

Out▼Smart



APRIL 2007

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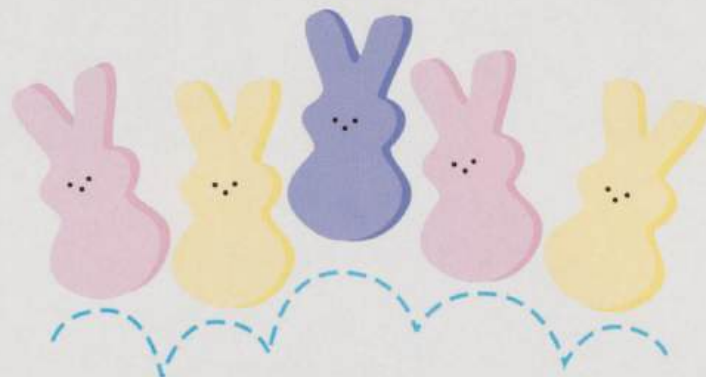
**The groundbreaking
HomoRevolution Tour hits Houston**

ALSO INSIDE:

- A farewell to PFLAG heroes Sue and Jim Null
- Chatting with author E. Lynn Harris
- A transgender woman joins the job-discrimination fight
- Spring food and wine ideas

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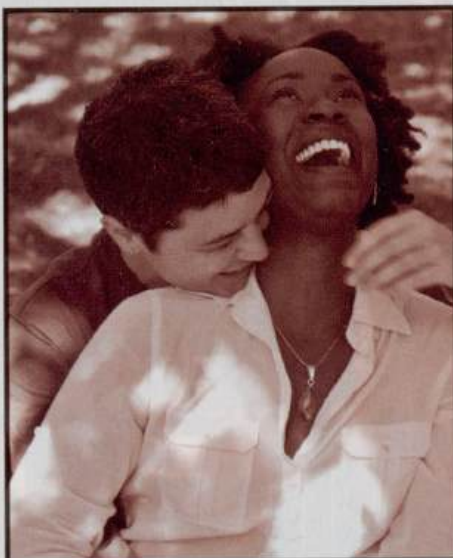
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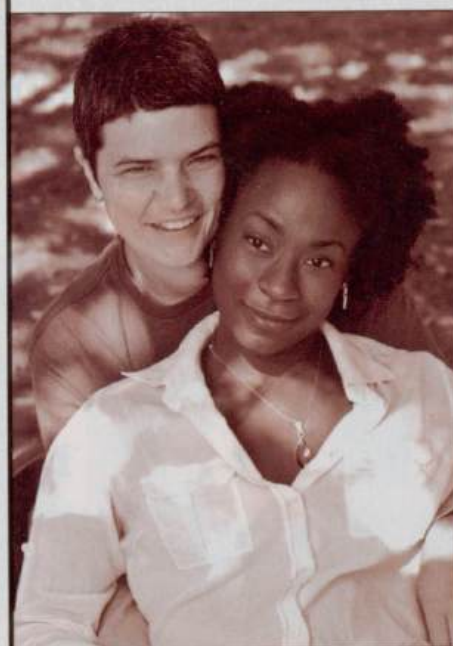
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About the cover: Mz Fontaine comes to Houston this month as part of the HomoRevolution Tour 2007. See page 36. Photo: Greg Frederick • Design: Blase DiStefano



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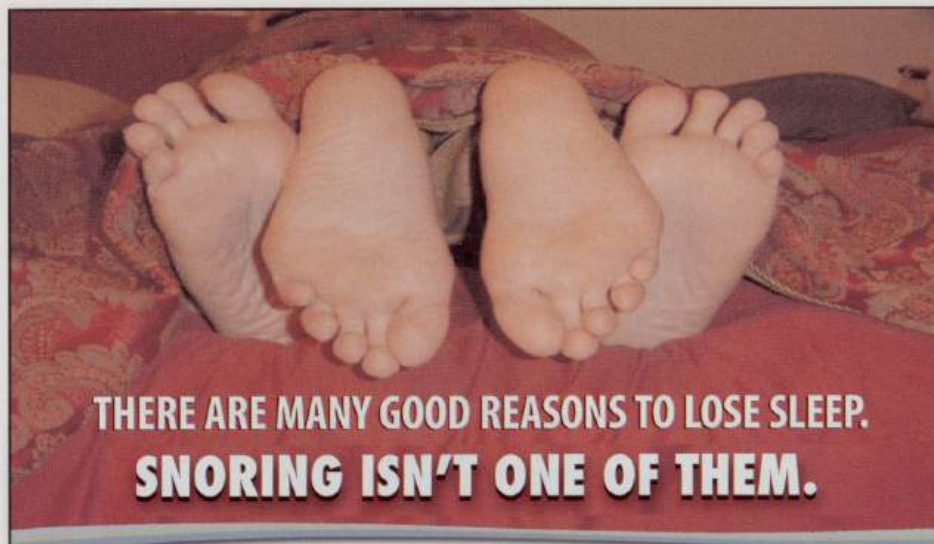


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Publishers of OutSmart Magazine
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713/520-7237 • 713/522-3275 Fax

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

E-mail address: letters@outsmartmagazine.com

Website address: www.outsmartmagazine.com

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REMEMBERING MARION

I just wanted to say what a great article that was on Marion Panzer ["What a World," March 2007] and that I really enjoyed it. I worked for Marion at the Fairview location in 1981. Those who knew her knew she was a strong woman with a soft heart. She was the only show in town during the early days and the news of her untimely death was certainly a shock to the community.

Thanks for keeping her memory alive.

Becky Holmes
Houston

I really enjoyed Nancy Ford's article about Marion Panzer; it's hard to believe it has been more than 20 years.

I was in the pool league at the time just Marion and Lynn's was short an 11-ball. It really stumped most of our league members, because no one could understand why the 11 and not the 8-ball was missing. We could only surmise that it had been taken by a "non"-pool player because it defied logic as we knew it at the time.

Your article brought a smile to my face, and I do know Marion would be happy to know that



you have the infamous 11-ball and that it has been in safe keeping all these years. I hope your article and the ball will someday be preserved by the Gulf Coast Archive and Museum, our GLBT historical society.

Deb Marshall
Houston

SURVEY SAYS

While the coverage in OutSmart would lead one to believe that the community is united in its opposition to the moves proposed by Pride Houston ["Whither, Pride?" January 2007], the results of our on-line survey indicate a far different picture. With 838 surveys completed as of March 1, 54% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree with the statement: "I would support a Pride Houston Parade and Festival held at a downtown park location." 38% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. In addition, 54% also either agree or strongly agree with this statement: "I would be more likely to attend Pride Festivities if they were held at a cooler time of year." 32% either disagree or strongly disagree with that statement. While the organized and vocal minority position gets the lion's share of press coverage on this issue, our

survey clearly demonstrates that the majority of the community supports change and growth for Houston's Pride festivities.

Pride Houston welcomes the ongoing community debate on this topic. You can add your vote to the survey by visiting www.pridehouston.org. We'd also like to remind everyone that our 2007 festivities will be held on Westheimer. The changes we are contemplating would not take effect until 2008 or beyond.

Carol Wyatt
Houston

EDITOR'S NOTE: Wyatt is president of the Pride Houston board of directors. In our February 2007 issue, we reported in News Briefs that one person not affiliated with Pride Houston who attended the January 13 town hall meeting spoke in support of proposed changes to the GLBT Pride Parade and Festival. OutSmart stands by its coverage.

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IS THAT A CARROT IN YOUR POCKET?

When Bunnies on the Bayou call their annual Easter event, Houston's "largest outdoor cocktail party," a fundraiser, that's exactly what they mean. Sponsors pay for everything up front. So when you plunk down that \$25 on April 8 to enjoy a downtown afternoon of fun, sun (we hope), cool beverages, hot tunes spun by DJ Joe Ramirez, and a flag-twirling performance by the Houston Fly Boys, rest assured that every penny of that \$25 lands in the coffers of its 13 designated charities. The Bunnies hosts include (l-r) Alfred Naranjo, Christian Rogers, Sean Carter, John Cox, Jay Pressley, Vince Flickinger, and Chris Meterko. Details: www.bunniesonthebayou.org.

Photographed by David Lewis



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*Single pill REYATAZ is for patients who have taken anti-HIV medicines before. It must be taken with ritonavir once daily in HIV combination therapy. REYATAZ does not cure HIV, a serious disease, or help prevent passing HIV to others.

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

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

REYATAZ[®]
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ASK YOUR DOCTOR if REYATAZ, in HIV combination therapy, can help you fight HIV your way.

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[®], Vfend[®], Advair[®], Flonase[®], or Flovent[®] while you are taking REYATAZ without first speaking with your healthcare provider. This list of

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.

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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), PEPICID 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.

R 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).
- PROPULSID® (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).
- CRIVIVAN® (indinavir, used for HIV infection). Both REYATAZ and CRIVIVAN 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), PHLOSEC® (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 CARDIOGUIN®, QUINIDEX®, and others).
- VASCOR® (bepridil, used for chest pain).
- COLUMADIN® (warfarin).
- Tricyclic antidepressants such as ELAVIL® (amitriptyline), NORPRAMIN® (desipramine), SINEQUAN® (doxepin), SURMONTIL® (trimipramine), TOFRANIL® (imipramine), or VIVACTIL® (nortriptyline).
- 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® (nirvase®) (saquinavir).
- 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), PEPICID 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:

- Know all the medicines you take.
- Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take.
- 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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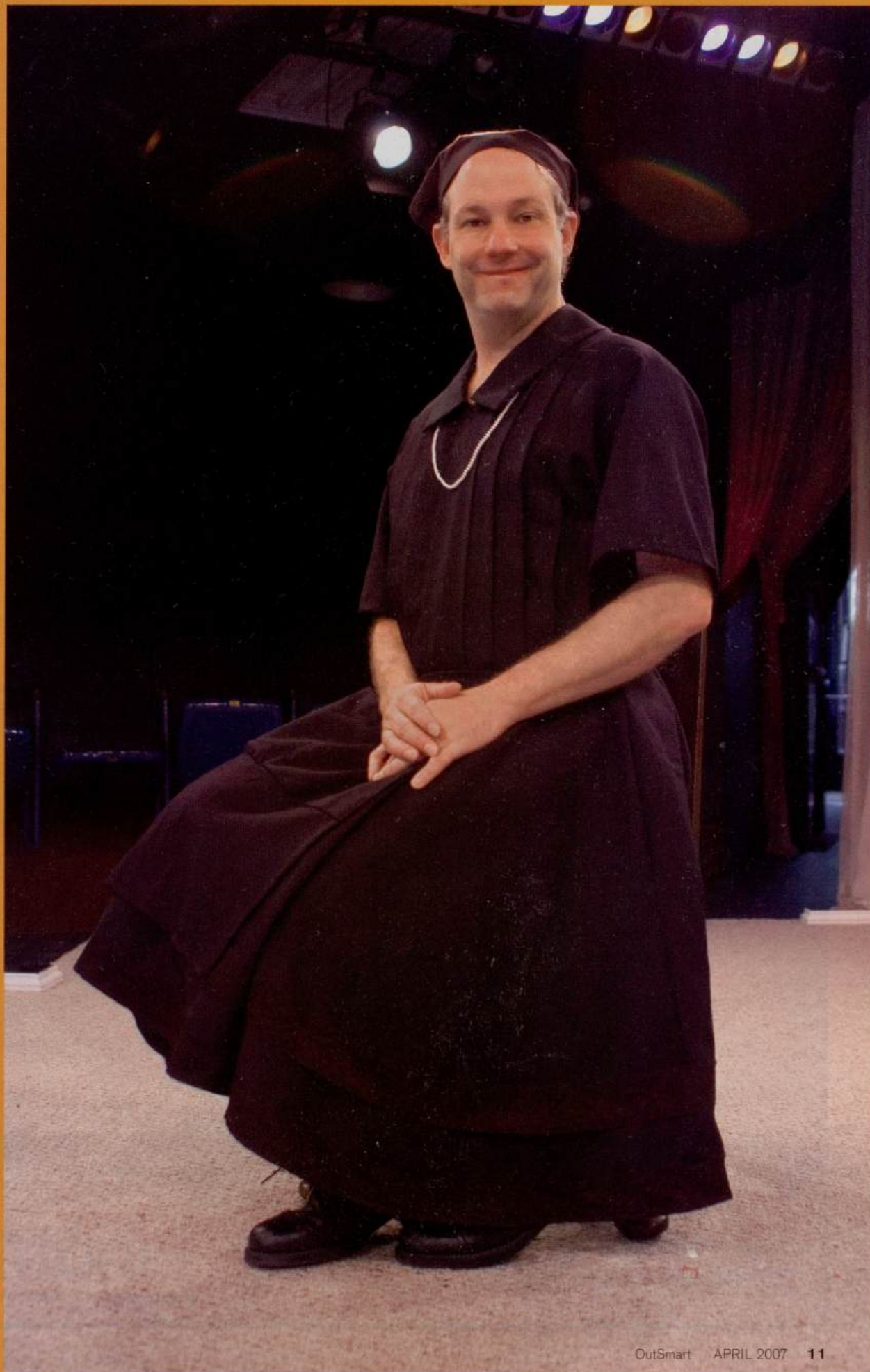
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Revised October 2006

WIFELY DUTY.

In one of the highlights of the arts season, Philip Lehl stars in the Stages Repertory Theatre production of *I Am My Own Wife*, the one-man drama about the true-life story of Charlotte von Mahlsdorf, an antiques dealer who lived openly as a cross-dresser under both the Nazi and Communist regimes in Germany. The celebrated Doug Wright play received both the Tony Award and the Pulitzer Prize in 2004. Lehl, pictured here during a rehearsal, performs the challenging role through May 10. On April 10, the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Texas hosts a benefit preview performance, chaired by Randall Ellis (tickets: 713/942-8146). During the production, Stages presents an exhibition of portraits by photographer Frank White of local transgender individuals, who include prominent activists Sara Rook and Melanie Rudd.

Photographed by Nathan Haase



News Briefs

DATEBOOK

AIDS Foundation Houston holds its Positive Opinion Leaders meeting on Apr. 3 and every Tuesday this month, 6 p.m., at the Houston GLBT Community Center. Details: Nike Lukan, 713/623-6796 x248, Lukann@afhouston.org.

With its Apr. 4, 7 p.m., general meeting, **Houston GLBT Political Caucus** moves its monthly meeting to a new location, the Havens Center at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Details: 713/521-1000, www.hglbtpc.org.

Poet and entertainer Aaron Coleman hosts **Jazz, Poetry & Art**, an evening presented by the Houston GLBT Community Center to celebrate National Poetry Month, on Apr. 13, 7 p.m., at Bering & James gallery. Donations benefit the community center. Details: aaronssongs@yahoo.com.

The second annual **AssistHers Softball Tournament**, rescheduled from March 17 due to weather, takes place on Apr. 14 in Memorial Park. Details: www.assisthers.org.

Houston Equal Rights Alliance and **Houston GLBT Political Caucus** hold their monthly community workday on Apr. 14, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at their office. Details: www.houstonera.org.

DATEBOOK continued on page 14

NEWS BRIEFS COMPILED BY NANCY FORD

POLITICAL CAUCUS PAC ENDORSES NORIEGA FOR COUNCIL

The Houston GLBT Political Caucus political-action committee voted to endorse candidate Melissa Noriega for City Council, At-large Position 3, at its March general meeting, held March 7.

Citing that the meeting room at the Houston GLBT Community Center was "filled to capacity" with approximately 50 members attending, caucus president Jenifer Pool characterized the endorsement of Noriega as "overwhelming," calling Noriega "a proven friend of the community for many years."



with such good candidates. Even though they were neophytes in the political race, Noel and Ivan have the potential to be strong candidates for our community in the future." *NEWS BRIEFS continued on page 14*

Openly gay candidates Noel Freeman (profiled in "Gay Watch," February 2007 *OutSmart*) and Ivan Mayers also sought the endorsement for the May 12 special election to fill the council seat vacated by Shelly Sekula-Gibbs.

"The caucus had the privilege to be able to screen two openly gay candidates in a race," Pool said. "The GLBT community is beginning to come of age

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In Galveston, **Misty Valdez** hosts a pre-benefit show at Undercurrent kicking off her 20th annual series of shows benefiting AIDS Coalition of Coastal Texas on Apr. 14, 9:30 p.m. buffet, 10:30 p.m. show with the Gulf Coast Drag Mafia. Details: www.undercurrentgalveston.com.

Shannon Schrader, M.D., and Nelson Vergel of Program for Wellness Restoration present "The Latest on HIV Research: Things You Should Know" seminar and free dinner on Apr. 19, 6 p.m., at United Way. Details: nelsonvergell@yahoo.com.

In celebration of its 20th anniversary year, **The Menil Collection** presents a lecture by museum architect Renzo Piano on Apr. 21, 10 p.m., in Richmond Hall, as part of the "MenilTalks at 20" series. Details: www.menil.org.

Human Rights Campaign Houston holds its annual gala dinner on Apr. 21, 6 p.m., at the Hilton Americas. Details: www.hrchouston.org.

With the theme "Declaration: I Am What I Am," **Houston Splash**, the annual Black Pride celebration, takes place May 3-7, at Houston and Galveston locations. Activities include the kick-off Declaration Ball on May 4, 10 p.m.-4:30 a.m., at The Meridian. Details: 832/443-1016, www.houstonsplash.com.

More: www.outsmartmagazine.com

SAN ANTONIO VETERAN NAMED HRC SPOKESPERSON

The first U.S. military service person wounded in the Iraq war, retired Marine Staff Sgt. Eric Alva, now serves as a national spokesperson in the Human Rights Campaign effort to repeal the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" military policy.

Alva came out publicly during a Capitol Hill press conference in early March. The press conference reintroduced the Military Readiness Enhancement Act, legislation to repeal the ban against openly gay and lesbian Americans serving in the military.

"When Eric Alva lost his leg in Iraq [in 2003], it didn't matter whether he was gay or straight, only that he was a courageous American serving his country," HRC president Joe Solmonese said in a media



statement. "Eric's voice represents the sacrifice of thousands of gay and lesbian service members fighting for the safety and freedom of all Americans. We believe his story should help move this issue forward and educate Congress as to why it's so important to lift the discriminatory ban that compromises our nation's security."

"My proudest moment in the military came when I would confide in one of my friends about my sexual

orientation, and they still treated me with the same respect as before," Alva said.

"And although I'm no longer wearing the uniform of the U.S. Marine Corps, my mission continues to be protecting the rights and freedoms of all Americans."

As spokesperson for HRC, Alva will →

Join the Celebration!



Bingo Night

Saturday, April 14, 6:30 pm

\$8 per session

\$2 per coverall game

Food, Fun & Fabulous Prizes



5th Annual Golf Classic

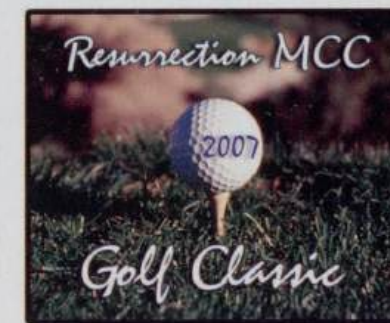
Saturday, April 21

8:30 am Shotgun Start

Bear Creek Golf World

Registration & Sponsorship form at

www.ResurrectionMCC.org



Twisted Torch:

A Celebration of Life

Saturday, April 28, 7:00 pm

featuring Cassandra White, soloist & Rodney Waters, pianist

Tickets available now at www.mukuru.org

Platinum \$35: Pre-concert gathering with artists & E. Lynn Harris, VIP seating, reception

Gold \$25: Preferred seating, reception

Silver \$10: General admission

Proceeds benefit AIDS Foundation Houston HIV Prevention Program

E. Lynn Harris

Sunday, April 29

9:00 am & 11:00 am

Author of best-seller,

I Say a Little Prayer,

delivers the Message

at both Sunday Services



Jazz Brunch &

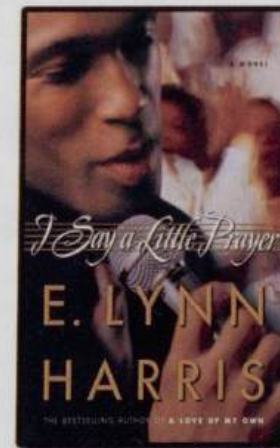
Book Signing

Sunday, April 29, 12:30 pm

Enjoy a delicious brunch, the sounds of jazz, and have your book signed by E. Lynn Harris

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Moonlight and Martinis includes tours of the McLemore Mansion, the 1929 Scottish Rite Cathedral, the 1882 Trueheart Adriance Building, the 1891 Engine House, and a loft at the 1874 Sergeant Building. Dance music provided by the Down to Earth Band. Heavy hors d'oeuvres by Jim Manning's The Market on Avenue L and Catered Affairs. Party tickets also include admission to all four days of the Galveston Historic Homes Tour, first two weekends in May.



A Project of Galveston Historical Foundation

News Briefs continued from page 14

raise awareness of the impact of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy through public appearances, media interviews, and blog postings at the Human Rights Campaign website, www.hrc.org.

In 2005, the Government

Accountability Office estimated that the cost to recruit and train replacements for enlisted service members separated under the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" ban was more than \$190 million from fiscal years 1994 through 2003.

LAKE JACKSON MAN IS LEAD PLAINTIFF IN 'DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL' CIRCUIT COURT APPEAL

The First Circuit Court heard oral arguments on March 7 in an appeal filed by veterans dismissed under the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" ban on lesbian, gay, and bisexual service members. The veterans, who all recently served, asked the court to reverse a lower court ruling dismissing their constitutional challenge to the law.

The lawsuit, *Cook v. Gates*, was filed on behalf of the plaintiffs by Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN) and the law firm of WilmerHale.

Tommy Cook of Lake Jackson, Texas, is the lead plaintiff in *Cook v. Rumsfeld*, which seeks to eliminate the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

"When we began this journey in December 2004, we were determined to have our stories heard and to present the facts



about 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.' Today's hearing was an important step forward in that journey," the plaintiffs said in a press statement.

"We have come to the First Circuit with unmovable confidence in our nation's promise of 'liberty

and justice for all.' We believe the freedoms we defended as United States military personnel are alive and well in our country. We know our nation can do better than this law."

Cook and 11 other plaintiffs in *Cook v. Gates* seek reinstatement in the armed forces. Their lawsuit asserts that "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" punishes lesbian, gay, and bisexual service members for their sexual orientation and for their private, constitutionally protected conduct.

PRIDE HOUSTON ANNOUNCES GRAND MARSHALS, IDOL CONTEST

Pride Houston announces grand marshals for the 2007 GLBT Pride celebrations at a reception on April 30, 7 p.m., at Café Adobe. Members of the community voted for marshal nominees in February.

This month, Pride Houston also introduces a new event to

uncover undiscovered talent in the community. Auditions and registration for Houston Pride Idol are scheduled for Saturday, April 14, at the Pride Houston office (1415 California).

Qualifying rounds will be held at Guava Lamp on five dates beginning April 17 and →

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THE FUTURE OF PRIDE: WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Pride Houston has proposed moving the location and date of the Houston GLBT Pride Parade and Festival in 2008. To gather community input, Pride Houston has posted a survey on its website.

More than 800 respondents to that survey have indicated they would consider the proposed changes, according to Pride Houston president Carol Wyatt (see "Letters," page 7). People in the community who object to a possible move, including members of People Opposed To Moving Our Parade Out of Montrose (POMPOM), have countered that the Pride Houston survey questions reflect a bias favoring the proposed changes.

OutSmart is conducting a survey to poll reader opinions

about the proposed changes to the GLBT Pride Parade and Festival. Please go to www.outsmartmagazine.com to express your opinion.

I would favor the following (please check one box in each category at our website):

1. ☐ Leave the Houston GLBT Pride Parade in Montrose.
☐ Move the Houston GLBT Pride Parade downtown.
2. ☐ Leave the Houston GLBT Pride Parade in June.
☐ Move the Houston GLBT Pride Parade to September.

You may leave additional comments at www.outsmartmagazine.com. This survey is intended for residents of Harris and surrounding counties. You may vote once.

News Briefs continued from page 16

running through June 14. The semi-final round will be held at Guava Lamp on June 17, with finals to be held on the main stage of the 2007 GLBT Pride Festival on June 23.

Entry forms and rules will be available online (at www.pridehouston.org), the Pride office, and at Guava Lamp. There is no entry fee, but contestants must sign up before the qualifying rounds. The event is limited to 15 contestants per qualifying round, or 75 total contestants.

CAUCUS NIXES PRIDE MOVES

At its February general meeting, the Houston GLBT Political Caucus unanimously voted to reject Pride Houston's proposed location and date change of the annual Pride Parade and Festival.

Pride Houston, the organization that produces the festivities traditionally held in Montrose each June, is considering moving

the festivities to a downtown location in September 2008.

The caucus statement reads as follows:

"With the hope that much of the GLBT community will address this issue as well as continue the discussion of the future of the Pride Parade, the caucus would like to state for the record the following:

"June is the historic date of Stonewall, since 1969 one of the most significant moments in the GLBT civil rights movement;

"June of 2003 was also when the *Lawrence and Garner vs. Texas* case was announced, making that month particularly important to Houston;

"Montrose is the historic heart of the Houston GLBT community and deserves that recognition;

"Finally, for the Houston GLBT Political Caucus, a parade in September is directly in the middle of the political calendar and would be in direct competition with the demands on the caucus during that time of the year."

ON THE WEB: Read more News Briefs at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

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ATRIPLA does not cure HIV or prevent passing HIV to others. See your healthcare provider regularly.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:

Contact your healthcare provider right away if you experience any of the following side effects or conditions associated with ATRIPLA:

- Nausea, vomiting, unusual muscle pain, and/or weakness. These may be signs of a buildup of acid in the blood (lactic acidosis), which is a serious medical condition.
- Light colored stools, dark colored urine, and/or if your skin or the whites of your eyes turn yellow. These may be signs of serious liver problems.
- If you have HIV and hepatitis B virus (HBV), your liver disease may suddenly get worse if you stop taking ATRIPLA. Do not stop taking ATRIPLA unless directed by your healthcare provider.

Do not take ATRIPLA if you are taking the following medicines because serious and life-threatening side effects may occur when taken together: Hismanal® (astemizole), Propulsid® (cisapride), Versed® (midazolam), Halcion® (triazolam), or ergot derivatives (for example, Wigraine® and Cafergot®).

In addition, ATRIPLA should not be taken with: Combivir® (lamivudine/zidovudine), Emtriva® (emtricitabine), Epivir® or Epivir-HBV® (lamivudine), Epzicom® (abacavir sulfate/lamivudine), Sustiva® (efavirenz), Trizivir® (abacavir sulfate/lamivudine/zidovudine), Truvada® (emtricitabine/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate [DF]), or Viread® (tenofovir DF), because they contain the same or similar active ingredients as ATRIPLA.

Vfend® (voriconazole) should not be taken with ATRIPLA since it may lose its effect or may increase the chance of having side effects from ATRIPLA. Fortovase®, Invirase® (saquinavir mesylate) should not be used as the only protease inhibitor in combination with ATRIPLA. Taking ATRIPLA with St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) is not recommended as it may cause decreased levels of ATRIPLA, increased viral load, and possible resistance to ATRIPLA or cross-resistance to other anti-HIV drugs.

This list of medicines is not complete. Discuss with your healthcare provider all prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements you are taking or plan to take.

Contact your healthcare provider right away if you experience any of the following side effects or conditions:

- Severe depression, strange thoughts,

or angry/abnormal behavior have been reported by a small number of patients. Some patients have had thoughts of suicide and a few have actually committed suicide. These problems may occur more often in patients who have had mental illness.

- **Dizziness, trouble sleeping or concentrating, drowsiness, unusual dreams, and/or hallucinations** are common, and tend to go away after taking ATRIPLA™ (efavirenz 600 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg) for a few weeks. Symptoms were severe in a few patients and some patients discontinued therapy. These symptoms may become more severe with the use of alcohol and/or mood-altering (street) drugs. If you are dizzy, have trouble concentrating, and/or are drowsy, avoid activities that may be dangerous, such as driving or operating machinery.
- **Kidney or liver problems.** If you have had kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis infection or take other medicines that may cause kidney or liver problems, your healthcare provider should do regular blood tests.
- **Pregnancy: Women should not become pregnant while taking ATRIPLA.** Serious birth defects have been seen in children of women treated during pregnancy with one of the medicines in ATRIPLA. Women must use a reliable form of barrier contraception, such as a condom or diaphragm, even if they also use other methods of birth control.
- **Breast-Feeding: Women with HIV should not breast-feed** because they can pass HIV through their milk to the baby. Also, ATRIPLA may pass through breast milk and cause serious harm to the baby.
- **Rash** is a common side effect that usually goes away without treatment, but may be serious in a small number of patients.
- **Seizures** have occurred in patients taking a component of ATRIPLA, usually in those with a history of seizures. If you have ever had seizures, or take medicine for seizures, your healthcare provider may want to monitor you.
- **Bone changes.** If you have had bone problems in the past, your healthcare provider may want to check your bones.
- **If you have ever had mental illness or use illegal drugs or alcohol.**

Changes in body fat have been seen in some people taking anti-HIV medicines. The cause and long-term health effects are not known.

Common side effects of ATRIPLA include tiredness, headache, upset stomach, vomiting, gas, and diarrhea. Skin discoloration (small spots or freckles) may also happen with ATRIPLA.

You should take ATRIPLA once daily on an empty stomach. Taking ATRIPLA at bedtime may make some side effects less bothersome.



ATRIPLA. One pill daily can help me stay on top of my HIV.

Individual results may vary.

The first and only **complete HIV regimen** in one pill daily. ATRIPLA may be taken alone or with other HIV medicines.

- **Effective:** Proven to lower viral load to undetectable† and help raise T-cell (CD4+) count through 48 weeks of a clinical study.
- **One Pill, Once a Day:** Take on an empty stomach, preferably at bedtime, and you're done with ATRIPLA for 24 hours. Taking ATRIPLA at bedtime may make some side effects less bothersome.
- **Tolerability:** Well-established patient experience in clinical studies with the three proven medicines in ATRIPLA.

† Undetectable was defined as a viral load of less than 400 copies/mL.

Ask your doctor if ATRIPLA is right for you.

visit www.ATRIPLA.com

* ATRIPLA is a combination of 3 HIV medicines – SUSTIVA® (efavirenz), EMTRIVA® (emtricitabine), and VIREAD® (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate).

Please see Patient Information including "What is the most important information I should know about ATRIPLA?" on the next page.

If you or someone you know needs help paying for medicine, call 1-888-4PPA-NOW (1-888-477-2669). Or go to www.pparx.org



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ATRIPLA™
(efavirenz 600 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/
tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg) Tablets

It all adds up to one.™ *

PATIENT INFORMATION

ATRIPLA™ (uh TRIP uh) Tablets

ALERT: Find out about medicines that should NOT be taken with ATRIPLA (efavirenz 600 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg).

Please also read the section "MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH ATRIPLA."

Generic name: efavirenz, emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (eh FAH uh renz, eh tri SIT uh bean and te NOE' to veer dye see PROX if YOU mar ate)

Read the Patient Information that comes with ATRIPLA before you start taking it and each time you get a refill since there may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking to your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment. You should stay under a healthcare provider's care when taking ATRIPLA. Do not change or stop your medicine without first talking with your healthcare provider. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you have any questions about ATRIPLA.

What is the most important information I should know about ATRIPLA?

Some people who have taken medicine like ATRIPLA (which contains nucleoside analogs) have developed a serious condition called lactic acidosis (build up of an acid in the blood). Lactic acidosis can be a medical emergency and may need to be treated in the hospital. Call your healthcare provider right away if you get the following signs or symptoms of lactic acidosis:

- You feel very weak or tired.
- You have unusual (not normal) muscle pain.
- You have trouble breathing.
- You have stomach pain with nausea and vomiting.
- You feel cold, especially in your arms and legs.
- You feel dizzy or lightheaded.
- You have a fast or irregular heartbeat.

Some people who have taken medicines like ATRIPLA have developed serious liver problems called hepatotoxicity, with liver enlargement (hepatomegaly) and fat in the liver (steatosis). Call your healthcare provider right away if you get the following signs or symptoms of liver problems:

- Your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice).
- Your urine turns dark.
- Your bowel movements (stools) turn light in color.
- You don't feel like eating food for several days or longer.
- You feel sick to your stomach (nausea).
- You have lower stomach area (abdominal) pain.

You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or liver problems if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking nucleoside analog-containing medicines, like ATRIPLA, for a long time.

If you also have Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) infection and you stop taking ATRIPLA, you may get a "flare-up" of your hepatitis. A "flare-up" is when the disease suddenly returns in a worse way than before. Patients with HBV who stop taking ATRIPLA need close medical follow-up for several months, including medical exams and blood tests to check for hepatitis that could be getting worse. ATRIPLA is not approved for the treatment of HBV, so you must discuss your HBV therapy with your healthcare provider.

What is ATRIPLA?

ATRIPLA contains 3 medicines, SUSTIVA® (efavirenz), EMTRIVA® (emtricitabine) and VIREAD® (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate) also called tenofovir DF combined in one pill. EMTRIVA and VIREAD are HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) nucleoside analog reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs) and SUSTIVA is an HIV non-nucleoside analog reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI). VIREAD and EMTRIVA are the components of TRIVADA®. ATRIPLA can be used alone as a complete regimen, or in combination with other anti-HIV medicines to treat people with HIV infection. ATRIPLA is for adults age 18 and over. ATRIPLA has not been studied in children under age 18 or adults over age 65.

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, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) develops.

ATRIPLA (efavirenz 600 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg) helps block HIV reverse transcriptase, a viral chemical in your body (enzyme) that is needed for HIV to multiply. ATRIPLA lowers the amount of HIV in the blood (viral load). ATRIPLA (efavirenz 600 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg) may also help to increase the number of T cells (CD4 cells), allowing your immune system to improve. Lowering the amount of HIV in the blood lowers the chance of death or infections that happen when your immune system is weak (opportunistic infections).

Does ATRIPLA cure HIV-1 or AIDS?

ATRIPLA does not cure HIV infection or AIDS. The long-term effects of ATRIPLA are not known at this time. People taking ATRIPLA 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) infection. It is very important that you see your healthcare provider regularly while taking ATRIPLA.

Does ATRIPLA reduce the risk of passing HIV-1 to others?

ATRIPLA has not been shown to lower your chance of passing HIV to other people through sexual contact, sharing needles, or being exposed to your blood.

- Do not share needles or other injection equipment.
- Do not share personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them, like toothbrushes or razor blades.
- Do not have any kind of sex without protection. Always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom or other barrier to reduce the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.

Who should not take ATRIPLA?

Together with your healthcare provider, you need to decide whether ATRIPLA is right for you.

Do not take ATRIPLA if you are allergic to ATRIPLA or any of its ingredients. The active ingredients of ATRIPLA are efavirenz, emtricitabine, and tenofovir DF. See the end of this leaflet for a complete list of ingredients.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking ATRIPLA?

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- Are pregnant or planning to become pregnant (see "What should I avoid while taking ATRIPLA?").
- Are breast-feeding (see "What should I avoid while taking ATRIPLA?").
- Have kidney problems or are undergoing kidney dialysis treatment.
- Have bone problems.
- Have liver problems, including Hepatitis B Virus infection. Your healthcare provider may want to do tests to check your liver while you take ATRIPLA.
- Have ever had mental illness or are using drugs or alcohol.
- Have ever had seizures or are taking medicine for seizures.

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

ATRIPLA may change the effect of other medicines, including the ones for HIV, and may cause serious side effects. Your healthcare provider may change your other medicines or change their doses. Other medicines, including herbal products, may affect ATRIPLA. For this reason, it is very important to let all your healthcare providers and pharmacists know what medications, herbal supplements, or vitamins you are taking.

MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH ATRIPLA

The following medicines may cause serious and life-threatening side effects when taken with ATRIPLA. You should not take any of these medicines while taking ATRIPLA: Hismanal® (cimetidine), Propulsid® (cisapride), Versed® (midazolam), Halcion® (triazolam), and other medications (for example, Wigraine® and Cefepid®).

ATRIPLA also should not be used with COMBIVIR®, EMTRIVA, EPVIR®, EPVIR-HBV®, EPZICOM™, TRIZIVIR®, SUSTIVA, TRIVADA®, or VIREAD.

Vfend® (voriconazole) should not be taken with ATRIPLA since it may lose its effect or may increase the chance of having side effects from ATRIPLA.

It is also important to tell your healthcare provider if you are taking any of the following:

- Fortovase®, Inveks® (saquinavir), or Biad® (clarithromycin); these medicines may need to be replaced with another medicine when taken with ATRIPLA.
- Crivarin® (indinavir), Methadone, Mycobutin® (rifabutin), Rilampin; cholesterol-lowering medicines such as Lipitor® (atorvastatin), PRAVACHOL® (pravastatin), and Zocor® (simvastatin); these medicines may need to be replaced with another medicine when taken with ATRIPLA.

Videx® EC (didanosine); tenofovir DF (a component of ATRIPLA) may increase the amount of didanosine in your blood, which could result in more side effects. You may need to be monitored more carefully if you are taking ATRIPLA and didanosine together. Also, the dose of didanosine may need to be changed.

Reyataz® (atazanavir sulfate) or Kaletra® (lopinavir/ritonavir); these medicines may increase the amount of tenofovir DF (a component of ATRIPLA) in your blood, which could result in more side effects. You may need to be monitored more carefully if you are taking ATRIPLA and either Reyataz or Kaletra together. Also, the dose of Reyataz or Kaletra may need to be changed.

Medicine for seizures (for example, Dilantin® (phenytoin), Tegretol® (carbamazepine), or phenobarbital); your healthcare provider may want to switch you to another medicine or check drug levels in your blood from time to time.

Taking St. John's wort (Hypericum perforatum), or products containing St. John's wort with ATRIPLA is not

recommended. St. John's wort is a herbal product sold as a dietary supplement. Talk with your healthcare provider if you are taking or are planning to take St. John's wort. Taking St. John's wort may decrease ATRIPLA levels and lead to increased viral load and possible resistance to ATRIPLA or cross-resistance to other anti-HIV drugs.

These are not all the medicines that may cause problems if you take ATRIPLA (efavirenz 600 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg). Be sure to tell your healthcare provider about all medicines that you take.

Keep a complete list of all the prescription and nonprescription medicines as well as any herbal remedies that you are taking, how much you take, and how often you take them. Make a new list when medicines or herbal remedies are added or stopped, or if the dose changes. Give copies of this list to all of your healthcare providers and pharmacists every time you visit your healthcare provider or fill a prescription. This will give your healthcare provider a complete picture of the medicines you use. Then he or she can decide the best approach for your situation.

How should I take ATRIPLA?

- Take the exact amount of ATRIPLA your healthcare provider prescribes. Never change the dose on your own. Do not stop this medicine unless your healthcare provider tells you to stop.
- You should take ATRIPLA on an empty stomach.
- Swallow ATRIPLA with water.
- Taking ATRIPLA at bedtime may make some side effects less bothersome.
- Do not miss a dose of ATRIPLA. If you forget to take ATRIPLA, take the missed dose right away, unless it is almost time for your next dose. Do not double the next dose. Carry on with your regular dosing schedule. If you need help in planning the best times to take your medicine, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.
- If you believe you took more than the prescribed amount of ATRIPLA, contact your local poison control center or emergency room right away.
- Tell your healthcare provider if you start any new medicine or change how you take old ones. Your doses may need adjustment.
- When your ATRIPLA supply starts to run low, get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to ATRIPLA and become harder to treat.
- Your healthcare provider may want to do blood tests to check for certain side effects while you take ATRIPLA.

What should I avoid while taking ATRIPLA?

Women taking ATRIPLA should not become pregnant. Serious birth defects have been seen in the babies of animals and women treated with efavirenz (a component of ATRIPLA) during pregnancy. It is not known whether efavirenz caused these defects. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you are pregnant. Also talk with your healthcare provider if you want to become pregnant.

Women should not rely only on hormone-based birth control, such as pills, injections, or implants, because ATRIPLA may make these contraceptives ineffective. Women must use a reliable form of barrier contraception, such as a condom or diaphragm, even if they also use other methods of birth control.

Do not breast-feed if you are taking ATRIPLA. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that mothers with HIV not breast-feed because they can pass the HIV through their milk to the baby. Also, ATRIPLA may pass through breast milk and cause serious harm to the baby. Talk with your healthcare provider if you are breast-feeding. You should stop breast-feeding or may need to use a different medicine.

Taking ATRIPLA (efavirenz 600 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg) with alcohol or other medicines causing similar side effects as ATRIPLA, such as drowsiness, may increase those side effects.

Do not take any other medicines, including prescription and nonprescription medicines and herbal products, without checking with your healthcare provider.

Avoid doing things that can spread HIV infection since ATRIPLA does not stop you from passing the HIV infection to others.

What are the possible side effects of ATRIPLA?

ATRIPLA may cause the following serious side effects:

- Lactic acidosis (buildup of an acid in the blood). Lactic acidosis can be a medical emergency and may need to be treated in the hospital. Call your healthcare provider right away if you get signs of lactic acidosis. (See "What is the most important information I should know about ATRIPLA?")
- Serious liver problems (hepatotoxicity), with liver enlargement (hepatomegaly) and fat in the liver (steatosis). Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any signs of liver problems. (See "What is the most important information I should know about ATRIPLA?")
- "Flare-ups" of Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) infection, in which the disease suddenly returns in a worse way than before, can occur if you have HBV and you stop taking ATRIPLA. Your healthcare provider will monitor your condition for several months after stopping ATRIPLA if you have both HBV and HIV infection and may recommend treatment for your HBV.
- Serious psychiatric problems. A small number of patients may experience severe depression, strange thoughts, or angry behavior while taking ATRIPLA. Some patients have thoughts of suicide and a few have actually committed suicide. These problems may occur more often in patients who have had mental illness. Contact your healthcare provider right away if you think you are having these psychiatric symptoms, so your healthcare provider can decide if you should continue to take ATRIPLA.
- Kidney problems. If you have had kidney problems in the past or take other medicines that can cause kidney problems, your healthcare provider should do regular blood tests to check your kidneys.
- Changes in bone mineral density (thinning bones). It is not known whether long-term use of ATRIPLA will cause damage to your bones. If you have had bone problems in the past, your healthcare provider may need to do tests to check your bone mineral density or may prescribe medicines to help your bone mineral density.

Common side effects:

Patients may have dizziness, headache, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams during treatment with ATRIPLA. These side effects may be reduced if you take ATRIPLA at bedtime on an empty stomach. They also tend to go away after you have taken the medicine for a few weeks. If you have these common side effects, such as dizziness, it does not mean that you will also have serious psychiatric problems, such as severe depression, strange thoughts, or angry behavior. Tell your healthcare provider right away if any of these side effects continue or if they bother you. It is possible that these symptoms may be more severe if ATRIPLA is used with alcohol or mood altering (street) drugs.

If you are dizzy, have trouble concentrating, or are drowsy, avoid activities that may be dangerous, such as driving or operating machinery.

Rash may be common. Rash usually goes away without any change in treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. If you develop a rash, call your healthcare provider right away.

Other common side effects include tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, gas, and diarrhea.

Other possible side effects with ATRIPLA include:

- Changes in body fat. Changes in body fat develop in some patients taking anti-HIV medicine. These changes may include an increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), in the breasts, 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 fat changes are not known.
- Skin discoloration (small spots or freckles) may also happen with ATRIPLA.
- Tell your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you notice any side effects while taking ATRIPLA.
- Contact your healthcare provider before stopping ATRIPLA because of side effects or for any other reason.

This is not a complete list of side effects possible with ATRIPLA. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for a more complete list of side effects of ATRIPLA and all the medicines you will take.

How do I store ATRIPLA?

- Keep ATRIPLA and all other medicines out of reach of children.
- Store ATRIPLA at room temperature 77 °F (25 °C).
- Keep ATRIPLA in its original container and keep the container tightly closed.
- Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. If you throw away medicines away make sure that children will not find them.

General information about ATRIPLA:

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for conditions that are not mentioned in patient information leaflets. Do not use ATRIPLA for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give ATRIPLA to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

This leaflet summarizes the most important information about ATRIPLA. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about ATRIPLA that is written for health professionals.

Do not use ATRIPLA if the seal over bottle opening is broken or missing.

What are the ingredients of ATRIPLA?

Active ingredients: efavirenz, emtricitabine, and tenofovir disoproxil fumarate. Inactive ingredients: croscarmellose sodium, hydroxypropyl cellulose, microcrystalline cellulose, magnesium stearate, sodium lauryl sulfate. The film coating contains black iron oxide, polyethylene glycol, polyvinyl alcohol, red iron oxide, talc, and titanium dioxide.

July 2009

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SF-00018-07-06

YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN

Why friends and family flock to the annual reunion for Kindred Spirits, the late, great nightclub

Kindred Spirits was the first gay women's bar I ever set foot in. Ever hear of it? No? Really? Then I'm flattered that you—a very, very young person—should choose to read this column.

Serendipitously, I was escaping Ohio and visiting Houston that fateful February 1980 weekend of Kindred Spirits' grand opening. Never before had this naïve neophyte to the gay community seen so many lesbians in a natural habitat, roaming free. Look at them all! Hundreds and hundreds of them! Amazing! Shhh, don't startle them—they'll scatter!

Though I returned briefly to Ohio after that first visit, I never really looked back. It seems like only moments later I had packed my buckeye bags and moved to Texas. Hey, that's where all the women were. I had seen their herd with my own eyes!

Not long after my great migration, I found myself strapping on my guitar and entering a talent competition at Kindred Spirits (or "KS" as we called it then, before those letters stood for something far less entertaining). As it happened, it was a rainy Sunday afternoon—not exactly prime time—but I won the contest, the grand prize being a paid gig entertaining the KS Friday happy-hour crowd.

That prize was my first professional gig in a gay club. Since I can't recall exactly how the judging was set up, I assume the decision must have fallen to the Boss Lady. You can bless/blame Marion Coleman for launching my gay showbiz career.

Another prize I won at Kindred Spirits: a girlfriend. A really good one, too—not the kind you wish you'd never met after your credit card invoices and tests results come back.

D and I met one of those magical nights at Kindred Spirits II, the Galleria-area redux of the outgrown KS I on Buffalo Speedway, when anything could happen...and often did. We locked eyes over the video trivia game and went home together that very same night (yes, girls do that sometimes too, guys).

And that, as they say, was that for nearly five years, and we're still together.

No no no, we're not together together now. Silly. But D and I, as well D's now-wife of 16-plus years, are all the very best of friends.

It's a rare thing when you can walk into an establishment looking for a friend and walk out with a family.

KS was also special in that it was the first club for gay women in Houston—make that in the Southwest—that looked more like a Bennigan's than a garage. Live plants adorned the walls rather than peeling paint and cinder blocks. We sat shoulder to shoulder, rocking in the clean, green director's chairs in the sunken lounge area subtly lit

KS was also special in that it was the first club for gay women in Houston—make that, in the Southwest—that looked more like a Bennigan's than a garage.

by the artful neon cactus. We draped over the upper railing, gazing down into the chick sea that undulated in waves beneath us. We stayed out of the fire lane, by god.

But KS was more than cold beer and cheap thrills. Way more.

In the '80s, Houston had no gay community center, no gay coffee shops. Houston had one—one!—little gay bookstore that wasn't a porn shop. The very few gay organizations that existed had even fewer places to meet. On any given night, a thirsty customer might walk into KS to find a politically motivated meeting going on in one corner, a softball team setting batting lineup in another, auditions for an upstart gay theater company in yet another. Without question, KS was a precursor to, if not the birthplace

of, many current community organizations that thrive today.

It's been more than 26 years since Kindred Spirits first opened its doors and almost two decades since those doors closed. Later, the gargantuan, multi-clubbed, also now-closed Ranch became the hub for local lesbians, further expanding the idea that a women's bar needn't look like a bomb shelter. Now it's the Chances/G Spot/New Barn triplex in the heart of Montrose that carries the torch that Marion Coleman lit. Another of KS's more enduring legends, Miss Vicci, can be found at the newly renovated G Spot, still serving drinks without attitude. Drop in sometime and ask her to share a war story or two.

Marion Coleman, long a mainstay of Houston's gay community, tells me that over the years hundreds of women have asked her when she's going to open another Kindred Spirits. In 2002, she and a handful of friends began producing a reunion of sorts for those hundreds of former customers, employees, and supporters, all of whom continue the KS tradition each spring. Thousands of women and their friends attend those fund-raising parties, so far collecting in excess of \$30,000 for charities.

Now in its sixth year, the celebration is set for April 28, 8 p.m., at the Edwin Hornberger Center. Still advocating for her community, Marion says the \$25 ticket benefits AssistHers, Bering Support Network, Houston Buyer's Club, and Lesbian Health Initiative-Houston. Full details are available at www.kindredspirits-houston.org.

Perhaps eventually Marion can be persuaded to open yet another Kindred Spirits. Or maybe she should open a pair of clubs: Kindred Spirits III for her new customers—the naïve neophytes who are visiting from Ohio and setting foot in a gay bar for the first time in their lives—and Kindred Spirits Rehab/Retirement Center/RV Park for her former ones.

I'd happily play the Friday happy-hour gig at either. ■

TO TELL THE TRUTH

After six years, the White House now confronts a new game

Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely. There is no better evidence of that tenet than the current administration. The problem for the Bush administration is that after years of its having had a free pass, the Democrats now control the Senate and the Congress, and with that, the power of the subpoena and the ability to investigate allegations of corruption.

When the Republicans controlled the Senate and the Congress, there was no check or balance on the Bush White House. No accountability. Any allegation of corruption was whitewashed. Whether the allegation was that the administration had lied about pre-war intelligence to gain authorization for going to war (a more impeachable offense than lying about a blow job); what Dick Cheney discussed with oil-company executives before introducing energy legislation (oil-company executives originally testified that they did not meet with the vice president but some have now acknowledged that they did);

whether the administration had authorized secret, illegal wiretaps (the FBI has admitted it has); or whether prisoners were being illegally detained and tortured (can you say waterboarding?), the Republicans have been steadfast in their support of the President. They have refused to subpoena witnesses, squelched investigations, and stiff-armed Democrats who persisted that allegations of corruption deserved investigation.

The only bright spot in the partisan stonewalling was the appointment of Patrick Fitzgerald to investigate and prosecute anyone involved in the illegal disclosure of the identity of CIA agent Valerie Plame. We know the result of that investigation and prosecution—the conviction of Scooter Libby, Cheney's chief of staff and the person who apparently took the fall for Cheney's overzealous defense of the administration's pre-war strategy.

What a difference an election cycle makes. In November, when the Democrats

took back control of Congress, they regained a useful tool—the power to investigate allegations of corruption, the power to hold congressional hearings to investigate such allegations, and the power to subpoena witnesses and to compel them to testify at investigative hearings.

Lo and behold, there has been a sudden shift at the White House, previously known for its steadfast secrecy. The veil has begun to lift. The new defense secretary, Robert Gates, appeared and played nice during questioning before the Senate. People actually showed up and admitted at Congressional hearings that the conditions at Walter Reed Army Medical Hospital were deplorable. Gates took responsibility and made something happen. Heads rolled.

More tellingly, after the Democrats took over, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales voluntarily appeared before Congress. After years of arguing that the White House's

continued on page 26

A SCORECARD FOR DEMOCRATS

Clip and save this column, check back in two years

Democrats are now in charge of Congress, having gotten there in part with the support of millions of dollars from national gay organizations and about 75 percent of gay voters. Gays are, indeed, perennially the third most loyal voting bloc for Democrats (behind blacks and Jews). Now, it's fair to ask, what are gay Americans going to get in return? How are we to gauge the progress made in the next two years? Below is a scorecard.

One way to evaluate congressional Democrats is to ask whether they will be better on gay issues than Republicans were during their 12 years in power. Republicans weren't as bad as some gay activists predicted they would be. In fact, during the 12 years of Republican rule, Congress passed only one major piece of antigay legislation: the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Of course, DOMA also had the support of many Democrats and was signed by President Clinton.

In fact, there were mildly positive devel-

opments during the Republican reign. AIDS funding remained largely intact. President Bush formally kept in place Clinton's executive order barring discrimination in federal employment; there was no attempt to repeal the order by legislation. The first hearings were held on the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA).

But it must be admitted that Republican congressional leaders tried to do more harm than they actually did—by pushing for a federal constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, for example. Republican congressional leaders also set a tone of hostility toward gay Americans, exemplified by the comments of former senator Rick Santorum warning that decriminalizing gay sex would lead to "man on dog."

The Democrats will be an improvement. The tone will be much better. We will hear pleasing and soothing words from congressional leaders for a change. The federal marriage amendment won't even get a vote

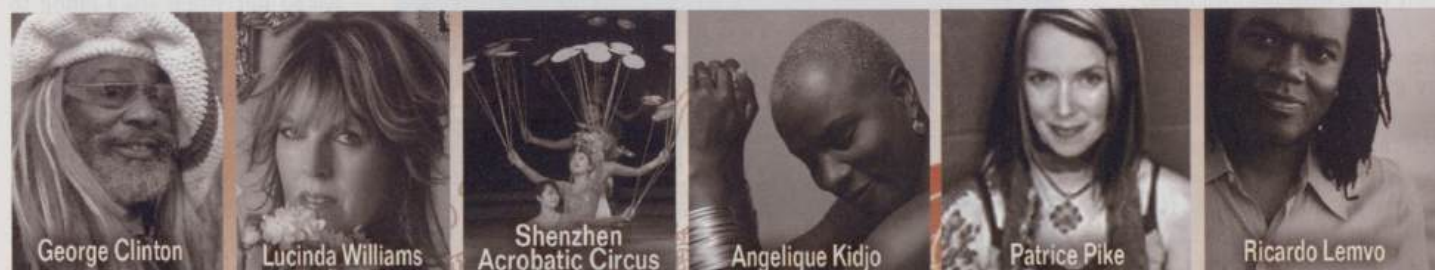
for the next two years.

Is this enough? For some people it will be. Moreover, all manner of excuses will be made for any lack of action: why pass legislation the President will veto, other matters require more immediate attention, the Democrats can't afford to be seen as beholden to "special interests," it's more important to concentrate on electing a Democrat to the White House in 2008, and so on.

For those who expect more in exchange for gays' loyalty to the Democrats, here is a point system for grading them.

(1) Federal recognition of gay relationships (up to 50 points)

Congress could vote to repeal DOMA (35 points). It could vote to give spousal benefits to the same-sex domestic partners of federal employees (15 points). At a minimum, Democratic leaders could hold hearings on these matters that will get the ball rolling toward eventual federal recognition of gay relationships (3 points). →



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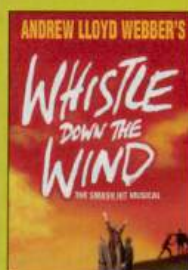
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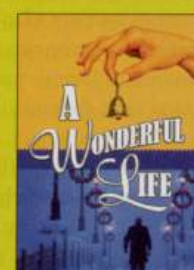


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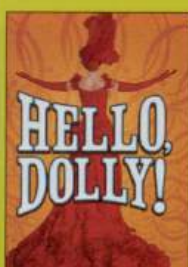


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LeftOut continued from page 24

secret wiretapping program did not require court approval, Gonzales immediately changed course and conceded that it did.

Later, after eight U.S. attorneys were simultaneously dismissed, and Democrats questioned those dismissals, Gonzales voluntarily appeared again before Congress and offered that the eight attorneys who had been fired simultaneously were not fired "for political reasons" but because of "job-performance reasons."

That latter statement does not appear to stand up to scrutiny. Two fired U.S. attorneys later testified that they were told by an acting associate attorney general that they were fired for political reasons. Two others testified that several Republican officials had called them and attempted to influence their prosecutorial decisions. One was fired after obtaining a guilty conviction of a Republican congressman. And one testified that he was questioned by then-White House Counsel Harriet Miers, who asked him to explain why he had "mishandled" the issue of a criminal voter fraud investigation sought by Republicans, which the prosecutor had independently decided not to pursue.

Because the Democrats are in the majority and could actually ask questions about the firings, we now know that Miers originally wanted to fire all 93 U.S. attorneys simultaneously, but then reduced that to "targeting" the eight who were ultimately fired after others pointed out that the firing of all 93 might result in political upheaval. (Remember, Harriet Miers is the intellectual giant that Dubya nominated to sit on the Supreme Court and then withdrew her nomination when the Democrats made an issue of her lack of qualifications.) And we have also learned that although the dismissals were not supposed to be politically motivated, one of the would-be replacements was a Karl Rove favorite, as Gonzales' chief of staff revealed in an e-mail when he wrote that the filling of the position was "very important to Harriet [Miers] and Karl [Rove]."

Before the Democrats took over, this, too, would have been whitewashed. The Democrats, as the minority party, could not request documents or compel the testimony of any individual unless the Republicans agreed. But that all changed when the new Congress was sworn in on January 2, 2007.

On March 9, the House of Representatives judiciary committee wrote to the White House and requested documents and e-mails that might reflect whether the U.S. attorneys were dismissed for political reasons. The letter also stated that the judiciary committee would like to interview White House officials. And the Senate judiciary committee

indicated it might like to hear again from Gonzales and to hear for the first time from Harriet Miers and Karl Rove.

These three individuals should be given the opportunity to explain themselves. They should be compelled to appear before Congress and to testify, under oath, about their actions. They should be forced to answer questions and to tell the truth—something the Bush administration has not had to do much in the past six years because it has not been forced to answer any of the tough questions.

The individuals who do come forward and testify would be well served to remember something they should have learned during the impeachment trial of President Clinton—that lying under oath is a crime. Ask Scooter Libby.

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 25

(2) Gays in the military (up to 30 points)

With strong Republican support, a Democratic Congress and Democratic president gave us Don't Ask, Don't Tell in 1993. The new Democratic Congress could make amends by voting to repeal the law, leaving to the president the power to decide whether to allow gays to serve (20 points). Or it could vote simply to ban discrimination against gays in the military (30 points). At a minimum, Democratic congressional leaders could hold hearings on antigay discrimination in the military (3 points).

(3) ENDA (up to 15 points)

Seventeen states and the District of Columbia already prohibit employment discrimination against gays. A federal bill making this national policy has been pending in Congress in one form or another for more than three decades. The latest version being pressed by national gay groups would also ban discrimination against transgender people, which complicates its chances of passage even with Democrats in control. Congress could pass the legislation, with or without protection for transgenders (15 points), though it might pass a weak bill with lots of broad exemptions for small businesses, religiously affiliated institutions, and the like (deduct one point for every 10 percent of gay employees not covered). At a minimum, congressional leaders could schedule another round of hearings (1 point).

(4) Hate crimes legislation (up to 5 points)

There's no evidence that hate crimes laws actually deter hate crimes. There's little evidence that the states aren't already prosecuting antigay crimes. But a federal law would have some symbolic value. Congress could pass such a law (5 points). Yet a →

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This is a reproduction of the painting 'The Japanese Bridge' by the English Romantic painter J.M.W. Turner. The painting depicts a traditional Japanese arched bridge spanning a pond filled with lily pads. The brushwork is visible and expressive, capturing a sense of light and atmosphere. The color palette is dominated by earthy greens, browns, and muted pinks, with a soft, hazy quality. The bridge's railing is a light, weathered color, contrasting with the darker, more textured foliage in the background. The lily pads in the foreground are rendered with delicate, varied colors, suggesting different stages of bloom or decay. The overall composition is balanced, with the bridge's curve leading the viewer's eye across the scene.

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OutRight continued from page 27

Cut this column out of this magazine (print it out if you're reading online). Stow for two years. Before you vote in November 2008, pull it out of your desk and total the Democrats' score. Here's how to evaluate the total:

- **75-100 points:** Never vote for another Republican.

- **30-49 points:** Democrats are willing to fight for gay equality, at some political risk.
- **10-29 points:** Democrats will do the minimum necessary to mollify gays.
- **0-9 points:** Democrats know they can take gays for granted.

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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*Serving the GLBT Community
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by Annise D. Parker

WELL PRESERVED

Retaining Houston's historic buildings impacts the future of our city

When I travel, I often tour historic districts, sometimes visiting historic homes to get a glimpse of the past. One of my favorite local drives is along Heights Boulevard. With its beautiful, grand Victorian homes and Craftsman bungalows, the boulevard reminds us of a different era. Drivers in Charleston (where my mother lives), Savannah, San Antonio, or Philadelphia could tour for hours looking at magnificent homes and buildings, many more than 100 years old. Sadly, Heights is a relatively short drive in Houston. Hundreds of Victorian mansions and 19th-century buildings that once graced Houston now only exist in the pages of history books.

We can't bring back Houston's stately past. However, we can prevent more destruction and put protections and incentives into what many consider the weakest historic preservation ordinance in the nation. That's what City Council members began

attempting in early March, although they remain very timid about any imposition on private property rights, and all the proposed restrictions are voluntary. Bolstered by the outcry over possible demolition of the River Oaks shopping center and both the River Oaks and Alabama theaters, council passed the first of what could be several ordinance enhancements designed to provide greater protection for the relatively few remaining historic structures in Houston.

The first step created the category of protected landmark. A property designated a protected landmark by the city may never be torn down.

More recently, City Council imposed a temporary moratorium on demolitions in the Old Sixth Ward north of downtown, which includes some of the oldest residential buildings in the city. This protection will expire on September 1, giving council time to consider land use controls that will apply only to the Old Sixth Ward. As

an owner of some historic houses in that neighborhood, I am watching with interest.

Another proposal would allow permanent 100 percent tax exemptions for about 50 commercial buildings deemed to be the city's most significant historic structures. The tax break would be contingent on maintenance of the building's historic façade. Included on this list are the River Oaks Theater and the downtown Macy's (formerly Foley's) building. Unfortunately, this plan as currently crafted would not apply to single-family residences. I hope that changes. Providing incentives to save the few remaining historic houses is just as important as working to preserve commercial buildings. People who own these homes sometimes need the tax break, among other incentives, to restore an exterior to its original glory.

There are also proposals to make it easier for residents to apply for creation of a historic district as well as increased penalties for illegal demolition of a historic structure.

Great Cities

Most current City Council members realize that great cities preserve their history. Historic preservation protects a diversity and way of life that is fast disappearing. When we tear down the past, we lose our referents, our compass points. Newcomers find there is nothing here to link them to the past and the cities they once knew.

Respected social scientists like Richard Florida produce one survey after another concluding that quality of life (enhanced by parks, good neighborhoods, diversity and tolerance, recreation, and historic preservation) attracts highly mobile top graduates and families to cities—not to mention tourists and conventioners.

Houston Style

The seven historic districts of Houston make up less than 3 percent of the city's 630-plus square miles. Working for historic preservation in this sprawling growth center is like swimming upstream. It goes against the tide of Houston history. This is a city of change, of movement, of the new. If you don't like the landscape, reform it. Replant the coastal prairie with live oaks. If the city isn't well positioned for trade, build a 50-mile ditch to the Gulf of Mexico and call it the Houston Ship Channel. If you don't like →



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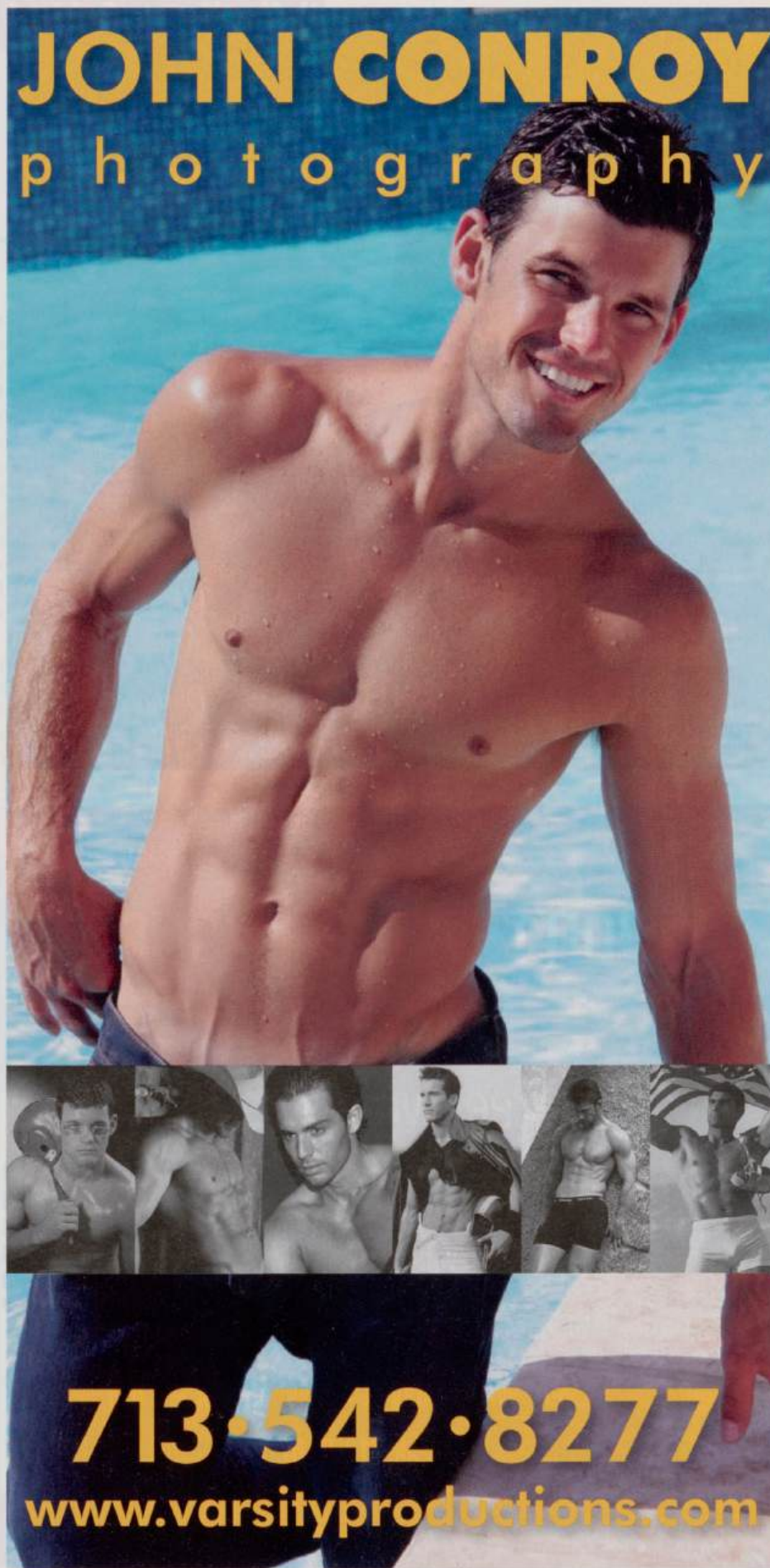
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InsideOut continued from previous page

the climate, change it—thus, air conditioning and the Astrodome.

Historic preservation in Houston will be Houston-style. It must be dynamic, recognizing changing conditions and needs, not an attempt to put bell jars over neighborhoods or save static "house museums."

We will have to make the real estate market value the past, to prove the dollar potential of historic properties. While there has to be a prohibition framework—the "thou shalt nots"—it will have to be broad and flexible. And we must provide incentives more than sanctions. We must be proactive rather than reactive. Education is the key. We need an inventory so we'll know what we have and have the potential of losing. We're creating a roadmap of what we need to do and where we need to do it.

What a difference a new City Council makes. As a City Council member, I sponsored what was a somewhat tougher historic preservation ordinance that had come out of the city's Archeological and Historical Commission after two years of hard work. A council committee rejected the revisions and voted 7-6 to make participation in city historic districts voluntary. Mayor Lee Brown (Bill White's predecessor) did not put the weakened ordinance on the full council agenda.

The City Council stands on the brink of creating a far more livable city, where historic preservation and neighborhood planning take their rightful place alongside responsible development.

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



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You May Have a Claim in a Proposed Class Action Settlement

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You may be able to get cash from a \$24 million Proposed Settlement if you paid for the prescription drug Serostim. The Proposed Settlement is with Merck Serono International, S.A., Serono Laboratories, Inc., and EMD Serono, Inc. ("Defendants"). It is pending in the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

Who Represents You?

The Court has appointed attorneys to represent the Consumer and TPPs who comprise the Class. Class Counsel will request the Court award fair and reasonable attorneys' fees and costs not to exceed \$3.96 million, plus reimbursement of expenses.

You may hire your own attorney, if you wish. However, you will be responsible for that attorney's fees and expenses.

What Is the Class Action About?

Plaintiffs claim that Defendants improperly marketed Serostim, a drug approved by FDA to treat HIV/AIDS wasting or cachexia. The lawsuits claim that Defendants encouraged doctors to prescribe Serostim based on diagnostic criteria that were not approved by FDA. The lawsuits do not allege that Serostim is dangerous to patient health, or that Serostim is not safe and effective for its approved uses.

The Defendants deny any liability and have decided to settle to avoid the expense and uncertainty of litigation.

What Are Your Options?

- If you do not want to be part of the Proposed Settlement, you must exclude yourself, in writing, postmarked by **May 21, 2007**. Excluding yourself will allow you to bring your own claims against the Defendants.

- If you stay in the Settlement Class you can file a claim. Your claim must be postmarked by **July 19, 2007**. All claim documentation submitted by you will be kept confidential and will be used only for the purpose of processing claims.

Who Is Involved?

The Proposed Settlement Class includes all persons or entities nationwide that paid in whole or in part for the drug Serostim from July 1, 1995 to December 31, 2006, and their heirs.

- You may object to or comment on any part of the Proposed Settlement. Your objection/comment must be written and postmarked by **May 21, 2007**. You may also request in writing to speak at the Final Approval Hearing.

What Does the Proposed Settlement Provide?

- \$10.8 million will be allocated to certain large Third-Party Payors (e.g., insurance companies) who have a separate agreement with the Defendants.
- \$13.2 million will be allocated to the remaining Third-Party Payors (82%) and consumers (18%), after attorneys' fees and the costs of administering the Proposed Settlement are deducted.

The Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement explains excluding yourself, making a claim, objecting/ commenting and requesting to speak at the Hearing.

Will the Court Approve the Proposed Settlement?

The Court will hold a Final Approval Hearing on June 19, 2007 at 2:00 p.m. and will consider whether to approve the Proposed Settlement, award attorneys' fees and allow reimbursement of expenses.

For Additional Information

For the Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement, information on your rights and how to file a claim:

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TAKING CARE

People living with AIDS can do things to maintain their health

If you are living with HIV/AIDS, there are things you can do to help yourself stay healthy. I've seen with my own eyes the impact lifestyle choices can have upon HIV disease progression. While they are anecdotal and not scientific, my observations focus on two very close friends (both gay men who were infected through sex) and the ways in which their behaviors and attitudes influenced their health.

First, let's take a look at Robert.

Robert was most likely infected in 1981 or earlier. Considering what a cute, young thing he was and how often he frequented the bath houses in those days, I'm absolutely sure he was exposed to HIV many times, beginning very early in the epidemic. But I digress.

In the mid '80s, Robert began to experience some unusual illnesses, like Bell's palsy, which paralyzes one side of the face. Despite his series of weird illnesses, Robert did not test for HIV until 1987 when he went to the

doctor about a small "blood blister" on his face that wouldn't go away. Of course, the test came back positive, indicating Robert was infected with HIV. And it wasn't a blood blister on his face. It was a Kaposi's Sarcoma (KS) lesion, an AIDS-indicating cancer. So by the time Robert took the HIV test, he had already progressed from being HIV positive to having AIDS.

Treatment for HIV was still in its infancy in 1987, and Robert did not have a lot of confidence in AZT. So he opted not to take any sort of treatment. While that decision did not help him, what really hurt him was his continued heavy use of alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs; his stressful, go-go-go lifestyle that did not afford him adequate time for sleep or exercise; and his lack of proper nutrition. Also, it did not help that he had been co-infected with hepatitis and a couple of sexually transmitted infections.

My dear, sweet, mischievous friend Robert died on December 4, 1990, at the age of

29. I still miss him very much, and I often wish he could have held on until the advent of protease inhibitors and other improved treatment protocols. However, when I look at how he lived, I can't say I'm surprised that he succumbed.

Now let's examine George (I'm sure he'd like that!) and his lifestyle. George tested positive for HIV around the same time that Robert received his AIDS diagnosis. Unlike Robert, George decided to seek medical treatment and change his behaviors right away. For example, he cut back on the partying, he made sure he ate three healthy meals per day, got eight hours of sleep each night, and he took his medication exactly as prescribed. George even realized the connection between stress and the health of the immune system, so he got into Buddhism because the chanting and spiritual peace helped him better manage stress.

So here it is, 2007, and I'm happy to report that my wonderful friend George is alive and

well and living a full life—20 years into his infection with HIV! And that's no surprise. He takes care of himself, he has a great, positive attitude, and he occupies himself with people, things, and activities that make him happy. His healthful lifestyle is an example for us all to follow, but especially for persons living with HIV/AIDS.

What else can people with HIV/AIDS do to ensure their continued good health? First thing, I would recommend they get themselves to the Center for AIDS Hope and Remembrance Project (CFA) at 1407 Hawthorne. We in Houston are very lucky to have CFA, because they house, in an unassuming-looking building in Montrose, the largest repository of HIV treatment information in the Southwest.

CFA also produces valuable educational materials, such as *25 Things You Need to Know If You Are HIV+*. This brochure includes a variety of tips to help persons with HIV stay healthy. While I won't cover all 25 suggestions in this column, I'll hit some of the high points:

- #25. Do not eat raw meat, raw fish, or raw eggs. These foods can make you sick.
- #23. If you've never had Hepatitis A or B, ask your doctor about getting vaccinated against them.
- #22. Regular dental care is crucial. See a dentist twice a year. The first signs that your HIV infection is getting worse often appear in the mouth.
- #20. It's important to avoid activation of the immune system. Treat any non-HIV illnesses you experience as soon as possible. These illnesses activate the immune system.
- #10. Never take a regimen of only one HIV medication. Most of the time it takes three or more medications to suppress HIV. (But remember, sometimes a pill has more than one medication in it, like Combivir or Trizivir.)
- #7. Take every dose of every medication on time every day. Skipping doses of your medication can be harmful, as it can lead to HIV developing resistance to the meds.
- #5. Eye care is important. If you experience "floaters" or any changes in vision call your doctor immediately. Some conditions left untreated can cause blindness.
- #1. Choose a doctor with experience in the treatment of HIV/AIDS. The more experience, the better. This is the most important decision you can make.

For more information, contact the Center for AIDS Hope and Remembrance Project Center For AIDS (713/527-8219, www.centerforaids.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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Call It **Homo** hop

The first-ever HomoRevolution Tour brings GLBT hip-hop performers—including Mz Fontaine, Deadlee, Johnny Dangerous, Bigg Nugg, FoxxJazell, and QBoy—to Houston this month. As these artists rock the mic, they are changing perceptions about their music

by Christopher Whaley

Dangerously yours: The self-proclaimed "homo hip-hop head of controversy," Chicago-based Johnny Dangerous is one of the artists performing with the HomoRevolution Tour 2007, which arrives in Houston on April 6 at Club Dignity. PHOTO BY SERGIO PEREZ

It's no secret that for the past two decades, hip-hop has been at the forefront of modern-day culture. Turn on your TV and you're bound to see or hear the music in some form or fashion. It's a multi-billion dollar industry that, besides the music, has resulted in everything from designer clothing labels (Roc-A-Wear, Sean John) to artists acquiring ownership in pro-basketball teams (Jay-Z, Usher). In 2006, hip-hop gained more mainstream popularity when Three 6 Mafia took home the Academy Award for their song "It's Hard Out Here for a Pimp" from the film *Hustle & Flow*. Hip-hop, which has its roots in the Bronx club culture in the '70s, is now enshrined in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (with the induction of Grandmaster Flash last month). An art form that was once considered a passing fad has stood the test of time—but in a significant way has yet to really catch up with the times.

In the late '90s, radio personality Wendy Williams caused a bit of controversy when she spoke of a "gay rapper" within the confines of the hip-hop community. The \$64,000 question was "Who is it?" and emcees from LL Cool J to Queen Latifah became suspect. Needless to say, the "gay rapper" was never revealed, but over the years, hip-hop has never been kind to anyone with a life that centers on anything apart from what is considered the norm. Buju Banton, the successful dancehall musician from Jamaica, created a considerable amount of international controversy with

his 1992 song "Boom Bye Bye" that called for violence against homosexuals. Popular rapper Eminem has earned his fair share of press for his antigay lyrics as well. His sophomore release, *The Marshall Mathers LP*, received praise from critics but provoked a backlash from gay-rights activists and feminist groups who asserted that the album was misogynistic and homophobic. In what was considered a publicity stunt, Eminem performed his song "Stan" at the 2001 Grammy Awards with gay icon Elton John. In a post-ceremony interview with MTV newsman Kurt Loder, Eminem said that he wasn't aware John was gay and that he respected him. Neither the gesture nor his comments appeased critics.

Portrayals of masculinity in hip-hop and rap often mimic stereotypes of aggressiveness, violence, sexism, and homophobia. To make mockery of someone's sexuality by regulating them to "bitch-made" status or to make lyrics that degrades a man by "making a n-ga suck my dick" is one of the driving forces that causes many people take a look at rap music today and ask, Just how did it get to be so homophobic? Why is the music so violent? What's really going on with a cat who is supposed to be so "thugged out" and "hardcore," yet is depicted bare-chested in a video dissing women while cavorting with a bunch of dudes? Is it homoeroticism or homo-thuggery? In his new documentary *Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes*, →



Homohop

continued from previous page

filmmaker Byron Hunt calls attention to question when he asks Busta Rhymes—who made news a year ago when he lashed out at a gay fan in Miami—to describe his feelings about homophobia in hip-hop culture. Rhymes refuses to answer the question and instead walks away from the camera.

"I'm becoming numb, so to speak. I believe most people who are homophobic have deeper issues they're not willing to deal with," says Ernie Ball, when asked about his feelings about homophobia in hip-hop culture. "Society has made it easy to disrespect people of a different sexual orientation. Even though the GLBT community has come a long way, it's still a fight for respect. There will always be people who don't agree with the lifestyle and will always have negative things to say about it."

There are many who share Ball's sentiments, but from the depths of the urban underground, a new breed of emcee

Trip hop: Both Deadlee (l) and FoxxJazell (r) travel to Houston for the HomoRevolution Tour, which also stops in El Paso, San Antonio, Austin, and Dallas this month. Deadlee, who recently appeared in a CNN segment about rap and hip-hop, releases a new CD this spring. Long Beach, California, native FoxxJazell is a transgender performer who has opened for RuPaul.

(April 8) on their Texas leg of the tour—also shed light on changes that are necessary for hip-hop to come to grips with the negativity it has accumulated over the years.

At the same time, the Homo Revolution hip-hoppers offer new role models for people who feel they are not represented in mainstream hip-hop.

Gay hip-hop, or "homohop," as it has been called, has been around for a while in the underground, but it was first brought to the attention of the larger GLBT community in Alex Hinton's 2005 documentary about the genre, *Pick up the Mic*. That 90-minute film profiled 18 GLBT hip-hop artists, who included Houstonian Miss Money, interviewed last fall by *OutSmart* ("She's So Money," September 2006).

Before the launch of the Homo Revolution Tour on March 29 in San Diego, I spoke with several of the performers who will appear in Houston (the stop here is sponsored by the local organization Gay and Lesbian Latino Organization as well as Unity in the Community, a new group established by club promoters Barbara and Zip Short-Morgan, among others).

Deadlee, who refers to himself as "the queer bastard child of Lil' Kim and DMX," is a roughneck and grimy vigilante whose lyrics have tackled race, class, police brutality, and, of course, sex. "I think we need to directly challenge the homophobes and let them know that gays are not to be f**ked with. Gay peeps can also be masculine, and it just hasn't been shown in the media," Deadlee said in a phone conversation with *OutSmart*. "I remember when Queen Latifah had a song saying she

has stepped to the mic and now rocking new rhymes about their own experiences. They are standing up for themselves and in all honesty don't care whether you—or the rest of the hip-hop community—like what they have to say or not.

Several of these performers, including Deadlee, Mz Fontaine, Johnny Dangerous, Bigg Nugg, FoxxJazell, and QBoy, roll through Houston this month as part of Homo Revolution Tour 2007, the first-ever music tour featuring gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender hip-hop artists. Homo Revolution, which lands here on April 6 at Club Dignity, located at 127 Scott (just off Interstate 45 near the Texas Southern University campus), offers a chance to experience another aspect of the hip-hop genre. Through their words and beats, the Homo Revolution artists—who perform in El Paso (April 3), San Antonio (April 5), Austin (April 7), and Dallas

wasn't a bitch, and gays need to say the same: We ain't your fag. I grew up with hip-hop, and it's my music, too. I don't understand how anyone can tell me that I can or can't do this. It is more upsetting that the black community knows struggle and bigotry, yet they can be the worst homophobes."

Originally from South America, Mz Fontaine cooks up a musical fusion of Caribbean bass lines, American hip-hop soul, and British neo-soul, which is influenced by her background. "Growing up, my mother would listen to singers such as Tina Turner and Jim Reeves. I remember playing with my father's record player after he departed from the physical, and I would sing [along] to Whitney Houston and Michael Jackson. Music in South America was much narrower, and the highlighted influences came from the reggae culture, which was a great influence in my early life. Hip-hop music filtered through to Guyana, and you had the MC Hammer and Bobby Brown era. This was the type of music my friends introduced to me, as I was never allowed to listen to the genre of hip-hop. My mother would not allow it under her roof, so after moving to the liberated UK, I was able to broaden my horizon fairly quickly."

Representing the "T" in GLBT, FoxxJazell, a striking mocha beauty who stands five-foot-ten, is a hip-hop connoisseur at heart. "I love T.I. [the popular Atlanta-born hip-hop artist and self-proclaimed "King of the South"], and I would love to work with him," she said. "I think he is one of the best in the game right now." FoxxJazell has already shared the stage with divas RuPaul,

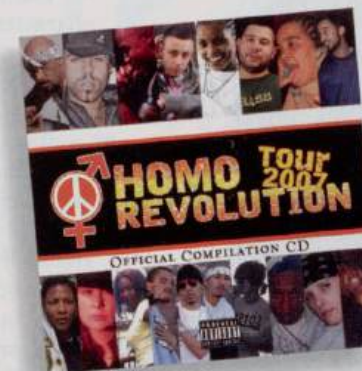
Q is for queer: British hip-hop performer QBoy (l) crosses the Atlantic for the HomoRevolution Tour. The Brit also narrates the 2007 Channel 4 documentary *Coming Out to Class* about GLBT students in British schools. Another UK artist, Mz Fontaine (a native of Guyana) releases a new CD, *Spoken Thoughts*, this year.

Ce Ce Peniston, and Robin S. She has high hopes of making an impact on the hip-hop community with her passion for the game. "I don't aim to be the best or greatest rapper," FoxxJazell said. "I aim to be the voice for my people because our voice is non-existent in the hip-hop community. It's time for change, and I want to be that change."

Chuck D, the fiery orator of the legendary rap group Public Enemy, once said, "If I can't change the people around me, I

London. "I was bullied at school myself and wrote the track "A Deal With God" about my experience, which led me to working with charities like Schools Out, who specialize in helping young gay teens. It's an issue I feel strongly about and am pushing it further beyond just a TV program. I want to see policy change and gay teens protected and supported like the rest of their classmates."

QBoy added, "Hip-hop is *not* homophobic. Certain artists are homophobic. Unfortunately, these artists are the mainstream ones who get played and featured everywhere. However, we can't tar everyone in hip-hop with one brush, as there are plenty



On the Record

The *HomoRevolution Tour 2007* compilation CD is now available. The disc features 17 songs and more than 60 minutes of music by Deadlee, FoxxJazell, Mz Fontaine, Johnny Dangerous, QBoy, and other artists on the tour. All proceeds from sales (\$11.99) help pay for tour expenses. To purchase: www.homorevolution.com.

change the people around me." A perfect embodiment of this tenet is QBoy, a take-no-shit emcee hailing from the UK. "I've just presented a documentary for Channel 4 called *Coming Out to Class* which looks at gay teenagers and their experiences at school, highlighting the homophobia they face and the lack of support they currently have, and it's been getting a great response," QBoy said in an interview from

of positive, conscious artists out there who are not getting any light on them, because the big corporate sponsors have decided that negative rap not only makes them money but also continues to propel negative connotations of black society. I think we need to educate. We need women to see that the root of most homophobia is sexism. People also like to use their religion as an excuse to spread their hatred and become

continued on page 83



Rhymes with Itch

*The now-solo Bitch performs
this month in Houston*

by Lance Scott Walker

Photo by Roberto Portillo

Sometimes, your "better half" is your weaker half, your more cumbersome half, or just plain *half* of that to which you amount. In the case of the group Bitch and Animal, the two openly lesbian songstresses might not have been an *item* (i.e., each other's "half"), but they were a duo, and it's becoming obvious that the former is far better off without the latter. Bitch and Animal were more akin to beat poets than they were conventional songwriters—rife with a determined, poignant voice and a lot to say with it, but little to offer in the way of melodic prowess with which to get that message across.

Last fall, Bitch released her solo debut *Make This/Break This* (Kill Rock Stars) and shattered that mold. Her tools—an electric violin, ukulele, and bass guitars—are again patently minimal, but she has taken on the wisdom of producer June Millington and three-time Grammy-nominee Roma Baran to tighten everything up.

The results jump straight out of the speakers. Her character as an outspoken singer has finally caught up with her musical abilities (she classically trained in violin from the age of four). What's more, she has merged the two fluidly.

Bitch and Animal was critically lauded in some circles, yes (although not by this writer), but there is something to her character now that transcends what that band accomplished—as if she's come out of her shell on this record. The endorsements—such as that of Ani DiFranco (who co-produced and released Bitch and Animal's second album) and Indigo Girls (who took Bitch on tour this past fall)—continue, but she's also branched out. John Cameron Mitchell (*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*) put her in his film *Shortbus*, the Showtime series *The L Word* has featured her songs, and she's even to be seen in the Bright Eyes "First Day of My Life" video.

Bitch's music—which can be heard on April 7, 9 p.m. at Jet Lounge—is still minimal, it's still politically charged, it's still relevant, and still poignant. She's just figured out a hell of a lot better way to get all of that across on her own.

Lance Scott Walker writes frequently about music for OutSmart magazine.

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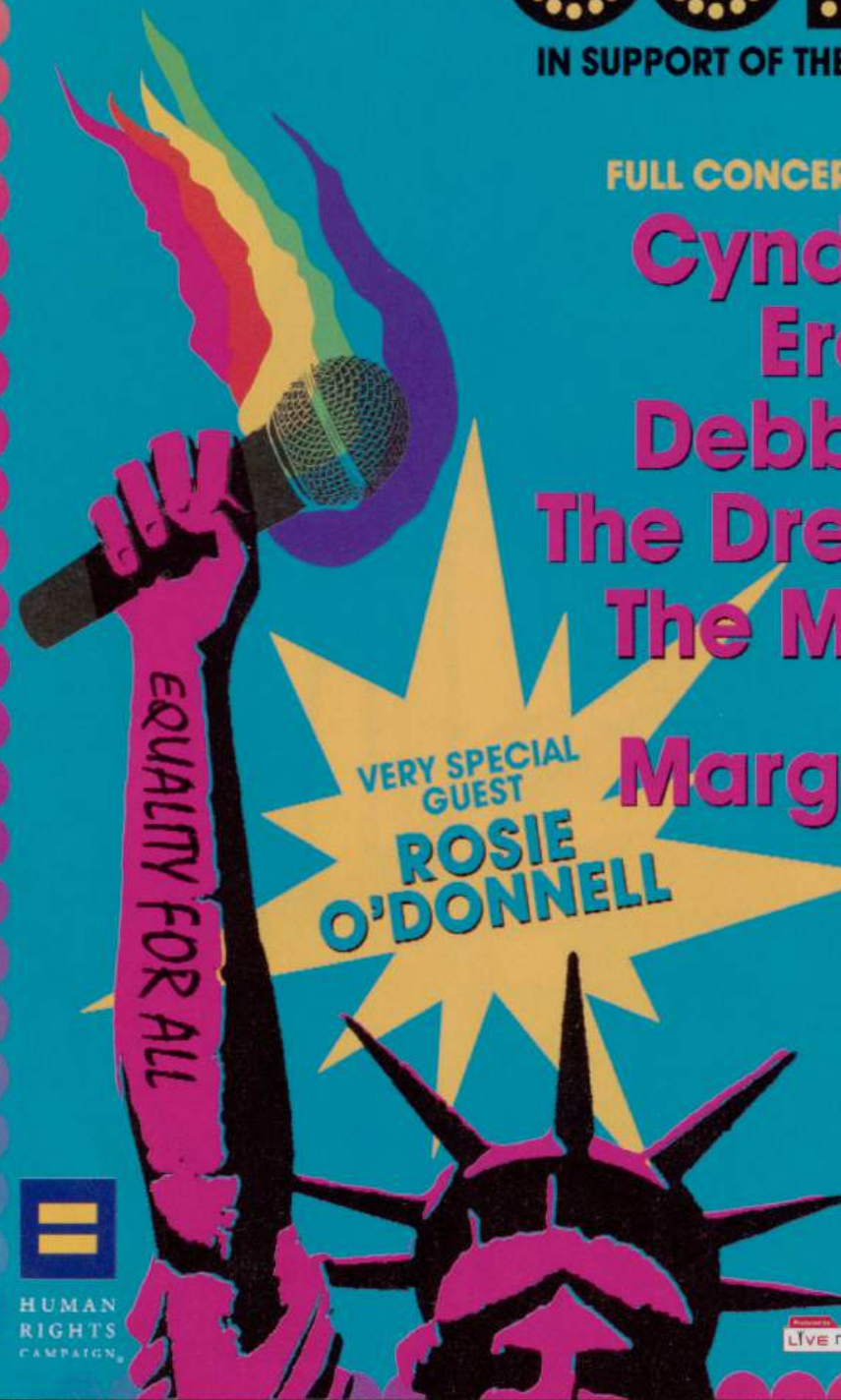
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Out & Off the Shelf

E. Lynn Harris, who came to fame with the bestseller 'Invisible Life' and released his latest novel 'I Say a Little Prayer' in 2006, comes to Houston to help celebrate the 35th anniversary of Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church. First, he talked to us

by Christopher Whaley

Ever since he stepped onto the literary scene in 1991 with his self-published debut, *Invisible Life*, E. Lynn Harris has become a major force to be reckoned with. All 10 of his books have been bestsellers and combined have sold in excess of three million copies. He is an accomplished storyteller who writes warm and passionate novels that take you into the rarely depicted world of black gay men. In 2006 he released *I Say a Little Prayer* (Doubleday), which dealt with struggles within the black church concerning gay rights. Harris took a very delicate topic that many in the

black church are not willing to address and prompted readers to challenge their views and opinions on all lifestyles.

Harris, who currently lives in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and Atlanta, is the guest this month for the 35th anniversary celebrations of Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church. On April 28, he will appear as part of *Twisted Torch*, a concert presented by Mukuru Art Against AIDS. On April 29, he will speak at both Sunday-morning worship services and will then sign copies of his books during a 12:30 p.m. jazz brunch.

In a recent interview with *OutSmart*, Harris spoke about *Dreamgirls*, what inspired him to become a writer, and his opinion on issues concerning the black GLBT community. →



Good words: "Nobody wanted to publish it because there wasn't a market for that, and as a result, I created my own market," says E. Lynn Harris about his first novel, *Invisible Life*. "I took the book to black-owned bookstores and beauty salons and the book caught fire." **INSET:** Harris' latest novel.

Christopher Whaley: Mr. Harris, with all the hype surrounding *Dreamgirls*, a lot of people are unaware that in the fall of 2001, you made your Broadway debut as a narrator in a benefit performance of the play. What was that experience like for you?

E. Lynn Harris: It was one of those dreams come true for me because I never thought that it would happen. I've always been a fan of Broadway, but I'm no actor, no dancer, no singer, and that was a dream that I've never dreamed for myself. It was an incredible two weeks rehearsing with all the cast mates, and they all took me under their wing since I was the only non-actor in the play. It was a wonderful experience that I will always remember.

What is your take on the latest incarnation of *Dreamgirls* with Beyoncé and Jennifer Hudson?

I loved it even though it took me a long time to go see it because I thought I would be disappointed. I liked it because they stayed true to the story.

You've also completed a screenplay for the remake of the 1976 classic film *Sparkle*, which featured Irene Cara and Lonette McKee. What are the latest developments surrounding this project?

I don't know. It was done with Aaliyah in mind [the singer/actress who died in a 2001 plane crash], and after that I heard some rumblings that they were thinking about

doing it again. However, I am out of the loop now and when they needed a rewrite, I wasn't in the position to do it.

Mr. Harris, take me back to the beginning if you don't mind. What inspired you to quit your job in sales and write your first novel, *Invisible Life*?

It was that desire to do something that I would enjoy doing. I wasn't happy doing the sales work and I was looking for something that would bring me joy.

What obstacles did you encounter with *Invisible Life*?

Nobody wanted to publish it because there wasn't a market for that, and as a result, I created my own market. As it went on, the support grew because a lot of people didn't know what I was doing. I took the book to black-owned bookstores and beauty salons, and the book caught fire.

Now let's get deep in this conversation, Mr. Harris. You tend to write about black characters dealing with different aspects of their sexuality, especially homosexuality and bisexuality. What gave you the motivation to write about black life that some people find so taboo?



BOOKED

Works by E. Lynn Harris include the following:
Invisible Life • *Just As I Am* • *And This Too Shall Pass* • *If This World Were Mine* • *Abide With Me* • *Not a Day Goes By* • *Any Way the Wind Blows* • *Gumbo: A Celebration of African American Writers* (co-editor with Marita Golden) • *A Love of My Own* • *What Becomes of the Brokenhearted: A Memoir* • *I Say a Little Prayer*

For more about the author:
www.elynnharris.com.



I was just telling my story. You can't write about what you don't know. Somebody had to write about it, and I wanted to write because it was very easy for me.

In the black church, most likely you will see such characters as the gay piano player, the flaming choir director, the down-low deacon, and the in-the-closet preacher. Yet homophobia runs so rampant throughout the congregation. What is your opinion about this?
 My last book, *I Say a Little Prayer*, is where I wrote about this topic. I wrote about it, and that's all I want to say about it. I think it's hypocritical, and now my thoughts about it are out there in print.

With all the strides that the black community has made over the years, why do you think we as a people are still in the closet when it comes to GLBT issues?

I really don't know. I get asked that a lot of times, and I have no idea why it's such a big deal for us. We would rather die than talk about it.

You are well known for your lectures and presentations. What's your advice to someone who's dealing with sexuality issues and may have a fear of coming out?

You do it on your own time, and don't let anyone tell you when the time is appropriate. Only you will know when it's time.

Christopher Whaley is a poet and spoken-word artist and editor-in-chief of the Houston music magazine SOBO/Soulful Bohemian. He also previews the HomoRevolution Tour in this issue. These are his first contributions to OutSmart.

WEB EXTRA: LIFE AT 35

Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church is now the largest of the worldwide MCC fellowship of GLBT-positive congregations. The local church began as a small group of the faithful who gathered in a living room. Read an interview with two of the charter members of Resurrection at www.outsmartmagazine.com.



In concert: Soprano Cassandra White performs in an April 28 concert at Resurrection.

MCC CELEBRATES

The members of Resurrection Community Church celebrate the 35th anniversary of their congregation with a slate of events, which include these:

- A golf tournament on April 21 at Bear Creek Park.
- *Twisted Torch*, a concert presented by Mukuru Art Against AIDS, on April 28. The evening features spirituals as well as works by Mozart and gay composers Samuel Barber and Aaron Copland performed by soprano Cassandra White and the pianist and Mukuru artistic director Rodney Waters. Tickets: www.mukuru.org.
- Author E. Lynn Harris speaks at 9 and 11 a.m. worship services on April 29. He then signs copies of his books at a jazz brunch at 12:30 p.m.

More info: www.resurrectionmcc.org.

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Null Void

Our community says goodbye to Sue and Jim Null, two of GLBT Houston's most vocal and visible supporters

By Nancy Ford
Photo by John Conroy

It wasn't the easiest party to attend. On March 3, Bruce Smith and Tony Carroll played hosts at a reception at their Montrose home honoring Sue and Jim Null. Longtime PFLAGers in specific and proponents of equal rights in general, the Nulls have decided to leave Houston, their home of 40-plus years, leaving late last month for their new home in Brevard, North Carolina.

The online invitation to the reception soon became a tribute board, with postings thanking the Nulls for their years of dedication in their struggle for equal rights for all:

- "Sue and Jim have been an incredible inspiration to us since we met them in 2007 during Freedom to Marry Week. Their tireless devotion to equality has encouraged countless GLBT individuals to come forward and stand up for their own rights, and has contributed to social change in our community and beyond. Words can't describe how they will be missed by so many."

Sue Null's PFLAG journey began in 1995. At that time the Nulls had opened their home to a young Korean man, Ike, who was learning English. She began attending meetings when she learned that Ike was gay.

"After hearing so many distressing stories of parents who rejected their GLBT family members, I stayed on to learn more and to participate in more PFLAG activities," she says. (For the uninitiated, PFLAG is the acronym for Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, the national support organization that began with a meeting at a New York City church in 1973.)

Sue's husband, Jim, joined the local PFLAG

chapter a year later. Eventually, Jim began writing all of the group's grant applications, later serving as vice president and president for PFLAG Houston, and then as the PFLAG regional director for Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. Most recently Jim was elected to the PFLAG national board of directors.

Sue held her share of PFLAG Houston offices as well, serving as the group's secretary for several years, then advocacy chair.

All those years' worth of mementos and souvenirs from their efforts could spawn the greatest GLBT garage sale of all time: HATE HURTS signs from PFLAG excursions to Washington,

- "The city will collapse without Jim and Sue to keep an eye on it. I will never turn to the *Chronicle* editorial page with the same expectation again!"

- "I would never have become a straight ally in PFLAG if it weren't for Sue and Jim Null."

- "There are not words to express the outstanding, dedicated work of Jim and Sue. They are the definition of PFLAG."

"It's been tremendously affirming for us, without any question," Jim Null says. "I was almost crying when I read the responses to that E-vite."

Amid toasts and tears, Houston city controller Annise D. Parker presented a proclamation honoring Sue and Jim at the Carroll/Smith reception. As she displayed the proclamation, she commented, to assenting comments and knowing nods around the room, that North Carolinians had "no idea" what was in store for their state.

D.C., and lobby days in Austin. Brochures from the 2005 Love Won Out protest, responding to antigay billboards in Galveston touting ex-gay conversion therapy. Political push cards handed out in grocery lines. Placards from a presidential motorcade protest, decrying the current administration's attempt to ban same-sex marriage in the U.S. Constitution. Citations including Sue's 2000 Champions Award from the Houston Transgender Unity Committee and Jim's 2003 Ray Hill Award for Advocacy By a Non-Attorney from the Stonewall Law Association of Greater Houston.

Among their most prized kudos, they say, are medals from 2004, when they were named →



Family portrait: Sue and Jim Null have epitomized the role of PFLAG in Houston's GLBT community.



Warm send-off: Tony Carroll and Bruce Smith (far left and far right, respectively) honored Jim and Sue Null with a March 3 reception attended by approximately 75 well-wishers, including Houston City Controller, Annise D. Parker (second from right). Parker thanked the Nulls for the years of GLBT activism with an official proclamation from her office.

Null Void

continued from page 46

honorary grand marshals of the GLBT Pride Parade.

"That was a real high point, a definite high point," Sue reminisces. "We had marched in the parade before, of course. As you come around the bend, toward the end, the noise just gets so voluminous, so noisy in support of PFLAG."

"We still have the big badges, the medals, hanging up in our living room," Jim says. "We will have them displayed prominently in Brevard."

A town with a population of approximately 7,000 people, Brevard, North Carolina, is a far cry from the über-urban style of living in the fourth largest city in the United States. But the couple has already found community in the local Unitarian Universalist church (in Houston, they were long-time members of First Unitarian Universalist Church).

"It's nice to know that even in a conservative community you're going to find these enclaves, these little groups of people with whom you can feel a sense of community and togetherness," Sue says. "You will find kindred spirits."

Located about 45 minutes from the renowned lesbian-heavy enclave of Asheville, Brevard has a small PFLAG chapter that Jim categorizes as "almost defunct."

"Nobody would take over the position as president," he says. "The people who have been doing it are just sort of burned out, so there really is not a strong, functioning PFLAG in that area right now."

Will the Nulls reactivate the chapter?

"Yes, I think we probably will," Jim says. "The PFLAG regional director lives in Hender-

sonville, just 20 minutes away from Brevard, so I would think we will be involved in trying to get something going."

But Sue, a long-time educator and English as a second language instructor, has other plans.

"My idea is something considerably more moderate, given the size of the community," she says. First on Sue's agenda is to visit Brevard's sole high school and other centers of learning.

"There is a university where I would want to make our presence known and educate counselors and all as to what PFLAG is, and that we are available as resources and back-ups. We are there to be called upon."

Brevard is also home to a gay-owned campground, called Ash Grove, so there may be some ready-made allies right there.

With or without the official calling card of PFLAG, the Nulls will undoubtedly continue to write letters to newspaper editors, call radio talk shows, make TV appearances, wear equality-affirming T-shirts everywhere, and "embrace every possible opportunity to speak out in favor of equality and respect for GLBTs," Sue says.

Among the many victories they have witnessed in Houston in recent years, the Nulls are perhaps most pleased with the changes that have occurred in local mainstream press coverage of GLBT issues.

"The *Houston Chronicle* has certainly

changed totally in coverage and attitude, and PFLAG played a significant roll in that," Jim says proudly.

Sue lined up a meeting with the paper's editorial board in 1999, an idea she says came from local activist Deborah Ball, now KPFT *Queer Voices* co-host and chair of the Lesbian Rights Task Force for the National Organization for Women chapter in Texas.

"Deborah was saying that NOW or some feminist group had done something similar with the newspaper editorial board. So I called up, wrote an e-mail, and they agreed," Sue says.

The *Chronicle's* editorial board met with the Nulls, PFLAG Houston representatives including Don Sinclair, Jane and Irv Smith, Roger Donnelly, and others for an hour and a half, Jim recalls.

"It was very interesting. It was clear that they didn't have any idea what to expect," Jim says. "They kept asking us, 'What are your issues? What is it you care about?' People were giving them sort of vague answers, and they were becoming frustrated."

"Finally, I said, 'Let me tell you one: Our lesbian daughter and her partner would like to adopt a child. There's a bill in the Texas legislature now, sponsored by Talton out in Pasadena, that would prohibit gays or lesbians from adopting children. So we are opposed to that.'"

Jim says the group discussed the bill for a few minutes, and then moved on to other things. Two weeks later on a Saturday morning, they realized the fruit of their efforts.

"Lo and behold, the *Chronicle* had this huge editorial opposing Talton's bill!" Jim says. "The editorial was almost poetry. It was just beautiful."

But their struggle hasn't been all poetry and plaques. The 2001 defeat of the city charter amendment to grant domestic partner health benefits to Houston city employees was particularly bitter for the couple.

"We were all unhappy about the marriage amendment last year, but we knew we could not possibly win

that," Sue says. "But this other one, back in 2001, we thought we might be able to win. And it was close. Really, really close."

Despite the couple's Energizer Bunny-like dedication to obtaining equality for all, Jim cites one area where he feels they have fallen short.

"I've always been disappointed that there seems to be almost no awareness in the GLBT →



All in the family: PFLAG Houston honored Jim and Sue Null with a reception after its February 3 meeting at St. Paul's United Methodist Church. At the event, the Nulls were joined by their "adopted" gay son, Ike (c), who moved in with the couple in 1995 when he was learning English.

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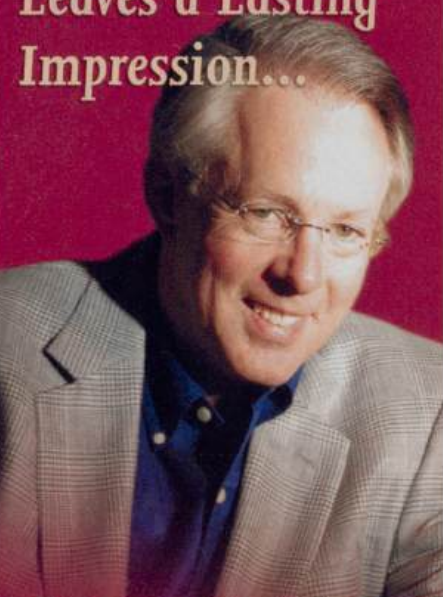
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Null Void

continued from page 48

community that PFLAG is really a support organization for them," he says. "The gay community thinks PFLAG is just an organization for the parents, and the parents think we're just here for the gays."

At the same time, Jim applauds the local GLBT community's financial support of PFLAG, particularly from groups like the Krewe of Olympus, The Hollyfield Foundation, Bunnies on the Bayou, and The John Steven Kellett Foundation.

"Year after year after year, the support we've gotten from various foundations and social groups in Houston has been absolutely wonderful. If we hadn't had that, we wouldn't have been able to do a lot of the things that we have done—the billboard campaign, all of the Healing the Hurt conferences, all of the brochures going into schools and so forth.

"What's happened is, we produce results so we get support and we can produce more results."

Of all of PFLAG's achievements in recent years, Sue says the relationship built between PFLAG and the transgender community has been particularly gratifying for her.

In the late '90s, the national board of PFLAG amended its mission statement to include transgender people.

"At that point, they also urged all the chapters to amend their mission statements and their programs. This in Houston was a somewhat touchy issue. The relationship between the transgender community and PFLAG was somewhat scarred," Sue recalls.

Somebody told her to look up Vanessa Edwards Foster, a transgender activist.

"Vanessa was very eager, also, to do whatever she could do to mend the relationship between the transgender community and PFLAG," Sue says. Together they set up an educational panel, with PFLAG national sending a representative to share the national viewpoint.

"I think about 50 people attended. It was phenomenal!" Sue says. "For many of us, it was the starting point to really opening our eyes and opening our minds toward a group of people most of us knew little or nothing about. And I think we have progressed since then. We have a growing transgender support group during our monthly



Sweet sendoff: PFLAG Houston presented Jim and Sue Null with a cake at the February 3 reception at St. Paul's United Methodist Church. Regarding activism in their new home in North Carolina, Sue Null says, "We are available as resources and back-ups. We are there to be called upon."

son, Ike, and the vibrant gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community in Houston.

"For us, it has been such an incredible journey of learning, of growing, of sensitivity, of compassion. It has been so valuable, so rewarding, so worthwhile," Sue says.

And for us, as well. Good luck, dear friends.



Changing of the guard: Incoming PFLAG Houston president Tim Suenram (c) joined the Nulls at the February 3 reception. In remarks at event, Jim Null said, "One of my favorite sayings comes from Newton, and before him from the Greeks. It is, 'You can see farther when standing on the shoulders of giants.' This is how I view my tenure as president of PFLAG Houston."

PFLAG Goes On

For local activists, including PFLAG Houston, life without the Nulls is difficult to imagine. But PFLAG continues to meet:

- Monthly meetings are held on the first Sunday of each month, 2 p.m., at St. Paul's United Methodist Church.
- PFLAG Houston board of directors meets on the second Thursday of the month, 7 p.m., at the Houston GLBT Community Center (where the group maintains an office).
- A mid-month discussion group meets at on the third Thursday of the month, 7:30 p.m., at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.

meetings. The transgender support group started very small, but now it's going pretty strong every month.

"We couldn't have imagined way back in '99 when we started this panel to try to understand each other and talk to each other that we were going to end up where we are now. Our next president's stepdaughter is transgender! I'm very happy that that happened."

Sue and Jim say they are looking forward to moving closer to two of their daughters, Christie and Cathy, as well their new granddaughter, especially since their son and his family live in France. But at the same time, the Nulls find it painful to leave behind their beloved Korean

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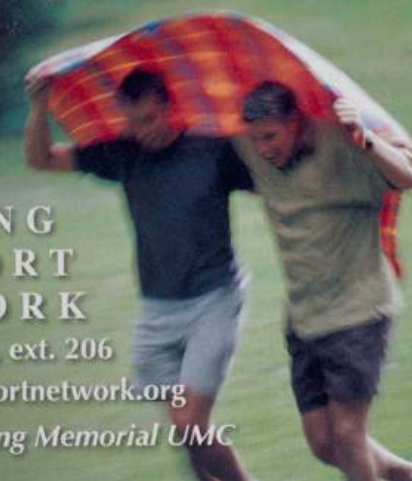


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Woman, hear her roar: "I was shocked when I received the call from human resources taking away the job they'd offered me," Izza Lopez says. "It felt as if they'd said to me, 'You're a monster. We don't want you here.'"

Right to Work

Izza Lopez, a young woman who received a job offer from a local medical firm, then lost that position because of her transgender status, files a discrimination lawsuit, aided by Lambda Legal

by Josef Molnar • Photo by Mark Hiebert

In October 2005, Izza Lopez was excited about starting her new job in scheduling at River Oaks Imaging and Diagnostics. The interview process, she says, had gone smoothly and was a positive experience for her. As many people do, she was leaving the job she had at the time (at the now-defunct Diagnostic Clinic of Houston) for better pay.

"It went very well," Lopez, a soft-spoken 26-year-old, says. "They were very laid back. It was a real casual interview. They told me they would call me after they did more interviews but called me really quick."

The medical-imaging company offered the scheduling position to Lopez, and she accepted. But although she had made her transgender status clear, someone in the company apparently didn't approve of her working there. In a telephone call from the human resources director and in a letter, she received the same message: She had misrepresented herself as an individual who had been born a woman, when in fact she was not.

"I was interviewed by a manager and a director who both felt I was qualified to do the job," Lopez says. "I was shocked when I received the call from human resources taking away the job they'd offered me. It felt as if they'd said to me, 'You're a monster. We don't want you here.'"

Now Lambda Legal, the New York-based advocacy organization, has joined Lopez in suing the Houston medical firm in the Fifth Circuit federal court, asserting that her treatment is a form of sexual harassment.

Her Lambda Legal attorney, Cole Thaler, cites legal precedent in similar cases and protections under Title VII of the Civil

Rights Act of 1964, which he believes will assure a victory in the case. Title VII, which protects U.S. citizens from discrimination based on their sex, has been used in other cases.

SIMILAR CASES

One of the primary tools Lambda Legal will use, Thaler says, is a letter that he says River Oaks Imaging and Diagnostics sent to Lopez after rescinding the job offer. In the letter, River Oaks Diagnostic claims that Lopez misrepresented herself as a woman during the interview process. The letter demonstrates that the issue was with the company's perception of →

Right to Work continued from previous page

Lopez's gender identity and presentation, and not her work experience.

Thaler, who is the transgender rights attorney based at the Lambda Legal regional office in Atlanta, points to a 1989 case, *Anne Hopkins vs. Price Waterhouse*, in which Hopkins was fired from a major accounting firm where she was on track to become a partner after executives decided she was too aggressive and masculine. Hopkins won the case when the court ruled that she was fired because she failed to conform to a gender stereotype,

know is that case law about discrimination against transgendered people is stronger than case law for gay or lesbian people, because of the issues with gender stereotyping," Thaler says. "We're seeing more wins for the transgender community under federal law than for gay and lesbian people, in the workplace."

As of press time, River Oaks Imaging and Diagnostics had not responded on the record to *OutSmart* requests for a comment. An employee who requested anonymity did indicate in a telephone conversation that River Oaks Imaging has submitted all of the documents in

OPEN ABOUT HER STATUS

Lopez says the situation with River Oaks Imaging should never have occurred, because she did everything she could think of to prevent it.

Lopez, who had transitioned at her previous job, says her transgender status was known to everyone she spoke with at the time. From her understanding, it was not an issue. She had been referred to the River Oaks Diagnostic position by a friend, and says she was clear about her gender status before she applied for the job.

"Prior to faxing in my résumé, I had them speak to the supervisor beforehand, because I didn't want to risk harassment and losing what was my current job," Lopez says. "And they made no indication it would be a problem."

After the River Oaks Diagnostic job offer was rescinded, Lopez was unable to return to her previous job; Diagnostic Clinic declined to rehire Lopez because she had sought employment elsewhere. Now a nanny for a family member who provides her with room and board, Lopez is unsure about her employment future. She says her transgender status has kept her from obtaining work elsewhere.

"I'm content right now, doing what I'm doing," she says. "I want to get back to [the job market], but at this point, I don't know when I'm going to get back to working. I never planned to be unemployed this long."

In a recent e-mail to *OutSmart*, Lopez explained her position: "I do want people to know and understand that I'm not only standing up for myself but for everyone who has ever been discriminated against, especially in the transgender community." Lopez (who plans to attend the April 14 Houston Transgender Unity Banquet, the biggest event of the year for the local trans community) wrote, "It is my goal to inspire a situation where people are willing to raise their voice in order to abolish discrimination. Transform a negative into positive. Hopefully, I've already conveyed that. I know it's not easy, believe me. I'm extremely shy. The more people there are the easier it will be."

In a better world, Lopez would now be working at River Oaks Imaging and Diagnostics (located, in one of life's ironies, in a Richmond Avenue building adjacent to another commercial building that houses the offices of Nechman, Simoneaux & Frye, the prominent GLBT law firm).

"Izza is composed, professional, and has had her offer taken away from her for a reason that has no relation to her ability to perform her job," Thaler says.

Josef Molnar profiled three of our People To Watch choices for our February issue.



Status report: Cole Thaler (left), transgender rights attorney for Lambda Legal, joined Izza Lopez at a forum hosted by the Houston Transgender Unity Committee, held at the Houston GLBT Community Center on January 17. Thaler and Lambda Legal are representing Lopez in her discrimination case against River Oaks Imaging and Diagnostic.

which is considered a form of sexual discrimination.

In another case cited by Thaler, *Ulane v. Eastern Airlines*, a highly successful airline pilot, Karen Ulane, was fired after she transitioned from male to female. Thaler says this 1984 case, as well as the Hopkins case, supports the argument that Lopez should not have had her job taken away from her because of perceptions about gender identity.

Other federal circuit courts, Thaler says, have provided enough cases to encourage the Fifth Circuit Court, which encompasses a region that includes Texas, to rule in favor of Lopez.

"There has been some good case law of the First Circuit and the Ninth Circuit," he says. "The Fifth Circuit Court should follow all of the courts. We will be citing all of those cases."

And while sexual orientation is not protected under federal law, cases in which gender bias is an issue has been defended in federal courts, Thaler says.

"The thing that people often don't

the case to the lawyer representing the company.

Lambda Legal and Lopez filed the case in December. A status conference between the judge and the attorneys was scheduled February 23, at which time the judge would have heard the arguments by both sides and determined whether the case would continue. That conference has been delayed and had not been rescheduled by press time. Thaler expects the court to decide to continue the case, despite the possibility that River Oaks Imaging could ask the court to drop the case.

"We have a very clearly presented legal issue," he says. "Even River Oaks Imaging is not disputing the facts we have presented in this case."

According to Lambda Legal, March 2008 is the earliest date that the trial could begin. *Lopez v. River Oaks* is Lambda Legal's latest lawsuit in its Blow the Whistle campaign to end discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and those with HIV in the workplace.



Renée Thomason
ATTORNEY AT LAW

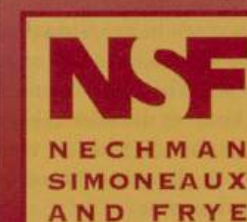
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Salute to Salud!

A winery grows in Montrose

By Marene Gustin
Photos by Mark Hiebert

If you thought a winery could only be a quaint, verdant hillside dense with lush vines, think again. Call them micro-wineries, make-your-own wine bars, or brew bars, wineries without vineyards are the latest craze to hit Texas.

"We have 133 wineries in Texas," says Dacota Julson, executive director of the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association. "And about 15 of those are custom wine-making facilities." Julson attributes the trend to the ever-rising wine mania in America. "The consumer consumption increases, and so does the interest, as people become curious as to how wine is made."

According to the January report of the London-based International Wine & Spirit Record, the United States will exceed the wine consumption of France within less than five years. Reaching that milestone will make America the number-one wine consumer in the world at some 721.2 million gallons by 2010.

And Texas isn't far off that wine-consuming pace. The state is currently the fifth-largest wine producer in the country. The number of Lone Star wineries has almost doubled since 2005. Wine bars have kept up with that growth. Everyone knows you can't spit inside the Loop without hitting a wine bar (you can even find a few in suburban locales). But a winery-sans-vineyard in Montrose?

"It's a concept that came down from Canada," says 33-year-old Salud! Winery co-owner Brad Odom. Odom, who is gay, his brother Charles, 36, who isn't, and their mom Audrey, operate the new venture, located at 3939 Montrose Blvd. (www.saludwinery.com).

Ontario, in fact, is littered with micro-wineries. Carafe began in Canada with brew-your-own beer stores, then opened its first wine-making store in 1993. The Canadian chain now has 13 blend-your-own wine stores. In 2005 the first U.S. Carafe opened in Virginia, followed by other Canadian chains such as Vintner's Cellar and Wine Not, which operates Texas franchises in Grand Prairie (The

Winery) and San Antonio (The Wine Werks). But it was the independently owned Swirl in Dallas that inspired the Odom clan.

"Mom and I were looking for a place to get a glass of wine in downtown Dallas, and here was this winery," says Brad Odom. "What a great concept!" The Swirl owners weren't interested in franchising, but they did offer to help train the Odoms, who made their first batches of vino there. As Salud! gets up to speed, the brothers intend to produce some 40 varietals of custom wine.

The interior of Salud!—which opened in late March—resembles a standard stylish wine bar: inlaid-wood tables, a bar, and a selection of wines by the glass or bottle, plus snacks and wine boutique items. But beyond that, you'll find the mixing room where even a novice can create a custom wine with the help of the Salud! staff.

"It's a great date place, a place for parties and bridal showers," Odom says. "You come here, try a glass or two, take a bottle home that you like, and then come back and have a custom batch made." While some tinkering is allowed, mostly customers follow established recipes, blending grape juice from around the world with oak chips or subtle flavors to create a Napa Chardonnay or the Italian Amarone—Brad Odom's favorite—with its hint of dark cherry, chocolate, and raisins, or another of several varieties. Once the wine is made, Salud! ages the wine for 45 days in 50-gallon stainless-steel casks on site. The wine makers can then return for a labeling party and go home with a little over two cases of their very own vino. Prices range from \$300 to \$500 per batch.

Not interested in making wine? Salud! stocks a range of wines from around the world for purchase and enjoyment in the warm and wood-toned Montrose emporium or to take home. A brief but tempting menu offers several items for noshing along with the wine. Most food items can be purchased for home consumption as well.

For Charles Odom, who says he has never been much of an oenophile, the winery is more about bringing his family together in a business venture. "I like making stuff," he says. "Whether it's wine or a two-legged chair. It's great working with Brad and our mom, our expertise compliments each other."

For Brad the concept is simpler: "It's a way to entertain you and ourselves."

Marene Gustin writes regularly about food for Houston Intown Magazine and other publications.



At the bar: Salud! co-owner Brad Odom (r) and boyfriend David Harris enjoyed some of the new winery's product at the bar of the Montrose neighborhood establishment prior to its grand opening last month. Salud! is located at 3939 Montrose Blvd. (713/522-8282).

Beyond Sipping

In addition to wines and the stuff of wine-making, Salud! sells an array of food items and treasures for wine lovers. This merchandise includes a couple of made-in-Texas items:

- Wine preserves and sauces from Leaning Oaks Vineyards, a small estate vineyard in the Hill Country (with a second vineyard in the Escondido Valley of West Texas).
- Wine stoppers from Dallas-based Texas Wood Products crafted from exotic woods and topped with Lone Star State symbols or Swarovski crystals.



The More You Eat...

...the more you give
to Dining Out for
Life this month

by Tim Brookover

On April 26, eating at a restaurant might do more than pad your waistline and deplete your bank account. Choose the right spot and you can support the work of AIDS Foundation Houston. All day, selected eateries around town participating in the Dining Out for Life program will donate a third of proceeds from food sales to the HIV/AIDS agency.

ActionAIDS in Philadelphia created Dining Out for Life in 1991, and the effort has since spread to 33 U.S. cities and more than 2,500 restaurants. This is the first year for Dining Out for Life in Houston.

We hardly need an excuse to dine out, but we'll take this one. We plan to start the day with pancakes at Baby Barnaby's, then maybe order a hearty Mexican lunch at Bocados. By then, it will be time for a mid-afternoon pastry at Tart Café. For dinner, we will be ready for some swank—either in Midtown at Monica Pope's t'afia or Uptown at Bistro Moderne. Then it's back to the Heights for a nightcap and a late-night sweet at The Boom Boom Room. Now that's a full day of helping a good cause. We're humanitarians that way.

Just desserts: This sweet morsel from Bistro Moderne in the Hotel Derek is one of the treats that diners can savor on April 26 at restaurants across the city, all while supporting the work of AIDS Foundation Houston.



COURTESY HOTEL DEREK

Wine Tour

Or maybe you just want to get out of town this month. Hop in the car and take a day trip to the two wineries in the region. Cheers!

Haak Vineyards & Winery in Santa Fe (pictured) is the only winery in Galveston County. For spring, the folks at Haak recommend their 2005 Blanc du Bois Blue Label made from grapes grown there along with Brenham, Cat Spring, Fulshear, Hillsboro, and Palestine grapes. Now that's a Texas wine. Info: www.haakwine.com.



Messina Hof Winery & Resort in Bryan celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. In February, the winery's 2005 Angel Late Harvest Riesling received the top Texas honor at Rodeo Uncorked, the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo wine competition. The Aggiedland destination now includes the Villa at Messina Hof, a 10-room bed-and-breakfast. Info: www.messinahof.com.

COURTESY HAAK VINEYARDS

These restaurants had signed up at press time. Check www.diningoutforlife.com for addresses, phone numbers, and updates.

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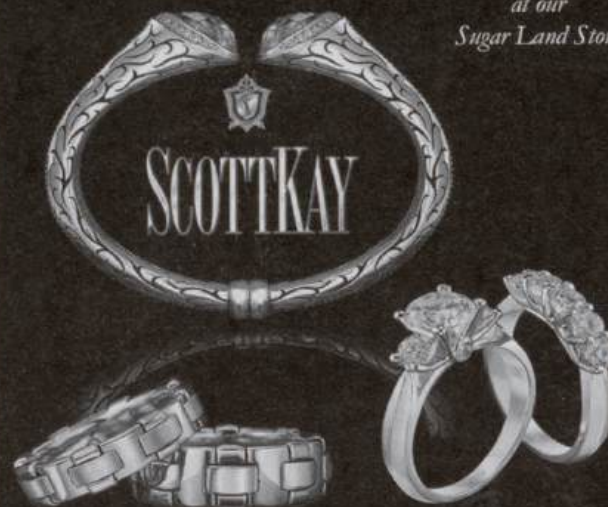
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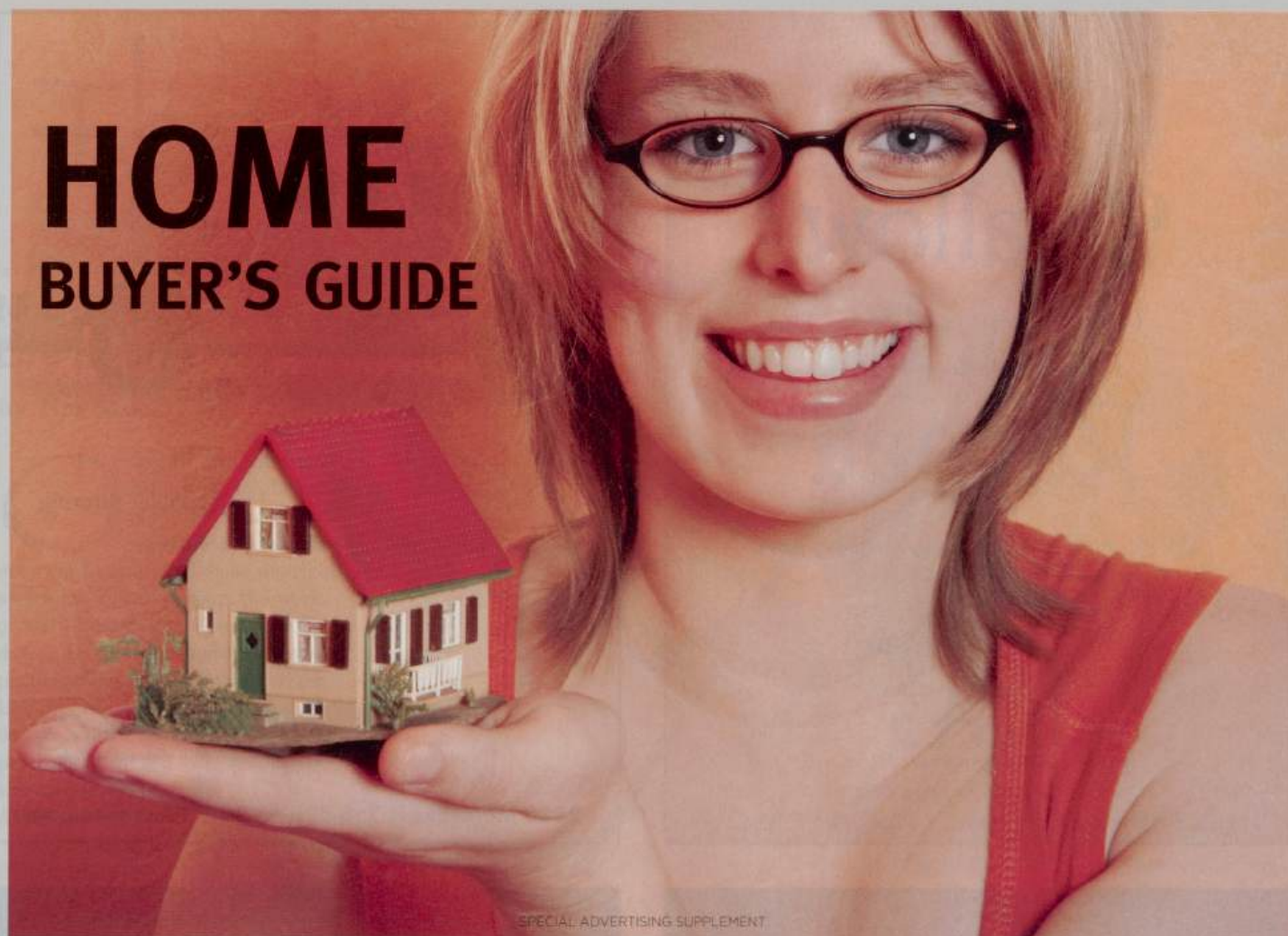
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HOME BUYER'S GUIDE



HOMEBUYER 101

Hit a homerun with your first real estate purchase

by Jeff Hammerberg, Gayrealestate.com

The purchase of a first home is one of the most exciting adventures of a lifetime. Unfortunately, most consumers venture into the transaction—which is usually the biggest financial commitment they will ever make—with little or no guidance, experience, or preparation. The steep and intense learning curve one travels along when buying a home for the first time can be daunting for those who want to figure out how to buy without making costly mistakes.

To help level the playing field for newcomers to the game so that they can make informed choices and complete their transaction from an experienced position, here is a simple 5-point strategy that anyone can follow with success.

#1 Trust Your Intuition and Ask Questions

If you can't trust your gut, you'll always have a bad case of the butterflies. The best way to get past your nervousness is to be in-

formed, and that means asking questions and getting answers from reliable sources.

Read informative articles, surround yourself with real estate savvy friends, and find a Realtor you feel comfortable with who is willing to patiently explain how the business works.

Just as picking a good university can help you land the right career, investing some time and energy in your informal real estate education can potentially save you substantial amounts of money now and well into your financial future.

#2 Assemble a Team of Experts

Real estate is complicated, and even professional investors don't go it alone without expert counsel and assistance.

Find an experienced real estate attorney (not just a lawyer who dabbles in realty on the side), an exceptionally thorough and meticulous home inspector, a creative mortgage

lender, and a hard-working Realtor.

With that team in place you help to ensure favorable results with the least amount of time, stress, and effort.

#3 Know What You're Looking for and Why

Real estate pros often nickname consumers who say they are ready to buy a home but really haven't a clue what they are looking for, where they want to live, or how much they want to spend "window shoppers."

To keep yourself out of that category—and speed up the process of finding your dream home—determine how much house you can afford, the features and amenities you can't live without, your timeframe for closing and relocating, and get pre-approved by a mortgage company.

Realtors will be clamoring to help you with your house hunt because you will be one of the rare clients who has their act together and

continued on page 62

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SPECIAL ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT

HOME BUYER 101

continued from page 60

is professionally prepared to search for, find, and purchase a house.

#4 Negotiate Skillfully but Reasonably

Once you've found the right home and are negotiating for purchase, keep your eyes on the prize. You don't want to overpay just because the seller has an inflated asking price, nor should you make an offer that is ridiculously low and risk losing your dream home.

If you quibble over minor repairs, you might win the battle but lose the transaction, and if you concede on major issues, you might end up buying a house that continues to cost you money down the road.

The best approach is to do research—by studying current sales data with the help of your Realtor—make a fair offer, and then negotiate the final price and any needed repairs based on realistic market value and objective third-party estimates from contractors.

#5 Personally Attend the Inspections

Most buyers don't go to inspections because their presence is not required, but they miss a truly golden opportunity. Skip a couple of hours of work that day so you can accompany the inspector, ask questions along the

way, and take notes about home maintenance.

Not only will you learn about any potential problems with the property that need to be addressed before closing, but you will also get valuable insight into how to take care of the home once it is yours.

Inspectors can teach you useful things such as how to detect termite activity or how to save money—and the environment—by changing the settings on your water heater. They can explain why those outlets in the kitchen with red buttons on them help prevent electrocution, and why you should never plant shrubs too close to the house.

For those who are becoming homebuyers for the first time—or for those whose prior experiences were nerve-racking or unnecessarily time consuming—these insider tips for buying a home should remove much of the mystery.

The good news is that you can take full advantage of the expertise of others. They were once novices just like you, and most real estate professionals get satisfaction from teaching new homeowners the tricks of the trade.

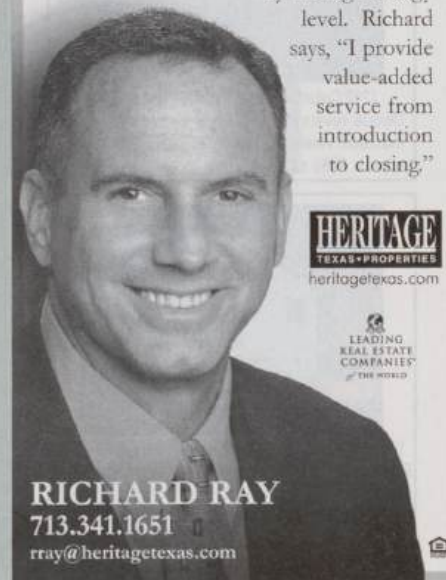
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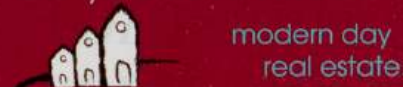
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SPECIAL ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT

CONDO LIVING

Is your next address a homeowners' association?

by Lori Harlan, Copley News Service

When choosing between a condo and a house, the advantages of either depend on lifestyle.

Sue Montalvo and her partner recently decided to sell their house on an exclusive golf course and move to a condominium nearby. The couple had plenty of experience on which to base their decision. In the past 20 years, the two have lived in four houses and three condominiums.

Montalvo says the most compelling reason to move to a condo was to get out of yardwork, repairs, and maintenance. The freedom she sacrificed when she sold her house was balanced by the additional free time she can now devote to more relaxing endeavors.

"Condo living is limited in many respects, but it was definitely the right thing for us. We have more leisure time for travel and golf. I don't regret the decision at all," Montalvo says.

"When we were building the condo, we had to choose from a limited selection of floor plans—five or six total. We also have to adhere to what the association says we can and can't do," she says. "There's not a lot of freedom of choice in landscaping and exterior finishes. You just don't have the same control building a condo as you do building a house."

Condo associations or boards control many of the decisions regarding the property. They often decide how association or maintenance fees are spent.

Still, in spite of the limitations, Montalvos and her partner agree that condo living fits their lifestyle. Many of their friends, who are also near-

ing retirement, are considering similar moves.

But it's not just older Americans who are buying up condos around the country. Younger people also benefit from the flexibility of condo living.

When Montalvo's daughter finished college and began her career, she considered a number of properties, but ended up in a condo, as well.

"Condos are great for people who are nearing retirement, but they can be just as good for young people. My daughter is just starting out. By purchasing a condo, she doesn't have to be bothered with property maintenance like yard work and other upkeep. It was a great choice for her lifestyle as a busy young professional."

The decision is also economic, according to a real estate professional.

"Less square footage means more money and less maintenance," says Randy Johnstone, an agent with The Real Estate Group. "You generally get less space and a smaller yard in a condo, but you also get freedom from responsibility. Smaller, maintenance-free condos give people more time and money to spend enjoying themselves."

Location is another common draw for condos. Especially in urban areas, condos are often built within walking distance of amenities such as grocery stores, dry cleaners, and restaurants, virtually eliminating the need for a car. Single-family homes are more common to suburban areas where even simple errands require a car ride.

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SPECIAL ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT

Why Buying Now Makes Sense

Waiting may not be the answer

by Jeff Hammerberg, GayRealEstate.com

Should I buy now or wait for prices to shrink?" can be a tough question to answer during a shifting market, when even the experts can't seem to agree on what lies ahead for the economy. Especially during a reversal of trends it is hard to read the signs. But it does appear that we are leaving the long period that defined an unprecedented seller's advantage in real estate and are entering into a buyer's market.

For those who have property to sell, the decision is not as complicated. Most Realtors agree that those who offer their homes now at a reasonable price will get results. And those who hold on to last year's outdated values and try to get more than the current market is willing to pay may get the cold shoulder from a market that is rapidly cooling off from its historical highs.

Buyers may have a tougher call to make, because buying now could mean paying too much if housing prices keep falling, but it also ensures lower interest rates if mortgage rates continue to climb.

To take some of the confusion out of the decision-making process and help you make up your mind, we offer five important points to consider. Every potential buyer ought to consider these underlying economic factors while planning for the immediate future:

1) Interest rates are likely to continue their rise.

Although the outlook for housing prices is unsure, most pundits agree that interest rates will need to continue a steady rise in order to curb the threat of inflation. And even a two-point increase in mortgage interest can translate into an increased payoff of tens of thousands of dollars more over the lifetime of a loan. Waiting a year for housing prices to drop could mean paying a considerably higher amount to borrow the mortgage money, if rates rise at the pace they have over the past 12 months.

Your monthly payments will also increase. For example, if you borrow \$300,000 at six percent over 30 years, your monthly interest payment will be \$1,800. Borrowing the same amount at eight percent will increase your monthly payments to more than \$2,200. That is an increase of \$4,800 a year or nearly \$145,000 over the life of your mortgage. So those who plan to remain in their homes for the long haul should weigh interest rates as carefully as they weigh purchase price.

2) When rates rise, leasing becomes more expensive.

As interest rates increase, so do the monthly payments needed to service mortgages. As a result, the number of qualified buyers diminishes. People who would otherwise buy homes find themselves unable to qualify for loans, so they enter into the market for leased property, driving the price of rentals up. If you are leasing now and plan to continue leasing until housing prices drop significantly, keep in mind that your landlord may raise prices to keep up with increased demand in the rental market. Your strategy to save money may be neutralized or negated by a sudden shift in supply and demand.

3) Construction costs are increasing.

There are lots of factors that influence construction costs, but one of the most universal relates to the price of oil. Everything on a construction site is connected to gasoline. The carpenters drive to and from work in gas-guzzlers and the brick masons use gas-powered

continued on page 68



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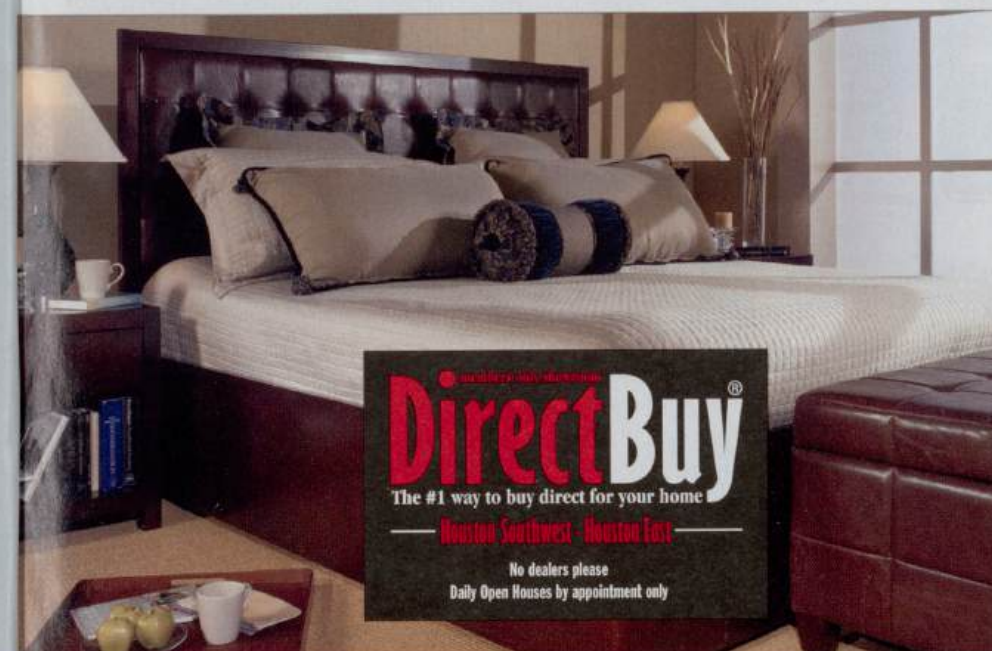
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WHY BUYING NOW

continued from page 68

mixers. The plywood is cut from raw wood by saws fueled by gasoline and oil. And the sheet rock and cement are shipped from state to state or coast to coast by trucks that burn diesel. The entire life cycle of any building that's made using conventional construction materials and techniques is tied to the price of oil, and as the price of a barrel of oil rises, so does the price of construction per square foot. If you're planning to build, don't wait for housing prices to fall as gas prices go through the roof.

4) Mortgages are still cheap and lenders are desperate for business.

Historically speaking, mortgage rates are still dirt cheap. And with a slowdown in the housing market, lenders are hurting for business. You can take advantage of low fixed-rate mortgages and also negotiate for more concessions on fees and closing costs, if you act now while the mortgage industry is still in a period of economic limbo.

5) Ownership comes with perks you may not want to delay.

Buying a house offers tax breaks on interest payments and the opportunity to add equity to your investment through home improvements that may also be tax deductible. And home ownership can also provide a tremendous amount of personal financial security. If those are perks you look forward to and you are already considering buying your own home, you may want to go ahead and buy now instead of postponing the pleasure for later.

Jeff Hammerberg is the president of www.GayRealEstate.com, a network of agents and lenders committed to serving the GLBT community with fairness and professional excellence. He can be reached at 1-888-420-6683.

RULED OUT

The residential Universal Tax Exclusion Act doesn't benefit GLBT couples

by Jeff Hammerberg, GayRealEstate.com

When it sounds too good to be true, it usually is, especially when the subject is U.S. government policy regarding income taxes. But this time is an exception - or more precisely an exemption - which is not only real but also offers incredible opportunities to make money in real estate. In fact, many experts believe that the Universal Tax Exclusion Act enacted recently is the best deal to ever hit the residential real estate industry.

Unless you happen to be gay.

For those who are members of the GLBT community, it is still sort of a wonderful deal. But it would be absolutely *fabulous* if it wasn't followed by another slap in the face that we aren't supposed to notice.

Here's how the tax exclusion originally worked:

In the past, the elderly were pretty much

the only ones who took advantage of an exclusion from capital gains taxes on the sale of their principal residences. Because it was a one-time deal, you could only use it once during your entire lifetime. It did not make sense to use the once-in-a-lifetime exclusion as a young person selling a home with very little capital gain. So in practice it became primarily a tax break for older folks, who could sell their residence, reap tremendous capital gains, and not have to pay taxes on those profits.

For example, a woman we know ordered a brick house through the Sears catalog (yes, it's true, thousands of great homes were sold that way) back in the 1950s. She paid \$15,000 for it (believe it or not), and paid it off in full before 1975. Later she sold it for a capital gain of more than \$200,000. Using her one-time tax exclusion, she was able to keep that nest egg to fund her retirement.

Here's how it works nowadays:

Since the tax exclusion became "universal" (translation: everybody except gays), it can be used every two years, for as many times as you want. All you have to do is buy a house and live in it as your primary residence, for at least two years. After two years you can sell it and pocket the profits, without paying a penny in capital gains taxes. Then you can move into another house and do the same thing, all over again.

How people use it to make money:

Find the home of your dreams. Buy it in a rising real estate market. Live in it for two years (or more), and sell it for a profit. Use the proceeds to invest in another house. Many clever investors buy a house, live in it for two years, and while living in it do updates and remodeling. Or, if the house is in good shape

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RULED OUT

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and in a popular area where prices are rising, they just live there and maintain it, without adding any significant equity. Then they sell it. In the recent real estate bull market, thousands of people used this strategy with great success.

Let's say, for instance, that you buy a house worth \$600,000 and it increases in value 10 percent per year, which is not unusual these days. That's 60 grand a year, for just staying home and watching television while eating chips and salsa on the sofa. Not a bad gig, and you still have time to go to a real job, if you want to make some extra cash.

The catch:

There is, however, a ceiling on how much profit you can make before you have to pay capital gains taxes. The amount is \$250,000 per person. However, spouses are allowed to combine their exclusions, so a married couple can make \$500,000 before they have to pay capital gains. Even if you aren't good at math, you know that's a mighty sweet deal.

Unless it's against the law for you to marry the one you love, which is the big rub. If you're popping the champagne cork

and toasting the benefits offered by the Universal Tax Exclusion Act, your fluted glass runneth over. But as you read the small print, you begin to understand the larger implications of the law, and realize that while some of us view the champagne glass as half full, others—namely GLBT couples—know that it is definitely half empty.

Consider how much money changes hands in the U.S. each year when GLBT couples buy and sell homes. How many millions are in a zillion? Now divide that number in half and you will have the answer to how much tax discrimination against gays is worth as it refuses to recognize gay partnerships. A whole lot.

We wish that the United States would add a room on to the house where our civil rights reside, to make some space under the roof of equality for the GLBT community.

That day will come.

In the meantime, the good news is that the *Not Quite Universal Tax Exclusion* may still save you a bundle of cash!

Jeff Hammerberg is the president of www.GayRealEstate.com, a network of agents and lenders committed to serving the GLBT community with fairness and professional excellence. He can be reached at 1-888-420-6683.

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT

MAKE REPAIRS

Work to improve credit long before applying for loan

by Paul R. Huard, Copley News Service

Buying a home means more than just looking at houses. Unless you have more money than Donald Trump, you'll buy your home with a loan—and even the Donald has a banker who checks his credit scores.

If you have great credit, you'll be eligible for better loans at more affordable rates. If your credit has some problems, don't give up hope.

And if you don't know what your credit score is, you haven't taken the first financial step needed to enter intelligently into the home-buying market.

According to the lending company Credit.com, credit scores from Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion (the nation's three largest credit reporting companies) play a major role in determining your mortgage rates.

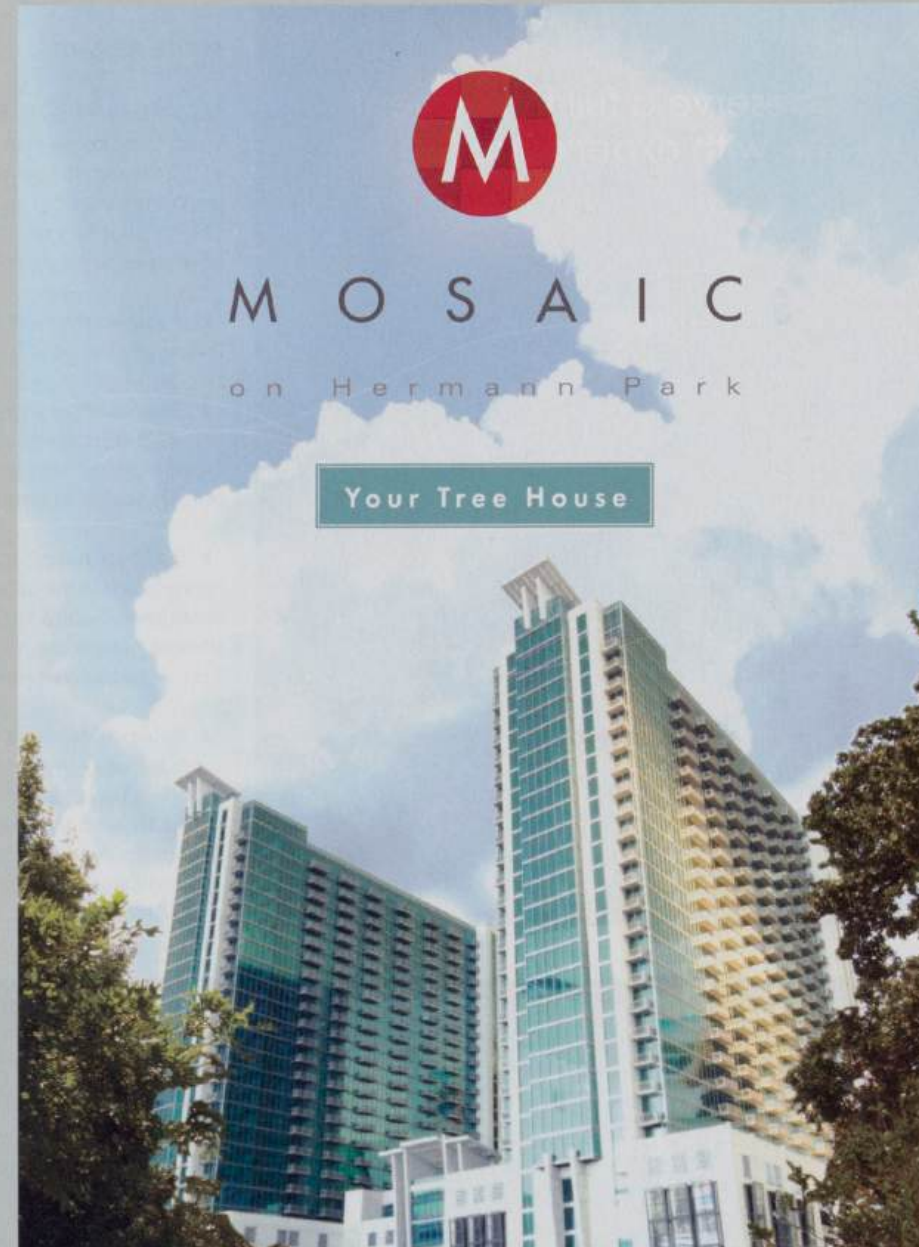
Ideally, you should start working on improving your credit scores three to six months before you plan to buy a home, because this will give you time to consider how to improve your scores. Also, because your mortgage lender may check your Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion credit reports for your application, it's important that you check all three, too.

If you want to remove something inaccurate from your credit reports, submit a letter of dispute to the credit bureau. If you want to remove something fraudulent from your credit reports, report the crime to the credit bureau's identity theft departments.

In addition, you'll need to check your FICO score (named after the Fair Isaac Corp., the financial data company that began furnishing lenders information on loan applicant's repayment history, outstanding debts, and credit line status in 1956). The score is a number that averages out information about one simple fact: how well and how quickly you repay your debts.

There is no "perfect" score, since there are always lenders willing to provide loans with higher interest rates to borrowers with less-than-sterling credit. However, the payoff from a better FICO score can be big. For example, with a 30-year fixed mortgage of \$150,000, you could save approximately

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MAKE REPAIRS

continued from page 71

\$131,000 over the life of the loan—or \$365 on each monthly payment—by first improving your FICO score from a 550 to a 720.

What should you do to improve your scores? Fair Isaac Corp. suggests the following:

- ▶ Pay your bills on time. Delinquent payments and collections can have a major, negative impact on your score.
 - ▶ If you have missed payments, get current and stay current. The longer you pay your bills on time, the better your score.
 - ▶ Be aware that paying off a collection account, or closing an account on which you previously missed a payment, will not remove it from your credit report. The score will still consider this information, because it reflects your past credit pattern.
 - ▶ If you are having trouble making ends meet, contact your creditors or see a legitimate credit counselor. This move won't improve your score immediately, but if you can begin to manage your credit and pay on time, your score will get better over time. And seeking assistance from a credit counseling service will not hurt your score.
 - ▶ Avoid credit repair agencies that charge a fee to improve your score by removing negative, but accurate, information from your credit report. No one can force credit bureaus or lenders to remove accurate information from a credit report. Credit repair companies often take your money without delivering what they promise.
- You can check your FICO score online by going to www.myfico.com and ordering a report.

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT

CHECK IT OUT

Home inspection makes sense

by Vicky Katz Whitaker, Copley News Service

The price is right, the neighborhood desirable, and the house perfect. But before you plunk down money on that resale, think with your head instead of your heart and hire a home inspector. Otherwise, your dream home could become your worst nightmare.

Today, wise buyers make the purchase of a home contingent on a satisfactory whole-house inspection. That allows them to pull out of the deal if the inspection turns up serious defects too costly to repair. Savvy sellers tap the skills of home inspectors, too. By uncovering problems beforehand, they can correct them before the house goes on the market.

"A home inspector has the ability to see the forest through the trees," says Frank Lesh, president of the 6,000-member American Society of Home Inspectors, North America's oldest and largest association of professional home inspectors. "While the home buyer is envisioning how much fun the children are going to have playing in the new house, the home inspector is reporting on potentially unsafe conditions," Lesh notes.

Although there are several thousand home inspectors operating either independently, through a franchise, or as part of a large company, not every state requires them to be licensed, even those with tough seller disclosure laws. Housing inspectors do not need licenses in California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maine,

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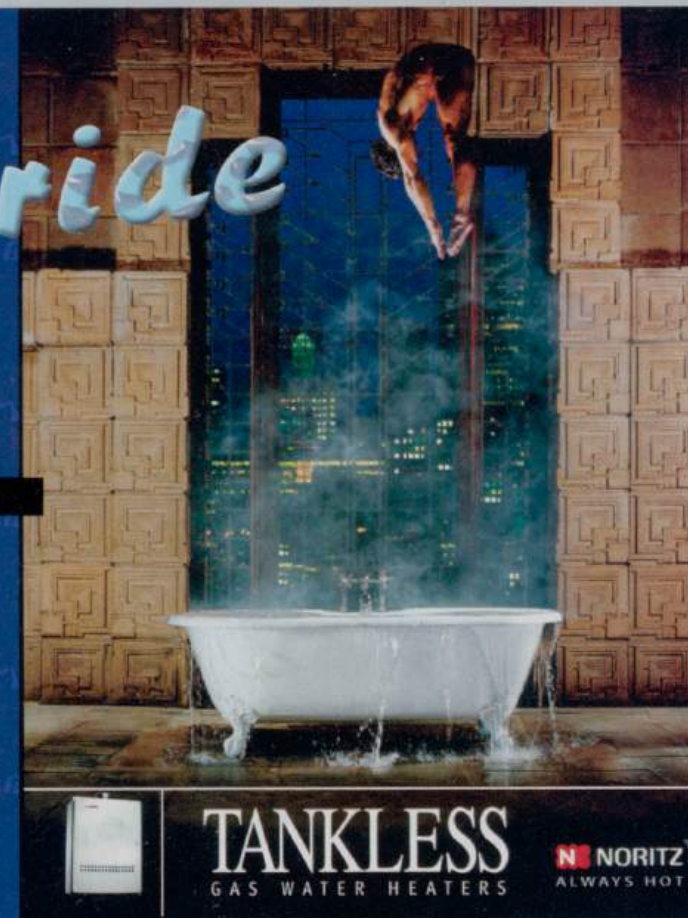
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CHECK IT OUT *continued from page 73*

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Most licensed professionals are affiliated with one or more professional organizations like ASHI or the National Society of Home Inspectors, which provide standardized testing, codes of ethics, and courses that keep members abreast of new materials and construction standards. Whole-house inspections usually cost \$200 to \$600 depending on location. If you've agreed to buy or sell a house, the inspection may have to be completed within a narrow time frame specified in the sales contract. National home inspector organizations like ASHI can provide you with the names of members in your area, either via the Internet (www.ashi.org) or by phone. NAHI's website (www.nahi.org) also provides current state-by-state licensing information.

Though buyers often depend on their real estate agents to direct them to local home inspectors, that's not always prudent. Since agents have a vested interest in seeing the sale go through, you may not get the names of tough inspectors for fear they could kill the deal. Before you retain a home inspector, ask for recommendations from friends or business associates.

Whether you're buying or selling, plan to be on hand for the inspection, which could last a few hours. That way you'll have an opportunity to see and get advice on solving any of the problems that are uncovered.

Expect the inspector to look for damaged or decayed roofing, poor drainage, electrical hazards, rotted wood, additions or alterations not up to code, unsafe fireplaces or chimneys, non-working air handling systems, faulty water heaters, gas heaters that need maintenance or

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repair, foundation cracks, and garage fire wall violations. The condition of appliances, faucets, insulation, doors, windows, sidewalks and driveways, and concrete floors should also be part of the inspection package. A comprehensive written report should be in your hands well before the closing. A termite inspection is usually handled separately.

If you own the house, make sure the inspector gets total access. That may mean clearing out the attic and garage as well as unblocking entrances to crawl spaces. Utilities should be turned on, electric panels put within easy reach, and sinks, showers, tubs and kitchen appliances made free of personal or stored items. If you have pets, either secure them or temporarily move them elsewhere.

PREMIUM ADVICE Property owners find covering assets a good policy

by Vicky Katz Whitaker, Copley News Service

Ready to close on that house, co-op, or condo? Don't be surprised if the mortgage lender requires you to arrange and pay for homeowners insurance to protect its investment.

Standard homeowners insurance usually covers the full cost of fixing or rebuilding a house in the event of fire, lighting, hail, explosion, or theft. If you want to be insured for accidental damage caused by floods, earthquakes, mine subsidence, or similar natural disasters, be prepared to pay separately. And don't expect to be reimbursed for damage that's caused by neglecting to do routine

continued on page 76

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continued from page 74

home maintenance.

The Insurance Information Institute, a New York City-based research center funded by the insurance industry, points out that while policy terms differ from one company to another, all homeowners insurance policies cover:

- Liability that protects you from the cost of lawsuits for injuries or property damage that may be caused by you or family members.
- Loss of personal property.
- Costs of temporary living expenses while your home is being rebuilt or repaired.

Most limits can be increased, but you'll pay an additional premium.

While they still must cover the mortgage lender, co-op or condo buyers face a different set of insurance issues. Most co-ops and condos have a "master policy" that insures common areas like a roof, walkway, or elevator and, in some cases, individual units as they were originally built. If you're buying a co-op or condo, you may need an insurance policy to cover alterations you make or those done by a previous owner. Also expect to pay separately to insure personal possessions, limit your liability, and be covered for additional living expenses if a disaster hits. You may also want to ante up the cost of coverage for unit owner assessments, water back-ups, flood, or earthquake insurance.

No matter what you're buying, before you close, read the fine print. Some lenders require only that you get enough homeowners insurance to cover the mortgage. That could leave you with a serious coverage gap if your home is damaged or destroyed.

It's the most common error homeowners make, the Institute says. The problem is compounded when you neglect to annually review and, if necessary, increase the limits of your homeowner policy to reflect higher construction costs or structural improvements. One recent industry study found that 59 percent of today's homes are underinsured by an average 22 percent.

How do you know how much insurance you need? Ask local builders, real estate agents, or your insurance rep. Take into account such things as the type of construction, the style of your house, special interior features like a fireplace, unusual windows, or a new kitchen or bathroom. Multiply the total by the square footage of your home and you'll get a pretty good

continued on page 78



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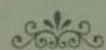
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PREMIUM ADVICE

continued from page 76

idea of what it would cost to replace it. Don't include the cost of the land and don't base the final figure on what you paid for your home. Those numbers fluctuate.

Most homeowners insurance policies cover personal possessions for about 50 to 70 percent of the insurance you have on the structure. A home inventory that details everything you own and the replacement cost if they were stolen or destroyed in a disaster will help you determine if you need more insurance. Expensive items like furs, silver, and jewelry should be insured separately, but the premium will be figured on the actual dollar value of the item and where you live.

If you need flood insurance, you'll have to get it from the Federal Insurance Administration. Some insurance companies sell earthquake insurance. In California, you can also get coverage through the California Earthquake Authority.

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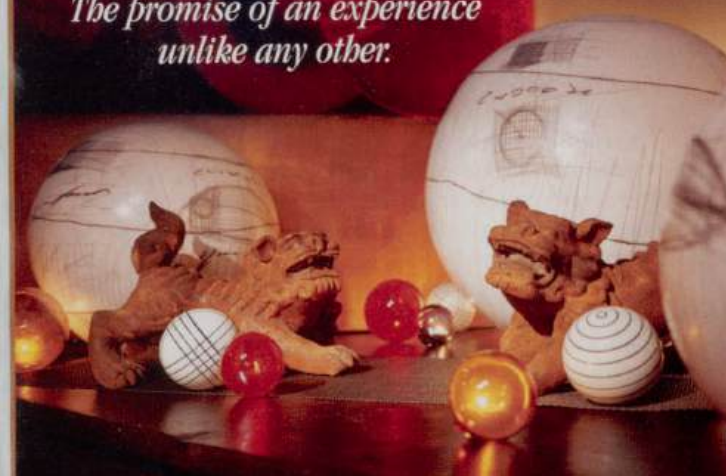
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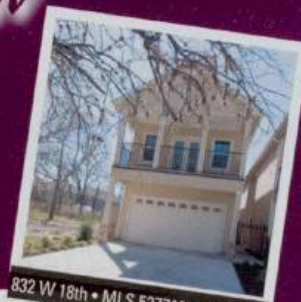


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SET THE STAGE

Subtle changes add drama and value to your home

by Cerise Valenzuela, Copley News Service

Ask any real estate agent, and he or she will tell you that getting a peak price takes more elbow grease and effort than before.

Sure, some buyers are lured by the fixer home they can make their own—and they'll get a better price, too. But most buyers want to be wooed by curb appeal, a fresh coat of paint, and the look of a finished or maintenance-free home they can imagine themselves in.

Savvy sellers realize they are in control of that baiting game. If they de-clutter rooms, let in the natural light, and use accessories sparingly, their home has a better chance of shifting from available to irresistible. And that can translate into big money.

The Wall Street Journal estimates "effective staging can boost prices by 20 percent to 50 percent." Other experts are more conservative, saying count on at least a 10 percent boost in the home price.

"Fresh is really what people are looking for," says Ronda West, a Redondo Beach, Calif., interior design consultant. "It's very rare that you're selling a fresh house. You're selling a house that's 10 years old, and one you've been living in for five years. Buyers want a fresh start, a clean slate. They like real clean and clear spaces."

Unlike with in-demand renovations such as kitchens and bathrooms, which bring their own market-determined price boast, subtle changes and staging can result in a wider and less-defined range of income. "But it wouldn't be unrealistic to guess that you could reasonably get 10 percent. Or what often happens is it's a much quicker sale," said West, who helps clients stage their homes for sale.

Television shows offering tips to homeowners about to jump into the selling game, such as HGTV's *Designed to Sell* and A&E's *Sell This House*, are hot. Staging, or preparing and merchandising a home for sale, has become equally popular with motivated sellers. They aren't decorating homes as much as they are minimizing accessories and personal touches and spotlighting the home's best features with paint.

Some sellers spend a few thousand dollars for paint, labor and new furniture. Other sellers are spending as much as \$30,000 to sell their homes, adding decorator tile to bathrooms, lighting fixtures, and new flooring to homes already touched up with fresh paint.

West tells clients to remove all the personal products on the bathroom counters, clear off kitchen counters, and clean even the unseen.

Be prepared for buyers to nose around in showers, cupboards, closets, even drawers. Set the dining room table for a party. Don't bother with the scented candles, but do replace the faux flowers. Orchids are elegant and resilient, she says.

"I try to have my client walk through her front door as if she's never seen her home before and see what her eyes go to. If it's that dead plant in the corner, get rid of it," West says. "The whole key to staging is you're trying to give buyers a visualization of what the house would be like if they live there. You want it to still look warm and inviting, but you need to leave room for the potential buyer to envision their own things in there."

De-clutter, de-personalize, and re-accessorize are three rules

sisters and RE/Max Realtors Kelly Evans and Laura Medina tell their clients. The pair added staging to their services a few years ago, after taking an accredited course.

"You're going to sell your house, but why would you sell it for less than you potentially could, for such a little effort," Medina asks.

"If people can't see through the clutter ..." says Evans. "They will give you a lower bid," adds Medina.

Sometimes it takes an outsider's eyes to see what needs to be done.

"A lot of people are so personally invested in their homes that it helps to have an objective person come in," says Medina, who even had a few suggestions when Evans put her own home on the market.

One client removed old carpet from bathrooms and spent about \$6,500 on improvements and got \$50,000 more for the house, Medina says.

When in doubt, pack it up, say the sisters. You're going to have to pack soon anyway. They tell clients to add \$1 to the home price for each item they pack away to reveal a clutter-free look. And don't forget the curb appeal.

"A Realtor can pull up to the house and a client can tell right then whether they'd buy that house," Medina says.

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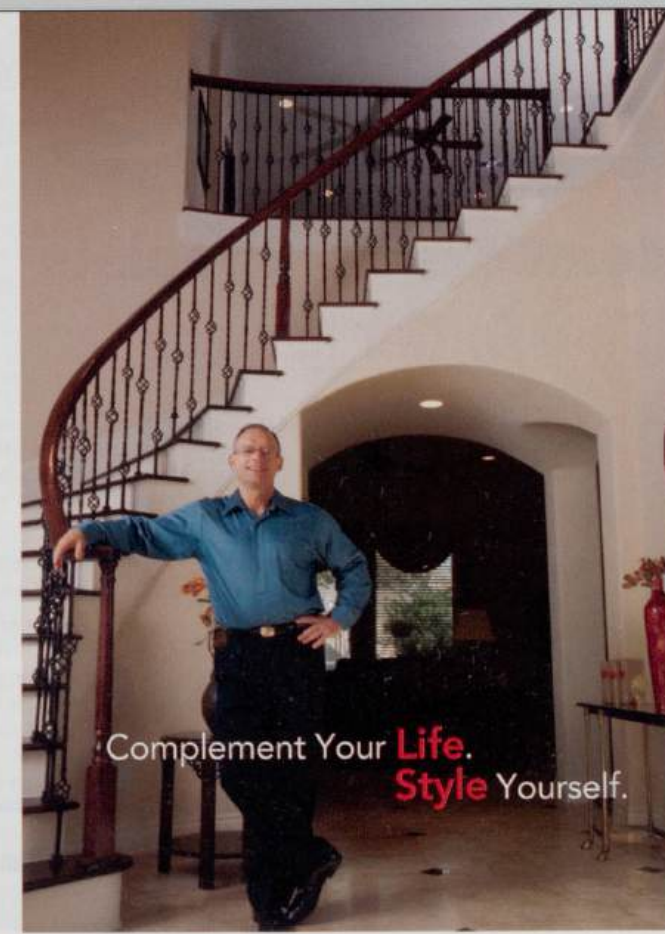
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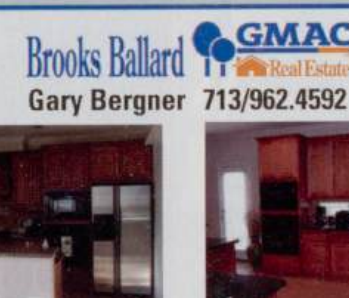
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Homohop

continued from page 39

what is very much the opposite of what it means to be a Christian. Therefore, religions need to step up and say quite clearly that they do not support bigotry and hate of any kind, including homophobia. The church is the last place where it's okay to be hateful, it seems, which is quite ironic."

The Homo Revolution Tour is more than a posse of GLBT rappers who got together to make money and rock the finer things that have become associated with hip-hop. It's about change. It's about being who you are and being comfortable in your own skin. To do so takes a lot of courage. Bigg Nugg, holding it down for the bear community, is an organic emcee with thumping beats and spitfire lyrics reminiscent of Tupac Shakur. When former NBA star Tim Hardaway recently made derogatory comments about gays after another ex-pro basketball pro, John Amaechi, came out, it was Bigg Nugg who took a shot at the baller with his track "Bullshit." Big Nugg told *OutSmart*, "I think someone of his status needs to be more conscious about what it is that they say. I'm not one for making diss tracks, but on the cool, I had to say something. I couldn't just let that go. Tim Hardaway was probably unaware that there are gay rappers out here who will respond, and we're not taking people's shit anymore. People like myself and Deadlee are gonna respond to things you say. And I used to be a Tim Hardaway fan when I was younger, but not anymore."

Mz Fontaine has high hopes about what the tour will do for the GLBT community. She is certain that she and her fellow rappers, who have come together for a common cause, will have a major impact. "In a few years when homohop is better known and widely accepted, I'm hoping we will all be listed in the history books of gay hip-hop legends for what we have achieved. On many occasions I have been labeled a role model for many young people and more so for lesbians interested in music or the hip-hop industry altogether. I would feel honored and satisfied that after all the fighting, the pain, and struggle, it'll easier for the young generation, and they will be strong and look up to us for what we have done. With tears in my eyes it will be a memorable moment, and I hope it's not too far in the future."

Christopher Whaley is a poet and spoken-word artist and editor-in-chief of the Houston music magazine SOBO/ Soulful Bohemian. He also interviews author E. Lynn Harris in this issue. These are his first contributions to *OutSmart*.

Looking ahead together or looking back single?

Gay men have struggled with dating issues forever. Although the ways and places gay men look for partners changes, the intensity remains the same. An illusion of hope is created by the thousands of gay men who claim to be looking for love on-line or in the clubs, but in reality the results are disappointing. A lot of time is spent on someone later to learn he isn't who you thought. On the other hand, when he's ready, you may find you've lost interest, and it all seems so futile.

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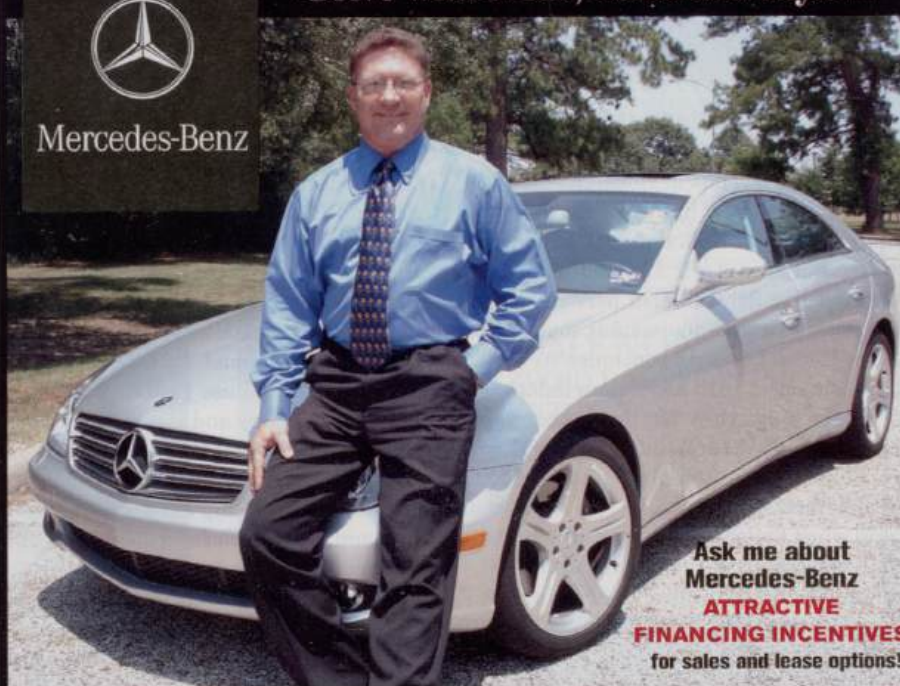
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INTERNATIONAL FLAIR. No need to rub your eyes or book a room with Britney at Promises—those really are dragons and flying acrobats cavorting in downtown Houston. Not the by-product of too many limoncellos, as Danny DeVito might say, the vision is simply part of Houston International Festival, which this year focuses on China.

Sure, expect the international sights, sounds, and flavors commonly associated with the festival. But perhaps the most striking inclusion for 2007 is a reproduction of the Great Wall of China. The 120-foot-long wall winds through the China Zone, located primarily in the area between City Hall and upper Sam Houston Park.

Set for the last two weekends of April, the festival kicks off Friday, April 20, at 11 a.m., at the Washington Mutual Center Stage at City Hall featuring hundreds of performances from nearly every musical genre.

Of particular interest to *OutSmart* readers: Women's festivals favorite **Ruthie Foster** hits the World Music Stage on Saturday, April 21, 1:45 p.m., and the Tejas Stage at 7:45 p.m. **RockStar: Supernova** finalist **Patrice Pike** plays Saturday, April 28, 7:45 p.m., on the Tejas Stage, with the delightfully twangy **Lucinda Williams** performing April 29, 6:15 p.m., on the World Music Stage.

Details: www.ifest.org.

STRINGS ATTACHED. April is turning out to be a big month for women's music legends in Houston.

Tret Fure performs in an "in the round" setting for a night of folk music at Anderson Fair on Thursday, April 12, 8:30 p.m. **Ken Gaines** and **Jen Rathbun** also perform that night. Details: www.andersonfair.com.

Diva House Concerts continues its intimate music series with Australian independent singer/songwriter **Martine Locke**. The concert is set for April 21, 8:30 p.m., at Mojo Risin' Coffee House. Details: 713/426-1505, www.martinelocke.com.

And when **Gretchen Phillips** returns to the Boom Boom Room this month, expect a family affair. Scheduled to open for and perhaps even perform with his singer/songwriter daughter on April 22, 7 p.m., is Houston Balalaika Society member **Paul Phillips**, known to fans of the medieval as the former King Gypsy at the Texas Renaissance Festival. Details: 713/868-3740.

CONTINUING HER LEGACY. We're not saying the event will be

haunted *per se*, but expect the spirit of **Brenda Thomas** to live on at the 15th annual Houston Transgender Unity Banquet. Thomas, the trans and HIV/AIDS activist and educator who passed away in July 2006, was one of the original founders the banquet, among the largest single-night gathering of trans folk and friends in the nation.

This year's banquet, set for April 14, 6:30 p.m., at the Westchase Hilton, is dedicated to Thomas' memory and is headlined by her friend and fellow equal rights activist **Ray Hill**. Some proceeds from ticket sales (\$50-\$60) benefit the scholarship fund established by **Peggy** and **Melanie Rudd**, which helps fund higher education for transgender-identified students. Details: www.htuc.org.

SWING YOUR PARTNER. Those who caught Southern Country's recent set at the LUEY Weekend Show of Shows know the local country western dance troupe has become a terpsichorean force to be reckoned with in its 16 years of boot scootin'. The troupe kicks up its heels once again for the 15th Annual Sweethearts In Texas Spring

Fling Hoedown, April 13 and 14, 7-9 p.m., at Brazos River Bottom. The weekend features dance exhibitions by the troupe, open dancing by the audience, and a raffle benefiting PWA Charities and AssistHers. Details: www.southerncountryhouston.com.

SAVE US. The Imperial Court of Houston raises concern for the sinner and the sin when the group presents its 2nd annual Rainbow Revival of the Mary's...Naturally Holy Rollin' Salvation Revelers on April 29. The noon "service," held at Mary's...Naturally, consecrated by **Jimmy Carper**, **Judy Reeves**, **Craig Farrell**, **Sara Sjolander**, and other heavenly beings, benefits Legacy Community Health Services drug assistance program and the Lexy Bowen Community Fund.

Earlier in the month, ICOH holds an additional benefit event supporting Legacy—an art show at Eastman-Smith Gallery. The opening reception is April 12, followed by an evening with the artists on April 20, which will also feature entertainment by **Ginger Vitis** and friends. Details: www.spacecityempire.org. ■

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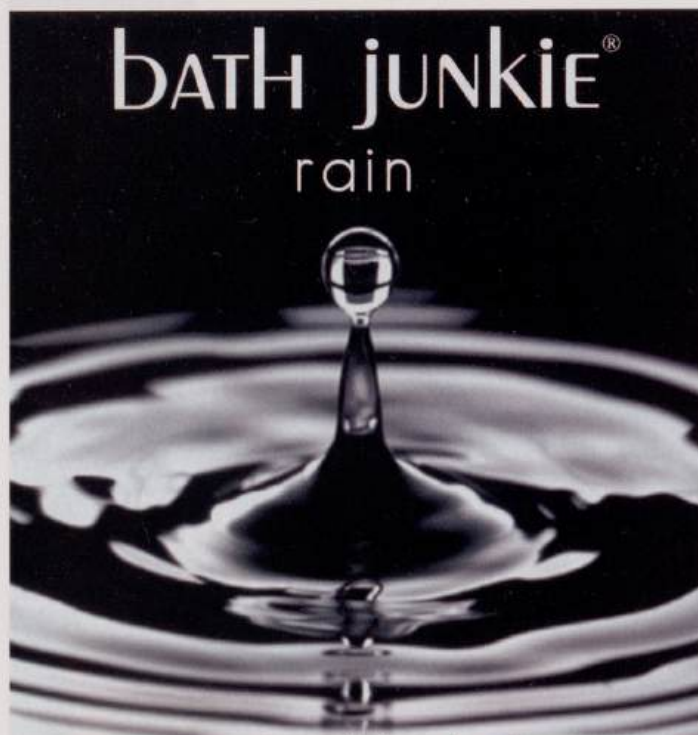
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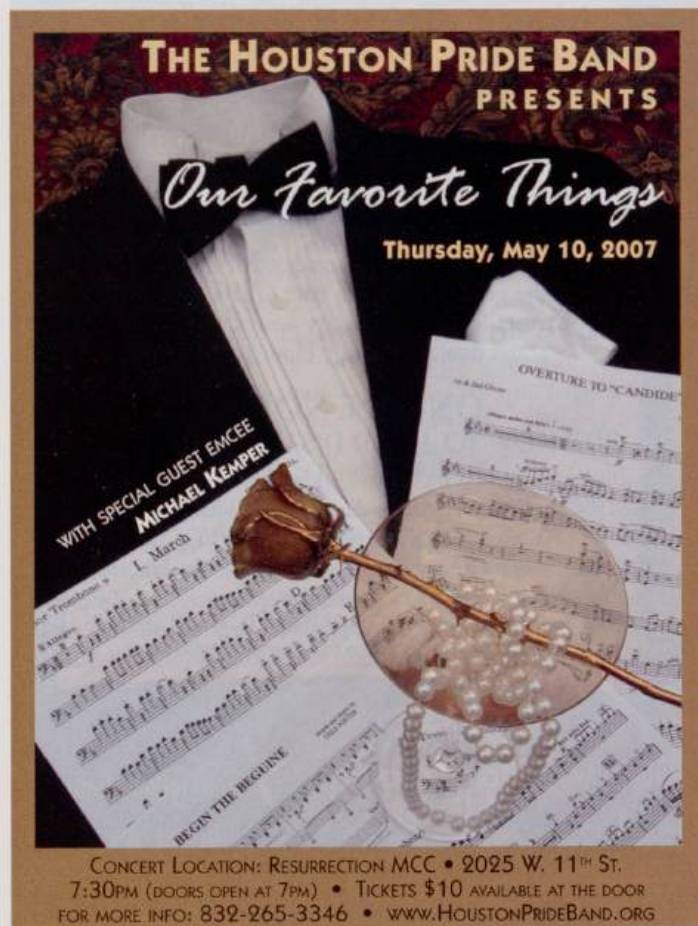
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Anderson Cooper

(news correspondent)

(Out, 3/07, Josh Kilmer-Purcell)



When I spent a couple of weeks observing ABC's *World News Tonight* for an advertising campaign a decade ago, it was common knowledge in the newsroom even then that Anderson was gay (at the time he was a news correspondent for ABC). Anderson's sexual orientation became even more apparent when one evening he introduced me in a gay bar to

the man he was currently dating—most likely as an excuse to stop my drunken propositioning....

Suze Orman

(financial guru/author)

(Larry King Live, 2/27/07)



Larry King: Why did you decide in *The New York Times Magazine*...to come out?

Suze Orman: I didn't decide to come out. Can you believe it—this is the first time in my history that any reporter ever asked me about my relationships.

She didn't know?

I don't know if she did or not. But she asked me, I answered. Actually, Larry, I have never thought I was in. You're in when you don't come to an event with your life partner.... I have always shown up with K.T. [Kathy Travis]. Everybody has always known. So she asked me and I answered.

Sarah Silverman

(comic, *The Sarah Silverman Program* on Comedy Central)

(*The Advocate*, 3/13/07, Brandon Voss)

Brandon Voss: Is it true that you aren't going to marry Jimmy [Kimmel] until gays in the U.S. can marry?

Absolutely true. I don't want this government to be any part of our love, so I have no interest in getting married. What makes it less wrong than when interracial marriage was illegal? It's f-king barbaric.

Did you make that statement before Brad Pitt did?

I did say it before Brad Pitt. I said it a long time ago. Actually, someone e-mailed to tell me when Brad Pitt said it, and there was a part of me that was mad! But then I was like, *Why would I be mad?* It's a good thing. I don't have to own that.

Kitty Carlisle on Cole Porter

(*Vanity Fair*, 3/07, Michael Feinstein) (Carlisle is a singer and was a *To Tell the Truth* panelist)

When [Michael Feinstein asks Kitty Carlisle] if the Porters wanted to have children, she responds emphatically, "Absolutely not. Their relationship was never physical, and she was much older than Cole. Many years later, he invited me to dinner when he was living at the Waldorf Towers. We were alone, and he ... started telling me about when he was a boy and went to this fancy school.... The headmaster came to his room, scooped him up, and put him into his bed. That's what started the whole thing, he said, started him as a homosexual...."

Thomas Lennon

(*Entertainment Weekly*, 3/2/07, Shirley Halperin)

Shirley Halperin: So Dangle: Is he or isn't he?

Thomas Lennon: There's always this question, "When's Dangle coming out?" and I'm like, "Have you seen the show?" On the first episode, he makes out with another man for about two minutes. I guess people think he's closeted because Trudy [Kenney-Silver] is in love with him, but that has more to do with the fact that she's severely brain-damaged.



Thomas Lennon (seen here as Lt. Dangle in *Reno 911*): Is Dangle gay?



Ellen DeGeneres (seen here hosting the Oscars): Would she go straight for Alan Arkin?

Ellen DeGeneres

(*The 79th Annual Academy Awards*, 2/25/07, ABC)

If there weren't blacks, Jews, and gays, there would be no Oscars. Or anyone named Oscar, when you think about that.

(*The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, 2/27/07, NBC)

Ellen DeGeneres talked by phone to Oscar winner Alan Arkin (best supporting actor for *Little Miss Sunshine*) a couple of days after she hosted the Academy Awards ceremony.

Alan Arkin: I gotta say you were sensational [as host of the Oscars]. I thought you were absolutely wonderful.

Ellen DeGeneres: Thank you. Thank you, thank you.

And I thought you looked incredible. I thought you looked just great. In fact, this will probably depress you, but I could really go for you.

[Laughs] It's never gonna happen, but thank you very much.

Queer Quotes

Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Melissa Etheridge

(*The 79th Annual Academy Awards*, 2/25/07, ABC)

After Etheridge's name was announced as winner for best original song for "I Need to Wake Up" from *An Inconvenient Truth*, Etheridge kissed Tammy Lynn Michaels on the mouth and walked to the podium, at which point she thanked her "incredible wife, Tammy, and our four children, Becky and Bailey and Johnnie Rose and Miller...." Later in the evening, she held her Oscar in the air and said, "This is the only naked man that will ever be in my bedroom."



Melissa Etheridge grasps a naked man. Will she take him to her bedroom? INSET: Etheridge with her wife, Tammy Lynn Michaels.



SU WITHOUT AN 'E'

The short films of Su Friedrich come to DVD

She's a one (wo)man movie-making band. Recognized as a resident of the top tier of GLBT cinema's most prolific contributors, Su Friedrich began writing and directing her own films in 1978, as well as acting as cinematographer, sound recorder, and editor.

Nearly 30 years later, the best of her efforts are now available in a five-disc set.

For those unfamiliar, Friedrich's works are essentially high-art house in flavor; largely shot in black and white 16mm, scenes are grainy and oddly focused yet quirkily beautiful.

Those more familiar Friedrich-ophiles will swoon at the hefty collection of short films, which begins with 1984's *The Ties That Bind*. This story of the rise of Nazi Germany, as told by Friedrich's mother who grew up in its shadow, is simultaneously chilling and oddly familiar.

Volume 1 continues with 1993's *The Lesbian Avengers Eat Fire, Too*. Co-directed with Janet Baus, this film documents the first year of actions by the now spottily-resurgent dyke activists group.

Volume 2 features *Damned If You Don't* (1984), Friedrich's "subversive and ecstatic" revisitation of her Catholic foremothers. Bonus selection, *Rules of the Road* (1993), examines the ups and eventual downs of a lesbian love affair in far starker imagery than *The L Word*'s pretty portrayals.

In volume 3's header, *Sink or Swim*, Friedrich turns the lens to the father/daughter dichotomy, earning her the Grand Prix award in the 1991 Melbourne International Film Festival.

The collection peaks with volume 4's *Hide and Seek* (1996), perhaps the most surgically accurate portrayal of a young lesbian's coming-of-age to be captured on celluloid. Nominated for Sundance Film Festival's 1997 Grand Jury Prize, it took L.A. Outfest's Grand Jury Award that same year for Outstanding Documentary Feature.

Sometimes hypnotic, sometimes alarming, and always thought-provoking, all five discs' selections are digitally re-mastered from the original 16mm negatives. Available from Microcinema DVD (www.microcinemadvd.com or 415/447-9750). —Preview: Nancy Ford



It's all good: In 2000, the New York Lesbian and Gay Film Festival recognized Su Friedrich for her contribution to GLBT cinema with its Peter S. Reed Achievement Award.

MORE DVD/VHS REVIEWS/PREVIEW

Color Me Kubrick



John Malkovich is not Stanley Kubrick, as his character, Alan Conway, wants you to believe. The conman Conway spent the last decade of the reclusive director's life posing as him in a search of profit, friends, and romance. From one mark to the next, Conway hilariously changes his accent and mannerisms; since most knew so little about Kubrick (Conway included), no one was the wiser. • 2005. Directed by Brian W. Cook. FYI: Cook was assistant director for Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*. • From Magnolia Home Entertainment (www.magnoliahome.com). —Preview: Eric A.T. Dieckman

Paper Dolls

What a curious, fun, and moving documentary. A group of Filipino transsexuals emigrated to Tel Aviv to become caregivers for elderly religious Jewish men, some of whom are Orthodox. On their one day off each week, they perform in drag shows as "The Paper Dolls." They

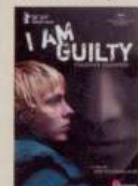


work as men, despite their plucked eyebrows and hormonally enhanced busts, and perform by night in Filipino clubs as glamorous women. • 2006. Written and directed by Tomer Heymann. English, Hebrew, and Tagalog with English subtitles. • From Strand Releasing (www.strandreleasing.com). —Preview: E.D.



Hard A fearfully closeted gay rookie detective and his seasoned partner hunt down a serial killer the rest of the intolerant police force couldn't care less about. Young male hustlers are turning up dead in Hollywood's gay underworld. Will he be stopped? The unrated director's cut uncovers all the subject matter that made the critically acclaimed film so controversial. • 1998. Co-written and directed by John Huckert. • From Westlake Entertainment (www.westlakeent.com). —Preview: E.D.

I Am Guilty



This dark German yarn pits Armin, a young, disaffected, unemployed college grad, against his own imagination. He fantasizes about committing violent crime and being gang-raped by leathermen, but is it all in his mind? Just how dark is Armin's dark side? • 2005. Written and directed by Christoph Hochhäusler. German with English subtitles. • From TLA Releasing (www.tlareleasing.com). —Preview: E.D.

Trapped!



Alexandra Paul (*Baywatch*) stars as Samantha, an Internet security expert living a life out of balance. There's her career, her girlfriend, and her difficult daughter Gwen. On their way to a bonding day at a spa, Samantha and Gwen are kidnapped by Adrien. Adrien uses Gwen as leverage to →

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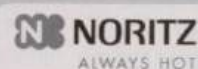
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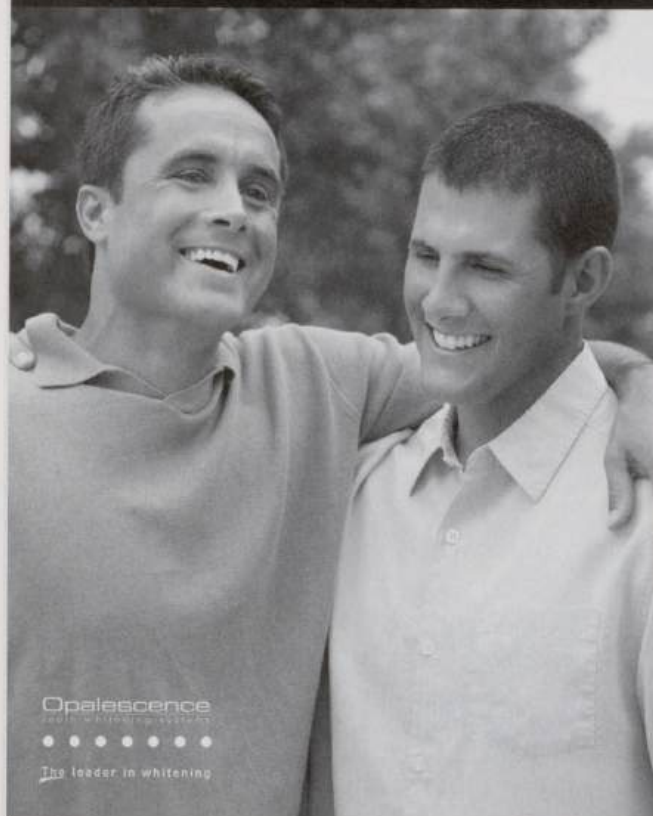


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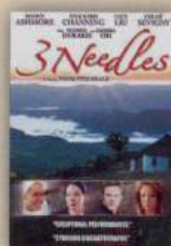
DVD/VHS continued from page 88

force Samantha to hack into an FBI database to find a relocated witness Adrien intends to murder. How will Samantha make it through this delicate balance and come out with Gwen alive? • 2006. Directed by Rex Pano. • From Liberation Entertainment (www.libent.com). —Preview: E.D.

Not Just the Best of The Larry Sanders Show

In one of the show's funnier episodes, David Duchovny plays a mischievously seductive homoerotic version of himself and crosses his legs a la Sharon Stone's *Basic Instinct* during a visit with talk show host Sanders (Garry Shandling). Other episodes include "I Was a Teenage Lesbian," "Ellen, or Isn't She?," and "Putting the 'Gay' Back in Litigation." Also look for appearances by Ellen DeGeneres, Alec Baldwin, Scott Thompson, Sharon Stone, and others. • From Sony Pictures Home Entertainment (www.sonypictures.com). —Preview: E.D.

'3 NEEDLES,' THREE STORIES



Three separate stories from across the globe tell a unifying story of the AIDS pandemic. Ping (Lucy Liu, left) lives in a small rural village in China where she runs a black market blood collection scam. Her schemes result in an epidemic infecting her village. Porn actor Denys (Shawn Ashmore) lives and works in Montreal. Although he's learned he is HIV-positive, he conceals his status to continue supporting himself and his mother (Stockard Channing, left). In South Africa, young nun Sister Clara (Chloë Sevigny, left) finds herself in a spiritual race against the clock as she attempts to convert dying infected Africans. She and her sisters (Sandra Oh and Olympia

Dukakis, right) approach a corrupt plantation owner in an effort to prevent spreading in the region. • Included in the extras are two short documentaries. Local sports fans might be interested to know that one of the two docs is "China AIDS Initiative with Magic Johnson and Yao Ming." • 2005. Written and directed by openly bi Thom Fitzgerald. English, Xhosi, Mandarin, Afrikaans, and French with English subtitles. • From Wolfe (www.WolfeVideo.com or 1-800-GET-WOLFE). —Preview: E.D.



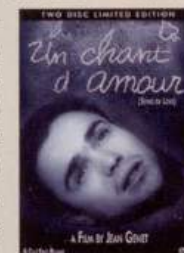
WHAT MAKES A MOVIE GAY?

Delving beyond musicals, limp wrists, and anything starring Barbra

From time to time when I've had the opportunity to comment on new DVD releases for this publication, it has been suggested that I consider the readership and skew my words accordingly—that is, find some sort of gay angle in regard to the products at hand. This is fairly easy if I'm commenting on, say, *Hollywood Go-Go Boys in Action*, and probably easier still if I'm carrying on rapturously about, say, Audrey Hepburn in *The Nun's Story*, but a bit problematic when I have to search for gay significance in, say, a Robert Mitchum "Signature Collection." So what have I got to work with for this issue? Well, I have before me volume two of a Doris Day Collection as well as a new Literary Classics Collection, plus Oliver Stone's latest incarnation of his apparent personal obsession, *Alexander*, and a two-disc limited edition of a rarely seen 1950 Jean Genet film. Let's just say two out of four ain't bad. ... Let me begin with Stone's new *Alexander*. You may recall that the much-anticipated theatrical release, which starred Colin Farrell as a sort of "Texas Blond" Alexander the Great, was a box-office disaster in 2004. The subsequent DVD releases included both the theatrical version and a second version of the film, a senseless "directors cut" that was shorter by eight minutes and minus some of the film's controversial bisexuality. Now, believe it or not, we have a third version, this one entitled *Alexander Revisited: The Final Cut*. (I can hardly wait for *Alexander: The Brunette Edition*.) This new one is longer by about 40 minutes, is far more intense (well, gory), and presents an even gayer Alexander if you can figure out what's going on with this version's altered chronology. Seriously, the new one really is much more entertaining than the previous two, possibly because Farrell's great butt scene is moved up to about an hour earlier in the picture. ... That brings me, for no logical reason, to Warner's new Literary Classics Collection, which contains film versions of Herman Melville's *Billy Budd* (1962), C.S. Forester's *Captain Horatio Hornblower* (1951), Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (the 1949 Jennifer Jones version), Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers* (the campy

1948 Gene Kelly/Lana Turner version), and, maybe best of all, a double-feature of the 1937 and 1952 versions of Anthony Hope's swash-buckler *The Prisoner of Zenda*. Personally, I was most anxious to see *Billy Budd*, since the film is mentioned in Vito Russo's *The Celluloid Closet* and is thereby certified as having some kind of gay content. Alas, being completely unfamiliar with the Melville source material, I couldn't find much gayness in this shipboard evil vs. innocence tale. But did I really think all those rough sailors were going to gangbang the gorgeously angelic young Terence Stamp, making his film debut here? Well, one can hope. ... Then there's this new Doris Day Collection, which is culled from her early years at Warners, beginning with her 1948 film debut in *Romance on the High Seas*, and including 1949's *My Dream Is Yours* (a personal fave), 1951's *On Moonlight Bay*, 1952's *I'll See You in My Dreams*, 1953's *By the Light of the Silvery Moon*, and 1954's *Lucky Me*. Since you're not going to find much hardcore gay sex in Day's early films, you'll just have to settle for her considerable screen charm and her gorgeous voice, plus the contributions of such character actresses as Eve Arden, Mary Wickes, Nancy Walker, and, of course, Rosemary DeCamp.

This set really is a feast for classic movie fans. ... Finally, what can one say about *Un Chant D'Amour*, the long suppressed "semi-pornographic" film by Jean Genet made in 1950 for gay Parisian porn collectors? Well, I guess I just said it. Let me just add that this 25-minute film is completely silent, beautifully photographed, and as downright homoerotic as anything you've ever seen. It's set mostly in a prison where some very hunky men are desperate to get at one another while being spied upon by a horny prison guard. You get full nudity, some explicit "autoeroticism," and a commentary by Kenneth Anger. As Julie Andrews might say: These are a few of my favorite things. A second disc offers a 1981 documentary on Genet plus a 1982 interview, but you should probably just linger over the first disc a while and then return to the Doris Day collection to get your senses back. • *Un Chant D'Amour* from Cult Epics (www.cultepics.com); all others from Warner Home Video (www.warnervideo.com). —Review: Jack Varsi ■



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OK, maybe not Target. But you get the idea. So did the brave cops and cop-ettes of *Reno 911!*, this month returning with its sheriff department's new, Hooters-like sponsor, Hotty's Restaurant.

New episodes likely to produce buffalo-wings-through-the-nose-spewing gales of laughter include Officer Johnson's (Niecy Nash) foray into a Christian karaoke singles mixer, and bi not-so-curious Lt. Dangle (Thomas Lennon) accepting a wedding proposal from his ex-wife's husband.

Need more? Log on to Comedy Central's "Reno Casino" where you can play craps, video poker, blackjack, slots, and a Reno-flavored paintball game with your favorite characters.



And don't forget to download a mobile ringtone while you're there.

Returns Sunday, **April 1**, 9:30 p.m. with encore presentations at midnight. Details: www.comedycentral.com.

April fools: The men and women of the Reno Sheriff Department include (l-r) Kerri Kenney-Silver, Cedric Yarbrough, Niecy Nash, Wendi McLendon-Covey, Robert Ben Garant, Thomas Lennon, Carlos Alazraqui, and Mary Birdsong.



Ian McKellen

Bein' with Ian

Sundance Channel offers a double shot of Ian McKellen

This month celebrates both the comedic and straight (the word "straight" in this case meaning not-so-comedic) sides of out Brit actor Ian McKellen. Catch two sides of the oft-lauded Sir starring in out director John Schlesinger's family farce, *Cold Comfort Farm*, airing Tuesday, **April 10**, 7:30 p.m. *Farm* is immediately followed by the U.S. television premiere of the darker family drama, *Emile*, at 9 p.m. details: www.sundancechannel.com.

(Not) Live from LOGO, It's Tuesday Night!

Sketch show pokes fun at gay issues in a good way

Think of them as The Not Ready For Hetero Players. Beginning this month, out director/actor Amanda Bearse directs eight funny guys and gals in *The Big Gay Sketch Show*, delivering six episodes with sketches, pop culture parodies, and recurring characters, all with a GLBT twist. And—surprise!—Rosie O'D is one of the producers. Debuts Tuesday, **April 24**, 9 p.m. Details: www.logoonline.com. ■



Amanda Bearse (center)

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GUTHRIE, KLEZMERIZED

The Klezmatics and their gay lead vocalist win a Grammy for a disc of Woody Guthrie songs

Out musician Lorin Sklamberg and his band-mates The Klezmatics are not the first musicians to put a modern spin on the work of the late Woody Guthrie. Billy Bragg and Wilco beat them to the punch by a few years. The Klezmatics are, however, the only Klezmer band officially sanctioned to put some of Guthrie's lyrics to music. Thus we have *Wonder Wheel* (JMG), a marvelous "new" collaboration between Guthrie and The Klezmatics, which received a Grammy in February in the Best Contemporary World Music Album category. On an afternoon when he had a sick child at home, Sklamberg, who is the Klezmatic lead vocalist (he also plays accordion, guitar, and piano), was kind enough to spare a few minutes to discuss the recording



The Klezmatics: (l-r) Frank London, Lisa Gutkin, Boo Reiners (this multi-instrumentalist is not a Klezmatic band member, but is featured on *Wonder Wheel*), Lorin Sklamberg, Matt Darriau, Susan McKeown (also not a band member, but the Celtic vocalist is also featured on the CD), and Paul Morrisett celebrate the music of Woody Guthrie.

and the work of Woody Guthrie (1912-1967).

Gregg Shapiro: I'd like to begin by asking you to say a few words about the genesis of the Woody Guthrie project, *Wonder Wheel*.

Lorin Sklamberg: The band was playing a show with Itzhak Perlman at the Tanglewood Festival, and I recognize Nora Guthrie, Woody's daughter, in the audience. After the show, we were all packing up our stuff, and I said, "You're Nora Guthrie, aren't you?" And she said, "Yeah." And I

said, "Did you know that we play one of your grandmother's songs?" And she said that she didn't. Her grandmother, Woody's mother-in-law, was a very well-known Yiddish poet and songwriter named Aliza Greenblatt, and we played what was →

GrooveOut Shorts

Swati
Small Gods



Thank goodness Swati didn't accept that scholarship offered by Julliard to study trombone. Riding her 12-string like it's a mad bronco, this out Lilith Fair alum also delivers profound and profane lyrics the likes of which we haven't heard since DiFranco pitched her first musical fit. Available April 3 from Mood Indigo Entertainment (www.moodindigoentertainment.com). —Review: Nancy Ford

Christine Martucci
I'm All In



If Melissa Etheridge ever needs a vocal stunt double, this New Jersey rocker would make a prime candidate. Standouts on this sophomore CD from the now-out army vet are "Devil's Door" and the designated first single, "There You Are." From Sunsetswest Records. More: www.christinemartucci.com. —Review: N.F.

Dolly Parton
Coat of Many Colors
My Tennessee Mountain Home
Jolene



Rich in good material with touches of gospel organ and bluegrass harmonies, these expanded editions are a perfect example of Parton's awe-inspiring work. Who can forget her all-time favorite performances of "Jolene," "I Will Always Love You," and "My Tennessee Mountain Home"? The effortless connection between the songwriting, singing, and production is brilliant. A genuine piece of Americana capturing emotional turmoil and nostalgic memories. Available April 3 from Legacy (www.legacyrecordings.com). —Review: Andrea Rodricks

Various Artists
Revolutions



Some of the artists on this GLBT compilation garnered advance play as background tracks to Showtime's *The L Word*, including Kirsten Price ("Magic Tree") and God-Des and She ("Love You Better"). With rock, rap, and R&B cuts, the CD is both tasty and diverse. Available

April 17 from Music With A Twist/Columbia Records. More: www.musicwithatwist.com. —Review: N.F.

Kitty Rose
Live at the Ryman



This 1972 recording of the former Houston home girl follows her *Greatest Hits* release in 2005, which brought her the Outmusic Award for Best Debut Female Artist. In this live work, she sings a lot about her horse and avoids pronouns in her lyrics. But it was 1972, after all. Excellent boot-scootin' fodder. From Wild Affair Productions (www.kittyrose.com). —Review: N.F.

Giorgia Fumanti
From My Heart



A full third of the songs on this Italian-born classical soprano's first CD come from this year's Special Oscar recipient, Ennio Morricone. Making her recording even more special is Fumanti's ambitious take on "I've Dreamed of You," first recorded by La Streisand herself. Gutsy and →

As seen on the Comedy Central Roast of Pam Anderson and The Tonight Show.

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probably her best known song. I asked [Nora] if she wanted to meet Itzhak Perlman, and she said, "Sure." So, I took her up on the stage and I said, "Itzhak, this is Aliza Greenblatt's granddaughter." She thought that was funny because everyone always introduces her as Arlo's sister or Woody's daughter. People don't generally introduce her as Aliza Greenblatt's granddaughter.

She said that she had been looking through her father's papers and he wrote some Jewish songs and asked me if I would be interested in taking a look at them. I said, "Sure," and she sent them to us. At the time I think she had just started putting together the archive of Woody's stuff. There were a few things [in what she sent], but as I recall, there were things that had already been published. There were these Hanukkah songs that we thought were interesting, and we kept in touch over the years. In 2003, we realized that we had scheduled this concert at the 92nd Street Y in New York, and we had a large chunk of time in which we weren't busy, so we thought that maybe that would be a good time to see if she had any more stuff for us. So we called Nora back, and she sent us about two dozen or so song lyrics, including eight or nine Hanukkah songs. There were lyrics about anti-fascism and cultural life in Brooklyn and things that she thought we would be interested in. By the end of the year, we had composed music to most of those, and we premiered the material at the 92nd Street Y. Here we are three years later, and we now have two CDs of this material.

Would you say that you got the full blessing of the Guthrie family with this project?

Oh, sure. They've been incredibly supportive. In fact, Arlo played with us on the first show that we did, and we subsequently did some shows with him the following year. He does these shows around Thanksgiving time, including a concert at Town Hall [in New York City], and we did several of those shows with him. We certainly do have the family's imprimatur on the material. Making sure that all the lyrics are correct and using all the material is done through the Guthrie archives in New York City. We have a very nice relationship with them.

I don't know if The Klezmatics ever considered themselves to be a political band before this project, but the very nature of a disc of Woody Guthrie songs certainly puts you in that category.

I think that one of the reasons that Nora was interested in us was because of our history of combining politics and music. We've certainly done that for the duration of our career. Even starting with our first recording, which is called *Shvaygn=Toyt*, which is Yiddish for Silence=Death, which we took from ACT UP—making that kind of connection between the idea that if you don't talk about something, then it's not going to survive. Or in this case, if you don't sing in Yiddish and play this music, then it's not going to continue to flourish. We've always been like that and recorded material that's overtly political and talked about political issues in our shows. It's always been important to us not to separate

who we are as people and our ideals from the music we play.

Guthrie was a true man of the people, so how do you think Guthrie would have felt about the GLBT community?

If his writing was any indication, I think that he would have seen it as part of the international community of people in general. The longest time in any place he lived was in New York City and Brooklyn. He was certainly exposed to and wrote about the diversity of the community there. Writing these Hanukkah songs on the one hand, sort of from the outsider's perspective, but with a lot of respect and a lot of humor, I would like to think that if he had lived longer and had seen the explosion that occurred after Stonewall and what's happened, that he would have maybe taken it up in some of his songs. I can't imagine that he wouldn't have. He certainly addressed every other progressive political issue that you can imagine.

The reason I say that is collections like this and like Billy Bragg and Wilco's *Mermaid Avenue* CDs tell us more about Woody Guthrie than we used to know. Nora likes to say that everybody thinks of him as sort of sepia-toned, dusty, and old-looking. Here are these songs that are Technicolor in a lot of ways.

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

Gregg 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

satisfying. From Manhattan Records (www.manhattanrecords.com). —Review: N.F.

Leonard Cohen Songs of Leonard Cohen Songs of Love and Hate Songs From a Room



Originally recorded in that heady hippie period between 1967 and 1970, these works have been expanded to celebrate the revered poet/musician/storyteller's 40th anniversary on the Columbia label. The still-prolific Cohen chose to celebrate the milestone, however, by producing jazz artist Anjani's cover of his own "Blue Alert." All are timelessly transformative. Available April 24 from Columbia/Legacy (www.columbiarecords.com, www.legacyrecordings.com). —Review: N.F.

Celtic Woman A New Journey

Think Riverdance without the foot pounding. Dominating



the world music scene since their 2005 debut, these six women put a pleasingly high harmonic twist on both traditional Irish tunes and familiar standards, alike. Includes a cover of "Over the Rainbow" that promises to shatter glass. From Manhattan Records (www.manhattanrecords.com). —Review: N.F.

Maude Maggart Maude Maggart Live



Recorded in part at the historic Algonquin Hotel's Oak Room, Maggart (the sister of Fiona Apple, by the way) delivers cabaret tunes with palpable freshness and innocence. Especially enjoyable is the seldom-heard entré to Rodgers and Hart's "My Funny Valentine." More: www.maudemaggart.com. —Review: N.F.

Electric Light Orchestra Out of the Blue

The remakes of this hit-filled 1977 double LP (plus their *Balance of Power* CD) marks the completion of the official restoration project of the 11 studio albums by the



Music DVD Johnny Mathis Gold: A 50th Anniversary Celebration



now 30-year-old ELO. The 20 tunes represent rock god Jeff Lynn's sophisticated, lush artistry at its best. From Epic/Legacy (www.epicrecords.com, www.legacyrecordings.com). —Review: N.F.

Out singer Johnny Mathis celebrated his 50th anniversary in the music industry with an amazing concert called *Johnny Mathis: Wonderful, Wonderful!* that was filmed for PBS. If you missed this once-in-a-lifetime concert, the DVD summarizes his half-century as a recording star. Perhaps one of the greatest singers of his generation, the DVD includes Mathis standards and unforgettable hits. Fans will be pleased with the added bonus material: eight more songs, a tour of his home, and an extraordinary photo gallery. From Columbia/Legacy (www.columbiarecords.com, www.legacyrecordings.com). —Preview: A.R. ■



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TALKING SHAKESPEARE

Novelist/filmmaker Samuel Park brings the Bard to page and screen

Some people like to read, some people like to watch movies, and some people like to do both. Gay novelist and filmmaker Samuel Park has those bases covered. *Shakespeare's Sonnets* is the title of his recently published novel from Alyson Books and his short movie, which is part of *Boy Briefs 3: Between the Boys—8 Gay Short Films About Hooking Up*, the Picture This compilation. However you choose to partake in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*—a story set at Harvard in the 1940s dealing with both the mysterious love object of the sonnets as well as the unfriendly climate for homosexuals on campus, and the budding relationship between two male students—it is well worthwhile.

Gregg Shapiro: In the tradition of the "which came first" question, which did come first in terms of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*—the movie or the novel?

Samuel Park: The short film came right before the novel. I made the short film, and then I wrote the novel, but they both came out at the same time, just because it took me so long to finish the short film.

So the actual genesis of the piece can be traced back to the screenplay?

It actually started out as a play. [Laughs] I believe in recycling. Recycling is important. These raw materials such as creativity must not be wasted. [Laughs] I've written a lot of



Samuel Park, author of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*: "I objected to [Shakespeare's being] 'straight until proven guilty.'"

things, but this is one of the few things that people have really been interested in. People kept asking me to come back to it. After I wrote the play, a friend said that it would be a great script. I wrote it as a screenplay, and then I made the short film with Vincent [Karteiser]. I met with the [production] people from *Latter Days*, and things were going along well, and then things fell apart

and it didn't happen. But out of that came the book. I'm very stubborn, and I felt like if I'm not going to get a movie out of this, I'm going to get a novel. I feel like the characters need to breathe and be alive somehow. This is my way of rescuing them.

Is there any chance that down the line there will be a full-length featured made?

I hope so. The production guy's former assistant, who is kind of moving up the ladder, has been trying to send it around. It's a weird beast, because you have to get it into the hands of the right person.

As a reader, the book felt like it had two primary themes—the first being, of course, Shakespeare. Can you please say something about your interest in Shakespeare?

For the purposes of the book, [Shakespeare's] sexuality...I've always been interested in the idea of recovering a historical past that's been lost to us. The straight critics get very defensive about Shakespeare, saying there's no proof, there's no evidence. There's also not that much proof or evidence that he was straight, either. So I objected to [his being] "straight until proven guilty."

Why not the other way around?

Exactly! People say he was married and had three children, but there are a lot of people who were married and have children [and →

this is the best book I've read this year.

—Review: Angel Curtis

fully referenced, the logic here shows that full civil rights for all is simple American justice. —Review: A.C.

ReadOut Shorts

What Becomes You

Aaron Raz Link and Hilda Raz

Univ. of Nebraska Press (www.nebraskapress.unl.edu)

All I could say after first finishing this one was, "Wow, what a book!" This deeply personal collaborative memoir details the multiple layers of the journey Child and Mom take on the road to Sarah becoming Aaron. This book can't help but challenge the readers to rethink what they know about gender, sex, family relationships, and themselves. A compelling narrative,

Gay Marriage and Democracy

R. Claire Snyder

Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

(www.rowmanlittlefield.com)



To carry the marriage debate beyond emotional rhetoric, Snyder's book is the one we need. Scholarly and well written, it develops a case for gay marriage that reveals the logical flaws in the arguments posed against us by the conservative and religious right. Elegantly reasoned and

The Real antiChrist:

How America Sold Its Soul

Michael S. Piazza

Source of Hope Publishing (www.h4pj.org)



Though the cover of his book sensationally depicts George W. Bush with the word "antichrist" emblazoned on his forehead, author Michael S. Piazza insists W, per se, is not him. Or it. Penned by one of the driving forces behind Dallas' gay megachurch, the →

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ReadOut

continued from page 98

are gay], especially in our culture. I want children. Shakespeare didn't have the option of getting a Chinese baby. I don't think that means anything. I loved the idea of looking at the past and finding the queerness of people that we had assumed to be straight.

As one might expect, the sonnets figure prominently into the novel, but are there sonnets on which the novel or the characters are directly based?

Yes. The overall arc of the sonnets is followed by the book. What happens in the sonnets is that you have the poet romancing this young man, and then later, in the last third of the sonnets, this woman, the Dark Lady, comes between them because she starts sleeping with the young man, which brings out all sorts of jealousies in the poet/narrator. In the novel, it has the same sort of triangulated love structure—except that the Dark Lady is played by Professor Mullins. I thought that it would be cool to have a man play the role. The overall arc is very similar to the sonnets, but with a more contemporary, gay twist.

In the last few years some non-fiction books have been published about the Harvard homo purge, so there continues to be interest in the subject, which is the second predominant theme in your novel.

There's a book that just came out, whose name escapes me, which came out after I wrote the novel, based on an article that was published in the *Harvard Crimson* about the scandal in the 1920 when a student committed suicide. And when they dug up the background on the suicide, they found out that he was part of this group of students who were accused of being gay. They were essentially persecuted and being expelled from school. They were part of these out students who would throw parties and have sex with each other. So there was this sort of gay subculture at Harvard. The novel isn't based on that, because I wrote it before that article came out, but I suspected that if you have a homo-social environment with all those young men, and you're gay, you would have that kind of subculture—especially at Harvard, a place of privilege, where you can somehow bend the rules. It's a completely self-enclosed world, with its own set of rules and it's also a kind of homoerotic world where you always show your affection towards each other. You're away from women. It's like a recipe for a porno. [Laughs]

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

Gregg Shapiro writes frequently about the arts for OutSmart.

ReadOut Shorts

continued from page 98

Cathedral of Hope, this tome offers Rev. Piazza's theory on who—or what—is. —Preview: Nancy Ford

Seventy Times Seven

Salvatore Sapienza

Harrington Park Press (www.haworthpress.com)



Seventy Times Seven is a look at the religious life of Brother Vito Fortunato, a young gay man who is ever so human. The author records Vito's honest thoughts on reconciling his gay lifestyle (after meeting the man who becomes his lover) with his brotherhood and, in the process, makes *Seventy Times Seven* an engaging read that balances homosexuality, religion, and spirituality.

—Review: Blase DiStefano

Puss 'n Cahoots

Rita Mae Brown & Sneaky Pie Brown

Bantam Books (www.randomhouse.com)



Rita Mae and Sneaky Pie continue in stride! As always, Mrs. Murphy, Pewter, Tucker, and a host of animal companions help the sense-limited humans solve the crime and save the day. A special bonus in this one, you'll meet a new animal character

whose name will become synonymous with bitchy drag queen. Truly entertaining, there is no better way to spend an afternoon than visiting with the kids. —Review: A.C.

M4M: For an Hour or Forever—The Gay Man's Guide to Finding Love Online

Jack Mauro

Simon Spotlight Entertainment

(www.simonandschuster.com)



Here in one volume is expert advice on everything online from creating your online profile to setting up hookups. Well organized, realistic, and real, this book can not only help you avoid looking like a total dork, but can help you find the fun you are looking for. Read this one even if you think you know what you're doing. —Review: A.C.

The Summer Book 2007: A Guide to Houston Day Camps and Classes for Kids and Teens

Sarah Gish



The title says it all. This is mother/marketing whiz Sarah Gish's fourth edition, listing more than 200 fun ways to entertain and educate the younger set while school's out. *The Summer Book 2007* is a required reference for every local parent who doesn't consider Wii or Time Warner Cable a suitable babysitter. For more information, visit www.thesummerbook.com.

—Preview: N.F. ■

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WHO'S HAPPY NOW?

Sally learns that a caregiver may need an unexpected boost

The trouble with antidepressants, besides their obscene contribution to Big Pharma's bloated bottom line, is that they work. Prescription happy pills can lift even the gloomiest sad sack out of the pits. That's my gripe.

Last year my best friend, Darlene, slipped into a serious funk. The deeper she sank, the more I stepped up. Suddenly I had a purpose in life besides my usual smash-the-patriarchy, liberty-and-justice-for-all, save-the-world quest. Darlene's blues became my new calling.

Her money worries, academic pressure, and single-parent stress were real enough, but Darlene's doom and gloom did not seem commensurate with her situation—especially during our annual summer vacation. Can you imagine anyone staying negative for a whole week in a spacious beach house with five chosen-family dykes, four

happy little girls, and an unlimited supply of fresh seafood? Darlene did.

Despite our nightly fish fries under the stars, daily surf romps, and bocce ball games, Darlene didn't snap out of it. Even after the

Suddenly I had a purpose in life besides my usual smash-the-patriarchy, liberty-and-justice-for-all, save-the-world quest.

kids were fed, bathed, and snoozing in their bunks and we grown-ups broke out the poker chips and fine chocolates, my pal could not get festive.

The D-word hadn't been mentioned, but her depression was obvious. On our last day, Darlene and I took a beach walk. Under a

clear sky with the ocean mist pluming off the waves and sand pipers hopping along the sparkling shoreline, I prodded my buddy.

"You get that you're depressed, right?" A flock of seagulls flapped down for a landing.

"I suppose so." She turned to face the ocean, weeping. "It runs in my family."

"Promise me you'll talk to your doc when you get home." Wow, did I feel wise.

"OK." She wiped her tears. "If I don't drive off a cliff first." So Eeyore.

Over the next few months, while she submitted to experimental dosages and combinations of various antidepressants, we talked every day. She was overwhelmed by her unfolded laundry, overdue homework, and unpaid bills. She worried she might slit her wrists or try heroin. She was convinced things would never improve.

I listened. I was there for her.

"You sure you're not sick of me?" she'd ask.

"Things will be better soon." With me as her champion we could get through anything. Rosie the Riveter *We can do it!* to the rescue. "You'll get this thing under control."

"If I don't have a stroke first."

Finally, Darlene got on the right meds, enrolled in a gym, and cut the comfort food. She felt better and called less. Last week she phoned, giggling, to tell me she had a crush on her math instructor and they'd made a date.

For my pal, finally out from under that terrible dark cloud, antidepressants are a lifesaver. But what about *me*? How do antidepressants help you when you're the friend who hung in through the tears and melancholy and suicide ideation? Suddenly you've lost your gig. Like your job's been outsourced to another country—your services are no longer needed.

Now what? Don't tell me there's a pill to help me cope with happiness.

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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Calendar of Events

by Eric A.T. Dieckman

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APRIL

Daily (Mon.-Fri.)

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

Daily (Sun.-Fri.)

HIV Testing. The Montrose Clinic offers free confidential HIV testing at these locations: **Decades**, 1205 Richmond, 713/521-2224, Mon. 6-10pm (Dennis); **EJ's**, 2517 Ralph, 713/527-9071, Wed. & Fri. 10pm-1am (Rhonda & Lourdes); **Mary's, Naturally**, 1022 Westheimer, 713/527-9669, Wed. 4-8pm (Jack); **Midtown Spa**, 3100 Fannin, 713/522-2379, Tues. 9pm-1am (Carlos), Wed. 10pm-1am (Juan), Fri. 10pm-1am (Quincy); **Ripcord**, 715 Fairview, 713/521-2792, Wed. 9pm-12am (Matthew); **Inergy/Mango Lounge**, 5750 Chimney Rock, 713/660-7310, Mon. 9pm-12am (Carlos); **1415 Bar & Grill**, 1415 California, 713/522-7066, Thurs. 9pm-12am (Carlos); **611 Hyde Park Pub**, 611 Hyde Park, 713/526-7070, Tues. 3-7pm & Sun. 2-6pm (Matthew); **All Star News and Video Emporium**, 3415 Katy Freeway & Studewood, 713/869-7878, Mon. & Thurs. 4-8pm (Jack); **Brazos River Bottom**, 2400 Brazos, 713/528-9192, Thurs. 8pm-12am (Matthew); **Cousin's**,

817 Fairview, 713/528-9204, Thurs. 8pm-12am (Jack); **Club Houston**, 2205 Fannin, 713/659-4998, Tues. 8pm-12am (Dennis). For more info: 713/830-3000.

Daily (Sun.-Fri.)

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

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 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,

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—MON., APR. 9.**

900 Portway Dr. For more information, call 713/869-7722, ext. 127, or visit www.houstonspca.org.

5 (Thur.)

Kill Two Mockingbirds with One Stone. See a show and socialize. Pick somethin' nice from that busted up ol' chiffrabe for the ActOut To Kill a Mockingbird pre-show mixer. Enjoy appetizers from Hunan Downtown, drinks from Budweiser, and tracks from DJ Mike Bell. Meet cast members and fellow fans of the theater. Tickets start at \$19 (ActOut mixer is free with ticket purchase). 5:30-7:30 pm (showtime at 7:30 pm) at the Alley Theatre's Hubbard Stage, 615 Texas Ave. Info/reservations: 713/228-9341 ext. 404 or www.alleytheatre.org.

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). \$6 (\$2 for parking). At Rice Media Center, entrance 8 from University Blvd. at Stockton. Info: 713/348-4853 or www.ricecinema.rice.edu.

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 (who played the role of Grace's mother on *Will and Grace*), 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 endeavors to prevent child abuse. Seating/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.

13 (Fri.)

Kiln Some Time. (Get it?) The Salt Grass Potters Guild holds its annual Spring sale of original, handmade pottery. Works range from functional dishware to objets d'art. 10 am-5 pm at the Clear Lake Park Meeting Room, 5001 NASA Pkwy., Clear Lake. Info: 281/337-9286 (Eileen) or www.SaltGrassPotters.com

13-15 (Fri.-Sun.)

The Height(s) of Living. Historic Houston Heights Spring Home & Garden Tour presents "The Colors of Our Lives." A "Candlelight Dinner and Auction" kicks off three days of celebration of Heights beauty. Visit unique homes and gardens that reflect the richly cultured and diverse Houston Heights community. \$15 in advance, \$17 day of tour; dinner and auction: \$100, \$1,000 for table of 10. Candlelight Dinner and Auction: Friday, 8-11 pm, at Winter Street Studios, 2101 Winter St., with private tour of homes 6-8 pm. Tour: noon-6 pm, Saturday and Sunday. Tickets/info: Another Place in Time, Buchanan's Native Plants, Eclectic Home, Karen Derr & Associates, and www.houstonheights.org. Day of the tour tickets are \$17 at the Heights Fire Station and at each home. Dinner and auction tickets: 713/861-4002, ext. 3.

14 (Sat.)

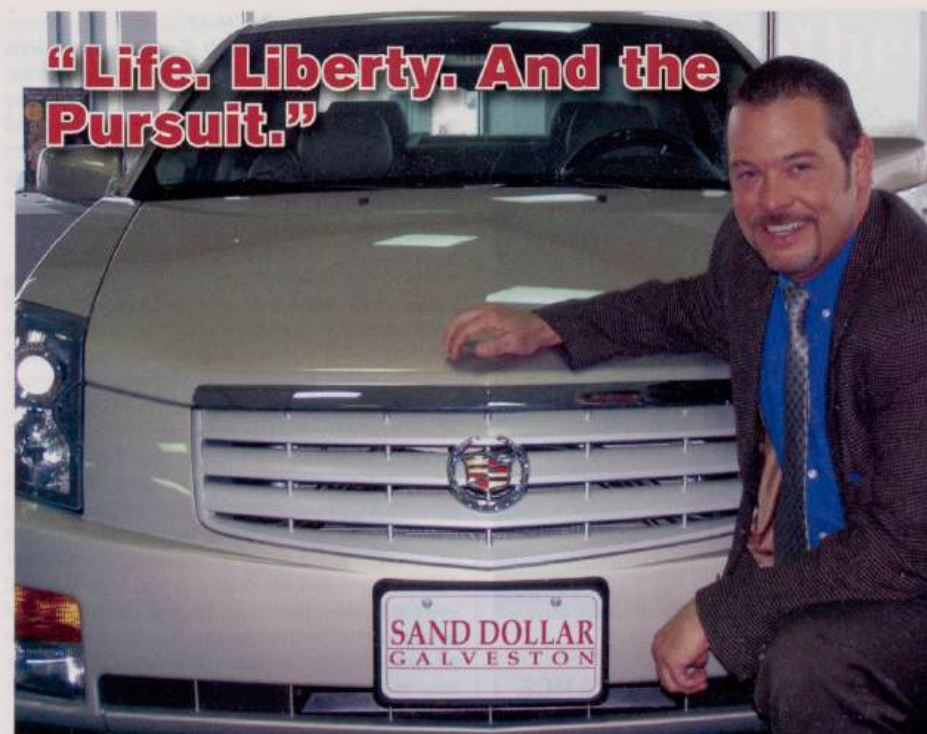
Bowlers' Ball. Come see your friends bowl their hearts out at the Annual Miss Bowler Beehive Review. The event is sponsored by the Houston Invitational Bowling Tournament which raises \$8,000 for local charities each year. (Registration forms will be available for the GLBT summer leagues starting in May.) 8-10 pm at JR's on the Santa Fe side, 808 Pacific St. More info: 713/861-1187.

14 & 15 (Sat. & Sun.)

Wood, Water, and Art. The Woodlands Waterway Arts Festival puts musicians, dancers, and actors 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: 713/521-0133, www.woodlandsartfestival.com, pegwelbes@yahoo.com, or (fax) 281/364-3011.

15 (Sun.)

Lend Me a Hand (or Four). In his first Da Camera appearance, influential pianist Leon Fleisher performs Schubert's sublime *Sonata in B-flat major* and *Fantasy in F minor* for piano four-hands. \$22-\$38. 2:30 pm, at Cullen Theater, 501 Texas at Smith. Info/reservations: 713/524-5050 or www.dacamera.com.



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OUT IN NEW YORK IN THE '80S

'Lost and Found Portraits of Ricardo Nicolayevsky'

The Mexico City-based multi-disciplinary artist and filmmaker Ricardo Nicolayevsky began his career in the '80s using Super 8 and 16 mm film (he has since incorporated video into his palette). Also a musician and composer, Nicolayevsky often creates his own soundtracks. His award-winning films have screened in museums, galleries, and international festivals. Nicolayevsky's '02 film, *Quinteto*, though left without description, is categorized on the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) as both "experimental" and "gay interest." Nicolayevsky studied film at New York University. • During that lengthy stay in the New York gay scene of the early '80s, Nicolayevsky assembled a Maya Deren-inspired Super 8mm intimate portraits of his friends, acquaintances, and lovers. This mesmerizing opus serves as a celluloid time capsule to the period and location. —E.D.



Ricardo Nicolayevsky

The What: *Lost and Found Portraits of Ricardo Nicolayevsky*

The Where: Rice University's Rice Media Center. (Park in the North Lot at entrance 20 or 21 off Rice Blvd. Parking is \$5.)

The When: Saturday, April 28, 7 p.m. **The Wherewithal:** 713/348-7529 or www.ricecinema.rice.edu

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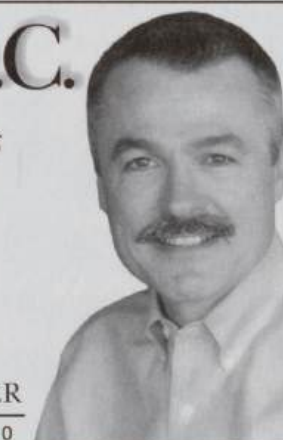
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16 (Mon.)
Citywide Yom HaShoah Commemoration. Holocaust Museum Houston hosts the annual city-wide Yom HaShoah Commemoration as a time to remember those who perished in the Holocaust and to honor those who survived. 7 pm, at Congregation Brith Shalom, 4610 Bellaire Blvd. Info: 713-942-8000, ext. 104 (Tamara Savage), events@hnh.org, or www.hnh.org/register.asp.

16 (Mon.)
And Along Reads Mary. Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Mary Oliver has authored more than 20 tomes of poetry and prose. Her most recent book takes a new direction, dealing with the death of her partner of more than 40 years. \$10 (available at door only). 7:30 pm at the Alley Theatre's Hubbard Stage, 615 Texas Ave. Info: 713/521-2026 or www.inprint-inc.org.

21 (Sat.)
Almost Legendary Dinner. Virtuosi of Houston presents its annual dinner and concert, "Legends of the Future V: Celebrating Sports Legends." Virtuosi of Houston is a premier chamber orchestra whose musicians are students ranging in age from 11 to 18 years. Its goal is the education and development of young talented musicians into true professionals. 6 pm at Hotel Intercontinental, 2222 West Loop South. Info/reservations: 713/522-8881, 713/524-0661, or www.virtuosiofhouston.org.

21-22, 28-29 (Sat.-Sun.)
Feast Your Eyes on I-Fest. Though the Houston International Festival spotlights China this year, there will be plenty of music, food, and culture reppin' from round the globe. Be sure to seek out China Town, located in Upper Sam Houston Park, the focal point of the China Zone, with a 120' replica of the Great Wall. Climb to the top for a view of the city any Mongol horde would kill for. \$8 for Early Bird discount (until April 18), \$10 from April 19-29, \$13 at the gate, \$3 for kids 4-12, and free for kids under 3. 1-10 pm Saturdays and 1-8 pm Sundays in Downtown Houston, including City Hall, Upper and Lower Tranquility Park, Bagby Street, and Upper and Lower Sam Houston Parks. Info/reservations: 713/654-8808 or www.ifest.org.

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. • Author E. Lynn Harris hosts *Twisted Torch: A Celebration of Life*, a concert by AIDS Foundation Houston's Mukuuru 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 on the Resurrection campus. Harris will conduct a book signing during the brunch. • Early registration for the Golf Classic: 713/861-9149. Tickets/sponsorships for *Twisted Torch*: www.ResurrectionMCC.Org or www.Mukuuru.Org. Tickets for the Jazz Brunch: 713/861-9149.

25-29 (Wed.-Sun.)
So Out of Date, It's Back in Style. The 12th Annual 20th Century Modern Market is the only antiques show of its kind in the Southwest exclusively featuring designs of the 20th century. Specialist dealers from around the country offer a variety of media including furniture, glass, objects d'art, and fashion. There is also a free public lecture on Modern design. Preview party: \$30 for members (admission throughout weekend), \$40 for non-members; Saturday and Sunday general admission:

\$5. Lecture Wednesday, 7 pm; Preview party/sale Friday, 6-9 pm; Market weekend Saturday and Sunday, 10 am-5 pm, at Lawndale Art Center, 4912 Main St. Info: 713-528-5858 or www.LawndaleArtCenter.org.

26 (Thur.)
Fighting AIDS With a Fork. "Dining Out for Life" raises funds benefiting AIDS Foundation Houston, Inc. (AFH). AFH serves nearly 6,000 clients annually through its 43 client-based programs. More than 150 restaurants in the Houston area as well as thousands of restaurants internationally will participate by donating one-third of their proceeds to designated AIDS service organizations. For a list of participating Houston restaurants: 713/623-6796 ext. 282 or www.diningoutforlife.com. More info on AFH: www.AIDShelp.org.

26 (Thur.)
Our Bodies, Our Selves. Dealing with "the change"? Want to be prepared before anything arises? Nellie Grose, M.D., and Eric Grose, L. Ac., lead this seminar "Hormones, Menopause, and Breast Cancer: What Every Woman Should Know." \$50. 5:30-9 pm at the Spectrum Center, 4615 Post Oak Place Dr. Info/reservations: 713/660-6620 (Emily).

28 (Sat.)
That's So Sosa. Latin jazz pianist Omar Sosa mixes jazz and Afro-Caribbean rhythms, and the rhythms are gonna get you. \$26.50-\$45. 8 pm at Cullen Theater, 500 Texas at Smith. Info/reservations: 713/524-5050 or www.dacamera.com.

PLANNING AHEAD

MAY 2 (Wed.)
A Little Day Music. Da Camera of Houston's free lunchtime performance series features the Strike 3 Percussion Ensemble. Attendees can win tickets for an upcoming Da Camera concert. A Little Day Music is presented the first Wednesday of every month from October through May. Noon in the Grand Foyer of the Wortham Theater Center, Texas at Smith. More info: 713/524-5050 or www.dacamera.com.

May 3 (Thur.)
Debbie Does Dallas. The notorious film from 1978 is now a camp musical. If high schooler Debbie Benton is going to become a Dallas cowgirl cheerleader, she must first scrape up the bus fare to get to the Big D. But how can she get the money together? Through June 10, 8 pm (Sunday, June 3 at 5 pm), at Theater LaB, 1706 Alamo St. Info/reservations: 713/868-7516 or www.theaterlabhouston.com.

May 4-6 (Fri.-Sun.)
Bayou City Crawfish Festival. Cajun, Zydeco, and Texas country music, arts and crafts, a mechanical bull, and steamin' piles of crawfish; what Texa-Cajun could ask for more! Benefits Texas Equu Search. Friday from 4:30-10:30 pm, Saturday from noon-10:30 pm, and Sunday from noon-6:30 pm at Hermann Square/Reflection Pond at City Hall, 901 Bagby. Info: www.bayoucitycrawfishfestival.com.

May 4-12 (Fri.-Sat.)
The Cunning Little Vixen. The premiere of Janáček's opera, considered one of the 20th century's most indispensable operatic works, juxtaposes the lives of a fox and her cubs with those of a forester and his friends. Tickets start at \$20. At the Wortham Center, Texas at Smith. Info/reservations: 713/228-6737, 800/626-7372, or www.houstongrandopera.org.

May 5 (Sat.)
Beethoven Celebration. Making his Da Camera debut, Avery Fisher Career Grant winner Soovin Kim and Bion Tsang join pianist Sarah Rothenberg in a program featuring "Variations for cello and piano on a theme from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*" and two of Beethoven's most celebrated works, the "Kreutzer" sonata and the grand

"Archduke" trio. \$22-\$38. 8 pm at Cullen Theater, 501 Texas at Smith. Info/reservations: 713/524-5050 or www.dacamera.com.

May 10 (Thur.)
Our Favorite Things. The Houston Pride Band presents its final concert of the '06-07 season. Band members selected their favorite arrangements to assemble an entertaining program ranging from Cole Porter's "Begin the Beguine" to "Jupiter" from *The Planets* by Gustav Holst to Leonard Bernstein. \$10. 7:30 pm at Resurrection MCC, 2025 W. 11th St. Info/reservations: 832/265-3346 or www.houstonprideband.org.

May 12 (Sat.)
Summer Kick-Off Fun Run. Take part in a 5K run, a 3K walk, or a 1K kids' run. There are awards for a variety of demographic groups. Proceeds benefit scholarships through the James Glenn Foundation. Begins at 7 am at Clear Creek High School, League City. Info: www.jamesglennrun.com.

RADIO

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

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

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

PERFORMING ARTS

◆ **Aida.** This new production of Verdi's Egyptian epic reveals an ancient land revived in brilliant color. This is not the standard pyramids-and-palm-trees setting we've all grown to expect. In Italian with English surtitles. Tickets start at \$20. April 13-May 5 at the Wortham Center, Texas at Smith. Info/reservations: 713/228-6737, 800/626-7372, or www.houstongrandopera.org.

◆ **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. Through 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.

◆ **At Home in the Heights.** Soak up beautiful music at a beautiful location. AIDS Foundation Houston, Inc.'s Mukuuru "Arts for AIDS" series presents this special concert hosted by Bill Baldwin and Joe Gonzalez featuring members of the internationally acclaimed Enso String Quartet. Recently renovated, 205 Bayland was completed in 1910 as the home of architect and civic visionary William A. Wilson. \$75. Friday, April 20 (wine and hors d'oeuvres at 6:30 pm, concert begins at 7 pm) at 205 Bayland. Info/reservations: 713/623-6796, ext. 278 (Lydia Murray) or www.mukuuru.org.

◆ **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. Through 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.

◆ **The Clean House.** Susan Ruhl's eye-opening

comedy-drama about Brazilian housekeeper Mathilde demonstrates how one can overlook household dirt in favor of unearthing a neglected heart. Tickets start at \$19. April 27-May 27 at the Alley Theatre's Neuhaus Stage, 615 Texas Ave. Info/reservations: 713/228-8421 or www.alleytheatre.org.

◆ **Corpus Christi.** Terrence McNally's controversial and often misunderstood play is part Passion Play, part autobiography. Unhinged Productions presents this challenging tale of Joshua, a young gay man, coming of age during the '50s in Corpus Christi, Texas. He attends Pontius Pilate High, is persecuted by intolerant bullies, falls in love with a mysterious and jealous man named Judas, forms a group of 12 of his peers, and ultimately dies for his message of love, acceptance, and peace. \$20, \$10 for students and seniors. April 6-21, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm and Sunday at 3 pm, at Silver House Theatre, 1107 Chartres. Info/reservations: 713/869-6233, unhingedproduction@yahoo.com, or www.u-p.org.

◆ **DBR & The Mission.** Society for the Performing Arts presents composer, performer, violinist and band-leader Daniel Bernard Roumain and his ensemble. Expect a blend of funk, rock, hip-hop, and classical amalgamated into unique soundscapes. DBR's Houston debut performance will feature Hip-Hop Studies and Etudes: small, intimate, musical vignettes (one in each key) that explain, examine, and express aspects of hip-hop music, from rhythm to timbre to form. \$38-\$47. Friday, April 13, 8 pm, at Cullen Theater, 501 Texas at Smith. Info/reservations: 713-227-45PA or www.spahouston.org.

◆ **Former U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins.** No poet since Robert Frost has managed to combine high critical acclaim with such broad popular appeal. Audience members will be seated on the stage for a decidedly intimate set with the artist. Following his appearance, Collins will be available to sign books. \$35. Friday, April 20, 8 pm, at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Info/reservations: 713/227-45PA or www.spahouston.org.

◆ **The Glass Menagerie.** Tennessee Williams broke theatrical convention with his autobiographical "memory play" when it opened in 1944. The Wingfield family's struggle, blue roses and all, is now read in high schools nationwide. \$30. Through April 14 at The Texas Repertory Co., 14243 Stuebner Airline Rd. Info/reservations: 281/583-7573 or www.texreptheatre.org.

◆ **I Am My Own Wife.** The regional premiere of this solo show by Pulitzer Prize-winner Doug Wright explores the extraordinary true story of Charlotte von Mahlsdorf, an East Berlin transvestite. Openly gay and perpetually and unapologetically in drag, she successfully held leadership positions in both the Nazi and Communist regimes. \$26-\$40. April 13-May 10 at Stages Theatre, 3201 Allen Pkwy. Info/reservations: 713/527-0123 or www.stagestheatre.com.

◆ **Itzhak Perlman's Tchaikovsky 5.** Perlman does what he does best—conduct and play the violin. In addition to Tchaikovsky, Perlman performs Brahms' *Academic Festival Overture* and Beethoven's *Romances*. \$45-\$105. April 28 and 29, 8 pm Saturday, 2:30 pm Sunday, at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Tickets: 713/224-7575 or www.houstonsymphony.org.

◆ **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.

◆ **Obo Addy and the Music & Dance of Ghana.** Presented by the Society for the Performing Arts, master drummer Obo Addy brings African musical history to life. A key originator of the influential musical movement

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now known as "Worldbeat," Addy embodies Ghana's musical culture. Free. April 27, 8 pm, at Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Drive in Hermann Park. Info/free tickets: 281/FREE-FUN. For a complete schedule of performances, visit www.milleroutdoortheatre.com.

◆ **Spring Fieldwork Showcase.** Several Dancers Core, in conjunction with The Field, a New York-based artist service organization, presents works-in-progress by local artists. After the performance, the audience is invited to meet with the artists and discuss the performance. \$7. Thursday, April 12, 8 pm, at the Houston Community College Central Campus Studio A. Info/reservations: 713/862-5530, www.thefield.org, or www.severaldancerscore.org.

◆ **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. Through 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.

◆ **To Kill a Mockingbird.** The classic story of "Scout" and Atticus Finch, Boo Radley, and that busted up of chiffrabe take the place of the previously scheduled *Terms of Endearment*. Tickets start at \$19. Through April 29 at the Alley Theatre's Hubbard Stage, 615 Texas Ave. (Captioned performance April 28, 2:30 pm; ActOut pre-show mixer April 5, 5:30-7:30 pm.) Info/reservations: 713/228-8421 or www.alleytheatre.org; 713/228-9341 ext. 404 for ActOut details.

◆ **Virtuosi d'Italia.** British violinist Monica Huggert and guitarist-lutenist Richard Savino—both renowned period instrumentalists—perform Italian works from the 17th and 18th centuries. \$30, \$25 for seniors, and \$10 for students. April 20, 8 pm, at Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas Ave. (preconcert talk at 7 pm.) Info/reservations: 713/432-1744, www.HoustonEarlyMusic.org.

◆ **Wicked.** The Grammy and Tony Award-winning musical uncovers the story of how two unlikely friends became the Wicked Witch of the West and Glinda the Good Witch. \$29-\$78. Through April 15 at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. Info/reservations: 713/629-3700, www.BroadwayAcrossAmerica.com, www.wickedthemusicaltour.com.

◆ **Wrap It Up Quick** at the end of the semester with an evening of 10-minute plays. (If you don't like a play, just shut your eyes and ears for 10 minutes and wait for the next one.) Free. April 20, 8 pm, at Rice University's Hamman Hall, Park in the North Lot at entrance 20 or 21 off Rice Blvd. (Parking is \$5.) More info: 713/348-7529 or www.theatre.rice.edu.

◆ **Zero Hour.** Another one-person regional premiere at Stages, Jim Brochu's tribute to brilliant comedic actor Zero Mostel finds a naïve reporter interviewing the volatile actor. In addition to all sorts of mad humor and juicy behind-the-scenes stories, Mostel uncovers his difficult struggle on McCarthy's blacklist. \$26-\$40. April 20-May 13 at Stages Theatre, 3201 Allen Pkwy. Info/reservations: 713/527-0123 or www.stagestheatre.com.

PERFORMING ARTS

For Young People

◆ **Jack and the Beanstalk.** Magic beans? The classic children's story comes alive onstage. \$7. Through 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.

◆ **Princess Polite.** The evil Queen wants to get rid of Snow White—not just because she's beautiful, but also because her manners are so refined. \$8. Saturdays, April 7 and 14, 2 pm, at Express Theatre, 446 Northwest Mall.

Info/reservations: 713/759-1314.

◆ **The Story of the Lone Star State.** InterActive Theater explores 600 years of Texas history in 45 minutes, with stories ranging from Indian folklore to Sam Houston to NASA astronauts. For grades 1-7. Free. April 19, 11 am, at Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Drive in Hermann Park. Info: 281/FREE-FUN or www.milleroutdoortheatre.com.

◆ **Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing.** Judy Blume's charming story is adapted for the stage. Peter's little brother, Fudge, makes him feel like a zero. How do you cope with a two-year-old brother who doesn't just steal the spotlight, but has taken it hostage? \$11, \$9 for kids over 3. April 10-May 18, Saturdays at 10:30 am, 1 pm, and 4 pm, at Main Street Theater—Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. Info/reservations: 713/524-6706, www.mainstreettheater.com, or www.ticketweb.com.

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

◆ **2007 Core Artists in Residence Exhibition.** Sculpture and video dominate this show at the Glassell School of Art, exploring the sexual revolution, cultural excess, and race relations. Free. Through April 20 at the Glassell School of Art's Laura Lee Blanton Gallery, 5101 Montrose Blvd. Info: 713/639-7500.

◆ **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, Jermayne MacAgy, and Caroline Weiss Law. The exhibit is part of the year-long observation of the Menil Collection's 20th anniversary. Through July 8 at the Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. Information: 713/525-9400 or www.menil.org.

◆ **Artadia at DiverseWorks...Reprised.** The '06 Artadia Awards comes back for another look. Featured artists include The Art Guys, Francesca Fuchs, Joseph Wooten among others. Through April 21 at DiverseWorks, 1117 East Fwy off Main at Naylor. Info/reservations: 713/335-3445, www.diverseworks.org, or www.artadia.org.

◆ **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.

◆ **Blue: Live.** Octavio Campos' dance-theater experiment pays tribute to the final film of Derek Jarman, *Blue*, a strange and wondrous motion picture. The film is 80 minutes of a blue screen accompanied by a score by Brian Eno with spoken word from Nigel Terry and Tilda Swinton. Its script consists of material composed before he died of an AIDS-related illness in '93. Campos adds movement and live action to the goings-on. \$15, \$6 for students and seniors. April 28 and 29, 8 pm, at DiverseWorks, 1117 East Fwy off Main at Naylor. Info/reservations: 713/335-3445 or www.diverseworks.org.

◆ **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. Through 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.

◆ **The Great Wall of China: Photographs by Chen Changfen.** The first U.S. exhibition of work by this important Chinese photographer who devoted 30 years of his life to exploring and photographing the Great Wall is reminiscent of the long-term projects undertaken by Ansel Adams in Yosemite and Alfred Stieglitz at Lake George. \$7, \$3.50 for kids 6-18. April 1-August 12 at the Museum of Fine Arts Aubrey Jones Beck Building, 5601 Main 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).

◆ **Media Archeology: Below-Fi.** Aurora Picture Show presents the fourth installment of this annual festival featuring live audio-visual events at three Houston venues. Found and original electronic media is used to produce live multimedia performances that combine film or video projection, theater, and music. April 19-21 at Aurora Picture Show, Domy Bookstore, and The Orange Show Center for Visionary Art. \$10, \$8 for members, \$15 for festival passes, \$10 for member passes. Program dates and times: www.aurorapictureshow.org or 713/868-2101.

◆ **Never Been to Houston.** Aurora Picture Show presents this exhibition at the Lawndale Art Center featuring photos submitted by worldwide contributors who have "Never Been to Houston" and are being asked to participate in this experimental, virtual travelogue to the city that the *New York Times* opines "refuses to assume a simple identity." Contributors upload their photos daily to an on-line photosharing site, which is projected as a slideshow in Lawndale Mezzanine gallery. Free. Through April 14 at Lawndale Art Center, 4912 Main St. Info: 713/528-5858, www.fresharts.org, www.aurorapictureshow.org, or www.LawndaleArtCenter.org.

◆ **Perspectives 155: Francesca Fuchs.** The artist's first solo museum exhibition is comprised entirely of new work. The monumental canvases in this exhibition, some as tall as nine feet, will alternate between depictions of babies, flowers, and everyday domestic scenes. Through April 29 at the Contemporary Arts Museum's Zilkha Gallery, 5216 Montrose Blvd. Info: 713/284-8257 or www.camh.org.

◆ **The Pump That Jack Used.** Art League Houston presents a new exhibition and interactive multimedia installation of works by Anthony Thompson Shumate. In work that combines corporate design and contemporary art aesthetics, Shumate creates a subversive commentary on the modern American social landscape. Through April 27 at Art League Houston, 1953 Montrose Blvd. Info: 713/523-9530, alh@artleaguehouston.org, or www.artleaguehouston.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. Through July 22 at Holocaust Museum Houston's Central Gallery, 5401 Caroline St. Info: 713/942-8000 or www.hmh.org.

◆ **Showered in Watercolor.** The Watercolor Art Society-Houston (WAS-H) ushers in the month with a shower of art. Works feature water-media in a range of styles from abstract to realistic. A part of the proceeds from sale of the paintings benefit WAS-H. April 13-May 4 at the WAS-H gallery, 1601 West Alabama. Info/reservations: 713/942-9966 or www.watercolorhouston.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 info: 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.) Through April 13 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 May issue: Monday, April 9, 5 p.m.



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Business News

by Nancy Ford



STOP AND SMELL THE COFFEE Inversion Coffee House (above) has officially opened in the new home of Art League Houston (1953 Montrose Blvd., Suite A, 713/523-4866). The art café is on the former site of the visually dizzying Inversion House project created by artists Dan Havel and Dean Ruck, which slowed curious travelers on Montrose for much of 2006. Its image can now be seen on the side of Inversion Coffee House (inset). The shop offers a sandwich and salad menu, and features the work of a different local artist every three months (Daniel Adame, in April). Ask about the "frequent buyers card." Details: www.inversioncoffee.com.

IT'S A MENAGERIE OUT THERE Bonnie Russell and Deb Marshall, owners of **The Glass Menagerie**, have expanded their cyber-based business into the virtual world. Their custom-designed, hand-etched glass, stone, and metal items suitable as gifts for commitment ceremonies, anniversaries, and charitable benefits—all with



The Glass Menagerie

a GLBT flair—are now available at Male U Wear (415 Westheimer).

Glass Menagerie's website also offers home furnishing accessories, polished stones, custom jewelry, specialty candles, and many other items (including those pictured, above). Details: www.theglassmenagerie.net.

OUT MONEY MAKERS The National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce currently offers "early bird rates,"

starting at \$299, for people registering now for its **2007 International Business and Leadership Conference**, May 31 through June 2 in Miami, Florida. Topics at the conference of interest to the GLBT business owner include "How to Become an LGBT Certified Diverse Supplier," "Practical Insights from 100+ LGBT Focus Groups," "Media Training for Your Business or Your Chamber," and "Business Financing and Development."

The Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce is an affiliate member of the national chamber. Details: www.nglcc.org.

RAINBOW CONNECTIONS The Gay & Lesbian Rainbow Pages has launched its new website, featuring a page-by-page viewing capability and with banners that offers "our community choices, and targets us directly," president and chief financial officer Lonnie M. Davis says. The site now directly links to several video suppliers, including Wolfe Video and Amazon.

Following its March 8 release party for its 2007 Houston directory held at La Strada (322 Westheimer, 713/523-1014), Rainbow Pages presents "Rainbow Night at La Strada" on Tuesday evenings, 6-9 p.m. Houston Grand Opera has signed on to entertain. Details: www.rainbowpages.net.



ONE IS WILLIAMS AND THE OTHER IS GOLD A Houston outlet of the Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams furniture and design store is set to open later this month near River Oaks. The nearly 10,000-square-foot store, located at 3303 Kirby, will be similar to its Austin store (above) that opened last spring at 2785 Bee Caves Rd. (512/347-1616). Founders Gold and Williams, partners in life as well as in business, established their firm in 1989 and currently operate stores in the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

Customers who can't wait for the opening of the store can find MG + BW "relaxed design" merchandise at High Fashion Home (3100 Travis, 713/528-3838). Details: www.mgandbw.com.

Send your business news to OutSmart, 3406 Audubon Place, Houston, TX 77006, or e-mail to tim@outsmartmagazine.com.

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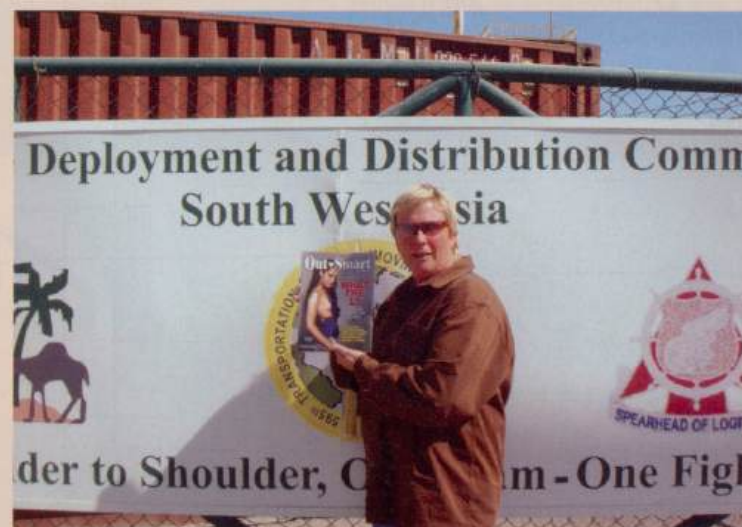
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Time Out



Rebecca D. Brack holds the OutSMART that traveled with her from Houston to Camp Spearhead, Kuwait.

SHOW US YOUR OutSMART!

"I was just home on R&R back in January," Rebecca D. Brack recently wrote in an e-mail from Kuwait. "I picked up the OutSMART magazine because it had been years since I had read one. I saw in the Time Out section that you may print a picture of a person who submitted a photo on their travels. I am in the middle of my third tour in the Middle East. I am sending you a photo from Camp Spearhead in Kuwait. For security reasons I cannot send much more information. Some friends that are currently serving our country in the military enjoyed the issue [January 2007 OutSMART] and would get a kick seeing their Camp featured."

"Regardless of the opposite opinions on this war, remember to always support the troops," continued Brack, who is a health, safety, and environmental coordinator for KBR, the Houston-based engineering-and-military-services contractor. "They are the true heroes."

Going out of town? Take OutSMART along. Snap a picture of yourself at your destination and send it to us. We will publish our favorites. Readers who submit photos that we print will be entered into a drawing for prizes. Send high-resolution images to editor@OutSmartMagazine or mail photos to 3406 Audubon, Houston, TX 77006.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Check out these events supported by OutSMART:

April 7. Jungle 15: Return To Lust, presented by Bayou City Boys Club and benefiting six HIV/AIDS service organizations including AIDS Foundation Houston. Info: www.bcbc.info.

April 8. Bunnies on the Bayou, benefiting 13 community organizations including AIDS Housing Coalition Houston. Info: www.bunniesonthebayou.org.

April 21. Casino Royale Houston, the Human Rights Campaign Houston benefit gala. Info: www.hrchoouston.org.



Bunnies on the Bayou members attended a VIP party on February 18.

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

BRAZOS RIVER BOTTOM

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

CHANCES/THE NEW BARN/G-SPOT

Nearly recovered from a November fire, Houston's premiere nightclub for lesbians has partially reopened with major renovations. Expanded with state-of-the-art video screens, larger dance floors, and cabaret and banquet seating, the multi-club continues to offer happy-hour specials, live music, and Sunday screenings of *The*

L Word. 1100 Westheimer • 713/523-7217 • www.chancesbar.com.

CLUB 1415

On Wednesday, Boys & Girls Club takes over the second-floor club space. Papi Chula 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. 5760 Chimney Rock • 713/666-7310 • www.clubinergy.com.

BEHIND THE BAR

WHO: Julia Baltimore

WHERE: Bartini, 1318 Westheimer, 713/526-2271



WHAT: Located just east of Westheimer's infamous curve, Bartini serves up drinks and fun with an urban twist in this multi-level nightclub.

YVONNE FERGEE

COUSINS

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

DEAN'S CREDIT CLOTHING

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

DECADES

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

EJ'S

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

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 Wough • 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.

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.



WHAT: Located just east of Westheimer's infamous curve, Bartini serves up drinks and fun with an urban twist in this multi-level nightclub.

YVONNE FERGEE

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 features 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,

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 nightspot, 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 Loui 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

Study 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.

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 • 713/528-7070.

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 Lache with DJ Cubanito on Wednesday. 810 Pacific • 713/529-SOBE (7623) • www.SouthBeachTheNightclub.com.

TONY'S CORNER POCKET

Located in the space that was formerly Keys West, new owner Tony 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.

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 bar! 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

Sorry to say this venerable island club has closed. Its website says the club lost its lease but swears that it will reopen in a new location, which would be good news for sentimental fans of Galveston's oldest drag bar. Stay tuned. 315 Tremont • 409/765-5805 • www.thekontiki.com.

THE PINK DOLPHIN

Opened by Eldridge Langlinis, 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) • 409/765-8092.

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 Aggie land, "our venue is always packed with the hotties," the owners promise. 121 North Main • 979/823-6174 • www.haloclubs.com.

Send bar/club news to
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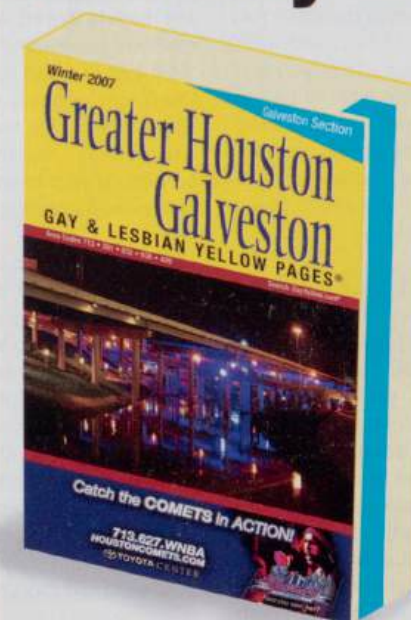
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SignOut

by Lilly Roddy

The important event for this month is that Saturn, planet of focus and direction, goes direct on April 19. After this date, many of you will be ready to take action on projects and tasks. Those things started after this date have a good chance of completion. • We do start the month with several challenging aspects in the sky, which will make the beginning of the month difficult. You may want to keep your expectations to a minimum until after the 19th. • The Full Moon on the 2nd reminds us of the importance of harmony in our relationships. The New Moon on the 17th inspires us to action for self-preservation. • Days to stay under the covers: April 1, 2, 4, 9, 22, 23, 26, and 29. Days you can come out from beneath the covers: April 7, 8, 19, 21, 27, 28, and 30.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). You are rather sensitive this month. You will not take kindly to being ignored or passed over. Be careful that you don't indulge yourself in too much chocolate to pacify those hurt feelings. Work can be very tricky. You may feel that you are being taking advantage of, and you will not keep these feelings to yourself. You are a bit on edge and may take things too personally. Your social life improves after the 7th. Make sure that you take advantage of this time, which is good for business and social combinations. Relationships will test even your perseverance.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). You are very career focused this month, and after the 6th, there is even a bigger boost to this area. If you are interested in applying for a new job or tackling some new project at work, this is the time. You are feeling very courageous and in touch with your intuition. Voice your ideas where you feel they are needed. Relationships have to be fun and enjoyable right now. You are not in the mood to work to make your relationship better. If your relationship is not able to stand up to a few tests this month, it may not make it. Make your communications extra clear.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). Your brain and heart are working well together this month. Ideas that seem to come out of the ether are really making an impact on you. You are almost inspired. If you are in sales, you seem to be magnetic and charismatic. If you are writing or talking, your ideas really connect with the people with whom you come in contact. Applying this energy to your business can ensure success in almost any venture this month. Keep a close watch on your diet because you will want to indulge, and your rationalizing side will be working better than usual. Do take some time to indulge in social activity by the end of the month.

LEO (July 23–August 22). With Saturn going direct in your sign, this is the beginning of the end of Saturn's journey through your sign.



ARIES (March 21–April 19). Happy Birthday to the Rams and Ewes. Now is your time to focus on yourself, and no one can complain. This is a great time for you to begin new projects and get your personal new year off to a super start. You want to spend some time with friends, but only if they are interested in a deep conversation. Superficial things don't interest you. Some of you are beginning to consider a career change. Keep working on this plan until the fall. Watch your spending—you can overdo it a bit. Finances are the focus for next month.

With Saturn here, you have been more serious than normal. With her leaving, you are more compelled to complete your task and prepare for the future. Anything or anybody with whom you invest your time and energy has to have a place in your future or will face elimination from your life. Sexual energies are heightened after the 6th. The end of the month may have you on the prowl if the connections at home aren't satisfying.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). Relationships take center stage for you this month. There could be fireworks if you or your partner are not on the same page. Many of you are just feeling bored with your partner and your routines associated with that part of your life. Well, get out and re-invent your relationships. Don't just let it wilt and die. Business partnerships are on this same axis. If they are doing well, take a proactive agenda. Keep working on getting your finances in order. You will need that even more next month.

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). Your work environment is spotlighted for you this month. You are interested in improving relationships between co-workers and yourself. You are certainly more sensitive to the interactions than usual. Some of you may even be relocating your office or work areas. Health is another big factor this month. Pay close attention to it. See the doctor, start an exercise regime, or get back to eating more healthily. Don't overwork yourself, or your body will pay the price. Spend some time with your partner or someone close. You will need the break from the work stuff.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). You have been very focused on getting your home environment into a comfortable place; you are now ready for a vacation or at least a break. Don't overload yourself this month, as you will not be interested in a lot of "have tos." Try to

keep your life based on fun and creative play as much as possible. That will help keep your interest up and help with follow-through. Relationships could be a very wonderful outlet. If you are single, get involved in some groups that have single potentials.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). The comfort of your home and your financial security peak your interest this month. First, this is a great month to entertain at home. You are also interested in making the place much more comfy. You could be remodeling or redecorating. If there are problems with the family, this should be a time that those rise to the surface. It may be harder than usual to sleep, but with some exercise, you could burn off that extra energy you are feeling. You will be more sensitive to stress than usual. Avoid it as much as possible.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). Communications are the primary focal point for this month. You are trying to get at the bigger picture of life, and you are trying to put it into reasonable terms so that it is manageable. After the 6th, you could be very short and clipped with people. So watch how you deliver your message if you wish to be heard. Otherwise, this is a great month to take classes, put out fires, and communicate with people from your past. Near the end of the month, you begin to center on aspects associated with your family and home.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). With Mars traveling through your sign, you have not had an easy month. He leaves your sign on the 6th, and you should be able to breathe a sign of relief. Money, self-worth, and skills and talents will be highlighted for the rest of the month. If you have some financial problems, this would be the month to get a handle on them. You don't want to be burdened or trapped by them. Otherwise, this is a great time to start a new money-making project. You are feeling very inventive and ready to take a risk.

PISCES (February 19–March 20). Wow, this is such a busy month for you. Get ready for action, decision-making, and impatience. You are certainly ready for a different career direction, a promotion, or a new place to work. In this area, you will be very impatient. You may need to be on your own. Relationships are a bit touchy because they may make you feel too inhibited or limited. This will be a month when you are supposed to be establishing new long-term goals in your relationships. If you are running up against walls, it is because you have finished what you started. Look for something new to renew the partnership.

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

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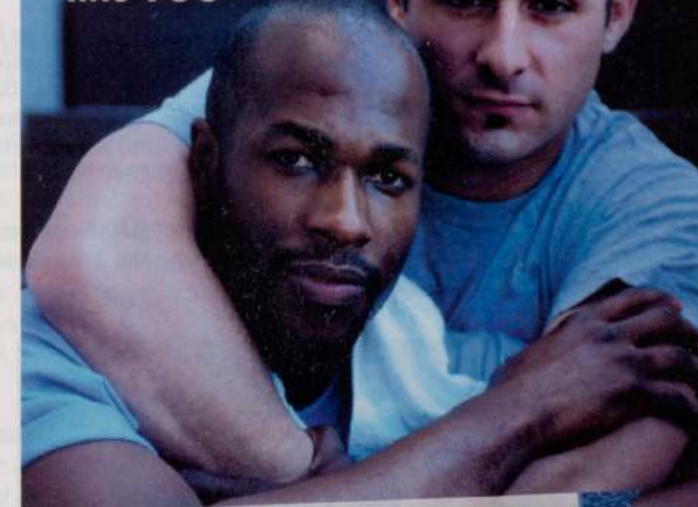


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OUT IN HOUSTON

1 Author/artist **Donna Garrett** at her farewell poetry reading, held Feb. 10 at Bead Atelier. Garrett has embarked upon an extended performance tour of China.

2 **Jaime Diaz** and **Jesse Marche** at AIDS Foundation Houston's 2007 AIDS Walk Kickoff party, held Jan. 18 at St. Arnold's Brewery.

3 A November fire that gutted the Chances side of the famed triplex for lesbians means all new décor when that wing of the club reopens, hopefully this month.

4 **Jesse Parra**, left, and Deem Reality's **J. Roy Hall** enjoyed the Gaminus Parade during Mardi Gras! Galveston, Feb. 10.

5 Freedom to Marry Week protestors gathered at the Houston City Clerk's office in City Hall in support of marriage equality, Feb. 14.

6 **Lorrie Lampson**, left, founder **Tracy Gary**, and **Rick Wilcox** at Inspired Legacy's Alternative Giving Market, held Dec. 2 at Té House of Tea. Inspired Legacies provides training and planning advice to prospective donors and nonprofit organizations.

7 **Pedro Asty** (a.k.a. **Jessica Mayes**) fronted Houston Gendernyn's first full production, *The Love Show*. The drag king show, which also featured performers from Austin and New Orleans, packed Club 1415 on Feb. 23.

8 On Feb. 15, **Cynthia Chappell**, Ph.D., associate professor at the University of Texas School of Public Health, spoke on the biology of sexual orientation and gender identity at the UH Law Center. Chappell's presentation was part of Freedom To Marry week events organized locally by the Foundation for Family and Marriage Equality.

9 **T Cooper** signed copies of her latest novel, *Lipschitz 6 or Two Angry Blondes*, at the Jewish Book & Arts Fair, held at the Jewish Community Center, Oct. 30. Read an interview ("ReadOut," July 2006) with the New York-based queer writer, who has family living in the Houston area, at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

10 Members of PFLAG-Houston represented GLBT visibility in the Martin Luther King Jr. parade, held in downtown Houston, Jan. 13.



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