

Houston's gay, lesbian, bi, and trans magazine

AUGUST 2002 • COMPLIMENTARY

Out Smart

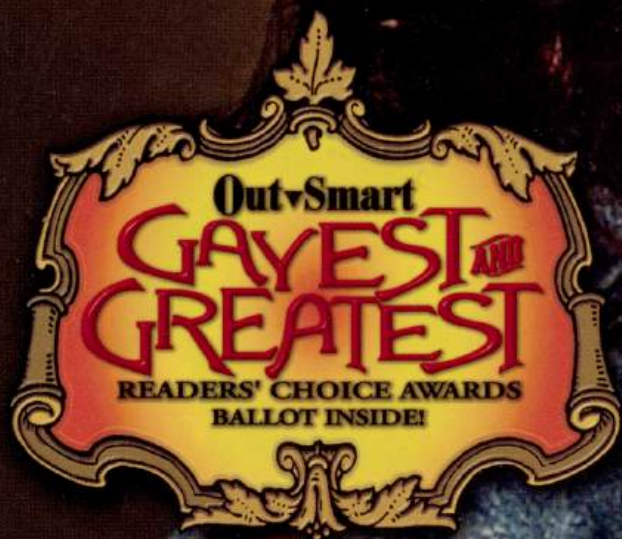
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August 2002

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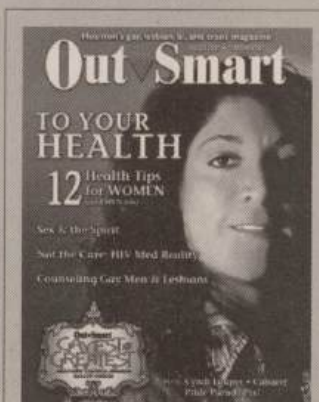
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About the cover:
Jennifer Reno.
By BJ Smith.

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Letters



FUNDAMENTAL PRAISE

Wow! Fantastic article ["Beyond Us vs. Them," July]. I'm looking forward to seeing this film [Family Fundamentals]. Thanks to John Stiles for writing it. I found the article to be alarming and haunting. This brave concept brought to surface for any to see is part of what makes our art exist in this world. [Director] Arthur Dong's work is profound. The word must be out about this film.

I hope many of us in the community here in Houston will not miss this film. I hope this film just doesn't come and go without much fanfare. It must be spoken loud.

Omar McDonald
Houston

MAD ABOUT THE BOYS

We all know what the "boys of the night" [July] are doing out there. So what's your point? There's no need to elevate their status in our neighborhood via your romanticizing and your lamentations just because you have nothing to write about!

Let me assure you that your story has barely scratched the surface of this issue. Rather, you have picked the scab of a chronic localized wound, poured salt on it, and then turned around and walked away without any hint of a solution.

Those of us who live in this vicinity deal with the problem every waking hour, and we try our best to forget about it. We have to forget the fact that our gal pal at City Council (Annie Parker) has yet to do anything to clean this up. We have to forget the fact that HPD has told us repeatedly that there's nothing they can do. We have to forget the fact that the majority of residents in this neighborhood don't view this type of behavior as a serious threat. Instead, it is thought to be part of the "local flavor." Besides, most residents of Montrose are preoccupied with the invasion of straight couples and their Ray Allison townhomes!

"The boys of the night" are a very small piece of the puzzle. The much larger issue of illicit sex goes hand in hand with the robberies, burglaries, drug use, drug sales and, yes, even hate crimes! (GASP!) Let us all dry the tears we shed for the "boys" and come to terms with the reality of the what's wrong with this picture.

James Fedowsky
Houston

LOVE LETTERS? HATE MAIL?

We want it all! Tell us what you think about OutSmart: What got you thinking? What got on your nerves? Send to Letters, 3406 Audubon Place, Houston, Texas 77006, or e-mail to letters@outsmartmagazine.com.

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SO PROUD. June always provides a surfeit of opportunities for prideful activities. Here are but a few glimpses of our annual festival season:

Carlo Deason broke the tape at the June 8 Pride 5K Fun Run/Walk, followed by overall female winner **Caroline Burum**. **Richard Peoples** and **Vicki Danielson** led in the masters division. The Houston Montrose Athletic Association race, benefiting AssistHers, attracted 176 jocks pounding the Memorial Drive pavement.

A **Sheila Jackson Lee**-signed proclamation highlighted the Houston Black, Lesbian, Gay, Transgender Coalition kickoff reception on June 19. Coalition organizer **Steven Jerome** welcomed a lively Juneteenth crowd at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, where the coalition has opened an office. Spotted in the crowd: **Judge Mattocks**, **Paul Guillory**, **Anita Hall**, **Kevin Jackson**, **Lori Moore**, **Buhl Perkins**, **Dionne Redmond**, and **Chris Turner**.

Houston Buyers Club benefited from Poetry Jam, a June 23 reading at Theatre New West. In addition to reading their own work, **Mike Bolin** and **Joe Watts** conceived the spare, dramatic staging for the evening, which also featured **Thomas Blanton**, **Sarah Crowder Holtzmann**, and **Michael Locke**.

Michael Brown, **Joe Hlavac**, **Coy Tow**, **Bart Truxillo**, and **Lee Williams** were five of the silent-auction browsers at the Community Center Art Festival on June 22. Seventeen artists contributed work to the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center benefit, including **Roberto Guzman**, who motored in from Laredo with his photograph. Other artists represented: **David Aylsworth**, **Thomas Chelena**, **Jamey Davenport**/Mercader Antiques, **Kermit Eisenhut** (who created a painting for the event), **Teodoro Estrada**, **Richard Fluhr**, **Jean-Claude Gilles**/Betz Gallery, **David Groover**, **Tori McMillen**, **Patrick Palmer**, **Jose Solis III**, **Vera Taylor**, **David J. Webb**, **Richard Williams**, and **Kat Zemanek**.

On June 25, equal rights warriors **Phyllis Frye** and **Ray Hill** amazed and entertained the audience at "Houston's First Decade: 1975-1985," presented by Stonewall Law Association of Greater Houston. **Aaron Coleman** read "Montrose," his homage to the

neighborhood. New Stonewall prexy **Jerry Simoneaux** and his partner **Chris Bown** organized the June 25 event at the Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law. The audience included **Troy Christensen**, Judge **Steven Kirkland**, **Eugene Harrington** (in whose name the lawyers dedicated an academic-excellence award at TSU), and **Brenda Silva**. Donations benefited



SHOW STOPPERS: Omari Tau Williams (l) and Lauren Anderson joined a talented cast in *Before the Parade Passes By*, the Pride week cabaret show on June 28.

Community Awareness for Transgender Support, Q-Patrol, Stonewall Lawyers, and the Gulf Coast Archive and Museum of GLBT History.

Paul Hager directed the June 26 performance of the comedy *Comfort & Joy* that supported the Gulf Coast Archive and Museum and the Pride Committee of Houston. Among those chortling in the Theatre Suburbia audience: **Don Gill**, **Jewel Gray**, **Bill O'Rourke**, GCAM president **Bruce Reeves**, and **Brandon Wolf**. **Judy Reeves**, GCAM secretary as well as Theatre Suburbia stalwart, pulled double duty: assistant director and the offstage voice of Marci, a frazzled Hollywood secretary.

Hal Core, **Richard Elbein**, Rabbi **Steven Gross**, Cantor **Marilyn Ladin**, **Madeleine Manning**, **Victor Schill**, and **Mark Unbehagen** planned the Interfaith Pride Worship Service that took place on June 26 at Congregation Beth Israel. Rabbi **David Whiman** of Beth Israel and the Rev. **Gwen**

LookOut

by Tim Brookover

Pierre of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church (subbing for a hospitalized Rev. **William Lawson**) presided.

On June 27, health educators deployed across the city for National HIV Testing Day. **Jeff Benavides** led the troops at Thomas Street Clinic, one of the sites.

Paul Arcizo and **Linda Morales** presided over the return of Baile Internacional, the black-tie dance. On June 28, a crowd of 500 rocked Ripley House and included **Mark Amaro**, **Monsour** and **Soraida Akbar**, **Raquel Cedillo**, **Mela Contreras**, **Diana Escamilla**, **Terry Flores**, **Lily Hernandez**, and **Luis Miranda**. The event raised funds for the Pride Committee and Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church.

Of the remarkable company that performed in *Before the Parade Passes By*, the June 28 cabaret show, ballerina-turned-chanteuse **Lauren Anderson** and **Omari Tau Williams** provided just two of the show-stopping moments. Taking the stage in a marabou-trimmed minidress that showcased her sensational gams, Anderson delighted the capacity crowd at the Alley

Theatre with a languid, soulful spin of "Everything," the **Paul Williams/Rupert Holmes** tune. Late in the **Ken Williamson**-directed Pride Committee benefit, Williams took his star turn in a gospel-charged rendition of the "Beauty School Dropout" number from *Grease*. Whooping and whirling across the stage like the love child of **Patti Labelle** and **Ben Vereen**, Williams proved that the combo of talent and old-fashioned star quality can still stun.

Indeed, everyone in the cast—a pleasing assemblage of varying ages, shapes, and shades—made the evening a smash. And who was that adorable drummer? ■



BIG DANCE: Baile Internacional on June 28 welcomed a sold-out crowd, including Rachel Demo (l) and Blanca Trevino.



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Helen Clark

(New Zealand prime minister)

(The Advocate, 7/9/02)

"I'm not a lesbian myself, but some of my best friends are, literally. So I can't take it as an insult [that opponents say she is a lesbian by making continual references to her childless marriage], because it's not wrong in any way to be lesbian. I'm going to refuse to see it as a smear, because I say, 'If I was [lesbian], so what!'"

Chastity Bono

(author, daughter of Cher)

(The Advocate, 7/9/02)

I was doing an interview the other day for this book [*The End of Innocence*] and the woman said to me, "Why do you write about these things? You certainly don't need the money." And I was thinking, Yeah—I do! I do need the money! I'm not a trust-fund baby; my mother does not pay for my life. It's just like it is for anybody else. I'm lucky that I happen to love what I do, but money is absolutely a factor in doing it.

Augusten Burroughs

(author)

(Entertainment Weekly, Summer Issue, Karen Valby)

[In his book, *Running with Scissors*, Burroughs's] adopted sister Natalie tells him she already knew [that he is gay]. "You did?" I asked, alarmed. Did I emit a certain gay odor? Or maybe it was my unnatural obsession with cleanliness that clued her in. It was one thing to be gay. But it was something else to seem gay."

Gay Pride in Israel

(The Advocate, 7/23/02)

About 2,500 people marched in Jerusalem's first gay pride parade on June 7, over fierce objections from the city's Orthodox Jewish leaders. Parade organizer Hagai El-Ad said the symbolism had special resonance for Jerusalem's conflict-weary residents. "People want to live together without fear and hatred—gay, straight, Palestinian, Israeli, Muslim, or Jewish. We as gay people come from all these different communities."

Gay Pride in Boston

(The Advocate, 7/23/02, Mubarak Dahir)

It's not unusual for politicians to woo gay voters with appearances at pride events, but celebrants at Boston's gay pride parade on June 8 were bowled over when Massachusetts gubernatorial hopeful Robert Reich told a crowd of several thousand that he endorses full marriage rights for same-sex couples. It's the furthest a gubernatorial candidate has ever gone in supporting equal rights for gay couples.

1 YEAR AGO

Pat Buchanan

(Late Night, 8/01, Conan O'Brien)

"Pat Buchanan is recovering and doing fine after having surgery to remove two gallstones. Apparently Buchanan had the emergency surgery after tests revealed that the gallstones were gay."

Queer Quotes

Compiled by Blase DiStefano



Sonja Sohn

(The Advocate, 7/9/02, Lori Kaye)

Sonja Sohn on her role as an out lesbian narcotics detective on HBO's *The Wire*: Sohn does have a significant man in her life as well as two daughters. "They don't care if I'm playing a lesbian," she says. "They're like, 'Mom, please don't be naked.'"

As for the possibility of being seen as a lesbian icon, Sohn says, with a throaty laugh, "Is it going to be disconcerting for people to see me as a lesbian sex symbol or some s---t like that? That's actually kind of hot."

Craig Kilborn on Mike Piazza

(Late Late Show, 7/02, Craig Kilborn)

There's a new book, *Judy Garland: The Day-by-Day Chronicle of a Legend*. And today, Mike Piazza held a press conference to deny he read it.

← SONJA SOHN: Is this straight woman a hot lesbian sex symbol?

→ RUFUS WAINWRIGHT: Is this gay singer a queen?

Bert & Ernie

(Entertainment Weekly, 6/21/02, Scott Brown)

Scott Brown: OK, the \$64,000 question . . . Ricky Martin was asked this . . .

Ernie: Oh . . .

Brown: Rosie O'Donnell was asked this . . .

Bert: Wow.

Brown: Does Elmo ever get on your nerves?

Ernie: [Pause] What did Rosie say?

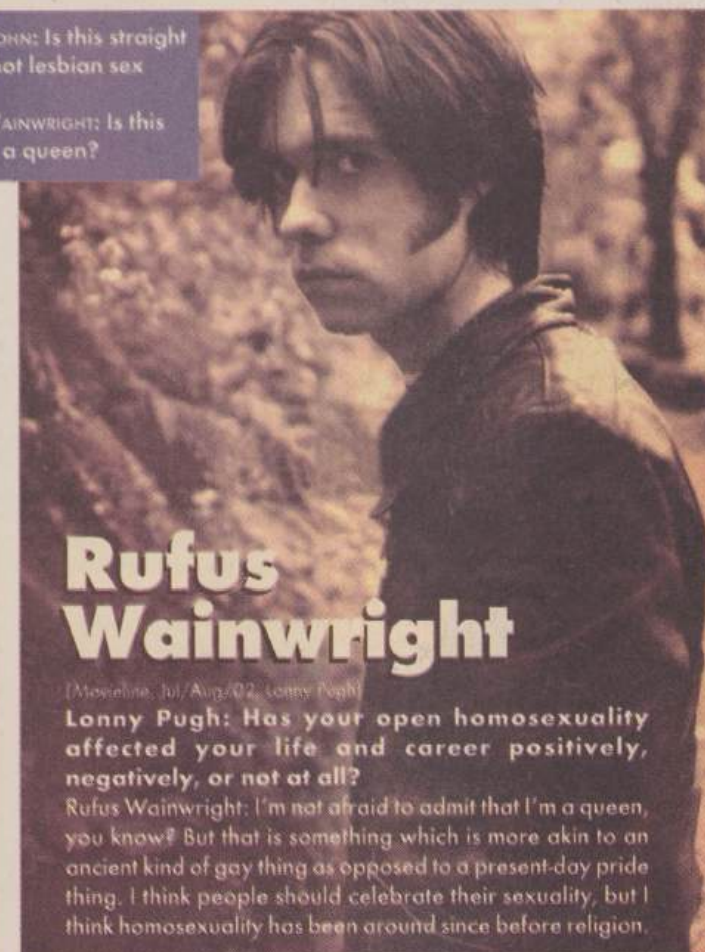
Bert: Well, he doesn't get on my nerves as much as Ernie. I'd be fine rooming with Elmo. I think we'd get along terrifically.

Ernie: Maybe we should just have a sleepover.

Conan O'Brien on Liza Minnelli

(Late Night, 6/02, Conan O'Brien)

1. Liza Minnelli announced that next year her autobiography will be coming out. Not only that, Liza also announced that next year her husband will be coming out.
2. It was reported today that Liza Minnelli and her brand-new husband may be getting their own television show. Right now, the working title for the show is *Diagnosis Gay*.



Rufus Wainwright

(Modeline, Jul/Aug. 02, Lanny Pugh)

Lonny Pugh: Has your open homosexuality affected your life and career positively, negatively, or not at all?

Rufus Wainwright: I'm not afraid to admit that I'm a queen, you know? But that is something which is more akin to an ancient kind of gay thing as opposed to a present-day pride thing. I think people should celebrate their sexuality, but I think homosexuality has been around since before religion.

SONJA SOHN - CHRIS LEE/HBO; RUFUS WAINWRIGHT - DREAMWORKS RECORDS

Television

by Blase DiStefano

RELIGION, PROSTITUTION, & DRUGS

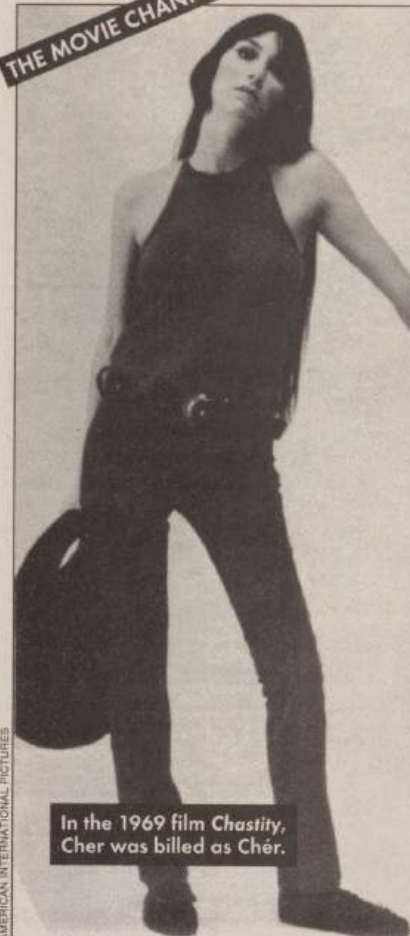
Priest, Chastity, and The Wire

PRIEST If you missed it when it played in theaters, or if it's been some time since you've seen it, *Priest* is airing on Sundance in August. • British stage veteran Linus Roache plays Father Greg, a young, idealistic Catholic priest whose strict adherence to church dogma is challenged when he arrives in a poor Liverpool parish. It seems that a fellow pastor (Tom Wilkinson, *In the Bedroom*) has casually abandoned his vow of chastity to live in a domestic relationship with the housekeeper (Cathy Tyson). However, Father Greg's crisis of faith gets personal when he visits a gay bar. • This timeless and controversial drama was directed by Antonia Bird and written by Jimmy McGovern. • *Priest* airs on the Sundance Channel on Wednesday, **August 7**, 8 p.m.; Sunday, **August 11**, 10 p.m.; Friday, **August 16**, 12:30 a.m.; Thursday, **August 22**, 8 p.m.; and Monday, **August 26**, 2:05 a.m. For more information, visit www.sundancechannel.com.



Linus Roache
in Antonia Bird's *Priest*

THE MOVIE CHANNEL



In the 1969 film *Chastity*,
Cher was billed as Chér.

CHASTITY If you can't wait till August 21 to see Cher (in her Houston concert at Compaq Center), The Movie Channel Extra East is showing *Chastity*, the 1969 film in which Cher stars as a lonely teen hitchhiker hitting the road in hopes of finding her own way in life. She winds up in a Mexican whorehouse owned by a strange lesbian (Barbara London). Though the two "get it on," it's not what Chastity wants. (Three things here: One, doesn't this part sound like Cher's real life, what with her girl-on-girl experimentation? Two, isn't it just a little weird that Chastity doesn't want to be a lesbian, but Cher's real-life daughter, whose name is also Chastity, wants to be a lesbian? And three, the film was written by Sonny Bono! It's all so... uh, so Cher.) • *Chastity* airs Saturday, **August 10**, at noon, and Sunday, **August 18**, at 11:15 a.m. Still need to see Cher after the concert? Repeat airings: Monday, **August 26**, at 1:15 p.m., and Thursday, **August 29**, at 5 p.m.

HBO



The Wire's lesbian character Shakima Gregg (Sonja Sohn, r)
with fellow narcotics detective Ellis Carver (Seth Gilliam)

THE WIRE It's a war on drugs in west Baltimore, complete with wiretaps and surveillances, all told from the point of view of both the police and their targets. And the police just happens to include narcotics detective Shakima Gregg (Sonja Sohn), an out lesbian whose sexuality is seen with curiosity among her peers. In a recent interview in *The Advocate*, Sohn says, "I think it's important that we have realistic portrayals of people on television, whether it be lesbians or black detectives or gangsters... because it helps break stereotypes, hopefully broadening the viewpoints of people who don't have the opportunity to be exposed to any type of diversity—cultural, racial, or sexual—in their lives." Though Sohn is straight, she says that playing a lesbian is no big deal, that "I run with a pretty ultraleft, ultraliberal, crazy kind of crew of people." Suits us. *The Wire* can be seen on Sundays at 9 p.m. on HBO, with repeat airings during the month. Runs through September 18. ■

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

Does KALETRA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

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

How should I take KALETRA?

• You should stay under a doctor's care when taking KALETRA. Do not change your treatment or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

• You must take KALETRA every day exactly as your doctor prescribed it. The dose of KALETRA may be different for you than for other patients. Follow the directions from your doctor, exactly as written on the label.

• Dosing in adults (including children 12 years of age and older): The usual dose for adults is 3 capsules (400/100 mg) or 5.0 mL of the oral solution twice a day (morning and night), in combination with other anti-HIV medicines.

• Dosing in children from 6 months to 12 years of age: Children from 6 months to 12 years of age can also take KALETRA. The child's doctor will decide the right dose based on the child's weight.

• Take KALETRA with food to help it work better.

• Do not change your dose or stop taking KALETRA without first talking with your doctor.

• When your KALETRA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to KALETRA and become harder to treat.

• Be sure to set up a schedule and follow it carefully.

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

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

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

What happens if I take too much KALETRA?

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

As with all prescription medicines, KALETRA should be kept out of the reach of young children. KALETRA liquid contains a large

amount of alcohol. If a toddler or young child accidentally drinks more than the recommended dose of KALETRA, it could make him/her sick from too much alcohol. Contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately if this happens.

Who should not take KALETRA?

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

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

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

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

Can I take KALETRA with other medications?

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

MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH KALETRA:

• Do not take the following medicines with KALETRA because they can cause serious problems or death if taken with KALETRA.

– Dihydroergotamine, ergonovine, ergotamine and methyl-ergonovine such as Cafergot®, Migranal®, D.H.E. 45®, Ergotrate Maleate, Methergine, and others

– Halcion® (triazolam)

– Hismanal® (astemizole)

– Orap® (pimozide)

– Propulsid® (cisapride)

– Rythmol® (propafenone)

– Seldane® (terfenadine)

– Tambocor™ (flecainide)

– Versed® (midazolam)

• Do not take KALETRA with rifampin, also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®. Rifampin may lower the amount of KALETRA in your blood and make it less effective.

• Do not take KALETRA with St. John's wort (hypericum perforatum), an herbal product sold as a dietary supplement, or products containing St. John's wort. Talk with your doctor if you are taking or planning to take St. John's wort. Taking St. John's wort may decrease KALETRA levels and lead to increased viral load and possible resistance to KALETRA or cross-resistance to other anti-HIV medicines.

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

Medicines that require dosage adjustments:

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

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

• If you are taking oral contraceptives (the pill) to prevent pregnancy, you should use an additional or different type of contraception since KALETRA may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

• Efavirenz (Sustiva™) or nevirapine (Viramune®) may lower the amount of KALETRA in your blood. Your doctor may increase your dose of KALETRA if you are also taking efavirenz or nevirapine.

• If you are taking Mycobutin® (rifabutin), your doctor will lower the dose of Mycobutin.

• A change in therapy should be considered if you are taking KALETRA with:
Phenobarbital
Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
Carbamazepine (Tagamet® and others)
These medicines may lower the amount of KALETRA in your blood and make it less effective.

Other Special Considerations:

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

• If you are taking both didanosine (Videx®) and KALETRA: Didanosine (Videx®) should be taken one hour before or two hours after KALETRA.

What are the possible side effects of KALETRA?

• This list of side effects is not complete. If you have questions about side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. You should report any new or continuing symptoms to your doctor right away. Your doctor may be able to help you manage these side effects.

• The most commonly reported side effects of moderate severity that

are thought to be drug related are: abnormal stools (bowel movements), diarrhea, feeling weak/tired, headache, and nausea. Children taking KALETRA may sometimes get a skin rash.

• Blood tests in patients taking KALETRA may show possible liver problems. People with liver disease such as Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C who take KALETRA may have worsening liver disease. Liver problems including death have occurred in patients taking KALETRA. In studies, it is unclear if KALETRA caused these liver problems because some patients had other illnesses or were taking other medicines.

• Some patients taking KALETRA can develop serious problems with their pancreas (pancreatitis), which may cause death. You have a higher chance of having pancreatitis if you have had it before. Tell your doctor if you have nausea, vomiting, or abdominal pain. These may be signs of pancreatitis.

• Some patients have large increases in triglycerides and cholesterol. The long-term chance of getting complications such as heart attacks or stroke due to increases in triglycerides and cholesterol caused by protease inhibitors is not known at this time.

• Diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) occur in patients taking protease inhibitors such as KALETRA. Some patients had diabetes before starting protease inhibitors; others did not. Some patients need changes in their diabetes medicine. Others needed new diabetes medicine.

• Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking anti-retroviral therapy. 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 legs, arms and face may also happen. The cause and long term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.

• Some patients with hemophilia have increased bleeding with protease inhibitors.

• There have been other side effects in patients taking KALETRA. However, these side effects may have been due to other medicines that patients were taking or to the illness itself. Some of these side effects can be serious.

What should I tell my doctor before taking KALETRA?

• If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant: The effects of KALETRA on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known.

• If you are breast-feeding: Do not breast-feed if you are taking KALETRA. You should not breast-feed if you have HIV. If you are a woman who has or will have a baby, talk with your doctor about the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that HIV can be transmitted through breast-feeding.

• If you have liver problems: If you have liver problems or are infected with Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C, you should tell your doctor before taking KALETRA.

• If you have diabetes: Some people taking protease inhibitors develop new or more serious diabetes or high blood sugar. Tell your doctor if you have diabetes or an increase in thirst or frequent urination.

• If you have hemophilia: Patients taking KALETRA may have increased bleeding.

How do I store KALETRA?

• Keep KALETRA and all other medicines out of the reach of children.

• Refrigerated KALETRA capsules and oral solution remain stable until the expiration date printed on the label. If stored at room temperature up to 77°F (25°C), KALETRA capsules and oral solution should be used within 2 months.

• Avoid exposure to excessive heat.

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

General advice about prescription medicines:

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

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THE GRAY AREAS BETWEEN GAY & STRAIGHT



Christopher
(Jeffrey Tambor)
and Grace (Jill
Clayburgh)

Christopher (Jeffrey Tambor) is an exterminator-cum-jazz musician who begins to question his sexual orientation. Grace (Jill Clayburgh) is a divorcee who is looking to jump-start her life anew. When a blind date for Grace goes bad, she ducks into a gay bar—and meets fellow first-time patron Christopher. The circumstances are so wrong that the two are immediately drawn to each other. Will they be happy together? Is Grace's credo "never again" a self-fulfilling prophecy? • At press time, *Never Again* was scheduled to be playing through early August at both Greenway (713/626-0402) and Angelika (713/225-5232) theaters.

NEVER AGAIN
USA FILMS
USA, 2002
97 MINUTES



Dahmer (Jeremy Renner) and a victim

By the time of his murder at the age of 34, Jeffrey Dahmer had killed 17 men, using them for bizarre sexual acts and cannibalizing parts of their bodies. This film could have been a sensationalized version of the gruesome tale, but instead it offers, according to the director David Jacobson, "an incredible suspense story, but... a great emotional story, too." • Jeremy Renner, who plays Dahmer, has received great reviews. • At press time, *Dahmer* was scheduled to start August 9 at Landmark's Greenway Theatre, 713/626-0402.

DAHMER
WELLSPRING
USA, 2002
102 MINUTES



Brendan Behan
(Shawn Hatosy, top)
pins fellow reform school
student Charlie
Millwall
(Danny Dyer)
in *Borstal Boy*.

It's World War II, and 16-year-old Brendan Behan (Shawn Hatosy) travels from Ireland to Liverpool on a bombing mission that fails. He is apprehended and sent to Borstal, a reform school in England. Upon his arrival, he meets Charlie Millwall (Danny Dyer), a sailor who he's not particularly fond of because of his homosexuality. Millwall reveals to Behan that he knew he was straight the moment he met him. When Behan asks why, Millwall's reply—because Behan parts his hair on the right—is believable to the gullible Behan. When Millwall tells him it's a joke, it's the

beginning of a true friendship, one that is at the core of *Borstal Boy*. • When they perform in an Oscar Wilde play, Millwall (in drag) portrays Behan's betrothed, and when they kiss, it's tender and natural. A later kiss with Millwall, this time out of drag, is even more touching because Behan initiates it. • This details only one aspect of Peter Sheridan's *Borstal Boy*, a moving film about Behan's metamorphosis from hate to love. • Some of you might consider having a hankie ready for the ending. • Scheduled to start August 23 at the Angelika Film Center, 713/225-5232.

BORSTAL BOY
STRAND RELEASING
IRELAND, 2000
91 MINUTES



Lin Chung (Chao-te Yin, right) warns Shao-dung (Lei Huang) of forthcoming danger in *Fleeing by Night*.

China. 1930s. Three characters. Unspoken love. • Shao-dung (Lei Huang) is entranced when first hearing opera singer Lin Chung's (Chao-te Yin) voice, a voice filled with "despair and anger, speaking from his heart." . . . I could understand him," says Shao-dung. • Shao-dung's fiancée, Ing'er (Rene Liu) introduces the two men, and the three become intertwined . . . but the main attraction is between Shao-dung and Lin Chung. • Lin Chung hints at his attraction to Shao-dung, but Shao-dung continues to ignore his own feelings of love for the singer. The awkward and complicated situation intensifies when Shao-dung rejects Lin Chung's affectionate advances.

FLEEING BY NIGHT
STRAND RELEASING
TAIWAN, 2000
123 MINUTES

• Second only to the beautifully-told-yet-tragic story of these three friends are the muted tones of the gorgeous cinematography. The only reason not to see *Fleeing by Night* is if you simply can't deal with subtitles. Oh, and that hankie that you used for *Borstal Boy* will come in handy again. • Scheduled to start August 30 at the Angelika Film Center, 713/225-5232. ■

SHINE ON

Defiant and independent, Cyndi Lauper really wants to do a musical

Cyndi Lauper shines brightly on *Shine*, lighting up these dark times with her newly released five-song EP, currently available at her website (www.cyndilauper.com) as well as in stores. You will also, undoubtedly, be able to purchase the EP at the various venues where Lauper is opening for Cher, on latter diva's farewell tour (in Houston on August 21 at the Compaq Center).

The songs on the *Shine* EP were originally meant for the full-length disc of the same name. The uplifting "Shine," the '80s-retro bounce of "It's Hard to Be Me," the fat-bottomed funk of "Madonna Whore"

(referring to the complex, not the singer), and the gorgeous tear-jerking ballad "Water's Edge" represent some of Lauper's best work in years. As either a teaser or a preview of longer CDs to come, Lauper delivers as only she can. As a nod to her devoted club-going gay fans, a slamming dance remix of the title tracks closes the EP.

I spoke to the deeply introspective Cyndi Lauper just before Independence Day. It was the appropriate time to speak to her, as she is and always has been one of the most fiercely independent and original performers in contemporary musical history.

Gregg Shapiro: I had a dream the other night, in which you released an album of cover versions of songs from the '70s. You did these brilliant renditions of the Barry Manilow hit "Somewhere in the Night" and Boston's "More Than a Feeling." Have you ever considered doing an entire album of cover tunes? Cyndi Lauper: No. That would be like nails on a blackboard to me.

Oh, no. But I'm glad it wasn't a nightmare for you. It would have been a real nightmare for me. I did cover tunes when I first started. I had to sing them all. And you know what, I still

didn't sing any Barry Manilow tunes (laughs). Speaking of Manilow, last year a musical revue of his biggest hits called *Could It Be Magic* played in Chicago. What would you say if someone pitched a Cyndi Lauper musical revue to you?

I don't know. I think it's a tribute every year when somebody else covers "Time After Time." If they are going to sing the songs that I've written, I would find that really interesting. It's always interesting to see people interpret music, but I don't really feel the need to have anybody do that.

You refer to Cher as "a good egg, that one" in your tour diary on your website.

I take it that the tour has been a good experience so far?

Yeah. She's a great gal. She's really inspirational. She never has anything bad to say about anybody, which I could never say for myself. She's sweet and she's smart, and she's been a big supporter of mine. And she's Cher. She's great. She is a real inspiration for me. Looking at her every night, it makes me feel like I'm five. It's kind of cute [laughs]. It's so exciting for me. Then to hear the retrospective of how many hits the woman has had. How many things she has done. You just have a whole different respect...

She's a symbol of longevity. →

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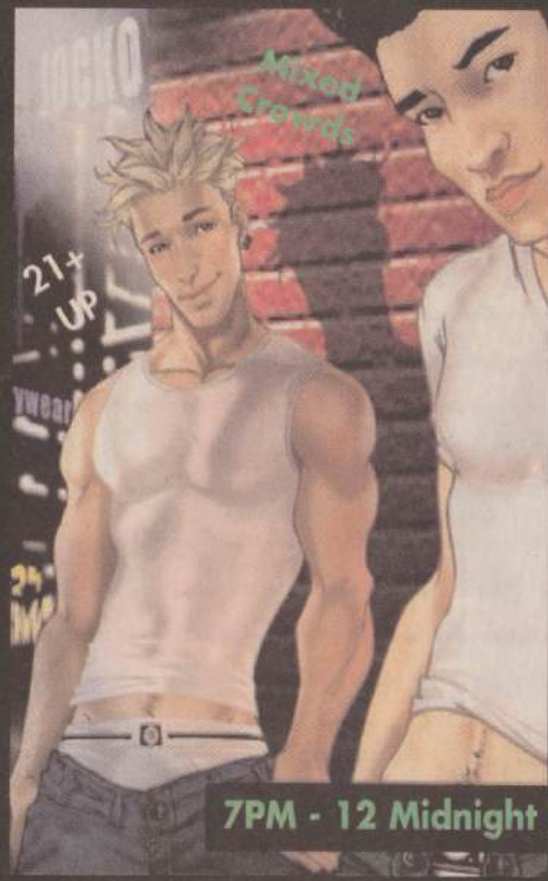
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She's a symbol of an independent woman. To me, that's really inspiring. All these independent people inspire. Even Tina [Turner]. Tina defied them, and came back. **Survival.**

Not survival. It's called defiance, and I love defiance [laughs]. I think it's good to do that, because you don't want to walk around your whole life like a sheep. You don't want to be told what looks nice and what doesn't, or how you should make yourself into this or that. The only time you should make yourself into anything is when you look in the mirror and deep down inside you feel "I want to change." Then what do you want to change into? Who do you want to become? What part of your personality would be empowered? What can you do to yourself to empower that part of your personality to thrive better on this planet? That is a real makeover. It comes from within. It never comes from the sorrowful person who is trying to conform in this world. Conformity is the deadening of our society, not the celebration of the individual. Which is what this country was originally about—individuals.

What have some of the most memorable moments of the tour been for you so far? Philadelphia, when I sang to my son. I just

came up on him in the audience. I didn't know he was going to be there. I knew he was there, but I didn't know that's where he was sitting. When he came up and gave me the flag, the rainbow flag. Each night is really different. Each one is an interesting experience for me. I always am curious as to each town you go to. Who are you? Who are you people? What are you like? As you go along, you rouse them a little and you listen back and you see who they are. You hit 'em again and then you do something else and keep coming at them from different ways and you see who they are.

Touring with both Tina Turner in the past and Cher in the present has exposed you to some incredibly varied audiences—many age groups, cultures, and sexual orientations. What does it mean to you to be reaching such a large cross-section of people?

The truth is that my audience was always varied in age. My audience seemed to match Cher's. Although perhaps her audiences, some of them are older, I don't know. Because of my work in the [gay] community, which came about because of my friends and family, and because of opportunities that arose for me to contribute in a way that would really help, and because it was more fun. When I was pregnant in '97, and reading my website, I started to notice that people who were gay

and lesbian, and were young teenagers, were writing me letters. They talked about when they came out and how they couldn't go to their parents. Some of them, their parents disowned them, and they became depressed. Then I saw that something that I really needed to do was become more active and more aware, being a parent myself. I was speaking to my mom, because my sister [Elen] is a lesbian. Growing up with someone who is different, in your family, you know who they are. She's a hero of mine. She's an amazing person. She's very wise, even though she's only a year and a half older. I've always admired her. I always ran after her, too [laughs]. Being the younger sister, I was told that I was born to be her friend.

That's a very nice way to put that.

That's how my mom put it. You know how parents are. [In a parental voice] "You were born to be her friend." The poor thing, every time she tried to play with somebody else, I would be chasing her down the block, having a fit, yelling at her, saying "You can't play with them. You have to play with me. I was born to be your friend" [laughs]. Poor Elen [laughs], my poor sister. When I read that [about the gay teens on her website], I found it very disheartening that they would become very suicidal, because they didn't know what to do about being different, and there was no

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one to talk to. My God, if you can't talk to your parents . . . I saw that as a big opportunity to say, "Hey, they're your kids. They come riding in on horseback. They're your blood." You can't change who they are, because they're born that way. My sister was born that way. I know. I was there from the beginning. My sister didn't change who she was.

Right. She was no different before she came out to you than after she did.

No. Except after it made more sense. That's something that people could think about.

The way that you assembled the songs for the *Shine* EP is very touching. You wrote that the chosen songs were the ones to which you could see your audience making a connection and having the strongest response.

I saw them singing along, and I know that they wanted me to put out a record. For instance, "Shine." It's kind of about me and kind of about someone you love. What better way than to pull someone up than through their love. Even though it's corny and it sounds sappy, really and truly love is a great healer, and it can stand the test of time. The love thing will always bring you back, always bring you back to yourself. People with no love in their heart do bad things. Sometimes it's really just a lot of hurt, and then if you

love them, really love them, you can pull them up. Somewhere in people's hearts there is that love, and that's what you pull people up by. That's real strength. I guess that I felt that from the people around me. That's what makes me stand up in my own personal life. When you're writing about something personal, sometimes the song goes out and other people hear it and then it becomes larger than you and your own little world, it becomes part of their world.

It becomes universal.

Yeah, and that's the best that you can hope for. That's a great gift, too, because it teaches me, and anybody who's writing how it changes and how people hear it. Then all of a sudden you hear it differently.

When I've interviewed you in the past, I've asked you about the possibility of seeing you in the lead role of a Broadway musical—either a revival or an original production. Is there any chance of that happening?

I wanted to do *Annie Get Your Gun*, but hey, those things come and go.

Yes, in fact, you mentioned that show the first time I interviewed you.

I wanted to do that, but it didn't pan out. [I want to do] something with good music. Some of the stuff doesn't have that good music. The hooks, they don't have the hooks. That's what

you want. Broadway music is going through a change, as you can see with the success of *Mamma Mia!* You want songs with choruses that people can sing along to.

How is the Cyndi Lauper of today . . .

. . . Now you're scaring me. How could you talk to me like I'm in the third person?

I'm sorry. How are you different than you were September 11, 2001?

[After a long pause] How am I different now? In millions of ways, I'm different. I have to catch myself all the time and always try and be fair and understand. It was very hard for me to understand how much hate somebody could have in their heart to do something like that, because they did it to people. Those buildings, to them [the terrorists] were symbols. But there were people in there, and it's the people that you hurt. That's what the shame is. You would hope that maybe sanity would land on this planet and we would be able to coexist together. I'm not perfect myself. I'm still figuring it out. That's the bottom line. Everybody's got to figure it out. Everybody makes mistakes and everybody doesn't do the right thing. It's just something that you've always got to try to remember, that's all.

Pop culture journalist Gregg Shapiro, a 1999 inductee into Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame, is also a published fiction writer and poet.

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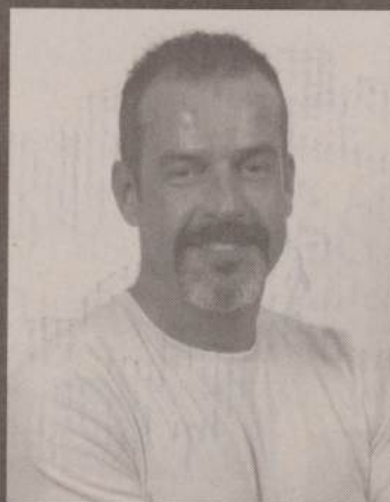
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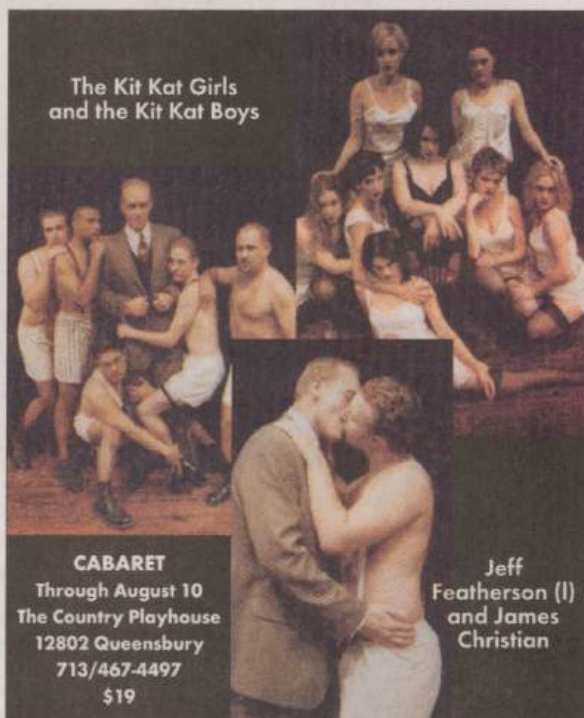
The publicity photos for The Country Playhouse's production of *Cabaret* got my attention—two men kissing, Kit Kat boys, a greasy emcee in suspenders and short pants, and a cross-dressing orchestra. This was a production of the classic Kander/Ebb musical I wanted to know more about.

My curiosity took me out to the netherland intersection of Beltway 8 and I-10, to Town & Country Village, where I discovered Houston's most unfamiliar theater company and its uncompromising vision of Weimar Germany's dissolution.

"Nobody knows we're here," said Nancy Meikle, publicity and marketing director for Country Playhouse, "short of setting fire to the building and running around naked to see if we could get anybody's attention. I'll get 20 to 30 questionnaires each show that say this is the first time I've been here."

Country Playhouse started in 1956, making it older than either the Alley or Stages. The company was housed in a barn when cows roamed along Westheimer, and Beltway 8 wasn't even a dream. The Country Playhouse moved into its present location at 12802 Queensbury 22 years ago and has since been surrounded by Town and Country Village mall. CP has been a regional staple in presenting a who's who of theater for those outside the Loop. Past shows include the Houston premiere productions of *M Butterfly* and *Master Class*, *Hair*, *The Philadelphia Story*, *Gypsy*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Born Yesterday*, and *Man of La Mancha*. Beginning with *Cabaret*, this season's repertory runs from Kaufman and Hart's screwball classic *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, Samuel Taylor's romantic fairytale *Sabrina Fair*, Tennessee Williams's hothouse *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and Ira Levin's chilling crypto-gay *Deathtrap*.

This year, the company received its non-profit 501(c)(3) designation. Its large Cerwinske Stage theater seats an impressive 250; its smaller Black Box is reserved for more avant-garde fare such as their sold-out shows *Agatha Christie Does Dallas* and *A One-Sided Conversation with Casey Stengel*. There are acting classes led by Barbara Lasater, and a renowned summer theater camp program for kids. The Country Playhouse provides a whole world of theater to the west of downtown.



The Kit Kat Girls
and the Kit Kat Boys

CABARET
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The Country Playhouse
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\$19

Jeff
Featherson (l)
and James
Christian

"We don't know why," Meikle said, "but for some unknown reason, we were granted the privilege of doing *Cabaret* while it's still on Broadway. Generally, those rights are never handed out to anybody, let alone a small regional theater."

CP's production, directed and choreographed by Christopher Ayres with musical direction by Claudia Dyle, is modeled on Sam Mendes's lurid 1993 London smash-hit recension, transplanted later to NYC's Studio 54, where it's still playing. Mendes, artistic director of London's cutting-edge Dunmar Warehouse and Oscar-winning director of *American Beauty* and the recent release *Road to Perdition*, set the Kander/Ebb musical inside the seedy Berlin nightclub, played up leading man Cliff's bisexuality, added songs from Bob Fosse's film, and overlaid the entire production with Weimar decadence and sexy grunge.

Cabaret is director/choreographer Christopher Ayres's 10th show for CP, and if the first full run-through that I witnessed was any indication, he is clearly in his element.

"The Kit Kat boys was kind of hinted at in the '88 revival," said Ayres. "They also hinted at Cliff's bisexuality. The movie makes a mention of it, but in the original production because of the time when it was written, they really had to shove that way, way under, but when they did the London version at the Dunmar, they played up the fact that Cliff

was bisexual, and the male waiters became performers, the Kit Kat Boys.

"In the research that I did, Berlin in the '30s, prior to the Nazi takeover, was actually more hedonistic and wilder than even Paris. Paris had cornered the market, so Berlin had to top whatever was being done. If what we are doing on stage seems wild, believe me it is nothing compared to what was really going on there at the time. The show really has a pan-sexual energy. You've got men with men, women with women, men with women. They're all over each other."

Though worried about her patrons' reactions to such steamy goings-on, Meikle's irrepressible love is for the theater and putting on the best show possible. "I like family theater, I have to admit, and I'm hesitant when we start ripping off our clothes and running across the stage, but we're just following the direction and instruction from the book we got when we got the rights," she said.

"The nice thing about working here has been [that] not once has anyone really tried to tie my hands, and say you can't do this," said Ayres. "There have been concerns and arched eyebrows, but when push comes to shove, the board really does stand behind its directors."

"It's been a wonderful ride, because this has been the first show I've ever done anywhere when we have had no diva fits, no egos, no attitude. The company genuinely gets along with each other and loves being together. One of the girls walked in today and said, 'What a horrible weekend; I'm so glad to be back with these people I love.' How many shows have I not heard that before!"

When directing, Ayres wears a whistle around his neck.

"I don't believe in yelling at people. Where there's tension, there's no creativity. Dancers and singers are infamous for being chatty. Rather than scream at them, I just blow the whistle. They get quiet, and then I can talk to them like civilized human beings. Some people dread it and some people like it, but it works. It's a trick I picked up from a Fosse bio."

During the run-through, he doesn't blow his whistle once. At one point, he quipped: "If musical theater would be any easier, it would be called football." ■

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GEORGIAN STATE DANCE COMPANY Friday, September 20, 2002 8pm in Wortham Center's Cullen Theater DDC / SAN FRANCISCO, THE VELVETEEN RABBIT Saturday, Sept. 28, 2002 2pm in Wortham Center's Cullen Theater ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA Richard Goode, Pianist Thursday, October 3, 2002 8pm in Jones Hall MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP Friday & Saturday, October 11-12, 2002 8pm in Wortham Center's Cullen Theater BALLET PRELJOCAJ Friday, November 8, 2002 8pm in Wortham Center's Cullen Theater HILARY HAHN, VIOLIN Sunday, November 17, 2002 2pm in Wortham Center's Cullen Theater LA NOCHE BUENA: LATINO CHRISTMAS EN TEJAS Friday, December 13, 2002 8pm in Wortham Center's Cullen Theater LANG LANG, PIANO Saturday, January 11, 2003 8pm in Wortham Center's Cullen Theater CHARLIE VICTOR ROMEO Tuesday & Wednesday, January 14-15, 2003 7:30pm in The Hobby Center's, Zilkha Hall KRONOS QUARTET: THE NASA PROJECT, SUN RINGS Thursday, January 23, 2003 8PM Wortham Center's Cullen Theater	TWYLA THARP DANCE Friday, January 24, 2003 8pm in Jones Hall IMAGO THEATRE: FROGZ Saturday, February 8, 2003 8pm in Wortham Center's Cullen Theater AEROS Saturday, February 22, 2003 8pm in Hobby Center's Sarofim Hall KODO DRUMMERS OF JAPAN Friday, February 28, 2003 8pm in Jones Hall JAMES GALWAY, FLUTE Wednesday, March 12, 2003 8pm in Jones Hall SPALDING GRAY Friday, March 21, 2003 8pm in Wortham Center's Cullen Theater ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER Friday & Saturday, March 28-29, 2003 8pm in Jones Hall STREB Friday & Saturday, April 11-12, 2003 8pm in Wortham Center's Cullen Theater EMANUEL AX / RICHARD STOLTZMAN Wednesday, April 16, 2003 8pm in Jones Hall MERCE CUNNINGHAM DANCE COMPANY Friday, May 9, 2003 8pm in Wortham Center's Cullen Theater
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Out in the Arts

by D.L. Groover

SHOW ME THE MONEY.

I guess that \$1.7 million bonus just wasn't enough for Museum of Fine Arts, Houston director **Peter Marzio**. That was his reward from the board of trustees for raising the \$126 million for the Audrey Jones Beck addition. That sleek stone structure opened in 2000, adding 85,000 square feet of exhibition space and pushing the MFAH from 30th to 6th in U.S. museum space, while propelling Marzio and his associate director to stratospheric first place among Houston arts executives' salaries. Now, two years later, he wants another building. This time it's a 150,000+ square foot behemoth proposed to house the museum's growing contemporary collection and recent acquisitions. Wasn't that why the Beck was built? My suggestion: If they would remove all the second-tier art now displayed, the really quality stuff would fit snugly in our own tiny Gulf Coast Archives and Museum of GLBT History on West Main.

FADE TO BLACK. Our community's favorite Martian, wiggly ol' **Michael Jackson**, has even out-weirded himself. He's turned himself black! In a transparent attempt at blackmailing Sony head honcho **Thomas Mottola**, the one-time King of Pop has gone on a publicity rampage to smear Mottola as a racist in order to renegotiate his royalties contract and lead blame away from dismal sales of his latest dog of an album, the uninspired *Invincible*. Brandishing photos of Mottola doctored with horns and a pitchfork, wacko Jacko proceeded through Harlem in hopes of stirring up unrest and dissatisfaction, accompanied by mercenaries **Al Sharpton** and **Johnnie Cochran**. Jackson didn't seem phased by the fact that Sony has a rich stable of black artists or that the music giant spent in excess of \$50 million to promote his musical bomb, all while reaping a dismal 2 million in domestic sales. "When you fight for me, you're fighting for all black people, dead or alive," Jackson pronounced straight-faced to the crowd. He even kissed a surprised Sharpton, who later backtracked on his involvement in this excessive prima donna exercise. Jackson has threatened a lawsuit against Sony, which Mottola is amply prepared to defend. As ex-



Rebekah Dahl (l) and Luther Chakurian in *Sweeney Todd* at the Masquerade Theatre.

husband of **Mariah Carey**, he knows everything about divas and freaks.

A VERY CLOSE SHAVE. If you think a contemporary Broadway classic can't be done low rent, you obviously missed Masquerade Theatre's chillingly perfect rendition of **Stephen Sondheim's** Grand Guignol tale of the demon barber of Fleet Street, *Sweeney Todd*. All the ghastly delights inherent in the 1979 multiple Tony Award-winner are here, just miniaturized and brought full face in the bandbox theater on Shepherd under **Phillip Duggins'** razor-sharp direction. When **Luther Chakurian**, a dark psychotic Sweeney if ever there was, swept the air in front of him with his lethal "friend," everyone in the theater instinctively leaned back. In a deliciously daft yet sympathetic portrayal as Mrs. Lovett, baker from Hell, **Rebekah Dahl**—whether wielding rolling pin or blissfully conjuring up seaside retirement—was ideal and, dare I say, quickly made one forget **Angela Lansbury's** definitive original. Everyone in the cast was damned near ideal—with special kudos to ultra-pro High School for the Performing and Visual Arts sophomore **Logan Kesler** and Masquerade veteran **Allison Sumrall**. Because Sondheim's vision in *Sweeney Todd* is so exquisitely bleak and misanthropic, there's never much to take away from even a good production, except for admiration for the creators' limitless craft. With this one, Masquerade surpassed itself.

ON THEIR TOES. If you were anywhere near sleepy Jackson, Mississippi, last month, the street banners and exhibition-sized

posters would have led you inexorably to the VII USA International Ballet Competition. This every-four-year dance fest is one of four top ballet competitions in the world, sharing honors with sister cities Varna in Bulgaria, Moscow, and Tokyo. Competitors must range in age between 19 and 26 for the senior division and 15–18 in the junior bracket. An international jury of 13 artistic directors and former dancers rate the field, which this year numbered 112. As in the Olympics, the judging is often extremely subjective and downright daffy. I heard, after the fact, of a dancer's shoes as well as a costume color considered inappropriate and therefore marked down—neither of which has anything to do with the quality of dancing and ease of performance. Houston Ballet entered three dancers, and all made it to the finals but received no medals, although soloists **Sara Webb** and **Ian Cassidy** were an audience hit in their contemporary entry, **Dominic Walsh's** pas de deux *Sonate Corellisante*. Competing in the junior division, HB academy member **Michelle Carpenter**, a real beauty of a dancer who will join the company as an apprentice this season, won a special citation from the jury for a full scholarship to the State Ballet Academy in Munich, Germany. She has wisely decided to stay put with Houston Ballet. ■

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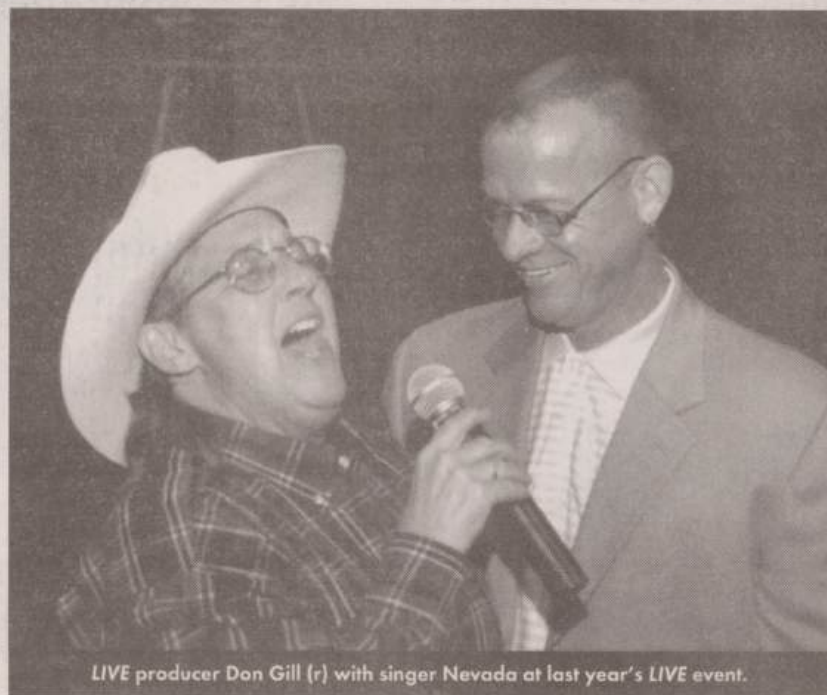
News Briefs

HRC HOSTS AUG. 19 TOWN HALL MEETING

Current U.S. immigration law permits straight Americans to sponsor spouses from other countries for citizenship. To spotlight the fact that same-sex couples do not have the same right, the Human Rights Campaign and 12 co-sponsoring organizations will host a town hall meeting on Monday, August 19, 7 p.m. at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church (1440 Harold). "We have invited all elected federal officials in the area," says Charlye Sells of HRC. "We would like to get them to sign on to the Permanent Partner Immigration Act." Sells explains that Rep Sheila Jackson Lee is currently the only politician from this area to sponsor the legislation.

The co-sponsoring organizations are the Gulf Coast GLBT Immigration Project; Lambda Legal; Lesbian & Gay Immigration Rights Task Force; Love Sees No Borders; National Center for Lesbian Rights; Parents, Friends and Family of Lesbians and Gays; Sexual and Orientation and Gender Identity Section of the State Bar of Texas; Stonewall Lawyers Association of Greater Houston; Texas Gender Advocacy and Information Network; Texas Human Rights Foundation; Tindall & Foster, PC; and the University of Houston chapter of the National Organization for Women.

LIVE FROM HOUSTON ON AUG. 18



LIVE producer Don Gill (r) with singer Nevada at last year's LIVE event.

For the third year, community fundraiser Don Gill will dedicate money raised from his annual musical revue, *LIVE*, to the Gulf Coast Archive and Museum of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender History (GCAM). He and co-producer Bob Bouton will present *LIVE 2002* on Sunday, August 18, at 6:30 p.m. at Keys West (817 West Dallas; 713/571-7870).

Preserving the history of our wonderful community has become so very important," Gill says. "So much of our history has been

lost. GCAM is working very hard to make sure that what history we have had and our history to be will be preserved."

Keys West assesses no cover charge. Reserved seating for *LIVE 2002* is available for \$25 for a piano-side stool to \$200 for a table that seats six to eight people. For reservations and/or more information, contact Gill at 713/521-0911.

GCAM is located 1609 West Main, #4. The museum/archive is open by appointment. More information is available at www.gcam.org or by calling 713/227-5973.

Check out www.diffa.org/houston.html for restaurants participating in "Eat Out/Chip In" on August 22, when eateries will donate a percentage of their sales to the Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS.

Mildred's Umbrella Theater Troupe hosts an August 15 performance of *Eros: A Circus*, a new John Harvey play, benefiting the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, at Helios, 411 Westheimer.

15 GROUPS RECEIVE HOLLYFIELD GRANTS

Making its first grants in two years, the Hollyfield Foundation awarded funds to 15 organizations in June:

- AIDS Foundation Houston
- AIDS Services of Austin
- AssistHers

- The Center for AIDS
- HOPE Project
- Lesbian Health Initiative
- Montrose Clinic
- Montrose Counseling Center
- OutYouth Austin
- People With AIDS Coalition Houston

- PFLAG (Parents, Friends and Family of Lesbians and Gays)
- PFLAG/H.A.T.C.H. Youth Scholarship Foundation
- San Antonio AIDS Foundation
- Uncommon Legacy
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VIRACEPT is indicated in combination with other antiretroviral agents for the treatment of HIV infection. The most common side effect of VIRACEPT is diarrhea, which can usually be controlled with over-the-counter treatments. Some prescription and non-prescription drugs and supplements should not be taken with VIRACEPT, so talk to your doctor first. For some people, protease inhibitors have been associated with the onset or worsening of diabetes mellitus and hyperglycemia, changes in body fat, and increased bleeding in hemophiliacs. 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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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 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 Zertiv® (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®, Quindex®, and others
Ergot derivatives (Cafergo® and others, for migraine headache)
Halcion® (triazolam)
Versed® (midazolam)
Mevacor® (lovastatin, for cholesterol lowering)
Zocor® (simvastatin, for cholesterol lowering)

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

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

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

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

Phenobarbital
Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
Carbamazepine (Tegretol® and others)
These agents may reduce the amount of VIRACEPT in your blood and make it less effective.
Oral contraceptives ("the pill")

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

Special considerations

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

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

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

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

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

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

Retrovir (zidovudine, AZT)
Epivir (lamivudine, 3TC)
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:
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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.

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	Number of Level Scoops*	Number of Level Teaspoons†	Number of Tablets	
Kg	Lb			
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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MAKE THE BIG SWITCH

Designers Troy Broussard and Jennifer Loh are preparing to work over two rooms as part of The Big Switch. This project sponsored by Bassett Furniture Direct with Houston PBS Channel 8, the *Houston Chronicle*, and *OutSmart* will allow two couples to trade homes and redecorate rooms in each others' home with the help of Broussard and Lowe. The results will be revealed on November 2 and 3 broadcasts of "WeekDay" on Channel 8, hosted by Ernie Manouse, and in the November *OutSmart*.

Couples can register in pairs through Friday, August 23, at any area Bassett location. A panel of celebrity judges will narrow the field of entrants at an August 26 dinner at Sam's Pub & Grill. After visiting



Jennifer Loh and Troy Broussard lend their artistic talents to The Big Switch.

the finalists, the co-sponsors will then choose the winning couples. The winners will be announced on Labor Day, September 2.

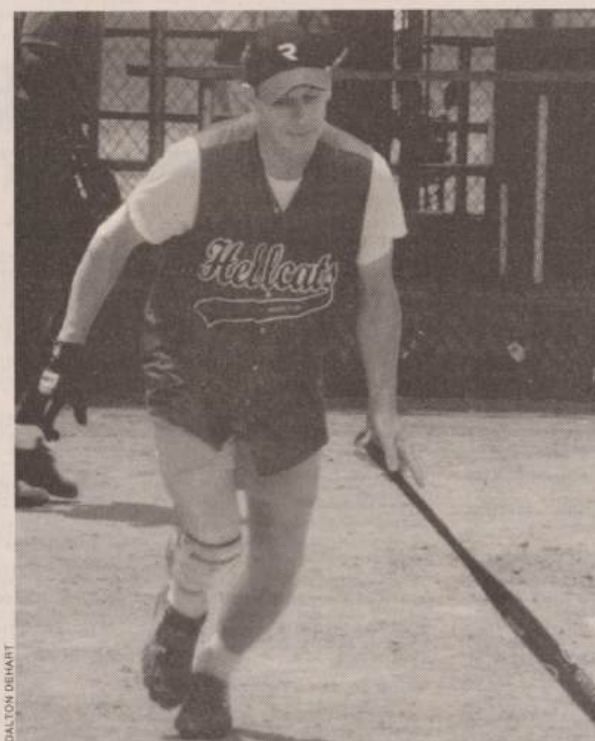
The transformations will take place on September 14 and 15. Bassett Furniture Direct will provide \$1,500 per room. Either Broussard or Lowe and their professional carpenters will work with each couple to redo a room in a 48-hour period.

Entry forms and registration rules may be picked up at any of the three Houston-area Bassett Furniture Direct locations (15305 Katy Frwy. at Highway 6, 17955 North Frwy., just north of FM 1960, and 4989 Sweetwater Blvd. at Highway 59). Rules can also be accessed at www.bassett-houston.com.

News Briefs

PLAY BALL!

The Houston Astros have never made it to the World Series. But later this month three local teams will travel west for the Gay Softball World Series. The Montrose Softball League squads Houston Force, Rich's Hellcats, and Chaos will vie for the title in each of their respective divisions beginning August 18 in Portland, Oregon. Gary Gano (pictured) from the Hellcats is one of the players who will compete. Before the teams depart, the league will host an August 3 casino trip to Louisiana to raise funds for its bid to host the World Series in 2004. The cost is \$20. Details/RSVP: 713/867-3913.



Gary Gano from Rich's Hellcats: on his way to first base ... and the Gay Softball World Series.

TRANSITIONS

Allan McClerren, 51, died of liver failure on July 2. McClerren founded Fitness Exchange. A memorial service for McClerren will be held at Fitness Exchange (4040 Milam) on August 10 at 1 p.m. Contributions in McClerren's name may be made to the Montrose Clinic.

Lynn Pannill, 53, died on May 10 from complications related to Hodgkin's disease. Pannill was a past executive director of the People With AIDS Coalition

Houston. In 1998, she founded Nonprofit Consulting Services. The family requested that contributions in Pannill's name be made to the Trinity Episcopal Church Millenium Capital Campaign.

John Walzel, 50, died on July 1 of a heart attack. A gay rights and AIDS activist, Walzel had served since 2001 on the Human Rights Campaign national board. Walzel owned a jewelry store in Houston. Contributions in Walzel's memory may be made to the HRC Foundation Capital Campaign.

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DUBYA: BUTCH ABROAD, FEY AT HOME

Why there's no hope for the war on corporate terrorism

When it comes to fighting international terrorism, Dubya is just plain butch. Posing midday on his Crawford ranch in the sweltering Texas sun, chainsaw in hand, he's bad. He looks like the Marlboro man without the mustache.

Dubya's talking about wanting Osama "dead or alive." He's deploying troops around the globe to snuff out "evildoers." He promises, "We're gonna hunt 'em down, smoke 'em out, and then git 'em."

Laura stands demurely behind Dubya in a prairie skirt, gazing adoringly at the former oil-company-running, Texas-Ranger-owning, 7-minute-mile-hoofing husband of hers. Let's face it. Bush is butch.

America gets all fired up by this testosterone pep rally. We've been f---- with. We're pissed off. We've got an identifiable enemy and a cowboy in a white hat in the White House. We're fixin' to whip

a little terrorist ass.

Osama takes to his caves and reports only by video. Dubya's approval ratings go through the roof. Bush is riding high. Re-election in 2004 is a shoo-in. What could possibly go wrong?

Can you say corporate greed at the highest level in the biggest companies in America? Enron. WorldCom. Halliburton. Anderson.

Corporate executives misstate profits. They cook the corporate books. Their auditors sign off on it. They exercise stock options on purposefully inflated stock. They sell when the stock is high and disappear when prices crash.

Employees whose 401k's are made up of over-inflated stock find their retirement funds have disappeared. Shareholders whose stock portfolios had doubled or tripled in the last decade find

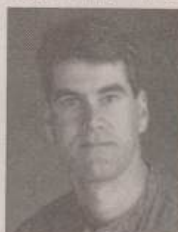
their current value is half of what it was 12 months ago.

The result: The stock market is at its lowest in decades. Investors are panicked. Americans who thought Social Security was a bust and should be tied to the stock market find the stock market is a bust, and now their financial future is tied to the Social Security system.

Americans get all fired up by this fleecing of America. We've been f---- with. We're pissed off. We've got an identifiable enemy and a bad ass in a white hat in the White

continued on page 00

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.



WHAT UNITES US?

For GLBT people, success comes with a price

The annual gay pride celebrations prompt some reflection on the state of the movement and the community of interests it represents. It's fair to ask, for example, do we really have a "community of interests" that a civil rights movement could be said to represent? Or do gays comprise so many constituencies with such divergent (and even conflicting) interests that labeling us a community is more aspiration than description?

The truth is somewhere between the two, but closer to the latter. This fact concerns a lot of gay activists, who plead for "unity," but it shouldn't.

It's trite to say we're everywhere, but in this case trite is right. We come from North, South, East, and West. Gay people are born into rich families and poor families, understanding families and bigoted families. We worship God in every religious tradition.

Some of us do not worship Him at all. Gays come in all ages, shapes, sizes, and colors. We like every kind of food, music, and dress. We're in every occupation, from highway construction worker to CEO.

We are Republicans, Democrats, Greens, Libertarians, Independents, and none of the aforementioned. We are liberal, conservative, radical, reactionary, and uninterested. We voted for Bush, Gore, Nader, and Daffy Duck.

With all this diversity, it would be very surprising to find that we could reach a consensus on almost anything. We can't even settle on what to call this purported community. Gay? Gay and Lesbian? GLBT? Queer?

So what does a 50-year-old conservative, religious, closeted white gay man from the rural South who works in a factory have in common with a 20-year-old radical, atheist, out-and-proud self-identified "queer" Latina

from New York City who attends an elite university? Can these people really be part of the same community?

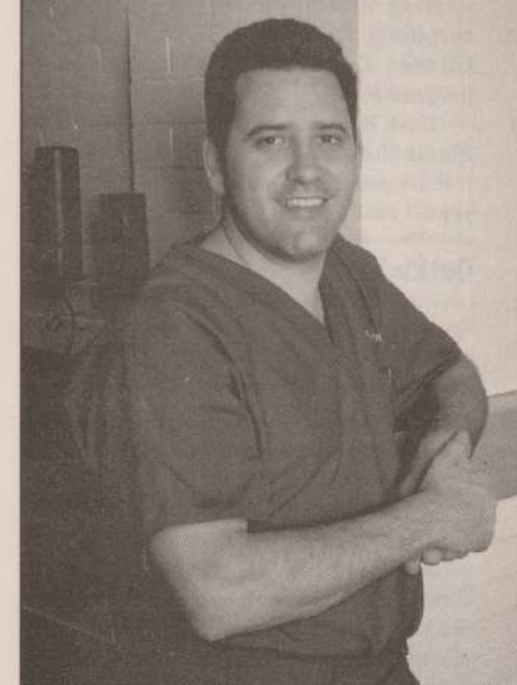
What, for that matter, do I have in common with Barney Frank?

Gay people have two things, and only two things, in common. The first is sexual attraction to members of one's own sex. By itself, that is hardly anything to form a community over. Straight people, after all, share with each other an attraction to members of the opposite sex. But it would be bizarre to speak of a single

Writing from the conservative end of the political spectrum, Dale Carpenter began his column for OutSmart in 1994, when he resided in Houston. Now living in Minneapolis, Carpenter can be reached at OutRight@aol.com.



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SEXUAL ABUSE IN THE CHURCH

Recent discoveries of sexual abuse by Catholic priests and the years of cover-up involved, have left many parishioners wondering who they can trust. While most of the clergy are honorable and trustworthy, some are not and they continue to violate the trust of the innocent and vulnerable. Churches have failed in their duty to protect some of its children from abuse, and have instead been protecting themselves.

Even if the sexual abuse may have occurred while a child, those who are now adults may still pursue cases even if the abuse happened years ago.



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LeftOut

continued from page 00

House. We're fixing to whip a little corporate ass.

Uh-oh. Not so fast. The butch in the cowboy hat has his head up Laura's prairie skirt. Dick Cheney takes to his secure, undisclosed location and reports only by video. Dubya's approval ratings drop below 70 percent for the first time since September 11. The Bush presidency is in jeopardy. What can Dubya do?

Dubya takes to the airwaves. He poses midday in a business suit on Wall Street, proposal for corporate responsibility in hand.

But this time, Dubya's different. There's no talk about wanting corporate thieves "dead or alive." No promise to "hunt 'em down, smoke 'em out, and git 'em."

This time the terrorists are not "evildoers" but just "a few bad apples" who need "a new ethic of personal responsibility in the business community." The government doesn't need to overhaul the system, but shareholders should "demand an attentive and active board of directors." After all, as Dubya reminds us, "in the corporate world, sometimes things aren't exactly black and white when it comes to accounting procedures. Sometimes there's differences—an ability to interpret one way or the other."

Let's face it. When it comes to fighting a bunch of rich white guys guilty of corporate terrorism, Bush is not butch. He is not going to kick any corporate ass. And putting him in charge of cleaning up corporate America is like putting Bill Clinton in charge of abstinence-only programs.

Bush in charge of corporate clean up. As Alanis Morissette might say: "Isn't it ironic... don't you think? A little too ironic... and, yeah, I really do think." ■

OutRight

continued from previous page

"straight community." No, we would say, heterosexuals' interests and perspectives are too divergent to merit the moniker. Gays are fewer in number than straights but no less diverse, so the mere fact that gays share a sexual orientation is insufficient.

If there is any basis to recognize some kind of community, it must come from the second thing that all gay people have in common: an experience of stigma and discrimination that arises from society's reaction to the sexual orientation we share.

Some such experience is an inescapable fact of life in modern America. No matter how cocooned you are in a tolerant atmosphere, you will experience some of this simply because you're gay. It could be a funny look

from someone on the street, or an epithet shouted from a passing car, or a job lost, or a family member who no longer wants you around her kids.

If you hide in the closet in order to avoid these hazards, you face a different set of problems. Feeling the need to hide is itself discrimination and stigma affecting your life.

But is this experience enough to say we have anything significant in common? The intensity and duration of these experiences vary wildly from person to person, depending on many factors, including just dumb luck. Chances are, our 20-year-old university student will have a very different experience of stigma than our 50-year-old rural Southerner.

More importantly, our "common" experience can be as disuniting as it is uniting. The lessons we draw from our life experiences, even when those experiences are roughly the same, can be radically different.

Person A is attacked on the streets by some ruffians yelling antigay slurs and concludes she should start a Pink Pistols brigade to encourage gay people to arm themselves against such aggression. Person B suffers the same attack and thinks the best response is to lobby for a hate crimes law.

Person A is rejected by his family when they learn he is gay and opts to win them over by emphasizing how fundamentally similar to them he is. Person B suffers the same rejection and opts to emphasize how really different her homosexuality makes her.

When it comes to public policy, our common experience of discrimination gives us almost no common ground. For example, the gay left seems most concerned to get the government into our lives in order to protect us; the gay right is most concerned to get the government out of our lives in order to free us.

There ought to be, and there is, a strong consensus that outright state-sponsored antigay discrimination (marriage, the military, sodomy laws) should be eliminated. We all agree that such legally enforced inequality should go.

Even with this agreement, however, there are differences over how much priority to give the protection-enhancing measures vs. the equality-enhancing measures.

So there's not much unity in this community, and there will be even less as social stigma and legal discrimination fade. Our success in the cultural and political battles erodes the basis for the very community that organized to fight those battles. We ought to see our fragmentation as a marker of progress, not as a reason for despair. It's a sign we're winning. ■

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HOUSTON AND HIV

The city lags behind nationally in spending on the epidemic

Houston Health Department HIV workers participate and vote at UCHAPS (Urban Coalition of HIV/AIDS Prevention Services) meetings. Three-year-old UCHAPS lobbies on behalf of the six large cities Congress designated to receive HIV/AIDS funds directly from the Centers for Disease Control. The lobby effort continues despite the fact that only five cities have paid the \$10,000 annual dues for the past several years. Houston is the poor relation.

Houston has a similar relationship with the other five cities in terms of local spending for prevention. Chicago, for instance, which received \$7.7 million in CDC grants in 2001, contributed \$3.6 million from the city's general fund. Philadelphia, which is about the same size as Houston, got \$6.5 million from the CDC and contributed \$4.1 million (for pre-vention, care, and surveillance).

That same year, Houston received \$5.4 million from the CDC and contributed \$207,300 from the general fund. Things haven't changed much in two years.

Beginning July 1, Houston will have spent just \$259,300 in general funds as part of the city's \$6 million HIV/AIDS prevention program.

Halfway through the city's five-year HIV/AIDS State of Emergency plan for the African-American community, about 40 percent of the original \$1,964,300 budget has been spent or budgeted. About \$100,000 will be earmarked for the plan this year.

Criticism that the State of Emergency effort exists in name only is the latest rift in a 20-year-old frustrating relationship between the city health department and the GLBT community and, more recently, a wide range of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C service providers. Mention former

department directors James Haughton and John Arrandondo or the city's mobile van program and watch longtime activists bristle. It would be too cruel to bring up HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for People With AIDS) and the city's housing department.

Before the State of Emergency was declared on World AIDS Day, December 1, 1999, I joined with other officials to urge the mayor to declare it. After its mostly unfunded budget was announced, I tried unsuccessfully to get more funding.

While the city administration understands the seriousness of the HIV/AIDS crisis, many conservative city and county leaders remain unwilling to commit sufficient local dollars for prevention—and not just for HIV/AIDS. Immunizations, hepatitis C, and timely prenatal visits at city health clinics also fall through this crack.

To make matters worse, the city tried to

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Dr. Schrader is on the clinical faculty at Baylor College of Medicine and the University of Texas School of Medicine where he serves as a preceptor for medical students during their training. HIV disease is of special interest to Dr. Schrader and he conducts clinical trials on an ongoing basis. Dr. Schrader's commitment to HIV education and treatment is evidenced through his involvement in community outreach programs. Both Dr. Schrader and Pennye believe the focus of medicine should be on people, and they treat each patient with special care.

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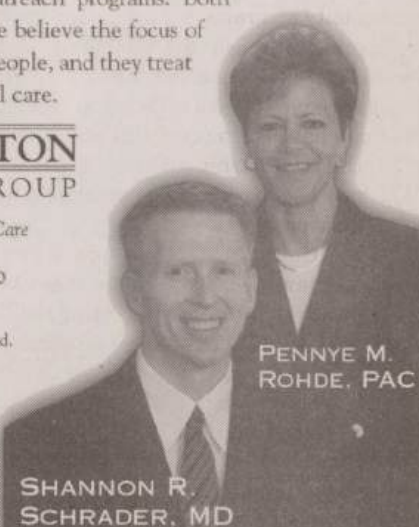
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launch its underfunded Emergency program just as hepatitis C grabbed the spotlight. We were already way behind the curve, and there was the perception that the two diseases were pitted against each other for funding. AIDS/HIV organizations wanted to work with hepatitis C groups to piggyback outreach efforts. Some hepatitis C activists, however, did not want to be associated with HIV. "Hep C is not a sexually transmitted disease," one hepatitis C activist protested at a meeting in the Medical Center.

As Houston's first openly lesbian City Council member and an at-large member, one of my top priorities upon taking office on January 2, 1998, was improving the Health Department's HIV/AIDS services. I convened a meeting of service providers and listened to an hour of blistering complaints:

- Late, inaccurate contracts
- Late, inconsistent reimbursements
- City outreach workers showing up to test clients 10 minutes before community providers appear at the same location
- City workers telling clients tested at remote locations they had to go to clinics for test results
- Inefficient and punitive behavior by the city ("It can't keep a bargain.")

Providers said they had tried to work out problems with the city to no avail.

Health Department director Dr. Mary desVignes-Kendrick soon received a lengthy memo about the complaints and answered in great detail. Thus began our relationship of memos, meetings, phone calls, and discussions at Neighborhood Protection Committee meetings. Kendrick is compassionate and dedicated, as are many of her employees. Her greatest challenges are money and management.

I have tried to push the department to become a conduit for grants and to be an evaluation and support resource for community programs, not a provider. We were competing too much with community service providers. (City and community outreach workers have stopped colliding at test sites.) The city has also improved its efficiency and financial relationship with service providers, who have begun meeting informally for lunch to discuss problems.

New Council Member Ada Edwards brings renewed energy and her many years of advocacy to the task of directing the City/County HIV/AIDS Task Force established in the State of Emergency plan. Her first task force meeting attracted 125 people. At press time, a second meeting had been scheduled for July 17.

Several commitments were made during a recent meeting between task force leaders

and Mayor Lee P. Brown and Dr. Kendrick:

- The mayor and Dr. Kendrick will speak loudly, clearly, and consistently about the epidemic to the African-American community and will convene and participate in meetings with service providers and concerned citizens.

- The mayor will be a strong advocate for additional funds and services and will make this a priority for the city's state legislative lobby effort.

- The mayor and health director will work with service providers to reevaluate the training and testing of city and community-based organization staff.

In response to the task force's request for a project manager, health department clinical education coordinator Courtney Rogers will coordinate the department's task force effort. He has been involved in the task force for three years.

City Council member Edwards is determined to take the task force to the next level through such efforts as block walking in hot spots. "We need aggressive outreach outside of 9-5 M-F. A majority of individuals expressed a willingness to work outside the box, volunteering their time to take this project on, taking common sense, not clinical information, to the laundromats, homes, and beauty shops," she commented at the April task force meeting.

Another hopeful sign is the arrival of Rick Mendiola in the health department. Mendiola served as AVES (Amigos Volunteers in Education and Services) director of education before joining the city in April 2000. A year later, he became the HIV Prevention Program manager.

Mendiola believes he has improved the program: "HIV prevention efforts/resources are prioritized before being contracted out for service. I feel I can help make decisions regarding specific populations and interventions as well as find ways to fill gaps.

"The bureau needed to be more administrative than providing direct services. I helped build a section within the bureau for capacity building/technical assistance and quality assurance. We are looking at new and innovative interventions for Houston."

Mendiola gets high marks for his compassion and dedication from one HIV/AIDS service provider, who still faults some department employees for not caring about their work. "The department's problems are systemic," the service provider said.

Years of underfunding and budget cuts have skeletonized many services and surely affected morale. The department's broad mission—air quality monitoring, restaurant inspections, Bureau of Animal Regulations

(BARC), bioterrorism, health clinics, infectious diseases—also spreads limited resource thin and makes filling specialized medical and technical positions difficult in a highly competitive job market.

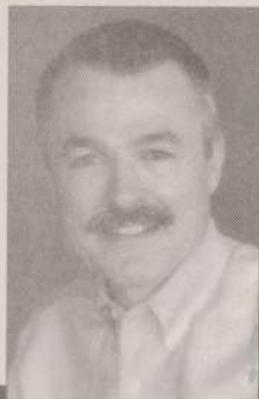
When the budget passed in June, I asked the administration to conduct a long-overdue performance review of the health department so Dr. Kendrick can concentrate on long-range planning. We need a Health Department to Standard program, much like Neighborhoods to Standard and Parks to Standard, to provide adequate services to a growing population in the midst of an emergency care crisis. After two years of excruciatingly painful health department budget hearings, I think City Council is primed to bring the department up to a standard we can be proud of. At some point, we may even use proven but controversial approaches to HIV/AIDS, such as needle exchange. ■

A Houston City Council member who happens to be lesbian, Annise Parker is serving her third term in At-large Position 1. Call or e-mail to receive her bi-monthly newsletter, 713/247-2014, or annise.parker@cityofhouston.net. Her website is www.ci.houston.tx.us/citygov/council/1.



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POSITIVELY TOXIC

HIV meds are not all they're cracked up to be

by Thomas Gogeny

Recently I received a call at The Center for AIDS that pretty much sums up the state of HIV treatment in 2002. A woman called asking for the name of an HIV-treating physician in Houston. She needed to get her niece out of a hospital in central Texas because, in her words, "They did not know how to take care of her, and she is dying." The niece has been HIV-infected for roughly 10 years and was admitted to the hospital because of muscle weakness, severe abdominal pain, and vomiting. She was thought to be having seizures. It turns out that she was experiencing drug toxicity from her HIV medications. She had pancreatitis for sure, and perhaps even lactic acidosis, since she cannot walk because of severe muscle weakness. She is off her medications for the time being, but she is not recovering very well—thus her aunt's desire to transfer her to medical facilities with more experience in this area. The woman is 29 years old.

In case you haven't heard, HIV medications aren't just hard on the virus but also on the people taking them. Besides, as we all know by now, they do not cure the disease or even "eradicate" the virus from the body. The drugs have bought time for people with HIV—but who knew at what price? Even though fewer HIV-infected people are

progressing to full-blown AIDS, because of HIV medications, a growing number of people are experiencing metabolic complications, toxicities, and yes, even death—in some instances because of HIV medications themselves. One report at an HIV scientific conference earlier this year indicated that life-threatening ("grade 4") events may now be more common in the HIV-infected population than AIDS-defining events, like opportunistic infections and certain cancers.

Seeing some of the worst effects in Center for AIDS clients, I am now inclined to change the meaning of the acronym HAART (commonly used to describe HIV medications) from Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy to Hardly Acceptable And Really Toxic. The list of maladies is daunting, including retinal toxicity, neuropathy of the hands and feet, liver toxicity (especially if hepatitis co-infection is present), kidney malfunction, pancreatitis, lactic acidosis, cholesterol and triglyceride abnormalities, and anemia.

Also, many HIV-infected people are dealing with the physically disfiguring effects of lipodystrophy (frankly referred to as "the hollow-cheeked 'poz face' common to patients on anti-HIV drugs" in *PRIDE.02* magazine). The physical manifestations of lipodystrophy do indeed include a reduction of fat in the face as well as the arms, legs, and buttocks. A build-up of fat is also sometimes seen in the upper abdomen, breasts (especially in

women), and/or at the back and sides of the neck. The syndrome could be caused by HIV medications, HIV itself, or both. The telltale purple spots associated with Kaposi's Sarcoma may be much less common now, but people with HIV have lipodystrophy to give away their disease status.

However, the side effects and toxicities of HIV drugs are not the whole story. Although T-cells can bounce back with HIV therapy, the overall reconstitution of the immune system is incomplete. For example, irregularities in B-cell function do not seem to improve very much with HAART. This may be why certain cancers (like non-Hodgkin's lymphoma) still persist at higher rates in HIV-infected people despite successful viral suppression with HAART. The drugs have brought many people back from the brink of death because of AIDS, but in the end those people may very well die from other complications. The bottom line is that people with HIV and their health-care providers have to be more vigilant than ever with this disease.

Clearly, the cure for HIV/AIDS must involve the immune system and not just drugs that combat the virus. What's important for people with HIV to realize is that the fight for a cure continues. Treatment activism and advocacy are not dead. What's important for uninfected people to realize is that the virus keeps spreading and that the treatments available are incomplete and toxic. Do not

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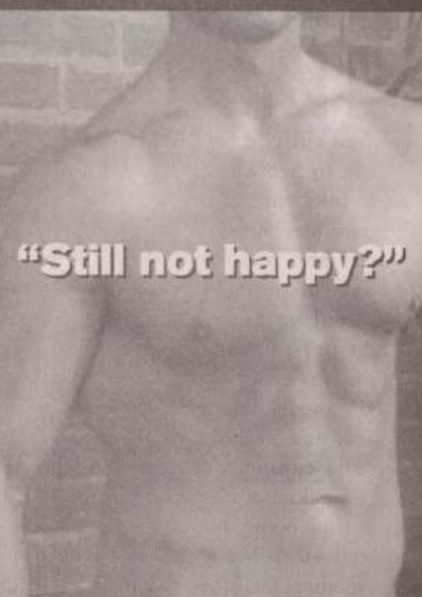
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think for an instant that getting HIV now is somehow better than it was before HAART. People are still getting sick and dying now. They are only getting sick and dying differently.

Thomas Gegeny is editor of the journal Research Initiative/Treatment Action! (RITA!) and the RITA! Weekly Newsletter at The Center for AIDS: Hope & Remembrance Project. He also produces the patient newsletter HIV Treatment ALERTS!

In the September OutSmart:
A report from the XIV International
AIDS Conference

Selected HIV information resources on the web

LOCAL

- The Center for AIDS: Hope & Remembrance Project
www.centerforaids.org
- AIDS Foundation Houston
www.aids-help.org
- AIDS Coalition of Coastal Texas (Galveston)
www.fc.net/~acct
- Body Positive Wellness Center
www.bodypositivehouston.org
- Houston AIDS Information Link (HAIL)
www.hailinfo.org
- Montrose Clinic
www.montrosecclinic.org
- People With AIDS Coalition of Houston
www.pwach.org
- Ryan White Planning Council
www.rwpc.org
- Thomas Street Clinic
www.tmc.edu/hchdLocations_and_Services/Thomas_Street_Clinic.html

NATIONAL

- AIDS Action Council
www.aidsaction.org
- The AIDS Channel
www.theaidschannel.com
- AIDS Education Training Centers
www.aids-ed.org
- AIDS Treatment Activists Coalition
<http://atac-usa.org>
- American Foundation for AIDS Research
www.amfar.org
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention
www.cdc.gov/hiv/dhapp.htm
- HIVPositive
www.HIVPositive.com
- National AIDS Treatment Advocacy Project
www.natap.org
- National Association for People With AIDS
www.napwa.org
- National Minority AIDS Council
www.nmac.org
- Poz Magazine
www.poz.com
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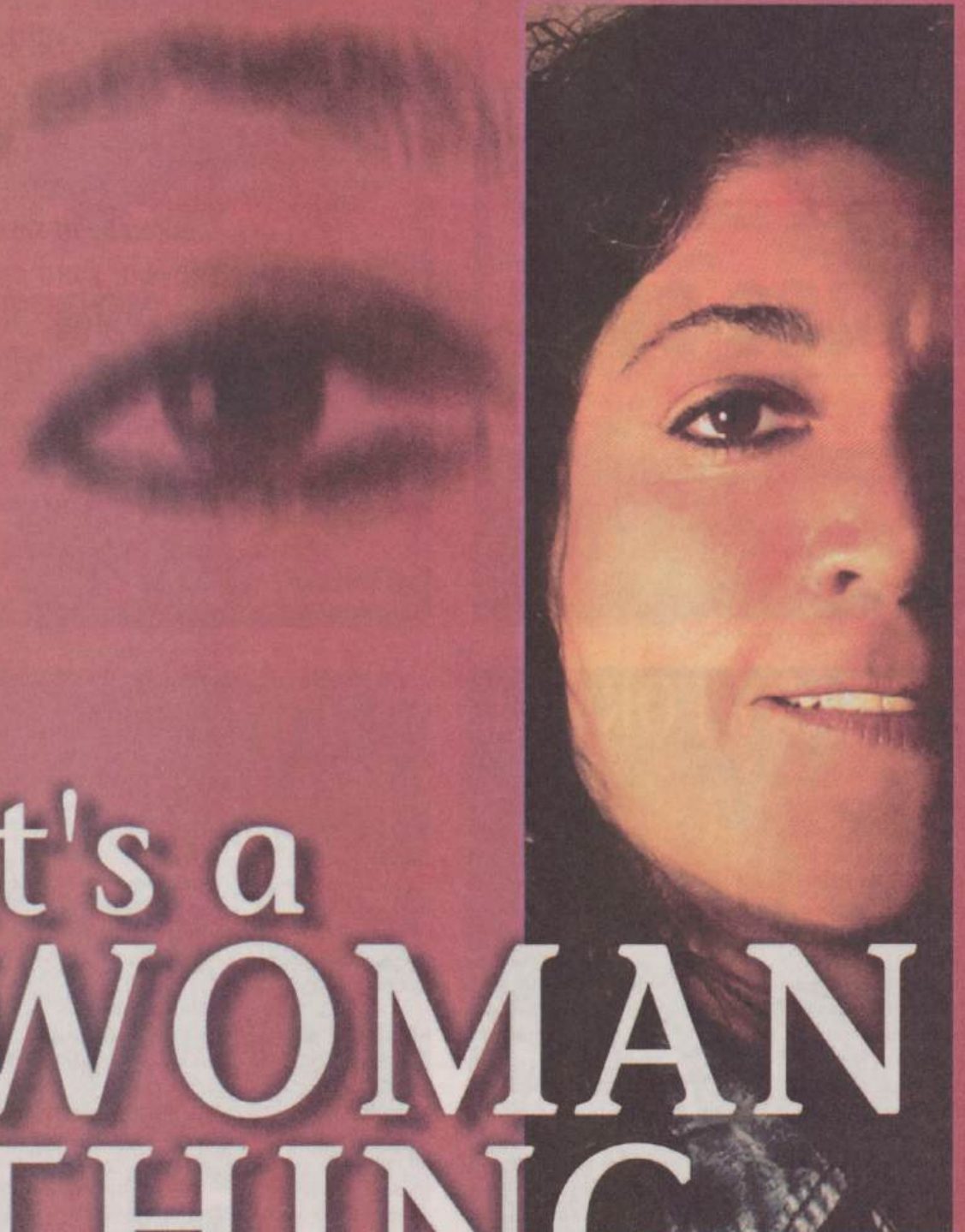
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It's a WOMAN THING

8 HEALTH ISSUES

That Should
Concern
All Lesbians

by Marene Gustin photo by BJ Smith

The good news: When it comes to health issues and diseases, lesbians aren't that different from heterosexual women. The bad news: When it comes to health issues and diseases, lesbians aren't that different from heterosexual women.

One disturbing fact does stand out, according to the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association's landmark 2000 study on GLBT health, in conjunction with the Columbia University L. Mailman School of Public Health Center for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health: There simply isn't enough research on lesbian health issues to make definitive statements. But part of that lack can be attributed to the documented fact that lesbians—whether due to a lower social-economic status, lack of family health benefits, or fear—don't access health providers to the extent that heterosexual women and gay men do. But one area has been researched, written about, and documented:

1. Breast Cancer

Lesbians may actually be at a higher risk for breast cancer than straight women, based on the GLMA research, due to "higher rates of obesity, alcohol consumption, nulliparity, and lower rates of breast cancer screening." Both Lucy Watson, president of the Lesbian Health Initiative, and Montrose area physician Carolyn Gardiner agree that the lesbian population isn't getting regular mammograms. Watson, through the LHI, offers free mammograms at health fairs in conjunction with the M. D. Anderson Cancer Center's mobile mammogram unit. And LHI offers coupons for The Rose, a nonprofit organization that offers free

breast cancer screening, diagnosis, support, and treatment. "But not enough of the community is taking part," says Watson. Gardiner concurs: "My biggest gripe is lesbians who don't come in for cervical exams or breast exams." The American Cancer Association's statistics of one in eight women getting breast cancer don't indicate how many of them are lesbians. But the point is clear: If you have a history of breast cancer or are over 40, get a mammogram. And get a pap smear.

2. Gynecological Cancers

Gardiner, like many doctors, is worried about the lesbian community when it comes to uterine, cervical, and ovarian cancers. "I see a slight increase, not huge, but slight," she says. "A lot of women think if they have never been sexually active with a man, they can't get gynecological cancers." They could be dead wrong.

Sonna Alton, director of communications at the Montrose Clinic, has been helping compile a survey of lesbians over 35. "Many of them couldn't remember when they had their last exam, or they said it was at least five years ago," she says.

The American Family Physician, a fairly conservative publication, in a 1999 report, addressed the issue of lesbian patients, indicating "vulnerability to ovarian cancer may be increased because of low pregnancy rates and reduced exposure to oral contraceptives." While research is slim and inconclusive, the fact is obvious: Whether a woman is lesbian or heterosexual, a "well woman" exam is important.

3. Colon/Rectal Cancer

Are lesbians more prone to this once rarely discussed form of cancer? Who knows?

Again, little research exists in this area. But LHI's Watson is again proactive. "The aging lesbian population isn't getting screened. By the time you're 50, you should be tested, but if you're a lesbian and you haven't got in the habit of regular checkups and well-women exams, you're not likely to have a colonoscopy." Listen to Katie Couric, who famously got tested on-air on the *Today* show—and get checked.

4. Substance Abuse

The GLMA report cites: "Sound data about substance abuse among lesbians is even more scarce, though McKirnan and Peterson (1998) found that rates of marijuana and cocaine use were higher among lesbians than among heterosexual women." Locally, Gardiner, who specializes in internal medicine, finds that "I seem to see more smokers and more drinkers who are lesbians than who are heterosexuals." Watson thinks "a smoking cessation program for the lesbian community would be great." Obviously, lung cancer is a concern, but so is:

5. Heart Disease

"It's the number-one killer in women," says Watson. And it knows no sexual preference. The Montrose Clinic's Alton adds, "I think, if you look at overall health, those concerns are for everyone. It's the general lifestyle, aging, being sedentary, and overweight. If I would say one thing to lesbians, it would be to be more proactive about preventive care." Which again goes back to the lack of accessing health care. High risk factors—such as lack of exercise, smoking, drinking, and not seeking regular medical attention—can lead to a variety of diseases and health-care issues. And then, there

is a fairly new concern for the lesbian community:

6. Hepatitis C

AssistHers is a nonprofit group that provides in-home health care for lesbians. Eva Geer is the vice president of client services. "One thing I am more worried about is Hep C in the lesbian community," she says. "It isn't so much about sexual transmission but other high-risk behaviors. Tattooing and body piercing, particularly in the younger population, are increasing." Hepatitis C is also increasing in the population at large and is just becoming a real concern in Houston. Certainly it is not being as aggressively researched or funded as other disease, like:

7. HIV/AIDS

Since the early days of the pandemic, HIV and AIDS has been the main topic of conversation when it comes to homosexual medical issues. But should lesbians be concerned? "I've been doing this for 10 to 12 years," says Gardiner, "and I have had very few lesbians with HIV/AIDS, and none of them were women-to-women transmission." That doesn't mean it is impossible. The GLMA reports that some cases have been documented, mostly notably in instances of sex during menstrual periods.

8. Eating Disorders

More gay men and more heterosexual women have eating disorders than

lesbians. Still, AssistHers' Geer says overall nutrition "is a big problem" for her clients. LHI's Watson indicates that lesbians tend to go to extremes. "I think there's a need for general nutrition information," she says. "It goes from vegetarians who don't smoke to those who smoke and eat everything in sight."

Bottom Line

Lesbians must start taking advantage of health-care opportunities and demanding better access to health care. So far the evidence doesn't point to more problems, just fewer opportunities.

Marene Gustin profiled the Gay & Lesbian Switchboard Houston in the June issue.

AND FOR THE MEN

In July, the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association released a survey of its members that listed the top health-care concerns for men:

1. HIV/AIDS, Safe Sex

That men who have sex with men are at an increased risk of HIV infection is well known, but the effectiveness of safe sex in reducing the rate of HIV infection is one of the gay community's great success stories. However, the last few years have seen the return of many unsafe sex practices. While effective HIV treatments may be on the horizon, there is no substitute for preventing infection.

2. Substance Use

Gay men use substances at a higher rate than

the general population, and not just in larger communities. These include a number of substances ranging from amyl nitrate ("poppers"), to marijuana, Ecstasy, and amphetamines. The long-term effects of many of these substances are unknown; however current wisdom suggests potentially serious consequences.

3. Depression/Anxiety

Depression and anxiety appear to affect gay men at a higher rate than in the general population. The likelihood of depression or anxiety may be greater, and the problem may be more severe for those men who remain in the closet or who do not have adequate social supports.

4. Hepatitis Immunization

Men who have sex with men are at an increased risk of sexually transmitted infection with the viruses that cause the serious condition of the liver known as hepatitis. These infections can be potentially fatal and can lead to very serious long-term issues such as cirrhosis and liver cancer. Universal immunization for Hepatitis A and B viruses is recommended for all men who have sex with men. Safe sex is effective at reducing the risk of viral hepatitis, and is currently the only means of prevention for the very serious Hepatitis C virus.

For more tips for both men and women, access the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association website at www.glma.org.

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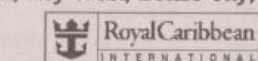
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Warrior

Talking with gay mystic Andrew Harvey:
Using both sexuality and activism to journey to our
deepest spiritual selves

by Alan Davidson

One night in India, the six-year-old Andrew Harvey learned that God could appear anywhere, anytime. The family cook taught him. His parents out for the evening, he ate his dinner on the balcony. Afterward, the family cook sat on the ground beside him and beat a drum in ecstatic rhythms. Suddenly, the cook stopped, set the drum aside, and touched his forehead to the floor. He explained to the surprised child that he was thanking God.

"And you think God hears you?" Harvey asked.

The cook explained. "God is the moon. God is the garden. God is you. God is me. God is all around. God is always seeing. God is always listening. All you need to do is to whisper, and God will hear." Young Andrew experienced an epiphany that would carry through his entire life.

Andrew Harvey was born in south India to English parents in 1952 and lived there until he was nine years old. He credits this early life with shaping his vision of the inner unity of all religions. The love and acceptance he felt from India's diverse peoples and strands of spirituality—from the Hindu cook, to holy fakirs, to the Muslim

driver of his Protestant parents—told him that this was so. India also bred in Andrew the sense that the divine is present in nature; he could see the sacred in the sensual as well as the transcendent.

Andrew was sent to private school in England when he was only nine. The separation from his mother and India traumatized the young gay man for years. He entered Oxford University in 1970 and at 21 became the youngest person ever to be made a fellow of All Souls College, England's highest academic honor. He remained at Oxford to teach, mastering the English culture of "irony and despair," as Harvey describes in *Gay Mysticism*. However, Harvey was soon disillusioned by the academic culture, which he likened to "a concentration camp of reason."

After suffering a nervous breakdown, Harvey returned to India while still in his 20s and began his spiritual search. There, he studied the world's great religions, which inspired two books, *A Journey in Ladakh*, about his studies with Tibetan Buddhist master Thuksey Rinpoche, and *Hidden Journey: A Spiritual Awakening*, about his 13 years studying with the Indian teacher Mother Meera. That spiritual search has led, thus far, to the writing and editing of 30

books, including *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* (co-authored with Sogyal Rinpoche) and *The Way of Passion: A Celebration of Rumi*. Of particular interest to the gay community is Harvey's *The Essential Gay Mystics*, a compilation of gay leaders and thinkers from all the major mystical traditions—the first time such an attempt has been made.

Harvey was deeply moved by Mother Meera. She had been his guru and inspired his first understanding of the holiness and redemptive power of the divine feminine. Then, in 1993, she told Andrew to leave his husband, Eryk, and renounce his homosexuality. Despite his reverence for her as a teacher, he was able to see that her teaching on gays was not divine law, as she said, but instead deep-seated homophobia. He and Eryk stayed together and began the traumatic five years of separating from Mother Meera, which had a staggering effect on Harvey's thinking. The result was a sophisticated understanding of the difference between false authority and one's own inner divinity, which he wrote about in *The Direct Path*.

Harvey was recently in Houston, brought by Brigid's Place to give a workshop on "Mystical Paths to Wholeness" at Christ Church Cathedral.

OutSmart: It's a privilege to speak with you, Andrew. Many of our readers have a real commitment to spirituality and integrity.

Andrew Harvey: That is so important to the gay movement, isn't it? It can't all be poppers and sex parties, can it? There must be other things.

The Bacchic revelry can only last for so long.

A lot of my work has been devoted to trying to get the truth of the gay Tantric mystical experience out. Without it, the whole picture of humanity is falsified, isn't it?

What do you mean by "mystical" and "Tantric"?

The mystical journey is where everyone meets their divine essence, their soul without dogma. The best way to spirituality is to find the place of radiant balance, where spirit meets body and body is infused with spirit—that place is simply love. A Tantric path is the path of dignity, of respect, of tremendous mutual honoring of fidelity, of tremendous

of Love



surrendering to and worshipping of each other as divine beings. We mustn't confuse very exciting sexual experiences, which can lead to delight, with Tantric experiences, which lead to initiation and revelation.

That kind of honoring is a rare thing in the world I live in.

It's amazing that we're still in a world where homophobia is still so rampant and the understanding of sexuality is still so primeval.

I feel that homophobia entrenched in my own mind, and so many other gay people I know still have it as well.

How could we not have it?

If you've been treated in a despicable way for so long, it's in our genes. It's in the first conversations we ever heard about sexuality. It takes a massive effort of the psyche to exorcise it.

The massive effort to overcome that kind of programming, that's really the essence of the spiritual journey.

Yes it is, and it's important to realize that you have the divine on your side, that the divine is not against love, or

the body, or sexuality. The divine wants the complete flowering of body, heart, mind, and soul together to produce a completely different kind of human being. This is what Walt Whitman saw. Whitman is the supreme prophet poet of the last 300 years—the one who really understood the deepest possible connections between sexual liberation and the birth of democracy and the freedom of all beings to live their complete lives in the sanctification of nature. If gay people really read Whitman's poems, they'd be given an extraordinarily beautiful image: of the nobility of what their love could be. It gives people courage. It gave me courage to not sell my love short. It's not surprising that he was a bisexual poet.

I'm trying to make real inroads into gay consciousness, opening up a whole Tantric vision for gay people. And the majority of the

gay press is just not interested in it. It's business as usual. And that's very sad, because I think it's keeping back hundreds of thousands of gay people from their spiritual journey, from their enormous potential for spiritual growth that's hidden in homosexual passion. Gay people have chosen to experience their love and to live it. They have learnt something about the extraordinary transforming force of love.

You say gays have "chosen the path of love." In my experience, there is a deep hunger and longing for love, but we often choose the path of sex or choose

"When you do meet the divine, you begin the great process of healing oneself of one's inherited homophobia, body shame, body hatred, of the fear of love itself. And that slowly starts to transform you into a warrior of love."

the path of a gay culture.

I think that hunger for true communion with someone else is part of the deepest human hunger. I think that the culture at large is the culture devoted to pornography and sensual excess really out of despair. That is particularly clear in the gay culture, where an addiction to youth and an addiction to physical beauty and an addiction to sex mask a very great self-loathing and self-despair. It's that self-loathing and self-despair that has to be healed—which can only be healed really by the mystical journey. When you do meet the divine in this way, you begin the great process of healing oneself of one's inherited homophobia, body shame, body hatred, or the fear of love itself. And that slowly starts to transform you into a warrior of love.

There is such a self-loathing of the body in so many of the religious traditions.

This is the source of the nightmare that we're in. We're in a crisis of the body. We do not know the divinity of our own bodies. We do not know the divinity of nature. We're wandering blind and greedy and crazy in a coma of disassociation. The religious traditions are responsible for this because they have been, what I call in my work, addicted to transcendence. They've been addicted to a vision of the divine as absolute light, as totally remote from reality, as eternal and final beyond all the mess and chaos of blood and of the creation. A great many people are using spirituality and mysticism as a form

of drug to try and bliss out from the pain and agony of this time and the enormous challenge of this time. I think that's fatal. It's been a total disaster. It's a total misreading of the divine because it depreciates and devalues all the different aspects of life.

Gay people endure so many woundings from society, ourselves, and the religious traditions. There are so many opportunities for

neurosis and pathology. How do we take an experience of wounding and cultivate that for growth and healing as opposed to just more pathology?

It depends on how you view the wounding. If you view it as making you a helpless victim, then you're trapped in the victim position. If you see your wounding as an opportunity to enter more deeply into compassion, as an opportunity to understand the other kinds of woundings that limit and damage people, to use your wounding as an oyster uses the grit that comes into it to make a pearl, by using it to spur you forward into the mystical quest, spur you forward into all the different forms of therapy and meditation and self-help and service that can really help you transform yourself—then the wound becomes not something that limits you but in fact becomes something that provides the basic soil in

which the rose bush of your human divine identity can grow.

When you have real mystical knowledge, you realize that we are all traveling in time, and we are all reincarnate souls who have been traveling a long time. And the woundings that we experience are at least partly the result of karma. Karma isn't just punishment. Each wound is gloriously and particularly tailored by the divine intelligence to offer the chance to transform parts of ourselves that need to be transformed. Knowing that would give you a calm and a generosity and a self-wisdom, which, in itself, would help you grow. **Generosity for ourselves and for everyone else. A person needs to claim a sense of responsibility to heal these woundings. There is such a lack of personal responsibility in our society. How do we on the mystical path inspire people to begin to claim their own responsibility?**

The most important thing is to live your life in such a self-responsible way that people are delighted and amazed by the joy and fire in us, by the exuberance and creativity and inspiration of your presence. That in itself will inspire them to take self-responsibility. You can't lecture people about it; you can't beat them over the head with it. That just drives them deeper into the victim position. Through your own flowering, you give other people the passion to flower. That is what I think is the deepest way of helping people. You have to be shrewd and subtle about these things.

To "be the change you wish to see," as Gandhi said. That kind of personal responsibility requires action.

The world's future hangs on the definition of two words: mystical activism. The true "axis of evil" is the inner axis of disassociation from nature that's allowing the death of the environment; that's allowing the creation of two billion people who live on a dollar a day; that's allowing the persecution of homosexuals in all religions; that's allowing a hundred million women to get genitally mutilated; that's allowing the holocaust of the animals. The mystic sitting on his/her futon, vibrating with the infinite, is not going to change anything. The activist that's not fed by the powers and wisdom of mystical awakening is going to be rapidly destroyed or burnt out by the tremendous powers ranged against change. It's a vision that fuses the highest mystical understanding to the responsibility that arises from the suffering of our time, a radical, political, economic vision that really changes the structures of power. That is exactly what the authentic Jesus did.

And Gandhi...

Gandhi had a vision of how the spirit could be made politically active, and he gave his life for it in the most noble way. Gandhi is a

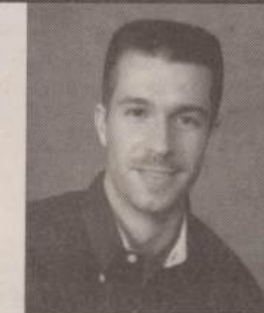
terrific example. So is Martin Luther King Jr. and, of course, His Holiness the Dali Lama. These are the three key spiritual activists of the 20th century. The ones that are really trying to show all of us the way through.

One of the inspiring quotes that I live my life by came from your book on Rumi. You said something about the enlightened heart must be able to contain the horrors of Auschwitz and Dauchau as well as the ecstasy of the divine. It's just that reminder that I can't go chasing after all that is good and beautiful and easy in the world, I have to sit with what's most horrific as well. You must! If you don't, you're using your vision of the divine as a way of secretly sealing yourself off from the world, and that is escapism and narcissism. That is joining the coma of the new age. The real use of mystical knowledge is to make you strong enough to withstand the full blaze of the pain of reality, to give you the courage to see it without illusion and to give you the even greater courage to make your whole life a testimony to that love that could transfigure suffering.

Alan Davidson profiled Ram Dass in the April 2001 issue. Davidson is completing a book, Living Through My Body.

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Kenneth W. Lester, DC

How does this gay "warrior of love" sustain the intensity of his passion?

Love. "By my love for my husband and my love for my cats and my love for my intimate friends. They give me the courage to be my whole self."

The example of others. "By deeply inspiring myself by the great lives of the bodhisattvas and warriors of love of all the traditions, because they have all faced this darkness in the world. They have all faced this refusal of love in the world, they've all faced this inertia and indifference and despair. That has made them only more committed to real inner transformation, so as to become stronger."

Prayer, meditation, and service. "Through daily nonsense spiritual practices to keep myself constantly in the stream of the sacred fire. For me this involves fundamentally three things: prayer, meditation, and service."
• "Deep passionate prayer to the divine, asking the divine for what I need to do my work, to stay as illumined as I can be, clear, forceful, and discriminatory."
• "Through meditation, you come to know the intimate nuances of your own saboteur. You can then free yourself from that saboteur. And also in

meditation you taste the boundlessness and peace of your essential being so that gives you constant re-immersion in your deep self."

• "Through service, through really trying to give myself completely in all the work that I do as a teacher, as a writer, as a speaker. If you approach your work and being in the world with that sacred intention to honor the divine in all beings that you meet, that gives whatever you do a great inner beauty. That inner beauty reflects itself back to you as courage and power and energy."

Pain in the...

The shame, the burning

by Michael Alvear



If you haven't suffered through the most embarrassing medical condition on earth, odds are you will. Up to 75 percent of us will get it, according to the Mayo Clinic.

The first rule of real estate—location—explains the eye-widening, mouth-puckering shame associated with hemorrhoids. Everyone has them. Three, to be exact. When they act up, they become a mass of swollen veins in the lining of the anus and rectum. There are internal and external hemorrhoids. You don't want to know much more than that.

Men are especially prone to late-stage surgery for hemorrhoids because a) We're stupid and b) We believe that hemorrhoids are a sign of rampant anal sex, and we don't want to out ourselves to straight doctors.

I'm right on point A, wrong on point B. "Hemorrhoids aren't caused by bottoming," my doctor scoffed. "They're caused by pushing too hard when you're on the toilet trying to have a bowel movement."

He pointed to the special head-down-but-tocks-up table and asked me to assume the position. When I heard the urethane glove snap on his hands, I thought to myself, *Why couldn't I have Attention Deficit Disorder like everyone else?*

He wheels out an anoscope and sticks in what looks like a dildo with lights. "Third degree hemorrhoids," he announced. "You need a specialist, probably surgery."

When I arrived at the specialist, I blanched at the sign on the door—"Colon and Rectal Surgery." There are no grand entrances through a door like that. One doesn't walk in as much as slink in. Eight or nine

people were inside, waiting and carefully avoiding eye contact and shifting painfully in their seats.

I was finally ushered into the exam room. I almost fainted when I saw what looked to be a two-foot dildo with a gun-like trigger and an open vial of KY jelly.

It was a sigmoidoscope. This device is inserted into your anus all the way up to your colon. Air is introduced into the scope to aid in viewing. This is the only field of work where pumping air up your ass isn't considered a public relations ploy.

Mercifully, the doctor didn't use the contraption, saving it, presumably, for the patients who complained too much about the long wait in the lobby. As I bent over the bottoms-up table, the doctor spread my cheeks apart as far as he could, giving his lovely blonde assistant an unobstructed view of what I used to think of as a private part. I longed for a shot of dignity the way a diabetic longs for a shot of insulin.

I scheduled the surgery within a few days. The procedure didn't require an overnight stay, but it did require anesthesia. Thank God. Who in their right mind wants to stay awake for that?

Three days after my surgery, I sneezed. I thought my sphincter had flown out of my ass. The good thing about a hemorrhoidectomy is that you don't really need painkillers after the surgery. The mortification masks most of the discomfort.

My straight surgeon laughed at the idea that gay men are more prone to hemorrhoids. He doesn't blame anal sex for hemorrhoids.

He blames magazines. "The bathroom isn't a library," he said. "Go in, if nothing comes out, get out."

Words to live by.

My surgery could have been avoided if I had been properly schooled in the toilet arts. Never hold your breath when you're on the bowl. If you do, you're trying too hard. Breathe. Don't effort. Don't strain. Be at one with the bowl. There is no place for struggle in the art of the Zen dump.

My surgeon has seen it all. Removed it all, too. Hemorrhoids aren't the only things he has extracted from anal canals. Among the other foreign objects: eggplants, candles, shampoo bottles, even a perfume decanter. "We have a little museum of artifacts," he said of the things he has pulled out of asses.

The record goes to a man who got a dildo stuck in his rectum. My surgeon said you could tell by the way the man walked that the device was still vibrating inside him. They had to shut it off before they could pull it out of him in surgery. I didn't ask how they did it. I didn't want to know.

There's a one in 200 chance that my hemorrhoids will come back after surgery. I have taken the magazine rack out of bathroom. I drink a gallon of water a day. I'm eating enough fiber to cement the government's food pyramid to the floor. Nothing motivates better than mortification—except maybe the threat of a generously lubricated, air-shooting, gun-triggered colon-crushing rectal projectile.

Michael Alvear lives with Zoey and Zack, his lesbian Labrador, and girlie-boy Viesla. He can be reached at michaelalvear@attbi.com

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David Monroe met Dawn Clark as she was receiving the Gifts, and was one of the first to use the Gifts for soul recovery work. David used the Gifts and Dawn's help to recover from the tragic death of his daughter, to accept his own homosexuality and come to peace with God and himself. David has continued to study with Dawn over the years. David's spiritual background includes being a licensed Christian minister at UC-Berkeley. In addition to teaching the Gifts, David practices civil trial law in Houston, Texas, and is involved in film production in Los Angeles, California.

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Nearly 30 years ago, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) removed homosexuality from the list of mental disorders catalogued in its *Diagnostic Statistical Manual*. Even today, though, most graduate programs in psychology still offer little, if any, training to help therapists deal with issues faced by gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender patients. One local counselor, Colleen Logan, is working to change that.

Logan and her colleague, Bob Barret, arrived at the idea of co-authoring the new college textbook, *Counseling Gay Men and Lesbians: A Practice Primer*, when they realized that even within the APA's professional organization, the American Counseling Association, the issue of homosexuality was not adequately addressed.

"Even though the [subcommittee] for counseling gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals had been in existence [within the APA] since the '70s, they had never formalized it into the bigger organization," Logan says. "They had divisions for multicultural, they had divisions for school counseling, divisions for assessment, but they'd never allowed the gay organization to become part of [ACA]."

"It was in 1993, and I went to my first convention and I find out that 'Oh my gosh,



Colleen Logan: "The more comfortable you are with who you are, the better you feel."

SPECIAL NEEDS

Local therapist Colleen Logan writes the book on counseling gay men and lesbians

by Wendy K. Mohon

they're still not a formal part of ACA? You're kidding," she recalls. "And Bob and I kind of just hooked up then and said, 'We've got to make a difference. We've got to make this happen.'"

"And that year I was nominated to be co-chair with him of the organization, and within two years the Association for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Issues in Counseling became a formal organization of ACA. That was only in 1995. So it was out of that spirit of changing the world, revolution—we're going to be at the table, we're now voting, we're now part of changing the fabric of counseling—that we looked at each other and said, 'We've got to write a book.'"

Aimed at graduate students studying to

become counselors, the text covers topics such as identity development, couples counseling, spiritual issues, and parenting. Each chapter begins with a case study, then breaks down the issue in straightforward, reader-friendly fashion. Although the book isn't being heavily marketed outside of academia, Logan, who teaches at the University of Houston-Victoria, says the text was written to be accessible to both counselor and patient.

While both gay and straight individuals face many of the same issues, such as depression, anxiety, and relationship problems, Logan says counselors should simply be aware of how a patient's sexuality may color each of those issues. The first step is making the straight counselor aware of

their homosexual clients in the first place.

"The famous joke is, 'What do heterosexuals think about gay people? They don't. Why would they?'" Logan says. "So that's true for counselors, too. If it's never crossed their desk, it's never crossed their studies."

The next step is ensuring that the counselor understand that while a person's sexuality may only be a part of his or her personality as a whole, it can affect virtually every aspect of life.

"What makes it different, what makes it a challenge, is living every day of your life in a world that's prejudiced against you," Logan says. "And if you happen to be African-American or Asian and a woman and gay,

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The ABCs of GLBT Counseling

How does counseling GLBT individuals differ from counseling the straight population? Though some issues like prejudice and coming out are universal to all gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders, local counselor and author Colleen Logan notes that each group has unique stressors and problems.

Gay men

"Gay men grow up in a society that says whatever you do, don't be who you are. And as they come out and start to deal with their feelings and differences and recognize feelings toward other boys or other men, they have to try and cope with learning how to accept themselves and love another man. So what happens is they come out younger, and they come out in the bar scene. What we find working with gay men is that intimacy between men is really hard. It's hard to be vulnerable and ask for what I need and communicate and being in this relationship with you because what I was told is you can't love another man."

"[Gay] men and women tend to have very different relationships that aren't traditional. They have lots of agreements about being sexually intimate outside the relationship. If you're a counselor who has never dealt with gay people, and then a gay man comes in and says, 'Well, this is how my relationship is,' you'd be horrified. But that's part of counseling. It's helping the gay male couple work out those issues on how they negotiate their relationship, including, 'Are we going to be monogamous or non-monogamous?' ... The challenge for counselors is how to negotiate what both or three or whomever is involved needs."

Lesbians

"Women are different. They tend to come out in a relationship. It can be, 'I have this great friend. Oh, my gosh. We're kissing. Oh, my gosh. Wow! Look at this. I'm a lesbian.' And you're in a relationship, and you're just coming out together, and there's all kinds of chaos and catastrophe and crisis. And then it starts to be all about you. It's your fault. I can't really be gay. This is awful! Lesbian relationships begin very intense, then end very intensely, and then we move on to another relationship."

Bisexuals

"I think one issue that people who are bisexual struggle with is just getting validation. And it's not only in the counseling setting, of course. It's in the world. In our society, we want everyone to fit in a box. So we want to say, 'Oh, you're in a relationship with a woman. Well, you're not bisexual anymore. You're a lesbian.' But that's really discounting who that person really is."

Transgenders

"With the transgendered, the biggest challenge is coming to terms with being incongruent internally and externally—the pain, the hate, the shame that goes along with that—and the struggle trying to fit into any community. The transgendered clients I've been blessed to work with I've learned so much from about being hated, about being suicidal, about trying to fit into any community."

All

"Counselors have to reach deep into their bag of skills and really listen. It's a basic need. Because putting people in boxes either way, you're going to miss who that person really is. If I want to quickly make a transgendered person gay, I'm going to miss a whole experience. If I want to quickly make a gay person transgendered, I'm going to miss a whole story by just jumping to conclusions."

you're dealing with triple minority status. And that changes your ability to, I think, be who you are in this world, love who you want to love. Just living in a prejudiced world, that makes a difference.

"Then all that prejudice and hate gets internalized and again it starts stacking up as you add status, ethnicity, and then gender. So if someone comes in and says, 'I'm having a relationship problem,' as you unpeel it, you start to find out, well, 'it has to do with my parents who aren't accepting who I am as a gay person, and I've never really accepted it, so I keep having multiple relationships.'"

Logan—who maintains a private practice in addition to teaching—notes that many self-help books aimed at the GLBT market end with coming out. That process, she points out, can be perpetual and a constant source of stress—"no matter how out you are."

The petite, red-haired therapist, who fully identifies herself as out, elaborates. "I can walk along and somebody can make a comment or I can be in a situation and someone will just give me this," Logan says, raising an eyebrow and scowling for emphasis, "and will feel that old *I'm not liked, I'm hated, there's something wrong with me because I'm gay*. That's why this book was necessary. If you are heterosexual, a lot of times, you don't understand that."

As an openly gay counselor, Logan says she believes "the more comfortable you are with who you are, with who you love, the better you feel," but says she does not push clients out of the closet.

"There's real danger out there. There is real violence. There are real consequences for being different in this world," she says. "Hell, we can't even deal with left-handers, so being gay is huge. But all the studies show, when people come out to others, to self, there's a greater degree of self-esteem. There's a greater sense of self-worth. And as people live out, no matter how out they are, there is a greater freedom to participate more fully in society."

"It's not something I force on people, and it's not something I choose for people. I'm with the client, no matter where the client is, and strategizing with that person how and when and if he or she wants to take steps to come out to others or come out to family or come out at work. It's not a flip decision by any means. But I do know that the more comfortable you are with who you are, the better you feel. It's just true."

In addition to better training mental-health professionals to deal with gay clients, another goal of Logan's is to eliminate the word *homophobia* from the vocabulary.

"Homophobia is a misnomer," she explains. "There is no such thing as a phobia toward

gay people, but we continue to use this word in inappropriate ways including defense. The killer of Matthew Shepherd tried to use the 'panic defense,' but there's no such thing. There is no black phobia. There's no Asian phobia. We don't say that. We only apply it to homosexuality."

"I think homophobia is the worst word ever. Any time I see it, in my mind, I replace *homophobia* with *homoprejudice*. I think it's empowering, and it makes people culpable for their behavior. And the more we, as GLBT people, embrace that—that it's prejudice when we experience it—I think the more potential we have for change."

FACTS

- Colleen Logan, Ph.D.
- Age: 37
- Born: Northern Ireland, raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Graduated: University of Virginia, 1994
- Professor at the University of Houston-Victoria
- Partner: Deborah Bloom, also a counselor with Depelchin Children's Center. The couple met four years ago at a counselors' convention and are expecting their first child in September.
- *Counseling Gay Men and Lesbians: A Practice Primer*, co-author with Bob Barret. Brooks/Cole, Wadsworth Group (www.brookscole.com).

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Humor
by Sally Sheklow

SHARP ATTACK

*An adventure outside Western medicine
needles the chi*

Here I am lying on the acupuncturist's table, thinking the floaty kinds of thoughts people think when they're lying around with needles sticking in them. Profound insights unfold, like "I have needles sticking in me!" Before long, I'm lulled into a healing trance.

The reason I'm lying here at Sue's House of Needles is that I have been sick. For weeks on end, I've been training for the Olympic cough team. My cat enjoys soaking up the extra body heat generated by my recurring fever, but jumps aside for my coughing fits. She watches with a been-there-done-that expression, waiting for the day I finally hawk up a humongous hairball.

In Chinese medicine this is known as The Year of The Green Phlegm. It's been hell. I have tried everything to get rid of whatever I've got, even mainstream Western medicine. The only thing the MDs have been able to rid me of is my

last shred of confidence in mainstream Western medicine. I've been screened, scanned, palpated, diagnosed, billed, re-diagnosed, and re-billed. I paid \$100 for one prescription. When that didn't work, the doc said, "Here, try this one," and gave me a free sample of a stronger version of the same drug. Definitely go for the free samples. They don't work either, but they are easier on the pocketbook.

Pocketbook... now there's an odd word, I muse as I slip further into the needle-induced meditative state. How do you suppose they came up with a word like pocketbook? Does anyone actually call them pocketbooks anymore? Why do so few lesbians carry pocketbooks? I get a vivid memory of Aunt Ida's pocketbook—a big white plastic thing she'd let me poke around in during long car trips. Amid the jumble of her rhinestone compact, photo-bulged wallet, ring of keys my brother and I used for playing Jail, boar-bristle hairbrush, Kleenex, fire-engine red lipstick that children were not allowed to play with if they couldn't remember to wind it back down before closing, rhinestone saccharin box, fountain pen, bobbie pins, extra clip-on earrings, rhinestone reading glasses, and folding plastic rain hat, I could usually find a box of Smith

Brothers cherry cough drops. Sweet and delicious. Maybe eating all of Aunt Ida's cough drops when I was a kid made me immune to the \$100 medicine. It's probably too late for a lawsuit. Those Smith Brothers already looked pretty old back in the '50s.

I am lying perfectly still on this cushioned table, careful to move only my eyeballs so as not to disturb any of the needles which, if you're at all squeamish, I would strongly advise you not to look at. The table is eye level with drawings of naked Chinese people. These wall charts reveal how acupuncture works. After several treatments, I think I finally have it figured out. Your body is covered with "points" along a network of "meridians" which carry your "chi." Ancient Chinese healers discovered which specific points would eventually become so terrified of the next needle that they would release enough adrenaline to bully your immune system into expelling the "lingering pathogen." Then you feel all better.

I wouldn't let just anybody mess with my chi, but I trust Sue because we have been friends for years. Sue is a kind, gentle person who really cares about helping people get well, I remind myself when Sue opens a packet of needles and skewers some of my most tender points. I keep my eyes closed during this part just in case her usually calm and compassionate expression has turned into a maniacal grin.

While Sue flicks needle after needle into my flesh, I notice my consciousness drifting to a higher level, a brighter, happier place, and wonder if perhaps I am dying. When the treatment is over, I'm so relieved to have survived that I find I actually do feel quite a bit better. I'm struck by the urge to go out and get myself a pocketbook.

Sally Sheklow lives and writes in Eugene, Oregon, where she performs with the WYMPROV! comedy improvisation troupe. Her column appears in several newsweeklies and magazines across the country. Send comments to sally@wymprov.com.

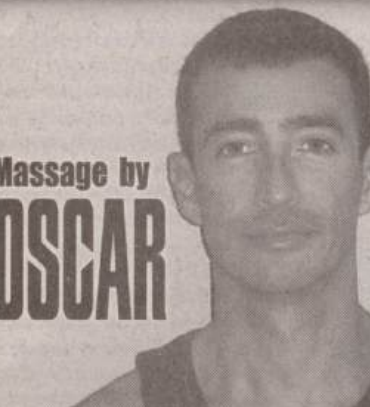


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Calendar of Events

Deadline for OutSmart's September issue is 5 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 11.

AUGUST

Weekly (Mon.-Sun.)

HIV Testing. The Montrose Clinic now offers free confidential HIV testing every day of the week at the following locations. **Monday:** Keys West (817 W. Dallas), 8 pm-midnight. **Tuesday:** The Club Houston (2205 Fannin), 8 pm-midnight. **Wednesday:** Mary's (1022 Westheimer), 4-8 pm; the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center (803 Hawthorne), 6-9 pm; Ripcord (715 Fairview), 9 pm-midnight; EJ's (2517 Ralph), 10 pm-1 am; and Midtowne Spa (3100 Fannin), 10 pm-1 am. **Thursday:** The Outpost (1419 Richmond), 4 pm-8 pm; Brazos River Bottom (2400 Brazos), 8 pm-midnight; Cousins (817 Fairview), 8 pm-midnight; and Toyz Disco (5322 Glenmont), 10 pm-1 am. **Friday:** The Meatrack (2915 San Jacinto), 10 pm-2 am; EJ's (2517 Ralph), 10 pm-1 am; and Midtowne Spa (3100 Fannin), 10 pm-1 am. **Saturday:** Viviana's (5219 Washington), 11 pm-2 am. **Sunday:** Club Inergy (5750 Chimney Rock), 9 pm-midnight. The clinic also offers classes for those newly diagnosed with HIV or Hepatitis C. For more info: 713/830-3000.

6 & 24 (Tue. & Sat.) 13 (Tue.)
Feng Shui. Learn this ancient art to enhance prosperity & balance in your

home or office. Tues. (6th) at 7:30 pm and Sat. (24th) at 2 pm. • **Eliminate Your Allergies,** completely & naturally, with Dr. Ted Barnett. Tues. (13th) at 7:30 pm. • All at CenterPoint, 1920 Hollister. Info: www.centerpointhouston.com or 713/932-7224.

8 & 22 (Thu.)

Family to Family Adoptions, a non-profit licensed agency, is offering a free adoption seminar discussing how to adopt a child in less than one year. They currently have programs in the U.S., China, Guatemala, Russia, Vietnam, & other countries. They work with single men, single women, & couples 25 to 65 years of age. A free informational is included. • **On the 8th:** 6:30-8:30 pm @ Methodist Hospital, 16655 Southwest Freeway, Sugar Land, TX. • **On the 22nd:** 6:30-8:30 pm @ Bellaire Hospital, 5314 Dashwood, Bellaire, TX. • For more info: 281/342-4042; e-mail info@fam2fam.org or fam2fam@aol.com; website www.fam2fam.org.

10 (Sat.)

Melissa Etheridge. The openly gay rock star performs at 7:30 pm @ Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. Tickets (\$41 & \$81) are available at all Ticketmaster outlets or can be charged at 713/629-3700. For more info: 281/363-3300.

10 (Sat.)

Autoimmune Diseases Explained by Patricia Salvato, MD. Assist-Hers volunteers and friends are invited to attend this one-hour free presentation at 11 am @ Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold at Mulberry. Info: Assist-Hers at 713/521-4628.

11, 18, & 25 (Sun.)

Zion Lutheran Church. On the 11th: Circus Sabbath features Pastor Rick Hartmann as Ricardo the Clown. Hartmann has led this style of worship for 20 years. It's fun & solidly Lutheran. (The clown—Jesus—is the One who cries so that others may laugh.) A circus-style lunch will follow. • **On the 18th:** A Back-to-School Sabbath features Dr. Annette Citzler, professor of economics at Texas Lutheran University, who will talk about the importance of learning & faith. Citzler is a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church in La Grange, and received her doctorate in agricultural economics from Texas A&M University. Educators & students from local schools will be special guests at the worship service & meal following. • **On the 25th:** The Rev. Daryl Koenig from Texas Lutheran University will preach at the service led by Zion's youth. Koenig has served as a parish pastor and as director for the Evangelical Lutheran

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

Church of America's national youth gatherings. • **Zion Lutheran Church,** 3606 Beauchamp at Pecore in the Heights. Sunday worship services: 10:45 am. Growing disciples (adult and youth education) for all ages is at 9:30 am, preceded by time for fellowship and continental breakfast at 9 am. Info: 713/869-1493 or www.zionlutheranhoustan.org.

16 & 17 (Fri. & Sat.)

Irma Vep. Hong Kong action diva Maggie Cheung is a latex-suited reincarnation of Irma Vep (anagram for vampire), the super-heroine of Louis Feuillade's (1873-1925) silent serial *Les vampires*. In this funny satire, Jean-Pierre Léaud plays a film director in decline who is inspired to cast Cheung after seeing her in *The Heroic Trio*; as might be expected, the crew members bicker, the director despairs of realizing his vision, and the endearing Cheung is left adrift with only the friendship of a persecuted lesbian on which to lean. 7 pm @ Museum of Fine Arts (Brown Auditorium), 1001 Bissonnet. Tickets \$7 (\$3.50 members/seniors/students). For more info: 713/639-7515 or www.mfah.org.

19-25 (Mon.-Sun.)

GLBTQ Summer Camp. A rainbow flag will fly over one corner of Kezar Falls, a quiet village 45 minutes outside Portland, Maine, beginning Aug. 19. That's the day 200-plus gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender men & women converge on Kezar Falls for a queer twist on summer camp (this is the 6th year). Campers come from 24 states & 12 countries. Opportunities abound at "Camp": ropes adventure course, waterfront activities, pottery making, theater games, journal writing, yoga, stargazing, & cooking classes. Evening activities have included an all-camp square dance & the popular talent/no talent show. The \$898 camp tuition covers lodging, meals, & all activities. Facilities include a theater; sound studio; tennis, basketball, & volleyball courts; hot tub; and arts & crafts studios. Cabins, which accommodate eight to 25 campers, have electricity & running water. Info: 888-924-8380 (toll free) or www.campcamp.com.

20 (Tue.)

Fannie Flagg, author of *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe*, will read from her new book, *Standing in the Rainbow*, at 7 pm @ Brazos Bookstore, 2421 Bissonnet, 713/523-0701.

21 (Wed.)

Cher sinks into Houston on her 50-cities farewell tour across the U.S. "The road is tough," says Chastity Bono's mother, "but the audience makes it all worthwhile." FYI: Cher's single "Believe" was a number-one hit in over 25 countries and holds the record as the biggest-selling single by a female in UK history. Cher's special guest for the evening's performance at the Compaq Center is Cyndi Lauper (who, by the way, has a lesbian sister). Tickets (\$39.75-\$79.75) are available at all Ticketmaster locations, by phone at 713/629-3700, or online at www.cc.com.

24 (Sat.)

Texas Tap Ensemble performs at 11 am @ Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park. For more info: 713/686-9184.

25 (Sun.)

Sunday Twist @ Mo Mong celebrates the five senses. Mo Mong's urban loft space will be transformed into a euphoric wonderland complete with auctioned artwork by local emerging artists donated to benefit Art League Houston, music by Chris Sill, food & spirits from the Pacific Rim, on-site massage, and the faint scent of botanicals & spiced tobacco perfuming the air. 7 pm-midnight @ Mo Mong Restaurant, 1201 Westheimer, 713/524-5664.

PLANNING AHEAD

SEPTEMBER & BEYOND

September 1 (Sun.)

Pink Lobster Beach Party. The Greater Houston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Chamber of Commerce is hosting a beach party at Galveston's East Beach, which has been the gay beach for many years. The chamber is going to have a cookout unlike all others to help celebrate the end of summer and Last Splash. From 11 am till ??? Mark your calendar.

September 12-14 (Thu.-Sat.)

A Little Night Music is presented by Bayou City Concert Musicals, the folks who brought Houston audiences *Follies* in 2000 and *Falsettos* in 2001, and benefits The Center for AIDS: Hope and Remembrance Project. *A Little Night Music* is a witty, warm, & romantic tale of mismatched lovers in turn-of-the-century Sweden. Often called Stephen Sondheim's "waltz musical," *A Little Night Music* features his best-known song, the bittersweet "Send in the Clowns." Alley actor Paul Hope (who codirects) has assembled a cast of Houston's finest performers—both veteran actors & rising talent—for this production. 7:30 pm @ Ovarions, 2536-B Times Blvd. Reservations are required. Tickets are \$25 and may be purchased by check or any major credit card (additional \$1.50 handling fee for credit card processing) by calling Kayleen Clements at 713/880-1935.

October 17-21 (Thu.-Mon.)

Texas Lesbian Conference (TLC) honors its 15th anniversary with its first-ever conference at sea. Attendees will board the Carnival ship "Celebration" in Galveston & cruise to Cozumel, Mexico, for 4 days of fun, entertainment, & conference activities. The conference theme, "What Lesbians Really Want," will examine the changing needs of lesbians in Texas and how TLC can continue to serve its community. Speakers & workshops will be offered on-board ship. Michele Balan, known as "da Comic Princess," will entertain. All-inclusive tickets (cruise & meals on board, entertainment, port taxes, & conference fees) begin at \$439 per person (double occupancy). Reservations: Stan the Cruise

GAY IN THE JUNGLE

Blake Hammond is Pumbaa in The Lion King

Pumbaa, that lovable warthog, aka Blake Hammond, celebrated his 39th birthday in Denver, the first stop of the national touring production of the Disney/Elton John/Julie Taymor mega-hit, *The Lion King*. After 13 weeks in the Rockies, the truly spectacular show has rolled into Houston's Jones Hall for an extended safari through August 25. • Out actor Hammond, born in Glen Rose, Texas, is a familiar face on the great white way, having co-starred in celebrated revivals of *The Music Man*, *Kiss Me Kate*, the very gay revue *When Pigs Fly*, as well as numerous appearances as one of Rosie O'Donnell's Chub Club Dancers. • Thirteen weeks in Denver was long enough to get to know the town, find a new boyfriend, and familiarize himself with his 30-pound puppet costume. • "Pumbaa is the most generous, sweet, trusting soul I've ever played. As soon as I walk on stage, I'm immediately recognizable. The audience already likes you, so you don't have to win them over." • And being lured away by some stagedoor Johnny? "This is such a family show that the stagedoor Johnnys are all 10." —D.L. Groover



Out Blake Hammond out of costume

What: *The Lion King*
When: Through August 25
Where: Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana
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Clinical trials are carefully designed studies which investigate the safety and effectiveness of medicines and therapies in treating HIV and associated opportunistic infections. Most trials offered at the ACTU provide study drug(s), study-related clinic visits, exams and laboratory tests at no cost to study participants.

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Man, toll free, at 1-866-200-2086 or e-mail Stan@CruisingWithPride.com. For more info on the conference: www.texaslesbianconference.org.

October 17-21 (Thu.-Mon.)

Bisexual/Men's Awareness Institute Conference. This three-day weekend in San Diego's Mission Valley is hosted by the American Institute of Bisexuality (AIB), an organization founded 10 years ago to educate the public about the subject of bisexuality. The AIB created this conference in 2000 expressly to allow bisexual and bi curious men to gather in a safe, supportive environment to dialogue on their issues of concern, including their feelings of invisibility & the societal pressures to remain closeted. This 3rd annual conference will offer approximately 12 workshops (covering themes including coming out, relationships, culture, spirituality, identity, health, & more) & numerous social events. There will be a Friday night no-host welcome reception, a Saturday evening banquet with live entertainment, as well as time to explore San Diego. Registration fees: \$40-\$120 depending upon the activities selected & whether registration has been completed by the Sept. 27 early-bird deadline. Southwest Airlines is offering a special discount for conference attendees. More info: www.bisexual.org/pages/newconf/sdsandiego/. Workshop info: Alexei Guren at 206/709-8676 or Alexei_Guren@msn.com. Inquiries about AIB: Dr. Fritz Klein at 619/542-0088 or FritzKlein@aol.com.

October 24-26 (Thu.-Sat.)

LGBT Medical Conference. Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA) is holding its 20th annual conference in Toronto. The conference is designed for physicians & other healthcare professionals and provides both Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits and Continuing Education Units (CEU) to attendees through dozens of workshops & seminars that relate to LGBT health. The 3-day program will focus on primary care & biopsychosocial issues, as well as policy & advocacy. The conference will take place at the Fairmont's Royal York Hotel in Toronto, Canada. More info & early-bird registration discounts are available at the GLMA website: www.glma.org.

November 2-9 (Sat.-Sat.)

Gay Games VI "Under New Skies." INTA-Aussie South Pacific, one of Australia's leading tour operators, has selected Concierge Travel as a preferred supplier to the games. Currently, Concierge Travel has participants registered to compete in ballroom dancing, marathon, & body building. For more info: Kim Gustavsson, Concierge Travel, 713/661-2117.

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 banns, 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 runs Friday nights at 8 pm. Both shows are presented at Marriott West Loop, 1750 West Loop South at San Felipe. Info: 713/944-2583 or www.mysterycafehouston.com.

◆ **The Face on the Barroom Floor or Glimpsed Through the Sawdust** is a comic "mellerdrammer" in three acts. Cheer the manly hero, console the down-trodden heroine, boo & hiss the dastardly villain as you pelt him with popcorn! Tickets \$10 (students/seniors \$9; matinees \$8). Fri. & Sat. at 8:30 pm, Sun. at 3 pm, through Aug. 24 @ Theatre Suburbia, 1410 W. 43rd St., 713/682-3525, www.theatresuburbia.com.

◆ **The Lion King.** Now in its 4th sold-out year in New York, *The Lion King* is the winner of 25 major awards: 6 Tonys, 8 Drama Desk awards, 6 Outer Critics awards, a New York Drama Critics Award, a 1998 Theatre World Award, an Astaire Award, a Drama League Award, & a Grammy. In addition, Julie Taymor became the first woman in Broadway history to win the Tony Award for Best Director of a Musical. Elton John & Tim Rice's original score has been expanded for the stage and now features 15 numbers, including 5 from the animated film. John & Rice have written 3 new songs. *The Lion King* is part of the 2001-02 Broadway in Houston series presented by the Society for the Performing Arts. Through Aug. 25 @ Jones Hall. Purchase tickets (\$19.25-\$76.25) at the Jones Hall box office, at Ticketmaster locations, at www.ticketmaster.com, or 713/629-3700. See who plays Pumbaa the warthog on page 00.

◆ **Romeo & Juliet: Love & Sex at Holy Cross High.** Prior to his first off-Broadway engagement in December, Rob Nash graces Houston for five weekends with his latest one-man show. He was recently nominated for Best Actor in a Comedy by the Austin Critics Circle for this production. According to the Austin Chronicle, "Nash brings to life on stage, just by himself, an entire community of diverse people and draws the audience into a world as well fleshed-out as the nascent stages (at least) of Garrison Keillor's Lake Wobegon. Nash simply changes his voice for each character he evokes: He changes his voice, his posture, his face's posture, and, of course, the patterns of his speech. Again, again, and again. It's like watching Sybil, for Christ's sake." 8 pm, Thursdays, Fridays, & Saturdays, through Aug. 17, @ Theatre New West, 1415 California (ground floor of Sonoma Restaurant bldg.), \$20-\$22. Reservations: 713/394-0464.

◆ **The Story of Burford, Category 5!** is about a force 5 hurricane that cuts a new ship channel through the Bayou City. Through Aug. 31 @ Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt. Desserts, munchies, champagnes, wines, beers, cappuccino, & soft drinks are available for purchase throughout the show. Admission \$16, reservations required; tickets must be purchased in advance at the theater or by calling 713/522-7722.

◆ **Tamalalia 7: The Love Show** features Tamarie Cooper in her very own Harlequin romance. Do we have to tell you there's a twist? Expect Freud, John Lennon, Tom Selleck, a bunch of Hare Krishnas, and a chorus line of Cooper's ex-boyfriends. And don't forget that cute little love god, Cupid. See Tamarie get crushy, then lucky, dumped, then hitched. Her singers sing about love. Her dancers dance about love. And that Infernal Bridegroom Productions house band plays nothing but love songs. Don't get us wrong... this ain't the kind of love you feel for your dear old mother or your trusty old dog—this is the kind of love that gets in your head, drives you crazy, makes you stupid, turns you upside down, inside out, and sends you round the world and back again. 8 pm, through Aug. 17, @ The Axiom, 2524

McKinney \$10-\$15. Reservations: 713/522-8443.

◆ **The Three-Cornered Hat** is a lighthearted comedy of errors set in the Spanish countryside, circa 1805. A couple who are deeply in love live happily until the village sheriff becomes enamored of the wife and sets into motion an absurdly complicated ruse to steal her affection. Through Aug. 17 @ Main Street Theater at Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. Tickets are \$20-\$30. For more info: 713/524-6706 or www.mainstreettheater.com.

RADIO

◆ **After Hours.** Saturdays, midnight to 3 am. Featuring the QM2 (Queen 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

◆ **Old Master Drawings.** Featuring a modest but critical selection of works on paper dating from the 16th to 18th centuries, this exhibition focuses on works by Parmigianino, Rembrandt, Giulio Romano, & Federico Zuccaro. Organized around themes, including mythology, religion, landscape, & anatomy, this exhibition offers fresh insight into The Menil Collection's holdings, as it is the first time that the museum has displayed these works to the public. Through Sept. 8 @ The Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross, 713/524-5050.

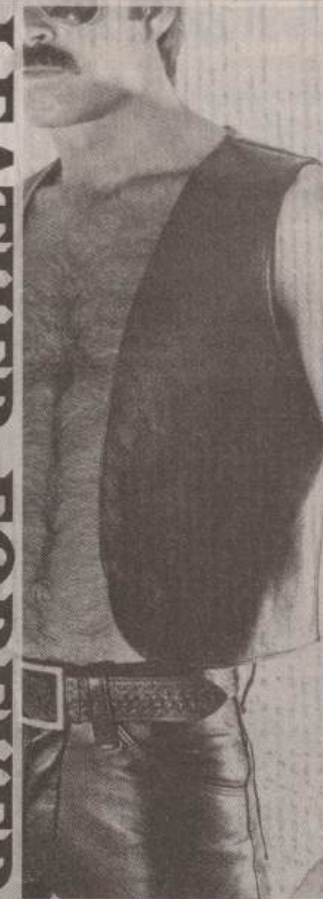
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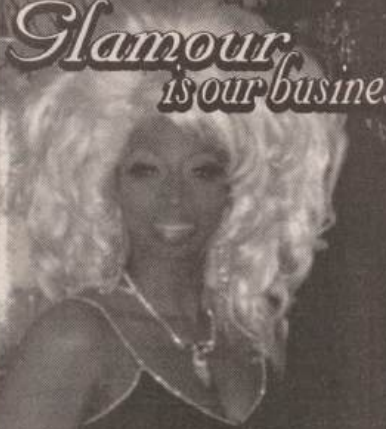
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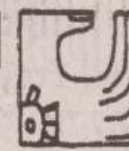
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THE LONG AND WINING ROAD

A trek through the Sonoma and Napa wine country offers heat relief

The Russian River Valley may be best known as Northern California's premier gay resort town, but this same lush woodland in western Sonoma County is also part of North America's most famous wine-producing region. Wine-touring is a favorite hobby of visitors to Sonoma and neighboring Napa counties, two areas that have also long appealed to lesbians and gays, both as destinations and as places to live.

There are a few different ways to approach a wine-tasting adventure in the Napa-Sonoma wine country. If you're primarily interested in the Russian River queer scene, and perhaps incidentally the nearby wineries, base yourself in Guerneville, where gay accommodations and bars abound. From here, it's at least an hour drive east to Sonoma's and Napa's wine-making hubs. But in Guerneville itself you can tour Korbel Champagne Cellars, which is headquartered in a century-old, creeper-covered brick building. An adjoining deli and microbrewery serves excellent salads and sandwiches (try the one with salami, Brie, tapenade, roasted peppers, and greens) on a tree-shaded deck.

Several more fine wineries nearby include the first-rate Mark West Estate, which like so many Russian River wineries, produces an outstanding pinot noir. The tasting room is at the Blackstone Winery, in the quaint village of Graton. Blackstone also produces



An inviting base for exploring both the Russian River and the Sonoma Wine Country, Huckleberry Springs has four stunning cottages.

its own excellent wines. Also try the intimate and delightful Joseph Swan Vineyard in nearby Forestville.

Among greater Guerneville's many gay-popular resorts and inns, one of the most intimate and charming is Huckleberry Springs, a women-owned 56-acre resort that sits high in the hills above the Russian River amid spectacular scenery; the compound has four stunning cottages. Applewood, a posh mini-resort a few miles from town, has 16 luxurious rooms split between a 1922 Mission Revival house and a newer building modeled after it. A superb attached restaurant is open to nonguests on a space-available basis.

If you're looking to balance extensive wine-touring with plenty of club- and restaurant-hopping, stay in the small but lovely city of Santa Rosa, an easy 60-mile shot up U.S. 101 from San Francisco. Although low-key, Santa Rosa—midway between Guerneville and the Napa and Sonoma valleys—does have a bit to see and do, and it also claims a visible queer community. Shoppers should investigate the city's Historic Railroad Square, and gardeners can head to the verdant Luther Burbank Home and Gardens, the estate of the renowned horticulturist. A bit west of town, Zazu is worth the trip for outstanding California cuisine.

If you're a die-hard wine-tasting aficionado, and especially if you and a significant other are seeking a quiet, romantic vacation, skip the Russian River and even Santa Rosa and stay in the heart of either Napa County or eastern Sonoma County. There are several gay-friendly accommodations out this way, as well as some of the most acclaimed eateries in North America.

Sonoma's main wine-growing region runs parallel to and west of Napa's for about 30 miles, from the town of Sonoma north through charming Healdsburg—with its courtly Spanish-influenced green shaded by palm and redwood trees—and on through

Geyserville and Cloverdale. Sonoma itself is especially picturesque. You can eat at any of two dozen restaurants near the historic plaza fringed by Spanish Mission-style buildings, or drop by the Sonoma Cheese Factory to pick up a little of wine's favorite companion.

Giving a definitive list of recommended wineries in the heart of the Napa-Sonoma Wine Country is nearly impossible. But here is a sampling of stellar ones.

Many oenophiles focus on the 17-mile-long Valley of the Moon, from Sonoma north through Glen Ellen and Kenwood. Glen Ellen's Benziger stands out among the many competitors by offering interactive tram tours. Count Agoston Haraszthy's Buena Vista Carneros is steeped in history. Kunde, where the genial staff explains the entire wine-making process, is ideal for first-timers. Noted for its rich and full-bodied zinfandels, Ravenswood serves wines in a rustic, airy space warmed by a fireplace in cooler weather.

A star in the county's northern reaches, Geyserville's Clos du Bois can become crowded, but it makes a pleasant excuse to wander through this charming town, and the views of the Alexander Valley are stunning. Famous for its award-winning fume blanc, Dry Creek has magnolia- and redwood-studded grounds.

Broad and flat, the Napa Valley has scenery that is pleasant if not quite as lush as Sonoma's. The valley runs from the rather prosaic town of Napa north toward hippie-dippy Calistoga, which is famous for its several hot springs and spas, all of them quite gay popular. Commercial wineries line traffic-clogged Highway 29. Running parallel and just east, the delightful and less-crowded Silverado Trail skirts the eastern foothills.

Tasting highlights include the century-old Beaulieu Vineyard, set on Rutherford's glorious town square. Beringer has been around for more than 120 years, having survived Prohibition by producing communion wines. Be sure to tour the 1883 Rhine-style mansion in which the winery is housed. Visit Clos Pegase as much to admire Michael Graves' postmodern architecture, the extensive sculpture garden, and the provocative modern-art collection as to sample the wines.

Stag's Leap produced the wine that put the Napa Valley on the enological map two decades ago and remains a star vintner. An aerial tram sweeps visitors up to the area's winery in the sky, Sterling Vineyards. Despite its growing reputation, St. Supery remains a surprisingly friendly facility that puts on a very nice tour.

There are numerous gay-friendly lodging options. The choice of foreign dignitaries, San Fran yupsters, and other money's-no-object sorts, Auberge du Soleil is a discreet 48-room

retreat with a Tuscany-meets-the-Southwest sensibility. Even if you don't stay here, consider a meal at its heavenly restaurant. Sonoma's posh MacArthur Place inn, a few blocks from the historic plaza, has 64 spacious, high-ceilinged rooms and striking grounds comprising rose gardens, an inviting pool, and a sumptuous spa. One of the few sanctuaries of comfort and elegance along Highway 29, the Ink House B&B has long been popular among lesbians and gay men. Rooms have high ceilings and many antiques, and the fourth-story belvedere that crowns the yellow 1884 Italianate house yields panoramic Napa Valley views.

Finally, keep in mind a few general tips before setting out to visit wineries. The Sonoma and Napa valleys are no longer the land of free wine; count on paying a nominal fee to sample most vintages. Also, wineries sell their stock at retail, often for 10 to 20 percent more than at some liquor stores back home. Finally, it's always a good idea to call a winery ahead to learn of upcoming special events—from jazz concerts to food festivals—and to confirm our times and whether reservations are necessary.

Check out www.outsmartmagazine.com for *The Little Black Book* with addresses and contact info on Napa and Sonoma destinations.

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Business News

Cities has moved to a new location at 2411 West Alabama at Kirby. The hip home furnishings retailer now has 4,600 square feet to showcase objects, including one-of-a-kind items never offered at either the Houston or Austin store. **Bill Burge** is the owner, and **Saul Moreno** is the co-buyer. The telephone number is 713/528-2662. The Cities web site is www.shopatcities.com.

Chances is marking eight years in business with an anniversary party on Friday, August 16, with no cover and \$2 "you call it" specials from 8 to 10 p.m. Entertainer **Patrice Pike** will perform at 10 p.m. The address is 1100 Westheimer. The telephone number is 713/523-7217, and the new web site is www.chanceshouston.com.

Randy Mitchmore, D.D.S. of **LifeSmiles** has been named an Honorable Order of Good Fellow by the Texas Dental Association. The award recognizes 25 years of continuous membership and service to the dental profession. LifeSmiles is located at 2617 West Holcombe Blvd., Suite E. The telephone number is 713/592-9300.

Conciege Travel, Inc. has been selected as a preferred supplier to Gay Games VI by INTA-Aussie South Pacific, a leading tour operator in Australia. Concierge Travel manager **Kim Gustavsson** currently has more than 20 clients traveling to Sydney for the November 2-9 games. The Concierge Travel telephone numbers are 713/661-2117 and toll-free 877/775-9616.

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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 a.m. Popular with gay and straight alike. The Sunday brunch starts at 11 a.m. and doesn't end till 3 in the afternoon. 1312 W. 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" in OutSmart's Readers' Poll, 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 and 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 purple-felt pool table, leopard-print columns and table tops, funky lamps, and

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cool Johnny Cash poster on the fridge welcome you. 512 Elgin • 713/520-5218.

CLUB BIGYO

Houston's new lesbian bar that, according to its mission statement, puts "our ladies on top where they belong. This is an all girls production; our male friends are welcome." Thurs.: talent night. Fri. & Sat. nights: black male Chippendale & female dancers. Sun.: no cover all night, special shows/events emceed by Flawless Oz. 6305 Skyline • 713/953-0268; hotline 281/322-0394; www.clubbigo.com.

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 weekends for its campy shows. 817 Fairview • 713/528-9204.

DECADES on Richmond is celebrating their 4th anniversary. Owner Rick Hall invites the community to stop

by for a cocktail at this true neighborhood bar with lots of local color. If you want to get out for some local fun, don't pass up Decades, just a few blocks west of Montrose. 1205 Richmond • 713/521-2224.

DIAMOND JIMM'S NIGHT CLUB.

No "honky-tonk" about this new northside bar (formerly Boogie Night). Diamond Jimm's has opened as a "Houston Alternative Lifestyle Nightclub" ... a gay club that is straight-friendly. Owner Jim Hale, aka Diamond Jimm, opened his first club in July with the idea of bringing back the Copa, with plans of different themes each night. There's a DJ who will create a great dance place "with the best music covering the rainbow," he says. Open 7 days, 6 p.m.-2 a.m., 18 and up. 13331 Kuykendahl (near Ella Blvd., just minutes from the Montrose, off I-45 at Kuykendahl) • 281/875-3330.

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.

GUAVA 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.

INCIGNITO THE CLUB

Giving Houston's black gay community "a place to party comfortably" since 1995. The host of the annual mega-blast Houston-Splash ("the South's largest African-American GLBT Weekend"), Incognito recently moved to its current huge three-level space. Friday night is girls' night, Saturday is for the boys, and Sunday is a male & female strip show. But everybody is welcome every night. 3704 Fannin • 713/237-9431.

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 Hollywood Video), 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.

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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.

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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 • 713/522-6100.

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 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.

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.

RIPCORD

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.

611

You can wake up and go straight (uh, gaily) to this neighborhood bar that opens at 7 am. You will always find lots of men there, from the youngest allowed to the oldest. Good bartenders ready to serve you. Play pool, throw darts, relax in their garden-style patio or just hang around their large bar and you will be sure to meet someone. Check out their buffets on Fridays and Sundays. 611 Hyde Park • 713/526-7070.

SOUTH BEACH

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

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Conroe, this spot features daily drink specials, live entertainment, & Wednesday karaoke night with Heather & Music Express. Tuesday is college night. 2111 Airport Rd. • 936/441-6426.

Galveston

BLVD SALOON

A perfect place for a relaxing cocktail or fun-filled evening of socializing & entertainment. Big walk-around bar & dance floor, on the Seawall, with a great view of the ocean, especially from the new 2nd-floor deck. Entertainment on weekends. See some of the hottest male dancers around—they're better than you can imagine. 3102 Seawall • 409/750-8571.

GARZA'S KON TIKI

The gay bar for the Island. Conveniently close to all Galveston's celebration spots, the Kon Tiki is close to the Strand district and the Pier. It's the place to go dancing, with male & female entertainers on weekends—and, of course, the "show girls." 315 Tremont (23rd) • 409/765-5805 • thekontiki.com.

JIMMY'S ON THE BEACH

The tropical décor & full wall of windows overlooking the Gulf give you plenty to please the eyes. Located on the East end makes it convenient to stop in on your way to & from East Beach. Male dancers & "showgirls" on weekends. Open noon–2 am, seven days a week, with happy-hour prices on every drink every day until 8 pm. Corner of 9th and Seawall (904 Ave M) • 409/765-6911.

MYRA'S CANTINA

Galveston's newest bar opened its doors

Mar. 13. Well-known island entertainer Myra Sanchez & her business partner Charles Pena ("Sisters") opened this distinctly Latin neighborhood cantina. They offer beer, wine & setups, real cheap (you provide liquor for the setups). There's a pool table, game machines, juke box & TV (Latin station). Myra & Charles plan their grand opening Sat., May 11. 813 21st Street, between Ball & Sealy.

ROBERT'S LAFITTE

A real neighborhood bar, the clientele is as colorful as the chandeliers that adorn this Island institution. 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. Two blocks from the Seawall. 2501 Ave Q, corner of 25th • 409/765-9092.

Beaumont

THE COPA

This bar lives up to its name as a hot dance club. This two-story fun complex has pool tables, a spacious stage, & 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.

CROCKETT ST. STATION

A sweet, cozy neighborhood bar. Cute, friendly bartenders serve up your favorite cocktail while you play pool and socialize. It's right around the corner from the Copa, so visit both on your next trip to Beaumont. 304 Orleans • 409/832-4306.

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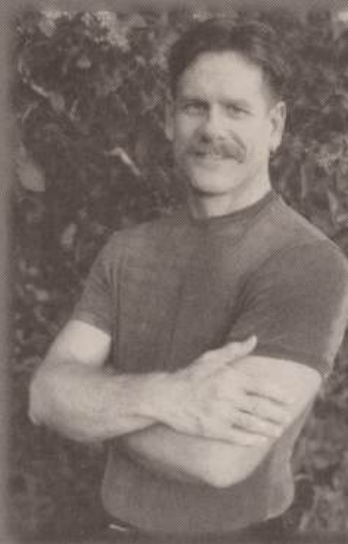
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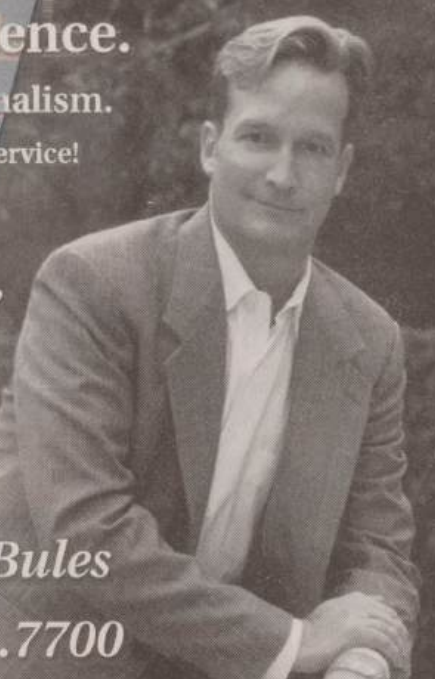
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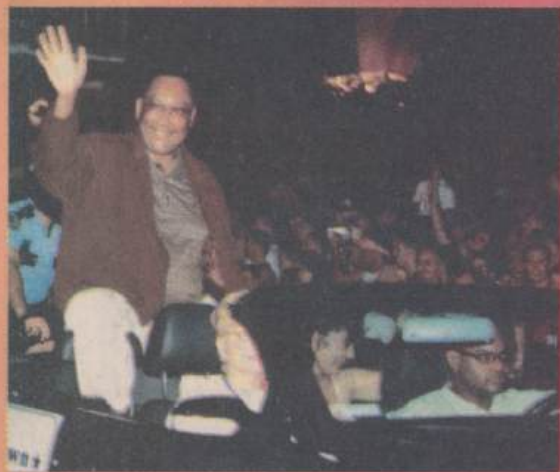


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- Stonewall (best commemoration of Pride): Bering Memorial United Methodist Church
- Pride Worldwide (best interpretation of theme): Krewe of Olympus
- Spirit of Montrose (best overall entry): Houston Fire Department
- Ruby Slipper (best walking unit): Houston Pride Band



Pride Parade

- Ruby Slipper (best walking unit): Houston Pride Band
- Edison (best lighting on a nonprofessionally built float): Montrose Counseling Center
- Houston (best nonprofessionally built motorized unit):
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
- Rainbow Lights (best lighting on a professionally built unit): Chase Bank
- Texas (best professionally built motorized unit): Club Inergy

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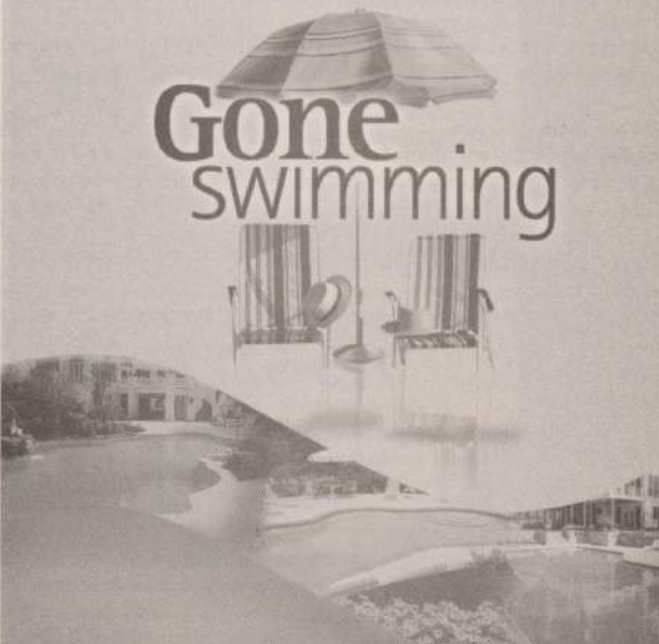


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The month opens with a rocky start. Mostly you will wish you were taking it easy somewhere and not worrying about anything. If you can get a break from your routines, it will be better. Life gets back to abnormal, but there are a few days to watch out for. Pluto, planet of the ultimate clean-out, goes direct at the end of August, producing a new level of intensity and life alterations for the mutable signs, Gemini, Virgo, Sag, and Pisces. Days to wear flats are August 1, 2, 4, 15, 19, and especially 23. Days for high heels are August 6, 7, 8, 10 (a good day to kick someone), 21, and 22.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You are certainly a creative devil this month. Ideas and solutions are just flowing from your brain. The first half of the month you are more content to just live and enjoy life. Relationships enter the picture after the 7th. You will be thinking of others. You will need someone to share all those ideas with. In business, you can sell yourself and conceptions to almost anyone because you are so in touch with the flow. As the month progresses, you are more interested in putting your ideas into practical application. Effort will have to have result.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Family fun and fireworks continue for you this month. Trying to be close to family members may produce some combative nurturing. Nevertheless, you may still want to go home for a visit. Stay somewhere you can have your privacy. This is true if you just stay at home with your own nuclear family. You will not want people to tell you "No" this month. Especially volatile days are the 4th and the 10th. You are continuing to work to get your money and resources in order. You were really up against the wall in May and June; now you are finally making some progress. Keep your workload and schedule light.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Your mental capacities are excellent this month. You have views and ideas, and you are ready to share them with anyone who will listen. In business, you can really convince others that your ideas are best. This is an especially good thing for business, networking, or working with organizations. The only area in which this doesn't work too well is in relationships. There is a lot of tension and apprehension on your part; the results don't seem to justify the efforts. That area will begin to improve by September, but you may not see any difference until October.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Money and personal resources are your focus for this month. You are really going to work on making money this year. You just have to be careful that you don't spend it as fast as you earn it. Your communications skills seem to be really working well this month—even if you are pushy with your views. You are secretly looking for a jousting partner who you can push and pull with. In romantic relationships, this can produce some sparks and fireworks or some out-and-out battles. This sounds better for sex than for Scrabble.

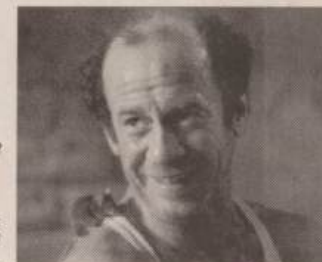
LEO (July 23-August 22). Happy birthday to all the Leos out there. It is your month to shine even more than usual. Jupiter, planet of travel, education, and optimism, has been moving into your sign to stay for the next year. You are ready to embark on new directions without the normal precautions that you have about taking action and embracing change. Mars, planet of action, is moving through your sign now as well. You are ready for adventure and definitely something new and exciting in your life. This is a great month for planning ahead for the next year. Take some time for yourself to consider what great things you are going to accomplish this month.

VIRGO (August 23-September 22). You are in a rest-and-retreat mode this month. You are plenty busy, but you seem to be doing most of your work

Happy Birthday to Michael Jeter.

Born August 26, 1952, the openly gay actor has costarred in TV's *Evening Shade* and Armistead Maupin's *Tales of the City*.

Pictured at right is Michael Jeter with "Mr. Jingles" in 1999's *The Green Mile*.



CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19). It is normal for you to look at the use that people and things have in your life. You are able to help people focus the talents that they have and may not use for their best. This month, you are looking at the deeper values of people. Their emotional value may come into conflict with your view of practicality. In romantic and business partnerships, it becomes all too obvious that you both have to have a common underlying substance and meaning. This is the

month to bring that to the surface and chat about it. If these aren't found, some of you may seek others to fill this void. You want satisfaction and a future with people. And you won't get involved without both.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18). I hope you are able to take some time for yourself and your personal projects this month. You need time away from predictable habits and the crowds of people that have been in your life over the last few months. And you also need more time to yourself, in part to recharge for the busy time ahead. You are reflecting on your place in the universe. And this is no simple process for the Water Bearers. Relationships can be very helpful now, as they can be mirrors to the depths that you are plummeting. And if there isn't depth in your existing relationships, you will be out looking for it. The worse thing is to be lonely when someone is around.

PISCES (February 19-March 20). Your habits and routines are up for discussion this month. And your relationships with co-workers are in the process of change. This could be a time when you are looking for a new place to work or expecting a promotion. You certainly need a change in your customary occupation. And this includes an opportunity to expose others to your imaginative talents. You are not much into settling for the sake of security. And you are much more willing to take risks that you would not have taken in the past. And the person you have to rescue the most is you.

Lilly Roddy is a Houston-based astrologer. She can be reached at lillycath@aol.com or www.hermesfoot.com.



SignOut by Lilly Roddy



J.P. Morgan Chase held a Pride Family and Youth Fun Day on June 23 in Hermann Park.

1 Carl (l), Miche, and Sir Jacob Scott.

2 Anthony (l), and Mikki Gonzales.

3 Houston Energy players (l-r) Tami Branson, Monique Howard, owner Robin Howington, Dawn Dendy, and Stacy Agee.

4 HPD officers (l-r) Ann Walter, Joy Smith, and Susan Kohn.

5 On July 4, Larry Simpson and Ken Jones hosted a fundraiser for Debra Danburg at their home in the Spires.

6 Paul Hope (seated) and Hillary Fields perform at the July 15 preview of Bayou City Concert Musicals' production of A Little Night Music, benefiting The Center for AIDS.

7 Rick Herrera (l), Center for AIDS board member, and center founder Joel Martinez.

8 Guest DJ Manny Lehman (l) and Gary Archer at Rich's.

9 Ben Whittle at the July 16 EPAH dinner meeting flanked by psychic Bell Ann and psychic June.

OUT IN HOUSTON

The Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center hosted a benefit art silent auction on June 22.

10 Contributing artists included (l-r) Vera Taylor, Christina Lewis, Roberto Guzman, Tori McMillan, and Kat Zemanek.

11 Oscar's Creamery was the site of a June 25 screening of the short film Confessions of a Go-Go Boy, directed by Kyle Fu (l) and featuring Eduardo Costa. An exhibition of Fu paintings, Scooby Doo, was also on display at Oscar's.

12 GCAM and Pride Committee of Houston benefited from the June 26 performance of Comfort and Joy at Theatre Suburbia, which featured (l-r) Danitha Bockoven, Zona Meyer, Gene Griesbach, Craig Bushey, Timothy Newman, and Oliver Blanco.

13 Birthday boys (l-r) Trevan Ross, Gary Killingsworth, and Dan Meador at their annual Triumvirate Birthday Party on July 13.

14 (L-r) Joe Watts, Rob Nash, and Fred Walters at

July 17 Houston Buyers Club benefit performance of Nash's Romeo & Juliet: Love & Sex at Holy Cross High at Theatre New West.

15 Randy Stanger won the Best Decorated Lawn Chair award at the June 23 EPAH pool party.



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