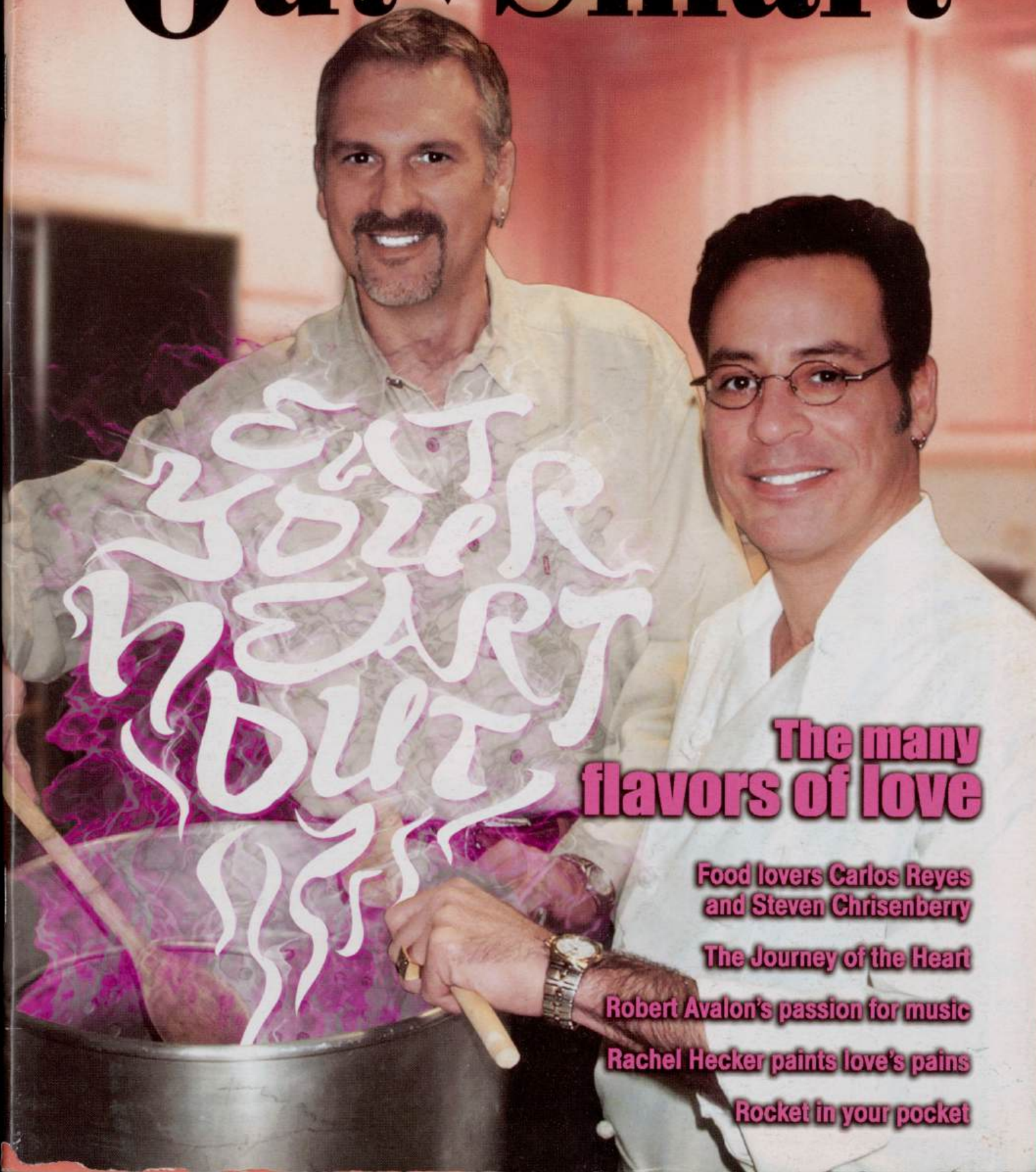


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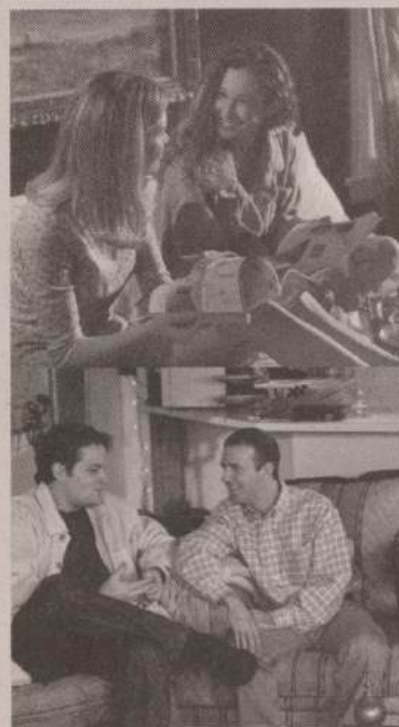
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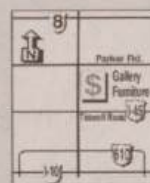
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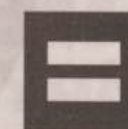
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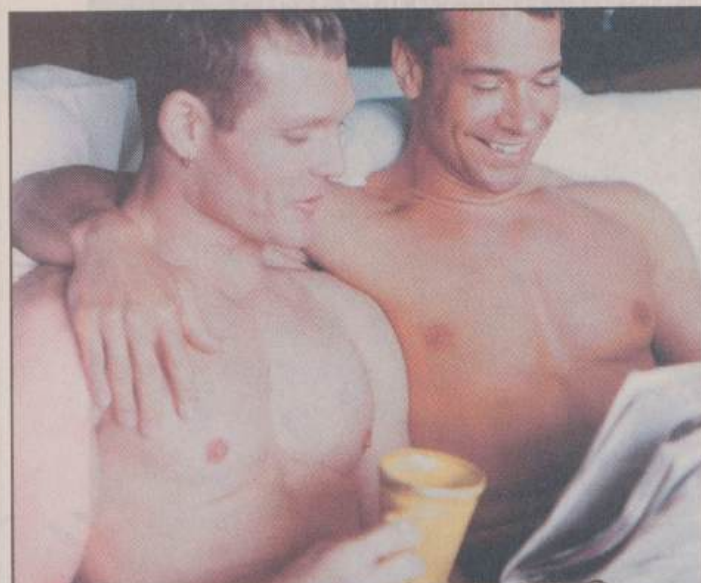
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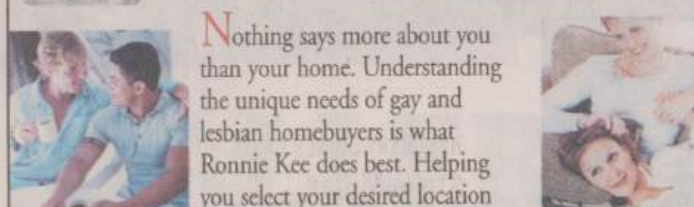
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National Advertising Representative

Rivendell Marketing Co., Inc. • 212/242-6863

Printed by AdGraphics



Publishers of OutSmart Magazine
3406 Audubon Place • Houston, TX 77006
713/520-7237 • 713/522-3275 Fax

Subscriptions: \$23/12, \$40/24 Issues

E-mail address: letters@outsmartmagazine.com

Website address: www.outsmartmagazine.com

OutSmart is published monthly. Estimated readership in Houston and surrounding areas is 60,000. Up&Out Communications is not responsible for claims and practices of advertisers. The opinions and views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the staff or management of OutSmart. Inclusion in OutSmart does not imply sexual orientation. ©2002 by Up&Out Communications. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without permission of the publisher is strictly prohibited. Unsolicited material is accepted. No manuscript returned without SASE.

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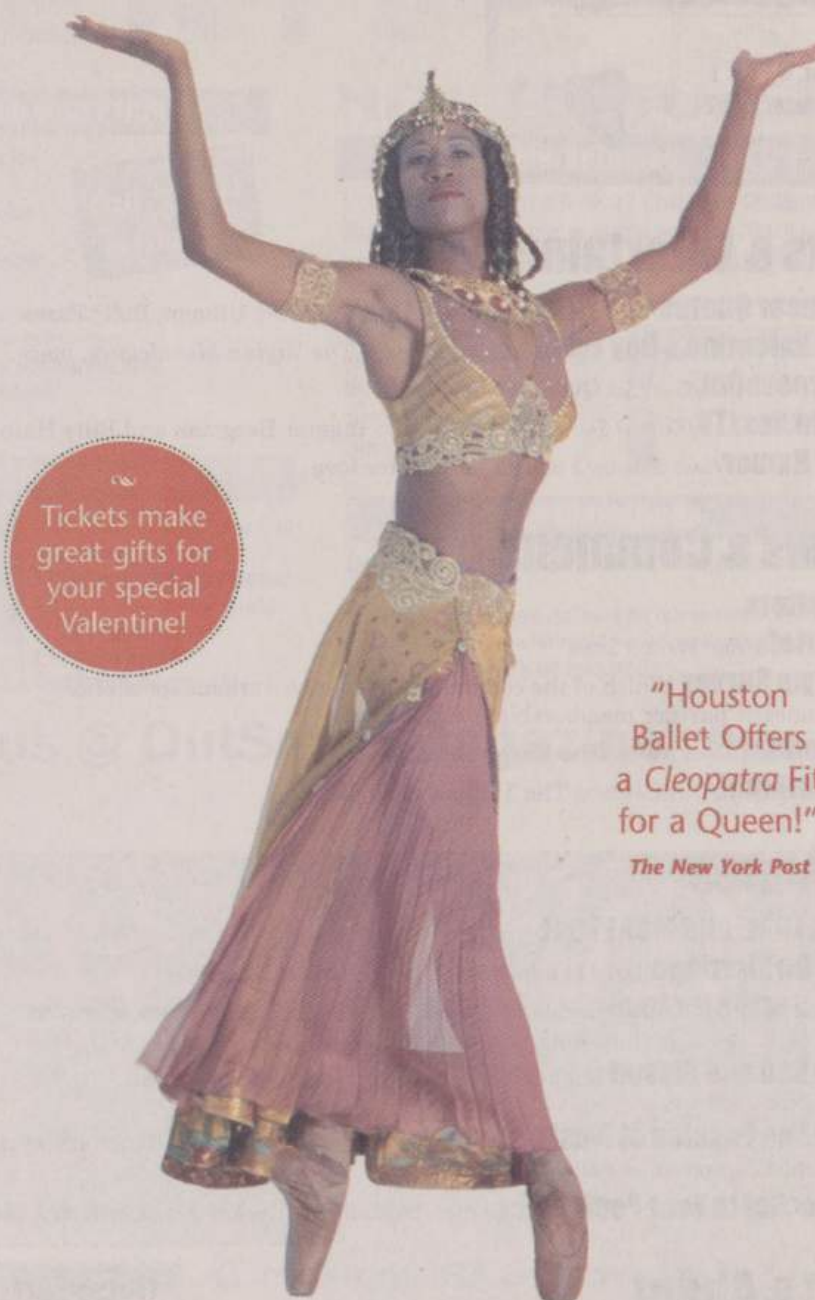


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Eat Your Heart Out: Carlos Reyes and Steven Chisenberry cook it up at Don Carlos Catering and DC in the Heights
Photograph/Design: BJ Smith

Heart art this page: Teodoro Estrada

Letters

ARE GAY JOKES FUNNY?

Conan O'Brien:

"A Texas court has upheld a law that makes it illegal for two men to have sex together in their home. Which explains why gay men all over Texas are having sex on their front lawns."

"According to a zoology journal, researchers have discovered gay orangutans living in Asia. Apparently, you can tell which orangutans are gay—they're the ones who throw their feces like a girl."

"Britney Spears has to re-shoot some scenes for her upcoming movie because test audiences didn't like long scenes of Britney in nothing but her underwear. Apparently, the test audiences were made up entirely of gay orangutans."

(published January OutSmart, "Queer Quotes," edited by Blase DiStefano)

[About Conan O'Brien's jokes quoted in OutSmart: I admit that I have never liked his show and rarely watch it, but I have never heard him make a racial joke about African Americans, Hispanics, or Asians. Apparently, some people don't mind hearing a "fag joke" because we are not fully accepted in society. If we ever want to be considered equal, we need to start standing up for our rights. Dr. Martin Luther King did not stand behind a podium and say, "It's okay to drink from a separate water fountain." No, he said, "We will not drink from different water fountains." Not until we start saying "No, that's not right" and insist on standing up for our rights, will we ever have equal rights.

I have often found out that we (GLBT community) are our own worst enemy.

We say that we are stereotyped, but within the community we ridicule and put down each other. I disagree that gay jokes on TV are considered progress. Real progress is when someone's sexual orientation is not even an issue.

Comments can be mailed to Viewer Relations, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY, 10112, or directed to www.latenight@NBC.com.

Steven Bratsen
Santa Fe, Texas

Steven,

I appreciate your passion and your willingness to write letters in defense of our community very much. I just happen to disagree with the idea that Conan is a homophobe.

These jokes aren't mean-spirited evil, hateful "fag" jokes. They are lighthearted funny "gay" jokes that stemmed from a recent public announcement about homosexuality and orangutans. The fact that people feel comfortable making jokes about GLBT people on TV is a sign of progress in my book.

I think it's important that we pick our battles wisely and that we only "attack" those who "attack" us with jokes that are meant to hurt and harm us. I saw the show that these jokes were delivered on, and I laughed continuously through them. It is my opinion that they were told in good spirit with a lighthearted delivery and a playful tone.

David Morales
New Orleans

(Editor's note: This dialogue was first published on the Houston PFLAG e-mail discussion group.) ■

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FEBRUARY 2002

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WONDERFUL HEIGHTS TREASURE was probably a farm house. High ceilings, exposed beams, wood floors, lots of windows - not your typical bungalow! Master bedroom has sitting area. Living room has raised area for a piano, etc. Little room on back was old second bath & could be restored. Huge fully-fenced lot also features koi pond. Call Bob Derr to see the great home! \$164,900. 713/875-7049.

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Robert Sabuda (creator of children's books)

(The Advocate, 12/25/01, Michael Giltz)

... Sabuda has been open from the start of his career. He even includes the fact in his press biography, sent out to reviewers, reporters, and librarians.

Has this candor cost him? Far from it. ...

Sabuda thinks there's one obvious reason that his career comfort level keeps improving. "Children's publishing is populated by 97% women," he offers, "and they have a very different perspective on things, I feel, than men do."

Reba McEntire

(Globe, 1/8/02)

"As a female, I can relate to gay men better. ... They're very good listeners and they're very easygoing," she explains. "I've got tons of gay friends—and not only from the entertainment business. ... If people would just let them be themselves, live their own lives and not be judgmental," she says, "the world would be a better place to live."

Edgar Rodriguez (former Sgt., NYPD)

(The Advocate, 1/22/02, Jessica DuLong)

Whereabouts on September 11: In Los Angeles for a convention for gay police officers when he learned the first plane had hit. He worked at ground zero the following week.

His story: "I feel there's less prejudice now. People recognize there were gay cops and gay firefighters lost in the buildings. And gay and lesbian officers who survived realized how short life is and how petty their fears are. People are coming out in larger numbers. I see captains coming out as a result of the World Trade Center. They don't want to die in secret and have their lovers suffer in silence."

Gay TV

Re: a recent press release about Showtime and MTV discussing the possibility of creating a gay channel.

• (Politically Incorrect, 1/14/02, ABC)

Genevieve Wood (spokeswoman for the Family Research Council): ... What if we have a network of people who decide, "Hey, I like pedophilia, and I'm going to have a network based on that. ..."

Mark Walberg (host of *Temptation Island*): I just hate that you're putting pedophilia and homosexuality in the same sort of ...

Wood: No, I'm not. ... I'm saying you're basing it on behavior.

Bill Maher (host of *Politically Incorrect*): It's called the priesthood.

• (Entertainment Weekly, 1/18/02, Jim Mullen)

Showtime and MTV are reportedly in talks to create a gay television network. They're developing an original series called *Barbra Streisand on Ice*.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

(1997, Today's Out Look Calendar)

110 YEARS AGO

Bisexual poet and dramatist Edna St. Vincent Millay was born on **February 22, 1892**. Once, when she asked a psychologist's advice about her recurring headaches, the doctor inquired into her relations with women. Millay replied, "Oh, you mean I'm homosexual! Of course, I am, and heterosexual, too, but what's that got to do with my headache?"



Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Dolly Parton & Tracey Ullman

(both women appeared on BBC's Parkinson, 12/01)

Tracey Ullman: I love the gay stewards on the airplanes. I love the gay ... some of them are gay, let's face it. I love 'em. But they're only gay in the galley—they say to me [she purses her lips], "Ooo, that bitch in 3B." ... And then when they're [with the passengers], they've got to be heterosexual [she lowers her voice], "Would you like a cocktail, sir?" ... I've got more bloody upgrades from those gay guys. I love 'em. ...

Michael Parkinson to Dolly Parton:

There's always speculation about your sex life, and there are always allegations with your [female] assistant. ... There's always speculation about this lesbian affair with her.

Dolly Parton: ... [We] have been best friends since we were in the third grade. And her mother and my mother were friends. Her father and my father used to drink together, work the fields together. And she's very shy, and I was always very outrageous. We just became best friends when we were little girls. We went all through high school together, took all the same classes. When we graduated, she came to Nashville ... well, actually, she went to the

Tracey Ullman (seen here from her 1998 book *Tracey Takes On*, as gay flight attendant Trevor Ayliss, based on a retired steward): Does she love gay stewards?

Air Force for four years. ... But we made a deal when we were little that when I got to be a star, she would come work for me. ... or with me. So we are still best friends, and we have never been

lovers, and that is the truth. And this is not a Bill Clinton—I have never ... I have never had sex with that woman ... never. ...

Ullman: My best friend is with me tonight. ... We're very physical with each other and grab hold of each other. And people can misinterpret that any time they want. I don't care.

Parton: But I wouldn't be ashamed of it if it was true. She's a great gal.

Parkinson: But that's the price you pay. ...

Parton: The way I look, people think I'd sleep with anybody.

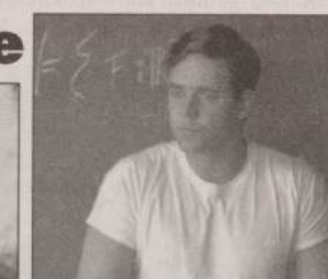


Gertrude Stein & Alice B. Toklas

(1997, Today's Out Look Calendar)

On Valentine's Day in 1993, the Lesbian Avengers erected a papier-mâché sculpture of Alice B. Toklas beside the statue of her longtime lover, Gertrude Stein, in New York City's Bryant Park.

Russell Crowe



The straight Russell Crowe played gay in 1995's *The Sum of Us* (pictured left as the son of Jack Thompson). Is he playing bi in the recent *A Beautiful Mind* (above)?

(Entertainment Weekly, 1/4/02, Benjamin Svetkey)

Benjamin Svetkey: *A Beautiful Mind* is based on Sylvia Nasar's biography of [John Forbes Nash Jr.], but there's a lot of material in the book that didn't make it into the film. Anything you regret losing? Russell Crowe: A certain adventurousness in his sexuality.

You mean the speculation in the book that he may have had homosexual tendencies?

Exactly. And that was a big question for us, how far to go into that. It was relevant to his character, but we didn't want to imply that there was a possibility that schizophrenia and homosexuality are related. That would be ridiculous.

So you decided not to put it in the movie?

Oh, it's in there. It depends on how you watch it. There's a scene where Nash is walking down a corridor at Princeton and he fixes a young man walking towards him with a gaze. The extra turns around and goes, Wow, what was that about? You don't need a whole scene for everything—there are grace notes that you can do.

Valentine's Day

by Blase DiStefano

FEBRUARY 14, 2002

Seeing, singing, and signing

THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES Debuting off-off-Broadway in 1996, *The Vagina Monologues* went on to win an Obie Award, but that was only the beginning for this one-woman show. Eve Ensler's controversial work subsequently sparked a global movement to end violence against women and was staged in theatrical productions around the world, with a host of celebrities participating in the performances. (Ensler performed her show at Theater LaB Houston in 1997.) • The feature-length HBO documentary recaptures the intimacy of the original show, presenting Ensler in a solo performance of her revolutionary play. It also explores the creative impetus behind the show and features Ensler conducting new and revealing "vagina-related" interviews with a cross-section of women, as well as detailing how the play went on to achieve extraordinary popular and critical acclaim. • Before creating *The Vagina Monologues*, Ensler was curious to know what women thought about their vaginas, and polled friends. Astounded by their replies, she expanded her search to include more than 200 women from all walks of life. • For the HBO special, Ensler interviewed a broad range of women on camera, just as she did prior to writing her play: "What would your vagina say if it could talk?" Ensler asked. Among the replies: "Slow down"; "Oh, no!"; "Accept gifts." • In addition to winning an Obie Award, *The Vagina Monologues* was nominated for Drama Desk and Helen Hayes awards. Among the celebrities who have participated in performances of the play are Glenn Close, Cate Blanchett, Winona Ryder, Susan Sarandon, Whoopi Goldberg, Lily Tomlin, Kate Winslet, Melanie Griffith, and Calista Flockheart. • Debuts **Thursday, Feb. 14**, on HBO.



Eve Ensler in *The Vagina Monologues*

Sad and Pissed

Sad and Pissed" is a one-woman art show of works by Rachel Hecker. A reception will be held **Thursday, Feb. 14**, 6-8 p.m. at the Texas Gallery, 2109 Peden, 713/524-1593. The exhibition will run Feb. 1-28 at the gallery. (Read more about Hecker and see some of her work on page 44 of this issue of *OutSmart*.)



Forbidden Love in the 17th Century

Based on a true story, *Love, above the reach of time* tells the tale of a love that conquered time, social influences, and tradition. The heroines are two Anglo-Irish noblewomen who fell deeply in love at a time when same-sex relationships were considered unthinkable and evil. In an unprecedented move, these women eloped to the Welsh countryside and lived in an undisguised romantic relationship for 50 years, becoming internationally famous while doing so. • Befitting Valentine's Day, author Anna M. Curren is visiting Houston to promote her novel. She will be signing her book on **Thursday, Feb. 14**, at 7 p.m. at Barnes and Noble, 7626 Westheimer, 713/786-6016. (Her other stops at Texas Barnes and Noble venues: Plano on Feb. 9, Irving on Feb. 11, Austin on Feb. 12, and San Antonio on Feb. 13.) • *Love, above the reach of time* is published by Ladyepress.



ENSLE: JOAN MARCUS; ANDREWS: 20TH CENTURY FOX; HECKER: B.J. SMITH; CURREN: LADYEPRESS

Sound of Music Karaoke Night

Pull out your guitar and put on your best nun's gown, or dress as your favorite *Sound of Music* character and sing songs from the show—it's "Sound of Music Karaoke Night" at JR's Bar & Grill. One lucky winner will co-host an actual performance of the *Sing-A-Long Sound of Music* show; five runners-up will win a pair of tickets. • The "Sound of Music Karaoke Night" starts at 10 p.m. on **Thursday, Feb. 14**, at JR's Bar & Grill, 804 & 808 Pacific, 713/521-2519. • For more on the *Sing-A-Long Sound of Music*, see page 60 of this issue of *OutSmart*.

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future
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action
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promise
choice
reality
life
action

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Because it's easy to live with. VIRACEPT's easy dosing schedule and manageable side effects have been helping all kinds of people continue to lead their lives on their own terms.

Because it saves future options. When choosing a treatment plan, it's important to consider what options you will have in the future. Studies show taking VIRACEPT early on leaves you with choices in treatment for later. Ask your doctor about your future with VIRACEPT.

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nelfinavir mesylate
TABLETS AND ORAL POWDER

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. HIV drugs do not cure HIV infection or prevent you from spreading the virus.

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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QUEER TO THE CORE

Prick up your ears, all the pissed-off punks aren't straight.
Welcome to the artistic and political battlefield of Queercore



that Durham, North Carolina, is home to Queercore's strongest record label, Mr. Lady Records and Video. Headed by Kaia Wilson and Tammy Rae Carland, Mr. Lady represents two of the biggest bands in Queercore today, the Butchies and LeTigre. With big, thick guitars and pounding drums, the Butchies capture the cur-

rent sound of punk rock, while LeTigre creates a sonic dance soundscape with modern-day electronics.

Queercore's strength lies in its bands' unwavering willingness to put their sexuality first in their music. Instead of not making an issue out of their sexual preference, it becomes *the* issue. If straight-edge punk bands can sing explicitly about sex and their angst at being spoonfed a commercial lifestyle, then so can queer-punk bands . . . they just have to sing a little louder.

So prick up your ears, Queercore is the sound of the new gay subculture.

Special note: Le Tigre will be in Houston on March 1 at Rice University's Grand Hall. Tickets (\$10) can be purchased at the door. For more information, visit www.handsuphouston.com.

By day, Chris Sill works as a buyer at Soundwaves; by night, he spins tunes at Rich's. He can be reached at csill@infohwy.com or www.djchrisill.com.



Not all lesbians like folk music and not all gay men like dance music and show tunes.

gry, its songs loud and speedy. From Germany, Low End Models mix metal, techno, hardcore, and punk. The all-male Pansy Division is no more, but the men are represented by such Queercore bands as the tragically hip Limpwrist and the Nebraska-raised duo of Fagatron.

As for the capital of Queercore, one would think of the obvious, San Francisco or New York. Wrong, too conventional. Try the Pacific Northwest area of Portland and Seattle. Even more surprising is the fact

It was 1994, and indie-rock band Green Day took a little known all-gay band Pansy Division on tour with them. The raucous indie crowds were used to lyrics that were as sexually abrasive as they were politically defiant. But although these punk-inspired bands were on the edge, it had always been a straight edge. Now Pansy Division was out and screaming, "I looked into his eyes, and let him sodomize me with his dick of death."

Welcome Queercore. Once called "homocore," Queercore is an outgrowth of punk and such anti-mainstream bands of the late '70s and early '80s as the Ramones and the Sex Pistols with their anarchistic charge against commercialism. After Pansy Division's appearance on the national scene, the Queercore movement gained legions of fans both gay and straight. For gay listeners, it's a call to arms against the stereotypical gay mainstream lifestyle. Not all lesbians like folk music and not all gay men like dance music and show tunes. Younger gays and lesbians find that Queercore embraces their anger toward adopting the gay culture that surrounds them and against growing up in the era of AIDS.

As with the punk rock movement, Queercore is anti anything conventional. Does the male world predominate in conventional gay culture? In Queercore, the women

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	Body Weight Lb	Number of Level Scoops*	Number of Level Teaspoons†	Number of Tablets
7 to <8.5	15.5 to <18.5	4	1	—
8.5 to <10.5	18.5 to <23	5	1 1/4	—
10.5 to <12	23 to <26.5	6	1 1/2	—
12 to <14	26.5 to <31	7	1 3/4	—
14 to <16	31 to <35	8	2	—
16 to <18	35 to <39.5	9	2 1/4	—
18 to <23	39.5 to <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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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)
Epidur (lamivudine, 3TC)
Zerit (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 is unchanged. A dose adjustment is not needed when VIRACEPT is used 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.

Agouron Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
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VIRACEPT®
(nelfinavir mesylate)
Tablets and Oral Powder
Information for Patients
about VIRACEPT® (VI-ra-cept)
Generic Name: nelfinavir (nei-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.

Alert: Find out about medicines that should NOT be taken with VIRACEPT. Please also read the section "MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH VIRACEPT."

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 should be taken together with other antiretroviral drugs such as Retrovir® (zidovudine, AZT), EpiVir® (lamivudine, 3TC), or Zerit® (stavudine, d4T). 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 foods 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.

Medicines you should not take with VIRACEPT:

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



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William Haines was America's number-one male box-office draw in 1930. And he was openly gay! In this superb American Movie Classics (AMC) documentary, *Out of the Closet, Off the Screen: The William Haines Story*, we find out that only a few years later, MGM head Louis B. Mayer forced Haines to choose between Hollywood and his boyfriend Jimmie Shields. That Haines chose his lover tells you where his priorities lay. After all, Haines eventually stayed with Shields for 47 years. • After Mayer's nasty ultimatum, Haines turned to his hobby, interior design. His career change was a success... with the help of Joan Crawford. In his early years, Haines had helped Crawford, and they became (and stayed) very close friends. It seems that although Crawford wasn't much of a mother, she was a very supportive friend. • *The William Haines Story*, narrated by the gay-friendly Stockard Channing, premieres **Tuesday, Feb. 5**, at 9 p.m. (and 11 p.m.) on AMC, with repeat airings during the month. For a schedule, visit www.amctv.com. —Blase DiStefano

BOTH HAINES PHOTOS USED WITH PERMISSION OF AMERICAN MOVIE CLASSICS

Movies

BERGMAN'S BEST

Rice Cinema brings in newly struck prints

In 1966, Ingmar Bergman created what would soon be considered one of the most important films in cinema history. *Persona* would go on to inspire generations of filmmakers with its stark yet dreamlike tale of two women who violently exchange personalities. After *Persona* (Liv Ullman & Bibi Andersson), Bergman would go on to direct three more films of equal ambition, all starring Liv Ullman and Max Von Sydow: *Hour of the Wolf*, *Shame*, and *The Passion of Anna*. Rice Cinema brings to Houston these four titles in sparkling prints newly struck by MGM Studios. Additionally, Bergman's seminal masterpiece, *Persona*, will be featured in a newly translated uncut director's version never before released in the U.S. Also showing is *Light Keeps Me Company*, Carl-Gustaf Nykvist's moving portrait of his father, the late Sven Nykvist, cinematographer to many of Bergman's films. • Tickets are \$5 (\$4 students/seniors). For more information, call the film information line at 713/348-4853 or visit www.ruf.rice.edu/~cinema. —Kristian Salinas



Bibi Andersson (l) and Liv Ullman in *Persona*

Fri., Feb. 15: *Shame* at 7 p.m.; *Light Keeps Me Company* at 9.
Sat., Feb. 16: *Passion of Anna* at 7; *Light Keeps Me* at 9.
Sun., Feb. 17: *Light Keeps Me* at 5; *Hour of the Wolf* at 7.
Wed., Feb. 20: *Shame* at 7; *Light Keeps Me* at 9.
Thu., Feb. 21: *Passion of Anna* at 7; *Hour of the Wolf* at 9.
Fri. & Sat., Feb. 22 & 23: *Persona* at 7 & 9.
Sun., Feb. 24: *Persona* at 5 & 7.
Wed. & Thu., Feb. 27 & 28: *Persona* at 7 & 9.

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January 9, 23
February 6
March 6
April 10

UH System at Cinco Ranch
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6:30-9:30 p.m.

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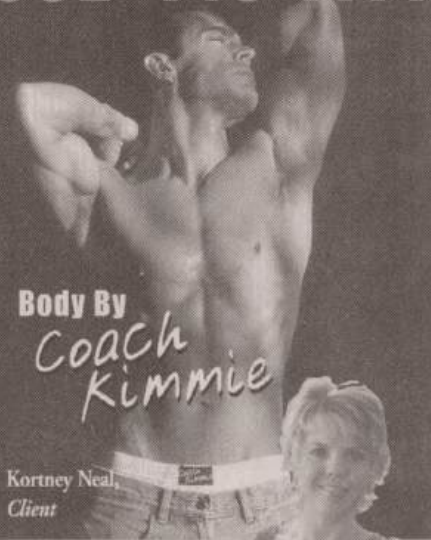


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Humor
by Sally Sheklow

SPUD LOVE

Sometimes "forever" starts with a baked potato and a pair of huge blue eyes

I wasn't looking for love. Having a fling was fine, but nothing long-term for me, thanks. My "Love Forever" relationships had always ended in ugly scenes and late-night door slamming. Who would want that to last forever?

On our first-six-month-a-versary, my sweetie gave me a card asking "Wanna try for another six months?" I hit the roof. "Quit future tripping. Don't lay any expectations on me!" I was hopelessly attracted to trouble—a shoo-in for Miss Codependency. I couldn't trust that I had recovered enough to make good choices, so my sweetie and I shared a whole year of sleepovers before I started using the word "Love." Even longer before "forever" passed my lips.

Fourteen years later, I'm easy with "love forever." The moment I changed is hard to pinpoint. Maybe it was when my old dog died

and my sweetie stepped up to the number-one loyal companion spot. Maybe it was weathering tough times without turning on each other that let me relax into love. Or maybe it just kept being good, so I stayed.

My "love forever" came disguised as your run-of-the-mill, crotch-throbbing attraction. About a month before our first night together, the future love of my life wanted to interview me on the radio show she hosted, to talk about the Gay Lobby Day I'd just attended in Washington, D.C. I was nervous, but she was cool and competent, a woman in charge. I couldn't take my eyes off those chubby little fingers diddling the console knobs. During a break she slipped her headphones off and commented, "You're shy, aren't you?" Wonga wonga!

Something got me about her seeing my vulnerability—the tender inner me behind

my out-n'-proud persona. I drove away from the radio station vowing she'd be my next fling... only for the sex, of course.

I invited her to stuff envelopes at the nonprofit where I volunteered. She had a meeting. I asked her if she wanted to go to the Pride rally. She was fixing her sink. A movie? She had a dentist appointment. At a potluck she announced, "I've got a free pair of tickets to a concert, anybody want to go?"

"I will!" If I hadn't been so gaga, I might have noticed her trepidation. But I was full speed ahead. I tried to make a good impression in my vintage Hawaiian shirt, a poor choice for the chilly auditorium with its cold metal seats. I scooted my chair toward her, hoping to share some body heat. Was it my imagination, or did she scoot away? I scooted again. She did, too. When we gave a standing ovation, I sidled closer. She stepped into the aisle.

It was pouring rain when the concert let out, and we had to run across the parking lot to her truck. I hoped she'd put her warm arm around me or at least lay one of those plump little paws on my thigh. I wanted to connect, win her over, get in her pants. When a huge RV passed us, I said, "Ah, that's my fantasy, to have a big camper, drive out into the boonies, and have loud sex."

Silence. She didn't say another word for the whole 45-minute drive home.

I made myself wait a week to call her up. "Hi, I just harvested my potatoes. Want to come over for dinner?"

"Sure, that sounds exciting."

Potatoes? Exciting? This from the chair scooter? Maybe she finally ran out of excuses. Maybe she had a thing for spuds.

We ate our baked potatoes. She was relaxed, warm, funny. Why hadn't I ever noticed those huge blue eyes? I served her another potato.

After dinner, we took a walk, held hands, talked, and laughed. We hugged goodnight at my gate. Full body press. Progress! The next night we went to the Gay and Lesbian Center benefit dance. We made out in the car and went home to my place. We have been together pretty much every night since.

After 14 years, even I will admit this isn't a fling. The love keeps unfolding—like one of those party-favor balls you unravel slowly so you don't miss any of the little prizes tucked between the layers. Who wouldn't want it to last forever? ■



Sally Sheklow lives and writes in the Pacific Northwest. She is one of the four funny lesbians who founded and perform in WYMPROV!, Oregon's award-winning improv troupe. Contact her at sally@wymprov.com.

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Pride Marches On

After almost 20 years of being at the center of Houston's Pride celebrations and 10 years as head of the Pride Committee, Jack Valinski resigned his position as executive director of the Pride Committee of Houston. The Pride Committee has elected Kenneth Donnelly to fill the position.

After moving to Houston in 1981 ("the day Kathy Whitmire was elected," Valinski says), Valinski quickly became involved in both KPFT and the Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus. "Those were the days when five people did everything," Valinski remembers, so it was a natural step to get involved with the parade, which had only just started in 1979, after a Pride celebration in 1978. For years Valinski's role was to produce the Pride Guide. But in the early '90s, when the chair Felix Garcia had to step down, Valinski and Carol Clark said they'd fill the void.



Jack Valinski appeared on OutSmart's Pride 2000 cover with members of the Pride Committee. Peeking out from behind Valinski is Ken Donnelly, the new executive director.

Under Valinski's leadership, the Pride Committee became an official nonprofit, and, most significantly, the dramatic decision was made to move the parade to the night, making it the country's first nighttime Pride parade.

"It grew by three times after that," Valinski said. "But more than just the numbers, it was the excitement. Stonewall happened at night, the community originally came together at night. It just sounded really exciting and different."

Valinski cited burnout as the biggest factor in making the difficult decision to step down. He continues to be involved with Queer Voices every Monday evening on KPFT 90.1, where he is executive producer.

"Although I had heard of this decision some time back, seeing it in print sometimes is like getting the pie in the face," said longtime community politico Carl Whitmarsh. "Jack is and has been the real 'PRIDE' in the Houston celebrations, and few, if any, of us would have given to the community or the organization as he has. For that effort alone, this community will always be in his debt."

Hardy-Garcia Resigns

After eight years at the helm of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby (LGRL) of Texas, executive director Dianne Hardy-Garcia has announced her resignation. After incredibly long hours and hard work—which pressure led to the breakup last year with her longtime partner—she said she's just ready to take a break from the organization.

Hardy-Garcia is best known for her work against hate crimes. "Nicholas West was killed the first month I got my job," Hardy-Garcia told the *Dallas Voice*, referring to the brutal murder of a man in Tyler. Rather than accept the status quo and let the murder get buried on the back pages of the local newspaper, Hardy-Garcia organized a rally that drew national TV coverage and politicians and activists from around the state. (When Hardy-Garcia went to fill out the forms to get a permit for the rally, the clerk seemed confused by the word "lesbian." "They were, like, 'Lesbene? Ma'am, how do y'all spell that?'" Hardy-Garcia reported in David Mixner's book *Brave Journeys*. "That's when I really knew where I was.") From there she began researching the many gay-bashing murders that had already happened, but which had gone relatively unnoticed.

Speaking about another gay murder, this one in Midland, Mixner quotes State Rep. Glen Maxey: "Dianne took this obscure crime that was pretty much thrown away in the general public's mind—nobody paid attention to it—and developed it into a major news story. It's

just remarkable the kind of things she has done, again and again, in that context. Making it very visible, making people understand, bringing varied people to the table."

After tireless lobbying—including a significant trip to visit the family of James Byrd Jr. after he had been so horrifically killed—Hardy-Garcia saw the passage of the James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act last year, thanks largely to her relentless efforts.

Under Hardy-Garcia's leadership, LGRL stopped the Texas version of the Defense of Marriage Act three times. Her vision and organizing skills prevented the passage of legislation that would have barred gays and lesbians from adopting or providing foster care. She organized the first passage of the Non-Discrimination in Education bill that included sexual orientation

and gender identity in the Texas House of Representatives.

Hardy-Garcia is the former co-chair of the Federation of LGBT State Organizations and was the executive director of the Millennium March on Washington. She served as co-chair of the Austin Lesbian/Gay Political Caucus, and spearheaded the effort that gained domestic partnership benefits for City of Austin employees and established a statewide domestic partnership registry in the state of Texas.

During Hardy-Garcia's tenure, LGRL tripled its membership, greatly increased its major donor contributions, and quadrupled the organization's budget.



Dianne Hardy-Garcia appeared on OutSmart's cover in 1995.

STAMP for Your Rights

Queer students and allies interested in working on GLBT rights in Texas's schools are invited to the next Students, Teachers, and Allies Making Progress (STAMP) Conference in Austin, Fri.-Sat., Feb. 22-23.

STAMP's workshops and programs are designed to give students the tools they need to combat homophobia and discrimination within their community. Speakers include State Rep. Glen Maxey and Dianne Hardy-Garcia.

The conference will focus on the Non-Discrimination in Education Bill. Currently, neither Texas nor any school districts have discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Registration is free, and all are invited. To register, contact the Lesbian Gay/Rights Lobby of Texas at 512/474-5475 or info@lgrl.org.



On January 2, community brunch phenomenon La Strada burned.

Photographs by Debbie Maurelli

Olympic Body Work

A Houston massage therapist will be in the middle of the Winter Olympics in Utah getting a hands-on experience of the athletic event.

When Jeffrey Salazar read that a volunteer team of massage therapists was being recruited for the Winter Olympics, he knew this was one service project he could give himself to heart, soul . . . and hands.

Salazar had to apply for the privilege of serving on the 2002 Winter Sports Massage Team, plus pay his own way in order to work six-to-eight-hour shifts as part of the 259 massage therapists flying in from around the world to give massages to the Olympic athletes, their families, and even the attending journalists—an estimated 25,000 people total.

"To be a member of this historic team would be a dream fulfilled," Salazar wrote in his application.

Actually, Salazar is no stranger to donating his services, giving massages on a regular basis at the Body Positive clinic and the Bering Health Fair.



Jeffrey Salazar

Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus, "And the Winner Is . . ."

The Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus decided to do something a little different with their annual awards this year. Although normally they choose a whole slate of honorees, this year they chose only three. "We found the winners of these three awards to be exemplary and honorable examples of action and benefit to our collective GLTB community and those who support us, love us, work with us, and support our issues," said caucus president Deborah Rogers.

The John Paul Barnich Humanitarian Award was given to the ministers of the greater Houston area for collectively opposing the passage of Proposition 2 on the November city ballot. "The selfless action of these individuals who went on the line to publicly stand by and live the substance of their convictions is something that we should all carry forward into the new year and draw on for ourselves as an example of conviction, humility, and taking action on our stand," proclaimed the caucus. →

Vote for Your Pride Marshals!

The time has come to vote for your choice of grand marshals to preside over the GLBT Pride Parade, which will be Saturday, June 29, this year.

Nominees for the position of female grand marshal are Janine Brunjes, Herlinda (Mela) Contreras, and Barbara Walker. Rusty Mueller, aka Crystal Rae Lee Love, was nominated as male grand marshal; Jane and Irv Smith for honorary grand marshals. Groups nominated for honorary grand marshal organization are the Gay & Lesbian Switchboard of Houston and Gulf Coast Archives & Museum.

You can find ballots at stores and bars in Montrose, or you can download a ballot at www.pridehouston.org. Send the ballot to the Pride Committee of Houston by Thursday, Feb. 14, to PCOH, P.O. Box 66071, Houston, TX 77266-6071. Include proof of residency in Harris County or its surrounding counties, such as a copy of your driver's license or a utility bill. Or vote on Saturday, Feb. 16, at the Lesbian and Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The 2002 Pride Parade grand marshals will be announced March 14.

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And the Winner Is

continued from page 24

The Harvey Milk Politician of the Year Award went to former city councilman Chris Bell "for his consistent, fair-minded support of GLTB-friendly legislation and eagerness to be educated to GLTB issues, as a city councilman, as a candidate for mayor, and as a candidate for Congress in the future; and for not giving up on or abandoning the GLTB community and continuing to support our causes after a heated race for mayor."

Finally, the Barbara Ciganeiro Volunteer of the Year Award went to HGLPC officers vice president Ken Jones, treasurer Mark Wood, and secretary Karma Hinson.

Pro-Life Movement Spurns Gay Pro-Lifers, Plus Prayer of Jabez Author Sues Gay Follower

Leaders of the Pro-Life Alliance of Gays and Lesbians (PLAGAL) were arrested at the 29th Annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. The arrests were conducted by the United States Park Police by direct orders of March for Life organizer Nellie Gray.

PLAGAL president Cecilia Brown and vice-president Eric Jurek were at the March for Life for the "sole purpose of protesting the 1973 Supreme Court decision which legalized abortion-on-demand." The PLAGAL delegation was approached by officers and ordered to remove their banner, which had the group's name and the slogan "Human Rights Start When Human Life Begins." When they refused, more police were called, and Brown and Jurek were arrested.

And when Dotti Berry tried to start a gay-affirming website as part of the popular Prayer of Jabez movement, she was sued by the book's author Bruce Wilkinson. Although she had been authorized to set up a website to distribute the book, she was contacted by an attorney from the book's publisher saying they were distressed that she chose to include "gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender and allied persons in the category of God's children," according to a press release from Berry's foundation.

The central prayer of Wilkinson's bestseller *The Prayer of Jabez: Breaking Through to the Blessed Life* is: "O that you would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that your hand would be with me, and that you would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!"

Cutting-Edge Queer Cinema

If you're interested in alternative queer cinema, here is a sampling of some upcoming standouts. The Horizons/Frameline Completion Fund was established 10 years ago to assist lesbian and gay media artists with the final stages of production, and strives to promote GLBT visibility through the media arts,



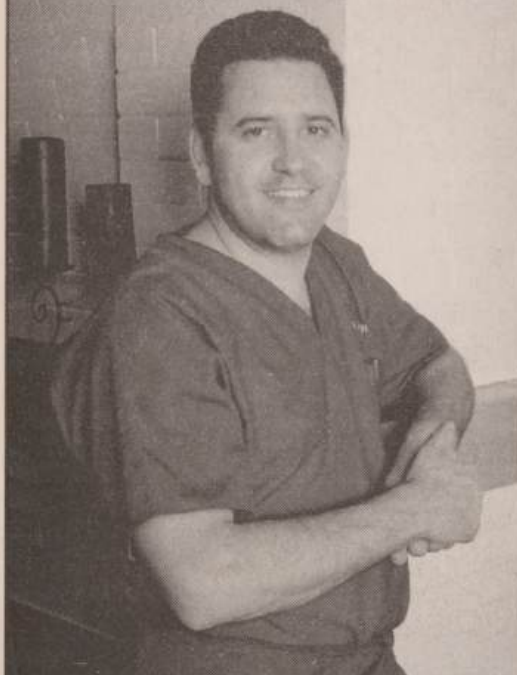
especially for filmmakers exploring underserved audiences.

"Although queer-themed films occasionally enjoy crossover success, most do not get distribution or even screenings at mainstream film festivals," explains Jennifer Morris, Frameline's festival

Go Fish director Rose Troche continued on page 63

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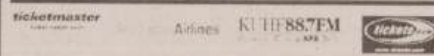
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ONE MEMBERSHIP DOES NOT FIT(NESS) ALL

Which local gyms give gay couples the same membership preferences as straight couples?

by Kay Dayus



Christine Burchette (left) and Sherrie Davis

A local lesbian couple got more than a workout when they recently attempted to get a family membership at Bally Total Fitness on North Shepherd. In fact, they were given the runaround because they were not legally married.

Christine Burchette and Sherrie Davis, partners for the past four years, went to Bally on North Shepherd and asked for a membership at the couple rate. They both felt it would be no problem because they had had a family membership at the YWCA on Waugh for several years.

"We only wanted to switch because Bally has more equipment," said Burchette. "We joined the YWCA as a family and they had no problem with it."

At Bally, the couple met with a sales representative who first asked if they were sisters. "We said no, we are married," said Burchette. The rep said that was no problem, but that he'd need to see some proof of their union.

"Sherrie stayed at Bally's and I went home to fax a copy of our MCCR union certificate," said Burchette. It seemed to Burchette that everything was okay once the sales rep saw the certificate.

In fact, it was so okay that they signed a three-year contract and paid the \$100 deposit for a family membership.

However, when they returned the next day for their I.D. cards and to work out, they were told the manager needed to see them. "The manager said, 'Well, this isn't going to work; we'll have to redo the contract,'" Burchette said.

He said the union certificate was not recognized as legal in Texas and therefore they could not join as a family unit.

less Burchette changed her last name on the contract to match Sherrie's last name. "Then we could join as sisters," said Burchette.

According to the couple, the manager also said, "You don't have to worry, people like you come in here all the time. We help people in your situation all of the time."

"Our contract was not valid when we told the truth, but it would be if we lied and said we were sisters," said Davis with an amazed tone.

The manager then asked the couple for another \$100, saying their first \$100 would be refunded in a week or so. They refused to give more money and refused to sign another contract as "sisters."

Davis said they were then offered a 14-day trial membership to think about the situation and that "it's been well over a week now and we still haven't got the \$100 back."

OutSmart calls to Bally on North Shepherd where questions were answered by George Hinds, operations manager for Bally Houston.

Hinds said it was their policy to give family memberships if the last names were the same. If not, he continued, they required a marriage certificate or a union certificate as proof of the union. When informed of the incident with the lesbian couple, Hinds said, "We as a company accept a union certification. It doesn't matter what the state recognizes; we do. Maybe the manager at that location was new. Sounds like we

should have given them the membership."

But then Hinds said he would do some checking on official policy and call back. When he returned the call, he said he had spoken with national Bally headquarters in Chicago to check on their "official" policy. He then reversed what he had said earlier.

He said they would accept a state or government-issued union certificate for family membership. However, they would not accept a church certificate that was not deemed legal in Texas.

Based on these criteria, he said, they "wouldn't qualify" for a family membership. He added that he was sorry he couldn't help the couple. He did say that the manager at the North Shepherd location was wrong to treat them the way he did, that he needed some counseling on how to deal with such situations.

Fortunately, not all local fitness centers follow Bally's criteria for family memberships. "We more than welcome same-sex couples," said Mary Ann McBee of Fitness Exchange, "and of course offer a reduced rate for partners."

Tim Fletcher, manager of Houston Gym, said that of course they offered family memberships to same-sex couples. "We don't differentiate—man, woman, beast, or child—it doesn't matter. We have a universal nondiscrimination policy."

At 24-Hour Fitness (formerly the Q), family memberships are given if the couple shares the same address.

Muscle Mechanics does not offer memberships as such. Instead they work one-on-one

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with clients. "Gay or straight, it doesn't matter to us," said John Villarreal.

The Downtown YMCA does not recognize either same-sex couples or heterosexual couples if not legally married, said Mandy Bogatin, vice-president for members and marketing. "The YMCA recognizes families as those legally married or having a dependent who is claimed on their income tax." Bogatin added that the Downtown Y's policy is mandated from the national YMCA.

Even though the YMCA does not recognize same-sex couples, the YWCA on Waugh does recognize same-sex or heterosexual unmarried couples, said Valeria Spell, assis-

tant to the executive director.

"We don't have anything in our policy against it and we don't require proof of marriage. We make no differentiation at all," she said.

So, will Burchette and Davis join Bally as single members? No, they respond in unison. If they can't join as a family, they will go elsewhere. Davis said that when she left after talking to the manager at Bally, he asked her why she was so angry.

She took a deep breath and said, "I am angry that in the year 2002, I am being asked to call my wife my sister in order to work out in this gym." Burchette added, "What a wakeup call. I couldn't believe it." ■

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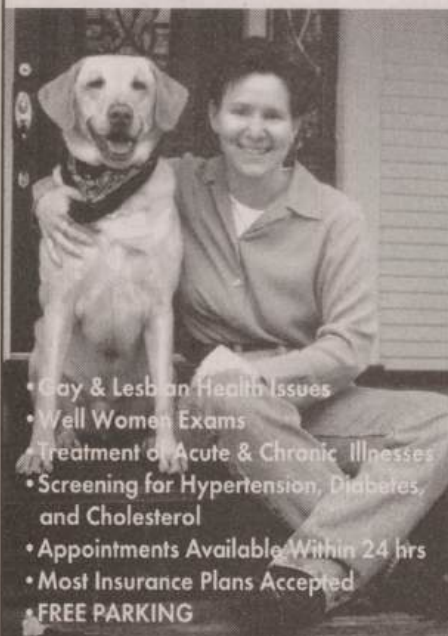
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THE ENRON DEBACLE

A case study in the need for campaign finance reform

Since the collapse of Enron, the White House has been circling the wagons. Vice President Dick Cheney remains in a secure, undisclosed location, refusing to surface and answer questions about the six meetings he held with Enron executives while drafting Bush's energy policy.

President George Bush has invoked Clintonian comparisons by conservatives like George Will for parsing the truth and lamely offering that he "inherited" his buddy Ken Lay from former Texas Governor Ann Richards. Bush cabinet members appear regularly on Sunday talk shows to explain that their refusal to act on Enron's behalf proves that Enron's money did not buy influence with the Bush White House.

Congress, the Justice Department, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and three other governmental entities have begun investigations, promising to get to the bottom of the corporate scandal that led to

the loss of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in retirement funds.

In the meantime, Democrats are busily trying to figure out how to turn the Enron debacle into a political issue without looking like they're turning it into a political issue.

The problem is that nearly everyone who promises to get to the bottom of the Enron scandal has taken money from Enron. More than half of the current members of Congress have received contributions. Attorney General John Ashcroft had to recuse himself because he received \$50,000 in his election bid for the U.S. Senate (which he lost to a dead man). Indeed, during the past 10 years, Enron—who managed not to pay taxes in four of the last five years—contributed almost \$6 million to politicians of both parties.

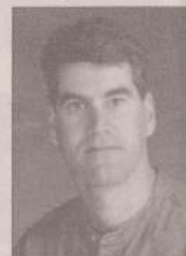
Whether Bush or anyone in the White House acted improperly with regard to Enron is irrelevant when it comes to campaign-finance reform. What is relevant is that Enron

executives could pick up the phone on any given day and speak with the secretary of commerce or the secretary of the treasury. They could command an audience with the vice president—six times—while he was drafting a national energy policy designed to benefit Enron.

Because of this type of political access, Senator John McCain has been fighting his own party—and many Democrats—for years to get meaningful campaign-finance reform passed. After finally prevailing in the Senate, his Republican counterparts in the

continued on page 34

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.



THE AMERICAN TALIBAN'S GAY DAD

What can we make of the fact that John Walker's father was gay?

It turns out everyone is gay. I mean, not only the notable historical figures like Alexander the Great, Michelangelo, Lincoln, and Hitler, but the main actors in our modern dramas, too.

September 11 is the most recent example. The terrorists who flew the planes into the buildings were gay, we're told. One of the pilots wrested from his seat at the controls of the plane the gay terrorists flew into the Pentagon was gay. The guy who saved the White House from certain destruction by foiling the gay hijackers was gay.

At least, I've been consoling myself, John Walker, the 20-year-old wretch who joined the Taliban and was recently captured in Afghanistan, isn't gay.

Well, if reports now surfacing can be believed, his dad is.

Walker's life story is gradually coming to light and some cultural critics are having lots of fun with it. Walker was raised by his par-

ents, Frank and Marilyn Lindh, in Northern California, specifically Marin County, home to beautiful vistas, affluence, and oh-so-politically-correct politics.

His mother, whom *Newsweek* describes as "a child of the '60s," home-schooled him for a while. After that, his parents sent him to a progressive private school where students determine their own curriculum and are required only to update a teacher on their progress once a week.

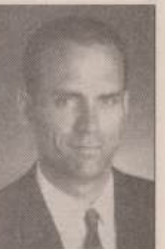
At about the age of 16, Walker took his interest in Islam from a teenage hip-hop obsession to a fanatical devotion. He began wearing a white robe, a pillbox hat, and started calling himself Suleyman. He regularly attended mosque and determined to memorize every verse in the Koran. Walker's parents were "proud of John for pursuing an alternative course," says his dad. They didn't object when he dropped out of high school and took the high-school equivalency exam. At the

same time, his parents split up.

Unhappy in America, Walker eventually journeyed to the Middle East and wound up in league with the most extreme Islamic fundamentalists of them all. When captured, he told reporters he "supported" the September 11 attack.

Walker's turn to religious extremism, some cultural critics are hypothesizing, must have been a product of his excessively indulgent upbringing. Having drifted in the I'm-OK-You're-OK moral relativism that dominated his childhood milieu, Walker was desperately seeking struc-

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



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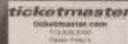
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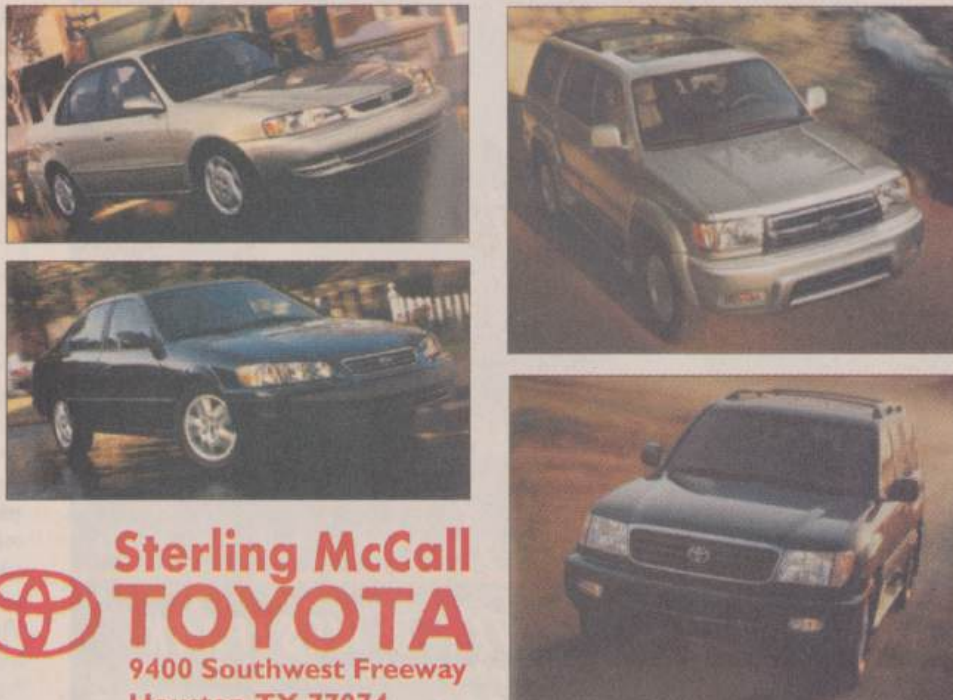
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LeftOut

continued from page 32

House killed the issue by refusing to bring it to the floor for a debate.

Now, since the Enron debacle has finally revealed exactly how much access money buys in Washington, members of Congress who previously blocked campaign-finance reform have agreed to bring up the issue. In Congress, 216 members have signed a "discharge petition" to bring the issue to the floor; 218 signatures are needed.

It will take two brave Republicans to become numbers 217 and 218. After all, they don't call the House Republican majority whip Tom DeLay "the Hammer" for nothing. They call him "the Hammer" because he is unabashed about his willingness to punish those within his own party who oppose him.

DeLay recently called those who are pushing for a debate on campaign-finance reform "political opportunists" who are using the Enron debacle to push their political agenda. Hopefully, there are two more political opportunists in Congress who will risk the wrath of the Hammer and become numbers 217 and 218, sign the petition, and put campaign-finance reform on the front burner. The American public has been hammered long enough.

In time, we will learn what the White House knew and when it knew it with regard to the collapse of Enron. But we do not need to wait for that answer to know that Washington is corrupt. That money buys access, if not always influence. And that the time to curb "soft-money" contributions from entities like Enron is now. ■

OutRight

continued from previous page

ture and guidance in life. Fundamentalist Islam would fill that need by telling him how to think, dress, act, speak, and eat.

That proposition in itself is debatable. Lots of kids grow up in a rudderless home environment but very few become religious fanatics. And at least a few kids grow up in good Christian homes only to become wanton murderers. Think Columbine.

Now we can add to this speculative hypothesizing one more element sure to draw more attention when and if Walker is ever tried in an American court. According to a columnist for the *San Francisco Examiner*, when Walker's parents split up, Frank Lindh left the family to move in with his male lover. This, according to unidentified sources "close to the family," left the 16-year-old Walker "startled and flustered."

There will, I suspect, be a strong temptation in gay circles to deny that the homosexu-

ality of Walker's dad was connected in any way to his son's bizarre life path. Already, columnist Michelangelo Signorile has written that "[t]he sexual orientation of John Walker's parents, like their liberal politics and tolerant attitude toward child-rearing, did not cause Walker to join the Taliban." It will be said that the suggestion that there is such a connection is homophobic.

Why are we afraid of the obvious? If it turns out that Walker's dad left the house when Walker was 16 to live with his gay lover, and if it's true that Walker's turn to bizarre fundamentalism followed that event, it is not necessarily homophobic and indeed quite plausible to assume that the event at least partly explains the boy's turn to extreme religion. Suddenly learning that one's parent is gay must be a very traumatic event in a person's life, especially in a teenage boy's, and might influence all manner of rebellion.

Conceding this relationship is just a recognition of reality in modern America, where homosexuality is still a shameful thing in most families.

The real problem arises when commentators use the relationship between the father's homosexuality and Walker's behavior to draw policy conclusions like, "This shows homosexuality is damaging and must be repressed" or "This shows gays are bad parents."

The opposite would be the right conclusion. If homosexuality weren't stigmatized, the emotional trauma of the revelation to Walker wouldn't have been as severe as it presumably was, or at least it wouldn't have been more severe than the revelation that his father had left his mother to run off with another woman. The major shock would come in the fact that the father left the mother for a lover, not in learning the sex of the lover.

Additionally, in a world that didn't stigmatize gays, Walker's father might have realized earlier in life that he was gay, or he might have acted openly on the realization earlier in life. Either way, the absence of stigma might have prevented a disastrous marriage and the traitorous product of it.

Walker's dad did exactly what the religious right wants men to do: He married a woman. To the extent that the son's sins can be laid at the father's feet at all, they are just another harmful consequence of socially enforced heterosexuality.

Of course, before we psychoanalyze Walker too closely, it might be best to wait to hear from him directly.

But let's not lose too much sleep when it turns out some bad person, or the relative of some bad person, is gay. After all, as we've been saying, we're everywhere. ■



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Love Is a Journey

by Rev. Robert L. Schaibly

Marriage suits me. I like continuity, warmth, living with someone I love, and having a safe setting for self-expression. But I do not happen to think marriage is for everyone. Me—I'm pro-choice! If you have chosen not to partner, I respect that and I applaud self-knowledge.

In the book *Here Lies My Heart*, the feminist Vivian Gornick acknowledges a polemic she wrote called "Against Marriage." Subsequently, for many years she found herself very lonely. Then she was teaching in a university town and had an opportunity to share a house with "a woman my own age, divorced with grown children away at school. I thought her a sympathetic soul and decided after years of living alone to chance it. We conducted our lives independently, yet were always delighted to spend an evening at home together. Conversation was an ever-deepening pleasure between us, but neither of us ever made the other feel guilty for wanting to be alone. The relationship was simplicity itself. What took me by surprise was the relief I felt at not living alone. I wasn't with a lover or even an intimate friend. I was simply sharing a house with a compatible person. It was the absence of gross loneliness that was having an extraordinary effect on me. I felt calm every day and all through the day. I looked around then at my life, and I saw that I had not learned to live alone at all. What I had learned to do was strategize; lie down until the pain passed; evade; get by. I wasn't drowning, but I wasn't swimming



...Not a Destination

Illustrations by Teodoro Estrada



either. I was floating on my back, far from shore, waiting to be saved."

The reasons we marry are many. Amy Bloom writes, "We marry to find safe harbor in a roaring sea. We marry to avoid gray loneliness in a small room with only a hot plate and a thin cat." She goes on to talk about divorce: "We divorce to find ourselves, and free ourselves of the self-defeating templates of childhood misery." And then she presents her insight: "The chasm that separates us from a partner terrifies us; the prospect of intimacy does, too." We want to be close, but we are often talking about things that are not really the most important thing we have to say to one another.

We may be attracted by what the other person sees in us. For instance, Lynn Darling said, "I married the man I married because I liked his version of myself better than my own. I felt more real with him than I had ever felt with anyone else. I was pleased by the person I saw reflected in his eyes." As we listen to her, it seems that he had a vision of her she preferred to her own understanding of herself as a more complete, more fully known person. What is interesting is that everyone knows marriage means choosing one other, but maybe it also means choosing one's self, or at least the direction I will develop myself, the role I'll choose. This is who I will be; I'll try to live up to this image he has of me.

But of course we are more than that one image, and what we are, all that we are, will

Marriage means choosing one other...

maybe it also means choosing one's self.

My partner Steven had no interest in going to Japan, and so I thought that was that, I could forget Japan in this lifetime. But then I realized, No, I really want to go to Japan, and so I went by myself.



be unveiled as time passes and will surprise and delight our partners, right? Uh, huh. Some say we are never to be fully known.

Barbara Ehrenreich counsels reducing our expectations of marriage partners and tolerating shortcomings. She lists the roles people expect their partners to fill: co-provider and a reliable financial partner. Co-conversationalist and sparkling dinner companion, fully briefed by CNN. A skilled co-parent with a repertoire of bedtime stories. A fitness partner. Handyman or woman. A tireless and imaginative lover. "It doesn't make sense. Only in marriage do we kiss common sense goodbye and expect that every single human need can be met by a single all too human being. . . . It's time to cut the spouse some slack and put more of our demands on the rest of the human

environment; in other words, to rebuild the ancient and honorable notion of community."

In my home, because of our unusual lives, I cannot make the time and do not have the interest in theater-going my partner Steven has. He sometimes goes to the theater with Doris. He had no interest in going to Japan, and so I thought that was that, I could forget Japan in this lifetime. But then I realized, No, I really want to go to Japan, and this was my once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and so I went by myself.

I might say a word here to the widowed and all who think they will never again live with another. Although we think no opportunity will again present itself, we may be surprised and amused. Author Mark Doty, who currently teaches at the University of Houston, wrote about his 12-year relationship with Wally, who died of AIDS. Mark has since partnered with Paul, a man both he and Wally had known for several years. Though the first relationship was fine, "there are those pleasures that belong to the new relationship. Paul and I love lots of the same books, admire many of the same artists, share passions that Wally and I did not. I've thought, 'Oh, I'm enjoying something with Paul that Wally couldn't enjoy.' I've wondered, guiltily, if I liked my new relationship better. Which would be a betrayal, wouldn't it?" No, Mark.

Mark Doty goes on to talk about that domestic pleasure of just being. I have often had a similar sensation, just knowing one I love is elsewhere in the house and I am doing my project and the other is engaged in his own activity. Mark Doty writes about his lover, Paul, who composes music: "He doesn't know that I have come into the next room. My lover has that concentration, that absorption in the moment, in which it's impossible not to see his handsomeness, his presence as himself, both self-forgetful and completely involved. As the tune continues, our dog leans back, as if the song were entering him, and then begins to roll on his back. So much pleasure in this constellation of things: warmth and sun and the sweet configuration of voice and music. Soon, Paul will notice that I am here, watching, and though he'll be happy to see me, it'll break the moment's domestic spell, this little bright instance of what I love, which I am grateful now to stand and watch, unseen." ■



Rev. Robert Schaibly first presented a longer version of this article as a sermon on July 11, 1999, at the First Unitarian Universalist Church, where he has been senior minister for 19 years. (You can see the original at www.firstuu.org.) Ten years ago he and Steven Storla were joined in a commitment ceremony at First Unitarian.

The drawings and paintings that accompany this article are part of an ongoing series by Houston artist Teodoro Estrada, inspired by his travels in Mexico. Depicting a floating heart traveling amongst milagro (or miracle) figures, the series is called "Pilgrimage to Tepeyac." "As we mature into adulthood," Estrada says, "sometimes we are faced with the undesirable. Well, miracles are granted every day, we just have to be aware that they do happen." Estrada is an educator in the Houston area.

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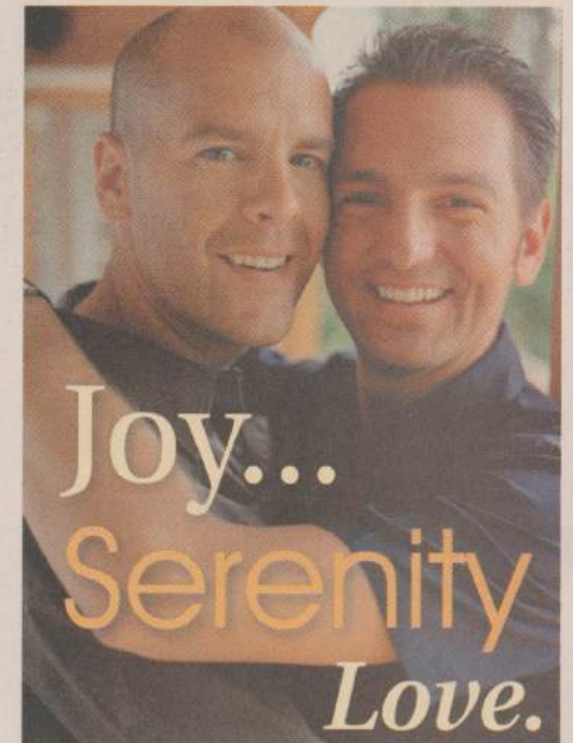
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Carlos Reyes (left) and Steven Chrisenberry

RECIPE FOR LOVE

by Eric A. T. Dieckman
photos by BJ Smith

With Don Carlos Catering and now DC in the Heights, Carlos Reyes and Steven Chrisenberry are partners in business and love

Catering is a hectic business, an art of organized chaos where whatever can go wrong, will go wrong—and the going-wrong may involve whipped cream on the ceiling. In their 10 years as owners of Don Carlos Catering, Carlos Reyes and Steven Chrisenberry are well acquainted with Murphy's vicious law and are always prepared to overcome whatever Murphy

throws their way, taking it one day at a time. Now, as if running a business that offers no days off was not enough, Reyes and Chrisenberry recently opened a restaurant a few blocks away from their home—DC in the Heights—to add to their already bustling schedule.

Yet somehow the couple finds some time for an interview. At home, Chrisenberry sits on the sofa in shorts and a polo with the

company logo, his long limbs sprawling in front of him. Reyes stretches out in an easy chair, his arms draped across its back, a portrait of genteel repose as luxuriantly cat-like as Sandy, their orange Tabby.

Partners in life as well as in business, these comfy moments are a cherished rarity. Steve has a party in three hours. Is there ever a break? "We have to actually leave town to have time off," Reyes says. He and

Chrisenberry go to Aspen every year with a few other couples for gay ski week—although Reyes still does all the cooking. He has to, it's simply a part of his intrinsic nature, his innate drive to entertain. "We'll be eating breakfast and I'll be thinking, 'What'll we do for lunch?'" Reyes says. "Then we'll be having lunch and I'll be asking, 'Where should we go for dinner?'"

a tad more nostalgia. "I saw him when he first came in—he was hard to miss, he was so tall—I watched him go all the way around the room. When he came up to me, I stuck my foot out."

They were inseparable almost immediately. Eight months later, they were in business together, a risky move that sends many relationships crumbling. Food service was not

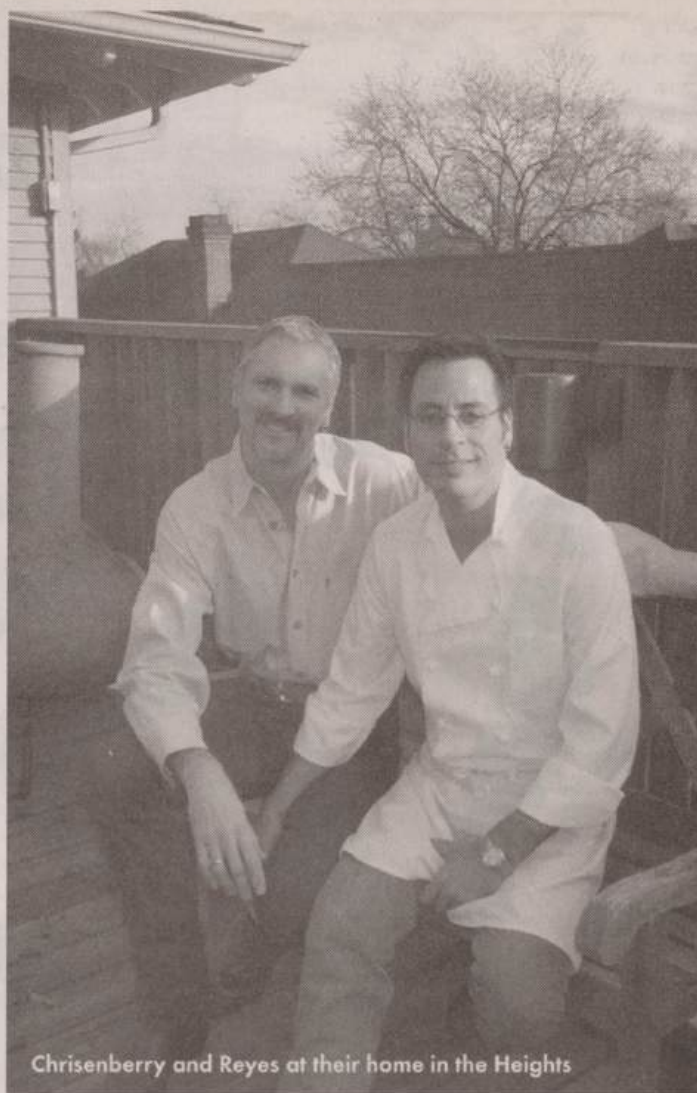
"I saw him when he first came in—he was hard to miss, he was so tall—I watched him go all the way around the room. When he came up to me, I stuck my foot out."

"I don't want to think about dinner. I'm trying to have lunch," counters Chrisenberry.

The two met 11 years ago at the Brazos River Bottom (BRB). The gangly and sweet Chrisenberry had just ended a 15-year straight marriage. "I had just come out probably two weeks before that," he says. "I had only been to the bars a couple of times. My roommate heard me complaining that I didn't like the people I was meeting and said, 'You need to go where the real men are,' that I needed to go to the BRB. So then I found Carlos instead." He laughs and winks mischievously at Reyes.

Reyes, out since he was 14, tells his version of the story with

new to Reyes. He had grown up waiting tables in his father's restaurants, and gone on to manage nightclubs and restaurants in the early '80s. He had always loved cooking. The business started for him as a side-gig, almost a hobby. Soon the hobby became a full-time effort, one that required assistance. Chrisenberry had been with a software company. He knew nothing of food. "Okay, here are the onions. What do I do with them?" he would say. What Chrisenberry did have, however, was business sense, the ability to make spreadsheets, to calculate costs, and crunch numbers. The two proved just as complementary to each other



Chrisenberry and Reyes at their home in the Heights

in business as they were in their relationship. It was a perfect match.

Building their catering business was not easy. The first year was scary. Booking even one party a week was an accomplishment. Success in catering relies almost exclusively on word-of-mouth, and you're only as good as your last event. It took four to six years to build

a following in the gay community. The next logical step was to expand the business. Having made the Don Carlos name a respected and appetizing one, it was time to make the DC delicacies regularly available, outside of the invitations-only world of the soiree. DC in the Heights was born July last year. And it is yummy.

A common misconception

about the culinary world is that the professional caterer/restaurateur is a pure gourmet, eating nothing but the finest of fine foods, the most savory of savories every meal. Wrong! Far from dining every morn on Fritatas Florentine, Reyes and Chrisenberry are more likely to be found crunching away at a bowl of Post Toasties. "People over the years have said, 'We would have you over for dinner—but—we'd be so embarrassed about what we'd serve.' We love being invited to other people's parties, not having to do the cooking," says Reyes. Chrisenberry adds with a laugh, "If we don't feel like cooking, we'll pop fish sticks in the oven just like anybody else." Speaking of fish sticks, what's comfort food to this dynamic duo? For Reyes, good ol' meat and potatoes. Chrisenberry? Blue Bell homemade vanilla ice cream.

But man does not live on bread (or even ice cream) alone. For Reyes and Chrisenberry, when did sex make that mysterious transformation into love? "Eleven years ago," they say without hesitation. And their recipe for a relationship that works in the whirlwind of organized chaos? Just take it one day at a time.

DC in the Heights is open Tuesday–Friday, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. & 5–9 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. & 5–9 p.m.; and Sunday, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

New Orleans Bread Pudding with Southern Whiskey Sauce

(Adapted from Joy of Cooking—offered as a special at DC in the Heights)

Spread 3 tablespoons softened unsalted butter over a 13 x 9-inch baking pan, preferably glass.

Cut 1 1/4 pounds French or Italian Bread (1 1/2 to 2 loaves) into 1/2-inch-thick slices. Arrange the slices almost upright in tightly spaced rows in the prepared pan. Tuck 1 cup raisins or currants between the slices.

Whisk 3 large eggs until frothy. Whisk in 4 cups whole milk, 2 cups sugar, 2 tablespoons vanilla, and 1 teaspoon ground vanilla bean.

Pour the liquid over the bread and let stand for 1 hour, pressing down now and then with a spatula to wet the tops of the slices. Preheat the oven to 375° F.

Bake the pudding until the top is puffed and lightly browned, about 1 hour. Cover with Southern Whiskey Sauce. Let cool on a rack for 30 to 60 minutes, then cut into squares and serve. Leftover sauced pudding will keep for several days in the refrigerator and can be reheated in a 300° F oven for 15 minutes.

Southern Whiskey Sauce

Melt 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter over low heat in a small, heavy saucepan.

Using a heatproof rubber spatula or wooden spoon, stir in 1 cup sugar, 1/4 cup bourbon or other whiskey, 2 tablespoons water, 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated or ground nutmeg, 1/8 teaspoon salt.

Cook, stirring, until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture is blended. Remove from the heat.

Whisk 1 large egg until light and frothy.

Vigorously whisk the egg into the liquor mixture. Set the sauce over medium heat and, stirring gently, bring to a simmer. Cook until thickened, about 1 minute. The sauce will not curdle.

Pour over pudding at once, or set aside at room temperature for up to 8 hours, or let cool, then cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days. Reheat over low heat, stirring; if the sauce separates, remove from the heat and whisk in a little warm water.

Take another little piece of my heart now, baby!

Are your Valentine's sentiments kind of cheesy? Is your heart in your mouth? Do you want to give your sweetheart a piece of your pie? If your idea of love is snuggling up with your honey to watch a video and pig out on pizza, here's the crowning touch. On Valentine's Day, every pizza pie coming out of Palazzo's Italian Café's ovens will be shaped like a big heart. The family-owned neighborhood restaurant makes gourmet pizzas ranging from \$4 for a personal size pizza to \$14.99 for a large. Palazzo's is located at 3210 Westheimer (between Kirby and River Oaks Boulevard), 713/522-6777; and 2620 Briar Ridge (at Westheimer), 713/784-8110. Delivery available from the Briar Ridge location.



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Sad and Pissed

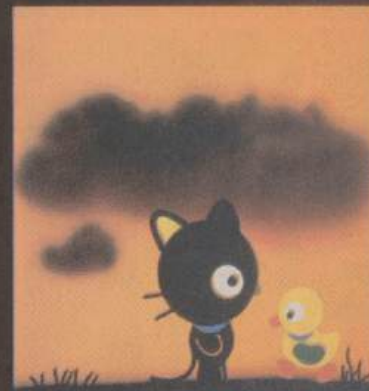
Artist Rachel Hecker on love

by Lauren Johnson



Top (photo by BJ Smith): Rachel Hecker with *The Four Seasons* (clockwise from top left)—Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter. Below: (left) *They Couldn't See the Black Cloud That Hung Over Their Relationship*, (center) *Black Thoughts #2*, and (right) *Saying Goodbye*.

Still life at table: smoked salmon, crème fraîche, capers, a red pear, and these little crackers that my girlfriend says taste like dirt. These items plus a bottle of red wine decorate the table where artist Rachel Hecker and I now sit in her house in the Houston Heights. She



smokes Camels, like she did when I first met her in 1988 or '89—I don't remember which year, but I remember the circumstances perfectly. At the time Rachel was the interim director of the Glassell School and I was writing an article, my very first article, on the art school for a long-defunct Montrose magazine.

I remember knowing she was gay—I don't remember how I knew that—and I can remember thinking how remarkably intelligent she was. Two years after that interview, Rachel started dating one of my best friends. Their relationship lasted nine years, during which time Rachel and I became good friends. Over those years, we shared much wine and food (Rachel is a terrific cook), as we are doing now.

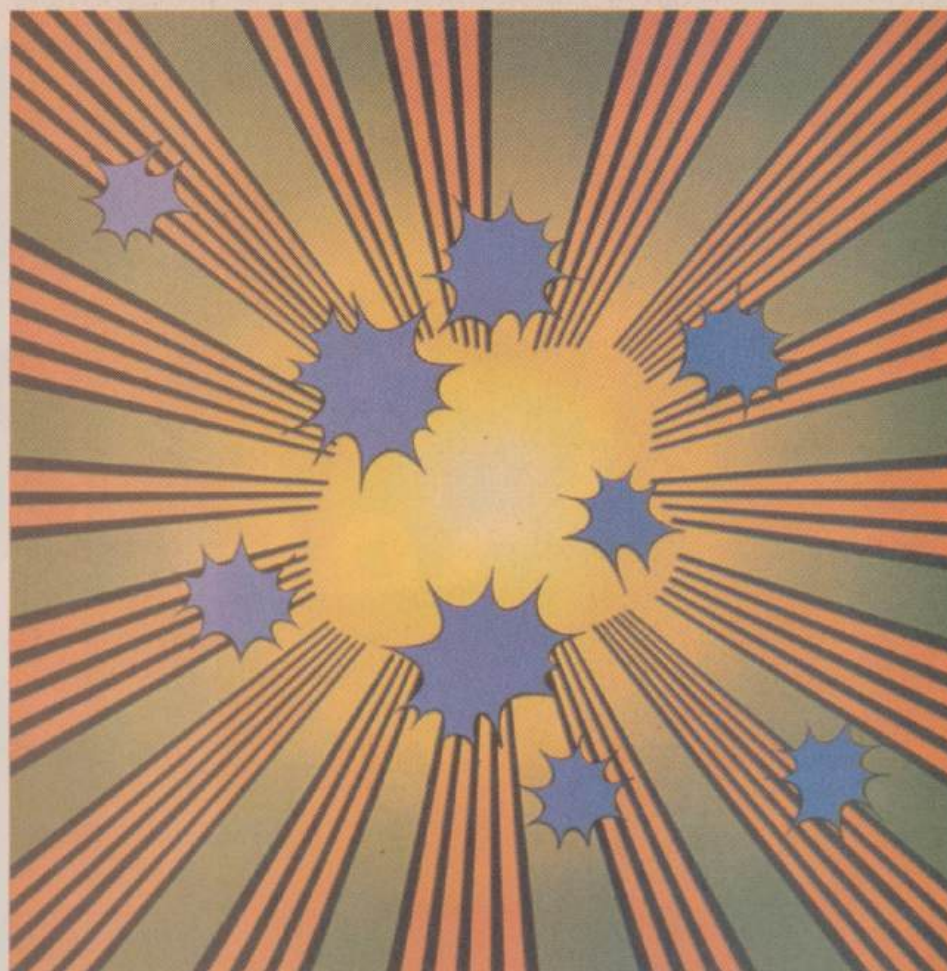
Many Houstonians may know Hecker's work from her painting *Censorship*, a depiction of a shirt-and-tie everyman with a huge cartoon character's fist obscuring his face. For years the painting hung in front of DiverseWorks for five years until it was stolen in 1994—its whereabouts are still unknown. This in-your-face piece as well as its slash-

"Suffering is humbling, because it connects you to every other living being. And humility breaks the spell of self-involvement and that in turn provides a way out of your own sense of loss."

and-run theft are typical of Hecker's Bad Girl reputation in the Houston and national art world. Not that she doesn't have an art establishment pedigree—starting with a master's from the Rhode Island School of Design and a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship, she's had numerous one-person exhibitions and countless group shows all over the country, in venues from the Menil Collection to galleries and museums in Dallas, Canada, and France. Warm, wry, and tremendously funny, her sly humor is evident in even her saddest paintings.

By the time I met her in the late 1980s, Rachel had been at the Glassell for seven years, first as an assistant director, then as an associate, and finally as acting director. After leaving the Glassell, Rachel became a visiting professor at the University of Houston in 1992, becoming an associate professor in 2000. I ask Rachel about these accomplishments, and about what it's like to have tenure at the University of Houston.

"I've had some fulfilling things happen to



Above (photo by BJ Smith): Hecker at home. Opposite page: (top) *Explosion #6*; (center left) *Saying Goodbye to the World as I Knew It*; (center right) *Pig!* (J.D.); (bottom) Hecker with *Now Can We Go Shopping*.

me professionally—I feel like I've passed though the eyes of some very small needles—but on the other hand, those things don't really change you, not in any kind of fundamental way."

I know what she means, which is that the things that do change you in a fundamental way are the things like love, and its beginning and its ending.

Today, about 10 years after Rachel met my friend and became one of the important people in my life, their relationship ended abruptly and painfully. Through a bit of divine irony, here I am once again writing an article with Rachel Hecker at its center. This time, though, it's about her, and her upcoming show "Sad and Pissed," at Texas Gallery, in the month of February. The artist's reception is—when else?—February 14.

"I wanted the reception to be on Valentine's Day, for obvious reasons," Rachel grins. "The phrase 'sad and pissed' describes the extreme emotions I've experienced in the last nine months quite accurately, I think."

I first saw the paintings back in April, and have watched them progress. I ask Rachel to describe these paintings, to compare them to her earlier work. In the past, she says, she has used pop culture images to comment on society, but always from a safe intellectual distance. Never before this work did she use her painting to reflect her own personal feelings or situation.

"This time, I made a conscious decision to place myself emotionally in the work, making paintings about loss, alienation, and abandonment, but the context was theoretical or from

the past, or at least I thought so. I thought I was quite happy and in love when I began them."

The paintings fall into two groups: the Comic Explosion paintings and the Emotional Narrative paintings. Although I laughed out loud the first time I saw the Comic Explosion paintings, it was a kind of wincing, painful laugh. I know from my own experience how good it feels to say words like "bitch" and "liar" when you can't say what you really need to say, since what you really need to say is unsayable. If you could say it, it would sound something like the air being stomped out of a large, human balloon. Or look like one of Hecker's paintings.

If the Explosion paintings are a kind of emotional venting, the Emotional Narrative paintings depict emotional states by telling stories, a new approach for Hecker. Rachel's alter ego in the world of the paintings is portrayed by the Sanrio "Chocokitty" from the popular "Hello Kitty" children's toys and novelties.

"I made the decision to be more revelatory in my work, but I was a safe distance from the emotional content," she says. "This was before my breakup, before I had this bomb dropped on a nine-year relationship. I was making paintings called *They Couldn't See the Dark Cloud That Hung Over Their Relationship*, as well as comic book explosions that for me are a metaphorical depiction of what happens when ordinary life doesn't. And then ordinary life stopped happening for me—with a bang, I might add."

When her relationship ended, the distance

between life and art closed, and the narrative moved from fictional to autobiographical. Suddenly, the painter who had been creating what she thought were imaginary stories about heartbreak, loss, and endings, found herself painting stories from her real life. Ironic, isn't it?

Rachel smiles. "I'm not particularly interested in irony, but I am interested in shared experience. For me as an artist, popular culture provides a location where I can discuss specific events in general terms."

Artists communicate by making the specific experience general—that is, by making it something the audience can relate to. This isn't always a pleasant experience, for the artist or the viewer. Rachel Hecker's journeys of the last nine months—both the personal and the artistic ones—have not been pleasant, but they have been productive.

"Suffering is humbling, because it connects you to every other living being. And humility breaks the spell of self-involvement and that in turn provides a way out of your own sense of loss."

So on the way out of her own feelings of loss, Rachel Hecker, artist, teacher, and friend of mine, shares, through her paintings, her own suffering, which has made her feel—you got it—sad and pissed. And how does she move out of sad and pissed, and on to what's going to happen next in her life?

"I say yes a lot, even when I don't want to. Yes makes me get out of my own skin. And teaching does the same thing, because to do it well you can't be self-focused. I learn a lot about life from my students."

And what about love? Is it changed for her in one of those fundamental ways we talked about?

Rachel smiles again. It's a sad smile, no doubt, but not pissed.

"I'm still a romantic at heart," she starts, and then replies to my surprised look, "I am, really. I still love love, and being in love. I just can't see it happening for me. But then again, we never see the big things coming, do we?" Rachel Hecker grins at me again. "Hey, there's your irony." ■

Lauren Johnson and her partner Sharon Ferranti start shooting the lesbian horror script *Make a Wish in March 2002*, which they hope will be a less horrifying experience than the film's contract negotiations. In addition to contributing to local and national magazines, Lauren is the director of communications for a large public pension plan in Houston.

"Sad and Pissed," a one-woman art show of works by Rachel Hecker will be showing Feb. 1-28 at the Texas Gallery, 2109 Peden, 713/524-1593. A reception will be held Thursday, Feb. 14, 6-8 p.m.

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The Passion of Music

Getting to know composer

Robert Avalon

by Timothy Cowell

photos by B.J. Smith

Houston is lucky that classical composer and musician Robert Avalon has chosen to make his home here. He has a presence both locally and internationally, and his work has been garnering high accolades from musicians and critics alike. "Dramatic sweep and authentic emotional power," says the *American Record Guide*. "Uncommon lyric gift," and "very beautiful... intensely melodic, firmly tonal," says John DeMain, music director of Houston Grand Opera. "A gift for broad, compelling melodies and building the tension of a movement to a resounding peak... [he has a] fresh, innocent exuberance," says Charles Ward, music critic for the *Houston Chronicle*.

Avalon composes orchestral, chamber, vocal, and solo piano works and is an accomplished pianist. He is such an international figure that he has established an ensemble in Amsterdam that specializes in performing his compositions. Here, he is working to start the first fully improvisational classical orchestra. Other Avalon





Robert Avalon serenades his partner Wayne Dockery in the studio/performance venue they've fashioned from a historic church in the Heights.

"As a performer," Avalon says, "I can feel when an audience is very into the music, really listening, afraid to cough, sometimes even to breathe, it seems. When that happens, I escalate my concentration, putting myself into the music with much more focus, recognizing the urgency of communicating with the audience. That's what the audience comes away with, too—remembering those moments. Performers yearn for those intensely communicative moments of connection. We dream about them."

It is easy to immerse oneself in Avalon's music. It has both a passion and a lyrical richness that can just swallow up the listener. "His music must be enormously gratifying to play," wrote a reviewer for *Fanfare Magazine*. "I can say without equivocation that it certainly is wonderful to listen to, and I look forward to experiencing more."

Avalon often sets his music to poems and other texts. He's especially fond of Spanish, in which he is fluent. One of his signature works is a setting of three poems by Puerto Rican Julia de Burgos as a "Sextet with Soprano"; the 19-minute piece is melodic, rhythmically rich, and beautiful.

Avalon has also written an opera in Spanish—a lush two-and-a-half-hour work of magical realism called *Carlota*, set to debut in Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes in 2003. *Carlota* and her husband Maximilian were appointed the empress and emperor of Mexico by Napoleon. In a poignant case study of the cultural clash between Europe and Meso America, Maximilian was executed after only a brief reign, and *Carlota* went mad. The opera follows *Carlota*'s journey of doubt, revelation, and ecstasy.

Avalon has also set texts in English, Japanese, and Greek, with plans for works in German and French. He is currently working on setting a number of poems by gay Dutch writers. The crowning piece of the composition is a love poem by Jacob Israel de Haan entitled "To a Young Fisherman."

*Roses are not as beautiful as your cheeks,
Tulips not as your tender bare feet,
And in no eyes I ever read
Such a boundless longing for friendship*

("Such a boundless longing for friendship" is also found engraved on the ground-level portion of the Amsterdam Homomonument, a large triangular sculpture of pink granite dedicated to the past, present, and future struggles of gay liberation. Avalon's song will be set for a septet.)



I asked Avalon about what seemed to be a high percentage of composers who were gay.

"Composing takes an immense amount of time," Avalon muses. "A certain amount of isolation is essential—it is a very solitary activity. A lot of 20th-century gay composers were isolated [for fear] they would be persecuted."

"Gay composers like Aaron Copland were closeted during their lifetime," Avalon continues. "A few of his select friends knew. But he didn't feel compelled to marry a woman, to put up the kind of façade that, say, was necessary for Leonard Bernstein that would make it easier for him to circulate in the cocktail party circuit."

Robert Avalon is one composer who lets his passions shine forth—in his life and in his music.

Tim Cowell is a music lover and avid concertgoer. He has published a large number of articles, but they've mostly been about polymer science. →

To hear Robert Avalon's music, excerpts may be found at www.robertavalon.com/listen.php3 on his web page. Also, he and other musicians perform local home concerts that are often open to the public; to get on the e-mail list for information concerning upcoming concert times and locations, write to ravalon@swbell.net.



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Robert and Wayne.

Editor's note: Robert Avalon's latest composition is set to a prayer written by Father Mychal Judge, the openly gay Franciscan priest and chaplain to the NYC fire department who lost his life in the September 11 attack. In researching his piece, Avalon talked to many of the people who knew "Father Mike," and wrote the following tribute, which will be printed in the program when the piece is given its premiere February 1 at Wigmore Hall in London. →

Father Mychal Judge

(May 11, 1933–Sept. 11, 2001)

by Robert Avalon

On the morning of September 11, I felt sad anger as I watched the televised mass murder of thousands of people when fanatics flew hijacked planes into the World Trade Center. Motivated by a religious hatred that gave them a temporary sense of godliness, a small group of murderous men accomplished their goal of capturing the rapt attention of the world. But their perverse mission also created a sense of solidarity among people who worked together to overcome loss.

One of the earliest visible casualties of the disaster was the Reverend Mychal Judge, the 68-year-old Brooklyn-born, recovering alcoholic, gay chaplain to the NYC fire department who died while rushing into the flames to support the effort of the brave firefighters to whom he was so devoted. Shortly after the attack, a dear

friend of mine, Patrick Bromley, saw a news report that quoted a prayer written by Father "Mike" (as he was affectionately referred to by the firefighters). Patrick couldn't remember the exact wording of the prayer, but he paraphrased the essence of the prayer in a way that made me want to find its precise text and translate its expression into music.

In my search for the text, I spoke by phone with several of Father Mike's best friends who told me story after story of his consistent, compassionate devotion to others who had experienced loss. It was a good friend of his living in Manhattan, actor Kevin Scullin, who finally told me the exact words of this prayer that Father Mike carried with him always. The words of the prayer gave me insight into the character of this uncommon man.

Father Mike had taken a vow of poverty and gave everything he had to others. From early in the morning to late at night he tended to others with an energy that astonished people who knew him. In 1996 the Franciscan priest became a devoted caregiver to many of the families of the TWA Flight 800 that had crashed in the water off Long Island. His concern and attendance to their needs transcended all considerations of religious affiliation as he

tended to their lives even until his own death in the base of the World Trade Center Towers.

Shortly after the attack on the north tower, Father Mike threw on his fire gear at the friary of the St. Francis of Assisi Church in Manhattan where he lived and was off before his pager had sounded, heading toward the scene of the disaster. He stopped briefly outside the north tower to administer the last rites to a fallen firefighter who had been struck by a woman who had jumped from the flames. He then rushed into the flaming tower to help people evacuate. At one point, firefighters inside the dense smoke of the dark lobby felt a huge swelling and heaving of the building as the south tower collapsed. They also noticed among the rubble the body of Father Mike, who had apparently been struck by falling debris. They carried his body away from the towers to the corner of a nearby church and ran inside to find a priest to give the last rites to Father Mike. A lady they encountered said that there was no priest inside and suggested that instead they give him their own blessing. At the conclusion of their blessing, the north tower came down. The other members of their squadron were inside that avalanche of steel and concrete. As sur-

vivors, they felt Father Mike's own passing had saved their lives.

I have attempted to put into music the kind of simple, direct expression that this prayer of Father Mike's contains. I composed this song to "Mychal's Prayer" in December at the conclusion of a two-week stay in a lovely 300-year-old house by the side of an 11th-century Roman church in Sotosalbos (population 90) outside of Segovia, Spain. A close friend, the neurologist and advanced amateur musician Eduardo Gutierrez Rivas, had made this sanctuary available to me for composing in isolation. The intense quiet of this village enabled me to connect with the spirit of Father Mike and to capture and understand the meaning of his words. ■

Mychal's Prayer

*Lord take me where you
want me to go.
Let me meet who you
want me to meet.
Tell me what
you want me to say.
And keep me
out of your way.*

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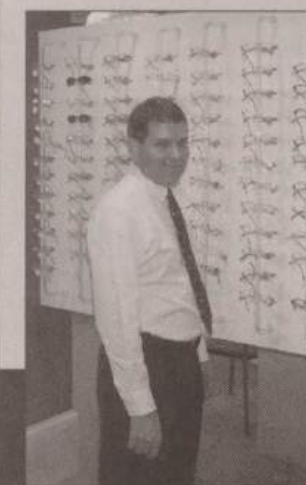
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Finding Love in All the Right Places

**Not all churches are homophobic:
Dr. Jesse Jennings preaches universal love at his Creative Life Spiritual Center**

When I moved to Houston in 1992, one of the first orders of business was to find a spiritual home where I could find acceptance and support. One Sunday morning, I drove out 45 North to Spring to check out a "new-age" church I'd heard about—the Creative Life Spiritual Center. I tried to stay open-minded about a church that called itself a "center."

The center was on the second floor of an office building. At the top of the stairs stood a man. "Welcome, I acknowledge the good in your life," the stranger said and hugged me. I had no idea the full extent of the greeting's meaning. That was the church's minister and visionary, the Rev. Jesse Jennings.

In the simple service, Rev. Jennings led us in song and meditation. His message was simple but profound: "We are all perfect creations of God. There is nothing you have to do, no change

you have to make, to be beloved of God."

Over the years I have experienced this "unconditional acceptance" at Creative Life Spiritual Center. Not a church in the traditional way of speaking, it is a center for spiritual discovery and growth.

Dr. Jennings's center is part of the Science of Mind movement and the United Church of Religious Science, founded by the American philosopher Ernest Holmes (not to be confused with the Church of Christ, Scientist or the Christian Scientists).

Creative Life is a place where your "affectional" orientation is accepted fully—where you are welcome to display affection with your partner—hold hands, hug, and kiss. In 1988 the United Church of Religious Science (UCRS) issued a statement, which said, in effect, "We do not discriminate against anybody for any reason"—which was to be followed in both hiring and volunteer positions. Earlier this year

the UCRS authorized its ministers to perform ceremonies honoring same-sex unions.

Creative Life has reached out to the Houston gay community in several ways. They had an active AIDS care team with FIRM, the Foundation of Interfaith Research and Ministry. They were also a vital part of Ron Davis's Center for Positive Living located on Commonwealth.

"Every Monday became 'Religious Science' night," said Dr. Jennings, "and we created a fun, high-energy service that was attended by an amazingly diverse group of people. I remember one time when we had a student who was HIV positive and in Park Plaza Hospital and we had class around his bed."

Dr. Jennings writes a column read monthly by more than 75,000 worldwide in the *Science of Mind* magazine. His book *The Essential Ernest Holmes* will be published in spring 2002. Church member Jill Boullion interviewed him for *OutSmart*. —Thomas Chelena



Rev. Jesse Jennings

"We are all perfect creations of God. There is nothing you have to do, no change you have to make, to be beloved of God."

The philosophy known today as Science of Mind had its beginnings around 1915 when a man known as Ernest Holmes began holding public lectures on "mental law" and other spiritual topics. Ernest discovered the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson as a young man, and then Thomas Troward, and started his lectures based on Troward's writings. In 1927 the Religious Science Institute was opened and began to teach classes. Today the Science of Mind philosophy is also an organized church, The United Church of Religious Science. Until his death in 1960, Ernest Holmes was a seeker of the truth, and his teaching is recognized today as one of the leading viewpoints in modern metaphysics. **The issue of sexual preference within the Church of Religious Science really doesn't exist?**

We look forward to the day when, in the words

of writer and critic Bruce Bawer, "homosexuality becomes something of absolutely no interest whatsoever." In the meantime, so long as divisions are drawn between people who love those of the other gender and people who love those of the same, we will be working in consciousness to heal that division by refusing to recognize that it has any right to exist in the first place. We've been performing "holy union" ceremonies at our center since the beginning.

What about those churches that welcome gays "in spite of" and then wish they would change?

Well, those are places where people are taught that being gay is contrary to God's will. On the plus side, they are willing to try to look past your affectional orientation and see who else you might be. On the minus side, doing so discounts a huge part of who you are. There are those who believe that praying for gay people will make them heterosexual. Praying for anyone else to change into what we think they ought to be is not only futile but also arrogant. ■

The Creative Life Spiritual Center is located at 5326 Spring-Stuebner, 281/350-5157, www.creativelife.org. Sunday services are 9 & 11 a.m.

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Rocket in your Pocket?

Getting to know Sam Steph, the man behind Red Rocket Jeans

by Todd J. Ramos

A zipper may seem a small and insignificant thing. But it grants access (sometimes quite sexy access!).

That, at any rate, has been the experience of Houstonian Sam Steph, whose Red Rocket Jeans have been garnering fashion adulation, all thanks to one little strategically placed zipper.

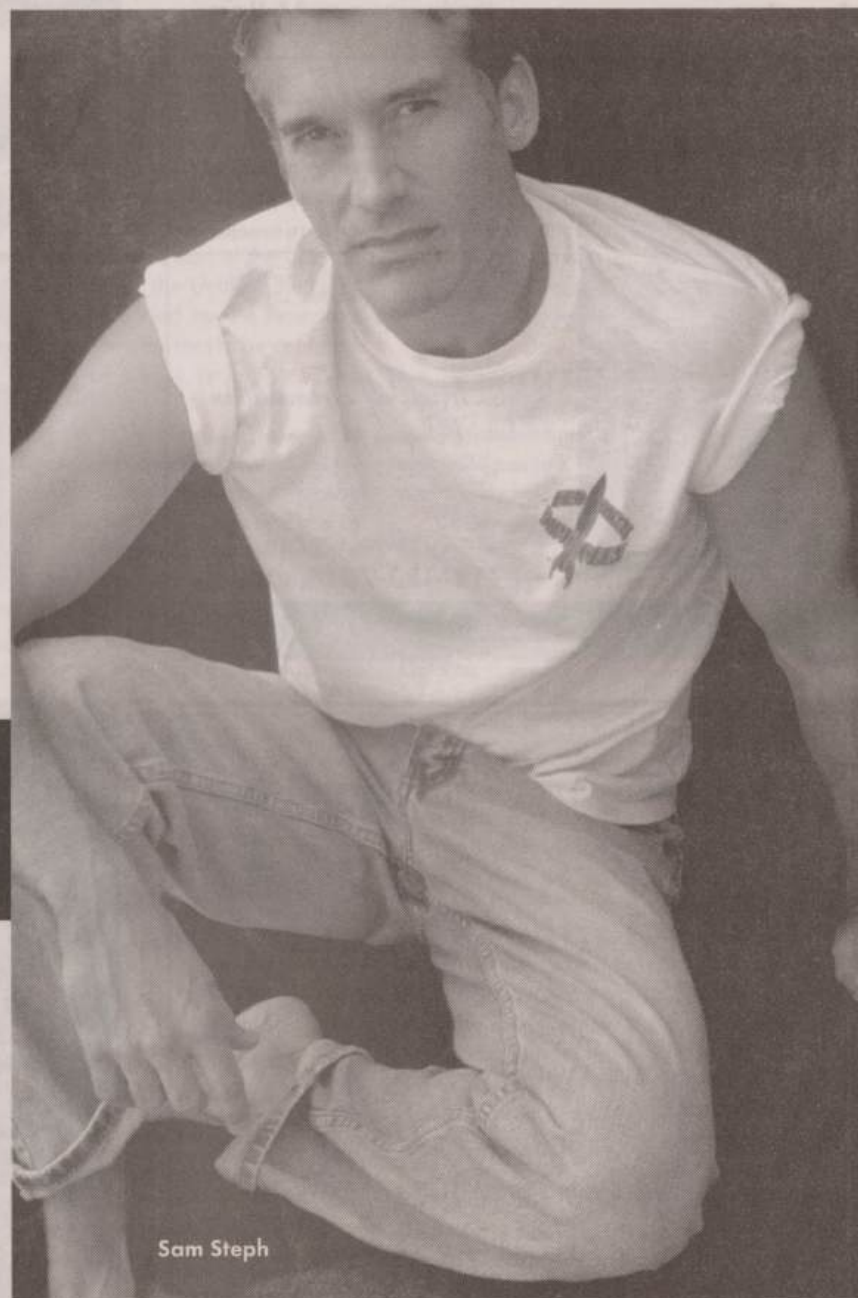
Steph already had a career as a highly successful model and entrepreneur when he came up with the idea for Red Rocket Jeans.

"One day I was people-watching with a friend," Steph says, "and observed a couple where the girl was playing with her hand in his pocket. I thought that it would be really interesting if there were a zipper for access."

"One day I was people-watching with a friend and observed a couple where the girl was playing with her hand in his pocket."

Red Rocket Jeans hit the fashion scene in 1999 during the Fall Magic Show in Las Vegas and soon became one of the infatuations-du-jour of the fashion media. "Rocket Jeans are the most comfortable and, I must say, fun jeans I have ever worn. I don't wear anything else!" gushed *Playboy* model Laura Ingle. "I have been waiting for this all my life," said the Lionell Internet Television/Talk show. *Jane Magazine* uttered the calculated assessment: "Cool."

Quite a lot of hoopla for a hometown boy. But then, this is not the first time the openly gay Steph has felt fame's spotlight. →



Sam Steph

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Steph was born in Clyde, Texas, and graduated from Texas Tech University in architecture. He began his business career in 1981 with two health food stores in Lubbock and San Antonio. Then a friend entered Steph's photograph in a contest that resulted in his first modeling job as the Calvin Klein Man. For the past 17 years, Steph's modeling career has taken him through Tokyo, Milan, Paris, and Munich. He has appeared in such catalogues as Land's End and Neiman Marcus, and has been featured in MTV videos. You can see him now in a national television commercial for TGI Fridays. Locally, Steph has worked with clients from Academy to Foley's, Neiman Marcus, and Saks Fifth Avenue.

Although Steph is one of Houston's top models, he's managed that rare combo of beauty without attitude. He is the good-looking "guy next door" that you want to take home to mom. "Sam is one of our shining stars," says Page Parkes Eveleth, whose Page.713 model and talent agency represents Steph. "Handsome, humble, kind, and sincere all in one."

I've known and admired Sam for years. I took the opportunity to ask a few of the questions I guessed discerning fashion readers might want to know.

OutSmart: With all the places around the world where you could work (and have), why is Houston your home?

Sam Steph: My family and friends live here. The city doesn't have any airs about it and has a hometown feeling. Houston has everything a big city has but without the rat race. It's all about the people, nice and warm.

Are you married?

[Grinning shyly] No, I am single.

What is a perfect date to you?

A nice bottle of wine with good conversation.

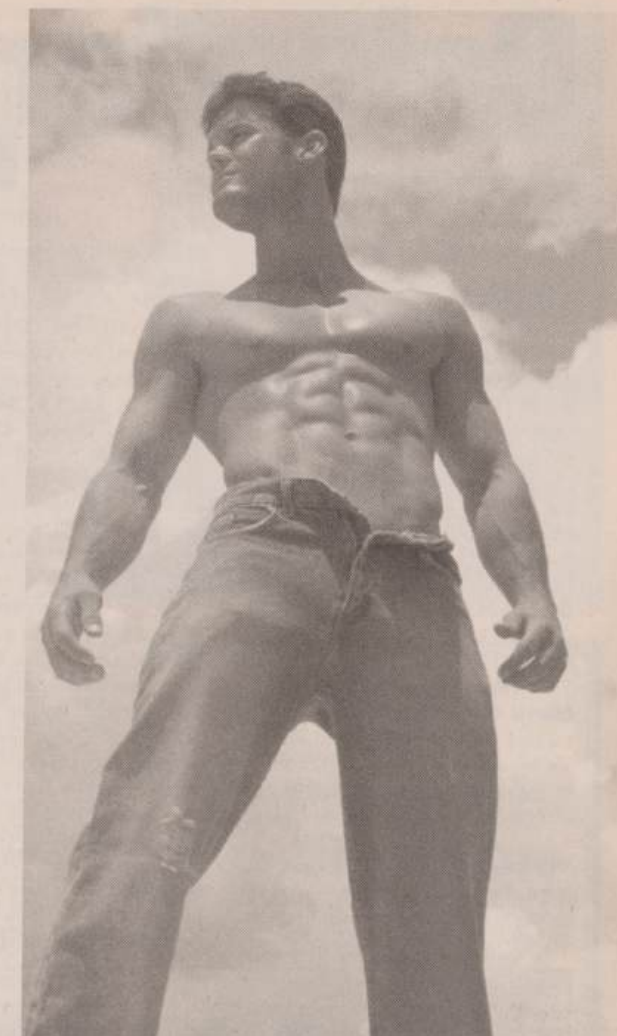
What's in the future for Red Rocket Jeans?

To expand internationally.

What advice would you give to a young entrepreneur?

When you have an idea, don't wait for someone else to do it, you do it. Creativity is half the ingredients needed for success, and the other half is follow-through and drive.

Stores in many cities across the country, from Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Dallas, New Orleans, and Phoenix, to South Beach, carry Red Rocket Jeans. Locally, Basic Brothers is where you'll find these fabulous jeans, for men or women.



Photography

John Conroy

Models

Charise Meriwether,
Stacey Seaver, and
Kevin Ward

Models provided by
Page.713

Styling

TJR Style

Hair/Makeup

Andrea Schutter

Clothing

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Calendar of Events

Deadline for OutSmart's March issue is 5 p.m., Monday, February 11.

FEBRUARY

Weekly (Tue., Wed., Thu.)

HIV Testing. The Montrose Clinic offers free confidential HIV testing every Tuesday at The Club Houston (2205 Fannin), 8 pm-midnight; every Wednesday at Mary's (1022 Westheimer), 4-8 pm; and at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center (803 Hawthorne), 6-9 pm; and every Thursday at Toyz Disco (5322 Glenmont), 10 pm-1 am. Call 713/830-3070 for other testing locations. **LIVE IN OR NEAR CONROE?** Free & confidential HIV/AIDS testing is also available from 2-5 pm on the 13th & 27th in Conroe at Northwoods AIDS Coalition, 1414 South Frazier, Ste. 106. More info: 936/441-1614.

Throughout February

Mardi Gras! Galveston. For info, contact the Galveston Island Visitors Center at 1-888-GAL-ISLE (425-4753) or www.mardigrasgalveston.com. The center is located at 25th & Seawall Blvd.

3 & 16 (Sun. & Sat.)

Wellness and Psychic Expos. Explore alternative healthcare medicine & products including vitamins & magnets. Try aromatherapy, acupressure, reflex-

ology. Consult top Houston psychics. 1-5 pm @ CenterPoint, 1920 Hollister. Entry \$1. (Classes starting Feb. 4 at CenterPoint: yoga, tai chi, feng shui, & meditation.) Expo/classes info: 713/932-7224 or www.centerpointhouston.com.

5, 12, 19, 26 (Tue.)

Queer Duck. If you missed its Showtime premiere on Jan. 29, here's the scoop: *Queer Duck*, the first series to expose the lives of gay cartoon characters, follows the outrageous adventures of a gay duck who works as a male nurse. Each episode is only a few minutes long, but it doesn't shy away from double entendres and gay humor. *Queer Duck* (voiced by openly gay Jim J. Bullock) and his animal friends—Openly Gator, Bi Polar Bear, and Oscar Wildcat—all lead openly gay lives. In one episode, when *Queer Duck* comes out at work, everyone wants to know what else is new; however, when he comes out to his parents at the dinner table, they are speechless—his

mother goes into the kitchen, and they smell... roast duck; she has stuck her head in the oven. *Queer Duck* premiered online at www.SHO.com on Jan. 23, where Showtime developed an interactive website exclusively for the series. After the online debut, the series premiered on Jan. 29, and will continue its Tuesday run following the 10 pm broadcast of *Queer as Folk*.

6 (Wed.)

TB and HIV: Fears, Facts, and Fallacies. The Bering Omega Care Center is a licensed adult day-care facility operated by Bering Omega Community Services for people with HIV disease. Beginning Feb. 6, they will offer "First Wednesdays," a lecture series on HIV-related topics for social services & nursing professionals. Lectures are free of charge, and certificates of attendance are available for obtaining continuing education units. Speakers are Michael Eckenfels, RN, LSMW, and Andrew McPhaul, LPC. A complimentary light supper will be served. Although there is no fee for participation, space is limited and reservations are required. Social

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—MON., FEB. 11.**

services & nursing professionals: 713/520-7070, ext. 141, for reservations. The next topic, "Adherence Issues and HIV," will be covered on Mar. 6.

6 & 9 (Wed. & Sat.)

Marian Anderson String Quartet. • On the 6th, the quartet is Da Camera of Houston's feature for their free lunchtime performance series, "A Little Day Music." Noon in the Wortham Center's Grand Foyer. • On the 9th, the quartet is Da Camera's feature for their free family series, "Da Camera Goes to the Zoo!" The concert is free with paid admission to the Houston Zoological Gardens (\$2.50 adults, \$2 seniors, 50¢

DIRTY BLONDES?



Christy Claxton (second from left) and the Dirty Blondes (l-r): Brett Needham, Chris Gardiner, Randy Wall.

When Christy Claxton began her promotional tour for her CD release, *Out of Nowhere*, she knew she needed to form a band that wouldn't get lost in the mass of indie bands struggling for recognition. After many shows with many excellent players, she settled on an eclectic group of players from Houston. The name Dirty Blondes came about from a joke that all of the people in Claxton's band are "dirty blondes."

Who: Christy Claxton & the Dirty Blondes
Date, Time, & Place:

- **Fri., Feb. 1:** 8:45-11:45 p.m., Vintage Bar, 4356 Westheimer, 713/355-3093
 - **Sat., Feb. 2:** 9:30 p.m.-1:30 a.m., Walter's, 4215 Washington, 713/864-2727
 - **Fri., Feb. 8:** 7:30-11:30 p.m., Mojo Cafe, 18627 Tomball Pkwy., 281/469-2233
 - **Sat., Feb. 9:** 8 p.m., Millbend Coffee, 1370 N. Millbend, 936/273-0610
 - **Fri., Feb. 15:** 8 p.m., Next Door Coffee House, 2719 Joanel (on the corner of Edloe & Kipling between Westheimer & W. Alabama), 713/626-3667
 - **Fri., Mar. 1:** 9:30 p.m., Dan Electro's Guitar Bar, 1031 E. 24th, 713/862-8707
- More info:** www.christyclaxton.com

children 3-12; children 2 & under free). An hour prior to the concert, children have the opportunity to see, touch, & play instruments featured in that day's performance. Concert at 2 pm @ the Houston Zoological Gardens, Hermann Park, 1513 MacGregor Dr. • Program for both: "Center Stage: A Tribute to African-American Composers." For more info: 713/524-7601, ext. 15, or www.dacamera.com.

7 (Thu.)

Johnny Mathis. The openly gay crooner is back by popular demand. Don't miss the velvet tones & elegant style that made him a star. 8 pm @ Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. For ticket prices/more info: 713/224-7575.

8 (Fri.)

Sérgio & Odair Assad. These Brazilian-born brothers, a guitar duo, perform works of Brouwer, Debussy, Piazzolla, & Rodrigo. 8 pm @ Wortham Center's Cullen Theater. Tickets are \$20-\$35 (students/seniors half price) and can be purchased by calling Da Camera of Houston at 713/524-5050 or by visiting www.dacamera.com.

8-10 (Fri.-Sun.)

Intimacy & Ecstasy. How to get close and yet respect personal boundaries is the question of every re-

lationship. How can we let others get to know us without going too far? How do we get close to others while respecting their mystery? What does Christian spiritual life teach us about intimacy & ecstasy? How do we blend spirituality & sexuality? These questions are the subject of a weekend retreat at Bering Memorial Methodist Church, 1440 Harold, led by author Chris Glaser. Cost of \$45 includes food. To register: Rev. Stacy Pever: 713/526-1017 or stacy@clearsail.net.

9 (Sat.)

Gal-Pal Social. Women who want to meet other women are invited to the first-ever lesbian speed dating event in Houston. Here's how it works: After some general socializing and ice-breaking, participants will have 7-minute conversations with seven different women. Each participant then uses a match card to note whether or not she is interested in speaking with that person again. Over the next few days, the organizers find the mutual matches, who may then follow up as they wish. 6 pm @ Meteor (corner of Genesee & Fairview). Registration is \$20 & limited to 50 women. At 8 pm, a general mix-&-meet begins, which is open to all. Produced by Gal Pals, a division of the Houston Women's Festival. Info: www.hwfestival.org/events.htm or 713/861-3316.

9 (Sat.)

Ride 'em Cowboys & Cowgirls. It's the 15th annual Conoco 10K Rodeo Run, which leads the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo Parade and is Houston's only point-to-point race. 100% of the race entry fees are donated to the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo Educational Fund. 5,000 runners are expected to hit the streets, some in costume. Enter the costume contest by just showing up in your fabulous Western drag, or just gussy up your cowboy hat to win Conoco bucks for gasoline. The wheelchair race begins at 9:45 am, the overall race at 9:50, in downtown Houston at the corner of Smith & Texas, and finishes at Enron Field. Registration is \$20. Register at Conoco stations, Krogers, YMCAs, Luke's Locker, or online at www.conocorodeo.com, or call 281/293-2477.

9 (Sat.)

Heartfelt Living. Learn why your thoughts & feelings shape your life's experiences; how spiritual mind treatment (affirmative prayer) works; plus connect with a group of other like-hearted people. It's the "Science of Mind" winter classes, every Saturday from 10 am-1 pm for 13 weeks @ Creative Life Spiritual Center, 5326 Spring-Stuebner, Spring, Texas. Cost is \$225, plus books. For more info: Jesse Jennings at 281/350-5157.

10 (Sun.)

Fat Sunday. For the 2nd consecutive year, Zion Lutheran Church is hosting its popular "Fat Sunday" worship service featuring the instrumental jazz ensemble Jazz Sunday. Dress is casual, and a variety of gumbos will be served following the service. The public is invited. 11 am in Zion Lutheran Church's Great Room, 3606 Beauchamp at Pecore in the Heights. Sunday worship services are at 8:15 & 11 am; "Growing Disciples" for all ages is at 9:45 am. Info: 713/869-1493 or www.zionlutheranhouston.org.

10 & 11 (Sun. & Mon.)

OrchestraX's annual Valentine's opera-with-a-difference is Verdi's *La Traviata*, which explores racial barriers. Not only is it updated, it will be performed in English. Tickets are \$45, including dinner. 7:30 pm in the Crystal Ballroom of the Rice Hotel, 909 Texas Ave. Tickets/info: 713/225-6729 or www.orchestrax.org.

11 (Mon.)

Deadline. Today is the deadline for your OutSmart Calendar submissions for our March issue. You can fax them by dialing 713/522-3275 or e-mail them to calendar@outsmartmagazine.com. →

SING-A-LONG SOUND OF MUSIC

It's time to tune up your vocal cords and/or dress up your torso

Wondering what all the buzz is about? *Sing-A-Long Sound of Music* is a screening of the classic Julie Andrews musical in glorious, full-screen Technicolor, complete with subtitles so that the whole audience can sing along! Audiences of all ages (and orientations) are invited to join in singing some of the best-known songs of the 20th century AND to dress up as their favorite character, item, or even line from a song for a one-of-a-kind interactive event and costume contest. • Here's how it works: Have you ever been to a musical film and had an uncontrollable urge to burst spontaneously into song? Have you wondered what it would be like to wear a wimple? Could you watch Julie Andrews sing "Do-Re-Mi" or "My Favorite Things" and stop yourself from singing along? Liar! What if all the lyrics were put up on the screen for you—subtitled—to make it criminally simple? Here is your chance to bellow—shamelessly and loudly—about your favorite things! Sing along with Julie! Wave your edelweiss! Bark at Rolf (the telegram boy)! Boo at the Nazis! Join in earnest choruses of "Climb Ev'ry Mountain"! Blame it on the guy next to you! Is that a guy? • Since its 1999 opening in the U.K., *Sing-A-Long Sound of Music* has played to packed houses across the globe, and it's now coming to Houston! During the performance at the Hollywood

Bowl, 18,000 spectators packed the arena dressed as nuns, Nazis, and everything in between. • Opening night is Monday, February 18 (the regular run starts Friday the 22nd), with a fundraiser benefiting the Houston Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. Charmian Carr, who played Liesl "Sixteen Going on Seventeen" Von Trapp, will be on hand to lead the singing and give a little backstory: What happened with Liesl and Rolf after the cameras were turned off? Were those really curtains they paraded through Salzburg in? Now's your chance to find out!

Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music*

What: *Sing-A-Long Sound of Music*
When: February 22-March 14 (opening night fundraiser is Feb. 18)
Time: Nightly at 7 p.m. (plus matinees at 1:30 p.m. on weekends)
Where: River Oaks Theatre, 2009 W. Gray
Cost: Weeknights \$20, weekends \$22.50 (\$5 off for students/seniors 65+; \$10 off for children under 12)
Info/order tickets: 281/397-8124, www.eventsunlimited.com
Info on Feb. 18 fundraiser: 713/524-2175

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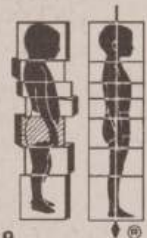
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12 (Tue.)

Print Auction. Houston Center for Photography's (HCP) 2002 print auction exhibition will be held in the SP Martel Auditorium, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 3511 Yoakum. A preview will be held from 6-7 pm; the auction will take place from 7-9 pm. Admission fee is \$25. For reservations or to purchase a 2002 Print Auction Catalog (\$6.25 including shipping/handling), call HCP at 713/529-4755. More info: www.hcponline.org.

15 & 16 (Fri. & Sat.)

Rent. In addition to receiving the Tony Award for Best Musical, *Rent* was also awarded the Pulitzer Prize and has been touted as "the most exuberant and original American musical to come along in a decade." It is a joyous, breathtaking, & often heartbreaking musical that celebrates a community of young artists as they struggle with the soaring hopes & tough realities of today's world. Find out what happens when Mimi wants Roger... Benny wants Mimi... Mark wants Maureen... Maureen wants Joanne. 8 pm on Friday, 3 & 8 on Saturday @ Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice. Tickets (\$16.50-\$65) are available by calling 409/765-1894 or by visiting www.thegrand.com.

15-17 (Fri.-Sun.)

Linda Eder. If you weren't able to get tickets to Eder's sold-out, one-night-only performance with the Houston Symphony last season, now is your chance to enjoy this incredible talent. If you were lucky enough to experience her in concert, you already know why she has earned rave reviews across the country. From the Broadway stage to Carnegie Hall, Linda Eder is a talent not to be missed. Friday & Saturday at 8 pm, Sunday at 7:30 pm @ Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Tickets (\$25-\$80) are available at all Ticketmaster outlets; by calling 713/224-7575; or online at www.houstonsymphony.com.

15-17 (Fri.-Sun.)

Homes & Gardens. With over 1,500 exhibits, the 16th annual Texas Home & Garden Show is one-stop shopping for your home & garden. Includes: art, antique, & accessories showcase; gourmet cooking shows; home & garden theater; home improvement, home building, energy efficiency, and A/C & heating experts; and interior & exterior decorating ideas. Admission \$8 (kids under 14 free). More info: 713/529-1616 or visit www.texashomeandgarden.com.

16 (Sat.)

Poets and Writers Ball. Mary Karr is the featured speaker. Her memoir, *Cherry*, is the exploration of growing up in east Texas. Karr sketches the joys and pleasures of childhood & adolescence that shape & challenge the identities we build for ourselves as adults. Before dinner—which will feature a menu from Ouisie's Table—three Texas writers, including Molly Ivins, will read briefly from their work. For more info: 713/521-2026 or www.inprint-inc.org.

16 (Sat.)

Illumination Gala. Candlelight, neon, strobes, flashlights, lava lamps, tiki torches, black lights... they will all be part of the *Illumination* gala. The evening begins at 6:30 pm with cocktails & a silent auction featuring donated artwork. Dinner starts at 8 in a fantastically decorated warehouse space. The meal features dishes donated by many outstanding restaurants. Following the gala will be afterGLOW, the official post-gala party where you can groove the night away with some of Houston's top DJs. Tickets for afterGLOW are \$35 (dinner guests are invited at no extra charge). Dinner tickets start at \$150 with sponsor levels ranging from \$1,750-\$10,000. Seating limited. Reservations: Elizabeth Proctor, development director, 713/223-8346.

16 (Sat.)

Beakman Live! The mad-but-wacky scientist from the TV show *Beakman's World* takes to the road. Watch him make a flying bat materialize in thin air! Marvel as Beakman breaks the sound barrier in front of your very eyes! Witness him fearlessly stand in the path of a speeding bowling ball! And along the way, Beakman uncovers some very cool scientific principles. 7 pm @ Wortham Center's Cullen Theater. Tickets (\$10-\$35) available at all Ticketmaster locations or online at www.spahouston.org; charge by phone at 713/629-3700.

16 & 17 (Sat. & Sun.)

Two Women. Sophia Loren earned a well-deserved Oscar for her performance as a mother who flees war-torn Rome with her preteen daughter during World War II. They hope to find safety in the country hills, but their experiences along the way—from starvation to rape—leave them defeated and hardened. The two women must struggle to survive and heal. The 1960 film was directed by Vittorio De Sica. 7 pm in the Brown Auditorium of the Museum of Fine Arts. General admission \$5 (members/seniors/students \$4). More info: 713/639-7515 or www.mfah.org.

18 (Mon.)

Listen Up. The Margaret Root Brown Houston Reading Series presents Jorie Graham & Mark Strand. Graham's collections include *The Dream of the Unified Field: Selected Poems 1974-1994*, *The End of Beauty*, and her most recent, *Swarm*. Strand's works include the collections *Blizzard of One*, *Selected Poems*, and *Reasons for Moving*. Both poets are recipients of the Pulitzer Prize and MacArthur Foundation "genius" fellowships. 7:30 pm (doors open at 6:45) @ the Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. Tickets are \$5 (students/seniors free) and are available only at the door on the evening of the reading. More info: 713/521-2026 or www.inprint-inc.org.

19 & 20 (Tue. & Wed.)

The Seven Last Words of Christ. Pulitzer Prize-winning author Mark Strand reads his original poetry, based on the last words of Christ, between the movements of Haydn's *Seven Last Words*, which is performed by the Brentano String Quartet. The interplay between music, painting, architecture, & poetry creates a powerful, contemplative experience. Presented by Da Camera of Houston at 7:30 pm @ the Rothko Chapel, 1409 Sul Ross. Tickets (\$30; students/seniors half price) are available by contacting Da Camera Music Center, 1427 Branard, 713/524-5050, or online at www.ticketmaster.com.

20 (Wed.)

Jewish Gays & Lesbians. As a continuation of its outreach efforts, Jewish Family Service will host a program, "Gays and Lesbians in the Jewish Community: An Open Discussion." The meeting will explore the needs of the gay & lesbian Jewish community and consider ideas for future programs. 7-9 pm @ the Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond. No RSVP is necessary. Questions/info: Toby Newman at Jewish Family Service, 713/667-9336, or you may e-mail her at tnewman@jfs-houston.org.

22 (Fri.)

Houston Grand Opera's inaugural BRAVO! gala features comedienne B.J. Ward in her one-woman show "Stand-Up Opera." Called "a rollicking ride on the high C's" by *The Washington Post*, "Stand-Up Opera" puts a hilarious spin on opera's plots, prima donnas, & eccentric personalities. The show has toured coast-to-coast from Hollywood to New York and is produced by TV & stage director Gordon Hunt, whose direction of TV's *Mad About You* won a Directors Guild of America Award. Tickets start at \$75. 7 pm @

Cutting-Edge Queer Cinema continued from page 26



Above: Ruth Ellis at a very young age with a friend and at 100 years old in *Living with Pride: Ruth C. Ellis @ 100*. Below: Cheryl Dunye, director of *Watermelon Woman*, and actor J.D. Cerna in *Alkali, Iowa*.



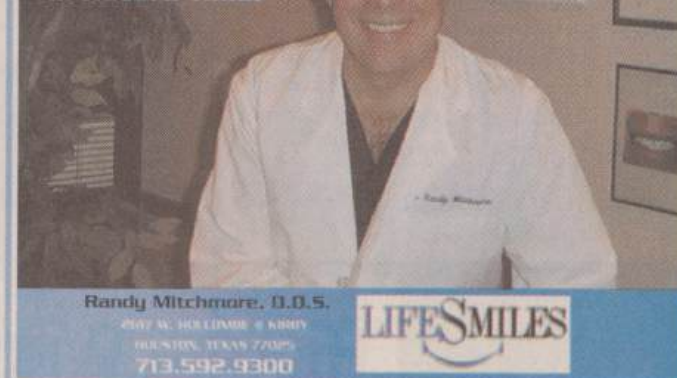
co-director. "This fund aims to tap into the motivation and energy that fuels a queer artist to make their vision a reality and help them with the crucial last steps that could make the difference between being seen by a larger audience and not being seen at all."

This year, funds went to these four films: *By Hook or By Crook* (directors Harry Dodge & Silas Howard), a feature film chronicling three weeks in the life of a handsome, gender-bending, small-town butch with a nagging messiah complex; *Barefeet* (director Sonali Gulati), an experimental narrative short film about a South Asian woman who struggles to come out to her family in India; *Making Media That Matters* (director Liz Miller), a documentary about a nonprofit organization in Nicaragua that has managed to mainstream controversial feminist issues such as abortion, homophobia, and domestic abuse through a politically charged "Social Soap Opera"; and *Ke Kulana He Mahu: Remembering a Sense of Place* (director Kathryn Xian), a historical documentary on the rise of intolerance and homophobia in Hawaii as a result of Western colonization and modernization.

To date, more than 50 films and videos have been completed with assistance from the fund, including Cheryl Dunye's *Watermelon Woman*, Barbara Hammer's *Nitrate Kisses*, Rose Troche's *Go Fish*, Mark Christopher's *Alkali, Iowa*, David Weissman and Bill Weber's *The Cockettes*, Yvonne Welbon's *Living with Pride: Ruth C. Ellis @ 100*, and *The Brandon Teena Story* by Susan Muska and Greta Olafsdottir.

Each year, Frameline presents the San Francisco International Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, the oldest and largest event of its kind in the world. Frameline Distribution is the nation's only distributor solely dedicated to lesbian and gay film and video. ■

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THUNDER WONDER

The return of
In the Under Thunderloo

There never was a scene like this. May 6, 1993. Limousines and drunks. College professors and skate punks. Fighting each other off at the door for the hottest ticket in town, only \$5.99. In the bad old days, this used to be called rock-and-roll theater. • Almost nine years ago, Infernal Bridegroom Productions (IBP) began its 37-production history as Houston's leading homeless theater company with the world



Clockwise from top left:
Cary Winscott, Jodi McLaughlin,
Troy Schulze, and Annessa Ramsey

premiere of IBP artistic director Jason Nodler's *In the Under Thunderloo*, at the Axiom (then called Catal Hüyük). • The revised *Thunderloo* features a new set of rock songs by IBP associate director Anthony Barilla with lyrics by Nodler, who also directs. • Alternately set at the beginning and the end of the world, *Thunderloo* follows post-apocalyptic heroes Jake Steak and Photochick on their search for truth, justice, and the mythical Woodman. Expect philosophical cavemen, poison pumpkins, dinosaur cops, and the loudest, baddest, rock songs you ever heard. And expect to book your tickets early.

What: *In the Under Thunderloo*
When: Opens Fri., Feb. 8 and runs open-ended
Where: The Axiom, 2524 McKinney
Cost: Opening weekend retro rate \$5.99;
ticket prices for remaining performances \$10-\$15
Reservations/More Info: 713/522-8443

Rockefeller Hall, 3620 Washington Ave. & Waugh. For more info: Laura Woods at 713/546-0277 or lwoods@houstongrandopera.org.

23 (Sat.)

The Mercury Baroque Ensemble focuses on authentically performing 17th- and 18th-century music, playing on period instruments in order to recapture the intimacy & nuance of Baroque music. Tonight's concert, "Bach, Between Cantatas and Sonatas," starts at 8 pm @ the Virginia Stuller Tatham Fine Arts Center, St. John's School, 2700 Buffalo Speedway at Westheimer. Tickets are \$20 (students/seniors \$10). For more info: 713/498-4853.

23 (Sat.)

Death of a Salesman. Based on the story by Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman* is about Willy Loman who spent his whole life "way out there in the blue, riding a smile and a shoeshine" and proud of his ability to sell anything to anyone. But Willy Loman's "American dream" turns into a gut-wrenching nightmare as he finds himself at the end of his career and at the end of his rope. 8 pm @ Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice. Tickets (\$14.50-\$55) are available by calling 409/765-1894 or by visiting www.thegrand.com.

PLANNING AHEAD

MARCH & BEYOND

March 1 (Fri.)

Brentano Quartet and Friends. Da Camera of Houston presents The Brentano String Quartet performing Janáček's *String Quartet No. 1*. They are joined by Steven McKay (electric guitar) for McKay's *Troubador Songs* and pianist Ignat Solzhenitsyn for Gabriel Fauré's *Second Piano Quartet*. 8 pm @ Wortham Center's Cullen Theater. Tickets (\$20-\$35; students/seniors half price) are available by contacting Da Camera Music Center, 1427 Branard, 713/524-5050, or online at www.ticketmaster.com.

March 2 & 7 (Sat. & Thu.)

Fire is a new exhibit by Jay Branson, Kelly Gale Amen, & John Palmer. *Fire* features furniture created by Amen which has been painted by Palmer, set on fire, and photographed by Branson. 10 am-6 pm on Saturday, 6-8 pm on Thursday, @ the KGA Compound, 1907 Crocker. For more info: 713/227-9101.

March 6 (Wed.)

A Little Day Music. Da Camera of Houston's free lunchtime performance series features soprano Karol

Bennett & pianist Alain Declert in a program titled "Intimate Settings: Songs by Schubert and Fauré." The series also features drawings for tickets to Da Camera's upcoming events. You are encouraged to bring & enjoy your lunch while listening to the music at noon in the Grand Foyer of the Wortham Theater Center, 500 Texas at Smith. More info: 713/524-7601, ext. 15.

March 10 (Sun.)

The 13th Annual AIDS Walk Houston is a 3.5-mile walk event to increase awareness & education of HIV/AIDS. Last year's walk raised more than \$35,000 with the help of over 4,000 participants. There is no cure for HIV/AIDS, and it is infecting/affecting all communities, race/ethnicities, sexes, & ages. Currently, it is estimated that one in 90 Houstonians is HIV-positive. According to the Houston Department of Health & Human Services, as of December 31, 2001, in Harris County alone, 10,628 reported individuals are living with HIV/AIDS. Beneficiaries this year are AIDS Foundation Houston and five local HIV/AIDS service organizations. The walk begins with registration at 8 am, warm-up activities at 8:30, and starting time at 9 @ Sam Houston Park, 1000 Bagby. For more info: Gwen Johnson at 713/623-6796, ext. 252, or online at www.aids-help.org.

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March 29 (Fri.)

Outfest 2002. As one of the world's largest gay & lesbian film festivals celebrates its landmark 20th anniversary, Outfest 2002 is now calling for submissions for completed feature, animated, & short films, videos, and documentaries. To be held in Los Angeles July 11-22, 2002, filmmakers from across the country and around the globe are invited to submit their work and join in the celebration of the gay & lesbian community's vision & artistry. Applications, rules, & regulations are available from the Outfest website at www.outfest.org. Submission deadline is March 29, and final decisions will be announced May 31.

May 3-5 (Fri.-Sun.)

Enchanted Rock Trip. The Houston Outdoor Group (HOG) is a social group for gay men, lesbians, & gay-friendly people who enjoy the outdoors... so if you're a gay man, a lesbian, or a gay-friendly person who enjoys the outdoors, now's your chance to sleep outdoors. Enchanted Rock is about 70 miles west of Austin & north of Fredericksburg. The group has reserved three campsites (maximum 24 people) with tent-camping only. This campout fills up fast, so for more info, call now: 713/KAMP-OUT (526-7688).

November 2-9 (Sat.-Sat.)

2002 Sydney Gay Games. The Houston Montrose Athletic Association with Mark Hoyer of American Express Travel will be the resource contact for the Houston contingent that will be going to the games. Hoyer has worked out a travel package that includes discounted hotel & flight rates. Visit the 2002 Sydney Gay Games website at www.sydneysydney.org.au for more info about the events & registration. For reservations, call Mark at 713/365-6266 (reservation cost \$210).

PERFORMING ARTS

◆ **Come Up and Slay Me Sometime** and **Marriage Can Be Murder** are presented by Mystery Café, home of Comedy Murder Mystery Dinner Theater. • In their new original production *Come Up and Slay Me Sometime*, the troupe runs roughshod over Texas history of the 1920s, as a national radio broadcast takes place at a floating speakeasy. In attendance: flappers, gangsters, historical figures, Mae West, & Abraham Lincoln. With a combination like that, somebody's going to wind up dead. • *Marriage Can Be Murder* takes place at a disastrous wedding ceremony and can serve as either a warning to lovebirds or a soothing balm to those who have already posted bans, as they can say, "Well, at least our wedding wasn't that bad!" • *Come Up and Slay Me* runs Saturday nights at 8 pm in repertory with *Marriage Can Be Murder*, which performs Friday nights at 8 pm. (There will be a special performance of *Marriage Can Be Murder* on Thursday, Feb. 14, at 8 pm.) All shows are presented at the Prima Pasta Restaurant, 2710 Richmond Ave. Info: 713/944-CLUE (2583) or www.mysterycafehouston.com.

◆ **Experiment with an Air Pump.** In the same room in two different centuries—1979 & 1999—two families grapple with issues of scientific exploration and its effects on human values. In 1979, physicist Joseph Fenwick's household buzzes with scientific experiments, furtive romance, & farcical amateur dramatics. In 1999, Ellen, a geneticist, and Tom, an English professor whose job has become redundant, discover a dark secret buried in the house for 200 years. Through Feb. 24 @ Main Street Theater in Rice Village 42540 Times Blvd. Tickets are \$20-\$30. More info: 713/524-6706 or www.mainstreettheater.com.

◆ **Fences** is the first of two plays by August Wilson to be awarded a Pulitzer Prize. This play, set in Pittsburgh in the 1950s, revolves around Troy Maxson, a former

Negro League baseball player. Metaphorically, the "fences" in the play are the barriers of desegregation which separate Maxson, a proud man, from his dreams and the fences he creates in loving his wife, his son, & himself. Through Feb. 24 @ the Ensemble Theatre, 3535 Main St. Tickets are \$20-\$35. More info/reservations: 713/520-0055.

◆ **Forever Hold Your Peace!** Join the festivities at the tiny town of Dumpster, Texas, throws a wedding in this original Fertile Family comedy. Thursdays & Fridays at 8:30 pm, Saturdays at 8 & 10:30 pm, through May 12 @ Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt. Desserts, munchies, champagnes, wines, beers, cappuccino, & soft drinks are available for purchase throughout the show. Admission is \$16, reservations are required, & tickets must be purchased in advance at the theater or by calling the box office at 713/522-7722.

◆ **Houston Ballet.** Cleopatra—the most powerful woman in the world; an enchantress for the ages; the lover of two of the world's greatest leaders, Julius Caesar & Marc Antony. Cleopatra comes to life in Ben Stevenson's sweeping epic, which spans two continents and is punctuated by moments of unforgettable pageantry & spectacle. Thomas Boyd's designs beautifully evoke the languor & sensuality of the Egyptian court & the bare-knuckled struggle for power in Rome. Feb. 28-Mar. 10 @ Wortham Theater Center's Brown Theater, Texas at Smith streets. Tickets (\$11.50-\$104.50) are available by calling 713/227-ARTS (2787) or in person at the Wortham Ticket Center in the Wortham Theater Center. For more information: www.houstonballet.org.



Lauren Anderson

◆ **The Laramie Project.** The brutal murder of gay college student Matthew Shepard—and the onslaught of media attention that followed it—stunned the sleepy prairie town of Laramie, Wyoming. In the aftermath, Moises Kaufman's Tectonic Theatre Project conducted over 200 interviews with the people of Laramie as they struggled to heal their wounds and face the realization that "it can happen here." The result is a play that chronicles darkness & heroism with equal sensitivity. A co-production between Stages and Unhinged Productions. Through Feb. 10 @ Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway. Tickets (\$32-\$42) are available at the Stages box office or by calling 713/527-0123 or at www.stagestheatre.com.

◆ **Lobster Alice.** In 1946 Hollywood, animator John Finch is busy creating the fanciful world of Wonderland—and falling in love with his secretary, Alice. When he's assigned to supervise the work of Salvador Dali, Finch's predictable life is turned upside down as he & Alice are drawn through Dali's looking glass into the glittering world of the bizarre. Feb. 27-Mar. 24 @ Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway. Tickets (\$32-\$42) are available at the Stages box office or by calling 713/527-0123 or at www.stagestheatre.com.

◆ **The Man in the Trunk.** a new drama by Houstonian Fernando Dovalina, is about five Texans—a feuding Houston couple & the three friends who are drawn into their turbulent exchanges: a gay man who is the husband's best friend, a recent divorcee, & a drunk copy editor. Tickets are \$15 (\$12 students/seniors). 8 pm, Thu.-Sat., beginning with a preview on Feb. 21, through Mar. 30 @ Unhinged Productions, 3304 LaBranch, 713/524-8707.

◆ **The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told.** Due to rave reviews and sold-out houses, Theatre New West

announced a holdover for its production of Paul Rudnick's brilliant comedy, *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*, which deals with Adam & Steve and Jane & Mabel in the Garden of Eden. Now running through Feb. 23 (Fridays & Saturdays only) at 8 pm @ Theatre New West, 1415 California. Tickets are \$20. For reservations: 713/394-0464.

◆ **The Mousetrap** by Dame Agatha Christie. This quintessential "whodunit" has it all—unsuspecting lodgers snowed in at a new bed and breakfast, an unexpected guest, and a dead body. Tickets \$10 (students/seniors \$9; matinees \$8). Feb. 22-Mar. 23 @ Theatre Suburbia, 1410 W. 43rd St., 713/682-3525, www.theatresuburbia.com.

◆ **No Exit**, by Jean-Paul Sartre, is presented by dos chicas theater commune. Three damned souls are brought together in a one-room hell where their actions take on a twisted system of judging and being judged by one another, illustrating what can and does happen when people refuse to make choices and take responsibility for them. As each character attempts to accept and understand their fate, they are in a constant battle between how they see themselves, how the other two see them, and how they wish to be seen. This continual imbalance and irritation leads to the conclusion that "hell is other people." 8 pm, Feb. 1, 2, 8, & 9 @ Upstairs at Heliotrope (formerly the Mausoleum), 411 Westheimer. Tickets are \$10 (\$6 seniors/students). Reservations: 713/201-0193.

◆ **Of Mice and Men.** John Steinbeck's story is an American classic, an examination of the true nature of friendship in an unfriendly world. Set in rural 1930's California, it mythologizes an America struggling to reinvent itself. Through Feb. 17 @ the Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. Tickets are \$25-\$45. For more info: www.alleytheatre.org or 713/228-8421.

◆ **Postmortem.** A famous Sherlock Holmes portrayer & playwright invites the cast of his latest play to his pseudo-medieval castle where a trap is set for a suspected murderer. Tickets are \$12 (students/seniors \$10). Through Mar. 9, Fridays & Saturdays at 8 pm @ The Company Onstage, 536 Westbury Square, 713/726-1216. Reservations recommended.

PERFORMING ARTS

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

◆ **Androcles and the Lion.** "Every person must be free to be" is the theme of this prize-winning adaptation of the popular Aesop fable. A cast of strolling players presents us with a miserly Pantalone, a bragging Captain, the friendly slave Androcles, & a very endearing, funny Lion. Tickets \$6. Saturdays at 11 am & 1:30 pm, through Mar. 2 @ The Company Onstage, 536 Westbury, 713/726-1216.

◆ **Catch a Ride with the Houston Symphony.** Find out how the symphony can travel by boat, plane, and even flying horseback, before inviting little listeners aboard the famous & well-loved *The Little Engine That Could*. For children ages 4-13 and their families. Saturday, Feb. 16 at 10 & 11:30 am @ Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Tickets (adults \$14, children about \$9) are available at all Ticketmaster outlets; by calling 713/224-7575; or online at www.houstonsymphony.com.

◆ **The Courage of Mandy Brown** is a tale of the Underground Railroad told through the eyes of a young girl who must find her courage and make her way to Canada and freedom. The play is rich with music & song from its time period, and celebrates the human spirit & its ability to triumph over adversity. Tue.-Fri. group performances: 9:30 & 11:30 am; Sat. public performances: 11:30 am & 2 pm. Through Mar. 2 @ Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway at



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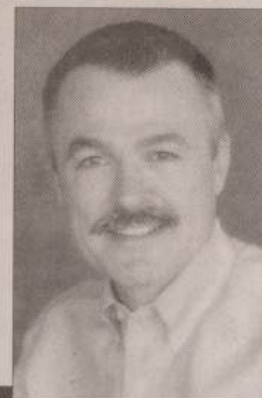


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Waugh. Tickets are \$8 (\$6 each for groups of 10 or more); tickets also available online at www.stages-theatre.com. Info/reservations: 713/527-0123.

♦ **Highlights for Children** was created from the belief that the arts motivate & empower children to think more critically and to enhance their communication abilities, as well as to encourage them to achieve greater dimensions of creativity. \$6 (\$5 for children under 12). Thu., Feb. 28, at 7 pm @ Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice, 409/765-1894. www.thegrand.com.

♦ **Romeo and Juliet**. Heralding from feuding families, the Montagues and the Capulets, Romeo and Juliet are star-crossed lovers hiding their affections from the world. Pledging to marry they garner the secrecy & trust of a local clergyman. But can love save them from the terrible anger & violence to which the two families have bound themselves? Recommended for 6th-12th grades. Tickets are \$10 for adults; \$8 for children/students/seniors. Main Street Theater at Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. For more info on family performances (Feb. 15-17): 713/524-6706. Info on school bookings (through Feb. 22): 713/524-7998.

♦ **Thief of Sherwood Forest** is presented by Mystery Café on Saturdays at 11:30 am @ the Prima Pasta Restaurant, 2710 Richmond Ave. Info: 713/944-CLUE (2583) or www.mysterycafehouston.com.

RADIO

♦ **After Hours**. Saturdays, midnight to 3 am. Featuring the QMZ (Queer Music Zone) with Jimmy Carper. KPFT 90.1 FM, 713/526-5738.

♦ **Queer Voices**. Mondays, 8-10 pm. Features, news, music, interviews, reviews, and commentary. KPFT 90.1 FM, 713/526-4000.

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

♦ **Katharine Cobey: Fiber Sculpture**. Cobey takes the process of knitting to new levels of art in her new exhibition. Her knitted sculptures include a range of media such as hand-spun wool, plastic garbage bags, & metal wire, all demonstrating her skill & creativity as a fiber artist. Through April 7 @ Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main St., 713/529-4848.

♦ **Rex Kare's** powerful & exciting new works include figurative oil paintings, sketches, & portraits. Feb. 15-Mar. 15 @ Betz Gallery, 1208 West Gray, 713/523-3765. Opening reception: Feb. 15, 6-9pm.

♦ **The Tourist Project** will reach far beyond the confines of the gallery space as New York-based artist Lee Mingwei discovers the city of Houston through its residents' eyes. Volunteer participants selected by lottery will act as "tour guides" and bring Lee to places that are personally meaningful to them. While some participants might choose to guide Lee to popular tourist attractions, others might elect to visit more private locations, such as an automobile, dormitory room, or café. In this fun, poignant process of telling and listening to stories, the city comes to be defined by the multiplicity of experiences it plays host to. Through Feb. 24 @ Rice University Art Gallery. For more info: 713/348-6069 or www.rice.edu/rug.

**CALENDAR
DEADLINE**
for OutSmart's
March issue is
Monday, Feb. 11, 5 p.m.

Look for Galveston's newest bar—**Jimmy's by the Beach**. Doors opened January 18, although the grand opening will take place after Mardi Gras. Overlooking the Gulf, Jimmy's by the Sea is the closest bar to the gay East Beach, and plans are in the works for male strippers and karaoke nights. • "I was happy being a bartender," says owner **Jimmy Sweeney**, who has been on the island for 19 years, "but I decided it was time to make a career of it. I wanted to establish a place where everyone can have fun." • Sweeney is supported in this new adventure by his partner **Gary Bache** and many friends. Open daily, noon to 2 a.m., with daily happy hour prices 7 p.m., plus \$1 mimosas and Bloody Marys on Sundays. Corner of 9th & Seawall (904 Ave M), 409/765-6911.

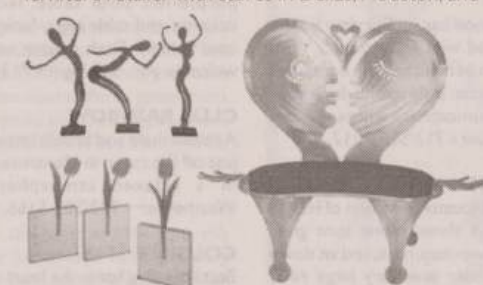
If you keep missing them for dinner, try doing brunch. **Cole's Restaurant** will be open for Sunday brunch beginning February 10. Owned by **Richard Cole** and **Paul Long**, the casual and cozy neighborhood restaurant has great atmosphere for a cocktail after work or a weekend dinner with friends. 2100 Waugh Dr. (between Michigan & Indiana) in the Montrose, 713/942-2100.

Sonoma returns, by popular demand—and reopened January 31. This elegant oasis of fine dining closed just after Pride month 2001 in order to regroup after the flood. However, owner **Jay Allen** said the community just didn't want to see Sonoma closed for good. Although **Neil Markert** will take over the management, the kitchen staff has all returned—the menu will include all your old favorites, only you will be pleased to see some of

the prices are actually reduced! Watch for lunch in the near future. Bolstered by the success of **Joe Watt's** Theater New West and "The Magic Bus" comedy classes—both of whom use spaces in the Sonoma building—Allen has plans to turn the Sonoma complex into an entertainment center for the community. 1415 California, 713-522-7066. Tue.-Thu., 5-10 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 5-11 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Bocados is now open for a Sunday Disco Brunch 11 a.m.-3 p.m. A DJ spins all your favorite club classics and live entertainment is scheduled later in the month.

Looking for a Valentine gift with style and panache? **Cantoni Furniture**, a high-end contemporary furniture retailer with stores in Dallas, Houston, and



Cantoni's dancers, vases, and loveseat

Irvine, has several furniture and accessory items that demonstrate the fun-loving and whimsical feel of this romantic holiday. A **Christopher Royal** loveseat features brushed aluminum and a velvet seat, \$2,139. Heart cut-glass bud vase designed for one stem flower, \$69. Intricate heart designs encircle

Business News

a glass bowl, \$219. Black Dancers with Red Heart sculpture features individual dancers in elongated, contemporary positions, \$169. The Tango Chaise in cherry red supersuede is the perfect Valentine's gift for any couple, \$1179. The Pop-art "Why Darling You're Beautiful" ceramic vase by **JoAnn Delomba** exclusively for Cantoni, \$899. Cantoni, 9889 Westheimer, 713/787-9494.

Long-time Houstonian and graphic designer **Michelle Flora** announces the launch of her firm's new website: www.lionsden.net. She gives great thanks to her partner, **Kim Morgan**, for helping her make it happen. Check it out!

The Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce celebrates a 67-percent increase in membership for 2001—a record growth for the long-standing community organization—bringing the total to 430 members. This follows a board decision to invest in a fulltime executive director and increase direct member benefits. With **Coy Tow** at the helm as the chamber's ED, the group's plans for 2002 are to concentrate on membership growth, community infrastructure development, enhancing chamber events, create a community website, and further develop the Corporate Networking Group. Membership is open to individuals, nonprofits, businesses, and corporations. Please contact Coy Tow at 713/523-7576 or visit the website at www.ghlcc.org. ■

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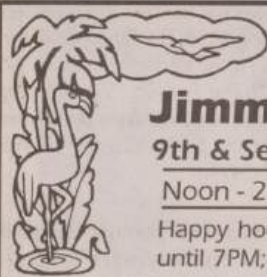
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Bar Guide



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BOCADOS

This homey Mexican restaurant serves comfort food in a colorful setting, but on Wednesday nights, Houston's women turn out for dancing and socializing until 1 am. Popular with gay and straight alike. The Sunday brunch starts at 11am and doesn't end till 3 in the afternoon. 1312W. Alabama • 713/523-5230.

BRAZOS RIVER BOTTOM

Best known as the BRB, Houston's premiere country-western bar brings you denim, boots, and cowboy hats. Located just outside the Montrose, this bar calls Midtown home. Voted the "Best Place to Two-Step," the BRB has two huge bars to serve you—not to mention a great bar staff. Whether dancing, playing pool, or just cruising around, you're sure to see some true Texas kicker dancing. 2400 Brazos • 713/528-9192.

BRICKS II

This neighborhood bar on Fairview boasts a jukebox loaded with C/W music. With cement floors, cold draft, and the occasional cowboy hat, you can belly up and drink your fill in a low-key atmosphere where regulars rule. 617 Fairview • 713/523-7217.

CHANCES/NEW BARN/G-SPOT

Keeping up the Houston tradition of HUGE lesbian bars, this three-in-one spot gives you a place to two-step, rock, and sit down and talk—all under one very large roof. Voted "Best Honky Tonk & Upscale Lesbian Bar" in OutSmart's Readers' Poll. 1100 Westheimer • 713/523-7217.

CHULO'S ICE HOUSE

Chulo's does a great job of creating a friendly, quirky atmosphere. Built from the remnants of a gas station, Chulo's is a step sideways from the usual icehouse. The

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purple-felt pool table, leopard-print columns and table tops, funky lamps, and cool Johnny Cash poster on the fridge welcome you. 512 Elgin • 713/520-5218.

CLUB RAINBOW

A mixed male and female crowd, this bar is just off the curve in Montrose. DJ, dancing, in a relaxed atmosphere. 1417-B Westheimer • 713/522-5166.

COUSIN'S

Best little drag bar in the heart of Montrose. Drag aficionados pack the place on week-ends for its campy shows. 817 Fairview • 713/528-9204.

EJ's

It might be on the western end of Montrose, but it attracts a crowd from all over while keeping the charm of a local colorful hangout. Now with three bars, one

inside, one outside, and one on the new second floor patio, you never have to wait for a cocktail, so drink up and enjoy the nightly entertainment on and off the stage. 2517 Ralph • 713/527-9071.

GUAYA LAMP

This funky little spot is the perfect place to grab a cocktail, listen to your favorite tunes, and maybe shoot a round of pool. Like its name, it's groovy, hip, and a tad bit kitschy. 2159 Portsmouth • 713-524-3359.

J.R.'S/SANTA FE

Where do you meet the boys? Right here, at one of Houston's gay institutions. JR's boasts everything from pool tables to karaoke to table dancers, depending on the day of the week. 808/804 Pacific • 713/521-2519.

KEYS WEST

It's Cheers in Neartown. Must-see décor

featuring a piano bar and guest entertainment, Tue.-Sat. Check out the clientele, and if you think they look familiar, you've probably seen them over at the Briar Patch. Say hello to owners Joe and Jerry and their seasoned bar staff. 817 W. Dallas • 713/571-7870.

MARY'S

THE venerable local neighborhood bar in the Montrose. Largest private garden patio anywhere in Houston and an inside and outside bar to serve you. Enjoy a game of pool or darts, or just join the men relaxing at the bar. Always a great gathering place for local events, everyone should see the Pride Parade from the roof of Mary's at least once. 1022 Westheimer • 713/527-9669.

MELA'S

Houston's favorite little Tejano and country-western bar, this joint is mostly women, pool tables, and music. 302 Tuam • 713/523-0747.

METEOR

A step up from the rest, Meteor offers a relaxing but chic atmosphere with its overstuffed couches and fancy glassware. Handsome men and darling women gather here any night of the week for drinks and conversation. The friendly bar staff makes this video lounge a great place to catch your favorite TV or music videos. Winner of OutSmart Readers' choice award for "Best New Club." 2306 Genesee • 713/521-0123.

MO MONG

Voted "Best Martini" by OutSmart readers.

every Wednesday night the guys and gals come out in droves to enjoy the multiple martini specials. Located just behind the old Tower Theatre (now HollywoodVideo), this Vietnamese restaurant's downstairs lobby and outside patio do double duty as a bar for the mob on Wednesday nights. 1201 Westheimer #B • 713/524-5664.

MONTROSE MINING CO.

Hang out with the leather/denim crowd in this popular bar with an awesome stereo system and gorgeous male dancers every night of the week. If the dancers get you overheated, head outside to the two-level back patio bar to chill out. 805 Pacific • 713/529-7488.

NSOMNIA

Houston's premiere after-hours club. Enjoy your favorite cocktail here until 6am, Wed. through Sun., but only if you bring your own. This BYOB after-hours offers a game room, large outside patio, and great music, where you can dance till dawn. 202 Tuam • 713/521-1613.

OUTPOST

Minutes from the heart of Montrose, this country-style bar always has something going on. Play pool, watch a show, or just hang out with the regulars at this local hangout with a lot of charm. 1419 Richmond • 713/520-8446.

PACIFIC STREET

The heat is on at Pacific Street, where this two-story industrial-style nightclub will get you sweaty. With the best drink prices in

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Bar Guide

town, you can dance all night or hang out on the balcony for a better view of the strip—or sneak out to the secluded back patio for a secret rendezvous. 710 Pacific Street • 713-523-0213.

PARADISE

Enjoy this neighborhood-style bar and private patio by chatting it up with the friendly bar staff and the even friendlier crowd. 2312 Crocker • 713/522-7366.

RAINBOW ROOM

Out of the Montrose and outside the Loop, this is a welcome spot on the Northside. 527 Barren Springs off Ella • 281/872-0215.

RIPCORN

This "man's bar" in Montrose was voted "Best Place to Show off Your Leather." With three bars (two inside; one outside) manned by the best bartenders in town to serve you, you'll never go thirsty. Whether inside or on the newly expanded back patio, this is the hottest place in town, where cruising takes on a whole new meaning. 715 Fairview • 713/521-2792.

RICH'S

The meeting place for the hip and gay (or just hip) for over 20 years, the iconic two-story danceteria Rich's still packs 'em in. OutSmart readers bestowed several honors on this local favorite in this year's Gayest and Greatest,

including "Friendliest Bar Staff" and "Best Club If You're Under 21." Outstanding light and laser shows add to the varied pumped-up music. 2401 San Jacinto • 713-759-9606.

SOUTH BEACH

From the ashes of the club Heaven has risen one fine phoenix. A relative newcomer to the bar scene and an instant hit with the in crowd, the splashy new South Beach is the place for high-energy dancing. Its cutting-edge design and technochic sound system keeps the mixed crowd of chicly dressed and shirtless buffed boys pumped up late into the night. 810 Pacific • 713/529-7623.

Galveston

BLVD SALOON

A perfect place for a relaxing cocktail or a fun-filled evening of socializing and entertainment. Nice big walk-around bar and dance floor, right on the Seawall, with a great view of the ocean, especially from the new second-floor deck. Entertainment on weekends. 3102 Seawall • 409/750-8571.

EVOLUTION

A two-story entertainment complex one block off the historic Strand. A huge dance floor and bar keep this stay-up-late crowd entertained all night. 2214 Mechanic • 409/763-4212.

GARZA'S KON TIKI

The gay bar for the Island. Conveniently close to all Galveston's celebration spots, the Kon Tiki is a block and half from the Strand district and the Pier. It's the place to go dancing, with male and female entertainers on weekends—and, of course, the "show girls." Don't ask; just go see for yourself. 315 Tremont (23rd) • 409/763-6264.

JIMMY'S BY THE BEACH

Newest bar on the island, owned and operated by long-time bartender Jimmy Sweeney. The tropical décor and the full wall of windows overlooking the Gulf give you plenty to please the eyes. It's the closest bar to gay East Beach, and owner Jimmy plans to add male strippers and karaoke nights to the list of attractions. Open noon–2 am, seven days a week, with happy hour prices on every drink every day until 7 pm. Corner of 9th and Seawall (904 Ave M) • 409/765-6911.

ROBERT'S LAFITTE

A real neighborhood bar; this venerable place has been around forever. The clientele is as colorful as the chandeliers that adorn this Island institution. A great place to be yourself or who you would like to be or who you think you are! Sit out on the private lush tropical patio and grab some of that nice Gulf breeze. Just two blocks from the Seawall. 2501 Ave Q at corner of 25th • 409/765-9092.

Beaumont

The Copa

This bar certainly lives up to its name as a hot dance club. This two-story fun complex has pool tables, a spacious stage, and a staircase that would make Norma Desmond green with envy. You'll be entertained by some of the prettiest "show girls" from the Golden Triangle. The bar of Beaumont, and the hangout for the hip crowd from Lamar University. 304 Orleans • 409/832-4206.

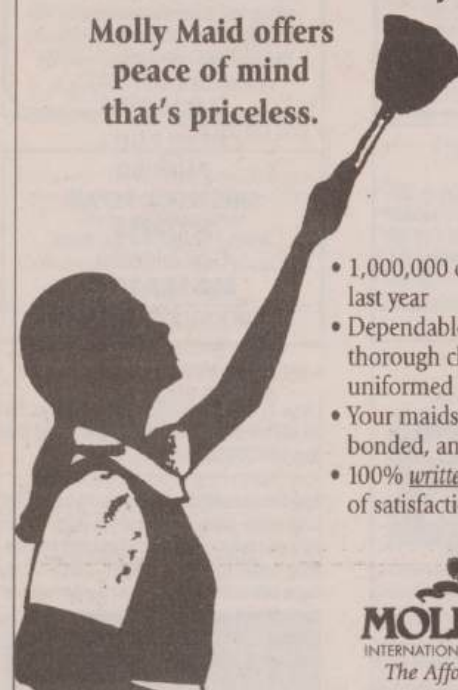
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OBITUARY

Danny Wayne Carver

12/27/54-1/7/02

Danny Wayne Carver went forth into the welcoming arms of the Father, the everlasting banquet of the Lamb, and the joy of the Holy Spirit. He succumbed to the devastation of AIDS at sunset on the 7th of January following a gallant decade-plus battle. • Danny was born in El Dorado, Arkansas, on December 27, 1954. He graduated from Harleton High School in Harleton, Texas, and joined the National Guard and then later the United States Army from which he was honorably discharged. He then moved to Houston where he lived for 22 years. His life was varied and creative. As a florist, his creations awed and delighted. As a pianist, his music inspired joy. As a Christian, his faith upheld many. As a "character," his humor and dry wit left laughter in its wake. As a web master, his sites were eye-catching and clever. • Danny was preceded in death by his mother, Kitty, and is survived by his partner, Robert Wittliff; his father, A.D. Carver; his brothers Doyle and Randy; and a large group of family in Houston and Longview, Texas. His graveside service was held in Memory Park Cemetery in Longview on January 11. • Family and friends celebrated his life on January 27 at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Houston. Reception followed at the "Pink House" on Bomar Street, where family and friends shared "Danny stories." • Danny was cared for by the Omega House in his last days, and his family requests donations be made in his name to Omega House, 602 Branard, Houston, Texas 77006. Danny said that the staff and volunteers cared for him and "treated him like gold." • Danny is now at rest in his mansion with his harp of gold, and his greatly anticipated "singing flowers." *Ad gloriam transit.* Robert, family, and friends will miss him dearly and think of him fondly.

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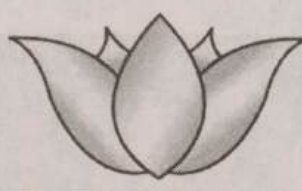


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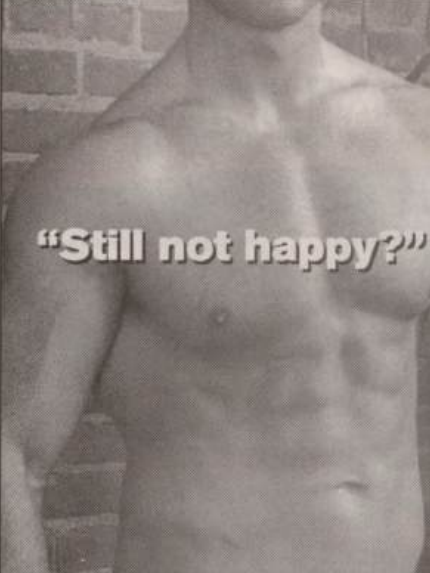
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OUT IN HOUSTON

1 The reception after the inaugural of **Ada Edwards** (l) was held at Itz All Good Creole Kitchen. With Edwards is Itz owner **Barbara Jackson**.

2 A performance of *Falsettos* was presented Jan. 21 at the Alley Theatre to benefit the Center for AIDS. Co-director **Paul Hope** (r) and **Todd Waite**, both from the Alley.

3 Krewe of Olympus captains **Denise Martin** (l) and **John Weinland** at the 12th Night Mask-erade Fundraiser, Jan. 12, at the Italian Cultural & Community Center.

4 **Kelly Wyatt** (l) and **Kim Cade** at the GLBT Chamber of Commerce New Year's Eve gala at the Warwick Hotel.

AIDS Walk kickoff, Jan. 16, at Chipotle: **5** **Misty "Blue" Burciaga** (in blue) with her Blue Crew. **6** AIDS Foundation Houston's **Ken Kelley** (l) and **Crawford Bunkley** of Exxon Mobil.

Reception for Mayor Lee Brown, Jan. 2: **7** **Gerald Size** (l) and **Janine Brunjes**.

8 **Sue Lovell** (l) and **Sylvia Garcia**.

9 Students from the Texas School of Business collected money for the Montrose Counseling Center.

10 A showing of artist **Don Snell's** (l) work, Jan. 13, at the Houston Heights Fire Station benefited the Montrose Clinic. With **Daniel Edwards**.

11 (l-r) **Shane Champagne**, **Doug Wright**, **Mark Howard**, **Jimmy Sweeney**, **Gary Bache**, and **Mel Kennedy** reading *OutSmart* magazine at Jimmy's on the Beach.

12 Celebration of the life of **Kip Granberry**, Jan. 13, with his family and friends at Guava Lamp. Kip's partner **James Cook** (bottom left) and Kip's mother **Peggy Walsh** (second from right).

13 BCBC Jungle X Kickoff, Jan. 20.

The Compaq marathon was Jan. 20: **14** Bering United Methodist Church marathon runners raised \$3,000 for the Bering Support Network.

15 **John Gassett** gives a big smile at the 10-mile mark.

Stages staged a weekend full of community events in conjunction with the opening of *The Laramie Project*.

16 KUHT town hall meeting "Confronting Hate in Our Community," Jan. 17, with (l-r) **Chaja Verveer**, **Mahmoud El-Gamal**, **Judy Shepard**, **Ernie Manouse**, **Louvon Harris**, **Mel White**, and **Susanna McMahon**.

17 H.A.T.C.H. benefit, Jan. 19.

18 **Randi Driscoll** benefit performance, the Vintage Bar, Jan. 19.

19 First Unitarian's **Rev. Bob Schaibly** (l) with **Rev. Mel White** of Souforce at a panel discussion, Jan. 19.



10 - UN-CREDITED; 11 - THOMAS CHELENA; 15 - DANNY KALLEN; ALL OTHERS - DALTON DEHART

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SignOut

by Lilly Roddy

Mercury, planet of communication, goes direct on the 8th and is back up to speed on the 11th. You can start all new projects then—buy a car or have something worked on that needs it. Saturn, planet of career and future obligations, also goes direct on the 7th. Time to work on your goals for the next six-month period, at which point you will be reviewing your plans for the future again. • The new Moon on the 12th is the beginning of the Chinese New Year, the year of the Horse. Since Chinese astrology runs on a lunar calendar, the new year always begins on the new Moon after the Sun enters the sign of Aquarius. • February 2 is Candlemas, groundhog day, Imbolc, Powamu, or Brigid. This is the middle of the cycle between the first day of Capricorn, the Winter Solstice, and the first day of Aries, the Vernal Equinox. These points align with the seed that is planted within that is not yet visible. • The Sun begins the month in Aquarius and progresses into Pisces on the 18th. Mercury begins in Aquarius and remains there for the month. Venus also starts the month in Aquarius but slides into Pisces on the 11th. As for the other planets, Mars is in Aries, Jupiter is in Cancer, Saturn is in Pisces, Pluto is in Sagittarius, and Neptune and Uranus are in Aquarius.



**Happy Birthday to
Sheila James Kuehl.**
Born February 9, 1941.
Kuehl is the first open gay or
lesbian to be elected to the
California Legislature.

Inset: Sheila James in the early '60s from the
TV sitcom *The Many Lives of Dobie Gillis*

Aquarius (Jan. 20–Feb. 18) It is your birthday month. And with so many of the planets in your sign, this is a time of growth, uneasiness, and relentless pursuing of those things that seemed unobtainable in the past. You are to the point that you will not tolerate bull manure from anyone about most anything. Of course, we will just think you are cranky and didn't like your birthday gift. You are really questioning your life, direction, self-worth, connection to the universal spirit, and if you should have that extra piece of chocolate. Go ahead and do it. In a hundred years, who will know?

Pisces (Feb. 19–March 20) You have been wandering for over a year. Most recently, your life has been a garage sale and everything is up for sale. Where are you going and where will you end up? Every place you have landed only seems like a place to visit. After the 10th, you are finally ready to make some decisions. You are narrowing down your choices and you will find a home—even if you haven't left yours. You are so tired of being controlled by the flow of the tides that you are going to create your own waves.

Aries (March 21–April 19) Mars, the planet of action and your sign's ruler, is moving through your sign making this an active month and giving you the "all right already!" syndrome. If you've been trying to gear yourself up for a

confrontation, this is certainly the month for it. If your relationships don't have enough spice and adventure, you will just substitute fighting. New friends are on the horizon. After the 10th, get out there and find them.

Taurus (April 20–May 20) Your career hogs the spotlight with confusion and more confusion for many of the cows, bulls, and calves. You don't know what you want to do—you just know that you're bored and restless with what you have been doing. A full-blown rebellion is brewing for the 6th and 13th—best to take those days off and have two mini-vacations. Relationships that demand clear answers from you can also put you off. You are much clearer after the 28th.

Gemini (May 21–June 21) You are not at your best as the month begins with your ruler (Mercury) retrograde. So, don't look for solutions or resolutions until after the 10th. You will be more

than ready to get on with your life at that point. Indeed, you will demand that people around you get their acts together or put them on the road. You are ready with valuable advice but are bored with the whiners. Personal relationships are tense to unbearable by the latter part of the month.

Cancer (June 22–July 22) I know you have been wanting to study the meaning of life and this is certainly the month for you to do that. Surface values and explanations will not satisfy you—and you may drive some folks crazy as you try to get to the bottom of everything. Sadly, it's best to accept that some things are just shallow. Relationships are tense because you need lots and lots of reassurance. Just ask your partner to do something special every Friday for you. Career is an adventure land. You are the alpha crab. Pick up your claw, walk sideways, and tallyho!

Leo (July 23–Aug. 22) It's the month of the relationship dance. And your themes are catch me if you can, hide and seek, don't fence me in, and better not ignore me. And you wonder why your relationships have so much drama. There may be a parting of the ways for those of you whose partners are tiring of the nightly drama whirl. Friendships need to have a purpose. And any that take too much work? Sayonara.

Virgo (Aug. 23–Sept. 22) Time for some beauty and order—all that clutter is just adding to your

confusion about your life choices. You are on the verge of making some decisions, and after the 10th, you are on the path. A place for everything and everything in its place. Relationships that don't fit into this flexible structure will be giving you a pain in the ankle. They will have to shape up. Your career is about to take off. This will spotlight much of your life over the rest of the year.

Libra (Sept. 23–Oct. 23) You are feeling playful this month. Visit the theater or the opera. Take classes that enhance your creative urges. Consider some costume drama sex. Zest lurks like a kitten in the relationship area. Ennui can be extra harmful in established relationships. Career activity is going well, and your motivation rises at the end of the month. After the 10th, any effort into promotion is going to pay off. Meet with as many new people and groups as you can. They will bring fabulous benefits in the near future.

Scorpio (Oct. 24–Nov. 21) You are thirsty for the grounding of home. Even though the holidays are over, you may want to do some cozy entertaining. For some of you, this will show up as an itch to move or redecorate—or have increased contact with the parental units. Exercise would really help as a ground wire for the tension at work. Relationships

can't be too demanding this month. Now, next month, that is a different story.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22–Dec. 21) You are in a similar organizing mood as your solar opposites, the Gemini, working to finish up old projects as the month begins. You are really feeling the push to get on with things. And that intensity only increases after the 10th. Relationships need goals and commitments—those partnerships that are lacking may be over by May. Home-based activities are more important as the month closes. Center on your family or your domicile.

Capricorn (Dec. 22–Jan. 19) Now that the holidays are over, the bills are coming in and money and security fill your vision. You have been feeling so alone in this area that no one is really helping you. Forget that stuff—you're asking for help, and the time for "please" is over. Your boss and your partner will be the first people you confront about this. You want more and your reasons are sound. Your partner's help is on the way, especially after March 1. Even if you don't have a partner, you will attract someone to help you.

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



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I love you as the day progresses.

I love you in the heat of the night
And in the coldness of the day.

I love you when you are not,
And I love you when you are.

I love you just because,
And I love you for a thousand reasons at once.

I love you for walking into my life,
And I love you for staying away,
But never apart.

Alonso

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