

MAY 2004

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

Out Smart

Sharon Gless

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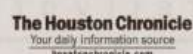
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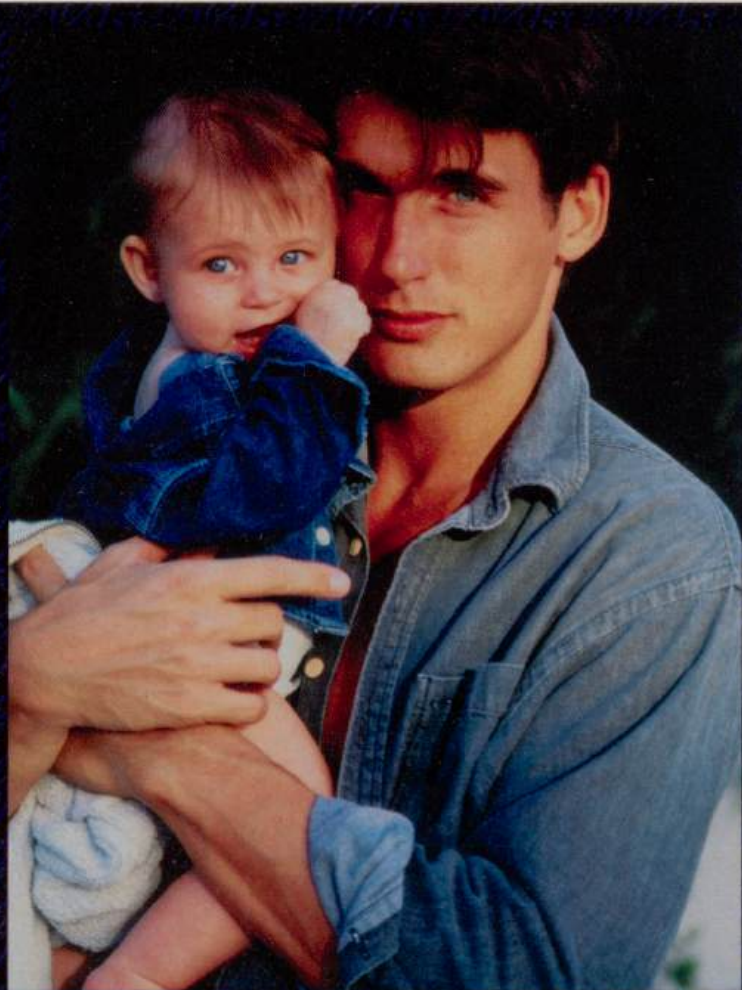
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Letters

3-D GLEE

As a sponsor of *OutSmart*'s 3-D issue [April 2004], I wanted to congratulate you on a job well done. BRAVO!

Everyone I have spoken to absolutely loved this innovative and exciting issue. This issue was a first of its kind for Houston, and I was proud to be both a sponsor and a reader.

The other day I walked into my favorite restaurant, and it was such a blast to see so many people reading their copy of *OutSmart* wearing the 3-D glasses with our logo on them. What a great concept. I can't wait for next year's 3-D issue! Thanks again for creating a quality magazine that provides invaluable information to our entire community.

Lea Bogle
Premier Wireless Solutions
Houston

I just wanted to pass along my laudatory comments about your recent publication. It was refreshing, innovative, and a thoroughly enjoyable illustration of the 3-D experience. The colors were so vivid, and the artwork complemented the 3-D theme. Good work, *OutSmart*!

Gary Teixeira
Houston

Congratulations, *OutSmart*, for putting it all into focus for us! What fun to see triple. Really cool.

David Kiser
Central Market sales manager
Houston

Central Market is a new distribution point for *OutSmart* magazine.

The *OutSmart* April issue—what a load of fun! I couldn't take my eyes off the pages as I perused the magazine from front to back and back to front again.

Actually, while I wore my 3-D glasses, I created a stir among folks passing by. I quickly noticed a crowd doing the *OutSmart* 3-D thing together with me. It was great fun, and it brought me together with a bunch of folks in the community.

Congratulations and thanks for this great issue and for all your good work over the last 10 years!

Robert Tomlin
Houston

Your k.d.lang issue with the 3-D glasses was so hip, so cool, so edgy, so *OutSmart*! Keep up the good work.

Ed Smith
Houston

SPLASHING AROUND

Hello, and thank you for doing the article on the Splash events ["OutFront," April]. This will be both



my wife's and my sixth year going. It's wonderful that this event is available to our community each year, although I wish there were more activities with dialogue year round. We are really looking forward to this event and are avid *OutSmart* readers. So, thank you for the article and keep up the good work.

Timberly Douglas and Tekeshia Parker
Houston

611 911

I noticed a small writeup about commending the 611 Club in your March 2004 issue ["Business News"]. You mentioned the growth of the bar over the past 20 years, the added features of a train and organ, and the community benefits the bar churns out. All of these items are respectable in their own regards, but *OutSmart* sincerely has failed to represent the true glowing features of this "club." I recommend you, or anyone else for that matter, to spend any given evening in close proximity of this building and take note of the hustlers, street kids, prostitutes, and now drug dealers that proliferate and openly operate on the property, in the bar, or the immediate area of the 611. Has anyone noticed how the bartenders of this club get the patrons so intoxicated that they can barely walk to their cars, and at 10 o'clock in the morning at that! The 611 might be raising money for HIV/AIDS causes, but I assure you that it is also contributing to the problem as well by condoning such blatant activities and lack of ethical boundaries.

As a resident of Hyde Park and supporter of the Montrose district, I sincerely hope that this bar truly takes a look at what it is doing to its neighborhood and make some immediate changes for its own reputation, the people that live in this historic residential neighborhood, and the community-at-large.

Ryan Johnson
Houston

CLARIFICATION

After publication of our March issue, The Assistance Fund canceled its benefit event scheduled for March 12, which we covered in "OutFront."

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

OutSmart photographer Yvonne Feece and her partner Rebecca Mahaffey are co-editors of the Houston section of *Pride.04*, the annual magazine published for Pride month and distributed locally by the Pride Committee of Houston.

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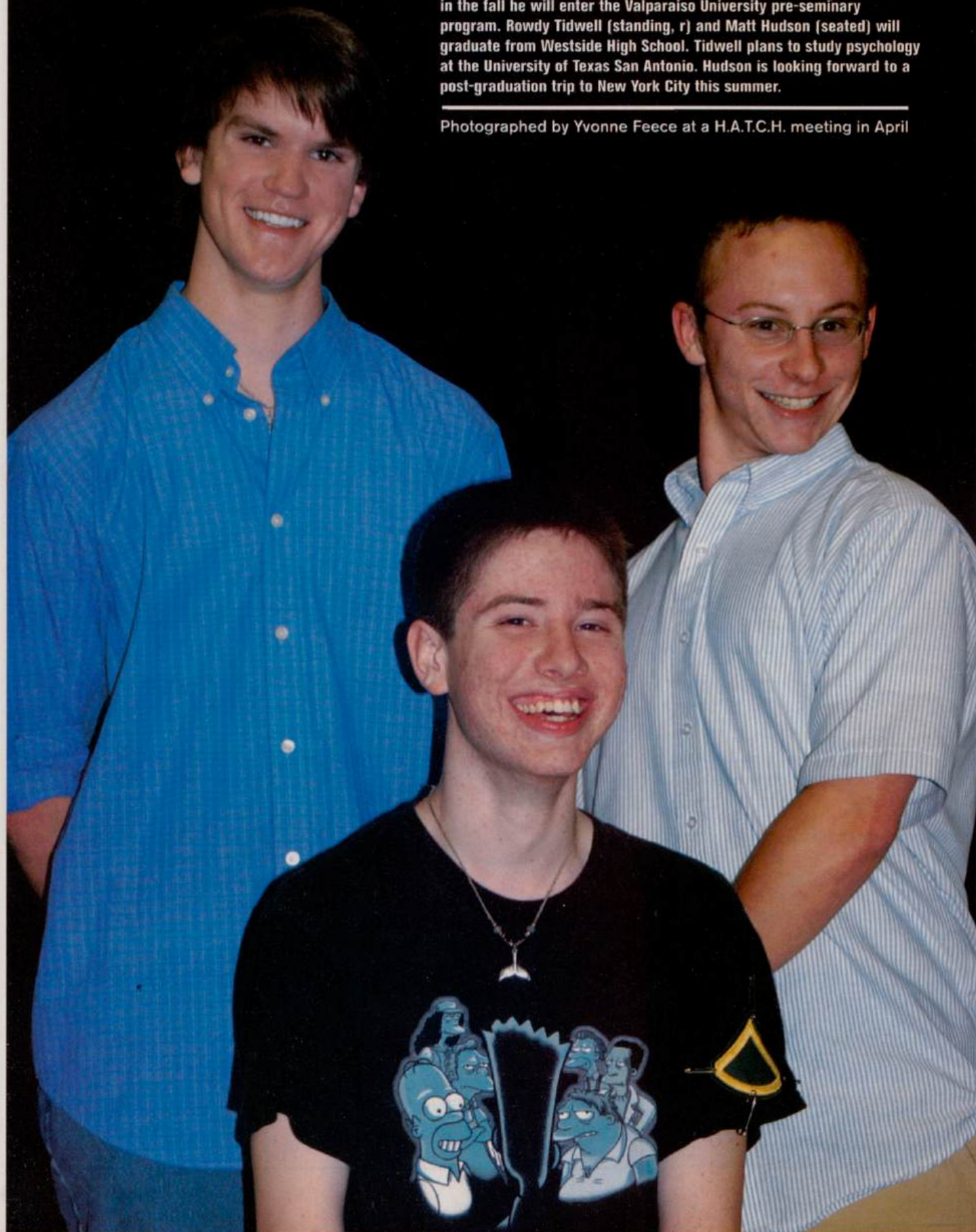
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THE GRADUATES. We all know that the throngs of high school seniors clutching diplomas this month include scores of queer youth. We recently caught up with three, who are all involved in H.A.T.C.H., the program for GLBT and questioning young people. Tom Jurewicz (standing, l) will graduate from Clear Lake High School, and in the fall he will enter the Valparaiso University pre-seminary program. Rowdy Tidwell (standing, r) and Matt Hudson (seated) will graduate from Westside High School. Tidwell plans to study psychology at the University of Texas San Antonio. Hudson is looking forward to a post-graduation trip to New York City this summer.

Photographed by Yvonne Feece at a H.A.T.C.H. meeting in April



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DEAR MOTHERS. With same-gender marriage and gay/lesbian families so much in the news, this year we will especially honor two-mom households on Mother's Day, May 9. Brianna Burchette will celebrate with her two mommies, Christy Burchette (in the center) and Sherrie Davis. When they aren't working to keep up with their 18-month-old daughter, Burchette teaches first grade and Davis teaches pre-kindergarten. They are new members of Houston Gay & Lesbian Parents, the active group for families in our community, which plans a horseback-riding excursion for May 15.

Photographed by John Conroy at West University Elementary



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ON THE ROAD. On May 8, Kirsten Brueggerhoff (r) and Betsy Odom will ride in the Art Car Parade in their own creation, El Pollo in the Desert. Odom will enter the parade—the annual event presented by the Orange Show Center for Visionary Art—for the first time. Brueggerhoff is a second-year veteran. Internet provider Everyones Internet sponsors the parade on Allen Parkway. At the photo shoot last month, Brueggerhoff stressed that El Pollo was a work in progress. But you can look for the iguana.

Photographed by Yvonne Feece



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• **Rainbow Fishing Club** sails from Galveston on deep-sea angling trips on May 2 and June 5. Reservations: 713/523-6381 John Hubert.

• On May 3, the **support group for gay men with HIV** resumes meeting on Mondays, 1:15–2:45 p.m., at Montrose Counseling Center. Register: Bob Hergenroeder, LCSW, 713/529-0037, ext. 322.

• On May 5, a new **Women's HIV Support Group** begins meeting on Wednesdays, 1–2:30 p.m., at Montrose Counseling Center. Register: Marilyn Barnes, LCSW, 713/529-0037, ext. 328.

• May 7 is the deadline for submitting an event for the official **GLBT Pride calendar**. May 15 is the deadline for reserving space in the June 26 **GLBT Pride Parade** (without incurring a late fee). Late deadline: May 30. Details: www.pridehouston.org.

• **Montrose Softball League** hosts the Lone Star Classic Tournament, May 28–31, at the Houston Sportsplex. Register: www.montrosoftballleague.com.

• **STAG/Some Transgenders Are Guys** meets the first Sunday of the month, 6 p.m., at the Houston GLBT Community Center.

• **CATS/Community Awareness for Transgender Support** meets Wednesdays, 7 p.m., at the Houston GLBT Community Center.

• **People With AIDS Coalition** offers free childcare by appointment, 8 a.m.–5 p.m., Monday–Friday, at Thomas Street Clinic and Bering Omega Community Services. Details: 713/873-4162. ■

CAMPING IT UP



Bill Nix (l-r), Joel Icenhower, Jerel McNeil, and Dennis Watson, will volunteer at the spring PWA Campout, May 21–23, at Buzzard's Peak outside Cameron, 150 miles north of Houston. The Texas Conference of Clubs, which includes the local Colt 45's and Houston Area Bears, owns the wooded 30-acre compound and donates use of the facilities for the twice-yearly event for people with HIV/AIDS and family, friends, and caregivers. The fee to campers for the three-day retreat is \$25, and donations help send campers unable to pay. To contribute, contact campout coordinator John Szewczyk at tex4ever@hotmail.com.

EMPOWER TO STAR *QUEER EYE* JAI

Jai Rodriguez, culture maven from the Bravo series *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, will appear at two events during Empower, the June 12–13 business-and-community expo presented by the Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce.

Rodriguez, a singer and Broadway performer (*Rent*, *Zanna Don't*) as well as reality-TV star, will preside at a VIP party and autograph reception during "Lift-Off: Our Launch into Pride," a Saturday-evening event co-hosted by the chamber and the Pride Committee of Houston.

Rodriguez will then perform his single "Love Is Good" at the "Out of This World Party" and dance later that night.

All Empower activities—including the daytime exhibitions by commercial vendors and nonprofit groups—will take place at the George R. Brown Convention Center. The chamber moved Empower from September to June this year.



AIDS ADVOCACY TRAINING SET

At no time since the beginning of the epidemic has it been more important for HIV-positive individuals to become proactively involved with issues related to HIV/AIDS funding and service delivery." This statement from Rich Arenschioldt, Center for AIDS director of education and outreach, reflects the urgency in the face of declining funds for HIV/AIDS felt by service providers and the affected community.

The Center for AIDS Hope and Remembrance Project is encouraging stronger involvement by offering another session of Project LEAP, the 17-week HIV advocacy training program. Participants can opt for day or evening classes, which will begin this month.

Project LEAP (Learning, Empowerment, Advocacy and Participation) fosters participation on the Ryan White Planning Council, the federally funded body that determines the allocation of more than \$19 million in Harris and five adjacent counties.

"In fiscal year 2004, Houston has suffered a 6.8-percent cut in funding for Ryan White Title I funding," Arenschioldt points out. This year, some HIV services have seen a 14-percent cut in federal funding, according to center statistics.

NEW TASK FORCE ADDRESSES MENTAL HEALTH

The first effort of a new task force on GLBT mental-health issues created by the Mental Health Association of Greater Houston is a brochure on depression and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. The free brochure is available at Bering Support Network, Houston GLBT Community Center, Montrose Clinic, and Montrose Counseling Center and through the association, a nonprofit, United Way Agency.

May is National Mental Health Month, sponsored since 1949 by the National Mental Health Association.

ACLU HONORS *LAWRENCE V. TEXAS* TRIO

The accolades continue to accrue for the three local men involved in the landmark *Lawrence v. Texas* case that resulted in the overturning of the anti-sodomy law. On May 8, the Houston chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union will present the Dassia Porper Liberties in Justice Award to attorney Mitchell Katine and



Lawrence petitioners Tyrone Garner and John Lawrence. The trio will receive the award at the Houston ACLU gala.

Radio commentator and author Jim Hightower will speak at the gala, which will also honor Ben Levy, founder of the Houston ACLU chapter.

Texas trio (l-r): Tyrone Garner, Mitchell Katine, and John Lawrence.

MAKE NO MISTAKE

Dubya reveals he is often in error, but never in doubt

Imagine you're in a job interview and your interviewer asks you the following question: "Identify a mistake you've made, and tell me what you've learned from it." Unless you're an idiot, or you've never made a mistake, this question is a softball. It's an opportunity to demonstrate that you're humble enough to recognize you're not God and that you're smart enough to learn from your mistakes.

If someone asked me that question about a mistake I've made in the past three years, I could give a number of examples:

- I rushed to judgment too quickly.
 - I was biased. I didn't listen for the truth because it wasn't playing out with my preconceived idea of what I thought the truth was going to be.
 - I went farther than I should have because I thought I had something to prove.
- There's nothing specific about any of these. They would work for almost anyone—

just general conclusions that we've messed up at one time or another. All have a hint of humility.

Then why couldn't Dubya identify one mistake he has made in the past three years when he was asked to do so at his recent press conference? Specifically, Dubya was asked by a reporter:

"Mr. President. In the last campaign, you were asked a question about the biggest mistake you'd made in your life, and you used to like to joke that it was trading Sammy Sosa. You've looked back before 9/11 for what mistakes might have been made. After 9/11, what would your biggest mistake be, would you say, and what lessons have you learned from it?"

When thrown this softball, the man who once owned the Texas Rangers struck out. He was dumbfounded. He rambled. He reached. But he couldn't come up with an answer. So he said:

"I wish you would have given me this written question ahead of time, so I could plan for it. [Laughter] John, I'm sure historians will look back and say, 'Gosh, he could have done it better this way or that way.' You know, I just—I'm sure something will pop into my head here in the midst of this press conference, with all the pressure of trying to come up with an answer, but it hasn't yet."

"I would have gone into Afghanistan the way we went into Afghanistan. [We assume he meant to say Iraq, but that would imply he made a mistake.] Even knowing what I know today about the stockpiles of weapons, I still would have called upon the world to deal with Saddam Hussein. See, I happen to believe that we'll find out the truth on the weapons. That's why we've sent up the independent commission. I look forward to hearing the truth, exactly where they are."

continued on page 20

A MOMENTOUS DECADE

Ten years of columns reflect an era of turmoil and victories

In the second of two parts, Dale Carpenter remembers a decade of writing for OutSmart with excerpts from his favorite columns.

Gay couples, having tasted the second-class legitimacy of domestic partnerships, will soon demand a first-class treatment they would not have dared to dream possible a few years before.

"California's Partners Law is a Principled Compromise," October 1999

Bill Clinton went to Los Angeles last month to speak about pain to the very same group of gay politicians he brought to tears seven years ago. . . . He told them, as he did in 1992, "I have a vision for America and you are part of it." Why the audience did not burst out in uncontrollable laughter at that moment is one of the great political mysteries of the age.

"Pain and Clinton LaLa Land," November 1999

It isn't the powerless who show mercy, it's the powerful. It isn't the timid who forgive, it's the self-confident. It isn't the weak who have patience, it's the strong. And it isn't the victim who looks a killer in the eyes and says "Live," it's the victor. This movement is going to have to be merciful to those who have done it wrong.

"Shepard, Falwell, and the Future," December 1999

For anyone who thinks gays should stand irredeemably apart from society—either because we ought to be outcasts or because we ought to be revolutionaries—this must have been a frustrating decade. The political causes that most defined our movement in the 1990s sought to weave gays into the fabric of American life.

"The Book That Started a Counter-Revolution," January 2000

When the Supreme Court held that the Boy Scouts of America may exclude openly gay

scoutmasters, many gay civil rights advocates howled. One writer said the result "lent legitimacy to the bigotry of . . . institutions all over America." That's one way to describe the function of the First Amendment. I prefer to think of it as something free people should cherish.

"The Scouts' Rights—And Ours," August 2000

The Log Cabin Republicans' (LCR) endorsement of George Bush has drawn criticism from Fire Island to the Castro. Gay political groups, notably the Human Rights Campaign, blasted LCR. The critics not only disagreed with the endorsement but seemed dumbfounded by it. Yet even if Gore is objectively the better choice for gays, the endorsement of Bush advances gay equality.

"How Could They?" October 2000

For Clinton, gays were an expendable constituency. He threw us just enough →

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Photo by Phoebe Rourke

LeftOut continued from page 18

They could still be there. They could be hidden, like the 50 tons of mustard gas in a turkey farm. . . . I hope I—I don't want to sound like I've made no mistakes. I'm confident I have. I just haven't—you just put me under the spot here, and maybe I'm not as quick on my feet as I should be in coming up with one."

Let's deconstruct Dubya's answer to reflect what he was really thinking:

"I wish you would have given me this written question ahead of time, so I could have gotten Condi to help me with it. You know, I just—I'm sure something will pop into my head here in the midst of this press conference, like Dick Cheney's hand usually does when he runs it up my ass and moves my lips with it. But I'm out here all alone with no one to tell me what to think or say. Boy, this is *really* scary. I want Karen Hughes.

"And why would I change anything about Afghanistan? I mean, we knew there weren't stockpiles of weapons when I decided to go to war. That's just what we told the public. By the time the American people find out the truth about the weapons, the war will be over with, and I will already have been reelected. And that's all that counts.

"I don't want to sound like I've made no mistakes, even though I haven't. I mean, I know I'm supposed to sound humble, but I just can't. I'm not as quick on my feet as I should be in coming up with an answer. And how can I have made any mistakes when I haven't made any decisions? All I've done is what Cheney and Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz told me to do. Ask one of them. I'm going back to Crawford for another vacation, and I'm never doing another press conference alone again. Ever."

Writing from the liberal side, Houston attorney Daryl Moore has a general practice and is board certified in civil appellate law.

OutRight continued from previous page

sops (an administration appointment here, using the word "gay" in a speech there) to keep us quiet when he betrayed us. We accepted this deal because, like a battered spouse, we thought we'd never had it so good. Having tied ourselves so closely to this man, we sit beside the stench of his moral putrefaction, in need of a bath.

"Goodbye to Clinton," February 2001

Personally, I'd rather have one openly gay person serving as the AIDS czar than a

hundred appointees under Clinton, the most important of whom labored over patents, housing, and relations with the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

"Defying Left and Right," May 2001

I don't think she understood homosexuality, but she knew all about devotion, having lived with the same man for almost 58 years. My partner was more than tolerated by Grandma, he was expected. He was part of us, the same as if he'd been my spouse. It wasn't a matter of gay rights. It was a matter of family. . . . On April 19, Grandma died. The hands that raised three generations of children were so distorted by crippling arthritis at the end that I could barely look at them. The kind blue eyes that could see into your core were closed. . . . Some of these preachers and politicians who talk so much about family values wouldn't have been worthy to stand in her presence. You're lucky to get one good mom in life. I had two. My love to you, Grandma.

"Real Family Values," June 2001

One year after Vermont enacted its civil unions law—the closest thing this country has ever had to gay marriage—the most remarkable thing is how unremarkable that year has been. No meteors have descended on Montpelier; no plague of locusts has stripped bare the maple trees; husbands have not left their wives for nubile male youths; wives have not abandoned their children for sapphic music festivals. A few more experiences like this, and we may get nationwide gay marriage one day.

"Our First Anniversary in Vermont," September 2001

We are in this with everyone else. We jumped from the towers in desperation. We climbed the stairs to save others. We called our lover in a frenzied last "I love you." Our souls went up from the rubble.

"The Inferno and Us," October 2001

To most gay Americans the U.S. is basically a good country that sometimes does bad things. To the antiwar gay left, however, this is basically a bad country that sometimes does good things. The war [in Afghanistan] has exposed the fundamental cleavage between them and the rest of us as never before.

"Follies of the Antiwar Gay Left," December 2001

The First Amendment created gay America. For advocates of gay legal and social equality there has been no more reliable and important constitutional text.

"The First Amendment to the Rescue," March 2002

Our success in the cultural and political battles erodes the basis for the very

community that organized to fight those battles. We ought to see our fragmentation as a marker of progress, not as a reason for despair. It's a sign we're winning.

"What Unites Us?" August 2002

When Bush won the presidency, we were told he would never hire an openly gay person to a post in his administration and would repeal the executive order protecting gay federal employees from job discrimination. On its website, NGLTF even featured a mock "count" of Bush's openly gay appointees starting with 0, which is where NGLTF imagined the count would stay. After a dozen or so openly gay Bush appointees, including an ambassador, the NGLTF counter is gone. The executive order is still there.

"The Sky Is Not Falling," January 2003

War and anachronism were everywhere. Consider the very room in which the oral argument [in *Lawrence v. Texas*] occurred. You look up and see a marble Greek-inspired bas-relief featuring two large men seated beside one another. Draped in robes covering their privates, they are nearly naked from the waist up, revealing six-pack abs, chiseled pecs, and bulging biceps. To either side of them stand young, lithe, and even more scantily clad man servants. The young men's athletic bodies face forward, but their heads are turned to gaze at groups of seminude, well-built, sword-bearing men, who stare back at them. It drips homoeroticism and bellicosity. Beneath this tableau, on March 26, 2003, the Supreme Court of the United States considered the constitutional fate of a law banning gay sodomy.

"Court Report," May 2003

Never before have we adopted a constitutional amendment to limit the states' ability to control their own family law. Never before have we amended the Constitution to restrict the ability of the democratic process to expand individual rights. This is no time to start.

"A Good Defense," November 2003

Writing from the conservative side, 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. Many of his referenced columns are archived at www.outsmartmagazine.com. Other past columns can be read at www.indegayforum.com.

CHECK OUT "CHECK UP"

In our ongoing 10th-anniversary series, we revisit therapist and former *OutSmart* columnist Patrick Vachon on page 52.



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by Annise D. Parker

BUDGET BUSTER

The city confronts the pension-fund debacle in a May 15 vote

The upcoming city budget will be the toughest balancing act since the 1986 oil bust.

Fixed expenses will jump \$156 million, but revenues are expected to climb only about \$43 million. Like many cities, Houston faces steep increases in employee health insurance premiums—\$26 million more next year. We'll also pay \$50 million more to police officers for raises promised in their contract.

Sales tax revenue, which accounts for about 25 percent of the general fund budget, is finally beginning to inch up again after dropping or staying flat for two years. The recession even slowed property tax collections, which make up about 45 percent of the general budget.

Then there's the pension fund shortfall you may have read about. That will account for almost \$58 million of the increase.

The pension fund crisis isn't just an

esoteric issue affecting only city employees. It could affect the level of city services and has certainly precipitated a crisis in public confidence. Everywhere I go, astonished voters ask how this happened and what the city is going to do about it.

May 15 Election

One immediate solution is the May 15 election. Houston voters will be asked to opt out of Proposition 15, the recently approved state constitutional amendment that prohibits cities from reducing or impairing any pension benefit already earned by someone vested in a municipal pension. If Proposition 15 is allowed to stand, the city will be limited in its ability to negotiate changes that could help reduce the unfunded pension liability.

I hope community organizations study the issue and recommend that people vote to allow the city to opt out.

Public and private entities all across the country face staggering pension problems, mostly due to the drop in the stock market and the recession. The city of El Paso's pension fund faces a \$440 million gap while Dallas is \$2 billion short. Many private pension plans have already asked for a federal bailout or have sought bankruptcy.

Of the city's three pension plans, the municipal pension system has by far the largest projected shortfall, ranging from \$1.5 billion to \$2.8 billion over the next 18 years. This covers about 12,000 civilian employees. The police pension system may fall about \$500 million short, while the Firefighters Relief Fund is essentially fully funded and may be less than \$50 million in the hole.

Yes, we've got a serious problem. But it's the result of the age and demographics of the municipal workforce converging with

changes on Wall Street and in Austin. The dilemma is complicated by the fact that we're trying to predict what may or may not happen two or three decades down the road. No one knows for sure at what age an employee will retire or what kind of returns we can expect from our investments in 2020. It's all imaginary numbers.

How It Happened

Since city employees make about one-third less than their private sector counterparts and are lucky to get a raise every three or four years, the city has tried to compensate by offering better pensions. The state legislature controls pension benefits for Texas cities. In 2001, the legislature dramatically increased Plan A benefits by raising the 25-year pension from 80 percent to 90 percent of salaries. The state also pays its employees less but puts more money into pensions.

Like previous pension changes, these occurred in Austin. City Council did not vote to increase pension benefits. We did, of course, know about the legislation.

In 2001, the Municipal Pension Fund's actuarial firm, Towers Perrin, estimated that 14 percent of the city's annual payroll would be needed to cover pension obligations. We thought we could afford the more generous pension benefits being discussed in Austin.

In 2003, a new Towers Perrin report predicted pension obligations would eat up more than 40 percent of the city's annual payroll. What happened between 2001 and 2003? Many of you with mutual funds and 401k's know the answer. The stock market tanked.

The Way Out

Change the actuary period. This would have a huge impact. The current estimates are based on a fixed actuary period that will expire in 18 years. A rolling 30-year actuary period would allow us to spread out the unfunded liability.

Issue pension obligation bonds. This would be like using your credit card to pay your mortgage. It's not a good idea, but we may have to consider it.

Change pension benefits. Employee payroll contributions likely will be increased. New hires and employees who are not yet vested may well be offered an entirely different plan. I envision a defined contribution plan instead of the current defined benefit plan. A defined contribution plan is similar to a 401k. Each year the city would contribute a specific amount of money on an employee's behalf. The employee would also contribute. Upon retirement, the employee →



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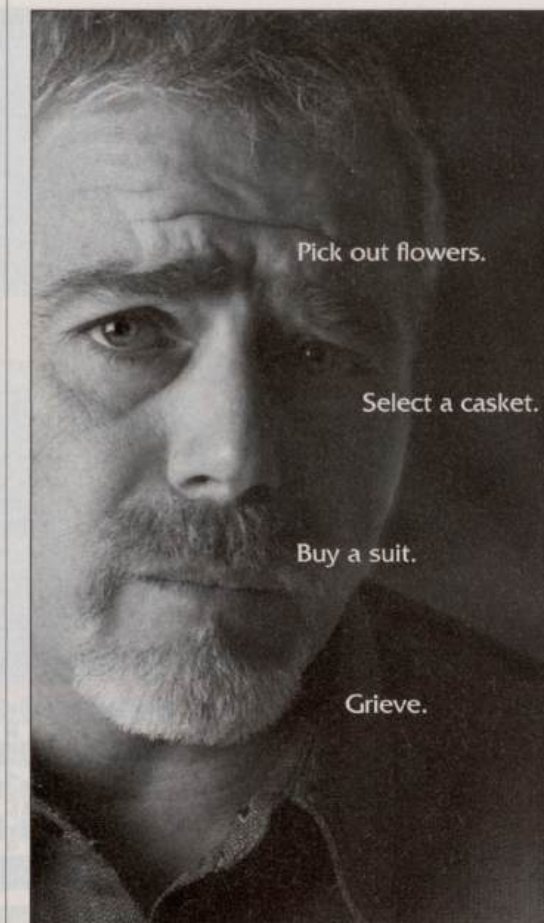


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InsideOut continued from previous page

would receive only the money in the account as opposed to a specified percentage of his or her salary.

Establish a city controller seat on the pension board. This would fit perfectly with the controller's responsibility as the city's financial watchdog and would bring some independent oversight to the pension fund's investing policies. There would be no conflict of interest because I have no vote at the council table. Either the controller or a designee could serve.

The city has a chance to begin bailing out the ship May 15. Please don't forget to vote.

My Municipal Channel TV show, *Money Matters*, can be seen every Monday on the Municipal Channel (Warner Cable 16) at 2 and 8 a.m. and 2 and 8 p.m.

Annise Parker is city controller and the highest-ranking openly GLBT elected official in any of the 10 largest U.S. cities. She has contributed a monthly column to OutSmart magazine since June 2002. The controller's website is www.ci.houston.tx.us/citygovt/controller. To receive her newsletter, send an e-mail to controllers@cityofhouston.net.



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A Montrose Hotspot Revisited

It had been awhile since my partner and I had visited Mo Mong, the Vietnamese bistro and one of Houston's hippest nightspots, so we decided to venture in one Wednesday night.

When we entered, we were immediately caught off guard by the stylish décor, which includes an industrial frame-work and deep, blue walls dotted with the work of local artists. The place felt urban and edgy, but we were very comfortable even in our business casual dress.

After a couple of rounds of excellently prepared cocktails, we perused our dinner options, which, I must say, were numerous. In addition to traditional favorites, Mo Mong has added some new summer menu items, including Fried Calamari Salad, a generous portion of fried calamari on a bed of field greens

with a peach glaze dressing. It was to die for! There was also the new Fusion Chicken, sautéed chicken breast with zucchini, snow peas, and red bell pepper, topped with a sweet and tangy peach sauce. We also shared Summer Rolls, crispy breaded chicken breast, fresh sliced mango, and lettuce in a rice paper wrap, served with a mango dipping sauce. To make our meal complete, we had a few of the \$2 martinis that have made Wednesday nights at Mo Mong famous. Others at the bar were looking fashionable, having frozen Cosmopolitans, another favorite here. Mo Mong always has been a place to see and be seen. It was nice to see it still is.

Fully sated, we leaned back and surveyed the rest of the establishment. I'd wondered that maybe, because my friend and I were fairly well dressed, that we had been mistaken for well-to-do businessmen, which might have led to

our A+ treatment and food. I was wrong. Customers from the large family next to us to the two guys in T-shirts and shorts on the patio were receiving top-notch, friendly service. Obviously, everyone fit in. My fears have been assuaged. Next Wednesday will find me at the Mo Mong bar, sipping a Manhattan among friends and strangers... and eagerly awaiting more Summer Rolls.



New Summer menu items
Fusion Chicken (l-r), Summer Rolls and Fried Calamari Salad accompanied by one of Mo Mong's famous Cosmopolitans.

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WHAT A DRIP

The second of a series of STD 101 articles looks at three common maladies

Early one morning, you try to go to the bathroom and almost scream with pain. Relax, you're not alone: Chlamydia and gonorrhea, also known as the Clap or the Drip, are the two most common sexually transmitted diseases.

Chlamydia is normally caused by the bacteria *Chlamydia trachomatis*, and gonorrhea is caused by the bacteria *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. Both bacterial infections are normally associated as sexually transmitted diseases of the urethra and cervix, but they can also infect (often with few symptoms) the throat, rectum, and eyes.

CHLAMYDIA TRACHOMATIS

Chlamydia is the most commonly diagnosed sexually transmitted disease. The symptoms of chlamydia vary from person to person and depending on where the infection occurs. *Chlamydia trachomatis* infection of the eyes causes recurrent eye infections that can lead to blindness if not correctly diagnosed and treated. Infections of the rectum and throat are often without symptoms, or symptoms are discounted as minor; however, the disease can be easily transmitted to sexual partners through unprotected oral or anal sex.

Infection of the urethra can cause painful urination, fluid discharge ranging in color from clear to milky yellow, tenderness around the opening of the urethra, and, in advanced cases, lower back pain. In women, chlamydia infection can also cause an increase in odor. If left untreated, chlamydia infection in women can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, ectopic pregnancy, and vertical transmission to the baby during birth. In men, it can cause an inflammation of part of the reproductive system, the epididymis, leading to difficulties ejaculating.

Chlamydia is highly contagious. Although your partner might not have any symptoms, you may still be infected through unprotected sex. Also, despite the lack of symptoms, long-term damage may still occur. Treatment options include many different types of antibiotics; ciprofloxacin, doxycycline, and azithromycin are com-

monly prescribed to treat infection. The particular treatment that your physician chooses is the product of many years of experience. Recurrent infections are most commonly the result of either failure to treat all sexual partners or treatment noncompliance.

NEISSERIA GONORRHOEAE

Gonorrhea is the second most commonly diagnosed sexually transmitted disease. Gonorrhea can infect the cervix, urethra, rectum, throat, and eyes, with symptoms ranging in severity from unnoticeable to debilitating. The symptoms of gonorrhea are similar to those of chlamydia, and they are often both present in those who test positive for one or the other. Like chlamydia, gonorrhea can also be transmitted through unprotected oral or anal sex. If left untreated,

If you feel queasy talking with your doctor about your sexual practices, find one you are comfortable with.

gonorrhea can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility in women, and in rare cases can create symptoms similar to those of rheumatoid arthritis and meningitis.

Gonorrhea is very sensitive to specific antibiotics. While there are resistant strains, infections can be treated with a single dosage of azithromycin or a series of any of a number of antibiotics.

ONE MORE BAD TRICH

Trichomonas vaginalis, a single-cell anaerobic protozoa flagellate (a one-cell organism that is not a bacteria, moves around using a tail-like structure, and needs an oxygen-free environment to live), is a sexually transmitted disease that is rarely talked about, but is very common. Trich is asymptomatic in 50 percent of women and 90 percent of men, but is still infectious despite the lack of symptoms. In women, trich can cause a vaginitis, including a yellow vaginal discharge, odor, vulvar

itching, redness of the vulva and vagina, painful urination, and pain during penetrative intercourse. In men, when symptoms are present, they include abnormal discharge, irritated tip of the penis, and burning with urination.

Because symptoms often are very mild or transitory, many ignore the symptoms and continue to spread the illness to subsequent sexual partners. Women often erroneously self-diagnose trich as a stubborn yeast infection and unsuccessfully use over-the-counter treatments. Once diagnosed, however, trich is easily treated with an antimicrobial agent called metronidazole.

Remember that while symptoms often disappear within the first few days of treatment, the entire course of medication must be completed in order to cure the infection. Regardless of the disease, the most important part of an effective treatment is to make sure that all partners are notified of the possibility that they might also be infected and receive treatment. It is pointless to treat one partner if the other(s) are left infected and not treated. If all potentially infected persons are tested and treated, the chances of reinfection are significantly reduced.

If you happen to have a partner who has been diagnosed with an infection, in order for your physician to make an accurate diagnosis, it is important that you are honest and open about your sexual practices. If your doctor does not know you practice unprotected oral or anal sex, for example, the appropriate tests will probably not be performed. If you feel queasy talking with your doctor about your sexual practices, find one you are comfortable with. Most physicians are aware of GLBT issues and are able to offer superior care when they know their patient's risk factors.

A positive test for any sexually transmitted disease is considered an indication of unsafe sex practices and should be followed with an HIV antibody test.

Michael Stuart began his series on sexually transmitted diseases in the April issue.

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Gless Glows

The star of *Cagney and Lacey* and *Queer as Folk* lets it all hang out

by Blase DiStefano

Photograph opposite page by Norman Jean Roy

Sharon Gless was especially appealing to gay women during her tenure as Det. Sgt. Christine Cagney in *Cagney and Lacey*, a TV drama that ran from 1982 to 1988, and she received the fan letters to prove it. The actress was nominated for an Emmy six times—twice she carried home the statuette. She also garnered a win out of five Golden Globe nominations—and won another one for her role in *The Trials of Rosie O'Neill*. • Now she's an icon for gay men because of her portrayal as Debbie Novotny,

Michael's (Hal Sparks) crazy-but-lovable mom on Showtime's *Queer as Folk*, which began its fourth season last month. Again, she gets the fan letters to prove it. • The 60-year-old performer (she'll be 61 on May 31) attributes her appeal to lesbians and gay men as part of the reason for her successful career. • When I initially called Gless to interview her, I got her voice mail. Shortly after, her publicist told me that she had had an emergency, that a friend was sick. When I called her a week later, I began the interview by asking about her friend.

Blase DiStefano: Is everything okay? Sharon Gless: Well, my friend died. She was my very best friend. Our parents were best friends and they had us a month apart, so I've known her all my life. She had cancer for 10 years, so we had been saying goodbye for a while now.

I had lots of friends who died of AIDS. I reached a point where it seemed

like I had been saying goodbye for such a long time that by the time they died, it was like, Okay, I'm ready.

Yes, I did a lot of mourning before she died. She told a mutual friend of ours, "This is going to hit Sharon really hard. I don't want her mourning, so I put her in charge of my memorial." [Both laugh] Her child is my godchild. Judy was one of those amazing mothers where all three children wor-

shipped her. How many parents can say that?

Since we're talking about mothers, and since this is for our May Mother's Day issue . . . how did you get to be Michael's mother?

I was in a play in Chicago called *Ca-hoot*, an original piece written for me by Claudia Allen, a wonderful lesbian playwright. While I was there, a →



Happy Mother's Day, Debbie! and Happy Birthday, Sharon! Sharon Gless plays a mom on *Queer as Folk*, and Gless's birthday is May 31.

local agent I know called me and said he had just read the most amazing script, that it was a British series. He said, "There's a part in here, Sharon, that you'd be so right for." He sent it to me, I read it, and I called Showtime that same day.

You knew who to call?

The assistant to the president of Showtime was assistant to my husband [producer Barney Rosenzweig] for 15 years. I called

I guess it was really a lot different, even for cable.

We did set the tone. There would be no other gay shows on television if it hadn't been for us. I mean, there was *Will and Grace*—you know what I'm saying?

So they told me the part was mine. I said, "Don't you want me to read for this?" They said, "Of course not." When I got out of the elevator in L.A., this man standing there said, "Are you looking for *Queer as Folk*?" It was Peter Paige [Emmett]. He'd just come from his interview.

I'm also approached by a lot of gay men. Last night we were shooting on location and an older man came up to me with tears in his eyes, saying, "Thank you so much for what you do for us." Blase, I get hugs all the time.

I'd hug you the second I'd see you.

Thank you. After the first year, we were being honored in New York City Hall, and a boy came up to me and said, "Could I have a hug?" While I was holding him, the boy just started sobbing. Sobbing and sobbing as I



Mother me: Debbie Novotny (Gless) hugs her son Michael (Hal Sparks) in a scene from *Queer as Folk*.

her and said, "Carol, I just read this script of yours, *Queer as Folk*. Has the role of the mother been cast?" She said, "Sharon, you don't want to do this. There's no money in it." [Laughs] I said, "I don't care. If you have the guts to do this show, I want to be on it. Who do I do to get that part?" She said, "Let me talk to Jerry [Offsay, head of Showtime]." Jerry sends back the message, "Tell Sharon I love it. I think she'd add a little class to the project." I sent the message back, "Tell Jerry that class was not what I had in mind." [Both laugh]

So they flew me out to meet with the two producers. It was a really black day for them, because nobody would return their calls. Everybody was afraid to touch this project.

When did you finally meet Hal Sparks [Michael]?

I was calling the producers back and forth because I had all these ideas for Debbie. "I want to change her wig, every day I want a new wig. It has to be cheap, because she can't afford anything." They loved it. So I kept calling them with more ideas, and on one of the days, they said, "Hold on a minute, Sharon." This voice came on the phone and said, "Hi, Mom." I said, "Hi, honey. Are you my Michael?" and he said, "Yeah." [Both laugh] That's how we met.

Have you met any PFLAG mothers?

Since I've started doing this show, I've met hundreds of them—some write to me, others approach me in public.

held him, and I never let go. Everyone disappeared for me as I held him. I only tell the story because I get these incredible perks...

It just shows you how much they love you.

Debbie has this kind of impact. But I also think she's outrageous. People tell me, "You remind me so much of my mom." I say, "I am so sorry." [Both laugh] Because she's not the perfect mom, you know? Michael loves her, but...

She's very loving, and that's the good thing about her.

Right. But she's just in that child's face!

[Laughs] Tell me about a typical workday on the set. →



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Sharon Gless *continued from page 30*

Excuse me. [Coughs] I have bronchitis. [Coughs] We're shooting in 20 below weather [in Toronto] and it's very cold. Last week we shot in a barn way out in the boonies somewhere. And it was not insulated, and snow was coming through the roof while we were shooting. Anyway, you'd asked me...

Yeah, a typical workday...

Most of my days on the set are in either the house or the diner. I get up early and a very handsome driver comes and picks me up and takes me to work. I'm an hour and a half in makeup.

That's a long time.

Well, for *Cagney and Lacey*, it was almost two hours, because they had to take wet straight hair and put it in pin curls to make it look like I had these sweet little curls.

But this time the man prepares my wig before I get there. First, I sit in his chair, he pincurls my hair. Then he puts a skullcap on me. Then I go to the makeup chair and he does the full makeup. Then I go back to the wig chair and they put the wig on and attach the wig. But before I do any of that, I go to my room and put on my wardrobe, because I have to get it over my head before the wig goes on.

Fifteen minutes is taken out for me in selecting what fabulous jewelry I'm going to wear. Whenever I'm in New York or L.A. where there's some funky little jewelry store, I go in and I buy all these things to bring back to the studio. I buy all of her dirty T-shirts, and all the dirty buttons that are on her vest.

So you know Debbie pretty well.

I made up this whole backstory for her. Her diner look is how I envisioned it. The producers said, "Bring it on."

Are you on the set for the nude scenes?

I'm not allowed on the set. I say, "That's my son!" And they say, "Sharon, go to your room." [Both laugh] There is one episode where I have to crawl through Brian's loft trying to get to Brian. I had to crawl over like 35 naked bodies. I thought, "Wow, this is one of my wildest fantasies." But it's interesting—when they were shooting, that's not where my mind was. I had dialogue, and I had to make sure I didn't step on any of those boys.

What are you working on now?

We're doing an episode right now where the boys do an AIDS ride from Toronto to Pittsburgh. So this whole episode is all on bicycles in the snow, I mean it's something. Debbie's on the food truck.

Of course. So let's move on to when and where you were born.

I was born in Los Angeles. Fifth generation Angeleno, which is very rare. There are very few people in our business who are actually from L.A. My husband Barney Rosenzweig was also born and raised in L.A. He's a producer, retired now.

Didn't he create *Cagney and Lacey*?

That's where I met him, I married the boss.

I had a wonderful childhood. When my older brother and I reminisce about when we were children, my sister-in-law says, "No one in the world had that fun a childhood."

We knew when we were in trouble. The awful part was, "Go to your room and think about it." When she spanked us, it was under a controlled atmosphere. Afterwards, my feelings would be hurt, more than my bottom.

I was raised in the same house my mother was raised in. My grandparents built it. I was raised Catholic and went to a Catholic school, a parochial school. Then I was shipped off to a girls' boarding school, called Santa Catalina School for Girls, in Monterey, California. Very beautiful. But almost the day I got there, my parents separated. So it was a hard four years for me.

That sounds traumatic.

They had it planned. I was the only girl, and they thought I was going to take it badly. As soon as I was on the train, my father moved into the athletic club, and when I came back, he was gone. No one told me while I was up there. So those years were actually not my favorite years.

But I made fabulous friends. I just finished a documentary, *Blase*—I've been producing it for 10 years with eight of the girls from my boarding school. We all met on my 50th birthday. My husband gave me a huge surprise party with 200 people. We [my former classmates and I] started talking and we thought, *God, we're interesting. And we're all so different.* Two of them are gay. One had cancer. Some were mommies... and fabulous mothers. One girl said, "Well,

my life isn't very interesting, I'm just a wife and a mother." I said, "How can you say that?" I don't know why—probably because I didn't have the nerve to take on the responsibility of raising another human being—I said that it's probably the most valuable job you can have. Never apologize for being a mother. I mean, my God.

Tell me about your mother.

I had the best mom. She died about six years ago. Nobody's face ever lit up like my mother's when I walked into a room. I remember when they asked me to play Michael's mother—this crazy lunatic—I knew exactly how to do this role. My mother wasn't anything like Debbie, except she had that heart. My mother was very refined and really a very quiet, elegant woman. But I'm just functioning from the fifth chakra when I play this boy's mom, because I remember what it felt like to be loved like that. Every time I walked into a room and I knew she was there, I would look for it—I'd look to see her light up when she saw me. And that was way into my 50s.

I had sort of a dual childhood. I was sent to a parochial school, but then I was removed once a month to go to cotillion. Eventually I made my debut. I actually was a debutante. There was that background too that was mixed in with a very normal and open childhood. [My mother] encouraged nonconformity in us, but we were disciplined.

Nonconformity and discipline sound like a good combination.

Yes, we had great respect for her. We knew when we were in trouble. The awful part was, "Go to your room and think about it, I'll be up shortly." She never ever once yelled at us. When she spanked us, it was under a controlled atmosphere and she told us exactly why she was doing it. I think I was the most sensitive of the three children. Afterwards, my feelings would be hurt, more than my bottom. I remember her always squatting down to my height and she'd say, "Who loves you?" And I'd say, "You do." She would ask me why, and I'd say, "Because I'm a good girl." I remember it like it was yesterday. She really was a wonderful woman. Children flocked to her. And she always spoke very softly.

That was something I noticed about your recorded message. After I hung up, I felt really safe. I don't know how to explain it—it was so soothing. I get very nervous when I'm going to do interviews, but after hearing your voice, I thought, I'm not going →

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to have to worry about this interview at all. I'm so pleased—what a nice thing to say. I'm going to call myself up and listen to it.

[Laughs] Do you remember how you came to know what homosexuality was? I ran away from home.

What?!

My mother was divorced and we lived in Carmel then. I always hated it and I wanted to be back in Los Angeles with my family and my friends. But I needed to grow up. So my mother sort of helped me run away. I know that sounds weird, but she saw that I was a little different than most kids and my brothers. They were much more traditional than I was. So one day she gave me \$200 and put me on a Greyhound bus and said to pick anywhere I needed to go. She knew I was suffocating. I said, "Where will I go? Where will I stay?" I'd never been on my own. I had just turned 20, going on 15. She said I should go to the Y. So I went and moved into the Y.

There was this one girl at the Y who was so good to me and so sweet to me. One time she asked if I'd like to go out and I said sure. I was having a wonderful time laughing and talking with all the women. I got up to go to the ladies' room, and somebody approached me. I didn't know quite what to do. I was a little frightened. And this girl all of a sudden showed up and she said, "Leave her alone. She's straight."

She became this wonderful friend. At one point, I was getting homesick and I was talking to my brother Michael by phone from the Y. This wonderful girl—I didn't know how much she loved me, it took such nerve for her—she opened up the door to the phone booth and she walked in and said, "I love you." I said, "Michael, can I call you back?" I always remember how kind she was. It was my first experience in a woman loving me that way.

I'm glad it wasn't something negative.

Oh yeah, there was no harm. You probably know this, but all of my adult life people thought I was gay, all during *Cagney and Lacey*. I was always sort of flattered, because it made me one of the team. [Both laugh] I asked my husband once, "Why is that? Is there something about me? Is it the energy that I exude?" And he said, "Sharon, it's a sexuality that you have that you're not aware of that's specific to any one. Also, it's your kindness." But I never took it as a negative thing. I was sort of fascinated with it.

That just shows how open you are.

I was never uncomfortable with the situation, and I love that I'm welcomed. Now that I'm doing *Queer as Folk*, people come up to me and hug me and I'm so welcomed in the community. I would be very hurt if I weren't. I'm serious. I found in my career the two major life-changing shows were *Cagney and Lacey* and *Queer as Folk*. My career has really been as full as it has been because of the gay community. Most of my fans on *Cagney and Lacey* were gay women. And now gay men embrace me into their community.

I remember one gay pride weekend they wanted me to give a speech about something very intellectual. I told them I was there for only one reason—I wanted this opportunity to say thank you, because I wouldn't have the career I'm having without the gay community.

This wonderful girl—I didn't know how much she loved me, it took such nerve for her—she opened up the door to the phone booth and she walked in and said, "I love you." I said, "Michael, can I call you back?"

How did you get into acting?

I worked for advertising agencies and then got a job behind the camera as a production assistant for independent film. One of the film companies I worked for, one of my jobs was to screen the actors and to read [roles opposite them for their tryouts]. So I'd read with them and then they would get the job. I'd also make out our payroll, and I'd see what they were making, and then I saw what I was making, and I thought, *Why am I so afraid? I think I was better than she was in that reading.*

So it came to the surface that I had always wanted to be an actress. But I think because of my background, one didn't do that—public displays. [Both laugh] When I was 18, I remember saying it to my grandfather. He was a very big lawyer in show business—he was Howard Hughes's attorney, Cecil B. DeMille's, Louis B. Mayer's. He said, "Stay out of it, it's a filthy business." I was very, very young and immature, so when I was told not to do something, I didn't do it.

Later, the production company I was with folded. I went to Arizona, because my grandfather had asked me to bring his car to him. One night, my new grandmother—my step-grandmother—and I stayed up late

after my grandfather went to bed and got loaded on a bottle of champagne. She said, "Sharon, you are 26 years old, and you have nothing to show for your life. What do you want to do? Don't be afraid, just say it. Even if it's the most impossible thing, just say it." I said, "I want to be an actress." She said, "Sharon, when I was your age, I was under contract at MGM. I know that longing. You must follow that dream." I said, "Please don't tell Grandpa."

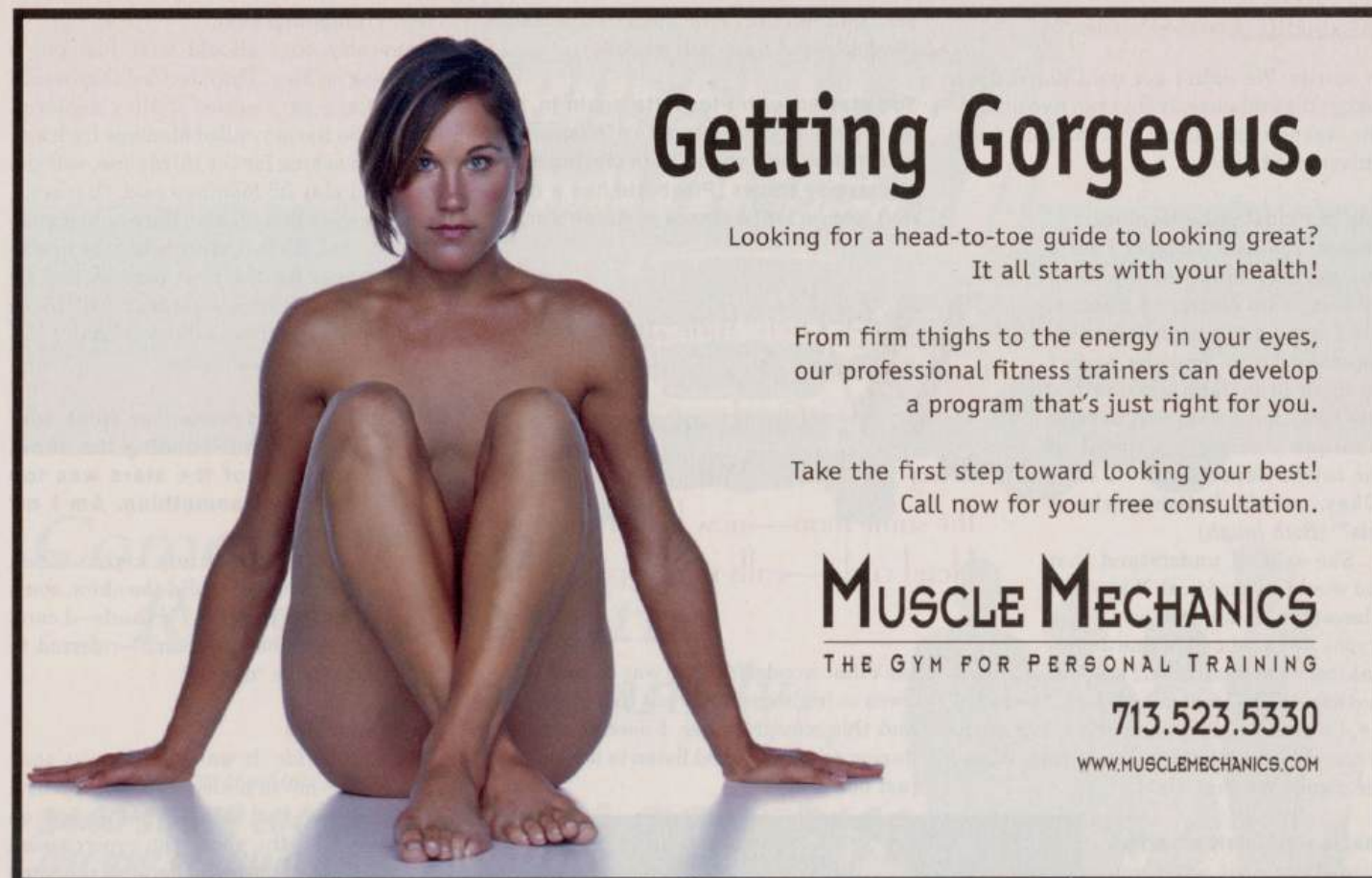
So the next morning I was summoned to his bedroom, and he said, "That's ridiculous." He was formidable. I said, "I asked Grandma not to say anything to you, because I knew that's how you'd feel." He said, "I mean I think it's ridiculous that you'd think I'd stand in your way. You want to be an actress? So what are you going to do about it?"

I said that I was going to go to an acting class. He asked what it would cost. I think the tuition was \$150 for three months. He said, "Okay, you've got \$150. Now what are you going to do?" I said, "Oh my God, Grandpa, thank you so much. Well, I'll get a job, and just pay for it." So he put me on a plane and while I was on that plane—every once in a while, I don't know how many times this happens in anyone's lifetime—while I was on that plane, I knew my life had changed forever. And I knew I

would not fail. It's fascinating when you have a dream and you have an epiphany. If you put it out there, you tell one person, things happen. And this is what happened.

I got to L.A. and interviewed with the acting school I wanted to go to, a beginners' class. They were all 15-year-olds and I was 26 years old. I didn't care, I was going for it. The class was on Thursdays during the day, so I had to get a night job. Then I get a call from a director who said he was forming a company and that I was the best production secretary he'd ever seen. I said, "Oh, I'd love to, but I can't. You'll laugh if I tell you why." He said, "Go ahead." I said, "I'm going to be an actress." He said, "I'm not laughing. What are you going to do about it?" I said that I was going to this class on Thursdays, so I had to get a night job. He said, "Okay, I'm giving you Thursdays off, now what?" Can you believe that! So I went to class on Thursday, I worked all day long for him, and I worked on my scenes at night. Sometimes—you wouldn't know by the size of me now—but I would forget to eat. I'd go two days without eating, I was so excited.

At year's end, a group of us from my workshop got together and did this awful little play in a community theater with →



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This is almost unbelievable.

I know. The next Monday I get a call saying, "Sharon, I'm with publicity with Universal Studios, and I saw you in your little play Saturday night. You'd be perfect for the lead in John Cassavettes' new film, and I want you to meet Monique James, the head of our talent department." I said, "Okay, cut the bullshit, who is this?" [Both laugh]

She said, "I understand that you would be skeptical. Why don't I have Ms. James call you?" Everyone knew who Monique James was, because [Universal] was the only studio that still had contract players. She called me, I went in and met her. She asked me to prepare a scene. I did the scene and, Blase, she signed me that night.

That is absolutely amazing.

It is. Take of it what you want, but that's my story. I was under contract for 10 years. I was the last contract player in the history of Hollywood.

Let me tell you a little side story. When I got my first contract from Universal, I took it to my grandfather and said, "Grandpa, look at my contract, I'm being paid only \$186." I was making \$200 a week as a production secretary. He looked at the contract and started laughing. I asked what was so funny. He said, "Sharon, I drew up the first contract between a player and a studio. This is my contract."

Whoa!

I know. He died before he ever saw me on film. He drew up the first contract between a player and a studio, and I was the last contract player in the history of Hollywood.

While under contract, you did a lot of television—I remember seeing you on *The Bob Newhart Show*.

Yes, that was my first loan-out. Suzanne Pleshette and I are still friends.

You starred with Pleshette again in 1976 in *Richie Brockelman: The Missing 24 Hours*. And now you're both playing mothers on gay shows [Pleshette has a recurring role on *Will & Grace* as Karen's mom].

When Tyne and Meg did the show, some hack writer for *TV Guide* referred to Tyne and Meg as "dykes." When I came on the show, the same man—now here I come with my blond curls—calls me "copa cabana."

Isn't that wonderful? She was so good to me. I was so frightened. She has this great heart and this mouth on her. I used to sit there during rehearsals and listen to her talk and just howl.



Dynamic duo: Christine Cagney (Gless, l) and Mary Beth Lacey (Tyne Daly) in the '80s cop drama *Cagney and Lacey*. **INSET:** *TV Guide*'s cover story was written by Gloria Steinem; Gless is pictured with her "sweet little curls."

How did *Cagney and Lacey* come about?

Actually, I turned it down, because I was under contract, so Loretta Swit did [the 1981 made-for-television movie]. Then Barney came back to my manager—Monique James had become my manager by then—and said, "It's now going to series, will Sharon play it?" She said, "I'm sorry, Barney dear, Sharon's in a series, *House Calls*." I had replaced Lynn Redgrave. So Tyne [Daly] and Meg Foster played *Cagney and Lacey*, and then they were canceled after four episodes.

I don't remember that.

Apparently, they should have just put a blond wig on Meg. They decided they would do it again as a series if they replaced Cagney. So Barney called Monique back and said, "I'm asking for the third time, will she come and play it? Monique said, "Barney, I told you she's in a series." Barney had gone to CBS to find out what the lineup was for the next season, and he says, "She just got canceled!" [Both laugh] That's how I finally got Cagney and Lacey.

I seem to remember some controversy surrounding the show, like one of the stars was too butch or something. Am I off track?

You're absolutely right. When Tyne and Meg did the show, some hack writer for *TV Guide*—I can't remember his name—referred to Tyne and Meg as "dykes."

You're kidding!

No, in *TV Guide*. It was just the way they phrased it—not in a nice way, like it was a bad thing. When I came on the show, the repercussion was awful because the same man—now here I come with my blond curls—calls me "copa cabana."

What a creep.

Oh yeah, he was. So I made a joke out of it. When I was asked how I played Cagney, I said, "I talk tough and I wear pink." [Both laugh] So one time we just [happened to be] shooting in his office. He had an office in City Hall apparently, and we were shooting on location on a Saturday. I saw his name on a desk. We had food service there, and I took some ice cubes and I placed, oh, about 20 ice cubes in the middle of his desk—so when he came in Monday, all his paperwork would be destroyed. I hope he reads this. [Both laugh]

He's not likely to read it, especially this being a local gay magazine. Unless he was gay and being really homophobic. Oh, I think he was gay.

That's even worse. On to more misery—I read that you did the stage version of *Misery*. Was it similar to the film? It was rougher. →



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Rougher!

I mean Kathy Bates was brilliant, but the film was adapted from the book by William Goldman, and it was softened in some ways. In that horrible scene where Kathy breaks his ankles—well, in the book by Stephen King, she amputates them. That's what we did.

Oh, my God.

It was just the nurse and the writer, built on a rotating stage, so Bill Patterson could move in his wheelchair. So they'd have me walking in one door as he's going in another, with high-pitched frightening music. The hobbling scene where I amputate a foot, they had music set to it. It was very, very, very dark and sometimes very funny. You didn't know how the audience would react from one night to the next. Sometimes they'd be howling. The next night was a quiet night. The director said that the audience was frightened, or that they were laughing out of nerves. One woman fainted, and the fire department had to come take her out.

You've reteamed with Tyne Daly many times, the latest in last season's *Judging Amy*.

We had the best time. When my friend died, Tyne didn't know she'd died. She knew she'd been ill. I get this call on my machine, "You are in my heart, you are so resonating with me right now. I just want you to know I love you. I don't know what's going on, but whatever it is..."

I can't believe she picked up on that. But you work with a woman for six years under the pressure we were under—I mean

So is Rosie O'Donnell not married anymore?

they threw us off the air three times before we were finished. She and I had been canceled. Her mother had a great expression, "Sweat is a great cement."

So, gay marriage.

I'm all for it. We're dealing with it in this episode that we're shooting right now, and I actually get to give the finger to the White House. I'm not too up on what's going on, because I'm working and I don't always hear the news, but somebody told me that San Francisco is now reneging?

Yes.

So, what is that? Is it like when the Catholic Church said there is no purgatory, and all the little souls are zapped out into space? [Both laugh] So is Rosie O'Donnell not married anymore?

Good question. Okay, bisexuality. Some people believe that it doesn't even exist. Who's saying these things? Oh, please.

Okay, now religion. Are you...?

I don't believe in religion. I think religion was formed to control the masses. But I do believe in spirituality. I've been studying metaphysics for 30 years now.

So tell me what you think about Bush.

I have a favorite T-shirt. They wouldn't let me wear it on the show, because they don't want to date the show in one particular era. It has two rectangles—one over one breast, one over the other. One has a woman's body just from the navel to below the pubic area, and a fingernail is pulling the pants down. The other side is a picture of our president. One says "Good Bush," the other one says "Bad Bush." [Both laugh] Isn't that the best?

Blase DiStefano, creative director of OutSmart, interviewed John Stossel for the March issue.

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Families, Ahoy!

This summer, Rosie and Kelli O'Donnell launch the first cruise for gay families

by Bradley David Williams

In July, a brand-new concept in gay travel leaves the dock—a vacation designed especially for gay families. Spearheaded by Rosie O'Donnell and her partner Kelli, the July 11–18 cruise is the first venture of R Family Vacations, the travel company recently launched by the couple to help satisfy the vacation needs of families like theirs.

Over a thousand gay families, along with friends and extended family members, are expected to embark from New York on the Norwegian Dawn liner, with ports of call that include Cape Canaveral and Key West, Florida, Nassau, Bahamas, and Great Stirrup Cay, the Norwegian Cruise Line's private Bahamian island. R Family Vacations has recruited the Family Pride Coalition—the 25-year-old Washington, D.C.-based organization that advocates for GLBT families—to host seminars and workshops during the trip on adoption, surrogacy, and gay parenting. There will also be discussion groups for kids and a panel discussion where teens can share their experiences of growing up with gay and

lesbian parents. Metropolitan Community Church, the predominantly GLBT Christian denomination, will have clergy on board to perform wedding ceremonies and conduct interfaith services.

If you're thinking you might want to join the historic sailing, it's probably not too late. As we went to press, there was still space available, starting at \$899 per person. Gregg Kaminsky, a founding R Family Vacations partner, reported that a large number of Texans had already booked passage.

"Texas is a huge market for us," Kaminsky says. "For some reason, when people do something in Texas, they want all their friends to go, so we have a really large number of people coming from Texas so far."

Kaminsky, 37, grew up in the Houston area, attending high school in The Woodlands before heading to Austin, where he was a cheerleader at the University of Texas. He spent six years organizing gay cruises for Atlantis and then hooked up with the O'Donnells to start the new travel firm. Kaminsky met the lesbian power couple through his partner Dan MacDonald, whom he married several years ago on the Bravo

network's *Gay Weddings* reality series.

"Dan and Kelli had been friends before Rosie and Kelli started dating and before Dan and I started dating," Kaminsky says. "Dan worked for Disney, and Kelli worked for Nickelodeon."

When one of the entertainers backed out of a gay cruise Kaminsky was working on a few years ago, he called Rosie to ask for suggestions. She promptly volunteered herself. The experience greatly impressed the entertainer, Kaminsky reports, and she asked him if there were any cruises available for gay families.

"I said, 'No,' and she said, 'Why don't you and Kelli do it?'" Kaminsky remembers. "So the three of us started the company."

Kelli O'Donnell, who grew up in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and earned a degree in advertising at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, was a marketing executive with Nickelodeon when she met Rosie over six years ago. The 36-year-old, who has legally changed her last name from Carpenter to O'Donnell, gave birth through artificial insemination to the couple's fourth child, Vivi, in 2002. The family, which also →

Family outing: In July, the Norwegian Dawn will leave New York with the first cruise for gay families, organized by R Family Vacations.

Families, Ahoy!

continued from previous page

includes three adopted children—Parker, 8, Chelsea, 6, and Blake, 4—will all be on board the cruise.

tour of *Taboo*. Kelli O'Donnell and Kaminsky handle the day-to-day operations of the new travel enterprise out of the guesthouse on the O'Donnell residence in Nyack, just north of New York City.

Kaminsky encourages travelers to book a bargain Internet fare to New York (air travel is not included in the price of the cruise) and tack on a few days in the city before or after the sailing.

"We leave on a Sunday, so I tell people to come spend the weekend in New York," he

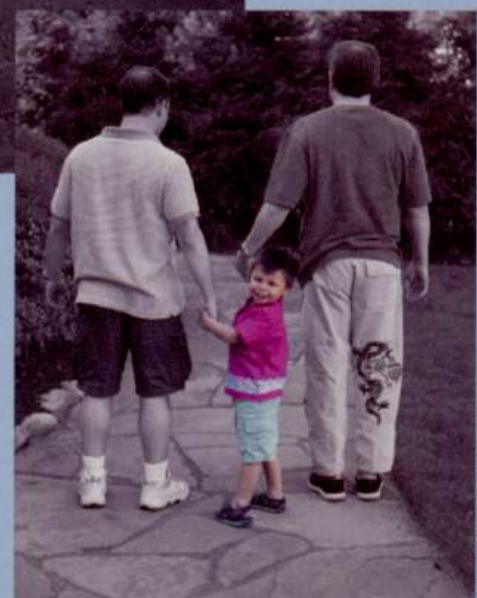
says. Special rates for cruise-goers are available at the Marriott Marquis and W hotels in Times Square.

Aside from the special onboard activities geared toward the specific needs of gay families, the cruise promises to be an unforgettable adventure on the high seas. The 2,200-passenger Norwegian Dawn, which entered service in December 2002, is considered one of the most spectacular ships in the world with 10 restaurants, a 1,100-seat theater, and a 24-hour fitness center and spa. The onboard art collection includes works by Renoir, Van Gogh, Matisse, and Monet. Adults can enjoy massages, cooking classes, lectures, casino gambling, art auctions, and first-run movies. Kids will have their own special day camp at the T-Rex Kid's Center, and teens will be able to hang out in their own club. Perks like room-service dining and babysitting until 10 p.m. will be provided at no additional charge.

As for entertainment, Rosie will host opening-night festivities, and an array of top stars will perform throughout the cruise. Comedian Joy Behar, co-host of ABC's *The View*, will do stand-up, as will gay comics Bob Smith and Judy Gold. Openly gay former NFL football player and vocalist Esera Tualo (recent star of his own Chili's television spot) and Broadway star Christine Ebersole will round out the impressive roster of celebrity guests.

Bradley David Williams also reports on gay Hawaii in this issue.

For details about R Family Vacations, visit www.rfamilyvacations.com or call 1-866-R-FAM-VAC.



BOTH PHOTOS: R FAMILY VACATIONS

Kids friendly: The cruise will include activities for children to enjoy with parents as well as supervised time to play away from parents.

Kaminsky and MacDonald have yet to take the plunge into parenthood. "Dan isn't ready yet," says Kaminsky. MacDonald is not directly involved with R Family Vacations but was Rosie's business partner in the production of *Taboo*, the Boy George musical. Despite a reported \$10 million loss from the Broadway run (don't worry about Rosie, who is reported to be worth \$100 million), the two are working on other projects, including a possible international

Kelli Speaks

Rosie's spouse chats about the cruise and the limelight

by Bradley David Williams

While more inclined to work behind the scenes, Kelli O'Donnell has recently become a very visible figure in the gay and lesbian community. After making her marriage to Rosie O'Donnell official earlier this year in San Francisco, she sat down for a nationally televised interview with Barbara Walters, in which she discussed life as the spouse of one of the world's most famous lesbians. In a recent phone interview, O'Donnell spoke with me about this summer's R Family Vacations

cruise and her somewhat reluctant foray into the media spotlight.

Bradley David Williams: So, was it Rosie's original idea to organize a cruise for gay families?

Kelli O'Donnell: Well, I think that the idea has been around for a long time. I think that a lot of different [gay travel] companies had the idea, but they didn't have the celebrity power and the financial means... I mean, an idea is really nothing if you can't pull everything else together. I don't want to say

that it was an original idea by any means, but she had the ability to fund it and to start the company.

Did your recent appearance on 20/20 with Barbara Walters result in a lot of interest in the company?

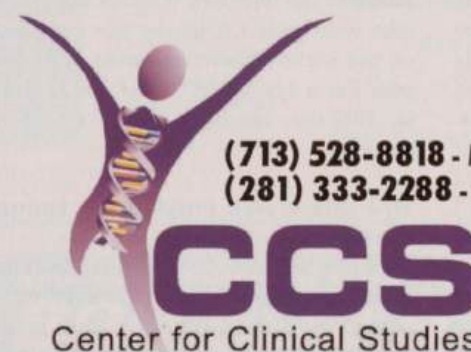
[Laughs] Well, needless to say, there's been a tremendous response since then. Bookings are going really well. People are very interested in the company, and if they're not booking on this trip, they want to know that the company will be →

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Saturday, June 5th	vs. Los Angeles	3:00 pm	Swoopes T-Shirt
Thursday, July 15th	vs. Detroit	7:00 pm	Cooper Waterbottle
Saturday, July 31st	vs. Indiana	3:00 pm	Nesting Dolls
Friday, Sept. 3rd	vs. Phoenix	7:30 pm	Photo Night

WEEKEND SIX-PACK

Date	Opponent	Time	
Sunday, May 30th	vs. Sacramento	3:00 pm	
Saturday, June 5th	vs. Los Angeles	3:00 pm	
Sunday, June 27th	vs. Washington	3:00 pm	Pride Parade Weekend
Saturday, July 10th	vs. Los Angeles	7:30 pm	
Saturday, July 17th	vs. Connecticut	7:30 pm	
Saturday, July 31st	vs. Indiana	3:00 pm	

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Kelli Speaks

continued from page 42

around long-term. Maybe they want to go next year. Maybe they want to do a land-based program, like a ski trip or a different kind of trip. It's also interesting to see the number of straight people that want to come on the cruise—like friends and family of gay people.

Have you had many singles booking?

Not a ton, but we have had a few. We have some single parents bringing their kids on board. There seems to be a lot of people that just want to go on the trip—especially men—who are looking for a vacation that's not so party-intensive and cruisy. They're just looking to go on a gay trip that's going to be more about eating out and the entertainment and the comedy and all the great things that'll be on board and having a really great time.

Will Rosie be performing throughout the cruise?

Well, she's going to host opening night. We are bringing other entertainers on board so she can actually enjoy the vacation. You know, we'll see. If there's a microphone nearby, who knows... [laughs].

And your parents, who were so great on 20/20, are going on the cruise, right?

My parents are going. Actually, my sister, her husband, my two brothers and their wives and kids are all going.

It's amazing, because as the 20/20 segment revealed, it wasn't that long ago that they were staging an intervention to try and "cure" you of your homosexuality, and now they're being interviewed by Barbara Walters and going on the gay cruise.

I know. They've come a long way, needless to say.

Has your life, personally, changed much since the 20/20 appearance?

I've gotten a lot of really positive feedback. I still can go around and nobody really knows who I am unless I'm with Ro. So I still have a bit of anonymity left. You know, I also had on so much makeup on the Barbara Walters show, nobody recognizes me in my normal life [laughs]. My life really hasn't changed that much. I'm glad I did it, I'm glad it's over with, and it is my last one. I will never do it again. It's too much stress for me. I'll leave the public part to Ro. I'm happier behind the scenes. That's where I feel most comfortable.

I think a lot of people were impressed with how eloquent you were. We've been seeing your picture in the tabloids all these years, but we had never heard you speak. But you don't see yourself as being a major figure in the gay community or being a role model or a leader or any of those things?

No, it's just, it's not really my... It's not what I do. I'm happy to do what I can, like speak at an event. Maybe, every now

and then, but it's not what I do well and it's not really what I'm drawn to do. It gives me more anxiety than happiness, so I try to stick with what makes me happy. I'll let Ro speak and be the public figure, and I will stand by her all the way, but it's just not where I feel most comfortable.

You grew up in Louisiana, but you have some Texas ties, right?

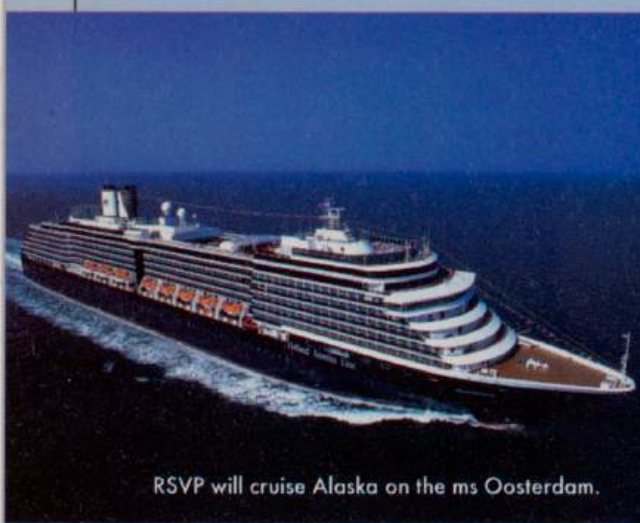
I went to college [SMU] in Dallas. My sister lives in Dallas. I actually was there when the Barbara Walters thing aired. And my best friend from high school lives in Houston. He's actually the guy I talked about in the Barbara Walters interview [she went to her first gay bar with him on the night of her debutante ball]. So, yep, I'm a big fan of Texas, aside from the fact that the Bushes are from there [laughs].

Will this cruise become an annual event?

I hope so. I'm not sure we'll do the same cruise every year. We may do a different ship or a different itinerary. But, yes, I hope we have a summer cruise every year. But this one, the first one, is going to go out with all the bells and whistles. Ro is really excited about it and wants to really make it the biggest event of the year. So I tell people, if they're interested in coming on one of our trips, the first one will be big! ■

More Cruising

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• Atlantis Events

Prefer a more tropical jaunt? The October 16-24 Atlantis Acapulco and Mexico Riviera might float your boat. The cruise aboard the New Radiance of the Seas will depart San Diego. Prices begin at \$799. A Greeks Isles cruise during the Summer Olympics is sold out, but hopeful travelers can register on a waiting list. Check www.AtlantisEvents.com.

• Pied Piper Travel

More close at hand, Pied Piper has a May 30-June 6 Memorial Day Caribbean cruise departing New York City. The ship is the Norwegian Dawn, the same ship booked for the inaugural R Family Vacations cruise in July. Prices start at \$734. Check <http://home.att.net/~gaygroupcruises>.

• Aquafest Cruises

Houston-based Aquafest will sail from Barcelona for a July 3-10 Mediterranean cruise aboard the Royal Caribbean Splendor of the Seas. Features include a gay-and-lesbian film festival. Stops include Nice/Monaco, Rome, and Naples. Prices begin at \$844. Check www.aquafest.net. —Victor Zorn

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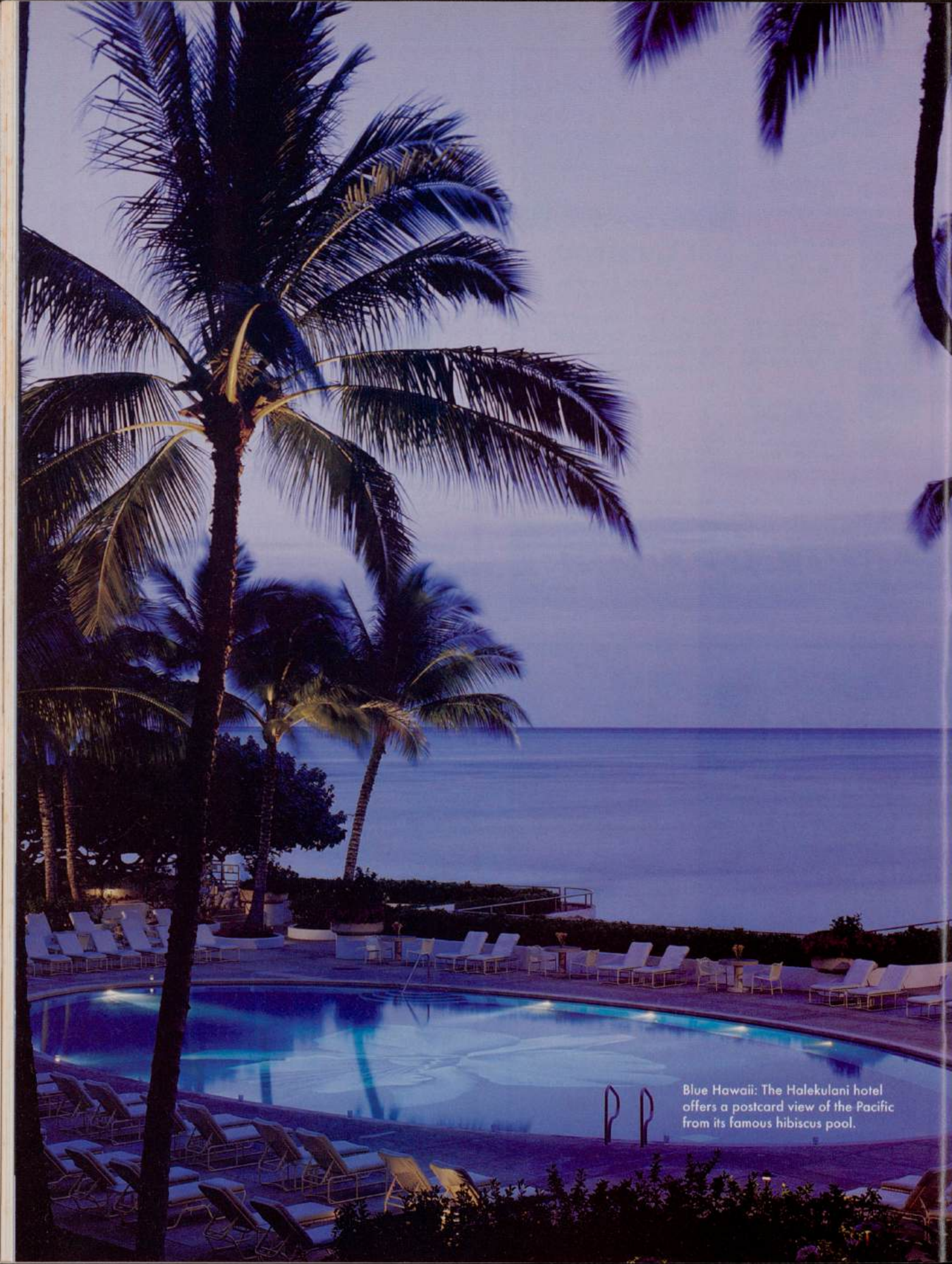
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Waikiki, Aloha!

*Sure, Hawaii is heavenly.
But check out Honolulu's hot tourist district
for the gay scene in this island paradise*

by Bradley David Williams

If you have never been to Hawaii, there's no way you can fully grasp how relentlessly fabulous this place is. There are so many intangibles: the sensuality of a soft South Pacific breeze, punctuated by the sweet fragrance of plumeria; the "Aloha spirit" that comes over even the most jaded post-9/11 traveler; and an oddly intense vibe that counterbalances the serenity of this breathtakingly gorgeous chain of otherworldly volcanic islands.

In case you can't tell, I am an unapologetic Hawaii freak of the first order. I first experienced the islands on a family vacation in 1980, the summer before my 13th birthday, and have returned seven times over the years, most recently this past January. I just can't get enough of Aloha-land.

While all six of the major Hawaiian islands are spectacular, each with its own distinct personality and array of attractions, you need go no further than Oahu if you're looking for a gay scene. Waikiki, the tourist district of Honolulu, is where the action is.

The first stop of any gay traveler arriving in Waikiki should be **Hula's Bar and Lei Stand**, located on the second floor of the **Aston Waikiki Grand Hotel** (134 Kapahulu Ave., 808/923-0669, www.hulas.com). Hula's is Waikiki's legendary gay bar and serves as headquarters for many gay visitors. Open daily, the bar features free Internet usage on two computers, a pool table, a giant video screen, and an enclosed dance floor. There's no

longer a lei stand as there was at Hula's previous location on the other side of Waikiki, but a local woman stops in regularly with a basketful of fresh leis for sale.

Sipping a mai tai at Hula's while taking in the panoramic view of Diamond Head and enjoying the company of locals and international tourists alike is a quintessential activity in gay Hawaii. You may even spot a celebrity. Hula's is the favorite hangout of comedian Margaret Cho when she visits. Be sure and pick up copies of *Odyssey* and *DaKine*, two free monthly magazines that give the low-down on gay happenings in the islands.

Some gay and lesbian visitors choose to stay at the Waikiki Grand, simply because of Hula's. The gay-owned **Queen's Surf Vacation Rentals** (808/923-1814) is located within the hotel and can assist you with reservations here and at other nearby properties. Eating out in Waikiki can get very expensive, so you may want to look for something with a kitchen.

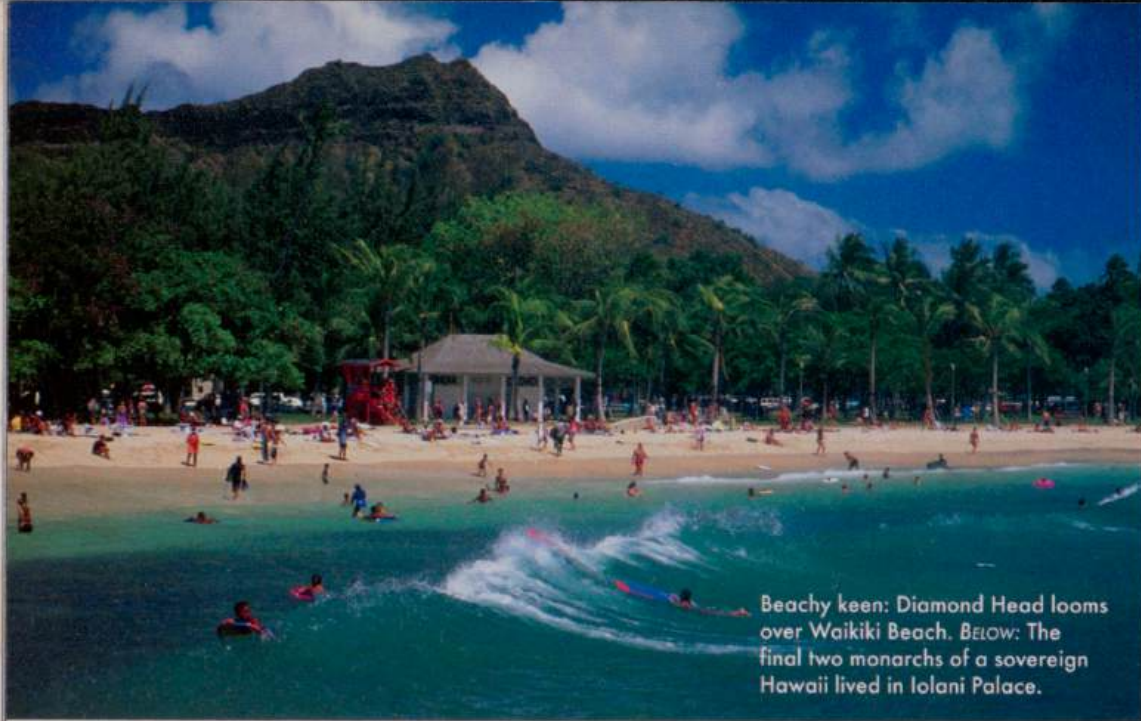
Another lodging option is one of two small gay hotels located on Cartwright Road, a tiny street a block from Hula's. **The Cabana at Waikiki** (877/902-2121, www.cabana-waikiki.com) and **Ha'aheo Waikiki** (808/923-7950, www.haaheo.com) are both popular with travelers looking for accommodations with an exclusively gay clientele. Besides their close proximity to Hula's, these hotels are just minutes from the Honolulu Zoo, Kapi'olani Park, and Queen's Surf Beach, the appropriately named hotspot for gay sun-worshippers. The Cabana features 15 newly remodeled one-bedroom suites, Continental breakfast, and an eight-man spa, while the Ha'aheo boasts larger two-bedroom suites accented with Polynesian décor.

At the opposite end of Waikiki from Hula's is a funky gay enclave called **Eaton Square** (444 Hobron Lane). This four-story complex of businesses surrounding a courtyard houses **Michelangelo** (808/951-0008), a darkly lit gay cruise bar popular with locals. Located next door is **P-10A**, a men's sex-club. An interior hallway linking the club and the bar allows patrons to move back and forth. Several floors up is →

Blue Hawaii: The Halekulani hotel offers a postcard view of the Pacific from its famous hibiscus pool.

Surfer boy: What's a Hawaii story without a picture of a cute guy?





Beachy keen: Diamond Head looms over Waikiki Beach. BELOW: The final two monarchs of a sovereign Hawaii lived in Iolani Palace.

BOTH PHOTOS: DANA VICTORIS BUREAU

Waikiki, Ahoha!

continued from previous page

Max's Gym (808/951-8232), a "private men's club" (a.k.a. bathhouse), which features a steam room, sauna, and video room. A gay boutique called **80% Straight** (808/923-9996) is also located in Eaton Square.

A great place to stay not far from Eaton Square is the **Ohana Maile Sky Court**, a budget high-rise owned by the Ohana/Outrigger chain of Hawaiian hotels. Boasting a fun little bar by the pool and Jacuzzi, the hotel (2058 Kuhio Ave., 800/784-1180) is one of the best bargains in Waikiki. A quick Internet search on CheapTickets.com found a package with roundtrip air (on Continental, non-stop Houston to Honolulu) and five nights at the Maile Sky Court for under \$700 per person, double occupancy. Hawaii is a popular destination year-round, with prices somewhat higher in the summer and around Christmas.

Another pocket of gay commerce is located in central Waikiki. A tiny little karaoke bar called **In Between** (2155 Lau'ula St., 808/926-7060) is often packed to the rafters on weekends and offers a fun and festive atmosphere. Hidden away down an alley off Kalakaua Avenue, Waikiki's main strip, the bar is just steps away from two popular adult video arcades, **Suzie's** and **Velvet Video**. Remarkably, the upscale tone of Waikiki somehow prevents this cluster of establishments from seeming overly sleazy.

While you're in this area, check out the gay-friendly **AstonWaikiki Joy Hotel** (320 Lewers St., 877/997-6667), which features a Tokyo-style karaoke studio. Called The Experience, the club houses 15 private karaoke rooms. Sometimes when you're walking down the street in Waikiki, you feel as if you're in Tokyo. Japanese tourists make

up around 50 percent of Waikiki visitors, and there are restaurants where you can't find a menu in English. Expect to see lots of cute Japanese boys sporting bleach-blond hair and rock star duds.

Another gay bar, **Angles Waikiki** (2258 Kuhio, 808/926-9766), and the after-hours dance club next door, **Fusion Waikiki** (2260 Kuhio, 808/924-2422), can get very busy. This makes for a gay-friendly atmosphere at the Starbucks and Jamba Juice across the street.

Several Waikiki eateries are especially welcoming. **Cheeseburger in Paradise** (2500 Kalakaua Ave., 808/923-3731) and **La Cucaracha** (2310 Kuhio Ave., #102, 808/922-2288) both advertise in the gay publications and offer reliably good food at reasonable prices. My two favorite Waikiki restaurants are excellent Thai places. **Singha Thai** (1910 Ala Moana Blvd., 808/941-2898) features nightly performances by Thai dancers. **Keo's** (2028 Kuhio Ave., 808/951-9355) is



known for its celebrity clientele. A wall of photos (Tina Turner, Richard Chamberlain, Shirley MacLaine, Carol Burnett) attests to the popularity of the superb Asian cuisine.

No Hawaiian vacation would be complete without at least a small dose of sightseeing. Depending on your mood and timetable, you may want to avoid the heavily trafficked sites like the U.S.S. Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor and the Polynesian Cultural Center, a Mormon-run educational theme park. You definitely want to rent a car (or you can take the bus for just a few dollars) and spend a day on Oahu's scenic North Shore, where the International Winter Surfing Championships are held each

year. Don't miss spectacular Waimea Bay and the sleepy little town of Haleiwa, with its famous "shave ice" (snow cone) joints. Snorkelers and scuba divers flock to Hanauma Bay, a short trip east of Waikiki.

Major points of interest in Honolulu include Iolani Palace, which was the residence of Hawaii's last two monarchs, King Kalakaua and Queen Lili'uokalani. After Hawaii became a state in 1958, the palace served for a time as the Capitol Building before the ultramodern current statehouse was built next door. Honolulu's Chinatown district, with its produce markets and lei shops, is also fascinating. There is actually a gay bar in the Chinatown area, **Kane'ala's** (10 N. Hotel St., 808/536-6966), but be aware that this neighborhood has a reputation for being dangerous after dark.

If you want to do something really unique and fabulous, book a tour of **Shangri La**, the estate of the late Doris Duke. When the eccentric tobacco heiress died in 1993, she left instructions for her Hawaii home (4055 Papu Circle) to be converted into a museum housing her collection of Islamic art. Small group tours given through the Honolulu Academy of Arts last approximately two and a half hours (866-DUKE-TIX, www.honoluluacademy.org). By the way, Shangri La was reportedly the site of a gay wedding involving Doris's friend Paul Reubens (a.k.a. Pee-wee Herman) in 1989, at which Hawaii residents and Duke friends Imelda Marcos and Jim Nabors both sang!

Some of the best sightseeing can be done on your own without leaving Waikiki and without spending a dime. A self-guided walking tour of Waikiki's most famous beachfront hotels is a must. Start at the **Sheraton Moana Surfrider** (2365 Kalakaua Ave., 800/256-4280), the stately "First Lady of →






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The sun also sets: The day ends on Waikiki Beach.

Waikiki, Ahoha!

continued from page 48

Waikiki," which was built in 1901, making it Hawaii's oldest hotel. Have a drink under the giant banyan tree in the courtyard if you wish, and don't miss the second-floor display of historic photos and memorabilia. Next door, hidden away from the street, is the elegant **Royal Hawaiian** (2259 Kalakaua Ave., 800/256-4280). Known as the Pink Palace, the Royal Hawaiian was built on the grounds of what was once the Hawaiian royal family's beach retreat. Making your way westward, take the elevator to the rooftop bar and restaurant for a sweeping view of Waikiki and Diamond Head. Next is the **Halekulani** (2199 Kalia Rd., 800/367-2343), the most expensive Waikiki hotel. With its austere white-on-white color scheme, this property is a favorite of celebs like Hawaii native Bette Midler.

You can skip the next hotel—the Outrigger—and continue on through Fort DeRussy Park and past the Hale Koa, the U.S. military hotel. Now you have reached the final stop on the tour—the grandiose **Hilton Hawaiian Village** (2005 Kalia Rd., 800-HILTONS). This sprawling 22-acre resort features six hotel towers, five pools, 22 restaurants and lounges, over 90 shops and boutiques, botanical gardens, exotic wildlife including flamingos and tropical penguins, a world-class spa, and a satellite of the Bishop Museum of Hawaiian Heritage. Check out the collection of photos documenting the Hilton's own rich history—Elvis filmed *Blue Hawaii* here, and JFK spoke to a mayors' conference at the hotel during his celebrated visit to the islands just months before his assassination.

There are two other hotels on the island

that are well worth visiting. Within walking distance, just east of Waikiki near the foot of Diamond Head, is the ultra-hip **W Hotel** (2885 Kalakaua Ave.; 808/922-1700). A short drive further east is the awe-inspiring **Kahala Mandarin Oriental** (5000 Kahala Ave.; 888/254-0637), which features a dolphin lagoon and has accommodated numerous kings, heads of state, and rock stars (a wall of fame showcases photos of past guests).

Shopping is also a major pastime in Hawaii. In recent years, **Kalakaua Avenue**, Waikiki's main strip, has become like Rodeo Drive. Everywhere you look you discover outsized boutiques with names like Gucci, Prada, Chanel, Yves St. Laurent, and Tiffany. **Ala Moana Shopping Center** (1450 Ala Moana Blvd.), just across the Ala Wai Canal from Waikiki, boasts a Macy's and Neiman Marcus among its over 240 stores. A free shuttle runs between Waikiki hotels and the shopping center.

If you have the time and money to visit

one or more of the neighbor islands, an obvious choice would be Hawaii, which, to avoid confusion, is always referred to as the Big Island. Just a 45-minute flight away on Hawaiian or Aloha Airlines, this is where you can observe the active Kilauea volcano and pay your respects to the volcano goddess Pele. Kauai and Maui are also extremely popular (there are non-stop flights from Houston directly to Maui), while the smaller Molokai and Lanai are the least-populated and least-visited islands. You could easily spend a week on each island and not get bored, and while there are currently no gay bars outside Oahu, there is a sprinkling of gay-owned bed-and-breakfasts throughout the islands (see sidebar). A number of local travel agencies, including the

gay-friendly **H.I.S. Hawaii** (808/330-9672), can assist you in creating a day trip or overnight stay on one of the neighbor islands.

Like our straight counterparts, many gay and lesbian couples travel to Hawaii to get married. A 1993 decision by the Hawaii Supreme Court promised for a time that Hawaii would be the first state in the nation to legalize gay marriage. Unfortunately, the next year the Hawaiian legislature amended state law, defining marriage as between a man and a woman. The Hawaii Gay Marriage Bureau (www.hawaiigaymarriage.com), a project of the Gay and Lesbian Education and Advocacy Foundation, provides a registration, referral, and information forum for those interested in same-sex marriage registration, marriage certificates, related services, and updates on the legal front.

Bradley David Williams contributes regularly to OutSmart. He interviewed Thoroughly Modern Millie writer Dick Scanlan for the December issue.

ON THE OTHER ISLANDS

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Their two dads: Fathers Patrick Vachon (top left) and Jason Komar cuddle with daughter Parker and son Anton. "If people could just come into our home, they'd see that we are a normal family," Vachon says.

Check Up Patrick Vachon

A single guy when he was one of the original *OutSmart* contributors, the therapist is now a family man

by Joyce Gabiola
Photo by Yvonne Feece

Every month during our 10-year celebration, we revisit an individual we interviewed or who played a significant role in the issue published a decade ago. →

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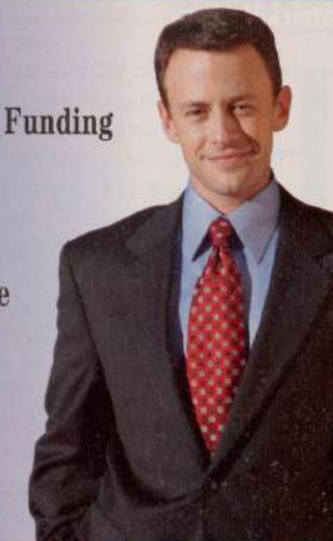
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Patrick Vachon and his son Anton greet me at the front door on a rainy Sunday morning. Anton articulates, as much as a three-year-old can, but enough for me to understand, "Come into the den." I am ushered into a room where *Free Willy* is about to start.

Vachon was one of the original *OutSmart* contributors, offering articles on various subjects such as the effects of adolescent sexual abuse on gay men, HIV/AIDS, coming out, and personal and community growth. While Vachon says now he is not a fan of writing, I found his written voice to be sound, confident, and trustworthy, which in his line of work is fundamental.

Vachon has been a clinical social worker in private practice for 10 years. He says his professional purpose is to work with and for the community to heal individuals, couples, and families. He assists his clients (about 50 percent are couples) in making their relationships work. While about 60 percent of his clients are gay or lesbian, his clientele also consists of heterosexuals. Compared to 10 years ago, the major difference in his practice is found in the emphasis on therapy for gay couples, many with families, while in the early years the focus was on HIV and coming-out issues. This change in focus is also a reflection of Vachon's personal life.

In 1985, after losing his partner of five years to AIDS, Vachon realized there was healing to accomplish, not just within his own life but also within the community. ("As a community, we do have wounding," Vachon says.) In 1990 he earned a master's degree in social work from the University of Houston and became a certified therapist in the IMAGO method (*imago* is Latin for "image"). The basis of the IMAGO relationship model is an embracing of the work required of any relationship in order for it to last. Vachon asserts that healing can only be accomplished in a relationship while growth work is done on an individual basis. He points out that relationships do not exist only between two people involved in a romantic coupling. As people, we have relationships with our co-workers, colleagues, peers, teachers, bankers, medical professionals, and others, just as we have relationships with inanimate objects or situations, such as food, money, and sex.

Vachon asserts that healing can occur in a relationship when we have long-term monogamous relationships. His critics say he is trying to influence gay couples to adopt "heterosexual ideals." "We need to invest in

relationships," Vachon counters. "We need to maximize growth potential."

Vachon and his husband Jason Komar have been together for six years. In July 2003, they exchanged wedding vows in Canada. Vachon's family is fully supportive, and Komar's parents accept Vachon as their son-in-law. "We grow and struggle just like everyone," says Vachon.

Komar points out that he had only been out of the closet for four years before he met Vachon. In turn, Vachon recalls the '70s and '80s, when both gay and straight people were insisting that gays and lesbians—especially gay men—couldn't have committed monogamous relationships. Looking around him, he adopted this mentality as truth, as many others have and do, but as times changed Vachon found himself in a significant relationship. He started wondering what else he could have that others in the past said he could not. Healthy relationship. Check. Kids. Why not?

As individuals, Vachon and Komar knew

**Parker was born on June 20, 2002. . . .
On July 27, five weeks later, Anton
joined the family. Suddenly, there
were two children in their household.**

they always wanted to have kids someday. Komar quips, "Always wanted kids, yes. Five weeks apart, no." Vachon and Komar's life together changed radically when Anton and Parker became part of the family, almost all at once.

In 2000, Vachon and Komar decided that they wanted to adopt. The process started in June 2001, and in January 2002 they met with the woman who would give birth to Parker (she had selected Vachon and Komar to raise the child on Martin Luther King Day, January 17, 2001). Then, in February 2001, they received a letter from Russia regarding Anton's adoption. Parker was born on June 20, 2002. For six months, since the day they met Parker's mother, Vachon and Komar were involved in the pregnancy, and they were in the delivery room to witness the birth of their daughter. Parker came to live with them the next day. On July 27, five weeks later, Anton joined the family. Suddenly, there were two children in their household. Vachon and Komar had created the family they always wanted.

Anton and Parker know Vachon as Papa and Komar as Daddy. "We don't hide our love together," Vachon says. They express affection for each other as any couple would with hugs, kisses, and handholding. "If people could just come into our home, they'd

see that we are a normal family," Vachon points out. The kids go to bed at 8 or 8:30, Vachon and Komar go to bed around 9, and everyone is up at 5 o'clock the next morning. "We have the same issues and struggles. We experience the same stuff everyone experiences plus an extra dose because of the oppression."

For Vachon and Komar, life now revolves around their children. I ask Vachon to sum up his life, and Komar pops up with a cliché—"I wouldn't have it any other way." Then he teases, "He's got the pool he's always wanted."

Vachon smiles, then adds, "Being in a relationship and a parent is the hardest combination you'll ever do. As hard as it is sometimes, I wouldn't want it any other way." He poses, "If I hadn't been in a relationship for five years, would I have gone into social work?"

I ask Vachon if this is where he thought he would be. He replies, "Hell no. If you asked me in the '70s or even 10 years ago about having a family, I would've said no."

Vachon says he wants to teach his children tolerance and to understand and accept differences. From his second *OutSmart* column (in the May 1994 issue), Vachon recalls a favorite quote from his IMAGO training: "Through our sameness we connect. Through our differences we grow." He wants Anton and Parker to be raised in an environment where they accept people of different races, socio-economic backgrounds, and beliefs. He assures, "They will get that quickly."

At some point during the interview, Anton has spilled lemonade on the kitchen floor and managed to leave the crime scene undetected. Shortly after, during playtime with Komar, Parker begins throwing a tantrum while Anton playfully rushes for one of my sheets of paper and my pen, which I willingly relinquish. Komar lifts Parker up and heads out of the den, telling her, "We need to have a girl talk." They return, Parker crying non-stop at the same pitch. Vachon turns to me and says, "This is a sign that it's naptime."

Vachon and Komar are calm and seem comfortable. Everything is now under control. As the interview ends, Anton sits quietly on a stool while Komar prepares sandwiches for the kids, and Vachon demonstrates how the short, complex plastic contraption located between the kitchen and the hallway becomes ajar (I was intimidated by one of those kids' gates, so?).

Vachon is happy he's here. Wouldn't you be?

Joyce Gabiola is a contributor for *Pride.04* magazine. This is her first piece for *OutSmart*.



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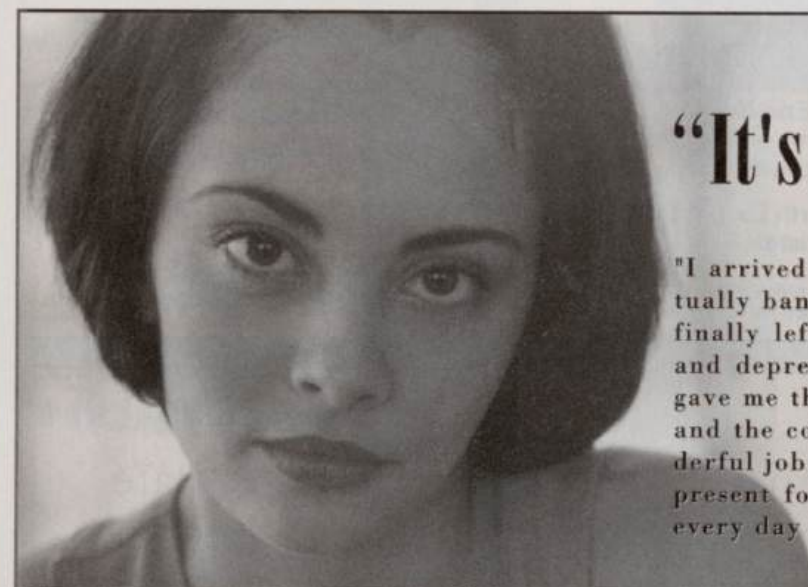


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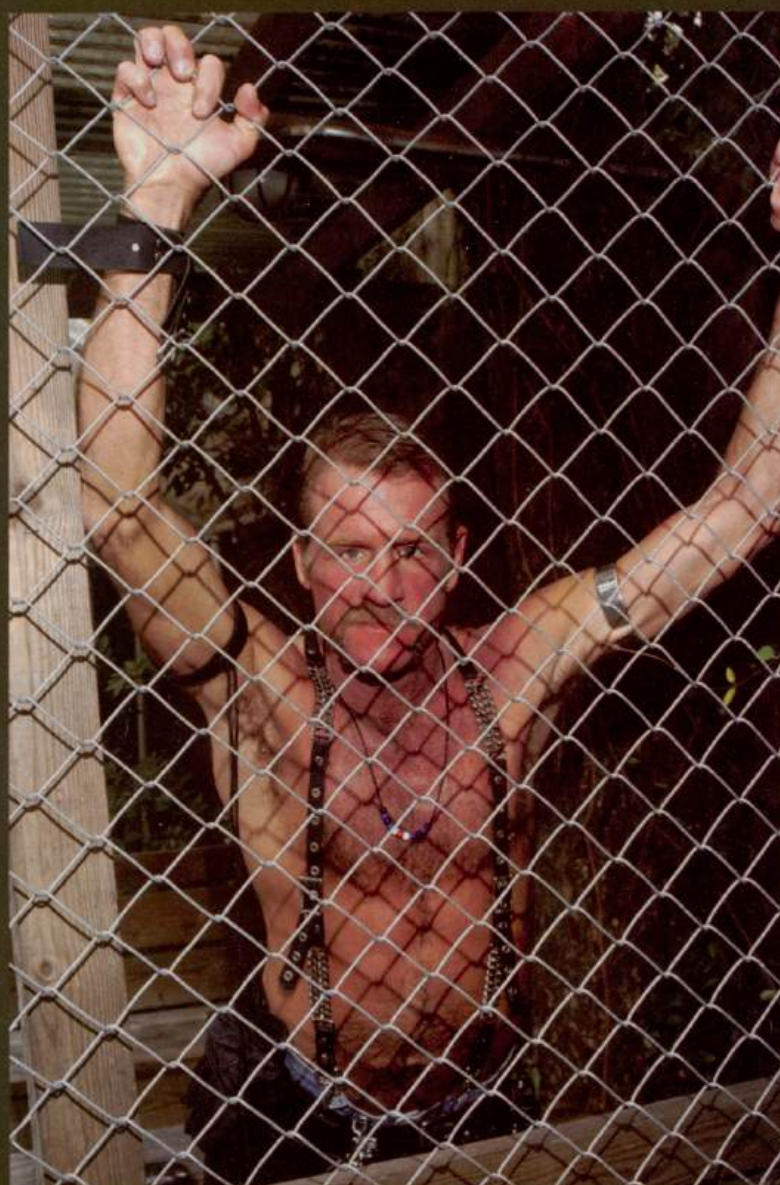
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LookOut

by Tim Brookover



LEATHER LONGING. When Steven Lloyd competes in the May 27-31 International Mr. Leather event in Chicago, he will seek to follow in the footsteps of the Texans who have won the title, Houstonian Colt Thomas (1983) and Stephen Weber of Dallas (2002). Lloyd—photographed at the Ripcord—will travel to the Windy City bearing the local Master of Leather title.

STEVEN DAVID

IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD. Our Sapphic sisters have often bemoaned a dearth of social opportunities for lesbians in Houston. "Where are all the women?" the sisterhood cries. Once again, **Carolyn Wyatt** has an answer. The founder of the popular first-and-third-Wednesday Professional Women's Happy Hour at Meteor now publishes a snappy weekly e-mail newsletter packed with events and activities of particular interest to the gals. Want to

fill your calendar? Drop a request to carol.wyatt@nuasis.com.

Still looking for something to do? Therapist **Daniel Garces** has formed the Montrose Social Group, which meets on Thursday night at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Learn more at www.MSGHouston.org.

Bryan Lari has seen such crowds at his weekly yoga class at the Houston GLBT Community Center that he now offers two

sessions every Monday—at 6 p.m., then at 7:30. Lari also teaches monthly classes at Thomas Street Clinic.

GLOBO president **Abel Rodriguez** recently e-mailed to announce the first Mr./Ms. GLOBO Pageant. Of course, you knew that GLOBO means Gays & Lesbians Organized by Orgullo (pride), sí? On May 9, the hombres and señoritas will strut down the runway at Club Inergy, competing for cash and prizes. Think you have what it takes? Call 713/710-0268 to register.

Becky Cochrane and **Timothy J. Lambert** will sign copies of their new novel, *The Deal*, at Borders River Oaks on May 25. Some of you learned about these two Houston writers in our February 2003 article ("Author! Author?") about *He's the One*, the book they wrote with two additional collaborators under the nom de plume **Timothy James Beck**. Perplexed? Stop by Borders and sort it all out.

Mark your **Frank Gehry** calendar now for the American Institute of Architects annual sandcastle-building contest on June 5 on Galveston's East Beach. Competitors from 85 teams—some of them scantily clad, *hello!*—will vie for the Golden Bucket Award.

GOOD WORKS. Never clean your own ride? Then motor over to Mary's on May 8 for the Sundance Cattle Company carwash benefiting Darla's Learning Center, the school for adults with mental retardation that recently moved into Montrose. Cattle Company chairman **Norman Umstead** and his fellow scrubbers will also sell exuberantly colored art created by Learning Center students, including school namesake **Darla Deese**.

On May 19, **Brad Brandt**, **Jon Famestad**, **Tivona Watson**, and **Jamie Zelko** will host a reception at Sunset Body Works benefiting the Human Rights Campaign. To RSVP: 713/524-7707.

Deterred by inclement weather on Easter Sunday, the Bunnies on the Bayou fundraising bash will hop to May 23. Hosts of the outdoor event held next to Wortham Center include **Nelda Billescas** and **Kirsten Vaselaar**.

CHO FUNNY. As we went to press, Houston Gay & Lesbian Film Festival president **Zig Zigman** buzzed with the news that the fest will host an advance screening on June 5 of the new **Margaret Cho** concert flick, *Revolution*. Sponsored by Sundance Channel, which will premiere the movie June 19, the sneak peek, and a party, will take place at Rice Cinema. Evening details were still in development. Check the festival website, www.hglff.org, for updates. ■

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Margaret Cho

(Entertainment Weekly, 4/09/04)

Following is a letter from Robert Pickett in response to Entertainment Weekly's "Funniest People in America": A "Funniest People in America" list without Margaret Cho?! That's about as crazy as the ban on gay marriage or the war in Iraq. In the words of Margaret herself, "Girl, you ig'nant!"

In Entertainment Weekly's next issue, they listed the readers' picks for the 10 funny folks they overlooked in their "25 Funniest People," and Margaret Cho was No. 1: "She's the only bisexual Korean-American comedian who riffs on colonics, menstruation, lesbian sex, and every other off-color subject imaginable. . . Plus, she's bounced back from a disastrous failed sitcom (*All-American Girl*) with an arsenal of gleefully subversive one-woman shows (her new tour kicks off this fall). Why we left her off [the first list]: She was No. 26. We swear."

Nia Vardalos

(Entertainment Weekly, 4/23/04, Karen Valby)

Her new movie, *Connie and Carla* . . . is a light cocktail costarring Toni Collette about a couple of cabaret singers on the run from the Mob who hide out in a drag-queen bar, disguised in wigs and boas and false baritone voices. The script was inspired by Vardalos's leaner years, when she hoofed it through cramped Canadian dinner theaters, belting out every cheesy chestnut from *A Chorus Line* to *Cats*. She dashed off a rough first draft of the script back in 1999, and when [*My Big Fat Greek Wedding*] hit \$80 million—it would go on to gross \$241 million—Universal swooped in with a bid. "Honestly, I just wrote the same movie twice," she says, "which is 'Hey, everybody's a little different, and in the end, we're all fruit!'"

Connie and Carla

(Entertainment Weekly, 4/23/04, Jim Mullen)

Connie and Carla: Two women pretend to be drag queens to escape the Mob. This was J. Edgar Hoover's original idea for the Witness Protection Program.

Charles Busch

(Out, 5/04)

When asked what he would wear to his nuptials, Busch said, "A mink coat over a nightgown."

Straight Bachelor

(The Advocate, 4/13/04, Richard Andreoli)

A straight bachelor on Fox's *Playing It Straight*, a reality show with one woman ferreting out the gay guys among 14 men: "In the beginning, I thought the line that divided me from homosexuals was a very clear and distinct one, yet in the end that line had become so blurry that it was hardly visible."



Sean Combs: glad for gays?

Sean Combs

(musician/producer/fashion designer)

(GLAAD Media Awards, 4/12/04)

At the GLAAD Media Awards in New York, Sean Combs presented the award for Outstanding Reality Program to *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*: "This year,

even more gay and lesbian characters took center stage in reality programming. What does this show America? It shows America that the reality is we all have a gay or lesbian friend or family member, and that every person in America, no matter their race, religion, or sexual orientation, is key to making our country great and must be included equally."



Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Olga Sosnovska

(actress, *All My Children*)



Olga Sosnovska (pictured right): Is she a ground-breaker? INSET: Sosnovska as Lena (r) and Edén Riegel as Bianca on ABC's *All My Children*—did their kiss cause an earthquake?

(TV Guide, 4/03/04, Michael Logan)

Michael Logan: How's it feel to be a ground-breaker? [Sosnovska as Lena and Edén Riegel as Bianca made history as the first same-sex couple on daytime soaps.]

Olga Sosnovska: It's so bizarre to think we've done something momentous. It really only hit me when Edén and I were interviewed about the kiss on CNN. More than anything, I hope our characters have been embraced because of *who* they are as human beings, irrespective of whether they're gay or straight. **Still, this is a sexual landmark.**

Gay people tell me that seeing themselves represented on screen has changed their lives and I am so proud of that. What's also exciting is that the straight audience wants to see Bianca happy on *her* terms—not theirs. They've watched a gay relationship play out on a soap and it did not cause an earthquake. Maybe the next time a show does this it won't be a phenomenon. Then I'll *really* feel like we've made history.

Carson Kressley

(Rolling Stone, 4/01/04, Bridget Freer)

Bridget Freer: Do you see a lot of Kressley-alikes when you make personal appearances now?

Carson Kressley: There are people coming up to me wearing pink. People are definitely listening to my advice. It's really cute and heartwarming. I love it.

Jason Mraz

(Rolling Stone, 4/01/04, Bridget Freer)

Bridget Freer: What's your favorite color scheme?

Jason Mraz: Well, I'll always wear pink in spring because it reminds me of my youth when my mom used to dress me up in pink for Easter Sunday—I remember crying all the way to church. I don't know if it was the pink or church. I'm not a big churchgoer now.

Chingy

(singer)

(Rolling Stone, 4/01/04, Bridget Freer)

Bridget Freer: Apart from a suit, is there anything you wouldn't wear?

Chingy: The colors pink and purple—they're too girly. I would not wear anything pink. Ever.



Carson Kressley: pretty in pink?

DVD TV

Absolutely Fabulous, Will & Grace, and The Kids in the Hall

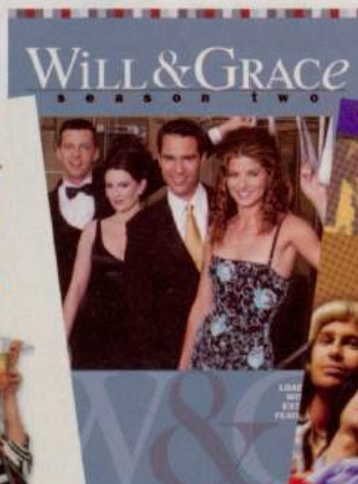
Absolutely Fabulous: Series 5

"The greatest female comedy buddies since Lucy Ricardo and Ethel Mertz" raved the *New York Times*, and it's no surprise that the internationally acclaimed *Ab Fab* series has garnered over 14 awards. • Jennifer Saunders and Joanna Lumley star as Edina Monsoon and Patsy Stone, two worn-out fashionistas who endlessly indulge in cosmetic surgery, alcohol, drugs, sex, shopping sprees, and trips abroad. In the eight all-new episodes of *Absolutely Fabulous: Series 5*, Edina and Patsy's agenda consists of book clubs with London's top glitterati, weekends in the country à la Madonna and Guy, and intimate gatherings with Elton on the piano. But when Saffy (Julia Sawalha) returns from a few months as an aide worker, Edina's heady world is turned upside down by the startling news that Saffy is pregnant! Babies and Bollinger don't mix, after all... or do they? • And if that isn't enough, there's 15 minutes of outtakes! • From BBC Video (www.bbcamerica.com). —Troy Carrington



Will & Grace: Season 2

This four-DVD box set includes all 23 episodes from the NBC hit series' second season, featuring the Emmy Award-winning cast of Debra Messing, Eric McCormack, Megan Mullally, and Sean Hayes. This is the season in which Shelley Morrison as Rosario makes her first appearance. • *Will & Grace: Season 2* also includes 12 featurettes that highlight the second season's funniest moments set to music: "Hugs and Kisses," "Out and About," "Fashion Quips," and more. • From NBC Enterprises and Lions Gate Home Entertainment. —Suzie Lynde



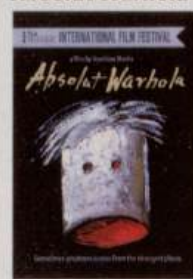
The Kids in the Hall: Complete Season 1

Are extraterrestrials dull? Who's gay in Hollywood? And how about that salty ham? • From romantically challenged cabbage heads to serial head crushing, five men from Canada—who were occasionally five women—turned sketch comedy into a bizarre, irreverent, and always hilarious weekly showcase of side-splitting unpredictability. The fab five are Dave Foley, Bruce McCulloch, Kevin McDonald, Mark McKinney, and openly gay Scott Thompson. • With a brilliant knack for turning the mundane into the surreal, and a dangerous willingness to explore the darker sides of comedy, all 20 episodes from the debut season of the *Kids in the Hall* are collected here on DVD and for the first time ever. • Bonus features include 45 minutes of new interviews with the Kids and Lorne Michaels, audio commentary by the Kids, two best-of compilations, and more. • From Broadway Video. More info: A&E Home Video (www.aetv.com) or www.kidsinthehall.com. —TC



MOVIES ON DVD/VHS PREVIEWS

Absolut Warhola

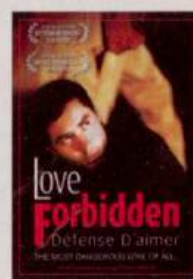


Described by *Variety* as "the film equivalent of a pleasant white wine with a kicker to it," *Absolut Warhola* (2001) examines the surprising heritage of one of the most famous artists of the century, Andy Warhol. The film tracks his ancestry back to the small town of Miková in Eastern Europe and visits the only pop-art museum in Europe, located in nearby Medzilborce. • After traveling the countryside, director Stanislav Mucha interviews the peasant relatives of Warhol about the art he created. Though aware of his success, these distant cousins have no understanding of his work. In

fact, when he would send them his art, they would turn it into everyday items, such as toys and clothing. No one knows the man that left them so many years ago, but each is proud to call him their own and bear his old-world name Warhola. However, when it is suggested that he might have been homosexual, the consensus is that he was not "you know what." One cousin is so sure that Warhol wasn't gay that he proclaims that he knows for sure that there are no homosexuals in Miková! • Slovak and Ruthenian with English subtitles. From TLA Releasing (www.tlareleasing.com). —TC

Love Forbidden

After being emotionally damaged by his ex-girlfriend, Bruce (Rodolphe Marconi, who is also the film's writer and director), a quiet and withdrawn filmmaker, becomes fixated on Matteo (Andrea Necci), a savvy local office



intern, who becomes increasingly involved in Bruce's life. He shows up at Bruce's house without being invited, and takes Bruce on a tour of Rome, showing him the churches, the paintings, and the fountains. Bruce, who feels both moved and disturbed by his sudden, odd attraction to another man, falls under Matteo's influence and into an ambiguous relationship with him. A newcomer, the punkish American girl Aston (Echo Danon), separately becomes a part of their lives; what begins as an idyllic work retreat soon evolves into a love triangle of confusion, aggression, and insanity. • *Love Forbidden* (Défense d'aimer)

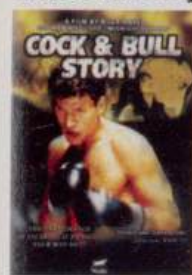
is a 2002 film in French and Italian with English subtitles. From Strand Releasing (www.strandreleasing.com). —SL

Waiting for the Messiah



Set in Buenos Aires, *Waiting for the Messiah* (2000) explores the lives of two men and how they are affected by an economic collapse. Ariel (Daniel Hendler) dreads his predetermined future of living in the city's Jewish section, working in his father's restaurant, and marrying the nice Jewish "girl next door." He gets a job working the nightshift at a video production company where he meets Catholic and bisexual Laura (Chiara Caselli), with whom he develops a passionate relationship. • In a parallel story line, Santamaria (Enrique Pineyro) is robbed of work, home, and wife by the collapse and is forced to the streets. • Directed by Daniel Burman. Spanish with English subtitles. From TLA Releasing (www.tlareleasing.com). —SL

Cock & Bull Story



Cock & Bull Story (2003) is the gritty tale of a gifted young boxer Travis Coleman (Bret Roberts) and his deranged best pal Jack O'Malley (Brian Austin Green). • Travis's budding career is quickly gaining momentum as he prepares for the biggest fight of his life. When Jack begins to question his friend's masculinity, he sets off a series of violent confrontations, putting their friendship to the ultimate test that will change their lives forever. Between men like this, a touch can be more deadly than a punch. *Variety*: "Solid performances... a potent treatment of homophobic machismo." • *Cock & Bull Story* (also known as *Southside*) is the debut feature from Billy Hayes, the man who lived to write about his experience in a Turkish prison, which became the book and Oscar-winning film *Midnight Express*. • Available May 18 from Wolfe Video (www.wolfvideo.com). —TC

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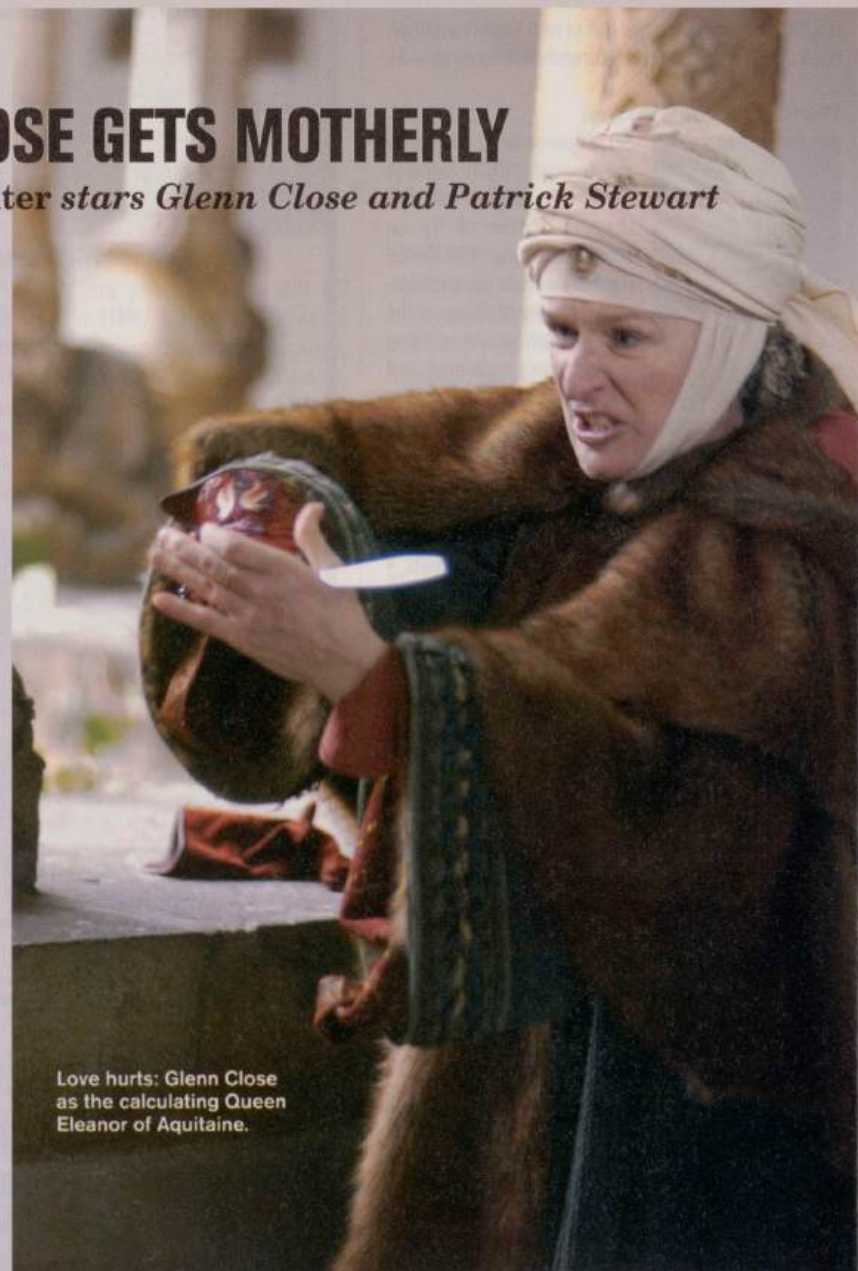
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GLENN CLOSE GETS MOTHERLY

Showtime's *The Lion in Winter* stars Glenn Close and Patrick Stewart

It's May, the month of Mother's Day, and what better way to celebrate it than to watch one of the mothers of all mothers, Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine, wreak havoc on her sons. That she is played by Glenn Close only enhances the havoc. Eleanor is the estranged wife of King Henry II (Patrick Stewart), who shares the queen's penchant for inflicting emotional pain on those close to him. • With the Christmas holidays approaching (in the year 1183), Henry invites the clan to his castle to announce his chosen heir to the throne. Vying for the coveted title are John (Rafe Spall), Henry's favorite; Richard the Lionhearted (Andrew Howard), Eleanor's favorite; and Geoffrey (John Light), nobody's favorite. Also invited are Henry's mistress Alais (Julia Vysotsky) and her conniving brother King Philip II (Jonathan Rhys-Meyers, who played bi in 1998's *Velvet Goldmine*). • John is the youngest and is basically a dunce. Geoffrey, the middle child, is unloved. Richard, the eldest, is forced out of the closet. • After accepting the inevitability of flashbacks to the 1968 feature film that starred Katharine Hepburn and Peter O'Toole, I enjoyed watching the film and will go out on a limb to say that Showtime's *Lion*, with its tongue-in-cheek dialogue, still holds up. Based on the Oscar-winning screenplay by James Goldman, *The Lion in Winter* is a fast-paced game of verbal volleyball that should keep you entranced till the ending credits. • Premieres on Showtime (www.sho.com) on Sunday, **May 23**, at 6:30 p.m., with a repeat airing on the 28th at 7 p.m. —Blase DiStefano

More TV →



Love hurts: Glenn Close as the calculating Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine.



A Dysfunctional family portrait: King Henry II (Patrick Stewart, bottom center) is hovered over by his dear ones (l-r): the estranged wife (Close) and the ambitious sons Richard (Andrew Howard), Geoffrey (John Light), and John (Rafe Spall).

◀ Love me tender: King Philip II (Jonathan Rhys-Meyers, l) bestows tender but meaningless words on mommie's dearest, Richard the Lionhearted (Howard), in *The Lion in Winter*, premiering this month on Showtime.

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The Opposite of Sex: Rene's Story

This is the first of two documentaries that looks at the world of transgender individuals and sex-change operations. *Rene's Story* focuses on a female-to-male sex change, starting a few months before the sex-reassignment surgery. The documentary explores Rene's emotions about his own identity and the reactions of his family and young wife to his operation. A second documentary, *The Opposite Sex: Jamie's Story*, will air in June. • *The Opposite Sex: Rene's Story* premieres on Showtime on **May 3** at 8 p.m., with repeat airings on the 11th and 19th at 8 p.m., and the 23rd and 29th at 11:30 p.m. To confirm schedule: www.sho.com. —Troy Carrington

InnerVIEWS with Ernie Manouse

May 6: Author/screenwriter/producer John Grisham—a former criminal defense attorney and Mississippi congressman—holds bragging rights as the best-selling novelist of the 1990s. • **May 13:** Singer k.d. lang. With a phenomenal catalogue of material, the Canada native has created a career worth admiring. As founder and front woman for her groundbreaking ensemble The Reclines, and through her own brilliant solo career, lang has offered some of the most memorable music of our time, while being honest with who she truly is. Along the way, she has garnered a mountain of awards, including multiple Grammys. • **May 20:** Born in communist China, and chosen at age 11 to study at the Beijing Dance Academy, dancer Li Cunxin hungered for more. After spending time in the U.S., Cunxin defected and became one of the world's greatest dancers. He chronicled his story in his best-selling book *Mao's Last Dancer*. • **May 27:** Actress Betty Buckley. Born in Fort Worth, Texas, this one-time beauty queen and Six Flags Over Texas performer went on to sell millions in Broadway tickets and vocal recordings. Her list of Broadway credits astound, including *1776*, *Pippin*, *Sunset Boulevard*, and *Cats*, in which she sang "Memories." Notable film roles include *Carrie* and *Frantic*. And, of course, she was Abbey on TV's *Eight Is Enough*. • Thursdays at 10 p.m. on Channel 8, Houston PBS (www.houstonpbs.org). More info: www.geocities.com/ernieontv/homepage. —Suzie Lynde

TRIANGLES AND EUNUCHS

Sundance Channel airs *La Répétition* and *American Eunuchs*

La Répétition

This is the U.S. television premiere of this psychological drama that boasts stunning performances by Emmanuelle Béart (*8 Women*) and Pascale Bussi res (*The Five Senses*) as two women who renew their friendship 10 years after a painful rift. A chance meeting leads to reconciliation between Nathalie (B art), now a successful actress, and Louise (Bussi res), now a married dental technician. The women rediscover their old camaraderie, but the dangerously charged dynamics that roiled their early relationship soon resurface. *La Rép tition* is directed by Catherine Corsini and airs on Sundance Channel on Sunday, **May 9**, at 8 p.m., with repeat airings on the 13th at 11 p.m., the 20th at 1:30 a.m., the 23rd at 12:05 a.m., and the 25th at 8:30 p.m. To confirm schedule: www.sundancechannel.com. —SL



Bathing beauties: Pascale Bussi res (l) and Emmanuelle B art reconcile in *La Rép tition*.

American Eunuchs

This is the U.S. television premiere of this intriguing documentary that looks at what would seem to be an archaic practice—voluntary castration—and finds a procedure that occurs even in the heartland of America. The film investigates the hows of castration—the semi-legal and clandestine operations—but its real focus is the whys, which are explored through the stories of three very different individuals. George is a happily married man who owns a dog-grooming salon with his wife; "Gelding" is a computer programmer whose adopted name reflects his pride in his masculinity; and Michael is a young Missouri husband who resorted to a motel-room procedure. *American Eunuchs* is directed by Gian Claudio Guiducci and Franco Sacchi and airs on Sundance Channel on Monday, **May 10**, at 9 p.m., with repeats on the 15th at 12:20 a.m., the 17th at 11 p.m., the 27th at 9 p.m., and the 29th at midnight. To confirm schedule: www.sundancechannel.com. —TC



Where the sun does shine: "Gelding" has no body-image problems and poses next to his pool in *American Eunuchs*.

ELAINE STRITCH AT LIBERTY



Curtain up: Elaine Stritch preparing for her one-woman show is part of this HBO documentary.

This feature-length documentary is an intimate portrait of the Broadway legend Elaine Stritch. The film combines footage from her acclaimed, Tony Award-winning one-woman show with a behind-the-scenes look at the actress by her longtime friends, legendary documentary filmmaker D.A. Pennebaker and his partners Chris Hegedus and Nick Doob. Premieres on HBO on Saturday, **May 29**, at 7 p.m., repeat airings on the 31st at 5:15 p.m. and throughout June. To confirm schedule: www.hbo.com. —SL

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Out in the Arts

by D.L. Groover

PRINCE OF A GUY.

A Houston Ballet principal dancer **Zdenek Konvalina** has, as they say in the ballet world, the most beautiful line and feet for days. Which means he looks great in a pair of tights, and his feet, whenever off the ground, are curved like scimitars. You can shape your body through diet and arduous exercise to look acceptable in classical dance costume, but there's not much you can do to get that perfect arch every dancer desires. You've either got perfect feet, or you don't. Konvalina has perfect feet. He also has regal bearing and composure, a dignified quiet about him, and an intense ardor that will serve him well in the upcoming Balanchine Celebration mounted by Houston Ballet (May 27 through June 6).

Born in Brno, Czech Republic, birthplace of composer **Erich Wolfgang Korngold** and home to the prestigious Janacek Conservatory and National Theatre, Konvalina started dance class when he was nine. Every year, representatives from the Brno Conservatory's academy would travel the country to select children who had the most promise for a career in dance. Unsuspecting kids were prodded and poked, their legs lifted in unnatural positions, as the dour adults looked for signs of flexibility and athletic prowess.

"I had no idea what this was," Konvalina says now with charming sincerity. "I never saw dance before."

Nonetheless, he was chosen, and, with his mother's blessing, off he went to ballet school. Only in recent years has he learned that his father didn't approve of his studying dance. He didn't want a "comedian" in the family, a circus performer. "My father's from a very old-fashioned family. My mother was the strong one who fought against him."

At the conservatory, students are there to dance and learn, not necessarily like it. "It was very professional, very communistic, very strict Russian school. At the beginning, I wasn't sure about it," Konvalina remembers. "In America, they try to attract you to dance."

The work was physically demanding for a child, bordering on abusive. The teachers would correct a position, not with words, but a fierce laying on of hands. Konvalina



Balanchine balance: Zdenek Konvalina (r), Barbara Bears, and artists of Houston Ballet will perform in George Balanchine's *Apollo* for the May 27-June 6 Balanchine Celebration.

admits he was a lazy pupil at first, but after he saw the professionals and the thrill live theater can give both audience and performer, he fell in love with ballet and graduated first in his class. He also graduated with a degree in sociology, and an encyclopedic knowledge of art, languages, and science.

"I was ready. I wanted to leave learning. I wanted a job."

As Konvalina explains it, a "job" in Europe—one in the arts, anyway—isn't quite the same thing as a job here. There it's your life. "You're a part of the theater; you are the theater," he says. "You finish rehearsal and see some opera singer who invites you to *Boheme*. I was never home. I saw every opera, every musical, every play. Afterwards you all go to the cantina. You know, there's no theater without the cantina."

He auditioned for Czechoslovakia's premier Prague Ballet, but when the smaller Ostrava offered him a principal contract, he accepted their offer.

"I'm not loud about it, but I feel that I'm good," Konvalina says. "I knew I could learn my craft there."

He spent two years refining his technique, and was looking to move on when **Eddie Toussaint**, artistic co-founder of Ballet Jazz de Montreal, came to Ostrava to stage his *Requiem*. They became friends and have been together ever since. Toussaint con-

vinced Konvalina to come to America to continue his career.

"I had got what I wanted from Ostrava, but America seemed so far," he recalls thinking at the time.

Under Toussaint's management and guidance, Konvalina performed as a guest artist for various small companies, "seeing every city in America." In 2001 he won a gold medal at the Helsinki International Ballet Competition. That recognition brought him to the attention of Houston Ballet, which offered a principal contract the same year.

Konvalina is featured in the three Balanchine ballets for the celebration: *Apollo*, Balanchine's first international masterpiece set to Stravinsky's immortal music; the haunting, mysterious *La Valse*, to Ravel's volcanic, hypnotic score; and the glittering *Theme and Variations*, Balanchine's show-stopping tribute to his school, the Imperial Russian Ballet.

Konvalina has wanted to dance *Apollo* ever since he saw **Mikhail Baryshnikov** in it in Czechoslovakia.

"At first, I wasn't mature enough to understand what it was," he says. "You know, the Stravinsky music is not so easy at first. But it's so rewarding and challenging to do it."

"I've danced Balanchine before, *Four Temperaments* or *Serenade*, but *Apollo*—is not Balanchine, it's *Apollo*," he says with reverence. "It stands alone. Balanchine is *Apollo* and vice versa. He choreographed it when he was 24, which is incredible; and he changed it so many times that it's now polished to perfection. And the music, I think, is the best Stravinsky ever did for ballet."

"You feel the music when you dance it. You *are* the music. But it's very thin ice. You can't pass the line. It needs to be reserved. It's abstract and short. I don't know... It's just *Apollo*, a masterpiece."

Konvalina gives a little laugh. "You know, when I travel, the customs people always ask what do I do. And I say 'ballet dancer.' They think I'm a belly dancer. But when I say *Nutcracker*, that they understand."

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

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HEART OF GOLD

Kate Schutt picks up the 8-string and makes some great new music

Kate Schutt's ever-growing legion of fans is in for a surprise when they hear *(heart-shot)*, the new five-song EP from this out performer. First of all, they will hear Schutt playing a new guitar, the Novax 8-string guitar/bass hybrid, an instrument perfectly matched to her skills. Next, they will hear drums (played by David Miller Jamrog) and even backing vocals. Finally, they will hear Schutt venturing into new territories that suit her well, on songs such as "Jane Doe" and "Lone Ranger."

Gregg Shapiro: In the couple of years that have passed since the last time that I interviewed you, you underwent throat surgery. Can you tell me something about that?

Kate Schutt: I had it on November 13, 2002. I was supposed to be singing again by about three months later. Theoretically, you have two weeks of no talking at all. Then you start gradually working into things and should be, all in all, back to performing in about three months. That didn't happen for me for a number of reasons. It first started when I woke up out of anesthesia and I coughed really badly and bruised my vocal cords, but they didn't know this. That started me off on the wrong foot. So I went the two weeks without talking, and when my doctors looked down my throat, they saw



Stringy: On *(heart-shot)*, Kate Schutt plays her new 8-string guitar.



that everything was bruised, essentially. I couldn't talk for another week and a half. The long and short of it was that I couldn't talk for about three and a half months. I learned a lot from that. That meant walking around with a note pad. That puts me to about March of 2003, and I gradually began to ramp up my talking from zero to an hour a day, then more than an hour a day. I spent the summer back at music school, so by the time I went to Berklee at the end of May, I was pretty much talking full throttle. I was singing a little bit and studying with a voice therapist the entire time. My first gig was in July, and I played a three-hour gig. That went well, but it was definitely hard. And then I had another one in August. Since then I've been free to perform as much as I want.

What was it like to be back in school?

It was definitely fun, but it was related to the voice thing. During that time, they were so pessimistic about what was going on with my voice, I had to come to terms with the fact that I might not be able to sing again. At one point they said that I may or may not be able to do that. I've always been more interested in playing the guitar than I have in singing. Singing's come so naturally to me. When I went to Berklee my first time around, I didn't sing a lick. I didn't tell

anybody that I sang. So I thought that I would still play music, it would just look very different. I really got interested in the 8-string around that time. I'd seen Charlie Hunter play a number of times and been interested in his music. I went to see him at the House of Blues about a week after my doctors told me about this [potential loss of singing voice] and was standing there in the front row, grooving on his stuff and realized that this was the sound that I had been looking for.

What can you tell me about the Novax 8-string guitar/bass hybrid?

It's made by a guy named Ralph Novax in California. He was a friend of Charlie Hunter's. I think he was already building guitars, and when Charlie was exploring more than six strings and tuning his lower strings down into the bass range, he finally needed somebody to make an instrument for him. Many hundreds of prototypes later, Charlie has been playing on his instrument for about 12 years. There are only about eight or 10 players of this instrument in the world, the most famous being Charlie.

"Jane Doe," the opening track from your new EP, has the kind of name-checking that you find in hip-hop. What can you tell me about that song?

That is like a weird product of my mind [laughs]. I came up with that first verse, and it cracked me up, just because of the juxtaposition of these female names that had this great sound quality. I thought it would be a great idea to do this song, definitely taking my cue from the hip-hop shout out thing but also from loving that →

also performs a special solo version of "The Last Time I Felt Like This," which she introduced with Johnny Mathis in the 1978 film *Same Time Next Year* and performed at the Oscars the next year. This intimate live set was recorded at the Berklee Performing Arts Center in Boston, the site of her first concert album over 20 years ago. From PS Classics (www.psclassics.com). More info: www.janeolivor.com. —TC

The Real Tuesday Weld
I, Lucifer



Stephen Coates is a modern-day electronic cabaret artist who calls himself The Real Tuesday Weld. *I, Lucifer* is the imaginary soundtrack to the best-selling book of the same name, about the devil returning to earth for a second shot at repentance and mortality. Weld has crafted a unique new sound, inspired by 1930s' jazz, Serge Gainsbourg, Ennio Morricone, and modern electronica. This enhanced CD features the award-winning animated video for the →

and scandalous lyrics. She has reinvented herself yet again, proving she has the sensuality and the voice to keep her at the top of the pop diva hierarchy. With the slow-tempo, sensual grooves, occasional up-tempo jam, and endless spoken interludes, it's as explicit as pop music gets. From Virgin Records (www.virginrecords.com). More info: www.janet-jackson.com. —Andrea Rodricks

Jane Olivor
Safe Return



The simultaneous DVD and CD releases of *Safe Return* mark the triumphant return of Jane Olivor. Still singing with her trademark rich and supple voice, she vividly revisits her beloved signature songs, pop standards, and several new songs, including "Safe Return," a poignant new composition she co-wrote for this program. Olivor

Murphy blazes through the show with a brassy performance. Oddly for a musical set among the denizens of Greenwich Village, there are no queers in evidence—at least judging by the CD—which is even more ironic because the at-least-bi Leonard Bernstein composed the light and pleasant music (Betty Comden and Adolph Green penned the lyrics). Jennifer Westfeld of the lesbian love story flick *Kissing Jessica Stein* sweetly handles the ingénue role of the sister. Best songs: the sisters' homesick lament, "Ohio," and the ringing "It's Love." From DRG Records (www.drgrecords.com). —Tim Brookover

Janet Jackson
Damita Jo

"Relax, it's just sex," whispers Janet Jackson at the end of "Sexhibition," the third song on her eighth album, *Damita Jo*. Those words were recorded long before her breast-baring exploits at the 2004 Super Bowl halftime show. The album is a sinfully appealing blend of infectious beats

GrooveOut Shorts

Original Motion Picture Soundtrack
Connie and Carla: Music from the Motion Picture

Featuring vocals by the film's stars, Nia Vardalos and Toni Collette, this soundtrack includes classic show tunes such as "Let Me Entertain You," "Mame," and "There Is Nothing Like a Dame." Debbie Reynolds also contributes to the soundtrack in addition to having a cameo in the film. From Epic Records (www.epicrecords.com). More info: www.connieandcarla.com. —Troy Carrington

Broadway Cast Recording
Wonderful Town

Donna Murphy may capture her third Tony for her full-out star turn in this hit revival of the 1950s musical (though she faces tough competition in Kristin Chenoweth's pre-*Oz* Glenda the Good Witch in *Wicked*). In a part first created for Rosalind Russell,

Time Out with OutSmart

SPECIAL PROMOTIONS AND ADVERTISING

3-D AT CENTRAL

Central Market in Highland Village is now an OutSmart distribution point. To celebrate, magazine general manager Tom Fricke joined Nancy S. Beck, Central Market community relations manager, and staff in testing the 3-D spectacles included in every April issue.



Readers enjoy the 3-D effect at Central Market.

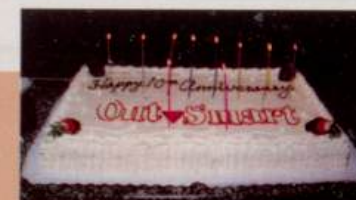


Tom Fricke and Nancy Beck

Central Market's Nancy S. Beck welcomes OutSmart's Tom Fricke and the magazine to the Highland Village store.

THE FIRST 10

On February 18, friends of OutSmart joined the staff for a 10th birthday party at Meteor. More than 100 guests stopped by to congratulate founder and publisher Greg Jeu and the rest of the team. Spotted in the crowd were some of the original



Ten candles celebrated 10 years.



Faces at OutSmart's 10th-anniversary birthday party at Meteor.

Party photos by DALTON DEHART



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GrooveOut continued from previous page

song "It's the End of the World as We Know It" by REM. Could I pull it off and have it be meaningful and be a good song? For about three to five months I started collecting names. I'd be going about my daily life and I would see some advertisement that featured a famous woman, and I would add her to the list. Or I surfed the web for a while and used Encyclopedia Britannica. I wanted to feature women that, as a listener, you wouldn't necessarily know who everyone was, so you'd have to go do some research. I had a spreadsheet with famous women from history, famous cultural icons, famous stereotypes, stuff like that. And then finding names that rhyme is a lot harder than it seems. I had a blast; it just took a very long time. I learned a lot, I'll tell you that.

"Peter Please" is rare in a few ways. First, it is a co-composition with someone identified as J.T.R. Second, it features backing vocals by Savannah Frierson, and like "Jane Doe," it has David Miller Jamrog on drums. Those are some major differences from a traditional Kate Schutt song.

The only thing I can say about that is that it was one of those songs that happened pretty quickly. It happened with a friend of mine who suggested the idea for the song. Once I composed it, I heard an African-

American female voice behind me, which I thought would make the song sound a lot better.

I happen to be a part of a very cool program at Harvard called the Radcliffe Mentoring Program. Women who have graduated from Harvard or Radcliffe can provide themselves as a mentor for undergraduate women at Harvard who are interested in their field. When I was at Harvard, I always wanted to have a Radcliffe mentor, but no one was working in music, so I vowed that when I graduated from Harvard, I would make myself available as a mentor for women interested in music and in the music business. I've been in the program for three years. Savannah, my [current] mentee, has an amazing voice, and she just started singing. It was a wonderful opportunity for me to provide her a chance to come into a studio and see what that's all about. Plus she has a great voice.

David's drums also propel the rocking tune "Lone Ranger," which is, again, a new way of hearing your music.

Dave is a great friend of mine and also my drum teacher. I started studying drums about a year and a half ago. He's an awesome guy. He plays around here in Boston and also all over. He plays with Toni Lynn Washington, who is a blues singer. He was the logical choice for me in terms of drum-

GrooveOut Shorts continued from previous page

dance-floor hit "Bathtime in Clerkenwell." Available May 11 from Six Degrees Records (www.sixdegreesrecords.com). —TC

The Bangles The Essential Bangles



The all-female rock band emerged from the paisley underground scene in Los Angeles, and now the ladies of the '80s are back. The album features their Top 10 chart hits digitally remastered—*Walk Like an Egyptian* and *Manic Monday*, as well as the mesmerizing cover of Simon and Garfunkel's *Hazy Shade of Winter*. If you enjoy '60s and '70s guitar rock, you will surely love the music of the Bangles. From Sony Music Entertainment (www.sonymusic.com). More info: www.legacyrecordings.com/bangles, www.thebangles.com. —AR

Rhian Benson Gold Coast

With a moniker such as hers, why would Rhian Benson bother to use her last name? It seems in a time where surnames mean very little and artists such as Prince, Madonna, and RuPaul have set the stage for unique names taking a front seat (those are all their real first



names) that it would be automatic for this artist to follow suit. Perhaps not. After all, there are a lot of things she could have done to follow suit on her debut album that she didn't do. We are talking about an artist who dropped out of Harvard to pursue music—this, after having spent time growing up in the dissimilar cities of Ghana, New Delhi, and London. So she was well traveled—did it have an effect on her music? Certainly. It's all over the place, and that's where she feels most comfortable. With an upbeat take on contemporary R&B, Rhian has employed the finer elements of soul, jazz, and dub to help confuse the listener on both her origin and that of the music. Beyond that, she has a soft, silky voice that she allows to lapse into a raspy candor at times, leaving the listener to wonder if they're listening to only one Rhian. After all, there is only one Rhian... right? From DKG Music. More info: www.rhianbenson.com. —Lance Walker

Blondie The Curse of Blondie

Deborah Harry has one of the greatest voices in rock music history, and the new album proves that the band still has what it takes. They play with the same conviction that made them international stars in the '70s. The disc is enhanced with a video for the disco groove-sounding single "Good Boys," which is bound to climb the charts.

mers because I love his attitude and his playing. He's an excellent drummer. I know how much he practices, so I respect that [laughs]. These songs are so different, and I'm like a new person after the fiasco with my voice; I felt like these songs would be best served with a drummer. That was part of what I heard in my head. I wanted to write these songs and record them really quickly as a warm-up for an album in the next six months.

I'm glad that you mentioned that, because if I have one minor complaint, it's that I am frustrated by EPs. I feel deprived. Five songs are simply not enough, and after a teaser such as (heart-shot), I want more. So are there plans to include these five songs on the full-length album?

How we envisioned this whole thing is that they were made very low-budget and quickly in the studio, and we're hoping to do three more of these EPs and then pick the best 10 or 12 songs and record from that and record a full-length album. Having said that, I'm already really tired of these songs. But I think it's safe to say that we'll include the best of these and probably a few others that won't have been recorded yet.

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.



Craig Linder Blue Serenity



Blondie stretches out to other genres, but you can still recall the old familiar sound on a few songs. From Sanctuary Records (www.sanctuaryrecords.com). For more info: www.blondie.net. —AR

Craig Linder's soul-massaging style of instrumental piano provides soothing ambience for stress relief, massage, meditation, yoga, or bodywork. *Blue Serenity* was created as an antidote to the stresses of everyday life, and its piano melodies tap into the listener's inner resonance to help dissipate tension, almost like a "mental massage." The CD's program of 16 solo piano tracks was designed to last 60 minutes to support many healing modalities. From Aqua-Horse Records. More info: www.craiglinder.com. —TC

Eliane Elias Dreamer

This 11-track collection comprises rarely performed tunes from the American songbook, rapturous Brazilian bossa novas, and new originals from Elias. From the opening track, "Call Me," to the final number, Burt →

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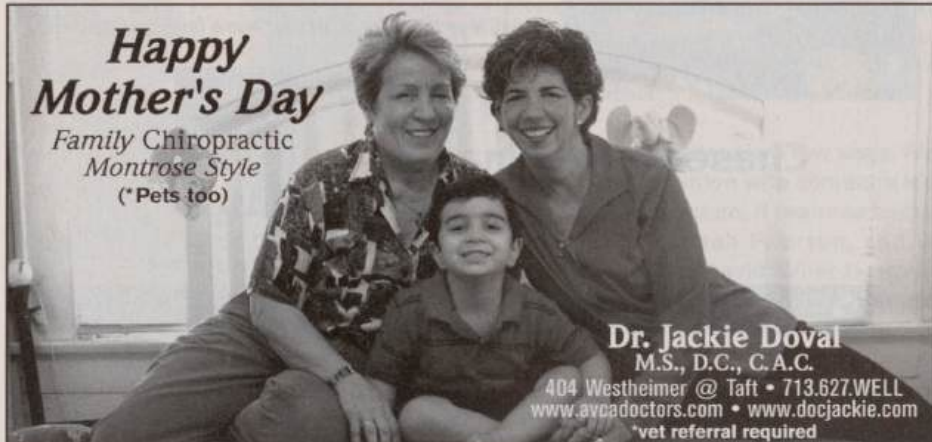
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www.elianeelias.com. —Suzie Lynde

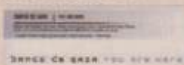
Bacharach's "A House Is Not a Home," *Dreamer* captures Elias in a musical setting that is elegant, sophisticated, sensual, and romantic. From Bluebird (www.bluebirdjazz.com). For more info:

Stephanie Cooke Everything



With her debut album, Stephanie Cooke brings the warmth, depth, and beauty of R&B to lush, jazzy, sophisticated club tracks created for her by some of the best producers in the business. *Everything* may very well be exactly that to those who like their club tracks to pump with a little heart. From King Street Sounds (www.kingstreetsounds.com). —SL

Banco de Gaia You Are Here



To say that Banco de Gaia is politically motivated is somewhat of an understatement. Sure, there are undertones of producer Toby Marks's frustration with the erosion of civil liberties around the world and the increasing presence of Big Brother all around in places where it has no business, but there is something here that exists even beyond that. Over the past few years, Marks has had to fight for the rights to his earlier albums with an older record label, a battle that will chip away at the enamel of any artist in the disheartening reality that music is money and that lawyers have more of a say sometimes than do musicians. The fact that Marks had to endure this over the years, though finally winning the battle, prompted the floodgates to open when he finally had room to experiment again musically. What resulted is a moving collection of instrumental tracks that center on world-beat themes but still introduce enough newer elements to keep it fresh. This helps it so that you don't feel like you're in the jungle while listening, but you can maybe still kind of see the jungle. From Six Degrees Records (www.sixdegreesrecords.com). —LW

Horacio Ravera Tango Project Vol. 1



Native Argentinean tenor Horacio Ravera is a critically acclaimed, world-renowned tango interpreter. He brings the tango to the forefront of romantic music. Often considered the dance of passion, it is also one of the most beautiful and romantic forms of song. The disc includes classic tango numbers such as *Sentimiento Gaucho* and *La Cumparsita*. The sexy syncopations of tango can be heard on this enhanced CD that has two new tangos and three DVD-videos.

From Caliente Records/Pimienta Records (www.calientemusic.com, www.pimientarecords.com). —AR

Broadway Cast Recording The Thing About Men



Based on the European film *Men* by Doris Dörrie, *The Thing About Men* tells the story of an advertising executive who will stop at nothing in an outrageous attempt to win back his wife's affections. Stars Tony-nominee Marc Kudisch (*Thoroughly Modern Millie*). From DRG Records (www.drgrecords.com). —SL

Jack Donahue Strange Weather



His voice glowing with warmth and sensuality, Jack Donahue is an elegant, jazz-inspired crooner who was recently called "one of the most entertaining and engaging young singers around" by *The New York Daily News*. *Strange Weather* features new interpretations of classic songs mixed with works by more contemporary writers. From PS Classics (www.psclassics.com). —TC

Patty Griffin Impossible Dream



Impossible Dream is a world of great emotional and social turmoil, a world in which Patty Griffin's "Truth #2" became—for her friends the Dixie Chicks—the song that spoke most clearly about what it's like to be censored. Griffin doesn't write protest music, but songs like "Don't Come Easy" and "Cold as It Gets" come straight out of a way of seeing the world with politicized eyes. From ATD Records (www.atdrecords.com). More info: www.pattygriffin.com. —TC

Various Artists

Lullaby: A Windham Hill Collection



This double-CD features quiet vocal performances on one CD, while the other contains soothing instrumentals. Carly Simon, Sinéad O'Connor, Amy Sky, and Phil Coulter join Windham Hill favorites to create almost two hours of easy listening. From Windham Hill (www.windham.com). —SL

Little Richard

Get Down With It: The Okeh Sessions



The "architect of rock and roll" exploded into the American consciousness in the mid-'50s and continues to make his mark on music history entertaining fans worldwide with his unique blend of music and a hard-to-match energy. The dynamic sound of these previously unreleased tracks along with old favorites embodies his musical in-

fluences. Excellent arrangements make this a superb album. It's no wonder Little Richard continues to be an active performer and music icon. From Legacy (www.legacyrecords.com). More info: www.rhythmandsoul.net or www.sonymusic.com. —AR

MUSIC DVD Luther Vandross

From Luther With Love: The Videos



In his 1998 appearance at Rodeo Houston in our then-beloved Astrodome, Luther Vandross emerged from behind the curtains next to the stage engulfed in thunderous applause. Without saying a word, he and his band, along with a full complement of backup singers, launched into a flurry of his emotionally sanctioned ladykiller ballads before he ever bothered to address the crowd. When he finally did begin to speak, that smooth, velvet voice we'd heard coming from the speakers was gone, replaced by a weak, hoarse voice that could barely sound out the words "How y'all doin'?" As the crowd continued to applaud in an understandably confused manner, Luther threw his arms up into the air, erupted into laughter, and again began to speak in his ordinary warm, rich tone, confessing "Ah, I'm just playing with y'all!" The crowd roared back even louder than before, thus setting the stage for an hour and a half's worth of concentrated intimacy with the man. Luther Vandross has made a career out of making men cry and making women hot, and there is no better example of this than his collected visual works. This DVD features 15 of his best-known videos, focusing on no era in particular, instead encompassing his lengthy and prolific career. It is well worth a look and a listen; just watch out for him trying to play tricks on you—he's got the voice to do it. From Epic/Legacy (www.epicrecords.com or www.legacyrecordings.com). —LW

MUSIC DVD The Doobie Brothers

Rockin' Down the Highway: The Wildlife Concert



When the Doobie Brothers hired a young Michael McDonald to help fill the spot of vocalist/guitarist Tom Johnston on tour in 1975, they knew they were getting a talented young musician in the deal. What they didn't know was that they were acquiring someone who was going to refinish the veneer of their music and produce a hit song for them in his first year. This DVD collection recounts that exchange as well as numerous other anecdotes about the band through the years, focusing on 1996's sole union of their three vocalists onstage at a benefit concert for the Wildlife Conservation Society. Despite their age, the band is in great form. Most of the sessions are a little rehearsed—not so much coming across like concert footage as it does a studio performance, but it is further proof that age has little to do with ability and that rock 'n' roll is still thicker than blood (no, none of them are actually brothers). From Legacy (www.legacyrecordings.com). —LW

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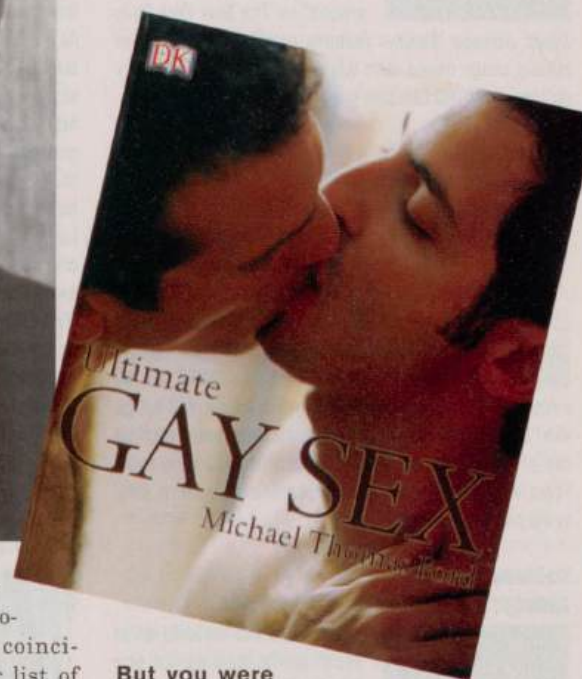
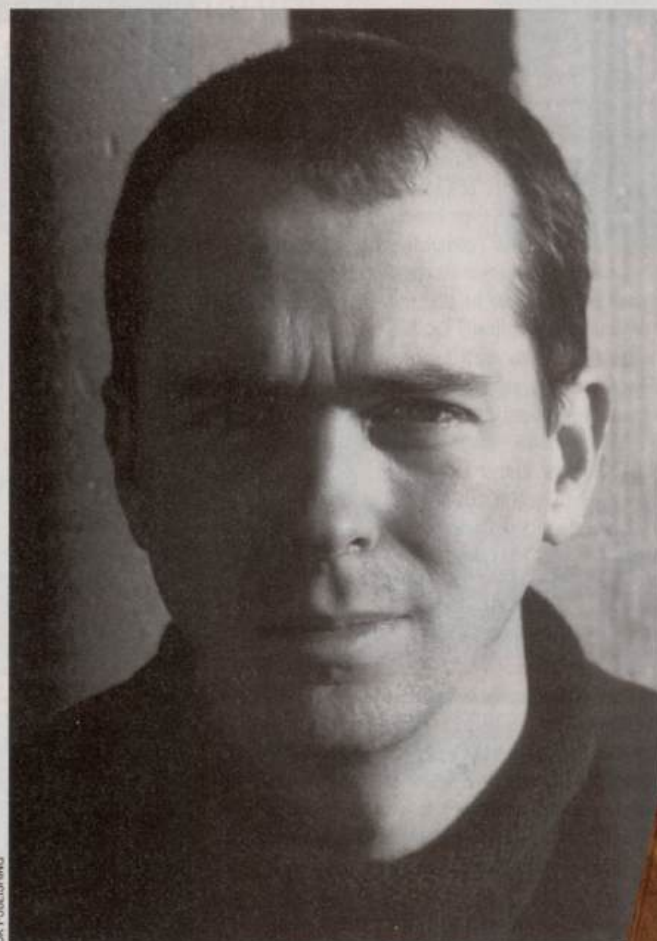
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HIS BIG FAT QUEER SEX BOOK

Michael Thomas Ford talks about his latest nonfiction endeavor



It isn't often that one is granted the opportunity to interview one's favorite writer: in this case Lambda Literary Award-winning essayist Michael Thomas Ford. Of course, it isn't every day that said author of almost 50 titles, including the best-selling "My Queer Life" series, pens the definitive (and fully illustrated) *Ultimate Gay Sex*. Suppressing the nervous giggles that crop up whenever I'm faced with celebrity, I called up Ford to discuss his latest work.

Thomas Blanton: What inspired you to write *Ultimate Gay Sex*?

Michael Thomas Ford: [Laughing] You want the real answer?

Whichever answer you feel like giving.

It wasn't a project I had come up with. [DK Publishing] had contacted the *Advocate* offices, because they were looking for the

person who had written the "Sex-pert" column, and I was one of the people who had written that. And coincidentally, I had also been on their list of people they had wanted to approach. They just didn't realize I was the same person.

That's a good coincidence. What was different about this project than the other nonfiction you've produced over the years? The only thing that was different is that this book is largely focused around the photographs. Whenever you're dealing with a photo-illustrated book, a lot of the text ends up having to be worked around what photos you can get.

And you got some really good photos.

Yeah, I was pleased! It's so strange—when you're working on it, you see it in bits and pieces, so it never quite looks like how it's going to be in real life.

But you were pleased with the final outcome?

I was actually more pleased than I thought I would be. As a writer, you always kind of set yourself up for disappointment with the way things are going to look, but we were all very excited about how the whole project turned out.

What was the biggest challenge in writing this book?

The biggest challenge was procedural. There were so many different people involved in it. Normally there's just yourself and the editor, but in this case, it had to be approved by editors in various countries for content and tone. So that's always difficult, when you have to keep that sort of thing in mind

when you're writing. You don't have quite as much free range as you do when it's just yours.

What about this project gave you the most satisfaction?

It was really nice to be able to produce a book about sex for gay men that took a different tone to the subject matter. It's not a medical approach, and it's not an overly sexualized approach. I think that this is the first book that actually looks at the way people really have sex, rather than the way they wish they did, or the way it's portrayed in porn movies or the media.

What main message would you like to get across to your readers?

There are a couple of messages in this book. One of them is that sex is not the most important thing in your life. At the same

I think that this is the first book that actually looks at the way people really have sex, rather than the way they wish they did, or the way it's portrayed in porn movies or the media.

time, you should be very aware of the role it can play in your life. Approach your sex life as something that can bring you enormous joy and enormous pleasure, and help you express yourself as a person, without it being an obsession or becoming all encompassing.

How do you think people who know you through your "Queer Life" series, or some of the books you've written for a young-adult audience, will react to *Ultimate Gay Sex*?

I think the reason that my books are popular is because I'm addressing issues that actual people face, you know? I don't write about or for an idealized gay community. I write about what I like to think of as the majority of the gay community. And I've always done that, and I think that's why the "Queer Life" books have been popular, because I was writing about things that everyday people were going through. That was the approach I took with this sex book. These are real people doing real things. They're not porn stars. They're not in the movies. They're not fictitious characters. What are the real issues that they're going to face? So I think people who like the approach I've taken in my other books will like the approach I've taken in this one.

I believe it was in *That's Mr. Faggot to You* [the second book in the "My Queer Life" series] that you said that you don't like interviews, but I have to say, you give very good sound bites.

You caught me on a good day.

Good! That makes me happy. What can we expect from you next?

In August, my next novel comes out, and then the paperback of *Last Summer* [Ford's first full-length novel]. Right now I'm working on a young-adult novel that has gay themes. That's going to be a lot of fun, because it's the first one I'll have done.

Do we know what's going to happen with *Queering the Path* [a book for gay pagans]?

That is coming out in 2005. In fact, as soon as I finish the young-adult novel, I have to start on that, [laughing] because it's overdue. But yeah, I'm really excited about that. It's going to be interesting to see what the reader reaction will be to that book. You know, with all these books, even with my first young-adult nonfiction, I honestly believed that there were real people out there who wanted information, and who wanted to see their lives represented. And too often with

books for gay readers, it's the idealized version. It's like, "How to Have the Perfect Body," "How to Find the Perfect Boyfriend." That's not real life. So I've always wanted to write books that address real issues and real people. Even in the fiction. I think my fiction is about actual people. With *Queering the Path*, I want to address concrete spiritual issues that I think a lot of gay men have. And I'm hoping that's what that book will do.

Any closing thoughts?

The main focus of everything that I do is writing about what our lives are really like. What I want people to take away from and enjoy about my work is that they're reading about themselves and seeing their own experiences reflected. If I can be the person who writes about what our lives are like in this place and time, then that's all I really want to do. And if people get something out of that, that's fantastic.

Ultimate Gay Sex, published by DK Publishing, Inc., is available in bookstores now. For a full-length transcript of this interview, including Ford's take on his Lambda Literary nominations, friendly conversations with conservative religious leaders, and vomiting Labradors, please visit OutSmart's website at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

ReadOut Shorts

Whisker of Evil: A Mrs. Murphy Mystery
Rita Mae Brown and Sneaky Pie Brown
Bantam Books



Calling all mystery lovers, it's time to curl up on the veranda, sip a mint julep, and settle into the 12th serving of the popular Mrs. Murphy mystery series written, of course, by none other than our own Rita Mae Brown and her faithful feline co-author, Sneaky Pie Brown. This lighthearted romp takes us deep into the world of Crozet, a small farm town in Virginia. Mrs. Murphy's owner, Postmistress Mary "Harry" Haristeen stumbles across the dead body of local horse breeder Barry Monteith, and the close-knit team of human and four-legged sleuths spring into action. Unraveling the details of the murder opens the door to a number of other unsolved mysteries that keep Mrs. Murphy et al. wondering until the exciting climax when the killer is discovered with a bang. Truth be told, Rita and Sneaky have a knack for writing a decent mystery. Faithful readers certainly won't be disappointed and will most assuredly enjoy the winding story, peppered with social commentary, religious and political observations, as well as a few pithy descriptions of the genteel Southern life. Kudos to Rita and Sneaky Pie for yet another delightful caper. —Colleen R. Logan

Luna
Julie Ann Peters
Little, Brown and Company



Luna takes the transgender issue and all of its dynamics and delivers it to us in a warm and understandable way. Regan (Liam, a.k.a. Luna's sister) is the narrator of the story, and it is through her eyes that we are able to look into Liam/Luna's world. The complex understanding and acceptance that Regan has worked into over the years is heartwarming and a true triumph for the human soul. That does not mean that she or Luna is invincible to society's biases and fears around transgender issues. Luna faces all of the same issues that a gay or lesbian person faces plus the added realization that she was born with the wrong body. Like Chris Bohjalian's *Trans-sister Radio*, Julie Ann Peters enables the reader to become a part of the journey, thus creating a level of understanding and compassion. *Luna* is an inspiring read, and the reader becomes educated about many issues they would not have thought of while engaged in the pleasure and pain of Luna's story. It is a must read and will create greater understanding and tolerance of transgender issues both within and outside the GLBT community. —Alexsya Coleman

THE LADY OR THE CAT ...

or the chair—the bigots' gay-marriage stance gets loonier

Does that mean you have to allow a man to marry his pet or a man to marry his chair?"

—Jon Bruning, Nebraska attorney general, responding to the Massachusetts State Supreme Court decision on marriage equality

Does removing legal barriers to spouses of the same sex really put us on a slippery slope to pet and chair marriage? Don't get me wrong: I'm as fond of a slippery slope as the next dyke. But I don't buy marriage equality being the slip 'n' slide to hell.

Still, I could see marrying my cat. We have a fulfilling, egalitarian relationship, even though I'm a lot older and have opposable thumbs. I adore her, and the feeling is mutual. She cuddles me. She touches her nose to mine. She leaves her regurgitated kibble exactly where my foot will land when I step out of bed. The cat is into me.

I wouldn't have a problem with marrying my chair either. My favorite chair never lets me down. It's accommodating yet independent enough to stand on its own four legs. My chair has comforted and sustained me through many a trying time. It unselfishly shares its collected spare change and popcorn kernels. My chair accepts me

My favorite chair is accommodating yet independent enough to stand on its own four legs.

for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, good times and bad, happy and sad. I trust my chair will support and honor me as long as we both shall live.

If the slippery slope leads to chair marrying, go ahead and sign me up. Not that the chair is eligible for much in the way of retirement benefits or social security, or that a floral recliner would be especially

judicious if it ever had to oversee my estate. But were I to wind up in the emergency room, say, I wouldn't mind opening my eyes to the soothing sight of my beloved chair.

If we are on a slippery slope for real, and marriage equality is really a crazy wild ride into chaos and eventually polygamy—as constitutional amendment supporters predict—I can state unequivocally, I would be willing to marry both my cat and my chair.

If it comes down to the law allowing me to marry the woman I've been sharing a bed with for 16 years and jump the broom with my cat (she's a good jumper!) and get hitched to my chair (it's stable!), I'm certain my cat and my chair would be fine with that. All three objects of my affection accept my multiple devotion, and they are only rarely just a teensy bit jealous when one gets more attention than the other (except my chair—never jealous!).

So what's the hullabaloo?

Homos aren't all that scary anymore. Years of exposure from the likes of Ellen and the Queer Eye guys and all of us coming out have made an impact. These days most people tend to like us. Regular folks aren't feeling threatened the way they did back when they believed we were recruiting their children and doing all the other icky things the right-wing zealots said in the voters' pamphlet.

Apparently marriage between loving same-sex partners doesn't engender enough panic in the public. To get folks seriously lathered up, now the bigots have to throw in the cat, too (she doesn't like being thrown), and the poor chair. As if marrying a pet or a chair is some deep-seated nightmare—the looming terror people will do anything to avoid, even vote to amend the constitution. A cat in a bridal veil. A chair in a tux. Ooooh! The new Axis of Evil.

Did we think we'd ever see the day when affection for pets and chairs would rattle the public cage more than two sissyfaggots or two bulldaggers dropping out of the patriarchal paradigm to make it with each other? We have come a long way, baby!

Sally Sheklow lives in Eugene with her wife, her cat, and her favorite chair.



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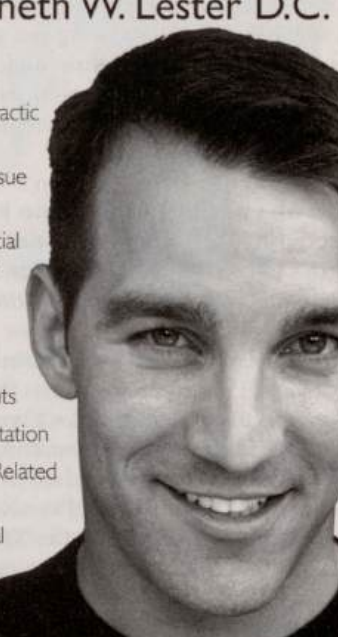
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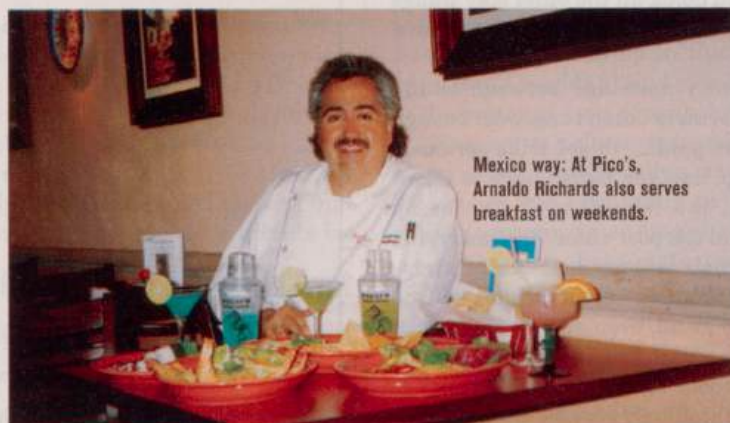
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BACK TO PICO'S

A Mexican-food favorite opens a second location



Mexico way: At Pico's, Arnaldo Richards also serves breakfast on weekends.

For a few years in the early '90s, Pico's Mex-Mex restaurant hosted an event that raised funds for Body Positive, the HIV service organization. The event, Vivo y Positivo, took place around Cinco de Mayo and sprawled across the grounds that surrounded Pico's then-open location on Kirby Drive. The final year for Vivo y Positivo featured entertainment from Houston and Mexico, including an astounding Oaxacan big band, and the brewing of what was billed as the world's largest margarita.

Pico's Kirby location—a popular stop for the close-by Montrose community—shuttered later that year. Restaurant owners Arnaldo and Janice Richards then concentrated on the original Pico's location on Bellaire, opened 20 years ago this year. (Full disclosure: For a couple of years in the last decade, I worked for the public relations agency employed by Pico's. I also attended high school with Janice, who is operating manager for the restaurant.)

In March, the Richardses marked two decades in business by opening a new second location on the Katy Freeway near the Memorial City mall. The setting—perched at the edge of a vast parking lot, hard by a Loehman's and other sundry retailers—seems less than auspicious. Inside, ocher walls, Mexican genre-scene prints, and colorful Talavera platters create a pleasant dining space.

The food is as remarkable as always, which, to borrow from the Martha Stewart lexicon, is a very good thing. A native of Mexico City reared in Monterey, Arnaldo Richards runs a kitchen that cooks some of the best Mexican food in the city. Unex-

pectedly rich flavors distinguish even the standards, including enchiladas and fajitas. More complex dishes like Chiles en Nogada (a roasted poblano pepper stuffed with pork, olives, almonds, and raisins in a walnut cream sauce and sprinkled with pomegranate seeds) remain a revelation. The chicken mole and the *manchamanteles* (a mélange of meats and vegetables in a thick sauce) are two of my favorite comfort-food items.

A recent visit to the new Pico's confirmed that Richards' kitchen turns out terrific grilled steaks. My partner Albert and I split a comically big Cowboy Steak special. Cooked medium rare, the 24-ounce sirloin slab had great flavor and arrived on a bed of grilled onions, poblanos, and roasted potatoes. Though not as heroically sized, other steaks are just as exceptional.

The new Katy Freeway location being more convenient to our Heights home than Bellaire, I expect we will be enjoying Pico's as much as I did when I used to frequent the Kirby spot (Richards will soon open a Sugar Land location). A minor noise advisory: An abundance of hard surfaces—tile floor, wood tables and chairs—does amplify typical restaurant noises, from the fussy toddler at the next table to the gang of boisterous work mates cheering the end of the day over margaritas. In other words, this may not be the venue for your intimate date with that tender someone. But Pico's is the perfect spot for amazing Mexican food.

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Tim Brookover opined on LaStrada in our December issue.

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Calendar of Events

Deadline for OutSmart's June issue is 5 p.m., Tuesday, May 11.

MAY

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.J.'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.J.'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.

4-9 (Tue.-Sun.)

STOMP. They're at it again. Those noisy kids with their clangy-clang and their swish-boom-click return to Houston to create engaging music and unforgettable rhythms with anything but conventional musical instruments. Brooms, trashcan lids, Zippo lighters, and, of course, their

famous stompin' boots provide all the percussive tunesmithing you could want in an evening. \$27-\$57. 8 pm, Tuesday-Saturday; 7 pm, Sunday; 2 pm matinees Saturday and Sunday at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Tickets: 713/227-45PA or www.spahouston.org.

8 (Sat.)

Strip Symphony. Houston's youthful, frisky symphony, OrchestraX is at it again. This time, they're stripping down, the music that is, to solos and strings. Composers include Mozart, Haydn, and Schnittke. \$30 (\$10 seniors/students). 7:30 pm at The Hobby Center's Zilkha Hall, 800 Bagby @ Rusk. Tickets/info: 713/225-6729 or www.orchestrax.org.

8 (Sat.)

This is Not a Love Song. Several Dancers Core presents—thanks to a grant from the Heartland Arts Fund—Berlin's Tanzcompagnie RUBATO's "This is Not a Love Song." Set to Wolfgang Bley-Borkowski's radical arrangement of Beethoven's Grosse Fugue in B-minor, this intimate duet choreography examines the relationship between a man and a woman as individuals and as two people together. Free. 8 pm at Miller Outdoor Theatre. For info: 713/862-5530 or www.severaldancerscore.org.

8 (Sat.)

The St. Lawrence String Quartet and Sarah Rothenberg perform Da Camera's season finale, featuring three mighty pieces of chamber music by Haydn, Shostakovich, and Beethoven. The St. Lawrence String Quartet is recognized as a world-class chamber orchestra of this generation. \$20-\$35. 8

pm at The Wortham Center's Cullen Theater, 500 Texas St. For tickets: 713/524-5050 or www.dacamera.com.

13 (Thu.)

Cruise to the Cure, the third annual fundraiser for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, offers a night of musical entertainment from the El Orbits and fantastic food from Brennan's, St. Pete's Dancing Marlin, Kraftsmen Baking, and others. \$50/individual, tables begin at \$1,000. 7 pm at Rice Hotel's Crystal Ballroom, 909 Texas. For info: 713/334-4400.

18 (Sun.)

Pasta-n-Pride. E.J.'s and the Houston Pride Band (HPB) are hosting a spaghetti dinner fundraiser for lovers of music and tasty food. The menu includes spaghetti, salad, and garlic bread, every bachelor's favorite easy-prep meal. After filling your tum-tum with carbs-a-plenty, fill your ears with HPB's new pep band, the Pride Pipers. The group was formed at the beginning of the year to perform at events throughout the community. \$5. 4-7 pm at E.J.'s, 2517 Ralph. Info: 713/862-9491 or www.houstonprideband.org.

20 & 21 (Thu. & Fri.)

Pick a Job, Any Job. Alley Theatre hosts Middle School Career Day, when pre-teens and early teens get an introduction to the theater community and the jobs therein. (Incidentally, this also provides many a suburban pre-adolescent with a first-time encounter with the gay community.) Actors, directors, designers, techies, and admins are on hand to share their expertise and field any questions. Free, reservations required.

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—TUE., MAY 11.**

9:30 am-12:30 pm at Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. Info: 713/228-9341, ext. 425.

21 (Fri.)

12 Minutes of Member Madness. The 12 Minutes Max! events at DiverseWorks bring various forms of performance artistry to the stage with one restriction: whatever you do, you only have 12 minutes to do it. This particular installment presents artists and performers who are also members of the D-Werx posse. \$12. 8 pm at DiverseWorks, 1117 East Fwy (off N. Main at Naylor). For info: 713/223-8346 or www.diverseworks.org.

21 (Fri.)

Sheepskin and Rubber Chicken. To honor the graduating academics of the class of 2004, ComedySportz presents its Salute to Graduates, a competitive improvisational comedy (read *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*) show pitting two teams against each in a suma cum Oh Lawdy! game of hilarity. This troupe style is PG-clean, so the graduates' dotting parents and grandparents can enjoy the show unscathed. \$12. 8 pm at Lambert

Hall, 1703 Heights Blvd. at 17th St. For reservations: 713/868-1444.

21 & 22 (Fri. & Sat.)

Not in Your Freezer Section. Spring Opera Pops do not come with a fruity frozen outside and a creamy ice cream center; no sir. It's an outdoor evening of fantastic opera music performed by the masterful young voices of the Houston Grand Opera Studio. Pack a blanket, a bottle of wine, and let the music pacify your soul. Free. 8:30 pm at Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Dr. in Hermann Park.

22 & 23 (Sat. & Sun.)

Gotta Get It, a series of films from the MadCat Women's International Festival, takes a look at the passions and obsessions of everyday life. Keep an eye open for those poor, frustrated souls who give out samples at the grocery store, all the while trying to maintain a cheerful demeanor under fluorescent lighting and relentless grocery muzak in Jennifer Drummond's *The F.E.D.S.* (Food Education Demo Specialists). \$5. 8 pm Saturday, 3 pm Sunday at Aurora Picture Show, 800 Aurora in the Heights. More info: 713/868-2101 or www.aurorapictureshow.org.

23 (Sun.)

Petalapooza 2 is Hollywood Frame Gallery's tribute to National Pet Month. Meet Hollywood Frame Gallery's exclusive artists Caresse Eguileor and Jim Tweedy. Enjoy music, food, art, and cross your paws in hopes of winning a raffle-giveaway. Prizes include works by Tweedy, Eguileor, and an original film poster of a Disney animal movie. \$5 per raffle ticket (6 for \$25). 1-5 pm at Hollywood Frame Gallery, 2427 Bissonnet, 713/942-8885 or www.hollywoodframegallery.com.

28-30 (Fri.-Sun.)

Lindy-Hopping Mad. Idy and Bob Thomas, known as The Kamikaze Jitterbugs, team up with the Texas Tap Ensemble for *Shall We Dance?* The show revives the music and dance of a peppier era, like tap, ballroom, jitterbug, and hand-jive. Slip into your zoot suit and get swingin'. Daddio. 8 pm Friday & Saturday, 7:30 pm Sunday at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. For info: 713/224-7575 or www.houstonsymphony.org.

PLANNING AHEAD

JUNE

June 5 (Sat.)

Faerie Godfather Day. Hear ye, hear ye! Faerie Empress Sassi Fae hereby proclaims a day honoring Faerie Godfathers across the entire Milky Way. Conceived by Crazy Bear and Ribbon of the Radical Faerie community of Nashville, Tennessee, Faerie Godfather's Day—half way between traditional Mother's Day in May and Father's Day—honors older gay men who have mentored younger gay (and straight) men (and women). Faerie Fae encourages us all to promote the day, host events, create greeting cards, throw theme parties, share stories about the older man in your life and how he made it more livable, and—moreover—take your Faerie Godfather out to dinner or for a drink. For info: www.faeriegodfathersday.com.

June 5 (Sat.)

Urban Mix III. City Dance Company dancers shake what their mamas gave 'em with an eclectic fusion of dance styles. Don't forget the mosquito repellent Free. 8 pm at Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Dr. in Hermann Park.

June 10-13 (Thu.-Sun.)

Texas Folklife Festival. Celebrate the diversity of Texas. Learn about its cultures, sample authentic international foods, watch entertainers do their thing, and maybe take some arts and crafts home with you. \$8 advance/\$10 at the gate, \$6 for seniors and military, \$4 for children 6-12, free for kids under 6. Thursday & Friday 5-11 pm, Saturday noon-11 pm, and Sunday

noon-9 pm at the Institute of Texan Cultures in downtown San Antonio. For info/tickets: 210/458-2390 or www.texasfolklife.org.

JULY

July 9-11 (Fri.-Sun.)

Getting the Love You Want. Patrick Vachon, licensed master social worker and advanced clinical practitioner, teaches couples how to reignite the fire that once burned brighter between them. Using Imago Relationship Therapy techniques developed by Harville Hendrix, Ph.D., author of the best-selling books *Getting the Love You Want* and *Keeping the Love You Want*, Vachon takes couples on an intensive weekend journey into each other's hearts. \$550/couple. Friday 7-10 pm, Saturday 8:30 am-8 pm, Sunday 8:30 am-7 pm at the offices of Patrick Vachon, 1712 Fairview. For more info: 713/524-1771, www.imagohealing.com, or vachonpj@aol.com.

July 23-25 (Fri.-Sun.)

DiverseWorks Retreat & Creative Capital Professional Development Workshop for Visual and Performing Artists. If you're a fledgling visual artist or a struggling performing artist or a struggling fledgling visual and performing artist, this is the workshop for you. Learn how to market your work as a creative individual, how to handle public relations, how to raise funds to realize your vision, how to plan strategies, strengthen professional ties, and—bottom line—quit that crappy job making espresso for bourgeois-boho ingrates and support yourself as a friggin' artist for a change. Free. Applications must be received by 5 pm, Friday, April 30. Applications available at DiverseWorks' office at 1117 East Fwy off Main at Naylor, or by calling 713/223-8346, e-mailing Rachel@diverseworks.org, or at www.diverseworks.org.

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 spookier, 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 pm; Saturday at 8 and 10:30 pm at Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt (off Richmond & Kirby). Tickets/more info: 713/522-7722.

◆ **Boy Groove.** Sick of boy bands? So is Chris Craddock, who wrote this *Spinal Tap*-esque spoof of a boy group's rise to fame, with tunes like "You Make My Hips Buck" and their eventual plummet to public disdain. A certain "park incident" brings about their comic demise. \$23 Fridays & Sundays, \$25 on Saturdays. May 18-July 10 at 8 pm, Sundays at 6:30 pm, at Theater LaB, 1706 Alamo (off 2100 Houston Ave.). For tickets: 713/868-7516 or www.theaterlabhouston.com.

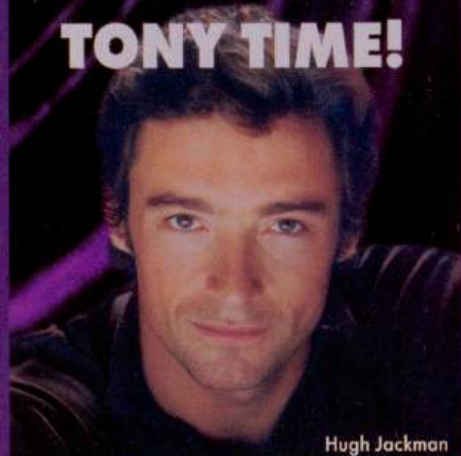
◆ **Le Devin du Village** (or *The Cunning Man*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau), is one of the most famous comic operas of the 18th century. Sung in French with English surtitles, this is Mercury Baroque Ensemble's season finale. Friday, May 28, 7:30 pm, at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. For tickets: 713/315-2525 or www.MercuryBaroqueEnsemble.org.

◆ **A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum.** Considered the funniest musical comedy ever written, co-writer Larry Gelbhart (*M*A*S*H*) created it drawing from the great ancient Greek comedies of Plautus. The Alley Theatre Resident Company takes on the story of romance, deception, temptation, and →

It's true. The most enjoyable Tony in the entertainment business does not have the last name "Danza." The Tony with "Awards" at the end is the one everybody loves to see.

Hugh "Wolverine" Jackman hosts the 58th Annual Antoinette Perry "Tony" Awards for the second time. Jackman's Broadway debut in *The Boy From Oz* has won him quite a bit of acclaim for his role as Peter Allen, the openly gay Oscar-winning singer-songwriter ex-husband of Liza Minnelli, who preferred entertaining over activism. Also look out for Jackman's next film, *Van Helsing*, about a fierce vampire hunter armed to the teeth with vampire-slaying gizmos, scheduled for release this month.

The tension builds this month as nominees are announced May 10. Who will make the list? The season had so much to offer. There's *WICKED*, the pre-qual to *The*



Hugh Jackman

What: The 2004 Tony Awards
When: 7-10 p.m., Sunday, June 6
Where: KHOU, channel 11; Alamo Drafthouse, West Oaks Mall
Info: www.tonyawards.com or www.alamodrafthouse.com, 281/556-0204

Wizard of Oz, The Boy From Oz, Bombay Dreams (Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical inspired by the massive Bollywood entertainment machine), new plays like *I Am My Own Wife* and *The Retreat From Moscow*, canonical classics like *Fiddler on the Roof*, and neo-classics like *Little Shop of Horrors*. Great actors like John Lithgow, emcee Hugh Jackman, Nathan Lane, Ashley Judd, and Dixie Carter have all tread the boards of the Great White Way. Who will win?

See the winners, the glitz, and the glamour, on the big screen at Alamo Drafthouse. You might remember the Drafthouse held a screening party for the Oscars, which benefited the Linda K. Manning Houston Division of the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition. Watch the theater event of the year on the big screen while waitstaff bring you all the food and drink you desire. It's almost better than being there. —Eric A.T. Dieckman

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What: *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*
When: May 7-30, Fri., Sat., & Sun. at 7 p.m.
Where: Fitzgerald's, 2706 White Oak
How much? Fri. & Sat., \$20; Sun., \$16
Info: 713/862-3838, www.fitzlive.com, www.hedwighouston.com

HALF THE MAN SHE USED TO BE

The off-Broadway sensation *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* inspired a cult film and following and helped revive pop culture's fascination with glam-rock (alongside another glam-pie, *Velvet Goldmine*). The story tells the tale of Hansel Schmidt, an East Berliner looking to escape the Soviet bloc. Hansel decides to undergo gender-change surgery, marry American GI Luther Robinson, and flee to the U.S. The surgery is butchered, but Hansel still succeeds in becoming Hedwig Robinson, with an inch of manhood still intact. After her GI hubby abandons her in a trailer park, Hedwig decides to pick herself up, dust herself off, and reinvent herself yet again, as a rock star. • Her new beau, Tommy Spec, has similar dreams, steals her songs, and becomes the stadium-filling rock sensation Tommy Gnosis. Still ambitious—and spiteful—Hedwig forms her own band, The Angry Inch. They hit every city Tommy Gnosis plays, performing in shabby little venues. Finally, Hedwig gets to sing her side of the story.

The dazzling film version of *Hedwig* returns for one weekend only, as part of Landmark River Oaks' kitsch-fest of a midnight movie series. The cast of the play infiltrates the theater Friday to make the experience all the more glamtastically punkalicious. Friday and Saturday night, May 21 and 22, midnight, at Landmark River Oaks Theatre, 2009 W. Gray. For more information, call 713/866-8881 or visit www.landmarktheatres.com. —ED

RADIO

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

♦ **QueerVoices.** Mondays, 8-10 p.m. Features, news, music, interviews, reviews, and commentary. KPFT 90.1 FM, 713/526-4000.

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

♦ **Chocolate: The Exhibit.** Chocolate. This universal treat is made from the seeds of the cacao tree whose scientific name *Theobroma* means "food of the gods." Complimentary weekend tastings (beginning at 1 p.m.) offer samples from some of Houston's finest boutique retailers. Wear a floppy khaki hat, speak in an Aussie accent, and insist you're the Chocodile Hunter. Crikey! Through May 19 at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Drive. For tickets and information: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

♦ **Bugs and Butterflies: A Rainforest Adventure.** The movie *A Bug's Life* is a big dirty lie. Bugs don't sing and dance. They fight. They kill. They rip your heart outta your chest and show it to ya before ya die. Wait, that was Bruce Lee. This particular IMAX picture features a cast of real insects, starring Papilio the butterfly and Hierodula the praying mantis. The film follows the two from their birth to their inevitable encounter in a rainforest of Southeast Asia. Predator meets prey. This ain't Pixar, baby. This ain't pretty. At the Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Drive. Tickets/info: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

♦ **Cinema al Fresco.** There are rumors of a remake of the '76 cult classic *Logan's Run*. So the Orange →

PERFORMING ARTS

For Young People

♦ **Beauty and the Beast.** We all know this endearing fairy tale. Love can see through any surface, no matter how rough-hewn. We know it because we've seen it since childhood. Here's a chance for your wee-ones to see it for the first time, and introduce them to the theater. \$7. May 15-June 26, Sundays at 11 a.m. & 1:30 p.m. at the Company OnStage, 536 Westbury Square. Tickets/info: 713/726-1219, www.companyonstage.org.

mistaken identity as its very first musical. Find out if these performers can sing as well as they can act. \$20-\$52. May 14-June 6 at the Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. For tickets: 713/228-8421 or www.alleytheatre.org.

♦ **The Hotel Play.** Infernal Bridegroom Productions pushes the envelope again, in terms of madness and volume (with a cast of almost 70). In the story, a hotel clerk is met by a near endless barrage of oddball guests, all in a day's work as any clerk will tell you. There's the hateful hubby and his wife who just wants to go home, the florist, the guy who's unhappy with his coffee. Like any clerk, some guests he messes with, some he ignores, some he simply watches as they have their temper tantrums. \$10 Thursdays, \$12 Fridays, \$15 Saturdays. Through May 22 at The Axiom, 2524 McKinney. Tickets: 713/522-8443 or www.infernalbridegroom.com.

♦ **Jekyll & Hyde.** The musical adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 novella tells the tale of young Dr. Henry Jekyll, a brilliant doctor and research scientist who, tormented by his father's mental illness, attempts to isolate the elements of good and evil which constantly battle over the forefront of the human psyche. The results of the experimentation are infamous. Possibly the first widely-published parable of drug abuse, the story remains as strong as ever. \$25-\$68. Through May 9 at the Hobby Center, 800 Bagby at Walker. For tickets: 713/558-887 or www.tuts.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 di-

CONVENIENTLY SCHEDULED



Just a few days after Mother's Day, this pop operetta opens. Vince's father walked out on both him and his mother when he was only six years old. Left to themselves, the mother and son grew bitter and apart. After 20 years of the silent treatment, Vince finally finds love—with another man—and decides he must come out to his mother and restore their relationship. —ED

What: *Convenience*

When: May 12-June 6

Where: Stages, 3201 Allen Pkwy

How much? \$20-\$35

Info: 713/527-0123, www.stagestheatre.com

PRIDE ON 42ND STREET



The Broadway legend that defined musical comedy, *42nd Street*, is en route to Bagby Street. The star-is-born tale brought us scores of memorable show tunes—"Lullaby of Broadway," "We're in the Money," and "Shuffle off to Buffalo," to name a few. • Cast member Dexter Jones (pictured, center) lives just as loud and proud as he sings. Jones has been in a number of productions, on and off Broadway. His impressive list of credits includes *A Chorus Line*, TV's *One Life to Live*, and *Bojangles* starring Gregory Hines. Michael Jackson fans might also recognize him from Jackson's "You Rock My World" video. —ED

What: *42nd Street*

When: May 12-23

Where: Hobby Center, 800 Bagby

How much? \$23-\$64

Info: 713/629-7469

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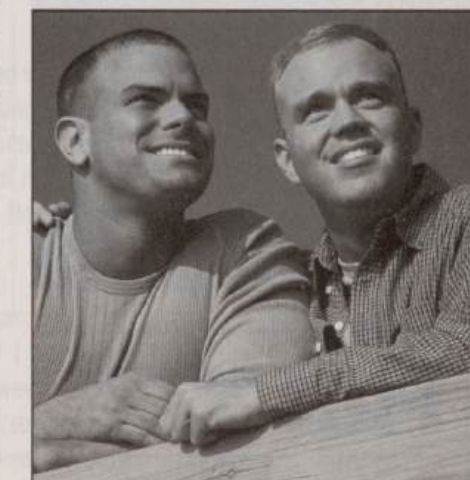
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Show took it as a cue to play the original Michael York vehicle about a youth culture gone haywire and the value of growing old. The evening opens with the experimental music of A Pink Cloud, The Wiggins, and Rua Minx. \$5. 6-10 pm at The Orange Show, 2402 Munger. Info: 713/926-6368 or www.orangeshow.org.

◆ **Fade In: New Film and Video.** Eight international artists from across the globe exhibit their works—many are Houston or U.S. premieres—which make video or film the central component to the design. Through June 4 at the Contemporary Arts Museum, 5216 Montrose Blvd. Info: 713/284-8265 or www.camh.org.

◆ **Family Records.** Joseph Vitone's ongoing photography series documents interpersonal relationships in his extended rural Ohio family. The same tensions, conflicts, and underlying love are made visible through his lens. At the Houston Center for Photography, 1441 W. Alabama. Info: 713/529-4755 or www.hpconline.org.

◆ **Olafur Eliasson: Photographs.** Houston is the exclusive U.S. venue for this exhibit of one of contemporary art's unique young talents. The Denmark-born Eliasson's creations are noted for their elegance, inspired by natural phenomena and introspection. Free. At the Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. For info: 713/525-9400 or www.menil.org.

◆ **Our Country: The History of Country Music.** 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 images of the mountains of Appalachia, the Grand Ole Opry, and the deserts of California. Featured artists include Dolly Parton, Loretta Lynn, and Houston's own Lyle Lovett. Through June 7 at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Info: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

◆ **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.

◆ **Perspectives 141: Aaron Parazette.** Three new groups of work from native Houstonian and modern artist Aaron Parazette explore his use of arcs and loops, the sport of surfing as a means to examine landscape using waves and other oceanic qualities, and "word

paintings" that focus on surf lingo. If only Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello could be there. Through June 20 at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose. Info: 713/284-8250 or www.camh.org.

◆ **Photo du Jour.** World-renowned photojournalist David Hume Kemmerly exhibits his photographic diary of the year 2000, with one photo for each day. Subjects range from the ordinary to the breathtaking. At the Houston Center for Photography, 1441 W. Alabama. For info: 713/529-4755 or www.hpconline.org.

◆ **shOUT!** In celebration of Gay Pride, some of Houston's most powerful new queer voices are given an outlet. Keep an ear open for the return of the Queer Poetry Slam, some of the most outspoken verse in town. May 14-June 26 at DiverseWorks, 1117 East Fwy (off N. Main at Naylor). For info: 713/223-8346 or www.diverseworks.org.

◆ **Under the Radar.** The 41st Rice student art exhibit brings works in various media by graduating visual arts majors to public view. Many of these works are available for purchase; take advantage of the opportunity before the artists become renowned and priced out of reach. Through May 8 at Rice Gallery, on the ground floor of Sewall Hall, near entrance 1 off Main and Sunset.

◆ **Video Art Now** looks at video as a recently accepted artistic medium. Some of the most captivating video art from around the globe examines what we watch on video and how we watch it, experimenting with projection spaces. Through July 4 at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd. For information: 713/284-8250 or www.camh.org.

◆ **Yale Street Arts & Flower Market** is a new Heights market created for local artists to display and sell their original works of art. Fresh-cut flowers are also available. Entertainment is provided by local musicians and is a highlight throughout the day. The market is free & open to the public from 9 am-5 pm and continues the first Saturday of each month, coinciding with the Heights 1st Saturday events. The market is located behind Kaplan's Ben-Hur at 210 West 21st Street just off Yale. Free parking is available in the Kaplan's parking lot. Info or booth rental: Mitch Cohen at 713/802-1213 or visit www.YaleStreetMarket.com.

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for OutSmart's June issue:
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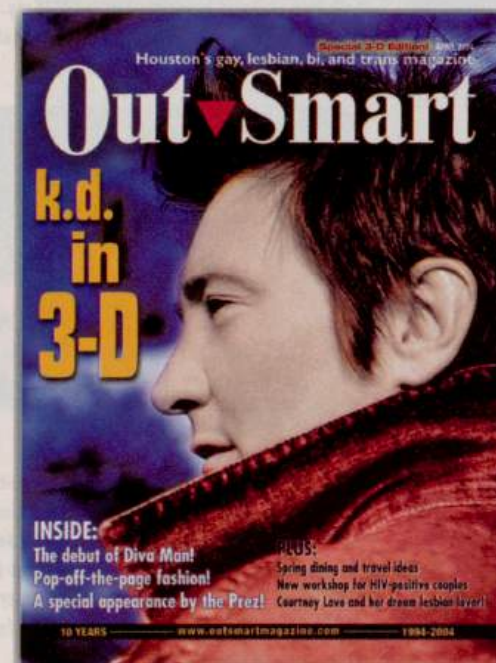
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—Jacquie Brennan, Attorney at Law

With its large audience and wide circulation, *OutSmart* certainly helped the Human Rights Campaign in Houston achieve its highest attended and most successful gala to date in 2003.

—Tim Kollatschny, Houston HRC Gala Co-Chair

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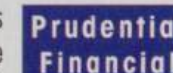
—Stewart Tinsley, VP Marketing, Cantoni by Design

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—Michael P. Delaney, Financial Services Associate
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As regular advertisers during the concert season, we know that *OutSmart* will reach a wider Texas audience, including the gay, bi and straight communities, than other gay community publications. *OutSmart* is a great deal! Thanks for the ongoing service; we look forward to years of continued success.

—Anthony Adams, Gay Men's Chorus of Houston



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Business News

Tom Fricke (r) has joined **OutSmart** as general manager. Before joining the magazine, Fricke owned and operated The Lovett Inn for 15 years. He recently sold the Montrose bed-and-breakfast hotel. As a founder of the Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce, and through his involvement with and support of local organizations and businesses, he brings a wealth of community experience to the magazine.

At **OutSmart**, Fricke will manage the business side of operations. He can be reached at 713/520-7237 or TomFricke@OutSmartMagazine.com.



THOMAS CHELSEA

Dolores Varela (r) has joined **OutSmart** as an advertising account executive. Varela worked for the city of Houston at the administration/supervisory level for 13 years before joining the magazine. She has also managed a catering company, owned/managed a contracting company, and worked as a bartender. The bilingual Varela is a member of the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. She can be reached at 713/520-7237 or Dolores@OutSmartMagazine.com.



THOMAS CHELSEA

Karen Derr of **Karen Derr & Associates Realty** congratulates **Glen Fillmore** (r) on achieving senior agent status for his 2003 performance. Fillmore is only the fourth agent to attain such status at the firm. Fillmore can be reached at 713/875-9482 or at www.KarenDerr.com.



COURTESY KAREN DERR

Pride Institute, the nationwide provider of mental health and chemical-dependency services for the GLBT population, recently promoted **Marty Perry** (below), the program director at the Pride Institute program in Dallas, to the position of executive director of the national Pride Institute organization located in Minneapolis/Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Randy Martin is the new program director for the Pride Institute in Texas. Martin joins Pride Institute after several years of counseling work at community counseling centers in Dallas and Irving.

The Pride Institute has facilities in six U.S. cities.



PRIDE INSTITUTE

The telephone number is 800/54-PRIDE. The website is tute.com www.pride-institute.com.

John Schilling is the new general manager of the **Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Galleria**. Schilling was most recently general manager of the Holiday Inn Select Greenway Plaza in Houston and worked several years with the InterContinental Hotels Group.

Managed by Houston-based **Heights Hospitality Corporation**, the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Galleria is located at 7787 Katy Frwy. The telephone numbers are 713/681-5000 and toll free 800/822-8373.



DALTON DEHART

On March 16, **Mike Roberson** (c), one of the co-owners of **Cabo Montrose**, greeted guests, including **Emily Jackson** (l) and **Ceci Resendez**, at the inaugural GLBT Night, which now takes place every Tuesday at the restaurant (1111 Westheimer, 713/942-2226). Clothing retailer **M2M** presented a fashion show during the first GLBT Night at Cabo.

Brennan & Johnson Attorneys at Law now meets clients at three area offices by appointment: 4265 San Felipe, 11111 Katy Frwy., and 6750 West Loop South. Formed in 1998, the firm still maintains an office in the Montrose area. **Jacque Brennan**, **Kevin Johnson**, and **Lisa VanAuken** are the firm attorneys.

Brennan & Johnson does have a new mailing address: P.O. Box 667185/Houston 77266. The main telephone number remains 713/522-1211. The firm website is www.lawbrennan.com.

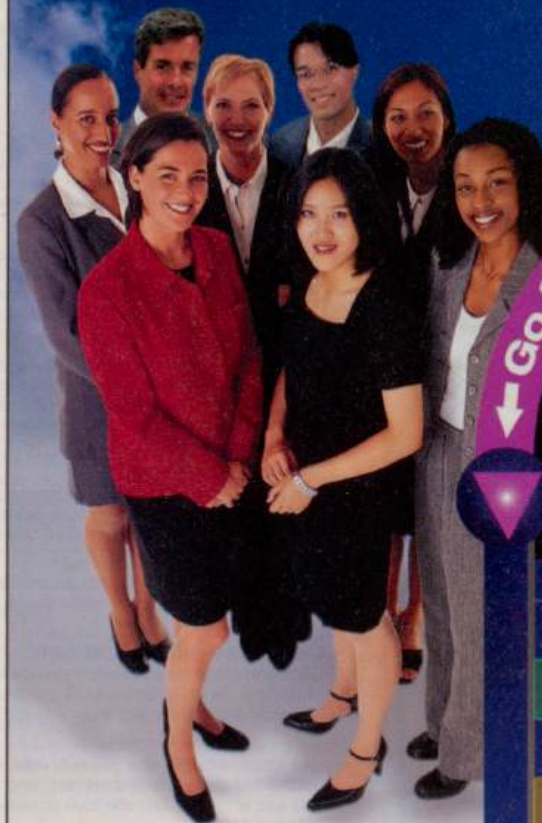
The new shop **decorDECOR** recently opened at 3200 Kirby, Suite 102, in the Café Express building. The boutique offers original works of art, decorative lighting, art glass, floral designs, draperies, jewelry, unique gifts, and other home accessories. Partner **Christine Dinh** plans to stock merchandise not found at other home-accessory stores in Houston. The telephone number is 713/524-8429.

Houston-based interior designer **Mikel Reper** marked the grand opening of his new Galveston store **Nest** with a May 1 Asian-theme party, "A Nite in Bangkok." Joe Manning of Catered Affairs of Houston provided food, and Lee's Golden Dragon Troupe performed.

Nest is located in the historic Galveston Telephone Company building at 525 22nd St. The telephone number is 409/763-5415. ■

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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 with country music, pool tables, cold draft, and the occasional cowboy hat. Regulars rule at this low-key spot. 617 Fairview • 713/628-8102.

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.

CABO MIX MEX GRILL

This restaurant near the Westheimer-Montrose epicenter now has a weekly Alternative Tuesday directed at GLBT diners, featuring drink specials. 1111 Westheimer • 713/942-2226.

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.

BEHIND THE BAR

WHO: Nick Wilson
WHERE: Meteor (2306 Genesee, 713/521-0123)
WHAT'S UP: Check in with Wilson before the new Musical Theatre Night. This bimonthly evening on the first and third Monday includes vocal performances, group sing-alongs, giveaways, and guest appearances by artists with local and touring productions.



THOMAS CHELSEA

CLUB XCAPE

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

COUSIN'S

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

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 at this stylish Shepherd Plaza video club. Karaoke fans tune up for the Wednesday and Sunday night contest. 2159 Portsmouth • 713/524-3359 • www.guavalamp.com.

JR's/S ANTA FE

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

KEYS WEST

Selected best piano bar in the Gayest & Greatest poll, this nightspot 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 Galt. Inside and outside bars stay busy at this legendary nightspot. 1022 Westheimer • 713/527-9669.

MELA'S

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

METEOR

The chic atmosphere at this Montrose video bar includes overstuffed couches, marble-topped bars, and stylish glassware. Attractive men and women gather here any night of the week for drinks and conversation. 2306 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, stay 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 dancefloor 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/levis/uniform crowd. 715 Fairview • 713/521-2792 • www.ripcordanjournal.com.

611 CLUB

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.

NOTE Ucar Lounge has discontinued its GLBT Night.

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

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.thekonitiki.com.

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.

UNDERCURRENT

Keith Curry and Marvin Grenier, long-time Blvd Saloon bartenders, have assumed ownership of the Gulf-view bar and rechristened it. The second-floor deck still has a great view of the water. 3102 Seawall Blvd. • 409/760-8571.

NOTE: Myra's Cantina has closed.

Beaumont

THE COPA

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

CROCKETT STREET

Formerly known as Mary's Place, this club recently changed hands and name. Miss Olivia Gardner hosts Talent Night on Tuesday. On Sunday, Latino Night includes Latin music and an all-Latino illusionist show. 486 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.

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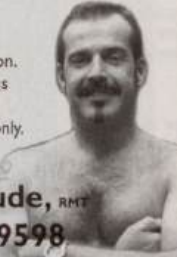
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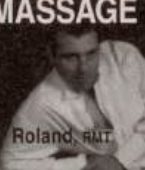
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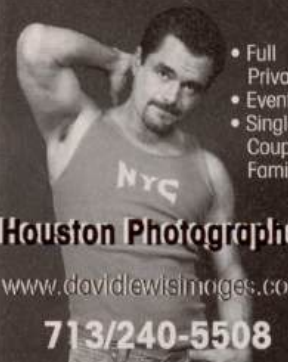
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Marketplace	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	12 Month
Color Boxed Ad per inch	\$62	\$57	\$52	\$47
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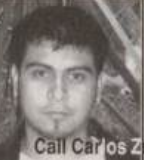
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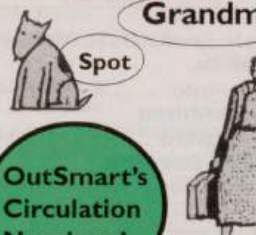
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by Lilly Roddy

This is an especially active month. First, we have the second part of the eclipse phase, the full Moon, occurring on May 4 at 11:33 a.m. at 14 Scorpio. This will make for intense feelings and will add a lot to the confusion that people will be feeling. Jupiter also goes direct on that day in Virgo, on its way to Libra. This will help us to want to look at all the details and get things cleaned up. On the 17th, both Venus and Neptune go retrograde. Venus retrograde period is from May 17 through June 29. Relationships, resources and, harmony are questioned. Neptune retrograde indicates a time of rethinking the future and heightens concerns about money. • Tense days this month are May 1, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 16th, 17th, 24th, and 27th. More pleasant days are the 8th, 9th, 10th, 21st, 23rd, 25th, and 30th. The Sun enters Gemini on the 21st. Mercury re-enters Taurus on the 15th. Venus remains retrograde in Gemini. Mars moves into Cancer on May 6. Jupiter remains in Virgo, Saturn in Cancer, Uranus in Pisces, Neptune in Aquarius, and Pluto in Sagittarius.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). Your attention turns to resources this month. You will have to put more concentration on resources that you share with your partner. Tensions around this issue will be extra strong on May 4. Family issues surface on the 7th. You will want to clean things up inside and out. After the 17th, you are ready to talk about almost everything that has been on your mind this entire year. Most of the things you have been holding on the inside. People will be surprised when you bring up the past so much. And some will experience you as downright confrontational.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). With your ruling planet Venus going retrograde this month, your birthday time is definitely contemplative. And you are not as social as we would expect you to be. Relationships are tense because of the eclipse on the 5th. This could be a time when you bring some to an end. Work is better, but you are still conflicted with your career direction. This is very notable on May 5 and the 27th. Don't act too quickly because the internal pressure will be building. You can plan for some action in July.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). With Mars moving into your sign on the 7th, you are an active crab. You will want your way. And if people try to block your path, you will use those claws on them. Social activity increases this month, but all activity has to pass through your filter of future utilization and application. Be careful that you don't hold people up to too high a standard. Otherwise, you will find yourself alone. On the other hand, you are clearly focused about your career direction. And nothing will interfere with that path.

LEO (July 23–August 22). Although you have been more of a solitarian lately, you are coming out for some sun, fun, and friends this month. Stress at home during the eclipse will drive you from your



Gemini (May 21–June 21). If you have projects you want to start this month, get them going before the 15th. After that, Venus goes retrograde in your sign until the end of June. Relationships, personal and business, will be going through a testing time. Issues that you have been holding in will be coming to the surface. Normally flexible, you won't exhibit those traits this month. You will feel that you are not significant enough to those people in whom you have placed your trust. New career directions are opening up for you. Keep your dance card open.

den and out into the world. People from the past will be contacting you, and you will be happy to see them. The first half of the month is a good time to initiate new projects especially associated with work or career. Relationships are still vague. Mostly, you don't know what you want. And this makes it hard for your partner to know what to do to make you happy. Look in the mirror for your answers. At the end of the month, you will need time alone.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). You need to make hay while the sun shines during the first half of this month. You are making impressions wherever you go. And you will find that others will just want to be in your presence. This is not so easy for the normally shy Virgos. Communications skills are heightened. After the 17th, you begin to review your career choice. You will examine the unconscious motives that were drilled into you as a small child. Expect some contact from your family or from the family ghosts. Don't overload your schedules.

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). This is a bit of an uneasy month for you. You are more open and communicative in your relationships, but you are interested in getting to the depths of things. And you are not interested in finding compromise this month. Your own directness may surprise you. And others will not see you as the "peacekeeper" that you like to be. You may isolate so that you don't inflict yourself on those around you. Best to stay out in the open and really confront those boundaries that you are re-working. Take some time to get away from it all near the end of the month.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). Relationships continue to be the major theme from last month and intruding into this month. The eclipse in your

sign will make you extra sensitive and moody and will loosen your control on your outward expressions. This is a make-or-break time in your relationships. They will be stronger at the end of this month, or they will be over. You are not willing to be the only supportive one in the relationship. Career is a much easier place to visit. You may want to go there to get a rest from the fray.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). You begin the month needing rest and seeking spiritual isolation. Your sensitivity levels are turned way up. But you will only have till the 6th to really enjoy this. After the 6th, you are back out dealing with the people around you. You are going to have to work to keep a handle on your schedule. You can really over-commit yourself this month. There are lots of new things opening up in your career sector, and you will want to do them all. After the 17th, take some time to look at what you really want and avoid making any long-term commitments until July.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). Creativity and re-organization are your watchwords for the month. And especially after the 17th, you are going to reorganize your workspace and your co-workers. You seem to have all the answers. And you are not working hard for the solutions. You will be a driving force at work, and others will be glad to follow. Romantic and business relationships are tender. You are just as ready to get clear on direction and commitment, and you are not willing to wait for those who cannot. You may seem very pushy and short-tempered. If your needs are not met, you will be out looking.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). New opportunities are out there for you in your career with the eclipse stimulating this area of your life. You are finding a new sense of commitment to yourself and to the things in your life that you really want. In the past you were afraid to really go for what you wanted. But this year, you are open to all possibilities. Your life is just on the edge of going more public than it has been in 14 years. After the 17th, you will be reminded to keep a playful attitude and not to take yourself too seriously.

PISCES (February 19–March 20). What a crazy month for you! Did I say that last month? For May and June, you will be finishing up with your past. You will be throwing out those final boxes that you have avoided going through. You are getting more clear on what you think your future should be. Relationship potentials and new and exciting people are coming into your life. Your social calendar could be exceedingly busy by the end of next month. Family issues still stir the pot until the end of June. Just use a big spoon.

A professional astrologer for 20 years, Lilly Roddy counsels individuals and teaches classes. Her website is www.lillyroddy.com.



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OUT IN HOUSTON



1 Tekeshia Parker (l) and Timberly Douglas walked down the aisle at the Feb. 13 Freedom to Marry wedding ceremony at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church.



2 Clint Willour juried the new Jung Center exhibition *Preparatory Works*, featuring recent art by members of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and Contemporary Arts Museum preparation staffs. While readying the May 3-28 show, Willour (second from l) posed with artists (l-r) Jason Makepeace, Kenneth James Beasley, Jeff Shore, Kenya Evans, and Jonathan Davies.

3 On March 1, Mitchell Katine (far r) and partner Walter Domingo (far l) appeared with their children Sebrina and Sebastian on an episode of the Univision talk show *Cristina* devoted to gay families. Host Cristina Saralegui (c) posed with the family.

4 Ryan Fugate (l) and Conrad Hernandez admired a painting at the Feb. 21 fundraiser for the Positive Art Workshop, art classes for people with HIV/AIDS, a program of the Houston GLBT Community Center. Hernandez chaired the event, held in memory of his partner Stephen Haddock.

5 Stewart Zuckerbrod (l) and his mother Elaine Zuckerbrod attended the Feb. 20 Gay Men's Chorus of Houston Silent Moon fundraiser.

6 Halloween Magic, the annual benefit comedy show, presented checks to beneficiaries on Jan. 23: (l-r) Michael Mizwa, AIDS Foundation Houston; Sonna Alton, Montrose Clinic; Sally Huffer, Montrose Counseling Center; Martin Heyn, Halloween Magic; Naomi Madrid, People With AIDS Coalition; Thomas Gegeny, The Center for AIDS; Ken Malone, The Assistance Fund; and Judie Cross, Bering Omega Community Services.

7 Members of GLOBAL, the University of Houston GLBT student group, paused before the March 14 AIDS Foundation Houston AIDS Walk. The 15th annual walk raised funds for the AIDS Foundation and 18 other HIV/AIDS service organizations.

8 At the post-AIDS Walk party at Boca Chica, restaurant owner Terry Flores (l) and business partner Lily Fernandez (r) welcomed Oscar de la Rosa of La Mafia.

9 On Feb. 13, Abel Rodriguez (far l), president of GLOBO (Gays and Lesbians Organized By Orgullo), and other members of the group gathered at Club Kilipso for Noche de Amor, which benefited Fundacion Latino-Americana Contra el SIDA, the HIV/AIDS service organization.

10 King Olympus XXXIV Gary Evans (l) and Queen Olympus XXXIV Becky Brewer paraded at the Feb. 7 Krewe of Olympus ball. The evening at the George R. Brown Convention Center raised money for The Assistance Fund, PFLAG Houston, PFLAG/H.A.T.C.H. Youth Scholarship Fund, and the Colt 45's Trouble Fund.



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