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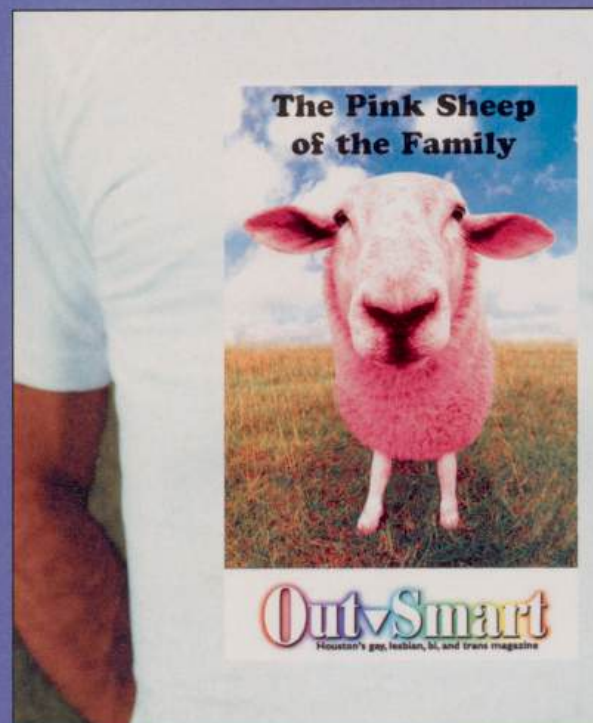
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Dad Is Out: Interview with B.D. Wong

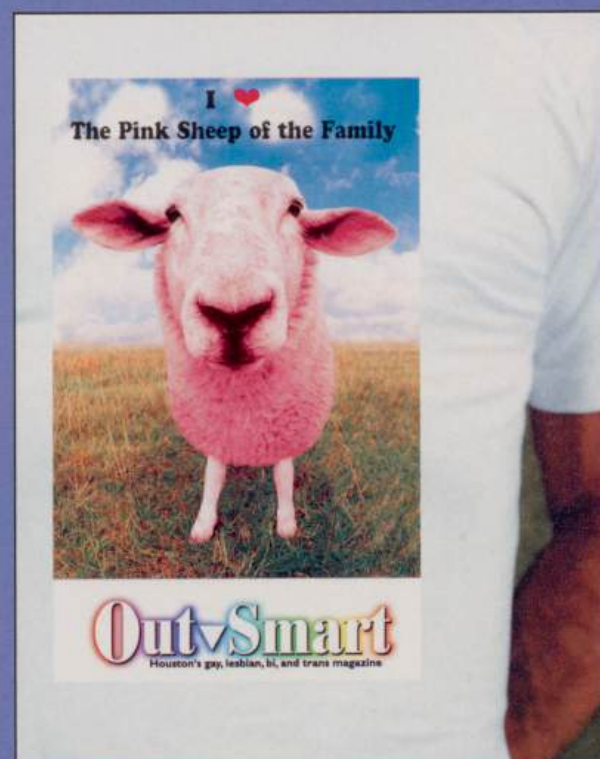
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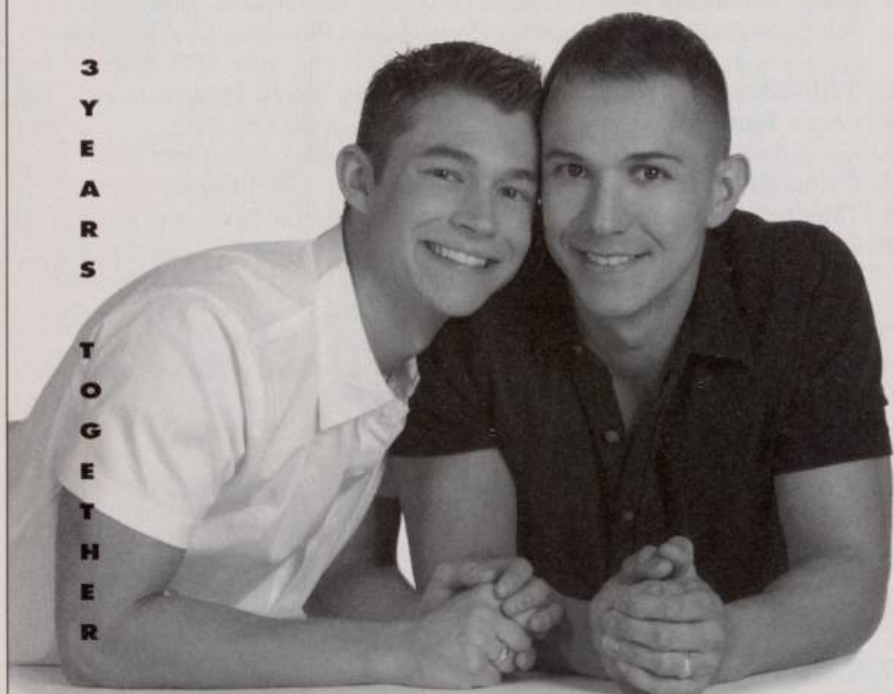
David Lewis photographed 29 individuals for our Pride portfolio, which begins on page 56. Cover design by Terry Klumpp.

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Letters

BLACKBALLED

We received this letter addressed to "LeftOut" columnist Daryl Moore:

You're a product of the new thought police. Read the book by Tammy Bruce; maybe you'll understand that it's OK to have an opinion. Unfortunately, people like you only fuel the fact that having an opinion means something cruel and misleading. You should be ashamed of yourself for making us feel blackballed and that our real concerns and thoughts are unimportant.

Mark Becker
Altadena, California

CONDOM-LESS

Nineteen years ago last month, my gay newspaper partner Bruce Brockaway died of what we now call AIDS. His was the first such death in Minnesota. I live in Houston now, and just this month I checked with the Montrose Clinic and the Montrose Counseling Center to see if they had a supply of condoms for high-risk groups like the young bucks at my gay AA center. The answer was "No, see MCC!" at the Montrose Clinic. The answer was "No, see the Montrose Clinic!" at MCC. How sad!

I am convinced that the average salary of a low-level outreach worker, maybe \$25,000 a year, would save more lives buying condoms in bulk. Are these institutions more interested in creating jobs and salaries for themselves than in saving lives?

Tim Campbell
Houston

Campbell is the former publisher of the GLCvoice in Minneapolis.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Two OutSmart writers, D.L. (Deb) Murphy and Sally Sheklow, have been nominated for Houston Press Club Lone Star Awards. Murphy was nominated in the feature category for "School's Out" (March 2002). Sheklow was nominated in the column category for "Thanks for Sharing" (January 2002). At press time, the press club was to have presented the awards on May 31.

At the annual OutMusic Awards on June 1, music contributor Gregg Shapiro will receive the OutMusic Award for Outstanding Support, which recognizes exemplary involvement by non-musicians in supporting and furthering the work of GLBT musicians. For more information: www.outmusicawards.com.

Houstonian JD Doyle received the award last year. His article "Queer Rock!" appeared in our October 2002 issue. Doyle is producer and host of "Queer Music Heritage," which airs during "QueerVoices" on KPFT-FM. He is also co-producer of "AudioFile," the monthly radio review that is part of "This Way Out," the internationally broadcast magazine show. His website is www.queermusicheritage.com.

Josef Molnar should have been credited as copy editor on the Houston Gay & Lesbian Film Festival Guide, included in the May issue.

LOVE LETTERS? HATE MAIL?

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

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LookOut

by Tim Brookover



These are rough times. American troops remain parked in Iraq, even as the media cites no-longer secret plans to destabilize Iran. SARS is on the march (despite what we indicated in our May issue ... whoops). The economy tips. Early on, the hapless quality of the Democratic presidential contenders would seem comical, if it weren't so sad. Hurricane season opens this month. Orlando Sanchez may be our next mayor.

Laughter is an antidote—at least a temporary one—for these troubles. *Mambo Girl* at Christian DeVries's Stargaze Theatre (née the Bienvenue)

SOAP QUEENS: Beverly Hutchison (top), Oliver Blanco (bottom, l-r), Erik Soliz, and Jonathan star in *Mambo Girl* at the Stargaze Theatre.

promises to be just what the soap-opera *medico* ordered. Mikel Reper directs this lampoon of Latin American *telenovelas*, a deliriously melodramatic form that pretty much spoofs itself. (My favorite: the virtuous twin/evil twin epic *La Usurpadora*, a classic.) Steve Lovett wrote the tale of eye-rolling intrigue and betrayal in "Rio de la Plata, a glamorous capital city of a mythical South American country." *Muy sabroso*. The cast includes Oliver Blanco, Janice Dickard, Kit Fordyce, Gene Griesbach, Joseph Hart, Beverly Hutchison, Jonathan, Amy Kennedy, and Erik Soliz.



GOOD WORKS. The Miss Camp America Foundation presents its annual June Bride wedding-spoof show at the Brazos River Bottom on June 8. Proceeds benefit Bering Omega Community Services, The Assistance Fund, PWA Holiday Charities, Donald R. Watkins Memorial Foundation, Montrose Clinic's Frost Eye Clinic, and PAWS (Pets Are Wonderful Support). Luis Miranda is Miss Camp's vice president for fundraising.

This month, photographer Evin Thayer

will host an exhibition of work by Kermit Eisenhut, Mollie Moore, Christopher Olivier, and John Palmer at his 405 Avondale studio. Ten percent of sales made during the June 12 opening reception will benefit a fund that provides scholarships for young Houston artists.

On April 5, Steve Carbone received the Mr. Prime Choice title at the Ripcord. As part of the competition, he scored major points for raising \$8,000 for his cause, the Assistance Fund. Runner-up

Lloyd Powell raised \$5,000 for the Men's Health Network.

SCREEN GEMS. The Houston Gay & Lesbian Film Festival continues. Check out www.hglff.org for the complete festival schedule. This year the lineup has included a slate of weekend midnight movies at the Landmark-River Oaks. Third in the series is the loony, arch *Psycho Beach Party* (June 13 and 14), penned by drag artist and writer Charles Busch. ■

Heartland Security and the Threat of Terrorism

Are you prepared?

Times have changed. We hear it all the time, and the sad reality is they have, and not for the better. The war is "officially" over according to Bush, but do any of us really feel safer? No, not really. Our country was under an orange alert Memorial Day weekend. Were you prepared?

What if terrorists strike closer to home? What if they hit the Port of Houston or the Medical Center? What if the local telephone system gets knocked out? What if the public switch is overloaded? How will you communicate?

If you answered, "I'll use my cell phone," then you may be surprised when it doesn't work. The odds are your cell phone won't

work or it will be difficult to use because *all* cellular phones use the public utility switch along with your home phone and your office phone system. Chances are you will hear a recording that says "All circuits are busy. Please try your call again." Or the entire system might be completely down.

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Rick Santorum

(Pennsylvania Republican senator)

Associated Press: ... [S]o if somebody is homosexual, you would argue that they should not have sex?

Rick Santorum: ... [I]f the Supreme Court says that you have the right to consensual sex within your home, then you have the right to bigamy, you have the right to polygamy, you have the right to incest, you have the right to adultery. ... In every society, the definition of marriage has not ever to my knowledge included homosexuality. That's not to pick on homosexuality. It's not, you know, man on child, man on dog, or whatever the case may be. ... I'm sorry, I didn't think I was going to talk about "man on dog" with a United States senator. It's sort of freaking me out.

For more of the interview, check out GLAAD's website at www.glaad.org.

Jim Verraros

(Lavender, 5/2/03, Travis Stanton)

Travis Stanton: Tell me about how you lost weight before *American Idol*.

Jim Verraros: I lost a lot of weight. And part of me regrets it, because it wasn't all for me, or for *American Idol*. It was for boys, because when I was overweight, I would go to Boystown, put on my cutest outfit that I could fit into, and no one would look at me. ...

So, I started working out obsessively, and I ate almost nothing....

What's your advice to young gay men who are overweight?

If you're overweight, and you're in the gay community, I feel for you. I've been there. Fat to many fags is foreign.

And I hate it, because I let them win. I sacrificed an insane amount of work and time. I lost 80 pounds in two months, and I hate that. I just wanted someone to love me for me.

Now, guys say I'm good-looking, but it doesn't mean anything, because they don't understand the shit I had to go through to get to this point. I mean, I say thank you, but it doesn't mean anything to me.

Conan O'Brien

(Late Night with Conan O'Brien, 5/03)

The latest news from Broadway is that Elton John is writing a brand-new musical about vampires. When investors of the vampire musical were asked to comment, they said, "We're just glad it's about blood sucking."

Dear Abby

(The Washington Post, 5/19/03)

Dear Abby:

Whenever I read in one of your columns a reminder about sending messages of encouragement to personnel in the military, I become frustrated. I would like to send a message, but I'm not sure where to send it.

I want to send encouragement, love, and heartfelt thanks to all the gay men and women who serve our country. ...

As it was in the Gulf War, their sexual orientation will be ignored because they are needed, but as soon as the action and/or threat is over, they will be tossed aside. ...

Please, Abby, let them know that we admire, care, and think about them and the sacrifices they are making.

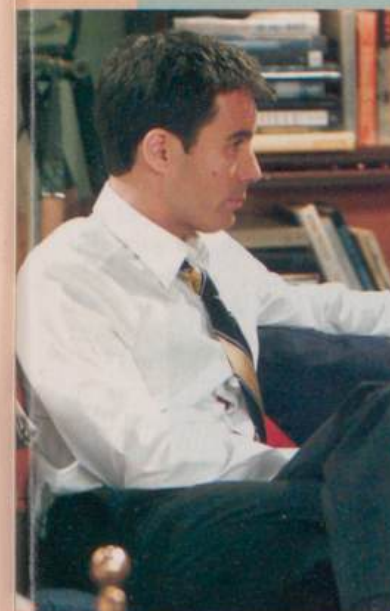
—Martin in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Dear Martin:

Thank you for pointing out the unfairness of "situational discrimination." A person's sexual orientation has nothing to do with his or her degree of patriotism or ability to successfully defend our country.

Madonna, McCormack, & Mutchnick

(Entertainment Weekly, 5/2/03, Michael Joseph Gross)



Eric McCormack (l) and Madonna: Everything's coming up roses on NBC's *Will & Grace*. But will Will fall in love when Max Mutchnick falls in love?

Madonna is by far the most famous passenger to board the good ship *Will & Grace* [NBC], although her manners, by some accounts, were less than impeccable. "She did ask me my name a couple of times, and I said, 'It's easy, just check the opening credits of the other 120 of these that we've done,'" says [Eric] McCormack. "She sort of laughed, but I was sort of only half-kidding. And then she sort of made up for it at the end of the week, when she sent me the most expensive thing of roses I've ever seen, and a card from her saying, 'Eric, thank you so much. I'm gonna have your name tattooed on my arm, if Guy [Ritchie, her husband] will let me.' ... [Madonna's guest

appearance] will probably be our biggest episode. Let's have that number of people show up to watch me hold George Clooney's hand, or whoever's up for doing it. ... Maybe that's what it's going to take to really make that next big, bold move—an actual relationship where we know, when [Will and another man] walk out of the room, they've probably just had sex. It might take a big celebrity name to make that work. I think we're debating it now."

... [Cocreator and exec producer Max] Mutchnick, who is single, adds, "I feel very connected to [Will] ... and I would imagine that the next time I fall in love will probably be the time Will falls in love."



Diane Sawyer & Rosie O'Donnell

(GLAAD Media Awards, 4/6/03)

The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) honored Diane Sawyer and Rosie O'Donnell, among others, at the 14th Annual GLAAD Media Awards in New York City.

Betty DeGeneres (Ellen's mom) presented Diane Sawyer with GLAAD's Excellence in Media Award, honoring a member of the media community who has made a significant difference in promoting equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

Diane Sawyer: "I just want to say thank you so much, and it means the world to me. Because I really do believe that every time you care about

someone and respect someone and love someone for what they entirely are, in every way, it's like inventing fire for the second time. Anything can happen. And we're not done yet."

Cyndi Lauper presented Rosie O'Donnell with GLAAD's Vito Russo Award, which honors an openly gay or lesbian member of the entertainment or media community for their outstanding contribution in combating homophobia.

Rosie O'Donnell: "Everybody would tell me [that coming out] would change my life. But I never thought when they were telling me—whether it was Ellen or Nathan or Harvey, or any of my friends who are out—I never thought for a

moment what it would change in my own life. I always thought it would be about the public perception, the adjective assigned to your name for eternity: 'lesbian Rosie O'Donnell, lesbian Rosie O'Donnell.' It's like 'Aries Rosie O'Donnell' or 'size-10-shoe Rosie O'Donnell.' What I didn't realize is that it would change everything about my life. And for the first time, I'm really, really, really happy."

Queer Quotes

Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Christina Aguilera

(GLAAD Media Awards, 4/25/03)

The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) honored Christina Aguilera, among others, at the 14th Annual GLAAD Media Awards in Los Angeles. She was honored with a Special Recognition award for including gay and transgender images in her music video for *Beautiful*.

It's so important that in my music I convey positive messages, and this song is definitely a universal message that everybody can relate to—anyone that's been discriminated against or unaccepted, unappreciated, or disrespected just because of who you are. It was so important to me that I support the gay community in this sense. It's so sad that still in 2003 we even have to give awards like this. And that's why I'm here to show my love and support to all of you."

Christina Aguilera: *Beautiful* gay and transgender images



MCCORMACK/MADONNA: CHRIS HASTON/NBC; SAWYER/O'DONNELL/GARRY: LARRY BUSACCA/WIREIMAGE.COM; AGUILERA: JEFF VESPA/WIREIMAGE.COM

Television

Compiled by Blase DiStefano

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During Gay Pride Month, Sundance Channel goes gay every day



SUNDANCE GOES GAY: Mark (far right) at a Yeshiva in Israel in *Trembling Before G-D*



ABOVE: Liu Ye (l) and Hu Jun in the illegally shot *Lan Yu*. BELOW: Non-dita Das (l) and Shabana Azmi set off sparks in *Fire*.



Once again, Sundance Channel will be gay every day for its annual Gay Pride celebration of GLBT cinema. This year's FilmFest features two weekly destination blocks: "Gay Love Under Fire," airing as four Saturday-night double features, and "Are You Musical?" a Friday-night fantasia of camp pleasures.

Out Loud: Gay Love Under Fire

This special Out Loud collection showcases stories about GLBT people facing a hostile and sometimes life-threatening cultural climate. Included are five critically acclaimed films in their U.S. television premieres:

- *Trembling Before G-D* is built around intimately-told personal stories of Hasidic and Orthodox Jews who are gay and lesbian. Sandi Simcha DuBowski's moving film portrays a group of people who face a profound dilemma—how to reconcile their passionate love of the Divine and Judaism with the drastic biblical prohibitions that forbid homosexuality. The film recently received the



ABOVE: Wilfried Friedrich (l) and Kurt Schmidt in *Herr Schmidt and Herr Friedrich*. BELOW: Ingrid de Souza (sitting) and Cesare Bocci in *Princesa*.



ALL PHOTOS BOTH PAGES COURTESY SUNDANCE CHANNEL

GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Documentary. Aired June 7 (9 p.m.), 11th (10 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.), 23rd (11 a.m. & 9:15 p.m.), and 29th (12:30 p.m. & 8 p.m.).

- *Lan Yu* is Stanley Kwan's chronicle of gay love lost and found in Tiananmen Square-era China. The film was shot illegally and banned in China. *Lan Yu* screened at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival. Aired June 14 (9 p.m.), 18th (10 p.m.), 23rd (12:30 a.m.), and 29th (11:30 p.m.).

- *Princesa* is Henrique Goldman's Cinderella story set against the real-life backdrop of Milan's seedy red-light district. Fernanda is a 19-year-old transvestite who dreams of becoming a woman and meeting a prince. *Princesa* screened at the 2001 Sundance Film Festival. Aired one night only, Saturday, June 28, 9 p.m.

- *Fire* is about middle-class Indian sisters-in-law who find love with each other under their husbands' noses. Deepa Mehta's superb film was an international hit and a scandal upon its Indian release. Aired June 21 (9 p.m.), 25th (10 p.m.), and 29th (1 a.m.).

- *Herr Schmidt and Herr Friedrich* is Ulrike Franke and Michael Loeken's documentary about two men who fall in love, commit themselves to each other, and have a longstanding, loving relationship. It is also the story of the divided Germany where, when they first met and fell in love, they were separated by the Berlin Wall—Kurt Schmidt lived in the West, Wilfried Friedrich lived in the East. Aired June 23 (8 p.m.) and 28th (7:45 p.m.).

Other films included in Gay Love Under Fire are *Aimée and Jaguar*, *The Brandon Teena Story*, and *East Palace, West Palace*.

More TV Premieres on Sundance

- *Big Eden* is a feature film by Thomas Bezucha. Gay architect (Arye Gross) returns to his Montana hometown to start anew and falls in love. Aired June 6 (8 p.m.), 12th (4 p.m.), 13th (4:35 a.m.), 17th (10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.), 25th (5:30 a.m. & 4 p.m.), 28th (noon), and 29th (4:30 a.m.).

- *É Minha Cara (That's My Face)* is a thoughtful personal documentary tracing gay filmmaker Thomas Allen Harris's lifelong attempts to reconcile his African-American and African heritages, along the way exploring the very personal intersection of politics and spirituality. Aired June 9 (8 p.m.), 14th (9 a.m.), 17th (12:30 p.m.), and 30th (11:30 a.m.).

- *The Devil in the Holy Water* is a documentary by Joe Balass. Two major events collide in Rome: when Roman Catholics converge for the Jubilee, the most important church pilgrimage in modern times, thousands of gays and lesbians from around the world gather for the first international World Pride Celebration. Aired June 16 (8 p.m.), 24th (11:05 a.m.), and 28th (2 p.m.).



GAY PRIDE: Two participants of World Gay Pride lip-lock on bikes in *The Devil in the Holy Water*.



BIRDS OF A FEATHER: Ugo Tognazzi (l) and Michel Serrault are really, really gay in *La Cage aux Folles*.



COCKY DRAG: The legendary San Francisco hippie drag troupe belt out a song in *The Cockettes*.



WHAT A WAY TO CROWE: Russell Crowe (r) and John Polson test the romantic waters in *The Sum of Us*.



NOT HIS TYPE: John Hansen (r) and a fellow soldier get wet in *The Christine Jorgensen Story*.

- *American Fabulous* is a documentary by Reno Dakota. Part Spaulding Gray-type monologue, part cinéma vérité Americana, Jeffrey Strouth takes an autobiographical look at his life from the back seat of a car—his bottomless well of lurid, often hilarious experiences constitute a kind of gay Jack Kerouac odyssey. It was originally released posthumously after his death of AIDS in 1992. Aired one night only, Monday, June 30, 8 p.m.

Out Loud: Are You Musical?

Give your inner diva a treat as Sundance Channel presents four films that tickle your musical fancy. The series kicks off with Edouard Molinaro's *La Cage aux Folles*, the irresistible 1977 French farce about a drag club impresario and his lover, who put on some kind of performance when the impresario's son gets engaged. Director Ken Russell brings his unique brand of cinematic excess to his biopic of Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky, *The Music Lovers*, starring Richard Chamberlain and Glenda Jackson. The "let's put on a show" spirit meets Age of Aquarius irreverence in *The Cockettes*, Bill Weber and David Weissman's award-winning 2002 documentary about the legendary San Francisco hippie drag troupe that flourished in the late '60s and early '70s. Closing out the series is Elliot Nugent's 1944 musical comedy *Up in Arms* (airs one night only, Friday, June 27, 10 p.m.), starring Danny Kaye as a nervous hypochondriac who becomes a man in uniform when he is drafted into the Army. Viewed today, this entertaining fluff offers up a mother lode for subtext prospectors; watch for the bus scene in which Kaye and Dana Andrews's sweet talk to their girlfriends mistakenly arouses the ire of some homophobic fellow passengers.

Other highlights of Out Loud 2003 include a rare screening of the 1970 cult classic *The Christine Jorgensen Story*, a biopic of the world's first transsexual; *The Sum of Us*, starring Russell Crowe as a gay man living with his doting father; and *Wilde*, starring Stephen Fry as the brilliant Irish writer and Jude Law as his bratty innamorata, Lord Alfred "Bosie" Douglas.

Need more reasons to tune in to Sundance Channel's annual Gay Pride celebration of GLBT films? How about these:

<i>The Adventures of Sebastian Cole</i>	<i>Get Real</i>
<i>Basquiat</i>	<i>Gods and Monsters</i>
<i>Bedrooms and Hallways</i>	<i>The Hanging Garden</i>
<i>Billy's Hollywood Screen Kiss</i>	<i>Hit and Runway</i>
<i>Burnt Money</i>	<i>L.I.E.</i>
<i>By Hook or by Crook</i>	<i>Our Lady of the Assassins</i>
<i>Chutney Popcorn</i>	<i>Paul Monette: The Brink of</i>
<i>Criminal Movers</i>	<i>Summer's End</i>
<i>Dear Jesse</i>	<i>Priest</i>
<i>The Delta</i>	<i>See the Sea</i>
<i>Desert Hearts</i>	<i>Silverlake Life: The View from Here</i>
<i>The Fluffer</i>	<i>Water Drops on Burning Rocks</i> →

GIRLS/GIRLS, BOYS/BOYS, & BOYS WILL BE GIRLS

Gay-friendly Showtime runs the gay gamut in June



Rachel Ward (l) and Bernadette Peters in *Bobbie's Girl*



Troy Garity (l) and Lee Pace in *Soldier's Girl*

Soldier's Girl

Soldier's Girl is the true story of Barry Winchell (Troy Garity), a soldier at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, who in 1999 fell in love with Calpernia Addams (Lee Pace), a beautiful transgendered nightclub performer from Nashville. In the closed, rigid world of the army, their love affair created jealousy and misunderstanding among Winchell's fellow soldiers. Rumors spread that Winchell was gay. Eventually, on Fourth of July weekend, as Addams was winning Miss Tennessee Entertainer of the Year, Winchell's lingo-like roommate Justin Fisher (Shawn Hatosy) goaded another soldier into brutally murdering Winchell. This extraordinary film premiered May 31 on Showtime; repeat airings are June 3 (7 p.m.), 22nd (7 p.m.), and 30th (10 p.m.).

Bobbie's Girl

Bobbie (Rachel Ward) and Bailey (Bernadette Peters) are two women living on the outskirts of Dublin, Ireland. Bobbie is English and

Bailey is from New York. Together they run a pub, The Two Sisters, with David (Jonathan Silverman), Bailey's eccentric brother who is another theatrical refugee from the Big Apple. Their lives are drastically changed by the sudden arrival of Alan (Thomas Sangster), Bobbie's 10-year old nephew. Alan, whose parents are tragically killed, casts the three adults in the unlikely and unexpected role of adoptive parents. Matters are complicated by the tragic news that Bobbie has been diagnosed with breast cancer. What follows is a sometimes painful but often comical struggle with changing circumstances, new responsibilities, and unexpected depths of feeling. *Bobbie's Girl* is a story of love and honesty which only strengthen under pressure. Airs on Showtime on Saturday, June 7 (9 p.m.), 13th (3 p.m.), 18th (4 p.m.), 23rd (4:30 p.m.), and 29th (1 p.m.).

Longtime Companion

The lives of seven New York gay men are powerfully impacted by the burgeoning AIDS

crisis over the course of a decade in this searing portrait of the disease's devastating effects on a community. Oscar nominee Bruce Davison stars with Dermot Mulroney, Campbell Scott, Mark Lamos, Patrick Cassidy, Stephen Caffrey, Mary-Louise Parker, and Tony Shalhoub in this shattering drama based on the play by Craig Lucas. Airs on Showtime on Wednesday, June 11 (8 p.m.), 14th (9 p.m.), and 23rd (12:45 p.m.).

The Rainbow

D.H. Lawrence's novel of passion and longing is transformed into an acclaimed motion picture by director Ken Russell. Sammi Davis stars as Ursula, a privileged young woman whose childhood fantasies of capturing a rainbow have turned into an adult quest for sexual fulfillment that is forever thwarted by her own idealism and the minimal living



Mia Kirshner (l) and Karina Lombard don't mind using the "L" word.

befriends their next-door neighbors, Bette (Beals) and Tina (Holloman), a lesbian couple in a long-term relationship who are trying to get pregnant. Through them, Jenny meets their alluring friend, Marina (Lombard), who introduces Jenny to her first lesbian sexual experience. The series will follow Jenny at a crossroads between the straight and lesbian worlds as well as the lives of the other key characters in the lesbian community. The two-hour premiere was directed by Rose Troche (*Go Fish*, *Six Feet Under*). *The L Word* is slated to begin airing on Showtime in 2004.

SHOWTIME'S GAY FUTURE SHOWTIME'S GAY FUTURE SHOWTIME'S GAY FUTURE SHOWTIME'S GAY FUTURE SHOWTIME'S GAY FUTURE

The L Word. This one-hour drama series will feature an ensemble cast, including Jennifer Beals, Scott Bairstow, Erin Daniels, Leisha Hailey (one of *The Mommies*, you may remember her in *All of Me*), Laurel Holloman (*The Incredibly True Adventure of Two Girls in Love*), Mia Kirshner, Karina Lombard, Katherine Moennig, and Pam Grier. *The L Word* explores the lesbian community in Los Angeles through the eyes of a new arrival, Jenny (Kirshner), who moves from Chicago to live with her boyfriend Tim (Bairstow). Jenny

With the cooperation of the University of Texas at Austin, film crews are following a dozen incoming freshmen around the clock for Showtime's new series *Going to College*. Additionally, the freshmen have been given their own video cameras so that they can record video diaries of their lives both on campus and off, thus collaborating in the process. These freshmen, a mixture of different sexes, ethnic backgrounds, and sexual orientations, are all dealing with the complexities of leaving home and being in complete

charge of their own destinies. Some of them are eager to "escape" their past lives by doing things that they've never done before in an effort to re-create themselves. Others are fearful of leaving their comfortable lives and are worried about not living up to their parents' expectations. What they all share in common is that they are meeting new people, having new experiences, and finding out a lot more about themselves than they ever knew before. The 10-episode half-hour documentary series is slated to air on Showtime in September of this year.

Showtime Network and the Kanbar Institute of Film and Television at New York University will join forces to work with students in the graduate film division to help develop their thesis projects. The films will explore AIDS-related themes. These shorts are part of Showtime Network's ongoing commitment to participate in the Viacom and Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation's multi-year HIV/AIDS initiative entitled *KNOW HIV/AIDS*. The films are expected to air on Showtime in late 2003 or early 2004.

FLAG WARS & GEORGIE GIRL GO PUBLIC

A rainbow flag on a restored house in Olde Towne, Columbus, Ohio



Public television's acclaimed P.O.V. series opens its new season with the feature film *Flag Wars*. Shot over four years, Linda Goode Bryant and Laura Poitras's film is a poignant account of competing economic interests between two historically oppressed groups, seen through the politics and pain of gentrification. This story takes place in Columbus, Ohio. Black residents, working-class or poor and often elderly, fight to hold on to their homes and heritage. Realtors and gay home-buyers see the enormous, often run-down homes as fixer-uppers. The inevitable clashes expose prejudice and self-interest on both sides, as well as the common dream to have a home to call your own. Both provocative and elegiac, *Flag Wars* is a candid, unvarnished portrait of privilege, poverty, and local politics taking place across America. Airs Tuesday, June 17, at 10 p.m. on Houston's PBS station, KUHT.



Georgina Beyer heading the HERO parade, the major GLBT carnival in Auckland, New Zealand

If you missed it at our film festival, now you can see *Georgie Girl* on the tube. Born George Beyer, one-time prostitute-turned-politician, Georgina Beyer was elected to New Zealand's Parliament in 1999, becoming the world's first transsexual to hold a national office. Amazingly, a mostly white, conservative, rural constituency voted this former sex worker of Maori descent into office. Chronicling Georgina's transformations from farm boy to celebrated cabaret diva to grassroots community leader, *Georgie Girl* couples interviews and images of Beyer's nightclub and film performances with footage showing a day in the life of this New Zealand member of Parliament. The film presents a remarkable account of Beyer's precedent-setting accomplishment, revealing her intelligence, charisma, and humor. Airs Tuesday, June 24, at 11 p.m. on Houston's PBS station, KUHT.

standards for women in her small Welsh community. Paul McGann, Amanda Donohoe (whose character has an affair with Ursula), and David Hemmings costar in this fine literary adaptation. Airs on Showtime on Wednesday, June 25 at 8 p.m.

Relax... It's Just Sex

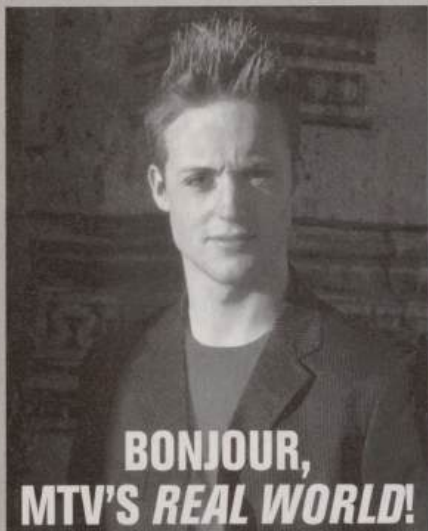
At a dinner party thrown by Tara (Jennifer Tilly), assorted guests wax philosophical about the hot-button topics of AIDS and sex, and a violent incident is revealed, leading to some couples disintegrating while new alliances are formed. T.C. Carson, Mitchell Anderson, Cynda Williams, Lori Petty, Serena Scott Thomas, and Billy Wirth costar in this ensemble romantic comedy. Airs on Showtime on Wednesday, June 18, at 9 p.m.



On the phone with his lover, Howard (Patrick Cassidy) reads one of the first stories written about a strange new disease in *Longtime Companion*.

A Boy Named Sue

Julie Wyman's compelling documentary chronicles the transformation of a transsexual named Theo from a woman to a man over the course of six years. The film successfully captures Theo's physiological and psychological changes during the process, as well as their effects on his lesbian lover and community of close friends. Taking full advantage of the unlimited access she was given to an extraordinarily personal process, Wyman carefully composes a moving story about gender identity, relationships, and how even things that seem permanent can change. If you're a night person, you're in luck; if you're not, learn how to work that VCR, because it's scheduled to air one night only, Monday, June 30, at midnight. For latest info: www.showtimeonline.com. →



**BONJOUR,
MTV'S REAL WORLD!**

Set amid the stunning backdrop of France, this season's *Real World* finds six Americans and one Irish gay lad (Simon, pictured above) residing in a charming four-story French chateau located on the outskirts of Paris. Unlike previous seasons, this cast is confronted with a unique challenge of adjusting to a new culture.

Filled with unforgettable experiences of France, this year's cast finds themselves working as travel writers on Frommer's *Official Guide to Paris*. They report on Paris's nightlife and hot spots at exclusive clubs along the Champs Élysées, local pubs in Bastille, and trips through the Marais for a true Parisian shopping experience. Toward the middle of the season, viewers will get the chance to vacation with the cast as they set out on an unforgettable journey throughout Europe.

Included in the seven cast members is Simon, 18, a native to Ireland, who lives at home and goes to high school in a small village about an hour outside Dublin. His family's acceptance of his sexuality has allowed Simon to live an openly gay life. Since he was 16, Simon has spent his weekends enjoying the gay scene in Dublin. Simon has a great sense of humor and a quick wit, yet is remarkably mature for his age. Simon met his Spanish boyfriend on New Year's Eve, a few weeks before moving to Paris. Aware of the temptations of Paris nightlife, Simon plans to stay faithful. A working model with a flair for fashion, this handsome European intends to go to college, but has yet to apply to schools because he's unsure about his career goals.

At press time, MTV had scheduled to premiere the 13th season of *The Real World Paris* with a special one-hour episode on Tuesday, June 3, at 9 p.m. The series will continue to air on Tuesday nights in its regular scheduled timeslot of 9-9:30 p.m.



Ellen DeGeneres.



Ellen DeGeneres?

Television
continued from previous page

ELLEN & ELTON & MORE

*HBO's got Ellen's new special
plus an AIDS documentary narrated by Elton John*

Ellen DeGeneres: Here and Now

This past March, Ellen DeGeneres began her national stand-up tour, culminating with the May taping of this special at New York City's Beacon Theatre. Premieres Sunday, June 28, at 9 p.m. on HBO.

Pandemic: Facing AIDS

Narrated by Elton John, this documentary series of five half-hour films by Rory Kennedy takes a unique look at the world-

wide AIDS pandemic, melding intimate personal stories with a global perspective. *Pandemic: Facing AIDS* features an original score by Philip Glass and debuts Sunday, June 15, at 6 p.m. on HBO with the initial two parts, "Thailand" and "Uganda," followed by single half-hours on subsequent Sundays.

The Wire

While *The Wire*'s debut season explored America's urban drug war, the 12-episode second season will chronicle the steady decline of the working class in American cities, focusing on the Baltimore waterfront and its unions. Among the actors returning from the first season are Sonja Sohn (lesbian detective Shakima Greggs) and Michael K. Williams (gay criminal and police informant Omar). Premieres Sunday, June 1, at 9 p.m. on HBO, with repeat airings on June 3 (9 p.m.), 4th (10 p.m.), 6th (9 p.m.), and 20th (7 p.m.)

Sex and the City

The EmmyAward-winning hit comedy series about four women (which has been jokingly alluded to as a show about four gay men) began production on its sixth and final season March 31 in New York. The first 12 of 20 new half-hour episodes debut on HBO on Sundays (8 p.m.), June 22-September 14, with the remaining eight to air in January 2004.

More television continued on page 21

MORE ELLEN: Before you view Ellen's HBO special, you can at least hear her voice in the new Disney film, *Finding Nemo*. When Marlin's son Nemo gets lost on his way to his first day of school, Dory (Ellen) offers to help. The only problem is that Dory has severe short-term memory loss and forgets things as quickly as they happen. Together, this aquatic odd couple set out on an impossible mission. *Finding Nemo* is now playing in theaters everywhere.

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Jeff Danis and his son in *He's Having a Baby*

He's Having a Baby

Hollywood talent agent Jeff Danis is at the top of his game. He and his partner of 20 years, Don Pike, share a rich life, which includes a beautiful home, exotic vacations, and many close friends. However, as he approaches his 50th birthday, Danis feels his life is incomplete and dreams of becoming a father. When he shares his desire with Pike, their relationship is thrown into turmoil. *He's Having a Baby* chronicles the challenges they encounter on their journey to Saigon to become parents. *Airs Wednesday, June 4, at 6 p.m., on Cinemax, with a repeat airing on June 29 at 7 a.m.*

All About My Father

This touching account of a respected doctor and transvestite in a small Norwegian community comes from the only person who could make such a film—his son. Even Benestad wants his father to explain why he has broken up the family and resists accepting Esben Benestad's new identity as Esther Pirelli. His father, on the other hand, wants the world to know that gender is a fluid and personal concept. *Airs Wednesday, June 11, at 6 p.m., on Cinemax, with a repeat airing on June 29 at 5 a.m.*

No Dumb Questions

This touching and funny film looks at three inquisitive young sisters, ages 6, 9, and 11, who want to know why Uncle Bill has chosen to become a woman. They love their uncle, but will they feel the same about Aunt Barbara? With just weeks

until Bill's first visit as Barbara, the sisters navigate the complex territories of anatomy, sexuality, personality, gender, and fashion. A fresh perspective on a complex situation, *No Dumb Questions* proves there are no dumb questions. *Airs Wednesday, June 18, at 6 p.m., on Cinemax, with a repeat airing on June 29 at 7:45 a.m.*

Ruthie and Connie: Every Room in the House

Ruthie Berman and Connie Kurtz met as housewives in a tight-knit Jewish neighborhood in 1960s Brooklyn. Fourteen years later, realizing they were in love, they left their husbands for each other. Berman describes the early stages of their relationship as "the agony and the ecstasy"—the ecstasy of loving Kurtz and the agony of being a lesbian. Recalling the complexities of a lesbian relationship in the 1970s, Berman remembers how she considered jumping off the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, believing it would be easier for her children to deal with her death than the shame of having a lesbian mother. In a



Ruthie Berman and Connie Kurtz in
Ruthie and Connie: Every Room in the House

landmark 1988 legal case, Berman and Kurtz sued the New York City Board of Education for domestic partner benefits. Overnight, they became national heroines, and after a five-year struggle, made history again by winning those benefits for all New York City employees. Their successful lawsuit resulted in TV appearances on Phil Donahue's and Geraldo Rivera's talk shows, during which they literally flew out of the closet before millions of Americans. *Airs Wednesday, June 18, at 6 p.m., on Cinemax, with a repeat airing on June 29 at 7:45 a.m.*

GAY STARZ!

STARZ! Cinema examines the GLBT lifestyle with four films that will air on the anniversary of Stonewall, June 28.



Hedwig and the Angry Inch. After a botched sex change, an East German singer emigrates to America to make "her" mark. John Cameron Mitchell (pictured) is the star, the director, and the writer. 7 p.m.



My Beautiful Laundrette. Two young British films face financial problems and racial prejudice when they take over a struggling laundromat. The film, directed by Stephen Frears, stars Daniel Day-Lewis (r), Saeed Jaffrey (l), and Shirley Anne Field. 8:35 p.m.



The Closet. A boring, straight-laced accountant pretends to be gay in order to keep his job with a condom company. The film stars Gerard Depardieu (l), Daniel Auteuil (r), and Michael Aumont. 10:05 p.m.



Wilde follows the life of novelist Oscar Wilde (Stephen Fry, l) and his personal demons. The film costars Jude Law (r) and Vanessa Redgrave. 12:05 a.m. (Sunday, June 29) ■

BABY AND RUTHIE & CONNIE: HBO; HEDWIG: RAFFY/FINE LINE FEATURES; LAUNDRETTE: ORION PICTURES CORPORATION; CLOSET: MIRAMAX; WILDE: LIAM DANIEL/SONY PICTURES ENTERTAINMENT

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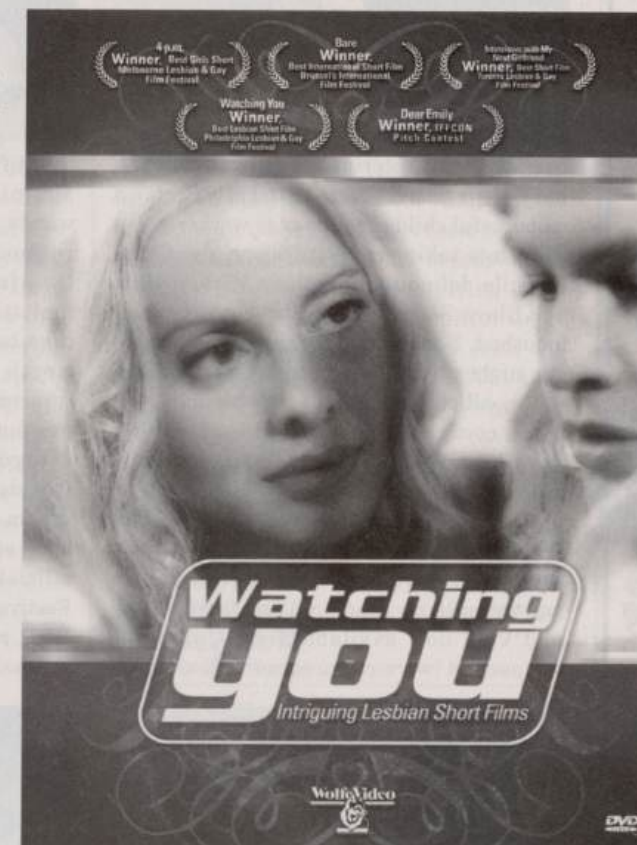
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The five films on *Watching You*:
• **Watching You.** A lesbian's hobby—photographing a captivating woman neighbor—causes trouble with her jealous girlfriend. In addition to winning Best Lesbian Short Film at the Philadelphia Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, *Watching You* has won awards in Berlin, Paris, Fresno, and Bologna. Directed by Stephanie Abramovich, Israel, 32 min.

• **4 PM.** Humorous tale of a one-night stand that goes terribly wrong. 4 PM won awards from gay and lesbian film festivals from around the world, including Seattle, Austin, Berlin, Melbourne, Barcelona, and Paris. Directed by Sam Backhurst, UK, 14 min.

• **Bare.** A hot one-night stand ignites a whole neighborhood of passion and romance. Winner of Best International Short at the Brussels International Film Festival. Directed by Deborah Strutt, Australia, 9 min.

• **Interviews with My Girlfriend.** A very particular single woman screens future prospects in a hilarious interview process. *Interviews* won the awards for Best Comedy and Audience Award at the planetout.com/HBO Short Movie awards, as well as top awards from gay and lesbian film



for a stranger's touch? Directed by Jacquie Lawrence, UK, 15 min.
Available June 24 from Wolfe Video (www.wolfevideo.com) or by calling 1-800-GET-WOLFE.

festivals in Paris, Austin, Philadelphia, Bologna, and Toronto. Directed by Cassandra Nicolaou, Canada, 13 min.

• **Dear Emily.** Sara recalls the drama of her senior year and an intense schoolgirl crush. Winner of the IFFCON Pitch Contest. Directed by Katherine Brooks, USA, 7 min.

The VHS edition will include a bonus short, **The Ten Rules: A Lesbian Survival Guide**, which takes a look at the pitfalls and pratfalls that happen when your friends aren't just your friends—they're also your dating pool. Directed by Lee Friedlander, USA, 28 min.

The DVD edition will include the six shorts listed above, plus two additional bonus titles. In **Traveling Companion**, an upcoming trip to romantic Italy persuades a travel writer to tempt fate and place an ad for a traveling companion. Directed by Paula Goldberg, USA, 20 min. In **Double Entente**, erotic tension builds when stressed-out Vanessa tries to meet her gorgeous lover Dulcie for an after-work cocktail. Will she settle

MGM'S SEVEN GAY CLASSICS

Groundbreaking gay films released to coincide with Gay Pride Month

Bent, *The Hanging Garden*, *Jeffrey*, *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *The Sum of Us*, *Wigstock*, and a special edition of *It's My Party* will all be available on DVD from MGM Home Entertainment on June 3. MGM Home Entertainment controls the home video and DVD rights to the largest modern library of filmed entertainment in the world. The company manages worldwide home video and DVD distribution rights to United Artists and current MGM Pictures theatrical releases, as well as titles from Orion, Goldwyn, and PolyGram libraries, totaling nearly 4,000 films. For more information about MGM Entertainment, visit www.mgmhomevideo.com.



• It's My Party

Eric Roberts gives a "touching, urgent performance" (*San Francisco Chronicle*) as Nick, a man whose three-year battle with AIDS is about to come to a close. Rather than face debilitation, he chooses to end his life, but not before throwing

the greatest farewell party of all time. The cast includes Lee Grant, Marlee Matlin, Margaret Cho, Gregory Harrison, Olivia Newton-John, Bronson Pinchot, George Segal, and Roddy McDowall. Featured on the DVD: a candid interview with the writer/director Randal Kleiser, also featuring Roberts and Harrison; 15 deleted and extended scenes; a behind-the-scenes featurette highlighting "The Kiss" scene, a photo gallery of 100; and much more.

• Bent

Max (Clive Owen) is a handsome young man who, after a fateful tryst with a German soldier, is forced to run for his life. Pursued and captured, Max is placed in a concentration camp, where he pretends to be Jewish because gays

are the lowest form of human beings in the eyes of the Nazis. But it takes a forbidden relationship with an openly gay prisoner (Lothaire Bluteau) to teach Max that without the love of another, life is not worth living. With Ian McKellen and Mick Jagger.

• The Hanging Garden

Ten years have passed since William (Chris Leavins) last visited his hometown. Now trim, attractive, and as headstrong as he once was sullen, he is ready to face his dysfunctional family. But when the visit conjures up a haunting reality long since buried, William must accept that his appearance has been the least of the changes in his and his family's lives since the day he left.

• Jeffrey

Disenchanted with the not-so-romantic side of safe sex, sweet, single, and obsessive Jeffrey (Steven Weber) vows to become completely celibate. No sooner has he sworn off sex than he meets hunky, sensitive Steve (Michael T. Weiss). Just as passion starts to ignite, Steve reveals some earth-shattering information, leaving Jeffrey to choose between losing the man of his dreams or taking a risk on what might be true love. With Patrick Stewart.

• My Beautiful Laundrette

My Beautiful Laundrette tells the story of Omar (Saeed Jaffrey), a bright-eyed Pakistani teenager who wants to make something of himself while living with his alcoholic father in a shabby flat. Daniel Day-Lewis plays Omar's lover Johnny. As Omar's papa drowns deeper in vodka and self-pity, Omar turns to his unscrupulous wheeling-and-dealing Uncle Nasser to show him the key to success. When Nasser hires Omar as manager of a seedy, dilapidated laundromat, Omar is forced to choose between running a squeaky-clean establishment and conducting some very dirty business.

• The Sum of Us

Harry Mitchell (Jack Thompson) has a problem with his gay son Jeff (Russell Crowe)... Harry thinks he's playing it way too straight! With a loving push out of the nest and into the gay bars of Sydney, he becomes his son's biggest cheerleader. But it's Harry's secret romance with an attractive but judgmental divorcee that puts father and son at odds and prompts them to discover that acceptance is a two-way street.

• Wigstock

Outrageous, outlandish, and totally out of the closet, Wigstock is a heavily mascaraed look at New York's most extravagant celebration of drag. This uninhibited look at the annual Wigstock Festival takes you behind the scenes—and into the dressing rooms—for an uproarious play-by-play of the self-proclaimed "Super Bowl of drag"! With RuPaul, Lyssinka, Crystal Waters, The "Lady" Bunny, Deee-Lite, Alexis Arquette, Jackie Beat, John Kelly, Debbie Harry, and the Dueling (Tallulah) Bankheads, it's a dazzling musical celebration of life, love, and lipstick.

DVD and VHS continued from previous page



Get Your Stuff

Phil (Cameron Watson) is a respected psychotherapist and couples counselor. Eric (Anthony Meindl) is a successful attorney. They have lots of friends, tons of money, and host pool parties complete with appropriately flamboyant

friends. In the interim of waiting to adopt a baby, their friend Gloria (Kimberly Scott), a resourceful child services case worker, talks them into taking in "just for one night" two juvenile delinquent brothers (Grady Hutt and Blayn Barbosa) who turn out to be foul-mouthed, liquor-cabinet-raiding terrorists. As one night stretches into many, the "father-son" conflicts escalate. Things become even more complicated when the alcoholic, prostitute, junkie mama (Elaine Hendrix) arrives on the scene to retrieve her kids—until she sees the mansion and the open bar. What results is a lively and touching comedy that explores what we think love looks like and the unlikely places we find family. DVD and VHS now available from Culture Q Connection (www.cultureqconnection.com).



The New Women

Lisa LaStrada (cult superstar Mary Woronov of *Eating Raoul* and *Death Race 2000*) is a recovering alcoholic with a philandering husband and a bitch for a sister. After a mysterious apocalyptic rainstorm puts all the men in the world into comas (with a sexy sci-fi twist), society plunges into chaos. Acerbic Lisa and her friends seek out Elysium, a new society rumored to be made by women for women. On the road, they find their path blocked by new-age hippy chicks and angry lady bikers. Will they make it to safety, or are they chasing a dream? Watch



Frida

Frida chronicles the life of famed artist Frida Kahlo (Salma Hayek) from her humble upbringing to her rise to international fame, capturing the life of an amazing woman and artist who conquered her own limitations and earned the respect of the world. This stunningly beautiful film embraces the turbulence that surrounded both Frida and her husband, the artist Diego Rivera (Alfred Molina), and it doesn't shy away from her bisexuality—not only is there the sensual dance between her and photographer Tina Modotti (Ashley Judd), but there is a love scene between her and performer Josephine Baker. Available from Miramax Home Entertainment (www.miramax.com).

out—you are entering no man's land. DVD or VHS now available from Culture Q Connection (www.cultureqconnection.com).



Ibiza Dream

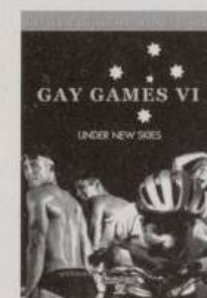
Ibiza Dream, the enticing, erotic-tinged film from the new Spanish generation filmmaker Igor Fioravanti, examines the lives of three people, friends since childhood, who live and play on the beautiful island of Ibiza, Spain. Carlos (Paco Marin) is filled with a lust for freedom and wants to live, experiment, and indulge without limits or taboos. Chica (Adriana Domínguez), not satisfied with the limitations of her lifestyle, realizes she must take her life into her own hands to find it worth living. Nacho (Adrià Collado), returning from India, attempts to apply his newfound spiritual enlightenment to his everyday existence. Although the three friends differ in many ways, they all allow a dream of freedom that their magical island once embodied for them. *Ibiza Dream*, an official selection in the 2002 Berlin Film Festival, is in Spanish with English subtitles. DVD and VHS now available from Strand Releasing (www.strandreleasing.com).



La Rép tition

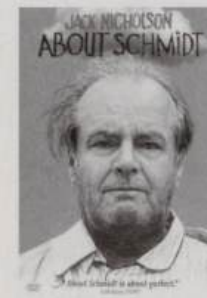
La Rép tition, the latest film from writer/director Catherine Corsini, features complex and riveting performances from the dazzling Emmanuelle B art (8 Women, *Mission: Impossible*) as Nathalie, and Pascale Bussi res (*When Night Is Falling*) as Louise, two professional women who rekindle their friendship after a tumultuous breakup. Meeting by chance after a decade apart, Louise insinuates herself into Nathalie's life. The two become embroiled in an erotic and emotional codependency that fuels their passion, but ultimately tears them apart. The French title

La Rép tition (Replay in English) contains a double meaning that relates not only to a play rehearsal but a repetition compulsion in which Louise grows increasingly obsessed with Nathalie, attempting to re-create the adolescent bond with her childhood girlfriend only to experience rejection. *La Rép tition*, an official selection at the Cannes Film Festival, is in French with English subtitles. DVD and VHS now available from Strand Releasing (www.strandreleasing.com).



Gay Games VI: Under New Skies

In November 2002, 12,000 athletes from every corner of the globe came to Sydney, Australia. Join them as they take you into the heart of the world's most inclusive sporting event. This two-disc, five-hour DVD will help you experience the magic of this memorable event even if you weren't there. It is the most comprehensive coverage of the Gay Games in history. Includes opening press conference with k.d. lang, 24 sports featurettes, 16 slide shows with over 500 photos, and much more. DVD available June 24 from Wolfe Video (www.wolfefideo.com) or by calling 1-800-GET-WOLFE.



About Schmidt

"Warren Schmidt (Jack Nicholson) is about to experience a bitter-sweet slice of life. Newly retired, he and his wife Helen have big plans to see America—but an unexpected twist changes everything. Now Schmidt is determined to stop his daughter's (Hope Davis) wedding to an under-achieving waterbed salesman (Dermot Mulroney). From meeting the groom's eccentric parents to sponsoring a Tanzanian foster child, Schmidt sets off on his mission... and gets lost along the road to self-discovery." That was the synopsis on the DVD cover. What the synopsis doesn't mention is Kathy Bates. Though there's nothing gay about Bates's character, when seeing the film in the theater, the audience clapped when she revealed her nude body. There was a general glee of seeing a *real* body on the big screen. As a lesbian friend who was with me said, "Gravity is having its marvelous effect." So, you can watch the film because it's a good film, but you've got the added attraction of Bates's wonderful "ampleness." DVD and VHS available June 3 from New Line Home Entertainment (www.newline.com). —Blase DiStefano



Those Who Walk in Darkness

Hot off the heels of releasing the hit animated *Sistas 'N the City* DVD, Urban Entertainment gears up for the release of the urban anime sci-fi movie *Those Who Walk in Darkness*,

which was inspired by the hit animated web series of the same name. The animated movie revolves around the character Soledad, who is voiced by hip-hop's Grammy-winning, fashion-forward Queen Bee Lil' Kim. Soledad is a female super-cop living in futuristic Los Angeles that has become home to people with amazing genetic structures—giving them powers that make them frighteningly superior to normal humans. She joins the Meta-normal Tactical Unit (MTAC) that must face off against these strangely powerful humans. The writer/creator is screenwriter/novelist John Ridley, who wrote *Three Kings* (George Clooney, Ice Cube, and Mark Wahlberg) and is currently writing Halle Berry's next film, *Foxy Brown*. He also created the new UPN drama *Platinum*. DVD and VHS available June 3 from Urban Entertainment. ■

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Who's

your

Daddy?

You probably know B.D. Wong as the chaplain on HBO's prison drama *Oz*, which only recently ended its five-year run. Or maybe you've seen him as the forensic psychologist on the currently airing NBC series *Law and Order: SVU*. Or maybe you have spotted him in one of the more than 20 feature films he has worked on, which include *Father of the Bride I and II*, *Jurassic Park*, and *Seven Years in Tibet*. You might recall his co-starring role as a member of television's first Asian-American family in *All-American Girl*, starring Margaret Cho. Wong also guest-starred on *X-Files*, *Sesame Street*, and *Chicago Hope* and appeared in HBO's film version of Randy Shilts's book *And the Band Played On*.

Now he's coming out . . . in more ways than one.

In his first book, *Following Foo* (the electronic adventures of the Chestnut Man), Wong writes, "Once upon a time, my partner and I found ourselves expecting [a baby] with the help of a surrogate mother, modern medical science, and lots of good luck and prayers. To add to our blessing, she was carrying twins! Things were pretty swell . . . until the twins arrived almost three months early. For those of you who don't know, babies that come almost three months early are pretty little, and boy are they scary looking. Especially when you're their dad. . ."

So, not only is Wong coming out with his first book, he's coming out of the closet, because in order to tell his touching tale of the birth of his son Jackson Foo Wong, he has to mention his agent Richie Jackson, who also happens to be his partner of 15 years.

In *Following Foo* (HarperCollins), Wong recounts the loss of one of the babies and the other boy's three-month stay in intensive care, a true story told in an unconventional style. We are privy to real-time e-mails from his family, friends, even strangers, in this fearless account of a fearful time. Ultimately, it's an uplifting story, and a parallel to the way he lives his own life. →

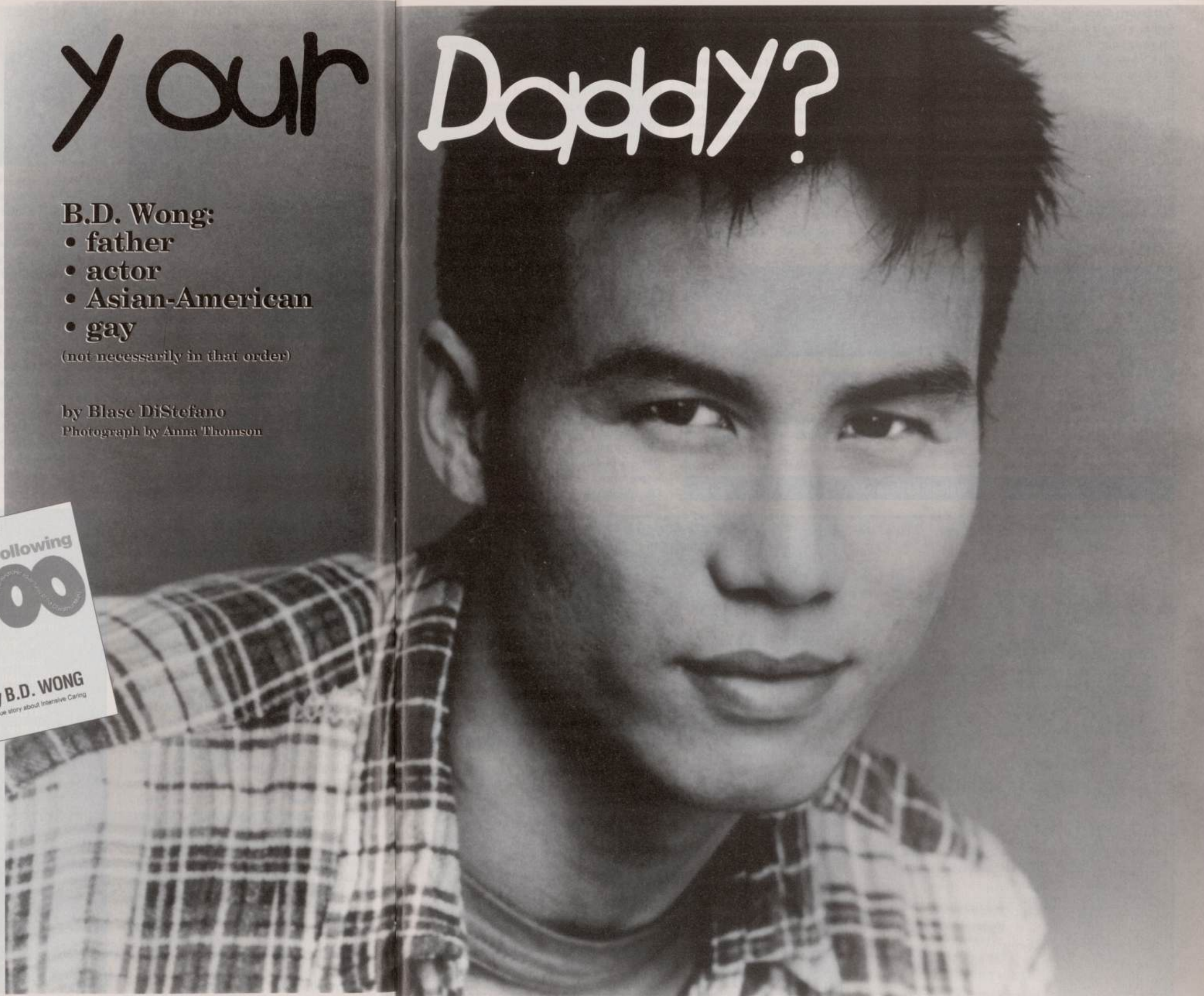
B.D. Wong:

- father
- actor
- Asian-American
- gay

(not necessarily in that order)

by Blase DiStefano

Photograph by Anna Thomson



OutSmart: Since this is our June issue and Father's Day is June 15, my first question is "How is your son?"

B.D. Wong: Oh, he's very well. I don't want to go into much more detail than the fact that he's very well and that we're all very happy.

How old he is now?

He's two and three quarters.

The terrible twos?

Which aren't so terrible really. To some people I think they are.

Is the reason you don't want to go into it a little more because you want him to have a private life?

I want him to have a private life, and I also

want people to read the book with not as full an understanding of everything. The book does have a happy resolution, but I do want them to get the answer, I don't want to just share too much of that.

It has a lot to do with the privacy issue too because, Blase, this is all so new to me. I don't know how else to say it except that I'm not particularly a real forthcoming person in general. I'm not struggling, but I do constantly have to think, *Gee, when do you cross the line between not being fully out and being out? What exactly are you giving away? What are you doing besides that?* Is it your obligation to tell everything is what I'm saying.

I guess you just have to reach some kind of compromise or balance.

Yes, and I think that what happens is that you feel an obligation to give more and more and more away. I think we just assume that celebrities' lives are kind of an open slate for the general public, and of course they're not. So I have to constantly temper my feeling of responsibility.

And it's gonna get a little more difficult with the book coming out.

It is. I'm comfortable with everything that's in the book. I feel like the book and the experiences that are described in the book happened to me for a reason. And one of the reasons is because of the book—and that I had to do that. I had to write the book. I didn't know earlier on when I was a young man that this was going to happen to me, but now it seems like it makes so much sense that there is this book.

Did it allow you to process all that grief and all that joy?

Absolutely. It absolutely did. And I was grateful for the experience, and I was grateful for the arrows all pointing towards this book. And this book's coming out is a tremendous life-changing experience for me on so many different planes.

Did you feel that working on *Oz* was a good experience?

Oh, absolutely. I will miss it. It was a great



B.D. Wong as Father Ray Mukada on HBO's prison drama *Oz*. The part was written for him.

experience for me. It was a role that carried a little more depth than the roles that I've had on television. And I enjoyed that immensely. That was a really refreshing thing for somebody like me who likes to work more deeply. That was a great sense of pride for me to be on that show because the part was written for me.

I interviewed Rita Moreno a couple of years ago and she was just fantastic ["Rita Reigns," Feb. 2001]. Did you have a chance to spend any time with her?

A little. I did know her from working on the show pretty closely with her, and I haven't really socialized with her that much outside of the show, but she's just a wonderful, vibrant, and important person.

At one point, she was the only female performer to win the Oscar, Emmy, Tony, and Grammy. Which reminds me, at this particular time, you're the only actor to have won five awards [Outer Critics Circle, Theatre World, Drama Desk, Clarence Derwent, and Tony] for one role in a Broadway play [*M. Butterfly*]. So why in the hell didn't you get the role in the film?

Oh well, I'm not the person to ask. The person who doesn't get the role in anything is never the person to ask. I do know that if you've seen the movie, the movie is considerably different from the play and in my opinion not necessarily to an advantage as to who would benefit from it. That would tend to indicate that the director had very different ideas about what it was going to be. And so that would probably indicate why he might not choose me.

That makes sense. I also interviewed Margaret Cho, and she, too, was wonderful ["The Non-Wicked Witch of the East," July 1999]. Did you have any idea of what was going on behind the scenes while you were working on *All-American Girl*?

Oh yes, because I was close to Margaret. There were a bunch of us on this ride together, and we certainly didn't know everything, but I generally had an understanding of where all the tension and misfires were coming from. It was very interesting. It had some great people doing it, and it was a great learning experience for the future of what a television show can or can't be and what makes one successful.

Do you find that you're discriminated against more for being gay or for being Asian American?

I haven't been out until this book came out. I haven't been in really. There are a lot of shades of gray. This is what we're going to find out. This is what I mean when I'm telling you that the book chose me.

I guess things will be a lot different when the book comes out.

In some ways, I'm sure it will be, and in other ways, hopefully I've established what it is that I do as an actor and that maybe that can be fully appreciated. Although there will always be people that aren't able to get outside of it or whatever.

Sure, but that's...

... the nature of the business for all different

I'm not the person to ask about why I didn't get the part in *M. Butterfly* the movie. You might talk to the person and give them a truth serum, and they might say, "Well you know what, he didn't shower that day."

kinds of people.

Do you still feel discrimination as an Asian American?

Oh yeah. That doesn't go away. That's probably never going to go away.

Is it rather obvious to you? Do they make it obvious or...

Sometimes they make it very obvious. Sometimes they don't even know it. And it's hard to explain. It's like discrimination is a very mercurial thing, so it can't often be identified when it's happening. Sometimes it can be identified in retrospect. And very seldom is it admitted. I think there will be a time when people will try to find another way

to, but it's like the kind of uncomfortableness of rejection, as human beings have a terrible time rejecting one another. Because they know how it feels to be rejected, they often temper their rejection with subterfuge. An actor's rejection is often filled with the smokescreen.

Like I've told you, I'm not the person to ask about why I didn't get the part in *M. Butterfly* the movie. You might talk to the person and give them a truth serum, and they might say, "Well you know what, he didn't shower that day." And you wouldn't ever know this. So because of that, I think people temper their rejection with a lot of things which are sometimes completely irrelevant. I think that that's what happens with racial rejection, and yet at the same time, there are obvious things that happen to you that will show you quite clearly that in fact that's what's happening. I've been at it long enough to know the pattern of it and to be able to identify it, to be pretty sure about it, although you can never be 100 percent sure about it.

Unless they say, I'm not hiring you because you're Asian American, which they would never do.

Yeah, they would never do that. So you have to read between the lines, and more often than not, I can tell you when it's happened to me and when it hasn't. It's just one of those things that if you can't accept it, then you really can't be an actor. I accept it to a certain point. I do try to make it better. I do what I can.

At least it doesn't stop you from moving on.

I hope not. Two parts on the latest jobs that I've had, *Oz* and *Law and Order: SVU*, were devoid of any kind of racial discrimination or stereotyping or any of that. That's refreshing to me. And yet they're all pretty small parts. You have to say, "Well, look, this is a big step for Asian Americans in one way, because it's dignified work and it's definitely..."

I fish for a lot for words, forgive me. "It's dignified and there's nothing to be ashamed of." There's nothing for me to worry about as far as people who see it—do they think I've set my people back 10 years or not. Yet at the same time, there aren't a lot of opportunities, and there certainly aren't the same opportunities that my Caucasian counterparts have. That's something that I have to accept and do whatever I can to overcome.

Your role is good, but it's still not the star. Yes, and to a certain extent, self-empowerment and self-generation are what many artists like myself enjoy. That is what the




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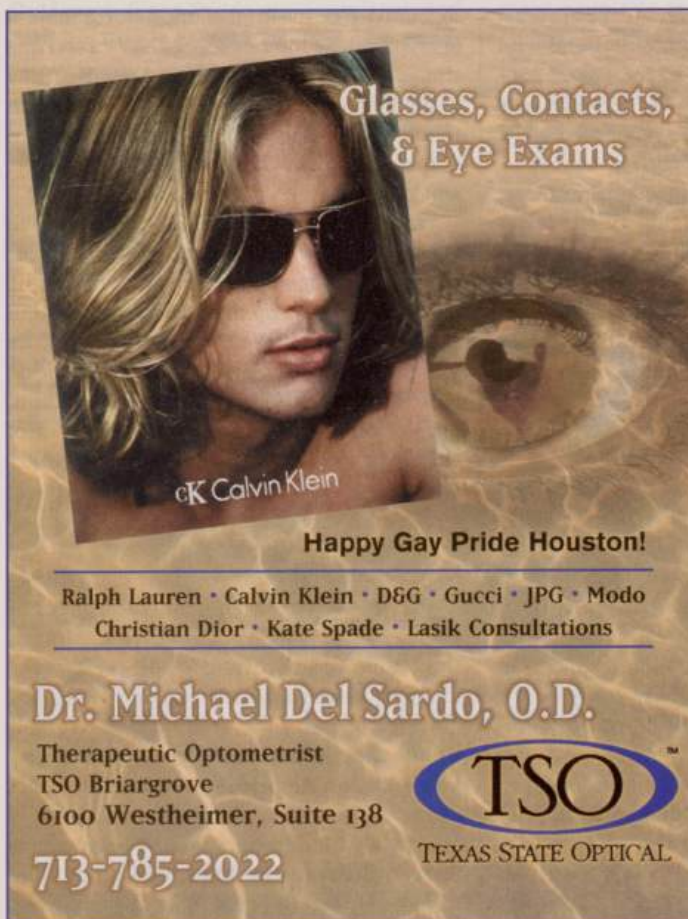
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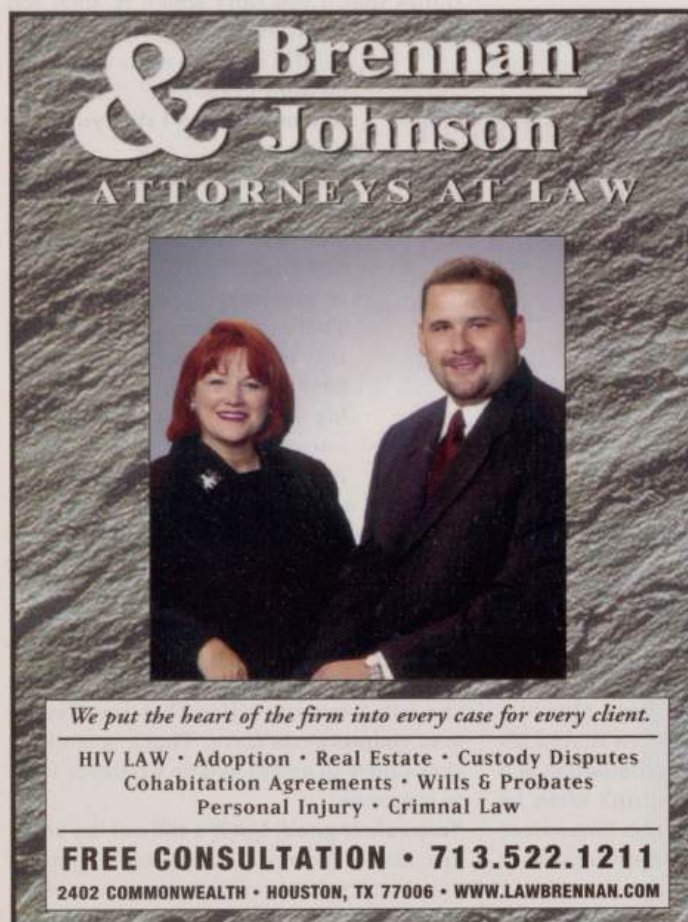
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book is partially for me. This is how I choose to represent myself creatively, because I'm not representing myself creatively on these two TV shows as much as someone might think. It's dignified and a fantastic living, but aside from those two things, I don't wish it to be mistaken as a representation of my creative self. I'm really working for other people.

This book is the first time that I've ever been able to express myself to the fullest spectrum of my creative ability, right down to the cover art and the inside design of the book, with very little intervention from anyone else and very little control from a corporation, which is what always happens on TV.

That's a good feeling, isn't it?
Oh, it's wonderful. Maybe this isn't good for the Asian-American actors, but it makes me put less pressure on trying to squeeze blood out of a network for a skinny little part in a one-hour drama, because it's been very hard for Asian-American actors at all levels of accomplishment, including myself.

It's just mind-boggling.
It is mind-boggling, because Asian people buy things. There is a high percentage of Asian Americans in this country, and yet it doesn't add up for the networks to put it together from a marketing perspective. That is the bottom line.

The gay community representation on television is similarly afflicted, although as a gay person, it doesn't affect me as much, because I don't get offered those kinds of parts. I get offered neither the gay stereotypical parts nor the Asian stereotypical parts at this stage of my career. That's in some way a positive thing, but they're still out there.

It seems to take a lot for people to understand that gay people and Asian people are in real life, are effortlessly and seamlessly integrated into our culture. Our interaction with your average Asian or gay person is completely effortless. In a drama, it doesn't require

any extra to say, "Oh, gee, a gay person waited on me today." You don't have to capitalize the letters or underline or italicize it. You just have to say it, you just have to live life with an assumption that it's an extremely and wonderfully diverse country that we live in, and part of our everyday life is the experience of that diversity.

Television is somehow not able to effortlessly do that. They can't put a kind of minimally effeminate gay character in a show without creating a whole gay scenario. The justification mars any kind of true depiction of real life. We don't justify it in real life, so as soon as we justify something on television, whether that person be Asian or Hispanic or Native American or gay, we're already doing a discredit to the storytelling. And TV is supposed to be all about storytelling, and that's too bad. **I imagine that with theater people, there must be a feeling of inclusiveness.**

There is, and there is still homophobia in casting. People are all very hung up on what it means to be straight acting, what it means to be out.

Are you at home right now? I think I hear Jackson in the background.

Yeah, can you hold on a second? *Wong to Jackson:* Hi. What do you want to say? Do you want to come here and say hello? Did you finish your lunch? You did? Pasta, what was on top of the pasta? Tomatoes? Was there anything else on top of the pasta? Was there cheese? Cheese, yep. Well, are you ready for a nap? Could you go night night, or play with cars for 20 minutes, all right? All right. You want to give me a kiss? Can I have a kiss?

Wong to OutSmart: Excuse me, sorry about that.

Oh, that's OK.

Wong to Jackson: Well, where are you going? Don't hit your head, OK?

Jackson to OutSmart: Hi.

Hi.

Wong to Jackson: You're very happy, now that you had some pasta, right? You were a little

cranky before that. Bye bye.

Wong to OutSmart: OK.

So we were talking about homophobia in the theater.

There just is, but not that I feel a victim of it necessarily. But I think that there is generally some. And I shouldn't shoot down what you're saying. There is definitely less in theater. If it weren't for gay people, there would be no musical theater. There would be no Broadway musical, and no one to go see a Broadway musical. And that's fantastic. We can't deny that, but as far as the casting process is concerned, I find it to be a general male-mindedness, which is not exclusive to racism. It's a certain narrow-mindedness that keeps you from getting a part because you're tall/you're not tall. That's the kind of narrow-mindedness that would include homophobia—it's just general narrow-mindedness in casting. The theater is supposed to be a wonderful open and highly creative place, and in some places, it is. Broadway has become very commercial, so there are still challenges, but it's certainly better than it was when I started out. And I'm not giving up on it.

You recently starred with Charles Busch in *Shanghai Moon*. How was that?

It was really a dream come true. He's just a singularly talented and brilliant individual. And it was a great experience for me; it was a terrific part. A very, very funny play. It was a terrific match of Charles Busch and the

Television can't put a kind of minimally effeminate gay character in a show without creating a whole gay scenario. The justification mars any kind of true depiction of real life. We don't justify it in real life, so as soon as we justify something on television, we're already doing a discredit to the storytelling.

company that I'm a member of called Drama Department. They often do revivals of older plays, but this was a new play that Charles had written. Charles always writes in a kind of retro cinematic style, makes fun of old films. His performances are always an homage to the great ladies of the cinema. So this was a good match as far as the style of the play and the company's kind of mission. **Did you happen to see the *Advocate* review?**

I heard about the *Advocate* review, but I don't read reviews. I tell people not to tell me what



B.D. Wong (l) with Richie Jackson, his partner of 15 years.

they say, especially when I'm doing the play. I just remember that I was told that the *Advocate* review was a good review.

Yes, would you mind if I just read one sentence?

I get so *Oh, gee* about it, because I don't want to know. And I want to be consistent about this, because professional criticism really boggles my mind. I don't necessarily understand its value. I understand people who are not into theater who read and want to know

what something is, but when somebody gets in their whole opinion about something, that's one person's opinion, and it baffles me. Therefore, I don't read them, and even though I would love to hear what you were going to say, I will say let's be above board about it and don't tell me. But I did hear that it was a good review—of course, that's always good for the show. [From the *Advocate*: "Busch is

surrounded by some very good actors, most notably B.D. Wong as Gong Fei, hilarious whenever he turns out to the audience to intone any Chinese name (and breathtaking when he strips to the waist)."]

I had a wonderful chemistry with Charles in the play, and it was a great experience for me because it was a real leading man's part that I would not have gotten under other circumstances. It was the perfect part for me. I dare say there wasn't anybody else that could do the part the way that I could, not because I'm the most talented person in the

world, but because it was a really good match of everything that I like to do and everything that I think that I am. I enjoyed it tremendously, and Charles and I had a great time together and I didn't know him prior to this very well at all. Have you seen any pictures of what the show looked like or anything?

Just the photo from the *Advocate*.

Is it Charles?

It's you and Charles.

Oh, I see. It was great fun. It was gorgeously designed on a minimal budget, and it was a huge hit. It was great fun and highly creative.

How is it working on *Law and Order*?

Law and Order is my day job in some ways. It's every week, and it's always one of the top-rated shows of the week. It's got a tremendous audience, which is something that is good for me as an actor, but as far as the work is concerned, it's not particularly interesting. It's just kind of what it is. I am grateful for it and I love it, but I got to do a play like *Shanghai Moon* and I got to go *Wow, I'm my creative self all of a sudden*. The book was the same thing—*Here I am, this is what my creative potential is*. My contract with *Law and Order* is so great, because it allows me to do other things. I don't really want a job like Chris Meloni [the star of *Law and Order*] has, because he works every single day, 16 hours a day. I'm grateful that I was able to do *Shanghai Moon* while I was doing *SVU*—I was going back and forth, leaving the set and rushing to the theater at night, and that felt so romantic and fantastic.

I know our time is up, but I've only got one more question. Are you adapting *Following Foo* for the screen?

I am. What I really hope for is to use some of the same creative energy that went into the book, because in some ways we reinvented the book, the form of the book. It wasn't a conventionally written book, and I am trying to implement some of that same unexpectedness in the screenplay. It will not be like a TV movie about this dramatic thing that happened. There will be lots of images and different funny things that happen that all add up to this one thing. Kind of like the way the book is.

I hope that works for you. The process is usually what's more important anyway.

That's certainly what worked for me in the book. And now at this point it's like who knows if anybody will buy the book or read the book, but at the same point in time, in the same way, I have the book for Jackson to read, and that is really my one thing that I care about. I actually have copies that have just come back from the printer, and they're gorgeous. And so there is that for him now. And so it doesn't matter what happens. We're leaving it all up to God now. ■

Out in the Arts

by D.L. Groover



A Lifetime moment? No, this is a still from lesbian director Dorothy Arzner's *Wild Party*.

DOROTHY GOES TO THE MOVIES. Dorothy Arzner wasn't the first woman movie director (there were surprisingly many during film's pioneer days). But she was the only one during Hollywood's "golden age" to breach the studio walls and become "one of the boys." That she was a flaming bull dyke in tailored suits and ties, with close-cropped hair, who lived for 40 years with choreographer Marion Morgan, ratchets up our curiosity and celebration.

When Hollywood formed itself into an "industry" in the late '20s, women were excluded from the club. They could author

screenplays, edit the men's celluloid, or slave away as seamstresses in the studio's wardrobe department, but they could not direct. Arzner entered through editing, and her invaluable work convinced Paramount that in order to keep her, they better make her happy and give her what she wanted. Between 1927 and 1943, Arzner directed 17 features. Almost all have unconventional heroines, strong and self-sufficient, who must reconcile marriage and career. Like James Whale's movies, her films resonate with gay subtexts, and this mini-retrospective at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston is the perfect

representation for Pride month's Houston Gay & Lesbian Film Festival.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 713/639-7300

Working Girls (1931)

June 1, 5 pm

Anybody's Woman (1930)

June 13, 7 pm

Honor Among Lovers (1931)

June 13, 8:30 pm

Merrily We Go to Hell (1932)

June 14, 7 pm

HALLELUJAH. I'm a sucker for historical plays, so when I learned that the AD

Players was presenting a work about George Frederick Handel and the writing of his oratorio *Messiah*, I had to see it. Now, I know, this troupe with their mission statement of Christian theater ministry might be a turnoff for you pagans out there, but sometimes you've just got to have a little faith.

Tim Slover's *Joyful Noise* (through June 8) is a splendidly realized surprise. Thoroughly entertaining, wickedly clever, and brought to life with imaginative design by Troy McLaughlin and Lee Walker, and sumptuous costuming from Donna Southern, the play documents Handel's adversities in getting one of civilization's greatest accomplishments on the stage. Not the writing of it—the producing of it. Handel, you see, never had trouble filling a blank manuscript page. Prolific and ready with a tune for any occasion, if he couldn't come up with one, he borrowed someone else's.

Handel was music's first impresario. A businessman as well as musician, he arrived in London from Germany in 1710 during the boom times of Italian opera and gave them better than they knew. He managed his own theater and became the world's most famous composer. His fortunes ebbed and flowed. He grew fatter in London, becoming an English citizen, and his music defines the Georgian period.

One of the most fascinating personal details of GFH's life is that he never married and left scant clues about his private life. His biographers (when they deign to mention such a topic) have never satisfactorily answered the perplexing question about his sex life. We can only surmise about the "sweet Saxon." Slover's play doesn't go there, but this tantalizing speculation is hardly missed with all the other wrangling and drama going on backstage and at the court of the other German George in London at the time, George II.

Unlike Handel's glorious music, the play is slightly windy and could stand some judicious use of the red pencil, especially in those stretches involving the whining Susanna Cibber. This most prodigiously talented of English actress/singers was never the misguided, maligned waif she appears here.

The cast, though, is splendid. Marion Arthur Kirby captures the expansive boisterousness of England's greatest import in both the physical and spirit. Courtney Blythe has a field day as low-brow high-soaring soprano Kitty Clive. And Ric Hodgins is sardonic royal wit to perfection. AD Players, 713/526-2721

AND KEEP IN MIND

Alice in Wonderland

June 5–15

Houston Ballet

Wortham Theatre Center, 713/227-ARTS

Ben Stevenson's version of the Lewis Carroll classic has the Houston Ballet talking as well as dancing. This production is Stevenson's swan song. He departs July 1 for Dallas/Fort Worth Ballet (to be renamed Texas Dance Theatre) to become that company's artistic director. A gala farewell tribute to his 27-year directorship takes place at the Wortham on June 15.

Hamlet

Through June 22

Alley Theatre, 713/228-8421

Arguably the world's greatest play, Shakespeare's tragedy is grand enough to withstand anything. Olivier overlaid the great Dane with Freud; Gielgud gave him intellect; Barrymore, a matinee idol's sexiness; Burton, a menacing intensity; and, game girl that she was, Judith Anderson never did look good in tights. Alley Theatre resident hunk Ty Mayberry assays the eponymous hero. He is the right age for Elsinore's prince, but will he go Nordic blond (like Olivier) or keep his intense brooding darkness? We look forward to what director Greg Boyd has in store for the dysfunctional royals. ■



Alas, poor Yorick: Ty Mayberry tackles *Hamlet* at the Alley Theatre.



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AIDA

Elton John's Aida opens in Houston for the first time



THE PEOPLE OF AIDA (l-r): Elton John, Tim Rice, Jeremy Kushner, Paulette Ivory, Lisa Brescia, and Mickey Dolenz.

The pleasure boats that ply the Nile can be pretty high end. Polished mahogany, waxed brass fittings, fresh flowers, and an educated staff pamper the tourists along such watery stops with legendary names like Dendera, Edfu, Tell el-Amarna, and Kom Ombo. You're never far from the pharaonic life once aboard. For all their four-star luxury, though, the ships never detract from the stupendous archeological sites that always take center stage. This cannot be said for Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida*, playing through June 15 on its national tour at the Hobby Center.

Aida is produced by Disney Theatrical Productions, whose current Broadway shows, *Lion King* and *Beauty and the Beast*, rake in a nifty 93 percent weekly average attendance. *Aida* has had a bumpy ride down the pre-Broadway cataracts. After a disastrous and critically panned Atlanta world premiere, the show was completely overhauled. A behemoth of a rotating pyramid was the first to go. The director, choreographer, set designer, and leading man followed. Infused with cash from Disney's bottomless pockets, tightened and stripped of excess, given a Zen-like design gloss, the

show opened in New York to respectable reviews and four Tony awards in 2000 (original music and lyrics, leading actress, set design, lighting design). It's still running.

While not the groundbreaking theatrical experience that is *Lion King*, nor the inelegant knockoff that is *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aida* is at least slick and diverting. Taking its source from Verdi's opera masterpiece, yet unfortunately retaining none of its barbaric splendor or seething volcanic emotions, this show straddles the politically correct and smoothes out the rough edges of miscegenation, messy political intrigue, and those familial themes that so obsessed Verdi. *Aida*'s been Disneyfied. However, if you love signature Elton John music, this show's for you. The ballad "Elaborate Lives," the campy "My Strongest Suit," and the pop-rock "Like Father Like Son" are so vintage Sir John you can imagine him pounding on a piano behind the scrim.

Giving a sitcom spin to the musical, or unwilling to play the drama straight, the creators have camped up the opera's romance triangle by turning the Egyptian princess Amneris into a Nile valley girl. She lives to

shop. Her mantra is "I am what I wear." As in the opera, her betrothal to the war hero Radames is compromised when the enslaved Nubian princess Aida and Radames fall in love. For all their soulful rock-star wailings, the lovers, played by Jeremy Kushner and Paulette Ivory, don't spark much interest, and their fabled coupling to last the ages is dry as mummy dust. Only Lisa Brescia's Amneris and Mickey Dolenz's Zoser, Radames's scheming father, bring the musical to life. Yes, that Mickey Dolenz, the ex-Monkee who has made a credible musical theater career out of touring shows as varied as *Grease* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. His supporting role as the villain is way too short, but he struts the hell out of his two numbers.

It's Lisa Brescia's spoiled princess who steals the show with her legally blond attitude and over-the-top fashion show. She also gets to emerge from a royal bath in one of Bob Crowley's most breathtakingly imaginative sets. Each of his designs steals whatever Brescia doesn't. The work of these two is reason enough to sit through *Aida*.

David Groover saw Aida in Columbus, Ohio.



TALKING WITH AMNERIS

Backstage, scrubbed and out of her gowns, Lisa Brescia exudes sweetness and levelheadedness. Unassuming, she is the most refreshing of actors. When she says she's thrilled to be in the show, you believe her.

Hired as Amneris's stand-in, she has played the role since September. She is a latebloomer in musical theater, having paid her show-biz dues as a member of the Mamas and the Papas international revival tour from 1993 to 1998. The last time she was in Houston she was playing Six Flags as a mamma. A stint in *Jesus Christ Superstar* on Broadway followed, as did musical theater work at Connecticut's prestigious Goodspeed Opera House and roles in regional musical theater across the states.

"My friends would say, you're doing *Brigadoon*? Rock-and-roll girl is doing *Brigadoon*?"

"I took a circuitous route. I went to the American Academy of Dramatic Arts with every intention of doing straight plays, and quickly found that it's close to impossible to survive pursuing that. It's been a short history in terms of musical theater. I'm always impressed with people who have a résumé a mile long and have been working professionally since they were 12.

"I'm just gonna continue on this ride while it happens, which is going so well and is so enjoyable, and then change careers. I may still be doing this in 10 years and surprise myself. It's so much fun, but I see friends of mine who are in their mid-to-late 40s struggling. I'd really like to eventually settle into something more predictable.

"I don't want to find myself praying for a regional gig for the summer so I can pay the rent. All the best people in show biz have some ambivalence about it. They seem to be the most well-rounded, too, with the most perspective. It's not life or death to get the job, be a star, have to be famous. It's really not something I want. I just want to work.

"I'd like to continue my education and become a therapist, a certified social worker. I don't know if that will actually happen, but it's something I've always wanted to do. I'll have all actor clients. It's not that far-fetched."

Brescia laughs at that notion. She is so well grounded, you know she would make the best damned therapist there is. She is already the best damned Amneris. —DLG



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Recent Releases

Various Artists

Queer As Folk—The Third Season,
Music from the Showtime Original Series



If you want to experience *Queer as Folk*'s fictional club Babylon, albeit through your headphones or speakers, disc 1 offers heart-pounding, non-stop dance music from legendary DJ/producers like Peter Rauhofer and Junior Vasquez. The tracks are flawlessly mixed by Chris Cox. Disc 2 explores the music heard outside Babylon featuring a blend of alternative rock artists, electronic music producers, and the song "Rough Boys" by Pete Townshend, which led to rumors that this was his coming out. The CDs feature the hottest dance music and a blend of alternative rock. From Tommy Boy Entertainment (www.tommyboy.com). Info: www.enterbabylon.com or www.sho.com/queer. —Andrea Rodricks

Testosterone Kills

War All the Time



Songs from *War All the Time* include such lyrics as "Come out wherever you are/Go and get what's yours," "I'm not my fault," "I like 'N Sync because they make me horny," "There's no denying we're connected to one another," and the always-popular "F-k you." Testosterone Kills is one of the new generation of GLBT bands who don't give a f-k what you think of them and who are obviously proud to be gay. That their music is great certainly helps. According to one critic, Testosterone's talented twosome (Timothy Daly and Pablo Ratliff) "can save lives and rock your ass at the same time." We wholeheartedly agree. Available June 3 from Fortified Records (www.antifolk.net). More info: www.testosteronekills.com. —Blase DiStefano

deepnine

Flowers on the Dirt Road Home



Flowers is the culmination of a decade of hard work, musical study, and experimentation by the talented artist Brent Roberts, the voice and brains behind deepnine. The openly gay singer/songwriter describes the album as "thoughtful, new edge electronica." The varied songs include "Final Hour," a spoken word/instrumental piece that sweeps over you like the tide, that was inspired by the true story of a hospice volunteer who drove a dying patient several hours to see the ocean one last time. In the liner notes, Roberts thanks his partner Bradley and son Gabriel. From Collabitat Records. For more info: www.deepnine.com. —Troy Carrington

GrooveOut

by Gregg Shapiro

LISTEN UP



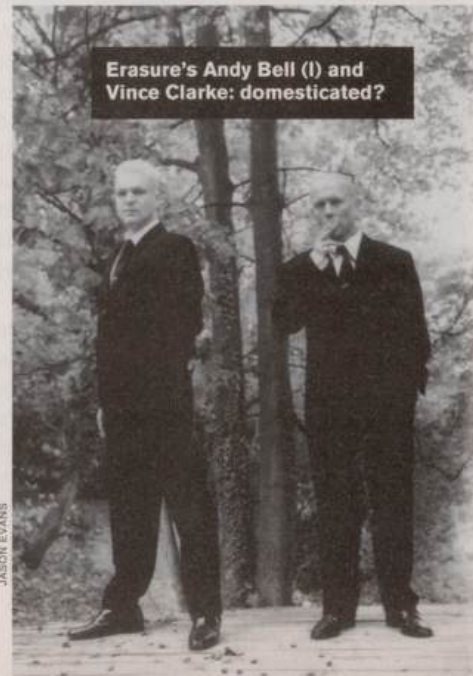
The Hidden Cameras with openly gay lead singer Joel Gibb (shirtless): What's that odor?

It's early May, and I am sitting in front of my computer preparing to write about music by queer artists. After all, Gay Pride month is just around the corner. The 2003 OutMusic Awards ceremony, scheduled for June 1 at the Knitting Factory in New York to celebrate and acknowledge the work of LGBT artists, is just weeks away. There is a stack of two dozen CDs by LGBT artists sitting on my desk. It's good to be gay.

Perhaps the most talked-about disc of the 2003 Pride season is *The Smell of Our Own* (Rough Trade) by The Hidden Cameras. A multi-member Canadian unit, The Hidden Cameras are led by Joel Gibb, who creates a large and lush sound reminiscent of The Polyphonic Spree. Additionally, the openly gay Gibb doesn't shy away from graphic subject matter. In fact, the disc opens with the retro romp of "Golden Streams" ("Golden stream/turns from warm to cold/in frightful time/in the frozen dead of night") and closes with the exquisite plucked and stroked strings of "The Man That I Am with My Man"—a couple of songs that make reference to golden showers in ways that I'm sure no one has ever heard before. The down-with-love sentiment of "Ban Marriage" is perfect for dancing The Pony, while the gorgeous "A Miracle" lives up to its name. The hand-clapping foot-stomping roof-raising gay gospel of "Breathe on It" was exhilarating, and "Smells Like Happiness" sure sounds like it.

All in all, the 10 glorious tracks, clocking in at less than 45 minutes, left me feeling as if I might have had an actual religious experience.

I witnessed quite a few people having a religious experience when Andy Bell and Vince Clarke of Erasure were doing a CD signing at a book and music store prior to their concert at the Chicago Theater in March, as well as during the show itself. Many of those same devotees, some of whom probably own the import edition of the 2000 disc *Loveboat* (Mute) will be happy to know



Erasure's Andy Bell (l) and Vince Clarke: domesticated?

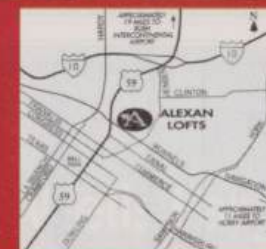
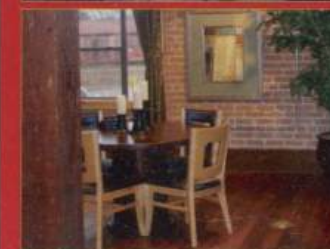
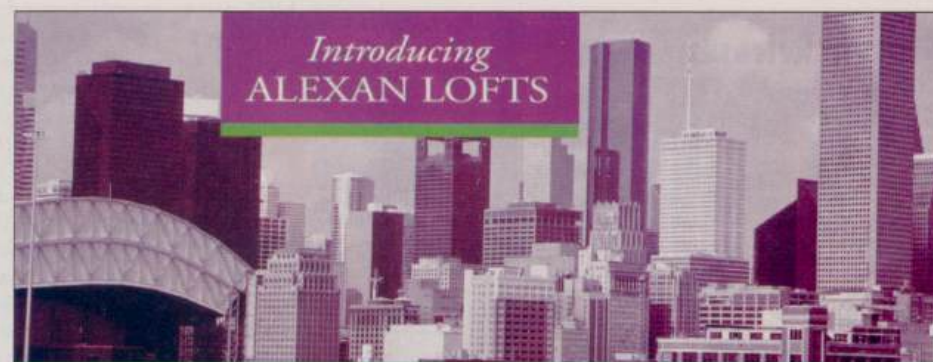
that the release is finally available domestically. Considered by some to be a return to form following the detour of *Cowboy*, the album was co-produced by Erasure and Flood and has a dark and filtered quality, giving it a more experimental bent (listen to "Perchance to Dream" to hear what I mean). While there are none of the jump-out-at-you dance tracks that Erasure lovers have come to expect, "Here in My Heart," "Catch 22," and "Moon & The Sky" do offer plenty of opportunities to move.

Mission Impossible (Delicious) by Agency-X sounds like the early '80s version of Vince Clarke's first commercially successful bands, Depeche Mode and Yaz. More synth-pop than electroclash, the songs on *Mission Impossible* do have a beat and a style that is, well, impossible to resist. A collaboration between openly gay electronic music artist David Mahr and Swedish musician Lars Wallden (of AvantGarde), Agency-X probably won't remain a secret for long due to original songs such as "S.O.S. (On the Radio)," "Happy Together," "Don't Hold Your Breath," and "At the End of the Day," all of which sound as if they would fill the dance floor at any party or nightclub.

Electro-folk duo Testosterone Kills has released an exceptional disc of tunes called *War All the Time* (Fortified) on which the self-proclaimed "Queer Sons of New York City's infamous Antifolk scene" sing about how 'N Sync makes them horny, among other things. David Gray proved that synthetic beats and acoustic guitars could exist in harmony, and Tim Daly and Pablo Ratliff of Testosterone Kills keep that trend alive. Beginning with the punchy opening track "Where I Stand" and continuing on with the powerful anti-bashing number "I'm Gonna Tell Ya," Testosterone Kills keeps us alive and listening with their songwriting skills. Other songs worth mentioning include "Crazy," "Arizona," and "Autopilot."

If you are craving crazy beats, I recommend *Hello Doctor* (Kill Rock Stars) by Gravy Train!!!! Yes, all four exclamation marks are necessary; one for each band member, including Funx, Drunx, Chunx, and Hunx. Imagine the queer electronic wizardry of Le Tigre crossed with the sexual essence of Peaches, and you're on the right track. These electroclash vixens tell it like it is. "We wore the little pleated skirts and hiked them up to show our goods," Chunx rails on "Titties Bounce," as she has her way with the church, declaring, "Gravy Train's the living testament." "Hella Nervous" inspires dance fever with the lines "you are long in the pants/short

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Recent Releases

Lisa Stansfield
Biography



The first-ever greatest hits collection from Stansfield is a fabulous 17-track compilation of great old favorites such as the Barry White hit "Never, Never Gonna Give You Up" to her breakout hit "All Around the World." Also appearing for the first time on her own album are other hits like "Those Were the Days of Our Lives" recorded live with George Michael and Queen during a tribute to Freddie Mercury and her rendition of Cole Porter's "Down in the Depths" lifted from the AIDS benefit album *Red, Hot and Blue*. The diverse influences of the British female vocalist stand out in her soulful voice and danceable club remixes. From Arista/BMG Heritage. For more info: www.lisastansfield.co.uk or www.flylifemusic.com. —AR

Dead or Alive
Evolution

At first glance you might miss the spot on the cover that reads "The Hits," but the disc speaks for itself once you start playing it. Folks might not think of Dead or Alive as having had an illustrious career of crafting pop songs, but this collection illustrates a much deeper catalog than one might think. "You Spin Me Round" is obviously going to be the song



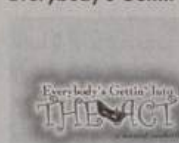
they are most remembered for, but as lead singer Pete Burns writes in the liner notes, "these are chosen by artistic integrity, not chart positions." That obviously applies in the category of a band considered a one-hit wonder by all accounts, but "Brand New Lover" and "My Heart Goes Bang" are just as strong, and the flamboyant style in which Burns presents himself is sure to always draw attention. Available June 10 from Epic (www.epicrecords.com). For more info: www.sonymusic.co.uk or www.deadoralive.net. —Lance Walker

Lime
Love Fury



Remember Lime? This long-awaited album is going to make DJs everywhere dig up collections of Lime classics. The music of the '80s is back, and Love Fury maintains their electro-disco sound that came to be known as HiNRG while adding a fresh new twist. Lime was huge in the underground disco scene and has incorporated new arrangements on this CD from salsa to cha cha to sexy love ballads. Denis and Denyse LePage's contrasting vocals never sounded so fresh and electrifying. Love Fury is bound to go to the top of the dance charts. From Unidisc Music (www.unidisc.com). —AR

Cast Recording
Everybody's Gettin' Into the Act



Everybody's Gettin' Into the Act, with music and lyrics by Bob Ost, is a canny and revealing musical vaudeville about games people play in life rather than being honest and sincere. The recording's cast includes acclaimed Broadway performers Emily Skinner, Marc Kudisch, Rebecca Luker, Mary Testa, and Robert Cuccioli. FYI: Also featured is Bryan Batt, who has only three films to his credit, and they're all gay: *Jeffrey*, *Kiss Me Guido*, and *Hit and Runway*. From Fynsworth Alley (www.fynsworthalley.com). —TC

Goldfrapp
Black Cherry



After the somewhat unexpected success of their debut record *Felt Mountain*, the British trip-hop duo of Alison Goldfrapp and Will Gregory were under pressure to create something just as strong, just as innovative, and just as successful. What they did was to blow off the idea of making another album that sounded like the first and go with a completely different approach to their songwriting.

continued on page 40

in the weiner/suckin' my muff like a vacuum cleaner." Gay boy Hunx pipes in on the explicit "Double Decker Supreme" and steals the show on "You Made Me Gay."

If you're hell-bent on dancing, Charles Stephen Hughes provides the beats and blips to keep you going from the discotheque on Saturday night to the Sunday-morning church on *Love Notes* (Independent Records). Hughes combines songs of man's inhumanity to man ("This Day Shall Be") and the complexities of man-to-man love ("Love Hurts," "Running for Your Love," "What Is Love," "Destiny") with songs of devotion. Hughes sings the praises of his heavenly father on a few tracks, including "Love Letter (Dear Lord)" and "Praise Him," making even an atheist such as myself marvel at the depths of this man's commitment.

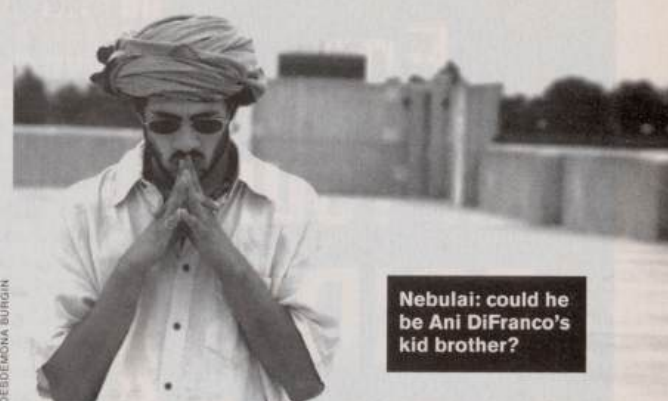


Beats of a different kind pulsate throughout *Visions* (Thrust Recordings) by Butt Boy. The seven songs on the disc are "designed to set the tone for dungeon scenes"—a soundtrack for S&M, if you will. The seven electronic tunes, ranging in length from six-and-a-half inches, I mean minutes, to eleven-and-a-half minutes, vary in intensity and rhythm, and

have titles such as "Riding Centaurs," "The Ritual of the Whip" (complete with smacking sound), "The Beating of the Minotaur," and "The Hooded Ungulate Flogger."

Odd Man-Out (Re-Perkus-ionz of Sovereign Art) by Nebulai is a blue-eyed soulful journey into the realm of folk funk, melding acoustic guitars and exotic instrumentation with vocals that testify to the power of love and coming out of the closet. The amazing "The Whole World's Watching" has anthem potential, and Nebulai sounds like Ani DiFranco's kid brother on "Coulda Woulda Shoulda," "Don't Bite the Hand," and "Your Silence Won't Protect You." Like The Hidden Cameras, Gravity Train, and Testosterone Kills, Nebulai is actively working to expand and redefine what we expect to hear when we think of LGBT music.

Bisexual lead singer Brian Molko and gay bass player Stefan Olsdal make up two thirds of the British band Placebo. Over the course of four albums, including the latest *Sleeping With Ghosts* (Hut/Virgin), Placebo rocks out with punk rock fury ("Second Sight," for example) and knocks out a dance



Nebulai: could he be Ani DiFranco's kid brother?

beat like old pros. "English Summer Rain," the second track on the disc, is ripe for re-mixing and dance-floor picking. However, unlike the last few Placebo albums, *Sleeping With Ghosts* sounds like a band haunted by others, including Coldplay, whom you can hear traces of on "Special Needs." Needless to say, no one but Placebo could come up with "Bulletproof Cupid," so maybe it's too soon to call in a priest.

Next month, Shapiro reports on more GLBT music.

Pop culture journalist Gregg Shapiro is also a published fiction writer and poet. He has a poem in the new collection *Sweet Jesus* (Anthology Press).



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Recent Releases continued from page 38

With most bands this only leads to disaster, but these two have managed to make it work. While the subdued melodies and tones of their first record were the attraction therein, *Black Cherry* speaks to the listener more from its flamboyance than anything else. They have crafted these songs from the angle of late '70s glam-rock rather than modern trip-hop, with their brilliant production dressing each track in what feels like a concept record. The songs all seem to tie in together in the newfound angle from which they are created, an angle that doesn't leave any gaps and only leaves us wanting more. From Mute (www.mute.com). For more info: www.goldfrapp.co.uk. —LW

Various Artists The Ultimate Diva Collection



Sixteen of the finest female jazz singers of all time, from Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday to Astrud Gilberto and Natalie Cole, are captured in performances that were recorded as long ago as 1954 and as recently as 2001. The artists featured are ranked in the very top echelon of female jazz singers. This album is a collection of some of the most sensitive and accomplished vocal performances ever recorded. From Verve Music Group (www.ververecords.com). —AR

Ultra Naté Brass in Pocket

It's hard to doubt Ultra Naté's allure, at least in what the artists have done with the record cover, but the music might leave something to be desired.



This disc is a collection of 10 different versions of The Pretenders' seminal 1980 rock hit "Brass in Pocket." The song itself holds up to the test of time in its brilliance in both well-rounded lyricism and interweaving melodies, but doesn't allow much for remixing. At least the idea behind the song and the strength of its message are communicated through its flow and intensity, two factors which are somewhat lost in the translation. It should be mentioned, however, that Naté has an absolutely gorgeous voice, one that will leave even the least curious of listeners wanting to hear more—and more of her original material at that. From BluFire Records. —LW

Various Artists The Players: Powered by Fender



Sling it on, flip the switch, and crank it up to 10. Fender guitars, basses, and amplifiers have become genuine American icons. This is the first album centered on the venerable Fender name, and it is a rousing salute to a tradition of quality and excellence. Rhino Records and Fender present a collection of 16 rock hits with each track featuring an artist who embodies the legendary sound of Fender guitars, including Sheryl Crow, Green Day, The Goo Goo Dolls, and Sugar Ray, to name but a few. From Rhino Records (www.rhino.com) and Fender Records (www.fender.com). For more info: www.fenderplayersclub.com. —AR



Jennifer Lopez • "I'm Glad" video

J-Lo has done it once again in her typically oversexed fashion, this time in a visual revisit to the '80s pop hit "What a Feeling." What has to be commended is the accuracy with which the director has recreated the sets and the look for the video. It is based entirely on the movie *Flashdance*, and the lighting and setups are so perfectly redone that it's almost comical—like you're watching a Weird Al Yankovic video. Lopez's dance moves are unheralded as always, though carefully choreographed from scene to scene to encourage the straight boys to sit on the couch and whip it out (it also works for lesbians, but what are the gay boys supposed to do?). Taking a cue from her predecessor Jennifer Beals, Lopez knows where to make the money. "I'm Glad" is the recent single from her Epic album *This Is Me... Then* (www.epicrecords.com). —LW ■

J-LO PHOTO: DAVID LACHAPPELLE



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ANNIE UNADORNED

Diva Annie Lennox goes Bare

By Andrea Rodricks

Annie Lennox is one of the most dynamic, theatrical pop singers around, and solo efforts from the pop music icon have always been successful. However, after recording *Medusa*, a collection of cover tunes that created the hit "No More I Love You's," Lennox took a break from her career. Now, with the release of *Bare*, her first collection of original songs since her solo debut album *Diva*, her talents are more apparent than ever before. The 11 tracks show that she has reached a new level of maturity both as a vocalist and as a songwriter. Yes, the songs are indeed about negative emotions, but they are simply terrific. She has a way of articulating the emotions we all feel and speaking directly to our hearts.

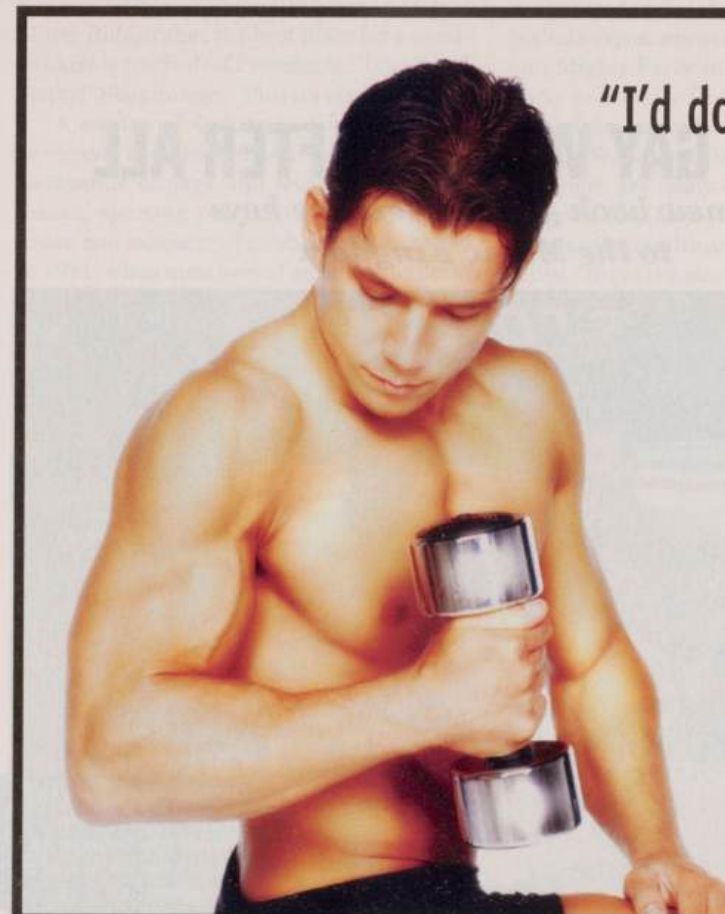
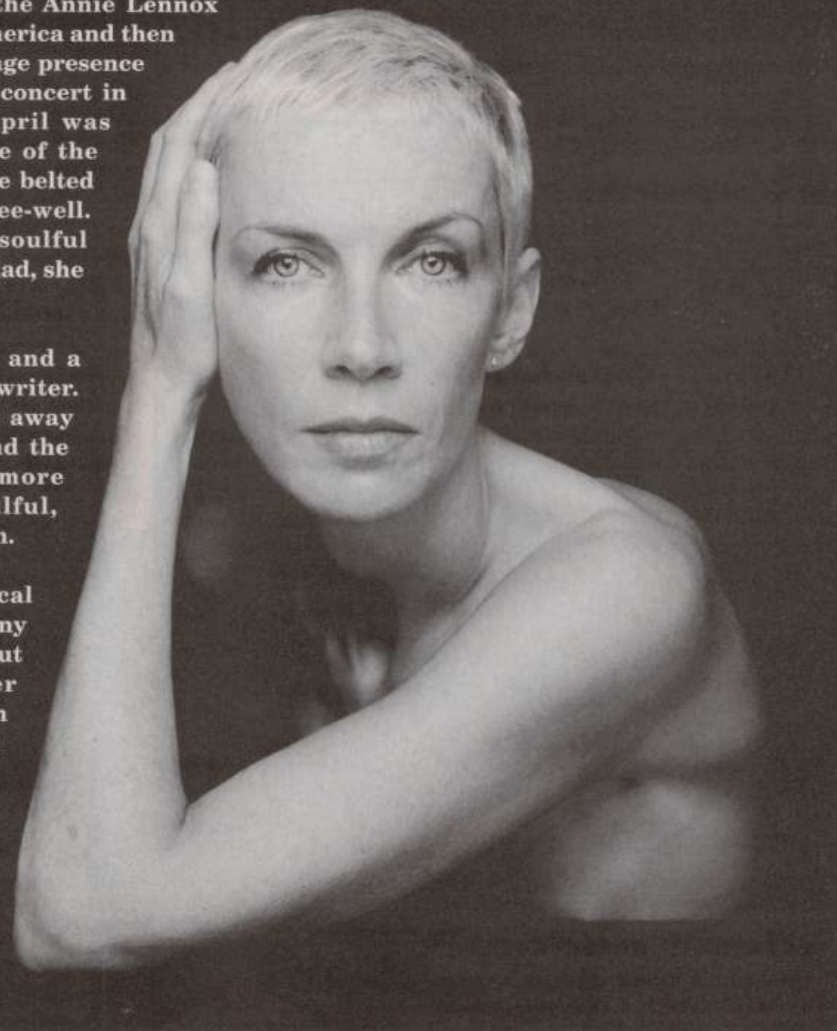
Bare was recorded in London and features songs written by Lennox. From the album's striking cover to the emotive lyrics, fans will find it to be an uplifting and ultimately superb collection. This singer has always expressed herself with confidence and a unique sense of style, as seen in her varied musical abilities and attractive androgynous look. Lennox once said, "I don't dress for fashion, I dress for fun." On the cover of her new album, she is caked in makeup, naked, and covered in sand.

To promote her new album, the Annie Lennox "Solo" tour opened in North America and then moved on to Europe. Her onstage presence is electric and powerful. The concert in Houston at Jones Hall in April was absolutely fabulous. With one of the finest voices of our time, Annie belted out old favorites to a fare-thee-well. Whether she was singing a soulful number or crooning a slow ballad, she had a captive audience.

Lennox is a versatile singer and a brilliant performer and songwriter. Her new material has veered away from the early Eurythmics and the technopop-'80s sound to a more emotionally grounded soulful, sophisticated sound all her own.

Lennox, no stranger to musical success, dares to be great in any number of stylistic settings, but her soaring vocals are her defining talent. The Scottish diva's latest release will be in stores on June 10. *Bare* is truly her best yet.

More info: www.j-records.com or www.annie-lennox.com or www.alennox.net/annie.html.



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— Comedian Steve Martin at the Academy Awards

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ReadOut Releases

What Night Brings
Carla Trujillo
Curbstone Press



Winner of the Miguel Mármol Award for first-time Latino novels, *What Night Brings* by Carla Trujillo is an engaging tale of identity, self-worth, and acceptance. Set in the San Francisco Bay area during the 1960s, *Night* is the story of

Marci Cruz, a Chicana teen who desperately wants two things: She wants to be a boy, and she wants her domineering, brutal father to disappear. Before the book is over, she realizes one of those dreams.

Marci's home life is riddled with violence and abuse. Her father is a mean and ugly drunk who thinks Marci is his private punching bag. Her little sister, who looks to Marci for safety, bruises easily at the hands of their vicious father. Her crazy mother can't protect herself much less her children.

With her family so completely commandeering Marci's life, she has very little to call her own. And what she wants most to call her own is the beautiful girl next door; hence Marci's desire to be a boy. As if that wasn't enough, the Catholic Church has laid ardent claim to Marci's soul.

While the world around her falls apart, Marci grows increasingly stronger, blossoming into an independent, intelligent young woman. An independent, intelligent lesbian young woman. Playing by her own rules, Marci learns that nothing is as horrible as an inauthentic life, and getting a black eye doesn't hurt as much as pretending it isn't there.

Like Marci's life, *What Night Brings* is not without its missteps—an effeminate neighbor boy and an aunt who trusts in spells and spirits more than her own strength both feel a bit forced at times. And since they have nothing to say, their dialogue falls flat. But Trujillo, who previously won the LAMBDA Book Award for Best Lesbian Anthology and the Out/Write Vanguard Award for Best Pioneering Contribution to the field of Gay/Lesbian Lifestyle Literature, manages to quickly bring the story back to Marci. Wonderfully well-drawn and honest, Marci is the type of character that leaves readers begging for a sequel.

Touching and tender, *Night* realistically explores the minefield of adolescence. In it Trujillo paints an elegant picture of Marci's decidedly angry and uncertain existence, with touches of black humor and hard-won wisdom.

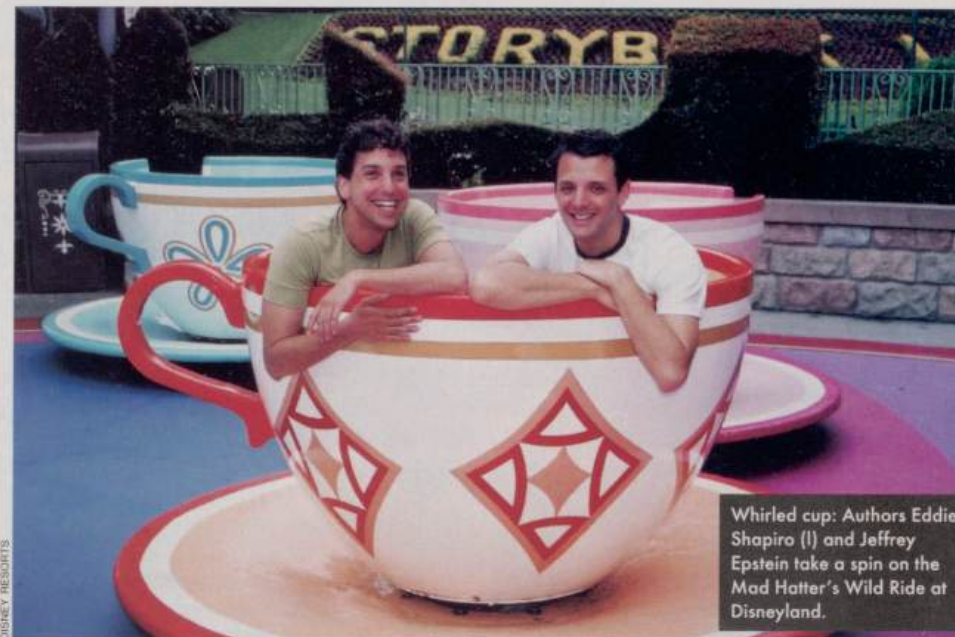
Trujillo is an enormously talented writer, and *What Night Brings* is an excellent first novel. —Olivia Flores Alavarez ■

ReadOut

by Dan Avery

IT'S A GAY WORLD, AFTER ALL

A new book gives queers the keys to the Magic Kingdom



Whirled cup: Authors Eddie Shapiro (l) and Jeffrey Epstein take a spin on the Mad Hatter's Wild Ride at Disneyland.

Let's face it: Disney is pretty queer. Cruella DeVil? Drag queen. The Red Queen? Bull dyke. Chip and Dale? C'mon, that's too easy.

But how do you have a gay old time at America's number-one family destination (and not the good kind of "family," either)? To help hapless homos make the most of the Happiest Places on Earth, Disney-philes Jeffrey Epstein and Eddie Shapiro have written *Queens in the Kingdom: The Ultimate Gay and Lesbian Guide to the Disney Theme Parks* (Alyson). Packed with vital information, from which rides are the hottest tickets to where to grab a covert "gay moment," the book is both irreverent and informative, like your best girlfriend showing you the ropes.

Epstein, senior editor at *Out*, met Shapiro while they were both studying at New York's Tisch School of the Arts, and the two bonded over their love for all things Disney. "Eddie's the real nut when it comes to the memorabilia," says Epstein of his friend/collaborator. "I think the only reason he worked on the book was to pay for all the collectibles in his apartment." They began writing about visiting the Disney parks a few years back and after getting a positive

response from Alyson, decided to embark on the book.

With the parks' naturally theatrical atmosphere and queer-friendly benefits, the authors say you're as likely to find a gay person operating an attraction as riding one, so don't be surprised if Goofy asks for your phone number. "Once we went to check out the Pocahontas show and two of the male dancers were definitely playing to us,"

Shapiro laughs. "They were the friendliest Indian braves I ever met." Other gay-interest attractions include Tarzan Rocks at Animal Kingdom ("cute guys in loincloths," Shapiro remarks), Peter Pan's Flight, and Ellen's Energy Adventure at Epcot, hosted by everyone's favorite funny lesbian, Ellen DeGeneres. But the top queer attraction has to be Splash Mountain, which is almost completely modeled around Brer Bear's butt. "The butt is everywhere you look," Epstein laughs. "You can't avoid it. It's relentless."

Much of the book is useful for vacationers of any orientation, including honest opinions on park rides, lodging, dining, and other attractions in and around Orlando and Anaheim—though straight folk might not be interested in knowing that Sigourney

Weaver's Ripley looks really hot in the Great Movie Ride or that the best place for a same-sex kiss is the Hall of Presidents. "It's always empty!" Shapiro says. "Plus it's nice and dark."

A section of *Queens in the Kingdom* is devoted to the parks' annual Gay Days, when thousands of gays and lesbians arrive en masse, sporting red shirts for easy recognition and solidarity. The phenomenon began in 1991, when members of an online bulletin board decided to organize a group trip to Disney World. Within a few years, the gathering had become a large-scale annual event. ("They get somewhere in the ballpark of 150,000 people," Epstein says.) Gay Day 2 in Anaheim began in 1998 and is quickly rivaling its East Coast counterpart. The

multiple-day celebrations at both parks include expos, soirees, and dance parties like One Mighty Party and Kingdom, the first gay party held inside Disneyland. This year, Gay Days take place the weekends of June 7 at Disney World and October 4 at Disneyland.

There are many different approaches to enjoying Gay Day, but Epstein and Shapiro embrace something of a commando mentality. "To get the most out of your experience, get up at the crack of dawn, hit the park all day, run home to shower and eat dinner, then dance the night away," Epstein says. After a moment's pause, Shapiro deadpans, "We realize it's not for everyone."

While the Disney Corporation does not officially endorse Gay Days (don't want to

give those Southern Baptists an aneurysm, do we?), they are supportive and allow unofficial events and parties in the park. "They were very helpful with the book," Epstein says. "The average gay visitor spends about a thousand dollars at the park. Disney's not about to turn them away."

Dan Avery, an entertainment writer in New York, interviewed the *Pet Shop Boys* for the September 2002 issue.

BOUND FOR DISNEY?

Read Lawrence Ferber's travel report, beginning on page 90, on visiting Orlando and Walt Disney World.

DOING DISNEY

Here are some of Epstein and Shapiro's tried-and-true tips to enjoying Gay Days at the Disney theme parks:

Attitude. This is an amusement park, not a circuit party, so check your snobbery at the door. "How can you have attitude when you're hurling toward the ground

at 100 miles per hour?" Shapiro asks.

Lodging. If you can at all afford it, stay at a Disney accommodation. They're convenient and offer great perks like free shuttle service and rolling admission. Plus you're more likely to meet other Gay Day participants.

Dining. There are a lot more dining options at Disney than most people realize, but even

at the more sophisticated restaurants, there are going to be families with kids. It's unavoidable.

Lines. "Lines are actually fun on Gay Day," Epstein says. "You can cruise, chat with people, make new connections, fall in love, break up, and stay friends all in one spot."

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JUNE BUSTS OUT ALL OVER

Beginning on page 67, we list activities from the official Pride Committee of Houston "25 Days of Pride" calendar. Many groups will present other special events this month. Here are a few we knew about by press time.

HIV Art Outreach Exhibition

June 6-30

Heritage Hall, the art gallery in the JPMorgan Chase Building (707 Travis) will present a show of linoleum-cut prints created by individuals living with HIV/AIDS who participated in art classes established in 1990 by Patrick Palmer. Free.

Songs of Our Voices

June 7, 10, 11, 8 p.m.

June 8, 3 p.m.

Didn't get enough ABBA when *Mamma Mia* blew through town? The Gay Men's Chorus of Houston will present hits by those Swedes with *extraABBA-ganza*. The program at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church (2025 West 11th) will also include Robert Seely's *Exile*. \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door. www.gmch.org

Mr., Ms., Miss Gay Pride

Saturday, June 7, 8 p.m.

The Royal Sovereign and Imperial Court of the Single Star of Houston will present the annual pageant and show at Chances (1100 Westheimer). Proceeds benefit the Assistance Fund. www.rsicss.org

"In Our Own Write" Poetry Reading

Friday, June 13, 8 p.m.

Thomas Blanton will host a special Pride evening of reading by local GLBT writers at the Houston GLBT Community Center (3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 207). Free, donations for the center encouraged. www.houstonglbtcenter.org

Jocks in Dresses

Saturday, June 14, 7:30 p.m.

Dude looks like a lady, indeed. Montrose Softball League athletes will work their skirts at Rich's Houston (2401 San Jacinto) in the league's largest annual fundraising event. \$5 in advance, \$8 at the door. www.montrosetsoftballleague.com



Sing a song of pride: Elizabeth White, shown here at a recent GoGirlsMusic.com showcase at Chances, will perform at the GoGirls concert on June 27.

Summer Sweat Fest

Friday, June 20,

7 p.m. registration

The Imperial Court of Houston-Space City Empire will present its first anniversary drag/leather/Levi run during the weekend. Highlights include the "Gonna Make You Sweat!" 8 p.m. Friday variety/drag show and auction at EJ's (2517 Ralph). Proceeds benefit AIDS Foundation Houston Camp Hope and AssistHers. www.spacecityempire.org

Go Fish

at Lesbian Film Night

Friday, June 27, 7 p.m.

For Pride month, the Houston GLBT Community Center (3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 207) will screen the extremely popular 1994 comedy about a circle of lesbian career women and their girlfriends. Free, donations for the center encouraged. www.houstonglbtcenter.org

GoGirlsRocks! Houston Pride

Friday, June 27, 8 p.m.

Madalyn Sklar's GoGirlsMusic.com will present its second annual Pride concert at the Rhythm Room (1815 Washington). Featured

performers will include Sarah Golden and Elizabeth White of Houston. \$8. www.gogirlsmusic.com

Keep in mind that many Houston clubs (listing, page 110) will present Pride events and specials throughout the month.

More news briefs →



FOR PROUD WALLS. David Lewis, *OutSmart* contributing photographer, and graphic designer Dustie Hollan have created the Pride posters for 2003. Kimberly Marler and Hollan posed for the photos. The 18-by-24-inch posters, printed in a limited edition, are \$10 and available through www.pridehouston.org and at M2M (3400 Montrose). A signed edition is available for \$50.

Houstonians Attend National Conventions

Seven local individuals will attend the June 2-6 Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf 18th Biennial Conference in Orlando. The Florida-bound Houstonians are Tobin Trahan, Doris Dover, Heather Dover, Tina Koopman, Tracy Mason, Bruce Herman, and Brian

Determan. For more information, check out www.rad.org.

Sam Stewman, who serves on the national board of BFLAG (Blind Friends of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People), planned, at press time, to attend the July 5-12 American Council of the Blind na-

tional convention in Pittsburgh. Established in 1996, BFLAG is an affiliated special-interest group of the council. Individuals interested in BFLAG or the convention may contact Stewman at wordgarden@houston.rr.com or at 713/526-6526. ■



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THE WAR ON IRAQ

*Bush led the country into a justifiable war;
based on an unjustifiable lie*

The Bush administration could have initially justified the war on Iraq by making the case that Saddam Hussein was such a monster that force was necessary to remove him from power. Hussein, after all, had starved and gassed his own people. He presided over a country for decades by instilling fear in Iraqi citizens. He tortured, maimed, and killed the families of disloyal officers and perceived traitors. Convincing Americans—and the world—that Hussein had to go was a difficult but doable task.

The Bush administration did not, however, paint Hussein as a monster whose gig was up. Instead, the administration engaged in the big lie: that Hussein had all kinds of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). The administration even pretended to know what kind and how many WMDs Hussein had: 5,000 gallons of anthrax, tons of nerve gas, hundreds of tons of toxins, mobile chemical laboratories, and Scud missiles and drones

fitted with chemicals and poisons.

Now that the war is over, and Bush has declared "Mission Accomplished," where is the evidence of WMDs? There is none. And various "unnamed administration officials" state they would be "amazed" if we ever find any.

Many Americans, having watched the war on TV and seen cheering Iraqis being liberated, might not think to ask, "Where are the WMDs?" More might ask, "Why is this question even relevant?"

It's relevant because WMDs were Bush's reason for war. The administration tried to convince us and the international community that Hussein and his WMDs presented a clear and present danger because he could use or turn over his WMDs to terrorists at any moment.

When Americans questioned the veracity of Bush's statements, they were labeled "unpatriotic." When other countries like France, Canada, and Mexico questioned the administration's motives, they were labeled

"obstructionists" who should be "punished."

But who will be punished if no WMDs are ever found? America will. Our credibility will be shot because the international community—including those who reluctantly supported us—will be convinced that we lied about what we knew so we could gain support we otherwise could not have gotten.

The Bush administration initially sold the war on Iraq as the "War on Terror." It then changed the designation to "Operation Iraqi Freedom." In other words, the war, while justifiable, was based on one big, unjustifiable lie.

continued on page 52

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



AFTER SANTORUM

*The latest GOP antigay pronouncements
reveal both the homophobia and progress of the Republican Party*

There are two things all reasonable people can agree on. First, Democrats are better than Republicans on gay issues. Even when you find a gay-friendly Republican, his Democrat opponent is almost always better. Wherever there's an antigay initiative brewing, Republicans are stirring it. And when something idiotic is said about gays, it almost always comes from a Republican mouth.

The second thing reasonable people can agree on is that we would be much better off if none of the above were true.

The real question has always been, How do we get from here to there?

One side says we should cozy up to the GOP, work from the inside to undermine homophobes, dispel stereotypes through our open participation in the party, and reward small Republican nods to equality in order to encourage more such progress.

The other side says we should just beat

the GOP into submission.

Into this old debate walks Rick Santorum, the third-highest ranking Republican in the U.S. Senate. Ruminating on the constitutionality of antigay sodomy laws, Santorum recently told the Associated Press. "If the Supreme Court says that you have the right to consensual [gay] sex within your home, then you have the right to bigamy, you have the right to incest, you have the right to adultery."

Santorum quickly attempted to clarify these remarks, saying in a press release, "My discussion with the Associated Press was about the Supreme Court privacy case, [and] the constitutional right to privacy in general. . . . My comments should not be misconstrued in any way as a statement on individual lifestyles."

The first Santorum statement suggests, "Courts will be unable to distinguish between gays and others, like polygamists and adulterers." It is a slippery-slope argument that says, in effect, "We must refuse to make

a sound decision today for fear of having to make a sensible distinction tomorrow."

Santorum's second statement implies, "I, however, am personally able to distinguish gays from these others."

Does Santorum really believe he can make simple distinctions while judges trained in making them cannot? The law is not a completely foreign thing. The kinds of arguments you make to your friends are often made, in specialized language, to courts.

One could persuasively argue to a person of sound mind that gay sex in itself is not

Writing from the conservative end of the political spectrum, Dale Carpenter began his column for OutSmart in 1994, when he lived in Houston. Now residing in Minneapolis, Carpenter is a University of Minnesota Law School professor. He can be reached at OutRight@aol.com.



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LeftOut *continued from page 50*

It's no wonder that the war ended as it began, with a falsehood.

Fade to the *USS Abraham Lincoln*. Bush makes a tail-hook landing in a fighter jet. He gets out of the cockpit looking butch in a flight suit. He declares victory standing in front of a "Mission Accomplished" sign, cameras rolling, campaign 2004 ads in mind.

Fade to the White House, hours later. When asked why Bush made a tail-hook landing in a fighter jet, White House press secretary Ari Fleischer tells us the landing was necessary because the *Abraham Lincoln* was too far out at sea for a traditional helicopter landing. Later, when confronted with the fact that the *Abraham Lincoln* was well within helicopter range—something the White House knew all along—Fleischer says the president wanted to "enjoy the experience of a tail-hook landing."

Yes, and the American people want to enjoy the experience of being told the truth in the beginning, not just at the end, after a war has been fought and 128 Americans have died after being sent off to another country with a mission that's an unnecessary lie. ■

OutRight *continued from previous page*

socially harmful and so can safely be protected as a right against the nosy preferences of other citizens. But polygamy, incest, and adultery are socially harmful and shouldn't be similarly protected as rights. (That's not to say they should necessarily be criminalized.) Plural marriage in modern times in our country would be unstable and would leave many people without a potential partner to care for and civilize them. Incest threatens to sexualize family relations. Adultery undermines a state-sanctioned and -supported union. And so on. It's not as if judges, unlike normal people, can't understand these arguments.

There's just no excuse for what Santorum said.

So what's the GOP's excuse for him? Critics of the Republican Party have made much of the fact that he could say such things and keep his job. Democrats called it proof that Republicans are all bigots. Indeed, although a handful of prominent Republicans criticized Santorum, most Republican leaders offered at least tepid support. Through his spokesperson, President Bush belatedly called Santorum "inclusive."

Still, the GOP is improving, incrementally. It's noteworthy that no Republican leader (other than the execrable Tom DeLay) has endorsed the substance of Santorum's actual comments, as opposed to defending the man's political position. I suspect they privately think his comments were ill advised but are loath to lose a second top Senate leader over casual remarks in the space of six months.

The White House has taken no public stand on the pending Supreme Court sodomy case, though it could have, and in an earlier era would have. While Bush doesn't have the gay-rights zeal of a PFLAG parent, he has done some positive things, like hiring openly gay people and retaining an executive order banning antigay discrimination in federal employment. The only people critical of him for this within his party are religious conservatives. Bush needs their support to win re-election, and he has been doing about as much as he can on gay issues without completely alienating that political base.

So how does the Santorum controversy affect the old debate about strategy between gay Republicans and gay GOP-bashers? The fact is, not much, because it doesn't alter two basic truths.

Both sides ignore that what is moving the Republican Party in the right direction more than anything else is a culture that is evolving to accept gays. The pace may seem slow, but the overall direction has been one way. We might be able to nudge the party a little faster through one method or another, but whatever *we* do, the GOP can't forever stay mired in a discredited past and hope to win elections in the future.

The other thing both sides ignore is that there is room for *both* strategies. We needn't put all our eggs in one political basket. Those of us who generally favor less regulation, lower taxes, and a strong national defense should stay and work inside the GOP, despite these occasional troglodyte eruptions. Those gays who favor "social justice" and worldwide peace through marches should throw stones at the GOP, despite gradual improvements.

Some see these divergent strategies as evidence of "division" when we need "unity." I say it's smart politics. ■

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PARADE PREDICTION

Given its success and size, the annual event may soon require a new location

Organizers of the GLBT Pride Parade estimate that the 2002 parade attracted a diverse crowd of 135,000 spectators. More are expected for this year's parade on June 28.

That's like putting the entire city of Beaumont or the University of Texas football stadium crowd plus 55,000 more people along lower Westheimer. Not to mention the cars.

For many people in the GLBT community, the parade is the highlight of the year. We've come a long way in 25 years, and what better way to celebrate? (I should know. I've attended most of them.) For me, one of the highlights of all the parades has to be the contingent of gay and lesbian HPD officers who marched in 2001. I'll never forget the thunderous applause and cheering that greeted them. Another is the first time I saw the disco ball hanging over Westheimer, glittering in the searchlights.

When the Pride Committee of Houston

decided in 1998 to move the parade to Saturday night, I introduced an amendment to the parade ordinance to allow it. One of my first council initiatives, it easily passed. In addition to allowing a Saturday night (as well as Sunday afternoon) neighborhood parade, the amendment provided an important exemption for the nighttime event: Unlike other neighborhood parades, Saturday evening and Sunday parade routes can extend more than eight blocks or a half mile on a major thoroughfare.

I am especially proud that the community is celebrating Pride in greater numbers than ever before. Pride is a celebration of the values of freedom and acceptance—the freedom to live our lives openly and the importance of accepting people for who they are. These values are not unique to the GLBT community and indeed bind all people together.

In the past 25 years, we have grown as a

community, and our allies have grown as well. African-American community leaders refused to support the James Byrd Hate Crimes law without protections for sexual orientation. A diverse contingent of Houston legislators—including state representatives Garnet Coleman, Jessica Farrar, and Senfronia Thompson and state senators Rodney Ellis, Mario Gallegos, and John Whitmire—formed the vanguard this year in defeating legislation that would have made it illegal for GLBT individuals to become foster or adoptive parents.

Annise Parker is serving her third term in Houston City Council At-large Position 1 and has announced her candidacy for city controller. To receive her bi-monthly e-mail newsletter, contact annise.parker@cityofhouston.net or call 713/247-2014. Her website is www.ci.houston.tx.us/citygov/council/1.



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I invite and encourage the GLBT community to join in Houston's many community celebrations—not just the Pride Parade, but also such celebrations as the Chinese New Year, Cinco de Mayo, and Juneteenth. These events, like the Pride Parade, proclaim universal human values that lift us all up.

The largest city parades, including those for the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, Thanksgiving Day, Cinco de Mayo, and Martin Luther King Day, go through downtown and are required to be held on weekends because of access, local impact, and safety issues. Our ordinance has slightly different regulations for downtown (as opposed to neighborhood) parades.

For 25 years, I've worked to build a society where everyone plays by the same rules. Our community has fought for equal rights, not special rights. Our events must play by the same rules, too. Because of the similar size of the Pride Parade to other major parades, it is inevitable that the Pride Committee will someday apply for a permit, and the city will reply, "No, you've outgrown the neighborhood. You've gotten too big to be a neighborhood parade." Then what? The decision won't involve who we are or the type of parade. It will be about logistics of a fabulously successful event.

I'm not trying to put a damper on this big anniversary celebration. And any decisions about the parade are best made by the Pride Committee. There are options: perhaps limiting the number and size of entries to fit it into the mandated three-hour time frame; perhaps modifying the route to move it to the more commercial areas of Montrose; perhaps moving to a different time of the year so that it can start earlier yet still have the darkness that we love to light up—without violating our noise ordinance that requires us to turn it down at 11 p.m.

Montrose is not the same bohemian neighborhood it was 25 years ago. Our parade is not the same humble gathering it once was. GLBTs are spread out all over the city now. We felt safe to move outside Montrose. Why can't our highly successful and diverse parade do the same when the time is right?

Street Festival

Let me touch on a related subject that has been in the news lately. Though not a GLBT community event, the Westheimer Street Festival was in a position a few years ago similar to the one that the Pride Parade is in now (although, unlike our parade, it had long been controversial and the object of numerous neighborhood complaints). The street fair, too, outgrew its base.

At some point, one must look at the matter from an objective policy perspective, not from an emotional standpoint. Large

festivals are held downtown or on Allen Parkway for good reasons: safety, noise, access. Large festivals cannot be staged in neighborhoods based on any kind of popularity contest from festival goers who live all over the city and county. They must be located based on public safety concerns, including the safety and rights of the public that lives and owns homes and businesses in the affected neighborhood.

When the Westheimer Street Festival applied for a permit under the new street-functions ordinance several years ago, a hearing was conducted. Dozens of neighborhood complaints were heard about economic hardship to businesses, loud noise from bands, disorderly and drunken conduct, gridlock traffic congestion, and unmanageable illegal parking. After about nine hours of testimony, assistant public works director George Bravenec produced a detailed report (available upon request) denying the street festival a permit. Council then voted 12-3 to uphold the recommendation.

I worked with festival organizers to find a suitable city location and helped them cut through red tape. They even got initial city underwriting. I'm sorry the Allen Parkway location has not worked out for them. As Neartown president years ago, I worked hard to mediate differences between the festival and the neighborhood. I will do everything I can to help the festival find a better home or make the Allen Parkway event more satisfactory.

But like any festival, street function, or parade, the event must comply with laws designed to protect public safety and the rights of citizens, including those in the affected neighborhood. Apparently, this year the organizers have decided to return to Montrose in defiance of the city ordinance and without the benefit of city regulations requiring street-closure permits, insurance, security, etcetera. They have also chosen to ride the coattails of the Pride Parade by changing their traditional dates to coincide with the parade. I hate to see these promoters try to take advantage of what the Pride Committee has worked so hard for over the years.

It is a source of both consternation and pride that, after more than five years in office, many people still believe that I represent the Montrose area on city council. Of course, most know that I am an at-large council member and represent all 2 million Houstonians. But I understand that the more than 20 years I spent working to both improve the lives of GLBT individuals and improve the quality of life in my home neighborhood have created an indelible identification. I also understand, though, that I represent the entire city. Always. ■



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TRUE COLORS

Photography by David Lewis

The restored hues of the rainbow flag inspire our Pride 2003 portfolio

Twenty-five years ago, a flag with eight color bars fluttered for the first time over San Francisco. Glenn Baker made that proud pennant, which became the internationally known emblem for our people — but with six bars after subsequent flag makers dropped two of the colors.

For the silver anniversary of his creation, Baker has restored the rainbow flag to the original design. He and a team are crafting a massive version, nearly 1 1/2 miles long and 16 feet wide, which will unfurl at Key West Pride on June 15, stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic. Segments of Baker's flag will travel this month to Pride

celebrations across the United States, including the Houston parade.

We salute the colors. On the next 10 pages, the classic rainbow flag hues accent portraits of men and women from the vibrant, multi-everything community — remarkable, ram-bunctious, occasionally irritating — that we know. We are the rainbow.

ANDY MILLS

Retired, Mary's Manager 1976-1985
Pride Parade Grand Marshal, 1982
Founding Director, Montrose Singers
Founding Director, Montrose Symphonic Band
Bayou Blue

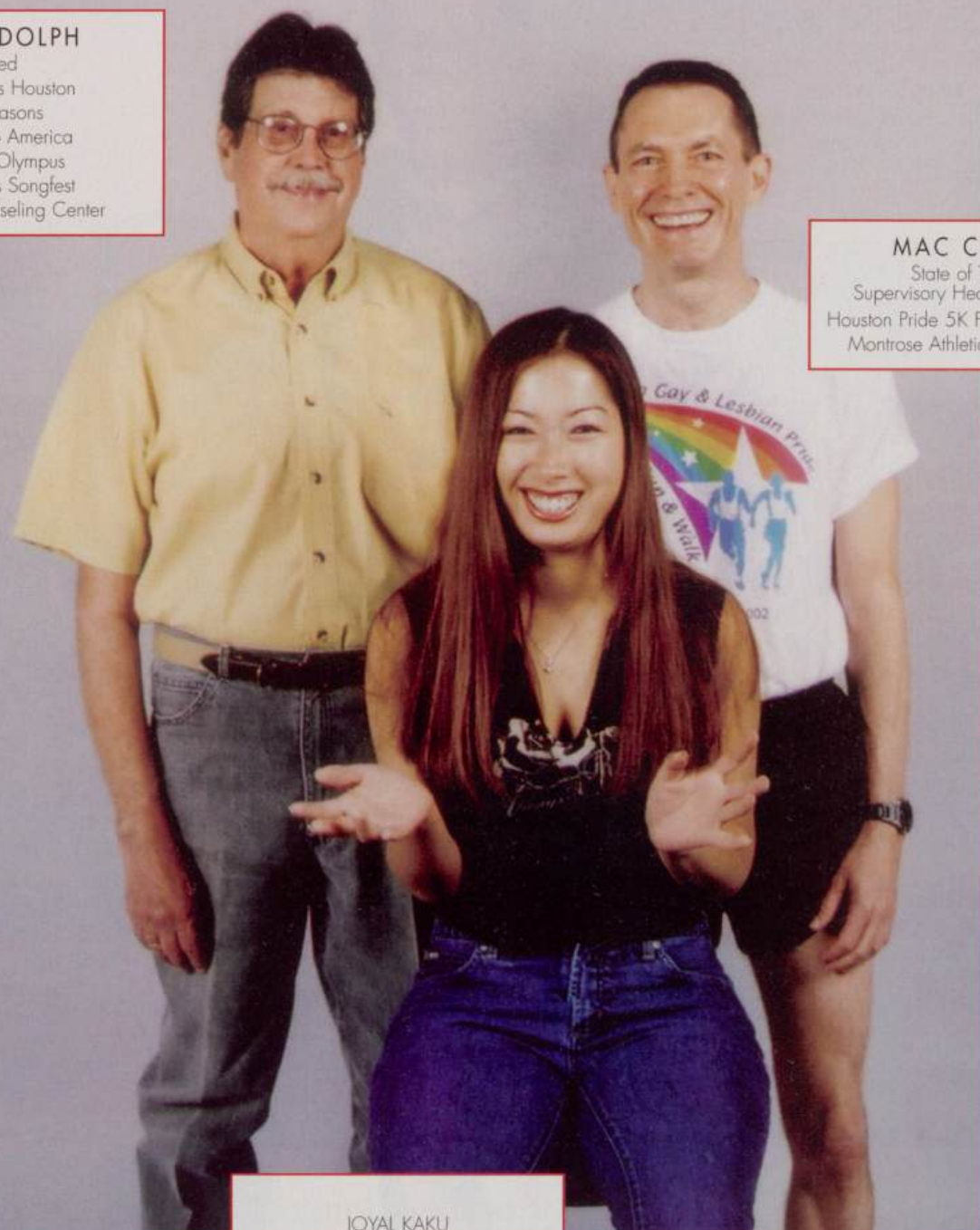


MARION COLEMAN

House of Coleman
Pride Parade Grand Marshal, 1982
Diana Foundation
Log Cabin Republicans
A Christmas Songfest
Kindred Spirits Reunion
Houston Challenge Foundation

PERRIE DOLPH

Retired
Prime Timers Houston
Four Seasons
Miss Camp America
Krewe of Olympus
A Christmas Songfest
Montrose Counseling Center



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 Pride Committee of Houston

YVONNE FEECE
 Photographer and Student
 Bewitched Ball
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DIANA ASHTON
 Student

ANGIE PANZICA
 Student
 University of Houston Graduate School
 of Social Work
 Intern, H.A.T.C.H./
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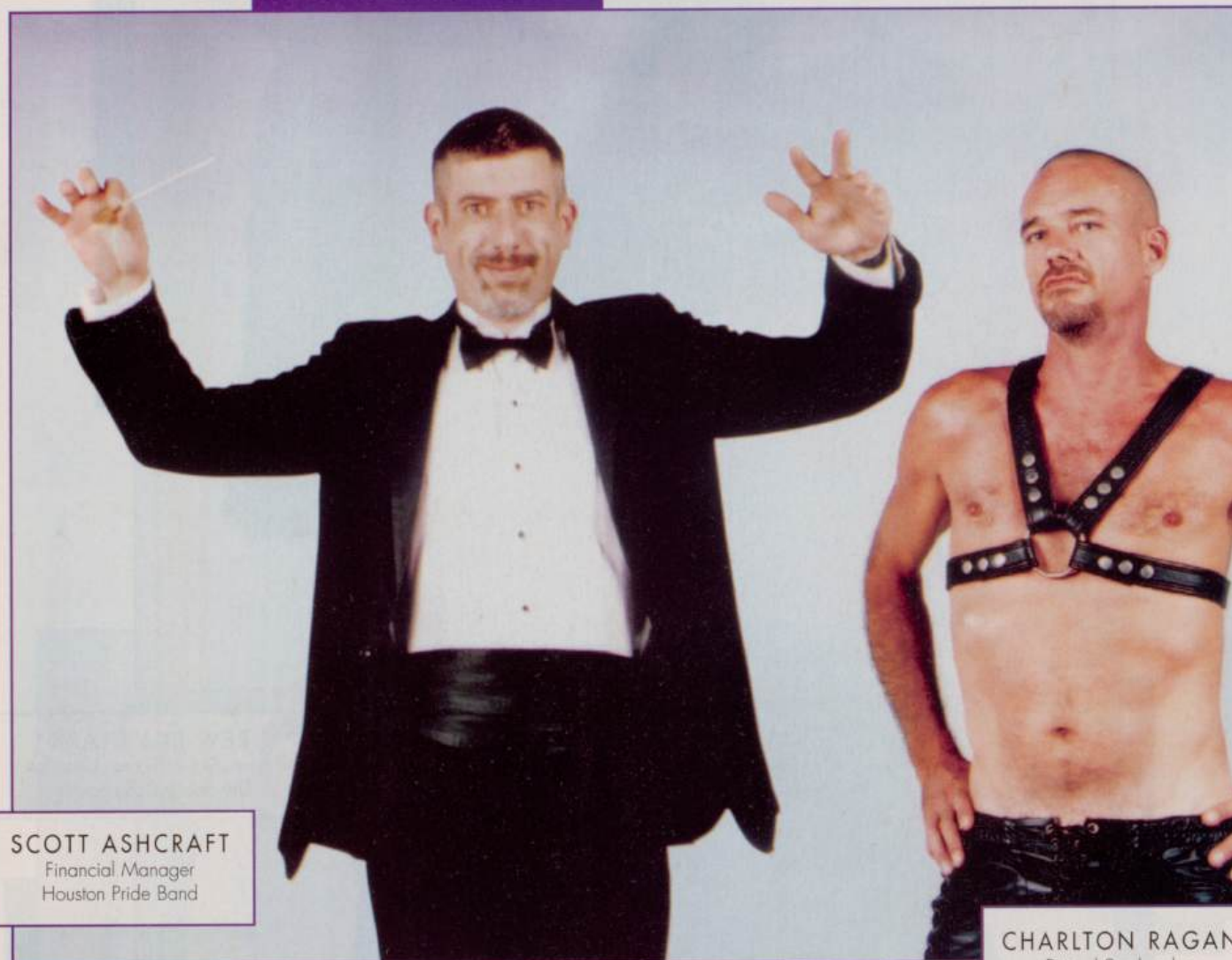


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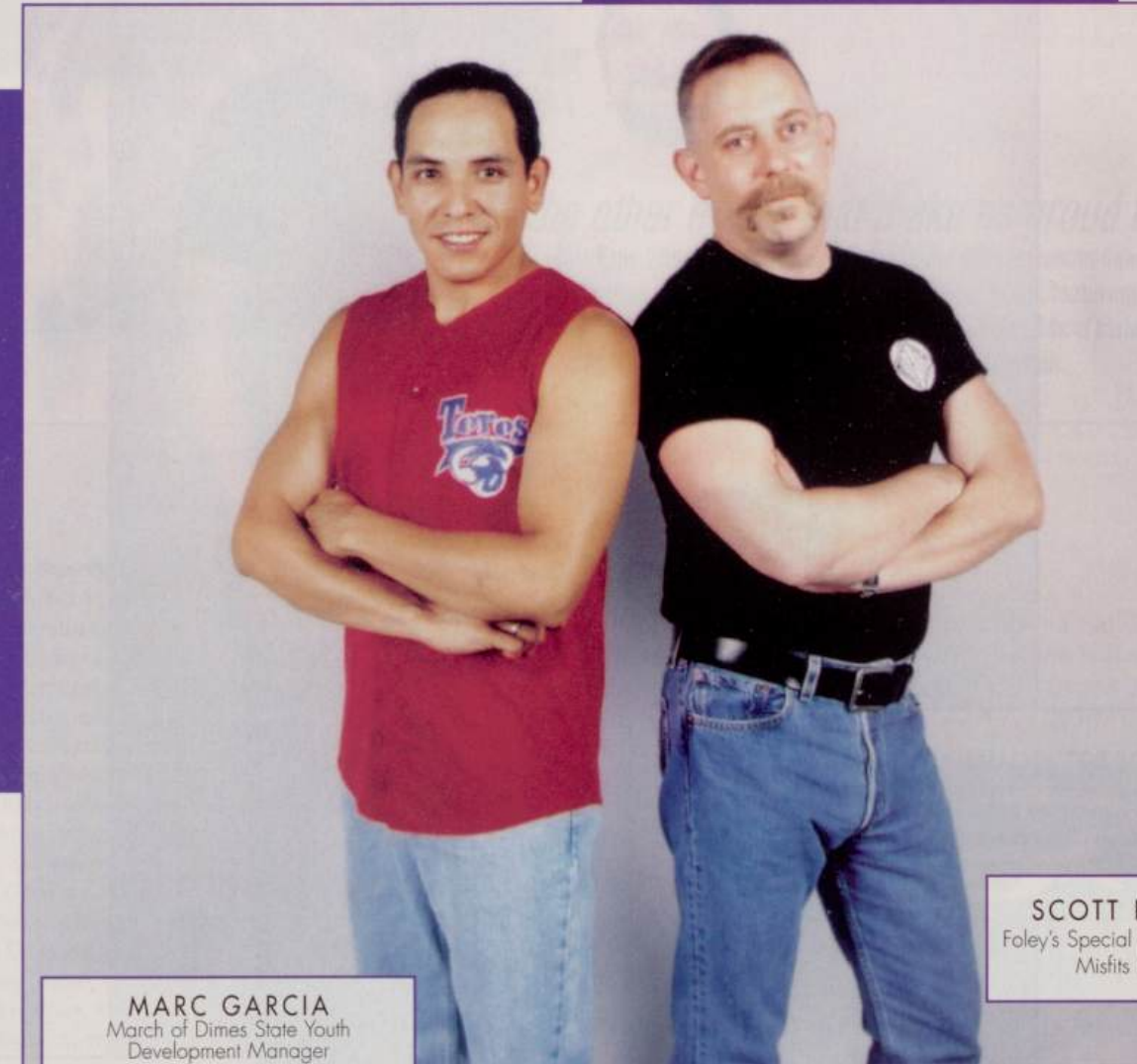
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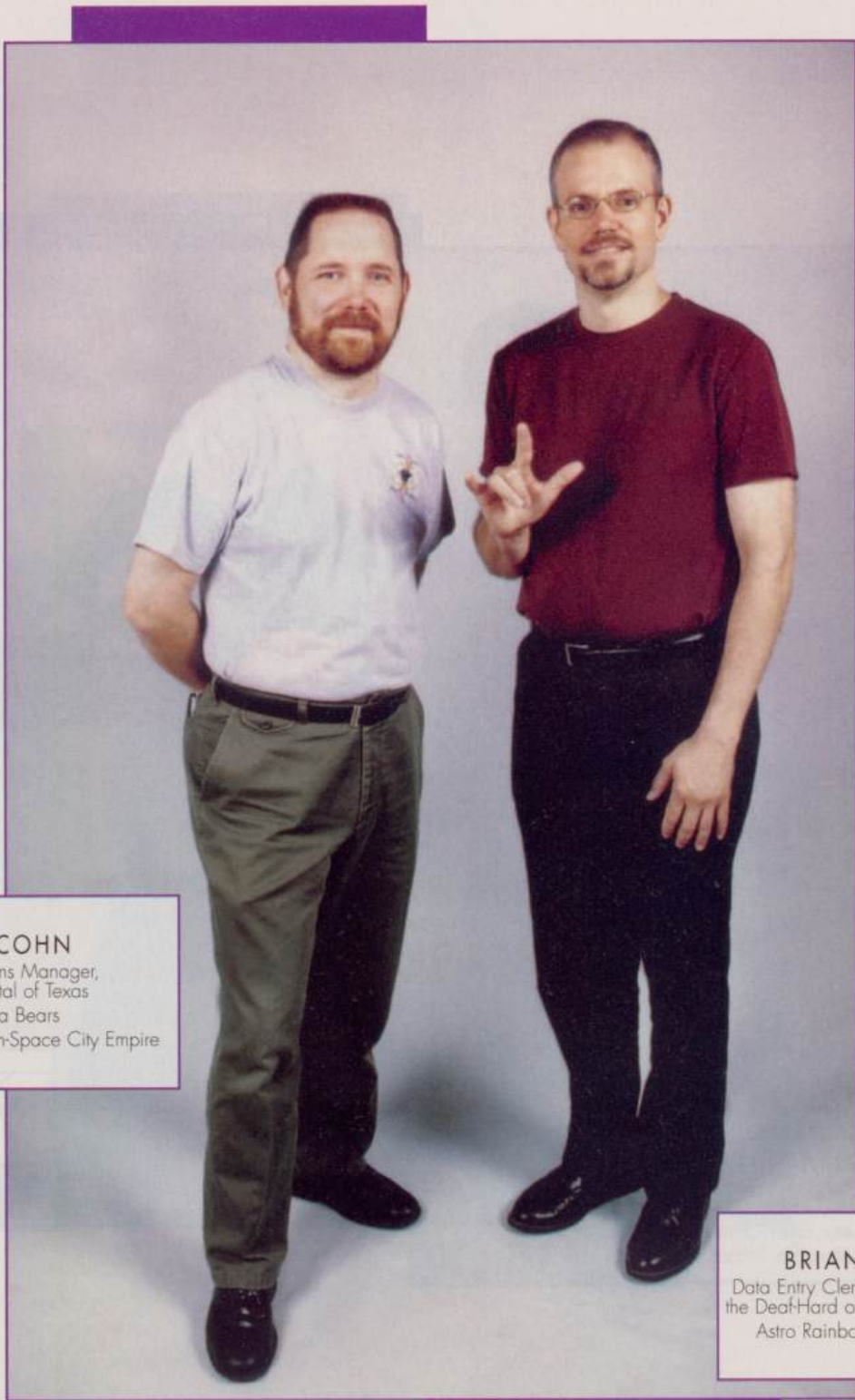
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Financial Manager
Houston Pride Band

CHARLTON RAGAN
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Houston Pride Band



MARC GARCIA
March of Dimes State Youth
Development Manager
Houston GLBT Community Center
Montrose Softball League

SCOTT KENYON
Foley's Special Events Manager
Misfits Houston



ROBERT COHN
Information Systems Manager,
Woman's Hospital of Texas
Houston Area Bears
Imperial Court of Houston-Space City Empire

BRIAN DETERMAN
Data Entry Clerk and Health Educator for
the Deaf-Hard of Hearing, Montrose Clinic
Astro Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf

WE LIKE A PARADE IN JUNE

And the other events that make us proud this month

This year marks the 25th year of Pride parades in the city. To commemorate the milestone, the Pride Committee of Houston has planned 25 Days of Pride, featuring events presented by a range of community groups. Here, we present a few highlights of committee-designated "official" events. See page 47 for more Pride month activities.

1 Kickoff Party

Friday, June 6, 7-10 p.m.

The Pride Committee will honor individuals who have served as parade grand marshals over the past quarter century—and who are collectively the 2003 grand marshals. The Lady Chablis, who gained national fame when she appeared in *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, will attend the event (Heritage Hall, JPMorgan Chase Building, 707 Travis). Free (donations for the Pride Committee accepted). www.pridehouston.org

Concert in the Park

Sunday, June 8, 2 p.m.

The Houston Pride Band will celebrate its 25th-anniversary year with an afternoon of music in Woodrow Wilson Park (Fairview at Yupon). The band will serve ice cream and collect items for Stone Soup Pantry. Free. www.houstonprideband.org

2 Fitness Exchange Health & Fitness Fair

Saturday, June 7, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

The gym in Montrose (4040 Milam) will mark 25 years in business with complimentary health screenings and displays from community health professionals and Houston Buyers Club. Free. Fitness Exchange members are invited to a June 8 party at South Beach. www.fitnessexchange.cc



Grand Marshal Reception

Monday, June 9, 7-9 p.m.

The Royal, Sovereign and Imperial Court of the Single Star of Houston honors the parade grand marshals of the past 25 years at Chances (1100 Westheimer). www.rsicss.org →

For details on the history and restoration of the rainbow flag, check out www.rainbow25.org.



1 Civil Rights Celebration Friday, June 13, 7-9:30 p.m.

Lambda Legal will host an evening to celebrate the U.S. Supreme Court case against the Homosexual Conduct Law. The event at Meteor (2306 Genesee) will feature Lambda legal director Ruth Harlow and entertainment by Jimmy James and Jerry Atwood's Funky Cabaret. \$35 at the door, \$25 in advance. www.lambdalegal.org

2 LHI Rainbow Health Fair Saturday, June 14, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Lesbian Health Initiative will offer free mammograms by appointment and other health screenings at no cost or minimal cost at Montrose Clinic (215 Westheimer). www.lhihouston.org

Community Law Day Saturday, June 14, noon-5 p.m.

More than 20 individuals from the Stonewall Law Association of Greater Houston will address a variety of legal matters throughout the afternoon at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church (1440 Harold). www.slagh.org

3 Cuerpos Calientes y Comida Wednesday, June 18, 7-10 p.m.

AVES (Amigos Volunteers Education and Services, Inc.) will present this Latino-themed night at South Beach (808 Pacific) featuring a Mexican buffet provided by Michaeline's Restaurant & Catering and an underwear show presented by Papi Wear (www.papiinc.com). DJ Cubanito will provide music. \$10 at the door will benefit AVES. www.aves-health.org

Houston Pride 5K Fun Run and Walk Saturday, June 21, 7:30 a.m.

The Houston Montrose Athletic Association sponsors the annual race in Memorial Park. This year's event will benefit AssistHers. Registration is \$15 before June 13, then \$20.



www.geocities.com/houstonpride5k/index.html

4 Pride Day at AstroWorld Saturday, June 21, 11 a.m.-10 p.m.

AstroWorld marks its own milestone this year—35 years in business. Hop on the rides with your family members and *scrrream*. \$35 in advance, \$39.95 at the gate will benefit the Pride Committee and Q-Patrol. www.pridehouston.org

Family & Youth Day Sunday, June 22, 1-4 p.m.

JPMorgan Chase will host this annual kid-friendly event in Memorial Park, featuring a moonwalk, face painting, and treats. Free.



Explaining HIV Drug Resistance: A Patient-Friendly Approach Wednesday, June 25, 8:30-10 a.m.

The Center for AIDS (1407 Hawthorne) will host a breakfast meeting with Andrew Zolopa, M.D., from Stanford University, who has lectured widely on strategic management of HIV disease. Free, RSVP required. www.centerforaids.org

5 Could Angels Be Blessed Thursday, June 26, 8:30 p.m.

In the summer of 1945, the family of a dead gay soldier receives a visit from a young soldier who brings a startling revelation. \$10 admission at the Theatre Suburbia show (1410 W. 43rd) will benefit the Gulf Coast



Archive & Museum of GLBT History. www.gcsm.org

6 Pride Cabaret: Before the Parade Passes By...Again! Friday, June 27, 8 p.m.

The first Pride Cabaret last year was a smash hit and a showcase for an astounding cast of community talents. Ken Williamson again directs the can't-miss show at the Alley (615 Texas). \$50. www.pridehouston.org →

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1 Baile 2003

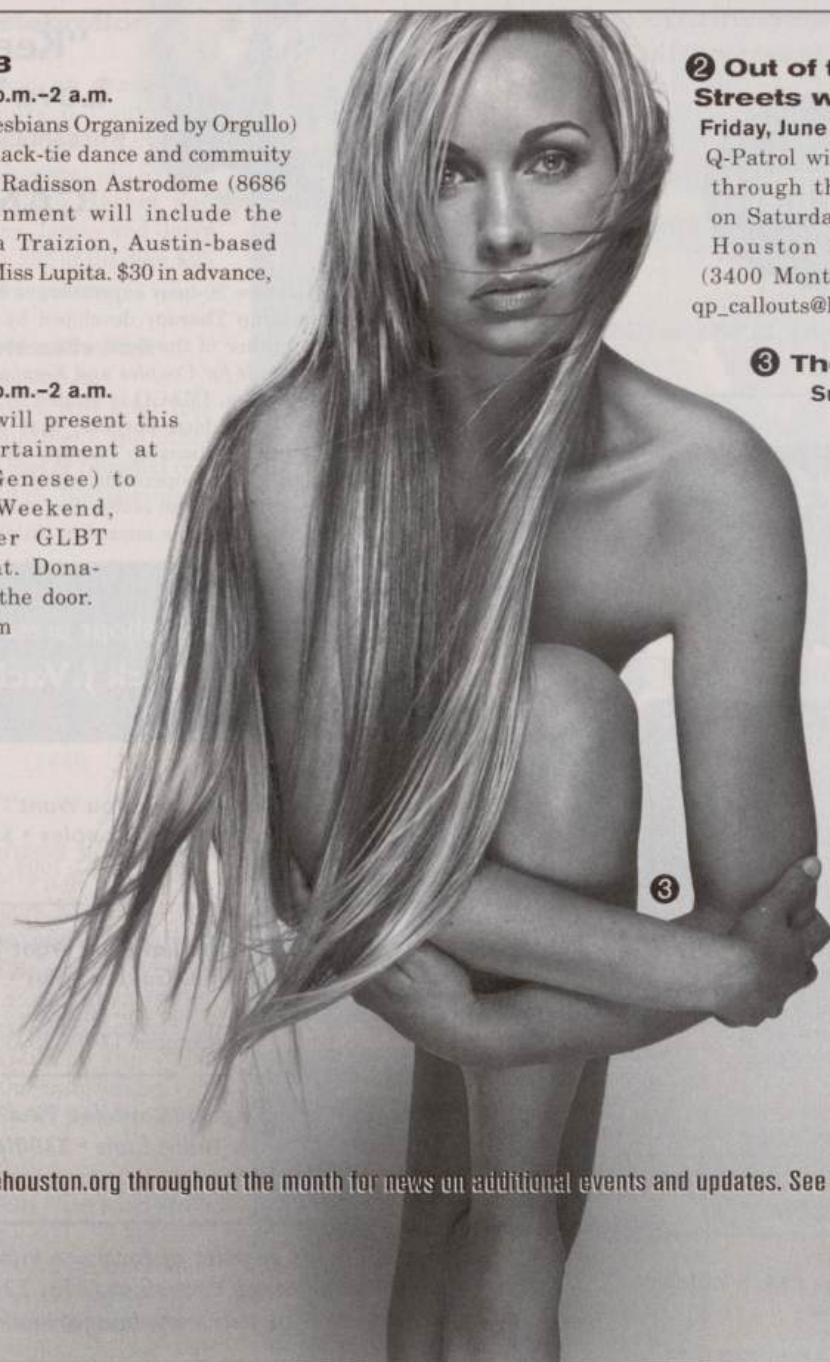
Friday, June 27, 9 p.m.-2 a.m.

GLOBO (Gays & Lesbians Organized by Orgullo) will present this black-tie dance and community fundraiser at the Radisson Astrodome (8686 Kirby). Entertainment will include the Houston band La Traizion, Austin-based Alma Tejana, and Miss Lupita. \$30 in advance, \$35 at the door.

Steel Pride

Friday, June 27, 9 p.m.-2 a.m.

The Grey Party will present this evening of entertainment at Meteor (2306 Genesee) to preview Steel Weekend, the new October GLBT fundraising event. Donations accepted at the door. www.steelparty.com



2 Out of the Bars and Into the Streets with Q-Patrol

Friday, June 27, 9:30 p.m.

Q-Patrol will host a special reconnaissance through the Montrose area—and again on Saturday night. Q-Patrol meets at the Houston GLBT Community Center (3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 207). E-mail qp_callouts@hotmail.com if you plan to attend.

3 The Parade

Sunday, June 28, 8:45 p.m.

Rolling along Westheimer from Woodhead to Whitney, the Silver Celebration parade will feature appearances by dance diva Amber and *Queer as Folk* cast member Robert Gant. Amber will then perform at a post-parade party at Rich's. www.pridehouston.org

Check www.pridehouston.org throughout the month for news on additional events and updates. See page 47 for more June events.



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"We're Queer, too, and We Are Here"

Long in the vanguard
of the fight for
transgender rights,
Phyllis Randolph Frye
sees positive direction
for the movement

by Tim Brookover
Photographs by David Lewis

Phyllis Frye is the Quentin Crisp, the Bella Abzug, the Sidney Poitier of the transgender movement in Houston, and perhaps the country," Ann Walton Sieber wrote a year ago in this magazine. "Forthright and smart, Phyllis was out there when nobody in Houston was out there as a transgender."

Phyllis, what are some of the recent developments in transgender [TG] civil rights?

More transgenders are coming out. A larger number of them are FTM [female to male]. Three major court rulings were announced in February plus action in Britain's House of Lords. There continues to be lots of grassroots legal work to get inclusive LGBT bills or to add gender identification in places where it was left out years ago. And more lawyers who are TG are taking a part.

What do you think is the most important of these developments?

Coming out and staying out is the most important. When you come out, you educate people about who we are. It is more difficult for bigots to remain so when they have to compare their stereotypes and myths against someone they know. Coming out will always remain the *single most important* thing to do.

["O Pioneers!" April 2002] • We still look to the redoubtable Ms. Frye, activist and attorney, for her expertise and sense of history and humor. In April, she spoke to the Stonewall Law Association of Greater Houston on recent developments in transgender civil rights. That appearance inspired this recent conversation with Frye.

What factors have led the movement to this point?

In 1992, I convened the first international TG law conference. At that time, there were no LGB legal groups that did anything for TG legal rights. Each year over the next six years we had another conference. Almost all attendees were non-lawyers. I trained them all in "Billie Carr" grassroots political action. From what I have observed, most of the grassroots TG activists today are second-, third-, fourth-, or fifth-generation folks who trained others from those folks who attended my conferences. You can read about this in the



Chapter 22 section of my website at www.transgenderlegal.com.

My perception is that progress has often been slow, sometimes steady, but then followed by a recent rush of positive developments. Is this perception accurate? If so, to what do you attribute this "rush"?

It's kind of like boiling water. All you see is the water taking in energy until it finally erupts. In this movement we began the fight for TG inclusion in the early 1990s. Let me restate that: We began the fight for re-inclusion. We were a part of the *beginning* at the Stonewall Riots, but were forced to the sidelines because LGs worried about the way we looked. Too bad. We're queer, too, and we are here!

Can you identify a particular event or moment that made a difference in the movement?

Yes, it is in the Chapter 22 that I referred to above. In the fall of 1994 and spring of 1995, we were working with U.S. Senator Jim Jeffords—then the chair of the Senate Health and Human Services committee. He was going to introduce a TG-inclusive ENDA [Employment Non-Discrimination Act] that I had drafted. But HRC [the Human Rights Campaign] got to him, and the old

bill was introduced. On the day the old bill was introduced, all but two of the national TG leaders were in Houston for the fourth TG law conference. We met, discussed the HRC betrayal, and began the big, coordinated push.

Without question, you have played and continue to play a major role in advancing rights for transgender individuals. Who are some of the other individuals and groups that have also been integral to the movement?

I have to salute both PFLAG [Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbians & Gays] and NGLTF [National Gay & Lesbian Task Force]. Both groups have decided that they will *not* endorse a bill that is not inclusive of the entire community.

Locally, the early work was led by Sarah

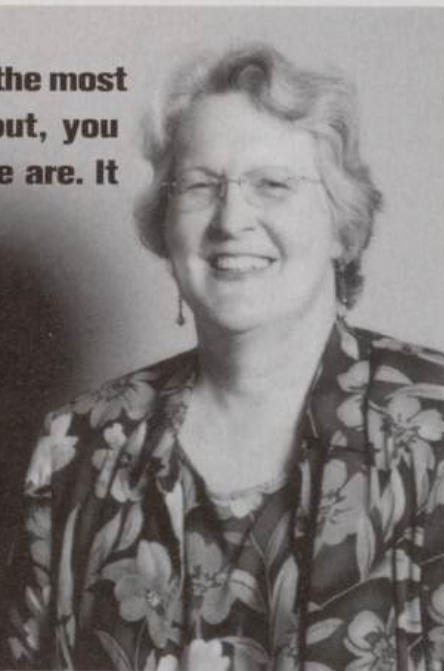
DePalma. It has been picked up by Vanessa Edwards Foster, Beth Richard, Brenda Thomas, Sara Rook, and many others. Anyone who went to the recent TG Unity Banquet in April saw their energy.

But the most significant thing, in my opinion, is the emergence of both the FTM community and those TGs who are people of color. Both of these groups make up a large part of what we will be when we are all out. And both groups wreak havoc to the stereotype of high heels and sequins on white MTF folks.

Where do we go from here?

Unfortunately, the fight nationally still is for us to see an ENDA Bill that reflects the entire LGBT community. While the Houston LGBT groups are finally inclusive, as are the groups in our state, there are still some holdouts.

Coming out and staying out is the most important. When you come out, you educate people about who we are. It is more difficult for bigots to remain so when they have to compare their stereotypes and myths against someone they know. Coming out will always remain the single most important thing to do.



To these folks, I suggest they go to www.transgenderlaw.org and see all the different localities and states that are now with TG protective laws.

I have predicted since my podium speech at the 1993 March on Washington that the TG folks will be instrumental in the granting of legal, same-sex marriage. Read my law review article on the subject on my www.transgenderlegal.com website.

Someday, the conflicting laws about the legal sex of TG people will lead to more same-genital marriages (on my website, click on Littleton). Hopefully, some LG lawyers will ask the courts why, in equal protection, TG same-genital folks can get married, but same-genital LGB folks cannot.

What can transgender individuals do to help secure rights for themselves and their

community?

Come out. Study my website. Join the local TG groups, especially TGAIN [Texas Gender Advocacy Information Network] and participate. Study the www.transgenderlaw.org website. *Quit voting conservative.* Join the local GLBT political caucus and get the name changed. Come out and stay out.

What about gay, lesbian, and bisexual allies of the transgender community? How can we be most helpful and effective?

Bless them. I love them. What they can do is not let folks get away with leaving *gender identity and expression* out of sexual-orientation language. When folks don't include bisexual, allies must speak up. When folks don't include transgender, allies must speak up.

Look at what we have done with the state bar of Texas. It was the *first* state bar to use "sexual orientation and gender identification" in the name of one of its sections. This was the same group that brought Anita Bryant to its Houston convention in 1978. If we can do that with this group, it can be done with any group in any conservative locality.

Sometimes divisions remain in our community be-

tween gay men and/or lesbians and transgender individuals—and bisexuals as well. How can we all break down those divisions?

I think the allies can do most of this. The allies must speak up when it is not popular or convenient.

How does the movement for transgender rights fit into the broader movement for GLBT rights?

Well, as I said before, we started it in the 1969 Stonewall Riots. When the LGB community leaders or politicians needed money, they always went to the TG/drag folks to raise it. And besides, most discrimination against gays and lesbians is actually about their gender presentation—either too feminine for men or too masculine for women. It is all part and parcel of the same fight. ■

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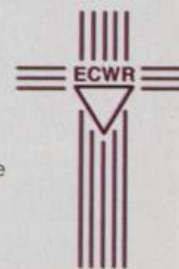


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For more information about the conference, accommodations, cost, and scholarships, please visit us at our website www.ecwr.org/connection or contact us at 619.281.6256. We will also be at the San Diego Pride Festival July 26 & 27, come visit us at our booth.

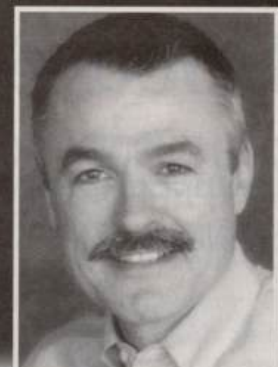


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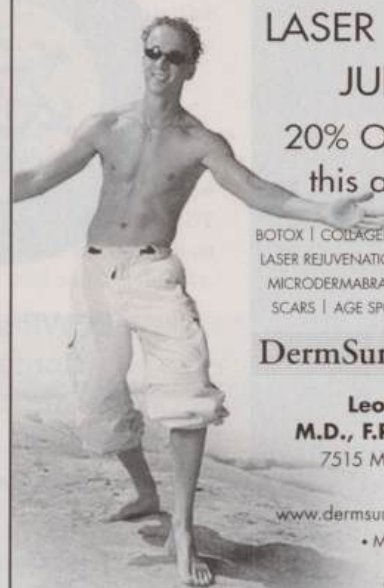
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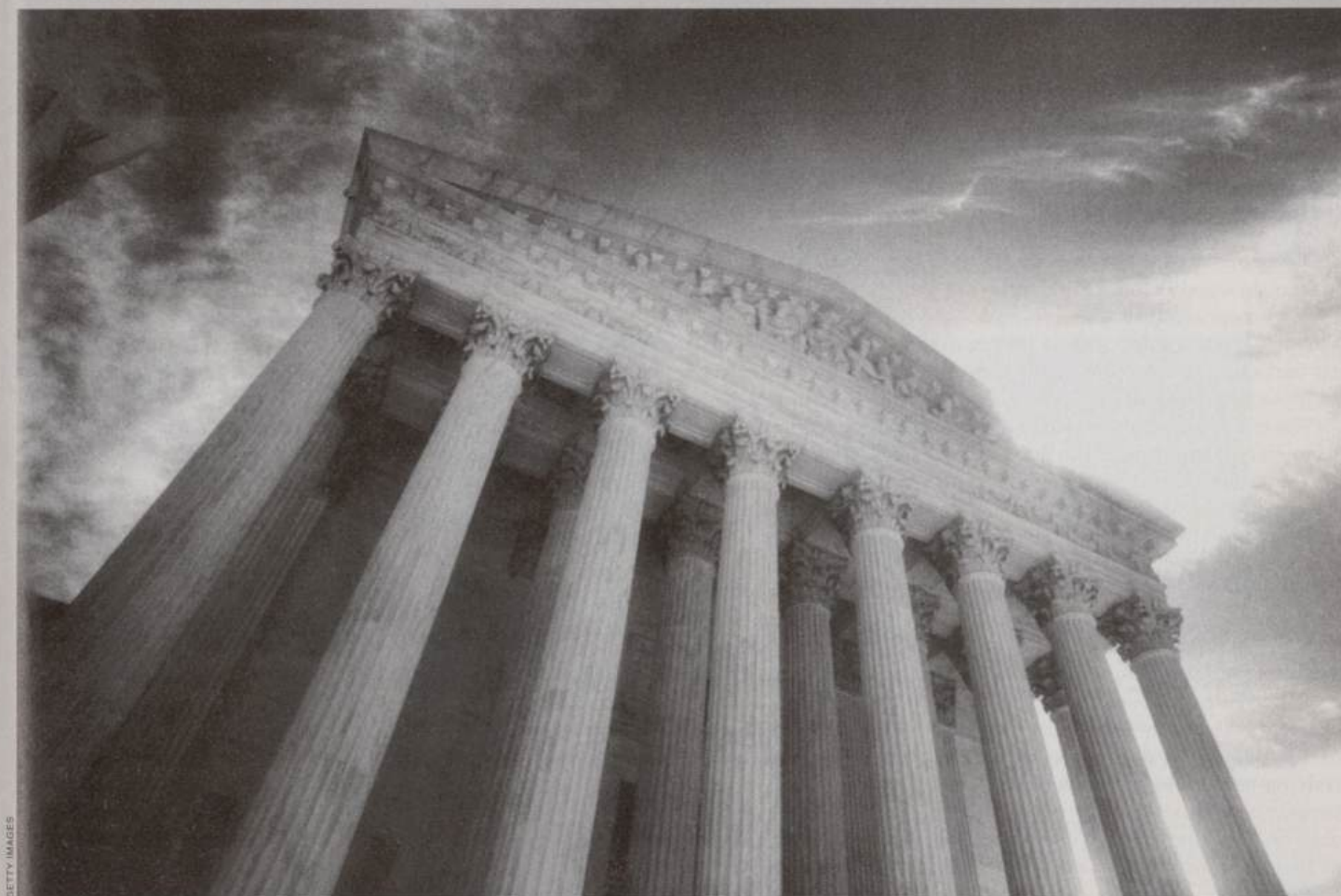
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Courting Change

*Soon the Supreme Court will hand down a decision in the sodomy case,
anticipated by our correspondent who attended the historic oral arguments in March*



by Josef Molnar

In a society that can be thrown into turmoil when our President asks for a definition of the word "is," it is no wonder that sex, as one of the most basic human acts and a highly controversial topic in America, becomes volatile when homosexuality enters the equation.

The recent Supreme Court case involving a consensual sexual act between Messrs. Tyron Garner and John Lawrence is forcing the nation's lawmakers to question the basis for its anti-sodomy laws, and specifically Texas's Homosexual Conduct statute. As an attendee at that his-

toric case, I began to ponder the greater significance of this case—not only for gay people, but for the law of might that exists in Texas and what the elimination of legal protections could pose to a society frantically holding on to one of its last moral gauges. →

A REASONED CASE

Garner and Lawrence were arrested in 1998 when a false report of a violent disturbance gave Harris County sheriff's officers the legal right to enter Lawrence's apartment. Inside, the officers discovered the men engaged in sodomy and promptly arrested them. The couple fought the subsequent conviction, and the case worked its way by appeals to the Supreme Court.

The case is now asking the Court to consider whether the Texas law violates federal equal-protection laws; whether gay people have the right to privacy in their homes; and whether the controversial cornerstone of legal discrimination against gay people, *Bowers v. Hardwick*, should be overturned. The answers may shake the foundations of discrimination against gay people.

As I sat in an alcove at the Supreme Court hearings with other reporters, I had to question this case the way I would any other. Is sodomy a crime? I asked. If so, should its basis be constructed on rickety social grounds, which can change in less than a generation, or built on a relatively concrete base of reason? Reason requires more than a subjective "Because we said so."

During oral arguments, Paul Smith, the Lambda Legal Defense Fund attorney who represented Garner and Lawrence, explained that sodomy laws in the past pertained to enforcing public decency and protecting free will.

"The enforcement of the sodomy laws in this country going back to the founding involves coercion, it involves children, it involves public activity," Smith said. "It doesn't involve the kind of conduct that's at issue here."

Smith did his homework. Although he didn't provide direct quotes from lawmakers of the time, it is safe to say his statements were based on more than conjecture.

"The argument about 19th-century enforcement is that they didn't prosecute anyone for private and consensual crimes involving adults," he continued, "that they worried about children, they worried about public activity, they worried about coercion, but that they didn't worry about same-sex or different-sex sodomy."

If this is so, it ought to be easy to convince people who rely on history that they got it wrong. It sounds like a logical argument, but as with all forms of discrimination, removing a message that has been so ingrained in the social and individual consciousness is difficult. And many times these messages are not based on reason, but on the faith people have in those beliefs.

THE MORAL ROAD

The religious people who founded the United States based their values and laws on those handed down by earlier generations and influenced by the Bible. Many of the laws we have were gleaned from its pages, and certain passages have been used to support anti-sodomy laws. This was a way to preserve morality at a time when most people could agree that morality was necessary for the preservation of society.

Bit by bit those laws have been weighed and judged by the courts and society based on more objective terms. Black Americans are free, and they can vote, marry, and intermarry with other races. Women, likewise, have the right to their livelihoods and the right to the decisions they make about their bodies.

Now gay people in Texas—and, by default, gays in the rest of the country—are demanding full rights. Add the general outcry for equality, and the world seems to be turned on its side yet again.

And yet all of this goes against supposed passages in the Bible, which certainly creates headaches for people who try to maintain a strict adherence to the book as a mandate from an all-powerful God. This God favors certain people: Those who, by nature or choice, decide to adhere to these laws become privileged members of a divine hierarchy.

But if law and society challenge the biblical laws, the divine hierarchy loses cohesion, and morality becomes more subjective and confusing. Religious leaders and conservatives have always adapted: When faced with the prospect that black people might actually be equal to whites and not the base and immoral creatures they believed them to be, the "separate but equal" doctrine was enacted. Women, likewise, stopped being viewed as quite so morally impressionable and childlike, and gained the right to vote—but remained bound to their husbands as *Mrs.* At the time, the people who benefited from an absence of these protections considered these changes exceedingly liberal because they were forced to relinquish control over those groups.

And now gay people in Texas—and, by default, gays in the rest of the country—are demanding full rights. Add to that the gen-

eral outcry for equality, and the world seems to be turned on its side yet again.

But social leaders have found a way to adapt even this discriminatory law. The familiar argument that the Homosexual Conduct law does not punish homosexuality, just the act itself, was once again heard from the bench during the hearing.

"It doesn't say you can't have . . . any sexual intimacy," Justice Antonin Scalia said. "It says you cannot have sexual intimacy with a person of the same sex."

I was appalled. By ignoring one of the basic tenets expressed by the vast majority of gay people—that they are attracted to each other by nature—Scalia failed to recognize the truth of sexuality. And by legislating sexuality, society claims the right to control the private actions of people at the same time that previous courts have decided it can't—with devastating results.

"Here you have a statute that, . . . while it purports to just regulate sexual behavior, has all sorts of collateral effects on people," Smith said. "People in the states [that] still regulate sodomy every day, they're denied visitation to their own children, they're denied custody of children, they're denied public employment. They're denied private employment, because they're labeled as criminals merely because they've been identified as homosexuals."

The majority of states have come to the conclusion that private expressions of sexual intimacy ought to remain under the control of couples. The conflict occurs with the 13 states that say people do not have that right. Nine of the states forbid sodomy, and four more, including Texas, strike out at homosexuals through the way many of them express their sexuality.

And so the conflicts between the rule of society and law were playing themselves out under the vaulted ceiling of the Court chamber. The intent of the Constitution's writers was to provide a framework for the preservation of individual freedoms for the common person, and to that end the forgers of that document attempted to cover their bases. But they only provided the background on which future generations would imprint their interpretations of the law.

Later this month the Court is expected to issue its answers to the three Constitutional questions presented in the sodomy case. The Constitution grants the Supreme Court the authority to move figurative mountains. For our community's sake, I hope certain members of the Court do not just consider the case a molehill.

Josef Molnar previewed the Supreme Court case in the March issue.

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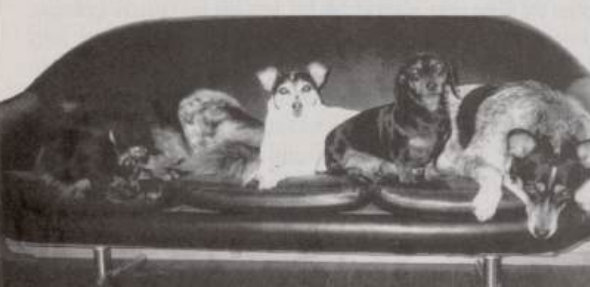
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THE ALLIES

**Despite the hard-right turn in the Legislature,
the community still has friends in high places**

by Randall Ellis

The current session of the Legislature has posed many obstacles for the Texas GLBT community. A record number of antigay bills has been introduced, and the religious right and big business seem to be calling the shots behind the scenes. Moreover, many of the community's traditional allies have departed, including Debra Danburg, Glen Maxey, and Harryette Erhardt.

But every dark cloud has a silver lining.

This session, a new generation of allies has emerged in the Legislature. Although most of them have been there working on issues of importance to the GLBT community for some time, the conquest of state government by the radical right has brought new friends and allies to the forefront.

Jessica Farrar

The redistricting process also brought many new GLBT voters into the constituency of Representative Jessica Farrar. With the new maps, District 148 picked up the Heights and Woodland Heights, both with large numbers of GLBT residents. Although Farrar has always supported GLBT issues, she had formerly been able to rely on Debra Danburg to lead the House in this area.

Farrar has jumped up to the plate and taken a lead role for equal rights at the Texas Legislature. She filed the first proactive GLBT bill this session, a bill that would help eliminate discrimination in employment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Texans. She also signed on to a Coleman-authored bill that would protect GLBT students in public schools from harassment.

Farrar is an articulate, strong-willed



legislator who has a clear idea of the direction in which Texas needs to move. The GLBT community can rest a little easier knowing that Representative Farrar is in Austin, fighting for equality.

Eddie Rodriguez

Representative Eddie Rodriguez is no stranger to GLBT is-

ssues. Rodriguez is the former chief of staff for Glen Maxey, the only openly gay person to serve in the Legislature. Capital insiders feel this young Austinite is a rising star—one who knows the process and the issues, and is not afraid to speak his mind.

Rodriguez, like his former boss, is not afraid to stand up to the big dogs in

the Legislature. During the opening week of the current session, he challenged an attempt by the speaker of the House to limit the power and input of House Democrats. Although he did not have the votes to stop Speaker Craddick, Rodriguez was able to serve notice to his colleagues in the House that he is one freshman legislator not to be underestimated.

Rodriguez has filed several bills that are important to the GLBT community. HB 810 would prohibit discrimination in employment by state agencies on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. He has also filed a harm reduction bill that would help reduce the transmission of hepatitis and HIV.

Rodriguez has a clear vision of what is fair, and he is not afraid to speak his mind. He brings a breath of fresh air to the sometimes-



stifling atmosphere of the Legislature, and he will accomplish great things for his constituents and the entire state of Texas.

Mike Villarreal

Representative Mike Villarreal from San Antonio has made a name for himself in the Legislature as a true champion of the people, standing up for disenfranchised and often overlooked segments of our population. Villarreal feels that discrimination only serves to divide our state and detract from the true value of diversity.

Villarreal serves on the House Committee on State Affairs, a committee that sees a number of bills relating to equal rights. During committee testimony on the Defense of Marriage Act, a bill that would allow Texas to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages or civil unions from other states, Villarreal seemed to be the lone voice of reason. He put the conservative forces on the spot by offering up an alternative bill. HB 3463 would allow Texas to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages or civil unions from other states but would also make it illegal



to fire a worker because of sexual orientation or gender identity. Conservative forces were deeply opposed to the bill, but HB 3463 allowed Villarreal to make a point. DOMA was not about doing what was best for the state; it was about dividing the state and telling one group of people that they are inferior.

Villarreal has his work cut out for him. The GLBT community has a rising star on its

side in Villarreal and should look for great things in the future of this ally from the Alamo City.

Garnet Coleman

Representative Garnet Coleman has been a legislator since 1991, representing downtown Houston as well as Third Ward. When political boundaries were redrawn in 2001, Coleman's new district included the



eastern half of Montrose, but it wasn't merely the redrawing of maps that compelled Coleman to stand up for what is right. From the very beginning of his stint as a legislator, Coleman has stood up for issues of importance to the GLBT community. Coleman has led efforts to promote early treatment of HIV and AIDS by increasing funding for combination drug therapy and expanding the Medicaid program. He has authored numerous bills that would protect GLBT Texans in the workplace and in schools. He has done all this without the fanfare that most expect from politicians of his stature. He has done it because it is the right thing to do.

This session, Coleman has filed legislation to protect GLBT students in public schools and has also taken the lead on HIV/AIDS issues. Coleman has a strong vision of equality for the future of Texas. Because of his expert and thoughtful leadership, we can all rest a little easier, knowing that we have an ally in the House of Representatives.

This is just a short list of our friends at work for us in Austin. Senators **Rodney Ellis, Mario Gallegos, and John Whitmire** (pictured below, l-r) have also been consistently excellent allies of the GLBT community and will continue to stand up for what is right in the Texas Senate.

Representatives **Senfronia Thompson, Joe Moreno, Terri Hodge, and Lon Burnam** (pictured from center, l-r) are all strong, fair-minded legislators who stand tough on issues of importance to GLBT Texans.



In the coming years, the GLBT community must return the support we currently enjoy from these lawmakers. They will be clear targets of the far right, simply because of their support of GLBT issues. Right-wing resources will be focused on these races, both in the primaries and

general elections, in an attempt to oust our allies from office. The GLBT community must step up to the plate and vote fair-minded individuals into office. The road to equality will be full of many detours and obstacles, but we must not lose faith. With the help of our allies working for us in

Austin, the GLBT community will play an important role in shaping the future of the great state of Texas.

Randall Ellis, executive director of the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby, wrote "Attack from the Right" in the March issue. LGRL has launched a renovated website at www.lgrrl.org.

UPDATE: At press time, this is the status of two bills of major community interest

DOMA. On April 30, the Texas House approved the so-called Defense of Marriage Act on a 118-9 vote. With Governor Rick Perry's signature, the bill will become law, forbidding the state from recognizing same-gender civil unions performed in other states.

Adoption. The bill, sponsored by Robert Talton (R-Pasadena), that would have prevented gay men or lesbians from serving as foster or adoptive parents remained pending with the Senate Affairs Committee after a contentious April 22 public hearing.

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NEW VOICES

Young writers from the community take another look at pride

Beginning this month, *OutSmart* welcomes the contributions of young journalists and writers involved with H.A.T.C.H. The Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals serves youth ages 13-21 through programming and support. The magazine will regularly feature their voices, and we are pleased to present their perspective.

As the community looks toward another Pride season, four writers consider the significance and the relevance of the annual celebrations and the parade.

Ajax*, age 14

The natural and ultimate result of Gay Pride is a Gay Pride parade. But what is Gay Pride? A counterbalance and/or an effort to effect equity upon society. To explain this I must first expound upon one of the simple truths of a dynamic society. The need for balance.

In almost every circumstance, when considering humans individually, repression for a minute demands flamboyance for a minute. This innate desire for equity, repression being balanced by flamboyance, expresses itself too on a much larger scale. It is expressed in entire communities.

Many gay people have experienced shame or repression during their lifetime, most occurring in the earlier, more impressionable days of their existence. For balance's sake, this necessitates later pride and flamboyance on their part, which takes the form of Gay Pride, or its greatest representative, a Gay Pride parade.

I personally do not find too much of a need in myself for Gay Pride, for whatever reason. However many people do, though less, I think, among the younger and newer gay people of society. This is most likely due to the development of tolerance for homosexuality and acceptance on the part of the homosexual individuals themselves. These two things eliminate repression, and they eliminate shame.

Andy, age 18

There comes a time when we queer youth question our role in society. We catch scarce glimpses of homosexuality in the history books; a brief reference to an island by the name of Lesbos, various persecutions from the Roman Catholic Church, or a bleak image of a six-pointed star with a pink triangle imposed on top of it. But there is little to be offered in the classroom to queer youth that

Jeffery, age 17

To me, pride means accomplishment and the attitude toward that accomplishment of self. A certain realization of who we are and the attitude of acceptance, love, bravery, honesty, and respect toward that accomplishment to ourselves as an individual and as a people. I say a *people*, hinting a separation from the lot. Because we have this pride, we have accomplished much more than our dreams. And we are frowned upon based on our "pride," which only seems to make us more proud of who we are. Not to piss them off, but to grow, again, as an individual along with us as a people.

Justin, age 19

To say "I deserve better than this" is pride. To say "You deserve better than this" is pride. To love the things you have accomplished, to fight for what you deserve, to move all obstacles before you is pride. To speak in spite of fear is overcoming shame. Pride is love. To love yourself is to hold sacred what you stand for. Pride is not a pill, not an escape, not a sedative or stimulant; it's not a shot, not a puff, not a line. It's a speech, it's a demand, it's a bill passed in Congress, a battle with restraints and regulations from a society with a crippled mind and wounded spirit. It's not about control, forcing oppressors to change. It's about surrender, surrendering to the truth that their power is an illusion, a cellophane cage for your mind. Pride is not a parade but the message behind it, a message extended to all who are willing to receive it. "Join us in freedom from the fear that lies in us all. Join us in a celebration of love."

The H.A.T.C.H. phone number is 713/529-3590; the website is www.hatchyouth.org.

* Because of the age of the writers and the need many have for confidentiality, *OutSmart* will identify most H.A.T.C.H. contributors by first names only.



Pride defined: "Pride is not a parade but the message behind it."

can satisfy the human desire of knowing one's origin.

History and precedents have often been used as the justification for the norm, but what history is there for gay youth? What the Gay Pride movement can offer to the next generations of queer youth is a past. There will come a time when marches, rallies, petitions, and protests will cease in their urgency, and when parents and friends cease to shudder when they discover their child or friend is queer. When that time comes, the actions of the Gay Pride movement should not be forgotten, but cherished as a past.

FUNNY OLD BROADS

Leave it to lesbians to enjoy aging

Between hurricanes, Florida's coastal communities have nice weather if you like hot and humid. Their muggy climate is famous for sustaining primitive life forms such as mildew, cockroaches, binge-drinking college students, and people who voted Republican in the last election (thanks a lot).

But, Florida's year-round warmth appeals to old people, and—hang onto your hat—lesbians get old, too. Even Sweetie and I are noticing the effects of gravitational pull. According to PlanetOut.com (and, by the way, not your local newspaper) two pushy old lesbian retirees are trying to enjoy their golden years in a Florida resort community that doesn't want to let them in. And it doesn't have to.

Florida, like most of our great country, is legally entitled to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. Now Florida's got those two nerry old dykes intent on changing that. They want equal access to the bingo tables, and they're putting up a fight.

But don't give up on traditional family values just yet. Unlike our thighs, Florida is holding firm. What's their deal, anyway? Is there a shortage of mashed peas and carrots? Do two old dykes gumming each other without their dentures somehow threaten America's moral fiber?

Speaking of gumming, Florida is also one of the 16 states in the United States that still has—and enforces—anti-sodomy laws. You can do 60 days in a Florida jail and be fined \$500 for breaking the legal prohibition on cunnilingus, fellatio, or anal coitus, pardon my Latin. That goes for everyone—homo or hetero—so next time you're "down there," be thankful you aren't in Florida!

I wouldn't live in Florida for all the fresh grapefruit in, well, Florida. Speaking of citrus, orange-juice spokeswoman Anita Bryant's Save Our Children crusade—the mother of all "modern" (and I use the term loosely) antigay campaigns—originated right there in Miami's Dade County.

Florida's proud history of homophobia keeps slithering right along like a gator in the Everglades. Under the benevolent rule of Brother Bush, Florida continues to roll up its diversity welcome mat. The Sunshine State is no more friendly to lesbian and gay people than to the African American and Jewish Democrats who tried to vote in the 2000 elections. Florida's queer hating is like gray hair: We can cover it up, we can dye it purple, but we can't get rid of it.

Sweetie and I plan to enjoy an uninhibited old age in our own town. Our flesh is already showing age signs, prompting our newest athletic endeavor, Wattle Ball™. So far, our game invention has one rule: The only body part you can hit the ball with must be devoid of bone or muscle. Leave it to lesbians to enjoy aging.

We practice being our alter-elders, Lefty and Shekkie. Last night, Lefty pulled her lips in over her teeth (still her own), smacked her tongue and asked, "So, Shekkie, how are you, sweet-hawt?"

I squeezed up my face for maximal wrinklage. "Oy, Lefty, yah still such a beauty. And what a wattle!"

Lefty's under-chin jiggled like an excited water balloon. "Shekkie, sweet-hawt, show me those fabulous wing dangles of yours."

I raised my arms and flapped the loose meat—the ready position for Wattle Ball™.

We're hoping to market our Wattle Ball™ invention someday, but it's still in the R&D phase. Should the slow-flying foam ball come in bright varicose blue or neutral liver spot brown? We're still perfecting the chin, arm, and thigh Wattle Ball™ whapping technique. Loose flesh is one resource whose abundance we can count on without having to invade another country.

Our target market is the non-age-phobic who won't be squandering their limited incomes on Botox. Lefty and Shekkie will be the happy lezbo geezers photographed on the game's package. We'll rake it in.

Then we can build a Florida retirement resort and admit whomever we choose. If we're really lucky, Wattle Ball™ will get us rich enough to buy our own governor.



Sally Sheklow performs with the award-winning comedy troupe WYMPROV! Comments can be e-mailed to her at sally@wymprov.com.

THAT'S NOT FUNNY!

TRIO airs uncensored comedy

TRIO, the entertainment cable television channel reflecting pop-culture, pushes boundaries by asking the questions, "Is it funny?" and "Is it offensive?" with its June tentpole "Uncensored Comedy." The month-long programming event is anchored by three original specials: *Uncensored Comedy: That's Not Funny!*; *Sick Humor*; and *Outlaw Comic: The Censoring of Bill Hicks*.

Here we address *Uncensored Comedy: That's Not Funny!*, which is a 90-minute documentary narrated by Susie Essman (*Curb Your Enthusiasm*). The documentary takes an unflinching look at "offensive" humor, showcasing comedians' first-person accounts on how they deal with the line between what's funny and what's unacceptable in issues of race, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender in their work. The lineup includes openly gay comedian Scott Thompson; Jon

Stewart and the staff/writers of *The Daily Show*; Colin Quinn; D.L. Hughley; Bill Maher; Matt Stone and Trey Parker; The Smother Brothers; Sarah Silverman; Craig Kilborn and the staff/writers of *The Late Late Show*; Joy Behar; and others.

Uncensored Comedy: That's Not Funny! premieres Sunday, June 8, at 8 p.m., with repeat airings on the 11th (8 & 11 p.m.); 14th (6 p.m.); 15th (12:30 a.m. & 4 p.m.); 21st (noon); 22nd (6 p.m.); and 23rd (8 p.m.).

Complementing June's programming is the 1990 feature film *Without You I'm Nothing*. Sandra Bernhard unleashes her singing and dancing talents, along with her many signature comedy routines and characters. Premieres Tuesday, June 3, at 8 p.m., with repeat airings on the 21st (4 p.m.); 22nd (3 p.m.); and 24th (8 p.m.).

To confirm dates and times, visit www.triotv.com.



Scott Thompson (above) in *Brain Candy*, and Jon Stewart of *The Daily Show*



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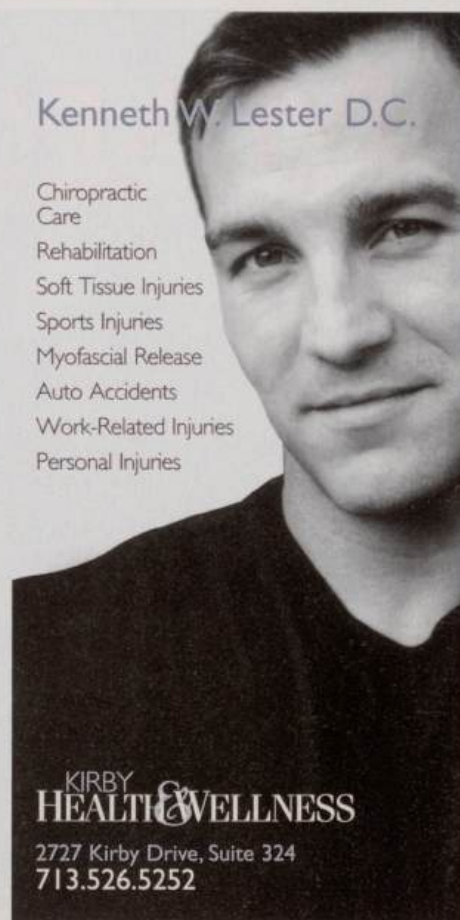
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GAY FOR MORE THAN A DAY

Orlando offers attractions apart from Gay Days at Disney World

A city lies beyond the mouse ears. Orlando, Florida, is recognized by most of the world as a cluster of theme parks, Disney magic, and pure Americana (i.e. chain restaurants, tacky souvenirs, and Wal-Marts). And many gays pilgrimage to the area for the annual June Gay Days weekend at Walt Disney World, wherein tons of homos invade the theme park and its environs for fun in the Magic Kingdom and circuit partying.

But what about the rest of Orlando and neighboring Kissimmee? And what about going to Orlando at a time other than the first weekend in June?

Over the course of almost two years, I've visited Orlando several times with my



"I think Orlando's a pretty welcoming place for any gay person," says columnist Billy Manes.

boyfriend. I found that it's gay every darned day. Who do you think mans those Chip and Dale costumes?

Gay Days

This year, Gay Days hit June 3-7. The tradition has grown since its origin as a single "Gay Day in the Magic Kingdom," for which queers wore telltale red shirts. The red shirts remain, but numerous events and the entire city have been added over a near-weeklong stretch. Visit www.gaydays.com for

details. Things begin with a kickoff party at the Orlando Museum of Art, peak with Saturday's overtaking of Disney World's Magic Kingdom, the Beach Ball party, and a Cyndi Lauper concert. Sunday is a big wrap-up of circuit parties.

Orlando, The City

Yes, Virginia, there is a city of Orlando. You wouldn't know it by sticking to the magical theme park path (and the confusingly monikered "downtown Disney"). But hop into a rental car and discover a very real place that is home to nearly 2 million people. Main gay 'hoods are the Vi-Mi district (the Gay and Lesbian Center is nestled here), Thornton Park, and downtown Orlando. You can look up more local details and an events calendar on www.gayorlando.com.

"I think Orlando's a pretty welcoming place for any gay person," opines resident Billy Manes, who writes the stinging queer "The B-List" column for *Orlando Weekly* (www.orlandoweekly.com). He describes it as a place of "extremes." "I guess it's still part of the South, so there's that conservative resentment, the Abercrombie khakis thing. Then the retirement world and hotel industry people." There's also a large gay

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creative community (many of whom are employed by—big surprise!—theme parks and hotels). “So there are certainly people to talk to,” he quips.

Manes credits Orlando’s lack of pretension as a virtue. “I’ve lived in New Jersey and Boston and there’s a sense of having to hold up your guard [in those places],” he says. “The best thing to do here is slop around with the pigs. You can sit in your house and not worry about making engagements.” One gay to-do he recommends is Sunday brunch at Dexter’s for its \$1.95 exotic fruit-flavored Mimosas and casual crowd. “I think we have a lot of quite beautiful places, and those things are like treasures.”

Describing himself as more of a Rufus

Your dreams come true:
That guy in the Mickey
Mouse suit may be gay.



Wainwright type of queer than White Party worshipper (“I weigh 130 pounds”), of Gay Days Manes admits, “I’m repulsed by it. The bloated red T-shirt, Mickey Mouse ears, and the circuit parties, it’s so foreign to me. I remember walking [into the park] and everyone was doing drugs. It’s kind of

sad, and I can’t pretend I was above it at that time. I was on K, so my judgment was bad, and the idea of kids being around as you indulge in adult destruction . . .”

Still, Gay Days manages to bring positive queer visibility to the city and the tourists who stumble upon it. Orlando’s mayor even wrote a welcome letter for the event program last year.

Since Orlando is chock full of heterosexual nuclear families from all over the world, it’s no surprise that homophobia rears its head on occasion. On one visit, my boyfriend and I stayed in a budget hotel on International Drive, a tourist-geared stretch littered with hotels, restaurants, mammoth souvenir shops, and those omnipresent “discount tickets” stands (most of these offer reduced theme park entry in exchange for spending a miserable morning being schmoozed into buying inconveniently located vacation properties). Walking down International Drive hand in hand, we received our share of double takes and lollygags (especially from UK visitors)—enough so that I won’t stay there again if possible.

At one point, a jeep pulled over, and the occupants called out (in what’s best described as a thick dumb accent), “Hey, you guys! Hey, pretties! Come over here! C’mon, pretties!” We kept walking, feigning

obliviousness, as the jeep crept alongside. “Hey! WHAT THE HELL? GET OVER HERE! WHY AIN’T YOU GETTIN’ OVER HERE, FAGGOTS???” Rhetorical question? Finally, the bashmobile drove off, and we breathed a sigh of relief.

Our lone brush with overt homophobia on theme park grounds occurred at Epcot Center. The irony of homophobia within Disney’s confines—where almost every performer is gay, and popular attractions include “Ellen’s [as in DeGeneres] Energy Adventure”—is whipping-cream heavy. Holding hands, we passed a 12-year-old Hispanic boy with frosted hair tips and a cherubic mother. Moments later, I detected a fracas.

“Sick!!! That’s sick!!!”

Hmm, what’s that? Wait a minute.

“You’re SICKKKK!!!”

It was the kid—the one with *frosted tips*—screaming at us, about 50 feet behind.

“It was Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve!!!”

Unfortunately, by this point we were too far away to compliment momma on her fine parenting skills, request a less clichéd aphorism, or point out to the kid, “You may not accept or like gays, but you need to respect them in public. And by the way, you have *frosted hair*. See you at Roxy in 2010!” →

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Downtown Highlights

One must-visit in downtown Orlando is an Italian restaurant, La Fontanella Da Nino (900 E. Washington St.). We enjoyed our favorite meal in the whole city there, and plan on visiting every time we're in town. Charming owner/host Nino Carrera, who hails from Naples but moved to Orlando to be with his American naval officer wife, greets guests nightly (except Mondays, when the restaurant is closed). Gay locals, some couples, some singles, filled an outside courtyard and rear dining room. Nino told us how downtown only recently turned hip and happening. Four years ago, it was somewhat unsavory. Now, locals stroll about at night from restaurant to bar.

Club-wise, there are plenty downtown, including two mainstays, Parliament House (410 N. Orange Blossom Trail) and Southern Nights (375 S. Bumby Ave.). "Southern Nights is a little like a roller rink amusement room," Manes muses with a laugh. "Everything here seems a little half baked." Southern Nights houses several areas, including a mini-cabaret for performers, a dance floor, and much bar space. Parliament House (www.parliamenthouse.com) is a whole darned gay resort offering rooms, a restaurant, and clubs/bars. Multi-floor superclub Firestone (578 N. Orange Ave.) throws a renowned Saturday gay night, The Club. The crowd's distinctly circuitry and ready to party! Leather men head directly to Full Moon Salon (500 N. Orange Blossom Trail).

Theme Parks

From mid-June through August, every family and their family hit the parks. You will be lucky to manage a handful of rides a day even with the "fast pass" thing going. Also avoid the parks on major holidays. Post Labor Day September through October is ideal—still warm out, yet quite empty (although hurricanes sometimes hit in September). Even though the weather's a touch chilly, November through February is your best bet if enjoying a quantity of attractions is a priority. In mid-January, we had no problem walking directly into even

KEY TO THE KINGDOM

Jeffrey Epstein and Eddie Shapiro recently wrote a jovial tome, *Queens in the Kingdom*, which breezily—and gaily—lays out Disney's attractions, lodging, and gay magnets. See page 44 for an interview with the authors.



THEY TRY HARDER

When you make your vacation plans, note that Avis (www.avis.com/prouder) affords domestic partners free "additional driver" status, no questions asked. The rental-car corporation is also sponsoring a number of gay film festivals this summer. Thanks, Avis! —LF

without the animals. Endless other attractions and parks in the area include Sea World; water park Wet N' Wild; the bizarre miniaturized China of Splendid China (floridasplendidchina.com), which presumably avoids miniature SARS; a vintage train ride that takes you to small New England-esque town Mount Dora (www.mtdoratrains.com); shopping centers like Mall at Millenia (www.mallatmillenia.com); and miniature golf galore.

What is funny is that for all its artifice, Orlando can be more real than, say, South Beach in Miami Beach (which could be why many gays prefer neighboring Fort Lauderdale). How much of a mix you get is up to you. Pretty goofy, huh?

See www.outsmartmagazine.com for more on Orlando.

Lawrence Ferber reported on queer movies at the Sundance Film Festival for the March issue.

the most popular rides. Regardless of weather, bring a poncho—the water rides can leave you drenched, especially a cruel piece of work entitled Kali River Rapids at Disney's Animal Kingdom. Oh, and avoid Tarzan Rocks if you value your sanity.

The theme parks employ untold numbers of queers. At Southern Nights you could well cruise the Goofy you had a picture taken with that morning! Just think—Donald Duck could find you hot. We always see a good number of gay vacationers of all ages in the parks (bears, twinkies, circuit boys, and more) all year around. And gosh, can they be cruisy.

I'm leaving breakdowns of Disney's rides to the *Queens in the Kingdom* book, which you really should consult, but here are a few non-Disney highlights: Universal Studios' Jaws is a must, as is Terminator 3-D. At Universal's Islands of Adventure you can pose with Captain America and other Marvel Comics characters. The Amazing Adventures of Spider Man ride is astounding. Make sure to avoid Poseidon's Fury, though; it was cheesy, noisy, and cockamamie, like a Seigfried and Roy nightmare

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DineOut

by Tim Brookover

OUT ON THE VINE

Soon, oenophiles here will be able to sip the wines of **Rainbow Ridge**, the gay-owned California winery. Co-founders and life partners **Tom Beatty** and **Dennis Costa** introduced their first varietal, a rich red Alicante Bouschet, last December. They are now working with a distributor to bring their product to Texas.

In March, that debut wine received a bronze medal in the prestigious *San Francisco Chronicle* wine competition. Beatty and Costa will next release a chardonnay.

Rainbow Ridge's out-and-proud ads feature soulful photos of male couples, and a portion of each sale benefits community charities, including AIDS Project Los Angeles. The winery has also signed on as a product sponsor of *Boy Meets Boy*, a Bravo reality show filming in Palm Springs.

Even before you can enjoy Rainbow Ridge wines here, you can order shirts and caps embroidered with the rainbow-hued grape cluster logo at www.rainbowridgewines.com.



has appeared in the specialty magazines *Saveur* and *The Wine Enthusiast* and in *Vanity Fair*. Carpineto's **Antonio Zaccheo Jr.** recently barnstormed through Houston to promote his wines. While here, he toasted with *OutSmart* contributor **Eric Dieckman** at Vinoteka in the Heights, one of the local spots where Carpineto is poured. Carpineto wines are sold at Spec's Liquors, HEB, and Whole Foods Market on Kirby.

EATING OUT

Miguel Rodriguez has opened **El Sol Restaurant**, serving foods from Mexico and Latin America. El Sol is located at 403 Westheimer. The phone number is 713/522-8903.

Gower Idress has begun serving a new "Steaks & Crepes" Sunday brunch at his **Chef G's Seafood & Steakhouse** (1915 Westheimer). He also now offers delivery service and curbside pickup. The telephone number is 713/521-9472.

Ziggy's Healthy Grill has moved a few blocks east. The new address is 2202 West Alabama (the spot once occupied by A Moveable Feast). The phone number is 713/527-8588.

Cedric Guerin, chef/owner of **Guerin's Cellar** and **Guerin's Bistro** (11920-J Westheimer) has opened a full-service catering firm. His telephone number is 281/497-1122.



Femme power: Carpineto's well-received ad has appeared in *Vanity Fair*.

WOMEN AND WINE

Carpineto, the venerable Italian winemaker, has received great response from its print ads that feature a pair of stunning women who are obviously more than roommates. The spot

Bocados owners **Terry Lynn Flores** and **Lilly Hernandez** have opened an additional Mexican-food spot, **Boca Chica** (2100 Waugh; 713/523-2622). ■



In the kitchen: Restaurant/chefs (l-r) Cedric Guerin, Miguel Rodriguez, and Gower Idress.

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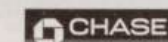
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Calendar of Events

Deadline for OutSmart's July issue is 5 p.m., Friday, June 13.

JUNE

Daily (Mon.-Fri.)

HIV Testing. HCHD Thomas Street Clinic is offering HIV testing free to the public, 9 am-1 pm. There is no need to establish eligibility ("gold-card"), no donation will be asked of the person seeking testing, and the test is free. Thomas Street Clinic, 2015 Thomas, 713/873-4157 or 713/873-4026.

Daily (Mon.-Sat.)

HIV Testing. The Montrose Clinic offers free confidential HIV testing at these locations. **Monday:** Bricks, 617 Fairview, 4-8 pm; Keys West, 817 W. Dallas, 8 pm-midnight; Club Xscape, 2612 South Richey, 9 pm-midnight. **Tuesday:** The 611 Club, 611 Hyde Park, 4-8 pm; The Briar Patch, 2294 W. Holcombe, 8 pm-midnight; The Club Houston, 2205 Fannin, 8 pm-midnight. **Wednesday:** Mary's, 1022 Westheimer, 4-8 pm; Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne, 6-9 pm; Ripcord, 715 Fairview, 9 pm-midnight; E.J.'s, 2517 Ralph, 10 pm-1 am; Midtowne Spa, 3100 Fannin, 10 pm-1 am. **Thursday:** The Outpost, 1419 Richmond, 4-8 pm; Brazos River Bottom, 2400 Brazos, 8 pm-midnight; Cousins, 817 Fairview, 8 pm-midnight; Toyz Disco, 5322 Glenmont, 10 pm-1 am. **Friday:** Club Escandalo, 2053 Wirt, 8-10 pm; Viviana's, 5219 Washington, 10 pm-midnight; Midtowne Spa, 3100 Fannin, 10 pm-1 am; Club Kalipso, 6806 Longpoint, midnite-2 am. **Saturday:** Club Inergy, 5750 Chimney Rock, 9 pm-midnight. The clinic offers classes for those newly diagnosed with HIV or Hepatitis C. For more info: 713/830-3000.

5, 8, & 12 (Thu., Sun., & Thu.)

Get Healthy Inside and Out at Body, Mind & Soul. **On the 5th:** Booksigning & lecture with Deborah Lord, author of *Choosing Freedom: Tools of Transformation to Heal the Source of Limiting Beliefs*. The book includes two inner self-help CDs. Free. 7-9 pm. **On the 8th:** Psychic Fair. Meet the real Miss Cleos of Houston at the bi-weekly Psychic Sunday. \$15 for a 15-minute reading. Pre-register on the prior Friday or Saturday (cash, check, or credit card). They'll foresee your arrival. **On the 12th:** Booksigning & lecture with Po Bronson, *New York Times* #1 best-selling author of *What Should I Do With My Life?* Bronson's book explores the lives of individuals who have found new, fulfilling direction in life through honest inner examination. Free. 7-9 pm @ Body, Mind & Soul Bookstore, 4344 Westheimer at Mid Lane. For more info or to register, call 713.993.0550 or visit www.bmshouston.com.

7 (Sat.)

Misty Valdez's Galveston Show. All proceeds from this show, the pre-benefit shows, and the garage sale will go to support the work of AIDS Coalition of Coastal Texas (ACCT). Misty Valdez, a.k.a. Roland "Rolly" Suniga, is the island diva extraordinaire. Her annual benefit has raised over \$50,000 through the years. In 2000, the mayor of Galveston issued a proclamation declaring the day of the benefit as Misty Valdez Day, yet Misty shies away from glory in her local fame. "The people who work at the AIDS Coalition are really the ones who deserve a pat on the back, because they are the ones that have to deal with it every day," says Misty. "I just do it once a year." This is her 16th anniversary benefit show @ Garza's Kon Tiki, 315 Tremont at 23rd, Galveston.

12 (Thu.)

A First Time for Everything. 405 Avondale Gallery is having its first show. The artists involved in the gallery's maiden voyage are Kermit Eisenhut, Mollie Moore, Christopher Olivier, and

John Palmer. The show is also a fundraiser for the Arts Scholars' Fund, Houston, a nonprofit organization that provides scholarships for young Houston artists. Complimentary beverages will be served during the opening. 405 Avondale, reception from 6-9 pm. For more information, call Jennifer Edwards at 713-524-0199.

12 (Thu.)

Red Rain Falling Down. Art rocker Peter Gabriel has come a long way since his exodus from being the original frontman for Genesis. His solo career includes groundbreaking music videos and industry-shaking collaborations, including work with African vocalist Youssou N'Dour. Gabriel's stirring lyrics will shake your soul, and the bassy, African-influenced rhythms of his later work will shock your monkey. \$36.50, \$56.50 & \$76.50. Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, 2005 Lake Robbins Dr., The Woodlands. For tickets, call Ticketmaster at 713/629-3700.

13 & 27 (Fri.)

An Evening at the Improv. In addition to their regular Friday shows, ComedySportz is sporting two special events, one for Papa and one for fun ... summer fun, that is. If you're not familiar with ComedySportz—or improv comedy for that matter—just think *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* This all-ages show is interactive and competitive. Two teams play games based on audience suggestions with utmost emphasis on the funny. **On the 13th:** All dads get in free for ComedySportz' tribute to the patriarch in your life. **On the 27th:** the Beach Blanket Bingo Match centers on beachtime shenanigans. \$10 each night. 8 pm @

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—FRI., JUNE 13.**

tion to their regular Friday shows, ComedySportz is sporting two special events, one for Papa and one for fun ... summer fun, that is. If you're not familiar with ComedySportz—or improv comedy for that matter—just think *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* This all-ages show is interactive and competitive. Two teams play games based on audience suggestions with utmost emphasis on the funny. **On the 13th:** All dads get in free for ComedySportz' tribute to the patriarch in your life. **On the 27th:** the Beach Blanket Bingo Match centers on beachtime shenanigans. \$10 each night. 8 pm @

PHONE HOMO Jerker slips into Houston

Nudity. Sex. Masturbation. Need we say more? Playwright/composer Robert Chesley wrote his two-character drama in response to the AIDS epidemic in 1986, and it has all the physicality and wanton abandon as his other sexy works for the theater. More flesh is on view, but a lot more heart, too, in this sentimental paean to anonymous gay phone sex and the phantoms of sexual freedom. Brett Cullum and Glen Fillmore heat up Ma Bell and then some. —D.L. Groover

What: *Jerker*
When: Through July 12
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Where:
Theatre New West,
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Reservations/info:
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Brett Cullum (l) and Glen Fillmore do it by phone.

TONY & HARVEY

Hairspray receives 13 nominations

And the winner for Best Performance by a Leading Actor in a Musical is Harvey Fierstein. Or so we assume. His role as Edna Turnblad should garner the openly gay actor the Tony trophy. Among numerous other nods, *Hairspray* is nominated for Best Musical. • *Take Me Out*, the play about coming out in baseball, is nominated for Best Play, along with nominations for two of the featured actors, Denis O'Hare and Daniel Sunjata. • And we would be remiss if we didn't mention Bernadette Peters, who is nominated for her leading role in *Gypsy*. • The Tony Awards will be hosted

by one of the *X-Men*, Hugh Jackman, who will be making his Broadway debut next fall starring as Peter Allen in the new musical *The Boy from Oz*. Among the stars scheduled to present awards are Sarah Jessica Parker, Matthew Broderick, Barbara Walters, Tyne Daly, Danny Glover, Laurence Fishburne, Christopher Reeve, Vanessa Redgrave, and Lynn Redgrave. —Blase DiStefano

What: *The Tony Awards*
When: Sunday, June 8 (7 p.m.)
Where: CBS
Info: www.tonyawards.com

Harvey Fierstein as Edna Turnblad in *Hairspray*

PAUL KOLINK



BEACH BEAUTIES: Besides some elaborate beach sculptures, the annual American Institute of Architects Sandcastle Competition brings out the zaniness in some participants, like these Jackson Ryan Architects who donned drag at last year's event. On June 7, the sandcastle sculpting will begin at 10 a.m. on East Beach in Galveston.

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14 (Sat.)

A Little Night Music. Houston's newest chamber concert series, barmusic, presents its inaugural program at the Axiom. Needless to say, if the home to avant-garde theater troupe Infernal Bridegroom Productions is going to do anything, it's not going to be vanilla. The first concert, a one-night-only event, is "The Black Mountain Range," a tribute to Black Mountain College, a school that attracted many of the 20th-century's most significant artists. Featured composers affiliated with Black Mountain include Lou Harrison, Ernst Krenek, Stefan Wolpe, Roland Hayes, and the eternally experimental John Cage. Works include John Cage's "62 Mesostics Re Merce Cunningham," Stefan Wolpe's "Piece in Two Parts for Violin Alone," a Lou Harrison ballet score for percussion trio, and others. \$7 at the door. 7 pm @ Axiom, 2524 McKinney, east of downtown. Tickets available by calling 713/522-5356.

14 (Sat.)

Red Hots! The Red Hot Chili Peppers have espoused many a word of wisdom. From "real men don't kill coyotes," to "Catholic school girls rule," singer Anthony Kiedis always knows just what to say to put life in perspective, while the energetic Flea thumps madly at his bass. With sexualicious album titles like *Blood Sugar Sex Magik* and *Californication*, no wonder fellow playa Snoop Dogg is joining the Red Hots on the bill. For shizzle, my bizzle. \$36 & \$46. Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, 2005 Lake Robbins Dr., The Woodlands. For tickets, call Ticketmaster at 713-629-3700.

15 & 28 (Sun. & Sat.)

Out to Sea! Come aboard. We're expecting you. The Rainbow Fishing Club offers deep-sea fishing trips aboard the New Buccaneer. Expected catches include red snapper, grouper, shark, and amberjack, oh my! Now that's good eatin'. Take Dad offshore for the Father's Day trip on the 15th! \$75 for adults, \$45 for children 12 and under; \$30 for non-fishing riders (cost includes rod, reel, and squid bait). Boarding begins at 6:30 am at Pier 19, Galveston. Boat sails at 7:30 am. Boat returns to dock at 7:30 pm. For more information, call 713-523-6381 or e-mail rainbowfishingclub@hotmail.com.

18 (Wed.)

South Beach Sabroso! South Beach hosts a Latino-themed night of fashion, food, and fun with "Cuerpos Calientes y Comida" to benefit AVES (Amigos Volunteers Education and Services, Inc.). AVES supports

persons living with HIV/AIDS and those suffering from substance abuse in the Latino and African-American communities. Michaeline's Restaurant & Catering will serve a complimentary Mexican Buffet from 7-9 pm, with drink specials provided by South Beach. PapiWear, designer of men's underwear, will sponsor an, eh-hem, intimate fashion show at 9 pm, with guest DJ Cubanito. A \$10 donation at the door will benefit AVES. 7-10 pm at South Beach, 808 Pacific Street. For more info on AVES, call 713/626-2837 or visit www.aves-health.org. For a fashion preview, visit www.papiinc.com.

21 (Sat.)

Twenty Weeks at River Café. Local contemporary artist Hank Gasper will unveil his latest series, *Twenty Weeks*, at a special showing to benefit AVES (Amigos Volunteers Education and Services, Inc.). Gasper created one watercolor painting each week for 20 weeks, focusing on events, both personal and global, as the source for the paintings. His art, predominately abstract, will be sold to benefit AVES, which supports persons living with HIV/AIDS and those suffering from substance abuse in the Latino and African-American communities. River Café, 3615 Montrose, 6 pm. Artwork will range from \$125 to \$150. Call 713/529-0088 for reservations. For more information on AVES, call 713/626-2837 or visit www.aves-health.org.

27 (Fri.)

GoGirlsRock! GoGirlsMusic.com presents the second annual GoGirlsRock! Houston Pride show with Sean Wiggins, Carol Plunk, Elizabeth White, Sarah Golden, and more, hosted by Mandy Smith. This showcase features rock, pop, folk, and more talented indie women than you can shake a stick at. But why do that? Just rock. Why? "Cuz chicks rock!" Rhythm Room, 713/863-0943, 1815 Washington Ave. For more info, visit www.gogirlsrock.com.

PLANNING AHEAD

JULY

July 19-25 (Sat.-Fri.)

Hawaii's 6th Annual Paradise Ride. Organizers are expecting as many as 150 participants to experience Hawaii by bicycle to support a coalition of HIV/AIDS service agencies including the Life Foundation, Malama Pono-Kauai AIDS Project, and the Maui AIDS Foundation. The Paradise Ride is the only fully supported bike tour in Hawaii taking riders on a nearly 400-mile journey across Oahu, Kauai, Maui, & Molokai.

The logistics of the event as well as the commitment & dedication of riders & volunteers makes this Hawaii's and perhaps the nation's most unique bicycle adventure, which is also helping to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS. Since it was first launched in 1998, the event has grown to become the largest AIDS fundraiser in Hawaii history & has raised more than \$1 million to date. Riders have come from across Hawaii, the U.S. mainland, & overseas destinations to participate. In exchange for satisfying a minimum pledge commitment of \$2,500, riders are offered the only fully-supported bicycle tour of the principal Hawaiian Islands. Support includes: three meals a day, snacks & beverages, inter-island transportation, gear & equipment transport, mechanical & logistical assistance, safety escorts, nightly entertainment, as well as special opening & closing celebrations. Registration and sponsorship information: www.paradiseridehawaii.org, or call Paradise Ride headquarters at 1-888-285-9866. Riders pay a \$375 registration fee that covers all inter-island transportation for riders, their bikes, & gear as well as one-night hotel accommodations & other expenses.

PERFORMING ARTS

♦ **Aida** (by Elton John and Tim Rice) layers a contemporary score over the fabled ancient Egyptian love triangle. Aida, the enslaved Nubian princess, dukes it out with Amneris, the haughty Egyptian princess, over Radames, the handsome soldier for whom both hearts yearn. June 4-15 @ the Hobby Center. Tickets available by calling 713/622-7469 or at www.broadwayacrossamerica.com. (For more on Aida, see page 34.)

♦ **Grandpa Hasn't Moved in Days.** The Fertle family returns home for a funeral, only to find the deceased's dying request a cause for hilarity. Written by Radio Music Theatre's Steve Farrell, *Grandpa* (like any Fertle comedy) stars a mere three actors who play countless characters, with each one as distinct as a thumbprint. \$18. Through August 30 @ Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt, near Richmond and Kirby. Showtimes vary. Tickets available at the box office or by calling 713/522-7722.

♦ **Hamlet.** No other Shakespearean tragedy has received as much attention, analysis, and debate as this ghostly tale of murder, madness, and revenge. Shakespeare's most quoted play continues through June 22 @ the Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. Tickets (\$35-\$50) are available by calling 713/228-8421, at the Alley box office, or at www.alleytheatre.org.

♦ **Houston Ballet.** I'm late, I'm late, for a very important date! The ballet interpretation of *Alice in Wonderland* features the music of Joseph Horowitz and choreography by Ben Stevenson. What could be a bigger trip than a hookah-smoking caterpillar in mid pas-de-deux? June 5-15 @ the Wortham Center's Brown Theater. Tickets (\$11.50-\$97.50) are available by calling 713/227-2787.

♦ **Houston Grand Opera** presents *The Little Prince*, based on the 1943 novel by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. Oscar-winning composer Rachel Portman joins Olivier Award-winning Nicholas Wright in creating their first opera. Teamed up with other award-winning folk, *The Little Prince* promises to be largely entertaining. Runs through June 22 @ the Wortham Center's Cullen Theater, Texas at Smith. Tickets are available at 713/228-OPERA, at www.houstongrandopera.org, and at the box office (in the lobby of the Wortham Center).

♦ **Killer Karaoke** and **Come Up and Slay Me Sometime** are presented by Mystery Café, home of Comedy Murder Mystery Dinner Theater. ♦ **Killer Karaoke:** The Gulf Coast Regional Semi-Final Three Steps Before National Silver Microphone Karaoke Competition will continue, despite an "accidental" fire and a crazed karaoke serial killer stalking the contestants. Anybody who's actually listened to karaoke will probably side with the killer, if they can figure his or her identity. ♦ **Come Up and Slay Me Sometime:** Bathub gin isn't the only illegal thing going on in this 1920s floating speakeasy—there's a dead body lying around, and nobody can call the cops. Featuring special appearances by Mae West, Charles Lindbergh, and Abraham Lincoln. ♦ **Killer Karaoke** plays Fridays; **Come Up and Slay Me Sometime** plays Saturdays. Both shows presented at 8 pm at Marriott West Loop, 1750 West Loop South at San Felipe. Reservations required: 713/944-2583 or www.mysterycafehouston.com.

♦ **Little Mary Sunshine** is a loving spoof of the Jeanette McDonald-Nelson Eddy movie musicals of the '30s, complete with *Little Mary Sunshine* & an almost proper group of finishing-school girls; the stalwart Captain Jim who leads an unusual squad of Royal Canadian Mounties; a mauling renegade Indian; and a "senior" romance. A funny, tongue-in-cheek musical. 8 pm, Fridays and Saturdays, through June 28 @ The Company Onstage, 536 Westbury Square. Tickets are \$12. Info/reservations: 713/726-1219.

♦ **Sundown Names and Night-Gone Things** is loosely based on the experiences of novelist Richard

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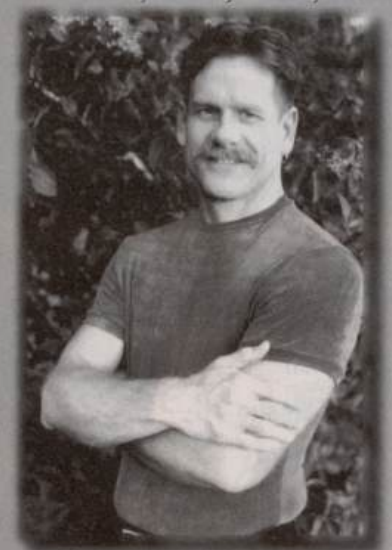
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Wright. The premiere performance reveals the schemes of womanizing insurance men who prey on unwitting, innocent clients and the penalties paid when their treachery is exposed. Opens June 5 and runs through June 29 @ the Ensemble Theatre, 3535 Main St. For tickets, call 713/520-0055.

◆ **The Women**, by Clare Booth Luce, focuses on the hypocritical lives of a small group of New York socialites. Moreover, this brutal comedy makes astute observations about how women can damage themselves by defining their lives through men. \$20-\$30. Previews: June 21, 22, and 25. Opens June 26-July 27 @ Main Street Theater, Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. Tickets available by calling 713/524-6706, at www.mainstreettheater.com, www.ticketweb.com, or at the box office at Main Street Theater.

PERFORMING ARTS

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

◆ **Main Street Theater Kids on Stage Summer Performing Arts Camp**. Young performers will turn into shining stars as they experience the excitement of a summer filled with theatrical activities and dance. Under the direction of professional actors, dancers, and educators, campers will learn all aspects of theater production, including acting, movement, directing, costume and set design, and makeup. Dance classes will teach campers to let loose and have fun with creative movement as well as teaching popular dance styles such as jazz, modern, hip-hop, and swing. At the end of each session, campers in each age group will produce and rehearse an eye-popping, high-energy production including a play and a choreographed dance spectacular for family and friends. For ages 4-14, June 9-Aug. 8. Prices range from \$215-\$465. For more info: Angela Harris, director of education, 713/524-9196, or e-mail at aharris@mainstreettheater.com.

◆ **Ramona Quimby** has been the star of a popular book series for kids of all ages. The character—created by Beverly Cleary and adapted for the stage by Len Jenkin—finds out her father has lost his job. Trying to help out with the family, lil' Miss Quimby discovers that being a grownup is hard work and, as her sister Beezus puts it, "being a kid and trying to become a grownup is even harder." \$8 for children and \$10 for adults. June 17-July 25 @ Main Street Theater at Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. Tickets available by calling 713/524-6706, at the box office, or at www.mainstreettheater.com, www.ticketweb.com.

◆ **Snow White and Rose Red** are threatened with destruction. Will their kingdom in the forest be safe? Will magic and mischief conquer? In this fairy tale by Houstonians Kate Pogue and Rob Landes, truth and kindness prevail. June 14-July 27 @ Stages, 1301 Allen Pkwy. Tickets available by calling 713/527-0220 or at www.stagestheatre.com.

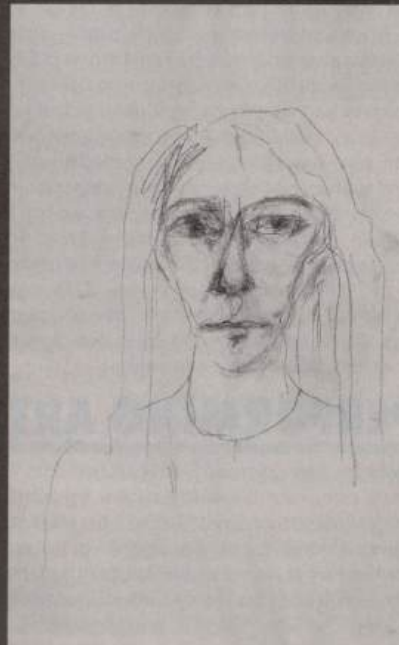
◆ **Winnie the Pooh**. No one can resist the Pooh's charm as he searches the nooks & crannies of the woods for a bear's favorite food—honey! Joining Pooh in this adventure are his forest friends Eeyore, Kanga, Roo, Rabbit, Owl, & his very dear friend, Christopher Robin. Saturdays, 11 am & 1:30 pm, through June 28, at the Company Onstage, 536 Westbury Square. Tickets \$6. Info: 713/726-1219.

RADIO

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

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

ANOTHER SIDE OF PATTI SMITH



Many of us know Patti Smith as music visionary, lover of and subject for Robert Mapplethorpe, and godmother to rock grrls everywhere. Through June 15, the Contemporary Arts Museum (5216 Montrose; 713/284-8265) presents a less familiar side of the honorary lesbian: visual artist. *Strange Messenger: The Work of Patti Smith* includes nearly 85 drawings produced over 30 years, including a series of large-scale works inspired by the attacks on the World Trade Center. Organized by the Andy Warhol Museum, this is Smith's first exhibition in Texas. More info: www.camh.org.

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

Asian Invasion. In Houston: A Site-based Installation features a first-ever collaboration among three of the most fascinating and provocative Chinese artists living in the U.S. today. New York's Zhang Huan and Zhang Jian-Jun join Houstonian Weihong in a large-scale performance and visual installation that explores the history, geography, and personality of Houston. The exhibit blends traditional Chinese philosophy and aesthetics with contemporary artistic practice. Among the works is a collection of images chosen by various Houstonians and the locations they feel best represent the quintessence of Houston. Look for Jim Pirtle's musings on the Home of Easy Credit building, once home to his own artists' collective/coffee house brainchild, notsu-oH (Houston spelled backward). Through June 14 @ DiverseWorks, 1117 East Fwy (off N. Main at Naylor). For more information, call 713/223-8346 or visit www.diverseworks.org. Free.

Evolving Art. Archway Gallery's new show, *Evolving Art*, features new artist Keith McNay. McNay, referred to as soulful, uses oil on canvass as his medium. Through June 28 @ 2013 W. Gray in the River Oaks Shopping Center. Monday-Wednesday, 10 am-6 pm; Thursday-Saturday, 10 am-8 pm; Sunday, 1-5 pm. For more information, call 713/522-2409 or visit www.archwaygallery.com.

James Rosenquist: A Retrospective. Lichtenstein, Warhol, Rosenquist. All pop artists who draw from the images of advertising and mass media to create visual commentaries on life. From his early days as a billboard painter to his recent use of abstract technique, Rosenquist demonstrates an evolving mastery of color, line, texture, and shape. The retrospective of his work, organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim

Museum in New York, debuts in Houston and is divided into two exhibits; his early work (the late '50s-1970) can be viewed at the Menil Collection; his work after 1970 can be seen at the Museum of Fine Arts. Through August 17 @ the Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. For more information, call 713/525-9400 or visit www.menil.org. Free. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston is located at 1001 Bissonnet and can be reached at 713/639-7540 or visit www.mfah.org.

Sanctuaries: The Late Works of John Hejduk. This is no typical architectural retrospective. Not at the Menil, John Hejduk is best known for his designs that remained on paper; theoretical designs that returned architecture to a level of art and spirituality. Known for elemental biomorphism (buildings that seem to have eyes, hair, beaks, legs), a preference for geometrical form and typological variation, Hejduk's work thematically explores falling from grace, passage, transformation, and architecture as sanctuary, a place of nurture. Through August 31 @ the Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. For more information, call 713/525-9400 or visit www.menil.org. Free.

Splat Boom Pow! Need we say more? Maybe so. Exploring the influence of cartoons in modern art, the works of Takashi Murakami, Elizabeth Murray, Kenny Scharf, and Andy Warhol are on display at the Contemporary Arts Museum. Among the many whimsical and kooky works to take in are a life-size Barbie doll entirely handsewn in beads, a painstaking process that simulates the dot-matrix look of comic strips. Also look for a shrine of sorts to Wonder Woman and a video montage of Linda Carter twirling into the aforementioned heroine on the '70s TV show version of the comic book super-vixen. Be sure to see this before it moves on to Boston in September. Through June 29 @ the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd. For more information, call 713/284-8250 or visit www.camh.org.

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for OutSmart's July issue: Fri., June 13, 5 p.m.

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At the Lesbian Gay rights Lobby of Texas we are proud to be working on behalf of the LGBT community. For 25 years we have been lobbying for LGBT equality in our state. Most recently, we lead the fight for a stronger hate crimes law, defeated measures that would prevent gays and lesbians from serving as foster or adoptive parents and assisted in enacting nondiscrimination policies protecting gay and lesbian employees in five major state agencies. But there is still work to do and we need the support of people like you if we're going to make Texas a place we are all proud to call home. To find out how you can help, visit us online at www.lgri.org or call us at 512-474-5475.



DEMANDING EQUAL RIGHTS IN TEXAS

Damn Oppressive Marriage Act

On April 30, 2003 DOMA, the so called Defense of Marriage Act, was passed by the Texas House of Representatives. This law will deny committed gay and lesbian couples scores of rights available to even the least committed of heterosexual couples, such as: inheritance rights, protection of jointly held property, and the right to visit a life partner in the hospital or make medical decisions on his/her behalf. This shameful attack against us, our children and our families continues unabated, with three anti-gay bills currently pending in the Texas Legislature. We need to make sure these bills don't become law. To find out how you can help, visit us online at www.lgri.org or call us at 512-474-5475.



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TONY CARROLL, LMSW-ACP



Tony Yarbrough has joined the **OutSmart** staff as community marketing specialist. • Yarbrough's professional background includes more than 20 years of sales and marketing experience.

Over the past 10 years, he has held the positions of director of sales, southern region, for Silversea Cruises and regional sales and marketing director for Cunard Line. • Yarbrough is also active in Houston's GLBT community. He is a co-founding member of Bayou City Boys Club, Inc. (BCBC), whose annual fundraising activities have generated more than \$750,000 for HIV/AIDS service providers, care givers, and educators. BCBC's annual fundraising events include the popular Jungle party, a holiday toy drive, benefit theater performances, and other events. • Yarbrough has also been a contributing writer for **OutSmart**. • In his new role with **OutSmart**, Yarbrough will focus on expanding the number of magazine advertisers, and he will work with advertisers to help them increase their business. In addition, he will coordinate the launch of a new publication for Up & Out Communications, **OutSmart's** parent company. • Yarbrough can be reached at tony@outsmartmagazine.com or 713/520-7237.

Coastal Banc is offering free business checking for one year. For a limited time, businesses can also receive the first set of commercial checks free. These offers expire June 30. Contact **Cody Grizzoffi** at the Coastal Banc Voss location (1629 S. Voss at San Felipe). The phone number is 713/978-7381.



BON VOYAGE. On March 27, **Copy.Com** president **Steve Astrich** (r) and staff threw a going-away party for manager **Mahlon Banda**. **Copy.Com** is located at 1201 Westheimer (713/528-1201). The website is www.copydot.com.

Bryan Williams, a sales associate at **Coldwell Banker Swilley-Hudson**, has earned the Coldwell Banker Previews Property Specialist designation. Only 5 percent of the more than 90,000 Coldwell Banker sales associates have received this designation. The Coldwell Banker Previews program is a marketing program designed for marketing luxury residential properties to buyers worldwide. Williams's phone number is 713/869-0456.

Business News



SPRING FLING. **Cantoni** introduced a new line of home furnishings at a March 14 spring preview party. Proceeds from the event benefited **DIFFA Houston** (Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS). **Cantoni** is located at 9889 Westheimer. The phone number is 713/787-9494, and the website is www.cantoni.com.

Clockwise from top left: **DIFFA** director Rodney Nonerkamp, Paulette Thompson, John Middleton, Lori Loria, and Mary Ann Young

MEG-A Care Connections, Inc. is seeking volunteers to participate in a test of a nontoxic holistic product for wasting and diarrhea control. Any person who is experiencing diarrhea symptoms is eligible to participate in the test. Interested individuals can pick up test quantities of **MEG-A Care** at the **Houston Buyer's Club**. For details, contact Ellen or Marion at the

Houston Buyer's Club at 713/520-5288 or contact Marion with **MEG-A Care** at 713/478-4536 or megaheal@aol.com.

Johnnye Barrera of **Barrera Design** has moved to a new office at 2323 Shepherd, Suite 1180. The telephone number is 713/528-6600, and the website is www.barreradesign.com.

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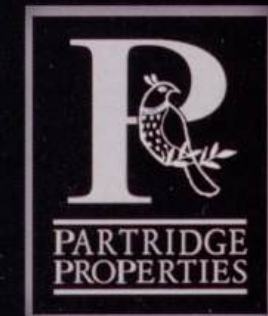
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BAR & CLUB GUIDE

HOUSTON

BOCADOS

On Wednesday nights, women pack this Mexican restaurant for dancing and socializing. Sunday brunch starts at 11 a.m. and lasts till 3 in the afternoon. 1312 West Alabama • 713/523-5230.

BRAZOS RIVER BOTTOM

The BRB, Houston's leading country-western bar, is located in Midtown, just outside Montrose. Expect to see some fast and fancy two-stepping. Great benefit shows often take place on Sunday night. 2400 Brazos • 713/528-9192.

BRIAR PATCH

One of the oldest gay nightspots in Houston, the venerable Briar Patch recently moved to a new Montrose location. Show tunes of the piano bar are the main attraction. 2312 Crocker • 713/665-9678.

BRICKS II

This neighborhood joint boasts a jukebox loaded with country music, busy pool tables, cold draft, and the occasional cowboy hat. Regulars rule at this low-key spot. 617 Fairview • 713/528-8102.

BUCHANAN'S

This club recently opened in southeast Houston near Hobby Airport. Buchanan's offers American and Latino dance music. Diana Jackson hosts Friday and Saturday night shows. 7731 Park Place • 832/754-4115.

CHANCES/THE BARN/G-SPOT

This three-in-one women's bar provides a place to two-step, rock, and sit down and talk—all under one roof. Thursday night features Kazi's Karaoke. 1100 Westheimer • 713/523-7217 • www.chanceshouston.com.

CLUB BIG YO

With the motto "This is an all girls production; our male friends are welcome," this Southwest club offers special evenings including Thursday talent night. Dancers strut on Sunday. 6305 Skyline • 713/953-0268, 281/322-0394 • www.clubbigyo.com.

CLUB KALIPSO

This Spring Branch club offers hot Latin music, including cumbia, merengue, ranchera, and salsa as well as Latin and English pop. Male dancers work their stuff every Sunday night. 6806 Long Point #F • 713/688-6562.

CLUB INERGY

A nightlife institution for 12 years, this Southwest club offers an eclectic mix of Latin rhythms, mainstream dance, and hip hop. Sunday is the special show night. 5750 Chimney Rock • 713/668-7310 • www.clubinergy.com.

CLUB RAINBOW

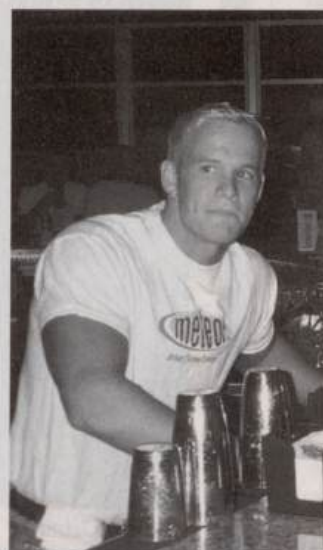
Welcoming a mixed lesbian crowd, this bar is located on the Westheimer curve in Montrose. The Glow Girl dancers perform on Sunday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday nights. 1417-B Westheimer • 713/522-5166.

CLUB XCAPE

Located in South Houston, Club Xcape offers special nights including Monday Madness with MC Jenny Craig. Ghetto Fabulous Friday, featuring rap, hip-hop, and bootie music, marks the end of the week. 2612 South Richey • 713/944-7663.

COUSIN'S

Drag fans pack this club in the heart of Montrose for its campy shows on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. 817 Fairview • 713/528-9204.



BEHIND THE BAR

WHO:
Nick Gray

WHERE:
Meteo
(2306 Genessee,
713/521-0123)

THIS MONTH:
Look for Gray on June 13 when Lambda Legal presents Civil Rights Celebration at Meteo, featuring entertainers Jimmy James and Jerry Atwood's Funky Cabaret.

JR's/SANTA FE

This Montrose standard offers features from pool tables, table dancers, to karaoke. Look for Carol Gifford and George Konar, named best bartenders in the 2002 Gayest & Greatest OutSmart reader poll. 808 Pacific • 713/521-2519.

JR's/SANTA FE

This Montrose standard offers features from pool tables, table dancers, to karaoke. Look for Carol Gifford and George Konar, named best bartenders in the 2002 Gayest & Greatest OutSmart reader poll. 808 Pacific • 713/521-2519.

KEYS WEST

Selected best piano bar in the Gayest & Greatest poll, this nightspot near downtown features regular performers and guest entertainers. The two-level deck provides a knockout skyline view. 817 West Dallas • 713/571-7870 • www.keyswest.com.

MARY'S

One of the oldest clubs in Houston, Mary's shuttered briefly in January but reopened once purchased by Michael's Outpost owner Michael Galtz. Inside and outside bars stay busy at this legendary nightspot. 1022 Westheimer • 713/527-9669.

MELA'S

The crowd at this neighborhood spot drops by for the Tejano and country-western music, the women, and the pool tables. Owner Mela Contreras was a Pride parade grand marshal in 2002. 302 Tuam • 713/523-0747.

METEOR

The chic atmosphere at this Montrose video bar includes overstuffed couches, marble-topped bars, and stylish glassware. Attractive men and women gather here any night of the week for drinks and conversation. 2306 Genessee • 713/521-0123 • www.meteorhouston.com.

MICHAEL'S OUTPOST

Minutes from the heart of Montrose, this relaxed neighborhood bar hosts frequent pool and dart tournaments. On Wednesday, stop by for Rick's chili con queso and chips. 1419 Richmond • 713/520-8446.

MO MONG

Every Wednesday night, the guys and gals show up at this Vietnamese restaurant in droves to enjoy the martini specials. 1201 Westheimer #B • 713/524-5664.

MONTROSE MINING COMPANY

Great-looking male dancers bump and grind every night at this leather/denim spot. The two-tier back patio bar provides a perch for viewing the Pacific Street scenery. 805 Pacific • 713/529-7488.

O

The folks who own Oz, the New Orleans French Quarter nightclub, have reopened the spot formerly known as Pacific Street. Special nights include Sunday Tea Dance and Calendar Boy Thursday. 710 Pacific • 713/523-0213 • www.ohouston.com.

PRIVE

The patio at this second-floor spot overlooks the lively Westheimer/Montrose intersection. The mixed crowd includes smartly dressed gays as well as non-gays. 910 Westheimer • 713/522-2542.

Montrose intersection. The mixed crowd includes smartly dressed gays as well as non-gays. 910 Westheimer • 713/522-2542.

RAINBOW ROOM

This gathering spot north of Houston has a casual neighborhood atmosphere. The pool tables stay busy. 527 Barren Springs off Ella Boulevard • 281/872-0215.

RICH'S HOUSTON

Even after more than 20 years, the iconic two-story dancehall still draws an energetic crowd. Techno light and laser shows enhance the pumped-up music. 2401 San Jacinto • 713-759-9606 • www.richs-houston.com.

RIPCORN

OutSmart readers named this spot the best place to show off your leather in the Gayest & Greatest poll. Inside the bar, the Black Hawk Leather Shop sells treasures for the leather/levis/uniform crowd. 715 Fairview • 713/521-2792 • www.ripcornojournal.com.

611 HYDE PARK PUB

On Friday and Saturday nights, this neighborhood spot offers great buffet dinners. Features include a beautiful garden-style patio. 611 Hyde Park • 713/626-7070.

SOUTH BEACH

The techno-chic sound system keeps shirtless boys pumped up late into the night. In the Gayest & Greatest poll, OutSmart readers named this spot the best club after 2 a.m. 810 Pacific • 713/529-SOBE (7623) • www.SouthBeachTheNightclub.com.

TOYZ

Latin house, hip-hop, salsa, and merengue flavor this Southwest Houston nightclub. Thursday is the Hot Papi Chulo contest. 5322 Glenmont • 713/668-4892.

VIVIANA'S

This club near downtown appeals to fans of Latino music and drag alike. 5219 Washington • 713/862-0203.

Main Street Depot, formerly known as the Venture-N, closed in April.

Conroe

RANCH HILL SALOON

Located 30 miles north of Houston, this spot features daily drink specials, live entertainment, and karaoke night on Wednesday. 2111 Airport Rd. • 936/441-6426.

Galveston

BLVD SALOON

In the Gayest & Greatest poll, OutSmart readers named this spot the best island place to show off your leather. The second-floor deck has a great view of the Gulf. 3102 Seawall Blvd. • 409/750-8571.

GARZA'S KON TIKI

Located downtown, the Kon Tiki is steps from the Strand. This spot was named favorite island club and best place to see male dancers in the Gayest & Greatest poll. 315 Tremont • 409/765-5805 • www.thekontiki.com.

MYRA'S CANTINA

Well-known island entertainer Myra Sanchez and her business partner Charles Peña opened this distinctly Latin neighborhood cantina. They offer beer, wine, and setups. • 813 21st (between Ball and Sealy)

ROBERT'S LAFITTE

A real neighborhood bar, this island institution attracts a colorful crowd of regulars and travelers. The club, only two blocks from Gulf, features a private patio. 2501 Ave Q (at 25th) • 409/765-9092.

THIRD COAST

This new club has opened in the former Jimmy's on the Beach location. The wall of windows still offers a great view of the Gulf. 904 Avenue M • 409/765-6911.

Beaumont

THE COPA

The hangout for Lamar University students, this two-story dance club has pool tables, a spacious stage, and a staircase that would make Norma Desmond green with envy. 304 Orleans • 409/832-4206.

CROCKETT STREET

Formerly known as Mary's Place, this club recently changed hands and name. Miss Olivia Gardner hosts Talent Night on Tuesday. On Sunday, Latino Night includes Latin music and an all-Latino illusionist show. 485 Crockett • 409/832-4944.

Have bar or club news?

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SignOut

by Lilly Roddy

As the month begins, there is certainly a lot of tension in the air. There is also a lot of confusion about people's intentions. And there seems to be a general lack of commitment, even for the most insignificant things. But good old selfness takes over on the 5th. After the 20th, people are ready for a more relaxed attitude toward life. • Uranus goes retrograde on the 7th and remains so until November. New projects started last November should be reviewed to see if things are on track. The Summer Solstice is on the 21st. This is the time of the year when the Sun moves into the sign of Cancer. Mercury begins the month in Taurus and drifts into Gemini on the 9th and eventually wades into Cancer on the 29th. Venus is at home in Taurus and floats into Gemini on the 9th. Mars soars through Aquarius and then sticks his toe into the sign of Pisces on the 16th. Saturn becomes awash in Cancer on June 3rd. She hasn't been here since August 1973. Jupiter remains in Leo, Uranus is steady in Pisces, Neptune is happy in Aquarius, and Pluto is seeking the truth in Sagittarius.

ARIES (Mar. 21–Apr. 19). You are just full of conversation and ideas and are just so ready to share your views. And you are ready to get your projects under way, especially those who have to do with getting the old home place in shape. Family issues and concepts of self-worth may creep to the surface. At least you will feel like talking about them. But overall, you are not ready to really dive into anything too deep. A quick solution is what you are looking for. This is a good month for business if you are involved in sales.

TAURUS (Apr. 20–May 20). You are most concerned about your finances this month. And certainly you are ready to get them into order. This is a good time to consider new investments. At the job place, you are going to want more money for the work you have been doing. Part of this is about your desire to be acknowledged for your value at the workplace. There could be some problems with the boss. You may be looking for any kind of attention, even negative. Relationships have a tone of tension. You are looking for some similar feedback. Does your partner really love you? And you won't stop asking until you get an answer.

GEMINI (May 21–Jun. 21). With this being your birthday month and having spent the last month looking at your past accomplishments, this is the month of action. You are ready for your relationship to move forward in the future or just end it. Relationships are especially tense the 22nd through the 25th. And you are in a black-or-white time period. For you, either way is fine. And by mid-month, you are feeling a strong need to get a grip on your career. You are taking more of a leadership role at work or pushing those in leadership positions out of the way. Don't be surprised if your dark twin shows up this month.

CANCER (Jun. 22–Jul. 22). With Saturn entering your sign this month and planning for a 2 1/3-

Cancer
Jun. 22–Jul. 22

year stay at your house for the whole time, you are going to be a very serious Crab. Some people, including yourself, will wonder if you have lost your sense of humor. You will find that if people or events don't have a specific purpose in your life, you are going to wonder if they are worth your time and energy. And everything will fall under this practical evaluative period you are in. Currently, you are behind the scenes setting up ideas that you plan to put into action after the 22nd. You will be looking for serious-minded people for your relationship partners. And for some of you, this will be that long-term commitment you have been talking about.

LEO (Jul. 23–Aug. 22). What a great month to be with your friends and fun business associates. You are certainly in a charming and entertaining mood. As long as relationships don't get in your way the first week of June, you are the best person to be with. If you want to concern your pretty head with business, you will be the most effective in group situations or through networking. Relationships can be tricky. First they will be there, and then they will disappear. And then they will be back. And when they are there, they are very demanding. You should send them out to get ice. You are ready for a break from the action by the end of the month.

VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sept. 22). Time to get active in your career. You are ready to be on stage and in front of your audience. You can expect to be clever and witty. And if you are bored with what you are doing currently, this is the time to consider doing something different and fun. Relationships need a boost this month, too. There is some trouble stirring, and this trouble comes from your neglecting your partner. It's time for an adventure or a trip to an out-of-town hotel. Otherwise, there could be excitement at your house, but one laced with anger and daggers. There is a lot of melodrama at your house on the 22nd through the 25th. Remain flexible.

LIBRA (Sept. 23–Oct. 23). Your creative juices are flowing this month. You are full of ideas and ready to learn anything new. You seem to have your finger on the pulse of the world. And you know what people are seeking before they ask you for it. You can put this creativity into your business life if you want to. You will want to climb the ladder of success this year. And you want more from life. This can be a great time to act on almost any new idea. Try not to work on the 2nd, 5th, 11th, and 12th. Relationships should flow very well this month with little work or effort.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24–Nov. 21). Your trust issues are being worn on your sleeve for all to see. Relationships can be tense as you seek to understand what creates the connection between you and your partner. If you are not involved, you will feel extra lonely during this period. This will influence business partnerships as well. This is a time to advance your career path. There are plenty of opportunities, but you have to act and trust your ability to make the right choice. Support at home is lacking, but your intuition is good. By the end of the month, you are in the flow, and things should be going your way.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22–Dec. 21). This month you will be setting the boundaries between your ability to please everyone in your life and what is best for you. And surprise! You will be choosing yourself over the other people in your life. Personal relationships are going to take the biggest hit at this time. And things in this area of your life could be very tense on the 9th, 11th, 14th, 23rd, and 24th. So anyone close who is not clear on your boundaries will find out on these dates. And for those of you without a partner, you will have plenty of energy to start the hunt for one. And they are more likely to get a very clear picture of who you really are and not who you want them to find attractive.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22–Jan. 19). Health concerns dominate your life through June. And this is just the month to address any things you have been putting off. You are great at routines, except for exercise, and you just need to find a routine you like. You need a diverse, active, fun, goal-oriented type of exercise that includes other people so you can see how well you are doing. The other big thing for the month is getting the workplace more efficient. Be sure that you don't take on the job of organizing everything just because you are the best at it. You may be the best, but do you want to be in charge of it all? And relationships and responsibility go together this month. Do you want that with or without?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20–Feb. 18). With Mars moving through your sign this month, you are a force to be reckoned with. You are the big wind from Winnetka. Normally, you stand a bit off to the side and don't respond unless you are called upon. But this month, you will be out front and leading. And you are not willing to share the stage with anyone. In relationships, you will not tolerate anyone ignoring you. If they do, they may be out of your life forever. You are feeling more creative and playful. This is not a good month for routine things. That will only make you feel more trapped. At the end of the month, you will be looking for more familiar surroundings.

PISCES (Feb. 19–Mar. 20). "Home Bittersweet Home" is playing on the Victrola. Mom and Dad are dancing in the parlor, and you are doing the dinner dishes while the rest of the family is watching Mom and Dad. What is wrong with this picture? To heck with dishes, you need a life. Old family patterns will emerge this month as you begin to understand what really drives you. You will have no tolerance for things that keep you locked to your past. Only the hope of a better future drives you forward. By the 17th, you are a person on a mission. And Goddess forbid that anyone gets in your way. They will hear the tsunami crashing on top of them. You are not looking for stability but for passion.

A professional astrologer for nearly 20 years, Lilly Roddy counsels on an individual basis and teaches classes. Her website is www.hermesfoot.com.



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OUT IN HOUSTON

1 GLOBE leaders **Blana Trevino** (l-r), **Rachel Demo**, **Joe Sandoval**, and **Domingo Ovalle** prepared and served barbecue at EJ's on March 22.

2 The Center for AIDS honored founding director **Joel Martinez** (center) at a March 20 reception at the home of **Julie Greenwood**. Members of Martinez's family joined him: **Victoria Peña** (l-r), **Marco Peña**, **Teresa Peña**, and **Jeordano Martinez**.

3 **Kelly Rowland** of Destiny's Child appeared at the March 9 AIDS Walk, which attracted more than 7,500 participants.

4 On March 8, **Leslie Townsend** (r) signed copies of her memoir, *Hiding in Plain Sight*, at Borders River Oaks. Friend **Chris Cassamassima** congratulated her.

5 At the Feb. 14 Lesbian Health Initiative benefit at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Galleria, comic headliner **Suzanne Westenhoeffer** (r) posed with LHI president **Lucy Watson**.

6 At the March 15 Human Rights Campaign dinner, city council candidate **Sue Lovell** (l) posed with Permanent Partners Immigrant Act non-supporter U.S. Rep. **Chris Bell** (r) and his wife, **Alison Bell**.

7 On Feb. 25, Montrose Clinic executive director **Katy Caldwell** (c) celebrated the dedication of the new Robert R. Lewis Eye Exam Room with ophthalmologist **Scott Sawyer** (r) and **Terrence Baggott**, chairman of the LTR Lewis Cloverdale Foundation, which supported the expansion.

8 **Marshall Maxwell** (r) and **Kris Walters** provided entertainment at Bringing in the Silver, the Montrose Counseling Center benefit on March 14.

9 **Jack Jackson** once again donned a costume to raise funds at the counseling center event.

10 **Rob Arcos** (l-r), **AmyBeth Gilstrap**, and **Ernie Manouse** attended the March 23 Oscars party at Landmark/River Oaks benefiting the Houston Gay & Lesbian Film Festival.

11 **David Hoey** high kicked at the March 22 Gay Men's Chorus of Houston show at Wortham Center.

12 At the Feb. 15 anti-war rally along Allen Parkway, Bering Memorial United Methodist Church minister **Rev. Troy Plummer** (in pink shirt) helped hoist the banner. L-r, from Plummer: **Walter Treash**, **Rev. Marilyn Meeker-Williams**, and **Rev. David Meeker-Williams** also protested.



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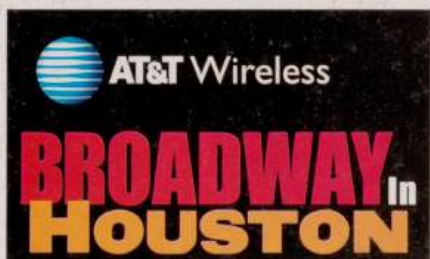
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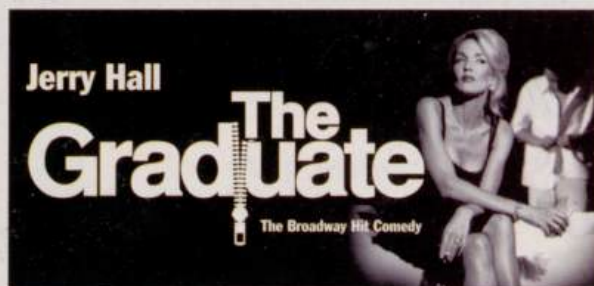
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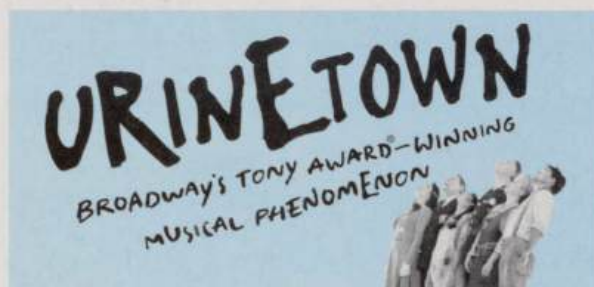
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