attitudes of the people around you. "Familiar voters" are more likely than non-familiar voters to support hate crimes legislation protecting gays (82 percent familiar vs. 74 percent non-familiar), employment discrimination laws protecting gays (74 percent vs. 58 percent), allowing gays to serve openly in the military (64 percent vs. 46 percent), legal recognition of same-sex civil unions (47 percent vs. 22 percent), and adoptions by gay parents (47 percent vs. 19 percent).

Unfortunately, the survey did not ask respondents' views on sodomy laws, which still exist in 18 states.

"Familiar voters" are also more likely to consider gay issues "important" in their voting decisions. They are correspondingly less likely to support a candidate who expresses negative views about gays.

Here's the bad news. If so many Americans say they know a gay person, and if coming out has such high impact, why does prejudice persist? Has the coming-out strategy reached the limits of its effectiveness? What do we do now?

The answers are surely complicated. For example, the survey concludes gays are more likely to be open about their sexual orientation with friends and even co-workers than with family members. It would be useful to know if pro-gay policy preferences correlate with the degree to which someone knows some gay person. Are people who know an openly gay family member more supportive than those who know only an openly gay friend or an openly gay co-worker? If so, it matters not just that we come out, but to whom.

The answer to that question, too, awaits a future study. But the Gill Foundation has made a good start in helping us understand ourselves and the people around us. ■

Featured Properties



Willowbend: Stunning contemporary with three bedrooms, two baths and many recent updates including roof, A/C, paint, plumbing, refinished wood floors, etc...\$164,500



Handsome three-bedroom/two-and-a-half-bath home in Houston Heights. Two generous-sized bedrooms with large closets, one bath upstairs. The oversized private lot consists of a covered deck, pool and spa, plus gorgeous landscaping with sprinkler system. A must see!!\$324,900



Heights: Handsome home (3200 sq ft per HCAD) on an oversized lot (75' X 135') on a great block on Harvard. Three bedrooms and four full baths. A must see!!\$489,000



Heights: Remodeled and updated three bedrooms and two baths. Wood floors, granite and formal dining room with wine closet...\$274,000



Heights: New construction! Galveston-inspired home with three bedrooms, two and one half baths, over 2,700 square feet...\$399,900

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Calendar of Events

Calendar

APRIL

4, 11, 18, 25 (Wed.)

HIV Testing. The Montrose Clinic offers free confidential HIV testing and counseling every Wednesday, 6-9 pm @ the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne. Center: 713/524-3818. Clinic: 713/830-3000. **PLEASE NOTE:** Free & confidential HIV/AIDS testing is also available from 1-3 pm on the 11th & 25th in Conroe at Northwoods AIDS Coalition, 1414 South Frazier, Ste. 106. More info: 936/441-1614.

7 (Sat.)

Socially New. The Southeast Area Gays and Lesbians (SEAG&LS) is a new social group for the GLBT community from the southeastern part of Houston & surrounding localities. Throughout every month, there will be activities such as movie nights, dinners out, brunches, day trips, plays, or whatever members may want to do in a group setting. For details of today's event or upcoming socials: Del at 281/998-7319 or e-mail at SEAG&LS@PRODIGY.NET.

7 & 8 (Sat. & Sun.)

Bernadette Peters. When Broadway's greatest diva launches into song, it's an invitation to walk straight (or gaily) into her heart. With her oversized little-girl voice & her riveting stage presence, the quintessential queen of Broadway is

nothing less than a musical meltdown. Tickets range from \$37-\$85. Don't miss Broadway's greatest diva on Saturday at 9 pm and Sunday at 2 pm @ Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Post-office. For more info: 800/821-1894 or www.thegrand.com.

10 (Tue.)

Evan Parker & Susie Ibarra. Two of the leading artists in the world of improvised music collaborate for a first-time duo performance. A pioneer of the European "free music" scene, British saxophonist Parker has reinvented his instrument. He takes the most extreme developments of John Coltrane & Albert Ayler as a starting point and goes out from there. Multiple lines rapidly unfold & collide in a continuous development that often sounds like two or three instruments playing at once. Ibarra is one of the premiere jazz artists of the younger generation. She was raised in Clear Lake, heard her calling as a jazz drummer at a concert by the Sun Ra Arkestra, and studied under the great Milford Graves. She is a mesmerizing player—her rich sounds vary from hypnotic polyrhythm to a thunderous maelstrom. She is both highly sensitive & fiercely assertive. Tickets \$20 (\$10 students/seniors, \$15 members). Presented by DiverseWorks at 8 pm @ Hamman

Hall on the Rice University campus, Rice Blvd., entrance 14. For 24-hr. reservations: 713/335-3445.

12 (Thu.)

A Child Is Waiting. Family to Family Adoption Services, a licensed nonprofit adoption agency, is dedicated to find loving homes for thousands of orphans. They are sponsoring a free workshop for prospective adoptive parents seeking more info about adopting children from the U.S., China, Russia, Bulgaria, Guatemala, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Honduras, Colombia, Vietnam, Korea, & India. Single men & women and couples from 25 to 65 years old are eligible to adopt. A free info packet will be given to each person, 6:30-8:30 pm in the board room @ Bellaire Hospital, 5314 Dashwood. More info: 713/249-5941.

12 (Thu.)

ComedySportz-Houston's Healing With Humor Match will benefit the SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) Alliance Greater Houston chapter, 7:30 pm @ Lambert Hall, 1703 Heights Blvd. at 17th St. Admission is \$10 with all proceeds going to SIDS Alliance and reservations are recommended. Reservations/more info: 713/680-0713.

14 (Sat.)

Painting Easter Eggs. DiverseWorks will be at Whole Foods to help take

INFO NEEDED FOR YOUR EVENT LISTING: a few lines of info about your event; date/time; cost; location/address; organization name; AND two phone numbers—one for OutSmart to reach you for questions and one for OutSmart readers to get more info on your event. **Mail info to:** OutSmart Magazine, 3406 Audubon Place, Houston 77006. **Fax info to:** 713/522-3275. **E-mail info to:** calendar@outsmartmagazine.com. **NO LISTINGS CAN BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DEADLINE DATE—WED., APR. 11.**

part in CommUNITY Giving Day. Bring the kids to meet the Easter bunny and paint eggs. Local artists (including Jama Shelton) will be on hand to help kids create that "perfect" Easter egg. Whole Foods will donate a percentage of the store's net profit of the day to DiverseWorks. 10 am-4 pm @ Whole Foods on Kirby. More info: 713/223-8346 or www.diverseworks.org.

14 (Sat.)

Thai New Year Party! Join Asians & Friends Houston (A&FH) in celebrating the new year at 7:30 pm. A&FH is a nonprofit social group for gay & lesbian Asians and anyone interested in furthering their understanding of the gay and lesbian cultures of Asia. For location or for more information: 713/626-6300 or www.AsiansAndFriendsHouston.com.

14 (Sat.)

Jungle IX. Join the members of Bayou City Boys Club as they present their annual Easter weekend. Tickets are \$40 advance; \$50 door; and \$25 student (available at the door only and must be 21 or over with a valid student ID). Tickets are available online at www.bayoucityboysclub.org or in advance at Basic Brothers and on the day of the event at Lobo Bookstore. The new venue is the Space City Entertainment Center at 3301 Polk. Beneficiaries are the Arrow Project, WAM Foundation, Kolbe Foundation, Assistance Fund, Buyers Club Inc., and Center for AIDS.

16 & 17 (Mon. & Tue.)

Stefon Harris Quartet. Vibraphonist & composer Stefon Harris has been heralded as "one of the most important young artists in jazz" by *The Los Angeles Times*. 7:30 pm @ the Menil Collection, 1500 Sul Ross. Tickets (\$25) are available by contacting Da Camera Music Center, 1427 Branard, at 713/524-5050.

20-22 (Fri.-Sun.)

The Joffrey Ballet of Chicago performs two works by company co-founder Gerald Arpino: *Viva Vivaldi* and *Secret Places*; Antony Tudor's *Lilac Garden*; and Laura Dean's *Creative Force*. Presented by Society for the Performing Arts at 8 pm @ Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Tickets (\$15-\$50) available by calling 713/227-4SPA (4772) or at Ticketmaster outlets.

21 (Sat.)

A/V Geeks Rides Again. Skip Eisheimer, founding geek of Raleigh, North Carolina's A/V Geeks, returns to Aurora Picture Show with more fabulously bizarre educational & training films from his 8500+ film collection. 9 pm on Sat., 3 pm on Sun. @ Aurora Picture Show, 800 Aurora (which crosses the 6500 block of N. Main). 713/868-2101 or www.aurorapictureshow.org.

21 (Sat.)

Out of Depression. Here's a class that will define the emotional & physical factors of depression, determine your potential vulnerability to depression, identify causes, and focus on healthy choices & effective coping skills for management of depression. 10 am-noon; \$25. Registration: 713/529-4414. Info: Denise O'Doherty at 713/524-9525.

21 & 22 (Sat. & Sun.)

Houston Masterworks Chorus marks its first concert with Craig Hella Johnson as music director, with two performances of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. 7:30 pm on Sat., 7 pm on Sun. @ Grace Presbyterian Church, 10221 Ella Lee. Tickets (\$25) are available by calling 713/529-8900.

22 (Sun.)

Share Our Strength's Taste of the Nation is a gala afternoon of wine & food tastings from Houston's best restaurants, caterers, & chefs. Seventy percent of funds raised go to agencies

PEOPLE WHO LOVE BARBRA . . .

. . . are the luckiest people in the world in April, because Encore is featuring Streisand all month long



Encore's documentary series, "The Directors," features a woman director this month—only the second woman to be selected throughout the three years the series has been running. After focusing on such disparate directors as Robert Wise (*West Side Story*) and Spike Lee, the series turns to the celebrity director so beloved for her acting roles and just for her presence in life—Barbra Streisand. No other female director can claim to have produced and starred in the films they direct.

Barbra Streisand has directed three feature films: *Yentl* (1983), *The Prince of Tides* (1991), and *The Mirror Has Two Faces* (1996). (The other featured woman director, Martha Coolidge, directed more than a dozen films, including *Rambling Rose* with Laura Dern and Robert Duvall and *Introducing Dorothy Dandridge*.) But even though she'd never directed before, the Hollywood Foreign Press (Golden Globe) voted *Yentl* Best Film and Barbra Best Director of 1983—the only woman ever even nominated.

The Prince of Tides and *The Mirror Has Two Faces* were critically less well received. *The Prince of Tides* received multiple Academy nominations but no wins, other

than Nick Nolte for best supporting actor. Likewise, the only Oscar recognition received by *The Mirror Has Two Faces* was for Lauren Bacall as best supporting actress.

The normally media-shy Barbra sits for a lengthy interview for this episode and she does not disappoint. She is frank and open in conversation about her directing and acting careers. The control issue comes up and she handles it deftly. She does fidget with her turtleneck to the point of distraction, though. Yes, Barbra, you have beautiful hands. The usual laudatory comments from friends and peers are included (Pierce Brosnan, Mimi Rogers, Brenda Vaccaro, ad nauseum) and are of little real interest. Toward the end of the hour, however, Marvin Hamlisch adds his comments and they provide a fascinating glimpse into Barbra's musical gifts, as well as some insight into her own attitude toward that unparalleled voice.

Encore plans a birthday celebration for Barbra on April 24 with a screening of *The Main Event* and *The Way We Were*. The Barbra Streisand episode debuts April 4 on Encore and screens a dozen more times during April. —John W. Stiles

When John isn't writing for OutSmart he keeps himself busy writing film reviews and essays for his website, www.johnwstiles.com.

FINE @ FIRE

There's a good reason to visit the beautiful Heights this spring: The Fine Arts Show is presenting a gallery of diverse fine arts in the Heights Fire Station Community Center.

What's your inclination? Artistically speaking, that is. Whatever it is, there should be something to your liking at this Fine Arts Home Show. The artists included in this year's spring show are: Jo Alcalde/Leslie Ravey (furniture), Marisa DeLeon (tile art), Ann Feldmeir (pottery), Eugene Fitzwater (wood), Michael Gilbert (metal sculpture), Sue Hains (leather), Kip Holms (photography), Emily Kiewel (pottery), Debbie Little-Wilson (mixed media), Benito and Doris Loera (mesquite & cedar wood), Glenn Lyles (oil paintings), Gloria Marie (mixed media), Kiki Neumann (reclaimed wood), Virginia Oehike (batik), Maxine Price (painting), and Margaret Sanchez (pottery).

FINE ARTS HOME SHOW

Where: Heights Fire Station Community Center, 12th @ Yale in the Heights, 713/868-3988

When: Fri., Apr. 27 (preview and reception, 6-9 p.m.); Sat., Apr. 28 (10 a.m.-6 p.m.); Sun., Apr. 29 (noon-5 p.m.)

Cost: No admission charge



Just a few of the artists displaying their wares at this year's Fine Arts Home Show (left-right): Kiki Neumann sitting on her reclaimed-wood garden bench; Leslie Ravey (that's her fine wood table at right); and Margaret Sanchez standing near her raku pottery.

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located in Houston (The End Hunger Network & The Houston Food Bank). Ten percent goes to rural area agencies within Texas. Three percent go to national and 17 percent to international hunger relief agencies. One hundred percent of the revenue from all ticket & table sales is distributed to hunger relief agencies. \$65 per person, \$100 Host Committee ticket. Tables are \$1,250, \$2,500, & \$5,000. Sponsorships begin at \$5,000. The event takes place from 4-7 pm on the Meadow at The Houstonian Hotel Club & Spa, 111 N. Post Oak Lane. Tickets/info: 713/547-8624.

22 & 29 (Suns.)

Several Dancers Core presents Fieldwork Showcase, showing new work produced out of a 10-week Fieldwork workshop. April 22 at 7 pm @ Rebecca Lodge, 1404 Allston in the Heights. Tickets are \$5 and are available at the door. The following Sunday, April 29, at 4 pm, CORE Performance Company presents an evening of mixed repertory to be performed at the Multicultural Education and Counseling through the Arts (MECA), 1900 Kane St. This event is free and open to the public. More info: 713/862-5530.

24 & 25 (Tue. & Wed.)

Fiesta Frenzy. It's Fiesta time in San Antonio, so if you're in the River City on either of these two days, be sure to check out "Fiesta Frenzy," a madcap review consisting of musical & dance numbers, female impersonations, and lesbian & gay stand-up comedy performers. 8 pm @ RiverCenter Comedy Club, 849 East Commerce, 210/299-1420. More info: Gay & Lesbian Community Center at 210/732-4300.

27-29 (Fri.-Sun.)

Reel Pop at the Museum of Fine Arts is presented in conjunction with Pop Art: U.S./J.K. Connection currently on view at the Menil Collection. • **Fri., Apr. 27, 7:30 pm:** Happenings: One and Two is a documentation of two of Pop artist Claes Oldenburg's series of "Happenings," held in a store on East Second St. in 1962. New York. This film will be followed by the short *Pat's Birthday*, which spends a day in the country with Oldenburg & the Ray Gun Theatre Players. • **Fri., Apr. 27, 8:30 pm & Sat., Apr. 28, 9:30 pm:** Suits: *Clothes Make the Man* is an entertaining travelogue from the unique perspective of Houston's own Art Guys: Michael Galbreth & Jack Massing. The two cross the U.S. wearing Todd Oldham suits covered in advertising logos. Transforming commercial culture into a year of wearable performance art, the "Suits Project" connects directly to the Pop Art sensibility. The Art Guys will attend the screening & introduce the film. • **Sat., Apr. 28, 7:30 pm & Sun., Apr. 29, 7 pm:** Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter? was recently selected for the Library of Congress's 2000 National Film Registry. Tony Randall plays Rockwell Hunter, an ad executive who hires a voluptuous movie star, played by Jayne Mansfield, to promote Stay-Put Lipstick ("For those oh-so-kissable lips!"). • Tickets \$5 (MFAH members, seniors, students \$4). Films are screened in the Brown Auditorium in the museum's Caroline Wiess Bldg., 1001 Bissonnet. For more info: 713/639-7515 or www.mfah.org. **Please note that "Reel Pop" continues into May:** Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* plays May 5 (7:30 pm) & 6 (7 pm); Kenneth Anger's & Bruce Conner's films are featured in "Shorts of the Sixties" on May 5 (9:30 pm); and Lana Jokel's *Andy Warhol* hits the screen on May 6 (6 pm).

28 (Sat.)

Liz Lerman Dance Exchange. With guest artists from our city alongside Lerman's multi-talented dancers, Society for the Performing Arts has commissioned Houston's own "In Praise of Family Legends" combining dance, music, & words to celebrate the spirit, strength, & vibrancy of our important family histories.

8 pm @ Wortham Center's Cullen Theater. Tickets (\$22-\$32) available by calling 713/227-4SPA (4772) or at Ticketmaster outlets.

28 (Sat.)

Bering Spring Festival. Activities include a pancake breakfast (\$5), a rummage sale, silent auction, children's carnival, and health fair. 7 am-2 pm @ Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold. For more info: 713/526-1017.

28 (Sat.)

Art Car Parade. Over 250 creations roll along the streets of downtown Houston celebrating the free-wheeling spirit of creativity. A fun-filled spectacle for all ages, the annual parade lifts off at 11:30 am @ Allen Parkway at Taft. For more info: 713/926-CARS.

28 (Sat.)

Galveston Gazing, International Kite Fest. View power parachutes, kite surfing, & kite demonstrations by internationally-known aerial kite performers. 10 am-6 pm @ East Beach. \$5 per car. More info: 409/766-7774 or 409/762-3930. **Galveston Artwalk,** which is held every six weeks, is an evening (6-9 pm) of the visual arts in historic downtown Galveston. It's free & open to the public, and the trolley will provide free transportation during opening. More info: 409/763-2403.

28 (Sat.)

Marilyn Horne. The mezzo-soprano is one of America's most accomplished artists and has been called "the Star Spangled Singer" and "the Heifetz of singers." She has celebrated 26 years as a leading lady of the Metropolitan Opera and was recently honored for her 39 seasons with the San Francisco Opera. This program will include works by Copland, Gershwin, & Stephen Foster, and Broadway hits. 8 pm @ Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Tickets (\$30-\$70) are available in person at Jones Hall, by phone at 713/224-7575, or online at www.houstonsymphony.org.

PLANNING AHEAD

MAY

May 2 (Wed.)

A Little Day Music. Da Camera's free lunchtime performance series features the Gotham String Quartet. Named one of the "ensembles of the future" by *Chamber Music Magazine*, the quartet is currently participating in the graduate program in ensemble music at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. Noon in the Grand Foyer of Wortham Theater Center, Texas at Smith. Info: 713/524-7601, ext. 15.

May 4-6 (Fri.-Sun.)

Village Fair/Music Festival. A League City tradition for 47 years, this three-day hometown event features a barbecue cookoff, carnival rides, live auctions, & entertainment. Walter Hall Park on Highway 3 in League City. For ticket/event schedule information, visit www.lcvillagefair.com.

May 5 (Sat.)

Lift for Life. In a united effort to raise funds for Camp Hope (a project of AIDS Foundation Houston), fitness trainers & their clients will come together in this 1st annual event. This fundraiser provides clients the opportunity to train their fitness instructors while raising funds for Camp Hope's children who are infected with HIV/AIDS. 2-5 pm @ Healthspan, 1111 West Loop South. If you would like to participate in this event, contact Ken Belveal at 713/862-6371 or e-mail at kbelveal@houston.rr.com.

May 5 (Sat.)

Houston Arts. This free outdoor event features talented visual & performing artists in a celebration of Houston's vibrant multicultural art scene. Included: origi-

nal artwork, interactive demonstrations, exhibits, and live musical & dance performances. 10 am-6 pm @ Uptown Park on Post Oak Blvd. & Loop 610. Info: 713/297-6282 or www.uptownparkhouston.com.

May 5 (Sat.)

Celebrating Patronage. Throughout history, the generosity of patrons—from Beethoven's beloved Archduke Rudolph to the legendary American patronesses Jeanette Thurber & Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge—has transformed the cultural landscape. Da Camera closes the season with Dvorak's "American" Quartet, Beethoven's "Archduke Trio," and the String Quartet in B Minor by Sergei Prokofiev—three chamber music masterpieces that would not exist without the patrons who commissioned them. 8 pm @ Wortham Center's Cullen Theater. Tickets (\$22-\$33) are available by contacting Da Camera Music Center at 713/524-5050 or online at www.ticketmaster.com.

May 18-20 (Fri.-Sun.)

The Desert Hearts Women's Festival is a gathering of women in nature celebrating who they are as women of pride. This 10th women's festival takes place on a secluded, wooded ranch in the scenic Texas Hill Country, 50 miles NW of San Antonio. Choose your sight in the woods, along the creek, or on the sunny ridge. Camping, comedy, and live music will keep you busy, plus daytime fun and games and the market place for shopping. Come alone or bring a gang. Tickets may be purchased by personal check, or MC or VISA. Early purchases really help the festival: \$55 if order is postmarked by Apr. 15; \$65 if postmarked by May 15 (credit card or money order if postmarked after May 15); \$75 cash at the gate. Tickets will be mailed to you along with camping hints & a map. *Adult women only. Sorry, no children or pets allowed.* For more info or to make special arrangements if arriving before noon or after 8 pm on Fri.: 830/796-7001 or 830/796-7446. E-mail: beaux2@indian-creek.net. Mail checks to: DHWF, 10101 Hwy 173 N, Bandera, TX 78003.

May 24-June 7

Houston's Annual Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. At press time *Hedwig & the Angry Inch*, which will not be commercially released in Houston until July, was scheduled to play at the MFAH on May 24; the festival was scheduled to coordinate this screening with their opening gala on May 25. *Paragraph 175* will be screened three times! And though we haven't seen these films, the titles appear very interesting: *Gaea Girls*, *Vampire Lovers*, *Live Nude Girls Unite!*, and *Forever Bottom*. Info: www.hglff.org, and pick up *OutSmart's* May issue.

PERFORMING ARTS

♦ **The American Plan.** In the summer of 1960, a troubled young girl's dreams of love are shattered by her mother's definition of happiness. \$20 Friday & Saturday, \$15 Sunday. Apr. 2-30 @ The Little Room Downstairs Theater, 2326 Bissonnet, 713/522-5737.

♦ **All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten** is a play with music based on the book by Robert Fulgham. Six actors play numerous young & old characters in a series of charming vignettes. It is a play about finding the extraordinary in the ordinary. Through Apr. 28 @ The Company Onstage, 536 Westbury Square. Tickets \$12. Info: 713/726-1219.

♦ **The Baltimore Waltz** centers around Anna, an unmarried schoolteacher diagnosed with ATD (Acquired Toilett Disease), a fatal malady with a high-risk factor for elementary schoolteachers. Tickets \$14 (students/seniors \$10). Through Apr. 28 @ Actors Theatre of Houston, 2506 South Boulevard, 713/529-6606. →

Calendar

The Joffrey Ballet of Chicago

"breathtakingly beautiful"
— Chicago Sun Times

Ravishing romanticism! Modern movement! The exuberant Joffrey Ballet of Chicago performs two works by company co-founder Gerald Arpino... **VIVA VIVALDI** and **SECRET PLACES**. More romance follows with Anthony Tudor's theatrical masterwork **LILAC GARDEN**, concluding with Laura Deans' **CREATIVE FORCE**.

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Theatre New West's production of *Bed, Boys and Beyond* stars (l-r) Jeff Dawson, Basil Anderson, David Barron, Ronnie Boyd, & Laurence Edwards.

◆ **Bed, Boys and Beyond** is a musical revue that explores the confusing, poignant, & often hilarious lives of five men searching for love & acceptance while facing the challenges of being gay in today's society. 8 pm, Apr. 6-May 26 @ Theatre New West, 1415 California (on ground floor of Sonoma Restaurant bldg.). Tickets \$20. Reservations: 713/394-0464. Info: 713/522-2204.

◆ **Chesapeake**. One man goes chewing after a senator's ass. Tickets \$20 & \$22. Through Apr. 22 @ Theater LaB, 1706 Alamo. More info: 713/868-7516.

◆ **The Civil War**. Grammy Award-winning country music singer Larry Gatlin stars in this sweeping musical of love & life, inspired by the passion & turmoil of the men & women who defined a nation. Tickets (\$30-\$55) are available at all Ticketmaster locations & online at www.ticketmaster.com, or at 713/629-3700. Presented by Society for the Performing Arts, Apr. 10-15 @ Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana.

◆ **Dinner with Friends**. Two 40-something couples & long-time friends who expect "to grow old & fat together, the four of us," are jolted by the news that one couple plans to divorce. Through Apr. 6-May 5 @ the Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. Tickets are \$32-\$49 (previews \$19-\$35) and can be purchased at the box office or by calling 713/228-8421.

◆ **Eating Crow** is a comedy about a young man who sets out to reverse his fortune through flattery. Tickets \$20 & \$25. Apr. 19-May 19 @ Main Street Theater in Rice Village, 2540 Times Blvd. Reservations/more info: 713/524-6706.

◆ **Home**. Samm-Art Williams, the creator of *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* and *Frank's Place*, once again masters the art of winning an audience with laughter & tears. This simple & endearing story affirms that home is both a place & a state of being. Many will identify with the central character's search for fulfillment, acceptance, & love, only to discover that and more in the South, when he returns "home." Through Apr. 24 @ The Ensemble Theatre, 3535 Main Street. Ticket prices/more info: 713/520-0055.

◆ **Houston Grand Opera** (HGO). Verdi's monumental music drama *Don Carlo*, though set in 16th-century Spain & France during the time of the Inquisition, explores a myriad of conflicts that are as relevant today as they ever were—church vs. state, parent vs. child, lover vs. rival, Catholic vs. Protestant, liberal idealism vs. established authority. Apr. 20-May 5. ◆ **Daniel Catán's Florencia en el Amazonas** details the journey of the legendary diva Florencia Grimaldi & her fellow passengers on a boat ride down the Amazon. Apr. 28-May 13. ◆ Both operas @ Wortham Center's Brown Theater, Texas at Smith. Tickets (\$22-\$200) are available by phone at 713/227-ARTS, in person at the Wortham Ticket Center (in the Wortham lobby), or online at www.houstongrandopera.org.

◆ **Lou Tells a Big One** is another original comedy featuring the "Single Fertle Family" from Dumpster, Texas. Uncle Al is opening a new Honky Tonk.

Calendar

Bridgette Fertle is about to reveal the actual father of her baby, someone in town has won \$85 million in the lottery, & Lou has lied his way into a mess that just might cost him everything. Through May 5 @ Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt. Admission is \$15, and reservations are required. 713/522-7722.

◆ **The Mauist**. Bobbinodrin Puppet Theater's new work is a full-length puppet play. The story involves a small native community on a fictional South Pacific island. The plot consists of the trickster god Maui, a volcano, a radical American splinter of the Protestant Church, and the vast confidence that is Western colonialism. Through May 6 @ DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway. 24-hour ticket line: 713/355-3445.

◆ **Picnic**. William Inge's Pulitzer Prize-winning romantic drama/comedy plays Apr. 27-May 13 @ Galveston's Strand Theatre, 2317 Ships Mechanic Row. For more info, call 409/763-4591 or 877-STRAND9 or visit www.galveston.com/strandtheatre.

◆ **Red, White & Tuna**. Superstars Joe Sears & Jaston Williams invite you to join them again for another satirical ride into the hearts & minds of the polyester-clad citizens of Tuna, Texas' third-smallest town. Tickets \$11-\$48. Apr. 10-15 @ Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice, 800/821-1894.

◆ **Steel DRAGnolias** (aka *Steel Magnolias*). Talk about a twist! Everybody's favorite six Southern belles grace Ashland St. Theatre Co.'s stage in this hysterical & famous play by Robert Harling. These "ladies" proclaim their strength through love, laughter, tears, high-heels, big hair, and testosterone! Theater like you've never seen it before! 11 pm, Fridays & Saturdays, through Apr. 14. Tickets \$12, with discounts for students/seniors. Special rates for season tickets & groups of 8 or more. Ashland St. Theatre Co., 2610 Ashland St. in the Heights. Reservations/info: 713-426-3019.

PERFORMING ARTS

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

◆ **The Clown That Ran Away**. Take a magical journey with Dodo, the runaway clown, as he searches for new experiences. He finds them at Frumpkin's Doll Shop, which has the world's finest & wackiest dolls loved by both girls & boys. Saturdays at 11 am & 1:30 pm, through April 28 @ The Company Onstage, 536 Westbury Square. Tickets \$6. Info: 713/726-1219.

◆ **Noonie's Masterpiece in Purple**. A little girl learns the value of her own creativity when the painters Picasso, van Gogh, & O'Keefe encourage her to trust her talent and participate in a school art contest. For kindergarten-6th grade. Tickets \$8. Through Apr. 21 @ Stages Repertory Theatre, Allen Parkway at Waugh Drive, 713/52-STAGE.

◆ **The Wave** is based on real-life events in a Palo Alto, California, high school in 1969 and the fascist movement that disrupted an entire community. Through Apr. 12 @ Main Street Theater's Chelsea Market location, 4617 Montrose. Recommended for 6th-12th grades & their families. Tickets are \$9.50 (adults) & \$7.50 (children, students, seniors). Reservations/info: 713/524-6706.

RADIO

◆ **After Hours** Saturdays, midnight to 3 am. Featuring the QMZ (Queer Music Zone) with Jimmy Carper. KPFT 90.1 FM.

◆ **Lesbian & Gay Voices** Mondays, 8-10 pm. Features, news, music, interviews, reviews, and commentary. KPFT 90.1 FM, 713/526-4000. →

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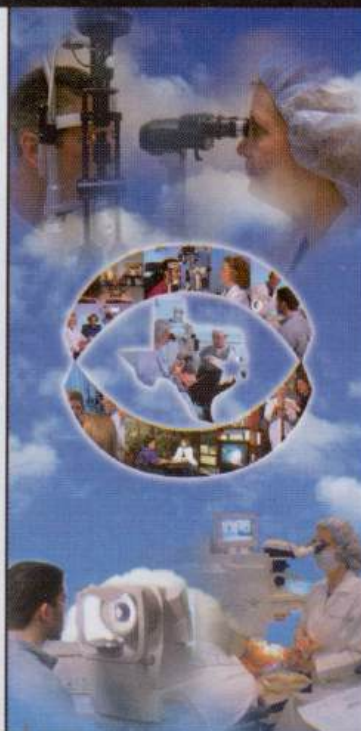
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Calendar

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

♦ **Art Classes for People With HIV: The Art League of Houston** is offering free art classes for people with HIV. The ongoing course meets every Thursday & Friday from 1-4 pm at the Art League, 1953 Montrose. Mixed media projects for the artist and non-artist. Constructive art-making in a relaxed atmosphere. Focus is on the healing power of art. More info: 713/523-9530. **The Museum of Fine Arts Houston** is offering free art classes for those with HIV/AIDS. Patrick Palmer begins his 9th year offering art instruction. Abstract painting, linoleum-cut greeting cards, & ceramics are some of the media offerings for the fall semester. Class is limited to 16. Everything is free, even lunch! The classes meet at the Glassell School of Art every Friday, 1-4 pm, 5101 Montrose Blvd., room 202. For more info: 713/639-7500 or 713/526-1118.

♦ **Art-o-mat.** DiverseWorks joins a network of sites throughout the U.S. serving as hosts for a national project known as Art-o-mat. Artists T. Clark Whittington and George Doles III, residents of the tobacco town of Winston-Salem, founded the Art-o-mat project in 1997. Their mission was to create an outlet where artists can expose their names & works to people who would otherwise not see it. They worked under the premise that art should be progressive, yet personal & approachable. What better way to do this than with a heavy cold steel machine? Whittington has refurbished an old cigarette vending machine specifically for DiverseWorks. The group Artists In Cellophane, as well as Houston-based artists, have filled the machine with original works of art that can be yours to keep for a mere \$3-\$5. The machine will be refilled with new art monthly. DiverseWorks will keep it filled to meet your demand. Through June @ DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway, 713/223-8346.

♦ **Drawings in Space.** New York-based Sharon Loudon is paired with Chicago-based Kathleen McCarthy in an exhibition sure to heighten the senses. Both artists create three-dimensional installations, doubling as spatial line drawings that shift & change in compelling ways. Loudon's concentration on gesture & form places figures within a frame or specific space. McCarthy deconstructs space in ways that are at once highly intricate & pristinely minimal. Through Apr. 21 @ DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway, 713/223-8346.

♦ **Face to Face** is the theme of the Watercolor Art Society of Houston's (WASH) membership show, which can be viewed 10 am-3 pm, Tuesdays-Fridays, Apr. 3-27. The public is invited at no charge. The gallery is located at 1601 West Alabama. For more info: 713/942-9966.

♦ **Positive Art.** The photographs in this exhibition were taken by participants in the Positive Art Workshops of the Glassell School of Art. The workshops target adults who are HIV positive. Participants were encouraged to make images and keep journal entries that revolved around issues of self or that described a sense of place. The resulting work is a fascinating insight into the lives, feelings, thoughts, & poetry of people who have been afflicted by HIV. The exhibition is scheduled to hang around till the spring at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne, 713/524-3818.

CALENDAR DEADLINE

for OutSmart's May issue:
Wednesday, April 11, 5 p.m.



Cynthia Chang
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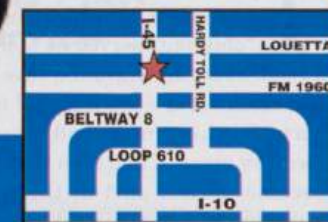


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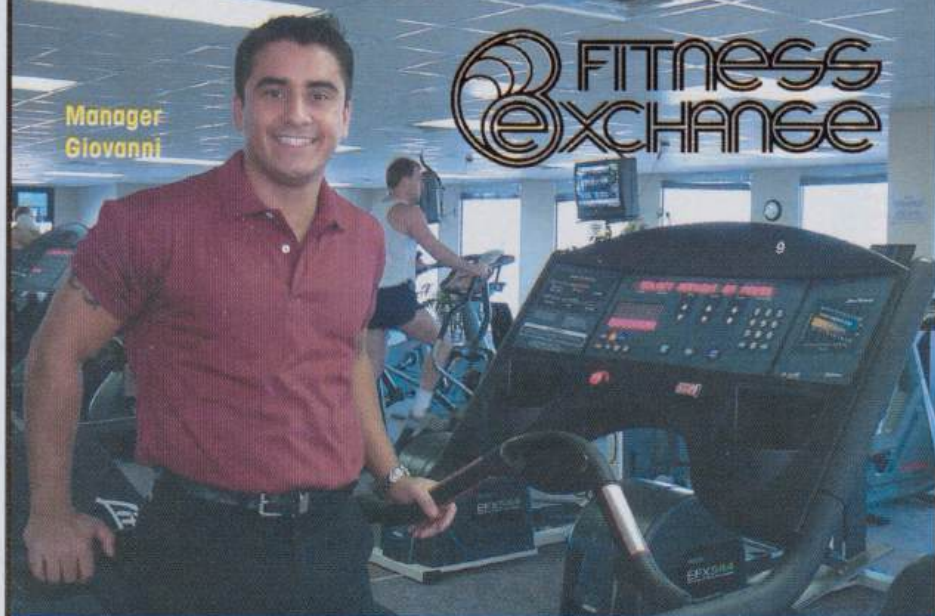
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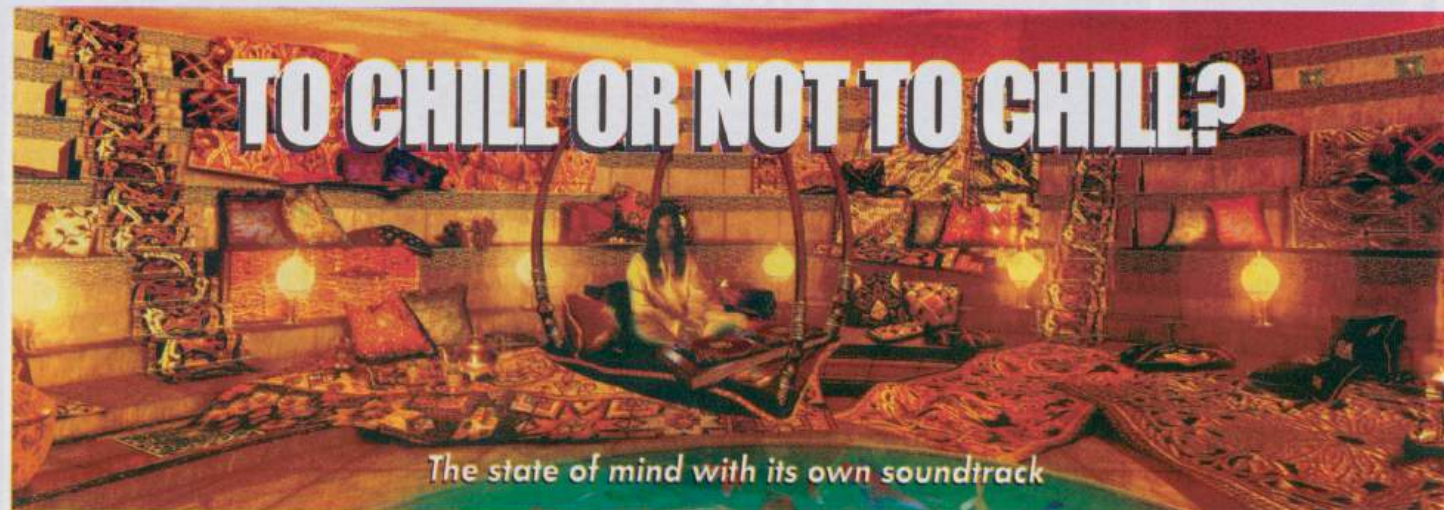
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To chill or not to chill? Once a question commonly asked by ravers, the term "chill-out" served as a description for a room at an underground rave party where one could escape the frenzied energy of the party. Soothing music and visuals aided the recovery process, and soon the chill-out room became a vital part of the party. As the phrase "chill-out" found its way into the mainstream, so did the style of music often associated with it.

But long before the chill-out sounds of raves existed, the origins of its music were being created in the early '70s by genre pioneers Brian Eno, Can, Tangerine Dream, and others. Dubbed "ambient," the music's purpose was to complement an environment, providing a background of sound that could be repeatedly listened to or completely ignored. With leaps in computer advancements in the past two decades, sounds from all genres have been fused together to create new hybrids in music. Chill-out combines elements of dance and ambient, resulting in downtempo electronic beats with often jazzy or ethnic influences.

While some chill-out is certainly danceable, the mood remains relaxed and laidback. Save the hands-in-the-air anthems and glow sticks for the clubs—chill-out takes you somewhere else.

"When you're out in a club you're usually in a hyperactive mindset," says Houston clubber Brendan Stuart. "Chill-out music is good for putting you in a different mood. It's not something that's going to make you jump off the wall."

Stuart also says he's noticed an increase in the popularity of the music among his friends. Perhaps some of the club music has become too repetitive and people are craving

something else. "With the variety of new downtempo music available, people are looking for different options for pleasure listening," he says.

Debbie Ratliff, store manager for Soundwaves on Montrose, agrees. "We play a lot of chill-out in-store, and the response from customers is very strong," she says. "Most people are not aware of this style of music, but find it's an alternative to the mainstream sound." Ratliff explains that chill-out serves as an in-between point to radio and club music. "You still get a vibe and a groove, but it's fresh." She adds that the sound has been slower to catch on in the States because so much of it is imported from overseas.

Today chill-out has risen out of the underground to find new life in a variety of places ranging from hotel lounges to restaurants. Immensely popular in Europe, chill-out provides the soundtrack to some of that continent's hippest clubs and lounges. Just west of the Place Vendôme in Paris stands Hotel Costes. Inside the restaurant and bar you'll find DJ Stephane Pompougnac adjusting the atmosphere with a sultry selection of sounds ranging from chill-out to samba. His sets have earned so much attention from the hotel's international crowd that they have been compiled on CD. *Hotel Costes*, *Costes La Suite*, and *Costes Etage 3* each capture the feeling of one of Paris's coolest spots with seamless sophistication. Also hailing from Paris is design guru Claude Challe's Buddha Bar. Once a trendy eatery set in a subterranean cavern-like space, Buddha Bar has now almost become a tourist attraction due to its popularity. Still, Challe's uncompromising musical taste endures on a collection of CDs. For an aural feast of world sounds, check out *Buddha Bar*, *Buddha Bar II*, and

the just released *Buddha Bar III*. Other titles worth investigating from Challe are *Nirvana Lounge* (pictured above) and *Flying Carpet*. Another tasty slice of Parisian chill-out can be found on the new release *Mezzanine De l'Alcazar*.

Amsterdam's answer to Costes and Buddha Bar can be found on *Supperclub Presents: Lounge* and *NL*. Both *NL* and *Supperclub* serve two main courses of delicious music: downtempo and deep house. Although slightly harder to find than their French counterparts, both are excellent choices for wining and dining friends.

Back in America, where record companies are starting to notice the renewed interest in chill-out, comes the Nettwerk Records compilation *Chillout 2001*. A healthy mix of ambient, techno, and trip-hop makes this compilation's focus more electronica in nature. Guidance Recordings out of Chicago offers *Doubts and Convictions* by Troublemakers. This full-length album of downtempo grooves adopts the more soulful elements from jazz and funk and adds a bit of French film noir for fun. In America, the prime city for chill-out is San Francisco. For chill-out from the city by the bay check out Om Recordings' *Om Lounge Series*.

Call it a trend, but chill-out is back and reaching new audiences of all ages in places other than raves. Its unobtrusive nature gives it a versatility and appeal that most other forms of electronic music lack. To chill or not to chill is no longer the question. The question is how long it will last.



Chris Sill spins tunes at Rich's and can be reached at csill@infohwy.com.



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Heath Ledger

(actor, *10 Things I Hate About You*)
(*Movieline*, 4/2001, Stephen Rebello)

Stephen Rebello: What types of films would you love to do?

Heath Ledger: Musicals, like those amazing ones with Gene Kelly and Judy Garland. They're what made me want to do movies in the first place. Musicals transport us to other places. . . . I guess in some people's eyes, guys dancing around can look queeny, but I think it's very, very cool.

Jennifer Garner

(actress, *Dude, Where's My Car?*)
(*Movieline*, 4/2001, Michael Moses)

"I think it's fair to say that Scott [Foley] gets more jealous than I do. However, on the night before our wedding, I turned on the TV and there was the *Felicity* episode in which Tyra Banks straddles Scott and thrusts her ta-tas in his face. He was like, 'Tyra Banks is hot.' I thought, 'Oh, how nice.'" Garner flashes a wicked smile. "But what can you do? She is hot—I'd kiss her."

Michael Cristofer

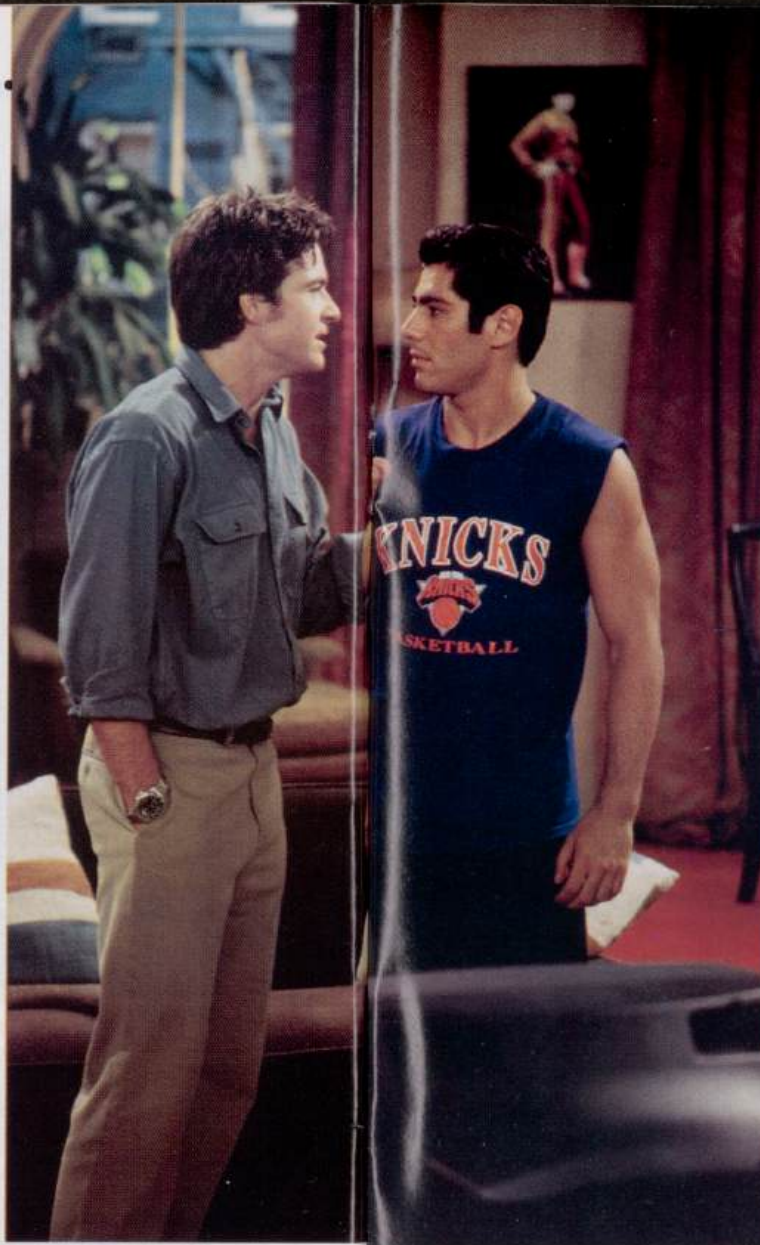
(director, *Gia*, *Original Sin*)
(*Out*, 3/2001, Eddie Shapiro)

"I'm not specifically attracted to stories that involve homosexuality, mainly because I'm a little leery of anything that's an issue story," he says. "That can be limiting. Watching *Queer as Folk*, I asked myself, 'Does my work have to be recognizably gay? Would it be better if I was waving the flag in everything I write and do?' It's politically important, but it isn't who I am. I hope people don't think, 'Oh, he's gay, but nobody knows it, so what good is he?' I'd like to think that in our writing, we aren't trapped by what we do with our dicks. You want to be out there, but you want to be out there for all of you."

Courtney Love

(actress/singer)
(*Entertainment Weekly*, 2/9/2001, Chris Nashawaty)

The professional provocateur . . . joked that the reason she signed up for *Julie Johnson* [a film recently screened at the Sundance Film Festival] was costar Lili Taylor. Said Love, "I wanted to make out with Lili."



< Jason Bateman

(actor, *The Hogan Family*, *Little House on the Prairie*)

(*Out*, 3/2001, Doug Brantley)

Re: CBS's new sitcom *Some of My Best Friends*.

. . . At press time, studio execs were considering renaming the show *Me and Frankie Z*, though Bateman admits, "It's a little sitcom-y for me," and adds that cast and crew have bandied about *Everybody Loves Rimming* as well. . . .

Certainly a far cry from *Little House on the Prairie*. "Oh," Bateman jokes, "you'd be surprised how many characters on that show were gay."

LEFT Warren (JASON BATEMAN, left), who is gay, takes in Frankie, a straight roommate (DANNY NUCCI), in the new CBS sitcom *Some of My Best Friends*.

RIGHT Cindy Mcauliff (LISA EDELSTEIN, left) was a male-to-female transsexual who became involved with Mark Albert (JAMES LEGRIS) in *Ally McBeal*.

BOTTOM KERR SMITH starred in last year's supernatural thriller *Final Destination*.

> Lisa Edelstein

(actress, *Relativity*, *Ally McBeal*)

(*Out*, 3/2001, Christine Champagne)

When the producers of *Ally McBeal* needed an actress to play attorney Mark Albert's . . . male-to-female transsexual love interest, . . . they actually sought out Lisa Edelstein for the role. "I wasn't quite sure how to take it, but I decided 'flattering' was the best way to go." . . .

Edelstein . . . first lit up the small screen in 1996 as *Relativity*'s resident lesbian. . . .

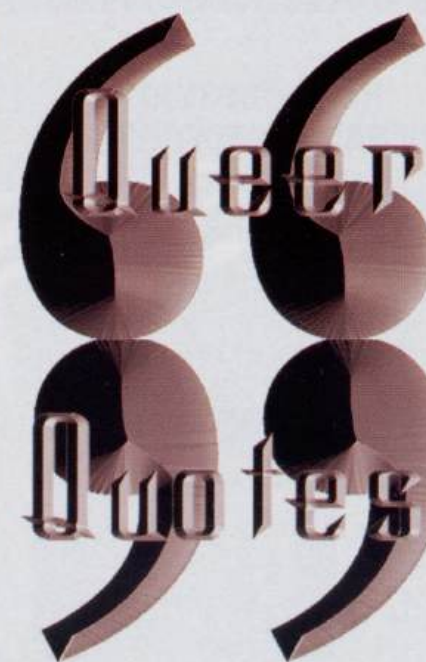
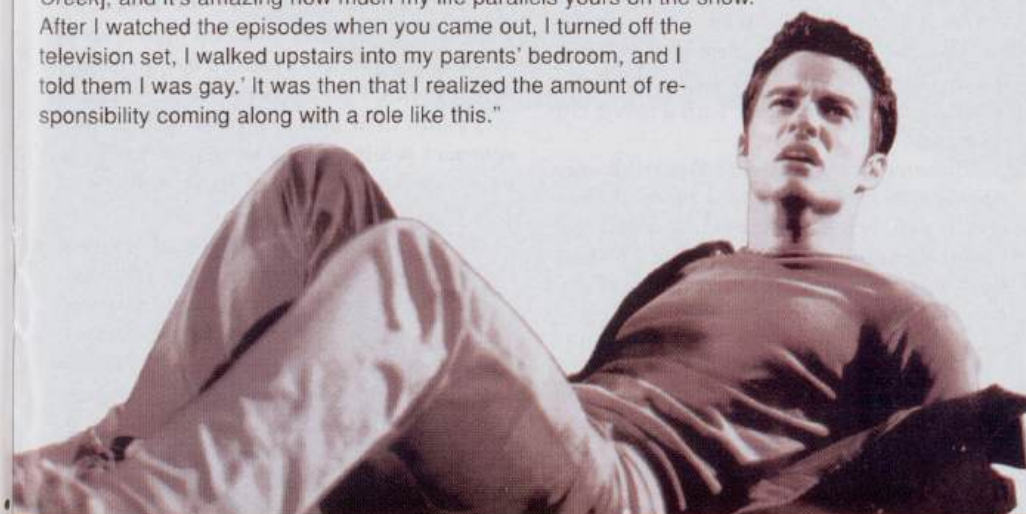
"At first, I was wondering if I would upset anybody because I don't actually have a penis," she says. "But then I decided if they were going to hire any woman, it should be me, because I know so many trannies that I felt like I could do the role with a certain amount of dignity."

▼ Kerr Smith

(actor, *Dawson's Creek*)

(*Out*, 3/2001, Jeffrey Epstein)

"There was one letter I got from a kid who said, 'I was watching [*Dawson's Creek*], and it's amazing how much my life parallels yours on the show. After I watched the episodes when you came out, I turned off the television set, I walked upstairs into my parents' bedroom, and I told them I was gay.' It was then that I realized the amount of responsibility coming along with a role like this."



Compiled by Blase DiStefano



Briefs *continued from page 28*

REMEMBERING RICHARD WIEDERHOLT

We at Riva's Italian Restaurant wish to honor the memory of Richard S. Wiederholt and to help carry out his wishes as far as we can.

"I call it my tragic gift," he said of his HIV. "It's tragic because of all the devastation it has caused. But it's a gift because I've really grown to know who I am and have been allowed to

meet so many wonderful people. What I'm doing now is probably one of the most productive times in my life. I have an excellent grasp of people. I'm working on a lot of boards. I'm working to eliminate

homophobia. We are normal people."

On Monday, April 30, 6-9 p.m., a free buffet with soft drinks will be held in Richard's memory at Riva's Italian Restaurant, 1117 Missouri Street. For those desiring, please bring a check (no credit cards or cash, please) payable to the Montrose Wellness Clinic. One hundred percent of your check will go to the clinic to help people with HIV. —*Michael Siboyeh*, owner Riva's

JUNGLE LUST

The Bayou City Boys Club announced that Jungle Lust IX dance party and fundraiser will be Saturday, April 14. Music will be provided by recording artist and circuit DJ Warren Gluck, who they claim "will bring to Houston the unique high-energy style that keeps the boys in New York City and Fire Island dancing past dawn." Gluck most recently spun at the White Party 2000, Hotlanta 2000, Black Party NYC, Winter Party 2001, and Cherry 5.0.

The BCBC pays for all the costs of the party, so the entire ticket price goes to the beneficiaries, which this year will be: The Arrow Project, the WAM Foundation, the Kolbe Foundation, the Assistance Fund, the Houston Buyers Club, and the Center for

AIDS. Jungle Lust moves into a new, larger venue this year, the Space City Entertainment Center in the warehouse district.

Jungle Lust IX is Sunday, April 14, 10 p.m.—the wee hours of Easter morning, 3301 Polk (at Roberts). Tickets are \$40 in advance, \$50 at the door, and \$25 for students over 21 with a valid student ID. Advance tickets are available at Basic Brothers, and may be purchased the day of the event at Lobo Bookstore; or order tickets online at www.bayoucityboysclub.org.

BUNNIES ON THE BAYOU— THE BUNNIES STORY

Easter Sunday, 1979. A few friends are sitting around their apartments, bored. They decide to call a few friends, and have a little party. The party was a success.

Easter Sunday 1980: The same group of people decide to have another Easter party at their apartment complex. They call a few friends, who call a few more of their friends—another great party!

1981: Planning starts earlier. The hosts call on Bill Bridges to wire for sound. Invitations go out. Larger crowd this time, and more fun.

Mid-1980s: HIV has become a social buzz word. There are many friends sick and in need. Idea: An Easter party where the guests bring food for those who are sick and cannot afford it. One new problem: Too many guests, not enough room. Thinking caps go on, and "Bunnies on the Bayou" is born. The hosts find a new location—the brand-new Wortham Plaza, downtown.

Now, after two decades: Easter Sunday is a day that means party, fun, and great music. In the past three years alone, Bunnies has raised over \$100,000 for local charities, and is one of Houston's largest gay events, with attendance approaching (and sometimes exceeding) 2,000 guests per year. A great way to be with friends and meet new ones on Easter Sunday. (From the Bunnies on the Bayou website, www.bunnies.org, which is worth looking at, with a movie clip from 2001, and more.)

Bunnies on the Bayou is Easter Sunday, April 15, 2-7 p.m., Wortham Plaza. Admission is \$25; bring your photo ID if you look young. Contact John Catalani at 713-630-0536 or e-mail info@bunnies.org for information about volunteering or VIP admissions.

S.O.S.'S "TASTE OF THE NATION"

Share Our Strength is throwing its annual "Taste of the Nation" food and wine tast-

ing on Sunday, April 22, with a feast thrown by 40 of the city's more sumptuous restaurants—occurring in more than 80 cities, it is the nation's largest culinary benefit to fight hunger. One hundred percent of the funds raised will go to hunger relief agencies, with the majority going to Houston agencies like the End Hunger Network and the Houston Food Bank.

For your good deed, you can feast on food from such places as Café Annie, Mark's, Tasca, Tony Ruppe's, benjy's, Prego, the Redwood Grill, the Rainbow Lodge, the Daily



At last year's S.O.S.

Review, Brennan's, and many more. Even our friends from Dacapo's Pastry Deli will have their goodies available.

Share Our Strength is a national nonprofit founded in 1984 that is working to distribute money to anti-hunger and anti-poverty organizations. The S.O.S. Taste of the Nation will be Sunday, April 22, 4-7 p.m., on the meadow at the Houstonian Hotel Club & Spa, 111 N. Post Oak Lane. Call 713/547-8624 for more information. Tickets are \$65.

H.A.T.C.H. PROM

The Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (H.A.T.C.H.) will hold its annual prom on Friday, May 4, at the Magnolia Ballroom. Since most Houston high schools still think of proms as being a boy-girl affair only, the H.A.T.C.H. prom gives our community youth their own prom night. Youth and sponsors receive free entry, while a \$25 donation is requested from other adults who care to attend.

H.A.T.C.H. provides safe social environments for homosexual youth, offers role models and peer support, and sponsors educational and community outreach opportunities to empower homosexual youth to become positive contributors to society. For information about the prom, being a sponsor, or about H.A.T.C.H. in general, call 713/942-7002 or e-mail info@hatchyouth.org. ■



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Taking certain drugs with KALETRA could create the potential for life-threatening side effects. Always talk to your doctor or pharmacist before starting new medications.

KALETRA should not be taken if you have had an allergic reaction to KALETRA (lopinavir/ritonavir) or any of its ingredients.

Pancreatitis and liver problems have been reported in patients receiving KALETRA. In some patients taking protease inhibitors, increased bleeding (in patients with hemophilia) and diabetes/high blood sugar have occurred. Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients receiving ARV therapy. Some patients receiving KALETRA have had large increases in triglycerides and cholesterol, which should be monitored before and during therapy.

The most commonly reported KALETRA-related side effects of moderate severity are: abnormal stools, diarrhea, feeling weak/tired, headache, and nausea.

For more information about KALETRA: Call 1-800-441-4987 toll free.

Ask your doctor or other healthcare professional.

Please see adjacent page for Patient Information.

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 Abbott Laboratories Inc.
North Chicago, IL 60064

KRAZY KATZ'S

Finally filling the crumbling space on lower Westheimer,
Katz's Deli satisfies midnight cravings (and any other time) with greasy gusto



"Here's a rule I recommend," said actress Tallulah Bankhead. "Never practice two vices at once." (Why you might not want to eat Katz's Reuben and Katz's Cobb Salad at one sitting.)

are grilled and filled with a half-pound burger, melted American cheese, sautéed onions, and mushrooms. It comes with a cheese-stuffed potato or French fries. The buttery toasty bread goes wonderfully with the cheesy beef and flavorful vegetables. You crunch through the strong rye and hit warm gooey protein.

The nine-page menu is stocked with every imaginable deli item and many Jewish favorites. The greatest thing is that "Katz's Never Kloses," so you can have a big-eat fix—including breakfast—any time of day. They serve appetizers, soups, salads, sandwiches, burgers,

steaks, grilled fish, open-faced sandwiches, large choices of sides, and a variety of egg dishes. If you have room, there's a full page devoted to desserts.

As this is a Kosher-style deli, you'll have the opportunity to try some Jewish food. For instance, their award-winning matzo ball, chicken, and noodle soup is a hearty beginning. Yet, stay away from the *kasha varniska*—sounds exotic, but it's really just drab bowtie buckwheat pasta served with gravy. The potato knish is a winner, with its light and flaky pastry, as is the homemade chopped chicken liver with horseradish, served as an appetizer with rye toast and deep-fried caramelized onions.

For breakfast, the Kosher-style tacos are good. Scrambled egg, chopped salami, spicy "fire dog," and potato pancake are rolled up in three flour tortillas with salsa on the side. The crunchiness of the potato with the chewy meat and soft egg makes for an interesting combination of textures in this tasty breakfast dish. The pecan pancakes come highly recommended by manager Barry Ruth. The cheese blintzes with blueberry sauce are good, but a little too sweet for morning. As a dessert, they'd be great. →

the restaurant is for sale—by the slice or by the pound—from the deli.

The bar area on the main floor wraps around Westheimer, with dark-green-painted French doors looking out onto the street. One downside: For nonsmoking diners at non-peak times, you must share the downstairs eating area with the smokers, which can get uncomfortably smoky. Overall, Katz's has a fun-filled atmosphere in a bright and comfortable décor, ideal for fulfilling any greasy craving.

This is not a health-conscious restaurant and it does not pretend to be. If you phone in and get put on hold, you'll hear the energetic recorded message from Marc Katz in which he brags that his favorite, the cheesecake shake, is "a heart attack in a glass." This is the kind of place where you go to stuff your face with food that you know is bad for you but tastes yummy. The portions are outrageous! It's impossible to leave feeling hungry and even more difficult to walk out without a drag in your step.

One of the tastiest items on the menu is the Brooklyn deli patty melt made from U.S. prime Angus beef. At \$7.95, it's a bargain meal. Two pieces of Jewish rye bread

Katz's Deli is like a Disney reincarnation of a real New York-style neighborhood deli. The attempt at authenticity comes from a multitude of easily recognizable Big Apple paraphernalia, which are plastered over everything in this two-story eatery on Westheimer. The visual stimuli keep you well entertained until your food arrives; after that, it's hard to notice anything else.

Some of you may have fond memories of Tila's Cantina & Taqueria, the Mexican restaurant that once occupied this space. With its authentic food and funky late-night atmosphere, Tila's became a Houston landmark to such an extent that when owner Clive Duval left Houston, the closing of the restaurant was covered by all the local TV stations. (Tila Hidalgo Leach and her recipes were the inspiration behind Clive and you can take a walk down memory lane at her restaurant, the Original Tila's, on Shepherd Drive in River Oaks.) After this icon closed, the beautiful big white building that had towered over the heyday of '80s Montrose went into a decade-long collapse.

The neighborhood welcomed the good-looking brown brick building that replaced the wreckage. Father and son team Marc and Barry Katz decided to branch out from their popular Austin location and continue the family tradition in Houston. Barry is the fifth generation of restaurateurs. Check out the endearing family photos on the inside cover of Katz's menu. Why Texas? Why not? Marc Katz closed a restaurant in Queens to open Katz's deli in Austin in 1979 and has never looked back.

Walking into Katz's, you are immediately met with visual temptations from the long glass display case showing off desserts and sandwich meats. Anything that is served in

St. John's wort. Taking St. John's wort may decrease KALETRA levels and lead to increased viral load and possible resistance to KALETRA or cross-resistance to other anti-HIV medicines.

- Do not take KALETRA with the cholesterol-lowering medicines Mevacor® (lovastatin) or Zocor® (simvastatin) because of possible serious reactions. There is also an increased risk of drug interactions between KALETRA and Lipitor® (atorvastatin) and Baycol® (cerivastatin); talk to your doctor before you take any of these cholesterol-reducing medicines with KALETRA.

Medicines that require dosage adjustments:

It is possible that your doctor may need to increase or decrease the dose of other medicines when you are also taking KALETRA. Remember to tell your doctor all medicines you are taking or plan to take.

Before you take Viagra® (sildenafil) with KALETRA, talk to your doctor about problems these two medicines can cause when taken together. You may get increased side effects of VIAGRA, such as low blood pressure, vision changes, and penis erection lasting more than 4 hours. If an erection lasts longer than 4 hours, get medical help right away to avoid permanent damage to your penis. Your doctor can explain these symptoms to you.

- If you are taking oral contraceptives ("the pill") to prevent pregnancy, you should use an additional or different type of contraception since KALETRA may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.
- Efavirenz (Sustiva™) or nevirapine (Viramune®) may lower the amount of KALETRA in your blood. Your doctor may increase your dose of KALETRA if you are also taking efavirenz or nevirapine.
- If you are taking Mycobutin® (rifabutin), your doctor will lower the dose of Mycobutin.
- A change in therapy should be considered if you are taking KALETRA with:

- Phenobarbital
- Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
- Carbamazepine (Tegreto® and others)

These medicines may lower the amount of KALETRA in your blood and make it less effective.

Other Special Considerations:

KALETRA oral solution contains alcohol. Talk with your doctor if you are taking or planning to take metronidazole or disulfiram. Severe nausea and vomiting can occur.

If you are taking both didanosine (Videx®) and KALETRA:

Didanosine (Videx®) should be taken one hour before or two hours after KALETRA.

What are the possible side effects of KALETRA?

- This list of side effects is **not** complete. If you have questions about side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. You should report any new or continuing symptoms to your doctor right away. Your doctor may be able to help you manage these side effects.
- The most commonly reported side effects of moderate severity that are thought to be drug related are: abnormal stools (bowel movements), diarrhea, feeling weak/tired, headache, and nausea. Children taking KALETRA may sometimes get a skin rash.
- Blood tests in patients taking KALETRA may show possible liver problems. People with liver disease such as Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C who take KALETRA may have worsening liver disease. Liver problems including death have occurred in patients taking KALETRA. In studies, it is unclear if KALETRA caused these liver problems because some patients had other illnesses or were taking other medicines.
- Some patients taking KALETRA can develop serious problems with their pancreas (pancreatitis), which may cause death. You have a higher chance of having pancreatitis if you have had it before. Tell your doctor if you have nausea, vomiting, or abdominal pain. These may be signs of pancreatitis.
- Some patients have large increases in triglycerides and cholesterol. The long-term chance of getting complications such as heart attacks or stroke due to increases in triglycerides and cholesterol caused by protease inhibitors is not known at this time.
- Diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) occur in patients taking protease inhibitors such as KALETRA. Some patients had diabetes before starting protease inhibitors, others did not. Some patients need changes in their diabetes medicine. Others needed new diabetes medicine.
- Changes in body fat happen in some patients getting anti-HIV medicines. These changes may include increased fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast and abdomen (stomach area). Loss of fat from the face, legs, and arms may also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.
- Some patients with hemophilia have increased bleeding with protease inhibitors.
- There have been other side effects in patients taking KALETRA. However, these side effects may have been due to other medicines that patients were taking or to the illness itself. Some of these side effects can be serious.

What should I tell my doctor before taking KALETRA?

- If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant: The effects of KALETRA on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known.
- If you are breast-feeding: Do not breast-feed if you are taking KALETRA. You should not breast-feed if you have HIV. If you are a woman who has or will have a baby, talk with your doctor about the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that HIV can be transmitted through breast-feeding.
- If you have liver problems: If you have liver problems or are infected with Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C, you should tell your doctor before taking KALETRA.
- If you have diabetes: Some people taking protease inhibitors develop new or more serious diabetes or high blood sugar. Tell your doctor if you have diabetes or an increase in thirst or frequent urination.
- If you have hemophilia: Patients taking KALETRA may have increased bleeding.

How do I store KALETRA?

- Keep KALETRA and all other medicines out of the reach of children.
- Refrigerated KALETRA capsules and oral solution remain stable until the expiration date printed on the label. If stored at room temperature up to 77°F (25°C), KALETRA capsules and oral solution should be used within 2 months.
- Avoid exposure to excessive heat.
- Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Be sure that if you throw any medicine away, it is out of the reach of children.

General advice about prescription medicines:

Talk to your doctor or other health care provider if you have any questions about this medicine or your condition. Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Patient Information Leaflet. If you have any concerns about this medicine, ask your doctor. Your doctor or pharmacist can give you information about this medicine that was written for health care professionals. Do not use this medicine for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not share this medicine with other people.

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KALETRA™ (lopinavir/ritonavir) capsules (lopinavir/ritonavir) oral solution

ALERT: Find out about drugs that should NOT be taken with KALETRA. Please also read the section "MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH KALETRA."

Patient Information KALETRA™ (kuh-LEE-tra)

Generic Name: lopinavir/ritonavir
(lop-IN-uh-veer/rit-ON-uh-veer)

Read this leaflet carefully before you start taking KALETRA. Also, read it each time you get your KALETRA prescription refilled, in case something has changed. This information does not take the place of talking with your doctor when you start this medicine and at check ups. Ask your doctor if you have any questions about KALETRA.

What is KALETRA and how does it work?

KALETRA is a combination of two medicines. They are lopinavir and ritonavir. KALETRA is a type of medicine called an HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) protease (PRO-tee-ase) inhibitor. KALETRA is always used in combination with other anti-HIV medicines to treat people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. KALETRA is for adults and for children age 6 months and older.

HIV infection destroys CD4 (T) cells, which are important to the immune system. After a large number of T cells are destroyed, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) develops.

KALETRA blocks HIV protease, a chemical which is needed for HIV to multiply. KALETRA reduces the amount of HIV in your blood and increases the number of T cells. Reducing the amount of HIV in the blood reduces the chance of death or infections that happen when your immune system is weak (opportunistic infections).

Does KALETRA cure HIV or AIDS?

KALETRA does not cure HIV infection or AIDS. The long-term effects of KALETRA are not known at this time. People taking KALETRA may still get opportunistic infections or other conditions that happen with HIV infection. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, and *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections.

Does KALETRA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

KALETRA does not reduce the risk of passing HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination. Continue to practice safe sex and do not use or share dirty needles.

How should I take KALETRA?

- You should stay under a doctor's care when taking KALETRA. Do not change your treatment or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.
- You must take KALETRA every day exactly as your doctor prescribed it. The dose of KALETRA may be different for you than for other patients. Follow the directions from your doctor, exactly as written on the label.
- Dosing in adults (including children 12 years of age and older): The usual dose for adults is 3 capsules (400/100 mg) or 5.0 mL of the oral solution twice a day (morning and night), in combination with other anti-HIV medicines.
- Dosing in children from 6 months to 12 years of age: Children from 6 months to 12 years of age can also take KALETRA. The child's doctor will decide the right dose based on the child's weight.
- Take KALETRA with food to help it work better.
- Do not change your dose or stop taking KALETRA without first talking with your doctor.
- When your KALETRA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to KALETRA and become harder to treat.
- Be sure to set up a schedule and follow it carefully.
- Only take medicine that has been prescribed specifically for you. Do not give KALETRA to others or take medicine prescribed for someone else.

What should I do if I miss a dose of KALETRA?

It is important that you do not miss any doses. If you miss a dose of KALETRA, take it as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose at its regular time. If it is almost time for your next dose, do not take the missed dose. Wait and take the next dose at the regular time. Do not double the next dose.

What happens if I take too much KALETRA?

If you suspect that you took more than the prescribed dose of this medicine, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

As with all prescription medicines, KALETRA should be kept out of the reach of young children. KALETRA liquid contains a large amount of alcohol. If a toddler or young child accidentally drinks more than the recommended dose of KALETRA, it could make him/her sick from too much alcohol. Contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately if this happens.

Who should not take KALETRA?

Together with your doctor, you need to decide whether KALETRA is right for you.

- Do not take KALETRA if you are taking certain medicines. These could cause serious side effects that could cause death. Before you take KALETRA, you must tell your doctor about all the medicines you are taking or are planning to take. These include other prescription and non-prescription medicines and herbal supplements.

For more information about medicines you should not take with KALETRA, please read the section titled "MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH KALETRA."

- Do not take KALETRA if you have an allergy to KALETRA or any of its ingredients, including ritonavir or lopinavir.

Can I take KALETRA with other medications?*

KALETRA may interact with other medicines, including those you take without a prescription. You must tell your doctor about all the medicines you are taking or planning to take before you take KALETRA.

MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH KALETRA.

- Do not take the following medicines with KALETRA because they can cause serious problems or death if taken with KALETRA:
 - Dihydroergotamine, ergonovine, ergotamine and methylergonovine such as Cafegot®, Migranal®, D.H.E. 45®, Ergotrate Maleate, Methergine, and others
 - Halcion® (triazolam)
 - Hismanal® (astemizole)
 - Orap® (pimozide)
 - Propulsid® (cisapride)
 - Rhythmol® (propafenone)
 - Seldane® (terfenadine)
 - Tambocor® (flecainide)
 - Versed® (midazolam)
- Do not take KALETRA with rifampin, also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®. Rifampin may lower the amount of KALETRA in your blood and make it less effective.
- Do not take KALETRA with St. John's wort (hypericum perforatum), an herbal product sold as a dietary supplement, or products containing St. John's wort. Talk with your doctor if you are taking or planning to take

In the mood for a huge sandwich? Be prepared to make decisions with over 30 to choose from. You must try the Reuben if you're a sauerkraut fan. It's their signature dish and would hold its own against any Brooklyn competitor. The Reuben is Friday's daily special and comes with fries for \$8.75.

If you want to challenge the flexibility of your jaw, then order the Kosher-style kountry klub. I had to remove quite a few of the slices of turkey before I could get my mouth around the sandwich. They replace the more traditional pork bacon with beef bacon, making for a flavorful change. According to the menu, you can get a free bucket of pickles on request. The pickles are a good way to break up the bites of sandwich. They have a great snap to them and their strength tickles your nose. I can't imagine eating a bucket, however.

The sandwiches and burgers are the best offerings on the menu, but there are also "Chef



Q: How do you get to Carnegie Hall? A: Practice, practice, practice. Katz's may not be the Carnegie Deli, but their splashy foyer is rehearsing New York New York! 24 hours a day.

Barry's dinner suggestions," a variety of dishes including open-faced turkey and beef sandwiches, pot roast, corned beef and cabbage, roast chicken or turkey, with choice of sides. One way to sample the sides is to order Katz's pick 3, which gives you the choice of three of the 19 sides.

The dessert page offers standard classics, such as carrot cake, apple pie, caramel fudge cheesecake, and jumbo hot fudge sundaes. With prices ranging \$3.95 to \$6.95, they may be steep and sweet, but they will fill you from head to feet. There is a fair collection of beer and wine, and an exceptional array of nonalcoholic drinks, including freshly squeezed orange and grapefruit juice, lemonade, handmade milk shakes, and floats. If you're going to go for an indulgent meal, you might as well go all the way.

However, as fun as the food is—it doesn't improve the service, which, on occasion, is as sloppy as a Kosher-style foot-long hot dog with sauerkraut and onions. With lots of free parking behind the building and across the street, it's easy to drop in to pick up an order to go, or to settle in for a meal. Be prepared to wait on the weekends as Houston's curious deli diners flock to Katz's for a fix. Cozy up to the bar and be patient, just like any real New Yorker would. ■

Katz's Bar and Deli
616 Westheimer @ Crocker St. • 713/521-3838
Open 24 hours, 7 days a week



A Taste of Houston

Tapas-style reviews
OutSmart Restaurant Guide

A note about our "tapas" dining reviews: You may have noticed that our advertisers are listed in our tapas section. Biased? You bet! By advertising in *OutSmart*, our advertisers are indicating that the business of the gay & lesbian community is important to them—and that's important to us at *OutSmart*. Of course, there are many other excellent and supportive restaurants out there, and we rotate mention of them into our tapas section.

Baba Yega

2607 Grant St. (Missouri St.)
713/522-0042

A Montrose institution. Sometimes we're tempted to eat here every day, it's so homey and healthy. We especially love Tuesday pasta night (\$9.95 for the pasta du jour and a glass of wine), their "Old Smokey" nosing platter of salmon with accompaniments, their in-house sesame dressing, Sunday brunch, and almost any of their specials. If you're feeling outdoorsy, you have the choice of their open patio under the trees, the covered patio, or the porch facing their secret garden. \$

Café Chino

6140 Village Pkwy (b/w Amherst & Times)
713/524-4433
600 Travis (tunnel level @ Texas)
713/223-1011

Houston Chronicle food editor Ann Criswell was dead on when she referred to Café Chino's ethereal seared green beans as "a little slice of heaven." Owner Eddie Chen prides himself on his glass-enclosed kitchen and piping hot wok, and he should: each dish is meticulously prepared, and-try as they might—no other restaurant can duplicate those famous green beans, or that wonderfully textured cashew shrimp and chicken. And, contrary to its Hunan label, Chen added sushi to his already winning menu early last year. \$\$

Chapultepec

813 Richmond Ave. (@ Montrose)
713/522-2365

A sentimental favorite, and the place where the bold and beautiful can nurse their hangovers 24 hours a day. Get a bite of Tex-Mex at its best—no lard, only the freshest meats and vegetables, and the nicest owners you'll ever meet. Francisco Valle and wife Thelma came across the Mexican border with four quarters and created a Richmond haven that's stood in its original spot for over 25 years. Olé. \$

Chianti

1515 South Post Oak Lane
713/840-0303

Sequestered in a little pocket of Tanglewood, this Italian sleeper exudes quaint—from the streamlined rustic Italian food to its sunken greenhouse of a dining room. Befitting its setting, the menu offers classic garden-variety Italian, except for the extraordinary stuffed artichoke, Insalata Caprese, and a spinach- and ricotta-stuffed ravioli lounging in a butter-sage pool with a simplicity that's almost startling. It's available for private parties in arguably the most picturesque setting in Houston (picturesque save for the ultra-hip martini bar tacked on to its western hip). \$\$

Churrascos

2055 Westheimer (@ S. Shepherd), 713/527-8300; 9705 Westheimer (@ Gessner), 713/952-1988; 1320 W. Bay Area Blvd. (Friendswood), 281/461-4100

The best thing that's happened to carnivorous Dixie since barbecue. The operative word here is beef—mouth-watering, succulent prime beef tenderloin basted with their signature chimichurri sauce (made from olive oil, fresh garlic, parsley, and spices) and char-grilled to order. Great grilled vegetables, empanadas, and seafood, too, but the pièce de résistance is the creamy tres leches dessert, which other restaurants have failed to imitate successfully. \$\$\$

Crostini

2411 S. Shepherd
713/524-8558

Although Chef Chai Rapesak is Thai, he opened Crostini five years ago because he loved pasta, and his inventive "contemporary Italian" dishes are most delicately intriguing. Taking fresh Thai herbs he creates such dishes as lemongrass pasta,

säkeē mondays

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A Taste of Houston
Tapas-style reviews

salmon griglia brushed with ginger balsamic vinegar, and papaya salad in a spicy lime vinaigrette with feta cheese. Or try the popular appetizer Shrimp Crostini, stuffed with crabmeat and topped with sliced portobello mushroom, mozzarella and sweet jalapeno sauce. All served in the sedate open room with its facade of French doors curving along Shepherd, brick-colored walls, reddish wood chairs and jazz in the background. \$\$

Dish
2300 Westheimer
713/528-2050
Sleek and stylish, Dish offers a refined American menu at fabulous prices. Sister restaurant of Benji's in the Village, Dish continues in chef/owner Aaron Guest's commitment to a singular dining experience at affordable prices. For starters, try the arugula salad, or the fried goat cheese and wild mushrooms turnovers. Our pork chop and salmon entrees had the entire table vying for first dibs on our plate. More than just the flavor of the month, this is the place to see and be seen. \$\$

Droubi Brothers Mediterranean
648 Polk Street
713/651-9377
You won't get excited over the cafeteria-like surroundings—it's the very authentic Eastern-Mediterranean food that wins one over. If you work downtown, want a quick and satisfying spot for lunch, and your co-workers don't mind you having garlic breath, then you must try this place. Pita sandwiches are fast, cheap, and good. For vegetarians, try the one filled with falafel, tomatoes, onions, pickles and tahini, with a small house salad at \$3.95. Can't decide, try the sampler platter, with two dolmas (grape leaves stuffed with ground beef and rice), tabouli salad, a kibby (it's like a very flavorful deep fried meat ball), hummus, and baba ghanouj with warm pita bread for dipping. \$

Estancia Grill
414 West Gray
713/807-1111
An open grill is the focal point of the kitchen at this casual upscale eatery. Already known for its Argentinian dishes, the new menu features cuisine from all of the Americas including Mexico and other Latin American countries. The bar menu serves up mouth-watering tapas. Also served are pastas, steaks and seafood entrees along with a variety of soups, salads and sandwiches all of which reflect the bold flavors of South America. Best of all, chef Greg Webb promises to dish up some of his favorite items, most notably the Opal Duckling. The atmosphere sparkles with simple elegance and the service is attentive. \$\$

Gugenheim's Delicatessen
1708 Post Oak Blvd. (@ San Felipe)
713/622-2773
Open wide and you still won't be able to close your mouth around one of these famous triple stackers. Where else but this New York clone can you order a beef brisket "jawbreaker" and have enough left over for the next two nights? Giant matzo balls, crispy potato pancakes served with dollops of sour cream and apple sauce, cheese-filled blintzes, and the flakiest knishes to rival either of those other coasts. Knishes, blintzes, you ask? Don't ask. Just eat! \$

Java Java
911 11th Street
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continued on page 59

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A Taste of Houston

Tapas-style reviews
(continued from page 56)

Kam's

4500 Montrose Blvd.
713/529-5057

Located right at the juncture of where Montrose turns into the museum district, we like to go to Kam's when we're in the mood for upscale Chinese food in an elegant, quiet, yet unpretentious atmosphere. The white tablecloths, genial waiters, and view of Montrose out of Kam's storefront windows are all oddly soothing. Although some complain that Kam's cuisine is rather Americanized, we are longtime fans of their sesame chicken, Singapore vermicelli, wrinkly sautéed green beans, and crispy hot and sour whole fish (although it's been known to seem slightly less than fresh). \$\$

Lai Lai Dumpling House

9262 Bellaire Blvd.
713/271-0080

The best dive on Bellaire, not to mention the best Chinese for the least bucks. No kidding—how about feeding a group of 12 for under \$50? Soothe your soul with the Tofu Hot Pot, chock full o' steaming fresh vegetables and firm chunks of tofu. Or the pork- and veggie-filled dumplings, or the green onion pancakes, or just about anything on their menu. Top off with a fortune cookie and you're set till your next craving. \$

Marks

1658 Westheimer
713/523-3800

Walk into this renovated church and turn your eyes upward to the heavenly painted ceiling. The interior is gorgeous, warm and elegant, which is probably why it attracts such a snobby crowd. No matter—ignore them and enjoy the sumptuous surroundings and exquisitely prepared meals by owner/chef Mark Cox (formerly executive chef at Tony's). The style is gourmet American with strong international influences on a rotating menu including fresh fish, veal, lamb and outrageous desserts. \$\$\$

Miss Saigon Café

5503 Kelvin (in the Rice Village)
713/942-0108

Walking into the Miss Saigon Café out of the bustling Village is like finding a restful glade in a busy public park. Many of the dishes interestingly combine cold with hot, with raw items providing an extra intensity of flavor. The summer rolls, Vietnamese egg rolls, or spring rolls are all excellent appetizers. For lunch try a bowl of vermicelli: precooked, cold rice noodles, fresh bean sprouts, shredded lettuce, cucumbers, and carrots are the base ingredients, then you choose a grilled item (pork, beef, chicken, egg roll, tofu, or shrimp) to top the chilliness. The caramel salmon hot pot makes for a most satisfying dinner. \$\$

Mosquito Café

628 Fourteenth Street, Galveston
409/763-1010

This trendy, sleek little cafe offers a welcome break from the typical Galveston fried seafood scene. Gay owned and operated, the Mosquito offers fresh gourmet salads, sandwiches, and pasta, and has a beautiful patio dining area with oh-so-Southern iron furniture

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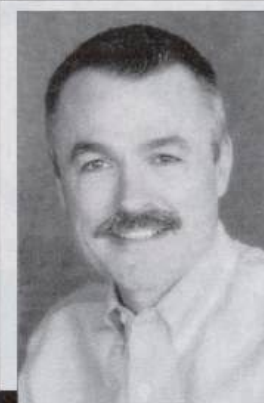
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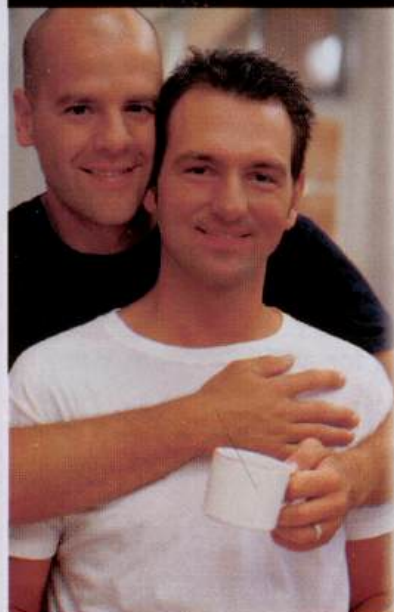
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A Taste of Houston

Tapas-style reviews

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Pot Pie Pizzeria

2207 Richmond, 713/526-1702

Who needs eggs when you can eat their baked potato pizza for breakfast, lunch and dinner? This gay-owned and operated neighborhood joint will feed you till you bust. Even better, the nightly all-you-can-eat spaghetti and outdoor patio makes your gorge-fest cheap and picturesque. Perfectly boring normal folks are welcomed with open arms despite its student and bohemian clientele. \$

Prego

2520 Amherst (in the Rice Village)
713/529-2420

Enjoy the intimate surroundings either at the bar sipping on a glass of Chardonnay from their award-winning wine list or at one of the cozy booths or tables. The food is exceptional, the atmosphere casual. They serve crunchy thin-crust pizzas from their brick oven, delicious pasta dishes, and tasty grilled items that have been cooked over a wood burning fire. For a perfect meal start with Caesar salad and a glass of J. Lohr, then move to veal meatball lasagna, probably more wine, and finish with the fresh berry cup. \$\$

Ragin' Cajun

4302 Richmond
713/623-6321
9600 Westheimer (at Gessner)
832/251-7171

Houston's authentic source of crawfish, red beans and rice, and anything you'd eat with tabasco. We love their fried oysters. This family business (Frank Messina and Luke Mandola) is busy just about anytime they're open. And now, after more than 20 years as a Houston institution at their atmospheric Richmond location, they opened a new restaurant in earlier this year. \$

Riva's

1117 Missouri St. (Montrose)
713-529-3450

In one of the most verdant and restful eatery atmospheres we know of, the brothers Silboey bring you Italian cuisine so unusually well seasoned you'll notice the pasta as well as the sauce. The simple dinner salad is alive with fresh vegetables and a tangy vinaigrette and a pleasant forecast of things to come. These men know herbs, and their fish dishes will make seafood converts out of diehard carnivores. And pastry chef Pierre kneads up some tasty little numbers. \$\$

Sake Lounge

500 Texas Ave. (in Bayou Place)
713/228-7253

Very hip and modern interior with lot of angles and the color purple makes for a fun environment. The separate bar area provides for an ideal stop after work, and 4-7 p.m., enjoy their happy hour drink and food specials. The open-air patio is a great spot to people-watch while enjoying the delicious Japanese food. Your best bet is to stick with the incredibly fresh sushi, but they have a full menu with noodle soups, fried fish, grilled steaks, veggies, and much more. Combine dinner with a movie at the Angelika Film Theatre, or a show at the Aerial or Alley Theatres for a perfect downtown evening. \$\$

Sawadee

6719 Weslayan (@ Bellaire Blvd.)
713/666-7872

The name alone will trigger a Pavlovian response once you've tried this quaint West U. hideaway. Everything on the Thai menu is delicious, but some dishes are so beyond description you'll be hard pressed to stray once you've found your favorites. Mine include the beef or chicken with basil and peppers as well as the lemongrass coconut soup. Then again, the curried chicken is just spicy enough to induce little beads of sweat on my forehead, and the spring rolls, well...excuse me while I drool. \$\$

continued on page 62

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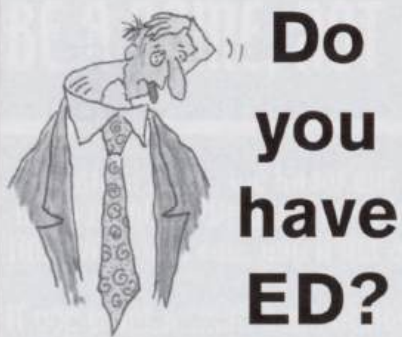


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A Taste of Houston

Tapas-style reviews
(continued from page 60)

Solero
910 Prairie
713/227-2665

If you're in the mood for a variety of tastes, then grab some friends and head to Solero in the downtown Market Square Historic District. My compliments to Arturo Boada, chef and part owner of Solero, for the best ceviche that I have ever tasted outside of South America. The menu is an international collection of flavors served in tapas-sized or dinner portions. \$\$\$

Tony Ruppe's
3939 Montrose
713/852-0852

Standing in the former Quilted Toque location, Ruppe's California vineyard décor sets a tone of anticipation that escalates with one glance at his fusion menu. Nothing standard here; even the descriptions smack of flavorful humor. Everything from Wok-seared Hoisin Beef Summer Roll and Extreme Cuisines' Wild Half-Moon Bay Salmon to his Blazin' Summer Salad (with a delightful cilantro cream dressing), and Capellini Pasta Baked in Parchment is intricate but not overwhelming. Even the sides of Parmesan Polenta and balsamic vinaigrette-marinated vegetables are off the beaten path. From entrée to dessert, Ruppe is masterful at concealing unspeakable delicacies in parchment paper. \$\$\$

Ziggy's Healthy Grill

2320 W. Alabama
713/527-8588

Ziggy's was always healthy and wholesome, but now that the three new owners are doctors, you know you're in for a guiltless gourmet experience. Although the décor is still a bit on the utilitarian side, we seek out Ziggy's when we don't feel like being embarrassed about our urge to eat healthy—you can even ask to see their binders with the nutritional contents of all their dishes. Both healthy and yummy, they offer comfort food like lean meatloaf, sweet yam fries, and pecan acorn squash; we especially love Ziggy's baked veggie sandwich and buffalo burger. They've all sorts of wild game burgers (known for being way lower in fat than regular cow beef)—even such exotica as ostrich, antelope, caribou, or kangaroo! Their latest offering is the Tuesday happy hour, with fresh blueberry margaritas and discounted appetizers. \$

The cost guide reflects the average cost of dinner with one drink and tip. Deduct about 25 percent for average lunch prices.

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\$\$\$\$	\$51 or more (very expensive)

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Holy Man

Sighted at Gay Porn House

Talking with Ram Dass about being gay, being soul friends, and just being . . . Ram Dass

by Alan Davidson

It is a glorious San Francisco day. I zip along the Golden Gate Bridge in a metallic blue Mustang convertible. The sun warms my face and arms as the winter breeze whips around me, a delightful reprieve from the sultry humidity I've left behind in Houston. The San Francisco Bay shimmers in the sunlight. I pass Sausalito as the Mustang climbs into the hills of Marin County. I arrive at my destination early and park in front of a simple stucco cottage that seems out of place nestled into the surrounding upscale houses. There is a magnificent view of the bay. I feel a bit nervous. (Okay! Like majorly nervous.) I am here to have a conversation with Ram Dass for *OutSmart*. He is only one of the most influential and celebrated teachers of Eastern thought in America, and a huge hero of mine. I breathe in the freshness of the afternoon to relax and calm my mind.

I remember the first time I heard of Ram Dass. I was bartending at the Montrose Mining Co. A rather peculiar customer made a musical request of our DJ, JD Arnold, which he complied with. The next night the customer brought JD a tip: a peyote button wrapped in a page from a book. The book was *Be Here Now* by Ram Dass.

Reading the page, I was so fascinated by the hallucinogenic scribbles of Hindu mysticism, Western psychology, and LSD trips that I went and bought the book. From *Be Here Now* I learned that Ram Dass was formerly Richard Alpert, Ph.D., a Harvard professor of psychology who had been fired—along with Timothy Leary—for wild experiments with LSD. (Ram Dass would reveal years later that his sexual escapades with his male students fueled the fires of the scandal.) However, Alpert became disillusioned with the ability of hallucinogenics to permanently change his life. When Aldus Huxley gave him a copy of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, Alpert recognized it as a map to greater consciousness. He set off for Asia in search of a guide to teach him to read the map.

Alpert found his guru in India. He met Neem Karoli Baba in the foothills of the Himalayas. Alpert realized he had met a

truly special human being the day Baba asked him about the tiny pieces of paper he was eating. "These are LSD," Alpert responded. Baba replied, "Give me some." Baba took 915 micrograms of LSD (the average dose is 50 to 70 micrograms). Alpert waited with interest for the outcome of the acid trip his teacher was about to have. Through the afternoon, with astonishment, Alpert noticed that the acid didn't change Baba. Occasionally Baba would smile at him as he went

"All my life has been about teaching the truth. My homosexuality is the one thing I have not been truthful about. Now it is important to be honest."

through the business of the day. The LSD had no effect on him because Baba already lived in an expanded state of consciousness—he was already in the place that the drugs temporarily created for Alpert. Alpert knew then he had found the map-reader to teach him the mysteries he longed to understand.

Neem Karoli Baba taught Alpert Raja Yoga, a scientific system of transformation that was first written down around 500 B.C. This ancient system includes hatha yoga postures, meditation, the importance of diet on states of mind, understanding the deeper states of consciousness, and *ahimsa* (non-violence). After years of study Alpert was renamed Ram Dass, which means Servant of God, and instructed to return to the United States and teach what he had learned. Teach

he did. Ram Dass became the premier teacher bridging Eastern mystical thought and Western psychology. His candor, his humor, and his rascally style endeared him to generations of Americans hungry for transformation. For a while after *Be Here Now* came out in 1971, it was the most popular book in English after Dr. Spock's baby book and the Bible. In addition to teaching, Ram

Dass's long career includes the championing of environmental causes, hospice care for PWAs, and healthcare in impoverished countries.

Over the years Ram Dass has cautiously spoken about his relationships with men. In the early '90s he moved from the East Coast to San Francisco, where he found that the liberal environment of Northern California

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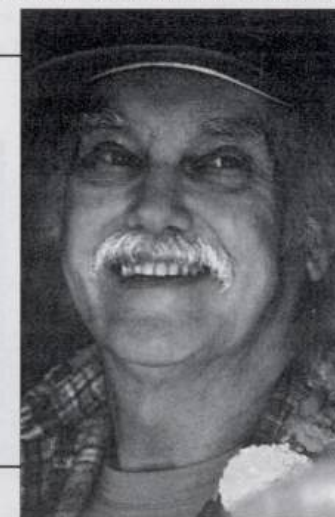
helped him open up about his homosexuality. In 1994 he publicly revealed his gayness in an interview with Mark Thompson for *Gay Soul*. Despite this bold move, most people in the meditative communities who know of Ram Dass do not realize he is gay; and many in the gay community had never heard of Ram Dass.

Then, in 1997, at the age of 66, Ram Dass suffered a stroke, a massive cerebral hemorrhage he was not expected to live through. He was just finishing his latest book *Still Here: Embracing Aging, Changing, and Dying*. An active, healthy 66-year-old, he suddenly needed help doing the smallest tasks like walking, getting in and out of bed, or going to the bathroom. This dramatic and painful turn in his life gave him a new perspective on living in pain and what it's like when you're not expected to survive. He added a new last chapter to his

across the bay. He tells me that he spends much of his days here taking in the view. I can imagine him sitting here alone, when his fans and questioning reporters (or both, like myself) are no longer seeking his service, meditating on the rise and fall of the many moods of the bay.

Ram Dass is a big man. Confined to a wheelchair, he is still an imposing figure. His right arm and leg are paralyzed, and his right eye has a slight droop. He is wearing khaki pants, a polo shirt, and a yellow flannel overshirt. His wild hair is roughly combed and parted to the left. I am disappointed to see that he is wearing yellow-tinted glasses, for I have often heard descriptions of his blue eyes, reportedly so intense they can transfix an audience. His words are clear but the stroke has affected his ability to speak. "I have the concepts in my mind," he tells me. "But the dressing

Ram Dass is a big man. Confined to a wheelchair, he is still an imposing figure.



just-finished book. And survive he has with his humor and candor intact.

I am here, now, looking across to Sausalito, waiting for my conversation and hoping I've enough composure to make complete sentences in the presence of one of the great minds and spiritual teachers of our generation. I take another deep breath, tear my eyes from the view, and walk to the bungalow.

Andrea, one of his aides, lets me into a small living area, which is a little cluttered and sloppy. Stacks of paintings lean against the walls on each side of the fireplace. Pictures and statues of Hindu saints and gods appoint the room. To the right I see a study, and from inside it, Ram Dass is rolling his wheelchair toward me. He gently welcomes me and motions me to sit by his desk. There are pictures of his guru, Neem Karoli Baba, a picture of Timothy Leary, and a psychedelic portrait of Ram Dass done by Leary. The large window that frames his desk overlooks the water. Beyond an enormous cedar tree I can see the boat slips of Sausalito

room for the concepts [has been] harmed." His speech is filled with long pauses and punctuated with false starts as he grasps for the right words. "Surf the silences with me," he asks me. "The silences allow for a deeper connection." His comfort with his speaking allows my own fears to relax.

I ask why Ram Dass has chosen at this late stage of the game to come out. He starts by telling me a story about his childhood. "When I was in prep school I was caught wrestling naked with one of my classmates. I was completely ostracized by the whole school. Nobody could talk to me. I was humiliated. Finally the captain of the swim team decided to be my friend. That was a very kind thing of him." This prep school experience encapsulated a feeling of oppressiveness that he felt on the East Coast. "Harvard felt the same way," he says. "Living out here [on the West Coast] is much more liberal."

Also, he says he didn't want people to be distracted from his message, to fixate on his sexuality and miss the truth he wanted to

share. Contemplation of the nature of truth is a predominant theme in his life.

"Truth is a fine thing between people," he says. "My life and my work have been about truth. All my life has been about teaching the truth. My homosexuality is the one thing I have not been truthful about. Now it is important to be honest." I remember a quote by Mahatma Gandhi that Ram Dass is fond of using. *Only God is truth. I am a human being. Truth for me is changing every day. My commitment must be to truth, not to consistency.*

The conversation turns to his body, his recovery from the stroke, and living in a wheelchair. "Terrible grace," he says of the experience. "The hardest part of this was my

My Stroke Grounded Me

(from *Still Here: Embracing Aging, Changing, and Dying*, by Ram Dass, 2000)

The stroke happened to me for many different reasons, including karmic and spiritual ones. But on the physical level, one of the reasons for the stroke was that I had been ignoring my body. I had spent most of my life keeping my Awareness "free of my body," as I thought of it then; but I can see now that I was also ignoring my body, pushing it away. By forgetting to take my blood pressure medicine, I showed how I was disregarding my body. By ignoring the early signs that something was wrong when I was diving in the Caribbean, I was disregarding my body. By over-committing myself, never saying "no" no matter what my body was telling me, I was disregarding it.

So then came the stroke.

...To work with the fear, I turned to my practices. The stroke called on all the practices I'd learned over the years: Vipassana meditation, jnana yoga, bhakti, guru kriya—at different points and in different situations I used them all. But in that particular crisis I found that I turned to Ramana Maharshi's practice of "I am not this body." I would note each part of my body, and I would say, "I am not my arm. I am not my leg. I am not my brain." That helped me avoid getting caught in the mind's fears and the body's sensations.

In the months that followed, though, I came to appreciate that, however wonderful it is as a practice, "I am not this body" is only half the truth. The stroke brought me squarely in touch with the fact that, although I certainly am more than my body, I also am my body. The stroke brought my Awareness into my body in a powerful way, with an array of physical symptoms: paralysis, aphasia, pain. The stroke "grounded" me, in both meanings of the word: it brought me in touch with the earth plane, with my body, and it made me stay at home. I used to be traveling constantly, but when you're traveling in a wheelchair, planes aren't much fun. So this illness "grounded" me, and taught me what everyone else already knew: that it's nice to be at home.

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'loss of faith.' For the first few weeks after the stroke I felt completely abandoned by God and my guru. How could this have happened to me? Now I see it as a gift."

Before the stroke, Ram Dass describes himself as "fiercely" independent. Traveling, driving a sports car around town, teaching. He was always the teacher and caregiver. "Now I must accept care from others," he says, which has led to a whole new path of insight.

Ram Dass explains his view that there are three simple levels of consciousness. There's the ego level where most human com-

Body Image

(from *Still Here: Embracing Aging, Changing, and Dying*, by Ram Dass, 2000)

Discontent with our changing body image as we age is a rich source of suffering for many people, and is intensified by advertisements and the pervasive notion that new things, and youthful people, are preferable to signs of wear and tear. This leads many old people to fight the aging process to an extent that makes their lives miserable. We need to examine our attitudes toward body image, the thoughts and feelings that arise at the images of ourselves in the mirror. Ask yourself: who am I now that my body is no longer what it was? What is the thing in me that has not changed, the "I" that is observing this process? ...

For 40 years, I fought with myself in the area of extra fat, swinging between diets and gluttony, caught in a no-win situation. Every milkshake and dessert brought guilt; every goody resisted brought feelings of deprivation. As I got older, the struggle to keep the pounds off became more and more difficult, but the habitual thought-pattern telling me that I was too fat, that I looked wrong when I let my body eat as it wished, and be bigger, was too deeply entrenched to be let go of easily.

Then I had an experience that changed this preoccupation. I was teaching for a week at a Jewish family summer camp, and late one Friday afternoon, I joined all the men for a *mikva*, or purifying bath, that involved immersing ourselves in a hot tub and then a swimming pool, en masse, naked. There were men and boys of all ages, and looking around, I suddenly saw myself reflected in many of the bodies around me, descended, as I was, from Eastern European peasant stock. I saw in that moment that the contours of my natural body, which I'd been fighting most of my life, were genetically ordained! I felt my compulsion to be thinner start to shift, and soon my body weight had stabilized at 215 pounds with no diet involved. Statistics say that this is a bit too high, but I ceased caring, and shed the attachment to a thinner-body image. I learned to appreciate my tummy rolls rather than fight them, which helped me relax—and helped me to prepare for my physical disability as well.

munication takes place, which is the level of the personality, our wants and needs. Second, there is the soul level where we connect with a broader perspective. "This is the level where the spirit is fed," he says. "I like to call this level soul friends. . . . When I look at my stroke from the level of soul friends I can see a broader perspective. On the level of the ego I am being nursed and cared for by my aides. At the soul level I am learning to receive and they are learning to give. We are soul friends at that level."

The third level is what he calls God consciousness, in which there are no boundaries. "This is the level that the great spiritual teachers speak of," he says. "There's no difference between me and the cedar tree out there, or the bay. I am all that is."

I want to explore the distinctions between pain and suffering. I read a quote by Carl Jung: "Neurosis is the absence of legitimate suffering." As I read, Ram Dass takes off his glasses to wipe his face. I see a flash of azure

"Presence is the most valuable gift we can give another human being."



blue as his eyes focus on the view outside the window. He replaces his glasses and thinks about Jung's quote.

"Pain is an inevitable part of life," he says. "Spiritual practice teaches us to open to pain, to accept it as a part of life. Our suffering comes from not accepting what's happening in the moment, be it pain or pleasure or peace of mind—from trying to avoid the reality of life. Most of our suffering comes from that place where our personalities have separated from our true selves. We generate all kinds of neurosis to mask the pain and loneliness of that separation. Responding with care to a person in need is a beautiful thing. Sometimes people get caught in the ego-role as caregiver. They don't feel valuable unless they can give you something. That's a neurotic response to suffering."

I remember a lecture Ram Dass gave once called "Service in the '90s." He spoke eloquently about the need for service in the world and his work with people with AIDS.

He emphasized the importance of caregivers to be really present with the dying. Ram Dass described the window of healing that can take place when the caregiver is present at the level of "soul friend" and the ego of the dying person cracks open to a greater level of consciousness. He tells me another story.

"Some friends invited me to come visit a friend of theirs who was dying in the hospital. I came and was completely caught in the role of 'Holy Man' visiting the AIDS patient. My friends played it up and I was caught in my ego role. I visited with the patient and left. As I was leaving I thought to myself, 'That wasn't very much.' I walked into the stairwell of the hospital and I prayed to God and my guru for a long time. I went back to that man's room and we had a good visit human to human, soul to soul. That day changed the way I work with other people. Presence is the most valuable gift we can give another human being."

Our talk turns to hallucinogenics. I read a quote of Timothy Leary's in which he says that with LSD "spiritual ecstasy, religious revelation, and union with God were now directly accessible" to everyone. I ask Ram Dass what he thinks of hallucinogenics as a spiritual path. His eyes grow wide and he sits straight up in his wheelchair as he exclaims, "It is a fabulous path. Everyone should try it!" I laugh and tell him the story of the peyote button and my first introduction to his work. He laughs and says, "If you'd taken the peyote you wouldn't have needed to buy my book." On his website (www.ramdasstapes.org) there are photos of Ram Dass, sitting in his wheelchair on a mountaintop at the annual Rainbow Gathering. That's the outdoor gathering of the hallucinogenic culture held in remote areas where LSD, psilocybin mushrooms, and pot fuel '60s-style celebrations of God, Goddess, Mother Earth, and the joys of Love and humanness.

continued on page 92

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Judge Susan Yarbrough

Lesbian, feminist, immigration judge, massage therapist, and now bird-friendly gardener—the many guises of a life lived with serenity & passion

by Shane Hennesey
Photo by
Theresa DiMenno

Balance, security, self-assurance, serenity, vision, clarity. These are some of the things I want for myself as I get older. I would want them whether I was transgendered, gay, or straight. So when I got this assignment, I hoped to get to meet someone who possessed at least some of those qualities.

It was with those expectations that I met Susan Yarbrough for lunch one Friday. At 54 years young, she has a rather impressive legal career, a stable home, life partner, side business, and a gentle soul. Not too shabby for a little girl who grew up in a not-so-nurturing family of East Texas in the late 1940s. Growing up gay in hyper-religious, uneducated East Texas—nuff said 'bout that.



New York City, feminism, and a chance to practice criminal law pulled Susan out of Texas and into Greenwich Village where the time was right for growing up on her own terms and coming out of the closet. She had created her space in the world and accomplished her personal/professional goals as a criminal lawyer when she got the urge to move back to Texas. Several years later, she was asked to apply for a federal judge position, and in the process, the FBI “discovered” she was a lesbian *and* that she had missed a tax-filing date several years before. Any guess which of these two discoveries was of imminent threat to national security? Well, as it turns out, the only people who were thoroughly upset by the uncovered sexuality were her parents, and the feds got over the tax issue.

Susan's federal career landed her a position in charge of judging asylum cases for illegal aliens here in Texas. She gives a focus to her lesbian, feminist energy through her passion for helping those people without a voice, whose faces are “pressed up against the glass of America.” But her healing energy could not be limited to the courtroom, so she went to massage school and picked up the skills to give her a more personal connection to people.

So what's this Lesbian, Feminist, Immigration Judge, Massage Therapist up to currently? Well, she is still trying to help the voiceless in court, she is still very much a feminist with an eye out for egalitarian treatment of all people, she has given up the physical rigors of massage therapy, and she is still quite lesbian. The part of her that is a little girl from Texas has created a business called Gardening for the Birds, for which she has a great passion that allows her to work outside on bird-friendly gardening, and this is where she hopes to plant her future.

I asked Susan what she would tell me if I were coming out to her and looking for advice and support. She told me that I was OK just the way I am, that God doesn't make trash, to find a family of my own choosing, that it would not always be easy, and that I could come back for a hug or a kind word any time I needed it. Above all the labels and descriptions I have given her in this brief article to help you understand some of who she is as a successful older gay person, let me add Big Heart and Good Person.

Balance, security, self-assurance, serenity, vision, clarity—I got what I hoped for. ■

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Iris Greer Sizemore

Gathering together feminist women for over 25 years

by Susan Lovejoy

Photo by J. Roe Photography



What brought you here?" Laura Reich asked the members of the Women's Group, an assortment of women of various ages and ethnicities who have met each Sunday at 10:45 a.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church on Fannin for the past 25 years. "Iris snagged me." "I've been going on and off for 20 years." "My therapist recommended the group to me." "I learned about the group through the church." "I met Iris at the feminist convention at Rice." "Iris found me at a bookstore."

As the women introduced themselves, Iris flitted around the room sitting in a chair, then getting up to pass out flyers or Xeroxed newspaper articles concerning women. Her striped button-down shirt had not been buttoned correctly and she occasionally had to tuck it back in her pants—this did not seem to faze her.

Iris Greer Sizemore is the founder and, with Laura Reich, co-facilitates the 25-year-old Women's Group. Her way of both empowering women and helping women to find their own power is phenomenal. She has been described by Laura Reich as "the engineer of a powerful train." She has a gift of enticing women to speak to the group on topics ranging from breast cancer to talent shows complete with an accordion player to financial planning.

Iris moved to Houston in 1974 from Chicago and soon managed the Unitarian Universalist Church bookstore. After being exposed to writers such as Betty Friedan, Audre Lorde, and Adrienne Rich, she began gathering other like-minded women, both gay and straight, to talk about feminist literature. From these discussions the Women's Group was born.

The first Women's Group met in front of a fireplace at the church in 1975. Although the members were white and mostly from privileged backgrounds, all were interested in defining their own vision of feminism by defining the issues and looking at the questions. "The group has dealt with the issues that have shaped their lives," Iris said. "Rape, incest, alcoholism, and racism are some of the big issues."

Iris has devoted not only a part of her day-to-day life over the past 25 years to the Women's Group but a part of her soul as well. As she sat in a green oversized chair at her home, her closed eyes reflected upon the past. Her hands and facial expression said more than her words. "I have grown with the Women's Group," she said. "I need the Women's Group; it is a part of me. It's been my survival growth. I grew and changed as the Women's Group did."

She even met her partner, Jascun, through the Women's Group. Iris tells the story, smiling as Jascun walks into the room.

"We met at a party for a woman turning 40," she said, "and we invited 40 people. When Jascun walked in, I went over to her and we talked the whole time." For someone as active and people-oriented as Iris, that was truly remarkable. "Iris did not move around; she stayed in one place the whole time," Jascun said.

Iris and Jascun looked at each other, their blue eyes matching in color as the doorbell rang. Three women came into the room, obvious Iris fans—they were all ready to go to a movie together, to gather, to talk. ■

The Women's Group meets with a different discussion topic or presentation every Sunday, 10:45 a.m. at the First Unitarian Church, Room 302, 5200 Fannin (at Southmore). To find out more, contact Laura Reich at 713/529-1886 or chzhead005@aol.com.



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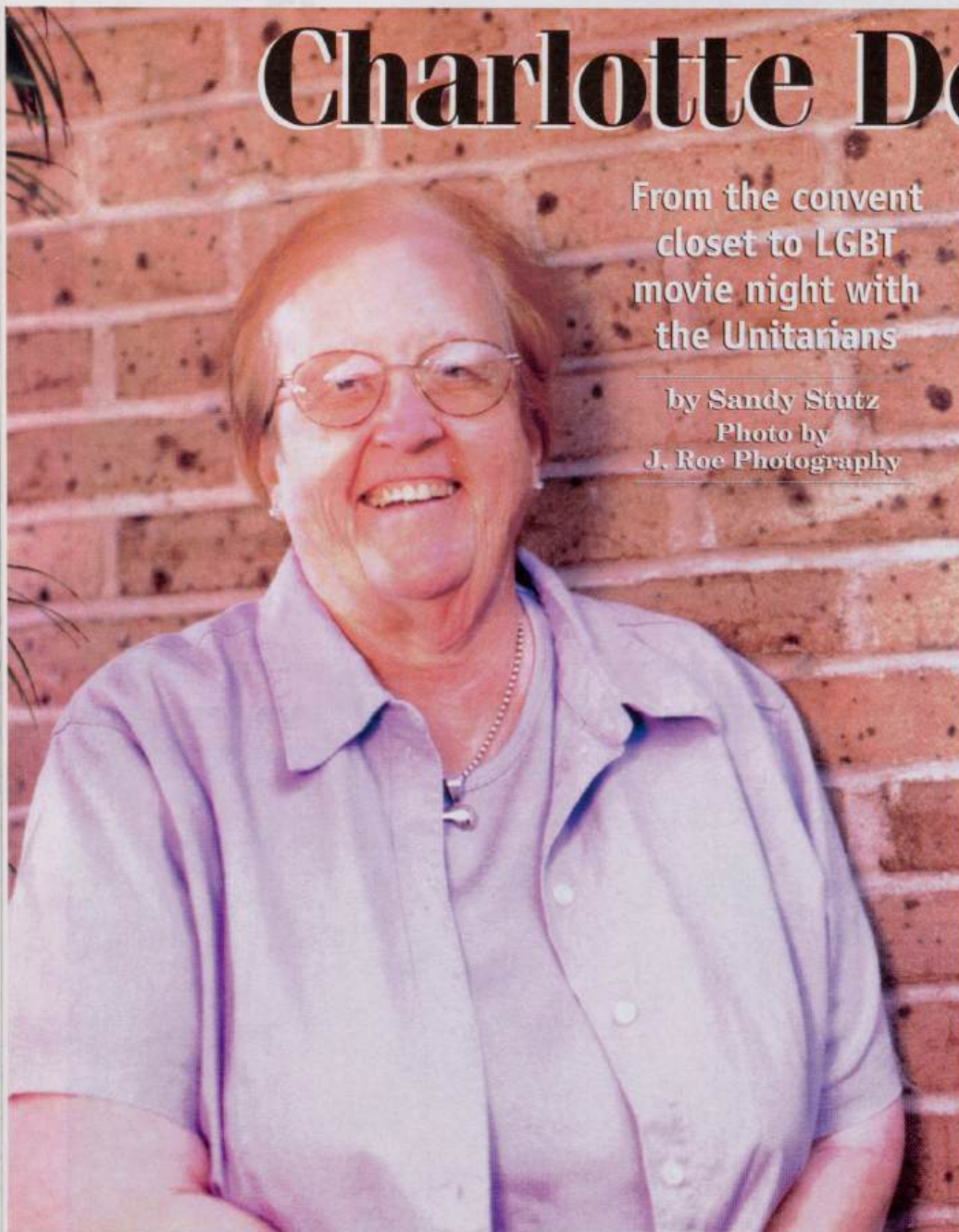
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Charlotte Doclar

From the convent
closet to LGBT
movie night with
the Unitarians

by Sandy Stutz
Photo by
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In 1986, Charlotte Doclar had just read *The Color Purple*. The story's theme of a woman in transition, overcoming obstacles of our misogynous society, resonated with her. Charlotte had seen some transitions of her own. As the former Sister John Ellen, a feminist lesbian nun, she had decided to leave the convent in 1981, at the age of 47. By her own description: "The patriarchy was out the window! I couldn't

take any more of that!" She tried the Episcopalian Church, but found that there, too, was a paternal oppressiveness. One weekend, a friend told her that Bob Schaibly, the openly gay minister at First Unitarian Universalist Church, was going to give his sermon on Alice Walker's inspiring novel. After the service, she knew she had found her new home. Today, Bob says affectionately, "She's wonderful at recruiting and she's good-

natured about chiding us. We are probably the only Unitarian Universalist Church in the world with a Mother Superior!"

Although Charlotte and I already know one another from church, we met at Baba Yega's restaurant to do an "interview" for this article. She smiled often during our conversation. Controlled in her movements, she is not the type to wave her hands in exaggeration as she speaks. But her spirited animation shines through her lively eyes.

Born in New Orleans in 1934, and entering the School Sisters of Notre Dame at the tender age of 18 in 1952, Charlotte is probably best known for her contribution to the 1985 book *Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence*. Charlotte joined 50 other nuns by speaking the truth that was supposed by many, but happily ignored by the majority of the population: The convent is home to many lesbians. Maybe no one wanted to know, but now they did. Being one of those first brave souls is quite an accomplishment. She was even profiled in *Ms.* magazine.

In the convent, many of the women were very young, some right out of high school. The really funny thing was that with Charlotte being out as a lesbian, some of the young women would ask her, "Do you think I am a lesbian?" As if she could somehow decide. "I really believe they were innocent," Charlotte said, "in the sense of *lesbianism*. We were friends, we were together, we were close."

Some forms of "closeness" were not allowed. To prevent what were referred to as "particular friendships," girls were seldom left alone in pairs. If PFs (as they were called) were suspected in the convent, the girls were separated. Often, one member of the offending pair was transferred to another convent. Stolen private moments were cherished. As Charlotte said in *Lesbian Nuns*: "My world ended every time . . . I can only say that I must have had an awfully good time between good-byes."

Charlotte would have preferred to be able to minister to the gay and lesbian community when she left the convent, but the funding wasn't there. Instead, she continued the

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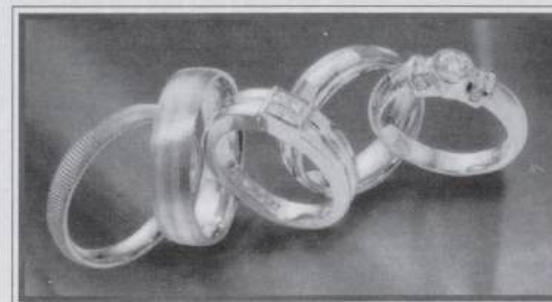
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teaching she'd been doing in the convent, only this time in the public school system—which was sometimes difficult because she had to be careful about whom she could come out to. Charlotte was proud of the *Ms.* magazine article, but couldn't really show it off to her friends for fear of word getting back to her job. Charlotte also worked for years as a volunteer at Omega House hospice. ("I worked there during the *bad* times... when it wasn't in vogue and it had just opened. I'm kind of proud of that work.")

Now, on any given Sunday, Charlotte can be found at First Unitarian Universalist Church on Fannin Street. An Amazonian matriarchal figure if ever there was one, she greets everyone with a very Southern "Hello, dahlin'." She has soft wispy auburn hair and is always neatly dressed in slacks and a button-front camp shirt, ever the kind but strict elder teacher. This particular Sunday I'm late, as usual. Taking the order of service she has offered, I tuck my head and grin as I begin to walk through the sanctuary doors. "No, no, no, no," she says softly and holds me back with a gentle touch to my shoulder and the tone of her voice. After a long pause, I can hear piano music begin to play. "There now. You can go

on in," Charlotte says. I obey like the good Catholic schoolgirl I never was.



Charlotte (center) at age 19 on her profession day, with her mother and niece Gail.

I've known Charlotte as head usher and First Church member now for probably five years, and have shared many First Church activities, from numerous potlucks of the Lesbian and Gay UU group, to being fellow panelists on a discussion for sexual minorities, to the Rainbow Church Committee. Charlotte's sense of humor is always good-natured... and wickedly dry. During one of the church's LGBT movie nights, we all sat in the church library, silently watching the previews prior

to our featured video. From the second row, a seemingly stoic Doclar pipes up, "Woo-hoo! Catherine Deneuve!" The silence broke into laughter as our collective grandmother figure spotted her favorite "sexy" film star!

In 2000, Charlotte retired from 46 years of teaching children. We laughed as she described the transition between teaching at the parochial schools and the public schools where she "couldn't be a nun." For this past year, she has been living in a garage apartment above two women that she refers to as her roommates. I laugh at what seems like a sorority; Charlotte calls it her community. She feels like she is starting over for the second time. I ask her if having her new roommates is a little like going back to the convent. "I don't think you ever leave," she says.

Charlotte has been a beacon for those coming out of what she calls "the two closets." She describes her former religious life as one and hiding one's sexual orientation/identity as the other. She has many friends in both the gay and heterosexual communities. We'd do well, I believe, to honor people like her who broke that ground for us. There's a lot more work to do, but we've been given a good head start. ■

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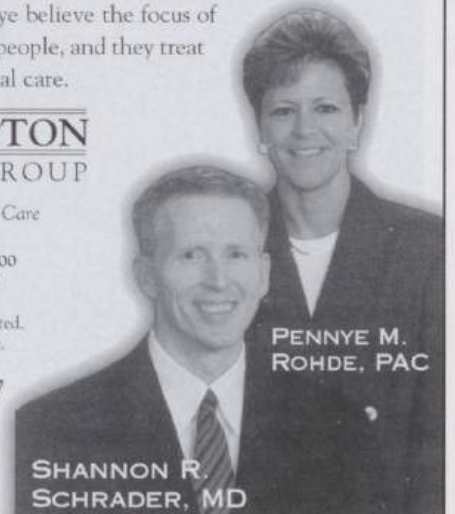
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Brenda Thomas

Taking it to the streets with the three "T"s: Tough, Tenacious, and Transgender

by Cristan Williams
Photo by Theresa DiMenno

"... [T]here are two ways to meet life; you may refuse to care until indifference becomes habit, a defensive armor and you are safe—but bored—or you can care greatly, and live greatly—till life breaks you on its wheel."

—Dorothy Canfield Fisher

I met Brenda a year ago and she intimidated me. Brenda Thomas shoots from the hip. Her entire demeanor suggests seniority. She has been there, bought the T-shirt, worn it, thrown it away, and already bought a new one.

The fact is that she has paid her dues. In September of 1996 she became extremely ill. "Jane got Mary and came straight to my house, got here about the same time my wife did, took

one look at me, scooped me up in the blanket I was lying on, and carried me to Park Plaza Hospital. . . . Had I not got there that night I probably would have died during the night. I owe my life to those three people." She was diagnosed with full-blown AIDS.

Since that time she has been heavily involved with HIV/AIDS organizations. Currently she is co-chair-elect for the Houston HIV Prevention and Planning Group, active with the AIDS Walk, works with the Houston Consortium, which distributes funds for the Ryan White Foundation, and is employed by the Houston Health Department's HIV/AIDS outreach program in which she specializes in targeted outreach to the transgender community.

Brenda knows what it is to face discrimination. Brenda lost her family when her first wife found out that her husband was transgendered. "After she found out, she packed up my kids and moved to Florida. I have not heard from them since." Speaking at an educational seminar recently, she said, "When I go somewhere, they know what I am. I have to just deal with it." If she comes across as tough or gruff, it is because she has had to be.

Through all of it, she has survived, grown, and, perhaps most importantly, given back to the community. Currently married and, she has celebrated her 25th wedding anniversary. Brenda has been known to say that she has the best job in the world: "I have a chance to work in a position for an entity that allows me to work diligently, furthering the two things that are most dear to my heart, transgender issues and HIV, especially together."

Brenda Thomas is a dedicated leader within the transgender community. She created and has facilitated Helping Transgenders Anonymous, which celebrated its 10th anniversary in February. "God, I love this community. There are so many great people here—and there is the possibility that there are also some great people out there who are not aware of the possibilities that exist within this community. If we can reach them and bring them into our community we can get stronger. I hate it when I see a young person working the streets to stay alive. I want to make a difference for those that come behind us, I want it to be easier for them. I just want to be remembered as someone who cared . . . someone who made a difference." ■

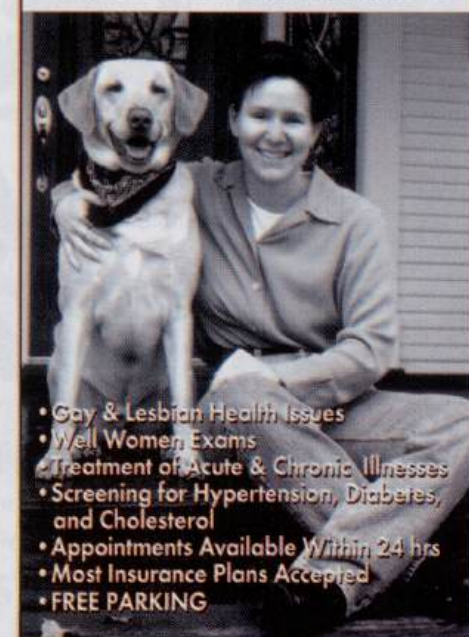


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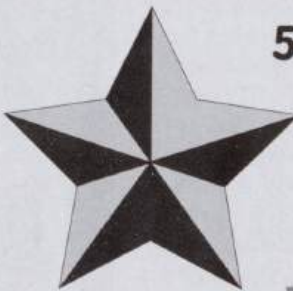
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After All, Tomorrow Is Another Day

Growing older with
wisdom and aplomb in
a small South Texas town

by Chris Sill

It's like walking out of one world and into another. You leave behind some very pretty things, but you also get rid of some negative things." Wise words on aging spoken by a gay man from a small South Texas town.

A teacher for the past 24 years, he is not publicly out (so he requested that we not print his name or photo). "I've never officially come out to people," he says. "Through conversation they've figured it out. It doesn't seem to matter to most people as long as you're a good person. However, that's something that has always bothered me. When I was younger, the big problem with being openly gay was that society painted pictures of gay people as being bad people, which created negative stereotypes. It's changing a lot these days. Now people realize that gay people are like anyone, just as diversified, and extremely nice, caring, and giving people. Sure, there are plenty of jerks out there, but that doesn't come with being gay, just human."

But even with increased acceptance, as a teacher in this tight-knit community, being openly gay is still just too controversial and career-threatening.

"I have students who come to talk to me about all kinds of issues, including sexual identity. I won't touch that subject until a student turns 18. Straight or gay, teachers have to be so guarded in what they say to students. With gay teachers it's even harder. If a gay issue comes up in class and some students react with hostility, it's very hard to remain neutral. But I have to be because that is not the reason I am there."

Regardless of his years of earned respect from parents and school officials, a public outing is still a difficult issue for him. "There is a caution there because the trust can be lost in a heartbeat."

Surrounded by young pupils, two decades of teaching mutual respect in the classroom have helped him feel easier about getting older. "One of the most difficult things for any man to deal with is physically realizing you are not young anymore. You have to learn to deal with it. When it is not the thrust of who you are and your personality is not fully de-

face can wrinkle, and my health can deteriorate, but all those things don't bother me as much as that one thought that creeps into my head—when I'm lying in that bed and dying, will there be anybody there? That's the one fear."

For now this small-town teacher relies on the company of good friends. Surprisingly, most of his closest friends are straight, something that gives him hope that one day sexuality will not be an issue in a classroom or anywhere else... even at his own Halloween party.

In all his years in this small town, not once had he encountered physical violence—that is, not until this past October at a costume party thrown by him and his roommates. He attended as Caligula, dressed in skimpy Roman attire with a long, heavy cape, fine gold leaves adorning his head, and plenty of eyeliner.

Later that evening, two male guests crashed the party and soon learned the host was gay. Unknowingly, the men began bad-mouthing the host to a couple of his best straight friends. The situation quickly escalated into a good ol' Texas brawl. With cape flowing behind him, Caligula charged into the room, putting himself between friends and foes. "This is my house and I will not have fighting!" he proclaimed at the top of his lungs. Suddenly his cape slipped off his shoulders to the floor. "Oh, excuse me for being so sexy!" he purred. Without a thought he picked up his cape, placed it on his shoulders and continued screaming.

The house went still. The two guests dropped their fists and left. For a moment, no one spoke a word. Then came the laughter. It was the perfect Shakespearean moment—

tension followed by comedic relief. Their gay friend and schoolteacher had just given them the performance of his life.

He comments, "I've had all kinds of people come into the house, find out I was gay and leave. Some come back, some choose not to. More have returned than not, and the ones that don't come back, you don't really want in your life anyway." Scarlet O'Hara couldn't have said it better. ■

pendent on the physical, it is easier to make the transition more gracefully."

His friends often comment on the amount of attention paid to him by younger men. He himself finds it strange and unexpected, especially coming from a culture so obsessed with physical looks. Friends insist the attraction comes from his unwillingness to worry and the obvious level of comfort he has with himself. Something young people struggle with, something that comes only with age.

"For me the fears [about aging] are not really there. I call it the Scarlet O'Hara syndrome—'Oh, I'll worry about it tomorrow'—and I never do!"

"For me the fears are not really there. I call it the Scarlet O'Hara syndrome—'Oh, I'll worry about it tomorrow'—and I never do!"

If one fear does cause him some anxiety, it has to be loneliness. "Occasionally being alone does cross my mind. I haven't had a lover in many years and I don't think I need that as part of my identity, but being alone is an issue many gay people face, since most do not have children. My hair can gray, my

The Myth of Gay Affluence

Why does the world think we're so well off? And how is it hurting us that they do?

by John W. Stiles

Case number one: On a July night in 1994, high school football star DeMarco McCullum and three friends left their Aldine subdivision and drove south to Montrose. They were out to have some fun and maybe rob some gays. Gays were targeted, according to McCullum, because "they always carry a lot of cash." Before the night was out, Michael J. Burzinski would be dead from a gunshot wound to the back of the head, and DeMarco would take his first tentative steps toward Texas's Death Row.

Case number two: Law professor Joseph Broadus, in testimony before Congress that helped defeat the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, identified homosexual households as "elite" and "not . . . in need of special civil rights legislation." The average gay household, according to Professor Broadus, earns twice as much as the national average.

Case number three: In 1992, the State of Colorado amended their constitution to prevent state and local governments from extending civil rights protection specifically to gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals. Four years later, the state's ban was challenged in the U.S. Supreme Court. Clemson University professor James Woodard, appearing for the State of Colorado, testified that median annual household income for gays and lesbians exceeded \$50,000, 40 percent higher than that of heterosexual households. Therefore, he argued, gays and lesbians need no special protection because their wealth protects them. The Colorado Amendment was overturned by the Supreme Court. The vote, however, was not unanimous. In an ominous dissenting opinion, joined by Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Clarence Thomas, Anton Scalia cited Woodard's testimony as evidence that gays' "disproportionate political power," achieved as a result of their higher incomes, entitled

the nongay voters of Colorado to rein in that power through legislation.

Case number four: The testimony Professor Broadus gave before Congress about the affluent gay community helped defeat the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and contributed to a climate that allowed the passage of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). DOMA prevents Houstonian Janet Langham from enjoying the generous benefit package of her partner, a successful U.S. attorney. As a "domestic partner," Janet is ineligible. Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, she was too sick to drive the few miles to attend classes at a local university—classes she took solely to qualify for

Everyone likes to think of themselves as suave and well-heeled—why not let the outside world think being gay is one never-ending Noel Coward party?

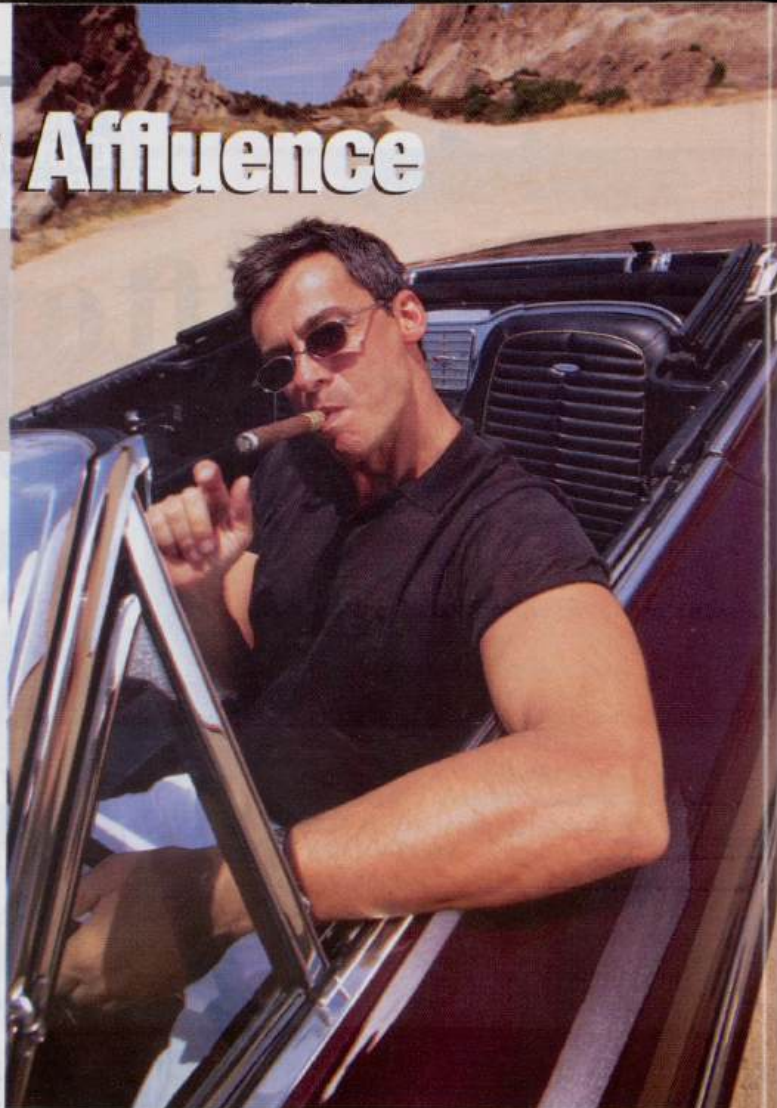
the meager insurance plan she qualified for as a student. AssistHers, the Houston lesbian support organization, provided transportation to and from campus for Janet. Janet is now president of AssistHers and speaks passionately on the subject of the domestic partner benefits denied to her, benefits denied her, in part, because of the "disproportionate

political power" she enjoys as a wealthy member of the GLBT community.

DeMarco McCullum, professors Broadus and Woodard, and Justice Scalia all share a common belief—the GLBT community is blessed with more than its fair share of cash. But is it true? Why do so many believe it to be fact?

The myth may have been started within our own community, or at least perpetuated. Everyone likes to think of themselves as suave and well-heeled—why not let the outside world think being gay is one never-ending Noel Coward party? Indeed, as Houston City Councilwoman Annise Parker remarks: "[It's] an internally promoted myth. It pleases us and is affirming."

To buttress this impression, in 1989, the Rivendell Marketing Company, a firm specializing in helping advertising agencies "reach the gay market," commissioned the Simmons Market Research Bureau to conduct a survey of gays and lesbians. That survey, along with one conducted by the National Gay Newspaper Guild (a guild that has since



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merged with Rivendell), reported individual incomes of gay and lesbian respondents as substantially higher than the national average. Rivendell's survey interviewed subscribers to gay and lesbian publications, while the guild's survey drew on people who had filled out sign-up sheets for the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. Another Simmons survey, conducted in 1996, used lists of names from mail-order and credit card companies. In 2001, the National Gay Newspaper Guild website reported that their average reader earns \$41,300 and their average reader's household income is \$63,700, while the national averages are less than half this. Clearly, these marketing surveys would appear to confirm the belief that gays and lesbians make more money. The subjects of these surveys, however, are subscribers to or readers of gay newspapers and magazines. Do they represent an accurate sampling of gays and lesbians?

In fact, surveys of newspaper and magazine subscribers are particularly misleading with regard to income levels. For example, male readers of *USA Today* earn \$5,000 more than the national average. Male readers of the *Wall Street Journal* average \$18,000

more. Still more strikingly, from the Simmons Bureau's own files, we learn that African-American readers of *Jet* and *Ebony* magazines earn nearly 60 percent more than the average African-American.

The Rivendell and Guild surveys were intended to provide marketing information to advertisers; they never pretended to be sta-

answer this question in a 1998 study by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Policy Institute titled *Income Inflation: The Myth of Affluence Among Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Americans*. Drawing upon a variety of sources, Badgett uncovered some surprising information about income levels in the GLBT community.

Across the board, each of the surveys reported income for gay men as less than that of heterosexual men. On average, they reported, gay men earn 7 percent less. When Badgett moved from "raw" survey numbers and took into account job type, education, and geographic location, gay men appear to earn as much as 25 percent less than heterosexual men. Why so much less? Badgett suggested the gap may be owing to workplace discrimination.

However, the picture is partially reversed for women. Two of the three surveys reported lesbian income as higher, and the third as lower, than the income of heterosexual women.

In getting information that was more generally applicable than the marketing surveys, Badgett first looked to the U.S. Census, thanks to their new category in 1990 of "unmarried partner." Next, she examined the Yankelovich Monitor, an annual study of

Across the board, each of the surveys reported income for gay men as less than that of heterosexual men.

tistically sound samplings of the entire GLBT community. Likewise, sign-up sheets for political marches may describe the earning power of gays and lesbians well-heeled enough to afford a week off work to march on Washington. They should not be used, though, as comprehensive indicators of a diverse community's financial condition. Used to "prove" the "disproportionate political power" or special income status of the GLBT community, such misrepresentations serve political agendas and not the truth.

What is the true picture of the gay community's levels of wealth? Economics professor M.V. Lee Badgett attempted to

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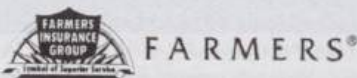
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attitudes and demographics and perhaps the most widely used commercial source of demographic data. Third, she included the National Opinion Research Center, which began including sexual partner questions in their annual General Social Survey (GSS) in 1988; a highly regarded tool in use by social scientists throughout the world, the GSS survey is an in-depth 90-minute questionnaire of 3,000 randomly selected and varying individuals. And finally, she looked to exit polls conducted at 300 polling stations on election day in 1992 and 1996, in which the Voter News Service (a service jointly owned by the major television networks) queried thousands of voters on a variety of topics, including sexual orientation and familial status. She used these four sources primarily, and then three others to validate her conclusions.

As far as household income (as opposed to individual income) is concerned, the 1990 census and the Yankelovich Monitor revealed an average difference of just over 4 percent between gay or lesbian and heterosexual household incomes, with the average gay and lesbian household at \$44,000 and heterosexual households at \$42,000.

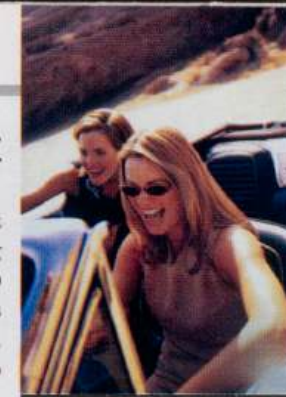
What about disposable income? Even if all incomes were equal, as they appear to be, wouldn't gay and lesbian households have

more disposable income since, by and large, they have fewer children to provide for?

Turns out, once you look at the numbers, the free-wheeling DINK (Double Income No Kids) reputation of gay households is not so clear-cut. Straight men are only about twice as likely to have kids at home as gay men (15 percent of gay men and 28 percent of heterosexual men have children under 18 at home, as measured by the Yankelovich Monitor). And with women, the difference between gay and straight is really pretty close (31 percent of lesbians versus 37 percent of heterosexual women have children under 18 at home, according to the voting exit polls).

So while gay men overall may indeed have somewhat more money than straight men to fling around, due to not having kids, they also earn significantly less—so for now, it really does seem that rumors and stereotypes about the “affluent gay community” are not, alas, true. So we get all of the harm of appearing wealthy, without any of the fun (or security) of actually having the money in our pockets and bank accounts.

With women, the difference between gay and straight is really pretty close.



Houston City Council Member Annise Parker was particularly struck by Justice Scalia's reference to “disproportionate political power” of the GLBT community. “With still less than 200 openly gay elected officials in the history of the United States out of the hundreds of thousands of elected officials around the country, I have to laugh at the myth of disproportionate political power.” She is dedicated, with

the support of Mayor Lee Brown, to extending domestic partner benefits to city employees. The issue will come before council within the next two years. Hearings will be held. Testimony will likely be heard. Testimony that gays and lesbians need no special treatment because of their affluent status. A status that, in 1994, attracted DeMarco McCullum and his friends to Montrose in search of some of their share. Which all goes to show that this myth of gay affluence is one fairy tale that cannot be permitted to live “happily ever after.” ■

When John isn't writing for OutSmart he keeps himself busy writing film reviews and essays for his website, www.johnwstiles.com.

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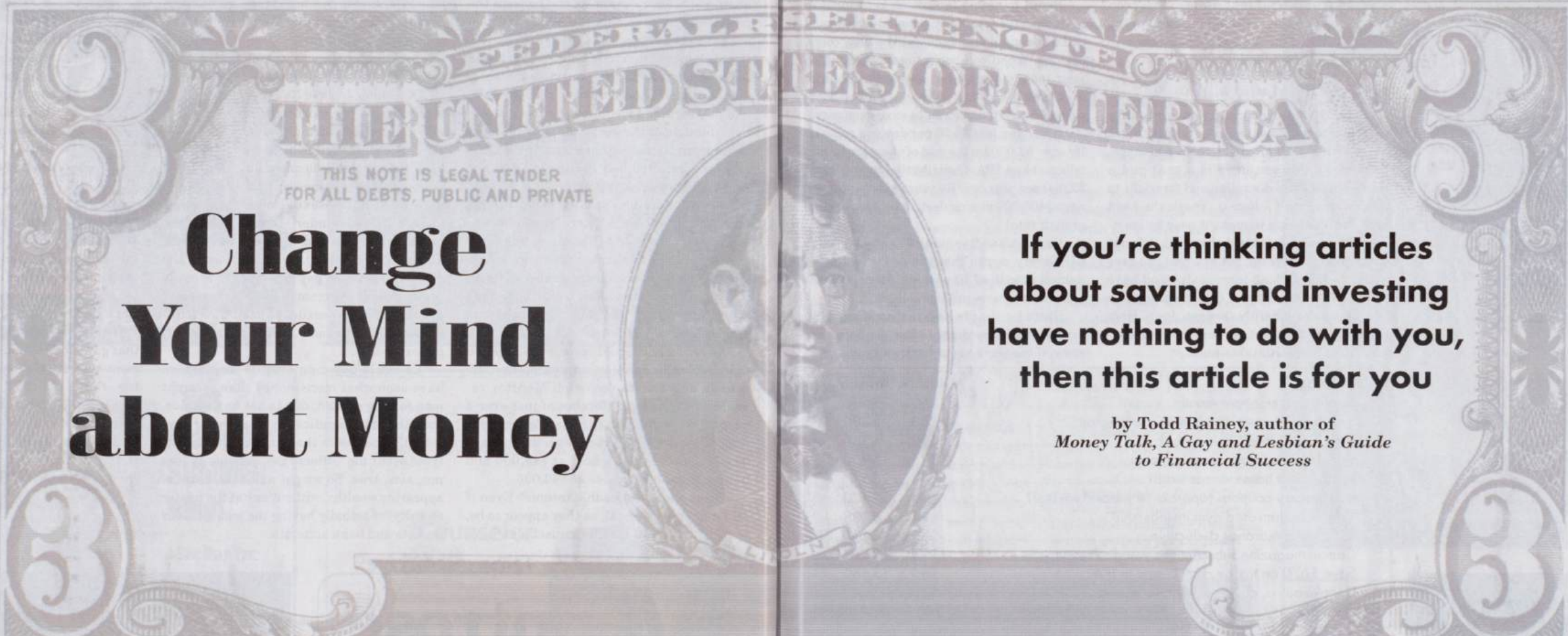
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Change Your Mind about Money

If you're thinking articles about saving and investing have nothing to do with you, then this article is for you

by Todd Rainey, author of *Money Talk, A Gay and Lesbian's Guide to Financial Success*

If you're like most people, you have a nagging thought in the back of your mind that says "someday I'm going to start saving for the future" (that nebulous place way out there in the ether). The problem is, we see it as something we have to do forever, which makes it seem too hard, so we never quite get around to it. I believe, however, that with a plan, we can do anything, one day at a time.

As a chartered financial consultant for the last 15 years, I've developed the tools and expertise to help people shift their thinking about money and realize more than a fleeting fruition of their life's labors. You can stop living from paycheck to paycheck and experience the freedom of knowing you have *more than enough* to live comfortably for a long time.

The challenge for gays

We all love the good life. We deserve a night on the town, nice clothes, a snazzy car, and a cool place to live. As gay men and

women, we have a special corner on the market on splurging. But for some, an attitude of instant gratification can stand a slight tweaking. What if we could be smart about money—and keep our *joie de vivre*?

Many of us are independent thinkers who become wildly successful entrepreneurs. We don't expect much support from the world, so we're quick on our feet and easily adapt to whatever comes along, constantly monitoring our environment. Career-wise, by the time we reach our 30s, we can usually make a good living. As contrary as it seems, becoming successful can mark the beginning of a financial downfall. Did you know that only 5 percent of the U.S. population retires with a comfortable income? Maybe you're not worried about that now, but Jill* is.

Jill's story

Ten years ago, Jill secured the job of a lifetime. Her salary doubled overnight and increased at the rate of 5 to 8 percent each

*The names of clients have been changed to protect their privacy.

year thereafter. After years of shopping discount stores, driving a clunker, and living with roommates, she moved into an ocean-front apartment, bought all the clothes she could stuff into a walk-in closet, acquired a fancy new car, and generally lived as if there was no tomorrow. But *tomorrow* came eight years later when she was laid off. "Not only did I have a mountain of credit-card debt," said Jill, "but I had nothing saved. The reality of my poor money habits sent me into despair—and bankruptcy."

Your relationship with money

Jill's story is not unusual. Her childhood role models were not the best. She told me that her alcoholic father was a compulsive spender who bought friendships with his bankroll. When he inherited a million dollars in 1950, he quit working and spent it all in only three years, ending up in prison for "bad checks." Jill's mother was a bitter woman with a victim mentality, who spent the rest of her life finding other men to pay her way.

When she came to me, Jill was getting back on her feet income-wise with her own business plus a "day job." Although she'd curbed her self-described "emotional spending" ways, she needed a plan—fast. At age 50, she wanted to know how to save for retirement. Using some of the tips described below, she has started on the road to a more secure future.

When it comes to managing money, it's not the past that's important. Whatever you learned in your life before now can be *unlearned*, and your relationship with money can be changed for the better—just by changing your thoughts and backing it up with new habits.

We're different

There are many differences in how gays spend and save money. Most of us don't have spouses to support or children to raise—meaning we usually don't have expensive weddings or ruinous divorces to worry about either. We can therefore create more dispos-

able income, which is the money left over after paying for our food, clothing, and shelter. It's the money we use to make choices, like buying a car, going on vacation, or purchasing a big-screen TV.

The trick is to use disposable income in a way that converts today's dollars into tomorrow's wealth. Whether you're saving for a vacation or for old age, you have a wonderful opportunity to achieve and appreciate a high quality of life. My own story is an example.

How I learned about money

I grew up with a dual perspective about money. My grandparents were children of the Depression—a time of struggle and lack. As adults, they over-compensated by saving and never using credit, except for their house and building the family grocery store, both of which loans were paid off years ahead of schedule. With their children, however, they took the opposite position. Whatever my father needed, my grandparents covered. He

never learned how to plan, save, or invest. With parents that always rescued him, he never understood the value of money. He always figured the family fortune would eventually remedy all his money problems. Sadly, he died deep in debt at age 62 last year—a few months short of receiving his inheritance.

Consciousness of wealth

Somehow I evolved from this by deciding that money is a tool, and not an end unto itself. According to Eric Butterworth in his 1993 book *Spiritual Economics*, "The word 'affluence' is an overworked word in our time, usually implying cars and houses and baubles of all kinds. Its literal meaning is 'an abundant flow,' and not 'things' at all. When we are consciously centered in the universal flow, we experience inner direction and the unfoldment of creative activity. Things come too, but prosperity is not just having things. It is the consciousness that attracts things."

Despite the mixed messages I had as a child, with a little hard work and my growing



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belief in a universal inheritance, I've been able to create a successful financial planning business and, at the same time, help others to benefit from my experience.

A goal and a plan

While you're deepening your prosperity consciousness, however, don't wait to get started with some practical, money-management steps. All you need is a goal and a plan—plus a little discipline and foresight to *keep on track and follow it*. That's the hard part. But I'm going to make it easy by starting with a simple, obtainable goal. It's not about giving things up, but how you can save money to realize long-term goals—and have more fun in the process. Slight changes in your lifestyle will hardly slow you down. Here are some ways to cut corners as your consciousness of wealth takes hold. →

Activity

Activity	Monthly	Annual
Skip 1 club night per month.....	\$50.....	\$600
Switch to 1 brown bag/week vs. eating out.....	\$40.....	\$480
Omit 1 cafe latte twice a week.....	\$30.....	\$360
Skip 1 dinner/movie once a month.....	\$75.....	\$900
Wash car at home vs. car wash.....	\$48.....	\$576
Use grocery coupons (approx. 14 percent savings).....	\$60.....	\$720
Cancel seldom-used gym membership.....	\$24.....	\$288
Raise auto insurance deductible.....	\$50.....	\$600
Cancel magazine subscriptions you don't read.....	\$10.....	\$120
Save \$670 on tax by contributing to IRA.....	\$55.....	\$660
Do take-out vs. dining out once a month.....	\$45.....	\$540
TOTALS	\$487	\$5844

Some tips to capitalize on your savings

- Keep your car for an additional two years after you have paid off the loan. This will save an average of \$300 per month for 24 months for a total of \$7,200 in savings. Be sure to actually continue to write the check and deposit it directly into your savings or investment accounts.

- The average mortgage is a 30-year term. You can save almost as much in interest as you paid for the home initially by paying off your mortgage over 15 or 20 years. For example, for a \$150,000 loan at 7 percent interest you can save \$80,156 in interest by paying off the mortgage in 20 rather than 30 years. Or save \$116,580 in interest by paying off the mortgage in 15 years rather than 30.

- It may be easier than you think to pay off your mortgage 15 years earlier. The difference in monthly payments between the 15- and 30-year schedule is only \$351 per month. As you can see, it would be easy to add even a small amount to your monthly mortgage payment and save many thousands of dollars over a relatively short period of time.

Begin having a long-term relationship with your money. Many people have what I call a one-night stand mentality—easy come, easy go. When you begin to save and watch your money grow, even in small amounts, over time it becomes infectious and your excitement will inspire you to save even more.

By saving just \$5.50 per day you can easily save \$2,000 by the end of the year to contribute to an IRA. Contributing to an IRA at \$2,000 per year over 30 years means you will reap \$400,000 at a modest 10 percent annual growth rate!

Can you handle saving \$15 a day? That's \$460 every month that you can invest at an annual growth of 10 percent. After 30 years you will have one million dollars!

Start by simply not buying something new to wear for a date. In the box below are some of the ways to cut back and save.

Think about the quality of life you will enjoy during your retirement, perhaps even take an early retirement, by making some of these minor adjustments today. Honestly, you'll hardly notice the changes, but I promise it will be worth it later. Just think about these facts:

- The average retiree will live 25 years in retirement.
- Only 4 percent of Americans retire on a \$40,000 annual income.
- Forty-four percent of Americans have an average monthly retirement income of \$1,200, including Social Security.
- Four-percent inflation will erode the value of the dollar by 50 percent in only 18 years.
- Money invested at 10 percent will double every 7.2 years.

Just do it

Jason* came to me about two years ago, not having a clue about saving or investing. A successful travel agent in his mid-30s, he was thinking about saving for retirement since his mother was preparing to retire with virtually

no savings. All Jason knew was he didn't want that to happen to him.

At our initial meeting, Jason thought he was starting too late and had too little to invest to make a difference. I explained that investing regularly over a period of time will grow substantially. Since he had never invested before and had virtually no savings, I suggested a Money Market Mutual Fund so he could accumulate up to three to six months of his current income into a liquid and safe vehicle before testing the waters with a more aggressive, long-term investment.

Jason began with an initial amount of \$250 and set up an automatic monthly debit of \$150 from his checking account directly into the Money Market Fund, which was affordable and did not impact his lifestyle.

Today, two years later, Jason has continued his regular monthly investment program and has accumulated nearly \$10,000 in his Money Market Fund. He's about to embark on his first test in the investment world with a systematic

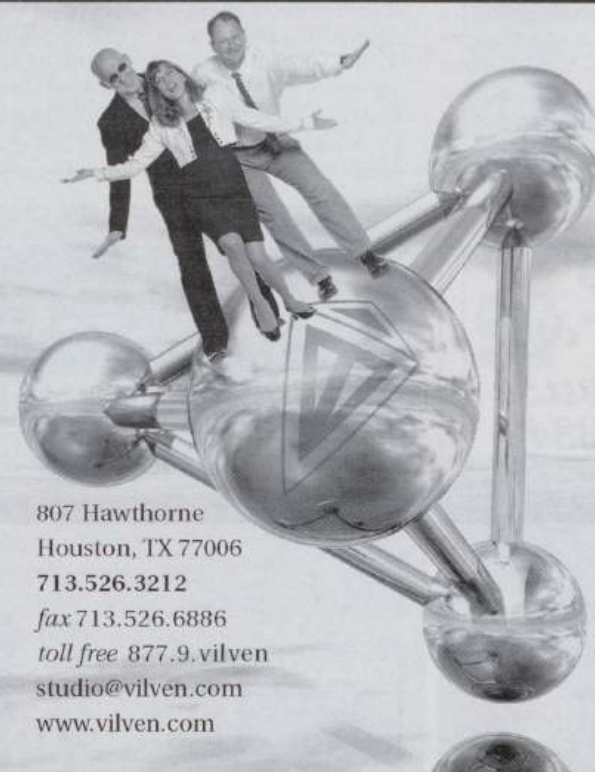
investment into a family of equity-based mutual funds.

The key has been Jason's relationship with money. He gave it a chance to grow and, like the seed of romance, it blossomed—all because he started slow and stayed within his means. By investing in a safe Money Market account, which is not subject to the ups and downs of market fluctuations, he became comfortable with the process; i.e., he had the psychological edge he needed to become a successful investor.

Like Jason, you can realize the abundant life you are destined to live. Believe it, take action, and it can happen for you, too.

Author of Money Talk, A Gay and Lesbian Guide for Financial Success, Todd Rainey is president of World Class Financial (www.worldclassfin.com) in Sherman Oaks, California. A financial service professional since 1986, Todd is a "Top of the Table" member of the Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT), which constitutes the top 1 percent worldwide of financial services industry professionals.

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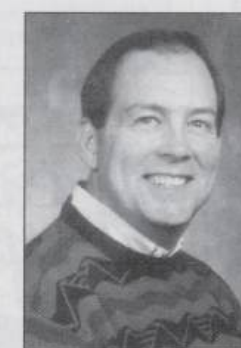
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Ram Dass

continued from page 68

One concern of mine is the rise of fundamentalism in the world. To this Ram Dass replies, "Fundamentalism is one of the last stages of enlightenment." I am so surprised to hear this (from my own place of spiritual superiority). He explains: If one is in this place of rigid righteousness that is fundamentalism and then falls, it "is so terribly humbling that it breaks open and frees the soul." How should we respond to fundamentalism? "With our intuitive hearts," he says. "Pull ourselves out of our egos and our spiritual roles and listen with care and compassion." It is responding from this place that will begin to soften the hearts of the fundamentalists.

I ask about the future of the gay movement as he sees it. Ram Dass begins by saying that there is "still so much guilt and shame to be found in the gay community. And there are so many roles that gays get caught in. . . . As for the young gay kids coming out and growing up, I say this, 'Don't label yourselves. Allow your minds and your souls to connect with everyone you meet.'" Despite a lifetime of modeling a life of compassion and acceptance, Ram Dass says he still struggles at times with being open about being gay.

Depression

(from *Still Here: Embracing Aging, Changing, and Dying*, by Ram Dass, 2000)

The sadness we often experience later in life may be just part of the Soul's evolution. Perhaps this depression is part of what Saint John calls the "dark night of the Soul," in which the Ego experiences a kind of death in order to allow the Soul to be born into its own full Awareness. . . .

There is a growing Awareness in the medi-

"I was standing in line at the adult movie theater once. I was in Chicago. And this hippie came walking by and saw me and recognized me. He stopped and started a conversation. As we talked I could see him registering where I was and his brain was scrambling to comprehend that Ram Dass, the spiritual teacher, was standing in line at the gay porn theater. In my mind I was trying to decide whether to be honest and go into the theater or to just walk down the street with him to get a cup of coffee. I chose to go into the theater. It took a lot of courage for me to do that. My own guilt and shame were so strong. It was the perfect opportunity for me to be here now!"

In his interview for *Gay Soul*, Ram Dass spoke of a longtime companion. I ask if they are still together. He answers candidly that he cannot talk about this relationship. He says, "I got into a lot of trouble for that interview. I choose to be open and honest about my life. When it affects others I must respect their privacy."

What does he think two men need to cultivate as lovers to succeed with a life together? "Be soul friends," he says. "All your differences happen at the level of the ego. If you focus on being soul friends then the ten-

cal community that a lot of what has been diagnosed and treated as depression among older people may instead be a natural process of reorientation. Whether we attribute it to cellular-biochemical mechanisms, or psychodynamics, or spiritual processes, there's a kind of drawing-inward that seems to be part of the process of aging. Not a paranoid drawing-inward; not being afraid of the world. Just a kind of deepening. I think it's probably the nearness of death that leads many people to want to reflect on what life is all about.

sion and difficulties that life bring you will take care of themselves."

We finish our conversation a few minutes early, and I summon my courage. I ask him, "Might I look into your eyes without your glasses?" He smiles, takes his glasses off, and turns toward me. I look deeply into his gaze. Melting is what I feel. My mind sharpens and slows. I breathe calmly. Some psychologists talk of body armor and personality. As I continue looking into Ram Dass's eyes, I feel long-held tensions in my body and my mind relaxing. I feel a sense of peace I've rarely known. A flood of appreciation for this man and his kindness to me fills my heart. I bow silently. "I feel that I have been in the presence of greatness today," I say. "Thank you."

Ram Dass smiles and waves his hand toward the bay shimmering outside his window. "But we are in the presence of greatness every day," he says.

As I make my exit I remember another of Gandhi's quotes that Ram Dass is fond of using: *My life is my message*. Ram Dass has often said that he is an advance scout for his generation: first with psychedelics; then eastern mysticism and spiritual practice; and now aging. The grace, candor, and humor with which he lives his life are an impressive message indeed. ■

Age is an opportunity for considering questions like "What am I doing here? What has this all been about? Where am I in the flow of all this? How do I understand it all?" Many people deny themselves that rich experience; they label their yearning to reflect about their lives as something weird or wrong. They think they're supposed to stay busy all the time. But slowing down, drawing in, can open us to some of the most fruitful experiences of life, and some of the richest gifts that aging has to offer.

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SignOut

by Lilly Roddy

Relationships get more clarity and move toward the future and away from the past as Venus goes direct on April 20. Before that, this is the time to review just what you want and what your partner wants, and then see if those things are vaguely similar. Saturn, planet of structure, work, and discipline, enters the sign of Gemini on April 20. Time for the Geminis to be serious. Okay, I was just kidding. Time for Geminis to tell everyone else they need to get serious. The Sun enters Taurus on April 19 and Earth Day follows on the 22nd. Mercury is busy this month starting off the month in Pisces, swimming over to Aries on the 6th and ramming her way into Taurus on the 21st. Venus still in Aries. Mars still in Sagittarius. Saturn joining Jupiter in Gemini. Uranus and Neptune are being friends in Aquarius. Pluto seeks the truth in Sagittarius.

Aries (March 21–April 19) This is the time of the year that is all about you. You are supposed to be thinking and talking about you. And if others need a topic of conversation, ask them what they think about you. Your energy is strong and you are ready to take on new projects. If you were going to think about the past, forget it. It has passed. You are more magnetic than usual so if you are needing some company, this would be a good month to look for people to help you celebrate your birthday. In business or personal life, this is a good time to market yourself to others. If you are already involved, get a new outfit. They will appreciate the new scenery.

Taurus (April 20–May 20) Spending time in the stable or the corral will be good for you this month. You are more sensitive than usual, and those bad people out there are not finding any lambs for the slaughter. Keep your hooves where you can see them. Life has to have a deeper meaning for you; just the normal day-to-day existence will feel very shallow this month. Work will seem very humdrum. Spend some time with your friends or get involved in some community projects. This will make you feel like your life has meaning and that you are making a difference while you are on this planet. By the 20th, open those gates! You are ready for a stampede.

Gemini (May 21–June 21) Time to get back in touch with those friends that you have not had contact with. If you are more work-inclined, then get with some networkers. You can have social contacts, business potentials, and someone to go to dinner with. Romantic relationships are very active this month. It will be like walking over those hot glowing coals: It is very exciting as long as you don't stand in one place too long. If you are in a relationship, you need an adventure. One of you gets a lion costume and the other gets the whip and the chair. But remember, you are a dual sign—change roles; you can play both parts.

Cancer (June 22–July 22) You are so work- and career-focused you would make a Capricorn jealous. You are trying to make your life

more secure. And right now you are in the public eye. Don't sneak out to the store in those rollers; you will run into everyone you know. You are experiencing a low tolerance level for bull malarkey and are very apt to speak your mind this month. And the funny thing is that, whatever you say, we will know it is right and should be said. But, *we ain't saying it.* You have that hard crab shell that bullets can't pierce. You be the messenger. Relationships did you say? How about Paintball war games with your loved one?

Leo (July 23–Aug. 22) Most of the planets are in air and fire signs this month and you are in a mellow cat mood. You are ready to lie in the sun and have someone special bring you margaritas. This is a great time for taking a break or being very diplomatic with clients and customers. Creativity is just oozing from your pores. You can soothe over the roughest areas. For those of you born July 29–August 1 and August 15–18, you are on a relationship roller-coaster ride. Fortunately by the end of the month, you will be more concerned about your career path, and that will bring you and the rest of the Leos back to level ground.

Virgo (Aug. 23–Sept. 22) Big news for the Virgins: Saturn, planet of the future and the Big Boss, moves into your career sector for the next two years. And this will make all of you Persephones happy to be working again. Lots of responsibility and public recognition are coming your way. Oh, you have to step up and be in charge. And if you have to step on your boss to get there, that is okay. They were just there holding your spot in line. Financial and career security are big on your menu this year. You won't be denied and may even end up starting your own business. Romantic relationships are very good since you are looking for practical and stable plans for the future. And if your partner knows QuickBooks, that is an extra plus for your future business and stability in your relationship.

Libra (Sept. 23–Oct. 23) Your ruling planet, Venus, is retrograding in your solar seventh house of relationships. In English, this means you are going back over stuff in your relationship that you and your partner have argued about 1,000 times before. There is no moving ahead until you get this stuff cleared up. A mediator of sorts would help—a therapist, minister . . . but not an ex. If that is your solution, might as well start splitting up the CD collection. This is true for business partnerships too. Time to get on the same page, work in the same box, run it up the flag pole, or some other business term. You are interested in finding someone you can really be open with and not just nice.

Scorpio (Oct. 24–Nov. 21) You are in an organizing mood this month. You are looking back at your past performance at work and where you are now. If there are employee problems, you are leading the pack in expressing your point of view. You are tired of hearing the "team" lecture and want the boss to be in there and be a worker as well as a leader. Some of this may stem from the fact that you are not feeling all that valued. After the 20th, you

move your laser beam to relationships. If you don't have one, you will want one. If you have one, they had better make you know it.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22–Dec. 21) Such a time of relationships for you. Some are coming to an end and some are just beginning. In established relationships such as legal partnerships and romantic commitments, you need to look at where you are going. Are you both working from the same agenda? You are not so romantic as you are looking to use your energy for practical establishment of a foundation that can carry you and those loved ones through your later years of AARP and Dentu-Cream. If you are not involved, you are looking at those potential partners with a very discriminating eye. You will move with caution and certainty.

Capricorn (Dec. 22–Jan. 19) Home projects and family outings take the spotlight for you this month. Just what sort of history and traditions are you establishing for you and your special lifestyle? Invite those friends and family members in for an early barbecue. Or plunge into an early spring cleaning. Look in all those boxes that you put in the attic and forgot about. Take a trip down Nostalgic Boulevard. This could look like moving, redecorating, or going to visit your parents. You need some connections to your roots. Plant a vegetable garden. That will help give you the earthy connection and sense of spiritual rootedness that you are needing.

Aquarius (Jan. 20–Feb. 18) You are more talkative than usual this month, sharing things about your personal life that you normally keep to yourself. Your friends are probably wondering just who you are. Friendly but reserved, you ordinarily keep most of this data to yourself. Too many experiences with your family taught you that anything you exposed about yourself would be used against you. This is a time to test that theory and maybe eliminate those who treat you like your family did, instead of resorting to old behavior. At the end of the month, you will want your home to be a more comfortable place. Time for a trip to the home-decorating center.

Pisces (Feb. 19–March 20) Big changes at work this year. And this is just the first round of changes. Some of the plans will take you far away from where you have been working. You are being faced with a lot of decisions about whether or not you want to stay and ride out the changes. Money issues are being rubbed in your face this month. If you have made the decision, you are wondering if you made the right one. But staying still doesn't seem like an option. Behind all this are some basic shifts in your roots and your family. You are re-establishing your foundation. But this time, you get to choose the one you want and not have to accept the one you came with.



Lilly Roddy is a Houston-based astrologer. She can be reached at lillyeath@aol.com or www.cybersim.com/hermes or <http://communities.msn.com/LillysAstrologicalPad>.



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