

Out▼Smart

MARCH 2007

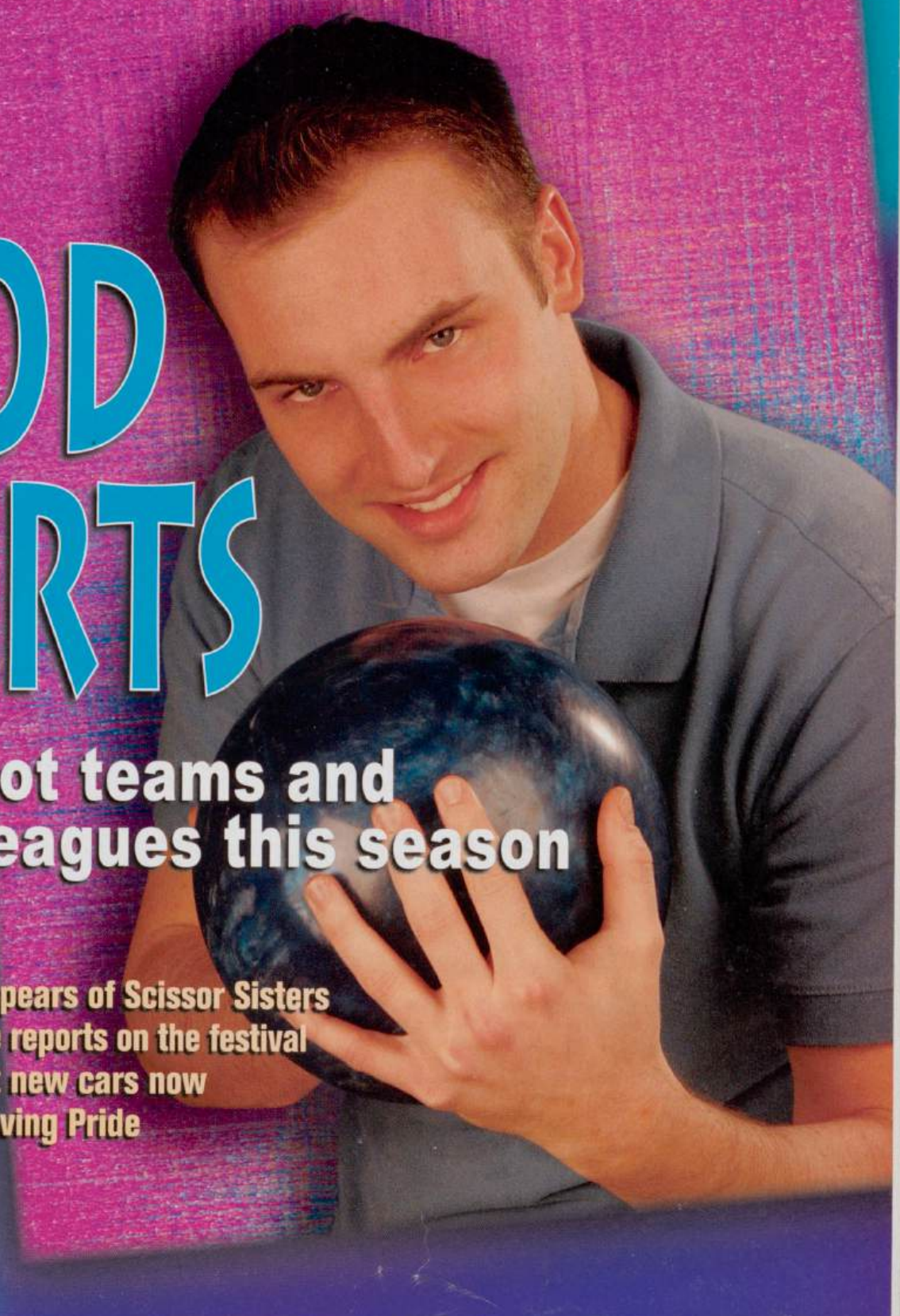
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Also Inside:

- Chatting with Jake Spears of Scissor Sisters
- Our man at Sundance reports on the festival
- Wheel love: the best new cars now
- Pros and cons of moving Pride

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About the cover:
Bowler Derek Smolenski is one of many GLBT jocks participating in sports in our community. See page 32.

Photo: John Conroy
Design: Blaise DiStefano

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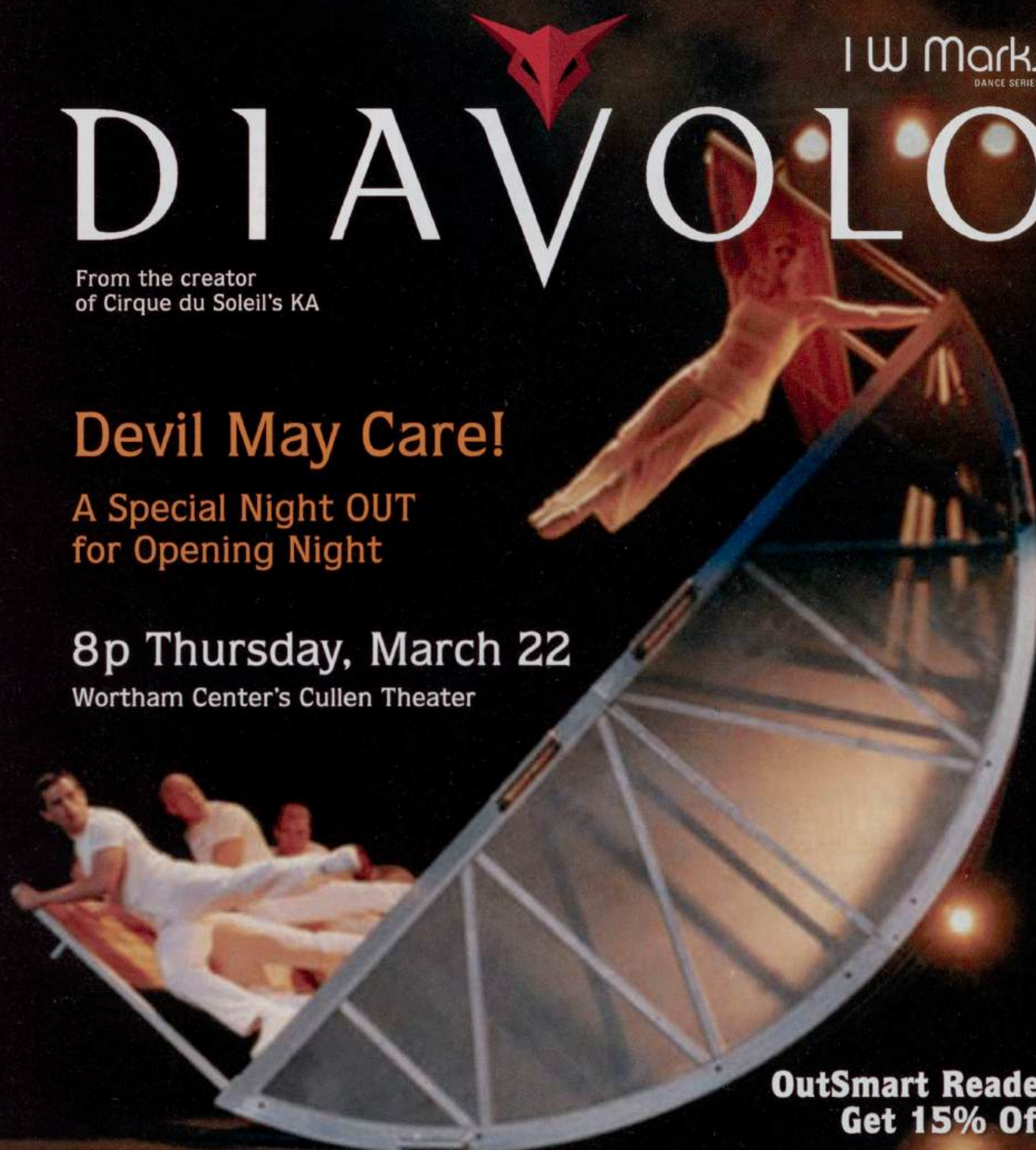
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Letters

CREDIT WHERE DUE

I read the article in *OutSmart* titled "Caucus Partners with Equality Texas to Lobby in Austin" (News Briefs, February 2007). I wanted to note that to my knowledge HERA and Nechman, Simoneaux and Frye are the only local partners for Equality Texas on the Lobby Day project—HERA has been active in working with Equality Texas on Lobby Day since early November.

Tammi Wallace
 Houston

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tammi Wallace is president of the Houston Equal Rights Alliance.

WEDDED MISTERS

Congratulations [to *OutSmart*] on 14 years of amazing work and service to the community!

Thank you so much for asking us to participate and allowing us to spread the word on Freedom To Marry Week ("The Marrying Men," February 2007). The article and photo turned out better than we could have ever imagined. Both Natasha [Avey] and John [Conroy] were so easy to work with and we are certainly delighted with the results. Great job on the layout/design and title for the piece!

Darin Brindle
 Houston

EDITOR'S NOTE: Contributing writer Natasha Avey interviewed Darin Brindle and Mark Eggleston for our February issue. They were photographed by John Conroy.

BUTCH IT UP

Really?! People hate butch women? Even lesbians hate butch women? [What a World, February 2007]? Not me. I'm a long-time lesbian with impeccable credentials and I love butch women! LOVE 'em! Every single one.

Jazz Paz
 Houston

CORRECTIONS

Randall Terrell is political director of Equality Texas, not Equality Houston, as we mistakenly indicated in News Briefs in the February issue.

In Time Out with *OutSmart* in February, we incorrectly identified the landmark in the photograph. It is Castle Howard.

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BOOT SCOOT BOOGIE.

As cowboys and girls near and far pull on their boots in preparation for the 2007 Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, popular community artist Kermit Eisenhut is elevating the spit-n-polish routine to new heights.

Aiming to raise awareness for the 75th anniversary of the legendary event, the rodeo selected local artists, including Eisenhut, for Boot Scoot 2007. The artists were challenged to decorate 85 fiberglass boots measuring six feet tall by six feet long (what's that they say about foot size?) for display at various Houston-area locations. Eisenhut's boot commemorating the diamond jubilee of the rodeo is displayed at Reliant Stadium. Eisenhut adorned several boots for the rodeo and says a favorite is hard to pick—"I like 'em all!" He does have particular affection for one big shoe decorated with rustic photographs of buggys and wagons—the Old West's methods of transportation. Ride 'em, cowboy!

Photographed by Nathan Haase



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¹ Undetectable is defined as a viral load of less than 400 or 50 copies/mL (depending on the test used).

² REYATAZ in combination therapy had a 1-3% rate of moderate-to-severe diarrhea.

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate)

INDICATION: REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate) is a prescription medicine used in combination with other medicines to treat people who are infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). REYATAZ has been studied in 48-week trials in both patients who have taken or have never taken anti-HIV medicines.

REYATAZ does not cure HIV or help prevent passing HIV to others.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:

Do not take REYATAZ if you are taking the following medicines: ergot medicines, Versed[®], Halcion[®], Orap[®], Propulsid[®], Camptosar[®], Crixivan[®], Mevacor[®], Zocor[®], rifampin, St. John's wort, Aciphex[®], Nexium[®], Prevacid[®], Prilosec[®], or Protonix[®]. Do not use Viagra[®], Levitra[®], Cialis[®], Vfold[®], Advair[®], Flonase[®], or Flovent[®] while you are taking REYATAZ without first speaking with your healthcare provider. This list of

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medicines is not complete. Discuss all prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamin and herbal supplements, or other health preparations you are taking or plan to take with your healthcare provider.

Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any side effects or conditions, including the following:

- A change in the way your heart beats may occur and could be a symptom of a heart problem.
- Diabetes and high blood sugar may occur in patients taking protease inhibitor medicines like REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate).
- Yellowing of the skin and/or eyes may occur due to increases in bilirubin levels in the blood (bilirubin is made by the liver).
- Rash (redness and itching) sometimes occurs in patients taking REYATAZ, most often in the first few weeks after the medicine is started, and usually goes away within two weeks with no change in treatment.

• If you have liver disease, including hepatitis B or C, your liver disease may get worse when you take anti-HIV medicines like REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate).

• Some patients with hemophilia have increased bleeding problems with protease inhibitor medicines like REYATAZ.

Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking anti-HIV medicines. The cause and long-term effects are not known at this time.

Other side effects of REYATAZ taken with other anti-HIV medicines include: nausea, headache, stomach pain, vomiting, diarrhea, depression, fever, dizziness, trouble sleeping, numbness, and tingling or burning of hands or feet.

You should take REYATAZ once daily with food (a meal or snack). You should take REYATAZ and your other anti-HIV medicines exactly as instructed by your healthcare provider.

Please see Important Patient Information about REYATAZ on the next page.

If you or someone you know needs help paying for medicine, call 1-888-499-4009 (1-888-477-2669). Or go to www.gilead.org



PATIENT INFORMATION

REYATAZ® (RAY-ah-taz) (generic name = atazanavir sulfate) Capsules

ALERT: Find out about medicines that should NOT be taken with REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate). Read the section "What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?"

Read the Patient Information that comes with REYATAZ before you start using it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This leaflet provides a summary about REYATAZ and does not include everything there is to know about your medicine. This information does not take the place of talking with your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment.

What is REYATAZ?

REYATAZ is a prescription medicine used with other anti-HIV medicines to treat people who are infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). HIV is the virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). REYATAZ is a type of anti-HIV medicine called a protease inhibitor. HIV infection destroys CD4+ (T) cells, which are important to the immune system. The immune system helps fight infection. After a large number of (T) cells are destroyed, AIDS develops. REYATAZ helps to block HIV protease, an enzyme that is needed for the HIV virus to multiply. REYATAZ may lower the amount of HIV in your blood, help your body keep its supply of CD4+ (T) cells, and reduce the risk of death and illness associated with HIV.

Does REYATAZ cure HIV or AIDS?

REYATAZ does not cure HIV infection or AIDS. At present there is no cure for HIV infection. People taking REYATAZ may still get opportunistic infections or other conditions that happen with HIV infection. Opportunistic infections are infections that develop because the immune system is weak. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, and *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections. **It is very important that you see your healthcare provider regularly while taking REYATAZ.**

REYATAZ does not lower your chance of passing HIV to other people through sexual contact, sharing needles, or being exposed to your blood. For your health and the health of others, it is important to always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom or other barrier to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood. Never use or share dirty needles.

Who should not take REYATAZ?

Do not take REYATAZ if you:

- **are taking certain medicines.** (See "What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?") Serious life-threatening side effects or death may happen. Before you take REYATAZ, tell your healthcare provider about all medicines you are taking or planning to take. These include other prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.
- **are allergic to REYATAZ or to any of its ingredients.** The active ingredient is atazanavir sulfate. See the end of this leaflet for a complete list of ingredients in REYATAZ. Tell your healthcare provider if you think you have had an allergic reaction to any of these ingredients.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before I take REYATAZ?

Tell your healthcare provider:

- **If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.** It is not known if REYATAZ can harm your unborn baby. Pregnant women have experienced serious side effects when taking REYATAZ with other HIV medicines called nucleoside analogues. You and your healthcare provider will need to decide if REYATAZ is right for you. If you use REYATAZ while you are pregnant, talk to your healthcare provider about the Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry.
- **If you are breast-feeding.** You should not breast-feed if you are HIV-positive because of the chance of passing HIV to your baby. Also, it is not known if REYATAZ can pass into your breast milk and if it can harm your baby. If you are a woman who has or will have a baby, talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.
- **If you have liver problems or are infected with the hepatitis B or C virus.** See "What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?"
- **If you have diabetes.** See "What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?"
- **If you have hemophilia.** See "What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?"
- **About all the medicines you take** including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Keep a list of your medicines with you to show your healthcare provider. For more information, see "What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?" and "Who should not take REYATAZ?" Some medicines can cause serious side effects if taken with REYATAZ.

How should I take REYATAZ?

- **Take REYATAZ once every day exactly as instructed by your healthcare provider.** Your healthcare provider will prescribe the amount of REYATAZ that is right for you.
 - For adults who have never taken anti-HIV medicines before, the usual dose is 400 mg (two 200-mg capsules) once daily taken with food.
 - For adults who have taken anti-HIV medicines in the past, the usual dose is 300 mg (one 300-mg capsule or two 150-mg capsules) plus 100 mg of NORVIR® (ritonavir) once daily taken with food.
 Your dose will depend on your liver function and on the other anti-HIV medicines that you are taking. REYATAZ is always used with other anti-HIV medicines. If you are taking REYATAZ with SUSTIVA® (efavirenz) or with VIREAD® (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate), you should also be taking NORVIR® (ritonavir).
- **Always take REYATAZ with food** (a meal or snack) to help it work better. Swallow the capsules whole. **Do not open the capsules.** Take REYATAZ at the same time each day.
- **If you are taking antacids or didanosine (VIDEX® or VIDEX EC),** take REYATAZ 2 hours before or 1 hour after these medicines.
- **If you are taking medicines for indigestion, heartburn, or ulcers such as AXID® (nizatidine), PEPCID AC® (famotidine), TAGAMET® (cimetidine), or ZANTAC® (ranitidine),** talk to your healthcare provider.
- **Do not change your dose or stop taking REYATAZ without first talking with your healthcare provider.** It is important to stay under a healthcare provider's care while taking REYATAZ.
- **When your supply of REYATAZ starts to run low,** get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy. It is important not to run out of REYATAZ. The amount of HIV in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time.
- **If you miss a dose of REYATAZ,** take it as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose at its regular time. If, however, it is within 6 hours of your next dose, do not take the missed dose. Wait and take the next dose at the regular time. Do not double the next dose. **It is important that you do not miss any doses of REYATAZ or your other anti-HIV medicines.**
- **If you take more than the prescribed dose of REYATAZ,** call your healthcare provider or poison control center right away.

Can children take REYATAZ?

REYATAZ has not been fully studied in children under 16 years of age. REYATAZ should not be used in babies under the age of 3 months.

What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?

The following list of side effects is not complete. Report any new or continuing symptoms to your healthcare provider. If you have questions about side effects, ask your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider may be able to help you manage these side effects.

The following side effects have been reported with REYATAZ:

- **rash** (redness and itching) sometimes occurs in patients taking REYATAZ, most often in the first few weeks after the medicine is started. Rashes usually go away within 2 weeks with no change in treatment. Tell your healthcare provider if rash occurs.
- **yellowing of the skin or eyes.** These effects may be due to increases in bilirubin levels in the blood (bilirubin is made by the liver). Call your healthcare provider if your skin or the white part of your eyes turn yellow. Although these effects may not be damaging to your liver, skin, or eyes, it is important to tell your healthcare provider promptly if they occur.
- **a change in the way your heart beats (heart rhythm change).** Call your healthcare provider right away if you get dizzy or lightheaded. These could be symptoms of a heart problem.
- **diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia)** sometimes happen in patients taking protease inhibitor medicines like REYATAZ. Some patients had diabetes before taking protease inhibitors while others did not. Some patients may need changes in their diabetes medicine.

ONLY

- **if you have liver disease** including hepatitis B or C, your liver disease may get worse when you take anti-HIV medicines like REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate).
- **some patients with hemophilia** have increased bleeding problems with protease inhibitors like REYATAZ.
- **changes in body fat.** These changes may include an increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.

Other common side effects of REYATAZ taken with other anti-HIV medicines include nausea; headache; stomach pain; vomiting; diarrhea; depression; fever; dizziness; trouble sleeping; numbness, tingling, or burning of hands or feet; and muscle pain.

What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?

Do not take REYATAZ if you take the following medicines (not all brands may be listed; tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take). REYATAZ may cause serious, life-threatening side effects or death when used with these medicines.

- Ergot medicines: dihydroergotamine, ergonovine, ergotamine, and methylergonovine such as CAFERGOT®, MIGRANAL®, D.H.E. 45®, ergotrate maleate, METHERGINE®, and others (used for migraine headaches).
- HALCION® (triazolam, used for insomnia).
- VERSED® (midazolam, used for sedation).
- ORAP® (pimozide, used for Tourette's disorder).
- PROPLUSID® (cisapride, used for certain stomach problems).

Do not take the following medicines with REYATAZ because of possible serious side effects:

- CAMPTOSAR® (irinotecan, used for cancer).
- CRIVIAN® (indinavir, used for HIV infection). Both REYATAZ and CRIVIAN sometimes cause increased levels of bilirubin in the blood.
- Cholesterol-lowering medicines MEVACOR® (lovastatin) or ZOCOR® (simvastatin).

Do not take the following medicines with REYATAZ because they may lower the amount of REYATAZ in your blood. This may lead to an increased HIV viral load. Resistance to REYATAZ or cross-resistance to other HIV medicines may develop.

- Rifampin (also known as RIMACTANE®, RIFADIN®, RIFATER®, or RIFAMATE®, used for tuberculosis).
- St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), an herbal product sold as a dietary supplement, or products containing St. John's wort.
- "Proton-pump inhibitors" used for indigestion, heartburn, or ulcers such as AcipHex® (rabeprazole), NEXIUM® (esomeprazole), PREVACID® (lansoprazole), PRILOSEC® (omeprazole), or PROTONIX® (pantoprazole).

Do not take the following medicine if you are taking REYATAZ and NORVIR® together.

- VFEND® (voriconazole).

The following medicines may require your healthcare provider to monitor your therapy more closely:

- CIALIS® (tadalafil), LEVITRA® (vardenafil), or VIAGRA® (sildenafil). REYATAZ may increase the chances of serious side effects that can happen with CIALIS, LEVITRA, or VIAGRA. Do not use CIALIS, LEVITRA, or VIAGRA while you are taking REYATAZ unless your healthcare provider tells you it is okay.
- LIPITOR® (atorvastatin). There is an increased chance of serious side effects if you take REYATAZ with this cholesterol-lowering medicine.
- Medicines for abnormal heart rhythm: CORDARONE® (amiodarone), lidocaine, quinidine (also known as CARDIOQUIN®, QUINIDEX®, and others).
- VASCOR® (bepridil, used for chest pain).
- COUMADIN® (warfarin).
- Tricyclic antidepressants such as ELAVIL® (amitriptyline), NORPRAMIN® (desipramine), SINEQUAN® (doxepin), SURMONTIL® (trimipramine), TOFRANIL® (imipramine), or VIVACTIL® (protriptyline).
- Medicines to prevent organ transplant rejection: SANDIMMUNE® or NEORAL® (cyclosporin), RAPAMUNE® (sirolimus), or PROGRAF® (tacrolimus).
- The antidepressant trazodone (DESYREL® and others).
- Fluticasone propionate (ADVAIR®, FLONASE®, FLOVENT®), given by nose or inhaled to treat allergic symptoms or asthma. Your doctor may choose not to keep you on fluticasone, especially if you are also taking NORVIR®.

The following medicines may require a change in the dose or dose schedule of either REYATAZ or the other medicine:

- FORTOVASE® (didanosine).
- NORVIR® (ritonavir).
- SUSTIVA® (efavirenz).
- Antacids or buffered medicines.
- VIDEX® (didanosine).
- VIREAD® (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate).
- MYCOBUTIN® (rifabutin).
- Calcium channel blockers such as CARDIZEM® or TIAZAC® (diltiazem), COVERA-HS® or ISOPTIN SR® (verapamil), and others.
- BIAXIN® (clarithromycin).
- Medicines for indigestion, heartburn, or ulcers such as AXID® (nizatidine), PEPCID AC® (famotidine), TAGAMET® (cimetidine), or ZANTAC® (ranitidine).

Women who use birth control pills or "the patch" should choose a different kind of contraception. REYATAZ may affect the safety and effectiveness of birth control pills or the patch. Talk to your healthcare provider about choosing an effective contraceptive.

Remember:

1. Know all the medicines you take.
2. Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take.
3. Do not start a new medicine without talking to your healthcare provider.

How should I store REYATAZ?

- Store REYATAZ Capsules at room temperature, 59° to 86° F (15° to 30° C). Do not store this medicine in a damp place such as a bathroom medicine cabinet or near the kitchen sink.
- Keep your medicine in a tightly closed container.
- Throw away REYATAZ when it is outdated or no longer needed by flushing it down the toilet or pouring it down the sink.

General information about REYATAZ

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use REYATAZ for another condition. Do not give REYATAZ to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them. **Keep REYATAZ and all medicines out of the reach of children and pets.**

This summary does not include everything there is to know about REYATAZ. Medicines are sometimes prescribed for conditions that are not mentioned in patient information leaflets. Remember no written summary can replace careful discussion with your healthcare provider. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider or you can call 1-800-321-1335.

What are the ingredients in REYATAZ?

Active ingredient: atazanavir sulfate
Inactive ingredients: Crospovidone, lactose monohydrate (milk sugar), magnesium stearate, gelatin, FD&C Blue #2, titanium dioxide, black iron oxide, red iron oxide, and yellow iron oxide.

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This Patient Information Leaflet has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

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Revised October 2006

OutFront



SECOND HELPINGS.

Think of it as the ultimate Montrose garage sale.

Legacy Community Health Services' most recent program for the community, Lasting Legacy resale shop, is in full swing and open for business. And if customers are lucky, Legacy's Miss Mint Julep 2007, Aurora Briar (a.k.a. Jeffrey Forbes), may be on hand to aid them with their shopping needs.

The store, occupying the 1232 Westheimer space that once housed Basic Brothers apparel shop, offers an emporium for discerning shoppers looking for bargains, whether in clothing, furniture, or housewares. Donations (details: 713/528-1653, www.legacycommunityhealth.org) are not only tax deductible, but can also give your favorite, now-too-tight pair of jeans or that extra coffee maker you got for Christmas a new, altruistic raison d'etre.

Photographed
by Steven David

DATEBOOK

Arshad Hasan, openly gay national director of training for **Democracy for America**, leads the Mar. 3-4 DFA Training Academy for grassroots activists presented at the CWA Union Hall by the Vermont-based nonprofit advocacy organization. Participants include Houston GLBT Political Caucus board member Elizabeth McLane. Details: 802/651-3200, www.democracyforamerica.com.

Montrose Counseling Center begins a **Sexual Assault Survivor Support Group** for GLBT and questioning teens on Tuesdays, 6-7:30 p.m., beginning Mar. 6. Register: Allison Vogt, LBSW, 713/529-007, ext. 339.

Beryl Kaminsky, LPC, CT, a counselor previously affiliated with Bering Support Network and now in private practice, begins a **Grief Support Group** on Mar. 6, 6-8:30 p.m., at a Museum District venue. Details: 713/303-9021.

Houston GLBT Political Caucus PAC endorses a candidate for the May 12 special City Council election at its Mar. 7, 7 p.m., meeting at the Houston GLBT Community Center. Candidates include Noel Freeman, president of Log Cabin Republicans Houston ("Gay Watch," February *OutSmart*). Caucus PAC hosts a wine reception prior to the meeting. Details: 713/521-1000, www.hglbtpc.org.

On Mar. 8, Oscar de la Rosa Foundation presents **Walk In My Shoes**, a 5:30-7:30 p.m. celebrity shoe auction, with some proceeds benefiting AIDS Walk Houston, at JP Morgan Chase Heritage Hall. Details: 281/413-7323.

Houston GLBT Community Center hosts its monthly GLBT Night @ Hollywood informal dinner on Mar. 13, 6:30 p.m., at Hollywood Vietnamese & Chinese, featuring door prizes provided by OutSmart. Details: 713/524-3818, www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org.

On Mar. 14, **Houston-Galveston Psychoanalytic Society** presents "Scrambled Eggs: Psychological Meanings of New Reproductive Choices for Lesbians," a talk by Susan C. Vaughan, M.D., Columbia University assistant professor of clinical psychiatry, at Bo's Place. Details: Margaret Jordan, mjordan@aol.com, www.hgpsas.org.

Montrose Counseling Center begins a **Coming Out Group for GLBT** and questioning individuals on Mar. 15, 6-8:30 p.m., continuing every Thursday for 8 weeks. Details: 713/529.0037, ext. 714 or ext. 702.

PFLAG/HATCH Youth Scholarship Foundation presents its annual spring fundraising dinner on Mar. 16, 6:30 p.m., at the Junior League of Houston. \$100-\$150. Details: Stacie Cokinos, staciecokinos@hotmail.com.

Houston Black Tie Dinner accepts beneficiary applications (available at www.houstonblacktiedinner.org) for its 2007 event through Mar. 16. Details: Matthew P. (Matt) Trietsch, 713/492-0924, mpt7601@yahoo.com.

Apr. 2 is the deadline for the **"Make a Difference for Equality" essay contest** for college students sponsored by Human Rights Campaign Houston and Houston Equal Rights Alliance. The writer of the winning 250-word submission receives a seat at the Apr. 22 HRC gala. Submissions: essaycontest@hrchouston.org.

More: www.outsmartmagazine.com

NEWS BRIEFS COMPILED BY NANCY FORD

EQUALITY DAY LOBBYISTS TO FACE GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS

When lobbyists and concerned citizens join together at the state capitol to engage Texas lawmakers for Lobby Day 2007 on March 5, they will have plenty to discuss.

In February, Rep. Garnet Coleman (D-Houston) filed a bill to amend the James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act to include transgender Texans. Coleman's House Bill 1289 specifically refers to personal or property damage incurred "because of the defendant's bias or prejudice against a group identified by race, color, disability, religion, national origin or ancestry, age, gender, [or] sexual preference, or gender identity or expression."

Rep. Mike Villarreal (D-San Antonio) has introduced HB 900, titled the "Freedom from Workplace and Housing Discrimination Act," which seeks to prohibit discrimination against gays and lesbians in public accommodations, employment, and housing.

In less-inclusive news, on February 8, the *Austin American-Statesman* reported that Rep. Warren Chisum (R-Pampa), long an opponent of GLBT equality, has included in a list of his goals as chair of the House of Representatives appropriations committee, "tweaking state law to give heterosexuals preferred status as foster



Paul Scott of Equality Texas

parents over gay parents."

"Chisum is directly contradicting his own statements, made after the Proposition 2 marriage amendment passed, that he would no longer attack gay families. He is placing our state's most vulnerable children at risk to the radical right's continuing crusade against gay and lesbian parents," said Paul E. Scott, executive director of Equality Texas, the GLBT lobbying group. "If Chisum's true concern was for the well-being of

Texas' children, he would not damage their lives by 'tweaking' an already overburdened foster care system to potentially discourage the applications of capable, loving parents."

Equality Texas, which sponsors Lobby Day 2007, calls the event the "single greatest opportunity" for GLBT Texans to advocate for equal rights and opportunity for themselves and their families.

Lobby Day events begin on Sunday, March 4, with a reception at the Wyndham Garden Hotel. Breakfast and training will kick off on the morning of March 5, followed by team lobbying visits in capitol offices. Houston Equal Rights Alliance serves as the local partner with Equality Texas for Lobby Day. More information: www.equalitytexas.org, www.houstonera.org.

BAYOU CITY GOES BEHIND THE MUSIC

Bayou City Performing Arts debuts a new Behind the Music series this month with a public discussion of faith-inspired music. The arts organization, which is the umbrella group for Gay Men's Chorus of Houston and Bayou City Women's Chorus, presents the March 10 event, "Reclaiming Faith: A Symposium on GLBT Spirituality," in conjunction with the March 13 Gay Men's Chorus concert, *House of Hope*. The panel for the 3-5 p.m. event at the Live Oaks Friends Meeting House, which is open to the public at no charge, includes representatives of several faith traditions, including Hiram Butler, who is a Quaker, and Rev. Jeremy



Rev. Jeremy Rutledge of Covenant Church

Rutledge of Covenant Church (American Baptist Church). Rev. Dr. John Tolley of the Unitarian Universalist-affiliated Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago.

The *House of Hope* concert includes music from an international range of faiths. "I think it is going to be one of the most important concerts we have ever done," artistic director James Knapp says. Selections include *The Chichester Psalms* (performed in Hebrew) by Leonard Bernstein, the traditional spiritual "Down by the Riverside," the civil-rights anthem "We Shall Overcome," Buddhist chants, and John Lennon's "Imagine."

More information: www.bayoucityperformingarts.org.

continued on page 16



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Milestones



MARRIED Jessica L. Frinsco (left) and Hillary J. Woest were formally joined in love in a commitment ceremony held on January 21 in the Historic Magnolia Ballroom. The ceremony themed "Live. Laugh. Love." was officiated by close friend Nancy Ford. Following a brief honeymoon in San Francisco, California, Frinsco and Woest returned to their careers in the Pasadena Independent School District. They will continue living in the Heights, where they have resided together for more than two years.



COURTESY BERING OMEGA

HIRED Ann Reed (pictured) has joined Bering Omega Community Services as vice president of operations. Reed previously served as executive vice president and chief operating officer for DePelchin Children's Center.

ELECTED Christopher Bown has been re-elected president of the Houston GLBT Community Center board of directors. Fran Vaughan was elected treasurer of the organization at the January board meeting. They join vice president Nelvin Esquillo and secretary April Ayers as officers.



COURTESY LEGACY

HIRED Ophthalmologist Scott Sawyer, M.D., (left) is now on staff at Legacy Community Health Services. Barry Mandel joined Legacy last month as chief operating officer. Mandel was previously president and CEO of the Houston Downtown Alliance. Sawyer and Mandel are partners.

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 14

DIANA FOUNDATION TOPS \$1.3 MILLION THIS MONTH

Over its 54-year history, the Diana Foundation—which began as an Academy Awards spoof party organized by some friends—has raised \$1.3 million for local charities, including many of the HIV/AIDS service organization in Houston. After a hiatus of its annual spring fundraising event, the Dianas return this month with a performance by Austin-based chanteuse Hedda Layne—perhaps best known here for performing at Meteor before that club closed—on March 24, 7 p.m., at the Houston City Club. The black-tie event (tickets: \$150) includes dinner and cocktails. Proceeds will support a community beneficiary, according to Diana Foundation



Hedda Layne

president John Heinzerling, which will be announced after the event. Tickets: Mark Wade Brown, 713/299-1303.

HOUSTONIAN LOIS CHILES REMEMBERS HER FAMOUS HOLLYWOOD TEACHER

On March 26, movie actress and Houston native Lois Chiles (*The Way We Were*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Moonraker*) pays tribute to her well-known acting coach Roy London as part of a 7 p.m. screening of the documentary *Special Thanks to Roy London—How to Act, How to Live*. Chiles, who recently taught film acting at the University of Houston and now lives in New York, will join documentary director Christopher Monger in a post-film discussion about the coach, who taught a number of well-known stars, including Geena Davis, Sharon Stone, Jeff Goldblum, Garry Shandling, and another Houstonian, Patrick Swayze. London died of AIDS complications in 1993. More information: www.mfah.org.



Acting teacher Roy London with the actress Lois Chiles, a Houston native.

HOUSTON HIP-HOP STAR J XAVIER LEADS AIDS WALK

Fourteen-year-old Houston native J Xavier, who recently released his debut CD, *Young Prince of the South*, and 21-year-old AIDS activist Hydeia Broadbent serve as grand marshals for the 18th annual AIDS Walk Houston on March 11. Read AIDS Foundation Houston CEO Kelly McCann's new column, "AIDS Watch" (page 28) for more information on HIV/AIDS service organizations that benefit from the annual event. More information: www.aidswalkhouston.org.



J Xavier

ON THE WEB:
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JUST MEMORIES

Twenty years have passed since the shocking death of bar owner Marion Pantzer

A lot can happen in 20 years. Texas' sodomy laws have been declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. Men who played professional basketball can announce they are gay. Women can wear fly-front pants—in public!—without fear of being arrested for cross-dressing.

Marion would be stunned.

Marion Pantzer owned Just Marion and Lynn's, one of Houston's very first bars for lesbians. Like many of the earliest gathering places in our community, Just Marion and Lynn's was a no-frills kind of establishment. The club, now the site of Cousins' neighborhood bar on Fairview, started out as a garage or warehouse of some sort: poorly lit with concrete floors, card tables, and long folding tables with folding chairs, some of them painted red. That was about as fancy as it got.

But the women and men who came to Just Marion and Lynn's weren't looking for fancy. We were looking for each other. We were looking for a safe place—as safe a place as possible—where we could share a beer and a story and a game of pool and maybe even a dance before vice cops came in to make sure that those dancing were dancing with a partner of the opposite sex. Ah, the good old, bad old days....

On my 30th birthday, I was shanghaied by friends for a pub crawl. One stop, of course, was Just Marion and Lynn's.

After downing our obligatory beers there and then spilling out on to Fairview to debate where we would land next, one of my rowdier friends produced a billiard ball from her pocket as her birthday gift to me. I remember being shocked—*shocked*, I tell you—that she had committed such a heinous act, leaving Just Marion and Lynn's billiard-playing patrons one ball short.

I put the smooth and inexplicably nicotine-stained 11-ball in my own pocket (my corner pocket?), intending to return it to Marion the next day.

While I publicly apologize to anyone who tried to play pool without that 11-ball, I am so glad I never returned it. The ball is one of my most prized possessions. It sits on

a bookcase in my bedroom, reminding me daily of a time when playing pool in a dingy, poorly lit garage with red folding chairs was all we had.

The mid-'80s saw Marion move Just Marion and Lynn's to a newer building on Richmond, near Montrose Boulevard. This time the club was dubbed Just Marion's and opened the year I had abandoned corporate life to pursue a career in comedy.

To help make ends meet between gigs, I

Marion pulled the ever-present .25 calibre automatic from her sweatshirt to defend her employees and her property. But her draw wasn't as fast as it had been when she served in World War II.

delivered singing telegrams. It was my pattern to stop by Just Marion's after a night of delivering birthday greetings and get-well tunes. During those late-night visits, I made small talk with Marion about her earlier life as a real circus clown, weakly comparing her experience to my lame clown 'grams for children's birthday parties.

The evening of March 10, 1986, I delivered a few telegrams, as usual. But I didn't drop by Just Marion's after my gigs. Who knows why not? Maybe comedian Bill Hicks was appearing on *Letterman* that night.

The following morning, my friend Billie Duncan called, sobbing with the horrific news that Marion had been shot.

Two men had entered Just Marion's at about 1 a.m., presumably to rob it. When she realized what was happening, Marion pulled the ever-present .25 calibre automatic from her sweatshirt to defend her employees and

her property. But her draw wasn't as fast as it had been when she served in World War II. She was gunned down in a flurry of five shots, the fatal bullet piercing her aorta.

Montrose went crazy. Disbelievers, both male and female, swarmed the tiny bar begging for the news not to be true. Marion's subsequent funeral was one of the largest and best attended in our city's history, with hundreds of community folk, business owners, police officers, drag queens, military personnel, and politicians paying their respects. One of the final registrants in the guestbook was Kathy Whitmire, the mayor of Houston.

Controversy still surrounds Marion's death. One of the accused, Roger McGowen, today sits on death row in Huntsville, insisting that though his car was used in the commission of the crime, it was his cousin Charles McGowen who had been driving. Roger says he was not even present at the robbery. Charles cannot confirm his cousin's story because he was slain by police while committing another robbery a few months later.

Loe has it that Marion's male bartender and friend, Peaches, testified at the trial that the bar was held up that night by two men in ski masks. If the two were wearing ski masks, the prosecuting attorney asked Peaches, how did he know they were men?

"Honey, I know a man when I see one," Peaches is said to have replied, likely with at least two snaps. Marion would have gotten a big laugh out of that one.

Fast forward 20 years. The Proletariat, a music venue, now occupies the site that housed Just Marion's at 903 Richmond.

On the afternoon of March 11, I intend to swing by The Proletariat. Maybe I'll have a beer, maybe I'll play a game of pool, maybe I'll share a story. Join me, if you like. If you're old enough to remember Marion Pantzer and her legacy, bring along someone who isn't but who believes preserving our Montrose history is important.

But this time let's leave all the balls on the pool table. ■



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LOOKS LIKE AMERICA

A diverse Democratic field line up for the White House race

It's hard not to get excited about the Democratic primary for President. Clinton. Obama. Edwards. Richardson. Biden. Vilsak. Dodd. Kucinik. What a lineup.

What's exciting is that the Democratic primary actually looks like the face of America. A woman, an African American, a Hispanic, and several white men. And while it is true that Clinton is not the first woman to ever run (see Shirley Chisholm, Elizabeth Dole), and Obama is not the first African American to ever run (see Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton), they are the first to run who have a real shot at winning the Democratic nomination and perhaps the White House. And Bill Richardson is the first Hispanic candidate to ever mount a serious effort to become the so-called leader of the free world.

Who knows how this will all shake out? It will be interesting to watch and see whether the country is ready for a female Commander in Chief. It seems odd to me that anyone would think Hillary Clinton isn't tough

enough to wage a war. Undoubtedly, she is a polarizing figure. Everyone really likes her or really hates her. Mention her name, and no one is lukewarm in his or her response. But whatever anyone says about Clinton, she is no wilting flower. She will raise gazillions of dollars. She is smart and disciplined. She is experienced. She saw and learned a lot in her eight years in the White House, and that, together with her time in the Senate and on the armed services committee, makes her more qualified than the current occupant of the Oval Office.

Personally, I like her. She doesn't offend or scare me as she does so many others. I think she would do a fine job—if she were elected. But I don't think she's electable. And I don't think that's because America is not ready for a female president. I just don't think America is ready for a female president like Hillary Clinton. She simply comes with too much baggage. From her famed *60 Minutes* interview, to the health-care debacle, to standing

by her man when she said she wouldn't, has acquired a long and public trail of offenses that too many people cannot forgive, or forget. Still, she is the 600-pound gorilla in the Democratic primary, and it will be interesting to see if anyone can take her out.

Obama is the anti-Hillary. He has a thin résumé, having served only two years in the Senate. He is a daunting intellect (former editor of the *Harvard Law Review*) and an outstanding orator. He has achieved rock-star status in the Democratic Party almost overnight. Unlike Clinton though, he doesn't seem to offend or scare anyone. He's not polarizing. He doesn't have a long or a public history of offending anyone. Any baggage that he has, he outlined himself in one of his two best-selling books, admitting that he smoked pot and did "a little blow." But he immunized himself from attacks and questions in the process.

Obama isn't strident or provocative on the stump. On the contrary, every time he

continued on page 22

SERVE AND TELL

A prominent general deals another blow to the antigay military ban

Bit by bit, support for the military's ban on openly gay service members is crumbling. In a recent and important *New York Times* op-ed, retired army general and former Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman (1993-97) John Shalikashvili concludes that the antigay Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy should be phased out.

Shalikashvili's stand is especially significant because the Joint Chiefs, who comprise the nation's top officers in each branch and advise the president on military matters, were the most influential opponents of President Clinton's proposal to lift the ban on gays in the military back in 1993. In fact, their opposition to lifting the ban was the decisive factor in creating DADT as a "compromise" that would supposedly allow gay Americans to serve as long as they hid their sexual orientation.

In fact, DADT changed nothing in practice since it was always the case that service members whose homosexual orientation was unknown could serve. In some ways, DADT

appears to have made things worse, perhaps by heightening awareness in the military about the presence of thousands of gays in the ranks. Discharges for homosexuality have risen almost every year since the policy became effective.

The basic reason Shalikashvili gives for his conversion is that the experience of the last 14 years has shown that allowing gays to serve openly would not undermine morale, harm recruitment, or hurt unit cohesion—long the main claims of those who have opposed allowing gay Americans to serve.

He cites four factors as support for his new view. First, we can look to the experience of more than two dozen other countries (including, person-for-person, the world's most effective militaries, Britain and Israel) that allow gays to serve openly. These military forces have not suffered the problems predicted by opponents of allowing gays to serve openly.

Second, attitudes in the military have softened considerably since 1993, when many service members strongly opposed letting gays

serve. A recent Zogby poll of more than 500 military personnel returning from Afghanistan and Iraq showed that three quarters were comfortable interacting with gay people. Only a small percentage indicated they would have a serious problem serving with gays.

Third, Shalikashvili has interviewed gay service members and learned that gays are already serving openly and honorably in many units. His interviews included "gay soldiers and Marines, including some with combat experience in Iraq, and an openly gay senior sailor who was serving effectively as a member of a nuclear submarine crew." Back in 1993, the Democratic Senator Sam Nunn luridly took reporters on a tour of the cramped quarters in a submarine to demonstrate the inappropriateness of allowing gays to serve. Shalikashvili's interviews showed him "just how much the military has changed, and that gays and lesbians can be accepted by their peers."

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LeftOut continued from page 20

talks he sounds like he is giving a pep talk or a motivational speech. People are flocking to his candidacy and lining up to get a closer look. But how long Obama will enjoy the love affair he is currently having with the press and the public is the big question. It's only a matter of time before the new wears off.

Sometime during the next 12 months, his pep talks will have to turn into policy speeches. His qualifications will be compared to those of Clinton, John Edwards, and the others. And he will be forced to convince people that his two years in the Senate is enough to prepare him for the presidency.

I don't think he will be able to pull it off. And I don't think his race will cost him the nomination. If he had Colin Powell's résumé to go with his own charisma, he would be unbeatable. But he doesn't.

Bill Richardson is like neither Clinton nor Obama. He doesn't have Clinton's negatives, but he doesn't have Obama's star quality either. He does have a résumé full of accomplishments and qualifications. He has been a congressman, ambassador to the United Nations, secretary of energy, and the governor of New Mexico. He also has an interesting story. He was born to an American father and a Mexican mother, and he grew up in Mexico City before moving to New England. He will be the first truly bilingual candidate to campaign for president to a growing number of Hispanic voters. Still, it's hard to imagine that he can leapfrog over Clinton or Obama or take out Edwards.

Whatever happens, this is a great time to be a Democrat. We have a woman, an African American, and a Hispanic who all make outstanding candidates. Any of them could actually become the 43rd president of the United States, if only they can make it out of the Democratic primary.

On the other side of the race, the Republicans have their usual diversity: John McCain, Mitt Romney, Rudy Giuliani, Sam Brownback, and perhaps Chuck Hagel. The first three are running to the right in an attempt to placate the fundamentalists who control the Republican primary. McCain is politicking to Jerry Falwell. Romney is running from his record on gay rights. Giuliani is running from his record on abortion. Brownback doesn't have to run to the far right because he is a fundamentalist. Hagel has spent the last three months attacking the president on Iraq and sounding more like a Democrat than a Republican.

Like I said, it's a good time to be a Democrat. I only wish there were a gay or lesbian person in the mix. One of these days...

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

OutRight continued from page 21

military personnel. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the larger war on terror, require an all-hands-on-deck approach to military recruitment and retention. "Our military has been stretched thin by our deployments in the Middle East, and we must welcome the service of any American who is willing and able to do the job," concludes Shalikashvili.

The time has come for Congress to look seriously at lifting the ban. Other former military leaders and supporters of DADT have urged likewise. A study earlier this year showed that the policy has not only cost the country the service of thousands of personnel, but has also wasted hundreds of millions of dollars in lost training and expenses for investigations of soldiers' private lives. Polls show that a majority of Americans favor lifting the ban.

I'm guessing the new Democratic Congress will be reluctant to revisit the issue just now, however. Other issues—like what to do about the mess in Iraq—are far more pressing. The Democrats' Achilles' heel is the perception that they are hostile to the military and weak on defense, a perception that voting to lift the ban might unfairly reinforce. At least that is what they will fear.

Of course, in the unlikely event President Bush were to announce that he favors a reconsideration of DADT, that would give Congress the political cover it needs to move forward. Bush could paint such a move as an effort to strengthen the nation's defenses in time of war.

The change could proceed incrementally, perhaps beginning by allowing gays to serve openly in administrative and other positions where heterosexuals' privacy concerns are least implicated. Or the ban could be suspended for the duration of the Iraq war and then reviewed in, say, five years. Or Congress could simply repeal DADT as federal law, allowing the president to decide what policy to have, as presidents could do before 1993. This would enhance executive power, and when has the president not favored that?

Shalikashvili also wants to proceed slowly with the change, not take it up as the first issue in the new Congress. "By taking a measured, prudent approach to change," he writes, "political and military leaders can focus on solving the nation's most pressing problems while remaining genuinely open to the eventual and inevitable lifting of the ban. When that day comes, gay men and lesbians will no longer have to conceal who they are, and the military will no longer need to sacrifice those whose service it cannot afford to lose."

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

EQUALITY FOR ALL

Texas lobby group champions our rights, needs our support

People may joke about Texas being somewhat conservative, but Texas can boast about being the first state to support a full-time GLBT lobbyist. Equality Texas, the GLBT state legislative lobby group, celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2005. And celebrate it should. Yes, the legislature passed an anti-marriage amendment that later won statewide approval. So did many other states. But the state legislature passed the James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act and has not limited GLBT adoptions or foster care, as some states have done. We owe a big thank you to Equality Texas for these and many other accomplishments.

This legislative session should be extremely interesting. While Democrats narrowed the vote gap in the Texas House of Representatives by four votes, some Republicans may be planning to go out with a right-wing bang, fearing more losses in 2008

when the presidential race could draw a record Democratic turnout. Republicans are still recoiling from the seismic shift that hit Dallas County in November when the red county unexpectedly turned blue. Can Harris County be far behind?

As Republicans look toward 2008, some lawmakers and lobbyists on the more progressive side of the aisle fear that homophobic amendments could pop up on the House or Senate floor and get attached to bigger bills at the last minute. This keeps little right-wing bills from making the public stroll through the committee process and prevents the GLBT community from getting ample warning. That's when being on the www.EqualityTexas.org email alert list becomes critical.

I served on the board of what was then LGRL (Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby) in the mid-1980s and saw first-hand how hard our lobbyist and staff work. Some months

they were paid little or nothing. One or two waited well past the end of the session to receive the balance of their paychecks. Fortunately, finances have improved, and we've been extraordinarily lucky to hire outstanding people. Equality Texas executive director Paul Scott is no exception. Paul's been on the job 10 months and is already juggling a complicated set of legislative priorities and meetings with apparent ease.

Scott is watching about a dozen bills, from HIV/AIDS testing in prisons and employment nondiscrimination to GLBT issues in education, insurance, and other legislation. The best way to keep up with the bills is to stay connected with www.EqualityTexas.org.

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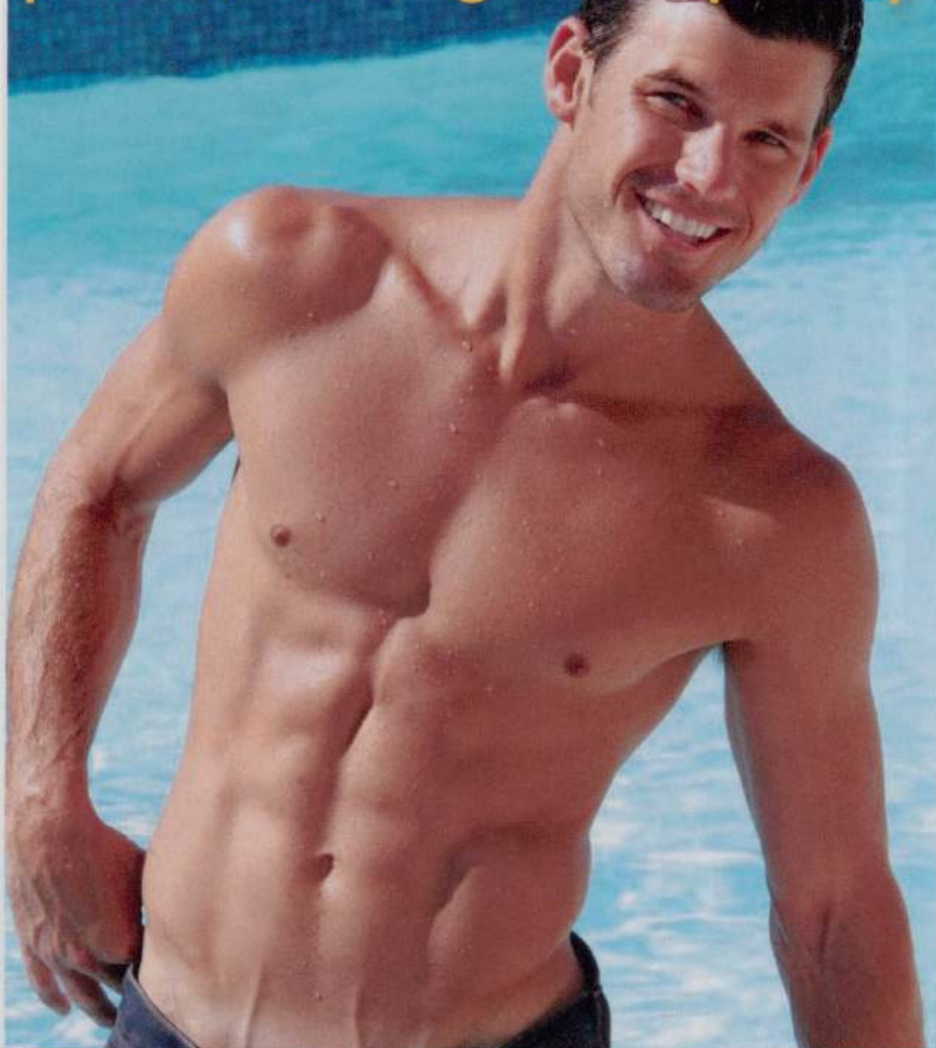
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InsideOut continued from page 24

you automatically become part of the email alert network, but you do not have to donate to join the email list. Equality Texas can quickly alert you to send an email to your state rep, senator, or a targeted committee member. As an elected official, I know what it feels like to get hundreds of emails about legislation. It's one of the most effective ways to make your vote count. Since we sometimes only get 24 hours' notice of a legislative vote, signing up at www.equalitytexas.org is vital to our success.

SaveThisPark.org

Beautifully wooded West 11th Street Park has finally joined the city park system. Well, not quite. The 20-acre gem, located at 2300 W. 11th at T.C. Jester just two blocks from Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, has been in the news lately because the city and community activists are trying to raise \$3.5 million to complete the purchase of this magnificent park so that five acres don't have to be sold to developers to repay a loan. Before the recent purchase/loan, the parkland was the last remaining significant parkland inside the Loop.

It's well worth a visit—1,000 mature trees, 90 bird species. If you'd like to donate or visit the park online, see www.savethispark.org.

Annie 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 (Time Warner Cable 16) at 2 and 8 a.m. and 2 and 8 p.m.

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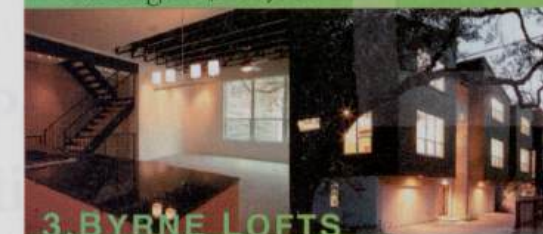
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STREET TEAM

The annual AIDS Walk Houston raises money for the fight against the epidemic

Extrapolated from statistics found on the City of Houston website (www.houstontx.gov), there are an estimated 21,209 persons in our city living with HIV/AIDS. That's about one in every 100 persons. Another of our citizens becomes infected with HIV every nine hours.

Those numbers are disturbingly high, and they clearly indicate the need for prevention and care services in Houston. Luckily, Houstonians can find some comfort in the fact that there are many organizations in our city providing assistance to thousands of people living with, or at risk for, HIV/AIDS.

As one of those providers, I can tell you we all face the constant challenge of acquiring sufficient monies to provide prevention education to our community while meeting the needs of our clients. Sure, we all write grants and secure government funding, but those sources are not keeping pace with the increasing numbers of HIV-infected persons

requiring services. That's why special fund-raising events are crucial. That's why AIDS service organizations need the support of the community. That's why we hope you will take a step with us on Sunday, March 11, in Sam Houston Park.

AIDS Walk Houston 2007, presented by Chevron, is a community-wide event that attracts thousands of Houstonians each year. The walk provides all of us with opportunities to increase awareness of HIV and available services, remember those who have been lost to the illness, and show support of those living with the disease. It is also a chance to assist providers by raising much-needed dollars. We at AIDS Foundation Houston produce the walk, but the event also benefits a number of local AIDS service organizations that are making an impact in lives of people infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS.

These are AIDS Walk Houston Partner Agencies for 2007:

AIDS FOUNDATION HOUSTON, INC. strives to create a positive social impact through the innovative management of HIV/AIDS and other chronic diseases by providing a full array of HIV-prevention programs as well as support services to men, women, and children living with HIV/AIDS. Information: 713/623-6796, www.aids-help.org.

BAYLOR INTERNATIONAL PEDIATRIC AIDS INITIATIVE improves the health and lives of HIV-infected children and families globally through high-quality, high-impact, highly ethical, state-of-the-art comprehensive care and treatment, health-professional training, and multi-center clinical research. Information: 832/825-1038, www.baylorids.org.

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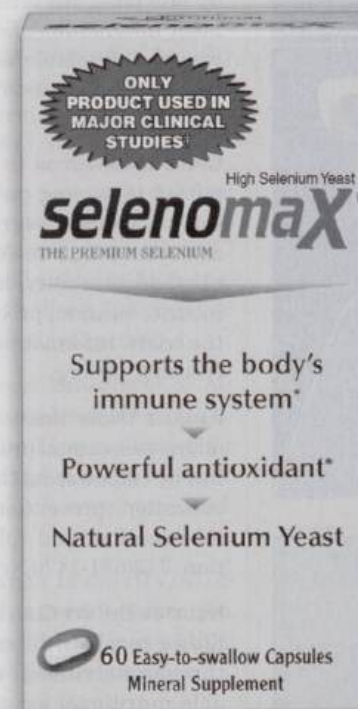
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AIDS Watch continued from page 28

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BRENTWOOD COMMUNITY FOUNDATION is a non-profit organization committed to providing education and supportive services to people living with HIV/AIDS. Information: 713/852-2550, www.brentwoodfoundation.org.

CAREER AND RECOVERY RESOURCES, INC. provides an array of services to a diverse population challenged by barriers such as older age, illiteracy, disabilities, homelessness, lack of skills, substance abuse, and at-risk behavior. Information: 713/754-7000, www.careerandrecovery.org.

THE CENTER FOR AIDS INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY empowers people living with HIV to make informed decisions about their healthcare by providing the latest research and treatment information and by advocating for accessible, affordable, and effective treatment options. Information: 713/527-8219, www.centerforaids.org.

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NEW HOPE COUNSELING CENTER, INC. is a private nonprofit community-based agency that provides abstinence education and rental, mortgage, and utility assistance to HIV/AIDS clients and their families. Information: 713/776-8006.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF HOUSTON AND SOUTHEAST TEXAS, INC. provides healthcare, testing, information, and education so that people can make informed decisions to live and love the way that is best for them. Information: 713/522-6363, www.pphouston.org.

RAPHA HOUSE OUTREACH CENTER, INC. seeks to provide HIV/AIDS services in Northwest Houston that will prevent health disparities and give hope to communities of color by offering structured self-help groups and linkages to other appropriate community resources. Information: 713/683-6868.

RESURRECTION METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH maintains an HIV Benevolence Fund that assists those with HIV/AIDS with food, utility assistance, rental assistance, gas cards, and other resources. Information: 713/861-9149, www.resurrectionmcc.org.

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ST. HOPE FOUNDATION, INC. is a multi-cultural organization that provides medical care and social services to persons living with HIV/AIDS in three different locations—Houston-Bellaire, Conroe, and Stafford. Information: 713/778-1300, www.offeringhope.org.

TEXAS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL DEPARTMENT OF ALLERGY & IMMUNOLOGY provides testing, treatment, clinical trials, and social services for children, adolescents, and pregnant women. Information: 832/824-1319, www.texaschildrenshospital.org.

THE WARREN CORPORATION is an HIV/AIDS service organization that provides education, testing, and supportive housing. Information: 713/541-9777, www.hivprevent.com.

For more information about AIDS Walk Houston and to register, call 713/403-WALK (9255) or visit www.AIDSWalkHouston.org.

Kelly McCann is the chief executive officer of AIDS Foundation Houston, which recently marked its 25th year of service ("A Caring Milestone," February 2007). Read a profile of McCann ("Still in the Fight") in our March 2006 issue at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

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SPORTING

LIFE

From bowling to volleyball, the range of teams and recreational opportunities in the community appeals to everyone from novice jock to the most skilled athlete

by Natasha Avey

WHEN IT COMES TO BEING AN ATHLETE, traits many people think of are physical strength, skill, and work ethic. But there are other significant elements involved with sports: teamwork, a sense of community, and the relationships that come from participating in a sport or activity with others. Teammates, in my experience, often become friends. Teams can even bond like a family.

Many individuals—and notably, lots of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender



Pigskin men: Members of the new Houston Hurricanes flag-football team practice in Memorial Park. **Inset:** The team includes (in front, l-r) Gabriel Gonzalez, Paul Lister, and Franklin Hu and (standing, l-r) Russell Garrison, Cory Beckner, and Rob Chapman. In October, the Hurricanes competed for the first time in Gay Bowl VI, the annual flag-football tournament in Dallas.

Sporting Life

continued from previous page

people—may think that they are not skilled enough to compete in even local sports leagues, in part because they may have received this kind of message from coaches or other jocks in the past. However, these potential athletes should understand a key point: Anyone can compete and have fun. At the same time, the social benefits will almost definitely overshadow any physical workout. And who can complain about that?

Our community offers many opportunities for sports and recreational activities. There are a number of teams and organized leagues in Houston that are either all GLBT or GLBT-friendly. The majority of them are open to everyone, regardless of skill level. There is always a place for a new member.

Houston not only has numerous teams of all kinds, but it is also home to some of the best GLBT athletes in the world. Every four years, a platoon of local competitors represent at the Gay Games, as they did once again last year, as well as at the 1st World Outgames (see "They Got Game," July 2006 *OutSmart*). Many of them have medaled.

Here is selected information on some of the many prominent sports leagues, teams, and athletic opportunities in Houston.



Play ball: The Montrose Softball League season opens on March 18 at Slo-Pitch City Softball Park.

TEAM HOUSTON

This is a great place to start when looking for information on GLBT sports organizations. Team Houston promotes gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender sports in general and also coordinates the local team for the Gay Games (most recently in Chicago in 2006) and the World Outgames (in Montreal last year). The next Gay Games will be in 2010 in Cologne, Germany, and the next Outgames will be in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 2009.

Keith Wright, Team Houston president and a cyclist, was one of 60 people who traveled to Chicago last year to compete (he and his cycling team won a silver medal). Wright says one of the long-term goals for Team Houston is to host an annual sports festival—one of the resolutions that he and the team presented at the 2005 Conference on Houston's LGBTI Future, the results from which are incorporated in the document "The Gay Agenda," edited by activist Phyllis Randolph Frye, one of the Futures Conference conveners, and posted on the Houston GLBT Community Center website, www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org. (Read more in "The Gay Agenda," January 2005 *OutSmart*.)

In Wright's words, the intention of Team Houston—which meets monthly at the community center—is to build the sports teams that are active and help create even more teams. "The saddest thing in the world," he says, "would be if 400 people around Houston sat around and said, 'If only there was a golf group in Houston.' Golf is just a good example, but it could be any sport. In a city as large as Houston, that has probably happened, and we want to help make those sports opportunities a reality."

On March 18, Team Houston hosts a 4-7 p.m. social for GLBT sports folk and people just interested in athletics at the club In-N-Out in the Heights.

More information: www.gaygames.teamhouston.org.

VOLLEYBALL

The Lone Star Volleyball Association is one of the largest GLBT sports organizations in Houston. With three divisions, its own tournament, and a new location for games, the Downtown YMCA, the group is more active than ever in 2007. The 18th annual tournament—sporting the slogan "The Right to Serve"—will be Easter weekend, April 6-7. This is one of the longest-running GLBT sporting events in the country and features over 450 athletes, spectators, volunteers, officials, and →

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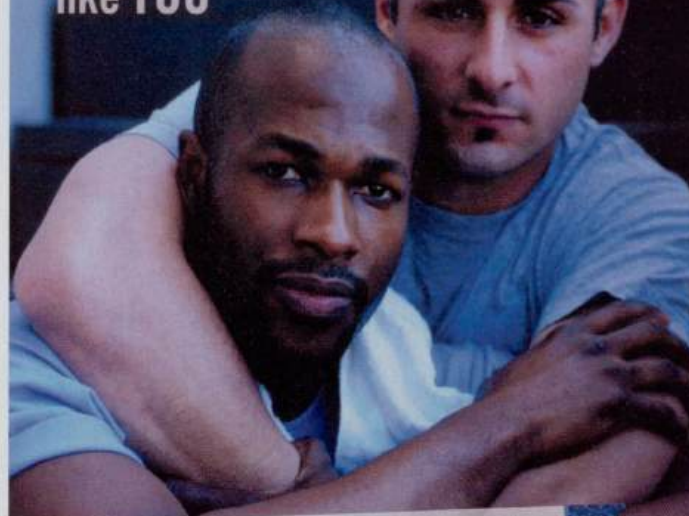
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To be reckoned with: The Houston Force was one of the Montrose Softball League teams that competed in the Gay Softball World Series in 2006.

Sporting Life

continued from previous page

sponsors. Proceeds this year will benefit HATCH, the youth support group.

More information: www.lsva.org.

GYMNASTICS ROLLERBLADING/SKATING

Keith Peters has owned a gym, Creative Development Gymnastics, since 1981. His facility is unique, he says, in that it is one of the only gyms that offers gymnastics lessons to adults.

At Creative Development, Peters welcomes interested gymnasts, GLBT or straight. "I'm proud of the family atmosphere that we have created at the gym," he says. Last year, Peters also offered his gym as a training facility for Cheer Houston, the cheerleading group affiliated with Team Houston (currently on hiatus).

A rollerblade athlete, Peters is a past medalist in blading events at the Gay Games and Rollerblade America. At one time, he was the president of the

Lambda Rollerskating Club, once one of the most active recreational groups in the community. "I am still training and skating and have been asked to restart the club," Peters says. "I am very busy with my business but I am tempted. The club was fun and an alternative activity for the GLBT community."

The possible revival of a rollerskating club remained undetermined at press time. Team Houston's Keith Wright has indicated an interest in helping Peters re-establish a group.

More information: www.gaygamesteamhouston.org.

BOWLING

Another major sporting group in Houston is the local chapter of the International Gay Bowling Organization (IGBO), a worldwide organization that has tournaments nearly every month in various locations across the globe. In Houston, IGBO offers regular league nights on Sundays, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

Tom O'Dell, IGBO president and a Team Houston member, has bowled with IGBO since the formation of the local chapter in 1985 and says participation is a great way to meet people. O'Dell says he can go almost anywhere and know somebody through the numerous tournaments he has competed in over →

A B-BALLER COMES OUT

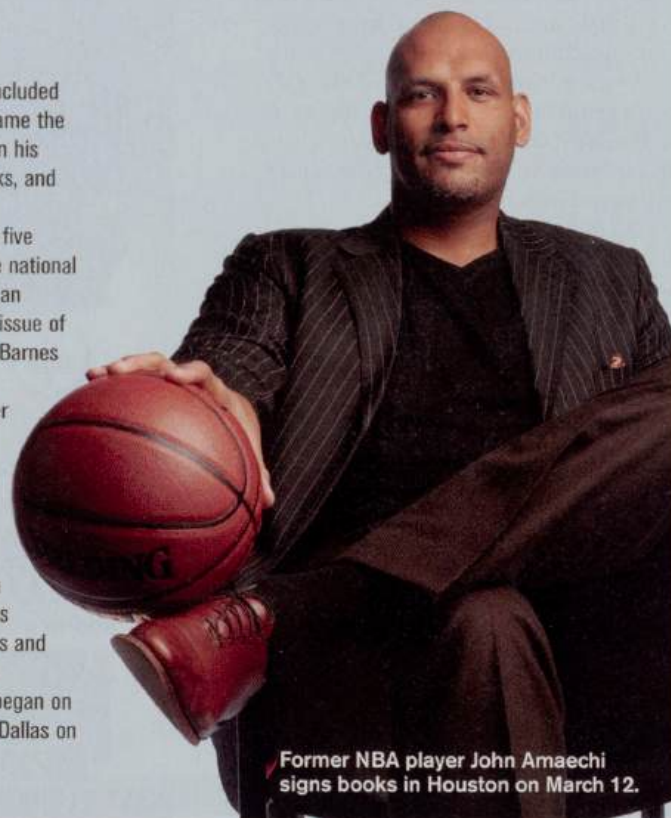
Former professional basketball athlete John Amaechi, whose career stops included the Houston Rockets, created international news in February when he became the first NBA player to come out as a gay man. Amaechi made the revelation in his book, *Man in the Middle: My Life in and Out of Bounds*, published by ESPN Books, and on the ESPN interview program *Behind the Lines* on February 11.

Following his announcement, Amaechi, who played at Penn State and spent five seasons in the NBA, joined the Human Rights Campaign as spokesperson for the national GLBT advocacy group's Coming Out Project. Last month, Amaechi embarked on an HRC/ESPN-sponsored tour to sign copies of *Man in the Middle* and discuss the issue of GLBT athletes, which will include a stop in Houston on March 12, 7 p.m., at the Barnes & Noble Town & Country location (12850 Memorial Dr., Suite 1600).

Amaechi's announcement acquired even greater import when another former NBA star, Tim Hardaway, made widely reported disparaging remarks about Amaechi and gay athletes in an interview aired on a Miami sports radio station. "You know, I hate gay people, so I let it be known," Hardaway said on WAXY-AM. "I don't like gay people, and I don't like to be around gay people. I am homophobic. I don't like it. It shouldn't be in the world or in the United States."

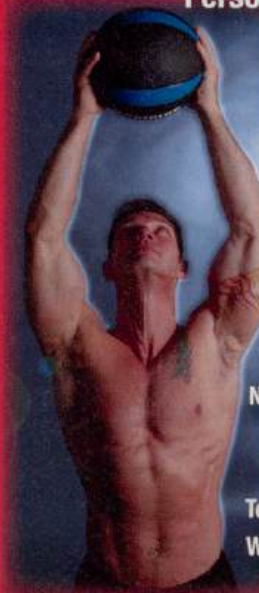
In response, the NBA removed Hardaway from his scheduled participation in events related to the pro basketball all-star game weekend, February 17-18. "It is inappropriate for him to be representing us given the disparity between his views and ours," NBA commissioner David Stern said in a statement issued by the league.

According to the HRC, Amaechi will blog during his nationwide tour, which began on February 17 at the HRC gala in Philadelphia and includes another Texas stop, in Dallas on February 26. Read his blog at www.hrc.org/amaechi.



Former NBA player John Amaechi signs books in Houston on March 12.

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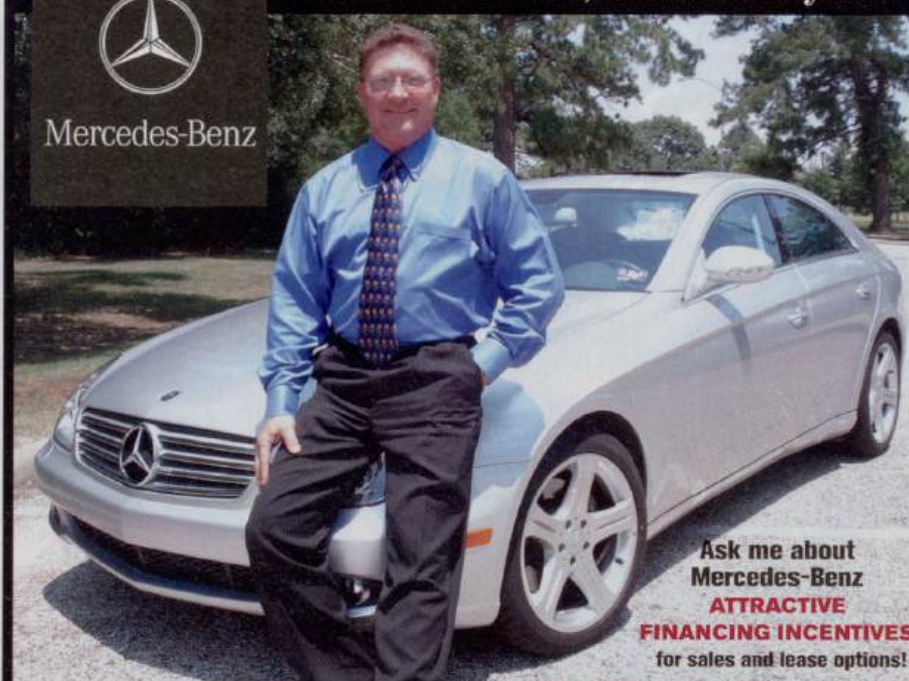
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Sporting Life

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the years. "We want everyone to feel welcome, gay or straight," he says. With the handicap system they have in place, he adds, "everyone is good enough."

IGBO hosts an annual tournament in Houston over the weekend following Independence Day (July 6-8 this year). Bowlers from all over the world travel to Houston to compete. Proceeds benefit local charities—for 2007, Legacy Community Health Services, Pet Patrol, and Texas Children's Hospital.

More information: www.houstoninvite.com or www.igbo.com.

FOOTBALL

There is a new game in the town, and it's gay flag football and the Houston Hurricanes. This team organized last September under the auspices of Team Houston, and by October the Hurricanes were competing in Dallas at the Gay Bowl VI, the annual National Gay Flag Football League tournament. After a little less than a month together, the Houstonians placed 12th out of 16 teams. The team, consisting of 10-12 men who practice every Saturday morning in Memorial Park, is gearing up this year for Gay Bowl VII in New York

City and seeks more players to form a league of their own.

More information: <http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/HoustonHurricanesFFC>.

Women with an interest in the pigskin game might check out the Houston Women's Flag Football League (HWFFL), which just marked 10 years of play. The HWFFL season starts in mid-September and ends in mid-January. There are nine teams in the league, and one GLBT team in particular. The Houston Inferno has 14 members. This is a full contact flag-football league and is highly competitive. Games are played at Slo-Pitch City Softball Park, located just inside Beltway 8 in north Houston.

More information: www.hwffl.org.

SOFTBALL

The Gay Softball World Series, which this year will be played in Phoenix in October, is the pinnacle for any GLBT softball player. Many female softball jocks prepare for this tournament—organized by the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance—by competing in the Houston Women's Softball League, which offers multiple recreational and competitive divisions. The Houston Blaze has won its division in the Gay World Series two years in a row and looks to win another title

this year. Both organizations are highly competitive but are open to new members.

More information: www.hwsf.org.

The Montrose Softball League (MSL), which opens its spring season on March 18, is arguably the largest and most organized of the local GLBT sports groups. With teams that range from recreational to extremely competitive, the league also plays its games at Slo-Pitch City Softball Park. MSL hosts an annual Memorial Day weekend tournament, the Lone Star Classic (May 25-27 this year). The calendar also includes two popular yearly fundraising events, Pranksters in Pumps (March 31) and Jocks in Dresses (June 9). Proceeds from MSL events in 2007 support AssistHers and the Houston GLBT Community Center.

More information: www.montrosesoftballleague.com.

SOCCER

The Montrose SC began another season of soccer in February. The team, though co-ed, plays for the Houston Women's Soccer League. This year-round league offers multiple divisions for men's, women's, and co-ed teams. Montrose SC is comprised of members of all backgrounds, some straight and some gay.

More information: www.hwsa.org. →

PLAY NOW

Here are three upcoming sports events:

1. AssistHers hosts its second annual softball tournament on March 17 in Memorial Park. Proceeds from the tournament support the group, which provides non-medical in-home support to lesbians with debilitating illnesses. Details: www.assisthers.org.

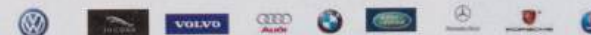
2. Lazarus House, the fitness organization that serves people with wasting conditions, presents its first benefit golf tournament on March 31 at Cypresswood Golf Course. The name? "Wham, Bam, Thank You, Ma'am, Scram!" Details: www.thelazarushouse.org.

3. As part of its 35th anniversary celebrations, **Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church** hosts its annual golf tournament on April 21 at Bear Creek Park. Details: www.resurrectionmcc.org.

A team of their own: Members of the AssistHers team, which will play in the March 17 softball tournament, include (seated, l-r) Nancy Wintle, Georgette Monaghan, and TC Mayfield and (standing, l-r) Pam Callahan, Debi Sharp, Ellen Novota, Barb Rolston, Terri Riha, and Sol Lara.

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Cruise on: The Montrose Softball League Cruisers also competed in the 2006 Gay Softball World Series.

Sporting Life continued from page 38

There are many additional active sports organizations in Houston. Here are a few more:

Independent Billiard League of Houston

www.iblhouston.com

Different Spokes Houston (cycling)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DS-Houston>

Texas Gay Rodeo Association

www.texasgayrodeo.org

Houston Roller Derby

www.houstonrollerderby.com

FrontRunners Houston

<http://home.swbell.net/larathon/houfr.htm>

Lone Star Frontrunners

www.frontrunners.org/clubs/lonestar/index.php

Houston Tennis Club

www.houstontennisclub.org

Natasha Avey, a basketball standout as a student at Houston Baptist University, profiled couple Mark Eggleston and Darrin Brindle and their participation in Freedom To Marry Week for our February issue.

PLAYERS

Team Houston is working at the present time to form new teams in golf and basketball. Interested duffers and hoopsters can express their interest by contacting the team through www.gaygamesteamhouston.org.

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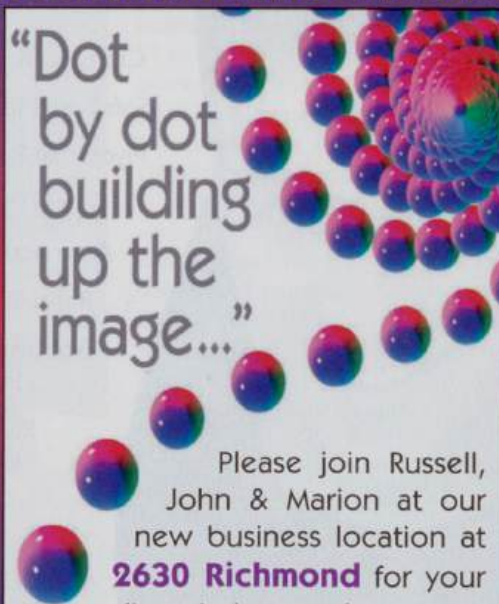
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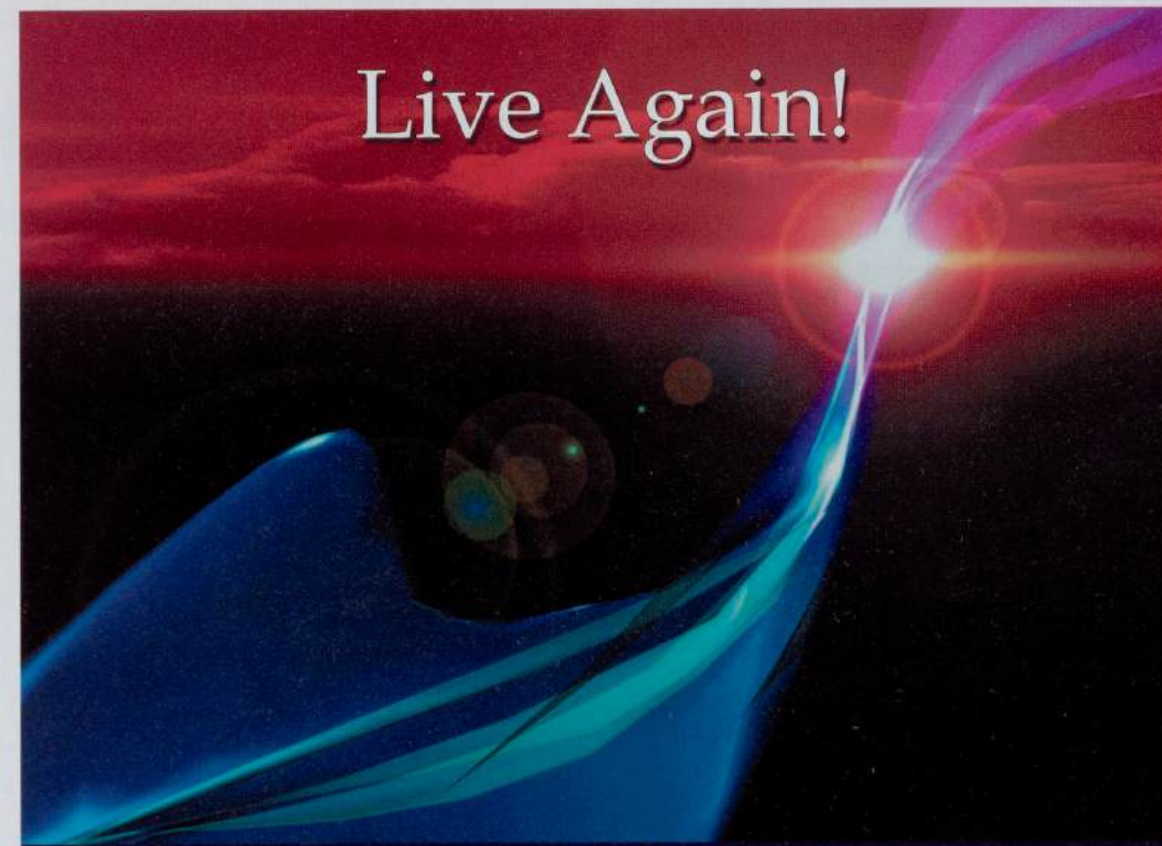
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2 Sides of Pride

An advocate and an opponent of a possible downtown move of the annual Pride celebrations comment on the continuing, simmering controversy

Photos by Blase DiStefano



Proud in Montrose: A scene from the 1983 Pride parade. Pride Houston moved the yearly parade, held on the fourth Saturday in June since 1979, from afternoon to nighttime in 1997.

At the conclusion of a lively, contentious community meeting in January, which we reported on last month, Pride Houston president Carol Wyatt announced that her organization would postpone voting on recommendations made by a task force regarding a move of the parade and festival to downtown in 2008 as well as a potential date change from the traditional June to late September.

The controversy in the community continues, even as Pride Houston, which organizes and produces the GLBT Pride parade and festival, proceeds with plans for the 2007 celebrations, which will remain in Montrose. To bring more clarity, we hope, to the issue, we asked two individuals involved with the opposing sides to comment on their perspectives. Bridgette Chambers is a member of the Vision 2008 Task Force appointed by Pride Houston. (We originally solicited remarks from Carol Wyatt. She requested that we instead publish comments written by the task force, because, she told *OutSmart*, the Pride Houston board has not taken an official position on the task force report.) John Nechman is chair of People Opposed to Moving Our Parade Out of Montrose (POMPOM), a grassroots group that emerged early this year to respond to the possible changes to the Pride observances in Houston. →

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John Nechman

Pride Houston, Inc. is again threatening to move our parade from Montrose to downtown and from its traditional date commemorating Stonewall to September. Despite claims that the board has made no decisions nor arrived at an official position, Pride Houston president Carol Wyatt continues a relentless campaign for the moves. The Pride Houston board should listen to the overwhelming opposition and reject this proposal, which has the potential to turn into the most divisive event in the history of our community.

A group of concerned citizens, including several past Pride grand marshals, formed People Opposed to Moving Our Parade Out of Montrose (POMPOM) in January and sent the Pride Houston board a list of compelling reasons to reject the proposal. At a Pride Houston hearing on the proposal on January 13, only one of 50 people in the audience spoke in favor. When the *Queer Voices* radio show invited callers to voice their opinions during a January broadcast, no callers spoke in favor. Even the *Houston Chronicle* published an editorial on January 21 calling for Pride Houston to leave our parade where and when it is.

Our parade does not have to move for Pride Houston to accomplish its stated goals of creating the best possible Pride festivities, outreaching to the entire community, and making Houston a weekend travel destination. Why not show communities of color that they are integral to Pride by sponsoring events such as Splash or Latino Pride? Ms. Wyatt has proposed a commitment ceremony on the steps of City Hall, but why not support the weeklong Freedom To Marry events that already take place each February? Why not gauge support for a downtown event by trying the festival there? Taking these steps would give our community reasons to celebrate and visitors reasons to visit Houston throughout the year and not for just one weekend.

The essence of our parade does not come from flashy floats choreographed to zip through the soulless canyons of a downtown devoid of GLBT businesses. Furthermore, the notion that downtown provides some imprimatur of credibility we lack in Montrose is offensive. Montrose is where our community's soul resides. These are the streets that nurtured us and taught us to be strong and proud even as we endured demoralizing raids and arrests and saw our loved ones perish from heinous acts of hatred or our own government's shameful neglect. These are



Aunt Sam: A patriotic, and glamorous, citizen adorned a float in the 1983 Pride parade.

the streets where our heroes planned, fought, and won the battles that give us countless reasons to be proud and carry on their legacy. Despite repeated efforts to rebuild, redefine, redevelop, or redistrict the Montrose we know into oblivion, the colors of the rainbow continue to shine proudest in this resilient, remarkable neighborhood and never more so than at our parade, when we invite Houstonians and thousands of out-of-town visitors to our home to celebrate our community and those extraordinary days in June 1969 when we told the world, "No more."

Pride Houston should abide by its mission statement and lead the effort to embrace and reconfirm Montrose as our home, educate the world on our amazing history, and leave our parade where and when it belongs.

John Nechman is chair of People Opposed to Moving Our Parade Out of Montrose (POMPOM).

POMPOM WAVE

People Opposed to Moving Our Parade Out of Montrose (POMPOM) will meet on March 14, 6:30 p.m., at the Houston GLBT Community Center. The meeting is open to the public, POMPOM chair John Nechman says.

Bridgette Chambers

In an unsuspecting red state, a movement is gaining acceptance and paving a road less traveled by southern states not accustomed to openly embracing their GLBT communities. If united, Houston GLBT citizens may be taking the next steps in creating a bond with city leaders and touting the clout of a community that represents a healthy share of disposable income, healthy voting habits, and intolerance for anything less than equality.

Andy Warhol stated simply, "They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself." Pride Houston has taken those words to heart and assembled a task force in 2006 to study improvements to the current Pride festivities. Improvements challenge the notions that Houston can become a destination weekend just as Atlanta, New York, and San Francisco have during their Pride celebrations.

Destination weekend? Why not?

The task force methodically solicited the opinions of political, social, and business leaders in efforts to produce a set of recommendations for the Pride Houston board of directors to contemplate. The task force studied the possible impact to Houston and trends experienced in other extraordinary cities that opted to optimize the manner in which they celebrate Pride.

The by-products of change, the task force learned, can be attractive. For example, Atlanta is estimated to bring in \$30 million of revenue for their city during Pride. Imagine Houston GLBT political positions when backed by evidence of revenue generation and significant impact in travel and hospital-industries.

Now in fairness, it is important to state that not everyone agreed. There are those in our community who hold tightly to the details of Pride weekend that have become tradition. Their concerns were voiced passionately. They represent an important part of our community. Their determination is admirable; however, the positioning of the Houston GLBT community is underserved by a reluctance to grow.

The task force identified a number of concessions that were feasible and exciting if included in the planning for 2008 Pride. Regrettably, opponents have a zero tolerance for change. Doesn't it make sense that we must press forward and grow past the comfort zone of those who would rather see the GLBT community left to mingle in Montrose?

Montrose is the cornerstone of the Houston GLBT community. Is there really anyone out there who thinks we leave our

pride behind by growing beyond our usual borders?

Regardless of what the Pride Houston board of directors decide to do, one thing is certain: The idea of growth was about improving our standing as a community. If we fail to come to the table and find a way to grow together, we will only add to the obstacles that exist against us. Last time I checked, there were enough of those.

What do you think would have happened if those brave women in New York had listened to the whispers that urged them to stay hidden in the Stonewall bar? What if brave entertainment executives listened to those who told them to only make movies and TV shows about heterosexuals and keep those gay people in the dark? Employment protection, safety, civil rights...how long do we wait to go beyond the borders someone else set for us?

It wouldn't take much imagination to determine that the GLBT community has enough constraints and obstacles. Perhaps it is time to make change happen and grow beyond our borders in Houston.

Bridgette Chambers is a member of the Vision 2008 Task Force appointed by Pride Houston.

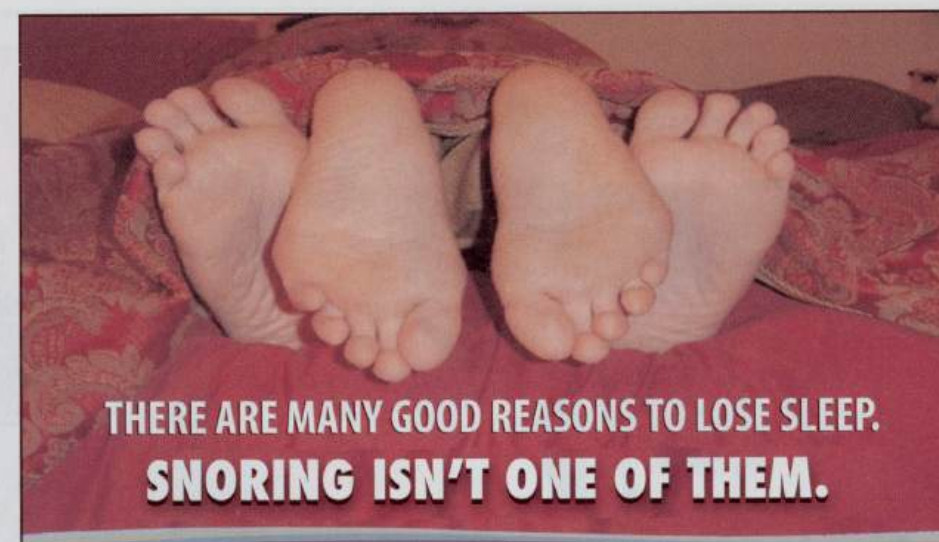
GET PRIDE

Pride Houston board meetings are open to the public. At press time, details of a meeting this month had not been announced. President Carol Wyatt indicated in an e-mail sent to *OutSmart*, "Because of the busy travel schedules of many of our board members (me included) we have found it impossible to keep to a fixed monthly meeting date. So, I don't yet know when the March meeting will be." Wyatt recommends that interested individuals call the Pride Houston office (713/529-6979) for updates. The organization website, www.pridehouston.org, includes more information on the task force and the status of its recommendations.

FOR MORE PRIDE

Read more about this issue at www.outsmartmagazine.com:

- The Vision 2008 Task Force report as well as the letter presented by POMPOM that includes its list of opposing points.
- "Whither, Pride?" January 2007 *OutSmart*.
- "Pride Houston Postpones 2008 Decision," February 2007 *OutSmart*.



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The Family Way

Same-gender couples and their children may not turn out to be the hot-button, red-meat-for-the-right-wing issue in the Texas legislature that it was in 2005. Still, as the late, great Molly Ivins observed, when the lege is in session anything can happen—and our community knows that where politicians go, homophobia often follows. Those facts makes the exhibition *Love Makes a Family: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People and their Families*,



presented March 9–15 at Bering and James gallery, especially timely, even provocative, as the session heats up in Austin. The exhibition—portraits of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender families from across the country, including some Texans—is organized by the Massachusetts-based nonprofit group Family Diversity Projects (co-founder and co-director Gigi Kaeser is the photographer). Since it debuted in 1996, *Love Makes a Family* has traveled to more than 1,000 communities in the United States. Equality Texas, the equal-rights group, sponsors the statewide, five-city tour, which also includes Dallas, San Antonio, Waco, and the state capitol building in Austin. In Houston, Equality Texas invites all GLBT families to attend the opening reception on March 9. —Tim Brookover



We are family: The photo exhibition *Love Makes a Family*, on view in Houston this month, features images of GLBT families from across the United States. These families include (from top) the Stokes family, the Elasser-Robinson family, and the Jang-Otto family. "Family means the people who look out for me and treat me with love and respect," sixth-grader Nabowire Stokes is quoted in the text that accompanies the pictures.

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Sharp &

Gloriously glam, Scissor Sisters and openly gay front man Jake Shears slash through town this month. Just days before the release of their second album, Shears chatted about the group's sophomore effort, Lewis Carroll, and dancing

by Gregg Shapiro
Photos by J. Cultice

Ta-Dah is a fitting name for the sophomore effort by Scissor Sisters. After touring the world and taking it by storm with their Grammy-nominated eponymous debut disc, they regrouped and recorded the eagerly anticipated follow-up, unquestionably deserving of such a bravura title. Scissor Sisters (which launches a U.S. tour this month and performs in Houston at Verizon Wireless Theater on March 16) know what you want and they serve it up, shiny as cutlery. The lead track and current single "I Don't Feel Like Dancin'" is a slice of '70s-influenced pop that is bound to have the desired effect. In fact, if dancing is your game, *Ta-Dah* (Universal/Motown) provides ample opportunity. Not ones to shy away from musical drama, Scissor Sisters slow it down for the greatest impact on "Land of a Thousand Words." Scissor sister Jake Shears—one of the openly gay members of the band, along with bass player Babydaddy, and guitarist Del Marquis—took time from the band's recent whirlwind European trek to answer a few questions, transatlantic style, before the domestic release of the new album.

Making the cut: Scissor Sisters Jake Shears (center) strikes a pose with fellow Scissors (l-r) Paddy Boom, Babydaddy, Ana Matronic, and Del Marquis. The band performs in Houston on March 16.

Shiny



Gregg Shapiro: You were just in the U.K., where Scissor Sisters are huge! What's it like to perform someplace where you are huge celebrities?

Jake Shears: It's strange. It's definitely not like we're "celeb celebs" because we've pretty much steered clear of tabloid fodder. As far as being a big pop band, it's amazing. It's a little bit nerve-wracking, at first, but we've really been working hard this past month and it culminated in this last week. It's just been in-sane! The record came out there on Monday [September 18], and the papers are declaring it "Scissor-mania." We played Trafalgar Square on Saturday night, and the city's never seen anything like that before. There's never been an event that big in Trafalgar Square.

Is it true that Kylie Minogue introduced Scissor Sisters at your Trafalgar Square concert?

Yes. It was just fantastic. It's so exciting that people are loving the music and they're loving the second record. It's just a big relief, because you just can't count on much of anything. You can't count on the fact that people are going to like what you choose to do, and you can't necessarily count on having any fans left on a second record. We've seen that happen in the past year, with other bands that were very successful on their first records, put out the second ones and just completely tanked. The fact that it's not tanking and in just three days it's turning out to be one of the biggest sellers of the year is very, very exciting.

I understand that the concert was filmed and will be shown in select movie theaters. How did that come about?

Most of the big gigs, whether it's a festival or whatever, get filmed one way or another, because, if they're big enough, there are those screens on the sides of the stage, because the people a mile away can't see you. A lot of times what they're filming gets broadcast.

You've probably been asked this question quite a bit recently, but how would you say that Scissor Sisters have evolved in the couple of years between the debut album and *Ta-dah*?

I think the band has evolved musically. I don't think we were necessarily a very good band when we started out. I think we were fun, and Ana is super funny, and the shows were really fun. But I don't think we were a great band. Whereas now, I think, the band itself has gotten really tight and amazing, just as a live band. And the music has taken another step. The second album is kind of different. It's a bit more nuanced →

Sharp & Shiny

continued from previous page

and lyrically it goes different places. This album is not about the same thing. We're writing about different things than we were on the first record.

One subtle difference I observed, for example, is going from calling the first album *Scissor Sisters* and then the second one is called *Ta-Dah*, which has a fanfare or announcement quality to it.

I always think that you have to put things out so you can move from them. Our A&R guy from when the first record came out didn't want us to put "Filthy Gorgeous" on it. I was very adamant about having it on [there], because not only do I think it's a nice song, but I knew we'd never write another song like it, and I don't think we will. I don't want to write another song like it, because we've already written it. It's really important to do what you do, and then take a step from it and move on. I'm absolutely terrified of getting stuck in some kind of rut. People are always wanting to categorize and shoebox what it is you're doing, but I want to defy that. I don't think there is a definition, yet, of this band that properly describes it. I don't

know what the definition of this band is, and I hope that I don't find out for a very long time.

How would you say that you have personally evolved?

I think I've become quite a bit more of a focused person, just in general. In terms of the things I care about. There's a lot at stake. I love what I do and I love what this band does. Those things are very important to me, and I take them very seriously. In that way, maybe I've become a bit more of a workaholic than I ever have been.

As one might expect, dancing continues to play a role in the music of Scissor Sisters, and in the songs "I Don't Feel Like Dancin'" and "Ooh," you actually sing about dancing. When it comes to dancing and singing, does one of them play a bigger role in your life or are they given equal billing?

Dancing and singing? I love performing. I dance like crazy on stage. The problem with a lot of these new songs, and the challenge that I am personally facing right now performing them live, is that vocally they're even more challenging than the first record was. "She's My Man" is very

hard to sing, "I Don't Feel Like Dancing" is very difficult to sing, and so is "Land of a Thousand Words." Especially with "I Don't Feel Like Dancing" and "She's My Man," when I sing these songs, I can sing the hell out them, but I can't move around a lot, which is driving me crazy. I'm just hoping that once we sing them over and over and over again, that I'm going to be able to use my body more when I'm singing them, because, as of now, that's been a real challenge. I love to move around when I'm singing, but those songs are proving to be a real bitch.

The song "Paul McCartney" is the equivalent of a musical fan letter. What would you want someone to write to you in a fan letter?

I don't know. Fan letters are very sweet, but I would feel kind of undeserving of one in the first place.

That's very humble.

I'm always blown away when I meet a big lover of the band or what not and people are shaking or they're really freaked out, and it makes me feel [laughs]...it makes me wonder what have I done to this person that they're actually scared to approach me

or they're really nervous being around me. It's a really weird thing for me. My mom's a Southern lady. She's very good at making everyone around her feel incredibly comfortable. I would hope to do the same.

You've met Sir Paul, and Kylie introduced you for your Trafalgar Square concert, and Elton John can be heard on *Ta-dah*. But how did you get Gina Gershon to play Jew's harp on "I Can't Decide"?

Oh, my God! God bless her, she's really wonderful! We were both really bombed at a party and struck up a conversation and ended up becoming good friends. She's absolutely a lovely lady. When we started talking, I found out that she plays Jew's harp. I said, "You've got to come to our studio and play Jew's harp on this record because it needs it." And she did! It's a very bizarre thing to see her do it, because she really can play very well. She's also an awesome actress. She's totally an icon.

Speaking of "I Can't Decide," violence also rears its head in that song, as well as in "She's My Man." Would you say that is a reflection of the current state of the world?

Maybe. Here we are in a world on the

brink of world war, and I often ask myself what business I have writing pop songs. I don't know what the answer to that question is. I don't know if I have any business writing pop songs. My only excuse for it is that it makes me happy and it makes people happy.

Right. It's a kind of escapism.

You just want to spread a little joy in the world. However, personally, I'm very fascinated by violence and always have been since I was a child. I don't know if that's a good or bad thing. Whether it's in novels or movies or comic books or whatever, I do have a fascination with the macabre, the grotesque, with violence. I don't necessarily know why or what the answer is. There are certain films that I find really fascinating—for example, a cartoony comedy in which people die. That's something that totally gets my juices going. *Ruthless People*, *Supervixens* by Russ Meyer.

Have you seen *9 Dead Gay Guys*?

I haven't.

It's that same sort of over-the-top comedy, but characters in the movie are dying. I find that more disturbing than actual

realistic violence. I'm a big fan of the animator Ralph Bakshi, who uses an abundance of violence in his work. I think it's a part of the aesthetic that I'm fascinated by, and I can't really come up with a why. It's definitely in there somewhere. There's a lot of rage in this boy. [Laughs]

Speaking of the grotesque, "Kiss You Off" makes reference to Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" ["Crush you like a gyre/But the gimple's all the same"]...

Oh, my God! You're the only person [who has mentioned that]. That's very funny. No one has caught that at all.

Would you say that you are a big Carroll fan?

Oh, my God, yeah! Absolutely! "Jabberwocky" is one of the best poems ever. I'm a big fantasy buff. I'm a big horror fanatic. I found this amazing Lewis Carroll trope that's about 1,500 pages long. It's always *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*, ad nauseam, but I found this book that has everything he ever wrote. It's really fantastic to read. I'm a big fan of alternate realities. Right now, I'm reading *To Your Scattered Bodies Go*, by Philip Jose Farmer, which is really tripping me out. So, the answer is yes! →

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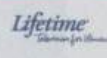
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Cuttingly Gay

Three members of Scissor Sisters—Ana Matronic, Del Marquis, and Paddy Boom—chatted about the “gay thing” in an interview with *The Scene* on CNN.com in October.

CNN: Do you think it's easier now, being a “gay band,” than it would have been, say 10 to 15 years ago?

Ana Matronic: I think, first, the sexuality of the band got us a lot of gigs in gay bars. And we were never apologetic or clandestine about our sexuality, or should I say the sexuality of three of the members of the band. Paddy and I are both straight but, hey, not narrow. And I think at first being so open might have pigeonholed us and worked against us because there are certain people who might not want to listen to a quote unquote “gay band.” So we had to work really hard to get through that stereotype. When people realized that the music was really good and we weren't a gimmick, we weren't the Village People or some manufactured band to make money off the gay community, people started to accept it. I also think that over in the U.K. they're much more permissive and much less hung up on differences in sexuality, differences in race, differences in gender. We like to think in the U.S. that we're the most progressive, and we're really not. Over in the U.K. people just really love music way more than I've really experienced anywhere else, and a good song is a good song, no matter who does it. Across the board, the U.K. has been a lot more accepting of gay artists and they have really embraced us as their own, which was really unexpected.

Paddy Boom: The difference too is that in England they listened to us because they listen to music. In America if something gets a label, as everything does, it's almost as if someone said, “Oh, there's this gay band,” which doesn't even apply because we're just making music. We're not waving rainbow flags or anything.

Del Marquis: No, but it's how you serve it up. It's about honesty. I don't think anybody in the band who is gay felt it was something to hide. I think that has something to do with the band. If you're deceptive about who you are, someone is going to find you out, and people love to tear you down if you're lying. If you just come out and are honest about who you are, it's a non-issue. That's how you should approach your life and music, and that's how the band served it up. It was like, “If you don't like it, we don't really care,” and that's something that certain audiences really love about the band.

P.B.: And also once people come and see the show, certain preconceived notions that they have go away and it's about putting on a show and expressing yourself and making a rock-and-roll performance. People walk away with a different impression than when they came in. It's about getting away from the stereotypes and the stigmas.

D.M.: So many people think it's going to be some schmaltzy, camp disco. There's a huge camp element going on ... but I can still play guitar. I don't care.

A.M.: Once people realized it was about really good music and expressing whoever you are, whoever that may be. Everyone's a freak in some way. There's no such thing as an ordinary person, and that's what we show people. We hold a mirror up to them and say “Let your freak flag fly.”

Sharp & Shiny continued from previous page

“I Might Tell You Tonight” is a wonderful love song. Are those types of songs easier or harder to write than others?

I think that love songs or songs with heavy emotional content are actually a lot easier to write than what could be considered a more insipid pop song. Getting to a song like “I Don't Feel Like Dancing” is much more challenging to write. To me, that's pure inspiration, whereas going into your emotions and writing something more personal is actually a bit easier.

“Other Side” sounds like one of the more introspective songs in Scissor Sisters' repertoire.

“Other Side” is half-based on the first novella in [gay novelist] Michael Cunningham's *Specimen Days*. The piece is called “In the Machine,” and that's what inspired “Other Side.” They just went hand-in-hand. Michael Cunningham is one of my favorite writers. He gave me an advance copy of *Specimen Days*, and I just devoured it. And then I wrote the song right away. It's interesting because this album was book-ended by deaths of very close friends. So the preoccupation with death on this record was part prophecy and part punctuation.

Gregg Shapiro, a regular contributor to OutSmart, also interviews lesbian singer Jennifer O'Connor in this issue (see page 76).



Scissor Savvy

Know your Scissor Sisters, performing in Houston on March 16:

- **Jake Shears** (Jason Sellards, center), vocals
- **Babydaddy** (Scott Hoffman, far right), vocals, bass guitar, keyboard, guitar
- **Ana Matronic** (Ana Lynch, second from right), vocals, percussion
- **Del Marquis** (Derek Gruen, second from left), guitar
- **Paddy Boom** (Patrick Seacor, far left), percussion

Shears and Babydaddy formed the group in 2000 when they met in Kentucky.

Need more? Check out the band website, www.scissorsisters.com.

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here comes the SUNDANCE

Saving gays: Mark (Shock to the System's Chad Allen, l) strikes up a close-knit relationship with Scott (Queer as Folk's Robert Gant, r), much to the consternation of Gayle (Judith Light, Ugly Betty), who is the head of Genesis House, an ex-gay ministry where the two lads meet. Save Me was written by Craig Chester (actor/writer/director of Adam & Steve), Alan Hines (writer of Breaking the Surface: The Greg Louganis Story), and Robert Desiderio (actor, The Sopranos). INSET: director Robert Cary.



gays are over themselves.

Or at least one could get that impression while surveying the line-up at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival. Many established and new gay filmmakers presented works at the Park City, Utah, extravaganza in January, yet few of those were explicitly queer in content, characters, and even subtexts. In fact, only two features really could be labeled "gay" films: *Save Me*, in which Chad Allen and Robert Gant play ex-gays who fall in love at a ministry lorded over by Judith Light, and *For the Bible Tells Me So*, a documentary by Daniel G. Karslake, a producer on the PBS series *In the Life*, examining how the "good book" has been used—and misused—as a weapon against homosexuality. A runner-up would be *Tuli* from director Auraeus Solito (*The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros*), the final third of which includes a lesbian love story.



Once again, our man on the scene at the Sundance Film Festival reports on the queer side of the annual movie extravaganza

By Lawrence Ferber

That said, outside the theaters, Sundance—unofficially the gayest nongay film festival in the country—remained queer as ever. The Queer Lounge, now a two-level suite housed in the Silver King Hotel, buzzed with filmmakers, festival programmers, musicians, and others who were schmoozing, drinking, networking, and chilling out. The Silver King's steamy indoor pool was the setting for a couple of Queer Lounge parties as well (with gift bags containing upscale sex toys from Fun Factory). There was a pair of queer brunches—one hosted by Outfest, producer of the Los Angeles GLBT film festival, and the here! cable network (at which Hollywood blockbuster director Roland Emmerich was toasted for his contribution to the Outfest Legacy Project for LGBT Film Preservation), the other by PlanetOut—along with an *L Word* brouhaha and a GLAAD Awards shindig to announce the year's media nominees. In fact, all the queer gatherings inspired one publicist to groan in exasperation, "I've seen the same gay people all day. I'm over the queers, too!"

The year's dearth of overly queer films, says Out Sundance programmer Shari Frilot, is due to the fact that "gays are doing their thing just like any other artists. Not everything is gay-themed, but they're bringing their flavor to whatever they touch."

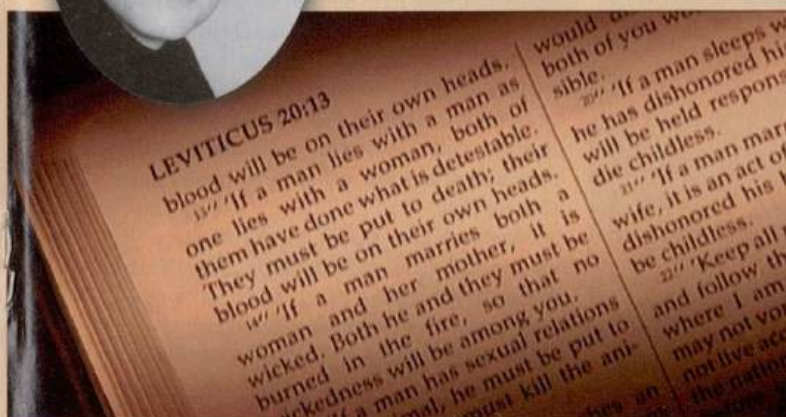
among the gay filmmakers at work:

Tommy O'Haver, the out director who followed the very gay *Billy's Hollywood Screen Kiss* with *Get Over It* and *Ella Enchanted*, brought the harrowing *An American Crime*. A sort of *Flowers in the Attic* meets *Lord of the Flies* based on a real-life case, the film stars Catherine Keener as an unhinged single mother who turns her basement into a torture chamber for an adolescent girl she is supposed to look after (*X-Men 3*'s Ellen Page). The film's premiere came to a temporary halt near the climax when an audience member suffered a seizure.



Other gay filmmakers: Ian Iqbal Rashid, director of 2004 Sundance queer pick *Touch of Pink*, returned with *How She Move*, a *Bring It On* for the stepping competition set. Marco Kreuzpaintner, German director of the sexy gay coming-of-age hit *Summerstorm*, delved into the sordid world of international child-sex trafficking with *Trade*, an English-language thriller. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* screenwriter John August made his feature directorial debut with *The Nines*, a perplexing sci-fi dramedy in which Ryan Reynolds plays three characters, including a gay writer for television. Writer Mike White (*Chuck & Buck*) also turned director with his comedy *Year of the Dog*, in which Molly Shannon plays a dog lover turned animal activist (says Sundance programmer Frilot: "It can be said there are some gay notes in it, not overly sexual but in the spirit of the movie."). *Teeth*, written, directed, and produced by Mitchell Lichtenstein (*The Wedding Banquet*), created chatter with its disturbing tale of a young woman whose vagina packs a set of chompers. Sundance vet Gregg Araki, whose dark drama *Mysterious Skin* played in 2004, returned to comedy with *Smiley Face*, in which a pothead (*Scary Movie* franchise's Anna Farris) spends a day in pot-brownie nirvana.

Meanwhile, the documentary *A Very British Gangster* revealed that its subject was gay, and openly so, but didn't dig far into specifics. Jessica Yu's *Protagonist* blended puppetry and Greek myth with the stories of four charismatic individuals who became what they hated most, one being an ex-gay minister who spread his self-loathing around the globe. →



Losing my religion: *For the Bible Tells Me So* is a documentary that explores the common elements between religion and homosexuality. Subjects included in the film are Gene Robinson (the Episcopal Church's first openly gay bishop) and lesbian activist Chrissy Gephardt with her parents, Dick (former Democratic House Majority Leader and presidential candidate) and Jane Gephardt.

INSET: director Daniel Karslake.

Here Comes the Sundance

continued from previous page

Gayness aside, this was a stupendous year for good films (a must-see: *Strange Culture*, a stunningly original documentary-narrative about an artist/activist framed and persecuted as a bio-terrorist by our well-meaning but overzealous government) and deal making, with many sales in the seven-figures. Bought for \$7 million, *Son of Rambow*, the delightful Garth Jennings (*Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) comedy, sees a pair of British preteens in the '80s making a stunt-filled amateur movie inspired by the Sylvester Stallone action flicks with help from a New Wave-styled French exchange



Director Aureus Solito (*The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros*) experiments with lesbian love in *Tuli*.

student who attracts as many boys as girls. Fox Searchlight's \$4 million baby, *Joshua*, is a delicious *Bad Seed* remake set on Upper West Side of Manhattan in which the titular piano-playing hellspawn is enamored with his erudite gay uncle

(portrayed by Houston-born Dallas Roberts of *A Home at the End of the World* and several *L Word* episodes).

A few films sparked off controversy, most notoriously *Hounddog*, a.k.a. "Dakota Fanning Gets Raped." Reportedly, the Salt Lake City screening was met with

protests and demands in both local and national media that the film be investigated for child pornography. But after the press screening of this

Southern Gothic tale, most audience members felt it should be investigated for racism and stereotyping. The black characters sit around singing blues and talking rattlesnake magic while the whites are all trashy and morally/spiritually bankrupt rednecks, even the rich ones. Memo to Dakota (who claimed she was so compelled by the script that she simply had to make this movie): This is the reason you should wait until you're 18 to make adult decisions. Another film involving sexual exploitation of children, but this time for real, was *Children of God: Lost & Found*. Playing the concurrent Slamdance Film Festival, this startling documentary—produced by World of Wonder's Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato (*The Eyes of Tammy Faye*, *TransGeneration*)—investigates the cult known as The



A couple of young boys are inspired by Sylvester Stallone in *Son of Rambow*.



Houstonian Dallas Roberts (l) plays the gay uncle of Jacob Kroger in *Joshua*.

with recording devices but were caught and detained by police. At long last, the war against swag at Sundance was being openly waged. Festival →

SUNDANCE: a houston take

We also asked local cineaste Rob Arcos for tips on a few Sundance flicks that he looks forward to. Arcos was executive director of the 10th annual Houston Gay & Lesbian Film Festival in 2006 (read "Reel Time," September *OutSmart*) and recently opened MOVIES, a video/DVD rental store (1407 Richmond, 713/527-9997, www.moviesheshop.com).

- Military lovin' might or might not be the case with the South Korean film *A Day Out*. But any film that combines a (male) sergeant, a (male) private, and a (female) prostitute in a story featuring "repressed sexual longings"—the advance word promises—sounds worth checking out.
- When I heard that gay director Gregg Araki (*Doom Generation*, *Mysterious Skin*) had a new film in competition, my homo-senses tingled. And when I read that *Smiley Face* starred Anna Faris (*Lost in Translation*, the *Scary Movies*), I was ready to book a flight to Utah. But after coming to my senses (I have my partner to thank for that), I decided to wait along with my fellow Houstonians to watch Araki's dark comedy about the misadventures you might have if you unknowingly ate some special brownies.
- With the recent success of *Layer Cake* and *Sexy Beast*, the documentary *A Very British Gangster* couldn't be more timely. Showing another side of one of cinema's most used genres, *Gangster* follows



Parker Posey is Fay Grim.

the trials and tribulations of gay Manchester crime boss Dominic Noonan as he lurches from criminal trial to trial while serving as the patriarch of an entire community, which he protects with his own brand of justice and security.

• Even though these next titles might not have GLBT content, I include them because the actresses involved have always been supporters of our community:

Parker Posey continues to prove to audiences that she indeed deserves the title Indie Queen. With two films in the festival, Posey balances broad, slapstick comedy in *Broken English* with a deeply, dysfunctional wife and mother in Hal Hartley's new film, *Fay Grim*.

Another Hartley alumna, Sarah Polley (one of my favorite actors), made the leap from actress to director at this year's festival. She delivers a challenging and engrossing drama, *Away From Her*, about a couple coming to grips with the onset of memory loss.

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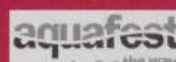
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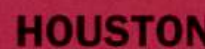
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Here Comes the Sundance

continued from page 00

organizers distributed large buttons with the slogan Focus on Film, subtly protesting the freebie fever at previous festivals that saw Paris Hilton's comp shopping garnering as much if not more press and chatter than the movies. Some typically visible brands and corporations were nowhere to be seen this year, while the few hospitality lodges/suites that remained aimed to at least project an altruistic edge. Besides Mary Louise Butter's aromatic artisan brownies and Lolly Lu's queer and campy flasks and mugs, the Winter Warm Up Retreat dedicated space to The Freedom Campaign, which endeavors to free Myanmar political prisoner and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, and helped young American Film Institute talents make connections and network by introducing them to suite visitors. The Ul-



LEFT: Writer Craig Chester (l) and producer Chris Ractser of *Save Me* at the Outfest Queer Brunch. ABOVE: Robert Gant (l) and Chad Allen of *Save Me*. RIGHT: For the Bible Tells Me So director Daniel Karslake (r) and Bishop Gene Robinson, one of the subjects of the film.

savored a heavenly foot massage with Desert Essence Organics lotions at The Green House.

imate Green Room boasted organic goods like Pureology hair products and Green & Black's chocolates and also spotlighted the work of The Creative Coalition, the celebrity-heavy arts advocacy group. Speaking of upscale products, high-end skin-care treatments were in abundance—Utah-based StriVectin, makers of a popular \$135/tube stretch mark/wrinkle cream, set up shop on Main Street, and the always hot Mar-queue on Main featured Dermalogica (along with Lacoste, Lia Sophia, and Polaroid)—as were undies (2xist and Ginch Gonch). I

Putting their actions where their buttons were, some stars skipped the swag entirely. But others loaded up anyway, including the reportedly on again/off again gay couple Lance Bass and Reichen Lehmkuhl, who also showed up at the *Save Me* premiere. Speaking of *Save Me*, I attended a pre-premiere private dinner with the filmmakers and stars,



during which Gant mentioned that *Queer as Folk* might have lasted at least another season had the escalating costs of the stars' contracts—and the fact that at least one principal actor was totally over the Showtime series—not killed that notion. Introducing *Save Me* to a packed house eager for some gay lovin' and triumph over ultra-religious adversity (and self-loathing), Sundance programmer John Cooper noted, "It's not a gay film. It's not a Christian film. It's an American film." During the post-screening Q&A, Light pointed out that her character's beliefs were far-removed from her own: "My heart and soul belong to the gay community," she shared to smiles and applause. The post-film party was equally warm and celebratory. Patrik Ian Polk, whose Logo series *Noah's Arc* is set to evolve into a 2008 feature film, swung by, while Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman—the gay, Oscar-winning documentarians (*The Times of Harvey Milk*, *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt*) originally slated to direct *Save Me* while it was in development at Fox Searchlight during the late '90s—and co-screenwriter

Craig Chester (Adam & Steve) shared in the joy.

There was additional celebration for gays at Sundance before the Sunday-night closing. Cynthia Wade's short documentary *Freeheld*, which follows the struggle of dying

lesbian police lieutenant Laurel Hester to leave her pension to life partner Stacie Andree, was awarded a Special Jury Prize. And over at Slamdance, *Red Without Blue*, a documentary about a pair of twins (one gay, the other transgender) won the audience award—a sweet, perhaps bittersweet, victory at a not-very-gay, yet very much memorable year in Park City.

New York-based entertainment writer Lawrence Ferber reports each year from the Sundance Film Festival for OutSmart.

GET MORE SUNDANCE

For more information on Sundance Film Festival movies, including a list of award winners and online access to short films (through March 18), visit www.festival.sundance.org.

SUNDANCE & 'MovieMaker'

MovieMaker magazine has entered its 14th year by premiering its winter issue at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah. Packed with interviews and analyses of the year's moviemaking trends, the new issue features a cover interview with Oscar-winner Cate Blanchett, who discusses her work on four of the most talked-about films of the year: *Babel*, *The Good German*, *Notes on a Scandal*, and the upcoming *I'm Not There* (directed by Todd Haynes), in which she plays Bob Dylan. • MovieMaker's winter 2007 issue also spotlights some of the entries at this year's Sundance Film Festival in its "Park City Preview," then rolls back the clock with a look at "Sundance's Greatest Hits," featuring commentary from past and present festival directors. • For more information: www.moviemaker.com. —Troy Carrington



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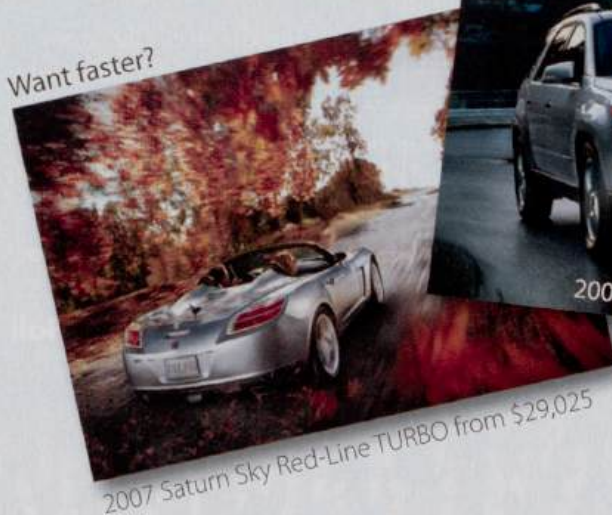
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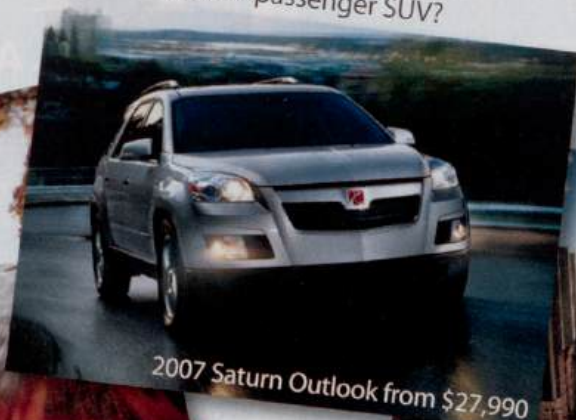
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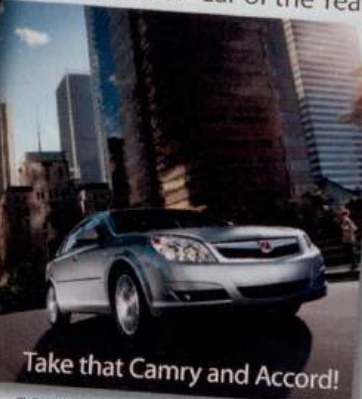


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Auto Choices for 2007

by James Hurst

Are you passionate for IT? Do you anticipate the new models every year? Do you dream in exhilarating colors, muscular shapes, swiveling headlamps, carbon-fiber bodies, and supercharged engines? Just how much do we love IT? By IT I mean our love affair with the automobile. Today's ever-rising gas prices, air pollution, and even traffic nightmares don't seem to deter us from our love affair with the car.

According to the Bureau of Transportation, there are 107 million U.S. households, each with an average of 1.9 cars, trucks, or sport utility vehicles and 1.8 drivers. That comes to 204 million vehicles and 191 million drivers across the United States.

Obviously, there is a passionate affair with the road! So let's talk about some of the choices for 2007. →



2007 Saturn Aura XR

This new model from Kansas is based upon the German Opel Vectra, making it a sibling of the Pontiac G6 but with Euro-classy skin and inspired tuning. The Aura XR comes with a six-speed automatic alloy DOHC V-6 producing 252 hp. Acceleration to 110 mph is identical to the 240-hp G6 GT's, although there is more subtlety due to the double-paned front glass, laminated steel, and sound deadening. The XR interior is Euro-sleek, offering an alternative to the run-of-the-mill GM product line of the past. Consider this car if you want something different and edgy.



2007 Volkswagen GTI

The spirit continues in the GTI tradition in this turbo-charged, direct-injected 2.0-liter, 4-C that develops a smooth 200 hp. The GTI offers a long list of standard features as well as an optional navigation system. Volkswagen has stepped up to the standard, offering a nice level of interior trim and amenities. The German autobahn never looked so fun, 30 years after the first GTI appeared on the market. It is roomier, more sophisticated, and a great car to drive.



2007 Toyota RAV4

This third generation RAV4 is a gem among small sport-utility vehicles. This year it comes with new amenities such as the new, optional 269-hp, 3.5-liter V-6, which revs this baby up to 60 mph in 6.3 seconds. The RAV4's combination of compact size, useful interior space, and Toyota reliability proves to be a sport-utility that is hard to beat. Pricing starts at barely over \$20 grand. Just a note, Toyota plans to offer a hybrid version on all of its models in the near future.



2007 Miata MX-5

One of the all-time favorite roadsters among car enthusiasts now gets even better. Mazda began modernizing the droptop in 1990. It has a new unibody, new skin, a new interior, and now a new folding hardtop. Undo the latch, press the button, and twelve seconds later the sky is yours. The top is stowed behind the seats with no trunk-capacity consequences. The pricing is even better. The Miata starts at just under \$25,000, making it the least expensive hardtop convertible in the U.S.



2007 Porsche Cayman and Boxster



This baby Porsche comes to us in two models—one has a solid roof while the other is a top-down model hair blowing in the wind. They're essentially identical down to the robust flat-six engine bolted in behind the cockpit and ahead of the tires, giving this fun machine incredible mid-engine balance and agility. Certainly a car everyone should own when they win the lottery.

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2007 Honda Fit

The Fit raises the bar for small-car expectations. Not only does it have an impressive array of standard features and an upscale interior, but it offers room for four adults and exceptional cargo adaptability with sports-car agility. A car with 109 hp won't generate enthusiasm on the Corvette scale, but it does run up attractive fuel-economy numbers — 33 city, 38 highway, according to the EPA. The boring subcompact econo-cars aren't so basic anymore. The Honda Fit is certainly a hit for 2007.



2007 Chevrolet Corvette

In its sixth generation, the Corvette offers an incredible blend of fun, technology, and warp speed. The Corvette's composite body harkens back to the seminal 1953 model, but now with newer materials, such as balsa-core composite panels in combination with a sophisticated body structure to produce one of the cars that has not gotten heavier over the years. The combination of American heritage, high-performance, and modern-day livability becomes amplified in the 505-hp Z06 limited edition. Chevrolet delivers this incredible street machine at a price vastly lower than any of its competitors. The car of your dreams!



2007 Mazdaspeed 3

Mazda has thrown us a curve with this new turbocharged, inter-cooled DOHC, 16-valve 2.3 liter inline-4. This tiger in disguise offers the Subaru WRX STI some competition. Other elements include suspension and brake enhancements, notice-me exterior trim, and racing styled interior seats. The Mazdaspeed 3 starts at a base price of \$22,835, but dealers will be offering a cold-air intake and cat-back exhaust system, adding 30 more horsepower to this bad boy.

2007 BMW 335i Coupe

This newest version of the 3 Coupe is longer, lower, and completely restyled. Although it shares critical chassis and suspension components with the sedan, it certainly is sexier and easier on the eyes. With the 2007 BMW Coupe 335i, power comes from a twin-turbocharged, intercooled 3.0 liter inline 6. BMW pegs the 335i's zero-to-62-mph acceleration at 5.5 and 5.7 seconds for the manual and automatic, courtesy of the new 300-hp engine. Inside the coupe is all BMW, although redesigned somewhat to meet the packaging. The 2+2 is divided by an extension of the center console—nice touch, trust me.



2007 Chrysler 300

The Chrysler 300 stands out for bold styling, excellent handling, and optional HEMI V-8 engine. Of course, also available are V-6s for a more sedate blend of performance and mileage. This year the 300 offers a long-wheel version, capacious trunk, and fold-down rear seats to provide cargo utility. The cabin is big, quiet, and impressive. Whether you judge a car by its looks, speed, practicality, or value, the Chrysler 300 is a popular sedan not to be overlooked. ■

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SUSTAINING SPIRITS. Plans are well under way for the sixth annual Kindred Spirits Celebration, a reunion of the friends and family who frequented that fabled '80s era women's bar (and those who wish they had), owned by **Marion Coleman** (pictured here on right, applauding with organizing committee member **Renee Tappe** at the 2006 event).

As is their custom, the organizers plan to kick off the reunion with a gala fundraiser-for-the-fundraiser party, scheduled for April 1 at the Historic Magnolia Ballroom downtown.

As a special enticement, individuals who performed regularly at

the now-closed nightclub will provide entertainment for the invitation-only kickoff party. Confirmed to strum and hum are former Spirits' regulars, **Brooke McDonald**, **Marianne Troiano**, this writer, and surprise guests.

The kickoff provides financial support for the main event, scheduled April 28 at the Edwin R. Hornberger Conference Center. This year, the reunion carries with it a travel theme, with raffle prizes including airline tickets, trips, and more. The annual event raises funds for AssistHers, Bering Support Network, Houston Buyer's Club, and Lesbian Health Initiative. Details: www.kindredspirits-houston.com.

JACQ WOODS

VALHALLA...HOLLA! A mad Bavarian king, a wild Texas teen, and "the loneliest humpback in Europe": All these are components of Theatre New West director **Joe Watts'** latest production, **Paul Rudnick's Valhalla**. (Upon its 2004 New York opening, *Time Out* dubbed the show "...a dizzy, brisk diptych that connects 19th-century Bavaria to 1940s Texas in a unified field theory of gayness.")

The comic epic opens March 2 at Midtown Arts Center, running weekends through March 31 with Sunday matinees on March 11 and 25. Watts—who continues to offer his acting classes, which we mentioned last month—also presents a preview performance on March 1 for early birds. Tickets: 713/522-2204.

FINAL PERFORMANCES. There's still time to catch the last weekend shows (through March 3) of **Chay Yew's Porcelain**. Directed by the prolific **Ed Muth**, the reflective story of a gay Asian man accused of slaying his Anglo lover is intended for ma-

ture audiences. Performances are at Theatre One on the Houston Community College central campus. Tickets: 713/718-6570.

GLBT ACTION. No, not that kind. Seeking to make movies that have a positive influence on the GLBT community, Gypsy Lar Production, an Atlanta-based independent movie production company, has announced its first semi-annual script-writing contest.

The contest is open to anyone who wishes to write a script in any genre as long as the main two characters are GLBT, organizers say. The winning script will be turned into a feature movie "which will be shopped around for sale to the highest bidders," they report. The submission deadline is June 1. Details: www.gypsylar.com.

BRINGIN' BACK THE GREEN. After a year hiatus, Bringin' in the Green, the Gaelic-tinged fundraiser for the Montrose Counseling Center, returns to fill the agency's pot o' gold on March 16, 6-9

p.m., at the home of **John Danielson**.

The 2006 passing of **Jack Jackson**, one of counseling center's favorite benefactors and leprechauns ("Just Jack," March 2005 *OutSmart*), has prompted organizers to honor him by encouraging attendees to make donations in Jackson's name. Details: 713/529-0037.

GARDEN PARTY. Speaking of green, **Camille Waters**, known locally as the Queen of Lettuce, hosts the last of her annual spring picnics benefiting Urban Harvest and Chef's Collaborative on April 1. After 13 years of growing salad greens, vegetables, and edible flowers for innovative local chefs, Waters has decided to retire and move to Mexico. Her final bash, thrown in her organic garden on Jackson Hill near the Heights, will feature the talents of several top chefs, including **Mark Cox** of Mark's and **John Sheely** of Mockingbird Bistro. The event (tickets: 713/880-5540) is also a 79th-birthday celebration for jazz legend **Harry Sheppard**, who will perform along with **Mandy G. Smith**. ■

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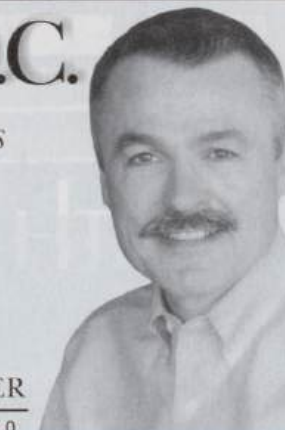
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(Vanity Fair, 2/07, George Wayne)

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Eric Brun-Sanglard

(POZ, Feb/Mar/07, Nicole Joseph)

Brun-Sanglard doesn't immediately disclose his HIV status on the show [A&E's *Designing Blind*].... "My producer [didn't] want me to be the 'HIV positive designer,'" Brun-Sanglard says, adding that he agreed to omit his status when he realized that he wasn't being asked to hide it. "It wasn't like I couldn't talk about it at some point, but they didn't want me to be labeled, and I agree," he says. In a society that still stigmatizes those living with HIV, the combo of an HIV positive, blind, gay interior designer might seem shocking. But for Brun-Sanglard, it's simply reality, a duality of illnesses that has shaped who he is today. It has also meant a life of reliance and trust....

On his best days, as a friend put it, Brun-Sanglard is "the only person that doesn't know that he is blind."

Gary Ackerman

(ServiceMembers Legal Defense Network, 2/7/07)

[I]t seems that the military has gone around and fired a whole bunch of people who speak foreign languages—Farsi and Arabic, etc. For some reason, the military seems more afraid of gay people than they are [of] terrorists, but they're very brave with the terrorists. If the terrorists ever got hold of this information, they'd get a platoon of lesbians to chase us out of Baghdad.

Inara George

(2/8/07, Peter Galvin)

Peter Galvin: For obvious reasons, "F*cking Boyfriend" has a lot of resonance for gay men. When the remix is played in clubs, it's a kind of empowering anthem.

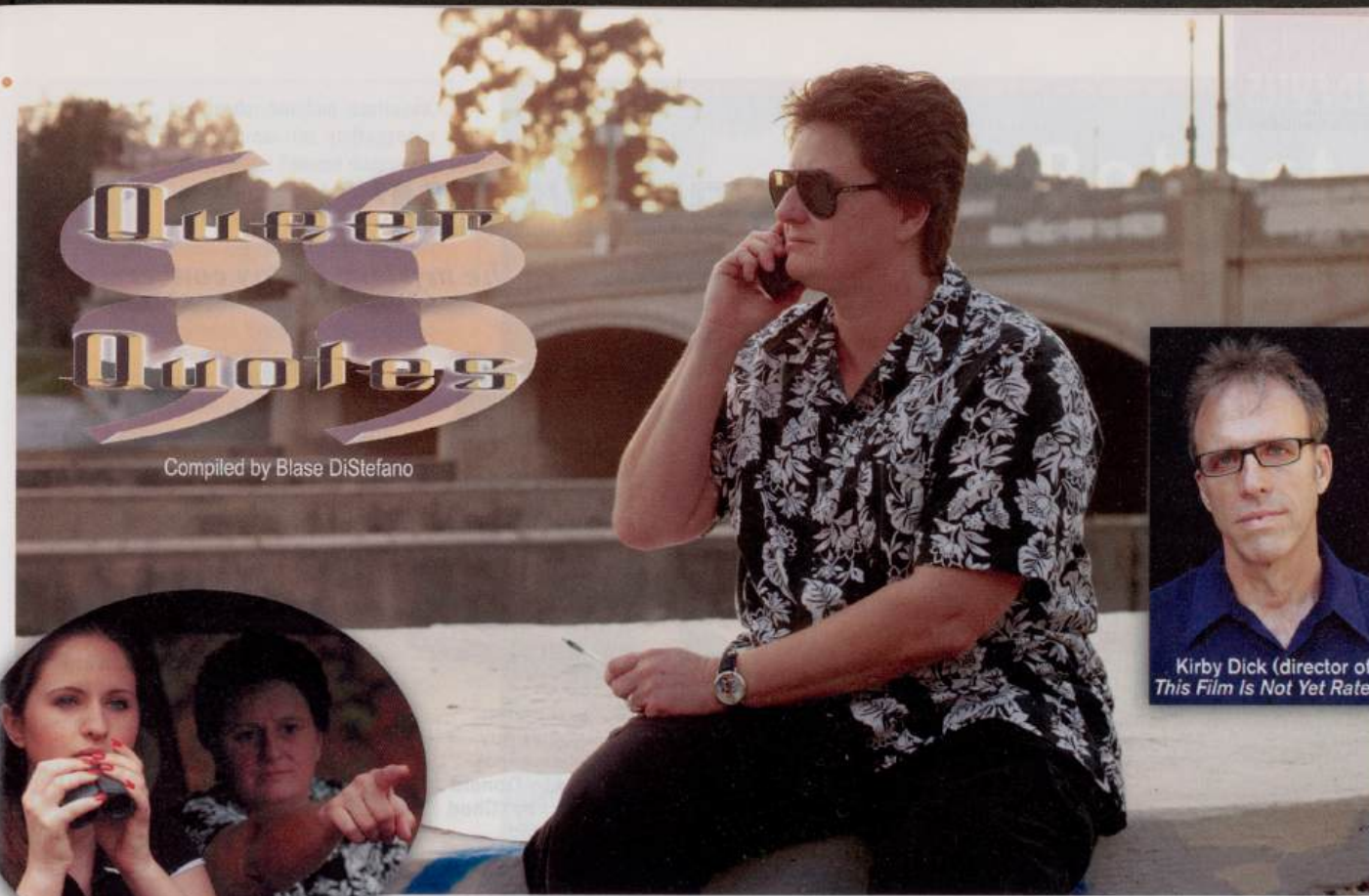
When the idea came up for a remix, we realized that it would be directed to the gay audience, which is great. Of course, gay men and straight women both know what it's like to have f*cking boyfriends!

Mike Jones

(www.beliefnet.com, 1/31/07)

Mike Jones, the male prostitute who revealed the "secret" side of Pastor Ted Haggard's life, visited Pastor Haggard's former church.... According to the few media accounts available, Jones said that several people came up to him, shook his hand and said, "God bless you."

The associate pastor at New Life, Rob Brendle saw Jones in the lobby, approached him and said, "I don't want to impose my religious beliefs on you, but I believe God used you to correct us, and I appreciate that."



Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Kirby Dick (director of *This Film Is Not Yet Rated*).

Kirby Dick on Becky Altringer

Becky Altringer (pictured here in *This Film Is Not Yet Rated*) is private about her investigating but she's out about her homosexuality. **INSET:** Altringer in the field with junior PI Lindsey Howell, daughter of Cheryl Howell, Altringer's partner in crime-investigating and at home. *This Film Is Not Yet Rated* airs on IFC, March 31 (see page 74).

Kirby Dick is the director of *This Film Is Not Yet Rated*, now out on DVD (see page 70).

What was the most fun about making [*This Film Is Not Yet Rated*]?

Kirby Dick: It was a blast working with a private investigator, and as a PI Becky was absolutely stellar. Also, it was fortunate for the film that she was a lesbian, because her presence in the film personalizes society's bias against homosexuality, a bias the MPAA [Motion Picture Association of America] has helped to perpetuate. In many ways I think Becky is one of the most interesting and unusual PIs in film history.

The Isaiah Washington Brouhaha

(USA Today, 1/25/07, Robert Bianco)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Actor Isaiah Washington used the word "faggot" to describe co-star T.R. Knight on the set of ABC's *Grey's Anatomy*. Since then, he has apologized, met with GLAAD, and at press time was undergoing treatment to transform his "negative actions into positive results," he said in a statement. **Robert Bianco:** Let's look at this ugly incident's bright side. Had word come out 20 years ago that a TV star had been called a homosexual, it's the gay actor whose career would have been over. Now, it's the bigot who's in danger. That, at least, is a healthy sign.

Isaiah Washington (l) and T.R. Knight:
Is there anything healthy about this relationship?



'SHOCK TO THE SYSTEM'

The follow-up to 'Third Man Out' finds a mystery within the mystery of gay conversions



On top of it: Another guy gets manhandled by Donald Strachey (Chad Allen, top). Inset: Morgan Fairchild plays the mother of a gay man.

In *Shock to the System: A Donald Strachey Mystery* (the second film in the series of gay detective stories by novelist Richard Stevenson) openly gay detective Donald Strachey (played by the also openly gay Chad Allen) discovers that Paul Hale, a recent client, has been found dead. A trail of puzzling clues leads Strachey to Dr. Trevor Cornell (Michael Woods), a religious-right biased gay conversion therapist. The client was sent to Cornell by his mother (Morgan Fairchild) who claims, "All I wanted was what was best for my son, to see him healthy and safe and happy."

He schedules sessions with the Doc, posing as a homosexual seeking treatment. (When asked if he'll be subjected to shock therapy or a lobotomy, the secretary assures him, "We don't advocate that treatment; we haven't for several years.") The deeper he gets, the more deadly his world becomes.

Among the DVD's special features is a documentary of relevance to the plot. *Soulforce Resists Religion-Based Discrimination* tells the story of a group dedicated to the use of nonviolent resistance to free GLBT people from religious and political oppression. The doc follows Chad Allen, Judy Shepard (Matthew Shepard's mother), and others on a protest march against the antigay *Focus on the Family* in Colorado Springs.

Shock to the System, which was directed by Ron Oliver (who also directed an episode of *Queer as Folk*), premiered on here! TV last year and is nominated for a Vision Award (see Television, page 00).

From Liberation Entertainment (www.liberationentertainment.com). —Preview: Eric A.T. Dieckman

MORE DVD/VHS REVIEWS/PREVIEW

Shortbus



Love and sex. The connections can be myriad, comic, and sometimes tragic. Several New Yorkers find each other—and themselves—at a weekly underground gathering of art, music, politics, eccentricity, and polysexual debauchery in this in-your-face ensemble comedy. • 2006. Directed by John Cameron Mitchell (*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*). • Available March 13 from THINKFilm (www.thinkfilmcompany.com). —Preview: E.D.

This Film Is Not Yet Rated

What goes into a film's rating? Academy Award-nominated filmmaker/documentarian Kirby Dick investigates the enigmatic Motion Picture Association of America and its questionable process of rating movies. Do some studios receive preferential treatment? Is the MPAA attempting to control our culture? Are there discrep-



F--K



Jeremy, Bill Maher, Miss Manners, and Hunter S. Thompson. • 2005. Directed by Steve Anderson. • From THINKFilm (www.thinkfilmcompany.com). —Preview: E.D.

ancies in determining the difference between PG-rated sex and violence and its NC-17 counterpart? • 2006. Co-written and directed by Kirby Dick. • From IFC Television (www.thinkfilmcompany.com). —Preview: E.D. Editor's note: See Television (page 74) and Queer Quotes (page 68) for this film's gay angle.

Soap



Charlotte has recently moved into a new apartment. Veronica, her new neighbor, awaits a sex-change operation, biding her time watching a daytime drama and with visits from johns. When they meet, Veronica turns Charlotte on to her favorite soap. They become inseparable, eventually developing an awkward mutual attraction. They clumsily pursue their love, discovering the drama, confusion, uncertainty—the soap—of their own lives. • 2006. Co-written and directed by Pernille Fischer Christiansen. • From Strand Releasing (www.strandreleasing.com). —Preview: E.D.

C.R.A.Z.Y.

After Zac demonstrates a zeal for donning his mother's frocks, he loses most-favored-son status with his father Gervais. As Zac grows up in the '70s,



his gender-bending continues, with acumen for androgynous Glam fashion. Paternal disapproval becomes disdain. As Zac leaves his teens and seeks self-acceptance, Gervais finds he must do the same. • 2005. Co-written and directed by Jean-Marc Vallée. French with English subtitles. • From Genius Products (www.geniusproducts.com). —Preview: E.D.

Sun Kissed



Teddy crashes at his professor's desert home to work on his novel. There he falls for Leo, the comely caretaker. After a few chapters—and a few [dozen] drinks—Teddy takes a stab at Leo. But it seems that Leo has taken a stab or two at danger in the past in this romantic thriller. • 2006. Written and directed by Patrick McGuinn. • Available March 13 from Wolfe Video (www.WolfeVideo.com). —Preview: E.D.

Outlaugh!



The first-ever queer comedy festival features Jason Stuart, Bob Smith, Karen Ripley, Page Hurwitz, the Nellie Olesons, headliner Lea DeLaria, hosts The Gay Mafia, and more. Behind-the-scenes footage looks at what it takes to be out and hilarious. • 2006. Directed by Gene Merker. • Available March 13 from Wolfe Video (www.WolfeVideo.com). —Preview: E.D.

The Full Monty: The Fully Exposed Edition



The riotously funny ensemble comedy of poverty and packages returns with a two-disc set. Bulging with bonus material, including the "Music Machine," which allows viewers to skip to fave music/dance numbers with the Oscar-winning film. • 1997. Directed by Peter Cattaneo. • Available March 6 from Fox Home Entertainment (www.foxhome.com). —Preview: E.D.

Robert Mitchum: The Signature Collection



Robert Mitchum is one film star from the Golden Age whose work just looks better with the passing of time, so the new Robert Mitchum "Signature Collection" is a welcome addition to one's home film library even though none of the titles here are particularly signature. Despite that, classic movie fans are probably going to be thrilled with at least some of the contents. For many fans the centerpiece of this set is 1952's cult bad girl drama *Angel Face*, with Jean Simmons cast against type as the title character. Mitchum's no match for her, and the twist ending proves it. Then, from the same year, there's *Macao* (a personal favorite), with Mitchum appearing only about half as tough and hardboiled as his gorgeous co-star, the great Jane Russell. Gloria →

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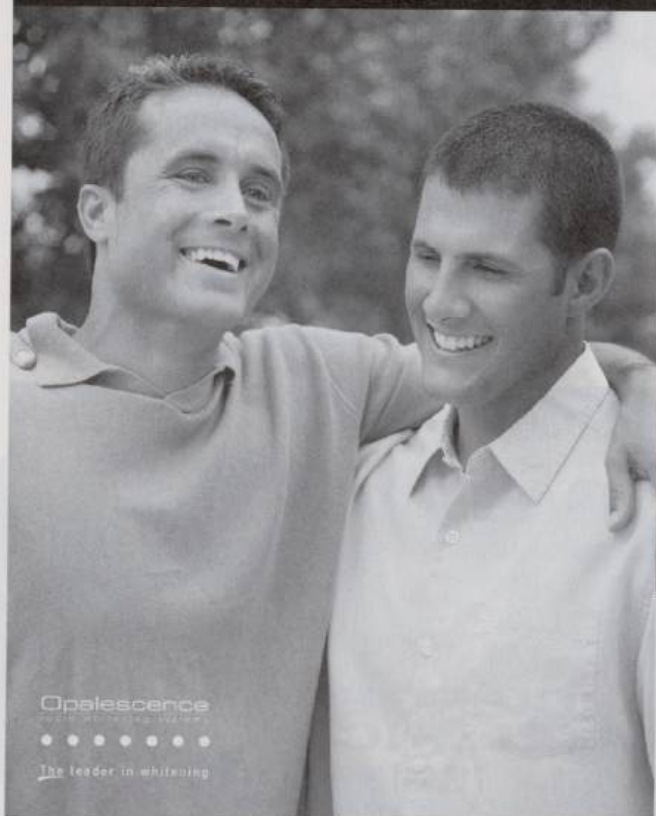
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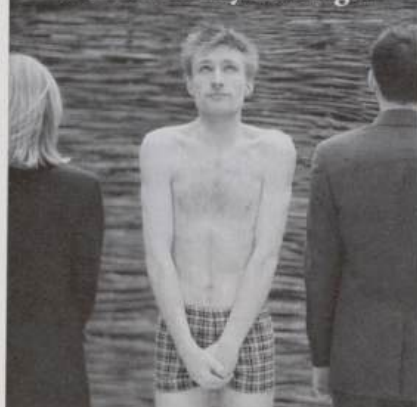


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DVD/VHS

continued from previous page

Grahame gives her some sulky competition in this noir drama set in a make-believe (read: soundstage) Macao. Another really underappreciated treasure is 1960's *The Sundowners*, featuring Mitchum and Deborah Kerr as Australian shepherders—and they've got the accents to prove it. This collection also includes, in descending order of quality, 1960's *Home From the Hill*, 1975's *The Yakuza*, and 1969's *The Good Guys and the Bad Guys*. Go directly to Macao, then make a stop in Australia before coming back home to Angel Face. From Warner Home Video (www.warnerhomevideo.com). —Review: Jack Varsi

TV DVDs

Maude: the Complete First Season



Abortion, gay rights, the war, racism—all hot topics for TV, even today. But when presented as comedy by producer Norman Lear in the early '70s, it was downright revolutionary. The first of her two signature sitcom roles, Bea Arthur's anything-but-compromising portrayal of Maude Finley rightly garnered her five Emmy nominations and a win in the course of the show's six-year run. Right on! • Available March 20 from Sony Pictures Home Entertainment (www.sonypictures.com). —Preview: Nancy Ford

Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman: Volume One



Before there was *Soap* (the TV show, not the listing on the previous page) or *Soap Dish*, there was Mary Hartman, who endured her travails with subtle humor. The pigtailed Mary (Emmy-nominee Louise Lasser) copes with her flasher grandfather, being kidnapped by a mass murderer, and a failing marriage, all the while fretting over the waxy yellow build-up on her floors. • Available March 27 from Sony Pictures Home Entertainment (www.sonypictures.com). —Preview: E.D.

Music DVD

Shut Up and Sing



Funny thing about free speech. It's seldom a speech, per se. And it is hardly free. That's what Dixie Chicks discovered when lead singer Natalie Maines spontaneously uttered that now-infamous sentence onstage about W and Texas and embarrassment. This country-rock doc traces DC's return to the top of the charts, despite being ostracized from many broadcasters since 2003. Maybe after sweeping the Grammys with five big wins, including song and album of the year, the Chicks will get a bit more respect from local radio. But don't hold your breath. From The Weinstein Company and Genius Products. Details: www.shutupandsingmovie.com. —Preview: N.F. ■

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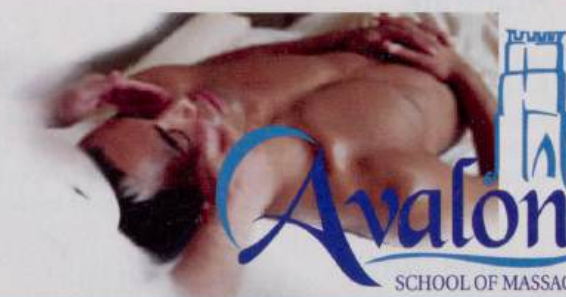
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by Nancy Ford

ALL HAIL

HBO and Queen Latifah keep it real with 'Life Support'

Oh, how we love Queen Latifah. She can serve up a Hip-Hop refrain with luster like the dirtiest ol' bastard, yet simultaneously inspire sistahs to new heights with the magnificence of Oprah.

Latifah's 1994 Grammy-winning "U-N-I-T-Y" rallied women of color in particular to higher awareness. Seventeen years later, *Life Support* is her war cry against the so-far-losing battle fought by people of color in general against HIV.

In it, the Queen plays Ana Wallace, a now-clean and sober facilitator of a women's HIV support group. A considerable departure from her 2002 Oscar-nominated role as *Chicago's* prison matron Mama Morton, Latifah's portrayal of the HIV-positive mother of two struggling to hold her family—and her own life—together is realistic and exhausting.

The scenes depicting her support group are shot in a highly educational, semi-docu, almost improvised form, conversationally and casually addressing safe-sex procedures, methods of



Our favorite queen: Ana (Queen Latifah) tries to convince Amare (Evan Ross, son of Diana Ross) to get off the streets. Inset: the Queen chats with director Nelson George.

transmission, down-low issues, and how to approach testing. Inspired by a true story, the movie also gently yet firmly shares the alarming statistics without being preachy, including the sorry fact that of the 1.2 million Americans living with HIV and AIDS, approximately 500,000 are African-American.

Jamie Foxx, Latifah, and a slew of others share executive production credit on *Life Support*, which is directed by Nelson George and co-written with Jim McKay and Hannah Weyer. It also stars Anna Deavere Smith, Wendell Pierce, Evan Ross (who plays a gay HIV-positive



teenager), Rachel Nickles, Darrin Dewitt Henson, Gloria Reuben, Tony Rock, and Tracee Ellis Ross (daughter of Diana Ross).

Debuts **March 10**, 7 p.m. on HBO, with repeats throughout the month. Details: www.hbo.com.

First-Rate

Lesbian P.I.s get the MPAA

In *This Film Is Not Yet Rated*, gay filmmakers Kimberly Peirce (*Boys Don't Cry*), John Waters (*A Dirty Shame*), Jamie Babbit (*But I'm a Cheerleader*), and others speak candidly about the inconsistencies (to put it mildly) imposed on films by the MPAA film ratings system. Plan on getting angry. FYI: Private eyes hired to uncover the secrets of the MPAA were domestic partners Becky Altringer and Cheryl Howell, who are also on-camera participants in this film directed by Kirby Dick. Airs **March 31** on the Independent Film Channel (www.ifc.com).

Tabloid 'Dirt'

Jennifer Aniston goes lesbian!

Together again, former *Friends* Jennifer Aniston and Courtney Cox get chummy on *Dirt*, CC's hot new FX series about the tabloids. Aniston plays a rival editor—and married lesbian with children!—in the **March 27** season finale. Nothing dirty about that. Details: www.fxnetworks.com.



'Not Yet Rated': director Kirby Dick



Shooting 'Dirt': actress Courtney Cox

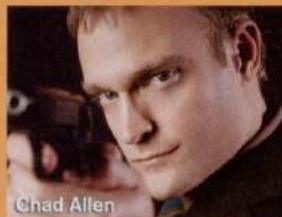
The Execution of Wanda Jean



Wanda Jean Allen

This ain't no musical. Produced by Home Box Office, Inc., this documentary follows Wanda Jean Allen in the three months prior to her execution for slaying her girlfriend in the parking lot of a police station, despite her defense of lifelong mental retardation and brain damage. Airs **March 29**, 9 p.m., and **March 30**, 1 a.m. on A&E (www.aetv.com).

The Way Out



Chad Allen

Produced in association with David Duchovny and Mythgarden, the production company run by the very out Chad Allen and Robert Gant, this film focuses on what happens to a gay man after he loses his partner of 53 years. • It's already been a good year for Allen. His *Shock to the System: A Donald Strachey Mystery*, which also airs on here!, recently garnered a nomination for the National Association for Multi-Ethnicity in Communications' Vision Award. *The Way Out* is now in development. Details: www.heretv.com.

Work Out



Jackie Warner

To amuse those of us who prefer watching exercise as opposed to actually exercising, Jackie Warner and the buff gang return to Bravo for a second season. Expect hilarity in episode 2: comedian Kathy Griffin gets the once-over. Airs Tuesday, **March 20**, 10 p.m., and returns to its regular time slot the following Tuesday at 9 p.m. on Bravo (www.bravotv.com).

Penn & Teller: Bullshit!



Penn & Teller

My, how time flies when you're exposing cons, charlatans, and idiocy in general. Back for a fifth season, the not-so-magical boys focus on obesity, Wal-Mart, Satanic conspiracy, and more. Sounds like another night on CBN, doesn't it? Premieres **March 22**, 9 p.m., on Showtime (www.sho.net). ■

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OVER, ACROSS, AND BACK

Jennifer O'Connor, the lesbian singer/songwriter, makes her major label debut

After making a significant impression with her independently released 2004 album, *The Color and the Light*, out singer/songwriter Jennifer O'Connor has returned with her major label debut, *Over the Mountain, Across the Valley and Back to the Stars* (Matador). O'Connor visits familiar territory on her musical journey, such as love and family, but her uncommon approach to transforming it into something musical—"the bumpy ride through space and time" of "Complicated Rhyme," for instance—is what makes the trip such a memorable one. I spoke to O'Connor last September.

Gregg Shapiro: Because your new album is being released on Matador, I have to begin by asking you what you think about the Liz Phair comparisons that pop up in articles written about you?

Jennifer O'Connor: I used to be a little bit bothered by them. But I don't really care about them so much anymore. I've kind of gone through this process where first I was



Not Phair: Jennifer O'Connor thinks specific thoughts.

excited and then I got annoyed because it was the first thing anyone would say. Now I've kind of gone through the grieving process. [Laughs] I feel like people just say it now because it's been said before.

Personally, I actually hear a little more Sarah Dougher than Liz Phair.

Everybody hears something. [Laughs] But that's cool. I like to listen to the people I get compared to, so I try to look at it as a compliment.

When you are writing songs, does the music come first or do the words, or does it vary from song to song?

Usually it all happens together, for the most part. There are exceptions, and sometimes it happens both of the ways you said. Usually, I just sit down with a guitar and just play, mess around, and then start writing words.

The album's title, *Over the Mountain, Across the Valley and Back to the Sea*, is drawn from the opening track "Century Estates." When a line from a song →

GrooveOut Shorts

Justin Hayford
It All Belongs to You



You'd think that being an AIDS advocate in his hometown of Chicago would keep this crooner busy enough. But no. Hayford also found time to not only play piano and do all the vocals on this collection of obscure Cole Porter tunes, but also to arrange them. De-lovely! From LML Music (www.lmlmusic.com). —*Preview: Nancy Ford*

The Roches
Moonswept



Goofball and endearing, simultaneously sweet, sultry, and silly—yes, it's the same Roche sisters who debuted in 1979 with their quirky folksy three-part harmony, reunited for the playful, swinging *Moonswept*. I laughed out loud at "Jesus Shaves"—Jesus portrayed as a factory worker with a crush on Magdalena in accounting—but on subsequent listens the thoughtfulness sinks in, the moodiness,

the hope. A delight. From 429 Records (www.429records.com). —*Review: Ann Walton Sieber*

Belinda Carlisle
Voila



A radical departure for the pop diva, Carlisle returns with 11 classic French pop songs. Her sultry voice makes these classics undeniably sexy. The album is a mix of arrangements from the flamenco-infused "Jezebel" to the heartbreaking "Ne Me Quitte Pas" ("If You Go Away"). Included: a bonus disc with English versions of songs from the album. From Rykodisc (www.rykodisc.com). —*Review: Andrea Rodriguez*

Toni Braxton
The Essential Toni Braxton



Dr. Dre ("Just Be a Man About It"), Tupac Shakur ("Me & My Boyfriend"), and Il Divo ("The Time of Our Lives") provide vocal assistance on this collection of the multi-Grammy-Award-winner's hits. Contains two versions of "Un-break My Heart"—the original and a club mix. Stick with the original. From LaFace/Legacy (www.legacyrecordings.com). —*Review: N.F.*

Original Cast Recording
Spring Awakening



It could have been titled *Sex, Violence and Suicide: The Musical!* Based on a late 19th-century drama, this version unfolds through the eyes of three teens. Penned by Steven Slater and Grammy-nominated Duncan Sheik, standouts are "Totally F--ked" (because he rhymes it with "self-destruct") and the discordant "The Bitch of Living." What's not to love? From Universal Music Classics Group (www.deccabroadway.com). —*Review: N.F.*

Norah Jones
Not Too Late



In her most personal album to date, this confident performer wrote or co-wrote every track on this record performing them with an irresistible voice and a soulful captivating style. Largely acoustic, *Not Too Late* combines several genres of music painting a vivid picture of life, love, disillusionment, and longing. From Blue Note Records (www.bluenote.com). —*Review: A.R.* →

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becomes the album title, does that give the song more significance?

That was the last song that I wrote when I was writing the record. I was trying to come up with the title [laughs] and I felt like that line fit, encapsulated the vibe of the record. I think that's why I also put that song first, because it seemed like a good opening for some reason, in some ways because it was written last, I think.

Your sisters figure prominently in your work. Can you say something about what it means to you as a songwriter to be able to immortalize people, especially those you love, in song?

It's funny, it's become more clear to me that I guess that's what I've been doing, because people ask me that a lot. [Laughs] It just felt natural to me while I was doing it. It was what was going on in my life. It feels good to have made something from painful situations.

Places can also be commemorated in song, as you have done in "Exeter, Rhode Island," and before that in "Pink Florida."

When I write, a lot of it comes from the details in my life. The more specific you can be with an idea or a thought, the more memorable it is, in a song or in literature or anything. I wouldn't say that I plan out writing about certain people or places specifically, it just happens.

It's nice because it really grounds the songs. Yeah, thanks. I think that's probably true.

Over The Mountain is dominated by refreshing love songs, proof that it is still a subject of limitless possibilities. Do you like writing love songs best, or are there kinds of songs that you prefer?

I don't really have a favorite type of song, to be honest. I think that it's maybe harder to write a song like that than another type of song because it's been done so much. I try not to think about other people's songs or what's been done before when I write because I'd drive myself crazy. Everything's been done! [Laughs] I don't really plan out the song-writing. It sort of happens based on what's floating around up in my brain or happening in my life or what comes down on me when I pick up the guitar.

You've cited Sleater-Kinney in the past and even have a link to them on your website. How do you feel about the band going on hiatus?

It's weird, the day I found out, I was really upset. They've been such an inspiration to me. But then, I figured that they've got other stuff that they want to do. That's cool. At least they're not dead. [Laughs] That's happened before with musicians I've really loved. I try to look at it that way and just be happy for them. I'm sure they've got other avenues they want to pursue. I got the feeling that we'll hear more from them musically, individually anyway.

As an out musician, would you say that you have felt support from the community of GLBT musicians?

Not really, no. I certainly know a few other

gay musicians. But it's not like it's a big group where we support each other, per se. Not because I do or don't want to. It hasn't really worked out that way for me. It's always been something that I am, but it's not really connected to my music, I don't feel.

What about in terms of your fan base? Are you aware of a following in the community?

A little. I think it's happened more recently as it's become more [laughs] known that I'm gay. I'll notice a few people in the audience that are obviously gay [laughs], but not a lot. I wouldn't say that it's a predominantly gay audience, no.

Your music publishing company, Truth Love Work, sounds like something of a personal credo. Am I on the right track?

[Laughs] Kind of. It was the name of the first EP that I did. Actually, my girlfriend at the time drew the cover for it. It was just part of the cover that she drew. She wrote that on there, and I liked it and used it and it kind of has become that [a credo]. It's from some sort of yoga Buddhist book that she was reading at the time. [Laughs] It's worked out nicely. I really like it.

ON THE WEB: Read more of this interview at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

Gregg Shapiro also interviews Scissor Sisters front man Jake Shears in this issue (page 00). Shapiro is a past recipient of the annual OutMusic award that recognizes contributions by non-musicians in furthering the work of GLBT performers.

GrooveOut Shorts

continued from page 76

Kelly Sweet
We Are One



Without doubt, this is the best English/Italian/French/Sanskrit recording we've ever heard. Multilingual and multi-talented, this 18-year-old could be the by-product of an Enya and Sarah McLachlan genetic union (if only). Her self-penned "I Will Be Waiting" is painfully hopeful and beautiful. From Razor and Tie Media (www.razorandtiemedia.com). —Review: N.F.

Tony DeSare
Last First Kiss



This jazz vocalist and pianist ambitiously combines standards, classics, and original tunes for his sophomore outing. We like "Gee, Baby Ain't I Good to You?" and his own title track just fine, but his redo's of Carole King's "I Feel the Earth Move" and Prince's "Kiss" are oddly creepy. From Telarc International (www.telarc.com). —Review: N.F.

Original Cast Album

Kurt Weill/Bertolt Brecht's Happy End



Bette Midler's 1973 cover of "Surabaya Johnnie," a Happy Ending staple, revived contemporary interest in this early 20th-century duo's work. But probably only true 'philes will appreciate this sole-authorized English adaptation of the theatrical classic, focusing on the battle between good (Salvation Army workers) and evil (gangsters) in pre-WWI Chicago. From Ghost Light Records (www.ghostlightrecords.com). —Review: N.F.

Echo & The Bunnymen

The Very Best of Echo & The Bunnymen



Subtitled *More Songs to Learn and Sing*, this CD/DVD compilation reminds us why we loved the '80s (or what we can recall of them). Contains alt faves "Bring on the Dancing Horses" and "Nothing Lasts Forever," plus lesser-known tracks including their respectable treatment of The Doors' "People Are Strange." From Rhino Records (www.rhino.com). —Review: N.F.

Katharine McPhee

Katharine McPhee



Despite her handlers' annoying penchant for attaching a McPrefix to anything connected to her, this gifted almost-American Idol's debut album is satisfying without the prerequisite hype. Especially enjoyable are "Home" and "Open Toes" as well as the disc's first single, "Over It." From RCA Records (www.rcarecords.com). —Review: N.F.

Various Artists

Interpretations: Celebrating the Music of Earth, Wind & Fire



The hits of the '70s and '80s supergroup are served up deftly in the hands of Chaka Khan ("Shining Star"), Meshell Ndegeocello ("Fantasy"), and Kirk Franklin, whose "September," dedicated to those displaced by Hurricane Katrina, achieves new spiritual heights. Funkalicious. From Concord Music Group (www.concordmusicgroup.com). —Review: N.F.

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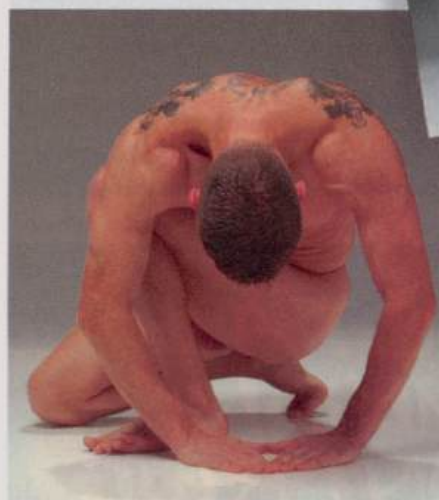
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I SING THE BODY BRILLIANT

Houston wellness guru Alan Davidson pens a new health book

Author and resident *OutSmart* wellness advisor Alan Davidson greets the spring with the release this month of *Body Brilliance: Mastering Your Five Vital Intelligences*.

"Most people would choose to be healthy and happy, but most of us don't know exactly how to get there," Davidson says, regarding the inspiration for the book. "*Body Brilliance* is my little instruction manual on a thrilling, happy, fun, and healthy life."



But this tome is no *Nirvana for Dummies*. Describing life as energy, Davidson (also a massage therapist and a perennial winner in the *OutSmart* Gayest & Greatest reader poll) says everyone has five specific energies that are used in life.

"I call them IQs: physical, emotional, mental, moral, and spiritual. Each of these

IQs can be measured and, more importantly, peaked and improved."

Davidson hopes readers, in turn, are inspired to look good, feel great, free their mind, and act better. "Live life full tilt and for the fun of it!"

The 220-page book (from Author's Publishing Cooperative) contains fetching photographs from the talented eye of Victoria Davis, who also provided images for *Healing the Heart of the World*, the 2006 anthology to which Davidson contributed.

Davidson signs copies of his book on March 22 at Bering & James Gallery. At this event, one of Davis' photos from the book (a \$1,600 value) will be auctioned, with proceeds benefiting Legacy Community Health Services.

Body Brilliance is available "at fine bookstores everywhere," Davidson says, and at www.bodybrilliancebook.com. For details, visit www.throughyourbody.com.



Bodies beautiful: *Body Brilliance: Mastering Your Five Vital Intelligences* includes images by Los Angeles-based photographer Victoria Davis along with advice from Alan Davidson (right). "Great health is a state of extraordinary well-being," Davidson writes. "Health is effortless. It is natural law—the simple flow of energy, undiluted and unimpeded."

RITA MAE BROWN IN HOUSTON



Our favorite master of the cozy cat genre mystery, Rita Mae Brown, is coming to Houston! In addition to *Rubyfruit Jungle*, *Six of One*, and *Venus Envy*, Brown (along with co-author Sneaky Pie) has delighted readers with 14 (and soon to be 15) *Mrs. Murphy* mysteries.

An icon of lesbian fiction, Brown has consistently provided us with great stories, wonderful language, and a sense that we too can play. Her autobiographical writings reveal

a life as interesting as that of any of her characters. An articulate, lively, and fun speaker, this opportunity to hear Brown is not to be missed.

Brown will be appearing as part of Murder By The Book's 2007 Mystery Author Luncheon Series. The luncheon will be held at The Briar Club, Wednesday, March 7, at 11:30 a.m. Tickets are \$55 and include lunch, a talk by Brown, a question-and-answer session, and a copy of the latest Sneaky Pie novel, *Puss 'n' Cahoots*. Tickets are available only from Murder By The Book, 2342 Bissonnet, 713/524-8597. —A.C. ■

ReadOut Shorts

Judy Chicago
The Dinner Party: From Creation to Preservation
Merrell Publishers
(www.merrillpublishersusa.com)



Recalling an incident from her days as an undergrad student at UCLA, the renowned conceptual artist and author notes: "The professor, a respected historian, promised that at the last class he would discuss women's contributions to Western thought. I waited eagerly all semester and, at the final meeting, the instructor strode in and announced: 'Women's contributions to European intellectual history? They made none.'" Well! Learn what else drove this muse in

this "making-of" look at Chicago's groundbreaking, '70s-era installation celebrating historical achievements of women. —Preview: N.F.

Blanche's Last Fling
Ivor Treby
De Blackland Press



Over the year's Ivor Treby has brought us some of our generation's best poetry. From a pre-AIDS celebration of gay life to his wry descriptions of us all, Treby has excelled at reminding us of all that is good not only in our lives, but in ourselves. Sadly, the forward to Treby's latest book, *Blanche's Last Fling*, indicates this may be his last book of original work. A major work by a major voice, this one is a keeper. —Review: Angel Curtis

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DineOut

by Victor Zorn

TWO-FACED

*But in a good way,
Mak Chin's offers a pair of hot venues*



Asian front: Mak Chin's Mango Sweet 'n' Sour (left) and Flaming Beef (right) with a signature Mai Tai from the bar.

Mak Chin's is a casual restaurant serving pan-Asian fare in a modified self-serve fashion—diners order at the counter, but servers bring food to the table (think Pei Wei). Mak Chin's is also a stylish bar catering to the lean and thirsty twenty-somethings that are increasingly drawn to the rapidly gentrifying Washington/Shepherd district. (Fortunately, the bar side seems to have shed any lingering frat-boy-on-a-bender karma in the redo of its old Richard Head's location—hint: try the diminutive of the first name to get the full back-slapping impact of the popularly used moniker for that watering hole.)

At Mak Chin's, the menu created by executive chef Paul Chu encompasses a range of culinary flavors—principally Chinese with some Thai and Japanese and a little Korean tossed into the mix. Some dishes tend to arrive on the mild side, which pleased my tender-palated companion. Fare can always be spiced up with items from a condiment bar in the dining room (think Café Express): hot

sauce, jalapeños, kimchee, ginger, pickles, mustard, and more.

Specialties include Mango Sweet 'n' Sour, which we preferred with the abundant, plump shrimp (chicken is also available), and Flaming Beef, slices of garlicky tenderloin atop a bed of lettuce and vegetables. We also particularly liked one of the starters, the Chicken Lettuce Wraps, which are distinguished by the welcome addition of crispy jicama amid the chopped chicken breast.

The place looks smart, especially because of the abundance of framed Asian movie posters and, we presume, photos of glamorous female movie stars. The bar side of Mak Chin's is more intimate and darker than the restaurant side, with a sleek, curving bar, plush couches, and chairs pulled close together. A patio sits right on Shepherd but is screened from the street by a concrete-block wall, providing yet a third, distinct zone at this multiple-personality spot.

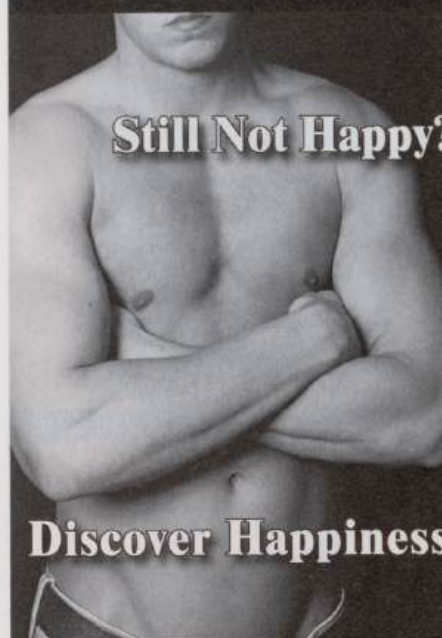
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SPUD LOVE

After a couple of baked potatoes, Sally relaxes into a relationship

I wasn't looking for love. Having a fling was fine, but nothing long-term for me, thanks. My "Forever" relationships had always ended in ugly scenes and late-night door slamming. Who would want that to last till the end of time?

My real "Love Forever" came disguised as your run-of-the-mill, crotch-throbbing attraction. We had known each other socially for years, but no sparks. Exactly one month before our first night together, the future love of my life interviewed me about my trip to Gay Lobby Day on the radio show she hosted. I was nervous. She was cool, competent, a woman in charge. I couldn't take my eyes off those chubby little fingers diddling the console knobs. During a break she took off her headphones. "You're shy, aren't you?" Wonga wonga!

Something got to me about her seeing the tender inner self behind my out 'n' proud

persona. I drove away from the radio station vowing she would be my next fling. Only for the sex, of course.

I invited her to stuff envelopes at the nonprofit where I volunteered. She had a

I invited her to stuff envelopes at the nonprofit where I volunteered. She had a meeting. I asked her if she wanted to go to the Pride rally. She was fixing her sink. A movie? She had a dentist appointment.

meeting. I asked her if she wanted to go to the Pride rally. She was fixing her sink. A movie? She had a dentist appointment.

Finally, one night at a potluck, she announced, "I've got a free pair of concert tickets. Anybody want to go?"

"I will!" I was too gaga to notice her trepi-

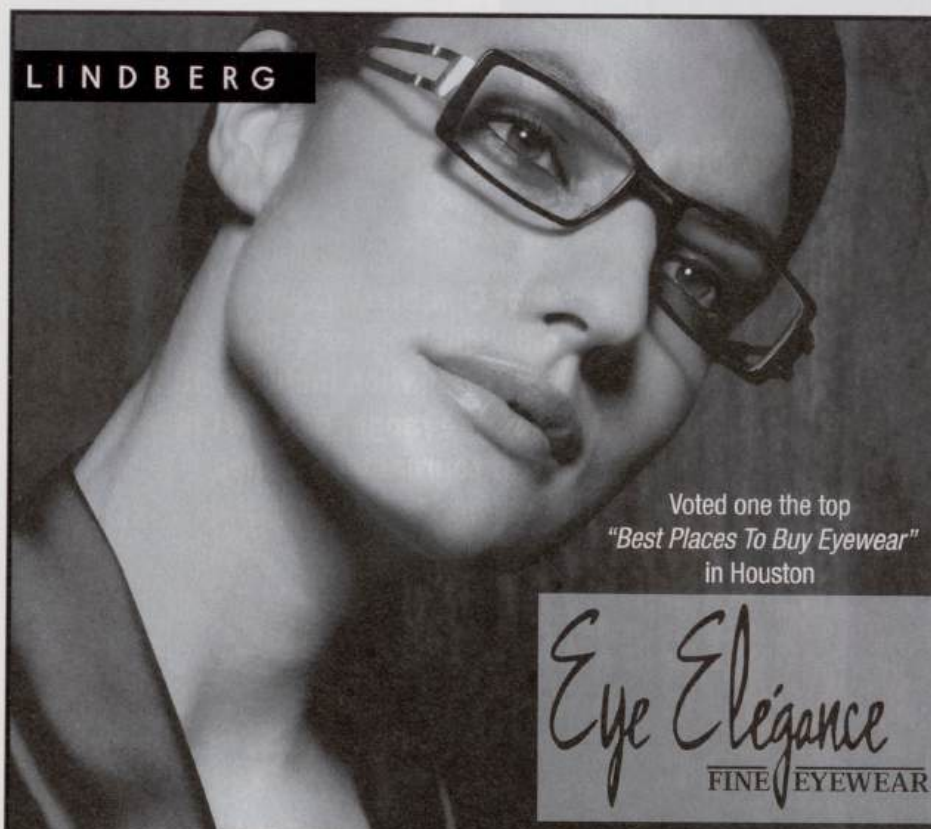
dition. I tried to make a good impression in my vintage Hawaiian shirt, a poor choice for the chilly auditorium's metal seats. I scooted my chair toward her, hoping for some body heat. Was it my imagination, or did she scoot away? I scooted again. So did she. During the standing ovation I sidled closer. She stepped into the aisle.

It was pouring rain when the concert let out. We had to run across the parking lot to her truck. I hoped she would put her warm arm around me or at least lay one of those pudgy little paws on my thigh. I wanted to connect, win her over, get in her pants. When a huge RV passed us, I said, "Ah, that's my fantasy—drive out to the boonies in a big camper and have loud sex."

Silence. She didn't say a word for the whole 45-minute drive home.

I made myself wait a week to call her up. "Hi. I just harvested my potatoes. Want to →

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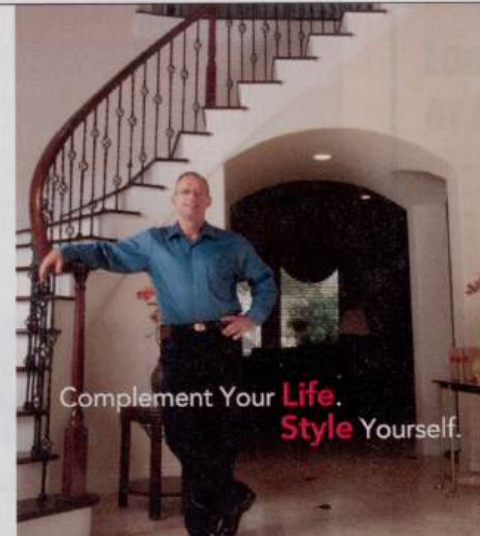


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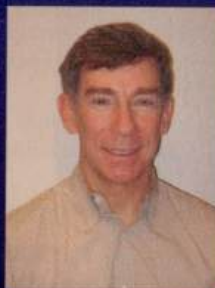
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OutLoud continued from page 84

come over for dinner?"

"Sure, that sounds exciting."

Potatoes? Exciting? This from the chair scooter? Maybe she finally ran out of excuses. Maybe she had a thing for spuds.

We ate our baked potatoes. She was relaxed, warm, funny. Why hadn't I ever noticed those huge blue eyes? "Another potato?" I asked.

After dinner, we took a walk, held hands, talked, laughed. We hugged good night at my gate. Full body press. The next night we went to a GALA dance. We made out in the car and went home to my place. We shared a whole year of sleepovers before I started using the word *love*—even longer before *forever* passed my lips. On our first-six-month-a-versary, she gave me a card asking, "Wanna try for another six months?" I hit the roof. "Quit future tripping. Don't lay any expectations on me!"

The moment I changed is hard to pinpoint. Maybe it was when my old dog died and my sweetie stepped up to the number-one loyal companion spot. Maybe it was weathering tough times without turning on each other that let me relax into love. Or maybe it just kept being good, so I stayed.

After 14 years, even I will admit this isn't a fling. And the love keeps unfolding—like one of those party-favor balls you unravel slowly so you don't miss any of the little prizes tucked between the layers. Who wouldn't want it to last forever?

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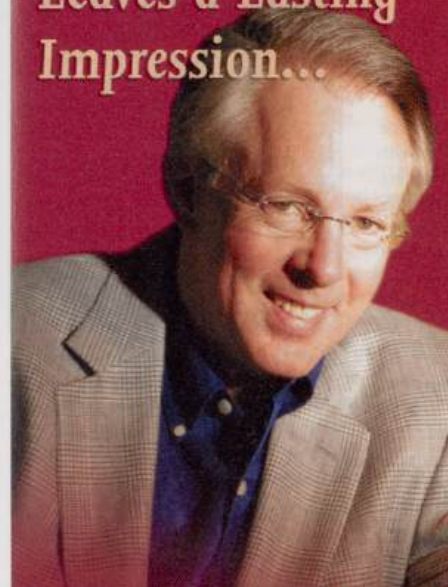
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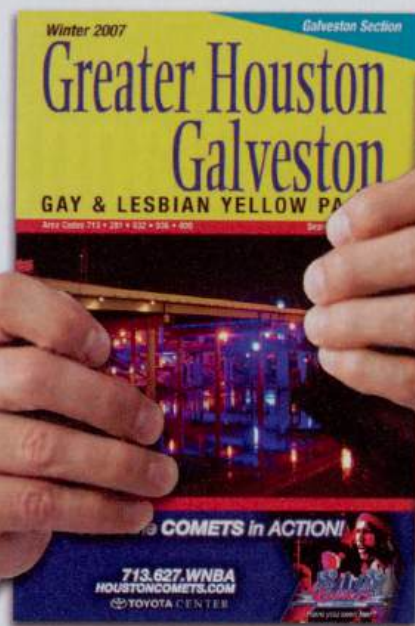
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HIV Testing. HCHD Thomas Street Clinic is offering HIV testing free to the public, 9 am-1 pm. There is no need to establish eligibility ("gold-card"), no donation will be asked of the person seeking testing, and the test is free. Thomas Street Clinic,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

Daily (Sundays thru April 22)

Fighting Fur with Fur. Buffalo Exchange encourages everyone to give your furs back to the critters. Coats For Cubs! takes donated fur and uses it to make bedding for orphaned and injured wildlife. Simply bring in your fur coats, accessories, and whatever else and let the kids at Buff-Ex know it's a donation for The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). (To claim a tax deduction, mail your fur directly to The HSUS, Attn: Coats for Cubs, 2100 L Street NW, Washington, DC 20037.) Information:

1-866-235-8255, www.coatsforcubs.org, or www.buffaloexchange.com.

Weekly (Mondays)

Grab Yer Partner, Doh-Si-Doh. The rhythmically awkward are welcome here. Have some fun gittin' fit with non-strenuous aerobic square dancing. No partner required. Casual dress. \$5. 7-9 pm at Eldridge Park Community Center, 2511 Eldridge Rd., Sugar Land. Please call ahead to verify time and place: Jan, 281/498-5301. More info: sugarsquares@hotmail.com.

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.

Semi-monthly (Wednesdays)

The D Word (Dinner). Come for a meal, stay for the camaraderie. The Lesbian Dinner Group welcomes womyn to build new friendships, enjoy conversation, network, and have a few laughs over an

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., MAR. 9.**

appetizing repast. Singles and couples welcome. The 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month, 7:30 pm, at Café Express, 1422 West Gray. More information: Lesbian.Dinner.Group@gmail.com.

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.

7 (Wed.)

Something Free at Lunchtime. Da Camera of Houston's lunchtime performance series, A Little Day Music, features the Carnaval Guitar Duo. Drop

in for the music, stay to win tickets for an upcoming Da Camera concert. Free. Noon in the Grand Foyer of the Wortham Center, Texas at Smith. More information: 713/524-5050 or www.dacamera.com.

10 (Sat.)

Fighting the Disease with Dinner. Bering Support Network's "Oodles of Noodles" Benefit and silent auction, held the night before the Houston AIDS Walk, raises money to continue its services of support for the GLBT community, those infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS. \$5. At Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold St. Donations/info: 713/419-6222, (fax) 713/520-6866, www.beringumc.org.

10 (Sat.)

Hot Latin Night. Set your heart ablaze with the beat of live Samba. Join the Samba dancers and learn a few steps. The rhythm of the Batucada (Brazilian Drums) is gonna get ya. Watch the exhilarating performance of Capoeira (Brazilian Martial Arts) and Maculelê (Brazilian Stick Dance) by Brazilian Arts Foundation group. \$10. 7-10 pm at Brazilian Arts Foundation, 1133 East 11th St. More info: 713/862-3300 or www.brazilianarts.org.

10-11 (Sat.-Sun.)

19th Annual Galveston Home and Garden Show. Over 100 exhibitors showcase the latest in home repair, landscaping, pet items, furnishings, outdoor living, and more. Look for previews of residential developments, giveaways, and pet adoptions. Benefits the Galveston Island Humane Society. \$5 adults, \$4 students, seniors, and kids. 10 am-6 pm Sat., 11 am-4 pm Sun. at the Galveston Island Convention Center, 5600 Seawall Blvd. Information: 409/762-3930, mjnaschke@aol.com, or www.galveston.com/homeandgardenshow.

11 (Sun.)

AIDS Walk Houston. Help to increase awareness and education about HIV/AIDS. Benefits AIDS Foundation Houston and other local HIV/AIDS service groups. Need we say more? Lace on those cross-trainers and either walk or cheer the pedestrians on! 8 am check-in, 9 am opening ceremonies, 10 am walk begins, all at Sam Houston Park, 1000 Bagby. More info: 713/403-WALK (9255) or www.AIDSWalk-Houston.org.

16 (Fri.)

Drive a Caprice? Nope, I Listen to One. Ensemble Caprice performs Les Septs Sauts, a demonstration of what made the music of the Court of Stuttgart so vibrant. \$30, \$25 for seniors, and \$10 for students. 8 pm at St. Philip Presbyterian Church, 4807 San Felipe (preconcert talk at 7 pm). Information and reservations: 713/432-1744, www.HoustonEarlyMusic.org.

17 (Sat.)

A League of Their Own. Assisters 2nd Annual Softball Tournament brings recreational and competitive teams together for this one-day (St. Patty's Day) tournament. Awards for 1st- and 2nd-place teams will be awarded. Concession stands will once again be run by members of the Houston Pride Band. Benefits Assisters clientele. At Memorial Park, 6501 Memorial Dr. More info (including starting time): sunbak@aol.com or www.assisters.org.

17 (Sat.)

Wonder Where the Lions Are?—at the Sugar Land Lions Club Arts & Craft Fair to ease shopping for Easter and Mothers Day. The fair benefits the many charitable programs the Sugar Land Lions Club sponsors locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally. Free. 9 am-4 pm at the Sugar Land Community Center, 226 Matlage Way, Sugar Land.

23 (Fri.)

Tales of Tromping the Boards. Main Street Theater favorite Joel Sandel reflects on his long relationship with MST in Joel Sandel: Songs That Main Street Taught Me, an evening of story and song. Sandel will perform the music of Gershwin, Porter, Bacharach, and others, and share

'HOT TOWN, COOL CITY'

Houston holds many secrets waiting to be savored, many a part of the GLBT community

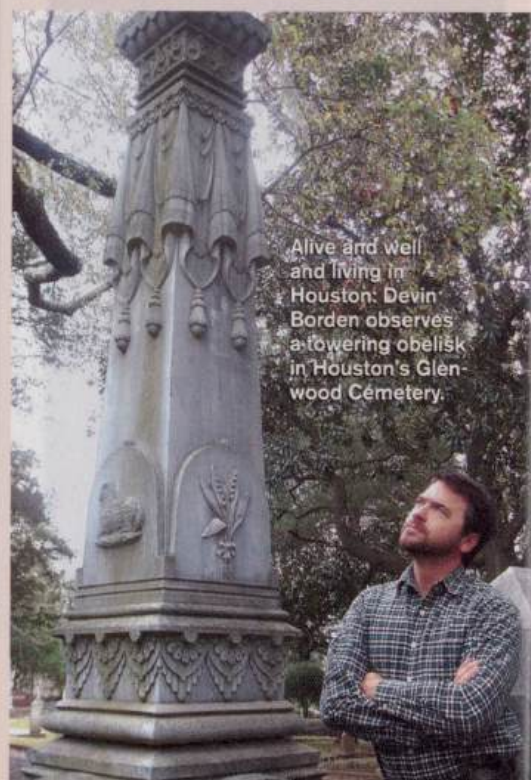
Director Maureen McNamara created *Hot Town, Cool City*, a docu-ode to our fair city as a means of answering the outsider question, "Why Houston?" True, on the surface, this is an industrial town, a place someone moves to only if seeking a profession in the petroleum game, or big medicine, or to shuffle off to the space shuttle. You hold your breath at every game, praying it won't be another bitter defeat. It's a town where you curse the oppressive humidity in August and wear short sleeves and sandals in December. • But beyond all that is a sophisticated, international soul with an edgy, avant-garde, highly creative underground. In her doc, McNamara uncovers a baker's dozen of what she describes as "gems waiting to be discovered." Among them, there's the Devin Borden Hiram Butler Gallery, known for handling superstar artists alongside local talent. The gallery often runs shows in tandem with another of McNamara's gems, The Menil Collection. In an interview, openly gay Borden speaks of another gem, the Glenwood Cemetery, final resting place of Howard Hughes. Then there are the many farmers' markets in town including one run by (also openly gay) Monica Pope; and the gay-owned Chocolate Bar, where Eric Shamban and Lynn Wyatt create flights of fancy from the coca bean that could make the Swiss Miss turn green with envy. —Eric A.T. Dieckman

The What: *Hot Town, Cool City*

The Where: Museum of Fine Arts' Brown Auditorium, 1001 Bissonnet

The When: Fri., March 30, 8 p.m.; Sat., March 31, 1, 6, and 8 p.m.; Sun., April 1, 1 p.m. (each screening is preceded by an introduction from director Maureen McNamara [and Mayor Bill White on the 30th] and a Q&A session afterward)

The Wherewithal: www.hottowncoolcity.org



Alive and well and living in Houston: Devin Borden observes a towering obelisk in Houston's Glenwood Cemetery.

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some behind-the-scenes stories from the life of a working actor. \$50. 8 pm at Main Street Theater-Rice Village, 2540 Times Blvd. Info/reservations: 713/524-6706, www.mainstreettheater.com or www.ticketweb.com.

23 & 24 (Fri. & Sat.)

Ragged Style. The Houston Area Fiber Artists present their "Bayou City Rags" style show and luncheon. Many of the unique garments will be available for purchase. \$45. Takes place on the 3rd floor of The Westin Oaks Hotel in Galleria I. The Spotlight Boutique: Friday, 5-9 pm and Saturday 10 am-3 pm in the Consulate Room; Style show begins on the runway at 11:30 am, luncheon to follow. Tickets: 281/332-0301 or send a S.A.S.E. to Betsy Finger, P.O. Box 1326, Friendswood, TX 77549. More info: www.fiberhouston.org.

23-25 (Fri.-Sun.)

Bayou City Art Fest's 10th Anniversary. Over 300 fine visual and performing artists transform Memorial Park into its own universe of art. Nineteen formats or media include textiles, furniture, glass, jewelry, leather, and others. Young artistic minds are invited to visit the interactive Creative Zone presented by Museum of Fine Arts, which engages children in creating their own art works to take home. And don't forget the food, beer, and wine. Beneficiaries this year include Art League Houston, Bering Omega Community Service, and DiverseWorks Art Space. \$10, free for kids 12 and under. 10 am-6 pm at Memorial Park, 6501 Memorial Dr. More info (including parking): 713/521-0133 or www.bayoucityartfestival.com.

24 (Sat.)

All Spaced Out. Da Camera and The Menil Collection museum present *Stop, Look and Listen!*, another free family performance. Visit the museum, then take in an interactive and informative concert of traditional Indonesian music performed by Space City Gamelan. 3 pm, The Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. Info: 713/524-5050, boxoffice@dacamera.com, or www.dacamera.com.

24 (Sat.)

Crawfish Party. Spicy crawfish will be served from 5 pm 'til 1, and live entertainment by the popular Bayou Roux begins at 9 pm, all at the "Home of the Coldest Beer & the Home of the Warmest Welcome"—Ranch Hill Saloon. More info: 281/298-9035.

24 & 25 (Sat. & Sun.)

Gettin' Good Love. The Single Gay Men's Workshop offers a way to building a relationship that makes life easier and richer, that provides joy, security, satisfaction and that makes you more complete. Tony Carroll, LCSW (recipient of OutSmart's "Best Therapist" award since 2003), with his partner, Dr. Bruce Smith, offer perspectives of both members of a happy, functional couple. Info/reservations: 713/527-0000, tony@houstontherapist.com, or www.houstontherapist.com.

24 & 25 (Sat. & Sun.)

JavaBach. Mercury Baroque presents an evening of J.S. Bach featuring the comical *Coffee Cantata*. The ensemble takes a timeless subject: coffee. The story follows a father and daughter in conflict over a caffeine fix. He wants her to consume less. She refuses. In frustration, he forbids her to marry. As a musical aperitif, Mercury Baroque opens with two instrumental Bach pieces, *Suite for Orchestra No. 2* and *Concerto for Violin in E Major*. \$18-\$42. Saturday, 8 pm, at Cullen Theater, 501 Texas; Sunday, 2 pm, at the University of Houston, Clear Lake, 2700 Bay Area Blvd. Info/reservations: Cullen Theater, 832/251-0706; UH, 281/283-2560; or www.MercuryBaroque.org.

PLANNING AHEAD

APRIL

April 6-8 (Fri.-Sun.)

Margaret Mead Festival. This series of films includes *China Blue* (April 6, 7 pm) about the impossible

goings-on of a blue jeans factory in Southern China. *El Inmigrante* (April 6, 9 pm) focuses on the U.S.-Mexican border crisis illustrated by the story of a migrant who was killed while crossing. In *Flock of Dodos* (April 7, 7 pm), an answer to the "evolution vs. intelligent design" is sought out in a comically cynical manner. *Shooting Under Fire* (April 7, 9 pm) looks at the lives of Israeli and Palestinian photographers working for Reuters to cover the war. *Sisters in Law* (April 8, 7 pm) deals with the judges and attorneys of a small courthouse in Kumba, Cameroon, and their efforts to protect women and children from domestic violence. The festival concludes with the short subjects *A Map With Gaps* and *Today's Man* (April 8, 9 pm). *Map* tells the story of the director's father's travels through Soviet Russia in his "Supervan." *Man* deals with the director's brother, who has Asperger's syndrome, a functional form of autism. \$6 (\$2 for parking). At Rice Media Center, entrance 8 from University Blvd. at Stockton. Info: 713/348-4853 or www.ricecinema.rice.edu.

April 12 (Thur.)

ESCAPE's 26th Annual Celebrity Chef Benefit. Debbie Reynolds (*OutSmart's* "cover girl," September '98) joins Houston sports and media celebrities in this benefit dinner. Reynolds, winner of a 2003 Lifetime Achievement Award for her contributions to Hollywood, recently played the role of Grace's mother on *Will and Grace*. Tonight, she and the other celebs will take knife in hand and play the role of Benihana chef, cooking up meals for attendees. Benefits the ESCAPE center, which has endeavored to prevent child abuse since 1983. Seating and sponsorship: \$300 (individual seat) to \$10,000. First seating at 6 pm, second seating at 9 pm, live and silent auction at 8 pm at Benihana of Tokyo, 9707 Westheimer at Gessner.

April 14 & 15 (Sat. & Sun.)

The Woodlands Waterway Arts Festival. Musicians, dancers, and actors appear on two stages while visual artists display and sell their works. \$10, free for kids 12 and under. 10 am-8 pm Saturday, 10 am-6 pm Sunday along the Waterway from the Woodlands Waterway Marriott to Town Green Park. Info/interested performers: 713/521-0133, www.woodlandsartfestival.com, pegwelbes@yahoo.com, or (fax) 281/364-3011. Performers' deadline: March 15.

April 21-29 (Sat.-Sun.)

Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church's 35th Anniversary. Celebrating 35 years of ministry to the Houston LGBT community, Resurrection is hosting an array of events. • The Annual Resurrection Golf Classic tees off with a shotgun start at Bear Creek Park's President's Course Saturday, April 21, 8:30 am. The Classic is open to all who want to play. • Noted author E. Lynn Harris hosts *Twisted Torch: A Celebration of Life!*, a concert by AIDS Foundation Houston's Mukuru Project artists Cassandra White and Rodney Waters on Saturday, April 28, at 7 p.m. One hundred percent of the proceeds benefit agencies that focus on racial and sexual minority youth affected or infected by HIV/AIDS. The National AIDS Fund will match all proceeds raised. • On Sunday, April 29, E. Lynn Harris brings *The Message* at 9 and 11 am. A jazz brunch follows at 12:30 pm on the Resurrection campus. The brunch features Andra Haviland's Best of Both Worlds Jazz Trio. E. Lynn Harris will conduct a book signing during the brunch. • Early registration for the Golf Classic: 713/861-9149. Tickets and sponsorships for *Twisted Torch*: www.ResurrectionMCC.org or www.Mukuru.org. Tickets for the Jazz Brunch: 713/861-9149.

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

♦ **An American Brat.** Bapsi Sidhwa's story of Feroza, a young Pakistani girl bound for college in America, examines the common threads of family life across the globe. Her liberal Parsi parents find their cultural tolerance challenged when Feroza falls in love with a Jewish boy—domineering grandmother included—and rooms with a lesbian. \$21-\$40. March 9-25 at Stages, 3201 Allen Pkwy. Information and reservations: 713/527-0123 or www.stagestheatre.com.

♦ **Anna in the Tropics.** Nilo Cruz's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama is set in a cigar factory owned by Cuban expatriates in 1929 Florida. The factory owner hires a lector from Cuba—a man hired to read to the workers as they roll the cigars. When the lector begins reading from *Anna Karenina*, he arouses emotion, causing the sleepy community to confront changes they had hoped to avoid. \$20-\$35, \$10 for previews. March 17-April 15, showtimes vary, at Main Street Theater-Rice Village, 2540 Times Blvd. Info/reservations: 713/524-6706, www.mainstreettheater.com, or www.ticketweb.com.

♦ **Bernstein's West Side Story.** Yuja Wang performs on the piano while Robert Spano conducts Bernstein, Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto No. 2* and Gandolfi's *Impressions from The Garden of Cosmic Speculation*. \$25-\$99. March 16-18, 8 pm Friday and Saturday, 2:30 pm Sunday, at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Tickets: 713/224-7575 or www.houstonsymphony.org.

♦ **Burn This.** Unhinged Productions presents a story of Anna and her recently deceased roommate and dance partner, Robbie. At the funeral, Anna is introduced as Robbie's girlfriend in an attempt to clear the fam's intolerant suspicions that Robbie was gay. The more she has to deal with them, the greater the sparks of her anger build. The sparks climax into a mad blaze. \$20, \$10 for students and seniors. Through March 10 at Silver House Theatre, 1107 Chartres St. Info/reservations: 713/547-0126, unhingedproduction@yahoo.com, or www.u-p.org/ticket.html.

♦ **Cirque du Soleil: Corteo.** Translated as "cortege" in Italian, Corteo is a joyous procession, a festive parade. Theatrics, acrobatics, and high-spectacle commingle under the blue and yellow Grand Chapiteau. \$40-\$75 for adults, \$28-\$52.50 for kids 2-12. March 22-April 22 (showtimes vary) at Sam Houston Race Park, 7575 N. Sam Houston Pkwy. Info/reservations: 713/629-3711, www.CirqueDuSoleil.com, or www.ticketmaster.com.

♦ **CORE at the Bayou City Art Festival.** It's Spring, time for the whimsy of a new site-specific dance work by CORE Performance Company at the BACF. The original piece, created especially for the festival, will appear hither and thither on the grounds of Memorial Park. Free with festival admission. March 24-26, beginning at 2 pm, at Memorial Park, 6501 Memorial Dr. More information: 713/521-0133, www.bayoucityartfestival.com, or www.severaldancerscore.org.

♦ **Diavolo.** More than a dance company, Diavolo combines contortion, strength, and ingenuity. Performances incorporate exaggerated sets and props, gymnasts, rock climbers, actors, and dancers. \$36.25-\$51.25. March 22-23 at 8 pm, at Cullen Theater, 500 Texas at Smith. Info/reservations: 713/227-45PA or www.spahouston.org.

♦ **Heartbreak House.** One of George Bernard Shaw's

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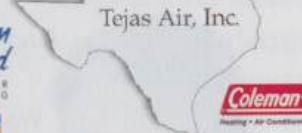
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♦ **Hitchcock Blonde.** A jigsaw-puzzle of a mystery, the enigmatic story is as complex as the relationship between the man and woman who must unravel it. (Adult content, sexual situations, nudity, and smoking.) Through Mar. 18 at The Alley Theatre's Hubbard Stage, 615 Texas Ave. Info/reservations: 713/228-8421 or www.alleytheatre.org.

♦ **Killing Game.** In this unlikely comedy by Eugene Ionesco, a plague infests an entire city leaving it in danger of annihilation. Through Mar. 31, 8 pm, at The Axiom, 2524 McKinney. Info/reservations: 713/522-8443 or www.infemalbridegroom.com.

♦ **Lou Tells A Big One.** The Fertle family is in financial crisis. Someone in town has won the lottery. Uncle Al is opening a honky tonk, and Lou is in a heap-o-trouble. \$20. Through May 12, Thursdays at 8:30 pm, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 and 10:30 pm, at Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt. Info/reservations: 713/522-7722 or www.radiomusictheatre.com.

♦ **Noche Caliente.** Diaz Music Institute presents this 6th annual event with Salsero, Frankie Negron, and Houston's own youth ensemble "Caliente." Free. March 24, 7:30 pm, at Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Dr. in Hermann Park. More info: 281/FREE-FUN or www.milleroutdoortheatre.com.

♦ **SFJAZZ Collective.** Led by SFJAZZ artistic director Joshua Redman, this all-star ensemble is comprised of eight of the finest composer/performers at work in jazz today. \$26.50–\$45. Saturday, March 17, 8 pm, at Cullen Theater, 500 Texas at Smith. Info/reservations: 713/524-5050 or www.dacamera.com.

♦ **Seven Brides for Seven Brothers.** Adam and his brothers need brides. Hey, why not kidnap 'em? \$29–\$92. March 13–25 at the Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. Info/reservations: 713/558-TUTS. 888/558-3882, or www.tuts.com.

♦ **Tick, Tick...Boom!** Winner of the 2001 Outer Critics Circle Award for best off-Broadway musical, Jonathan Larson tells the autobiographical tale of a young composer (Jon) on the brink of turning 30 and falling into oblivion. For Larson, this oblivion led to his Broadway blockbuster, *Rent*. We should all suffer such a void. March 14–April 14, 8 pm (Sunday, April 8 at 5 pm) at Theater LaB, 1706 Alamo St. Info/reservations: 713/868-7516 or www.theaterlabhouston.com.

♦ **True West.** In Sam Shepard's vexing tale, two brothers struggle to prove who is the best and in the process wreck their mother's house and steal all the toasters in the neighborhood. \$5. March 23–31, 8 pm, Hamman Hall, Rice Univ. Park (\$5) in North Lot at entrance 20 or 21 off Rice Blvd. Info: 713/348-4882 or www.arts.rice.edu.

♦ **Valhalla.** Paul Rudnick intertwines two stories in this comedic epic: the life of Ludwig of Bavaria, the 1880s Mad King responsible for building a series of storybook castles inspired by Wagnerian opera, and the fictional adventures of James Avery, a wild Texas teenager of the 1940s. While they embody separate eras, they are ultimately revealed as time-traveling soulmates. The play explores questions of beauty and madness, as both Ludwig and James pursue lives of operatic passion. \$20–\$22. March 1–31 at Midtown Arts Center, 3414 La Branch. Reservations: 713/522-2204.

PERFORMING ARTS For Young People

♦ **Backstage at Seven Brides for Seven Brothers Workshop.** Taught through The Studio at TUTS'

Humphreys School of Musical Theatre, this workshop is open to ages 7–18. Learn to high-kick just like the dancers did in the film version. Go onstage to learn about the sets and props used in the show. Meet the cast for a Q&A session. \$61–\$107 (includes workshop and show ticket). Saturday, March 17, 9–11:30 am, at the Hobby Center, 800 Bagby at Walker (show runs March 13–25). Information, reservations, and important details: 713/558-TUTS or www.tuts.com.

♦ **Go, Dog. Go!** Big dogs, little dogs, red dogs, blue dogs, yellow dogs, green dogs, black dogs, and white dogs are all at a dog party. What a crazy dog party! (Recommended for pre-Kindergarten and up, in case you couldn't figure that out from the description.) \$11 for adults, \$9 for kids and students. March 6–31, Saturdays at 1 and 4 pm, at Main Street Theater–Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. Info/reservations: 713/524-6706, www.mainstreettheater.com, or www.ticketweb.com.

♦ **Jack and the Beanstalk.** Magic beans! The classic children's story comes alive onstage. \$7. March 10–April 14, 11:30 am and 1:30 pm, at the Company OnStage, 536 Westbury Square. Info/reservations: 713/726-1219 or www.companyonstage.org.

♦ **Where the Red Fern Grows.** Produced by A.D. Players, the classic coming-of-age story about a boy and his beloved dogs teaches life lessons of friendship, loyalty, and sacrifice. Free. March 21–22, 11 am and 1 pm, at Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Dr. in Hermann Park. More info: 281/FREE-FUN or www.milleroutdoortheatre.com.

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

♦ **Andy Warhol: Three Houston Women.** One of the art world's most colorful, memorable (and openly gay) figures, Warhol created portraits of three women who had a profound effect on the role of modern art in Houston: Dominique de Menil, Jermaine MacAgy, and Caroline Weiss Law. The exhibit is part of the year-long observation of the Menil Collection's 20th anniversary. March 16–July 8 at the Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. Information: 713/525-9400 or www.menil.org.

♦ **Black Gold.** Next to oil, there's no commodity more valuable than coffee. This doc takes us to its birthplace, Ethiopia, and examines the place of the human element in an impersonal global trade. \$6 (\$2 for parking). March 23–25 at Rice Media Center, entrance 8 from University Blvd. at Stockton. Info: 713/348-4853 or www.ricecinema.rice.edu.

♦ **Black Holes.** Nothing escapes them, not even light. Not even irony. Totally invisible, they hold the power of a million suns and devour entire stars without so much as an "excuse me." Explore the dark mystery of *Black Holes* at Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr. Info: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

♦ **Blown Away.** Art glass pervades the Hooks-Epstein Gallery with this contemporary exhibit combined with the permanent, ongoing showcase, Glass Gallery. Through Mar. 17 at Hooks-Epstein Gallery, 2631 Colquitt. More info: 713/522-0718 or www.hooksepsteingalleries.com.

♦ **Daniel Adame: Improving the Ground Game.** Adame uses his body as an art tool to record traces of his movements throughout the gallery. Using a series of ramps, the artist runs on the walls of the gallery. The process by which the walls are scuffed and marked will be documented and on view. March 9–April 14 at Lawndale Art Center's Grace R. Cavnar Gallery, 4912 Main St. Info: 713/528-5858 or www.LawndaleArtCenter.org.

♦ **Deep Sea 3D and Wild Safari 3D: A South African Adventure.** IMAX 3D is here, with larger-than-life images that leap off the screen and state-of-the-art surround sound. See life in a whole new way as the planet's most unique, dangerous, and colorful creatures blast off the screen in *Deep Sea 3D* (narrated by Johnny Depp

and Kate Winslet), and embark on an African adventure with the continent's most dangerous animals in *Wild Safari 3D*. \$9 adults, \$7 children (3–11), seniors/students. Tickets/info: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

♦ **For Your Consideration.** Christopher Guest's latest mockumentary includes the usual cast of comic improvisational geniuses, including the openly gay Jane Lynch. \$6 (\$2 for parking). March 16–18 at Rice Media Center, entrance 8 from University Blvd. at Stockton. More info: 713/348-4853 or www.ricecinema.rice.edu.

♦ **Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color.** One of the 20th century's most innovative artists, Oiticica refused to sell his work. As a result, the exhibit of this artist concerned with liberating color into space is quite extensive. Documentaries and films accompany approximately 220 of his works. Through April 1 at the Museum of Fine Arts, 1001 Bissonnet St. Info: 713/639-7300 or www.mfah.org (en Español: 713/639-7379, TDD/TYY for the hearing impaired, call 713/639-7390).

♦ **Imperial Rome.** What began as a small village on the Tiber River grew into an enormous empire that dominated the politics, economy, and culture of the known world from 27 B.C. to the middle of the fourth century A.D. Meet the emperors, visit the homes, shudder at their once-fearful military. \$15. Through July 29 at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr. More info: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org (en Español: 713/639-4603).

♦ **Judy Pfaff: New Installation.** Pfaff works intuitively, improvising on-site, creating site-specific works. All that can be written about the installation is that in early January, Pfaff arrived in a truck full of raw materials, tool boxes, and welders, all from upstate New York. Free. Through April 1 at the Rice Gallery, Sewall Hall, ground floor, off Campus Entrance 1 at Main and Sunset Blvd. More info: 713/348-5761 or www.ricegallery.org.

♦ **Shanghai: A Refuge During the Holocaust.** Forced to flee their homeland during the Nazi regime, many Jews became "stateless refugees," denied entry into most countries. Shanghai was one of the very few places that stateless Jews could disembark without passports or visas. As a result, Shanghai became a refuge to thousands of Jews. The exhibit, comprised of photographs and documents, presents the complex Jewish community in Shanghai that resulted from this emigration. Free. March 2–July 22 at Holocaust Museum Houston's Central Gallery, 5401 Caroline St. Info: 713/942-8000 or www.hmh.org.

♦ **The Temptations of Flora: Jan van Huysum (1682-1749).** The first large-scale exhibition devoted to Huysum's work exemplifies the realism with which he painted elaborate floral and fruit arrangements. The exhibition provides a comprehensive view of the artist's lifework (said to be the most highly paid Dutch artist of all time), and features approximately 50 paintings. \$7, free Thursdays. Through May 20 at the MFA's Beck Building, 5601 Main Street. More information: 713/639-7750 or www.mfah.org.

♦ **Watercolor Arts Society—Houston: Annual International Show.** Works ranging from abstract to realistic fill the space and enchant the viewer. (The works are also on sale.) March 10–April 13 (opening reception Thursday, March 15, 6–8 pm) at One Williams Tower, 2800 Post Oak Blvd. More info: 713/942-9966 or www.watercolorhouston.org.

♦ **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 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 March issue:
Friday, March 9, 5 p.m.

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Monthly Dinner Meeting
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1608 W. Webster - Montrose area - 3/3.5/2
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- 2001 Bering - Galleria ground level condo - 1/1/1 - \$109k
- 1731 Tuam - Midtown - 2bd+study/loft/2ba/2car - \$210k's
- 4515C Lillian - Rice Military - 3/3/2, private yard - \$309k's
- 1114 W. Clay - River Oaks Area TH- 3/3/2, yard - \$330k's
- 4243B Purdue - West Univ. Area - 3/2.5/2, loft TH - \$390k's

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Info deemed reliable but subject to change without notice.

Business News



BoConcept

BO C'EST TRES BEAU The Denmark-based BoConcept has added a Houston location to its international collection of 170 stores and studios. Located at 4302 Westheimer, the 11,500-square-foot furniture store offers contemporary, urban-style furniture (including the pieces above). The on-site "New York Loft" illustrates how small spaces can be decorated for optimum effectiveness.

The Houston store—opening in the former Surprises gift store location—is the first BoConcept store in Texas. BoConcept plans to open additional stores in Sugar Land and The Woodlands within the next few months.

The phone number is 713/877-1900, and the website is www.boconcept.com.



Martinez (r)
and Jordan

RAINBOW UNIDOS Business woman and activist Cristina Martinez, chief executive officer and publisher of the *Gay & Lesbian Rainbow Pages*, has been elected to the first board of directors of Unidos, the new national Latina/o GLBT human rights organization (www.unidoslgbt.org). Martinez is the president and co-founder of GALLO (Gay and Lesbian Latin Organization) and serves on the Greater Houston Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce and Houston Black Tie Dinner boards of directors (above, Martinez is pictured, on the right, at the November 2006 Houston Black Tie Dinner with the event headliner, actor Leslie Jordan).

"I'm honored to have been selected to represent the state of Texas, which holds one of the largest GLBT Latino populations in the country," Martinez says. "Our goal is to be able to advocate and be a voice for the community in regards to the political arena, raising Unidos to be an advocate organization of national scope."

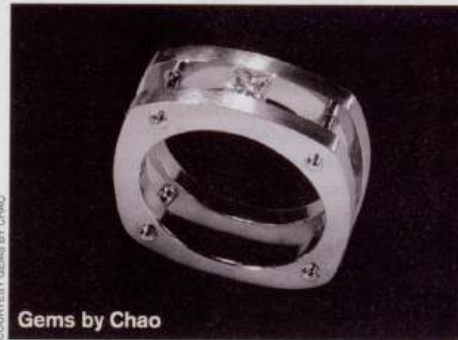
In addition to the *Houston Gay & Lesbian Rainbow Pages*, Martinez publishes editions in Austin and Dallas.

The local phone number for *Gay & Lesbian Rainbow Pages* is 281/997-9778. The web-site is www.rainbowpages.net.

IN DESIGN Amy Meyers, who previously owned Sippora Gallery located near Montrose, has joined the staff of **Cantoni** furniture store as an in-house designer. Meyers closed Sippora in August 2006.

Cantoni is located at 9889 Westheimer. The phone number is 713/787-9494, and the website is www.cantoni.com.

NEW NEW NEW This year, **Gems by Chao Fine Jewelry** marks 35 years in



Gems by Chao

business. With its anniversary, the store has introduced a new logo and a new look for its Galleria II retail space (5085 Westheimer, 713/626-0431). For the spring season, Chao has introduced several new collections, which includes an array of men's rings (one example, above). The store website is www.gemsbychao.com.



NEW TRADITION In early 2007, **Tradition Bank—The Plaza** opened its historic doors for business. Located at 5020 Montrose Blvd. on the site of the former Plaza Hotel, it is the seventh banking center for the locally owned and operated financial institution. The eight-story building (see rendering above), designed by renowned Houston architect **Joseph Finger**, opened as the Plaza in 1926 but had been vacant for a number of years.

Charles W. Norris is Plaza banking center president. The Tradition Bank phone number is 713/666-2511, and the website is www.traditionbank.com.

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The Schumacher-Millers and OUTSMART visited the Coliseum in Rome.

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Jerry Miller (far right) and Fred Schumacher (far left) traveled to Rome with their sons Aaron Miller-Schumacher (second from left) and Sean Miller-Schumacher and their copy of OutSmart.

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Participants in the 2006 AIDS Walk Houston.

STREET WALKERS

On March 11, the OUTSMART team hits the downtown pavement for AIDS Walk Houston, the annual fundraising event organized by AIDS Foundation Houston. Proceeds support the work of AFH and other HIV/AIDS service providers, including Bering Omega Community Services, Rapha House Outreach Inc., and the Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church HIV Benevolence Fund. OutSmart is an AIDS Walk media sponsor. Details: www.aidswalkhouston.org.

LESBIANA ARRIVES

The community nonprofit MECA (Multicultural Education and Counseling through the Arts) presents *Empanada*, a one-act play by Texas writer Anel I. Flores on March 30 and 31. From MECA: "Set against the backdrop of South Texas, *Empanada* illustrates the Lesbiana, singing her sensuality through eight bilingual poems and short stories, live music accompaniment, a photography slide show, and audio recordings.... The main character defends the richness of her expressive and artistic Mexican traditions and sexuality, regardless of their cultural contradictions, by placing value in her antepasadas, and baptizing herself Lesbiana."

The performances at the MECA Dow School Campus (1900 Kane) conclude the first annual Sor Juana Festival, which honors



A scene from *Empanada* at MECA.

Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz, the 16th-century Mexican nun and one of the greatest writers of the Americas. She was also the first person in the Americas to argue in writing for the right of women to receive an education. As part of the festival, Flores presents a free writing and performance workshop, "Finding Our Voices," on March 29, 5-6 p.m.

Houston *Empanada* performances are sponsored by the Mayor's City Initiative Program and OutSmart. The Sor Juana Festival, which includes a March 22-April 30 visual arts exhibition, is presented in collaboration with the National Museum of Mexican Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and other area arts organizations.

Tickets: \$5 in advance through www.ticketweb.com, \$9 at the door. Details: 713/803-9370, www.meca-houston.org.

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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' night, *Passionate Sundays* on the second and fourth Sunday, in addition to the Exquisite Wednesdays ladies' night. 1318 Westheimer • 713/526-2271.

BELLA AIDA GARDENS

Lady Barbara and MC Zip (of Bartini fame) host True Unity parties in this southwest Houston club every Saturday night for "everyone in the community," the women say. "We welcome lesbians, gays, transgenders, and bisexuals of all ethnic backgrounds." 9371 Richmond • 832/230-3739.

BLUR

This 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

Each Wednesday, women pack this Mexican restaurant for dancing and socializing preceded by open mic sessions on last Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m. Sunday brunch starts at 11 a.m. and lasts 'til 3 p.m. 1312 W. Alabama • 713/523-5230.

BOOM BOOM ROOM

Manager/chef Kai Mirns 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. 2618 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

Recovering from a November fire, Houston's premiere lesbian nightclub complex has introduced major renovations in the G-Spot bar. Expanded with state-of-the-art video screens, a larger dance floor, and cabaret & banquet seating, it remains open seven days a week, hosting happy hour, live music on Tuesdays & Thursdays, and The L Word screenings on Sundays. The renovated

Chances reopens at end of March. 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.

BEHIND THE BAR

WHO:

John Ludden

WHERE:

Tony's Corner Pocket,
817 W. Dallas,
713/571-7870,
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WHAT'S UP:
Now that the baby grand has been rolled out of this one-time piano bar, there's much more room for the Mr. Prime Choice Pageant on March 4 and Candi St. James' St. Patrick's Day show on March 17.

YVONNE FEECE

GUAVA LAMP

The club left Shepherd Plaza and 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 retooled 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.

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 Wednesdays event. 1022 Westheimer • 713/527-9669.

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

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

ORBIT 1

Sunday night is "family night" for "mature" gays and lesbians at this southeast neighborhood bar off Scott Street, offering a free buffet, door prizes, and drink set-ups for your own bottle. 3901 Lockhart St.

PRIVÉ

The patio of 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 Barren 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.

HOUSE OF FINESSE

Deidre Sam is taking a break from hosting monthly men's and women's socials. She continues to offer her facility near the Texas Southern University campus for special events. 2912 Wentworth • 713/522-6074 • www.houseoffinesse.com.

IN-N-OUT

There's a new bar in town, providing Heights residents with a nearby alternative to Montrose haunts with state-of-the-art large digital displays, internet jukebox, and daily drink specials. 1537 N. Shepherd Dr. • 713/589-9780.

JR'S BAR & GRILL

The lectures at this Montrose standard include pool tables, go-go boys, and karaoke. Kofi, named favorite drag queen in OutSmart's 2006 Gayest & Greatest reader poll, hosts popular shows Sunday through Wednesday. 808 Pacific • 713/521-2519.

MANGO VIDEO LOUNGE

Located next to Club Inergy, this Wednesday-Saturday spot has a 15-ft. video screen, dance floor,

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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.

SOCIAL ROOM

The trendy new club is open for business Wednesdays and Sundays only, featuring R&B, hip-hop, soul, and pop music. DJs on Wednesdays with happy hour pricing from 5-7 p.m.; women get in free 'til 9 p.m. Live music with no cover, Sundays. 1417 Westheimer.

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 Cubanita 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 Vacarro says the makeover of the near-downtown bar includes "Booze & Cruise Night" on Thursday, when "shirtless, in-shape guys" enjoy \$1 well drinks. Sunday Brunch starts at 11 a.m. 817 W. Dallas • www.tonyscornerpocket.com.

VINTAGE BAR

This romantic, European-style wine bar on the edge of the Galleria offers a special "Women's Music Night" (wink, wink) every third Thursday, 8 p.m. Enjoy a variety of appetizers with your choice of 40 different wine varieties. 4356 Westheimer at Mid Lane • 713/355-3093 • www.vintagebar.com.

VIVIANA'S

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

Spring

RANCH HILL SALOON

It's not just bart! This Woodlands-area mixed club is also available for private parties, holy unions and receptions, and features the Wall of Fame and the famous saddle from its previous location. • 24704 I-45 North, Suite 103 • 281/298-9035 • www.ranchhill.com • http://myspace.com/ranchhillsaloon.

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 PJ. Male dancers and drag dominate the weekends, with a special comedy night on Mondays. 315 Tremont • 409/765-5805 • www.thekontiki.com.

THE PINK DOLPHIN

Opened by Eldridge Longinois, 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. 2300 Ship's Mechanic Row • 409/763-0300.

UNDERCURRENT

This expansive, multi-level multi-bar is now under new management. Expect to see subtle changes to enhance the overall clubbing experience, but the entertainment component that Undercurrent has become famous for remains intact, including the Friday and Saturday night Gulf Coast Drag Mafia shows. 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.

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.

Houston Area HIV Services Ryan White Planning Council

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2007

March 8, 2007	August 9, 2007
April 12, 2007	September 13, 2007
May 10, 2007	October 11, 2007
June 14, 2007	November 8, 2007
July 12, 2006	December 13, 2007

Attend a Meeting... Apply for Membership... Be a Participant...

Meetings are open to the general public and although only Council members are allowed to vote, public comment is always welcome. The Council meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 11:30 a.m. at our offices located between Westheimer and San Felipe in the Galleria area.

Call to put your name on the list for public comment, to request a calendar or membership application or for more information.

The calendar of all Council & Committee meetings and a wealth of other information is available on our website: www.rwpc.org. Check the calendar regularly for topics of specific interest to you.

We hope to see you soon!

Houston Area HIV Services Ryan White Planning Council

2223 West Loop South, Suite 240, Houston, TX 77027

Phone: 713-572-3724 & TTY: 713-572-2813 & Fax: 713-572-3740



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PRESENTS

Empanada by Anel I. Flores

Playwright Anel I. Flores combines poetry, music, and audio-visual effects to explore the complex relationship between a young lesbian woman's coming out within the ascribed cultural traditions of her Mexican community. *Empanadas* uses the theme of food to explore the cultural pressures particular to the Latina lesbian community.



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We begin the month with good news. Mercury will be direct on the 11th. After that date, you can begin moving forward on new projects and ideas. So please wait until then to make any decisions. • We have two eclipses this month. The Lunar Eclipse (full moon) is on the 3rd in Virgo, which will help to keep us organized in our lives or point out where we are not organized. The Solar Eclipse (new moon) is on the 18th in Pisces. With this energy, we should seek out a greater sense of inner peace. Eclipse cycles repeat approximately every 18 to 19 years. To understand how this eclipse might influence you, just look back to March 1988 and see what was going on with you. This eclipse is strongest for the Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, and the Pisceans. • The Sun enters the first day of Aries on the 20th, which is always the first day of spring. Mercury is retrograde in Aquarius, is direct on the 7th, and enters Pisces on the 18th. Venus is focused on herself as she moves through Aries but becomes more sensual as she enters her own sign of Taurus on the 17th. Mars is visiting Aquarius for the whole month. The rest of the planets are happy in the signs they are in.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). Typically, this is your time of rest and retreat before the Sun enters your sign on the 20th. You are a bit more sensitive than usual, and you may want to spend more time as a hermit. Friends can be especially supportive this month if you need help. As spring begins, you begin to emerge from your hideaway and you are open to new possibilities and potentials. Many of you are beginning to rethink your current career path. You will want to start looking at different options. Relationships in general are more satisfying. Just enjoy your partner and don't ask why.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). So much activity is focused on your career and public life this month. You have been searching for a direction that really embraces you. With this month, you are very impatient and are ready to take some action on this front. Please delay your decisions until Mercury goes direct on the 11th so that your decisions will work out for the best. You should be ready to take a break in all your activity by the end of the month. Your energy and effectiveness will be very low on the 23rd, 24th, and 25th.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). This is a public time for you. There seems much to do, and you may feel that your agenda is overloaded. Most of the projects that you are working on are things that you should have done several months ago, and you are certainly feeling the pressure to get things done. The 3rd, 4th, and 5th can be very energized days. You will probably have some trouble sleeping because you will feel that you are not able to turn off your brain. It is time to reinvent yourself and your career. Get prepared but don't take any definite steps until after March 11, then go full speed ahead. You are feeling more optimistic about relationships in general. Get out there and meet someone if you are single. The planets favor relationships for you.



PISCES (February 19–March 20). With the Eclipse patterns in your sign this month, relationships with yourself and with others are in review. In existing relationships, fermenting problems will be brought to the surface so that you can examine them in the light. Part of this process will teach you how to have a better relationship with yourself. As this is your birthday month, it is no surprise that you are reviewing all your choices in the past and especially those associated with partnerships and the way you have constructed them. In the end, the purpose is to find renewed intimacies or to go your separate ways. As always, this could be a great time for relationship therapy. You might learn that you are not always the cause of or the solution for your problems.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). There are two big themes for you this month. One is continuing to get your finances in order and the other is developing a larger view of your life and your community. In relationships, you have to be more open about how your feel. In turn, you want those around you—partnerships and close friendships—to be more open with you. You will feel more vulnerable because you don't like to appear to be "out of control" with your emotions. Hiding them doesn't help. You feel the same inside, but you should draw in the support you really need. In your career, expand your outlook, territory, and the people you come into contact with.

LEO (July 23–August 22). Relationships and intimacy are what are really important to you this month. If you are single, you can gather this energy and help to put yourself out there and meet new people. If you want to do this before the 11th, contact people you were involved with before. After the 11th, you need new people in your life. If you are involved with someone, the barriers must come down. You are interested in a partnership in which both people are present. If these aren't available, there will be problems in your relationship until these areas are addressed.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). I know you are continuing to get your workplace in order. With Mercury just about to finish her motivation for orderliness on the 11th, you don't have much time to finish up with those piles of stuff. Maintain your health regime that you have started. You can expect very good results. Relationships have to be re-invented this year. Old patterns can make you feel trapped and can even drive your partner from you. This cycle is very strong on the 4th and 5th. If you are single, this is a great month for you to be window-shopping. Try anything on, but don't buy until after the 11th.

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). You deal with two themes this month. One is focusing on your health, and the other is expressing your creative

self. This is the month to get your workplace and your body health in order. Taking a look at your work routines and making them more applicable to you is important. There can be a lot of tension between coworkers. You should question whether it is your job to be the peacekeeper. You have the necessary talents, but is it your responsibility? Getting away from your routines and having some fun is so very important this month. The desire for escape will be overwhelming on the 23rd, 24th, and 25th. Plan some time to get away. You will be glad that you did.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). Home, family, and emotional-security issues are still on the menu this month. You are ready to take some action in this area of your life. You may find that you are very impatient with family members and that there is an air of anger around most interactions. Things must be brought out into the open. The pot will boil over if you wait until the end of the month to address issues. Some of this is generated around your attempts to figure out your career path and fulfill your spiritual destiny. You just feel that you don't have a clear direction.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). This is such a busy month for you. You are ready to take your life in a totally different direction. At the very least, you have to re-invent who you are so that you have the passion to continue the directional choices you have made. This can be a real test of all commitments that you have made over the last couple of years, including career and relationships. These commitments have to reflect you, or you will be changing them. This month, you seem to be able to communicate your deepest feelings.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). This month you are assessing your career, your salary, the way others treat you, and just what your talents are. This is quite a tall order. Certainly, you are looking for new ways to express your talents and recreate the essential you. This month you are feeling pressure to move forward in this area. You will have little or no patience with people who discount you or disregard your views. Be sure that you don't put your new plans into play until after the 11th.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). With Mercury finishing her retrograde path, inward revision, and examination on the 11th, you have only a small amount of time left to finish those old projects. Soon, you will be ready to start some new things in your life, and you could be quite anxious about them. You may feel that you just have to hurry up and wait. With Mars' presence in your sign, you will be more direct and perhaps a bit grumpy as you deal with other people. This is a great time to get things off your chest or start a diet or exercise program. Relationships can be a bit testy because you need more time and attention from your partner. Try to make sure that this is not negative attention.

Read Lilly Roddy's annual forecast for 2007, which appeared in our January issue ("Heavens to Lilly!"), at www.outsmartmagazine.com.



www.auracolors.com

About Pamala...

Pamala Oslie is an author, consultant, lecturer, and professional psychic, who also sees auras. She is energetic, entertaining, and authentic. In addition to having her own weekly radio show in Santa Barbara, Pamala has also been a popular guest on many other radio and television shows. She has been a featured speaker at international conferences, such as the International Forum on New Science, and at Fortune 500 companies.

Her latest book, *Love Colors – A New Approach to Love, Relationships, and Auras*, is filled with extraordinary information on the different aura color personalities and their relationship styles. Each color has a very unique personality, which is why advice that makes general statements about how to make a relationship work is not always helpful; the advice does not work for every type of personality. The guidance one would give to a Blue will not work for a Violet or Green aura color. Pamala has counseled thousands of clients since 1983 and has a nine to twelve month waiting list for private consultations.

For more info, contact joan@dakotafairing.com

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OUT IN HOUSTON

1 Queen Olympus XXXVII **Bill Henry** (l) and King Olympus XXXVII **Clint Harwell** at the Krewe of Olympus Ball XXXVII on Feb. 3 at George R. Brown Convention Center. The Krewe raises funds for community organizations including Lesbian Health Initiative.

2 **Julie Eberly** (l) congratulated **Sam Stewman** at the Jan. 18 "Girls Night Out" concert at Ovations, part of the AIDS Foundation Houston's Muku Art for AIDS series. Stewman wrote the lyrics—inspired by poems written by HIV-positive individuals—for the Mary Carol Warwick-composed song cycle "Shall We Dance," performed during the concert.

3 Houston Pride Band board president **Lisa Mace** (l) and founder and conductor emeritus **Andy Mills** attended the band's Jan. 25 Carnival concert at Resurrection MCC.

4 **Eric Roland** (l) and *Meth* film producer **Todd Ahlberg** attended the Jan. 18 screening of the film sponsored by Legacy Community Health Services at Landmark River Oaks Theatre.

5 **Debra Denny** (l) and **Jani Lopez** stumped for the Human Rights Campaign at the fourth season premiere screening of *The L Word*, the Showtime series, at Guava Lamp.

6 **Greg Moye** (l-r), **David Callahan**, **Jay Pressley**, and **Christian Rogers** attended the Snowbunnies 3 and M2M Spring Fashions celebration at South Beach on Jan. 14.

7 **Daniel Padilla** (l-r), **Manuel Padilla**, **Dwayne Todd**, **Sam Harris**, **Ene Gomez**, and **Javier Ferrer** at the Executive and Professional Association of Houston social at DNM Art Group Gallery on Jan. 26.

8 **Alejandro Pineda** (l-r), **Erica Andrews**, and "**Van**" **Vanover** at Andrews' Jan. 27 show at the La Academia nightclub.

9 **Derrick Nash** (l-r), **Amber David**, **Rodney Mark**, Fresh Start Church pastor **W. Jeffery Campbell**, **Sonya Brown**, and **Jason Black** attended a Jan. 27 appreciation celebration held for Campbell at the church.

10 **Merlin Cavallin** (l-r), **Scott Thomisson**, **Bryan Hlavinka**, and **Brian Tucker**, co-chairs of Bayou City Boys Club's Jungle 15 "Return to Lust," hosted the event underwriters' kick-off party on Jan. 21 at the home of **Frank Staggs**. Jungle 15 parties over Easter weekend will benefit five HIV/AIDS service organizations including Casa de Esperanza de los Niños.



PHOTOS: DALTON DEHART



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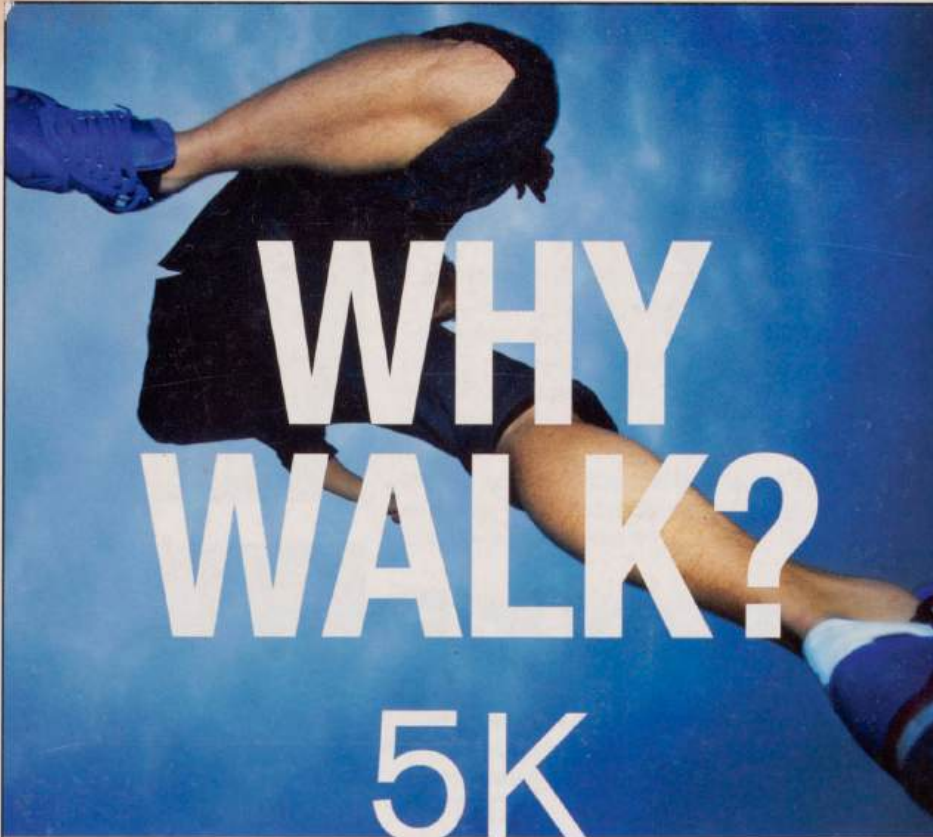
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