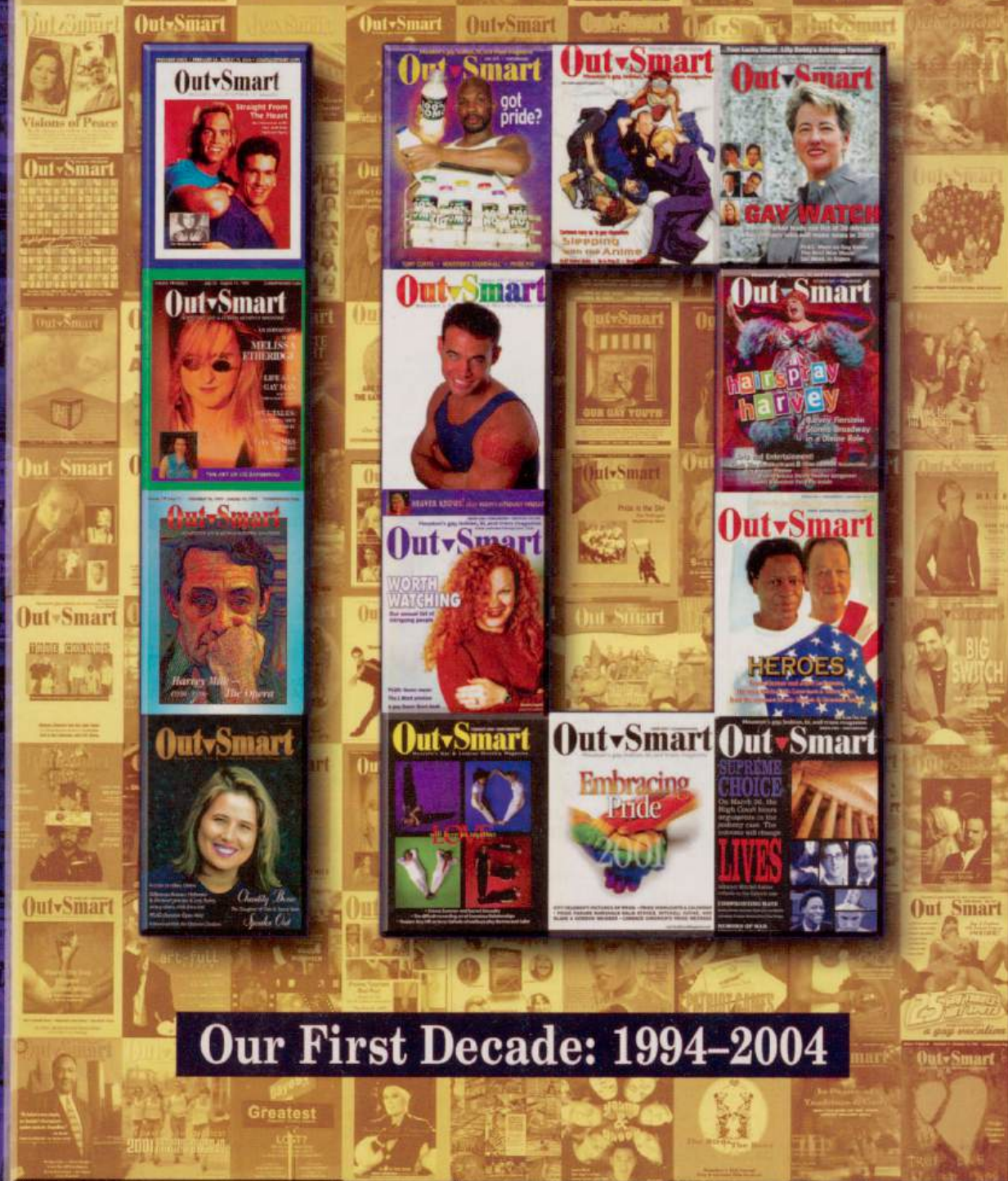


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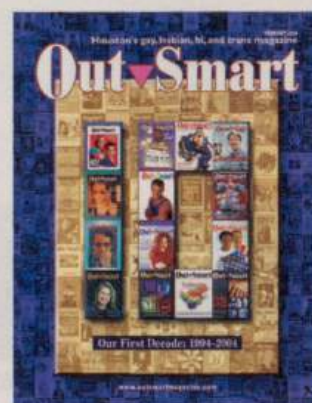
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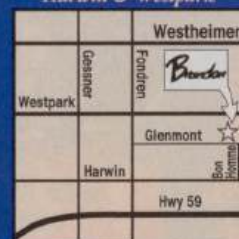
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Carrington, Eric A.T. Dieckman, D.L. Groover,

Alton LaDay, Suzie Lynde, Daryl Moore, Annise

D. Parker, Andrea Rodricks, Lilly Roddy, Gregg

Shapiro, Sally Sheklow, Lance Walker

Photographers/Illustrators Gavyn Aaron,

John Conroy, Dalton DeHart, Yvonne Feece,

David Lewis, David Eduardo Flores Perez

Proofreader Mary Sieber

Account Executives Thomas Chelena, Greg Jeu,

Joe Milstead, Jack Richardson III, Tony Yarbrough

National Advertising Representative

Rivendell Media - 212/242-6863



Publishers of OutSmart Magazine

3406 Audubon Place • Houston, TX 77006

713/520-7237 • 713/522-3275 Fax

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

E-mail address: letters@outsmartmagazine.com

Website address: www.outsmartmagazine.com

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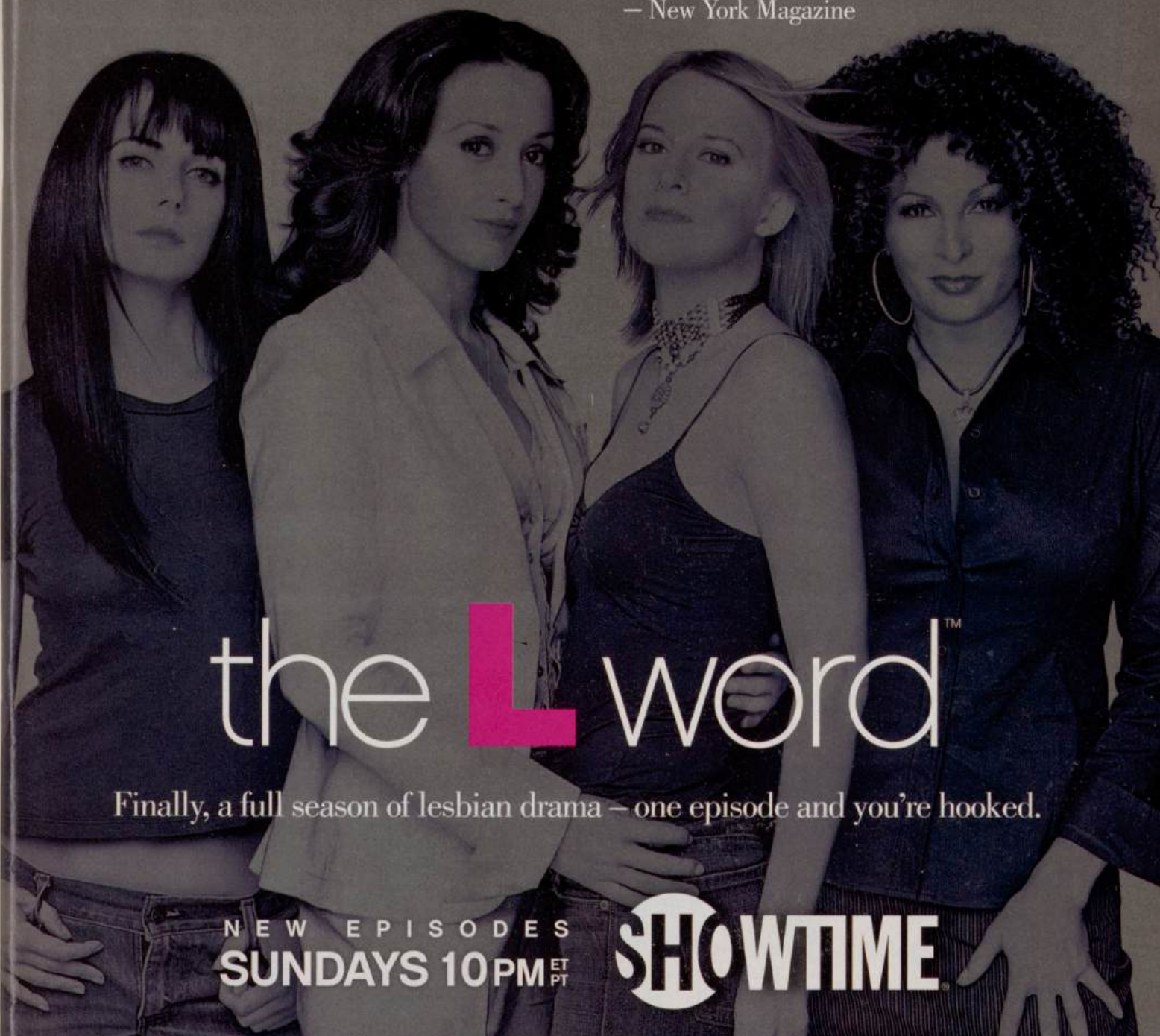
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Letter from the Editor

Now we are 10.

I remember having dinner with Greg Jeu in a Thai restaurant in Rice Village around the time he launched *OutSmart*. I then worked at a local design magazine, and I recall we chatted long into the evening about hopes for our publications. Ten years on, I work for Greg, that then-thriving design magazine is long gone, and to misquote Sondheim, "Good times and bum times/We've seen them all and, my dear/We're still here."

An anniversary is a good time not only to recollect, but also to look ahead. Throughout our celebratory year, we will introduce a few changes in the magazine, including some new features. We plan to build on what has made *OutSmart* a success for

a decade while always striving to improve.

All year, we will mark our 10-year milestone with events and celebrations. These festivities will begin with *OutSmart*'s birthday party on February 18 at Meteor (details, page 41). We hope you will join us for some birthday cake and visit with the staff. As the year continues, look for our limited-edition commemorative anniversary book, special Pride events in June, and a gala celebration and community fundraiser in conjunction with the annual Gayest & Greatest issue in October. We will finish the year with a juried photography competition, resulting in an exhibition and publication.

As Greg points out in his interview about the magazine's his-

tory (page 36), *OutSmart* could not have reached a decade in business without steadfast support from the community, including our advertisers. Over the years, a platoon of editors, writers, photographers, artists, production people, sales and marketing experts, and delivery folks has put together the magazine and put it out on the streets. Along with the current staff pictured below, many additional contributors help produce *OutSmart* month after month.

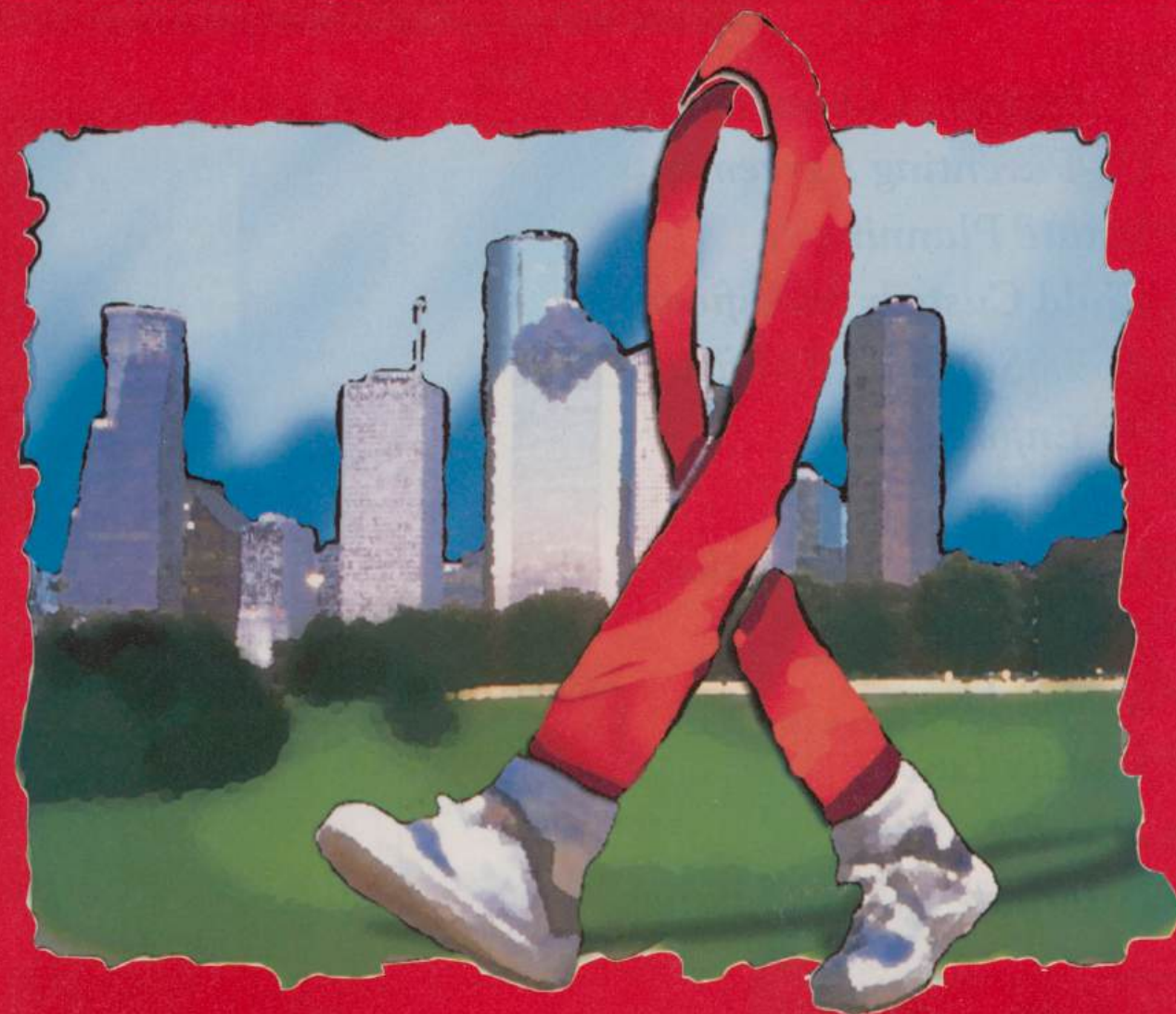
For 10 years, our readers have ensured our success. We hope you will let us know what you enjoy and what you don't like and contact us with your ideas. And we hope you will still be reading when we are 20.

—Tim Brookover



The *OutSmart* staff (l-r): James T. Hurst, Greg Jeu, Jack Richardson III, Eric A. T. Dieckman, Terry Klumpp, Joe Milstead, Tony Yarbrough, Thomas Chelena, Blase DiStefano, Teresa Anderson, and Tim Brookover.

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Letters

SHOWTIME'S LESBIANS

Olivia Flores Alvarez's write-up on Ilene Chaiken—the creator, screenwriter, and producer of *The L Word* ["Just Say the Word," January 2004]—was very well done. I liked the fact that she talked about the issues in the show; it was insightful and well-written.

I also liked the Super Bowl article ["Super Duper" by Tiffany Penn]. I may have to employ some of those suggestions.

Jean Bishop
New York City

MARK OF ACHIEVEMENT

Hi. I had the privilege of meeting Mark Coyle ["The Way of Nature," March 2000] at a craft show in the early '90s out in Sugar Land at the First Colony art show. He was "up and coming." It was his first show, and I've remembered him all these years. I was fascinated with his ability to just sit down and "do it." He is an amazing man.

Thanks for the article!

Linda Morris
Houston

COLTISH THANKS

On behalf of all of the Colt 45's I wish to thank you for a wonderful spread ["Out Front," December 2003]. It turned out very well and the Colts received some great publicity for our Christmas and Community Award show.

Jerel McNeil
Colt 45's president

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JOINING THE CORPS. Georges Zemanek, until recently the chairman of STAG (Some Transgenders Are Guys), begins duty this month with AmeriCorps, the national service program. Before leaving for the three-week orientation camp in Florida, the 2003 University of St. Thomas graduate reported that he didn't yet know his assignment. His first choice: working with the urban homeless. "That issue is such a problem, and one we ignore," he said. After his one-year volunteer stint, Zemanek, who is 23, plans to enter graduate school to continue his French studies.

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THE MARRYING KIND. On February 13, 30 gay and lesbian couples will converge at the county clerk's office to request marriage licenses. This observance of Freedom to Marry Day—the annual day of action calling for equality in matrimonial laws, organized by an array national GLBT rights groups and locally by Stonewall Law Association of Greater Houston—will surely get noticed. One of the couples, Stephanie Welch (l) and Cindy Scott, had a commitment ceremony in 1999. Now they seek to legalize their union. "I think it's going to take a nationwide effort to push marriage equality through," Scott says.

Photographed by David Lewis

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OUT WEST. Syed Asif Hassan will travel to Los Angeles this month for the North American conference of Al-Fatiha, the U.S.-based organization dedicated to GLBT Muslims. Hassan, a Rice University graduate student in physics, serves on the national board. For the February 13-16 event, Hassan is helping to coordinate the first queer Muslim film festival. He will also speak on two panels—one on the history and state of the Al-Fatiha movement and another on Sufism. "That's one of the more inclusive communities," Hassan explains. "There are Sufi congregations that are accepting of the full spectrum of queer."

Photographed by John Conroy

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• **Tamara Jones**, chief of staff for City Council member **Ada Edwards**, will lead a workshop on social, political, and civil justice activism on Feb. 5, 6:30 p.m., at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church. Register: Melissa Rogers, 281/531-8805 or rmcomm@yahoo.com.

• **Pride Committee of Houston** holds voting for pride parade grand marshals on Feb. 7 and Feb. 21, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., at its office. Check www.pridehouston.org for the list of nominees.

• **Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays-Houston** considers the controversy over the election of openly gay Episcopal bishop **Gene Robinson** at its Feb. 8, 2 p.m., meeting at St. Paul's Methodist Church. Details: 713/467-3524, www.pflaghouston.org.

• On Feb. 11, **Bering Support Network**, the counseling program of Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, begins two new facilitated groups: "Recently Diagnosed HIV+" and "Long-Term Survivors of HIV." Groups meet at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, preceded by a 6:30 p.m. potluck supper. Register: 713/526-1017.

• **Stonewall Law Association of Greater Houston** hosts a Feb. 8, 1-6 p.m., media-training class at the Houston GLBT Community Center for couples participating in a Feb. 13, 2 p.m., marriage-equality demonstration at the county clerk's office. Register: **Christopher Bown**, 713/227-1717, or MarriageEquality@slagh.org.

• **Conrad Hernandez** chairs a silent-auction fundraiser for the **Positive Art Workshop**, the Houston GLBT Community Center art classes for people living with HIV/AIDS, on Feb. 21, 7 p.m., at davidlewisIMAGES/Midtown Photography studio. Details: 713/524-3818.

• Longtime community organizer **Bob Bouton** speaks at "Fourth Sunday History Series" presented by the **Gulf Coast Archive & Museum of GLBT History** on Feb. 22, 3 p.m., at the museum. Details: www.gcam.org.

• Miss the marathon? Meet up with **FrontRunners Houston**, the gay/lesbian runners group, for regular 3-mile runs, Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. and Sundays at 8 a.m., in Memorial Park. Details: <http://home.swbell.net/larathon/houfr.htm>. ■

SAFETY FIRST: TIPS FROM

Since the November 28 attack on Avondale against New York dancer Alan Tibbetts, accompanied by rumors of other hate-

driven assaults, many in the community remain on edge. For some ideas on personal safety, particularly in the Montrose club district, we

PARKING

Pay to park.

Use one of the paid parking lots or even get your vehicle valet-parked at the club. Consider that for the cost of a single drink, you have taken out an insurance policy for the night—first, that your vehicle will be secure and easily accessible to you, and, second, that it will still be there when you are finished for the evening. If you must park in the street, check for parking signs and park as close to the club as possible and near a street light. Avoid areas with bushes or shrubs or overhanging trees.

WALKING

Never walk alone.

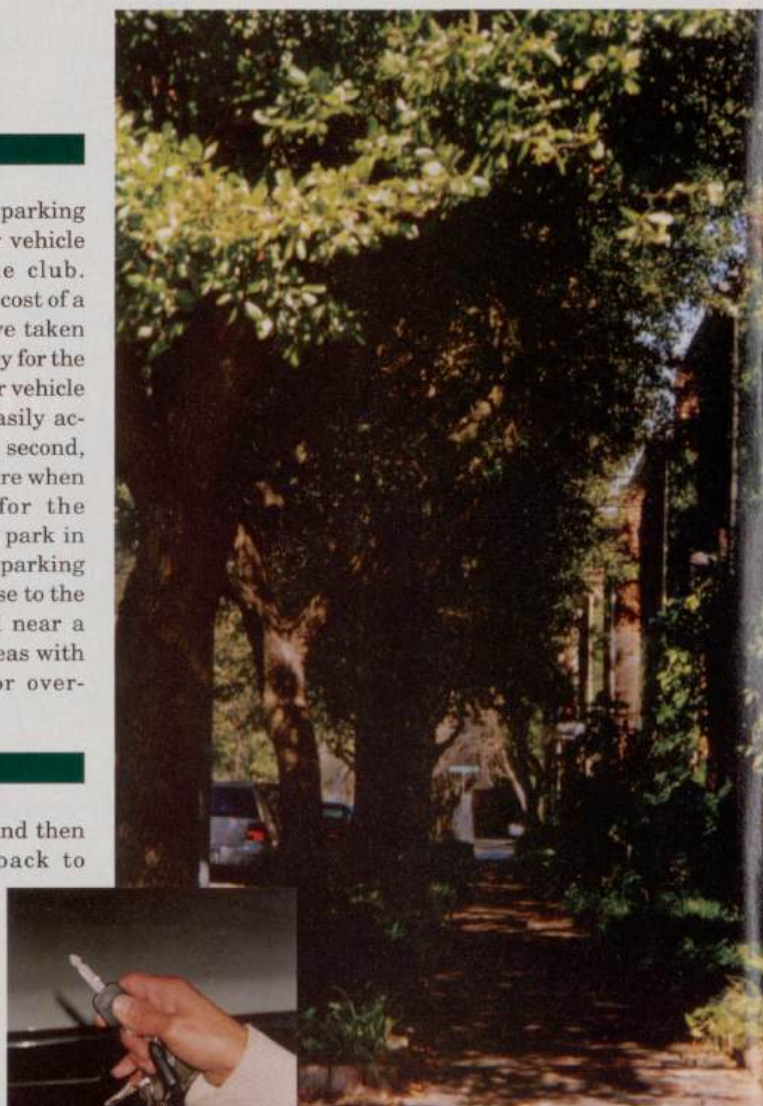
Walk with a friend and then drive him or her back to the club or vehicle. You can also ask one of the off-duty police officers or a doorman for an escort to your vehicle. It never hurts to ask.

Always walk with purpose.

Keep your head up and on a swivel. Always be aware of your surroundings and the people around you.

Have your keys ready.

Get your keys out and in your hand as soon as you leave the club. This keeps you from fumbling for them when you get to your vehicle and also allows for them to be used for defense if necessary.



Street smart: Shaded Montrose streets can be exceptionally dark at night. Avoid large shrubs and trees. Inset: Have your keys ready as you walk to your car.



Get loud.

Carry a whistle or horn or something that makes a lot of noise if needed. Predators do not like to draw attention.

Walk in the street.

I know that this is illegal, but walking in the street while facing traffic is a lot safer

Q-PATROL

checked in with Chris Arasin, chairman of Q-Patrol, the volunteer group that patrols the area on weekend nights. His tips:

than walking on most of the sidewalks in the neighborhood. **Avoid greenery.** Stay away from large shrubs, bushes, and overhanging trees, which make great cover for troublemakers.

IMPAIRMENT

Know your limits.

Too much alcohol or other substances can limit your ability to react to a situation and make you an easy target. You might even be at the point where you should not be behind the wheel of your vehicle. Get a friend to take you home or take a taxi.

IF YOU ARE ATTACKED

Report the attack.

Give whatever information you can. Contact the Houston Police Department and file a report. The city operates a Hate Crimes Hotline at 713/529-9615. If you are in need of counseling after the attack, the Montrose Counseling Center (713/529-0037) has people trained to assist you.

Contact Q-Patrol.

Let us know so we can keep a closer eye on that area on our next patrol. Our number is 713/528-SAFE (7233) or e-mail QPatrolHouston@yahoo.com. Consider joining us for a patrol. Remember that we patronize the bars, clubs, coffeehouses, restaurants, and bookstores to enjoy ourselves and the company of others. We have to be vigilant in making sure that we do not become a crime statistic, but we need not crawl into a shell. We need to stand up and show our pride in ourselves and in our community every day. That starts with being safe. →

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NEW MEN'S GROUP FORMS

This month, Derrick Elliott launches a new group for men across the multicultural spectrum. Men of All Colors Together-Houston will meet for the first time on Thursday, February 5, at 7 p.m. at the Houston GLBT Community Center.

"I see the group as being social," Elliott says. "I want to have a bar night. I want to have two nights a month at the center. I would like for us to have a bowling night."

Elliott adds that the focus of the group (more info: 281/373-5175 or 832/228-6234) "could change as the membership wishes."

The local organization joins a network of affiliated groups in 30 U.S. cities, including Austin and Dallas. In addition to these groups, variously identified as Black and White Men Together, Men of All Colors Together, and People of All Colors Together, there is a Pittsburgh-based National Association of Black & White Men Together.

SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINES SET

The application deadline for the The PFLAG/H.A.T.C.H. Youth Scholarship Foundation isn't until May 1, but interested students may want to start preparing now.

The program offers cash awards for GLBT students in the Houston area who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in high school or college. In 2003, the foundation awarded a total \$119,000 in amounts ranging from \$10,000 over four years to \$2,000 over two years.

More information and the application is available at

www.pflaghouston.org/scholarship.htm. To request information by mail, write PHYSE, P.O. Box 667010, Houston 77266.

In addition, the national organization of PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), offers nine scholarships of \$2,500 and 14 scholarships of \$1,000. These awards are available to GLBT students and to non-GLBT students who demonstrate support for the community. The deadline is March 15.

Information and applications are available www.pflag.org/scholar_docs.htm or by mail by writing Dr. Roy Gilbert-Higginson, PFLAG National Scholarships Program, 1726 M Street, #400, Washington, DC 20036.

MUSEUM SEEKS ARCHIVES HOME



Stored up: These are just some of the 19 shelves that hold the GCAM archives.

Nearly five years ago, Judy and Bruce Reeves helped establish the Gulf Coast Archive & Museum of GLBT History in their residence near downtown. Even after the community museum moved to its present West Main location, the Reeveses continued to house the bulk of the archives in warehouse space adjacent to their home. Now the Reeveses plan to sell the property, and GCAM seeks storage space.

Reeves hopes an individual or firm with climate-controlled storage space or a warehouse will donate room for the archives. "To date, we have 19 shelves, each on casters and capable of holding 18 regular file boxes," she says. "We need to find a new home for this valuable material, and we need to find it very quickly"

Reeves points out that because GCAM is a nonprofit organization, a donor could realize tax benefits. Interested persons can reach her at 713/227-5973, ext. 1. ■

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MIGHTY REAL

Gen. Wesley Clark stands out in the Democratic field

Generally, I don't fawn over candidates who supported Nixon and Reagan. And, generally, I don't find myself supporting a candidate who praised George W. Bush at any Republican fundraisers. But, generally, there's not a general who is running as a Democrat for the presidency. This time there is. And I'm a huge Wesley Clark fan.

What's not to like? No candidate—Democrat or Republican—has a more impressive biography. Born in Chicago in 1944, Clark lost his father when he was young, so Clark and his mother moved to Little Rock, Arkansas, to live with his grandparents. He was a star swimmer and top high school student in Little Rock.

Clark received an appointment to West Point, where he graduated first in his class. He was a Rhodes scholar. He served in Vietnam, was wounded in combat, and received two Bronze Stars, the Purple Heart,

and the Silver Star. (During this time, Dubya was hiding out in the National Guard to avoid combat, and Howard Dean was snow skiing in Aspen—on a medical deferment.) After obtaining the rank of four-star general, and after serving as NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, General Clark received the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Running as a Democrat, Clark provides the party an opportunity to nominate a candidate who is untouchable on national security. Running from the South, Clark provides the party an opportunity to carry some Southern states, which is necessary if the Democrats are to reclaim the White House.

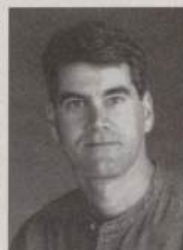
Still, many of the Democratic faithful are afraid of Clark. They say he's not a "real" Democrat, as reflected by his voting for Nixon and Reagan. Who in the Democratic primary is a "real" Democrat? Kerry, Gephardt, and Edwards, who supported the resolution for invading Iraq in a pre-emptive

strike? Dr. Dean, who called Medicare "one of the worst federal programs ever"? Joseph Lieberman, the Republican-lite candidate who is politically dead and doesn't yet know it? That leaves Al Sharpton, Carol Mosely Braun, and Dennis Kucinich. And even if they are "real" Democrats, none of them is polling 1 percent.

I've attended two Wesley Clark events and he sounds like a "real" Democrat to me. He disdains John Ashcroft, whom he calls "unpatriotic" for erasing individual freedoms that Clark fought for. He blasts the Bush administration for

continued on page 24

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.



MASS. MOVEMENT

Where will the state high court decision lead?

Did the Massachusetts high court really order the state to recognize gay marriages? That's the way the decision in *Goodridge v. Dept. of Public Health* was reported in the media, quickly becoming conventional wisdom.

Before a week had passed, however, revisionism set in. According to the revisionist view, the Massachusetts court gave the legislature the choice whether to extend full marriage to gay couples or to give them the legal benefits of marriage under some other name. The revisionist view is advanced by the Massachusetts governor and the state's attorney general, who oppose gay marriage. Some who support gay marriage but who fear a devastating political backlash also advance this opinion.

Are the revisionists right? Will civil unions suffice, as they did in neighboring Vermont three years ago when that state's highest court also addressed marriage discrimination?

The revisionist view has some support in the opinion. Andrew Koppelman, one of the leading gay-rights legal scholars in the country, argues the court "did not decree that same-sex couples were entitled to marry."

He bases this conclusion on three aspects of the decision. First, discussing the actual remedy given to the gay couples, the court said only that they were entitled to "the protections, benefits, and obligations of civil marriage." These things may be provided without attaching the word "marriage" to them.

Second, the court did not order the state to issue actual marriage licenses to gay couples.

Third, the court gave the legislature 180 days to remedy the problem. This makes no sense, Koppelman maintains, unless the legislature had some option other than simply to give gay couples marriage—a remedy the court easily could have imposed.

To these three arguments a fourth might be added: While a court is properly con-

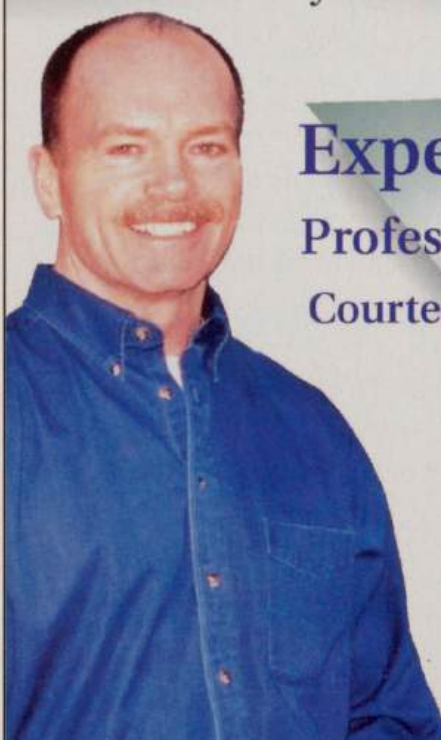
cerned about discrimination in substantive rights, it has no business telling legislatures what they must call those rights. As long as the legislature has given gay couples all the privileges of marriage, this argument holds, it may call that package "marriage" or "civil unions" or "fried green tomatoes."

There's an additional concern. To read the decision as requiring marriage may scare the state into amending its constitution. What's far worse, it may scare the country into adopting a federal constitutional amendment that would not only ban

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 22

"deceiving the American public" into supporting a premature invasion into Iraq, even though there was no "causal nexus" between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda, or Iraq and September 11. He talks about tax relief for the real middle class—not just for those who earn more than \$200,000/year, which seems middle class to King George and Vice President Halliburton.

And General Clark is vocally pro-choice, pro-affirmative action, and pro-gay rights.

Choice. "It's a decision the woman has to make . . . It's her choice."

Affirmative action. "I know this firsthand from my 34 years in the United States military: Affirmative action was essential to creating the diverse officer corps we need to defend our country. Throughout my career, I have seen the benefits of seeking out qualified minority candidates for leadership positions—and I am a beneficiary of their leadership."

Gay rights. "It's not right that people should hide their sexuality. Don't Ask, Don't Tell violates the principles of honesty, candor, and full development of the human potential that have been secrets of the military's success."

As General Clark himself has said, if he were a Republican, these positions would "make him the loneliest Republican in politics."

I don't care whom Clark voted for in 1972 or 1980. He seems like a real Democrat now. And he seems like he has a real chance of taking the White House away from Bush.

In fact, he reminds me of another Democrat who grew up in Little Rock, left Arkansas, and became a Rhodes scholar, entered politics, and ended up defeating an incumbent named George Bush.

Except the general has something Clinton lacks: self-discipline. And that makes me a real Wesley Clark disciple, because he's real enough for me. ■

OutRight continued from previous page

gay marriages but also civil unions and other forms of recognition. Koppelman, who supports gay marriage, urges activists to wait "a decade or two" before pressing for it.

I think the revisionists read both the opinion and the political climate the wrong way.

As for the opinion, it's true the court noted the exclusion of gay couples from marital "protections, benefits, and obligations." But it did so to emphasize one reason why marriage is so important. The Massachusetts court also recognized that "tangible as well as intangible benefits flow from marriage." The tangible benefits (filing joint tax returns and the like) can be captured by a marriage equivalent, but the intangible bene-

fits (historically grounded social recognition) cannot fully be. So what it's called does matter.

Notably, in fashioning its remedy, the court neither mentioned the Vermont example nor explicitly gave the state legislature an alternative to marriage, as the Vermont court did. Instead, the court followed the model of a Canadian court last summer by stripping the opposite-sex requirement from the definition of marriage itself. "We construe marriage to mean the voluntary union of two persons as spouses," the Massachusetts court declared.

While it's true the court did not order the state to issue marriage licenses to gay couples, that's not what the couples asked for. They asked only for the court to declare unconstitutional marriage discrimination against same-sex couples, which the court did by changing the definition of marriage to conform to state constitutional requirements.

What, then, is the Massachusetts legislature supposed to do in the next six months? Marriage discrimination against same-sex couples is rife in state law. The legislature, not a court, is best suited to decide how to rewrite those discriminatory provisions. That's what the legislature should do with its time if it wants to comply with the decision, not struggle to find ways to give gay couples a separate but equal status.

As for the politics, fears of a catastrophic backlash are probably exaggerated. Polls in Massachusetts show residents favor the decision by a 12-point margin and oppose a state constitutional amendment by a 17-point margin. As I have previously written, polls on this issue probably tend to exaggerate support for us. But we're already in a better position than we were in the immediate aftermath of the Vermont opinion, when a majority of that state's citizens opposed a more moderate result. Since a state constitutional amendment in Massachusetts requires eventual voter approval and since such a referendum could not be held until November 2006, there's time between now and then to calm fears.

As for a federal constitutional amendment, the prospects are even dimmer. Amending the U.S. Constitution is difficult, especially when one of the major parties opposes that action, as the Democrats do. Even conservatives are divided on the issue, some because they have become more moderate on homosexuality and some because they believe states ought to make their own decisions about marriage.

If the Massachusetts decision sticks and we get our first experiment in real gay marriage, 2003 will be remembered as the year we turned a corner toward full equality. ■

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by Annise D. Parker

FRESH START

The new mayor, controller, and council get started

From a City Council member's perspective, the tone of the 2004 inaugural celebration differed in one important respect from my first inauguration as an at-large member in 1998. When council members walked out on the stage with their spouses—in my case, life partner—we were introduced as “council members” without being named individually. All the focus was on the mayor.

When Mayor Bill White praised new council member Pam Holm in his inaugural speech for taking on the billboard industry, his inclusiveness signaled his administration's new direction.

White was no less generous in his remarks about other new council members Adrian Garcia, Ronald Green, M.J. Kahn, and Toni Lawrence. Inclusion has not always been the theme of new administrations, and time will tell if this grand honeymoon gesture will develop into a healthy marriage.

An appreciation for diversity will be helpful. The new council includes seven women (the most ever); the city's first Muslim and South Asian-American elected official; three African Americans; two Hispanics; and one Asian American. Not to mention an openly lesbian city controller.

Viewpoints will be diverse: small-business owners, a police officer, attorneys, a community activist and radio show host, nonprofit director, standup comic, physician, realtor, financial planner.

The day after the inaugural, the New York Times featured an unusually positive story about the new era in Houston. What better photo to run than one of the country's most modern light rail cars? The article also mentioned that I had walked across the stage with my life partner, Kathy Hubbard. Only some of the Miller Outdoor Theatre audience, however, realized that the pianist-composer playing the national anthem was

not just the mayor's brother, but the mayor's openly gay brother, Robert Avalon.

Efficiencies' Buzz

The mayor's new staff is scurrying around City Hall trying to get settled in with one hand and working frantically with the other hand to find Budget Efficiencies—the new buzzwords.

I was waiting to get a new ID badge, and one of the bright young stars of the White team wanted to talk about how to reduce maintenance and security costs in a particular department. Perhaps his frenetic pace is synchronized with the budget clock ticking in his ears. Houston may have a new mayor and unseasonable weather, but budget season begins each January.

The mayor's staff works closely with department heads and the financial staff to piece together a balanced budget that will be presented to council in May. On a parallel

track, the public gets its turn in late January and February at annual budget/CIP (Capital Improvement Program) hearings. Council members also have some input in the early stages through their budget priorities submitted in March or April. By July 1, Council must pass an FY05 budget as the new fiscal year begins.

The search for efficiencies is already intense as a huge budget crisis looms for FY05. We hope the recent minor upturn in the economy continues, because the city faces dramatic increases in the expense column, notably a \$50 million contractual raise for police and a \$20–\$30 million jump in health insurance costs (the city is still negotiating), as well as pension fund underfunding.

New Perspective at the Council Table

The mood was extremely cordial during the first full-length council meeting. This was also my first meeting as controller, who is invited to attend the first council meeting of the month to present the state of the city's finances. The current budget gap is down to about \$8 million because of spending cuts by the Brown administration. If sales taxes continue to inch up, this shortfall is easily manageable.

Mayor White's calm, thoughtful style set the tone for the meeting. He talked softly and offered to share the big stick with council, often going out of his way to acknowledge the important role of council and ask for input.

When he spoke, he made it count. At one point, the mayor was asked a logistical question for which he didn't immediately know the answer. He just paused for 20–30 seconds, without embarrassment, to think.

Important initiatives were announced:

- **Contractor scorecard.** Mayor White wants to make sure city contractors don't just perform work for the best price. He wants them rated on four criteria: bang for the buck, community involvement, commitment to diversity, and local employees.

- **Cost effectiveness.** The mayor also would like to formalize criteria for cost effectiveness, an idea that has been discussed by several council members. Presumably, these criteria would be applied to current and proposed programs.

- **Interdepartmental task force on LARA (Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority) and related public nuisance is-**



Annise Parker is city controller. To receive her newsletter, send an email to controllers@cityofhouston.net.

sues. LARA will sell abandoned property to CDCs (community development corporations) and developers at below-market prices to promote construction of low- and moderate-income housing.

At the end of the meeting, agenda director Marty Stein, who sits next to the mayor, summed up my feelings when she told the mayor, “Excellent job.”

2004 is off to a great start. ■

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TOO MUCH HATE

Our own problems impede our progress as people

This month's H.A.T.C.H. column deals with the hatred the writers see all around them and experience up close and personal.

Amy, 16*

Ageism. You usually think of it in the form of younger generations excluding seniors from their social groups, from "their" bars, from mainstream culture. However, the road runs both directions. Ageism against gay youth is rampant. Older generations think we don't care, think we've grown up in an era of *Will & Grace* and *Queer as Folk*, so we must not have the same problems they had. They think we have no pride and no place in the community, yet wonder why we don't want to take a more active part in it. As long as this is accepted, the schisms between the generations will widen.

Everyone is guilty. You've all had times when you saw a teenager and thought what they were trying to tell you wasn't your concern. You've all talked to seniors like they're beyond understanding your world. Or maybe you just avoid both. Almost without exception, all gay haunts are reserved for those in their 20s and 30s. Even in the few where we are accepted, such as gay-friendly bookstores and cafes, patrons and staff can often treat those from other generations with mild disdain and bias.

We've all grown up in different times, but we're still the same. The problem is simple, the solution is simple, but solving it is elusive and slippery. We have to open lines of communication. We have to learn from each other, but mostly we have to give a damn. Don't let this stagnate. We have everything to gain from each other.

Peter, 16*

Internalized Homophobia. Homophobia is bad enough, right? Why the hell do we absorb all of the horrible things other people say and direct it inwards? Because that's what we've been taught. The social and political climate is not too different from

that of earlier generations: It's wrong, immoral, abnormal, and anti-Christian (anti-religion really) to be gay. We soak this stuff up because if we hear it we start to believe it, and if we believe it, maybe, just maybe we'll have the power to change, to be better, to be . . . *heterosexual*.

You hate yourself so much you would deny who you are to everyone, especially yourself. Well, honey, you can't deny yourself your whole life. Maybe you'll get married and live in a lovely home with all those little rascals running around. Well, that's cute and all, but your marriage is a *lie* and your house is a *lie*, and your children are all *lies*. But having a lie of a life *must* be better than being gay, right? But I'm getting away from

Older generations think we don't care, think we've grown up in an era of *Will & Grace* and *Queer as Folk*, so we must not have the same problems they had.

myself . . . the cause of all of the lies is homophobia you turn on yourself. You can't come out of the closet, because you see nothing positive about being gay. Mainstream straight America has filled your impressionable little head with so much shit about how horrible gays are, and everyone, to different extents, has bought into it. Everyone has internalized homophobia issues. It's all a matter of you confronting them face-to-face.

Taylor, 15*

Sexism. I know how to change a tire. I'm more comfortable in pants and keep my hair short. I enjoy sports and keep up a tough attitude. Most likely you assume I'm a lesbian. After all, this is a gay magazine, so I have to either be a gay man or a gay

woman, and we all consider the stereotypes that we hold about each other. Who's to say that a gay man can't still have all the same interests as a straight man? They *are* the same gender—why should their sexuality mean that one is held to different standards than the other?

We talk about how horrible it is that women are expected to fill a certain gender role and that they should be able to do anything a man can, and yet we still have gender expectations in our own community. Men are supposed to be effeminate and fashion-conscious, while women are expected to assume the position of a typical man who wears baggy clothes and can fix any car. If a lesbian is more comfortable in makeup and a skirt, she had better be ready to play the part of the vulnerable woman. Butch women date femme women, and butch men can only date femme men. Everyone plays one role or the other. We have separated ourselves even within our own family. We have separate clubs to go to and different lifestyles that we are compelled to uphold. Sexism has become a major issue in our community. We should work to accept all of our individuality. The first step in

destroying gay stereotypes should be to let go of the ones we hold for each other.

Sexism. Internalized homophobia. Ageism. Hate. All forms of hate. If you're against one, you shouldn't practice another. The community gets enough hate geared toward it. We shouldn't point the gun at ourselves. If we want to be accepted, we must first embrace all aspects of our family. Cut the bullshit. Stop making excuses for your hate.

Some of the writers involved with H.A.T.C.H. now contribute a regular column to OutSmart. The phone number for the Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals is 713/529-3590.

**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.*

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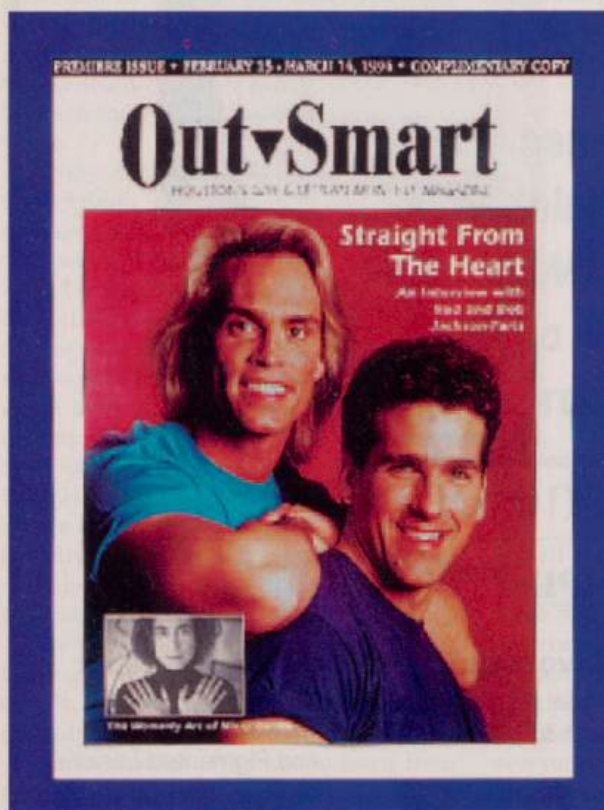
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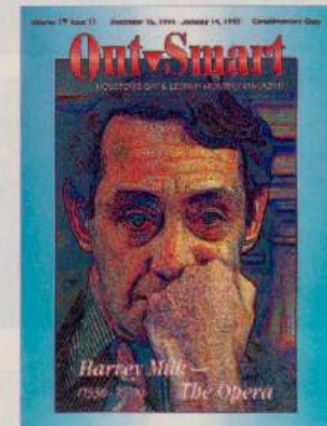
Up Front

Ten years of *OutSmart* covers

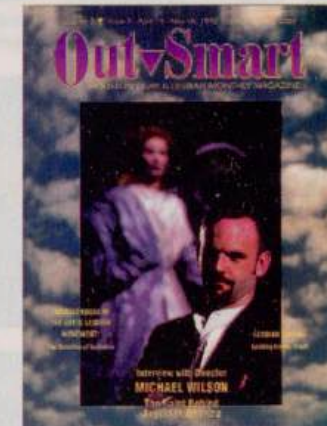


We launched *OutSmart* in 1994 with gay-couple-of-the-moment Rod and Bob Jackson-Paris. They didn't last. We did. Over the next decade, we featured famous GLBT faces (Melissa Etheridge, Chastity Bono, Harvey Fierstein), favorite celebrities, intriguing locals, and issues that confront the community (hate crimes, gays, and religion). We don't know what the next 10 years of covers will bring, but we hope you will keep checking us out.

1994



December 1994



April 1995



November 1996

1995



1996



1997-2004 covers on next three pages →

1997



1998



1999



OutSmart



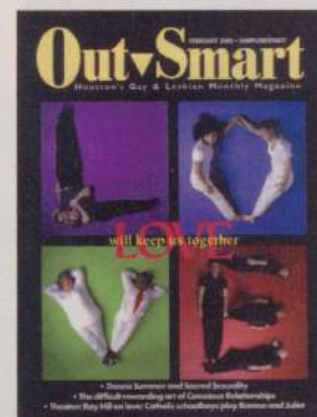
October 1997



February 1998



June 1999



February 2000



July 2000

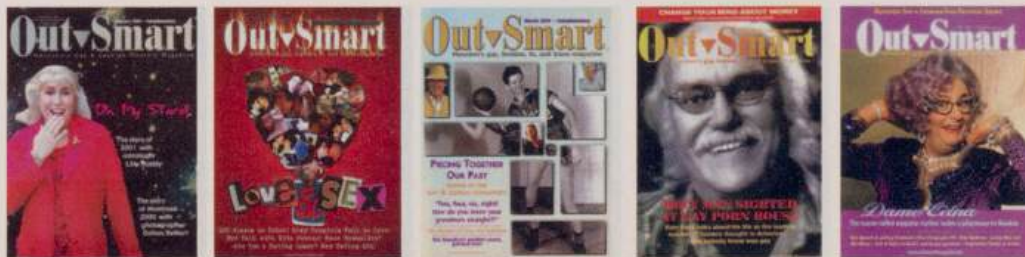


November 2001

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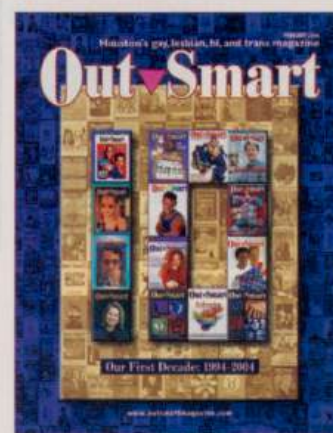
2002



September 2002



October 2003



February 2004

2003



2004



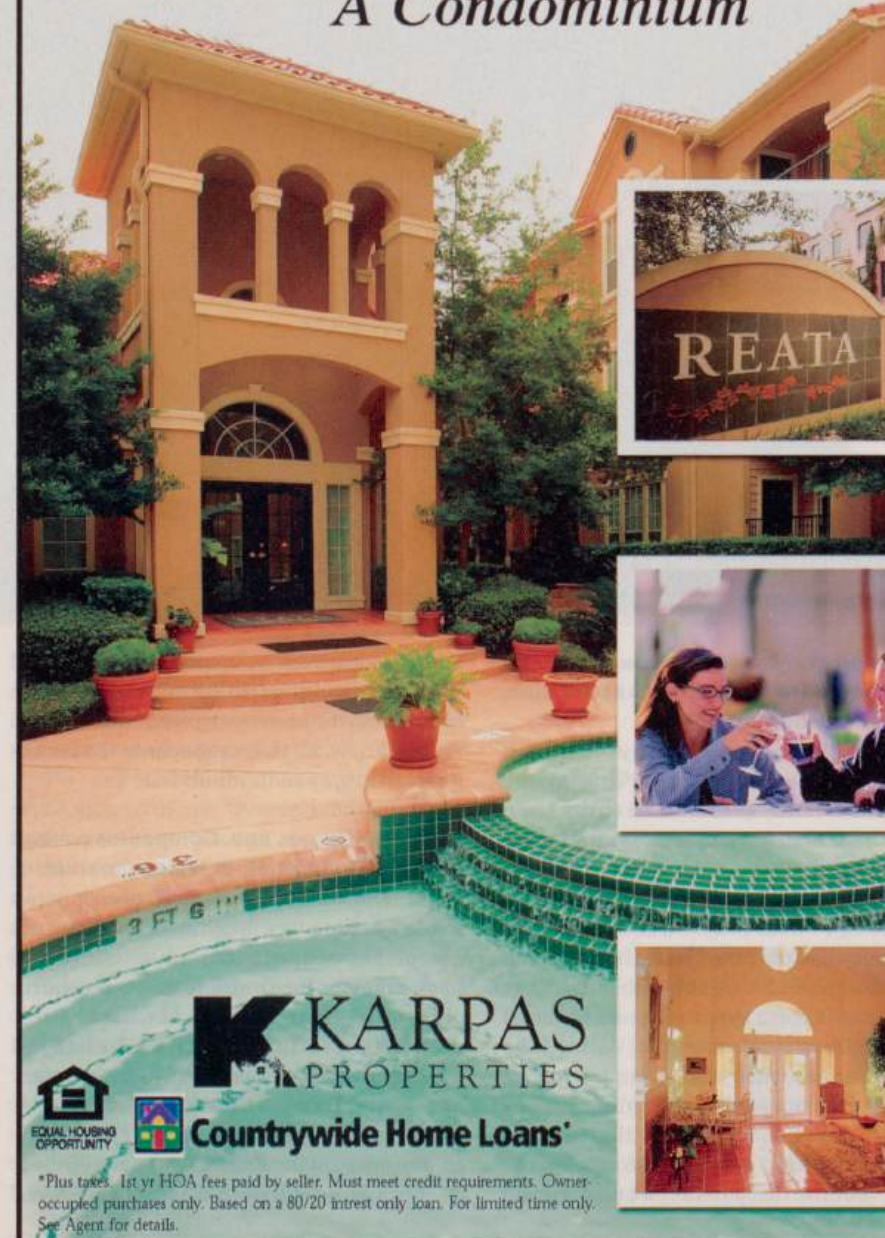
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Join the OutSmart staff on Wednesday, February 18, for the magazine's 10th anniversary party at Meteor (2306 Genesee), 5-8:30 p.m. Help us blow out the candles on our birthday cake, and sign up for great door prizes and special promotions to be awarded throughout the evening. Call 713/520-7237 to RSVP.

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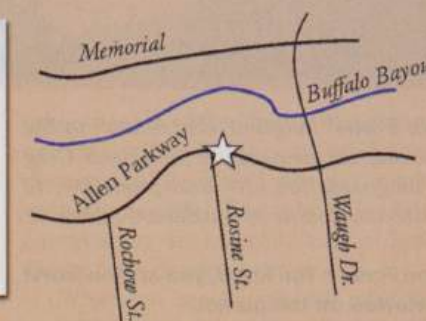


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OutSmarted

A couple of friends talk about
OutSmart magazine's beginnings and
the first 10 years

by Steven Foster • Photos by Tim Brookover



Steven Foster, longtime contributor to the magazine, sat down with his friend Greg Jeu, magazine founder and publisher, to chat about a decade of OutSmart. Listen in.

Steven Foster: You know, you are the worst interviewee on the planet.

Greg Jeu: I know, I know. You'd think that after doing this for almost 20 years that I'd be better at this. Sorry, I guess that's going to be your problem today, buddy [laughs].

Before we start walking through some issues, let's talk about how OutSmart got started.

Well, we were still publishing our holistic magazines *Uptown Express* and *Health&Spirit* [1985-1999] at the time. And we had...

Now when you say "we," you mean the people you were working with at the time, but it was really you, right?

I'm the publisher, but it always has been "we" no matter who was working at the magazine. It really does take an entire team to put the magazine out each month.

Oh, I got it, go on...

Before we started *OutSmart*, our community had only the typical bar-oriented magazines and the weekly tabloids. They didn't seem to be a great representation of the diversity of the community. With all the sex and bar ads, they just continued to feed the same stereotype of our community. They certainly didn't show the full dimension of gay people. We felt there was so much more to our community that wasn't being

addressed or even being acknowledged. And we really wanted to help empower the community to know our place in the world... you know, all the components that make us healthy gay individuals.

This was 10 years ago. Companies weren't exactly dying to talk to the gay market.

Right. But one of the biggest decisions we made in the very beginning was to not accept any sex-oriented advertising. And back then, for free pubs, it was their source of revenue, their bread and butter.

Starting out in our first issue we had just a handful of advertisers. We had some very lean years. Today, we have over 200 regular advertisers who support us and the community in *OutSmart*.

Luckily, we discovered a lot of gay-owned

and gay-friendly businesses that wanted to be visible and part of our community, and they also didn't want to be associated with all the sexually explicit advertising.

So we decided early on that we wanted to build the magazine with both gay-owned and gay-friendly advertisers who valued our community. And we really wanted to be partners with them, to help our businesses grow together.

It just seemed a bit more comforting to know that the merchants you were supporting, at the very least, appreciated your business and that the money you gave them wouldn't be given to some religious-right organization to be used against you.

At any rate, you had some great ideas on how to build the magazine.

After we got off the ground, people started calling us and gave us some great story suggestions—people they considered their role models, issues that we should address, and stories they thought we should cover. It was a very creative time for us.

This was right after your partner Joey Cundiff died.

Everyone knew the toll Joey's death took on me. I told them why [the magazine] was necessary. I felt our community wasn't being educated about important issues they needed to know. And I wanted to help people avoid the same bad experience I had gone through—losing your partner and then your home and assets just because you didn't know about the legal documents that could protect the people you love and care about. It was a nightmare, but looking back, it

came down to the office and we sat for hours stuffing them into the magazine.

This is fascinating, talking about this now. I mean, we still have a way to go, of course, but 10 years ago, well... face it, who would have thought the sodomy law would have been overturned because of two men from Texas? Come on. It was a fantasy 10 years ago.

Exactly. I think many of the changes began with the March on Washington in 1992.

I remember. You and Nancy Ford were in *Newsweek*.

We were good buddies and she was very involved in the gay community. Nancy and I went to the March in Washington in '92. It was an incredibly healing experience. We were marching with thousands of

In the beginning: "We felt people needed to know how to come out safely and hopefully find the power of their own voices," Greg Jeu (r) tells Steven Foster.

A lot of them developed in the early planning days, after I told my friends that I wanted to start up a gay magazine. They literally helped create the vision for it.

I'd ask them to do some creative processing with me. "Pretend for a moment that you just picked up a new gay publication that really spoke to you and you were jazzed about what you read in it. What are you seeing? What are you reading?" We got some terrific ideas. Sometimes there was so much creative energy floating in the room that I swear you could see it.

Most of the people that I talked to were friends who knew the history of where I came from. I even talked to my parents about it. Everyone knew my feelings about the injustice toward gay relationships and how I got shafted.

really was a major catalyst and the fuel to start this publication.

Back then, the religious right was so powerful. They were such a driving force.

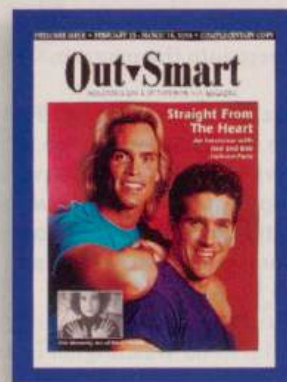
And they were teaching so much hate and misinformation about our community.

I remember telling my parents what I wanted to do, and they were unbelievably supportive. Growing up as first-generation Asian Americans, they had experienced racial discrimination, and then they witnessed gay discrimination being directed at their son. My family has been such a big part of *OutSmart* even from the start. They've done some incredible things to help out.

I remember one time the printer forgot to do inserts in the paper, and my family

other people. After being discriminated against, after having my relationship disrespected because I was gay, marching with thousands of people helped to re-energize my soul, and it kind of brought things back in perspective.

When we came back, we were hyped and felt so empowered to do something. The only way our community was going to have a voice was to come out and be counted. We wanted to help people with the process. So we named the magazine *OutSmart* because we felt people needed to know how to come out safely and to be smart and educated about our rights... and hopefully find the power of their own voices. We all needed to know our political power and the clout that our collective voice could create. →



First Cover, February 1994

Steven Foster: How was the first cover [of then-gay poster boys Rod and Bob Jackson-Paris] decided?

Greg Jeu: If I remember correctly, I believe they came out with their book [*Straight from the Heart: A Love Story*]. And these guys were going to be at Crossroads Market. People stood in line because it was one of the first gay love stories.

And, sorry, I think you needed something really accessible on the first cover.

Sure. But back then we also did a gay pride issue in *Uptown Express* [June 1993], and we got thrown out of the public library system. Who would have ever guessed that today there would be a major TV show where gay guys are the stars for making over a straight guy? A lot of things have changed in 10 years.

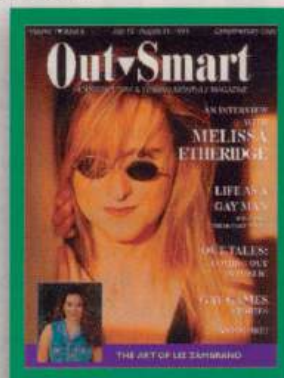
I think it's funny that in your first issue you featured these two cover-friendly guys, and in your second issue [conservative columnist] Dale Carpenter makes his debut.

[Laughs] I remember somebody called and said they hated him. "He's a gay Republican!" I had never even heard of a gay Republican. I know this sounds stupid, but it just seemed incomprehensible to me. I just couldn't imagine gay people being part of that political party. And then everybody thought I was a Log Cabin Republican because we published his articles. I think Dale is an excellent writer, but me, a Log Cabin Republican? No.

So you've put things in the magazine that weren't your bag.

Oh, absolutely. We were reaching out to the community, and we were fortunate because we had a lot of people who approached us wanting to write pieces for the magazine. We've published some really great interviews and features about health,

spirituality, politics, and other issues that directly addressed the unique needs of our community, and our stories have won awards from both the gay and mainstream press associations. But sometimes I wondered what the hell we were doing. I mean how do you print a gay pub that's mainstream without being cliché about it or flat and dead?



July 1994

You say you didn't know what you were doing, but here you have Melissa Etheridge on the cover. You were obviously doing something right.

Yeah, Nancy did that. Great piece. And we had many continuing series. Bill Scott, who helped start the Montrose Counseling Center, wrote a great article about how gay people develop—that when we come out, we have a second adolescent period. That piece was really honest about both emotional issues and sexual activity.

Speaking of... Here's the ice cream ad [holds up an innocuous image of a multi-scoop cone].

What's the ice cream ad?

Fiesta got a complaint that the ice cream cone in their ad looked like a big penis and that it was pornographic. The complaint was more about their company advertising in a gay publication. Unfortunately, I don't think they stepped up to the plate to defend their position. And it must have been at a time that diversity training was not an issue for them. The gay press has always been more scrutinized than the mainstream press.

February 1996

Then you get to The Sex Issue [both laugh]. God, that was controversy.

You know, I went back and re-read that piece, and I remember how much controversy was stirred up by it. Maybe it was ahead of its time to speak so frankly, but I thought it was a story that needed to be told. This particular issue covered a variety of topics that all had to do with healthy sex-



uality. We discussed sexual addictions. We featured a guy named Tom Steele. He was a guy who had led a tough life. He came from a broken home, his two brothers were in prison, and, by the way, he was also an adult film star.

There was nothing vulgar about our cover photo, and there was nothing vulgar between the pages; however, we were kicked out of Walgreens and Kroger for a few months.



November 1996

We were thrilled to have Chastity on our cover. At the time, she was the National GLADD [Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation] spokesperson. Blase [DiStefano] interviewed Chastity, and we were excited about her coming to speak at the LiB [Lesbians in Business] meeting, but Blase wasn't allowed in because he was a guy. A lot of women were really upset, because they felt, as we did, that this event should have been open to the entire community. I remember Lea [Bogle, Premier Paging & Wireless owner] being upset, as a lesbian in the community, that the organization would treat him that way. She saw it as reverse discrimination.

Fortunately, I think our community has improved, and the "all-male" and "all-female" events that specifically exclude people based upon their gender have pretty much disappeared. I think that's a great sign of our community progress.



July 1996

This is one of my favorites, since spirituality has always been a big part of my life. This issue was a way to bring our community and spirituality together in a very special way. It was a way to show that some churches are open and loving and how they embrace both gays and lesbians instead of trying to diminish and destroy us.



October 1997

This was the year the interior of the magazine had spot color—kinda stepping things up. It was also the year that you started winning awards—National Gay Journalism Association, the Vice Versa.

This was important. It was our first Gayest & Greatest Readers' Choice Awards. It is such a great cover.

And an exhausting concept to keep going year after year.

Yes, but it's worth it. It has been very rewarding to give our readers the chance to compliment the people they admire and the businesses they support. And for a lot of businesses, Gayest & Greatest has become a coveted title that they're proud to have received.

I've always liked how OutSmart covered both global community issues and more local ones. National celebs and hometown heroes.



January 1999

The Milestones issue was really cool. It was a timeline of Houston gay history, when our community organizations got started. It covered 30 years of our city's gay history starting from 1953 all the way to the year 1999.



April 1999

This is when Bering [Memorial United Methodist Church] was going to be kicked out of the denomination if they affirmed gay marriages. It was great to document the time when a church realized the hypocrisy, the injustice of that. And they took a stand. [Bering decided to ban all wedding ceremonies in response to the Methodist church ruling that prohibits ministers from performing same-gender unions.]

April 2000

Here's the big one.

Yeah, April 2000 is when we switched from newsprint to slick gloss magazine stock. We'd been trying for so long. I was proud because we had a professional and polished look. In newsprint, pictures just don't pop out that well. In slick, everything looks polished. Being on slick improves everything—the way you're marketed, even the public's perception of you. It was a great time, because it transformed us from just a normal freebie magazine into a more high-caliber publication. It brought our product



December 2000

up to a higher standard. We were able to do a lot more graphically, and we were no longer limited by newsprint.

By this time, OutSmart had won the nation's best gay and lesbian local magazine award for the second year in a row.

Yes, and it was quite an honor again. The press awards took place at a gay and lesbian journalist summit during the 2000 March [on Washington]. For me, it was the first time that I had really had a chance to connect with other gay publishers. It really helped me to know that we were all facing the same issues together.

At the awards ceremony, when they announced *OutSmart* as the winner, it caught me off guard. Jim [Hurst, associate publisher] and I were speechless and just so proud of this honor. We had taken a bunch of our coworkers to the march, and I just remember walking back to the table where we were sitting and everyone had tears flowing down their cheeks.



This Shepard/Ghandi issue is one of my favorite issues and one of the more powerful pieces that we've published. Alan Davidson interviewed Arun Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi's grandson, on how to use truth to overcome violence and answer love with hate. We also had an interview by John Aston, who talked with Judy Shepard, Matthew Shepard's mom, on what it would

take for the world to be a different and safer place.

Just what Matthew Shepard's father said to his killers gives me chills to think about it. [In a dramatic end to the 1999 case, convicted murderer Aaron McKinney accepted a deal for two life sentences—avoiding the death penalty—brokered at the request of Matthew Shepard's parents, Judy and Dennis Shepard. "Mr. McKinney, I give you life in the memory of one who no longer lives," Dennis Shepard told his son's murderer in court. "... I would like nothing better than to see you die, Mr. McKinney. However, this is the time to begin the healing process. To show mercy to someone who refused to show any mercy. ... Mr. McKinney, I'm going to grant you life, as hard as it is for me to do so, because of Matthew."]



January 2001

We're up to the month when the cover line changed to include bisexuals and transgenders. And I remember that conversation happening when I first met you.

Well, Lilly Roddy [astrology contributor and transgender activist] had been part of *Uptown Health&Spirit* for years and then started writing for *OutSmart*, which was perfect for where we were. We did it because it was important to Lilly and the transgender community.

Talk to me about that.

At the time, my concept of *community* was that we were all part of the same community. However, we discussed it at the office, and we went round and round about it.

That bisexual and transgender people were already included as part of "gay and lesbian"?

Yes. We just didn't put a label on it. I didn't see "them" as separate from "us." I always assumed gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders were all part of the "gay community."

So what changed you?

I think [then-editor] Ann Sieber's sensitivity to the transgender community helped us understand that the transgender community felt left out. It was important that everyone in the community felt like they were included.



January 2002

And then '02.

We went back to newsprint. After 9/11, we almost bit the dust on the printing. Advertisers didn't know what they were going to do. No one knew what they were going to do.

It was hard stepping back to the old newsprint-style paper after having felt like we stepped up with the full-glossy magazine. That was really difficult for us. I remember getting a very kind note from Susie Works. I had met her years ago when she used to place ads for Theatre Under The Stars. She said that she really respected the content we were producing in *OutSmart* and that it didn't matter really what kind of paper we were printed on. That I shouldn't worry about it. She really helped take the sting out of what seemed like a tough business decision. But still it mattered to me. I knew we had to do this to survive. ... And so we did.



June 2002

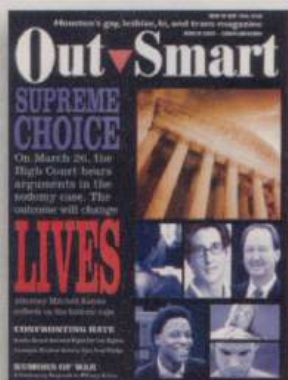
Oh! This Pride issue. This is the one with the Tony Curtis interview!

You know, people had tried to find out if he'd hopped the fence for years and, go figure, Blase basically gets him to admit it. Even the tabloids picked it up. That was pretty fun. [Curtis later backed off his statements to *OutSmart* in interviews with other publications, including *Vanity Fair*.]



January 2003

This was Tim's [Brookover, *OutSmart*'s current editor] initiation in starting an annual tradition of featuring people in our community whose names you might not recognize. It has been a great hit, and we just finished our second People to Watch issue. This has been one of many of his innovative ideas.



March 2003

Now, this is one of our best covers. Extremely powerful! It was hell for us to do this story. Josef Molnar, who wrote the feature, traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend the hearing before the Supreme Court. We knew this event was history in the making, and we knew we had to be there in person to cover it.

And this is the month you went back to slick, too.

Yes, it was a big step to return to slick paper so quickly after 9/11, but we felt doing that was important for the magazine, and we were fortunately in a better financial place at the time that made the move possible.



October 2003

Here are two humble people [Lawrence v. Texas petitioners John Lawrence and Tyron Garner] who were not seeking publicity and ended up as symbols for equality. I think God used them for a larger purpose. Look what it did for the entire nation, especially when you realize what they were up against, when you realize they could have pled guilty and faded into the background. They're heroes.

The simplicity of that truth ... it's revelatory.

Yes, absolutely. They took the high road.

Don't you think you've done that with the magazine—taken the high road?

I can't say for sure, but I hope I have. Look, I think we're all given opportunities to do great things, and sometimes we recognize them, sometimes we don't. I know from experience that when we feel empowered and inspired, our path sure does seem more illuminated and clearly defined. It's a lot easier to be pro-active and take action with your life when you have healthy self-esteem and a sense of pride in yourself, whether you're gay or straight.

Read an expanded version of this interview at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

Steven Foster began contributing to *OutSmart* magazine with the third issue. He appeared on the cover of the November 2001 issue as the subject of "Sleeping with the Anime" and was part of the inaugural "People to Watch" class in the January 2003 issue.

Celebrate 10 Years of OutSmart

Join the *OutSmart* staff on Wednesday, February 18, for the magazine's 10th anniversary party at Meteor (2306 Genesee), 5-8:30 p.m. Help us blow out the candles on our birthday cake, and sign up for great door prizes and special promotions to be awarded throughout the evening. Call 713/520-7237 to RSVP.

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Check Up

Missy

Ten
years
later,
the art
goes on

by Eric A.T. Dieckman
Photos by Gavyn Aaron

Every month during our 10-year celebration, we will revisit an individual whom we interviewed or who played a significant role in the issue a decade earlier. Launching the yearlong series, Eric Dieckman checks in with the artist Missy Gentile, who appeared in the first OutSmart in February 1994. →

Fresh paint: Canvases for an upcoming show rest behind Missy Gentile in Studio Sophie in Montrose.



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Some people have a certain quality about them. After you've spent time with them, you feel warm. Peaceful. There's something about their voice or presence that soothes you. You leave feeling that your soul has been comforted.

Artist Missy Gentile is one of those people. She exudes an inner tranquility. I recently caught up with Gentile (pronounced *Gen-tilly*) to learn what has transpired in her life since she spoke with *OutSmart* 10 years ago.

Gentile's Studio Sophie is full of paintings, photographs, images, and phrases painted on the walls. One wall is hidden by paintings, all different shades of blue, including a large canvas textured in cobalt. The rich saturated color, a mix of inks and oil paint, is ethereal and engaging. Gentile made these paintings for a color-themed group show, which opens March 13 at Sippora, the midtown gallery. Though the blue canvases are beautiful, to say the least, Gentile's color of choice is red. She loves its energy and inherent passion.

In her 1994 interview, Gentile said she wanted to paint full time within five years. Ten years later, she is almost there. To subsidize her artistic work, she teaches art to elementary school kids. "That helps me with my own painting, being around children," Gentile said. "They're so unbridled and innocent in their work." Taking a cue from their energy, Gentile paints from her moods, especially with her larger abstract paintings.

Ten years ago, Gentile recalled her first exhibition, a 1993 group show at the now-shuttered Unique Boutique and Gallery. These days, almost all of her shows are solo. In a month or two, Gentile plans to have a show in College Station ("That's a place that's just waiting to explode [culturally]") at a bookstore named Mighty Literaty. She has a line of greeting cards available locally at Sippora (10 percent of sales benefit the Pink Ribbons Project breast-cancer charity in memory of her mother). Gentile has fondest memories of a show at the Westheimer La Strada in February 2002 before it burned. "I started with 13 paintings, all figurative abstract. Huge pieces. I sold the whole show out in two months. I was bringing in other pieces because people wanted to take them off the wall." Gentile has done a good deal of commission work, including a three-panel mural she completed in 2002 for Half Price Books in the Village.

Over the decade, some things have remained the same for Gentile, and some have, of course, changed. Her studio is named after her cat, which has been around since her 1994 interview. Sophie (in turn named for Sophia Loren) is now kept company by Georgio, an exceptionally friendly Cornish short-hair cat that knows no strangers. Gentile now has a different partner. "She's the most supportive and loving partner. She believes in me as an artist, as a woman, and as a person. I see her as my life partner. I believe she's my soul mate." This time around, Gentile is sure she has found the right person, explaining their introduction as miraculous happenstance. "I went to Chances to play pool. Believe it or not, it helps me with my painting sometimes, because it's so precise. I walked

in, and there happened to be two of my good friends whom I hadn't seen in about six months—including a woman who had a five-piece collection of my work—talking to this woman they had just met. They said, 'Oh, this is the artist we were talking about.' We just connected. It was instantaneous."

Gentile still benefits from what she described as "menstrual wisdom" 10 years ago. "I really believe at that one certain time of the month, my creativity is so heightened, so intense, that I can't keep up with it. I feel like my creativity comes out of every pore of my body." Sometimes in her premenstrual state she can turn out as many as seven paintings a day. "I love it when it happens," she says.

Another source of intense inspiration came with disaster. Just as many were strongly affected by the 9/11 disasters, Gentile, a New York native, found herself painting nonstop for 24 hours after the attacks. She created two works, *The American Face* and *America Cries*. "I started on the 12th of September. I didn't mean to paint it. I had a big canvas stretched up on the wall and this just came out. I don't remember sleeping. I don't remember eating. I just painted." *The American Face* appeared in the March 2002 issue of the international magazine *Art Business News*.

What lies in Gentile's future? Down the line, she plans to move, probably somewhere else in Texas, while possibly keeping her studio here. She would like to see her work in the Menil Collection some day. "Or the Museum of Fine Arts or Contemporary Arts Museum. I want to keep on moving. I don't want to ever get stuck."

Eric Dieckman interviewed Juan Garza, M.D., for "People to Watch 2004" in the January issue.

Final touch: Gentile works on a painting for a show at Sippora Gallery next month. Her greeting cards (left) are available at Sippora.



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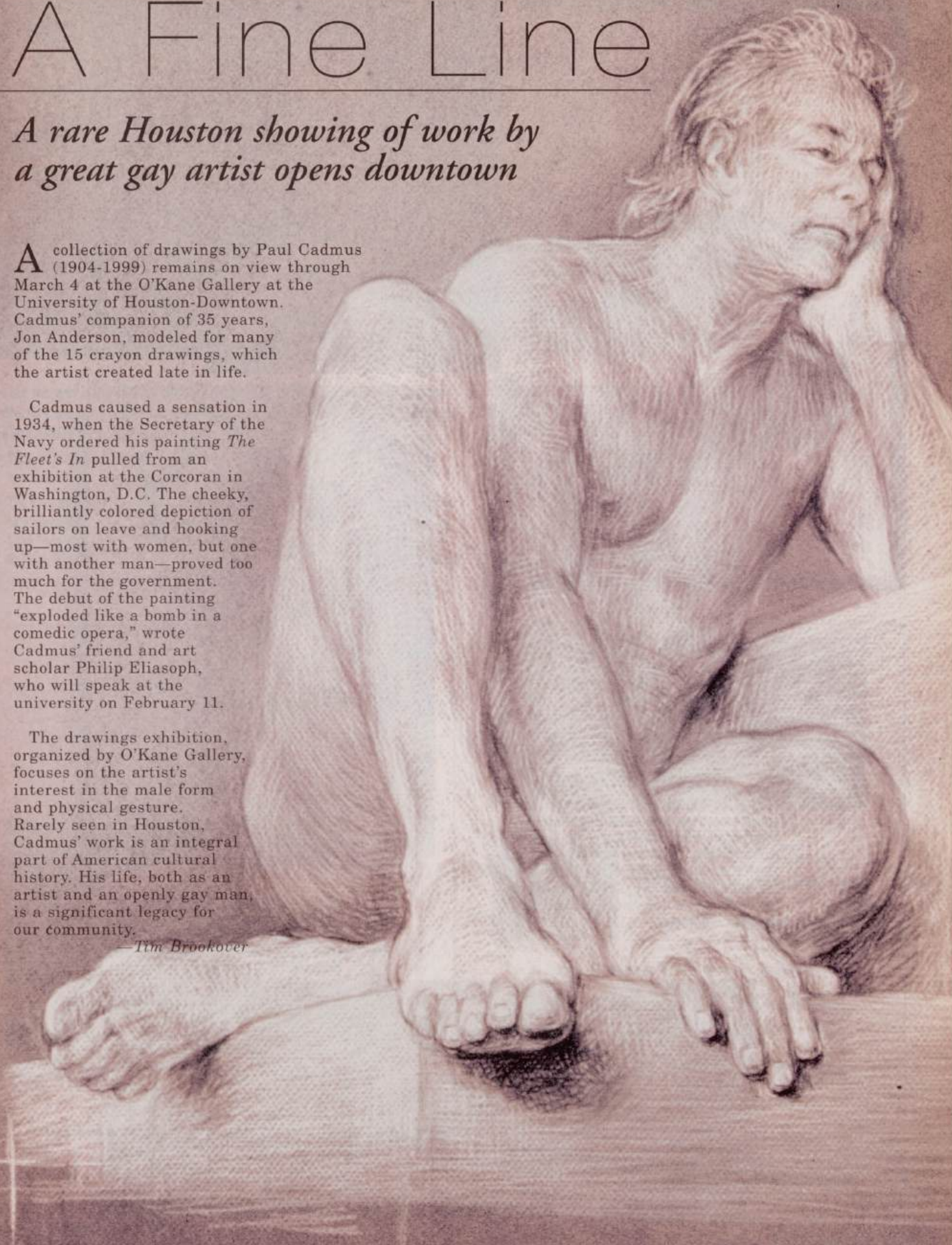
A rare Houston showing of work by a great gay artist opens downtown

A collection of drawings by Paul Cadmus (1904-1999) remains on view through March 4 at the O'Kane Gallery at the University of Houston-Downtown. Cadmus' companion of 35 years, Jon Anderson, modeled for many of the 15 crayon drawings, which the artist created late in life.

Cadmus caused a sensation in 1934, when the Secretary of the Navy ordered his painting *The Fleet's In* pulled from an exhibition at the Corcoran in Washington, D.C. The cheeky, brilliantly colored depiction of sailors on leave and hooking up—most with women, but one with another man—proved too much for the government. The debut of the painting “exploded like a bomb in a comedic opera,” wrote Cadmus' friend and art scholar Philip Eliasoph, who will speak at the university on February 11.

The drawings exhibition, organized by O'Kane Gallery, focuses on the artist's interest in the male form and physical gesture. Rarely seen in Houston, Cadmus' work is an integral part of American cultural history. His life, both as an artist and an openly gay man, is a significant legacy for our community.

—Tim Brookover





Clockwise from top: *Reclining Nude Z4*, 1991; *Male Nude NM179A*, c. 1983-84; *Male Nude NM151*, 1979; *Seated Nude on Ledges JS31*, n.d. Works are from the Cadmus estate (handled by DCMoore Gallery, New York), the collection of Jon Anderson, and other private collections.



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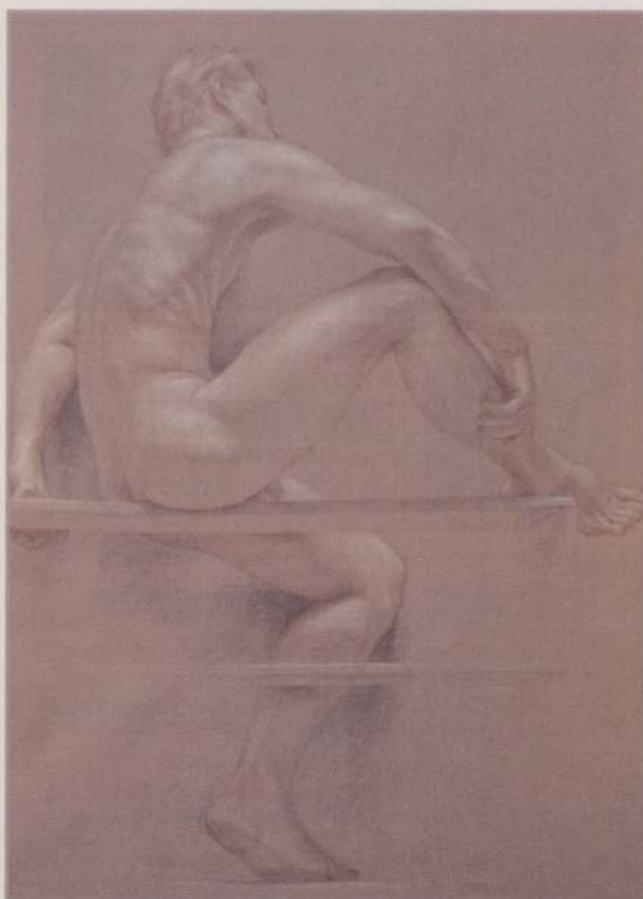
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Clockwise from top right:
People I've Met in
Newspapers, 1937; Male Nude
NM5, 1965; Two Figures
NM231, 1991; Male Nude (Jon
Anderson), 1965; Male Nude
NM40, 1966.



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No Cupid Allowed

*Destest Valentine's Day?
Celebrate something else—
from Oscar Wilde to animal sacrifice.*

by Thomas Blanton

Once a year, I go Goth. I dress in black, avoid sunlight, and listen to haunting, depressive music. I tell others all about the benefits of falling into the loving embrace of the sweet, sweet arms of Death. I stare into the mirror at the ebony circles beneath my eyes and wonder what I would have to do to get my lips the same color.

A psychologist once told me I had cyclical depression. "A lot of people get depressed during the winter months," she assured me, waving away the smoke from my clove cigarette. "It's called Seasonal Affective Disorder. It's perfectly natural, and easily treatable." Wrapped up as I was in my own misery, I couldn't muster the strength to explain to her that it wasn't cyclical, or hormonal, or even chemically induced. It was Valentine's Day.

I hate Valentine's Day. I get queasy at the sight of red-and-pink



decorations choking the life out of greeting-card stores. Those little candy hearts that taste like sidewalk chalk give me indigestion. And I can't watch romantic comedies during February even if they're gay-themed and feature straight actors making out with one another.

"But, Thomas," I hear you all saying, glancing up from your heart-shaped boxes of chocolate and stuffed toys stitched with squishy affirmations like *I Wuv You Beary Much*. "You're in a long-term monogamous relationship with a great guy. Why would you, of all people, harbor ill will toward a holiday that celebrates love and romance?"

Well, first of all, Jack and I let each other know how much we love each other all the time. I put his term papers into MLA style, out of support for his recent return to college. Jack buys me assorted textured vegetable protein alternatives, like Soyrizo and Tofurkey, so I can stay vegetarian while →

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Thank you OutSmart Readers!

No Cupid Allowed continued from page 52

he remains on the Atkins Diet. Granted, these may sound like small things, but I don't do parenthetical documentation for just anyone. And the fact that a devout Atkins acolyte would spend his hard-earned money on carbohydrates and fake meat is in itself proof of commitment.

Secondly, as a gay man, I grew up surrounded by images of heterosexual love that surged to a nauseating crescendo around Valentine's Day, leaving me feeling alienated and bitter. Even if, as an adolescent, had I been brave enough to express my true feelings, I'm not sure how the football team would have reacted had I shown up in the cafeteria on February 14 to present the star quarterback with a decoupage card and individually wrapped bonbons.

Mainly, though, I tend to muck up romance. I give it my best effort, but ultimately, like the mighty mallard duck flying high above a placid pond on the first day of hunting season, I just get shot down, and sometimes shredded by overzealous pointing hounds.

Last Valentine's Day, my carefully orchestrated plans for an intimate day of flowers and low-carb delights devolved into a heated debate over who were and were not appropriate people to be talking to online. The year before that, my idea of giving Jack a gallery of framed photographs of the two of us crashed like a Diana Ross comeback tour. Apparently, Jack and I are hardly ever standing next to each other when someone starts taking pictures. Also, while individually we are both pleasant-looking guys, we are pretty much never photogenic at the same time.

I take comfort in knowing that I am not alone in my aversion to Valentine's Day. Most of my friends have their own unique ways of surviving the holiday. My best buddy Patrick, who, out of all the straight people I know, is the one most likely to end up as the subject of a Michael Douglas movie, likes to go to the mall and try to break up high-school couples.

"Yeah, she says she loves you now," he'll say to startled teenagers who, up until moments before, were happily necking in the food court. "But I give it six months before she dumps you, probably for someone with a better car. Enjoy those waffle fries. Hope they give you comfort."

Sarah, my writing collaborator, stopped recognizing Valentine's Day years ago. Instead, she celebrates the birthday of Raymond Teller, of the comedy stage magic duo Penn and Teller.

"Penn and Teller are the best comedy magicians in the entire universe, so when I

read that February 14 was Teller's birthday, I decided to create Penn and Teller Day," Sarah once told me. "It's just a coincidence that February 14 is a nightmarish holiday filled with false sentimentality that I personally despise."

As part of her annual celebration, Sarah creates fake Polaroid spirit photographs, plays tricks on her friends, and drinks chocolate Yoo-hoo while watching old copies of Penn and Teller television specials. "You could also celebrate the day in silence," Sarah said, "but this is really only effective when you have someone babbling incessantly at your side."

Sarah's commitment to celebrating anything except Valentine's Day inspired me, so I whipped out my trusty Internet search engine and went on a quest to discover other ways to make the day palatable. Following are a few of the various holidays and observances I found. Feel free to mix, match, and accessorize.

Hug a Theater Queen Day. Oscar Wilde's last play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, debuted on February 14, 1895, at the St. James' Theatre in London. To celebrate this anniversary, hold a tea party for your closest friends, but eat all the cucumber sandwiches before they arrive, just as Rupert Everett did in the movie. Or in true Saint Oscar tradition, fix up overweight acquaintances with cockney rent boys.

Kill a Bootlegging Gangster Day. On February 14, 1929, seven members of Bugs Moran's gang and a random ophthalmologist were gunned down in a Chicago parking garage by crime lord Al Capone's henchmen, who were costumed as policemen. To commemorate this event, dress up like a cop and hang out in an underground parking garage. Whenever you see someone wearing a trench coat and/or a fedora, accuse them of "moving in" on your "turf," and then shoot out their windshields with a pellet gun. You won't get arrested. Just tell the real cops that you were vacationing in Florida the whole time. That worked for Capone.

Get Kicked Out of and/or Executed by an Organized Religion Day. On February 14, 1076, an angry Pope Gregory VII excommunicated Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV for attempting to appoint Catholic bishops to office (apparently, Catholics frown on emperors doing that sort of thing, preferring that they stick to ribbon-cutting ceremonies and genocide). Later that millennium, on February 14, 1556, Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer was charged with treason and heresy by Queen Mary I, who wished to return England from Anglicanism to Catholicism. To commemorate this day, get yourself excommunicated or accused of heresy. Donate a large sum →



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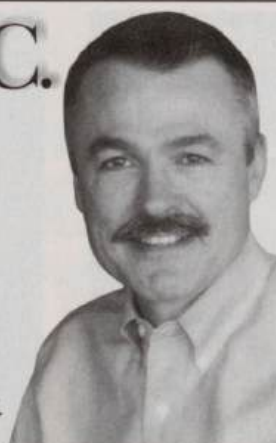
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♥ **Chocoholics, Unite.** Learn all sorts of facts about the sweet treat made from the seeds of the cacao tree whose scientific name, *Theobroma*, means "food of the gods." Cool hands-on kids' programs are scheduled for February 14 and March 15-19. To tantalize the chocoholic even further, complimentary weekend tastings (beginning at 1 pm) offer samples from some of Houston's finest boutique retailers. Wear your high-traction shoes to this exhibit. Chocolate lovers of every age will surely leave the floor slippery with drool. February 14-May 19 at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Drive. For tickets and information: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

—Eric A.T. Dieckman



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♥ **Girls Against Boys.** Interactive improv comedy troupe, ComedySportz, declares a heated gender war in a Saint Valentine's Day battle royale of the sexes. Sure, a gender-bashing theme is pretty heterocentric, but the rapid-fire laughs of this well-oiled comedy machine hit all audience members equally, whatever their orientation. Only the humorless will be unaffected. \$10. Friday, February 13, 8 p.m. at Lambert Hall, 1703 Heights Blvd. For tickets: 713/868-1444. —ED

▲ **Stop! In the Name of Love.** Diana Ross and the Supremes—*The No. 1's* is loaded with hits from The Supremes, Diana Ross & the Supremes, a solo Diana Ross, and even a stray cut by the Ross-less Supremes. • For being so nasty with each other, the group sure sang a lot about love. Remember *Baby Love* and *Love Child*, *Love Is Here and Now You're Gone* and *You Can't Hurry Love*? Who knew all that love would spawn so many lawsuits and bitter enemies? Now that Mary Wilson and other insiders have finally dished the dirt about the group's infighting and Miss Ross's humongous ego, song titles like *Where Did Our Love Go?*, *I'm Gonna Make You Love Me*, and *Love Hangover* seem to take on a whole new meaning. • Trivia geeks will thrill trying to find the remastering glitches (and there are a few). Was that really the original ending to *Back in My Arms Again*? Or to *You Keep Me Hangin' On*? And was *The Happening* really a chart topper? • From Motown Records (www.motown.com). —Olivia Flores Alvarez



DIANA ROSS & THE SUPREMES
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♥ **Something for Your Sweetheart.** Why be conventional? Instead of a box of chocolates, a bouquet of flowers, and a roll in the hay, give your special someone a watercolor painting... and a roll in the hay. The Watercolor Art Society, Houston, hosts an exhibit where paint and romance mix. Water-media paintings range in style from abstract to realistic. February 14-March 5, Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Watercolor Art Society, Houston gallery, 1601 W. Alabama. For information: 713/942-9966 or www.watercolorhouston.org. —ED

No Cupid Allowed continued from page 55

of money to Planned Parenthood in the name of Cardinal John O'Connor, or send an announcement of your impending civil union to the Episcopal bishop of Texas. If you've got a couple of hours to spare, invite a bunch of Southern Baptists over for Bible study and then lock them in your living room and force them to watch *Footloose*. Oh, and remember to pray loudly and openly later, when you're tied to the stake. It makes the God-fearin' people holding the torches uncomfortable.

Antonio Banderas's Singing Career and Mickey Rourke's Butt Day. Writer and director Alan Parker, who gave us such gay favorites as *Evita* and *Fame*, as well as the Cosby-kid-career-ending voodoo thriller *Angel Heart*, was born on February 14, 1944. To celebrate, climb onto a balcony and sing about how you kept your promises to Argentina all through your wild days or orchestrate a big dance number in the middle of a school. Or just dump blood all over Lisa Bonet and then slit the throat of a live chicken. Which leads us to...

Sacrifice Domesticated Animals for the Sake of the Children Day. February 14 was sacred to the Roman goddess Juno, Protector of Housewives and Inspirer of Blinding, Homicidal Rages Based on Good-For-Nothing Husbands' Rampant Infidelities. Following Juno's big day was the Lupercalia, an annual event honoring the nature god Faunus. During the Lupercalia festivities, a dog and two goats were sacrificed to promote fertility. Now, sacrificing dogs and goats doesn't usually go over well in most residential neighborhoods (except for the Woodlands, strangely enough), so to honor this holiday, just hold a massive banquet, followed by vomiting, a trip to the communal baths, and an orgy. Nothing says Roman like a nice, old-fashioned orgy.

A sidebar to this holiday planning: Dolly the Sheep, the first successfully cloned mammal, died on February 14, 2003, at the Roslin "We Make Sheep" Institute in Scotland. Wear wool in remembrance and use lanolin-based skincare products to retain essential moisture.

My hope is that one or more of these holidays will really take off on a national level, and soon none of us will have to deal with the tribulations of Valentine's Day. If you don't look forward to facing this February 14, though, then just head on over to my place. Jack and I have boxes and boxes of chalky candy hearts we'd be happy to share.

Thomas Blanton, who wrote "Old Green Eyes Is Back" in the February 2003 issue, is a poet and frequent contributor to the magazine.

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LookOut

by Tim Brookover



AT THE TABLE. Designer **David Stone**, ASID, will create a tabletop arrangement for the "Dining with Designers" showcase at the Houston Antique Dealers Association show February 26-29 at the George R. Brown Convention Center. More than 150 dealers will participate in this 40th spring event. Stone, pictured here at the table in his Montrose townhouse, will design a tablescape especially for the showcase, presented by Larry N. Bahn, proprietor of The Country Gentlemen.

GOTTA HAVE ART. Through February 10, artist and teacher **Patrick Palmer** presents *Self Portraits*, a juried exhibition at the Glassell School of Art. Palmer, who is head of the drawing department at the Museum of Fine Arts school, selected more than 30 works for the show. Gay artists in the show include **Larry Knapp**, **John Painter**, and **Ryan Fugate**.

Speaking of Fugate, a February 21 fundraiser and silent auction will benefit the Positive Art Workshop program he offers at the Houston GLBT Community Center. **Conrad Hernandez** chairs the event at davidlewisIMAGES/Midtown Photography studio, presented in memory of **Stephen Haddock**, to support the art classes for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Knapp will also display his work this month in a one-man exhibition, *Splendid Creatures*, which opens with a February 6 reception at Gallery 3, located adjacent to DiverseWorks. The show of Knapp's oil paintings will remain on view through March 6.

GOOD WORKS. "Olympus Goes Hollywood" is the theme of the Krewe of Olympus ball on February 7. **Bob Briddick** and **Richard Watson** co-captain the event at the George R. Brown Convention Center. The evening benefits the Assistance Fund, PFLAG, PLFAG/H.A.T.C.H. Scholarship Fund, and Colt 45's Trouble Fund.

Channel 8 talk show host **Ernie Manouse** and Channel 2 anchor **Linda Lorelle** will host Caribbean Carnival 2004 on February 7 at the Twelve Spot downtown. The casts of the Great Caruso production of *Dreamgirls* and the Strand Street Theatre production of *Once on This Island* will perform. Proceeds

will benefit Diverse Artists Dedicated to Action, a performing arts organization dedicated to the empowerment of women.

Hallelujah! On February 8, Bayou City Boys Club will host a gospel brunch at Kilworth Manor benefiting the Center for AIDS in memory of founder **Joel Martinez**. The group Elation will provide the joyful music. **Thomas Gegeny** is the center's new executive director.

The fantastic **Kate Clinton** will headline the Lesbian Health Initiative dinner/dance, "Celebration of Love II," on February 14 at the Hilton Hobby Airport. The Best of Both Worlds with **Andra Haviland** and **Kellee Ash** will provide musical entertainment.

To raise funds to transport hate-crime victims and their families to April 28-30 lobby days in Washington, D.C., the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition will host a 6-9 p.m. February 29 telethon on TransFM Internet Radio. Log on to www.TransFM.com. Houstonian **Vanessa Edwards Foster** is coalition chair.

For the holidays, bar owner **Charles Armstrong** donated a total of \$12,000 to 12 organizations: AIDS Foundation Houston, The Assistance Fund, AssistHers, AVES (Amigos Volunteers in Education and Services), Bering Omega Community Services, Center for AIDS, H.A.T.C.H., Houston Buyers Club, Montrose Clinic, Montrose Counseling Center, Q-Patrol, and S.N.A.P. (Spay-Neuter Assistance Program).

Joe Watts and his Theatre New West presented an October 23 preview performance of *The Stops* that benefited Maranatha Metropolitan Community Church. Then on December 3 his company gave a benefit show of *Reindeer Monologues* for the Center for AIDS.

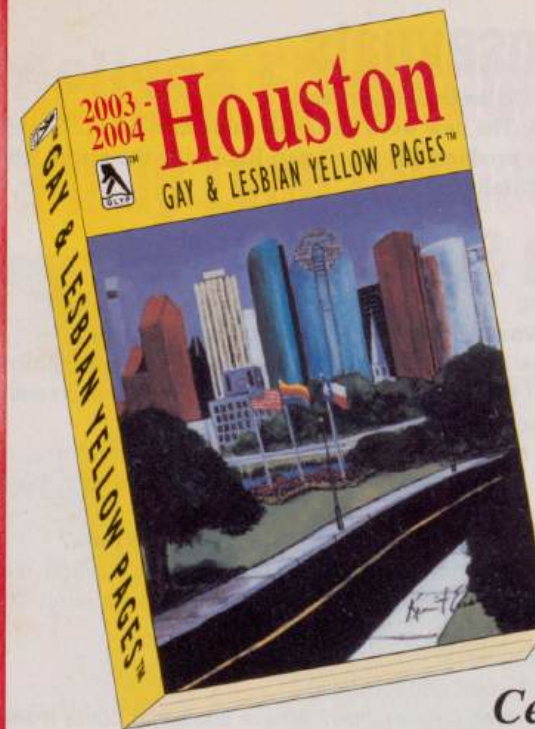
IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD. Our January cover girl **Shaunte Angelo**, one of our People to Watch 2004, will host launch parties for the new *h.e.r.s.* magazine on February 7 at Meteor and February 8 at Chances. Enjoy go-go dancers at the first event and a viewing of *The L Word* at the second. On February 27, Angelo and staff will host the GoGirlsRock concert at the Rhythm Room.

The musical duo **Jason & deMarco** will perform tunes from their new CD *Spirit Pop* at a February 8 concert at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church.

In December, **Daniela Parker** and **Marquitta Parker**, the lovely daughters of **Annie Parker**, our new controller, and tax whiz **Kathy Hubbard**, decorated the holiday tree at the Houston GLBT Community Center. Center volunteer **Clint Hudson** joined in the holiday decorating.

At press time, we learned that **Tom Fricke** has sold the Lovett Inn to **Dan Lueken** and **Todd Partridge**. Partridge called to report that he will move the offices of his Partridge Properties into the historic residence. He and Lueken plan to maintain the bed-and-breakfast tradition at the 12-room hostelry. Fricke has not announced his post-innkeeper plans.

SPORTS NOTE. Can't make it to Key West for the February 3-9 **Kelly McGillis** Classic? Listen to the annual International Women's Flag Football Association Championship via Internet broadcast at www.iwffa.com. By the way, McGillis—who recently delighted the gals by starring in the steamy lesbian thriller *The Monkey's Mask*—has endorsed the tournament for years and even played in some games. Hike! ■



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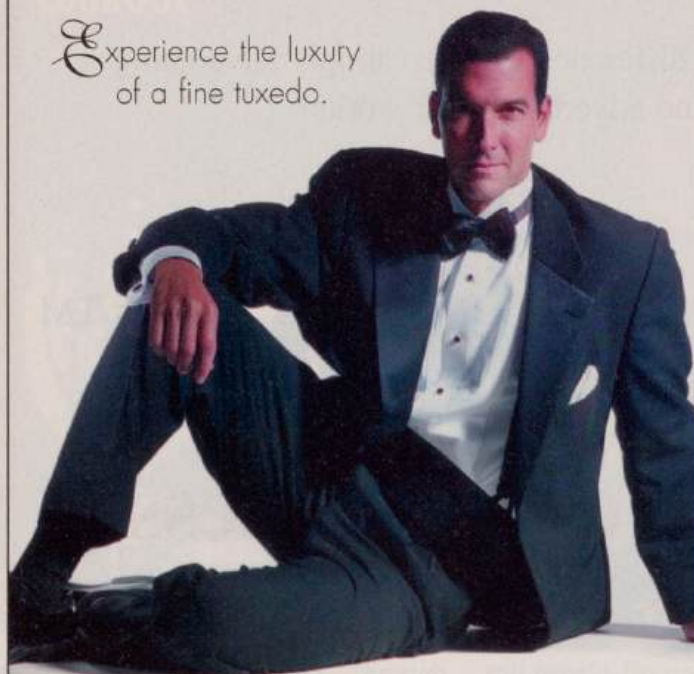
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Metrosexuals

(Entertainment Weekly, 2003 Year-End Special, Jim Mullen)

Metrosexuals: The new word for fashionable men who use high-end grooming products yet aren't gay. Replacing the terms "city folk" and "highfalutin."

Laura Schlessinger

(Larry King Live, 1/9/04)

Larry King: What do you think of metrosexuals?

Laura Schlessinger: ... I despair that we're taking masculinity, denigrating it so much that we have to have a whole movement to turn men into girls. I think it's disgusting.

Now, they're not gay, right?

Well, I don't know. But give me the Marlboro man any day. I think real women like real men.

So metrosexuals are what then, if they're not real men?

Neutered men. All they're concerned about, *Let's get facelifts, let's get this and let's get that and let's do this.* It's disgusting. It's offensive.

Teasing their hair?

[Expressing disgust] Oh! [Laughs]

What do you think creates that? Where does that come from?

The media. ... The values that we have largely today do not come from our homes and families and our churches; they come from the media. And that's the new thing. But I tell you, real women don't want those men. So they're gonna be on their own.

Aaron Sorkin

(The Advocate, 2/13/01, Paris Barclay)

Paris Barclay: We gotta talk about the Dr. Laura [Schlessinger] scene [in which President Bartlet berates an antigay talk-radio host]. That was so popular with gay viewers.

Alan Sorkin: I'm glad. To me, she is a horrifyingly, staggeringly mean and ignorant person. ...

Queer Eye

(Entertainment Weekly, 2003 Year-End Special, Jim Mullen)

Queer Eye for the Straight Guy: A surprise hit show in which five gay men try to turn a straight man into a human. For people who like science fiction.

Saddam Hussein

(Entertainment Weekly, 2003 Year-End Special, Jim Carvell and Jessica Shaw)

Captive audience: Saddam Hussein is captured by U.S. forces. Footage of a bearded, haggard-looking Hussein being examined by a doctor saturates the airwaves, though many viewers confuse it with a pre-makeover segment from *Queer Eye*.

Gil Warrick

(host of Fox 26's *Décor and More*)

"It was such an honor to be nominated in my first year hosting the show, but winning an actual Emmy is such a gratifying reward for doing something I love so much. Acceptance by the media has played an integral role in the show's success. I've never had to

Melissa Etheridge & Tammy Lynn Michaels



Melissa Etheridge is in love with Tammy Lynn Michaels (inset).

(The Advocate, 1/20/04, Bruce C. Steele)

Tammy Lynn Michaels [WB's *Popular*, Showtime's *The L Word*, and Melissa Etheridge's wife]: I was advised by a lot of people in my career not to come out and that I would never be anything—do anything, get cast in anything—if anybody had any idea that I was gay. That's what I was told, and this was not too long ago—'96, '97. And so I'm not surprised that I chose people who wouldn't fight with me to walk down the red carpet at the premieres and at the WB media shindigs.

Bruce C. Steele: The closet is a heavy burden on a relationship.

[Sighs] The closet is a heavy burden on the soul, period. You get two people in that, and it's too dark—you can't even see 'em. And then *she* [Etheridge] walked in.

(The Advocate, 1/20/04, Bruce C. Steele)

Bruce C. Steele: So what's the takeaway lesson ... from your story? Melissa Etheridge: **Love** happens.

It's worth saying.

Yeah. You know, I have made a career of singing about **love** and writing about **love** and dreaming about **love**. Romanticizing about it. To actually sit and be surrounded by **love** is **amazing**. And it can happen. Once you **love** yourself. As corny as it is, **love** yourself enough to be **loved** right. That's my lesson.



"bitch it up" for the camera, and I appreciate that viewers and fellow media professionals recognize that we can be our true selves in front of the camera and achieve success."

ETHERIDGE: CYNTHIA DANIEL; MICHAELS: COURTESY OF SHOWTIME; CHAMBERLAIN: COURTESY OF HOUSTON BROADWAY SERIES; WARRICK: COURTESY OF FOX CHANNEL 26

Queer Quotes

Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Bill Maher & Martin Short

(Politically Incorrect, 2/15/02)

Bill Maher: If I had to fall in love with a man, it would be you.
Martin Short: Wow.



Richard Chamberlain

(The Advocate, 1/20/04, Judy Weider)

Judy Weider: Having just gone through it, what did you think about the coming-out process?

Richard Chamberlain: ... It's the most astonishing and the biggest experience I can remember. In writing the book [*Shattered Love*], in the early stages, I didn't know whether I was going to talk about being gay; I didn't know whether I was going to talk about Martin [Rabbett, Chamberlain's partner of 26 years]. And Martin didn't know if he wanted to be talked about. ... I can't even recall the sequence of events, but it wasn't until I was writing a chapter about the '90s that I suddenly realized that this whole issue that I had tortured myself with all my life, till I was 68 years old, was completely bogus. It was absolutely without any basis whatsoever. This wasn't an intellectual realization. Well, it was that too, but it was a deep, deep, down-into-my-bones-and-heart realization. I suddenly realized that it's the nonissue of all time. And suddenly, it was as if the hand of some angel settled on my head and said, "Enough. Enough." [Pauses, eyes full] I'm gonna cry now. ... "Enough. It's over. It's over."

J.W.: Richard ... [Pauses, waits] No one has ever said anything like this to me before.

R.C.: I know, I know. Sixty-eight years. ... It was just so stupid.



Charlize Theron as Aileen Wournos in *Monster*.
 OPPOSITE: Director Patty Jenkins talks with Theron.

Making a Monster

Monster's director Patty Jenkins talks to OutSmart about telling the story of a serial killer and working with award-winning star Charlize Theron

by Olivia Flores Alvarez



BOTH PHOTOS: NEWMARKET FILMS

Lesbian Serial Killer." "Real-Life Thelma & Louise." Newspapers were filled with sensational headlines after Aileen Wournos, Florida's first female serial killer, was captured in 1991.

Monster, the film by first-time filmmaker Patty Jenkins and starring Golden Globe best actress-winner Charlize Theron and Christina Ricci, is a look behind the headlines.

After a tumultuous childhood in Michigan that reportedly included having

sex with her brother and several neighborhood boys before she was even a teenager, Wournos moved to Florida where she worked as a prostitute. Often homeless, Wournos bounced from boyfriend to boyfriend with occasional arrests for robbery and grand larceny. →

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In 1989, at age 33, Wournos began her first lesbian affair.

She also murdered several men during a year-long killing spree.

When she was arrested and charged with seven murders in 1991, Wournos claimed that she killed each of the men in self-defense. Nicknamed the "Damsel of Death" by the media, Wournos eventually confessed to killing a total of 12 men and later admitted that except for her first victim, 51-year-old Richard Mallory, who had raped and tortured her, the men had not attacked her.

Monster, which portrays the actual events with only minor changes, moves from tender to terrifying and back again. Part thriller, part biopic, part docudrama, the film is difficult to categorize.

"I, actually, in my mind, think it's a love story," said writer/director Patty Jenkins, who spoke to *OutSmart* from her office in California after a Canadian press tour. "More than anything, I think it's a character film like *Midnight Cowboy* and *Taxi Driver*, films with traditional storytelling that have conflicted characters. But still it's a love story to me."

Jenkins had contact with Wournos while she was on death row. The two women exchanged letters and spoke through intermediaries but did not meet face to face. Her script is based, in part, on thousands of letters Wournos wrote while in prison. In small, neat handwriting, Wournos wrote as many as four letters a day to longtime friend Dawn Botkins; she also wrote journal-like letters to God, discussing her life and crimes.

Monster doesn't try to excuse or justify Wournos, only to understand her. "I just knew that there's a space for understanding who people are without denying what they did," Jenkins said. "The point to me was that I always felt like I could never change the greater truth, but I did think the story needed filling in. Everybody in the country heard 'lesbian serial killer.' What they didn't hear was the rest of the story, so my point was to say, 'Yes, you're right—here's your monster. Now come and watch how she got there.'"

"I was very, very firm from day one that the rape-torture during the first killing be

shown the way that it was, because I think it's important for understanding her story."

Jenkins was also committed to showing the last murder as the cold-blooded killing it was. "I didn't try to show that last murder as being sympathetic, because you have to accept that that's where she went to."

"I've had no contact with [the victims' families]. When you set out to write something like this, you have to make a decision about whose story it is that you're telling. What was important to me was to have it really clear that the horror [the

victims] went through and the fact that, with the exception of the first man [who raped and beat her], the men she killed were anywhere from just a kind of sleazy guy who picked up a prostitute to completely innocent. That was the only gesture I could offer the victims' families."

Casting of the 5-foot-10 blonde beauty Charlize Theron to play the scruffy 5-foot-3 Wournos was seen as a gimmick by some industry insiders, but Jenkins knew Theron was the right actress for the role.

"Because I could see Aileen so well, I knew that this character rested entirely on somebody's ability to show both sides of her, to show her volatility, her anger, and still show her humanity," she says.

"We made a deal right off the bat. We said, 'Look, we're not going to do this halfway, we're going to take on this person's life and we're going to love her. We're going to walk this walk for her. We're not going to just look at it from the outside.' And we didn't."

Theron underwent a significant physical transformation for the role. Easily one of the most beautiful actresses in Hollywood, Theron wore special makeup to make her own flawless skin look like Wournos's blotchy, bloated face. She also gained weight and damaged her hair. "Charlize is just incredible," Jenkins said. "She really is a brave and strong actress. The bravery was not from looking like Aileen

and gaining 30 pounds. The bravery comes from Charlize putting Aileen in her heart and going through these horrible events."

Theron also signed on as one of the film's producers, a title Jenkins says wasn't just a vanity credit. "When she signed on as producer, people were saying, 'Well, Charlize has never been taken seriously, so she's developing this project to showcase her talent.' That was not how it went. And I always thought that was kind of demeaning to her, like she's making a movie for everybody to see how great she is."

"The movie was already green-lit and we had a shoot date when she signed on as an actor. I cast her because she was the right person. She signed on as a producer later to protect the film. As an A-list star, she knows the kind of power she has, and as a producer she was able to get involved and fight for things that we believed in."

Wournos's claim that she killed her first victim in self-defense unfortunately mirrors an event in Theron's life. Her mother shot and killed her father while defending herself and Theron when he came home in a drunken rage. Theron was a teenager at the time and had not, until recently, discussed the incident publicly.

Jenkins acknowledged that the media-fueled public examination of that tragedy in Theron's life has been difficult to witness. "I think the saddest thing, particularly in her case, is that the media approach people with so little sensitivity," she says. "You wouldn't go up to someone at a dinner party and just bark at them, 'So, your dad died, huh?' That's what's been so hard to witness."

"Everybody wants such overt explanations for things, and I wish that people would start looking deeper than that. The

truth is she's an incredibly talented actor and this is an incredibly sad story and she didn't have to be raped or kill someone to understand that."

Christina Ricci plays Aileen's girlfriend in *Monster*. The role is based on Wournos's real-life lover Tyria

Moore, who testified against Wournos and helped to secure her conviction.

Jenkins says the media's focus on Theron's performance has unfairly overshadowed Christina Ricci's contribution to the film.

"That's been the only heartbreak for me;

continued from page 113



Jenkins (r) advises Theron on a scene in *Monster*.



Jenkins (c) in conference with Theron and Bruce Dern in a scene from *Monster*.

"BUBBLY SENSATIONS"

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BE MY VALENTINE AT BUBBLY SENSATIONS

by Eric A.T. Dieckman

LOVE KNOWS NO BOUNDS

Not even the outback



Toni Colette plays a straight woman in a lesbian-written, lesbian-produced, and lesbian-directed film.

Sisters are doing it for themselves. Yes, the writer (Alison Tilson), director (Sue Brooks), and producer (Sue Maslin) of the film *Japanese Story* are all lesbians. Tilson has also penned *Frictions: An Anthology of Fiction by Women*, among other works. Maslin, developer of GeckoFilm Productions, is an independent film and television producer who has won a number of awards. Brooks is also a multi-award winner herself.

Japanese Story stars Toni Collette (*Muriel's Wedding*, *Sixth Sense*) as the ambitious, take-charge Australian geologist Sandy Edwards. When forced to baby-sit Hiromitsu Tachibana (Gotaro Tsunashima), the son of a wealthy Japanese industrialist, Sandy makes no secret of her displeasure with the task.

But realizing it may result in a positive business deal, she agrees. The two do not get along at all. She is outspoken, strong-willed, and independent. Hiromitsu is passive, polite, and sexist. Well, not so polite really; at one point, taken aback by her asperity, he describes her as "very loud and aggressive—and very stubborn." This description is made in her presence, albeit in Japanese while on his cell phone.

Hiromitsu insists Sandy take him on a tour through Western Australia's vast and lonely Pilbara desert. In the outback, plans go awry, leaving the two opposites lost with the grim reaper on standby. The further they venture, helping each other survive, the more they leave their predispositions about each other behind. They begin to see each other as people, not as representatives of cultures each finds appalling and distasteful. The rigors of their adventure bring them closer still until the two find themselves deep inside a tempestuous but tender love.

The film zigzags the audience from cross-cultural discovery to emotional drama to haunting love story. Critics praise Brooks's direction, saying she brings a "smoldering sensuality" to romantic moments of the tale with a style few male directors can parallel.

Japanese Story opens February 6 at Landmark River Oaks, 2009 W. Gray. More info: 713/866-8881 or www.landmarktheatres.com.

The Envelope, Please

It seems only logical to have an Oscar party—a party celebrating the biggest awards ceremony in the world to celebrate movies—at a place where movies are shown. The Landmark River Oaks Theatre, in all its grandeur, serves up a grand annual Oscar gathering indeed. Revelers can watch the Oscar ceremony in all its bigger-than-life glory on the downstairs movie screen. With Ernie Manouse from Channel 8 as emcee, food from Birraporetti's, and a "Gold" theme, the \$15 cover charge is a steal. Plus, every year the event benefits the Houston Gay & Lesbian Film Festival.

The 6th Annual Academy Awards Viewing Party takes place on February 29 at 6 p.m. (and ends when the Oscars end), at Landmark River Oaks Theatre, 2009 W. Gray between Shepherd & McDuffie. More info: 713/866-8881 or www.landmarktheatres.com.

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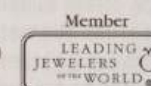
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P.S. YOU MIGHT WANNA SEE THIS!

Steve Guttenberg stars in *P.S. Your Cat Is Dead!*



The straight guy, Jimmy (Steve Guttenberg, left), has tied up the gay guy, Eddie (Lombardo Boyar), in a scene from the Guttenberg-directed *P.S. Your Cat Is Dead!* S&M? Well, no, not in the usual sense.

A fantasy of countless gay men (with one of the best chests in Hollywood), Steve Guttenberg shows a different, sophisticated side with the DVD/VHS release of his dark comedy *P.S. Your Cat Is Dead!* The star of such films as *Diner*, *Cocoon*, *Three Men and a Cradle*, and the *Police Academy* series, Guttenberg wrote, directed, and stars in this long-awaited film version of the cult smash novel and play by the

famed Pulitzer Prize-winning gay writer James Kirkwood, co-writer of *A Chorus Line*, who died of AIDS in 1989.

P.S. Your Cat Is Dead! is the story of two desperate men—one gay, one straight—who meet on a fateful New Year's Eve. Rex Reed described it as having "one of the most unusual friendships since Joe Buck met Ratso Rizzo in *Midnight Cowboy*." The play is still being performed in theaters nearly 30 years after its Broadway premiere. Yet it fell into development limbo for decades until Guttenberg chose it for his simultaneous return to the big screen and his directorial and screenwriting debut.

Guttenberg plays Jimmy Zoole, a struggling actor whose life is falling apart: his best friend recently died, his career is on the skids, he's been repeatedly robbed, his beloved cat is in the hospital, and his girlfriend is leaving him. The last straw comes when he discovers a burglar (Lombardo Boyar, *Gone in 60 Seconds*, *The Bernie Mac Show*) hiding under his bed. Pushed to his wit's end, Jimmy takes the intruder hostage by hog-tying him to his kitchen counter and cutting off his pants, and begins to extort revenge. Undaunted, the wily burglar turns the tables on the distraught Jimmy, and so begins a riveting interplay filled with unexpected twists.

TLA Releasing gave the film a national art house release in early 2003 and now offers it on DVD/VHS. The DVD features commentary by Guttenberg and cast members, behind-the-scenes interviews, alternate endings, and more. Available at www.tlavideo.com and major retailers. More info: www.tlareleasing.com. —Troy Carrington

MORE DVD/VHS PREVIEWS/REVIEWS

The Thorn Birds

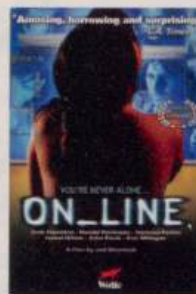


Based on Colleen McCullough's best-selling novel, the world premiere of *The Thorn Birds* astounded over 130 million viewers during its four-night run on television in 1983, making it the second-highest-rated series of all time. The landmark mini-series garnered six Emmy awards, including ones for Barbara Stanwyck (lead actress), Jean Simmons (supporting actress), and Richard Kiley (supporting actor). Golden Globe awards included ones for Richard Chamberlain (lead actor), Stanwyck (supporting actress), Kiley (supporting actor), and Best Mini-Series or Television Movie. • Provocative, sexy, and scandalous, this captivating tale of forbidden love chronicles 60 years in the lives of the adventurous Cleary family and Meggie Cleary's (Rachel Ward) forbidden, life-long love affair

with the family's priest (Chamberlain). • Chamberlain's character was in the closet about his love affair with Meggie, and Chamberlain in real-life was in the closet about his love affair with his partner of five years (at the time) Martin Rabbett. (See Chamberlain quote on page 61.) • The 2-disc DVD collector's set is available just in time for Valentine's Day. —TC

On Line

Set amidst the bustle and frenzy of New York City, *On Line* is a 21st-century take on the classic romantic comedy. The film centers on John (Josh Hamilton, *Urbania*, "Serge" in *Absolutely Fabulous*) and Moe (Harold Perrineau, *Oz*, *Woman on Top*), two friends who operate Intercon-X, a live erotic website, and the array of hilariously mismatched relationships that arise in and around the site. Out gay actor John Fleck (*Carnivale*) stars as Al Fleming, a New Yorker who connects with a young gay college student (Eric Millegan) living in the closet in the Midwest. Meanwhile, Intercon-X creator John is mending a broken heart with a real-life date with a woman he has met through his own website. • In an era when webcams and Internet-dating sites are revolutionizing the social scene,



On Line director Jed Weintrob explores the paradigm of contemporary relationships in an increasingly high-tech world. *On Line* utilizes state-of-the-art digital technology, split screens, and streaming webcam video. • The DVD (which includes a wide array of bonus features) and VHS will be available February 17 from Wolfe Video (1-800-GET-WOLFE or www.wolfevideo.com). —TC

South Park: The Complete Third Season

For the few of you who don't know, *South Park* is an adult-oriented animated series that is set in a small town nestled in the Colorado Rockies and features the misadventures of four eight-year-old boys whose everyday lives regularly intersect with world events and include elements of the paranormal, the mythic, and the divine. Created by Trey Parker and Matt Stone, *South Park* is an award-winning, critically acclaimed —>

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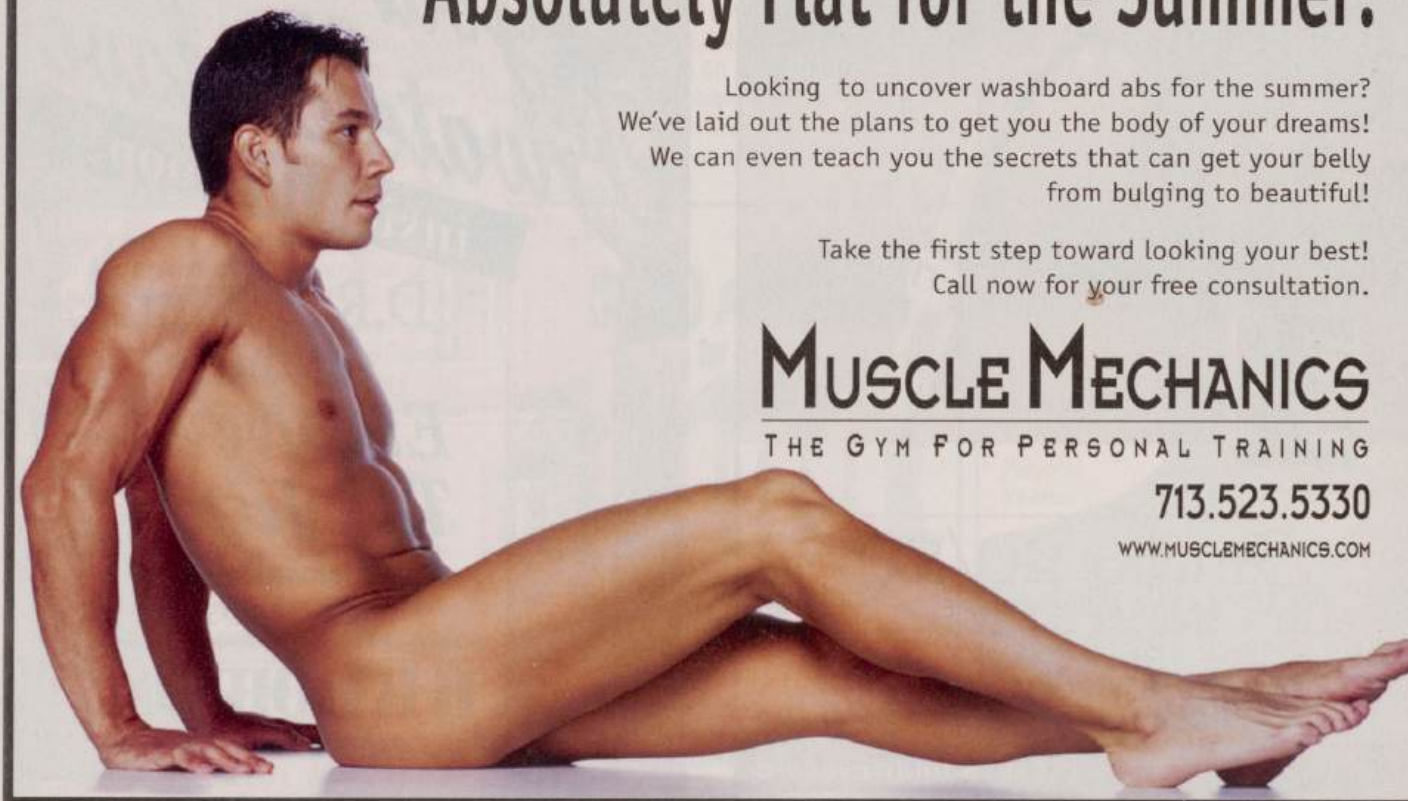
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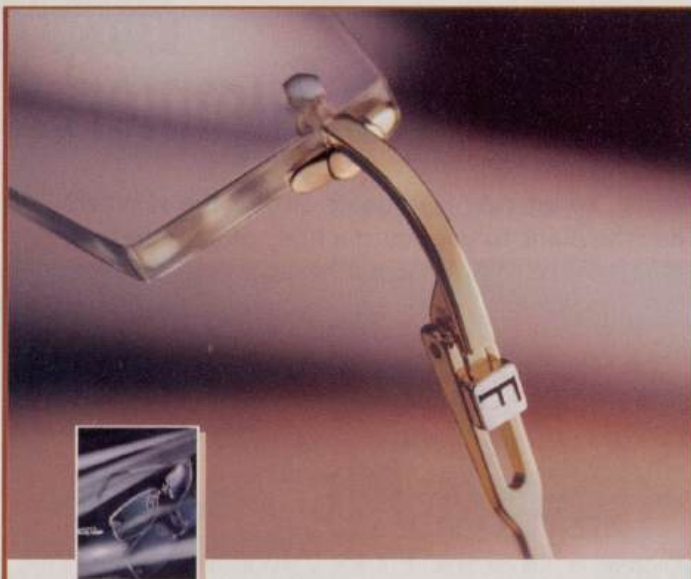
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DVD/VHS continued from page 68



series that is breathtakingly irreverent and ruthlessly funny. • Season Three begins with the episode titled "Rainforest Schmainforest." Mr. Mackey punishes the boys (Stan, Kyle, Cartman, and Kenny) by forcing them to join the "Getting Gay with Kids" choir, which is going to Costa Rica to

help save the rainforest. • Halfway through the season, Kyle and Stan's fathers experiment with their homosexual tendencies in "Two Guys Naked in a Hot Tub." • Remember the film *The Red Badge of Courage*? One of the third-season episodes is "The Red Badge of Gayness." • If you're a *South Park* fan, the third season is a must-have. Available in DVD format only from Comedy Central (www.comedycentral.com). —TC

Class Trip



Nicolas is an insecure child plagued by visions of disasters and horrible accidents. In his dreams and daydreams, he sees his father in a car crash, his brother abducted, and his own classmates shot at by men in white masks. His peers tease him or simply ignore him. Even Nicolas's teachers are frus-

trated by his lack of social skills. His paranoid father is of little help. Nicolas disconnects from the world around him. • On a class trip to the ski country, Hadkann, the class bully, befriends Nicolas and becomes intrigued by his dreams. When Nicolas takes ill, the line between reality and hallucination blurs as his startling visions begin to come true. When police find a dead child in the woods, Nicolas knows there is a connection between his crime and his visions, and with Hadkann's help, he sets out to find it. • *Class Trip*, which won the Special Jury Prize at the 1998 Cannes Film Festival, is on Picture This! Entertainment's (www.picturethisent.com) label "Tales from the Orphanage." Whereas its Picture This! Home Video label caters to a gay/lesbian audience, *Tales from the Orphanage* presents dark and creepy coming-of-age films for all audiences, gay and straight alike. Available in DVD format only. —TC

Mitch Hedberg: Mitch All Together



A perennial Houston favorite, when Mitch Hedberg visits our city, his shows are typically packed full with ardent fans. This was not the case when he taped his *Comedy Central Presents* special, making it even funnier. The edited version is full of laughs ahoy, but the real comedy (of errors) lies in the full, unedited version. The crowd that's been bussed in has no idea who Hedberg is and is not accustomed to his original style and dry, so-laid-back-he-might-be-high delivery. As a result, Hedberg has to goose the crowd every now and then to get a decent response. "I gotta do a half hour. You gotta like me more than that." The audience then indulges his next joke with an applause break. • Among

his many hilarious commentaries is his fear of HIV testing. "Waiting for the results is frightening. So I don't get the regular AIDS test anymore. I get the roundabout AID test. I call my friend, Brian. I say, 'Brian, do you know anybody who has AIDS? No? Cool. 'Cuz you know me.'" The DVD also includes his set on Comedy Central's *Premium Blend* and a CD of some more of Hedberg's creative material. Available in DVD format only, from Comedy Central Records (www.shop.comedycentral.com). —Eric A.T. Dieckman ■

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CINEMA SISTERS

Starz celebrates Black History Month with Sisters in Cinema

The presence and progress of African-American women directors in the film industry is the focus of *Sisters in Cinema*, a feature-length documentary by openly lesbian Yvonne Welbon (*Living with Pride: Ruth Ellis @100*).

In search of answers to her personal curiosity about the existence of African-American women filmmakers, Welbon goes on a quest to find her "sisters in cinema." As if telling a story, she serves as narrator of her journey as she seeks to identify and illuminate a history of independent filmmaking that has long been hidden.

The first documentary of its kind, Welbon begins her search in Hollywood at the major studios where she soon discovers that of the multitude of feature films produced, only one—Darnell Martin's *I Like It Like That*—had been directed by an African-American woman. Welbon quickly realizes that she is not going to



Lesbian Starz: Yvonne Welbon is the writer and director of *Sisters in Cinema*, premiering on Black Starz in February. Inset: Cheryl Dunye is one of many African-American women highlighted in the documentary.

find many of her sisters in Hollywood, so she expands her journey to the independent film industry where she finds a wide range of films directed by African-

American women outside of the Hollywood system.

Sisters in Cinema, which features interviews interwoven with film clips, rare archival footage, and photographs, is certainly a historical and educational homage to African-American women filmmakers who, against all odds, made history.

Highlighted in the documentary are the careers of Julie Dash (*Daughters of the Dust*), Maya Angelou (*Down in the Delta*), openly lesbian Cheryl Dunye (*My Baby's Daddy*), and Kasi Lemmons (*Eve's Bayou*), among others.

Welbon has created over a dozen award-winning works that have been screened on public television, cable, and in film festivals around the world. She holds a master of fine arts degree and a doctorate in radio/TV/film. Her film *Living with Pride: Ruth Ellis @ 100* has been screened in over 150 venues around the world (including Houston) and won 10 best-documentary awards.

Sisters in Cinema premieres on Black Starz (www.starzencore.com) at 7 p.m. on February 8 with repeat airings throughout the month. —Suzie Lynde

Sundance Channel Presents the U.S. Television Premiere of Lesbian's Documentaries

DocDay presents the television premieres of *My Babushka—Searching Ukrainian Identities* and *Resisting Paradise*, the two latest films by pioneering avant-garde filmmaker and documentarian Barbara Hammer. Hammer, who is openly lesbian, has had retrospectives at The Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the Berlin International Film Festival, and the Film Forum at the Directors Guild of America.

Resisting Paradise involves a region fabled for its magical light and beauty—southern France, which has been a beacon for painters, including Van Gogh, Matisse, and Bonnard. During World War II, the area was also a point of escape for scores of Jewish and anti-Fascist refugees. *Resisting Paradise* examines the region's wartime history and the response of its residents—including Matisse—to the Nazi threat. *Resisting Paradise* airs on Sundance Channel, Monday, February 16, at 8 p.m. Repeat airings: 23rd, 6:30 a.m. & 3:45 p.m.; 29th, 5:15 a.m. To confirm schedule: www.sundancechannel.com.

My Babushka—Searching Ukrainian Identities is an expansive diary of Hammer's journey to Ukraine, the birthplace of her maternal grandparents. What begins as an exploration of the filmmaker's ethnic roots soon evolves into a fascinating look at a nation trying to define itself in the post-Soviet era. Hammer interviews a range of individuals, from a lesbian activist to an elderly Jewish journalist; meanwhile, the film captures daily life in Ukraine and explores how its people are coming to grips with issues—including anti-Semitism, homophobia, and sexual inequality—that are new to the arena of public debate. *My Babushka* airs on Sundance Channel, Monday, February 16, at 9:20 p.m. Repeat airings: 23rd, 5:05 p.m.; 28th, 10 a.m. To confirm schedule: www.sundancechannel.com. —SL



Jewish Women Resisters Liberation March in Marseilles, France, in 1945, as featured in Barbara Hammer's *Resisting Paradise*.

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Comedy Central Goes Out on the Edge

Out on the Edge is a one-hour stand-up special hosted by Alan Cumming (X2, *Cabaret*) and features the best of alternative comedy with a distinctly gay edge. Some of the acts are gay, some are straight, but all of them are on the same twisted page!

The special features the music of BETTY, The Hazzards performing their international hit "Gay Boyfriend," Bayne Gibby, and Johnny McGovern as The Gay Pimp sending up teen pop with the dance extravaganza "Soccer Practice." *Out on the Edge* also features the stand-up of headliners Jim David, Rene Hicks, and Elvira Kurt. Special guest Buddy Cole from *Kids in the Hall* has a big surprise for the audience.

Tony Award-winner Alan Cumming has had an eclectic career that has included many outstanding performances



Alan Cumming (l) and Buddy Cole get edgy.

in theater, film, stand-up comedy, and writing and directing for film and television. His portrayal of the emcee in the Broadway musical of *Cabaret* was one of his most celebrated performances. In addition to his Tony Award, his performance also won him the Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Theater World, and the New York Public Advocate's awards, the latter for the original London production. He even received an Olivier Award nomination.

Though his performance here is as host, we feel he deserves some kind of award for his fashion sense—each time he appears, he has changed his wardrobe and hairstyle!

Out on the Edge premieres Monday, February 2 at 9 p.m. (repeated at 11 p.m.), with repeat airings on Friday, February 6 at 10 p.m. and Saturday, February 7 at 1:30 a.m. To confirm schedule: www.comedycentral.com. —TC

STRAIGHT EYE FOR THE QUEER GUY

Comedy Central eyes a Straight Plan



Flabulous: Rob Riggle (one of the "Flab 4," r) oversees Jonathan Schneider at a shooting range. Inset: The Flab 4 license plate.

Thanks to Comedy Central's *Straight Plan for the Gay Man*, three gay men achieve their dreams of becoming a blue-collar meatpacker, competitive basketball player, and bar-hopping, smooth-talking babe magnet. It also mocks and shatters the straight male stereotypes while "embracing" the phenomenon that has swelled over *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*.

Straight Plan for the Gay Man has four straight comedians, the "Flab 4" (Curtis Gwynn, Billy Merritt, Kyle Grooms, and Rob Riggle), working with a gay man to achieve his small-but-important dream of pulling the wool over the straight world's eyes for a day. In the three one-hour episodes, viewers will meet three different gay men and learn about that one thing they've always wanted to check off their to-do lists.

The gay men include Jonathan, an upscale fashion salesman who's always wanted to understand the life of a blue-collar worker; Roger, a quirky yoga in-

structor who has always dreamed of competing in a pick-up basketball game; and Stephen, a hip singer/dancer with tons of female friends, who's always wondered if he'd be a smooth straight man when it comes to picking up the ladies.

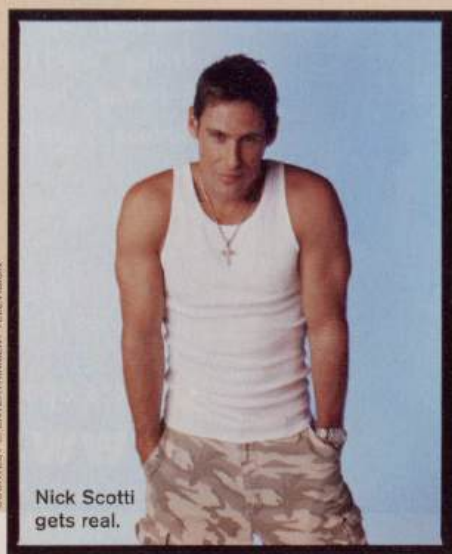
Over the course of each episode, our "Flab 4" comics take their new gay friend under their wings and give him a crash course on the secrets of straight male life—a life that inevitably includes uglier clothes, a bare kitchen, and a healthy dose of false egotism to cover all personal failings—of which there are many.

At the end of each episode, the straight comics go undercover alongside their gay subject to see if they too can "pass" their tests.

Straight Plan for the Gay Man airs on Comedy Central (www.comedycentral.com) on Monday, February 23, at 9 p.m., with a repeat at 11 p.m. —JC

Style Network Gets Nick at Night

Meet Nick Scotti, actor/model and star of the reality series *New York Nick*. (You might remember Scotti as the clueless hunk in 1997's *Kiss Me Guido*.) Along with Nick's saucy sis Viv Scotti and the siblings' colorful orthopedic shoe-wearing aunt, Irene "Diz," these three natives from Queens bring blue-collar style to the masses each week with their misadventures through New York, "Italian"-style family squabbles, and lifestyle tips from cooking baked ziti to looking great even on a budget. Airs on Style Network (www.stylenetwork.com) at 9 p.m. on Fridays. —TC



Nick Scotti gets real.

The Oscars

At press time, the nominations for the 76th Annual Academy Awards had not been revealed. We can't imagine Charlize Theron not being nominated for her role as serial killer Aileen Wuornos in *Monster*, so you might want to tune in for that. Airs Sunday, February 29 on ABC (www.abc.com) at 7 p.m.

And, of course, there will be the gowns, so you might want to tune in for El's (www.eonline.com) pre-awards red-carpet ride with Joan Rivers to see who's wearing who.

OSCAR-RELATED: On commercial-free Turner Classic Movies, Tom Hanks (pictured below) stars in one of his Best Actor-winner roles in *Philadelphia* (1993); Antonio Banderas plays his boyfriend. Also stars Denzel Washington, Jason Robards, and Joanne Woodward. *Philadelphia* was directed by Jonathan Demme and written by openly gay Ron Nyswaner, who also wrote the recent Showtime film *A Soldier's Girl*. Airs on TCM (www.turnerclassicmovies.com) at 9:15 p.m., Tuesday, February 24. —Blase DiStefano



Molly Ivins and Patti LuPone

Writer Molly Ivins's razor wit and pointed commentary have been literary thorns in the side of politicians for years. Never at a loss for an opinion, Ivins talks about the California recall, the White House, balancing the national budget, and peace in the Middle East, all with her usual biting sense of humor.

Accomplished theater actress Patti LuPone is known for the remarkable strength and determination she brought to her roles in *Evita*, *Les Miserables*, and *Sunset Boulevard*. The very candid LuPone talks about the rocky road that brought Norma Desmond to the stage, the challenges of a television series, and she even has a word or two about the movie version of *Evita*.

Interviews with the two celebrities are part of *Inner-VIEWS with Ernie Manouse*, which airs Thursdays at 10 p.m. on Houston's PBS Channel 8 (www.houstonpbs.org). The Ivins interview airs on the 12th, the LuPone interview on the 19th. More info: www.geocities.com/ernieontv/homepage. —SL



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Out in the Arts

by D.L. Groover

THE GREAT GAY WAY.

Richard Greenberg's gay baseball play *Take Me Out* may have recently gone to the showers on Broadway after winning numerous Tony awards and a Pulitzer for best 2003 drama, but the rainbow flag continues to fly high and proud over the Great White Way. If you're anywhere near 42nd Street, there's a show to match the color you prefer.

With its alternative-lifestyle characters, grunge *Rent* continues to soar, playing to 98 percent capacity years after its premiere. **Jonathan Larson's** beguiling rock musical, an East Village *La Boheme*, may very well attain the status accorded such classics as *Oklahoma* or *Gypsy*—it's just as good, and speaks to its audiences in that universal way great shows always do. Its renown is also heartbreaking: The preternaturally talented Larson died hours before the first preview. He never knew his energetic, life-affirming creation would be his epitaph. In true show-biz fashion, he went out with a hit.

Whatever else becomes a legend most, any show based upon *The Wizard of Oz* has "gay" written all over it. *Wicked* needs more than a sprinkling of pixie dust; it needs a closet full. Everyone and everything flies, but this plodding musical remains earth-bound. **Stephen Schwartz** (*Pippin*, *Godspell*, *Prince of Egypt*) adapted **Gregory Maguire's** airy novel *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*, but has dropped a house on the story, turning light fantasy into a lumpy \$14 million proto-feminist tract. **Idina Menzel** is the emerald-tinged Elphaba, roommate at sorcery school of very popular, very superficial, very blonde Glinda. After innumerable pop-Broadway anthems, they cross broomsticks, and you know the rest.

Campy but exceptionally ponderous, *Wicked* boasts a career-enhancing performance from **Kristin Chenoweth** (musical theater's current female darling) as a *Clueless*-like pre-Dorothy Glinda. She's getting the Tony this year. *Wicked* will not.

From last season, multiple Tony winner *Hairspray* continues to pony, stomp, and frug up a storm. Derived, yet sanitized, from the cult cinematic gay trash world of **John Waters** and drag diva **Divine**, this old-fashioned, uplifting musical bubble is



Strike a pose: Hugh Jackman as Peter Allen in *The Boy from Oz* is accompanied by (l-r) Stephanie Kurtzuba, Tari Kelly, and Colleen Hawks.



Strike a pose 2: Boy George gets cleavage in *Taboo*.

energized by **Harvey Fierstein's** cartoonish matriarch Edna Turnblad, accompanied by the buoyant bouffant score by **Marc Shaiman** and **Scott Wittman**. This show almost makes you nostalgic for the '60s.

can only judge her at our peril.

Another closeted gay character on Broadway happens to be blue, bespectacled, a Republican, and a Muppet. And don't tell anyone he's gay. Rod is one of the furry cast members of the irreverent *Avenue Q*, an adult musical by **Robert Lopez**, **Jeff Marx**, and **Jeff Whitty**. This *Sesame Street*/*South Park* amalgam is the surprise hit of the season, and the full frontal puppet nudity has even entertained the former First Family (yes, with Chelsea, too). How can you go wrong with a show that includes Trekkie Monster's addiction to Internet porn; the incessant mating rituals of Lucy T. Slut; and a muppetized **Gary Coleman**? Foul and funny, this is the street where **Bert and Ernie** should have lived.

The life of flamboyant cabaret performer **Peter Allen**—Oscar-winning composer, song and dance man, Radio City Music Hall headliner, **Judy Garland's** opening act, husband of **Liza**, and gay as the ace of spades—should be a no-brainer for a Broadway musical. Sadly, *The Boy from Oz* is lobotomized Biography 101: a crash course that briefly touches the high spots, listed above, but reveals nothing. Because it uses a catalogue of Allen's pre-existing songs to link his life, →

In the "straight" play category, **Tennessee Williams's** classic closet drama *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* sizzles, but only in the poster. Unfortunately, the pajama-clad beef of **Jason Patric** and the pin-up lustrousness of **Ashley Judd** are two-dimensional. When they actually open their mouths on stage, the illusion shatters. **Ned Beatty's** Big Daddy won't erase any memories of **Burl Ives's** stunning portrayal, but in this tepid, unsexed production he's the only thing breathing.

Then there's **Doug Wright's** spellbinding true tale of German cross-dresser **Charlotte von Mahlsdorf**, *I Am My Own Wife*. In a startling performance, **Jefferson Mays** inhabits dozens of characters in this complex portrait of an ultimate survivor. In her quest to be true to herself, von Mahlsdorf lived through the personal horrors of a dysfunctional family before facing even larger horrific forces under the Nazis and then East German communists. As witnesses, we are ennobled by the personal cost and duplicitous sacrifice needed to keep going. We

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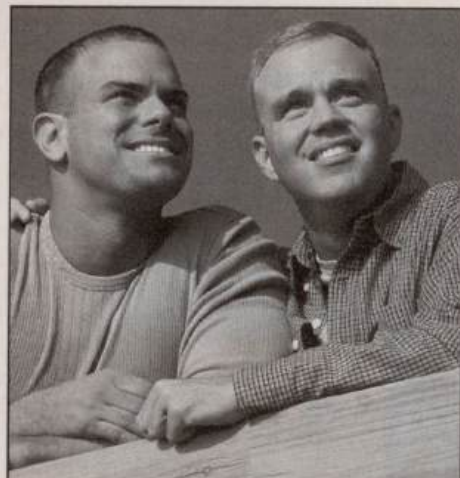
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Out in the Arts continued from page 76

these illustrations are only surface. When you use a generic love song ("Love Don't Need a Reason," for example), it remains a generic love song, without specific character, without dramatic depth, whether it's a duet for two men, as it is here, or a heterosexual anthem. It doesn't enlighten.

Even superficially, Allen's fascinating life was pretty amazing. Rendered in *Oz*, though, it's had all the edges smoothed down. There's nary a splinter to irritate the Blue Hairs. It's all carefree, scrubbed clean, and about as truthful as those insipid movie bios that would have, say, **Cary Grant** as a most un-gay **Cole Porter**.

Isabel Keating, as incomparable Garland, is an optical and aural illusion, but she's saddled with a waxworks character, while **Stephanie J. Block** is much too tall for Liza and has no character to play at all. Chiseled and buff Tony winner **Jarrod Emick** (from the 1994 revival of *Damn Yankees*) is wasted in a 15-minute supporting role as Allen's lover. In a truly embarrassing stage moment, he gets to come back as a ghost to sing "I Honestly Love You." The show, restructured and endlessly tinkered with since its Australian incarnation in 1998, has cringing moments like this throughout.

But what *Boy from Oz* does have, though, and no other show on Broadway comes close, is the megawatt star power of **Hugh Jackman**. Yes, Wolverine struts his stuff, sashays atop a piano, sings and dances, puts his hands on his hips, shakes his booty, and kisses Emick. But no Matinee Lady will take offense, because Jackman plays Allen playing Jackman. If you only know Jackman from those *X-Men* action films, you've obviously missed his previous definitive

outings in *Oklahoma* and *Carousel*. He bulldozes into this flimsy material with such sweet charm and knockout charisma that you're helpless in his seduction. There hasn't been such a presence like his on Broadway since the days of **Carol Channing** and **Ethel Merman**—the police lines around the stage door and the clambering fans attest to that. He's a true Broadway Baby, and *The Boy from Oz* would be worthless without him. Sorry, Peter.

The gayest show in town, however, is **Boy George's Taboo**, but it's struggling along at 62 percent weekly capacity. [At press time, *Taboo* was scheduled to close in February.] This most original, refreshing look at the decadent London club scene of the '80s, populated with its New Romantic denizens of the night, is an absolute high. Slick and glossy, its failure to become a major hit is unfathomable. The press has been universally unkind to the show's U.S. producer, **Rosie O'Donnell**, and all her legal troubles came to a head during *Taboo*'s opening last November, so the fallout may have had some influence. Although the gay aspects, the drug abuse, the freaks are in your face ("I'll Have You All," **Leigh Bowery**'s apotheosis to anonymous sex, is graphically set in a tearoom), it's neither offensive nor terribly shocking anymore to see this kind of stuff on stage. *Taboo* isn't perfect, either: All the many major characters get diffused under the dry ice and flashing mirror ball, but the show has such energy and slacker glamour, it works regardless.

Lovingly produced and exceptionally cast, with a great original score from Mr. O'Dowd (a.k.a. Boy George)—a few of his golden oldies are there to be savored again—*Taboo* has everything a big Broadway splashy show should need to succeed. Any show that highlights one of that era's most original creations, the performance artist Leigh Bowery, gets bonus credits.

Euan Morton makes a splendidly dramatic and vocal Boy George. **Raul Esparza** as smarmy promoter **Philip Sallon** is in a class by himself. **Jeffrey Carlson** as prickly drag queen Marilyn is in a world unto himself. And Mr. O'Dowd as Bowery, though strangely distant as a performer, wears those fantastic outfits like he means it and comes into his own when he howls "Ich Bin Kunst" ("I Am Art") from inside his museum display case.

With all its grunge depravity, radical chic, and sexual confusion, *Taboo* is a tuneful sentimental valentine wearing its punk heart on its sleeve. Roll it up and you'll find a tattoo that declares, "Freaks just want to be loved, too." Go see it. *Taboo* is a definite winner and deserves a full house.

D.L. Groover writes monthly on the arts for OutSmart magazine.

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by Gregg Shapiro

LUCKY CHARMED

Melissa Etheridge releases a jubilant new disk

Melissa Etheridge isn't the only one who is fortunate when it comes to her new album *Lucky* (Island). Her loyal legion of fans, who stuck with her through dark and low-key CDs such as *Breakdown* and *Skin*, are richly rewarded with the joyful and celebratory spirit of the new release (in stores February 10). Sexy and romantic, most of the songs on *Lucky* come in the wake of Etheridge's courtship and subsequent marriage to actress Tammy Lynn Michaels.

Etheridge does an effortless job of balancing confidence and vulnerability in love songs such as "Mercy," "This Moment," and "Will You Still Love Me." She flirts and flies, and she fearlessly wrestles the demons of her world throughout the album. The results are uplifting and empowering. I recently spoke to Etheridge, who was preparing for her *Lucky* tour.

Gregg Shapiro: One of the first things people will notice about your *Lucky* is the jubilant mood of the disc. Did it feel good to switch gears after the raw and ragged emotions of your previous album *Skin*?

Melissa Etheridge: Oh yeah. It certainly wasn't a conscious thing like, "Oh, I'm gonna be happy now" [laughs]. It's actually that it is my experience in my life. And thank goodness I'm not still writing back there. Thank goodness the journey has taken me here. The good stuff has happened and the celebration and the joyousness are real and true.



Come to my window: Melissa Etheridge is lucky in love. Inset: Etheridge's new album *Lucky*.



Beginning with the title track and ending with "When You Find the One," the whole album is sort of the musical equivalent of returning to the safety and comfort of home after being in exile. Was that what you intended?

Yeah, I guess so. I've been so involved with it and inside it that I haven't been able to step outside of it and think of it as a whole yet. I haven't played these songs live yet. I haven't lived them and gone through them. They're fresh and brand new.

There is a flirtatiousness to "If You Want To" that is equally refreshing and suspenseful. I think it's the kind of song that makes the listener root for the singer.

Oh, yeah, and it is flirtatious. It's like, "OK, I've been dead, and you gave me your number. OK, I'll call." It's just that moment, that reaching out, that unsureness. Having written the song, it was fun to go back to it and play with it, →

CYNTHIA DANIEL

GrooveOut Shorts

T-Pro & Angel C Tribal Pleasures



At the forefront of every great movement there are great people directing those movements. The legendary gay Latino parties that have surfaced in past years in New York clubs such as Milk and Cuchifrito and Los Angeles habitats like Circus and Arena have had such leaders, and at the top of that heap on each coast have been openly gay artists T-Pro and Angel C. Working in tandem as "TAngel," they have assembled and stitched together a collection of overly humid tracks in the café con leche

domain, one disc mixed and one disc left untouched. Standouts by their own admission include Marco Polo Cerere, Kiwi Dreams, and a vocal set including India's sultry "Seduce Me Now." From Jellybean/Sony Discos (www.jellybeanrecordings.com). —Lance Walker

Ari Gold Space Under Sun



Bronx grew up with a taste for R&B and has tethered that to his music in a most unorthodox manner. He seems to pull from the early '90s school of R&B perfected by

You probably wouldn't be too far off-base if you called Ari Gold the "poor man's Justin Timberlake." It might be a bit more accurate, however, to describe him as the "gay man's Justin Timberlake." This young Jewish boy from the

those such as Jodeci and Keith Sweat, but also marries that sound with a palette of melodies and arrangements that more mirror the sound of modern boy bands. In the end, they are love songs about men by a man, and he makes it work regardless of from where he's borrowing. From Gold 18 (www.arigold.com). —LW

Sarah McLachlan Remixed



A techno context for her music isn't that unusual. Sarah McLachlan's music career has soared because she is an open-minded artist. Seven DJs—including William Orbit, Hybrid, and DJ Tiesto—work their magic on nine McLachlan originals. Her previous collaboration with electronica group Delerium topped dance charts world-

wide. This is a collection of remixes featuring McLachlan's music captured with beats and synthesizer chords, making it an ideal club trance/dance album. From Arista Records (www.arista.com). More info: www.sarahmclachlan.com. —Andrea Rodricks

Ellen Demos Osmosis



Ellen Demos's debut recording *Osmosis* is a jazz vocal workout that will jar your senses and move your soul. Demos reaches far down into her being and convincingly uses her vocal talents to her advantage by making her voice the primary instrument on the album. While there are the usual suspects accompanying her, like the saxophone, guitar, and →

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GrooveOut continued from previous page

[although] in the moment it's very painful, every step you take.

Lucky also has some, you'll excuse the expression, balls-to-the-wall rockers, such as "Secret Agent" and "Giant." Do you think it is necessary to include that kind of work on albums to show you haven't lost that edge?

Oh, yeah. Not only to show it but to do it. I make these albums and they go out there. Then I spend the rest of the time performing these songs. I wanted to turn up the volume again. I wanted to rock again. I had been so very down and mellow about the last two albums. It was finally like, "OK, let's go. I feel it. I feel good. I'm ready. Let's go." It's more fun to play it live. You only have that one chance on the record.

Even with all of this uplifting energy, one of my favorite songs on the album is still the one that makes me want to cry—the gorgeous ballad "Meet Me in the Dark." What can you tell me about that song? I wrote that song when I was kind of in the middle of an identity crisis about myself and my music. After seeing that the record company was not responding to my music, I started to think, *Am I obsolete now in the radio world?* I've never tried to write a hit song. That's not what I'm made of and it's not what I'm about. I had this

real crisis, and I went into my living room, sat at my piano, and just threw up this song from my soul that I don't think will ever see the radio waves.

It's amazing, because it really made think of Joni [Mitchell], Carly [Simon], and Carole [King], circa '71. It made me think of the female singer/songwriters of that time.

That we don't hear much anymore [laughs]. Yeah, I was sad for the state of the music business. I wanted to write the music I used to listen to in the '70s. I wanted to go back to the rock 'n' roll ballad of Bruce Springsteen and Bob Seger, that Midwestern feeling. I just wrote from that. I love it. It's one of my favorite songs on the album.

I was also moved by "Tuesday Morning," the powerful and amazing tribute to Mark Bingham. The Ella Jenkins sample from "Up and Down This Road" is the perfect touch.

I, of course, as a person and an artist, was affected by 9/11. I believe we all were. It was reverberating and resounding in me. I was starting to write songs for this album in the beginning of 2002, and I had asked a musician friend of mine, Jon Taylor, to throw together some loops for me. I like to write to a lot of the rhythms. He had thrown some together, and he had this one with an Ella Jenkins loop on it. I was like, "What is that?" "That's an old

gospel singer. It's an old civil rights song." So I was listening to it and listening to it on this loop, over and over. I started to sing around it: [sings] "You cannot change this." I said, "Oh my gosh, is this my 9/11 song?" I started to think [about] what was going on with Mark Bingham on Flight 93, and the whole thing. I decided I wanted to pay tribute to this man. I don't want this part of our gay history to be wiped away or swept under.

And Ella lives here in Chicago.

I did not know that. I do not know anything about her. All I know is she's still alive [laughs]. I sent the song to her to ask permission, and the word got back that she loved it, and that made me very happy.

You are also known for your live shows, and you are about to embark on a tour in support of Lucky. What can people expect to see and hear on this tour?

I don't think I've ever been as excited as I am to go on the road with an album and with a set list that I have now. I have eight albums to choose from. I'm thrilled with the band I have. I'm just so excited. It's just like the album. It's full of joy. It's a celebration.

At the 2003 OutMusic Awards in June, Gregg Shapiro received the annual honor for Outstanding Support, which recognizes involvement by non-musicians in furthering the work of GLBT performers.

GrooveOut Shorts continued from previous page

flute, she easily gets into the higher vocal registers and instantaneously reminds you of the late Ella Fitzgerald and her famous scatting routines. You can e-mail the gay-friendly singer at pqrrecs@yahoo.com. —Suzie Lynde

Kelis
Tasty



The record begins with someone cramming their mouth full of potato chips and sucking on soda, moving on a couple of tracks later into Kelis's radio hit "Milkshake." The references are ironic considering that you know this lady goes nowhere near any of that stuff. She is cut like a supermodel and is as talented as a superproducer. Kelis Rogers is involved in the songwriting on nearly half of this record—a tall order considering that the other writers and producers involved are the likes of Dallas Austin, Pharrell Williams, and Raphael Saadiq. Her smoky, husky voice permeates their work like fine cream in black coffee, untouched by the spoon, untouched by the stir stick, weaving its way slowly through every verse,

every line. She believes in her words and forces nothing, manufactures nothing. It is a purity that runs throughout the music, the words, and even the artwork. It is also appropriate that the appearance of Andre 3000 [OutKast] is on a track called "Millionaire," since everything the man touches of late is turning to gold. It is, without question, the best song on a record that involves no filler and on which no corner of any song is left untouched. Nothing meanders, nothing drops off any cliffs—everything just finds its place, with just the right amount of breathing room just when you need it. From Star Trak (www.startrak.com). —LW

Missy Elliott
This Is Not a Test



From the beginning, Missy Elliott has successfully tested the boundaries of rap music. Along with acclaimed hip-hop producer Tim "Timbaland" Mosely, the hip-hop queen delivers yet another fearless album showing no signs of creative exhaustion. With unbelievable beats and uninhibited vocals, Elliott tries a little of everything on *This Is Not a Test*. She marvels at the magic of her vibrator in "Toyz," teams up with Nelly for an ode to full-figured Southern gals, and gives it up to classic '80s rappers.

There's a reason rap enthusiasts breathlessly await her new albums. From Elektra Records (www.elektra.com). More info: www.missy-elliott.com. —AR

Willa Ford featuring May
A Toast to Men (Fk the Men)**



To paraphrase ultra-syndicated humorist Dave Barry on the subject of writing, the most important step a writer has to take is to fool his or her publisher into believing that what they have submitted to them has never before been published. Changing the title is a good start. Willa Ford did alter the title, and subsequently came up with what is very likely a catchier one, but the infectious hook that is buried underneath and around "A Toast to Men" is actually an old sorority chant. Take that as you will, the fact remains that it was a preexisting melody that has now been transformed into a pop song. It's not exactly groundbreaking, it's not particularly brilliant, but it's not exactly unheard of either. Ford makes up for it in some form or another in that she produced the record herself, did all the string arrangements, and sang all the backup vocals. The results aren't

continued on page 84



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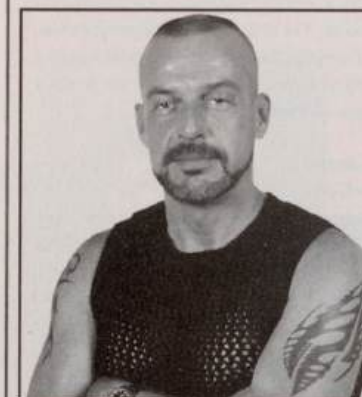
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GrooveOut Shorts

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stellar, to say the least, but with such a work ethic, she's likely to press on, and eventually she's going to run out of sorority chants, right? From Lava Records (www.lavarecords.com). —LW

Various Artists Windham Hill Chill 2



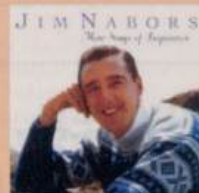
The music on *Windham Hill Chill 2* is designed to take the listener on a tour of the label's eclectic musical history, evoking a sense of tranquility. The continuous "chill" mix features relaxing music without breaks between the tracks. Just a few of the artists featured on *Chill 2*: George Winston, Yanni, Lili Haydn, State of Grace, Liz Story, Will Ackerman, and Jim Brickman. From Windham Hill (www.windham.com). —SL

Nigel Kennedy Vivaldi

Nigel Kennedy created a musical sensation with his

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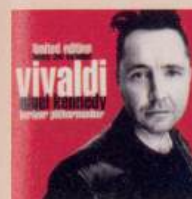


If you're a fan of Jim Nabors's voice, you'll love these songs that were recorded by the singer in the '60s and '70s. The songs include "Bridge Over Troubled Water," "Born Free," "On a Clear Day You Can See Forever," "Ave Maria," and "Just a Closer Walk with Thee," among others. The rumored-to-be-gay Nabors starred in the '60s sitcom *Gomer Pyle, USMC*, but also recorded numerous albums. From Columbia/Legacy (www.columbiarecords.com and www.legacyrecordings.com). More info: www.sonymusic.com. —Blase DiStefano

Gwen Jenner You've Got to Believe



More songs of inspiration, but, unlike Nabors (see above), these are recent songs written by the singer. Jenner wrote her first contemporary Christian song, "I've Seen the Light," in 1995. Jenner's deep respect and love for animals shines through in "I Need to Know" and "Wondrous Love Wondrous Nature." The other eight original songs mirror her own life journey with lyrics that are inspiring and honest. From Angel Dog Music (www.angeldogmusic.com). —SL



Amici Forever The Opera Band



1989 recording of *The Four Seasons*. If you own the original disc, you will be captivated by the intensity in this dynamic performance. Kennedy revisits *The Four Seasons* with a masterful approach, giving greater significance to the orchestral

accompaniment. Also included are two rarely performed violin concertos. These new recordings mark the beginning of the Vivaldi Project that Kennedy is undertaking in collaboration with the prestigious Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. From EMI Classics (www.emi-classics.com). More info: www.nigelkennedy.com. —AR

This is the debut album by Amici Forever, five classically trained opera singers previously known as Tenors and Divas. They experiment with classic contemporary music while presenting rearranged opera, bringing an interesting

nuance to even the most familiar arias. The full-bodied voices behind such classics as Puccini's "Nessun Dorma" and Handel's "Zadok the Priest" are sure to enchant opera fans worldwide. The harmony in "Prayer in the Night" is engaging. Dubbed the saviors of the classical music industry, Amici Forever looks to have one of the most successful crossover releases of the year. From Victor (www.victor-music.com). For more info: www.aristaassociatedlabels.com/index.jsp or www.amiciforever.com. —AR

10,000 Maniacs Campfire Songs



through the various styles of music that made 10,000 Maniacs so compelling. This double-disc package also features unreleased tracks and more. From Rhino (www.rhino.com). Info: www.maniacs.com. —AR

ANI DIFRANCO GETS SENSUAL AND HYPNOTIC

Ani DiFranco has always been a do-it-yourself kind of girl, and she proves it with *Educated Guess*, her 20th album and first solo project in a decade. Not only did she write all the music and lyrics, sing both lead and backup, and play all the instrumentals, but she recorded and mixed the entire album herself on a vintage eight-track reel-to-reel. The result is her most honest and organic work to date.

Educated Guess has a cozy, intimate feel, as if she'd invited a group of friends over and started strumming her guitar while everyone was sipping cocktails in her living room. While the music itself is sensual and hypnotic, it is DiFranco's confessional, cathartic lyrics that take center stage. From the self-effacing metaphors in the album's title track to her unbleached ideal of patriotism described in the spoken-word piece "Grand Canyon," DiFranco shows that she is not only an incredible musician, but a true poet as well.

The only thing missing from *Educated Guess* is the frenetic, aggressive, shoot-the-bastard break-up rock featured so prominently on her earlier solo albums. However, longtime fans will instantly recognize her trademark brand of musical genius, and those stumbling across her for the first time will be held captive by this rough-edged, down-home masterpiece. —Thomas Blanton



Hilary Stagg In the Presence of Nature



In the Presence of Nature is an incomparable journey through America's most pristine environments, its national parks and preserves. They include the dune-covered beaches of Cape Cod, the mystical swamps of the Everglades, the swirling clouds and sunlit forests of the Adirondacks, the

sparkling lakes and clear mountain streams of Yosemite National Park, the amazing geysers of Yellowstone National Park, and the majestic river valleys of the Grand Canyon. This beautiful journey is matched by one of the world's most inspiring musicians, Hilary Stagg. The soundtrack *Dream Spiral* is considered his most critically acclaimed work. The visuals coupled with the music enhance a meditative state of relaxation. Stagg, known for inventing the amplified harp, was prolific in creating a sound renowned for its healing qualities. His music is tranquil, comforting, and soothing. Available in DVD format only from Lobitos Creek Ranch. More info: www.lightyear.com. —SL

QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY GETS A GROOVE ON

Queer Eye for the Straight Guy's "Fab 5"—Ted Allen, Kyan Douglas, Thom Felicia, Carson Kressley, and Jai Rodriguez—teach straights how to get their groove on. Highlights include an exclusive new Duran Duran song, "Sunrise." This is better than their earlier reunion efforts, with an infectious, driving groove. There's a remix of Elton John's '77 hit, "Are You Ready for Love." Kylie Minogue's tune, "Slow," is funkadelically remixed by the Chemical Brothers, juxtaposing Minogue's sensual voice with mind-piercing trills and delightfully odd sound effects. Get out those glowsticks—Junior Senior's "Move Your Feet" is irrepressibly adorable and catchy. Another sonic novelty falls under the classification of the new "versus" mashup trend. The dance-art Fischerspooner



melds with '80s git-rock Billy Squier in the Billy Harris re-vamp of "Everybody Wants You to Emerge." Although the track is a hoot, it's also clubby and entrancing. OK Go and Liz Phair add the more rock-oriented elements with "You're So Damn Hot" and "Extraordinary," respectively. As a silly bonus, there's track 14, "5 Gay Men." While somebody haphazardly strums a guitar, Jai

and Kyan improvise a little ditty: "Five gay men cleaning one house. . . That's all it takes, just one dirty straight man. And five gay men."

Two versions are available, one with a limited edition bonus DVD and one with enhanced video. The DVD includes the video (and "making of" video) for the catchy theme song "All Things (Just Keep Getting Better)" and the video for Kylie Minogue's "Slow." The enhanced video CD contains the video for "All Things." From Capitol Records (www.capitolrecords.com). More info: www.bravotv.com. —Eric A.T. Dieckman ■



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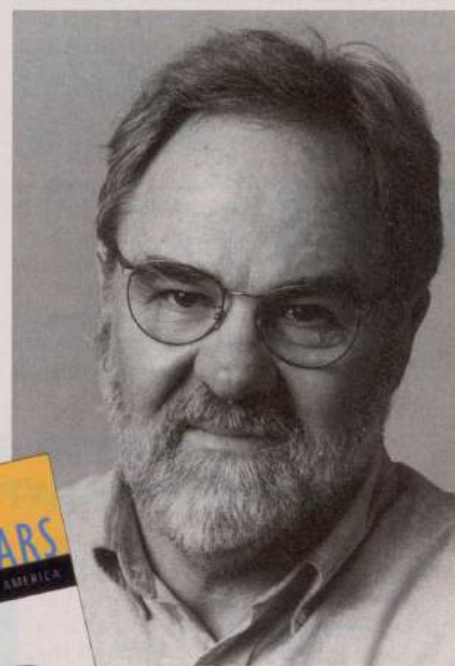
CIVIL WORDS

*A new book recounts
the Vermont gay-marriage struggle*

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist David Moats has authored one of the most gripping accounts of the modern gay civil-rights struggle. *Civil Wars: A Battle for Gay Marriage* (Harcourt) chronicles Vermont's public battle over the legalization of gay marriage and the intimate stories of the players behind the scenes.

Early in January, I had the opportunity to discuss the inspiration for *Civil Wars* with Moats and ask why a heterosexual man would take on such an endeavor. As the editorial page editor of the *Rutland Herald*, Moats became a witness to what he called "the most extraordinary story" he has ever covered. He began to write a series of fair and humane editorials for the paper that eventually earned him the 2001 Pulitzer. "I came to this story by history and by luck," Moats said. "Like many of my generation, I had been touched by the power and moral force of the civil-rights movement." Moats felt that this disposition made him empathetic to the gay couples in Vermont seeking the right to marry. "I did not come to the issue as a gay man. I came to it as a journalist," Moats said. "Like anyone who manages to look beyond the distinctions of sexual orientation, I was able to see a truth that becomes increasingly plain as the curtains of bias are pulled aside."

Moats sets the stage for his book (in bookstores on February 2) by beginning with the historical significance of this lawsuit taking place in Vermont. "If you look at Vermont's history, you see why the citizens consider themselves people who value equality," he said. "It was the first state to prohibit slavery and hosted a strong abolitionist movement." Moats demonstrated this climate of tolerance with an anecdote from his workplace. "Our editor for over 40 years was an early opponent of McCarthy and an early supporter of the civil-rights movement in the '60s," he said. "There was also an influx of newcomers to the state in the '60s and



MICHAEL ALESHIRE



Straight but not narrow: David Moats won a Pulitzer for gay-marriage editorials before writing *Civil Wars* (inset).

'70s that brought a certain, more modern-day liberalism." Moats added that the lack of influence that fundamentalist religion has on other states was another strong factor. "There are fundamentalist churches here, and there were religious groups that spoke out against gay marriage, but not nearly at the level you find in the South."

I asked Moats to compare the civil-rights struggle of the '60s to the gay marriage

Howard Dean made a point of meeting his critics after the bill signing. "He would attend parties at his opponents' homes, allowing them to attack him with their opinions, and he would stand there and calmly talk to them."

issue. He said that the battles were very similar, especially in the constitutional rights aspect. But he views the gay marriage issue as "more personal" to people, therefore heightening the severity of its opposition.

"The color of your skin is obvious about you. For example, your desire to sit at a →

Nicole
After



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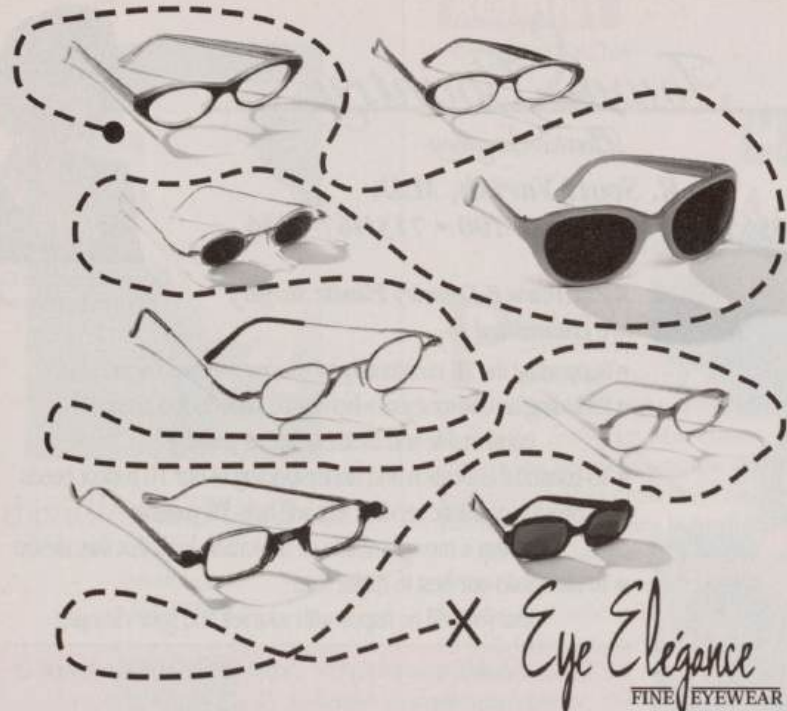
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ReadOut continued from page 86

lunch counter to have lunch is an obvious thing," Moats said. "Your sexual orientation is not obvious, and people's reaction is much more complex. People are uncomfortable dealing with sexuality. Gays are not asking to sit at a lunch counter. They want to marry, which challenges something very fundamental in people and touches on their sense of morality, religion, and emotions."

Former Vermont governor (and presidential candidate) Howard Dean, who signed the state's civil-union bill, plays a strong role in the book. I wondered why Dean signed the bill in private. Moats explained: "Bill signings are moments of great triumph and victory. Supporters all gather around and pictures are taken. Dean said he wanted to avoid the perception of celebrating, because the battle had been so bitter and he did not want to rub the opponents' faces in it." Immediately after the private signing in his office, Moats recounted, Dean came out and held a press conference stating that he supported the merits of the bill. "He didn't mince words about it. He just wanted to downplay the victory, not the support." Dean even made a point of meeting his critics after the bill signing. "He would attend parties at his opponents' homes, allowing them to attack him with their opinions, and he would stand there and calmly talk to them," Moats said.

One of the biggest fears expressed by opponents of Vermont's civil-union bill was the possibility that the state would become a haven for homosexuals. Two-thirds of civil unions performed in Vermont have been performed on out-of-state couples, Moats said, but he added that there has not been a swell in the GLBT population. "Many hotels and inns have taken advantage of the new interest in Vermont by offering special rates and packages specifically marketed to the gay community, but there has been no significant increase in Vermont's gay population."

In the heated debates, and the fear and venomous opposition to the gay marriage issue, Moats said, the true reason for the struggle was often lost: love. His account of Vermont buffeted by a storm of social change manages to chronicle the facts of the historical case but remains focused on the true issue. "When love shows up, it does not always obey arbitrary social conventions," Moats writes in *Civil Wars*. "It is up to us to follow where it leads. If it is love, it will not be sinful, abusive, or otherwise wrong."

Alton LaDay serves as public relations committee chair for the Human Rights Campaign Houston.

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MAKING THE CUT

Or the sad tale of Sally's tail

When I first started growing my tail, it was just a spit curl—a tuft at my nape barely long enough to twirl around a finger, a wisp of deviation from the lesbian norm.

Like most lesbians coming out in the 1970s, I defied the patriarchy by cutting off my hair. I blossomed during that golden era of dyke anti-fashion when women rejected compulsory heterosexuality and tossed away our curlers—or made social commentary art projects out of them. Short hair liberated us. We'd be women, not chicks or ladies, and definitely not girls. It felt funny to call our 20-something selves *women*, but there was power in it. Dignity. And we got used to it.

During that Amazon Age, we dropped out of the beauty industry on principle. We cut our own hair or found a friend to do it. We women were discovering our power and

refused to be distracted by appearances. We wanted freedom. Shirtless dykes circled around campfires, sang to the female Divine, and took turns shaving each other's heads. Cropped hair was our lesbian ID.

I needed to look presentable for a job interview, so I bit the bullet. I found a minimally offensive dress at Goodwill and ventured beyond my food co-op comfort zone into an actual grocery store where I bought pantyhose in a plastic egg.

I liked the no-nonsense experience of a buzz cut. But I missed having my hair to play with, the feel of it down my back, a lover stroking it. So I grew the tail. While I wholeheartedly joined dykedom's rebellion against het standards, my tail freed me from

conforming with the nonconformists.

By the time I finished college and had to find a job, my tail was nearly a foot long. I kept it braided and tucked under my collar out in the world. When I chose, I let it loose.

During those final months of school, I had no time for hair-cutting rituals, and mine was getting bushy and wild. I needed to look presentable for a job interview, so I bit the bullet. I found a minimally offensive dress at Goodwill and ventured beyond my food co-op comfort zone into an actual grocery store where I bought pantyhose in a plastic egg (I focused on the Goddess energy of The Egg). Then I braved a salon.

I hadn't seen that much pink since I was swathed in it at birth. I flipped through the stylebooks for an acceptable cut. One model sported a minimal crop of curl on top, tapered to a trim edge at the ears and neck, and slight

sideburns—compliant enough for gainful employment and butch enough to keep me recognizable to other dykes.

"This one," I showed the stylist. "Can you make my hair look like that?"

"No problem." My stylist was male, but he was gay, so I made allowances. His blonde-streaked coif seemed glued in place. Stylist Man couldn't wait to get his hands on my unruly mop. I sat in a vinyl swivel chair surrounded by mirrors. Nail polish fumes poisoned the air, commingling with chemicals from various gels, mousses, and styling sprays. With my hair flat and wet from shampooing, my reflection looked like Moe the stooge. Nyuk nyuk.

Stylist Man wielded his comb and scissors in a flurry of lifting and snipping. I closed my eyes—partly to protect myself from the falling hairs, but mostly to keep from witnessing my defoliation at the hands of the beauty industry incarnate. No circle of bare-breasted chanting witches midwifed me through this rite of passage—just the whir of hair dryers and the thump of music and the sulfur stench of perm solution.

"Do you want to keep your tail?" Stylist Man asked.

"Yes, definitely!" Wasn't it obvious? Apparently a man can't be expected to possess the intuition of a woman—even if he is gay. I would certainly have made it clear if I'd been ready to let go of my precious, carefully nurtured, laden-with-symbolism-and-significance tail.

"Here you go, then."

Stylist Man held out my disembodied tail. It hung there from his fingertips. I wanted to rewind, call for do-overs. I struggled to register the instant reality of a done deal. I was tailless. Nothing unique or creative or rebellious about me. Just a salon customer with a haircut out of a book.

My defiance symbol was gone. No tail to make me different, to signify my rebel spirit. That tail had been my amulet of individuality. Now I had no outer freak flag to fly.

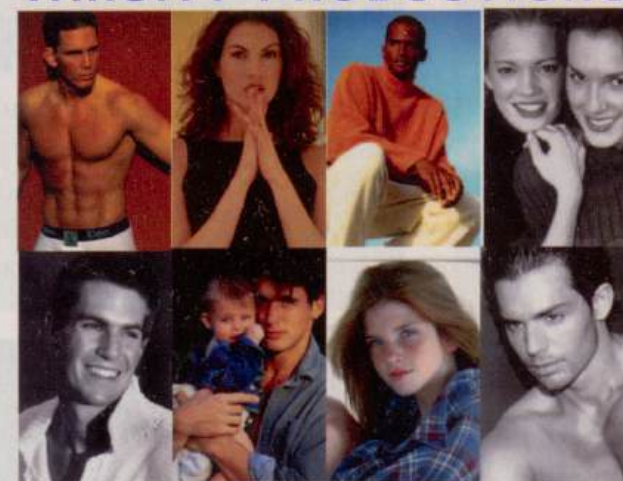
After that I stopped cutting my hair altogether. These days it does what it wants and is happy that way. Occasionally, I rifle through my underwear drawer and pull out the long narrow box that holds my old tail. It seems so sedate now—just a limp, lifeless braid. But it reminds me of how nifty I once was to break from the norm.



Reminds me I've always had the wildness inside, part of me no matter what.

Writer Sally Sheklow grows her own hair in Eugene, Oregon.

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FOOD FOR LOVE

Celebrate Valentine's Day with a romantic dinner out

Food. Its aphrodisiac qualities are limitless. If that weren't true, why would so many dates begin with dinner? Valentine's Day is the pinnacle of such goings-on. To ease your romance planning, here's an overview of a few places—some new-ish, some old favorites—that may make your special night all the more special.

Noche Cocina y Bar

2409 Montrose Blvd.
713/529-8559

Feel like Mexican but would rather something more adventurous than typical Tex-Mex? This is your place. A hot spot for margaritaphiles, Noche also serves excellent dishes to accompany the cocktails. The kitchen is always open to suggestions, so if crawfish enchiladas are not on the menu, just ask. With so many delights on the menu already, you won't need to order off the menu. The Gulf snapper boat could not be juicier. The chicken pibil offers tropical flair, with moist chicken wrapped in a banana leaves.

Osaka Japanese Restaurant

515 Westheimer
713/533-9098

Seriously, the quality is difficult to beat. Sushi lovers have commented that the fatty tuna here is unmatched. With outgoing staff and management and a heart-of-the-Montrose locale, how can you go wrong? While the surroundings are chic, Osaka is not packed to the gills with annoyingly trendy automatons. For dessert, try the green tea, red bean, or mango ice creams. They're a refreshing delight.

Pepino's Italian Restaurant

1421 Richmond
713/522-9044

Since Pepino's is located next door to Michael's Outpost bar, you could spend a full evening's worth of activity here without parking more than once. Chef Pepe encourages diners to bring their own wine to accompany their meal, be it osso bucco, risotto, or a juicy filet mignon.

Ragazza Italian Bar & Grill

920 Studemont
713/864-3700
www.ragazzahouston.com

Formerly Rivendell, the place now offers upscale Italian dining. With ultra-high ceil-



Shade Café

250 W 19th St.
713/863-7500
www.shadeheights.com

In Kaldi Café's old spot in the Heights, Shade Café offers a stylish modern minimalist feel that really stands out. Despite its upscale menu and surroundings, the place is casual-friendly. Prices are midrange (\$11.50-\$25.50) but the value is high for those looking to satisfy sophisticated palates. The menu offers savory fascinations like mushroom phyllo strudel, roasted couscous stuffed tomato, and pecan-crusted confit of duck leg. Pop in for coffee and dessert. The strong cappuccino goes well with the chocolate cherry croissant bread pudding and dollop of vanilla bean ice cream.

ings and lots of space between tables, Ragazza feels anything but cramped. For those who would rather just have a wine and maybe some hors d'oeuvre (try the stuffed mushrooms), a few love seats assembled in a corner near a grand piano encourage cozy lounging.

Riva's Italian Restaurant

1117 Missouri
713/529-3450

Lovers of Southern Italian fare will find joy in the endless supply of garlic bread, not to mention the veal and pastas galore set amidst lush tropical surroundings. Just a little peckish? The house salad comes well recommended by regulars.

Sorrento Ristorante

415 Westheimer
713/527-0609
www.sorrentohouston.com

Abbas Hussein, formerly of Michelangelo's, has opened this tranquil, candle-lit Italian spot on lower Westheimer. Specialties include veal osso buco, cioppino seafood soup, and an array of rich pasta dishes. For a Valentine's dessert, perch at the semicircular bar with your beloved and share a chocolate truffle terrine with walnut whipped cream, Sambuca sauce, and white chocolate espresso bark.

Tila's Restaurante & Bar

1111 S. Shepherd
713/522-7654

Tex-Mex with pizzazz. Traditionalists and culinary adventurers can both find satisfaction here. Standards like chili rellenos are countered by spicy pork tenderloin medallions with basil-mint pesto. After the meal, the spicy-sweetness of ancho-fudge pie will surprise you. On February 14, Tila's will offer a three-course-meal-with-champagne special.

Eric Dieckman also interviewed artist Missy Gentile for this issue.

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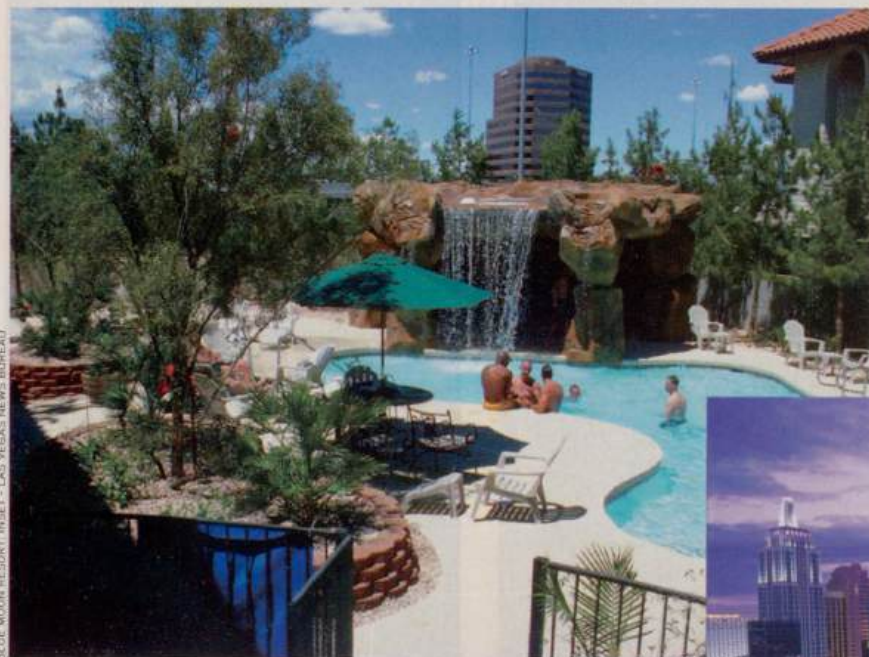
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VIVA VEGAS?

Britney can get a quickie wedding on the Strip. You can't.



Stripped: Britney Spears picked the Vegas Strip (inset) for her quickie marriage. You probably can't legally wed, but you can hit the town for a commitment ceremony and stay at the Blue Moon Resort.

Thank goodness some of the nation's prominent personalities are striving to preserve the sanctity of man-woman marriage (which obsesses politicians of both damn parties):

- Barely a year after their carnival wedding, Liza Minnelli and David Gest split. He has sued for alleged booze-fueled abuse. She counter-sued, accusing him of stealing.
- Though dead, segregationist right-winger Strom Thurmond caused a stir when the child he fathered with his family's underage black maid made their relationship public. After siring the girl, Thurmond had kept her distant while marrying a woman—not his daughter's mother—and starting another family, which was stunned by the new-sister revelation.
- Either out of champagne-besotted rebellion or just-for-fun kookiness, Britney Spears wedded

childhood chum Jason Alexander in a 5:30 a.m. ceremony in Las Vegas. With some prompting by a livid Mama Spears, Britney signed annulment papers 55 hours later.

These sterling examples of nuptial propriety can get hitched, with all the rights and privileges afforded to state-sanctioned marriage. Naturally, we evil homos cannot, for surely our wicked, wicked ways would undermine marriage—perhaps driving impressionable heteros to behave like, well, Liza and David or Strom or Britney and Jason. We can't have that, no sir.

If you are reading this magazine, you no doubt can't pull a Britney and get a legal quickie wedding. Sorry. But you can wing to Vegas for Valentine's Day and have a commitment ceremony, then stand on the Strip with a "Britney could get married. Why can't we?" placard.

While in Vegas, men might want to check into the new gay-owned Blue Moon Resort. In addition to rooms and suites, this boys-only hotel (866/798-9194, www.bluemoon

lv.com) features a Jacuzzi grotto with waterfall, steam room, and pool. During February, rates start at \$99 per night (\$159 for Valentine's Day weekend). Warning, Britney impersonators: Blue Moon is not located on the Strip.

Women and those male couples not interested in other, well, male company might gravitate toward the Las Vegas Gay Hotel. Special deals include Got Married Last Night package, which offers a small cake and bubbly. Rates at the gay-owned spot (800/574-4450, www.lasvegasgayhotel.com) begin at \$75 per night. A gay wedding, er, commitment ceremony chapel is located on the grounds.

The Little White Wedding Chapel, where a jeans-and-tummy-shirt-clad Ms. Spears launched her brief marriage, will not perform same-gender ceremonies. After all, we can't have queers disrespecting the holiest of unions, can we?

Tim Brookover wrote about LaStrada in the December issue.

There is still a Wonderful Gay Guesthouse on Galveston Island.

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Calendar of Events

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

FEBRUARY

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; O, 710 Pacific, 9 pm-1 am. **Tuesday:** The 611, 611 Hyde Park, 4-8 pm; Club Houston, 2205 Fannin, 8 pm-midnight. **Wednesday:** Mary's, 1100 Westheimer, 4-8 pm; Ripcord, 715 Fairview, 9 pm-1 am; E's, 2517 Ralph, 10 pm-1 am; Midtowne Spa, 3100 Fannin, 10 pm-1 am. **Thursday:** All-Star News, 3415 Katy Frwy, 4-8 pm; BRB, 2400 Brazos, 8 pm-midnight; Cousins, 817 Fairview, 8 pm-midnight. **Friday:** E's, 2517 Ralph, 10 pm-1 am; Midtowne Spa, 3100 Fannin, 10 pm-1 am; The Meatrack, 2915 San Jacinto, 10 pm-2 am; Rich's, 2401 San Jacinto, 10 pm-1 am. The clinic offers classes for those newly diagnosed with HIV or Hepatitis C. For more info: 713/830-3000.

7 (Sat.)

Peking Tuck (and Roll.) Performing unbelievable and nearly impossible acts

of physicality, this gaggle of graceful athletes recreate acrobatic splendor from the 2,000-year-old tradition of their homeland. Sword balancers, unicyclers, contortionists, dancers, and physical comedic performers leave audiences spellbound. 7 pm at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. For information and tickets: 713/227-45PA or www.spahouston.org.

6 & 7 (Fri. & Sat.)

All in the Family. Looking for a way to change your family from dysfunctional to functional? Maybe Terrence Real can help. The best-selling author of *I Don't Want to Talk About It* and *How Can I Get Through to You*, Real is a family therapist and couples counselor who's been on NBC *Nightly News*, *Good Morning America*, *Oprah*, and *20/20*, among others. His two-day workshop centers on creating healthy family relationships. \$50. Friday, 7 pm; Saturday, 9 am-12:30 pm at Christ Church Cathedral's Great Hall, 1117 Texas Ave. Information/reservations: 713/222-2593 or www.christchurchcathedral.org or www.relatinalrecoveryinstitute.com.

6-8 (Fri.-Sun.)

Beachy Homes and Gardens. The 16th Annual Galveston Home and Garden Show benefits the Animal Shelter and Adoption Center of Galveston. Learn about fine crafts, home and garden accessories, blooming plants, and

gourmet foods. Friday night offers a sneak preview for \$40 with samples from area restaurants and a large silent auction. The first 200 DIY'ers to enter Saturday morning receive a free tropical blooming plant from Moody Gardens Horticultural Therapy Program. \$4 in advance, \$5 at the door; kids under 12 get in free. Saturday, 10-6 pm; Sunday, 11-4 pm. Exhibit Hall C at Moody Gardens. Info: 409/763-0263 or www.galveston.com/homeandgardenshow/.

8 (Sun.)

Eggs-ultation. Bayou City Boys Club brings "Rise Up," a gospel and all-you-can-eat brunch that includes bottomless Mimosas and live gospel entertainment. Proceeds benefit the Center for AIDS in memory of community activist Joel Martinez who founded the center and passed away this November. \$35. 11:30 am-2 pm at 1415 California St. For tickets/information: www.bayoucityboysclub.org.

9 (Mon.)

Owl of the Desert. Ida Swearington has worn a few hats in her day. NYC cabbie, beet shoveler, family therapist, novelist. She currently lives in Minnesota (where she used to shovel beets) with her partner. Whether her partner ever shoveled a beet is unknown. Her novel, *Owl of the Desert*, follows Kate Porter after she gets out of jail. Recruited to track down her father who runs a right-

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

wing militia. Pitted against personal danger, she decides to use her training as a soldier to battle her father's armed disciples and finally face the man she has hated so long. Swearington signs copies of her novel, discusses her work and (maybe if you ask politely) the meditative joys of shoveling beets. 6 pm at Murder by the Book, 2342 Bissonnet. Info: 713/524-8597 or www.murderbooks.com.

9 (Mon.)

The Whore's Child's Father. Named "the architect of stories you can't put down" by the *New York Times*, Richard Russo is considered the best writer about small-town America since Sinclair Lewis. His *Nobody's Fool* was made into a feature film with Paul Newman. His *Empire Falls*, which he is currently adapting into a screenplay, won him a Pulitzer Prize. His most recent work, *The Whore's Child*, is a collection of short

stories full of wry wit. The Inprint Brown Reading Series presents Russo to read from his work. \$5, free to students and seniors. 7:30 pm at the Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. For more information: 713/521-2026 or www.inprint-inc.org.

13-15 (Fri.-Sun.)

Dig This, Mister Fix-It. The 18th Annual Spring Texas Home & Garden Show presents everything you could ever want to know about gardening, décor, and fixing up your home to make it a more lovely, liveable space. Added to the list of things to do and see are the Annual Vacation, Leisure and Outdoor Show and pet info. Find out how to make your critters more cozy or adopt one altogether. Gourmet cooking and samples are also there to satiate the epicure in you. \$8.50, kids 12 and under get in free. Friday, 2-9 pm; Saturday, 10 am-9 pm; Sunday, 11 am-6 pm. Reliant Center. Information: 713/529-1616 or www.TexasHomeandGarden.com.

18 (Wed.)

Orchestrated Birthday Party. It's the 90th birthday of the Houston Symphony! This special concert honors all members of the symphony family with Hans Graf conducting the orchestra. Free to subscribers. Subscriptions: 713/224-7575 or www.houston-symphony.org.

20 (Fri.)

Classic Romance. Johannes Brahms is considered the last of the great classical-romantic composers. Dr. Clifton Evans of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society and the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts conducts Brahms' *Tragic Overture*, three of his Hungarian Dances, and *Symphony No. 3 in F Op. 90*. Brahms' *Symphony No. 3* has been called the most perfect of his symphonies. Free. 7:30 pm at Talento Bilingue de Houston, 333 S. Jensen at Navigation. For information: 281/586-2100.

20 & 21 (Fri. & Sat.)

Get Stupid. Her second presentation in Texas, Claude Wampler blurs the boundaries between visual and performance art with a new project—*Stable (Stupidity Project Part 10)*—tailor made for the Lone Star State. Dance, sculpture, photography, and sound combine and reflect upon each other to create an interdependent experience. Performances at 8 pm at DiverseWorks, 1117 East Fwy off Main at Naylor. For information: 713/223-8346 or www.diverseworks.org.

20-22 (Fri.-Sun.)

Peace Out. "Renewing our Connections: Exploring the Spirituality and Practice of Active Nonviolence" examines violence, nonviolence, social change, community building, and methods of fostering local action planning. The workshop is endorsed by Decade of Nonviolence-Houston and the Fellowship of

Reconciliation. Tuition to the workshop includes six vegetarian meals and snacks, lodging, and a *From Violence to Wholeness* course book. \$200 (scholarships available). 1 pm Friday through 4 pm Sunday at Blackwood Retreat Center, six miles north of Hempstead. For information: 713/699-8424, 979/830-5210, bbhardt@mail.esc4.com, or albrightv@yahoo.com.

24 (Tue.)

Heinz 57. Noted conductor and composer and world premiere oboist Heinz Holliger has a zeal for both baroque and contemporary works. Among Holliger's setlist are a few sonatas from Czech Baroque master Jan Dismas Zelenka, a contemporary of Bach known for his harmonic inventiveness. \$30. 7:30 pm at the Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross St. For information: 713/524-5050 or www.dacamera.com.

28 (Sat.)

Run for the Bulls. Hey cowboy and cowgirls, who's up for a fun-run? The 17th annual ConocoPhillips Rodeo Run includes a 10K race and a 5K fun run and walk and is expected to lead the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Parade with 6,000 participants from around the country. Both races begin together in downtown Houston and end at Minute Maid Park. Race entry fees benefit the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Educational Fund. Race ya. \$20 (\$25 for late entries). Race starts at 9:50 am at the corner of Louisiana and Texas Ave. For information: 281/293-2447 or www.conocophilipsrodeorun.com.

28 (Sat.)

Musical Stereotypes. Baroque composers had a penchant for musically encapsulating countries and cultures. The Mercury Baroque Ensemble's *Parade of Nations* takes a look at some composers' dulcet

impersonations of Italy, Spain, Turkey, and the Americas. Composers on the list include Corbett, Rameau, Couperin, and Telemann. 7:30 pm at the Hobby Center's Zilkha Hall. For tickets and information: 713/315-2525 or www.MercuryBaroqueEnsemble.org.

28 & 29 (Sat. & Sun.)

Hints from Eloize. In the relatively new tradition of artsy acrobatic circuses with French names and themed shows, Cirque Eloize presents *Nomade*. This surreal carnival for the soul journeys along the highways, byways, and (farm-to-market) roads of the imagination. The timeline of this physically whimsical fantasy begins at dusk and ends at dawn. Singing, juggling, tumbling, dancing. All in a day's work. \$18.50-\$72. Saturday 3 pm and 8 pm, Sunday 3 pm at the Grand 1894 Opera House, Galveston, 2020 Postoffice St. For tickets: 409/765-1894 or 800/821-1894 or www.thegrand.com.

29 (Sun.)

You See Your Gypsy... apologies for the Stevie →



COMPULSION

Directed by Richard Fleischer, this 1959 film is based on a novel about the infamous Leopold and Loeb case of the '20s wherein two wealthy Chicago men, played by a young Dean Stockwell (pictured, left) and Bradford Dillman, murder a young boy for sport. The two confess to the police and the papers, then find an attorney who struggles to keep them out of capital punishment. Represented by Clarence Darrow in real life (famous for his work in the Scopes "monkey trial"), the killers' onscreen mouthpiece is the flamboyant Jonathan Wilk (Orson Welles). John M. Clum examines this film in chapter five of his book *He's All Man: Learning Masculinity, Gayness, and Love from American Movies*. The title of the chapter is "Gay Killers." *Compulsion* plays Saturday, February 21, 6 pm, at Houston's Museum of Fine Arts. \$6. Info: 713/639-7515 or www.mfah.org/films. —ED

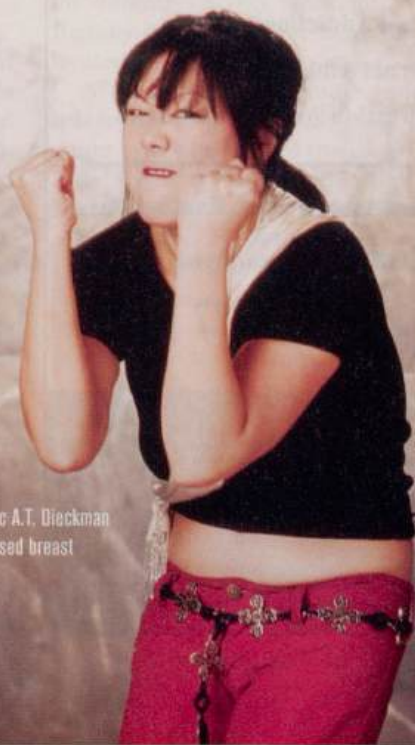
FIGHTING THE POWER, DEVELOPING MATERIAL

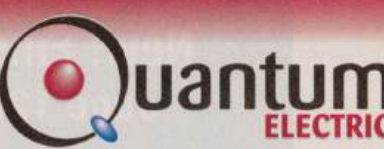
On her last few tours, Margaret Cho has entertained crowds both GLBT and straight from a distance at huge rooms like The Verizon Theater. This time, she returns to a more intimate club setting at The Improv, Houston's new branch of the famous chain of national comedy A-rooms. • Why return to a comedy club? She's developing material for a new tour, like *The Notorious C.H.O.* The new subject matter will not be as ribald as the last tour. "I don't even know what it's going to be yet," she told us. "It's going to be pretty topical, according to what's happening in the news," especially the war in Iraq. This subject has become the hot topic. Henry Rollins's current spoken-word tour covers it, too. But Cho's new show will not be 100% political. "Why can this heterosexual girl [Britney Spears] get married and have it annulled immediately as a joke? Yet gay couples want that and have wanted it for years and don't see it as a joke."

—Eric A.T. Dieckman

Also at The Improv in February February 12-15: Jake Johannsen with special guest Maria Bamford, with OutSmart's own Eric A.T. Dieckman as the opening act. The show on the 12th is a special fundraiser arranged by Dieckman to benefit Pink Ribbons Project, a locally based breast cancer awareness group. • February 19-22: Paul Rodriguez. • February 26-29: Earthquake.

What: Margaret Cho
When: Feb. 6, 8 & 10:30 p.m., Feb. 7, 7 & 9 p.m.
Where: The Improv, Marq*E Center, 7620 Katy Fwy @ Silber
How much? \$27 **Info:** 713/333-8800, www.improvhouston.com or www.margaretocho.com





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Nicks lyrics. Part of the Society for the Performing Arts International Series, *Gypsy Spirit*, Journey of the Roma takes the audience down the historic route of the Gypsy, from India through Europe, in a celebration of passionate dance, legendary music, and mysterious traditions. A people reviled for ages in Europe presents itself in a heartwarming evening of cultural exchange. 7 pm at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. For information and tickets: 713/227-45PA or www.spahouston.org.

29 (Sun.)

Music and Memory. Da Camera seems to always be there for impoverished music lovers, with free music events hither and thither. The first of their two free events at the Menil, *Charles Ives: Music and Memory*, finds the award-winning Miro' Quartet exploring Charles Ives' concepts of remembering through musical "snapshots" in his String Quartet No. 1 "From the Salvation Army." Anthony Brandt, professor of composition and theory at Rice University, precedes the quartet's open rehearsal with a brief talk. 3 pm at The Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross St. For information: 713/524-5050 or www.dacamera.com.

PLANNING AHEAD

MARCH

March 6 (Sat.)

H.M.S. Pinafare. Let your ship sail the ocean blue and remain an Englishman. Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera sets sail in the Galveston harbor one night only. For whom will the lovely Josephine pledge her troth, the noble Sir Joseph Porter or the lowly seaman Ralph? \$18.50-\$63. 3 and 8 pm at the Grand 1894 Opera House, Galveston, 2020 Postoffice St. For tickets: 409/765-1894 or 800/821-1894 or www.thegrand.com.

March 9-14 (Tue.-Sun.)

Rent. The rockin' youthful musical based loosely on

the century-old opera *La Boheme* returns to Houston for just under a week. Join the Greenwich Village gaggle of bohos and starving artists as they struggle with their dreams and embrace life. \$24.25-\$56.25. At Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. For tickets: 713/629-3700 or www.broadwaycrossamerica.com or www.ticketmaster.com.

PERFORMING ARTS

Birthday from Hell. The uproariously funny Fertle family faces more travails. About to turn 40, Bridgette Fertle finds herself stuck in midlife crisis. To make things worse, none of the Fertles seem to remember her birthday. To make things spooky, Mama Fertle believes she's been visited by her late husband, Ned. On a brighter note, the Fertle family simp, Earl, is inducted into The High Order of Little Baby Owls. The amazing thing is that all these characters, and countless more, are played—seamlessly—by a cast of three. \$18. Through May 15. Thursday and Friday at 8:30; Saturday at 8 and 10:30 pm at Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt (off Richmond & Kirby). Tickets: 713/522-7722.

Dancing in Harlem. Aaron Callies' story, a song-and-dance celebration of Harlem's early days, promises loads of gut-level entertainment. Through February 14, 7 pm, at The Musical Theatre of Houston, 311 W. 18th St. For more information, call 713/868-2566 or e-mail Curtainup@webtv.net.

Fallen Angels. Noel Coward wrote this bold tale about Julia and Jane, best friends and former sweethearts of the dreamy Frenchman Maurice. Whilst their huddles are away playing a round of golf, the two friends wait for their beloved Maurice to make an appearance. February 6-March 13 at the Company OnStage, 536 Westbury Square. For tickets: 713/726-1219 or www.companyonstage.org.

House of Yes. In Wendy McLeod's story of family dysfunction, eccentricity, and kink, Marty Pascal brings home his new fiancée for Thanksgiving. But what's going on between Marty and his jealous sis, Jackie O? Brotherly-sisterly love goes a little too far in this darkly hysterical show. Directed by Joe Angel Babb, who directed *The 8*, a sickly humorous Christmas story last year about lesbian reindeer and a Santa consumed with pedophilic bestiality. February 6-29 at Stages, 3201 Allen Parkway, Thursdays at 7:30 pm, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm, and Sundays at 3 p.m. For tickets: 713-547-0440 or www.u-p.org.

The Jury. This musical written by local authors Diana Howie and Anna Fay Williams places 12 angry citizens in that hated seat of public service, jury duty. Howie has had nine plays presented locally as well as in Chicago, Edinburgh, and Vienna. Director John Garrett has spent the past three years studying under and working with Stuart Ostrow at the University of Houston's renowned Musical Theatre Lab. \$10. February 20-March 6 at The Country Playhouse, 12802 Queensbury (Town and Country Village Shopping Center near Beltway 8). For tickets: 713/467-4497.

The Last Five Years. This intensely personal look at the relationship between a writer and an actress is told from both points of view, goes against the grain of the usual musical theater formulas and ushers in a unique musical score. Through February 14, 5 & 8 pm at Theater LaB Houston, 1706 Alamo. Tickets: 713/868-7516.

The Magic Flute. Mozart's captivating favorite tells the story of Princess Pamina and Prince Tamino, who falls in love with her. \$19 and up. Through February 15 @ Wortham Theater Center's Brown Theater, Texas Ave. at Smith St. For information: 713/228-OPERA, 1-800-62-OPERA, or www.houstongrandopera.org.

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The history of America and the history of country music are both documented and paralleled in this visually stunning IMAX film. Historical footage is edited with breathtaking images of the mountains of Appalachia, the Grand Ole Opry, and the deserts of California. Featured artists include Dolly Parton, retro-country boys Asleep at the Wheel, Guy Clark, Loretta Lynn, and Houston's own Lyle Lovett. Through June 7 at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. For information: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

♦ **Red Scare on Sunset.** McCarthy's regime blackballed more celebs than Marilyn Monroe blueballed adolescent moviegoers. Hollywood was shaken like an unruly child in a search for fascist acting coaches, communist screenwriters, and sympathizing actors. All the while, fanatic flag-waving radio personalities cried for bigger and bigger witchhunts. Charles Busch's satire finds the relevance of this era of paranoia in our current age of fear of terrorists and diminished personal security. \$10 (\$5 for students). February 13-21 at Rice University, Hamman Hall. For tickets: 713/348-PLAY.

♦ **Symphony of Rats.** Richard Foreman, the undisputed inheritor of Eugene Ionesco's legacy of the absurd, can be described as hysterical yet devastating, nonsensical yet completely honest. In this particular play, Infernal Bridegroom Productions presents a U.S. president who cannot think or speak for himself (relevance, anyone?) who receives his instructions from outer space or maybe God. Who knows. Nonetheless, robots, spacemen, and presidential advisors indulge in moments of psychic outburst and deflation. \$10-\$15. February 19-March 13 at The Axiom, 2524 McKinney. Tickets: 713/522-8443 or www.infernalbridegroom.com.

♦ **TEXAS: The Big Picture.** Anyone who's Texas-proud and is looking to convert a few unbelievers will find this Texacentric film handy. Narrated by native Texan Colby Donaldson (of *Survivor: The Australian Outback*) who grew up on a ranch in the small town of Christoval in West Texas, TEXAS portrays the Lone Star State in all its cinematic beauty, from her rugged mountains to her serene plains to her majestic city skylines and all her diverse inhabitants therein. Through June 7 at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. For information: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

♦ **Three Mo' Tenors.** While listening to the famed Three Tenors venture beyond the classical genre, Broadway director Marion J. Caffey felt inspiration. The abilities of black operatic tenors to sing pop, gospel, blues, Broadway showtunes, and scat through jazz (not

THE PRODUCERS

Mel Brooks's hilarious film cum hysterical (and most awarded in Broadway history) musical makes its way to Houston with some new cast members. Lewis J. Stadlen returns from his run on Broadway to play Max Bailystock, the role he originated for the national tour (pictured at right). Alan Ruck (pictured below), who played alongside Matthew Broderick as Cameron Frye in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, assumes the role of Leo Bloom, originally played by Broderick on Broadway. \$36.25-\$71.25. Showtimes vary. February 3-22 at the Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. For tickets: 713/629-3700 or www.broadwayacrossamerica.com and www.ticketmaster.com. —ED



to mention opera) is breathtaking. An African American himself, Caffey assembled Victor Trent Cook, Rodrick Dixon, and Thomas Young to span over four centuries of music. February 27 & 28, 8 pm, at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. For information and tickets: 713/227-4SPA or www.spahouston.org.

♦ **Topdog/Underdog.** Lincoln and Booth are brothers, named by their father as a poorly chosen joke. The Pulitzer Prize-winning story of these two brothers, both three-card monte hustlers, digs deep into the existential dilemmas of being African-American and male in the United States. In this dizzying dance of brotherly love and hate, the balance of power keeps changing, with their ability to harm each other unending—they aren't named Lincoln and Booth for nothing. Through February 15 at The Alley's Neuhaus Stage, 615 Texas Ave. For tickets and information: 713/228-8421 or www.alleytheatre.org.

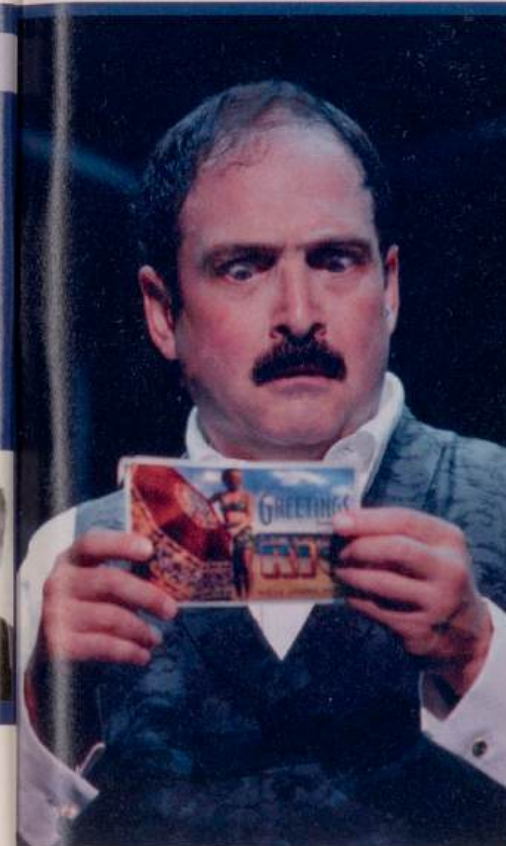
♦ **Twelfth Night.** Some of Shakespeare's most memorable characters and moments are found in this romantic comedy. Gender-bending, mistaken identity, duplicity, love discombobulated, and high comedy abound in this classic tale. February 20-March 14 at the Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. For tickets: 713/228-8421 or www.alleytheatre.org.

PERFORMING ARTS

For Young People

♦ **From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler.** Claudia Kinkaid and her brother Jamie run away from home. And where do they go? The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (What?) When Claudia and Jamie discover a statue titled Angel, their adventurous research to learn its origin leads them to the door of a strong-willed, eccentric lady. See this one with your kids, then regale the wee ones with tales of your own childhood escapades in various museums of fine art (and hope they don't decide you're a geek). \$5 for kids under 12, \$6 for everybody else. Thursday, February 26, 7 pm, at the Grand 1894 Opera House, Galveston, 2020 Postoffice St. For tickets: 409/765-1894 or 800/821-1894 or www.thegrand.com.

♦ **The Snow Queen.** The iniquitous Snow Queen has separated Gerda and Kai. Gerda risks everything to res-



cue Kai from the Snow Queen's ice palace in this tale of love and redemption adapted from the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale. Through March 6 at The Company Onstage, 536 Westbury Square, 713/726-1219.

RADIO

♦ **After Hours.** Saturdays, midnight to 3 am. Featuring the QM2 (Queen Music Zone) with Jimmy Carper. KPFT 90.1 FM, 713/526-5738.

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

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

♦ **Grass.** Heather Ackroyd and Dan Harvey use grass as a photographic medium, so much that they collaborated with the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research to develop a genetically engineered strain of grass called SO-GREEN (copyright) that can hold the artists' work for years rather than a few weeks like standard grasses. The two will use this untraditional medium to create a site-specific installation at Rice University Art Gallery. Through February 29 at Rice Gallery, Sewall Hall, Entrance 1. Info: 713/348-6069 or www.ricegallery.org.

♦ **In Pursuit of the Absolute.** Monochrome and non-objective works of greats such as Lucio Fontana, Yves Klein, Barnett Newman, and Mark Rothko are featured in this exploration of abstract art of the 20th century. The focus of these artists is on an art free from the constraints of narrative and recognizable imagery. Through February 29, 2004, @ the Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. Info: 713/524-9400 or www.menil.org.

♦ **Painting an Empty Sky.** A mural was created to commemorate the Space Shuttle Columbia astronauts who died February 1, 2003. The mural is the work of children of the astronauts and art students from Clear Creek I.S.D. who began working on it in the early

NATIONAL TOUR FUN FACTS

- ♦ 404 costumes
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- ♦ 400 props
- ♦ 27 actors
- ♦ 3 stage managers
- ♦ 28 traveling crew members
- ♦ 16 horny little old ladies
- ♦ 24 orchestra members
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- ♦ 12—most hair changes by one chorus member
- ♦ 10 semi-trucks to travel
- ♦ 3 company pets and one black cat
- ♦ 9 official show-birds
- ♦ 80 gallons of water consumed by cast in one week
- ♦ 24 Dixon Ticonderoga pencils
- ♦ 75 loads of laundry
- ♦ 40 lap shoes
- ♦ 22 Hitler moustaches
- ♦ 2,000 hairpins used per week
- ♦ 2 wheelchairs
- ♦ 6 broken-leg casts
- ♦ 1 trick sausage

summer. The preliminary sketches and plans are also on display. February 9-March 12, 9-5 pm Monday-Friday, at the Glassell Junior School, 5100 Montrose Blvd. For information: 713/639-7700.

♦ **Passport to the Universe.** This is not the dinky star show you went to as a kid. Academy Award-winner Tom Hanks narrates this full-dome, high-definition video at the Burke Baker Planetarium. *Passport to the Universe* brings you close-up views of star fields and planets through a virtual re-creation of our universe. Take the kids, bring the visiting relatives, or treat yourself to something just as entertaining as it is educational. \$5 (\$3.50 kids 3-11 & seniors 62+). At the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Info: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

♦ **Print Auction.** Need to enliven those walls with art? Houston Center for Photography presents its annual auction of print photography. View their electronic auction catalog at their website to find your picks, or pics, in advance. With over 100 photos to choose from—abstracts, portraits, still lifes, and famous fine-art photographers like William Wegman—there's probably something you'll want to take home. \$35 in advance, \$40 at the door. Tuesday, February 10, Buffet and preview at 6 pm, live auction begins at 7 pm at SP Martel Auditorium, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 3511 Yoakum Blvd. For tickets and information: 713/529-4755 or www.hcponline.org.

♦ **Splendid Creatures.** This exhibition of oil on canvas by Larry Knapp is full of vibrant color and representations of nature's creatures. If you're looking for something big, this show might do the trick. Knapp's paintings average 50x60. February 6-March 6 at Gallery 3, 1101 E Fwy. For information: 713/236-8535. ■

CALENDAR DEADLINE

for OutSmart's March issue:
Wednesday,
February 11, 5 p.m.

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH MASSAGE

Business News

Jack Richardson III

(r) has joined *OutSmart* magazine as advertising and marketing specialist. Richardson's experience includes 14 years in radio in Austin, Houston, and Victoria. He most recently worked at KHM-FM Mix 96.5 as director of programming. His responsibilities included marketing concepts and strategies, concert and event marketing, and charity fundraising. In the community, Richardson volunteers with KPFT-FM 90.1, the Sierra Club, and groups that work for human rights, health-care reform, and environmental protection. Richardson can be reached at Jack@outsmartmagazine.com or 713/520-7237.



Pamala Oslie, the author of *Life Colors* and *Make Your Dreams Come True*, visits Houston to give workshops on February 10-12. Oslie will speak on "Your Aura Colors—What They Say About You" at **Body, Mind & Soul Bookstore** (4344 Westheimer) on February 10, 7-8:30 p.m. On February 11, 7-9:30 p.m., the Santa Barbara-based psychic will again give her aura workshop at **Dakota Gallery** (2324 Shearn). Oslie will present her workshop "Our New Reality" on February 12, 7-9:30 p.m., at Dakota Gallery. The fees are \$30 for the February 10 event, and \$45 in advance (\$55 at the door) for the February 11 and 12 events. More info: 805/687-6604 or www.Auracolors.com.

Joe Marcinkowski will soon open a new **Metro Retro Furniture** location at 1665 Westheimer and Dunlavy. Dedicated to mid-century modern furnishings, Metro Retro sells original vintage pieces and reproductions by some of the era's famous furniture designers, including Charles and Ray Eames, George Nelson, Jean Pruvé, Arne Jacobsen, and Isamu Noguchi. Owner Marcinkowski collects furniture from the mid-20th century and often locates specific pieces for other avid collectors. Metro Retro's warehouse is located at 405 Preston in Pasadena. At press time, the new store (in the former Houston Futon location) was set to open on March 1. Contact Marcinkowski at joe@metroretrofurniture.com or 713/473-0000.



J. Todd Partridge (l) of **Partridge Properties** has received the prestigious Certified International Property Specialist (CIPS) designation, presented by the National Association of Realtors. Partridge joins a worldwide referral network of global real-estate practitioners with expertise in working with international clients. Partridge

Properties specializes in residential sales in Houston's close-in neighborhoods as well as commercial representation across the metropolitan area. The Partridge international division assists buyers with property acquisition and consulting primarily in Mexico. Partridge Properties is located at 3230 Yoakum Blvd. The phone numbers are 713/528-1184 and 800/528-1184.



Ken Claude
in his new studio.

Ken Claude, voted Best Massage Therapist in the latest Gayest & Greatest reader survey ("So Gay, So Great," October 2003) has moved his studio to a new facility, located between Montrose and River Oaks. He now offers showers for clients who need to return to work after appointments. Contact Claude at 713/240-9598. ■



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OutSmart's own Eric A.T. Dieckman (pictured) is the opening act for Jake Johannsen (with special guest Maria Bamford) for this special fundraiser arranged by Dieckman to benefit Pink Ribbons Project, a locally based breast cancer awareness group.

Thursday, February 12 • Doors open at 6:30 p.m., show at 8:30
The Improv Houston • 7620 Katy Freeway in MarqE Center • 713.333.8800
100% of the \$15 ticket price benefits Pink Ribbons Project.
 (There is a minimum purchase of two items in the showroom.)

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2/5-2/8	KPFT Election Ballot Count	2/13	In Our Own Write Poetry Night
2/5	Men of All Colors Together Organizational Meeting	2/19	NO HATE Houston Area Tolerance Education
2/7	Reality Selling with Mattison Grey	2/21	Positive Art Workshop Silent Auction Benefit at davidlewisIMAGES/Midtown Photography
2/8	Freedom To Marry Day Media Training		

Plus: American Veterans for Equal Rights, Bi-Net Houston, Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce, Houston Big Men's Club, Houston Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, Lesbian Film Night Lesbian Coming Out Group, Mending & Stitching, New Covenant Christian Church, PFLAG Houston, Q-Patrol, S.I.S.T.E.R.S., STAG (Some Transgenders Are Guys), Team Houston, Texas Association for Transsexual Support, University of Houston GLOBAL, Women's Game Night

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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 at 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 NEW BARN/G-SPOT

This three-in-one women's bar provides a place to two-step, rock, or chat. Check out the 9 p.m.-1 a.m. open mic night on Thursday. Women-fronted bands perform every Saturday. 1100 Westheimer • 713/523-7217 • www.chancesbar.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 • 713/666-7310 • 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 TOYZ

Latin house, hip hop, salsa, and merengue flavor this Southwest Houston nightclub. On Friday, Cookie LaCook hosts Ladies Night catering to the over-25 African American lesbian crowd. 5322 Glenmont • 713/668-4892.

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.

BEHIND THE BAR

WHO: German Gutierrez

WHERE: Montrose Mining Company (805 Pacific,

713/529-7488)

WHAT'S UP: Check out the

Mining Company on Friday

and Saturday nights for the

800 Pacific Block Party, with

drink-price promotions alternating

among the Mine, Santa Fe, and

JR's Bar & Grill, ending at South

Beach with no cover between

10:30 and 11 p.m.

THOMAS CHILENA

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.

DECADES

Celebrating its fourth year in business, this casual neighborhood bar packs lots of local color. Decades regularly hosts pool tournaments and benefit events. 1205 Richmond • 713/521-2224.

EJ's

Located on the western front of Montrose, EJ's retains the charm of a local colorful hangout. Nightly shows, including community benefits, pack the stage. The upstairs martini bar offers a quiet retreat. 2517 Ralph • 713/527-9071.

GUAVA LAMP

Every Thursday is Cabaret Night, featuring Jerry Atwood and Kim Yvette, at this stylish Shepherd Plaza video club. Karaoke fans show up on Wednesday and Sunday nights. 2159 Portsmouth • 713/524-3359 • www.guavalamp.com.

JR's/SANTA FE

This Montrose standard offers features from pool tables, table dancers, to karaoke. Look for Carol Gilford 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.

MANGO VIDEO LOUNGE

Located next to Club Inergy, this new Wednesday-Saturday spot has a 15-foot video screen, dance floor, and pool tables. DJ Kenny Jammz hosts karaoke night on Wednesday. 5742 Chimney Rock • 713/666-7472.

MARY'S

One of the oldest clubs in Houston, Mary's shuttered briefly last 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 of 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 Genesee • 713/521-0123 • www.meteorhouston.com.

MICHAEL'S OUTPOST

Minutes from 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

Two outdoor balconies allow patrons to watch the passing parade on Pacific. A sleek interior and multiple plasma screens distinguish this spot, which stays open after hours on weekends. 710 Pacific • 713/523-0213.

PEARL

Promoter Eduardo Elizondo now hosts a Thursday gay night at this swanky new club in the downtown club district. Hop on the

Metro train and head north. 310 Main • 713/528-5736 • www.pearlhouston.com.

PRIVÉ

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.

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.

RIPCORD

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/levi/uniform crowd. 715 Fairview • 713/521-2792 • www.ripcordjournal.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 • 713/526-7070.

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.

VIVIANA'S

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

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 • www.blvdsaloongalveston.com.

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 the 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

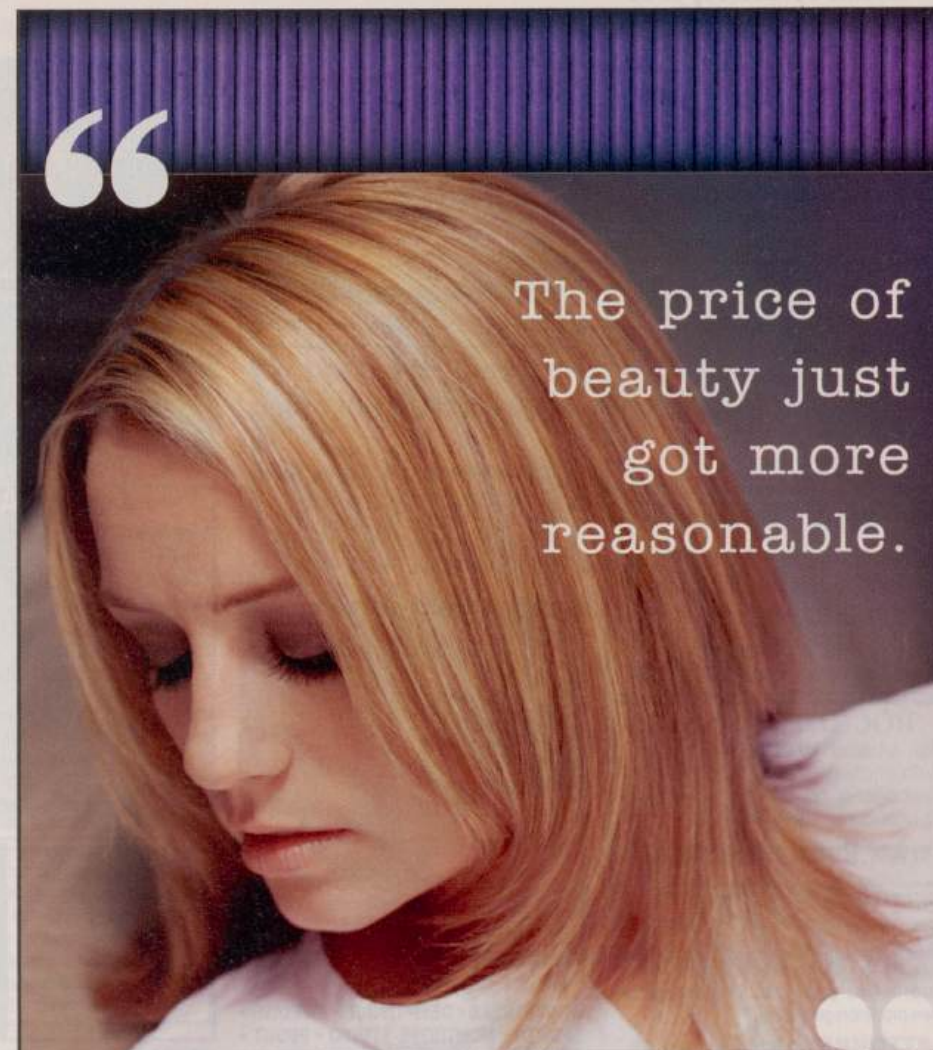
Formerly known as Mary's Place, this club recently changed hands and name. Miss Olivia Gardener hosts Talent Night on Tuesday. On Sunday, Latino Night includes Latin music and an all-Latino illusionist show. 485 Crockett • 409/832-4944.

HOOLIGAN'S

Though primarily a women's bar, this just-opened club is open to all. Features include karaoke night on Wed. & frequent live music, especially on Fridays & Saturdays. 6025 Martin Luther King • 409/832-0808.

Have bar or club news?

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As we begin this month, the energies are tense, laced with confusions. As we get closer to the 18th, when the Sun enters Pisces, the energies get a bit lighter. The full Moon is on the 5th in Leo. This will stir people to be more ego-centered. Some will share their light, and others will want all the light focused on them. The new Moon is on the 20th in Pisces. This is an especially significant new Moon, which will still the adventuresome energy in people. Some will rebel, and others will feel trapped. On the 25th, the Moon and Mars eclipse each other. This can bring up hidden agendas or repressed anger. Keep clear and open on this day. • The Sun enters Pisces on the 18th. Mercury goes from Capricorn to Aquarius on the 6th and into Pisces on the 25th. Venus begins the month in Pisces and runs into Aries on the 8th. Mars finishes his journey in Aries on the 3rd and enters Taurus. The rest of the planets are happy where they are—Jupiter in Virgo, Saturn in Cancer, Uranus in Pisces, Neptune in Aquarius, and Pluto in Sagittarius. • Good days for fun are the 6th, 10th, 11th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 25th, 26th, 27th, and 28th. Days to call in sick are the 1st, 2nd, 9th, 14th, 15th, and 24th.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). This month you are motivated to be more interactive with your friends and group associations. You are still looking to use your time wisely even if you are doing social things. And you are pushing forward at work, seeking to get organized. At the core of this is your desire to have a solid and stable emotional and financial base to work from. Everything must have a place in your life, or you will be eliminating it from your “to do” list.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). After the 3rd, when Mars enters your sign, you move out of the relaxed state you have been in and get into action mode. This is a good month to start new projects and confront things in your life that aren't working. You may not sleep as well. Exercise could help you relieve some tension. Relationships at work and at home are especially tense on the 9th, 15th, and 24th. Watch what you say or do on these dates, as the effect can have a long-term affect.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). You are looking at your world in the big picture view, trying to find the connections and relationships between yourself and everything and everybody that you



A professional astrologer for 20 years, Lilly Roddy counsels individuals and teaches classes. Her web-site is www.hermesfoot.com.



PISCES (February 19–March 20). As the month opens, you are getting a brief respite from all the planets, forcing you out into the open. You have been living on the edge, trying to find your center. This month you are supposed to pull back and recharge your batteries. By the last week of the month, you are back into full gear. Expect career, relationships, home, and you to all change this year. Just remember to answer the question “What do I want?”

are connected to. As you get more into the month, your focus shifts to your career and how well it fits and enhances your creativity. And if you aren't happy, your boredom level is going to increase. You could be very edgy on the 14th, 15th, 21st, and 26th. Look for some outlets so the universe doesn't have to create them for you.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). February is the month for sexual and intimacy renewal for you and your partner. You are interested in uncovering the hidden desires that attract or push you apart. This is not a good year for avoidance in every area of your life. The buck stops with you. Setting boundaries and goals, you will strive to achieve those endeavors. And you are more likely to draw the line between friends and acquaintances.

LEO (July 23–August 22). Relationships are spotlighted this month. If you are in one, you will want more time and attention from your partner. If you are not in one, you will be out on the prowl looking. This can be a great time for a weekend getaway. In business relationships, this is a time to sit and see if you both are on the same path. Work can be tense. And there could be problems with bosses if you feel they are squashing your individuality. Try to keep a good perspective.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). This is the month to get your workplace in order. You are just not able to live with all the chaos around you. It is making you feel trapped. The only way to make it better is to clean it up. Relationship desires are triggered by mid-month. You certainly have extra magnetism this year, and people are being drawn to you. This is a good time to promote

yourself, business, ideas, or some plans that you have for the future.

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). You are in a no-nonsense mood. You are looking for clear directions in your career and relationships. You are reassessing where you are going. You are especially mentally creative this month. And you can find solutions to problems right out of thin air. By mid-month, you are getting your work and home places cleaned up and organized. You are not as easygoing as you once appeared to be.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). Peace and quiet at home and relationship stability are coming to a head. It seems you have to sacrifice one for the other. And in the past, no matter the compromise, you couldn't get both. You will find the solutions that put you back in control on the 6th, 9th, 15th, and 24th. Those will be irritable days, but you will make a choice that is best for you. The last week of the month is finally easier, but you will need some rest.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). There are three things on your “to do” list this month. And those are financial security, making sure you are heard, and not being trapped by the BS in your life. Your friends may wonder where that happy-go-lucky Sag they knew went to. You will tell them that the evil twin is here to clean things up. Your communications may seem too sharp and blunt to others. But you will not be apologizing. You are feeling the urge to move. Travel will help relieve some of the pressure. Don't be trapped by your routines.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). You are very focused on money and financial security this month. You will want a handle on how you spend your money and how that promotes your long-term goals. Relationships are tense this year. Basically, you and your partner need to sit down and figure out where y'all are headed. A clear plan must emerge, or you will go your separate ways. You are more flexible in your conversations by mid-month. So don't push for a solution. Allow one to develop.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). This is your personal yearly cycle, birthday time, or solar return (as we say in the astrology biz). It is normally a time of reassessment of the past and consideration of future plans. This year, what you do must fulfill your inner dreams, or you will find yourself adrift at sea. Some of you will direct your energy toward home and creating a safe place to come to at the end of the day. And some will seek that inner harmony for the whole year. Try to keep your options open, as you will want to change your choices often. ■



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OUT IN HOUSTON



1 Sharon Montgomery (r) and Terry Pierce vamped for the Dec. 4 Christmas SongFest crowd at the Hornberger Conference Center. Proceeds benefited The Assistance Fund and Houston Buyers Club.



2 On Dec. 1, Roy Green spoke at the city World AIDS Day observance in Jones Plaza.



3 Sue Schecter (r) and Arthur Schecter attended the AIDS Foundation World AIDS Day luncheon at the Houstonian.



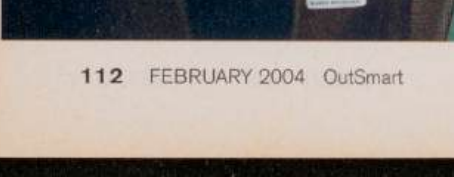
4 Marc Hill (l) and Alan Flambert attended the Dec. 7 BCBC Red Ribbon Toy Drive event at the Lovett Inn.



5 Rocky Atwood (l) and Alan Balla attended the Dec. 4 Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce holiday party at Kilworth Manor.



6 Gary Bristow (l) and Gary Teixeira admired one of the wreaths at the Nov. 7 DIFFA Holiday Collection event at Hotel Derek.



7 Adrain Bowie (l-r), Helen Guzman, and Brenda McClure attended the Dec. 6 S.I.S.T.E.R.S. holiday party at the Houston GLBT Community Center.

8 At its Dec. 7 25th-anniversary open house, Montrose Counseling Center honored five individuals with awards: John Coulter (l-r), Stella Scott Award; Brian Carlson, H.A.T.C.H. Award; U.S. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, the first Ed Eaton Award for Public Service to the GLBT and HIV-positive communities; Mohammad Virani, student of the year; and Lori Hidalgo, employee of the year.

9 Eston Hensley (l-r), Dane Tidwell, and Donnie Mohler performed at the Dec. 8 Gay Men's Chorus of Houston concert at Wortham Center.

More SceneOut page 114



All photos: Dalton Dehart

Making a Monster continued from page 64

it's been really hard watching that. I think that it's really too bad after being on set and being so blown away by Christina, to see her not get the credit she deserves," Jenkins said.

"Even more than that is Christina's bravery in taking this role. It's almost the bravest thing that happened in the whole film, because it's not the glory role, it's not an attractive role, but it's crucial to the story. And it's the hardest thing for me now, when people don't get the enormity of her performance. Christina is unbelievable in the movie."

When asked about Annie Corley, who plays a small, supporting role as Selby's fundamentalist Christian cousin, Jenkins answers enthusiastically, "Isn't she amazing? I'm so glad you bring her up, because so few people do, and she's just incredible."

The song "Don't Stop Believing" plays over the film's closing credits, a seemingly odd choice. "When I put it in, I knew it was going to be cheesy to some people, but I was absolutely serious. That was one of Aileen's favorite songs. The film ends with her walking out into the light to her own execution, but with the song we get a sense of the hope she still has. You know, there was no more going back to 'She's innocent, she didn't do it, she didn't deserve it.' But that didn't mean she didn't have some sense of hope."

"I don't think she ever stopped believing. As testament to that, and it makes me tear up just to think about it, the night before she was executed, in one of the last conversations she ever had, she gave her blessing to open up every letter she had ever written to us. She was really skeptical about me, about the film, about anyone telling her story. And the night before she was executed, after never believing me, after thinking that the film wouldn't happen, or that I wanted to take advantage of her, she decides to trust us with her letters."

Wournos was executed on October 9, 2002, after the Florida Supreme Court upheld her request to suspend her death penalty's automatic appeals. It's a day that Jenkins remembers vividly.

"It was one of the most horrible 24 hours of my entire life. We were just about to start shooting when she was executed. It was so crazy and then tortuous, because I knew she wanted to be executed. People were trying to stop her execution, and she was devas-

tated by that. I found myself having to support her being executed, because that was what she wanted.

"We were on the front page of all the [trade newspapers], with headlines saying 'Aileen's not five minutes in her grave and Charlize Theron's signed on to make a movie about her.' That was so cruel, so untrue."



Christina Ricci (l) as Tyria Moore in a loving embrace with her girlfriend Aileen Wournos (Theron)

"To make it worse, right after she was executed, which was a very somber moment for me, my phone started ringing off the hook with people saying 'Congratulations!' It was horrible," Jenkins said.

"We had to put all that aside and go to work on the film that we wanted to make, which was about the truth about Aileen's life, not the hype and the media frenzy that had been surrounding this story since the news about her and what she had done first broke."

"But that was going to be the tone of this whole experience. No one would believe it, nor could I spend my time trying to convince them what our true aims were in making this film. We just had to believe ourselves."

That belief seems to have paid off. Even before the film had opened in wide release, Charlize Theron received a Golden Globe Award best actress nomination for her performance. She went on to win at the January 25 award ceremony. During her acceptance speech, she thanked Jenkins, saying, "I wouldn't be up here if it wasn't for one person who took a chance on me, and that is the writer and director of this film, Patty Jenkins. There's only so much you can do, but if somebody doesn't give you the chance, there's nothing you can do, and you [turning to Jenkins] gave it to me. And you made me a promise when we started out. You said, 'No matter what anybody says, we'll stick together,' and you never broke that promise. And I am sharing this with you."

Jenkins says, "We didn't make this film to win awards, we made it to tell the truth about Aileen. And there's so much focus on winning, I find [the awards] all a little distasteful."

"Still, I do think Charlize deserves recognition, and the awards are homage to the work that she put into the film. That's what I'd like to see it as."

"I also think they're homage to Aileen. I don't mean homage to what she did in killing those men, but to what she did after that. In the courage it took to tell her own story, which even she understood was really pretty horrible."

"One of the details about Aileen that never got into the film was that on top of everything else, she never had a birthday. She was born on Leap Year, on February 29, so her birthday came only once every four years, and no one ever celebrated it. This year the Oscars land on her birthday. So the mere idea that a clip from her story might be shown at the Academy Awards for the whole



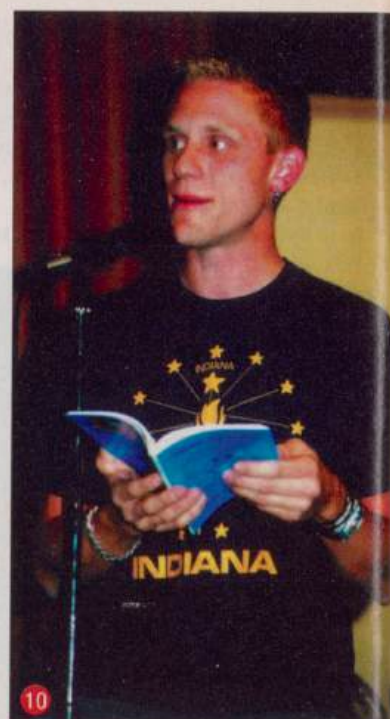
Theron thanks Jenkins in her acceptance speech at the 61st Annual Golden Globe Awards, which aired on NBC on January 25.

world to see, that is so beautiful for me. Not because we should praise what she did, but because we should honor the telling of truth."

Olivia Flores Alvarez is an arts and entertainment writer. She contributes often to OutSmart magazine and other Texas publications.

OUT IN HOUSTON

- 1 Heather Hughes (l) and René Zelt attended the Nov. 8 GoGirlsMusicFest concert.
- 2 Texas-bred Patrice Pike performed at the Rhythm Room show. Proceeds benefited Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls.
- 3 Susan Freeman (l-r), Brandi Untz, and Gin Klaren rooted for the Houston Energy at the Sept. 27 38-27 defeat of the Dallas Diamonds in Rice Stadium.
- 4 Jimmy Phillips (l) and Gary Rod starred in the Oct. 18 Halloween Magic show at the Homberger Conference Center, which raised funds for seven HIV/AIDS service organizations.
- 5 Brent Pendleton with Harley (l) and KHOU anchor Lisa Foronda with Bailey waited for their close-ups at photographer Pam Francis' Nov. 8 Portraits in the Park fundraiser for the Houston SPCA.
- 6 In October, the JPMorgan Chase PRIDE Team spruced up the Bering Omega Community Services dental clinic as part of the corporation's Global Days of Service program. The work day team included (front row, l-r) West Lutz, Izadora Martinez, Jeff Wallace, Noel Boado, and Bill Tarabula; (standing, l-r) Kent Beardsley, Chris Wilkinson, Frank York, Patty Cwalinski, Rusty Swisher, Yolanda Londono, Jerry Patrick, Ken Meyer, and Chuck Winkler.
- 7 Izadora Martinez worked a roller at the Oct. 25 PRIDE Team work day. Corporate donors to the effort included Aspen Carpeting, McCoy Inc., and Weller Cwalinski Art Consultants.
- 8 Philanthropist Monte Frost (c) received the Humanitarian Award at the Nov. 15 Houston Black Tie Dinner. Event co-chair Chree Boydston (l) and president Chris Lewis welcomed Frost to the podium at the Doubletree Post Oak.
- 9 Kathy Najimy (r), Houston Black Tie Dinner keynote speaker, posed with Precinct 6 constable officer Mark Timmers.
- 10 Todd Gressley read from his new poetry collection, *Indiana the Island*, at Helios on Sept. 24.



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OutSmart

10-Year Anniversary: 1994-2004

All this year, OutSmart celebrates its 10th anniversary with parties, prizes, promotions, and PRIDE!

Join us!

Feb 18 - OutSmart's 10th Anniversary Party



Celebrate our birthday with us! Join us at Meteor from 5:30 to 8 p.m. for cake, special promotions and announcements, and door prizes! Cash bar. Everyone is invited. RSVP: 713/520-7237.

OutSmart at the Improv



Join us on at the new Improv Houston on February 12, 8:30 p.m., for a night of comedy benefiting the Pink Ribbons Project, the breast-cancer awareness program. Our own Eric Dieckman will be the opening act for Jake Johannsen. \$15 with all proceeds supporting Pink Ribbons. More info: 713/333-880.

OutSmart's 3D Issue



In April, OutSmart literally stands out from the rest. Move over Mars rover. Pictures and ads will leap off the pages with 3D holographic imaging. This is one magazine sure to grab attention. Call 713/520-7237 by March 15 to be a part of all the 3D excitement!

OutSmart's 10th Anniversary Book



While you were making history, we wrote it down and took pictures. Don't worry, you look fabulous! This hardbound commemorative book spans the past 10 years of OutSmart and the community with articles, photos and features. This book will be kept for years to come. To include a memorial for a loved one or to enter your organization's salute to the GLBT community, call 713/520-7237.

OutSmart TravelSmart Getaway Giveaway



You go girl...and we'll send you there! Win travel and accommodations to top destinations and see some of the best GLBT travel spots in the world in the May OutSmart. Whether it's a quiet bed-and-breakfast weekend or a dance-till-you-drop party in San Francisco, you're bound to find the right destination for you and your partner.

OutSmart and OutProud! Pride 2004



Hot time, Pride in the city! Parties, parades, Empower, oh my! OutSmart shows its colors and covers the biggest annual celebration in Houston and hosts special Pride events! Read all about it and see the businesses that support you.

OutSmart's Gayest and Greatest Party



Vote for the best of what makes Houston's GLBT community so great. Tell everyone what places you love—the best places for fun, the best places for food, and the best places to put your gay money. In the October issue, see hundreds of categories that affect our life every day and the businesses that support our community. Then celebrate with OutSmart at a gala evening benefiting the community (details announced soon).



OutSmart's 2004 Photo Finish

You're going to be in pictures, kid! OutSmart wraps up the celebration year with a juried photography competition. Winning entrants will receive prizes and have their pictures displayed in an exhibition and published in a keepsake book. Rules and details will be announced soon.