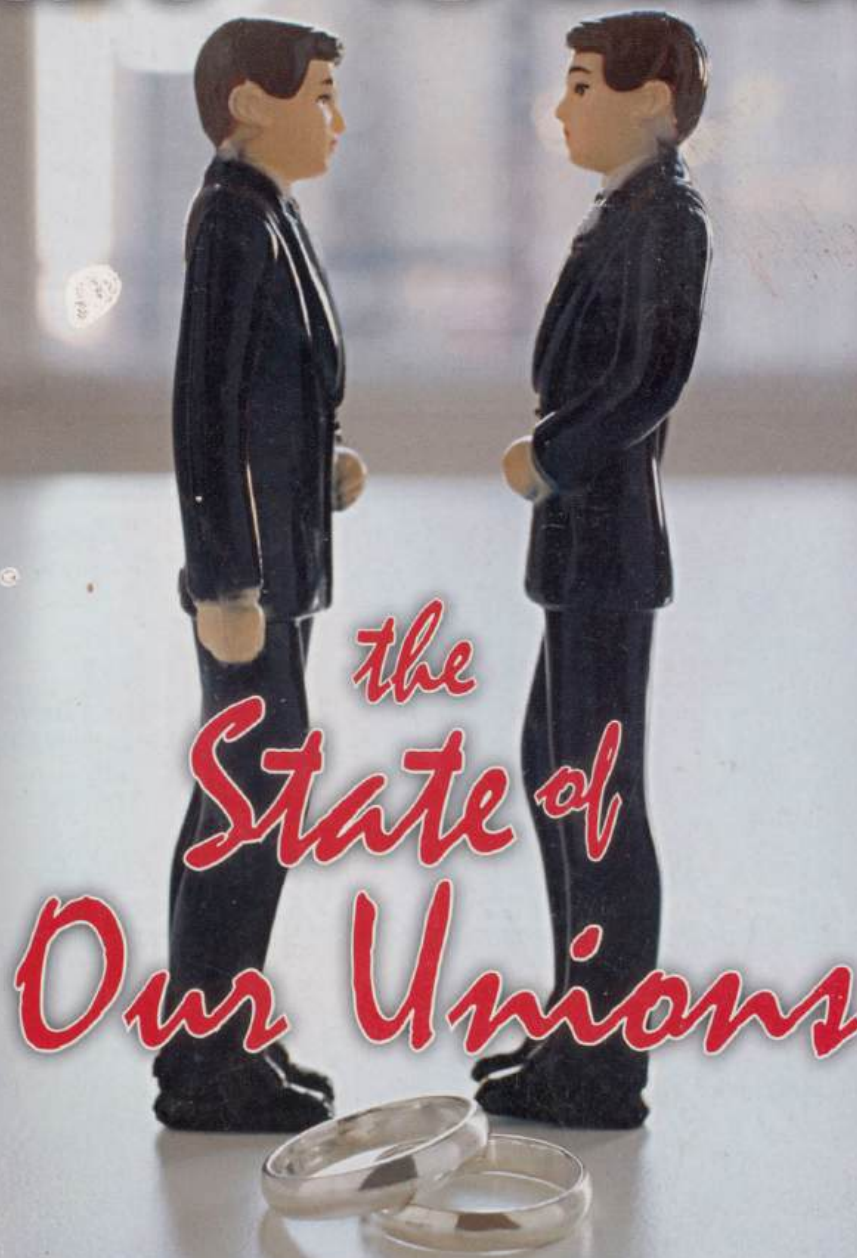


Out▼Smart

NOVEMBER 2006



the State of Our Unions

A year after the marriage amendment debacle in Texas,
we report on the struggle across the nation

GOING COHEN A profile of Lege challenger Ellen Cohen: "I support, 100 percent, GLBT rights."

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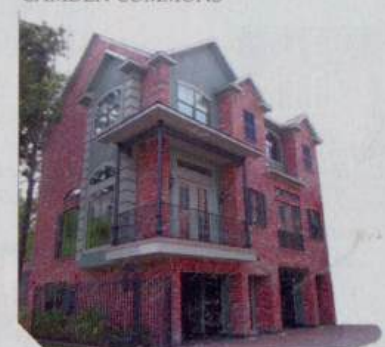


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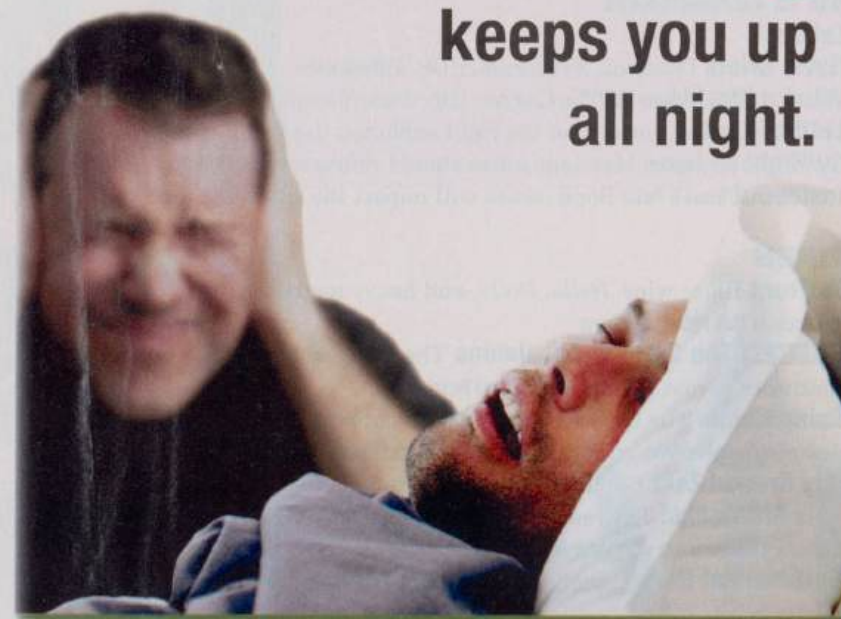
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OutSmart



About the cover:

A year after the passage of the antigay marriage amendment to the state constitution, Lambda Legal's David Buckel writes about the national struggle for full rights. His report begins on page 34.
Design: Blase DiStefano

Here are a few of more than 50 prevention, services, and volunteer programs that AFH offers.



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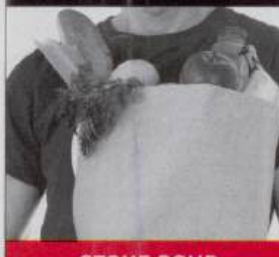
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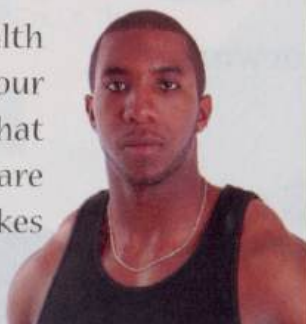
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Letters

OK FROM THE UK



Just happened upon your site whilst reading up on the daily news. Fantastic interview with Ms. [Sharon] Gless ["Gless Glows," May 2004]. So good to hear her views on many issues and what an interesting life—talk about destiny. Unfortunately, I have not seen Ms. Gless on screen for a long time in the UK, loved her in *Cagney and Lacey*. Glad to hear she is still busy. Keep up the good work.

Charlene O'Hara
Lancaster, Lancashire
United Kingdom

B&B



I was disappointed with your article on Galveston Island ["East End Story," July 2006], which mentioned a majority of the bed and breakfasts but no mention of Avenue O Bed and Breakfast, Coastal Dreams, or Lost Bayou (which is gay owned). You can go to any of the B&B directories including Galveston.com to find each of these B&Bs listed. Your article was incomplete without the inclusion of all the B&Bs.

Connie Porter
Avenue O Bed and Breakfast
Galveston

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS



Our Gayest & Greatest coverage ("The Big 10," October) contained some errors of spelling or incomplete information. The corrected items: Favorite Female Massage Therapist runner-up: Satya Shepherd; Favorite Female Athlete runner-up: Tina Thompson; Best Male Bartender runner-up: Shane Strahan, South Beach; the address for Lyssa Reynolds of Karen Dem & Associates, Best Female Real Estate Agent (Galveston): 1401 Postoffice.

After publication of the October issue, we learned of the closing of Hurricane Café (Best New Restaurant and Best Restaurant for People Watching runner-up, Galveston) and of the sale of Keys West (Best Piano Bar, Best Martini), which is now Tony's Corner Pocket (see page 95).

ATTENTION, COMMUNITY GROUPS

We are updating the community resource guide section for our website. Please send information about your nonprofit, fundraising, or social organization to editor@outsmartmagazine. Provide a current contact name and information (include mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number) along with a brief description of your group. The revised community resource guide will appear soon at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

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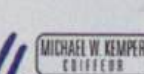


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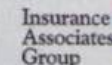
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BLAZE WINS AGAIN. Most players on amateur sports teams consider themselves fortunate to win a few games, benefit from exercise, and have some laughs with teammates. Winning, for some, is icing on the cake. But for the Houston Blaze, a team with the Houston Women's Softball League, victory is becoming the norm. Not only did the Houston Blaze take home the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance World Series championship for their division in 2005, but they also won the big prize again in August in Fort Lauderdale. Houston Blaze players pictured are (seated, from left) Stephanie Boles, Mechell Brown, Kathy Stephenson, Kelly Carman; (middle row, from left) Leslie Butcher, coach Erin Henry, Shamber Stapley, Nicki Bergmann; (back row) coach Stephanie Miller, Tracy Bucholz, and Mary Danley. Players not pictured: Laura Sanchez, Jenn Wiggle.

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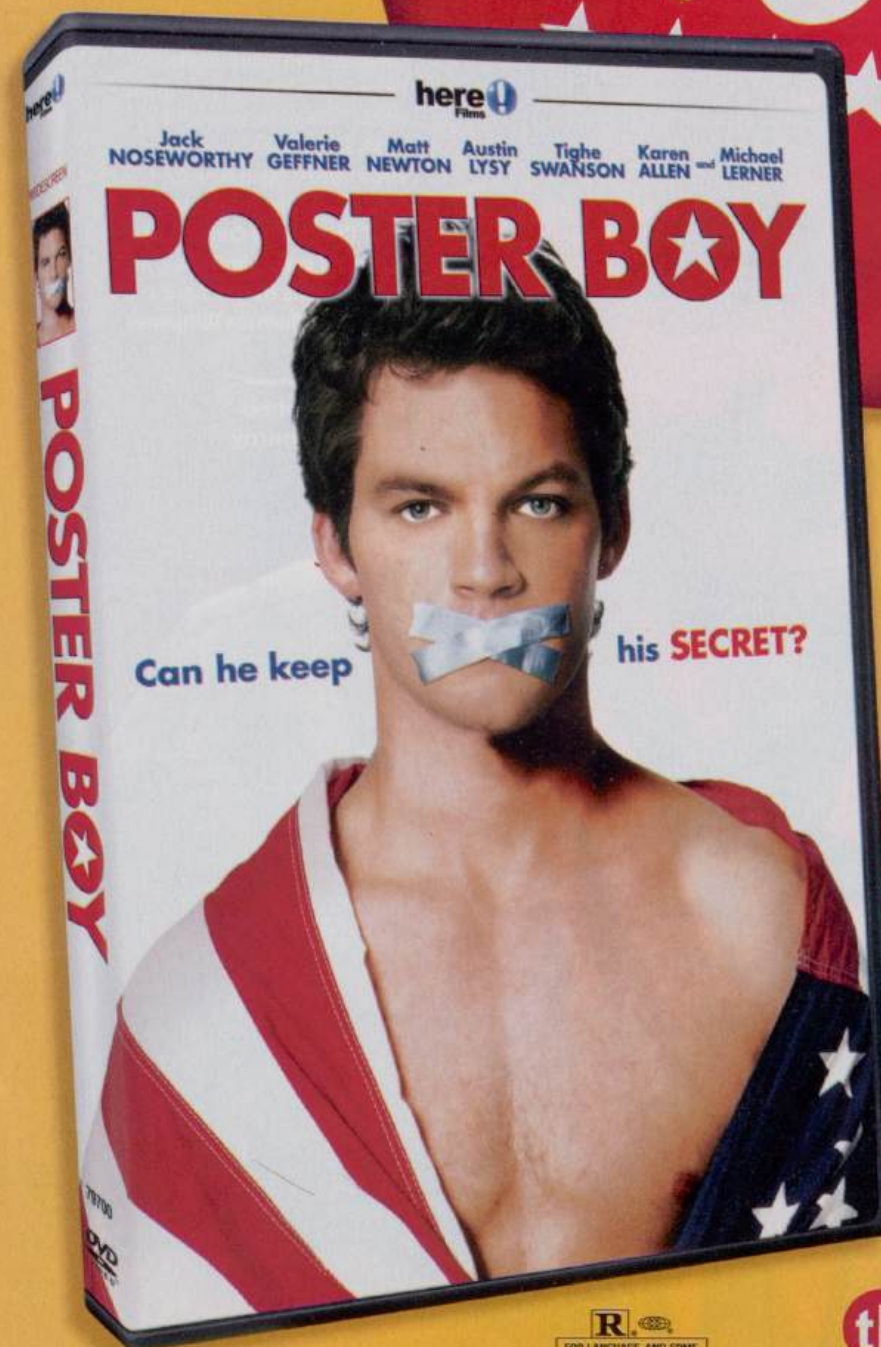
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PLAYING WITH DOLLY. "Wow wow wow. fellas/Look at the old girl now, fellas." Jerry Herman, the gay Broadway composer, created the ultimate diva role with *Hello, Dolly!* (see Pearl Bailey, Barbra Streisand, and, for heaven's sake, Carol Channing). In the Masquerade Theatre production, opening November 15 at The Hobby Center, company member Stephanie Bradow (photographed in the Hobby) tackles the classic role of effervescent matchmaker Dolly Levi, a part coveted by musical-theater actresses and beloved by old-school drag queens everywhere. Phillip Duggins, the Masquerade founding artistic director, directs this new production (running through November 26), part of the company's 10th anniversary season. Tickets: www.masqueradetheatre.com.

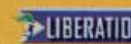
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The Secret's Out November 14



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WINNERS. A few months ago, we introduced readers to competitors bound for the Gay Games VII Sports and Cultural Festival in Chicago and the 1st World Outgames in Montreal ("They Got Game," July OutSmart). Keith Wright, president of Team Houston, the group that coordinated the local presence at the two events, reports that 65 individuals from the Houston-Galveston area participated in the Gay Games and returned with

36 medals. Twelve Houstonians traveled to the Outgames and brought home 24 medals. This latter group included Keith Peters (pictured), who competed in roller-racing events and captured two silver medals. Peters can add that pair to the bronze medal he won at the 1994 Gay Games. Even with events over, Team Houston meets monthly at the Houston GLBT Community Center and promotes sports activities, including plans for the April 1-8 First North America Outgames in Calgary.

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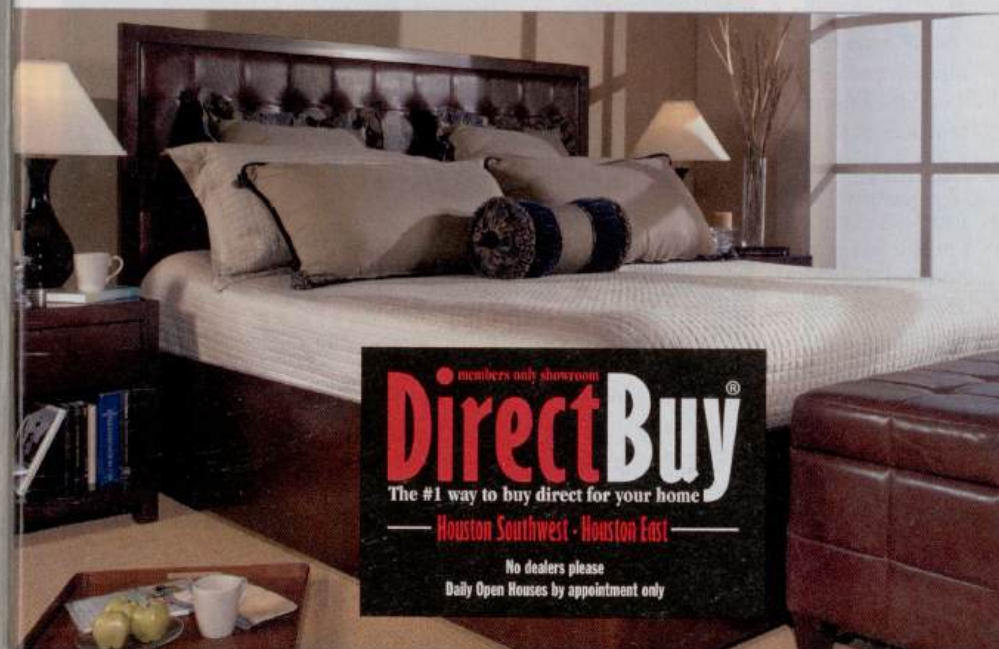
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DATEBOOK

Pride Houston hosts town hall meetings on Nov. 2, 7 p.m., and Nov. 4, 1 p.m., at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church to discuss possible changes in the annual Pride celebration. Details: www.pridehouston.org.

On Nov. 3, **Gay Lesbian & Straight Education Network** brings its Teacher/Educator Training Workshops, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., to Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, offered through a partnership between the network and the national MCC denomination. \$50. Register: www.mcccchurch.org/glsen-mcctraining.

Don't forget to vote on **Election Day**, November 7. Before casting your ballot, review the Houston GLBT Political Caucus PAC endorsements: www.outsmartmagazine.com, www.hglbtpc.org.

Houston Gay and Lesbian Parents hosts its annual potluck lunch on Nov. 11, noon-5 p.m., at Burroughs Park in Tomball. Details: hglp@hglp.org.

Futures Conference Working Group, which follows up quarterly on the 2005 Conference on Houston's LGBT Future, meets on Nov. 11, 1-4 p.m., at the Houston GLBT Community Center. Details: 713/524-3818, www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org.

Photographer David Lewis and designer Robert Tomlin of Vilven Design Group debut their **Caliente 2007** calendar at a Nov. 18, 7 p.m., reception at Brun Street Gallery. Proceeds from calendar sales (\$16 each) benefit Camp Hope. Details: 713/240-5508, davidlewisimages@aol.com.

On Nov. 18, **Art League Houston** honors Clint Willour, Galveston Arts Center curator, as Texas patron of the year at the Off the Wall Ball, co-chaired by Blakely Bering of Bering & James gallery, at the Hotel ZaZa. \$150. Tickets: 713/523-9530, www.artleaguehouston.org.



Activist Lilly Roddy spoke at the Transgender Day of Remembrance event last year at Holocaust Museum Houston.

Houston Transgender Unity Committee presents the local observance of Transgender Day of Remembrance, the international commemoration of individuals killed due to anti-trans hatred and prejudice, on Nov. 20, 6:30 p.m., at Holocaust Museum Houston. On Nov. 19, trans activist and self-defense instructor Lilly Roddy teaches a class on street safety. Details: www.htuc.org.

Legacy Community Health Services offers flu shots on a walk-in basis, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Mon.-Thurs., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Fri. \$20. Details: 713/830-3000, www.legacycommunityhealth.org.

More: www.outsmartmagazine.com

WORLD AIDS DAY PREVIEW: 25 YEARS ON



Head on: The Patrick Palmer painting *After Katrina* is one of the works on auction at Art for Life, the Mukuru Art for AIDS benefit on December 1.

On December 1, way back in 1988, the first World AIDS Day was observed. Seven years had already passed since the first AIDS cases were documented, three years since Rock Hudson had been gone, and just one year since the first form of the controversial anti-retroviral treatment AZT had been introduced in the United States.

It wasn't until 1991, after half of the 500,000 people infected with HIV in the West had died, that artists established the red ribbon as a symbol of hope and support against the epidemic that had been dubbed by some as God's judgment on homosexuality.

Twenty-five years later, according to the American Foundation for AIDS Research:

- an estimated 40 million people are living with HIV throughout the world
- more than 25 million people have died from AIDS worldwide, including more than 500,000 Americans
- 40,000 new HIV infections occur each year—more than half in people under 25 years old
- and, contrary to that errant notion about God's judgment, 75 percent of new infections in women are heterosexually transmitted.

Lots of numbers, lots of cold statistics. Pie charts and line graphs aside, 25 years later, AIDS continues to strip not only our gay and lesbian community, but communities of every race, region, and religion of their most value resource: humanity. →



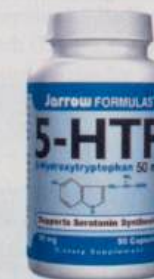
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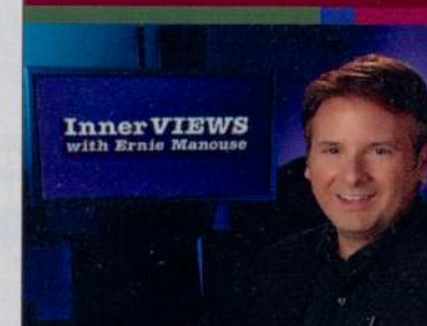
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News Briefs continued from page 18

With the international theme "Stop AIDS, Keep the Promise," World AIDS Day 2006 will be recognized in Houston with a sizable list of observances offering an opportunity for people to rail against that loss of humanity, uniting under the ubiquitous red ribbon in the continuing fight against HIV and AIDS.

On November 29, **St. Hope Foundation** presents a World AIDS Day Encouragement Hour Luncheon at noon at the St. Hope Clinic (RSVP: 713/839-7111). The foundation recently received a five-year HIV prevention and testing grant from Centers for Disease Control, targeting young men of color who have sex with men. W. Jeffrey Campbell directs the new program. Details: www.offeringhope.org.

Rather than host a single World AIDS Day event, the **Houston GLBT Community Center** presents the Tree of Remembrance for an entire month. The center encourages individuals to bring ornaments commemorating friends and loved ones to adorn the tree in the center lobby beginning November 30 and throughout December. Details: 713/524-3818, www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org.



Fabric of life: Panels from The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, including these Houston panels, will be displayed at Covenant Church on December 1 and 3.

One of the most encompassing events on World AIDS Day is the **Interfaith Remembrance Service**, sponsored by 18 faith communities and organizations. Set for December 1, 6 p.m., at Covenant Church, the service includes clergy from several traditions, community leaders, representatives of HIV/AIDS service groups, and elected officials.

As part of the observance, Covenant will also display panels from the **AIDS**

Memorial Quilt. Several of these panels were made by AIDS care teams created by local churches and synagogues in the early days of the AIDS crisis. The panels may be viewed December 1, 3-8 p.m., and December 3, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Details: 713/668-8830, www.covenanthouston.org.

Taking up far less acreage than the physical NAMES Project quilt, but nonetheless packing an emotional wallop, the **Virtual AIDS Quilt**, presented by the here! TV network, pays tribute to the many lives that have been lost to AIDS, allowing friends and family members to remember those lost.

Visitors to the AIDS quilt site (found at www.heretv.com, www.247gay.com, www.gaywired.com, and www.lesbianation.com) can scroll through photos and watch as the quilt grows with images and stories from the global online community. The site, set to launch December 1, provides users with the chance to dedicate a personalized quilt and share memories.

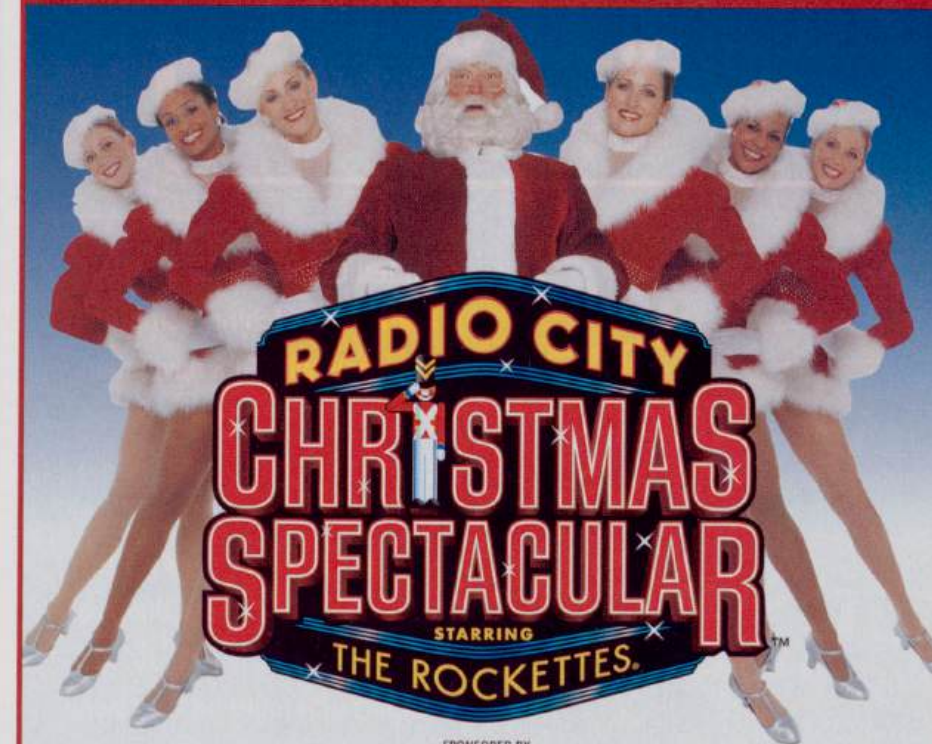
GALLO, the Gay and Lesbian Latin Organization, presents **World AIDS Day: A Bilingual Service**, led by Rev. Walter L. McFadden, Rev. Ralph Lasher, and Ricardo DeLeon, on December 1, 7 p.m. The memorial service at Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church (UCC), includes an anointing of the sick and music by the Noche de Oracion Choir. Details: Houstongallo@yahoo.com, 713/710-0045.

On December 1, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., **The Center for AIDS** hosts a Day of Remembrance and open house at which individuals can sign, write messages, and paste photos in the Book of Remembrance as a tribute to a loved one, friend, or family member. The book will then be placed alongside the remembrance candle at the Center for AIDS. Details: 713/527-8219, www.centerforaids.org.

Fundacion Latino Americana Contra El Sida offers its fourth annual education and HIV testing event at the Mexican Consulate on December 1, 10 a.m.-noon. The organization, which serves the Spanish-speaking community, also hosts a candlelight vigil during the event. Details: 713/772-2366.

Harris County Hospital District Thomas Street Health Center presents its traditional World AIDS Memorial Service and Tree of Remembrance. This annual program on December 1, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., gathers the community, patients, and hospital district staff to remember loved →

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Milestones



REGISTERED James Knapp (r), artistic director of Bayou City Performing Arts, and his spouse, **Jess Field**, registered as domestic partners in the Travis County county clerk's office on September 16.

DIED Christopher J. Gregory, 21, a student at University of Houston-Clear Lake and member of Unity, the campus GLBT organization, died on July 17. A Houston native, Gregory was a 2003 graduate of Clear Brook High School.



DIED Pepper Sue Tharp, 69, who was an active member of Tau Chi, the Houston chapter of Tri-Ess, the Society for the Second Self cross dressers support group, died on July 28. Tharp wrote about her early adventures as a cross dresser in 1960s Austin for the *Femme Forum*, the Tri-Ess newsletter.



DIED Christopher Claude Baudier, founder and president of the community fundraising organizations Pegasus Productions and Third Coast Family of Titleholders, died on August 28. Baudier, 43, was Daddy of Montrose 2000 and Texas Leatherman 2004.



ON THE WEB: Read more about these community individuals at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

SEND YOUR NEWS

Send information regarding commitment ceremonies/marriages, births, deaths, or other events regarding people in the community to editor@outsmartmagazine.com.

News Briefs continued from page 21

ones. Guests may bring ornaments to place on the tree in honor of people lost to AIDS. An open house and information fair follows. Details: 713/873-4000.

At its annual World AIDS Day luncheon, **AIDS Foundation Houston** honors Jackson Hicks, founder of the catering firm Jackson and Company, for his extensive contributions to AIDS services and HIV prevention education. Dr. Mark Kline receives the 2006 Shelby Hodge Vision Award at the event held at The Corinthian on December 1, 11:30 a.m. Details: 713/623-6796, www.AIDShelp.org.

The AIDS Foundation Houston arts series **Mukuru Arts for AIDS** presents Art for Life, a benefit exhibition and art auction, at Gremillion & Company Fine Art, on December 1, 6:30 p.m. Details: www.mukuru.org.

Montrose Counseling Center observes World AIDS Day with opportunities for remembrance and artistic expression. The center invites individuals to contribute to the Paper Chain of Remembrance, which will be displayed at the center with a chain created in 2005. Clients are also invited to help create a new red-ribbon art piece comprised of 25 individual ribbons signifying the 25th anniversary of HIV.

The center then offers its second annual Evening Candlelight Observance on December 1, 6 p.m. Details: 713/529-0037, www.montrosecounselingcenter.org.

Dominic Walsh Dance Theatre and Hope Stone Dance once again present The Illumination Project, an evening of contemporary dance at The Hobby Center, on December 1, 8 p.m. Proceeds benefit Baylor International Pediatric AIDS Initiative and Bering Omega Community Services.

In Galveston, **AIDS Coalition of Coastal Texas** hosts a 9 a.m.-1 p.m. open house and a luncheon on November 30. Dr. David P. Paar, director of the University of Texas Medical Branch AIDS Care and Clinical Research Program, is the invited speaker. Also planned is a candle-lighting ceremony in remembrance of those lost to AIDS, as well as dedication of engraved rocks for the Wall of Remembrance. Details: 409/763-2437. —Compiled by Nancy Ford

ON THE WEB

Find information about additional World AIDS Day events at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

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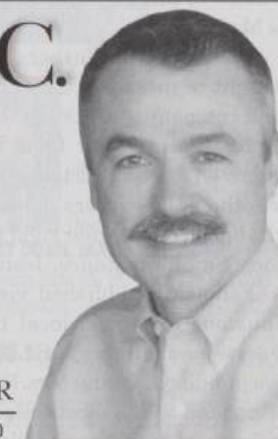
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OutSmart NOVEMBER 2006 **25**

FOLEY FALLOUT

Jackals on the right wasted no time in exploiting the Mark Foley scandal

The biggest misnomer in the Mark Foley fiasco is the statement that his transgressions were caused by the closet. We hear that his career ended in tragedy because living in secrecy warps the mind and leads to sleaze on the sly. This, of course, is often true, as in the case of former New Jersey governor James McGreevey. But Foley doesn't fit the script.

For one thing, it seems every gay man in West Palm Beach has at least one Mark Foley story. For someone supposedly on the down low, Foley attended gay parties and was brazen enough, on one occasion, to introduce his longtime partner to a news reporter.

In Congress, if Foley wasn't officially out to the Republican leadership, it was certainly a case of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. The congressman had been "outed" repeatedly in the gay press, and rumors swirled on the Internet. In the gossip mill known as Capitol Hill, believing that these whispers did not circulate to the top echelons of power just isn't credible.

The former congressman is not a victim of the closet, but of naked ambition and raw opportunism. Foley began his career as a Democrat, but figured his prospects were better as a Republican and switched parties. From the beginning, it was clear he stood for nothing but the attainment of his own personal power. This is why he had little trouble joining a party that was ascending, in part, by embracing an antigay, so-called family values platform. (Of course, by the way House Speaker Dennis Hastert has handled allegations of Foley's impropriety, it appears that the GOP party leadership is as insincere on "family values" as Foley.)

In the same cavalier way he snookered the right, Foley consistently trampled the gay community. He saw no contradiction in parading around with his long-term boyfriend in Florida, then returning to Washington to vote in favor of the Defense of Marriage Act, which prohibits states from recognizing same-sex marriages performed

in other states. Foley was willing to give second-class status to relationships, including his own, to satisfy his lust for power.

In a final act of monumental hypocrisy, Foley was the co-chairman of the House Caucus on Missing and Exploited Children. He strutted around, touting commendable legislation to protect children, while proclaiming, "We track library books better than we do sex offenders.... If I was one of these sickos, I'd be nervous with *America's Most Wanted* on my trail."

Only nine weeks later, we find that Foley has written more pages than Stephen King. The original online banter was creepy, but not sexually explicit. The instant messages released later in the scandal reveal a deeply disturbed man who was clearly abusing his authority to try to gain sexual favors from pages.

In an insincere effort to garner sympathy, Foley claims that his moral failures took place because he is an alcoholic. But even if

continued on page 28

NOT ANYTHING GOES

Gay marriage allies can refute the slippery-slope polygamy link

Not long ago, hundreds of progressive academics and activists issued a manifesto calling for health care and jobs for all, universal peace, an end to hunger, and the equal recognition of all relations among sentient creatures. Robert George, a prominent natural-law professor at Princeton who opposes gay marriage, took this rather stale document as fresh proof that gay marriage will lead to polygamy.

George understands the radical argument for gay marriage. It claims, as he notes, that "love makes a family" and that making any legal distinctions among people who love each other is unjustified. George concludes that this love-makes-a-family ideology "is central to any principled argument" for same-sex marriage.

That's wrong. While George understands the most open-ended argument for gay marriage, it does not appear that he has taken the time to understand more careful, restrained, and conservative arguments for gay

marriage, like those advanced by Jonathan Rauch, Andrew Sullivan, and others (myself included). I won't repeat the substance of these arguments here, but suffice it to say they do not easily lend themselves to support for polygamy; they certainly involve more than simply saying "love makes a family."

George complains that we have not made what he calls "principled" arguments regarding the reason that recognition of same-sex marriages does not entail the recognition of polygamous ones. Instead, we have made what he calls "pragmatic" and "prudential" arguments, emphasizing differences between same-sex marriage and polygamy in terms of their respective histories, expected effects on society and marriage, and predicted benefits to the people involved.

When you read modern natural-law writings about marriage, you find that by "principle" something like this is meant: "Marriage must be between a man and a woman because only they can procreate; as for sterile male-

female couples, they are included because they can have sex of a reproductive kind." Sex "of a reproductive kind" is sex that involves a penis and a vagina, even if it can produce no more babies than could a male and a male or a female and a female. The conclusion of the argument is embedded in the "principle" and then offered as if it is an argument.

In his scholarship, George has asserted that male-female marriage, and only male-female marriage, has an "intrinsic value" that "cannot, strictly speaking, be demonstrated." Its value "must be grasped in noninferential acts of understanding." This "noninferential understanding" that "cannot be demonstrated" is unavailable to some people, argue modern natural-law theorists. Another natural-law writer, Professor Gerard V. Bradley, adds, "In the end, one either understands that spousal genital intercourse has a special significance as instantiating a basic, non-instrumental value, or something blocks that understanding and one does →

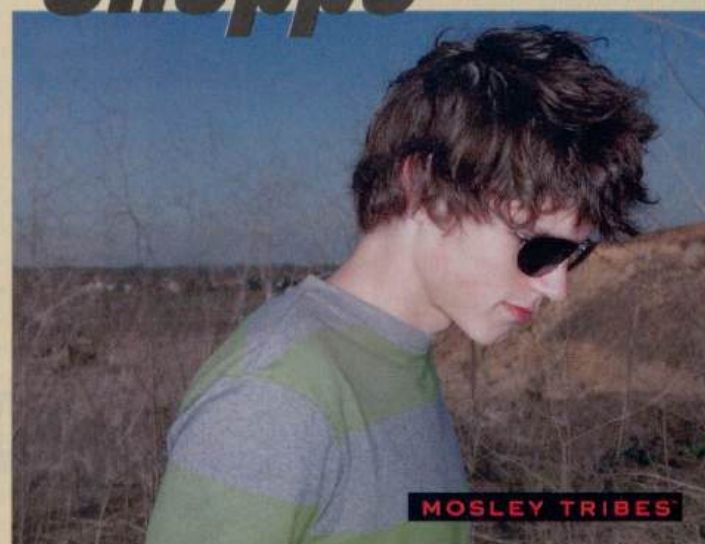
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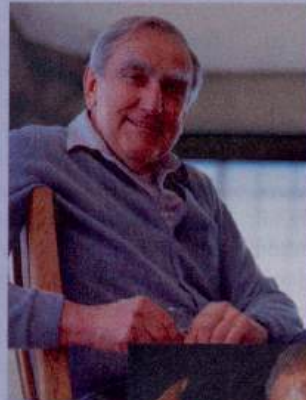
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LeftOut continued from page 26

he were a heavy drinker, he still had to be well aware that pages are high school juniors, making his weak alibi irrelevant.

Make no mistake. Foley's disgraceful fall has damaged the gay community, because it perpetuated the devastating stereotype that homosexuals are child molesters. To compound the problem, Foley's attorney claimed Foley was molested as a boy, while finally acknowledging that the disgraced former lawmaker is a gay man. By conflating the two issues, Foley provided fodder for every right-wing organization in the nation that claims that gays are the sinful byproduct of abuse or neglect.

The jackals on the right wasted no time in exploiting the situation.

"While pro-homosexual activists like to claim that pedophilia is a completely distinct orientation from homosexuality, evidence shows a disproportionate overlap between the two," Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council pronounced to the media.

Of course, Perkins' comments are disgustingly mean-spirited and untrue. A 2000 study by Michael R. Stevenson, Ph.D., past president of the Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Issues (affiliated with the American Psychological Association), concluded, "A gay man is no more likely than a straight man to perpetrate sexual activity on children." A 1994 study by Dr. Carole Jenny of the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center found that less than one percent of the children in her study (published in the journal *Pediatrics*) were abused by a gay man or lesbian. In 1978, Drs. Nicholas Groth and Jean Birnbaum found that none of the 175 molesters in their study (published in the journal *Archives of Sexual Behavior*) had an exclusively homosexual adult orientation.

Unfortunately, perception is reality. When Foley-gate is out of the headlines, the damage he wrought will make it difficult for the GLBT community to turn the page.

Wayne Besen, author of the book *Anything But Straight: Unmasking the Scandals and Lies Behind the Ex-Gay Myth* (Harrington Park), writes a weekly column published at www.waynebesen.com. He is executive director of Truth Wins Out, an organization that monitors the activity of ex-gay ministries. Daryl Moore returns in December.

OutRight continued from previous page
not perceive correctly."

This amounts to saying: "Same-sex 'marriage' is not marriage because only male-female marriage can be marriage. Trust me." The modern natural-law argument against same-sex marriage at bottom thus appears to rest on revelation of some precognition reality to the initiate and only to the initiate. This seems to me very close to saying that

marriage just is the union of one man and one woman and cannot, no matter the arguments, be defined any other way.

But advocates of a logical slide to polygamy need to show the necessary "principle" uniting the causes of same-sex marriage and other unions, such as polygamous ones. Yes, you can imagine such a principle ("love makes a family") and even find support for it in slogans and in the writings of some academics and activists who say they favor gay marriage but also favor many other reforms. The manifesto that has George so excited actually says very little about polygamy, but prominently calls for an end to "militarism," and repeatedly for a wide range of government social-welfare measures. Must gay-marriage advocates who didn't sign the manifesto produce position papers and principles against state-controlled universal health care, too? Same-sex marriage is no more necessarily tied to polygamy than it is to all of these other proposals.

And when it comes to crafting public policy, why don't pragmatic and prudential considerations count as serious arguments? If same-sex marriage will benefit the individuals involved, any children they're raising, and their communities, all without plausibly harming marriage, does this not matter as against a claim that a conclusory principle stands in the way?

If polygamous/polyamorous marriage raises a host of different questions about harm, practical administration, and about historical experience, none of which depend necessarily on how we've resolved the debate about gay marriage, why must gay-marriage advocates definitively address it?

The way we frame the debate about gay marriage matters not just for the ultimate outcome, but for the shape and attributes of that outcome. Those of us who have been making a conservative case for gay marriage do so, fundamentally, because we believe in marriage. We do not want to see it harmed and we do not think that this reform means every proposed reform of marriage, including potentially harmful ones, must be accepted.

Ironically, George and the manifesto-signers agree that gay marriage means anything goes. I don't expect that George and other conservative opponents of gay marriage will hold to that position when gay marriage is actually recognized (indeed, they will strongly resist the supposed slippery slope to polygamy then), but the damage they are doing now by making a tactical alliance with marriage radicals and arguing that the line cannot be held will not have been helpful.

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.

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by Annise D. Parker

PROPOSITIONED

Overlooked by some voters, crucial bond issues will impact the city's financial health

While city government may be enjoying its best financial health in years, crucial bond issues and revenue cap propositions voted upon on November 7 could either maintain the patient's robust health or make the patient sick, depending on your viewpoint.

At the end of the general election ballot are eight items proposed by the City Council. Anyone who casts a straight-party vote must vote on Propositions A-H individually.

Propositions A-F

The city of Houston is proposing a \$625 million bond referendum that would authorize financing for street, storm drainage, and police and fire projects, as well as libraries, parks, and other capital improvements. Like most cities, Houston holds a bond election (essentially a pre-authorization to borrow money as needed) every five or six

years to pay for expensive capital improvements, then repays the debt over 20 or more years. The bond issues would not require a tax increase.

Proposition G

Proposition G would amend the city charter to change the 2004 voter-approved Proposition 2, or Rev Cap, by excluding from the revenue cap all growth at airports and in other "enterprise" funds (water and sewer, and the convention and entertainment department), which are not funded by property taxes.

The mayor proposed Proposition G to differentiate between revenue sources that feed the general fund (mostly property and sales tax) and sources that support fee-based programs, such as the airport. A majority of City Council voted to place Proposition G on the ballot.

As you may recall, voters approved

Proposition 1, or Tax Cap, by about 60 percent. This proposition requires that city property-tax revenues not increase more than the combined growth of population and inflation, or 4.5 percent. About 55 percent of voters approved the more stringent Prop 2, which requires that city revenue from *all* sources cannot exceed the combined rates of growth in population and inflation.

Council feels that voters hungry for property-tax relief may have inadvertently penalized city services that are not tax-supported. The city contends that Prop 1 takes precedence because it received more votes. Both sides are waiting for the courts to decide.

I announced recently that the city is in compliance with both propositions but that complying with Prop 1 requires a slight tax decrease.

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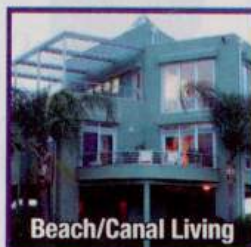
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InsideOut

continued from page 30

you to vote against Proposition G if your electric or gasoline bills are too high. Nonsense! There's absolutely no correlation. Prominent Prop G opponents include Bruce Hotze (brother of conservative activist Steve Hotze). Supporters include Continental Airlines.

Proposition H

This proposition is the kind of ballot initiative envisioned by both Prop 1 and Prop 2 supporters. It would allow the city to collect and spend \$90 million over the 2004 revenue and tax caps. The money would pay for police, fire, and emergency medical services (public safety) this fiscal year. While opponents contend this would just give City Council a blank check, proponents believe the proposition would guarantee that the city's most critical services are adequately funded in the face of rising concerns about crime and not negatively impacted by a revenue cap.

Leadership Conference in Houston

Mayor Bill White will welcome openly GLBT elected officials from all over the world in mid-November when Houston hosts the 22nd annual International Gay & Lesbian Leadership Conference.

Council member Sue Lovell and I will co-chair this unique annual event, which offers senior-level, openly GLBT leaders from the public and non-governmental sectors a rare opportunity to network. I have attended many of these conferences and found them to be extremely informative and exhilarating. I'm particularly proud that the conference this year will be in Houston, November 16-19 at the JW Marriott Hotel Houston (more details, page 48). While the conference targets GLBT elected officials, it is open to the public. Leaders of many of our national and international organizations will be presenting. Local sponsors include Continental Airlines and the law firms of Fulbright & Jaworski and Escamilla & Ponick.

The International Gay & Lesbian Leadership Conference is presented each November by the Gay & Lesbian Leadership Institute in collaboration with the International Network of Lesbian and Gay Officials.

Annise Parker is the second-term city controller and the highest-ranking openly GLBT elected municipal official in any of the 10 largest U.S. cities. Her website is www.houstoncontroller.org. Parker's television program, Money Matters, airs Monday on the Municipal Channel (TimeWarner Cable 16) at 2 and 8 a.m. and 2 and 8 p.m.

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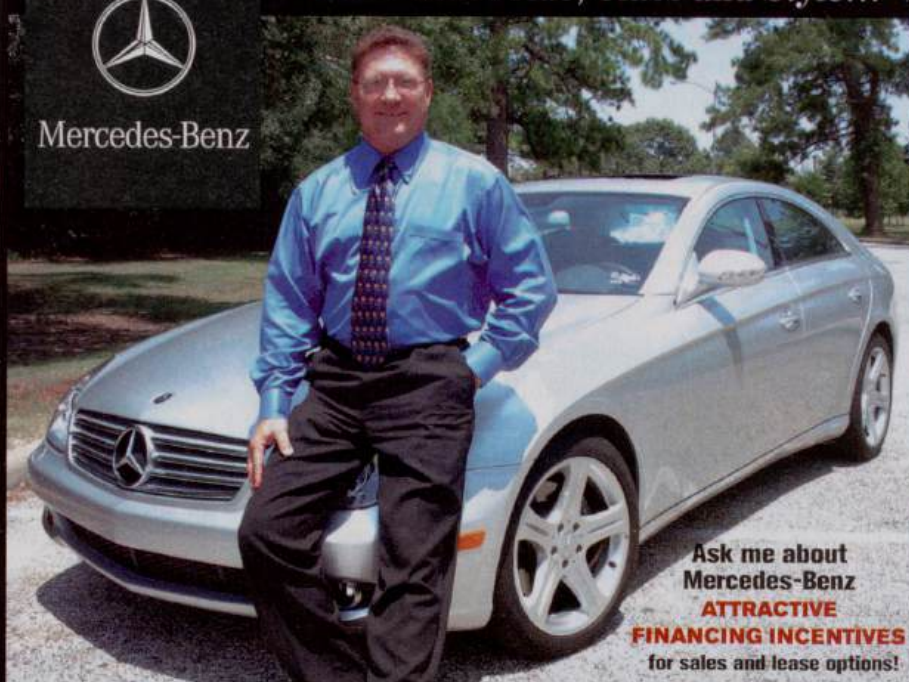
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THE STATE OF OUR UNIONS

A year ago, Texans voted overwhelmingly for the between same-gender partners and prohibits legal to marriage." Still, the struggle for full rights for anniversary, we turned to DAVID BUCKEL, marriage

state constitutional amendment that bans marriage status for any relationship "identical or similar all couples continues across the nation. On this project director at Lambda Legal, for an update

L

ambda Legal's work to protect the relationships of same-sex couples and their families takes many forms across the country. Protecting families depends largely on state law, so most of Lambda Legal's related work is done state by state. →



They're the tops: Our government may oppose full marriage rights for all its citizens, but a major segment of corporate America understands that there is money to be made from same-gender weddings. One of these smart businesses is Renellie, which markets female-female and male-male cake toppers (pictured on these pages and page 36) through its website, www.renellie.com. The California firm doesn't discriminate, however. The 7-inch, hand-painted porcelain figures are also available in opposite-gender couples and in a range of ethnic identities.

PHOTOGRAPHED FOR OUTSMART BY MARK HIEBERT



*T*here's no denying it—2006 is a painful reminder or what it feels like to be in the middle of a civil-rights movement, with setbacks sometimes overshadowing successes."

MARK HEBERT

LEGAL RECOGNITION OF SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

In 2003, **Massachusetts** became the first state to honor same-sex couples' freedom to marry. Married same-sex couples there are entitled to all of the rights and responsibilities of marriage under state law, although the federal

government statutorily prohibits respect for those marriages.

Currently, six other states and the **District of Columbia** offer same-sex couples some form of legal recognition for their relationships, with rights and responsibilities that range from comprehensive to rather limited. **Connecticut**

and **Vermont** offer "civil unions," which on the basis of sexual orientation create an alternate legal structure in the state for families while offering the rights and responsibilities of marriage under state law, providing the maximum protection for families short of marriage equality. **California** has a domestic-partner law that Lambda Legal helped draft and is the virtual equivalent of a civil union law. That highlights how a "domestic partnership" means different things depending on where you are standing in the country, because the domestic-partner protections available in the other gay family-friendly states provide far less, although nonetheless make families' rights stronger than they otherwise would be. Other states that provide protections include **Hawaii**, **Maine**, and **New Jersey**, and the **District of Columbia** does as well.

In addition, government workers receive some measure of domestic-partner benefits in a handful of states, including **Illinois**, **Iowa**, **Montana**, **New Mexico**, **New York**, **Oregon**, **Rhode Island**, and **Washington**.

Despite all of these gains, there is no avoiding the stark reality that 43 states refuse statewide legal recognition for committed same-sex relationships and the federal government bars such recognition by statute. The struggle to dismantle systemic discrimination against same-sex couples and our families remains some of Lambda Legal's most challenging work.

ANTIGAY AMENDMENTS AND LEGAL SETBACKS

There's no denying it—2006 is a painful reminder of what it feels like to be in the middle of a civil-rights movement, with setbacks sometimes overshadowing successes for a stretch of time. In July, the state high courts of **New York** and **Washington** ruled that their state constitutional guarantees of liberty and equality did not require an end to discrimination in marriage. On the same date that **New York** handed down its ruling against us, **Georgia's** high court ruled that the 2004 antigay amendment in that state is lawful. Just over a week later, the Federal Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit overturned our victory before a **Nebraska** trial judge who had →

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The State of Our Unions

continued from page 36

held that Nebraska's antigay amendment went too far in not even allowing same-sex couples to lobby their own elected officials regarding the importance of domestic partner benefits.

From one coast to the other, including here in **Texas**, there are already 20 states that have a state constitutional amendment that either limits marriage to the union of one man and one woman

or permits the legislature to impose such a limit, and some were written to bar domestic-partner benefits as well. As I write this article for *OutSmart*, there are eight more states poised to vote in November on whether to write similar discrimination into their constitutions. As Gandhi once said, "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win." This is what any civil-rights struggle in human history has endured.

CURRENT MARRIAGE LAWSUITS

Lambda Legal continues to challenge discriminatory marriage laws in states where we and key local groups believe the factors should line up in our favor, recognizing that in any civil-rights work the ground is constantly moving beneath us. We are currently awaiting a decision from the **New Jersey** Supreme Court that will decide if our right to marry is respected there. In **California**, our lawsuit with lead-counsel National

Center for Lesbian Rights and co-counsel ACLU, *Woo v. California*, is on its way to the California Supreme Court. In **Iowa** we're at the trial court level in our lawsuit seeking to end the denial of marriage to same-sex couples. Our sister organization, Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, is handling a lawsuit seeking marriage equality in **Connecticut**, and the American Civil Liberties Union is preparing its argument before the **Maryland** high court in its lawsuit seeking marriage for same-sex couples in that state.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

When the California Supreme Court became the first state high court to strike down laws against interracial marriage in 1948, lawsuits challenging miscegenation laws in 14 other states had been unsuccessful. In fact, 30 states had laws that banned marriage between interracial partners. Despite early setbacks and a hostile political climate, the people whose rights were denied did not give up. They pressed on to change public opinion, first in California, and then in other states, before the U.S. Supreme Court struck down all remaining laws barring interracial marriage 19 years later.

OPPORTUNITIES DESPITE DISCRIMINATORY LAWS

As Ken Upton, Lambda Legal's senior staff attorney in our south central regional office, pointed out in meetings last November with newspaper editors across Texas, antigay activists often use antigay marriage-restriction amendments as Trojan horses to try to gut any piecemeal advances, such as health benefits for our partners from municipalities or employers. Lambda Legal stands ready in Texas to take on those who seek to make it more difficult for us to be more responsible for each other and any children we may have.

Our marriage equality work has always been but one part of a wide spectrum of our organization's efforts to secure protections for those in same-sex relationships and children they may have, as well as those in other nontraditional families. For example, Lambda Legal has defended domestic-partner registration and benefits ordinances →



Chapel of love: United couples and family members posed for their portrait following the February 18, 2006, wedding celebration at Community Gospel Church, which was the local culmination of Freedom To Marry Week. In Houston, the Foundation for Family and Marriage Equality organizes events during the annual advocacy week, set for February 11-17 in 2007, a project of the New York-based Freedom To Marry partnership. Details: www.familyequality.org, www.freedomtomarry.org.

TEXAS PERSPECTIVE

DENNIS COLEMAN, regional director of the Lambda Legal south central office in Dallas, offered some additional relevant information:

In other states, we have seen those who are against equality for gay people use amendments like Amendment 2 to launch all kinds of attacks against the GLBT community. Since the amendment was passed by voters last November, we have been watching to make sure that it is not used as a weapon against same-sex couples. Our

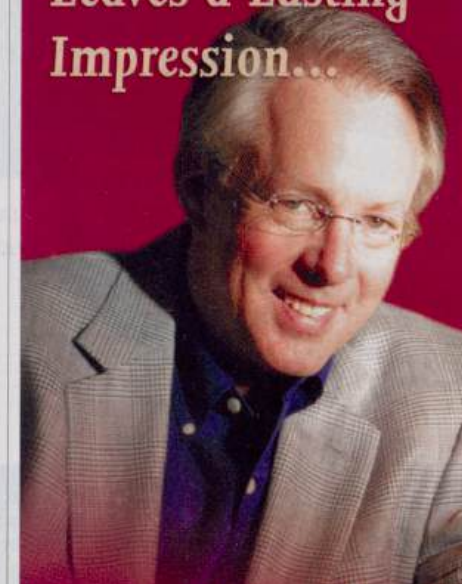
office has compiled some information that we thought you should know:

- On November 8, 2005, Texas passed anti-gay Amendment 2, which wrote discrimination into the Texas constitution by barring same-sex couples from marriage.
- Texas is home to well over half a million GLB adults and over 49,000 same-sex couples. (Statistics provided by The Williams Institute on Sexual Orientation Law and Public, a think tank based at the University of California Los Angeles.)
- As a percentage of the overall population,

metropolitan Austin ranks as the sixth largest area in the nation where lesbian, gay, and bisexual people live.

- The Dallas-Fort Worth area is home to an estimated 183,718 gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, including 15,554 same-sex couples.
- There are over 152,000 GLB adults in the greater Houston area, including some 12,762 same-sex couples.
- Despite the size and geographic reach of our community, only Travis County offers a registry for domestic partners in Texas.

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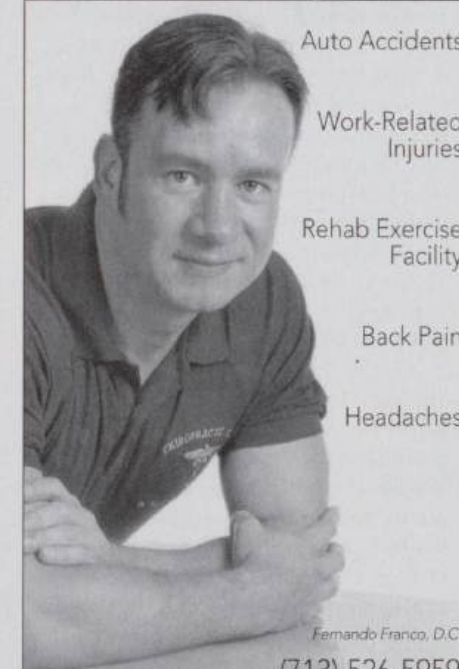
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Right to wed: The author Jerry Simoneaux (center, in suit and tie) posed with other activists at a marriage-equality demonstration on February 16, 2006, at the Harris County clerk's office in downtown Houston. The protest and additional events took place during the yearly Freedom To Marry Week, organized in Houston by the Foundation for Family and Marriage Equality. In 2007, Freedom To Marry Week—the 10th annual nationwide observance—is February 11-17.

"THE STRATEGY IS SIMPLE: COME OUT, GET INVOLVED"

We also turned to attorney JERRY SIMONEAUX for his perspective as an activist who has been on the front lines of the marriage struggle. Simoneaux is one of the founders of the Foundation for Family and Marriage Equality, which organizes the local observances, including a wedding celebration for same-gender couples, during Freedom To Marry Week each February. He is a partner in the GLBT law firm Nechman, Simoneaux and Frye.

The battle for marriage equality has been largely fought on two broad fronts: the courthouses and the legislatures. Throughout the struggle, we have focused on arenas that provide the greatest opportunities for victory. In some areas, the legal atmosphere provides better prospects for success against villainous laws by a swift and direct challenge in the courtrooms. In other places, the strategy has been to overcome bad laws by replacing them with good ones through the legislative process.

These two strategies are not mutually exclusive. Changes in attitudes and laws help build the arsenal lawyers need in the

courthouses, where, ultimately, a victory would mean an end to discrimination in marriage for all Americans. Our duty is to determine where our strengths are and implement them as best we can. In Texas we have a superior ability to effect change in policy and laws through grassroots efforts.

Changing attitudes toward our community is the first step in changing laws, which begins at the neighborhood level. Each one of us has the opportunity to help gain a foothold in Texas simply by talking to our neighbors, friends, and co-workers about our families. People who know us personally are less likely to vote against us.

Once our neighbors learn more about us and the inequalities that cripple our families, we can succeed in campaigns for rights at the city and county level. Dallas, Fort Worth, El Paso, and Travis County have all passed ordinances to protect their GLBT citizens against discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations. Organizers in Houston have begun talks with City Council members regarding implementation of similar ordinances.

As more and more people across Texas realize the importance of prohibiting discrimination against GLBT people, the objective of

changing state laws to protect every Texan becomes more attainable. City and county ordinances will lead to statewide protections in employment, housing, and public accommodations. In other states, these small steps have also brought about state laws giving all or most rights of marriage to same-sex couples. Hawaii offers reciprocal benefits. California provides domestic partnerships. Connecticut recently passed legislation giving all rights of marriage to same-sex couples via civil unions. Their victories were won in state legislatures, not in courtrooms.

The battle for marriage equality is different from any other challenge our community has faced before. We are in a culture war that has conscripted us all. Each of us has the ability and the duty to create change for the better. The more we effect change locally and on the state level, the more likely we will succeed in court battles, which could ultimately lead to a major victory in the Supreme Court.

Trudging through the legislative marshlands of Texas sounds daunting, but the strategy is simple. Come out and get involved.

The State of Our Unions

continued from page 39

against numerous antigay lawsuits seeking to dismantle them, including in Atlanta, **Georgia**; Broward County, **Florida**; Chicago, **Illinois**; Minneapolis, **Minnesota**; Montgomery County, **Maryland**; New Orleans, **Louisiana**; New York City, **New York**; Pima County, **Arizona**; San Francisco and Santa Barbara, **California**; and Vancouver, **Washington**.

MAKING THE CASE FOR EQUALITY

Throughout our existence, Lambda Legal has also participated in scores of cases as counsel or as a friend of the court seeking vindication of the rights of those not in legally formalized relationships (including unmarried different-sex couples) to acquire and retain domestic-partner health insurance coverage and other benefits provided by employers to their workers in committed relationships; visit their partners in the hospital; change their last names to the same chosen name; not be discriminated against in housing or public accommodations; maintain protection under domestic violence laws; remain in rent-controlled or rent-stabilized housing after the death of a partner who was on the lease; receive death benefits and victim compensation through private and public assistance programs; choose the inscription for a deceased partner's tombstone; among many others.

Of all our work, the *Lawrence v. Texas* case that originated here in Houston stands out as one of the most important cases in our 33-year history, with impact in every single state in the nation. In Texas they are not ignoring us anymore, and they are laughing less and fighting a lot more, so we're going to continue to stand up and fight back until we get to the win: equality.

ON THE WEB:

Read commentary written by local and national activists immediately after the passage last year of the marriage amendment ("What Now?" December 2005 *OutSmart*) at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

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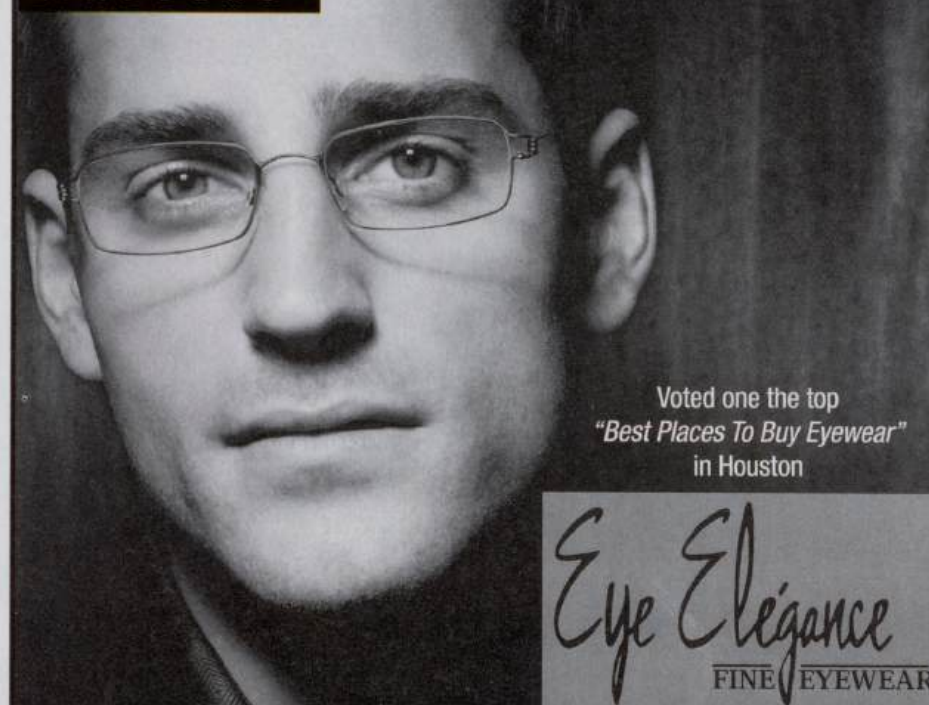
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Friend in deed: "I've always been out there, [and] I support, 100 percent, GLBT rights," says Ellen Cohen, the District 134 Democratic candidate, photographed in her Bellaire campaign headquarters.

Going Cohen

This month, Montrose and much of the GLBT community look to state representative candidate Ellen Cohen to defeat Martha Wong, Republican and antigay marriage-amendment supporter

By Josef Molnar
Photograph by Nathan Haase

At a Houston GLBT Political Caucus meeting early this year, the buzz in the room was palpable as the organization heard from Ellen Cohen, the Democratic candidate for the Texas legislature. Here at last, activists in the room at the Houston GLBT Community Center speculated, was a candidate with a realistic prospect of defeating Martha Wong, the two-term Republican incumbent who, even though she represented a chunk of Montrose, infuriated much of the gay community by supporting the antigay marriage amendment to the state constitution in 2005.

Even before her formal endorsement after the summer vetting procedure, Cohen was appearing before the caucus to seek its support—and, by extension, the approbation of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community and thus its votes. To enthusiastic applause, Cohen told the caucus audience that she would have voted against the Proposition 2, the marriage

amendment, had she been serving as the representative from District 134, which encompasses Meyerland, River Oaks, West University Place, the Texas Medical Center, and part of Montrose. It's a stance that Cohen, who has clearly captured the imagination of a significant number of GLBT voters, repeats in stump speeches.

However, if you ask Cohen about issues about equal rights for gay people, you might be disappointed when she doesn't thump her chest and loudly proclaim her support for gay issues, including marriage. That stance, she pointed out in a recent interview in her campaign headquarters in Bellaire, actually reflects the lives of many gay people, who find themselves thinking less about the issue of same-sex marriage than the everyday lives they and their families lead. That is not to say that the first-time candidate is not a stalwart defender of equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. On the contrary, Cohen readily promotes to her

support of gay civil rights (including on her campaign website, www.ellencohen.org) and said she is willing to carry the banner at any time it's needed.

"If someone doesn't want to vote for me because I support GLBT rights, that's certainly their right," she said. "Because the other piece is, that most GLBT people I've met are not solely, solely focused on issues of gay marriage."

As an example, Cohen mentioned a same-gender couple who approached her during a recent political event about a topic that was close to them. "Their daughter is about four or five, and their whole issue was public schools," she said. "That's what they cared about right then, the issue around public schools—how supportive I am. I don't even think they asked me about gay-marriage issues. They know, so what's there to ask me?"

Her record speaks for itself: Several years ago, Cohen (an Ohio native who moved to Houston 28 years ago with →

IN COHEN'S CORNER

State representative candidate Ellen Cohen was endorsed early by the Houston GLBT Political Caucus, in recognition of the importance of the District 134 race for community representation. Last month, the Houston Chronicle also endorsed Cohen, the Democrat, over Republican incumbent Martha Wong.

In an apparently unprecedented move, the Human Rights Campaign, the national GLBT advocacy organization, has also thrown its weight behind a local candidate. In July, the D.C.-based group gave \$5,000 to the Cohen campaign.

Going Cohen continued from previous page

her husband Lyon and children Marcia and Eric) supported same-gender partner benefits at the city level while she was executive director of the American Jewish Committee, then as president and CEO of the Houston Area Women's Center (from which she is taking leave during the campaign). Last year, Cohen was vocal in her opposition to Proposition 2, which not only banned marriage between same-gender couples, but also anything that confers the same rights as marriage.

"It makes a statement that we all benefit when everybody is inside the tent," she said. "Yeah, I could say that I had lunch with [City Council member and lesbian] Sue Lovell today... I don't want to do that 'Some of my best friends are [gay].' It's not the answer. So I talk about gay rights when it's appropriate, and when people ask me questions, I talk about the rights of all people."

"I think it's disingenuous for me to sit here and say, 'Yeah, let me tell you about that.' I am who I am. I've always been out there, [and] I support, 100 percent, GLBT rights."

Cohen points out that District 134 was one of the few state legislative districts



Capital gang: GLBT community activists who attended the January 19 kick-off event for the Ellen Cohen campaign included (l-r) David Arpin, Matthew Burrus, with Ellen Cohen, Fiona Dawson, Alton LaDay, and Alex Martinez.

that voted against Proposition 2 in 2005, so Wong's support for the amendment actually contradicted the majority of her constituents. (As one politically savvy local gay blogger, Queer in Texas, has asserted, "My biggest problem with Martha is the fact that she voted in committee to move the gay-marriage ban forward. That was a key vote, which puts her on record as being against gay equality. The fact that she was 'present not voting' on the floor vote just shows that she's a coward as well as a bigot.")

Cohen said she would advocate gay equal rights in the legislature, always a hot-button issue in a body dominated by not just the Republicans, but right-wing Republicans. She admits legal progress for gay marriage is limited with the passage of Amendment 2, because constitutional amendments are harder to remove than a law on the books. Still, Cohen points to social progress as a significant means toward one day overturning the amendment. Part of her plan to promote equal rights for gay people is to try and bring religious and →

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George Stubbs, *King Charles Spaniel*, 1776, oil on wood, private collection, United Kingdom



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This exhibition is organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Generous funding is provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Stark Foundation, the Hamill Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, Mr. Frank Hevdejs, and Mr. and Mrs. Peter R. Conaway.

Additional support is provided by Wells Fargo, Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P., Jeff Fort and Marion Barthelme, Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Clarke, Mr. John R. Eckel, Jr., Linn, Thurber, Arnold & Skrabanek, LLP, Lisa and Will Mathis, and Carla Knobloch. The catalogue for this exhibition receives support from Palm Beach America's International Fine Art & Antique Fair. Education programs for this exhibition receive generous support from the Favrot Fund.

Alexandre Hogue, *The Crucified Land*, 1939, oil on canvas, Gilman Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma. © The Estate of Alexandre Hogue

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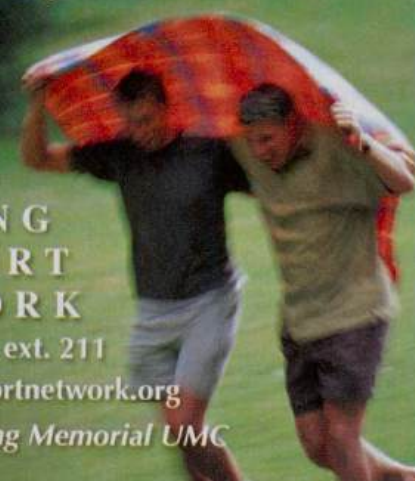
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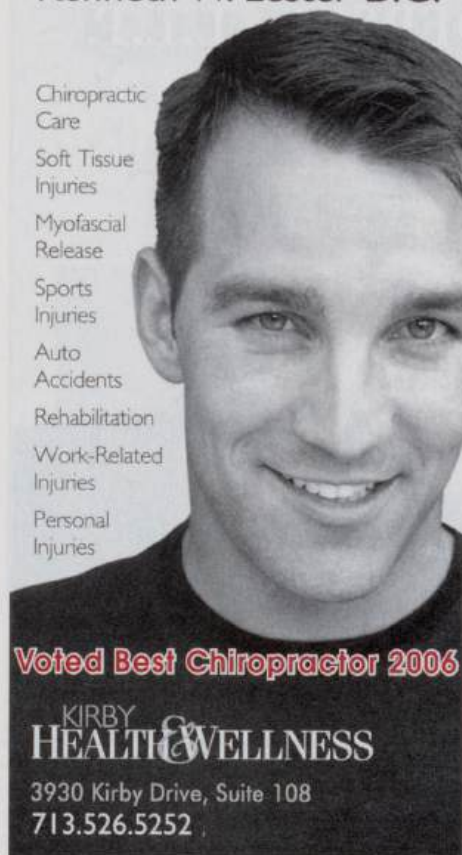
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Going Cohen continued from page 44

social leaders together with gay citizens in an effort to promote understanding. While Cohen admits achieving that goal may prove be difficult, she maintains that more moderate members of the faction that opposes civil unions are more likely to be swayed.

"If they sit in meetings, if they realize they're sitting next to a couple who's committed to each other, wants to be able to legally adopt their children, and say to themselves, 'That's not scary. I get that, I think they could move from civil unions to marriage,'" Cohen said. "Maybe what it is, is they'll never move to 'marriage in my church,' but they'll move to marriage at City Hall. And maybe their kids will move to 'marriage at my church.'"

While she supports the right of individuals to hold religious beliefs that may include opposition to homosexuality, Cohen (who is Jewish) makes a distinction between matters of religion and matters of state. "No one's saying that your religion can't feel as it does," she said. "Your religion can feel whatever way it wants. But that doesn't include being able to say that people of the same sex can't get married. If the church or the synagogue or the mosque doesn't want to perform it, it [should] still be done in a civil environment."

Cohen's passions prevailed in almost every subject that was broached in the interview, including her opponent Wong, who has received flak, even from her own constituency, for failing to live up to her campaign promises. Instead, many District 134 voters assert, Wong has catered to the right-wing leadership in the legislature. While the topic of her opponent did not incite hostility, it was the statement that Wong is "not quite" a moderate Republican that ruffled Cohen's feathers.

"Not quite being that way?" she said, throwing herself into the topic with all of the gusto of a heavyweight prizefighter. "No, she's far right!"

Point taken. Wong's record doesn't mesh with her campaign promises, which included support for education (she supported education cuts in 2003 and the Republican plan to use the new business tax for property tax cuts, instead

of funneling the money to anemic school districts), equal rights for all people (she supported Proposition 2), and public health care (she supported a \$200 million cut in the CHIPs, the Children's Health Insurance Program, which removed 180,000 Texas children from receiving state-funded health care and made qualifying more difficult for low-income families).

Cohen, the pro-choice, pro-environment, pro-stem cell research, and pro-education reform candidate, does not apologize for her beliefs, but says there's enough room for compromise for both sides to pass effective legislation that can support progress on gay civil rights, whether or not politicians on the other side actively support GLBT people.

She points to the influx of moderate Republican and Democratic candidates in this election cycle as a positive sign of progress.

"I think that if people get elected to the legislature who are not rooted in their own

political ideology and just won't get off the mark, then I think we can bring people together," she said.

These issues of particular concern to gay and lesbian voters includes civil issues such as visitation rights for hospitalized partners. Cohen's husband Lyon passed away three years ago, and as his legally recognized spouse, she was able to help him make important decisions and eventually inherited his estate, a right currently denied to same-gender couples. Cohen said there may be room to provide some of those benefits through the law.

"I'm not a lawyer, so I don't know," she added. "I can only say that there may be ways that legally you can try to put in same-sex partner benefits

to see if you can't provide for those same kinds of benefits."

While she includes equal rights for gay people as part of her political platform, she admitted the issue can be volatile. And since gay issues crop up so frequently in Texas politics today (and are likely to again when the legislature convenes in January), does she predict that she would spend a lot of time in Austin and in the limelight fighting for the rights of gay people?

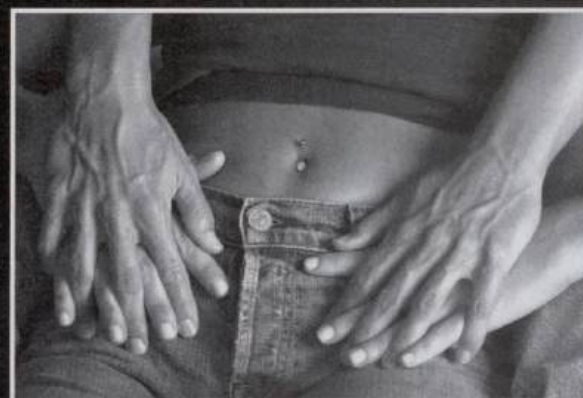
"The answer is, I don't know," she said. "I don't know where it's going to be, [but] I'm not afraid of controversy."

Josef Molnar is a frequent contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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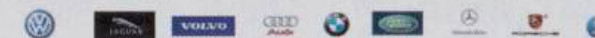


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Gay Ground Zero

For a weekend, national community leaders land in Houston

By Tim Brookover

Some of the leading lights in gay politics, including Houston's own Annise Parker and Sue Lovell, highlight a prestigious national event for GLBT politicians taking place here this month. Other political figures participating in the November 16-19 International Gay & Lesbian Leadership Conference, conducted by the D.C.-based Institute of National Gay & Lesbian Officials, include U.S. Representatives Barney Frank and Tammy Baldwin, Kate Kendall of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, Matt Foreman of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, and Volker Beck of the German Green Party. Democratic National Committee chairman Howard Dean will deliver the November 17 keynote address—which might be construed as part of his ongoing penance tour; one politically smart wag recently suggested, for appearing in May on Pat Robertson's gay-baiting and -hating 700 Club.

The institute is connected to the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, the powerhouse that supports openly gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender candidates across the nation, who have included City Controller Parker, City Council rep Lovell, and Dallas County sheriff Lupe Valdez,



Live, from Houston: Speakers appearing at the conference include (clockwise from top) U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin, National Gay & Lesbian Task Force executive director Matt Foreman, and National Democratic Committee chairman Howard Dean.

who is a lesbian. (Valdez was scheduled to participate in the conference, but had withdrawn at press time, according to Victory Fund spokesperson Denis Dison.)

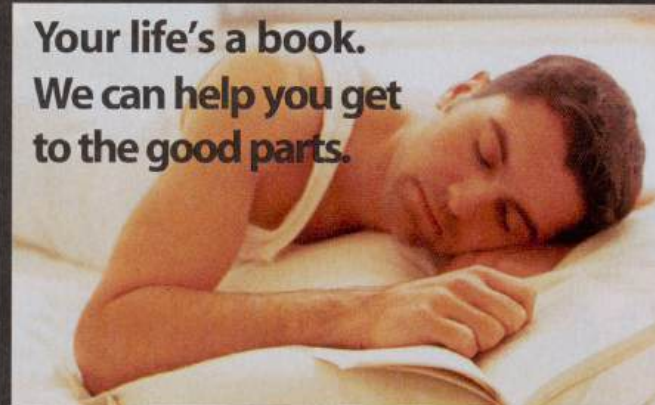
Following a Thursday-night reception at Bice, featuring remarks by Houston mayor Bill White, the conference continues with an intensive schedule of workshops and seminars on politics and GLBT rights (download the program at www.victoryfund.org).

Parker and Lovell will host an event on Saturday night for participants, joined by members of local GLBT corporate affinity groups, such as SEAShell and the Chase PRIDE Team.

The conference fee is \$375. The Victory Fund offers a one-day pass for \$75 (which includes lunch and admission to panel presentations during the day).

At the same time, the Gay & Lesbian Leadership Institute, a division of the Victory Fund, will conduct its annual Leadership Institute Candidate & Campaign Training program for aspiring openly-GLBT politicians. Victory Fund spokesman Dison calls the training "a boot camp for campaigns. It's a pretty intense three days from morning till night." This marks the first time the training event has been held in Houston. ■

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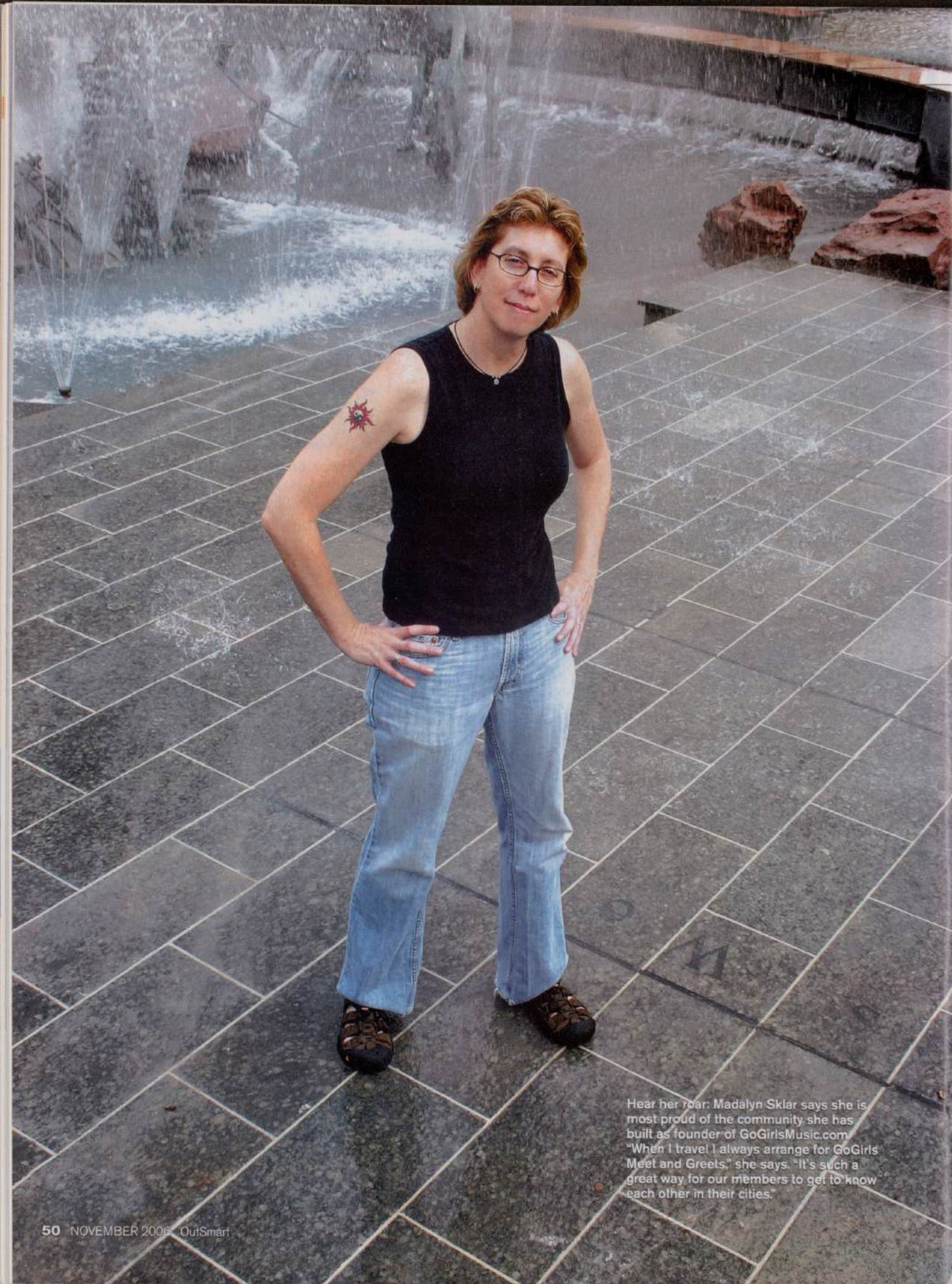
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Hear her roar: Madalyn Sklar says she is most proud of the community she has built as founder of GoGirlsMusic.com. "When I travel I always arrange for GoGirls Meet and Greets," she says. "It's such a great way for our members to get to know each other in their cities."

THIS GIRL ROCKS!

Ten years ago, musical entrepreneur Madalyn Sklar recognized the web as a source of infinite possibility for talented women. Now GoGirlsMusic.com has spread across the land

by Nancy Ford

Photographs by Giselle Monte

With its motto, "Cuz chicks rock!" GoGirlsMusic.com was founded by Madalyn Sklar in 1996, the same time her other business, Orbit Web Design, was getting off the ground. "But I spend the majority of my time at GoGirls," Sklar says.

Time well spent. In those 10 years, GoGirlsMusic.com, an online community where female musicians could network and get exposure, has produced more than 100 benefits, all primarily focused on the women's community.

Sklar, the 41-year-old partner to Georgia Moncrief and mother to Jordan, says she was first exposed to the Internet in 1995 and saw the potential to reach people through this new technology. What first started as a way for female musicians and songwriters to connect with others quickly became an avenue to help indie artists get heard via showcase events all across the country.

"In the last six years we have produced over 100 benefit shows called the GoGirlsMusicFest," Sklar says.

Then there's the annual Invasion of the GoGirls at SXSW, the South by Southwest music conference and showcase, held annually in July in Austin. Add the GoGirlsRock! showcase series presented in cities across the country, and Sklar estimates she has produced more than 200 shows since 2000.

Another of Sklar's music-oriented

businesses, IndieMusicCoach.com, has provided one-on-one coaching and consulting to musicians since 2004.

Last month, Sklar and GoGirlsMusic hosted the seventh annual GoGirls-MusicFest benefit shows around the United States, at which time she and Moncrief announced the launch of GoGirlsMusic Records.

"It's basically a digital download store where music fans can download music for free," Sklar explains. By logging on to www.gogirlsmusicrecords.com, members can sell their music online. As Sklar and Moncrief post on their website, "We feel strongly that indie artists deserve a break. They deserve to have people like us on their side helping

them get heard. We don't want to own their songs. We don't want to screw them out of money. We offer a music download store where 50 percent of all download sales go to the artist. It's simple. You make great music and we help you distribute it online.

"We also hooked up with a company where our bands can promote themselves using text messaging," Sklar says. "If you want to give it a try, text gogirls to 66937."

On November 4, Sklar and company bring the GoGirlsMusicFest to Houston at the Last Concert Café. The evening of music benefits CaringBridge, a Minnesota-based nonprofit organization that offers free, easy-to-create websites to connect family and friends during health crises. Performers include Tamara Booth, Everything Is Everything, Hidden Agenda, Osirus, Katie Stuckey, and Sheila Swift. Also in Houston, GoGirls has also launched a monthly open mic night, held on the final Wednesday of the month, at Bocados on West Alabama.

There's more: "Georgia and I started writing e-Booklets on effective Myspace marketing," says the cyberspace-savvy Sklar. For details, check www.gogirlsmusicstore.com.

As if all that activity isn't enough, "Georgia and I got married in Toronto in September!"

To stay abreast of all that Sklar and her GoGirls have to offer, sign up for the mailing list at www.gogirlsmusic.com. ■



Music to love by: GoGirlsMusic.com founder Madalyn Sklar (r) and her business and life partner Georgia Moncrief.

WHAT'S IN STORE

*Just in time for holiday shopping,
an assortment of new treasures and favorite things*

Wasn't it just yesterday that we were contemplating the relative merits of SPF 15 versus SPF 60 sun block as we prepped for that Galveston getaway? Now November is here, and the holidays lurk around the corner. Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Christmas, or the winter solstice, you are likely to have family and friends tromping through your house this season. So it's time to get your abode in shape with a snazzy new piece of furniture or some other treasure. Here, a few ideas from some of our current fave shops.



BRENT COMBER

combine a growing understanding of the impact that their design decisions make on the environment—both inside and outside their homes."

With that in mind, Brooks and Reid recommend the impressive work of Vancouver-based furniture designer Brent Comber. "He makes beautiful tables from naturally fallen trees. And remember, the first of the three R's mantra 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' suggests the importance of buying quality that lasts. Kiln-dried hardwood frames and hand-tied springs just last longer than particleboard. Buying furniture that can last as long as its beauty does means it doesn't wind up in a landfill before its time."

Brent Comber Originals furniture, including these Alder rounds (pictured, 19-20-inches to 37-38-inches in diameter and 12 inches to 28.25 inches in height, \$1,250-\$4,960 suggested retail), is available through www.brentcomber.com. Selected Comber furniture is available locally at Kuhl-Linscomb.

Brooks • Reid Studio. 629 W. 22nd St. #4, 723/426-5236, www.brooks-reid.com
Kuhl-Linscomb. 2424 W. Alabama, 713/526-6000, www.kuhl-linscomb.com

WOOD, MAN

The design team of Darin Brooks and Robert Reid, who celebrate the fourth anniversary of their Heights studio with a November 14 reception, embrace a natural aesthetic: "We're developing with our clients a new perspective on natural materials, where beauty and luxury go hand-in-hand with environmental responsibility. People don't want to compromise style for good-for-the-planet design. Our clients are looking to us for ways to

SIT DOWN

We love the treasure-house sensibility of Eclectic Home in the Heights. On every visit, we discover a new must-have item amid the cheerful warren of furnishings, sparkly accessories, and very good wall art. Recently, though, our eye landed on this stylish, clean-lined stainless-steel chair (\$780). A pair of these could improve the caliber of even the most mundane catching-up holiday chat.

Eclectic Home. 345 W. 19th St., 713/869-1414, www.eclectichome.ws



ECLECTIC HOME



BLISS ON 19TH

WHAT BLISS

One of the last of the independent department stores, the venerable Kaplan's Ben-Hur in the Heights, closed a year ago. Oh, we miss those chockablock aisles and the endearingly dated merchandise mix. The spirit of independent retailing in the Heights thrives in shops like Bliss on 19th. This *au courant* home boutique, offering a spectrum from furniture to fragrances to greeting cards, scores major style points for its name alone. On our current Bliss list: this amber mosaic hanging lamp from Germany (\$680).

Bliss on 19th. 235 W. 19th St., 832/673-0099



DESIGN HOUSE

BIG HOUSE

My friend the Red-Headed Shopper introduced me to Design House, Inc., the showroom in the Resource Centre. Red directed me to the emporium owned by Connie LeFevre, ASID, because of its art of wide-ranging genres and antiques. The designer just expanded her showroom in the center located off Old Katy Road. One-of-a-kind objects in the LeFevre's shop (pictured) include an antique Italian walnut bombe chest with marble top (\$4,800), a selenite crystal lamp on acrylic base (\$2,135), Asian ceramic pottery jar with glazed surface and terra-cotta interior (\$215), and painting by Sylvia Angeli (\$6,100).

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FRETTING WITH TRET Before Melissa, before k.d., before either of the Indigo Girls, there was Tret Fure.

A staple of the women's music scene since her self-titled debut album broke in 1973, Fure has since established herself not only as a prolific performer, but also as one of the country's first women sound engineers. That led to her founding Tomboy Girl Records, which last year released her most highly acclaimed recording to date, *Anytime, Anywhere*.

On November 4, Diva House Concerts, organized by KPFT *Queer Voices* co-host Deborah Bell, presents Fure and her guitar at Super Happy Fun Land in the Heights. Details: thedivadeb@yahoo.com.

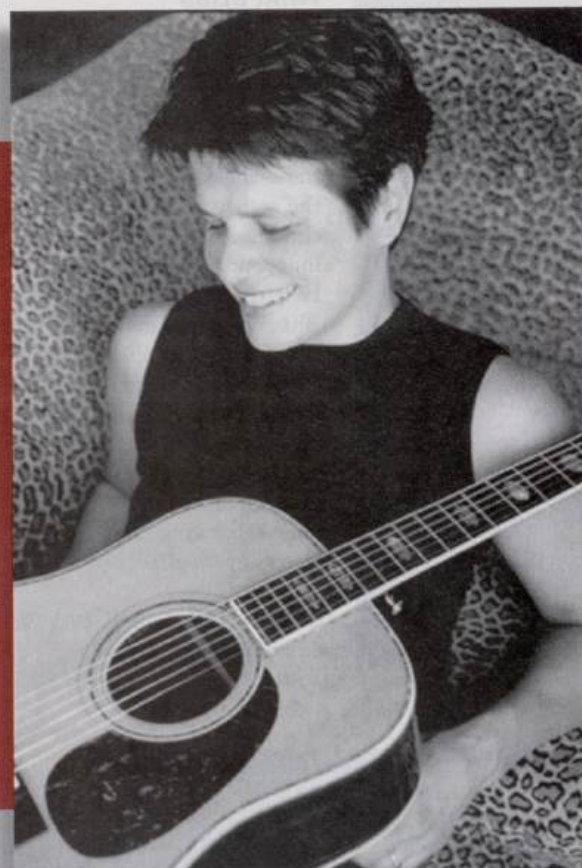


PHOTO: YOUNG

SPEAKING OF... Nationally acclaimed songstress Ann Reed straps on her 12-string for a Houston concert this month, reports our friend and women's music aficionada Pokey Anderson. Reed performs November 11, 8 p.m., at the Houston Community College Heinen Theater. Tickets are available through www.annreed.com.

GRACIAS, ALICIA For the past 27 years, Alicia dos Amantes has supported the community by performing at countless fundraisers and events. On November 10, GALLO, the GLBT Latino organization, honors her with an 8 p.m. reception and show at E/J's. Tips benefit Omega House hospice. Details: Houstongallo@yahoo.com.

LOCAL COLOR Don't think of it as graffiti. On November 18 and 19, the Center for Hearing and Speech and AIG present Via Colori, Houston's first downtown street painting festival. Community favorite John Palmer is a designated "featured artist" at the Sam Houston Park event. Details: www.viacolori.com/houston.

BREAST WISHES Twice annually, Lesbian Health Initiative sponsors its Rainbow Health Fair, at which women

may take advantage of health screenings. The next fair is November 4, 8:20 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., at Legacy Community Health Services.

Mammograms provided by M.D. Anderson Cancer Center Mobile Mammography Program, as well as Pap smears, require an appointment; tests available with no appointment necessary include blood glucose, blood pressure, total cholesterol, A1c specifically for diabetics, and HIV/STD testing and counseling.

But it's not just about pricking, poking, and squeezing. In addition to educational materials, also available at the fair are forms to obtain durable power of attorney for health care and to establish living wills, with a notary on hand. Information will also be available on accessing the Harris County Hospital District Gold Card system.

Details: www.lhihouston.org.

THIS USED TO BE THEIR PLAYGROUND No, Rosie or Madonna or Geena won't be there. But members of the All American Girls Professional Baseball League 1943-1954, including Red Mahoney, Alva Jo Fisher, and Ruth Lessing will be inducted into the Texas Baseball Hall of Fame at a reunion weekend, November 8-11. Catch

their moves in a celebrity softball game on November 11 at Big League Dreams Sports Park in League City. Details: 281/316-3400, www.bigleaguedreams.com.

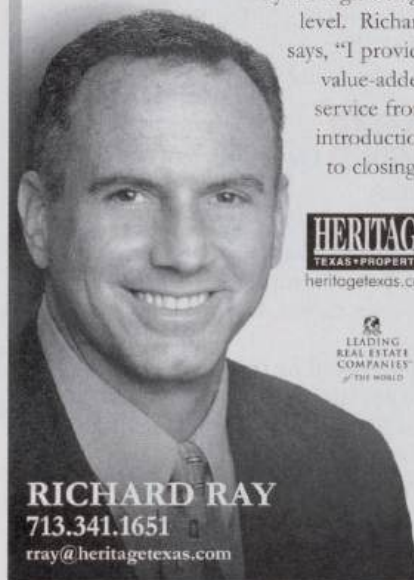
RAY OF LIGHT Moments after leaving the hospital, where he was fighting his continuing battle with diabetes, the indefatigable Ray Hill is once again in the spotlight this month. First, the Houston Peace & Justice Center honors Hill at its annual National Peacemaker Awards Gala on November 3 at the University of Houston Hilton. Hill is one of the four Houstonians saluted at the dinner, which will also honor Father Roy Bourgeois, founder of School of the Americas Watch.

Then Hill is the subject of director Brian Huberman's new documentary, *Ray Hill's Prison Show*, screened at Rice University. The film, based on Hill's one-man performance piece, shows November 17, 18, and 19 at Rice Media Center. *Prison Show* is on a double bill with another Huberman doc, *The Last Days of Charles/Kathryn!*. In this 1993 film, Huberman recounts the London sex-change operation of the sassy McGuire, the Texas-born cross-dressing construction CEO who was a fixture on the '80s Houston social scene. ■

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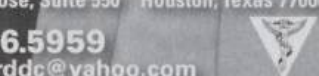
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Carrie Fisher

(Vanity Fair, 11/06, George Wayne)

George Wayne: You and David Geffen are friends, and I know you don't like to talk about other people, but I am asking: Is it true, as the blogs say, that he is dating actor Seann William Scott?

Carrie Fisher: I don't know, but I would doubt it. That's just the same as saying he married Keanu Reeves when they had never even met. I was actually with David at the Geffen [Playhouse theater] when he ran into Keanu. He said to Keanu, "Was it as good for you as it was for me?" They had never even met, and all that stuff had come about them being married.

David Rakoff

(The Daily Show with John Stewart, 10/5/06)

David Rakoff, author of *Don't Get Too Comfortable*, to *Jon Stewart:* I called up this guy named Robert Knight. Robert Knight is the founder of something called the Culture and Family Institute. They're always such innocuous names, like the Basket of Puppies Foundation....

His view of what he kept on calling the homosexual agenda was literally, like, "Oh, you actually think it's an agenda, a written agenda, like a to-do list. Things to do: recruit children, have sex with them, spread AIDS." It was just extraordinary....

So we're talking and talking, and the talk is all about sexual practices and what gay people do. And I finally said, "You know, HIV is transmissible by good old-fashioned, red-blooded, hetero-normative married sex."

And he says into my telephone, knowing it's being recorded, "Yeah, but not as much. I mean, the vagina can take a lot of punishment."

John Cameron Mitchell

(Out, 10/06, Dale Peck)

Re: Mitchell's shooting of his new film *Shortbus*, in which there is explicit sex. Mitchell is openly gay.

For my Hitchcock cameo I decided to do something I had never done: I ate me some p---y. It didn't get me hard, but it was better than craft service. Are you happy now, Mom?

Clay Aiken

(CNN Larry King Live, 10/7/06)

Larry King: No matter what your sexual being is, by answering [the question "Are you gay?"] yea or nay, you put it away.... [If] you say yea, what are they going to do, hit you over the head, not listen to you sing? No. If you say nay, what are they going to do to you? You're putting yourself in a no-win [situation] and you could be in a win-win [situation].

Clay Aiken: Or I could just say, "You know what, forget it. I'm not going to deal with it anymore."

Then you're always going to have people driving around your house taking pictures.

And I'm always going to say the same thing—"Stop doing it."

But they're going to keep taking pictures then, and they're going to keep asking questions, because they're going to say, "Why doesn't he answer it?" It's your choice.

I want people to stop driving by my house and taking pictures and hopefully they'll do it.



Odd coupling:
George Clooney (l) and
Leonardo DiCaprio?!

Queer Quotes

Compiled by Blase DiStefano

George Clooney

(Vanity Fair, 11/06, Rich Cohen)

"Here is my theory on debunking photographs in magazines, you know, the paparazzi photographs," he says. "I want to spend every single night for three months going out with a different famous actress. You know, Halle Berry one night, Salma Hayek the next, and then walk on the beach holding hands with Leonardo DiCaprio. People would still buy the magazines, they'd still buy the pictures, but they would always go, 'I don't know if these guys were putting us on or not.'"

Rosie O'Donnell

(TV Guide, 10/2/06, Mary Murphy)

Mary Murphy: In the episode [of *Nip/Tuck*], you and Julian have a sex scene that is absolutely hilarious. Was it fun to film?

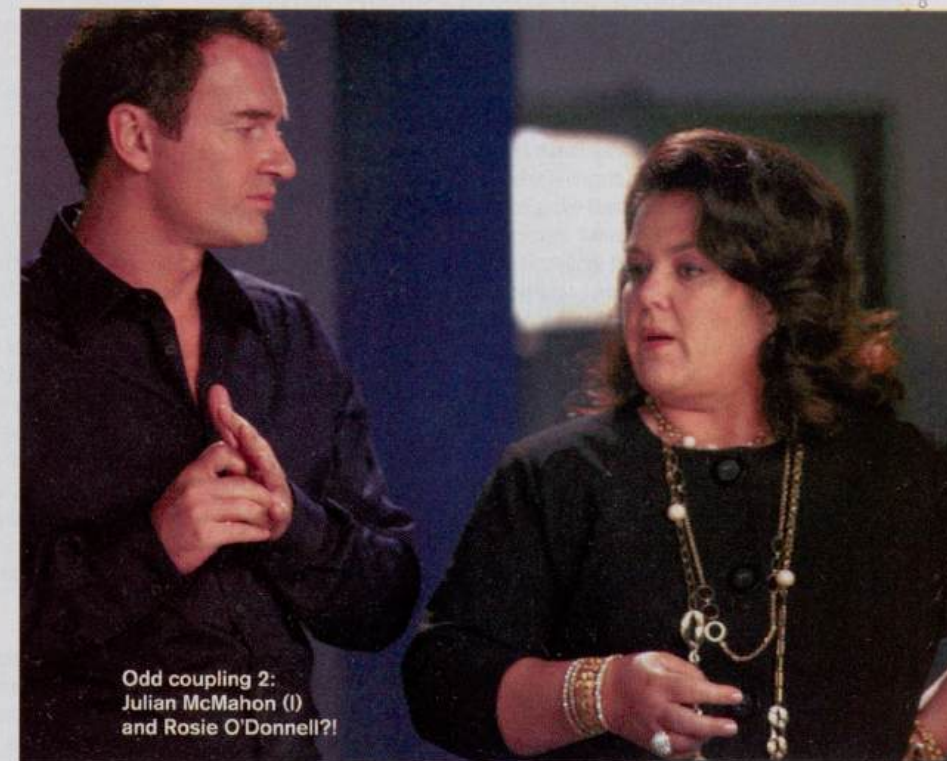
Rosie O'Donnell: I had on this tube top—thing, and these short shorts, and they drape me so I am not embarrassed. And he comes in and all he has on is a sock covering his penis. He is totally naked. And he says, "Are you ready?"

What did you say?

[Laughing] I didn't even remember doing this, but apparently I said, "Oh, my God! You look like Superman." He looks like he is carved out of stone. We did a couple of takes and my boobs were showing and finally I just said, "Screw it." And took my shirt off.

Did Kelli get jealous?

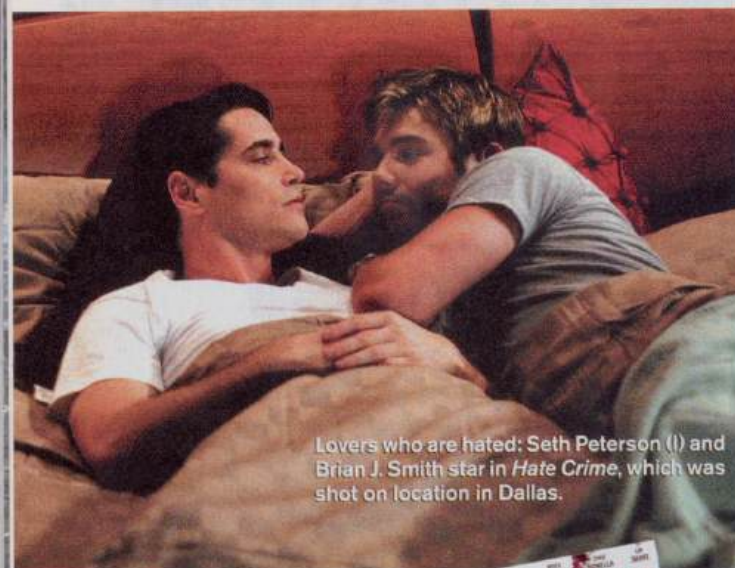
No, she was there, and she loved it!



Odd coupling 2:
Julian McMahon (l)
and Rosie O'Donnell?!

DAMNED IF YOU DO . . .

It's all about the motivation in Tommy Stoval's *Hate Crime*



Lovers who are hated: Seth Peterson (l) and Brian J. Smith star in *Hate Crime*, which was shot on location in Dallas.

What seems like a cookie-cutter, by-the-numbers story of a Southern Bible-thumper's intolerance for homosexuality at first becomes a well-told edge-of-your-seater with clever twists by the end.

Robbie Levinson (Seth Peters) leads an earnest life. A homeowner and profes-

sional, he has a genuine relationship with his earthy neighbor Kathleen (Lin Shaye, *There's Something About Mary*, *Snakes on a Plane*) in a quiet neighborhood. He's also in a committed relationship with Trey (Brian J. Smith) and is in the process of arranging a civil union with him. But all that peace and happiness is interrupted when a new neighbor moves in. At first, Chris (Chad Donella) seems harmless enough, even neighborly, until Chris sees Robbie kiss Trey goodbye. Chris' disdain devolves rapidly into threats of damnation. Shortly thereafter, Trey turns up beaten unconscious in

the neighborhood park.

Though Robbie and Kathleen are convinced Chris is behind it all, the police drag their feet. When it is revealed Chris is the son of a prominent (überintolerant) minister (Bruce Davison, *Longtime Companion*) in the community, one who provides Chris with an alibi, the authorities turn on Robbie, accusing him of manslaughter in an attempt to collect on Trey's life insurance. With no one else to turn to, Robbie takes Kathleen's advice and seeks resolution, and justice, on his own.

Hate Crime (2005) was written and directed by Tommy Stoval and costars Susan Blakely (*Rich Man, Poor Man*). Available November 14 from Image Entertainment (www.image-entertainment.com).

—Review: Eric A.T. Dieckman



MORE DVD/VHS REVIEWS/PREVIEW

The Lady in Question Is Charles Busch

Actor, writer, drag artist, leading lady. The life of Charles Busch unfolds in this endearing drag-to-riches tribute. From his childhood escapes into the world of Hollywood classics to his off-Broadway hit *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom*, to his kitschy-campy Broadway and Hollywood successes, Busch's story is told with love. (Look for Boy George, Rosie O'Donnell, Kathleen Turner, and others.) • 2005. Co-written and co-directed by Charles Ignacio and John Cantania. • From Docurama (www.docurama.com). —Preview: E.D.

Cynara: Poetry in Motion

Beautifully photographed with a lovely score, the lesbian soft-porn *Cynara* is erotic for the sake of eroticism; it may indeed stir you, depending on your threshold. If you are so moved, be sure to hit the stop button on your DVD player before the mood-killing, Jim Carrey-like outtake clips begin. That said, this brief, 40-minute period piece from writer-director Nicole Conn (*Claire of the Moon*) offers an opening scene that makes

us want to take a sculpting class. • 1996. From Wolfe Video (www.wolfevideo.com or 800/GET-WOLFE).

—Review: Nancy Ford

Innocent

Vulnerable young Eric (Timothy Lee) is at a crossroads in his life, both geographically and emotionally. A reluctant immigrant plucked from the familiarity of his Hong Kong existence to the rootless suburbia of Toronto, he establishes his gay sexual identity while his family slowly disintegrates. Soon, he finds himself falling for a succession of men while learning and growing from every painful experience. • 2005. Written and directed by Simon Chung. Mandarin and English with English and Spanish subtitles. • From Picture This! Entertainment (www.PictureThisEntertainment.com). —Preview: Troy Carrington

Two Drifters

Rui (Nuno Gil) is a young hunk who is grieving over the sudden death of his boyfriend on their one-year anniversary. While Rui deals with his loss through drinking and anonymous sex, he meets the peculiar Odete (Ana Christina de Oliveira), a fetching but unstable lost soul



who becomes obsessed with the dead lover, insinuating herself into Rui's broken life. He is baffled by Odete, particularly when she begins imagining that she's pregnant with his lover's child. • 2005. Directed by Joao Pedro Rodrigues (*O Fantasma*). Portuguese with English subtitles. • From Strand Releasing (www.strandreleasing.com). —Preview: Suzie Lynde

A Love to Hide

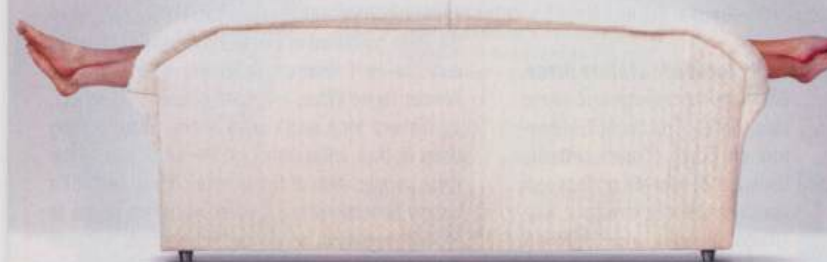
An award-winning period drama set amidst the Vichy persecution of the "third sex" in German-occupied France, two lovers, Philippe and Jean (Bruno Todeschini and Jérémie Renier), find further complications when Sara (Louise Monot), Jean's (Jewish) first love turns to them for protection. To make things worse, Jean's brother, a crooked opportunist, sees potential profit in the secrets the three must keep. • 2005. Directed by Christian Faure. French with English subtitles. • Available December 5 from Picture This! Entertainment (www.PictureThisEntertainment.com). —Preview: E.D. →



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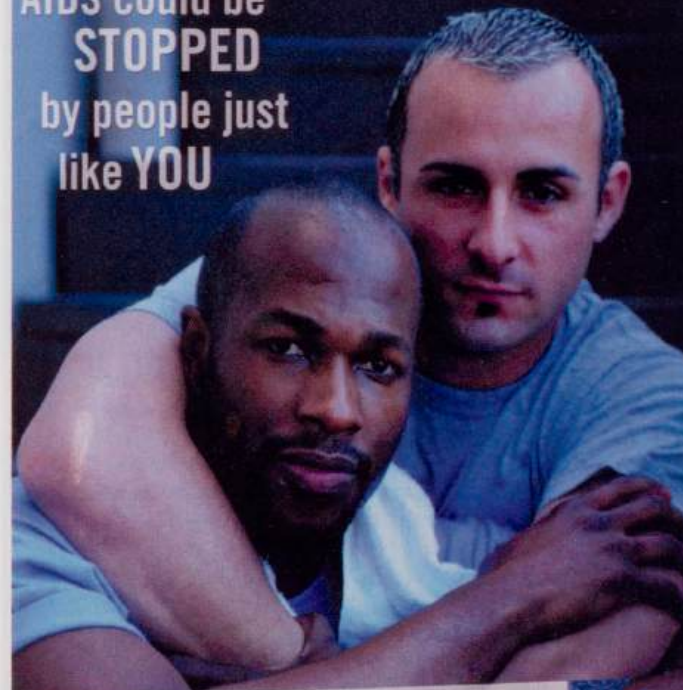
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DVD/VHS

continued from page 58

Fixing Frank



Title character Frank Johnston (Andrew Elvis Miller) is a journalist happily involved in a six-year relationship with his boyfriend, psychotherapist Jonathan Baldwin (Paul Provenza). When Jonathan asks Frank to go undercover as a patient and write an exposé about Dr. Arthur Apsey (Dan Butler, *Frasier*), a therapist who claims he can successfully change gays straight, Frank begins to doubt himself and his partnership with Jonathan. A psychological tug of war soon erupts between the two powerful doctors over the heart and mind of Frank. • 2002. Directed by Michael Selditch. Includes a commentary with Selditch and Butler, who is openly gay. • From Genius Products (www.geniusproducts.com). —Preview: T.C.

The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Green



Based on the underground comic strip, *Unfabulous Social Life* centers on Ethan (Daniel Letterle, Camp), a 26-year-old professional assistant and his boyfriend Kyle (Diego Serrano), a recently out pro baseball player. Ethan's ex-boyfriend Leo (David Monahan) threatens to sell the house that Ethan lives in, setting in motion a series of deceptions on Ethan's part to keep his house and relationship with Kyle intact. • 2005. Directed by George Bamber. • From Genius Products (www.geniusproducts.com). —Preview: T.C.

OpenCam



When cruising the Internet, not only can you catch a computer virus, you can catch your death. Manny (Andreau Thomas), a sexy, controversial artist, hooks up with men on WashingtonDick.com. But people are dying. With a killing spree at full throttle, Manny must reexamine his life and relationships with suspicion and fear, as hunky gay detective Hamilton (Amir Darvish) hunts down the murderer. • 2005. Written and directed by Robert Gaston. • Available November 14 from Wolfe Video (www.wolfefideo.com or 800/GET-WOLFE). —Preview: E.D.

A Star Is Born



Thirty years have passed since Barbra Streisand produced, starred in, and picked up a slew of awards for *A Star Is Born*. Heck, it probably took 30 years just to grow that perm out. To commemorate the tri-decade anniversary, the deluxe DVD release includes additional scenes, wardrobe tests, and commentary from Esther herself, as well as the remastered Dolby 5.1 soundtrack. Perfect for holiday gifting. Available November 28 from Warner Home Video (www.warnervideo.com). —Preview: N.F.



The Paul Newman Collection
The Marlon Brando Collection

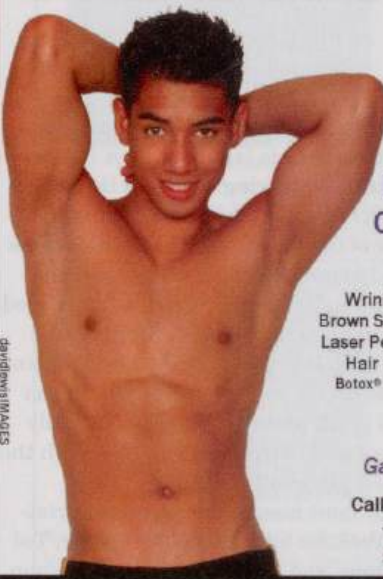
A major aggravation for those of us who collect classic films on DVD is when companies release box sets that contain a mixture of must-have films we'd just about kill to get, along with movies we've already got in our collection. Sometimes the films are sold separately and you don't need the set, but often you can only get your stuff by buying the whole set and you end up with duplications. Fortunately, all of the films contained in *The Marlon Brando Collection* and *The Paul Newman Collection*, both new from Warner Home Video, are making their DVD debuts, so diehard fans won't think twice about adding them to their collections. . . . For some people the most coveted item of the Brando set will be 1967's campy *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, which seems to have a reputation as a "gay film" simply because Brando plays a southern army officer who falls in love with a hot young soldier who happens to be nekkid for most of the film. Personally, I think of it as gay because Elizabeth Taylor spouts dialogue like, "She cut off her nipples with the garden shears—do you call that nawmal?" John Huston directed this adaptation of Carson McCullers' novel. Other titles in the Brando set are *Julius Caesar* (1953), *Teahouse of the August Moon* (1956), and *The Formula* (1980). Also included is the lavish 1962 remake of *Mutiny on the Bounty*, included here as a 2-Disc Special Edition. The Brando version of *Bounty* seems to have many detractors and a few fans—count me in the latter group. The film has gorgeous cinematography and a thrilling score by Bronislaw Kaper, and Brando's Fletcher Christian seems twice as gay as that army officer in *Reflections in a Golden Eye*. . . . The Paul Newman set thankfully ignores obvious and already available titles like *Hud* and *Cool Hand Luke* and instead gives us a few some of us have been begging for. Personally, I go for *The Left Handed Gun*, wherein an incredibly hunky young Newman portrays Billy the Kid as a misunderstood kid who just has to kill people when he's not making love to his gun. The film has a definite homoerotic air about it (well duh, it's based on a teleplay by Gore Vidal), and Hurd Hatfield's performance as the hero-worshipping "Moultrie" must be seen to be believed. The Newman set also includes 1956's excellent *Somebody Up There Likes Me*, with Newman portraying boxer Rocky Graziano (a role originally intended for James Dean), as well as *The Young Philadelphians* (1959), *Harper* (1966), *Pocket Money* (1972), and *The Mackintosh Man* (1973). • The Brando set is available November 7, the Newman set November 14, both from Warner Home Video (www.warnervideo.com). —Review: Jack Varsi ■

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THIS AIN'T NO 'VERY BRADY CHRISTMAS'

The Great American Christmas takes a diverse look at the holiday



In the family kitchen: Drew Panico (l) and Ted Trentman realize that acceptance is just a key lime pie away.

BOTH PHOTOS: KEVIN LONGER/USA NETWORK

felon who attempts to build a traditional Christmas for his family in East L.A. as he awaits sentencing. There is Dr. Robert Anthony Schuller, the second-generation pastor of the famed Crystal Cathedral, as he and his wife, Donna, prepare for the Baby Jesus' birthday with their privileged teens in Laguna Beach, California. And there is Shane, the New York City romantic who drives cross-country in a Budget rental truck packed with all his worldly belongings to surprise his fiancée with the greatest gift of all—himself.

But most memorable is an excruciatingly realistic look at one gay couple, Ted and Drew, and the hoops they must jump through to gain acceptance—not just tolerance—from Drew's deeply homophobic Midwestern family. Their moving portrayal is a lesson for potential PFLAG families everywhere.

Produced by Gary and Julie Auerbach and narrated by Howie Mandel, *The Great American Christmas* premieres Tuesday, Nov. 28, 8 p.m., on USA Network with replays on Nov. 29 and Dec. 2 at 3 p.m., and Dec. 3 at 8 a.m. Details: www.OutoftheClosetTelevision.com.

The Great American Christmas.

In it we meet Nate, who painstakingly deals with his insufferable mother-in-law as he trains to qualify as a member of the Olympic skating team. There are Cheryll and Rod, an African American couple who host a Christmas dinner for 100 members of their families. There is Repo, a convicted

Not a Turkey in the Bunch

Sundance Channel's November line-up contains a cornucopia of queer programming

The Sundance Channel never lets us down when it comes to homo-friendly programming, and this month is no exception. Flicks appearing on our favorite alternative cable channel's November schedule include Charles Busch's *Die, Mommie, Die!* (2003); Ivy Meerpol Washington insiders reality series, *The Hill*, episodes 1-6 (2006); Lily Tomlin and partner Jane Wagner's updated treatment of *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* (1981); Gregg Araki's *Mysterious Skin* (2005) and *Nowhere* (1997); John Waters' *Pink Flamingos* (1972); and Harvey Fierstein's *Torch Song Trilogy* (1988). So much to be thankful for!

Check local listings for airdates and times. More: www.sundancechannel.com.



Lily Tomlin and Rick Baker



Harvey Fierstein and Matthew Broderick

The Other Quarter-Pounder

FX to focus on trans life with 4 oz.

Ryan Murphy has an affinity for sharp instruments and their various applications. Not only is he the creator of FX's insanely popular *Nip/Tuck*, he also is the director of *Running with Scissors*, which opened in theaters just last month with the help of executive producer Brad Pitt.

Next year, Murphy and Pitt collaborate on yet another cutting-edge project, *4 oz.*, focusing on the travails of a male-to-female transgender sportswriter, her wife, and two sons.

Four ounces, by the way, refers to the average weight of a limpy. Watch for this one to be sliced from the cast in episode three. More: www.fxnetworks.com. ■

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Open Sun. 2-5

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LESBIANS ROCK

A roundup of recent women-driven releases

Although the odds are getting slightly better, out lesbian musicians continue to outnumber gay male musicians. In this column alone, there are more than 20 (!) CDs by queer women, most of which were released since the middle of the year.

The title *Despite Our Differences* (Hollywood) is fitting for the new **Indigo Girls** record for many reasons, not the least of which is that after nearly 20 years, Amy Ray and Emily Saliers are no longer recording for Epic. Also worth noting is production by hotshot, in-demand producer and musician Mitchell Froom. And, in case you missed it, Saliers curses on opening track "Pendulum Swingers." Some things that haven't changed include the queer duo's inclusion of stellar guest musicians,



Billboard history: Marilyn Scott

represented here by Pink, Brandi Carlile, Greg Leisz, and Froom's (and Suzanne Vega's) daughter, Ruby. There are also the alternating tunes, Ray's with a razor-sharp rock edge and Saliers' rolling like waves lapping at the shore.

Cutting-edge, all-female queer band **Erase Errata's** latest disc, *Nightlife* (Kill Rock Stars), correctly scrawls dance beats over punk crunch. Think The Slits crossed with Gang of Four, and add a dash of Le Tigre. Bracketed by the "dark cruising" of "Cruising" to the garbled gallop of "Nightlife," the album is permeated by a duskiess, which can also be experienced on "Another Genius Idea From our Government," "Tax Dollar," "Rider," and "Wasteland (In A...)." One of the best and most critically lauded albums of 2006



Original voice: Holly Near

is *Mythologies* by renowned queer jazz diva **Patricia Barber** [read an interview in "GrooveOut," October *OutSmart*]. Barber isn't alone in the jazz field. Out vocalist **Karen Blixt** is joined by a stellar line-up of musicians including Joey DeFrancesco, Russell Ferrante, Buddy Montgomery, and Alex Acuña on *Spin* (HiFi). Beginning with the dizzying Jon Hendricks/Count Basie composition "Swingin' the Blues" and continuing through her takes on standards by Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Mercer, and Van Heusen, Monk, and Miles, as well as her own tunes, Blixt is sure to make your head spin with delight. Known as the only vocalist in Billboard history to have two albums chart on both the traditional and contemporary jazz charts at the same time, **Marilyn Scott** returns →

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recording in four years. These choices, plus McDonald's impeccable interpretation, explain why Houston Grand Opera fans were likewise moved earlier this year when she debuted in Francis Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine*. From Nonesuch (www.nonesuch.com). —Preview: N.F.

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GrooveOut Shorts

Scissor Sisters
Ta-Dah

If the Scissor Sisters' 2004 debut album was but a hint that they might serve as the soundtrack of the new gay disco generation, then this album is a proclamation of it. The ghost of Maurice Gibbs has nested himself comfortably into the songwriting synapses of these New York youths, who have arguably perfected their layered, complicated marriage of melodic influences to forge a dynamic sophomore effort that easily, thoroughly eclipses the quality of their first. From UniversalMotown (www.umrg.com). —Review: Lance Scott Walker

Johnny Mathis
A 50th Anniversary Celebration

Half a century ago Johnny Mathis became young America's Number One choice of background music for making out in the back of Dad's Chevy with your steady at Lookout Point. But chances are, if

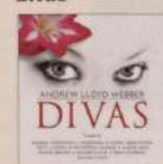
the suits who discovered him had known Johnny is gay, his first record would have been released around the 12th of never. But maybe not... it's not for me to say. From Columbia/Legacy (www.legacyrecordings.com). —Preview: Nancy Ford

Julie Loyd
All That You Ask For

Fans of womyn's music with a "y" will enjoy this live acoustic solo album, recorded from Loyd's shows in those famous lesbian meccas, Northampton and Asheville. Fiercely out, she even sings and strums about her experience kissing girls—with eyes wide open, at that—without the pretense of ambiguous pronouns. Love that. More: www.julieloyd.com. —Review: N.F.

Audra McDonald
Build a Bridge

"I just choose material that moves me." Such was McDonald's criteria for including selections from John Mayer ("My Stupid Mouth"), Randy Newman ("I Think It's Going to Rain Today"), and others on her first solo

Andrew Lloyd Webber
Divas

ALW called on some of his best-est diva friends for this 15-cut, pure-gold-wrapped-in-platinum-dipped-in-chocolate compilation of his Broadway hits: Brightman, Buckley, Close, Elliman, Lupone, Madonna, Streisand. What the heck else do you need to know? From Decca Broadway (www.deccabroadway.com). —Preview: N.F.

Sarah Brightman
Diva: The Singles Collection

This collection of 14 contemporary stage tunes vocalized by the premiere soprano is perfect background music for your tasteful Sunday brunches. Particularly flawless are Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Pie Jesu" and "Who Wants to Live Forever." Brightman-philés →



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Nov 22 - Pluff the Kat (Thanksgiving Eve Show)

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with *Innocent of Nothing* (Prana Entertainment). Like the Blixt offering, Scott's disc features Russell Ferrante, as well as George Duke, Patrice Rushen, Vinnie Colaiuta, and others. Similarly, Scott's disc includes standards by Monk and Dylan as well as numerous co-compositions.

After a couple of jazz-influenced albums **Mila Drumke** returns to the experimental folk-pop of her earlier recordings on *Radiate* (Little Pro). Those who were first smitten with her because of her song "Someone," originally heard in the movie *Go Fish*, ought to be pleased with this album and songs such as "Days



Headspinner: Karen Blixt

Go By," "My Big Holiday," and "I Think the Spring."

On her fourth studio album, *Another Kind of Fire* (ediecarey.com), **Edie Carey** demonstrates why she is an in-demand performer. In the tradition of Dar Williams, her songs strike a universal chord, her voicing is soothing, yet strong, and the arrangements never fail to have an emotional impact. Songs such as "Bonfire," "My Heart," "Without a Fight," and "Hollywood Ending" qualify Carey as the Shawn Colvin of her generation.

As you might have guessed, there are more than a few folk



Wonderlight: Diane Ward

get in the way, *Dryland* (Sad Rabbit) by **Chris Pureka** is an assured and mature effort of musical and literary merit. And don't forget about **Anne Stott's** six-song EP, *Untitled Mind* (astootmusic.com), and *Second Narrows* (jackiestrano) by musician and lesbian porn filmmaker **Jackie Strano**.

singers among these women. **Katie Sawickie's** aptly named *For the Quiet* (Bend) is a gentle collection of acoustic tunes. Recorded live in her project studio over the course of a 13-hour period, **Kim Char Meredith's** *40 Years* (Passionate Women) is a disc she likens to the dream of being at a gathering and realizing that you aren't wearing anything. With a little less hype and fanfare to

GrooveOut Shorts

continued from page 64



will be thrilled to know this CD is just a tease toward its DVD companion, the 21-cut *Diva: The Video Collection*. Dare you not to goosebump. From Angel Records (www.angelrecords.com). More: www.sarah-brightman.com. —Review: N.F.

Yolanda Adams

The Essential Yolanda Adams



Houston's own chart-topping gospel diva knows her God stuff and has 11 top-10 albums, two Grammy Awards, and seven Stellar Awards to prove it. This double-CD collection of contemporary inspirational tunes offers more than two hours of remastered holy hits. From Legacy Recordings (www.legacyrecordings.com). —Preview: N.F.

Andy Mullen

I Wish My Name Were Jack



Putting the blue in bluegrass, this former English middle-school teacher is getting a reputation as "folk music's newest smartass." If Rufus Wainwright and Leon Redbone had a baby, not only would it be biologically remarkable, but it would also likely sound a lot like Andy Mullen. Whimsically enjoyable. More: www.andymullenmusic.com. —Review: N.F.

Paul McCartney

Ecce Cor Meum

Did you even know that Paul McCartney made classic music? This is actually his fourth such venture since 1991, and it's been eight years in the making. McCartney was commissioned by Magdalen College Oxford to compose this piece for the opening of a new concert hall,



and he came through in epic fashion. What results is a piece that sounds like equal parts movie soundtrack, opera, and church music. In fact, about the only hint that a Beatle even wrote this passage is the inclusion of trumpets, which sound like something straight off of Sgt. Pepper. The trumpets'll get you every time. From EMI Classics (www.emiclassics.com). —Review: L.S.W.

Sarah McLachlan

Mirrorball: The Complete Concert



In 1999, after her much-lauded "Lilith Fair: A Celebration of Women in Music," Sarah McLachlan launched the Mirrorball tour, spawning a highly-acclaimed live CD and DVD. This issue of *Mirrorball* is fully remastered by McLachlan herself, making it better than chocolate and ice cream. So good it hurts to listen. From Arista Records (www.arista.com). —Review: N.F.

Arielle Dombasie

C'est si bon



This collection from French favorite Dombasie is heavy with lounge act classics made famous by folks like Marlene Dietrich ("Boys in the Backroom"), Marilyn Monroe ("This Is a Fine Romance"), and Dean Martin ("Relaxez-Vous"). Destined to become a go-to CD for fundraising drag performers—not a bad destiny, in the least. From SONY BMG France. More: www.ariellenyc.com. —Preview: N.F.

Basement Jaxx

Crazy Itch Radio

Banjo house. That's all you need to know. To know that there's an album out now that can boast just such a genre on their record—that should be plenty enough for you. The BJaxx continue on their brilliant, innovative journey



of past years with a typical sense of unpredictability at every turn. Lots of female vocals pepper this one, along with production that continues to elude reference to previous accomplishments by anyone, anywhere. From XL (www.xlrecordings.com). —Review: L.S.W.

Thea Gilmore

Harpo's Ghost



Heralded by *USA Today* as "the most provocative songwriter to emerge from England in years," this Gilmore girl's lyrics pack a wallop reminiscent of Alanis Morissette or Joan Osborne, only darker. Particularly outstanding is "Red, White and Black," penned after Gilmore toured with another Joan—Baez—whose influence is readily heard. From Sanctuary Records (www.sanctuaryrecordsgroup.com). —Review: N.F.

Jessica Simpson

A Public Affair



Tuna and whiney ex-husbands aside, Jessica Simpson has carved out a respectable niche for herself as a reliable pop singer. For this, her fifth album, Simpson teams with mega-producers Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis and others, dominating MTV's *Total Request Live* Top 5 since its early summer release. Catchy little ditties. From Epic Records (www.epicrecords.com). More: www.jessicasimpson.com. —Review: N.F.

Check out more
GrooveOut previews at
www.OutSmartMagazine.com

Holly Near, one of the original voices from the women's music movement, has returned with *Show Up* (Calico Tracks). As political as ever, Near gets necessary points across on originals such as "Somebody's Jail," "Family Band," and "I Am Willing," as well as via the additional lyrics she wrote for Eric Schwartz's very queer "Hattie and Mattie." Near also chose songs by Cheryl Wheeler ("Gandhi/Buddha"), Jackson Browne ("Lives in the Balance"), and Laura Love ("I Want You Gone Too"), to further get her peace and justice message across.

Out rockers certainly have a place in the queer women's music community. *Fast Moving Dream* (linqmusic.com) by **Linq**, *Wonderlight* (Shinytown) by **Diane Ward**, *Hand on the Stove* (Pommier) by **Liz Clark**, *Cry Mercy* (lindanunez.com) by **Nuñez**, *The Best of Life* (BNL) by **Deb Barber**, and *Moving On* (jenporter.com) by **Jen Porter**, run the gamut of rock styles.

Queer female musicians also know that there are lesbians (and gay men) who love to dance. **Kinnie Starr** is well aware of that fact, and her politically conscious blend of dance beats and hip-hop style delivery (i.e. "Rock the Boat") is sure to get every party (political or otherwise) in motion with her new album, *Anything* (Maple Music). **Nicky Click**, a *Scream Club* follower, speaks her on *You're Already a Member* (Crunks Not Dead). On *Do You Have a Lover?* (sandra-grace.tripod.com) **Sandra Grace** serves up a straightforward set of dance club tunes.

Gregg Shapiro is a past recipient of the annual *OutMusic* award that recognizes contributions by non-musicians in furthering the work of GLBT performers.

THEY ARE A CAMERA

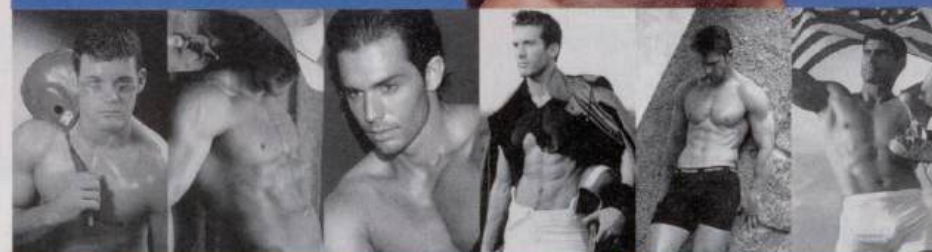


Joel Gibbs of
The Hidden
Cameras

The Hidden Cameras, featuring gay front man Joel Gibbs, perform in Houston at The Mink on November 21. The Toronto-based popsters are touring in support of their new release, *AWOO* (Arts & Crafts).

JOHN CONROY

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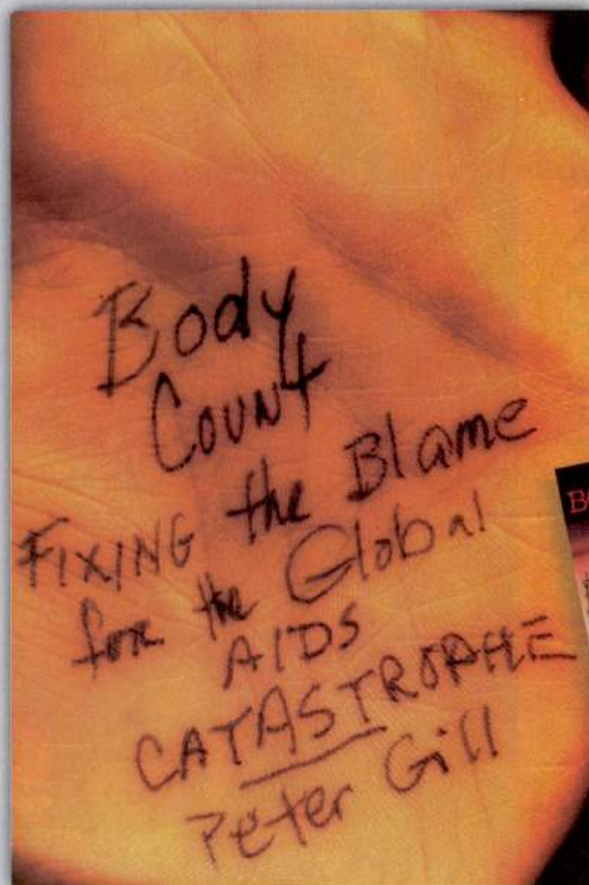
BEYOND THE BLAME GAME

The new book Body Count takes a historical look at 25 years of AIDS

Coinciding with the 25th anniversary of the initial Centers for Disease Control reports of what we now know to be AIDS, Peter Gill's new book, *Body Count: Fixing the Blame for the Global AIDS Catastrophe*, provides an interesting surmise of worldwide factors contributing to the current pandemic.

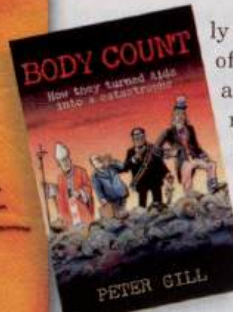
As a journalist specializing in world affairs, Gill has expertise in both media and public health. While working with the BBC, he coordinated a major HIV public awareness campaign in India that was so innovative its television ads were banned by the government. His book (published by Profile Books Ltd.) could easily be one of those works where readers believe they know its conclusions before they start the book's preface. Gill befuddles this dangerous simplicity by taking a broader view, delving deep into specificity, and maintaining journalistic impartiality throughout his exploration.

Though brief (202 pages in paperback), *Body Count* covers an immense amount of material and provides a



concise and intriguing perusal of epidemiological, economic, religious, and political factors impacting HIV, the leading cause of microbial death in the world today. Gill's historical commentary is valuable in that many of those he interviews have been involved with the epidemic since its genesis. This perspective enables readers to glean the intimate views of experts who, with varying degrees of success and regret, are able to examine their own actions, benefiting from 20/20 hindsight.

In spite of its profoundly dreary title, *Body Count* offers some fascinating and uplifting vignettes regarding those who have chosen (or been chosen) to play a pivotal role in forming their local, national, and international HIV/AIDS policies. →



Cover versions: The cover of the U.S. edition of *Body Count* (above, left) is less confrontational than the U.K. edition (inset), which pins responsibility for the AIDS pandemic with its in-your-face cartoon.

ReadOut Shorts

Wide Awake

David Levithan

Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers
(www.randomhouse.com/teens)

"What are you willing to do for something you believe in?" Levithan's latest tells the story of what happens when the opposing party tries to steal the election from the first gay, Jewish president-elect. This story captures the hope of young people, shows civil disobedience at its finest, and presents a future that really could happen based on where we are today. This one is a real page-turner.

—Review: Angel Curtis

Overcoming Crystal Meth Addiction

Steven J. Lee, M.D.

Marlowe & Company (www.marlowepub.com)

This comprehensive book is for anyone dealing with the use, personal or otherwise, of methamphetamine. If you are using, harm-reduction techniques



will help you stay as safe as possible. If you are addicted, this book will be a valuable resource for becoming (and staying) clean. If you are worried about friends and loved ones, this book will help you discuss their use in a productive way. Here is accurate and accessible information for all of us. —Review: A.C.

Transgender Rights

Edited by Paisley Currah, Richard M. Juang, and Shannon Price Minter

Univ. of Minnesota Press (www.upress.umn.edu)

In the past when people have asked questions about transgender civil rights, I have sent them to www.transgenderlegal.com to read the "Cider House Rules" article, or the "History of ICTLEP" of the Houston Press article. Now, I can point them to *Transgender Rights* as well. *Transgender Rights* is a compilation of 15 articles by authors who are each either transgendered themselves or who possess a long history with the community. These articles include law, history, and politics. In the appendix is the visionary

1996 "International Bill of Gender Rights." I personally know, respect, and have marched with, presented with, or otherwise collaborated with over half of the contributors. I hold them in very high respect. If you want to understand transgender rights, this is the book for you. —Review: Phyllis Randolph Frye

Tab Hunter Confidential: The Making of a Movie Star

Tab Hunter, with Eddie Muller

Algonquin Books (www.algonquinbooks.com)

In the tradition of the national bestsellers *Million Dollar Mermaid*, by Esther Williams, and *A Shattered Love*, by Richard Chamberlain, comes openly gay Tab Hunter's candid, entertaining, and eye-opening autobiography (now in paperback). Hunter reveals what it was like to be a 1950s-era star—to be created, packaged, and sold to the American public, shaped and controlled by the studio system that ran Hollywood until the 1970s. Hunter also discloses his on- and off-screen relationships, including one with Anthony Perkins.

—Preview: Troy Carrington ■

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ReadOut
continued from page 68

A panoply of interviewees abounds, and their scope may surprise and astonish readers. Among them is former Zambian president Frederic Chiluba, whose 1991-2002 tenure in office coincided with what Gill labels The Lost Decade of AIDS in Africa. With unusual candor, Chiluba accepts responsibility for his nation's deplorable inaction regarding the disease. Conversely, Brazilian prostitute-turned-activist Gabriela Leite tells of her transformation from a woman viewed by most as "The Shit from a bandit's horse" into a crusader whose efforts helped shape national and international health policy. So significant was her involvement that Brazil subsequently refused millions in American HIV-prevention funding rather than accept its accompanying conditional ban on prostitution.

Contrasting the actions of specific individuals, Gill illuminates institutional involvement within the epidemic. His examination of politics and policy spans four U.S. presidencies, two papacies, and numerous other tenures of leadership. In this recounting, Gill reaches some interesting conclusions about crucial bureaucratic missteps and provides unexpected, though qualified, accolades for more recent governmental activities.

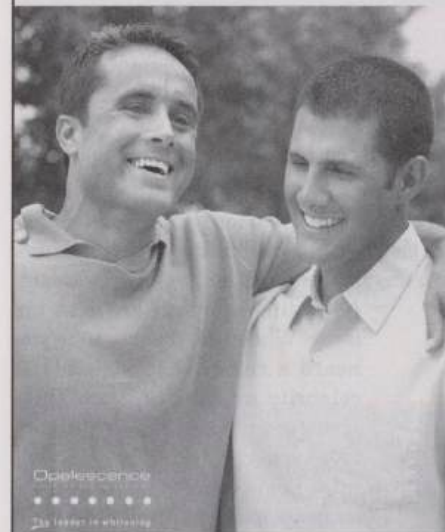
Overall, *Body Count* provides much more than a simplistic timeline of events regarding HIV/AIDS. Many readers will be aware of the major factors that prevented our world from effectively managing this pandemic since its discovery a quarter century ago. What Gill adroitly chronicles is how multitudinous and disparate actions of those in different corners of the globe contributed to the growth and, in some cases, effective control of HIV infection.

Body Count should interest many in the world, especially the youngest inhabitants of the current GLBT demographic. During their nubile lifetimes, AIDS has been portrayed largely as a domestic success story, something that affects individuals in locations beyond America's sphere of influence and resources. Many of Generation Y and younger have no knowledge of the trials and tribulations that precipitated current effective treatments and services.

Rich Arenschieldt is an HIV treatment educator. His essay "The HIV Fight Now" appeared in our January 2005 issue.

WORLD AIDS DAY PREVIEW
See page 18 for a listing of community events scheduled for December 1.

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FLAMING FLAGS

Sally knows that the right likes to pair GLBT folk and flag burners

My, we had a newsy summer. I would say Rush Limbaugh's Viagra bust took the Comedic Muse prize. Yes, yes, we all hoped he would face stiff penalties and do hard time—good ol' LIMP-baugh, what an upstanding guy. Har har.

Then we had Congress' frisky roll in the hay with their two hot Constitutional amendments. Thank Goddess, those bans on gay marriage and flag burning failed. Whew!

But don't get too comfy. You can bet your rainbow bumper sticker that America's queer-hating flag-wavers aren't appeased. Soon as the Republicans need another wedge issue to muster far-right fervor, they'll be baaaaack.

And oh, how the über-conservatives love to trot out their two big wedgies—as if defending the flag and the sanctity of marriage is the magic combo that will distract

voters from the sorry state of health care and education and the horrors in Darfur. Not to mention Iraq. Or global warming.

I wonder if the simultaneous trashing of queers and flag burning is part of a mas-

Hello. My name is Butch, and I'm a flag burner.

termined sinister strategy. We're used to hearing bigots justify discrimination against GLBT people by lumping our sexuality in with pedophilia, polygamy, and bestiality. At least when they call us perverts, we get where they're coming from. But lumping us in with flag burners? What's up with that?

Don't get me wrong, I don't have a problem with flag burners—not that I know any. But it's not as if they're oppressed. Nobody has to advocate for their rights. Unless you

count the ACLU. Or the first amendment.

But let's get real. Other than a mean glare from the occasional flag waver here and there, what problems do flag burners face, anyway? There's no flag-burner closet.

Admitting who they are is no big issue. When was the last time you heard a rumor that some major celebrity or politician or White House correspondent might be a flag burner?

But what if being lumped in with us by the hate-mongers makes flag burners feel the need for their own support groups? Can you imagine?

Hello. My name is Butch, and I'm a flag burner.

I first noticed the urge when I was a little kid. I'd go up into the attic with my best friend and pretend, but we didn't actually DO anything, not till much later, anyway. In high school someone said it was sick →



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OutLoud

continued from page 72

to think about it all the time, so I told my counselor. I guess that was the wrong person to confide in. Said she had a "moral and religious" problem with it, told my parents, and all hell broke loose. They were going to throw me out of the house unless I agreed to go to one of those camps.

Camp just made it more intense. I thought about it morning and night. EVERY morning and night. Day in and day out, up the pole, down the pole—it was torture!

Then I went to college. Whoa boy. Talk about temptation. In my dorm lots of people discussed it, right out in the open. Said it was nothing to be ashamed of.

I knew by then not to mention that kind of talk to my parents. They were already convinced college was filling my head with rebellious ideas. As if I hadn't been like this all my life. I guess I'd have to say I was born this way, but I also choose it. I choose to be myself and not be ashamed.

Hey, wait a minute! I get the picture. Same-sex couples actually do have something in common with flag burners. And not just because the Bushies can terrify voters with how both groups threaten America's children and the moral fabric of our country. This is about the very freedom the flag is supposed to stand for. I mean if we aren't free to express ourselves, what kind of a country is this?

Somebody hand me a lighter.

Sally Sheklow received both first- and second-place honors in the magazine column category in the 2005 Houston Press Club Lone Star Awards. She contributes a regular segment, "That Time of the Month," to the Air America radio affiliate in Eugene, Oregon.

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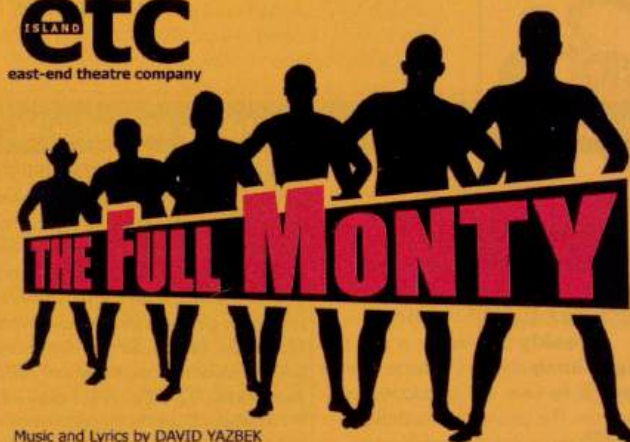
Research shows that 1 to 9 million children in the U.S. have at least one gay parent and there are 156,000 homosexual households.

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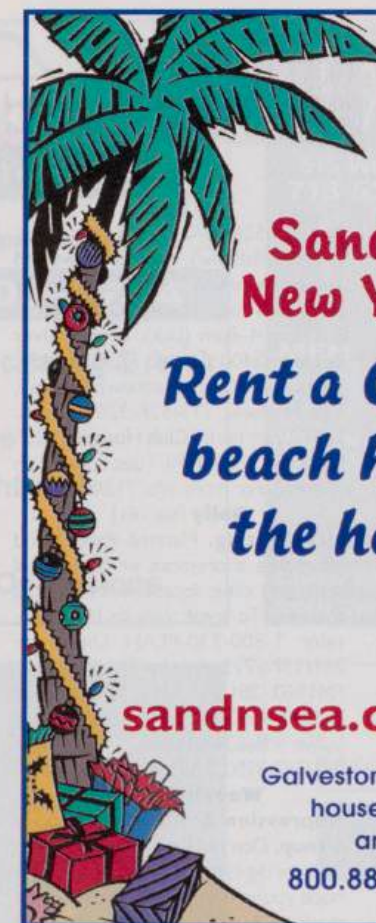
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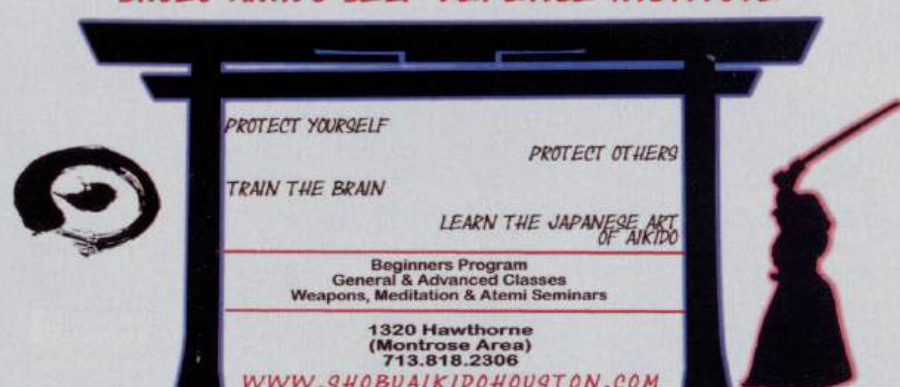
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Calendar of Events

Deadline for OutSmart's December issue is 5 p.m., Friday, November 10.

NOVEMBER

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 (Sun.-Fri.)

HIV Testing. The Montrose Clinic offers free confidential HIV testing at these locations: **Decades**, 1205 Richmond, 713/521-2224, Mon. 6-10pm (Dennis); **EJ's**, 2517 Ralph, 713/527-9071, Wed. & Fri. 10pm-1am (Rhonda & Lourdes); **Mary's, Naturally**, 1022 Westheimer, 713/527-9669, Wed. 4-8pm (Jack); **Midtown Spa**, 3100 Fannin, 713/522-2379, Tues. 9pm-1am (Carlos), Wed. 10pm-1am (Juan), Fri. 10pm-1am (Quincy); **Ripcord**, 715 Fairview, 713/521-2792, Wed. 9pm-12am (Matthew); **Inergy/Mango Lounge**, 5750 Chimney Rock, 713/660-7310, Mon. 9pm-12am (Carlos); **1415 Bar & Grill**, 1415 California, 713/522-7066, Thurs. 9pm-12am (Carlos); **611 Hyde Park Pub**, 611 Hyde

Park, 713/526-7070, Tues. 3-7pm & Sun. 2-6pm (Matthew); **All Star News and Video Emporium**, 3415 Katy Freeway & Studewood, 713/869-7878, Mon. & Thurs. 4-8pm (Jack); **Brazos River Bottom**, 2400 Brazos, 713/528-9192, Thurs. 8pm-12am (Matthew); **Cousin's**, 817 Fairview, 713/528-9204, Thurs. 8pm-12am (Jack); **Club Houston**, 2205 Fannin, 713/659-4998, Tues. 8pm-12am (Dennis). For more info: 713/830-3000.

Daily (Sun.-Fri.)

HIV Testing. Planned Parenthood offers free anonymous or confidential testing at clinic locations throughout the area. To speak with an HIV counselor: 1-800-230-PLAN, Dickinson: 281/337-7725, Fannin: 713/831-6543, FM1960: 281/587-8081, Greenspoint: 281/445-4553, Huntsville: 936/295-6396, Lufkin: 936/634-8446 x223, Rosenberg: 281/342-3950, Stafford: 281/494-9848.

Weekly (Thursdays)

Depression & Bipolar Support Group. Don't let depression or bipolar disorder dig its bleak claws into what little hope you've managed to hide from the shadows. Bering Support Network helps those in need to connect with others who are learning to cope. You are not

alone and can benefit from the experience of others. Take a step away from the dark. GLBT friendly. Free. Groups meet at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold, Room 232, 7:15-8:30 pm. Info: 713/526-1018.

Weekly (Saturdays)

Saving Animals partners with the City of Houston to save loving, adoptable animals from the pound and find them permanent homes. Adoptions take place at Northwest Mall every Saturday from 10:30-4:30 near entrance B. Information or to volunteer: 713/527-4490 or www.savinganimals.org.

Monthly (Tuesdays)

The Houston SPCA Pet Loss Support Group provides a professionally facilitated, supportive, and safe environment for people to grieve the loss of a beloved companion. Free. First Tuesday of the month, 7 pm, at the Houston SPCA, 900 Portway Dr. For more information, call 713/869-7722, ext. 127, or visit www.houstonspca.org.

4 (Sat.)

Sweet 16. ComedySportz celebrates its 16th anniversary with a showcase of all current members as well as former players from all over the country. \$14.

INFO NEEDED FOR YOUR EVENT LISTING: a few lines of info about your event; date/time; cost; location/address; organization name; AND two phone numbers—one for OutSmart to reach you for questions and one for OutSmart readers to get more info on your event. **Mail info to:** OutSmart Magazine, 3406 Audubon Place, Houston 77006. **Fax info to:** 713/522-3275. **E-mail info to:** calendar@outsmartmagazine.com. **NO LISTINGS CAN BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DEADLINE DATE—FRI., NOV. 10.**

Silent auction benefits Texas Children's Hospital. Info/reservations: 713/868-1444. 7:30 pm at the ComedySportz Arena, 901 Town & Country Blvd.

6-8 (Mon.-Wed.)

Toy a Red Ribbon 'round the Old Oak Tree. AIDS Foundation Houston (AFH), hosts its 12th Annual Red Ribbon Toy Drive. The toy drive benefits more than 1,200 local children infected/affected by HIV/AIDS. Donate new, unwrapped toys appropriate for children from birth through 19 years of age and make a difference in a young life. Information and gift drop-off sites: Richard Graber at AFH, at 713/623-6796, x 240 or www.AIDShelp.org.

11 (Sat.)

A Whole Lotta Lorca. Casa Ramirez Folk Art Gallery and the Flamenco Poets Society present "Lorca: Poetry & Dance," featuring the poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca. Works will be read in English and Spanish by Guadalupe Méndez and Julietta Parra Ducote; Laurie Nash will accompany with dance. \$10, \$5 for students. 7:30 pm at Casa Ramirez Folk Art Gallery, 241 West 19th St. Info: 713/880-2420.

11 (Sat.)

You're Booked! The fourth annual Houston book fair, "Booked," features collectible, rare, and modestly-priced used books with booths and displays from dealers around the U.S. Award-winning writer and Texas historian James L. Haley will make an appearance. This year's event is acknowledged to be the largest antique and collectible Book Fair in the state. \$5, \$2 for students and seniors. 10 am-6 pm at the Museum of Printing History, 1324 West Clay, between Waugh and Montrose. Info: 713/522-4652 or www.printingmuseum.org.

13 & 14 (Mon. & Tues.)

Museum-Sized Pianist. Da Camera Jazz presents the series debut of Houston-raised pianist Robert Glasper. A graduate of the renowned High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Glasper has worked with a wide variety of musicians from jazz artists Terence Blanchard and Roy Hargrove to hip-hop innovators Q-Tip and Mos Def. The 27-year-old pianist recently released his Blue Note debut, *Canvas*. \$30. 7:30 pm at The Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. Reservations: 713/524-5050 or www.dacamera.com.

17 & 18 (Fri. & Sat.)

¡Tu Tienes Mi CORazón! Several Dancers Core presents the Houston premiere of CORE Performance Company's multimedia performance, *Corazón Abriendo* (Heart Opening). Dance, sculpture, video, and music are interwoven in a celebration of the culture of the Maya and the Mayan emphasis on weaving as a means of identity. \$18, \$15 for students and seniors. 8 pm at the Heinen Theatre at Houston Community College Central Campus, 3517 Austin. Reservations: 800/838-3006 or www.brownpapertickets.com/events/5581.

17-19 (Fri.-Sun.)

Feeling Wuzzy. Formerly with the Houston Symphony Orchestra, Christine Wu combines the electric violin with live local DJs, original composition, and multiple forms of classical music in her performance, *Nomad*. 8 pm Friday and Saturday, 6 pm Sunday, at DiverseWorks, 1117 East Fwy off Main at Naylor. Reservations and info: 713/223-8346 or www.diverseworks.org.

18 (Sat.)

Be My Shadow Boxer, Baby. Ever shadow dance? No? Here's your chance. All are invited to dance in Ranch Hill Saloon's very own shadow box. Couples welcome. Free. 10 pm at the Ranch Hill Saloon, 24704 I-45 N., Ste. 103, Spring. Info: 281/298-9035 or www.ranchhill.com.

18 (Sat.)

I'm Dreaming of a Moody Christmas. Moody Gardens hastens the holiday with the fifth annual Festival of Lights. It all kicks off with Santa Claus parachuting in to switch on the lights (y'know, just like in all the traditional stories). From there, over a million twinkling lights and dozens of displays get you into the spirit of the season. Get into the Moody holiday mood while skating on the outdoor rink, listening to live music, taking pix with Santa, or watching one of several Christmas movies in 3D IMAX. Through January 6 at Moody Gardens. Info: 800/582-4673 or www.moodygardens.org.

18 (Sat.)

Nobody Does It Like Dmitri. The great 20th-century Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich's string quartets are among the most intense of his autobiographical works. Da Camera explores these works in "Music as Autobiography: Dmitri Shostakovich." The St. Lawrence

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Rice Department Faculty Show focuses on Brian Huberman's docs of GLBT fixtures

Ray Hill's *Prison Show* and *The Last Days of Charles/Kathryn*, both documentaries directed by Professor Brian Huberman, light up the screen at Rice Department of Visual Arts Faculty Show. • Ray Hill's doc follows Hill, the founder of KPFT's "The Prison Show," which has served the families of Texas convicts for 26 years. Hill reads letters from family members to inmates over the air and vice versa, and speaks on issues such as prison rape, proxy weddings, and capital punishment. A former inmate himself, Hill tells it like it is when he speaks on the subject of the American prison industry. (There are more civilians-cum-convicts in the U.S. than any other country in the world.) Sometimes Hill behaves so fervently in the doc, he appears part prophet/part hell-raiser. • *Charles/Kathryn* McGuire, Texas' most famous transsexual, is seen during his pre-op and her post-op life, as Huberman documents her operation in London. In one scene, Charles can be seen snoring during pre-surgery; in another, Kathryn is seen conched out in her hospital bed, resting after the surgery is complete, sans wig to cover her balding noggin. Huberman records Kathryn as she regains her zazz, proclaiming sex to be superior as a woman. Unlike some 21st-century P.T. Barnum, Huberman treats his subject with respect, pointing out, "With Kathryn, it's always bigger and better." —Eric A.T. Dieckman



Media man: A microphone is to Ray Hill as a golf club is to Tiger Woods. See *Ray Hill's Prison Show* at Rice Media Center this month.

The What: Rice Department of Visual Arts Faculty Show

The Where: Rice Media Center, entrance # 8, University Blvd. at Stockton Dr. **The When:** November 17-19, 8 p.m.

The Cost: \$6 **The Wherewithal:** 713/348-4853 or www.ricecinema.rice.edu

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String Quartet, which releases a recording of three of the quartets this fall, returns to perform the *String Quartet No. 7* and *String Quartet No. 8*. \$22-\$38, half off for students and seniors. 8 pm at Cullen Theater, Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas at Smith. Reservations: 713/524-5050 or www.dacamera.com.

18 & 19 (Sat. & Sun.)
Pottery Worth Its Weight in Salt. Twenty-five artists display and sell their handmade wares for an annual Christmas sale. Items range from decorative to functional. 10 am-5 pm at the Clear Lake Park Meeting Room, 5001 NASA Road One, one block east of the Hilton on the Lake. Info: 713/337-9286 or www.saltgrasspotters.com.

24-26 (Fri.-Sun.)
A Helping Hahn. Violinist Hilary Hahn performs selections from Grieg's *Peer Gynt*, among other compositions. In anticipation of Hahn's appearance, a bit of buzz has been generating regarding the musician's blog entries. \$25-\$99. 8 pm Fri. and Sat., 2:30 pm Sun., at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Info/reservations: 713/224-7575, www.houstonsymphony.org, or www.hilaryhahn.com.

PLANNING AHEAD

December 1 (Fri.)
Art for Life: An Exhibition and Art Auction. Mukuru presents this exhibit and silent auction of established and emerging national and local artists, with proceeds benefiting the battle against AIDS. \$50. 6:30 pm at Gre-million and Company Fine Art, 2501 Sunset Blvd. Info: 713/623-6796 ext. 278 or www.mukuru.org.

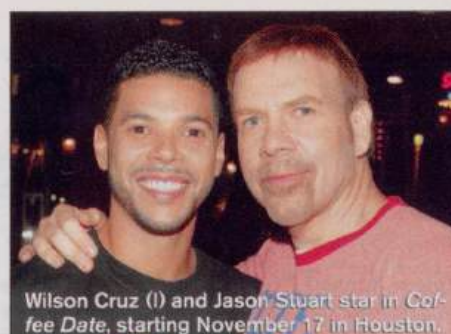
December 1 (Fri.)
Holiday on 19th. Stroll 19th Street in Historic Downtown Heights, as merchants open their doors for the holiday season. Enjoy food and refreshments, strolling carolers, live music, and more at this family-friendly fest. Fashions, original art, unique gifts, home and loft furnishings, and antiques offer a vast array of finds and gift ideas. 6-10 pm on 19th St. between Shepherd and Yale.

December 1 & 2 (Fri. & Sat.)
Heights Historic Home Tour and Holiday Market. Take in the various architectural styles of the historic homes in the Houston Heights. The Holiday Market, located in the Heights Fire Station on 12th and Yale streets, offers a variety of gift items, holiday-themed wares, and food. **December 1:** Historic Home Tour and Holiday Market 6-9 pm. **December 2:** Holiday Market 10 am-9 pm; Historic Home Tour noon-9 pm. Advance tickets \$12 beginning Nov. 15 at Buchanan's Native Plants, Squash Blossom, and Another Place In Time. \$15 days of tour. Holiday Market free. Info: 713/861-4002 or www.houstonheights.org.

December 2 (Sat.)
Year of the Dog. This "Howliday" open house benefits North American Shar-Pei Rescue. Purchase raffle tickets for a chance to win an original watercolor "self portrait" of your dog, donated by Jim Tweedy. \$5 per raffle ticket, six for \$25. 10 am-4 pm at Hollywood Frame Gallery, 2427 Bissonnet. Info: 713/942-8885 or www.hollywoodframegallery.com.

December 2 (Sat.)
Hyde Park Art Crawl. Sponsored by the Hyde Park Area Artists' Association, this is a wonderful chance to meet local artists who live and work in the Hyde Park area, view their work, and purchase one-of-a-kind holiday gifts. Special art activities for children and their parents will be available. This year adds the cabaret songistry of Mary Beth Schillaci. Free. 11 am-4 pm, beginning at Grace Lutheran Church, 2515 Waugh, and will be held at several other locations throughout Hyde Park. Info: Luis.Gilbero.Rivas@gmail.com.

December 2 (Sat.)
D'Est en Musique. Da Camera of Houston presents the U.S. premiere of this performance pairing excerpts



Wilson Cruz (l) and Jason Stuart star in *Coffee Date*, starting November 17 in Houston.

BUNGLED BLIND DATE

Todd (Jonathan Bray) is straight. Plain and simple. But once he goes out on a misinformed blind date, the result of a practical joke, no one will believe him. Probably because that blind date is with a gay man (Wilson Cruz, *Party Monster*). The two develop a genuine friendship, which comically confounds Todd's quick-to-judge friends. Jason Stuart plays Clayton, the office manager and wise guy who thinks everyone is gay. Look for appearances by Oscar nominee Sally Kirkland and Broadway's Deborah Gibson. *Coffee Date* opens November 17 at The Angelika Theatre, 500 Texas. Showtimes and info: 713/225-5232, www.angelikafilmcenter.com/houston, or www.coffeedatethemovie.com. —E.D.

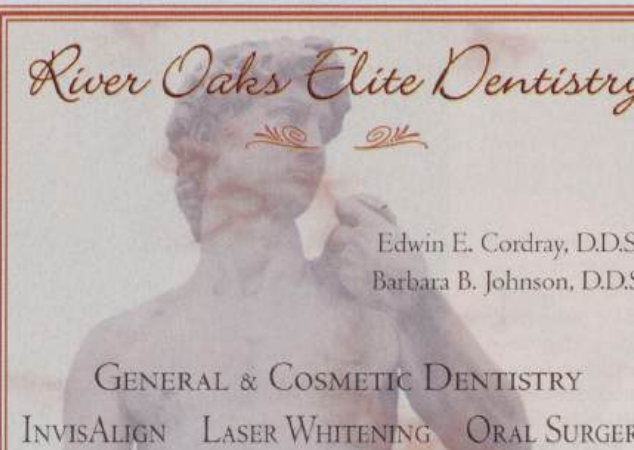
COURTESY JASON STUART

from acclaimed filmmaker Chantal Akerman's video *D'Est* with music of Russian composers Rachmaninov (Sonata for cello and piano and Vocalise), Prokofiev (Adagio, Op. 97), and Schnittke (Sonata No. 1 for cello and piano). \$22-\$38, half off for students and seniors. 8 pm at Cullen Theater, Wortham Theater Center, 500 Texas at Smith. Reservations: 713/524-5050 or www.dacamera.com.

December 2 & 3 (Sat. & Sun.)
Final Auditions in Houston for Opera in the Heights. Opera singers of all voice categories, with a special interest in male voices, have a chance at growing artistically in this organization. OH has an established reputation as a leading opera company in the development of young artists in the U.S. \$10 audition fee payable at the time of audition or in advance with application. Please specify preference of Houston or New York auditions. At the Heights Christian Church Sanctuary (adjacent to Lambert Hall), 1703 Heights Blvd. Information and audition scheduling: Laurie Hewett, auditions coordinator, 713/861-5303 or laurie@operaintheheights.org.

December 2 & 3 (Sat. & Sun.)
Dickens on The Strand Festival. Now in its 33rd year, Galveston Historical Foundation celebrates London's Great Exhibition of 1851 with its internationally renowned Victorian Holiday Festival. Set in Charles Dickens' Victorian England, this year the festival invites vendors, entertainers, and costumed visitors representing worldwide cultures of the era. Sari, serape, lederhosen, or loincloth, any costume contributing to the international ambiance of the festival will entitle the wearer to half-price admission. \$10 in advance, \$12 at the gate. 10 am-9 pm Sat., and 10 am-6 pm Sun. Info/reservations: 409/763-7834 or www.dickensonthestrand.org.

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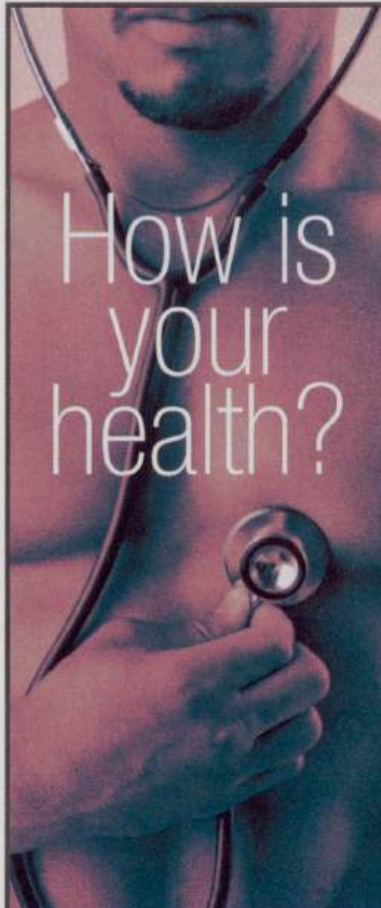
From L to R - Dr. Johnson, Earl, Dr. Cordray, Jeff

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December 3 (Sun.)

Wolf Blitzer Discusses the World Today. Wolf Blitzer, CNN television journalist and author, is considered an insightful journalist and draws from his vast experience when discussing contemporary issues. Hear him without commercial interruption. Free. 7:30 pm at Cullen Theater, Wortham Center, 501 Texas St. Info: 713/942-8000 or www.hmh.org.

December 6 (Wed.)

Sam Dinkins III Quartet. Brown-bag it, then hoof it to Da Camera of Houston's lunchtime performance series, "A Little Day Music." The quartet performs a program of holiday jazz favorites. Stick around for drawings for tickets to an upcoming Da Camera concert. Free. Noon in the Grand Foyer, Wortham Theater Center, Texas at Smith. Info: 713/524-5050, www.dacamera.com.

December 18-22 (Mon.-Fri.)

Main Street Theater Kids On Stage Winter Break High School Workshop. Students age 15-18 hone their skills by focusing on techniques of characterization, script analysis, and scene study. Also included are mini-workshops on playwriting, design, and marketing. \$250. 1-5 pm at Main Street Theater-Rice Village, 2540 Times Blvd. Info: www.mainstreettheater.com.

December 18-22, 26-29 (Mon.-Fri., Tues.-Fri.)

Main Street Theater Kids On Stage Winter Break Theater Camp. Students age 6-11 work on short-term projects such as improvisation, storytelling, mask-making, mime, and dance. The day is split evenly between theater and dance/movement classes. Week 1's theme is "Treasure Hunt Theater"; week 2 is "Animal Adventures!" Before-care and after-care available. \$250 for Dec. 18-22, \$200 for Dec. 26-29, \$400 for both weeks. 9 am-3:30 pm, daily, at Main Street Theater-Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. and Rice Village, 2540 Times Blvd. Info: www.mainstreettheater.com.

RADIO

◆ **After Hours.** Sunday mornings, 1-4 am. Featuring the QMZ (Queer Music Zone) with Jimmy Carper. KPFT 90.1 FM, 713/526-5738.

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

◆ **Reach Out in the Darkness.** Houston's only transgender radio host and her partner present selected music from the '60s, played like it was in the '60s, exclusively from vinyl pressings. Every Wednesday morning, 3-6 am, KPFT Pacifica radio (90.1 FM).

PERFORMING ARTS

◆ **All Shook Up.** Combining Elvis' most popular hip swivelers with a time-tested rock-'n'-roll story, a young girl's dreams come true when a dreamy guitar-totin' bad boy shakes up her square town and sets his sights on winnin' her heart. Nov. 7-19 at Sarofim Hall, 800 Bagby. Reservations: 713/622-7469 or www.BroadwayAcrossAmerica.com.

◆ **A Bad Night's Sleep.** Radio Music Theatre's most popular pieces from their 22-year history make up this revue. Phony commercials, goofy songs, and a Fertle family one-act fill the night with hilarity. \$20. Through Nov. 18, 8 and 10:30 pm, at Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt. Reservations: 713/522-7722.

◆ **Barbra's Wedding.** An out-of-work television actor and his wife examine their own marriage in the midst of the madness surrounding their famous next-door neighbor, Barbra Streisand's elaborate Malibu wedding, an event to which they are not invited! Fridays and Saturdays, Nov. 8-Dec. 9, 8 pm; Sunday, Dec. 3, 5 pm, at Theater LaB, 1706 Alamo. Info/reservations: 713/868-7516 or www.theaterlabhouston.com.



A scene from *I Feel Love* by Matt Wolf. The short plays in Houston on November 12.

HEEB IN HOUSTON

Heeb Magazine Film Festival. Aurora Picture Show joins forces with *Heeb Magazine*, the critically acclaimed lifestyle magazine for young modern Jews, to bring this film festival, with two screenings of original comedic, experimental, and documentary short films. Look for *The Pity Card* by Bob Odenkirk (Saturday, 8 p.m.), *The Ninjews* by local filmmaker Josh Bass, and *I Feel Love*, a gay-themed short by Matt Wolf (Sunday, 3 p.m.). \$5. 8 p.m., Saturday, November 11, and 3 p.m., Sunday, November 12, at Aurora Picture Show, 800 Aurora St. Information: 713/868-2101 or www.aurora-pictureshow.org. —E.D.

◆ **A Christmas Carol—A Ghost Story of Christmas.** This new production, a musical retelling of Charles Dickens' classic holiday tale, debuted last season. Tickets start at \$38. Nov. 21-Dec. 27 at the Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. Info/reservations: 713/228-8421 or www.alleytheatre.org.

◆ **Don Giovanni.** The famous tale of the insatiable womanizer whose lust knows no bounds returns. Tickets start at \$20. Through Nov. 11 at the Wortham Center's Brown Theater, Texas at Smith. Reservations: 713/228-OPERA or www.houstongrandopera.org.

◆ **Godspell.** The musical based on the Gospel of St. Matthew is known for the song "Day by Day," among others. \$14, \$12 seniors, \$10 students. Nov. 10-Dec. 16 at the Company OnStage, 536 Westbury Square. Tickets/info: 713/726-1219 or www.companyonstage.org.

◆ **I Do! I Do!** Express Theatre begins a series of intimate musicals with this valentine for lovers of long-term commitment. Michael and Agnes share over 50 years raising a family, negotiating mid-life crises, separating, reconciling, and ultimately growing old together. \$15, \$10 students. Through Nov. 12, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm, Sundays at 4 pm at Express Theatre, 446 Northwest Mall at the corners of 18th Street and 610. Info: 713/759-1314.

◆ **Tryst.** George Love cons lonely milliner Adelaide into a relationship. The smooth-talker finds a few surprising twists during his scheme to empty her bank accounts in this romantic thriller. (Play contains adult content, sexual situations, and nudity.) Tickets start at \$19. Nov. 9-Dec. 10 at the Alley Theatre Neuhaus Stage, 615 Texas Ave. Reservations: 713/228-8421 or www.alleytheatre.org.

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PERFORMING ARTS

For Young People

♦ **Interactive Theatre: "History of the USA, Part Two."** Young Audiences of Houston presents this history, picking up after the American Revolution and continuing through the westward expansion, Civil War, and into the present. Free. Nov. 14, 11 am, at Miller Outdoor Theatre. Info: 713/284-8350 or www.milleroutdoortheatre.com.

♦ **Jungal Book.** Based on the works of Rudyard Kipling but with a modern twist, Mowgli learns the laws of survival at an urban jungle gym. In this coming-of-age story performed by actors ages 8-14, Mowgli must confront Sherakhan to save the jungal way of life, even if it means that Mowgli himself must leave Paradise. \$5. Sat, Nov. 11, 3:30 pm, at Main Street Theater-Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. Info/reservations: 713/524-6706, www.mainstreettheater.com, or www.ticketweb.com.

♦ **The Toy Shop.** Santa's running dangerously behind schedule. Will Christmas take a bath? Not if Ms. Claus and the elves can help it, by gum! \$7. Nov. 11-Dec. 16 at the Company OnStage, 536 Westbury Square. Tickets/info: 713/726-1219 or www.companyonstage.org.

♦ **A Year with Frog and Toad.** Based on the books by Arnold Lobel, upbeat Frog and grumpy Toad spend a year's worth of seasonal changes together learning about life, friendship, and the importance of individuality. \$11, \$9 kids and students. Nov. 17-Dec. 16 at Main Street Theater-Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. Info/reservations: 713/524-6706, www.mainstreettheater.com, or www.ticketweb.com.

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

♦ **Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World.** America's first international celebrity is celebrated with this exhibition that explores the extraordinary life and astounding accomplishments of one of this country's greatest citizens—a celebrated scientist, inventor, entrepreneur, diplomat, philanthropist, and humanitarian, who was also one of this country's most-quoted and affable humorists. \$5-\$15. Through Jan. 21, 2007, at the Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Drive. Info: www.hmns.org or 713/639-4629. Información en Español: 713/639-4603.

♦ **Book of Fire.** Using printmaking, painting and mixed media, American-born college professor Murray Zimiles captures the emotional experience of the Holocaust and

violent destruction of Eastern European Jewry during the period. The Book of Fire is a 25-page, large-format book installed accordion-style. Free. Through Jan. 28, 2007, at Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline St. Info: 713/942-8000 or www.hmh.org.

♦ **The Cat's Meow.** In an attempt to prevent caninus envy, this exhibit of the place of the cat in art balances out the Best in Show exhibit. Through Jan. 21, 2007, at the Museum of Fine Arts' Beck Building, 5601 Main St. Info: 713/639-7300 or www.mfah.org (en Español: 713/639-7379).

♦ **Crafting a Collection.** Approximately 50 sculptural and functional pieces of craftwork dating from 1937 to 2005 adorn the MFA. Ranging in materials from wood to glass to metal and beyond, the American and international artists represented include Tom Patti, Iwata Kiyomi, Laaura de Santillana, and many others. Through January 7, 2007, at the Museum of Fine Arts, 1001 Bissonnet. Info: 713/639-7300 or www.mfah.org.

♦ **Experimental Watermedia Happenings.** See what's on the forefront of watercolor painting. Admire, purchase, get gift ideas. Styles range from abstract to realistic. Nov. 10-Dec. 1 at The Watercolor Art Society-Houston, 1601 W. Alabama. Info: 713/942-9966 or www.watercolorhouston.org.

♦ **A Fiction of Authenticity: Contemporary Africa Abroad.** New works in painting, sculpture, photography, video, performance, and more are on exhibit from some of the most prominent African Diaspora artists to be found in Europe and the U.S. Free. Through Nov. 19 at Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston, Fine Arts Building, entrance 16 off Cullen Blvd. Info: 713/743-9530 or www.blaffergallery.org.

♦ **Greece: Secrets of the Past.** Unlock the mysteries of ancient Greece in the latest IMAX adventure. How and why did civilizations of the Bronze and Golden Age crumble into the ruins that now scatter the mainland and islands of Greece? What happened? Tell us, IMAX, tell us. \$8 for adults; \$5 for kids, seniors, and students. Through Dec. 31 at the Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr. Info: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org. Información en español: 713/469-4603.

♦ **Houston Vintage Concert Poster Sale & Exhibition.** This extensive sale and exhibition includes first printings, rare, and signed posters from such artists as Stanley Mouse, Rick Griffin, Alton Kelley, Victor Moscosso, and Wes Wilson representing classic venues like the Fillmore East and West, the Avalon Ballroom, etc., and classic bands like Jefferson Airplane, the Jimi Hendrix Experience, Grateful Dead, and Janis Joplin. Nov. 4-Dec. 31 at McCains Market in the Heights, 550 Heights Blvd. at 6th St. Info: 713/416-9499 or wpierce4@houston.rr.com.

♦ **"The Imagery of Chess" Revisited.** Max Ernst and Marcel Duchamp made history with the 1944-45 exhibition *The Imagery of Chess*. One of the greatest art events of the 20th Century explores the exhibit that was held at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York. The original 13 chess sets that helped transform New York into the new international capital for modern art are a part of the reprisal, as well as numerous photographs from the show and other works. Through Jan. 7, 2007, at the Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. Info: 713/525-9400 or www.menil.org.

♦ **The Lester and Sue Smith Gem Vault.** A new permanent exhibit hall, completes the collection begun by the now world-renowned Cullen Hall of Gems and Minerals. Intensely hued jeweled masterpieces float wondrously in utter darkness. Look for the 2.765-carat Boulder Opal, the world's finest of its kind, and the stunning centerpiece, a 1.869-carat natural emerald crystal, the largest and most spectacular ever recovered in North America. \$9, \$6 kids/students/seniors. Opens Nov. 17 at the Houston Museum of Natural Science,

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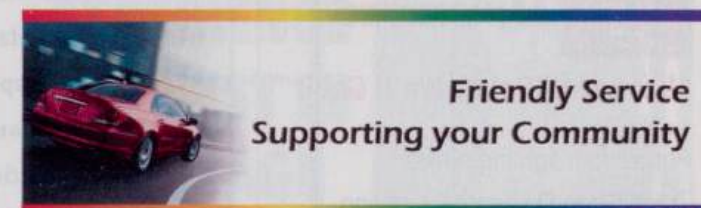
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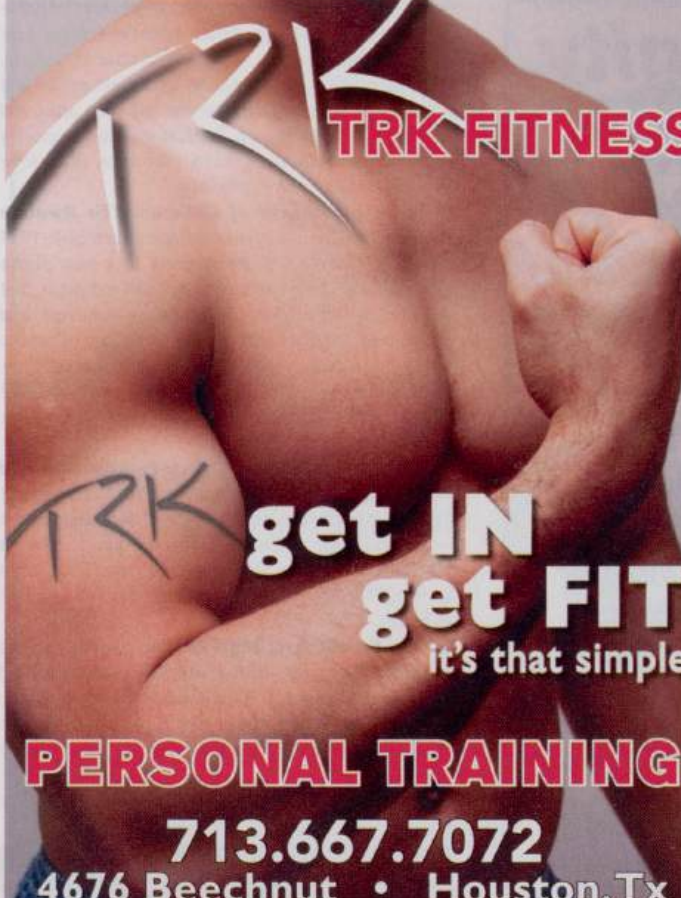
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♦ **Light My Fire.** New York artist Lisa Hoke makes Rice Gallery's fourth Summer Window installation, on view through the gallery's front glass wall while the gallery remains closed for the summer. Hoke describes the piece as an "intoxication of color." Information: 713/348-6169 or www.ricegallery.org.

♦ **Marc Dennis.** Technique and subject matter come together to create images of sensuous mystery in small and large hyper-realistic paintings and drawings. Through Nov. 25 at Hooks-Epstein Galleries, 2631 Colquitt. Info: 713/522-0718 or www.hooksepsteingalleries.com.

♦ **The Modern West: American Landscapes, 1890-1950.** For the first time in a major museum exhibition, the crucial role played by the western landscape in defining American Modernism will be explored in over 110 paintings, works on paper, and vintage photographs by artists including Ansel Adams, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Jackson Pollock, and will reveal the connections between the West, Modernism, and ideas about national meaning. Through Jan. 28, 2007, at the Museum of Fine Arts' Audrey Jones Beck Building, 5601 Main St. Info: 713/639-7300 or www.mfah.org (en Español: 713/639-7379).

♦ **David Novros.** A contributor to the history of modern abstraction, Novros' shaped monochromatic paintings are based on European frescos, mosaics, and cave paintings. Nov. 3-Mar. 4 at the Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. Info: 713/525-9400 or www.menil.org.

♦ **Perspectives 153: Demetrius Oliver.** The first solo museum exhibit of the Houston-based artist features five works created in 2006 especially for the exhibition. All have been inspired by the American Transcendentalists and their interest in nature as a divine phenomenon that can teach humanity about life, both literally and metaphorically. Through Nov. 26 at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd. Info: 713/284-8257 or www.camh.org.

♦ **Pipilotti Rist.** How many times can you say that name before you start to giggle? About three times for us. Her work in video, however, is nothing to titter at. Sensual, feminist, and emotional, the Swiss artist's feature film and video installations dissolve the line between artist and audience. Through Jan. 28, 2007, at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd. Info: 713/284-8257 or www.camh.org.

♦ **Through the Eyes of Children: The Rwanda Project.** Stunning images of children from post-1994 genocide Rwanda are the subjects of a new photo exhibit. What is so unusual about the exhibit is that the photos were taken by children—survivors and orphans of the Rwandan genocide—most of whom never saw a camera before the project started. Free. Through Feb. 18 at Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline. Info: 713/942-8000, www.hmh.org, or www.RwandaProject.org.

♦ **Timothy Greenfield-Sanders: Houstonians and Their Dogs (and Cats).** To complement and support the Best in Show exhibit, some local flavor adds to the works on display at the MFA. Through Jan. 1, 2007, at the Museum of Fine Arts' Beck Building, 5601 Main St. Info: 713/639-7300 or www.mfah.org (en Español: 713/639-7379).

♦ **Yale Street Arts Market** is an exciting Heights market created for local artists to display and sell original works of art. Local musicians entertain all day. It's a mini art festival in the Heights! Every month on 1st Saturday. Now at 548 West 19th at Wind Water Gallery's parking lot. Info: www.YaleStreetMarket.com. Be sure to visit The Artful Corner at 3423 White Oak Blvd., 713/426-4ART.

CALENDAR DEADLINE
for the December issue: Fri., Nov. 10, 5 p.m.

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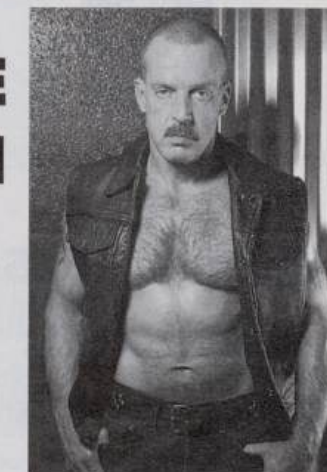
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Business News

FOOD BANKERS The Houston Food Bank has announced the appointment of **Michael Marx**, Kroger southwest division district manager, as president of its board of directors for 2006-2007.

The Houston Food Bank distributes more than 30 million pounds of food through 400 hunger relief programs in southeast Texas, enough to feed 80,000 people each week. "The Houston Food Bank's long-range goal is to triple the amount of food we distribute into the community in 10 years," says Marx (right).

Joining Marx on the board of directors are **Yvonne Schneider**, Global Product Development & Business Transformation for American Express Global Corporate Services; **Keith Miller**, SYSCO Food Services of Houston; and **Matt Winter**, AIG American General insurance and financial services.

FINANCIAL STRATEGIST Jennifer Phillips (right) has joined the Houston branch of **AXA Advisors, LLC** (777 Post Oak Blvd., Suite 450, 713/621-4760). Licensed and registered to provide financial products and services to individuals and small businesses including financial strategies, retirement and estate planning, asset allocation, annuities, life insurance, and mutual funds, Phillips works with clients to help them define their financial goals.

Prior to joining AXA Advisors, Phillips was a loan officer with Lighthouse Mortgage. She is currently a member of AssistHers, the Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce, and Bayou City Women's Chorus.

IT'S SHOWTIME On the heels of his service as executive director of the 10th annual Houston Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, former Landmark Theatres manager **Rob Arcos** ("Reel Time," September OutSmart) has opened a new video store, **MOVIES**, located at 1407 Richmond (713/527-9997).

"I understand that consumers have a right to choose how they get their entertainment. I'm hoping that with the right impression, consumers will like what they see and patronize my store as well [in addition to other popular resources, such as Netflix]," says Arcos (right, photographed at Angelika Film Center, venue for the film festival this year).

Offering a variety of film titles ranging from current releases to indie classics as well as television shows from past and present, MOVIES holds its in-store grand opening celebration on Sunday, December 3. Details: www.moviesheshore.com.



COURTESY HOUSTON FOOD BANK

HOOHOO TIME IN THE HEIGHTS The 19th Street merchants of Houston's **Historic Downtown Heights** have announced their annual Holiday on 19th will take place Friday, December 1, 6-10 p.m. At that time, shops located on 19th Street between Shepherd and Yale will offer refreshments, strolling carolers, live music, and festive attractions.

HELPING HAND Fred Walters of the **Houston Buyers Club** is recruiting support for an HBC client who is attempting to raise \$1,000 to provide school supplies to children in 14 families who were evacuated when Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast region in 2005.

"If our friends can contribute \$10 to \$50 each, we can purchase the remaining supplies needed," Walters says. "We only need to raise \$1,000—a very attainable goal in a short amount of time."

Donations are tax deductible through HBC, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Details: 713/520-5288.

POINTS FOR FITNESS John Aaron Villarreal of **Muscle Mechanics of Houston** has announced the gym has introduced its FitRewards loyalty and reward program for all members of the club.

"FitRewards is a free member-appreciation program that rewards club members for their ongoing participation at the club," Villarreal says. "Each time a member completes a qualifying event, that member will earn points that they can accumulate and redeem for brand-name gifts and club services."

Muscle Mechanics is located at 3334 Edloe. The phone number is 713/963-0899, and the website is www.musclemechanics.com.

DRIVING BUSINESS G & H Transportation Services, Inc. has announced the acquisition of the assets of **Ron's American Limousines**, the gay-owned limousine company.

G & H Transportation Services will maintain the Ron's American Limousines name, according to owners **Mitchell Guidry** and **Wesley Hart**. The company has a staff of five gay and gay-friendly employees and expects to add additional positions. Ron's American Limousines founder **Ron Delaney** will continue to act as a consultant to the organization during the transition.

The phone number for the firm is 713/266-6677, and the website is www.RonsAmericanLimousines.com.



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Members of Team Houston, including president Keith Wright (reclining at left, next to banner) posed with copies of OUTSMART prior to the opening of the July 15-22 Gay Games VII Sports & Cultural Festival in Chicago. See page 16.



Team Houston and OUTSMART traveled to the Gay Games in Chicago.

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FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Check out this event sponsored by OUTSMART:

November 4. Houston Black Tie Dinner, benefiting organizations including Houston GLBT Community Center and People With AIDS Coalition and featuring actor Leslie Jordan ("Here Comes Mr. Jordan," October). Info: www.houstonblacktiedinner.org.



THAT'S SO GAY

Missed the 10th anniversary Gayest & Greatest results last month? Check out the coverage ("The Big 10," October) at www.outsmartmagazine.com. The winners include Baba Yaga (I), which the readers named the winner in multiple categories, including Best Restaurant for Outdoor Dining.



Houston Black Dinner chairs Richard Hill (r) and Sydnee White posed at the June 14 dinner kick-off event at Saffron.



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BAR & CLUB GUIDE

HOUSTON

LA ACADEMIA

This new southwest salsa club welcomes patrons 18 and up, but they'll have to wait a few years to enjoy the Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday drink specials. 5829 S. Gessner • 713/334-5422 • www.myspace.com/laacademiaclub.

BARTINI

This club near the Westheimer curve now features a second ladies' nights. Passionate Sundays on the second and fourth Sunday, in addition to the Exquisite Wednesdays ladies' night. 1318 Westheimer • 713/526-2271.

BLUR

This new, multi-level dance club features an upstairs lounge, balconies, expansive patio, and happy hour daily, 8-10 p.m. Sundays pack the dance floor with Trash Disco and drink specials; Wednesdays are Ladies' Night. 710 Pacific • www.blurbar.com.

BOCADO'S

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.

BOOM BOOM ROOM

Manager/chef Kat Mims says business at this new Heights-area lounge is going great (even booming?), but "something was missing." So they introduced "Gay Night" on Tuesdays, with drink specials and tasty munchies. 2518 Yale • 713/868-3740.

BRAZOS RIVER BOTTOM

The BRB, Houston's leading gay country-western bar, is located in Midtown, just outside Montrose. Expect to see some fast and fancy two-stepping. Southern Country dance club offers lessons on Thursday night. 2400 Brazos • 713/528-9192.

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 Thursdays. Women-fronted bands perform every Saturday night. 1100 Westheimer • 713/523-7217 • www.chancesbar.com.

CLUB 1415

On Wednesday, Boys & Girls Club takes over the second-floor club space. Papi Chulo night on Thursday features an amateur strip contest. Fridays through Sundays are special event nights. 1415 California • 713/522-7066.

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 special show night. 5750 Chimney Rock • 713/666-7310 • www.clubinergy.com.

COUSINS

Drag fans frequent this club in the heart of Montrose for its campy shows on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. 817 Fairview • 713/528-9204.

LA CUEVA TEQUILA LOUNGE

Arluro Cahuiche recently opened this club in the former Briar Patch location, featuring 86 top brands of tequila in the full bar. Though La Cueva is not specifically a gay bar, Cahuiche welcomes all tequila fans. 2312 Crocker • 832/203-8574.

BEHIND THE BAR

WHO:

"Daddy" Rose Smith

WHERE:

Mary's...Naturally, 1022 Westheimer, 713/527-9669



WHAT'S UP:

The generous staff of Mary's plans to pull out the bird on Thanksgiving Day, offering a traditional turkey-and-all-the-trimmings feast to customers. Otherwise, expect weekend activity to increase on this world-famous gay landmark's patios as temperatures mellow.

YVONNE FEECE

DEAN'S CREDIT CLOTHING

DJ and promoter Gracie Chavez presents Les Femmes de la Nuit, the monthly women's DJ and music night, at this downtown nightclub. Chavez reports that the crowd includes a growing contingent of queer folk. 316 Main • 713/227-3326 (Dean's), 713/858-6227 (Chavez) • www.myspace.com/lesfemmesdelanuit.

DECADES

This casual neighborhood bar attracts a devoted crowd of regulars. It hosts a Monday pool tournament and Wednesday dart tournament and offers free pool on Friday. 1205 Richmond • 713/521-2224.

EJ'S

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

GUAVA LAMP

The club left Shepherd Plaza and recently reopened with a larger space near Allen Parkway. Guava Lamp presents karaoke nights on Sunday and Wednesday and offers a free happy hour buffet on Friday. 570 Waugh • 713/524-3359.

GEORGE

Long known as Bricks, the club recently took a new name and relocated as a country-and-western sports bar. This neighborhood joint still boasts a jukebox with country music and active pool tables. Regulars rule at this low-key spot. 617 Fairview • 713/528-8102.

MANGO VIDEO LOUNGE

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

MARY'S, NATURALLY

The oldest gay club in Houston, this is a legendary nightclub, though not as notorious as in days past. Mary's hosts many community fundraisers, including the Imperial Court of Houston's Jukebox Wednesday event. 1022 Westheimer • 713/527-9669.

METEOR

A sign on the door says Meteor has closed for remodeling. When it reopens, will it remain a video bar? Go cabaret? Both? Watch this space for details as they develop. 2306 Genessee • 713/521-0123 • www.meteorhouston.com.

MICHAEL'S OUTPOST

This neighborhood hangout has become a sing-along piano bar. A regular roster of keyboardists, including Phil Hooper and Lauri Gage, performs nightly. Tuesday-Saturday. 1419 Richmond • 713/520-8446.

MO MONG

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

MONTROSE MINING COMPANY

Sturdy mole 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.

PRIVÉ

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

RAINBOW ROOM

Every Thursday, Heather Moon hosts karaoke at this north Houston club. DJ Kenny supplies music on Friday and Saturday. The club has begun presenting live music. 527 Warren Springs • 281/872-0215 • www.therainbowroombar.com.

RICH'S HOUSTON

After a hiatus as a nongay music venue, Rich's has returned as the dance club you knew. The club now features Griz, a night of diva music (from Beyoncé to Whitney) with DJ Joe Ross, on Friday. 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 2005 Gayest & Greatest poll. The Black Hawk Leather shop is located inside the club. Another big draw is the Houston Big Men's Club's bi-weekly hamburger BBQ fundraiser. 715 Fairview • 713/521-2792 • www.theripcord.com.

The 611

This neighborhood club is a popular spot with pool sharks. On Friday and Saturday, the 611 dishes up buffet dinners. Features include a garden-style patio. 611 Hyde Park • 713/526-7070.

SOUTH BEACH

In the 2005 Gayest & Greatest poll, readers named this spot the best club for dancing and JD Arnold favorite DJ. Besides shirtless boys, special attractions include Café Con Leche with DJ Cubanito on Wednesday. 810 Pacific • 713/529-SOBE (7623) • www.SouthBeachTheNightclub.com.

TONY'S CORNER POCKET

Located in the space that was formerly Keys West, new owner Tony Vaccaro says the makeover of the near-downtown piano bar includes "Booze & Cruise Night" on Thursday, when "shirtless, in-shape guys" enjoy \$1 well drinks. 817 W. Dallas • www.tonyscornerpocket.com.

VIVIANA'S

This club, in a new location, appeals to fans of Latino music and drag alike. 4624 Dacoma • 713/681-4104.

Note: Keys West has been sold to a new owner, who has changed the name to Tony's Corner Pocket. La Cueva Tequila Lounge has closed.

Spring

RANCH HILL SALOON

The Contee club has packed up and moved south to a new home near The Woodlands. The Spring location still features the Wall of Fame and the famous saddle from the old watering hole. • 24704 I-45 North, Suite 103 • 281/298-9035 • www.ranchhill.com.

Galveston

3RD COAST BEACH BAR

OutSmart readers voted this Seawall spot the island bar with the best happy hour in the 2005 Gayest & Greatest poll. Thursday is karaoke night, with cabaret/Variety shows on Friday and Saturday nights. 31st and Seawall Blvd. • 409/766-6911 • www.3rdcoastbar.com.

GARZA'S KON TIKI

After a brief closing, the venerable island club is up and running once again, with a spiffy makeover and new owners, Trish and P.J. Male dancers and drag dominate the weekends, with a special comedy night on Mondays. 315 Tramont • 409/765-5805 • www.thekontiki.com.

THE PINK DOLPHIN

Opened by Eldridge Langlins, formerly the Paradise Guest House proprietor, this club in the former 3rd Coast Beach Bar location offers an expansive Gulf view. 9th and Seawall Boulevard • 409/621-1808.

ROBERT'S LAFITTE

A neighborhood bar, the island institution attracts a colorful crowd of regulars and travelers. The private patio includes a swimming pool. On Saturday and Sunday nights, the Ladies of Lafitte show takes the stage. 2501 Avenue Q (at 25th) • 409/765-9092.

THE TREMONT HOUSE

Smart Island visitors stop by the atrium bar in the Strand district hotel to enjoy cabaret music at the grand piano. Note: Orna Galloway, the longtime pianist at The Tremont House, died on May 22 at age 74. From our July 2003 issue: "Galloway doesn't merely tickle the ivories. He performs." A Tremont House spokesman reports that a pianist will continue to perform in the hotel atrium. 2300 Ship's Mechanic Row • 409/763-0300.

UNDERCURRENT

This massive, multi-level, 15,000-square foot club includes two bars with dance floors, a non-smoking lounge, a game room, and an art studio. Friday and Saturday night themed drag shows feature the Gulf Coast Drag Mafia. 2409 Market • 409/750-8571 • www.undercurrentgalveston.com.

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.

CHRIS' CROCKETT STREET PUB

Located in the downtown entertainment district, this club received extensive damage during Hurricane Rita and is currently closed. Local sources have informed OutSmart that the owners plan to reopen. 497 Crockett • 409/835-4243.

Note: Despite initial plans to reopen following the devastation of Hurricane Rita in 2005, Chris' Crockett Street Pub has been razed.

Bryan/College Station

HALO VIDEO BAR

The only GLBT dance club in Bryan/College station, this sleek spot is open Thursday-Saturday. Smack in the middle of Aggieland, "our venue is always packed with the hotties," the owners promise. 121 North Main • 979/823-6174 • www.halobcs.com.

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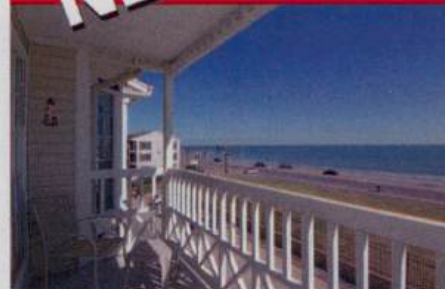
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SignOut

by Lilly Roddy

As this month opens, we are certainly in the Mercury retrograde period of reviewing the past and finding problems that we missed. This period comes to an end after November 21. So don't start any new projects, buy any electrical equipment, or sign any important documents. This is a great time to bring projects and relationships to an end. • There is a lot of activity in this month of Thanksgiving time. Uranus, planet of change, inspiration, and boredom, goes direct on the 20th. Jupiter enters its own sign of Sagittarius on the 23rd. Jupiter spends about one year in each sign, and the last time Jupiter was in Sagittarius was approximately 12 years ago. This should make the lives of Sagittarians, Pisces, Gemini, and Virgo very busy for the next year. • Good days for this month of thanks: November 1, 3, 13, 15, 21, 22, and 30. Days to take off and avoid the drama and tension: November 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 17, 25, and 28.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). You are in a rather introspective mood as the month opens. You are trying to establish a deep and more fulfilling connection between yourself and your partner. If there is some distance there, arguments may ensue, which bring you together—not in a peaceful way, but together nevertheless. You could be more proactive and just take some time together to renew your relationship. You could also have some financial problems at this time, too. By the time the holiday rolls around, you are much more upbeat and ready to be social. Don't overload your dance card, because it will be very easy for you to do that.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). With Mercury retrograding in your relationship sector, you are really looking at past relationship patterns and relationships in general. If you are currently involved, this is a time of review and possibly renewal. You have to have improved communications between yourself and your partner, whether business or personal. Family relationships can feel very burdensome or heavy during the holiday period. You may want to make sure that you spend a limited amount of time with the family. Or better still, create your own tradition and let the family drama fade into the background.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). Your work environment is your point of focus for this month. You will not miss the things around you that are ineffective. There could be a lot of bickering between co-workers as well. Getting out of the office and going to the gym or to the park may help you. Since your ruling planet, Mercury, is retrograde, you are inclined to look back at the past. You will really want to escape from the routines of your day-to-day existence. Make sure that you make some plans for the holidays, since you will be in a very social and magnetic period.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). You are in a particularly creative time. The only drawback during this month is that you may be a bit lazy and not want



SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). This is your birthday month. With Mercury retrograde at the same time, you are going to be more introspective than usual during the birthday period. This month, you are ready to address some old issues and problems. Relationships can be a source of tension and a desire to clear the air. You are still in the mode to be moving forward with your career goals. Those who are not on board with your project may find themselves looking for another ship. The holidays will hold more responsibility than pleasure. Make sure that your time is carefully measured.

to make best use of this time. Taking time off from your schedule would really benefit this month. Otherwise, you could make the best use of this time in situations that combine both business and social. By the time the holidays roll around, you are ready to get back into your work routine. You will even feel like starting a diet, but best to wait until after Thanksgiving. At work, get ready to start a whole new project.

LEO (July 23–August 22). As the month begins, you are feeling overstressed, as people seem to be pulling at your time and patience. One key thing: You have to learn to say no to people. Otherwise your attempts to make everyone happy will only result in your being unhappy and resentful. The holidays can be a bit tense. You feel the duty and obligation to be there but also a desire to spend some time alone. Make sure that you find a balance.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). With Mercury, the planet of communication, as well as your ruling planet retrograding through your communications area, you should be in contact with people from your past or people who you have not chatted with in a while. Try to be careful driving this month, as you will be mentally distracted. Relationships need to be redefined; otherwise, boredom is likely to set in. The holiday time should be an especially good one for you. You will enjoy the family get-togethers. If you are not going home for the holidays, make sure that you create that family environment for you and friends.

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). This month you are very focused on your financial picture. And with Mercury retrograding there, you are certainly supposed to be taking care of financial matters from the past so that they don't just continue to bug you. Part of this is about what you are worth, your talents and skills, and how that connects di-

rectly to your self-esteem. You may want to get a raise from your boss or increase your fees. It is best to wait until after the holidays. You are ready for a break in your schedule by the time the holidays get here. Make sure that you take some time to get away.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). You are in a period of rest and retreat this month. It is best that you keep your work and social schedule as drama-free as possible. You are more sensitive than usual and likely to take experiences in a more personal way than they were meant to be. But it would be a great time to get away from your routines. You are about to have a very busy end of the year, as well as the whole of next year. You will be glad that you have taken the time for some R&R. The holiday should be a good one for you. You are really ready to have some social activity. If you are single, there are new people around you just looking for some interesting conversation.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). The planets are lining up in the social and friendship area of your horoscope this month. So make sure that you make some time for fun this pre-holiday period. If you have to work, be sure to mix business and pleasure. You are very charismatic, which could work in your favor for business connections. With Mercury retrograde there, renewing old friendships can be especially beneficial for you. During the holidays, you are in a very nostalgic mood. Just don't let the fantasy override the reality.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). The emphasis this month is on the career and public sector of your life. Even with Mercury retrograde in this area, you are renewing contacts from the past, and these will be very helpful with your overall career direction. You are very ready to start new projects, but you will have to wait to begin them until after the 20th to assure success. This can be the beginning of a dream-fulfillment time for you, but you have to assert yourself to make it manifest. The holidays are best spent with family and friends who you like, not those to whom you feel obligated.

PISCES (February 19–March 20). It is best to get away from all schedules this month. You are searching for something that makes you feel connected to your passions. That may be something from your past. It would be good for you to take a trip and go back to a place that you visited before. Work has a bit too much drama for you to handle. You are not willing to be trapped at any place, physically or emotionally. At the end of the month, you are feeling energetic and ready to take on anything. Don't overdo your schedule for the holidays.

Read Lilly Roddy's 2006 forecast, which appeared in our January issue ("Word from Above"), at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

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OUT IN HOUSTON



1 The new Black Diamonds Revue, which introduces a new show on Nov. 12 at Fitzgerald's, includes (clockwise from top l) **Cam'Ron St. Clair, Tierra Nicole, China Doll Dupree, Tevin St. James, and Raven-Yolanda Adams** (details, see "OutFront," September *OutSmart*).



2 On Aug. 9, **Jacques Passino** and **Pamela Passino** of Jacques Antiques hosted a kickoff reception for the Design Industries Fighting AIDS Take a Seat benefit, for which designers and artists transform wooden chairs into works of art for auction. Attending the kickoff (l-r): co-chair **Alton LaDay**, Jacques Passino, Pamela Passino (in wig decorated with miniature chairs), **Alvin Abraham**, and co-chair **Steven Wagner**. The Take a Seat event takes place Nov. 11 at The Royalton at River Oaks.



3 **Dennis Draper** (l) and **Rob Arcos** teased Houston Gay & Lesbian Film Festival supporters with a door prize at the Aug. 30 kickoff party at Guava Lamp prior to the 10th annual Houston Gay & Lesbian Film Festival in September.



4 **Matt De Oliveira** (l) and **Drew De La Rosa** work at In-N-Out, the new club in the Heights.



5 Members of the Lone Star Lariats country-and-western dance team gathered for their annual fundraiser at Brazos River Bottom on Aug. 18.



6 Former Houstonian **Harold Wolpert** (third from r), managing director of Roundabout Theatre Company in New York, accepted the Tony Award for best musical revival for *The Pajama Game* on June 11. Accompanying him were other members of the producing team, including (l-r) **Julia C. Levy, Scott Landis, Todd Haimes, James Fuld Jr., and Jeffrey Richards**. Wolpert was general manager of the Alley Theatre when he lived in Houston.



7 **Nelvin Esquillo** (far r) and **Mark Ackerlund** (third from l) hosted a house blessing for their new residence with friends (l-r) **Jesse and Fran Vaughan**, and **Sean and Claudia Randall**, on Aug. 12.



8 Spotted at the Aug. 19 Back Door Sushi and Gekkeikan complimentary sake tasting (l-r): **Duane Nowell, Indra Kasim, Jimmy Tao, Jonathan Dizon, YuYu Huang, and Victor Song**.



9 **Tom Schwenk** and **Jack Bell** (first and second from l) welcomed **Bob Scott, Jim Rothgeb, Mike Phillips**, and (in front) **Tony LaCorte** to their Galveston home for Schwenk's 50th birthday party on June 3.



10 Posing with their trophies at the Aug. 5 Montrose Softball League awards banquet at the Westin Galleria: (kneeling, l-r) **Marcus Peters, Ray Olachia**; (standing, l-r), **Amanda Helton, Joel Pena, Hector Merino, Rita Guzman, Mark O'Brian, Chris Whatley, Shelly Desheneau, Eric Edwards, Jerome Banasik, and Jeremy De La Pena**.

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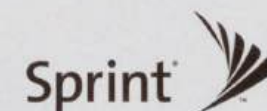
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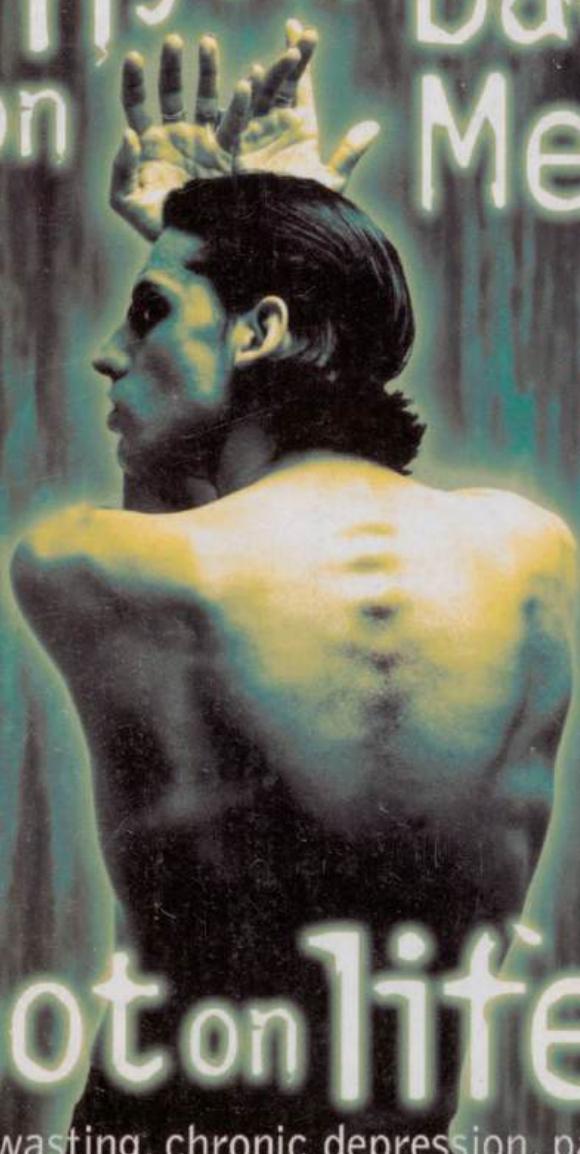
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