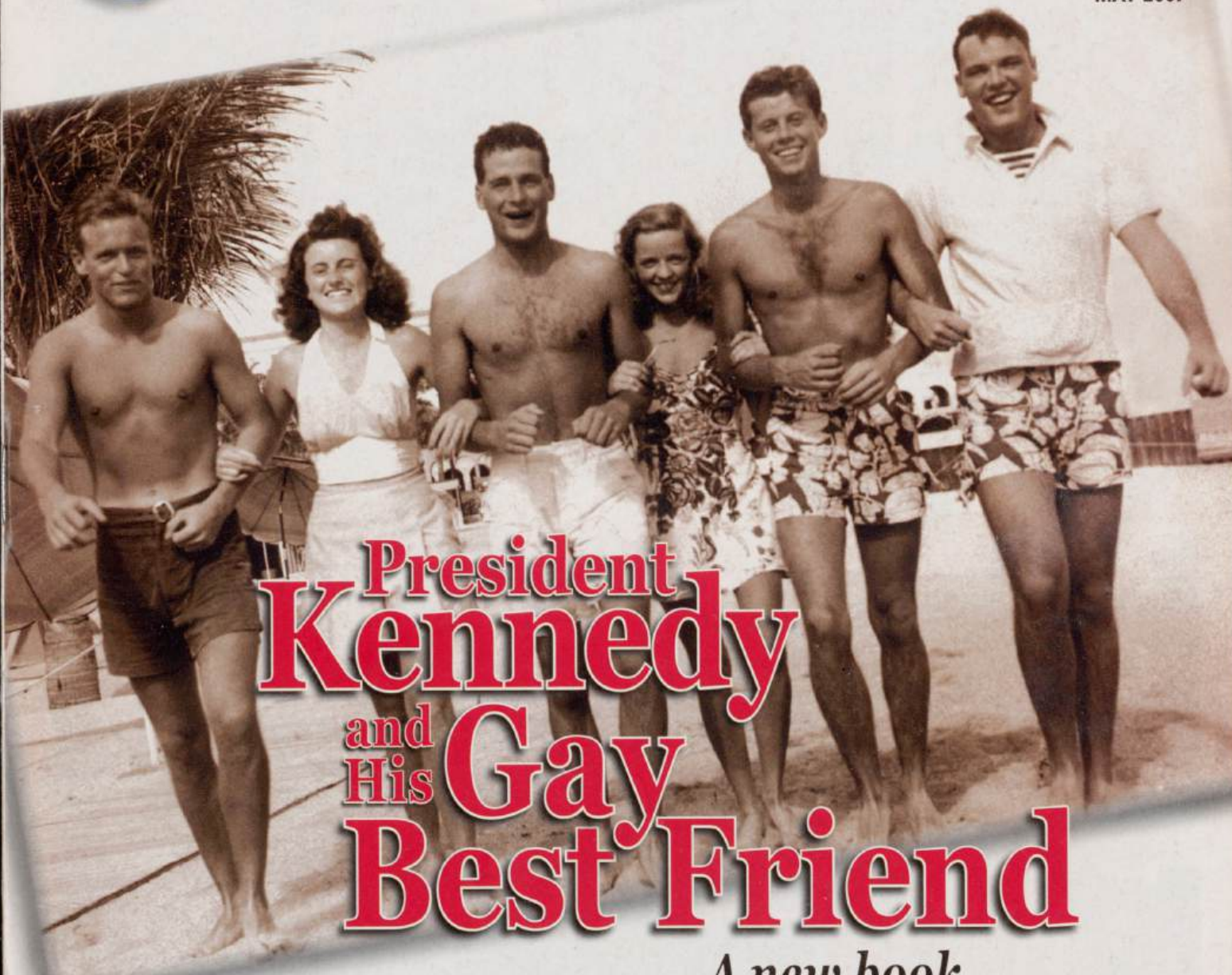


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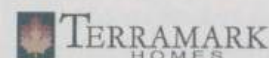
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About the cover: John F. Kennedy and his friend Lem Billings (at right) in Palm Beach, a photo from the new book *Jack & Lem: John F. Kennedy and Lem Billings—The Untold Story of an Extraordinary Friendship*. See page 38.

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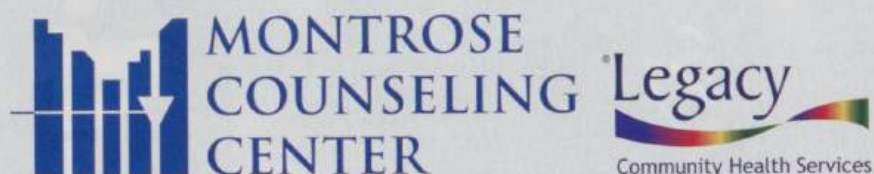


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Letters

TALK ABOUT PRIDE

Although I am not gay, nor am I an activist, I am shocked that the leaders of the Houston Gay Pride events would consider moving the parade and festival to another site, much less another date ["Two Sides of Pride," March *OutSmart*].

Even as an outsider to the movement, I can see the foolishness of disregarding the history of the movement. The purpose is to honor those who have gone before you and paved the way. Have you forgotten that? Montrose and June are significant to the history of your movement. It is sad that a white Yankee heterosexual female has to point that out to you.

Shall we move Martin Luther King Day to September to make more money also? How about Juneteenth? Shall we move that significant event to September so that we can appeal to more commercial interests?

I would never consider moving the festivities away from the area or the month of significance. It defeats the purpose of what you are celebrating.

As they say in the Northwest, Wake up and smell the coffee.

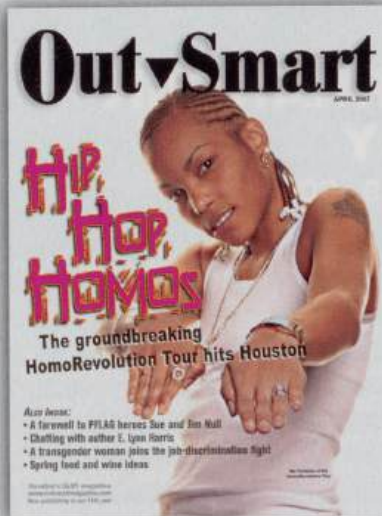
Jodi Pence
Katy, Texas

It was fairly obvious after reading the article that both "sides" in this debate are guilty of starting from fixed positions—and buttressing their arguments accordingly. In business circles, this generally leads to tunnel vision and sub-optimal results.

The Pride Committee's task force developed a report designed to answer "YES" to the question of moving the parade and festival out of Montrose and into downtown ... and to change the date to September. Somehow, the notion of creating a "destination weekend" overrode all logic. Forget the fact that September is the height of hurricane season or that it's likely to be just as hot as June in Houston. Ignore the fact that September is also home to other LGBT festivals and events around the country: Castro Street Fair, Folsom Street Fair, the Out & Equal Workplace Summit are just a few that came to mind without doing any heavy research.

The POMPOMs seemed to be a little more flexible, except on the basic points of keeping everything in Montrose and in June. They ignored some of the findings regarding the festival's ability to grow or continue to be successful at its present location... and there are some very real concerns about the parade route that need to be addressed with regard to safety and security.

All of that said, what really is called for here is a "re-do" on the analysis—starting with a process for everyone (as much as possible) to agree on what "success" will look like. Then we can move on to developing real, doable alternatives that will meet those goals for Houston Pride celebrations. I'm quite sure there is a winning formula that preserves our history and leverages the current successful



program to build and grow with our city.

Fortunately, the status quo is not so dire that an immediate change is required. We have the time to do it right.

Mike Craig
Houston

OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

Greetings from Taipei. I enjoyed the article on Hip-Hop ["Call It Homo Hop," April *OutSmart*] and was proud to see the young gay rappers step up. I just finished my first poetry venue, and there were so many young people

in the audience. My message is acceptance and diversity, and I am over here speaking loud and clear.

Kudos to Christopher Whaley, a young man I have had the opportunity to share a mic with. Houston is home for me, and *OutSmart* is still my magazine.

Donna Garrett
Taipei, Taiwan

EDITOR'S NOTE: As *OutSmart* senior editor Nancy Ford reported last September, Donna Garrett, the poet and performer from Houston, has moved to Taiwan to "share her art with the children and staff of the Taipei American School." Christopher Whaley reported on the *HomoRevolution 2007 Tour*.

MORE HIP-HOP RAP

Excellent, excellent article on gay hip-hop ["Call It Homo Hop," April *OutSmart*] and plugging the tour. One correction for your online edition—the address of Club Dignity is 1927 Scott St, not 127.

Gee, I wish I would have known you were making such a big splash out of this (it certainly is deserved). I would have encouraged you to plug my *Queer Music Heritage* show for April 23, on Gay Hip Hop.

JD Doyle
Houston

EDITOR'S NOTE: JD Doyle is producer and host of the *Queer Music Heritage* segment that airs on the fourth Monday of the month during *Queer Voices*, the 8-10 p.m. Monday KPFT radio program. Doyle is also co-producer of *Audiofile*, the monthly review program about new music of GLBT interest, for *This Way Out*, the internationally broadcast GLBT radio show. On May 28, Doyle will profile transgender musicians for his *Queer Music Heritage* segment.

VOICES OF THE NULLS

Just a thought—would've been nice if Ms. Ford had gotten the family info correct ["Null Void," April *OutSmart*]. Not only was my name spelled incorrectly, I just learned I have a brother in France instead of a sister.... Otherwise, it was a very nice article about my parents. Thank you for publishing it. I am very proud of them.

Kathie Null
Pennsylvania

A giant THANKS to both of you [senior editor Nancy Ford and editor Tim Brookover] for the great →

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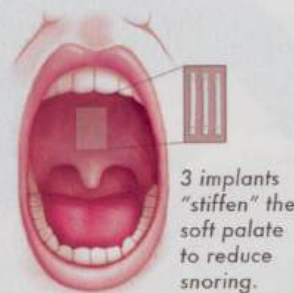


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Letters continued from page 8

story on us in the April issue. John Kellett and Irv Smith posted it on the PFLAG e-mail list, and I'm already receiving nice comments from people—some as far away as Atlanta. (But then, no place is far away in this e-mail age.) Thanks also to John Conroy for his lovely photograph. Gosh, we feel like celebrities....

This beautiful small city of Brevard, NC, is certainly a break from the bustle of Houston—which is good and bad. It's nice to slow down, but I'll have to search a little harder for ways in which to have meaningful impact. But I've already had one letter published in the local newspaper, so that's a step!

Sue and Jim Null

Brevard, North Carolina

A DIFFERENT TRUTH

One conclusion that a fair-minded reader can make after reading Daryl Moore's article, "To Tell the Truth" ["LeftOut," April OutSmart], is that all Republicans are evil and intent on looking after their rich friends and every Democrat is responsible for providing us the air we breathe. One example: that Bush lied about pre-war intelligence. Well, that would mean that virtually every Democrat in President Clinton's final year, including Senator Clinton through 2002 leading up to the Iraq war, lied regularly to us as well. And you are fully aware of this.

Is Daryl's only prism through which to view success and progress in America defined by one's political party? I bet his friends have to wear boots just to listen to him! If you missed his column, here's a summary: George Bush is corrupt, stupid, and incompetent. Democrats are the supreme judges of fairness and of good versus evil.

I hate to break this to you, Daryl, but if you're a career politician in Washington, chances are that you're part of any number of corrupt activities. Stuffing classified documents in one's socks; hiding money in a freezer; preferred treatment of an intern due to a sexual-harassment case; the list is endless.

I would like to ask Daryl a few questions about the omnipotent Democrat party:

1. How will it cut spending to balance the budget?
2. How will it win the war on terror?
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4. How does it defend our borders and U.S. sovereignty from illegals?
5. How does it propose to end a cycle of only about 50% of our high school students graduating on time?

You have great faith in government, Daryl. Show me three areas in its last 50 years where it has impressed you with their spending habits and problem-solving. I'll keep the boots handy.

Mike Crowe
Houston

CORRECTIONS

In the April issue, we inadvertently omitted information on the website of Los Angeles-based Greg Frederick, who took the cover photo of hip-hop performer Miz Fontaine. It is www.gregfrederick.com.

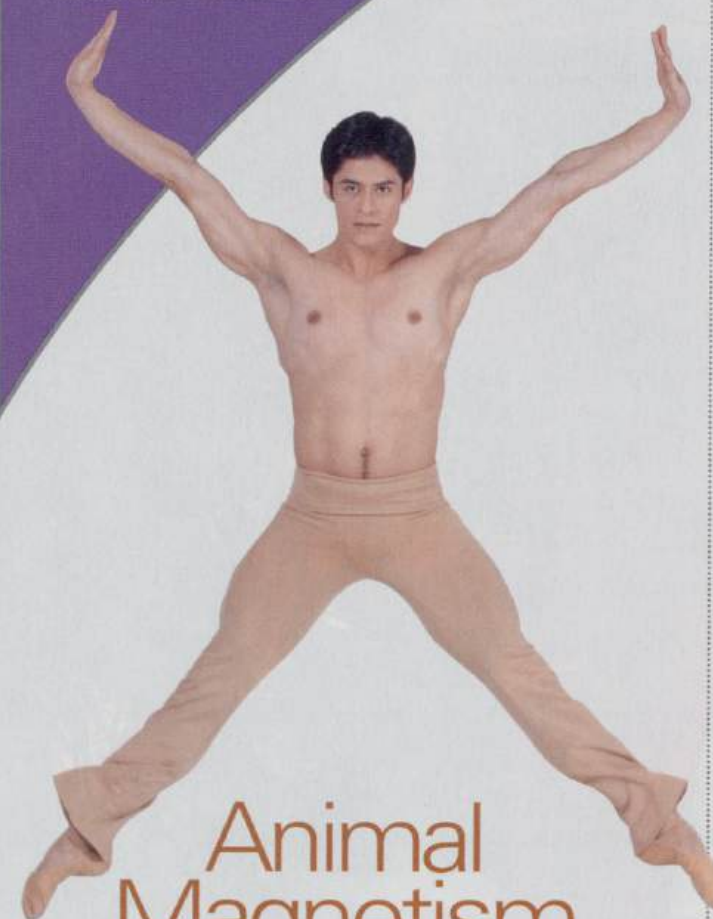
We misidentified activist and *Queer Voices* co-host Deborah Bell in the profile of Sue and Jim Null ("Null Void") in our April issue. Bell currently serves as the state president of the Texas chapter of the National Organization for Women.

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Randy Herrera in *Clear*
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Laura Richards in *Coppélia*
Photo: Drew Donovan

PROM AND PROPER.

It started as a dare that turned into a bet that morphed into a fundraiser. Proving that their dedication to HATCH knows no bounds, facilitators Bill Alexander, left, and Deb Murphy have agreed to an unusual wager. If members of the social/support group for gay, lesbian, bi, trans, questioning, and supportive youth raise \$5,000 earmarked for their June 8 prom, Murphy and Alexander vow to attend in full drag and a frou-frou gown (like the seemingly magical dress pictured here from Jewel's Boutique). Donations are already trickling in, Murphy says. The effort received an early push from GATHER, the Rice University GLBT student group.

But the kids need more financial support from the community to reach their goal. "I never underestimate the power of our youth to make anything happen," says Murphy, not a little warily. To contribute to the fun fund, call Alexander at 713/529-3590. The Historic Magnolia Ballroom is again the venue for the 15th annual HATCH prom. Tickets start at \$25 for adults; there is no charge for youth age 21 and under. Details: www.hatchyouth.org.

Photographed by Blase DiStefano



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- **Kidney stones** have been reported in patients taking REYATAZ. Signs or symptoms of kidney stones include pain in your side, blood in your urine, and pain when you urinate.
- **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.

Bristol-Myers Squibb

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

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If you or someone you know needs help paying for medicine, call 1-888-479-ADON (1-888-479-2643). Or go to www.ams.org



PATIENT INFORMATION

REYATAZ® (RAY-ah-taz)

(generic name = atazanavir sulfate) Capsules

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

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

What is REYATAZ?

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

Does REYATAZ cure HIV or AIDS?

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

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

Who should not take REYATAZ?

Do not take REYATAZ if you:

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

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

Tell your healthcare provider:

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

How should I take REYATAZ?

- Take REYATAZ once every day exactly as instructed by your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider will prescribe the amount of REYATAZ that is right for you.
 - For adults who have never taken anti-HIV medicines before, the usual dose is 400 mg (two 200-mg capsules) once daily taken with food.
 - For adults who have taken anti-HIV medicines in the past, the usual dose is 300 mg (one 300-mg capsule or two 150-mg capsules) plus 100 mg of NORVIR® (ritonavir) once daily taken with food.
- Your dose will depend on your liver function and on the other anti-HIV medicines that you are taking. REYATAZ is always used with other anti-HIV medicines. If you are taking REYATAZ with SUSTIVA® (efavirenz) or with VIREAD® (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate), you should also be taking NORVIR® (ritonavir).
- Always take REYATAZ with food (a meal or snack) to help it work better. Swallow the capsules whole. Do not open the capsules. Take REYATAZ at the same time each day.
- If you are taking antacids or didanosine (VIDEX® or VIDEK® 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.
- if you have liver disease including hepatitis B or C, your liver disease may get worse when you take anti-HIV medicines like REYATAZ.

R ONLY

- kidney stones have been reported in patients taking REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate). If you develop signs or symptoms of kidney stones (pain in your side, blood in your urine, pain when you urinate) tell your healthcare provider promptly.
- 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® (ipimozide, used for Tourette's disorder).
- PROPUISID® (cispripide, used for certain stomach problems).

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

- CAMPOTOSAR® (irinotecan, used for cancer).
- CRIVAN® (indinavir, used for HIV infection). Both REYATAZ and CRIVAN 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), PRILLOSEC® (omeprazole), or PROTONIX® (pantoprazole).

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

- VFEND® (voriconazole).

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

- CIALIS® (tadalafil), LEVITRA® (vardenafil), or VIAGRA® (sildenafil). REYATAZ may increase the chances of serious side effects that can happen with CIALIS, LEVITRA, or VIAGRA. Do not use CIALIS, LEVITRA, or VIAGRA while you are taking REYATAZ unless your healthcare provider tells you it is okay.
- LIPITOR® (atorvastatin). There is an increased chance of serious side effects if you take REYATAZ with this cholesterol-lowering medicine.
- Medicines for abnormal heart rhythm: CORDARONE® (amiodarone), lidocaine, quinidine (also known as CARDIOQUIN®, QUINIDEX®, and others).
- VASCO® (bepridil, used for chest pain).
- COUMADIN® (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®, INVIRASE® (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.
- BIAVIN® (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: Croscopolone, 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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Rev March 2007

OutFront

ANYTHING BUT COWARDLY.

The New York Times called *Design for Living* his "cleverest play" when it debuted in 1932. We call Sir Noël Coward's tribute to unconventional love a perfect appetizer to Pride month. In this Main Street Theater production directed by Claire Hart-Palumbo, *Design for Living* focuses on the comedy that occurs when boy meets girl meets boy, all of whom maintain, "It's amazing how a few insults can bring people together in three hours!" Performances featuring Ilich Guardiola (I), Shannon Emerick (c), and Dwight Clark as the amorous threesome begin May 10 and run through June 3 on Main Street Theater's Rice Village stage. Details: 713/524-6706, www.mainstreettheater.com.

Photographed by Mark Hiebert



DATEBOOK

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.

On May 6, **Houston Gay & Lesbian Parents** celebrates Mother's Day by attending a 2 p.m. performance of *Alice at Wonderland* at the 1894 Grand Opera House in Galveston. \$10. Reservations: hglp@hglp.org.

Central Market and Mockingbird Bistro are among the participants in **Taste of the Nation**, the annual food event benefiting Share Our Strength's programs to end child hunger, on May 6, 5-8 p.m., at the Houstonian Hotel, Club & Spa. \$85. Tickets: 713/355-7766, www.houstontaste.org.

People Opposed to Moving Our Parade Out of Montrose meets on May 9, 6:30 p.m., at the Houston GLBT Community Center. Details: John Nechman at 713/419-4067.

Houston GLBT Community Center holds the quarterly meeting following up on the 2005 **Conference on Houston's LGBTI Future** ("The Gay Agenda," January 2006 *OutSmart*) on May 12, 1-4 p.m. Details: 713/524-3818, www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org.

The Men's Gathering Houston, the discussion and support group for African American gay men, begins meeting on the second and fourth Saturday of the month, beginning May 12, 6-9 p.m., at the Houston GLBT Community Center. Details: tmghoustontexas@gmail.com.

National Transgender Advocacy Coalition, including media director and Houston activist Vanessa Edwards Foster, holds transgender lobby days on Capitol Hill on May 16-17 in Washington, D.C. Details: www.ntac.org.

Pink Lotus USA founder and filmmaker Carl Han ("Proud People," June 2006 *OutSmart*) hosts his **Love Party 2007** on May 19, 7:45-9:30 p.m., at Hollywood Bistro, featuring the premiere of his videos *In My Eyes* and *Secrets of Love 07*. Details: www.carlsjourney.com.

Positive Brothers United, the support/social for HIV-positive men and their families, holds a potluck on May 20, 2-5 p.m., at the Houston GLBT Community Center. Details: positivebrothersunit@yahoo.com.

STAG/Some Transgenders Are Guys meets on May 26, 5-6 p.m., at the Houston Area Community Services transgender center. Details: www.stag.transhouston.com.

More: www.outsmartmagazine.com

NEWS BRIEFS COMPILED BY NANCY FORD

HISTORIC ACCESS

Gay and lesbian leaders, including a Houstonian, recall a time the White House hosted them in a three-hour meeting—30 years ago

Thirty years ago, a start-up advocacy organization called the National Gay Task Force (now the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force) initiated the first-ever meeting between the White House and more than a dozen gay and lesbian leaders.

At that time Midge Costanza, the presidential assistant for public liaison for President Jimmy Carter, met with Task Force co-chairs and board members as well as representatives of gay and lesbian organizations for a briefing on policy issues affecting the gay community, as it was called in those pre-inclusive days. Costanza and the gay and lesbian leaders were joined by other Carter administration staff, including Robert Malson, the civil rights specialist for domestic policy.

The meeting marked the first time openly gay and lesbian leaders were welcomed at the White House and the first official discussion of gay and lesbian rights in the White House. Community activists who attended the 1977 meeting included Charles Brydon, Frank Kameny, William Kelley, Elaine Noble, Rev. Troy Perry, George Raya, Charlotte Spitzer, and Pokey Andeson, the Houston equal rights activist and author.

"I expected virtually nothing from this meeting. I did not expect to be really welcomed and really heard," Anderson said in a March 26 teleconference held by the Task Force. "However, we were welcomed, and we were heard."

The meeting took place in the historic Roosevelt Room, down the hall from the Oval Office, Anderson said. "It was a weekend, however, and Carter himself was not on the grounds of the White House."

The 1977 meeting lasted three hours, with Costanza and other White House staff posing thoughtful questions to the panel.

"We presented facts and policy, but we also spoke from the heart about things we all knew about deeply—the impact of discrimination against us and our community," Anderson said.

During the meeting, the point was made that Franklin Kameny had marched outside the White House in 1965, 12 years earlier.

"Here we were in 1977, and Frank was

inside the gates now," Anderson recalled. "Midge welcomed him, saying, 'Frank, I'm really glad to meet you finally. I'm just sorry that it has taken so long to come into a house that belongs to you as much as it belongs to anyone in this country.'"

"Elaine Noble said that some of us had been marching outside the White House gates so long, we wondered if there was an inside."

Anderson recalled 1977 as a time when Anita Bryant became famous for her anti-gay rhetoric, calling gays and lesbians "human garbage."

"But it was a very exciting time," added Anderson, who went on to help establish

the Gay Political Caucus, now known as the Houston GLBT Political Caucus. "Harvey Milk would be elected to public office within the year. It was a time of hope, when many of us thought all we needed to do was tell our story to America, and America would respond by making good on the national promise of freedom and opportunity for all."

The 1977 meeting was a critical milestone for the gay and lesbian community in terms of gaining access to the country's most powerful leadership. Accordingly, the criticism of the Carter White House that followed was intense. Appearing on the CBS news program *Face the Nation*, Carter press secretary Jody Powell responded, defending White House staff who participated in the meeting.

"Costanza was only doing her job when she used the Office of Public Liaison to allow groups to present issues that they would like the administration to address," Powell said at the time.

Costanza agreed, noting, "A basic tenet of American government is the right of citizens to petition that government."

Thirty years later, the invisibility that enveloped gay men and lesbians has dissipated, Anderson said. "However, the dynamic that makes one group of people into scapegoats remains."

"I salute the open hearts and open minds that people at the highest level of American government met us with 30 years ago, and hope to see a time like that again soon."



Charlie Brydon (l-r), Jean O'Leary, Bruce Voeller, Frank Kameny, Myra Riddell, and George Raya leave the White House after meeting with Midge Costanza, assistant to President Jimmy Carter, on March 26, 1977.

Photo by Bill Bland, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Records, Human Sexuality Collection.

continued on page 18

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JACK VALINSKI FETED FOR 25 YEARS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

In a roast-and-toast considered long overdue by many community leaders, longtime Houston equal-rights activist Jack Valinski was honored March 29 for his many years of service to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community. Sponsored by the Houston Equal Rights Alliance (HERA), the event was held at South Beach nightclub.

"Jack is one of our best and has served our community well for many years," HERA president Tammi Wallace said. "The entire GLBT community has benefited from his dedication."

Supporters packed the South Beach front bar to listen to comments from community leaders including activists Ray Hill and Ed Barnes, City Council member Sue Lovell, and others. City Controller Annise Parker presented Valinski with an official proclamation from her office, thanking him for supporting her in her campaigns for City Council and controller.

That night, HERA also introduced Jack's Pack, a new fundraising effort for the advocacy organization. Producer and co-host for the KPFT radio program *Queer Voices*, a board member of the Houston GLBT Political Caucus, and previous executive director of Pride Houston, Valinski was recently named director of operations for HERA, managing the GLBT community database (see "Milestones," page 20). Details: www.houstonera.org.



City of Houston Controller Annise D. Parker was among the people who honored activist Jack Valinski on March 29.

SPECIAL ELECTION EARLY VOTING CONTINUES THROUGH MAY 8

Early voting continues through May 8 for the special City Council election. The election on May 12 determines who will serve as the representative to City Council At Large Position 3, the seat that Shelley Sekula Gibbs vacated last year when she ran unsuccessfully for Congress.

Among the 11 candidates seeking the council position are two openly gay men, Log Cabin Republicans-Houston president Noel Freeman and Ivan Mayers. However, the Houston GLBT Political Caucus PAC endorsed Melissa Noriega, a special projects manager for the Houston Independent School District, in its March general meeting for

the position. Noriega, who is married to state representative Rick Noriega, will speak at the caucus monthly meeting on May 2, 7 p.m., at the St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Havens Center.

Voting information: www.hglbtpc.org, www.harrisvotes.org/Early_Voting.

LESBIAN HEALTH INITIATIVE EVENTS SEE CHANGES

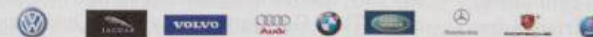
The Lesbian Health Initiative (LHI) has set its next Rainbow Health Fair for Saturday, June 2, 8:20 a.m.-3:15 p.m. Available services will be more limited compared to LHI screening events in the past. Pap tests will not be offered at this health fair, representatives said, though Pap tests continue to be available at no cost as a scheduled appointment at the Legacy clinic.

The health fair, held at the Legacy Community Health Services, will continue to offer mammograms through its collaboration with the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center Mobile Mammography Program at no cost to women ages 35 and up who are part of the greater Houston area GLBT community. (To schedule a mammogram, call 713/426-3356.)

LHI will again offer some other screenings for blood pressure, blood sugar, A1c for diabetes, total cholesterol, and blood typing. Health professionals will also be on hand to discuss the screening results with clients, upon request. Details: www.lhihouston.org.

continued on page 21

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Milestones

DIED Kay Longcope, the veteran journalist and founding editor and publisher of *The Texas Triangle*, on



March 29 at the Christopher House hospice in Austin. She was 69 and had been battling pancreatic cancer. Longcope and partner Barbara Wohlgemuth launched the Austin-based *Triangle* in October 1992. In 1996, Longcope and Wohlgemuth sold the

weekly newspaper, which developed into *TXN Magazine* under the ownership of the *Dallas Voice* (and ended publication in 2005). Before starting the *Triangle*, Longcope worked for 22 years at *The Boston Globe*, where she reported on civil rights and gay and lesbian issues.

Longcope is survived by Wohlgemuth, her partner of 17 years, and their sons Nick and Ted Blaine. "I just don't know how to convey to you what an amazing person she was," Wohlgemuth said in a March 30 *Austin American-Statesman* article about Longcope. "She said the newspaper inspired gay Austin citizens to identify with their community and instill a sense of pride. People just loved it because it was just different from any other gay paper. It was a paper they could show their parents or leave on their coffee table."

25TH ANNIVERSARY Mike Jernigan and Gaard Egeland recently celebrated their 25th anniversary as a couple. On the occasion of their silver anniversary, we asked the couple to offer some thoughts on maintaining a relationship. Mike (r) sent the following:



"It was 1982 in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He and his friends frequented the restaurant where I worked after school and that's how we met. The attraction was swift and powerful as are many romances of youth. Looking back, we seemed fearless and almost oblivious

to the challenges of our type of relationship in an early 1980's small-town mentality. We were lucky in many respects. Our relationship has seen conflict and resolution, individual growth and sacrifice, and the evolution of the gay lifestyle to a standard unimaginable 25 years ago.

"It does get easier and the grass does get greener on your side of the fence, if you stay on your side.

"A few quick tips we've found helpful:

1. Be proud of the two of you.
2. Listen, listen, and listen to your partner.
3. Expect acceptance from everyone.
4. Adapt once in a while.
5. Be kind to the mother-in-law.
6. Live far enough "out" to disrupt your social life.

7. Make each other laugh hard and often.
8. Foster individual growth."

OutSmart featured Egeland and Jernigan, who both competed in the sand volleyball competition at Gay Games VII in Chicago, in our Gay Games/Outgames coverage last summer ("They Got Game," July 2006 *OutSmart*).

HIRED Jack Valinski as director of operations for Houston Equal Rights Alliance. Valinski, who is former executive director of Pride Houston and producer and co-host of the KPFT radio program *Queer Voices*, will work on the GLBT voter database project.

HIRED Mary Urban as the new director of operations for Pride Houston. **Marian LaSalle** is the new Pride Houston director of development.

ENGAGED Ryan Lindsay and John Palmer in Central Park in New York City in September. Lindsay, who is an attorney, and Palmer, the well-known Houston artist, plan an October 13 wedding at The Lovett Inn.

SEND YOUR NEWS

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

News Briefs

continued from page 18

HOUSTON BLACK TIE DINNER NAMES BENEFICIARIES

After contributing \$80,000 to nine GLBT organizations in 2006, organizers of the Houston Black Tie Dinner say the organization plans to give even more to local service groups this year.

The recently announced seven beneficiaries of the 2007 Houston Black Tie Dinner, scheduled for November 10 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel Downtown, are the PFLAG/HATCH Youth Scholarship Fund, Bering Omega Community, PFLAG Houston, Montrose Counseling Center, Casa de Esperanza de los Niños, AIDS Foundation Houston, and AssistHers.

"We're proud to continue the tradition of celebrating and supporting such a diverse group of local organizations that began some 14 years ago with the first Houston Black Tie Dinner," president Scott Nettles said.

Since 1993, the Houston Black Tie Dinner has distributed more than \$2 million to local nonprofit organizations that primarily serve the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.

Details: www.houstonblacktiedinner.org.

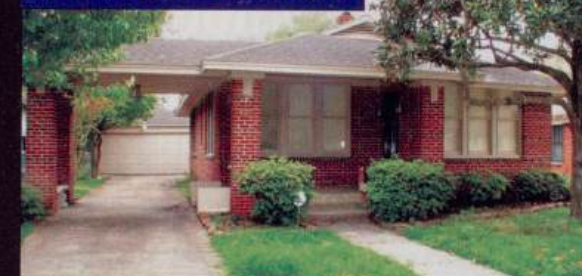
THE FUTURE OF PRIDE: WHAT DO YOU THINK?

In April, *OutSmart* began conducting a survey to poll readers about a possible move of the location and date of the Houston GLBT Pride Parade and Festival in 2008. Express your opinion at www.outsmartmagazine.com. To learn more about the issue, read "Two Sides of Pride," March 2007 *OutSmart*, and "Whither Pride?" January 2007 *OutSmart*.

ON THE WEB:

Read more News Briefs at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

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Important Information

INDICATION: ATRIPLA™ (efavirenz 600 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg) is a prescription medication used alone as a complete regimen or with other medicines to treat HIV infection in adults.

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 luh) 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 vih renz, em tri SIT uh bean and te NOE fo veer dye soe PROX ih FYOU may ste).

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 TRUVADA®. 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 tell 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: **Isotretinoin**® (acutane), **Propofol**® (disoprifol), **Verapamil**® (calan), **Haloperidol**® (halidol), **triazolam**, ergot medications (for example, **Wigrain**® and **Cafergot**®).
- ATRIPLA also should not be used with **COMBIVIR**®, **EMTRIVA**®, **EPVIR**®, **EPVIR-HBV**®, **EPZICOM**™, **TRIZIVIR**®, **SUSTIVA**, **TRUVADA**®, or **VIREAD**.
- Venlafaxine**® (Effexor) 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**®, **Intrase**® (abacavir), or **Brixin**® (didanosine); these medicines may need to be replaced with another medicine when taken with ATRIPLA.
- Crixivan**® (indinavir), **Methadone**, **Mycobutin**® (rifabutin), **Rifampin**, cholesterol-lowering medicines such as **Lipitor**® (atorvastatin), **PRAVACHOL**® (pravastatin), and **Zocor**® (simvastatin); or **Zolof**® (sertraline); these medicines may need to have their dose changed when taken with ATRIPLA.
- Videx**®, **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-up" 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 HIV and HBV 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 (sedative) 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. Rashes usually go 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.

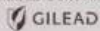
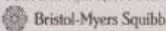
Do not use ATRIPLA if the seal over bottle opening is broken or missing.

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.

R ONLY

July 2006
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NEVER SAY NEVERLAND

Did Walt himself lay the groundwork for same-sex Disney weddings?

The spontaneous outburst of GLBT applause generated by the announcement should be sufficient to keep Tinker Bell alive and well for decades.

Walt Disney Co., the folks who brought us Disneys both Land and World, the same fine folks who had the good sense (not to mention, sense of humor) to cast our own Ellen DeGeneres as a fish in *Finding Nemo*, has opened its parks' and cruises' Fairy Tale Wedding packages to same-gender partners.

"We believe this change is consistent with Disney's longstanding policy of welcoming all guests in an inclusive environment," Disney Parks spokesman Donn Walker said, according to a recent story in the *Washington Post*.

Seems logical. What could possibly be gayer than a wedding held on Disney grounds, regardless of the lovebirds' affectional orientation? When attended by a best man dressed like Aladdin, even the straightest groom tends to look a bit fey.

But what would Walt Disney himself say about his company's über-inclusivity? The man died in 1966 (and no, he is not being cryogenically preserved. Cremated immediately following his death, his ashes are interred at the Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California. The term "Disney on Ice" means something entirely different).

Turns out Walt agrees with his company's inclusive attitudes, I learned after Googling "Walt Disney" and "quotations":

"We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things because we're curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths," Walt testified from the grave.

Just like everything associated with Disney, the ceremony doesn't come cheap. Like their hetero counterparts, homo couples are required to plunk down a minimum of \$4,000 for a commitment ceremony, Disney-style. Side dishes, like maybe Cruella de Ville acting as officiate, can elevate the tab to tens of thousands of dollars.

That not-insignificant coinage provides you and your significant other with an array of Disney bling and benefits, not the least of which is a ride in Cinderella's coach, representatives say. But perhaps best of

all, familiar Disney characters will attend the post-ceremony reception. (Go ahead and fill in your own drunken Uncle Goofy joke here.)

Regardless of the high price tag attached to its nuptials, "Disneyland is a work of love," Walt insisted. "We didn't go into Disneyland just with the idea of making money."

And that's more than just pretty talk from a dead guy with a thing for cartoons. Walt Disney Co. consistently scores the highest rating on Human Rights Campaign's corporate equality index for its treatment of its GLBT employees. This, despite an eight-year boycott of Disney joined by Focus on the Family, the American Family Association,

"I love Mickey Mouse more than any woman I have ever known."

—Walt Disney

and the Southern Baptist Convention in protest of Gay Days at Disney parks that barely dented the entertainment giant's estimated \$30 billion annual bottom line. Even if it had, chances are Disney officials wouldn't have yielded to the conservative groups' bullying, based on more of Walt's wisdom:

"Our heritage and ideals, our code and standards—the things we live by and teach our children—are preserved or diminished by how freely we exchange ideas and feelings," Walt said.

Besides, "We are not trying to entertain the critics," he continued, adding, "I'll take my chances with the public."

Considering the boycott and its residual bad mojo from some of America's most influential pulpits, one would have thought that pulling off such inclusive practices as same-sex marriage ceremonies would be nearly impossible—but not for Walt.

"It's kind of fun to do the impossible," he said. "I believe in being an innovator.... I don't want the public to see the world they live in while they're in the park. I want them

to feel they're in another world."

Alarmingly, more Disney Googling led to reports of Walt being anti-Semitic, anti-Arab, anti-woman, and a supporter of McCarthyism. It's unclear exactly what kind of theme parks these themes might be best promoted in—Communists of the Caribbean, perhaps?

Regardless, Walt recognized early on the impact a sympathetic Dumbo or a forgetful Dory would have on his viewing audience, and he won 22 Academy Awards to prove it.

"We have created characters and animated them in the dimension of depth," he said, "revealing through them to our perturbed world that the things we have in common far outnumber and outweigh those that divide us."

Perhaps most telling of all is a glimpse into his inclusive motivation is this confession offered by Disney, despite his 41-year marriage to his wife, Lillian: "I love Mickey Mouse more than any woman I have ever known."

Well!

If that weren't enough proof that Walt coulda-woulda-shoulda been a PFLAG daddy, check out these closing lyrics of "A Dream Is a Wish Your Heart Makes" warbled by Cinderella:

"Have faith in your dreams and someday your rainbow will come smiling through. No matter how your heart is grieving, if you keep on believing, the dream that you wish will come true."

That's right. Rainbow.

"When you believe in a thing, believe in it all the way, implicitly and unquestionably," Walt also said.

Admittedly, the quotes in this column attributed to Walt Disney have been taken completely out of context. The man, after all, has been gone for decades. Maybe the thought of same-sex couples cavorting hand-in-hand throughout his parks is, in reality, making old Walt's ashes spin in a *Fantasia*-like cyclone.

But based on the spirit of these random quotes, maybe not.

So thanks for at least seemingly believing in equality for all couples in love, Walt. Maybe it really is a small world after all. ■

THE RIGHT'S TOM CRUISE

Ex-gay movement gives its spokesman the boot. But why?

For nearly six years, Richard Cohen was the Tom Cruise of the so-called "ex-gay" movement. His book, *Coming Out Straight*, was all the rage and catapulted him into the realm of superstar status. In 2000, he was even a featured therapy trainer at the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality's (NARTH) annual convention in Washington's prestigious Mayflower Hotel.

Many of the religious right's elite, such as Rev. Lou Sheldon and Bob Knight, graced the gilded conference hall, which I also attended while working on my book, *Anything But Straight*. During Cohen's presentation, he discussed how men who are "transitioning into heterosexuality" must find mentors.

"I solicited all three of my straight male mentors," Cohen recalled. "Would you like me to service you? I'm really good at it," I told each one of them. When they rejected me, I knew they loved me for who I am."

Most of the middle-aged conservatives in

the crowd looked stunned and a tad sickened by Cohen's inappropriate remarks. Still, they followed his orders to take off their shoes and massage each other's backs while new age music piped through the speakers. "Touch, yes! Sex, no!" Cohen bellowed.

Following his demonstration, there was a mad rush to Cohen's booth where he was hawking his book. The right wing was so infatuated with their new gay-healing guru that they ignored passages in his book that revealed he once belonged to a bizarre sex cult. They even "overlooked" disturbing pictures of him banging a tennis racket against a pillow while yelling out his father's name.

Cohen was soon catapulted to the board presidency of Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays (PFOX). Until Cohen's arrival, the group was primarily an outlet for its leader, Regina Griggs, to vindictively get back at her son for coming out to her as gay. Cohen quickly seized control of the message and ludicrously cast ex-gays as victims of dis-

crimination and set PFOX's sights on getting their theories into the public schools.

Like Tom Cruise, Cohen's bright star eventually crashed because people started to realize that this guy just might be nuts. The wheels began to fall off the car when I got a tip that Cohen had been kicked out of the American Counseling Association in 2002. He managed to hide this career suicide from the public until I informed the media in 2005.

With his counseling career in ruins, Cohen turned to the media as his only channel to attract new clients to his "healing" seminars. However, his act that played so well at the NARTH convention made him look like a quack to mainstream Americans. On his appearance on CNN's *Paula Zahn Now* earlier this year, Cohen actually performed his tennis racket routine to the guffaws of million of viewers. He made a further buffoon of himself on ABC's *Jimmy Kimmel Live* where boxer George Foreman looked as if he

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A QUESTION OF MORALITY—BUT WHOSE

Peter Pace can't pick and choose with 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell'

Two news items in a single week in March together shed some interesting light on the current state of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT).

First, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Gen. Peter Pace, was asked by newspaper reporters to explain why he supports DADT. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, Pace defended the policy thus:

"I believe homosexual acts between two individuals are immoral and that we should not condone immoral acts," Pace said. "I do not believe the United States is well served by a policy that says it is OK to be immoral in any way."

"As an individual, I would not want [acceptance of gay behavior] to be our policy, just like I would not want it to be our policy that if we were to find out that so-and-so was sleeping with somebody else's wife, that we would just look the other way, which we do not. We prosecute that kind of immoral behavior," Pace said, apparently referring to the military's own constitutionally questionable ban on sodomy.

The comments generated lots of criticism, including from conservative Sen. John Warner (R-Va.), a former Secretary of the Navy, who said, "I respectfully but strongly disagree with the chairman's view that homosexuality is immoral." Pace himself later clarified that he was expressing only his "personal" views.

A significant and growing minority of Americans disagree with Pace that homosexual acts are immoral.

Even if one thought homosexual acts were immoral, however, it doesn't necessarily follow that gays should be disqualified from service. Lots of people do immoral things—lie, cheat, steal, commit adultery, commit crimes, take the Lord's name in vain, are gluttonous and lustful, worship idols—but are not automatically disqualified from service on that account. In fact, whatever they think of the morality of homosexual sex, most Americans tell pollsters that they think gays should be able to serve.

Further, Pace's view that allowing gays to serve openly would send a grand cultural

message that we condone immorality is very questionable and oddly reductionist. We don't send a message that lying is acceptable by allowing liars to serve.

And the predominant message of allowing gays to serve openly would not seem to be that we condone immorality but that we believe it is good and moral to serve in the military, especially in its hour of need. Why does Pace think that everything a gay person does is mainly about sex rather than, say, honorably serving one's country, as thousands have done in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan?

All that aside, Pace did us a service by frankly expressing his own moral perspective in defense of the policy. A great many people, in and out of the military, share his idealistic moral perspective and would have answered in just the way he did. Though Pace and others would no doubt advance other reasons for excluding gays from service, it's revealing that the moral objections came first. They seem to have been the main reason for the policy from the start.

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LeftOut continued from page 26

wanted to gi-ve him a left hook. He further disgraced his image on Showtime's *Bullshit*, starring comedians Penn and Teller.

However, Cohen's "jumping on Oprah's couch moment" came on his appearance with me on Comedy Central's *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*. To prove he was heterosexual, Cohen belched and cursed and when he was feeling the heat, he got up in the middle of the interview to "shake it off."

Cohen's antics were even more than PFOX and NARTH could take and they heaved him overboard, purging their websites this month of his kooky books and articles. The largest ex-gay group, Exodus International, even put out a statement saying they do not endorse the counselor's work.

In kneecapping their "Top Gun," these groups have been quite disingenuous. Richard Cohen did nothing wrong other than make public what the right wing strongly endorsed and applauded behind closed doors. Cohen's only real sin is that he went on television. As far as his outrageous and ridiculous therapies, NARTH and PFOX intimately knew about them for at least six years, as they are vividly discussed in his book. So, these disloyal groups are not dumping Cohen because he is off his rocker, they are dumping him because he is off-message.

Cohen may be the fall guy, but the fact that conservatives fell in love with him in the first place demonstrates how they will embrace practically anyone who is willing to make their living condemning homosexuals.

Wayne Besen, author of *Anything But Straight: Unmasking the Scandals and Lies Behind the Ex-Gay Myth* (Harrington Park Press), writes a weekly column published at www.waynebesen.com. Regular "LeftOut" columnist Daryl Moore returns next month.

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OutRight continued from page 27

To see why Pace's honesty is so valuable, consider a second DADT news item the very same week. Discharges for homosexuality dropped again in 2006, down to 612 from 1,227 in 2001. Since the advent of the post 9/11 phase of the war on terror, when the country most needs the skills and bodies of its citizens on the front lines, expulsions for homosexuality have dropped by 50 percent.

The common and practical concerns about service by gay personnel expressed when President Clinton proposed lifting the ban in 1993—that there would be problems of unit cohesion and morale, damage to enlistment and retention rates, invasion of soldiers' privacy—have been subordinated to the intense need for the service of these people we've trained and invested in.

When unit cohesion and morale are most important, in time of war, homosexuality is comparatively unimportant. Similarly, the experience of other nations' militaries is that a few open homosexuals are not disruptive and that their service is more valuable than whatever small amount of unease it might cause a few straight soldiers.

Putting these two events together—the morality concerns expressed by Gen. Pace and the practical decline in DADT enforcement—yields an insight about how the respective views on the policy have flipped since 1993.

Back then, advocates of gay military service were scolded that the military is an intensely practical venture whose mission is to deter and fight wars—not a forum for advancing social causes (e.g., the egalitarian claims of homosexuals).

Now advocates of gay military service argue with considerable and growing empirical support that the military is an intensely practical venture whose mission to deter and fight wars is aided by allowing gays to serve without fear of reprisal and expulsion—not a forum for advancing social causes (e.g., the idea that homosexuality is immoral).

Under DADT, some 10,000 military personnel—including many with critical skills in which there's a shortage, like Arab linguists—have been expelled from service solely because it's learned they're gay.

It is now opponents of gay military service who are left to advance a form of idealism that is disconnected from, and unsupported by, considerations of actual military need. Unpersuasive in abstraction, opponents of DADT have increasingly shifted to the practical; shorn of a practical foundation, supporters of DADT must increasingly shift to the abstract.

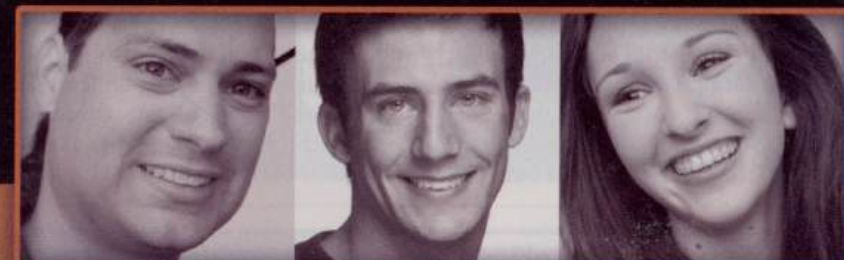
Writing from the conservative side, Dale Carpenter began his column for OutSmart in 1994, when he lived in Houston. Now residing in Minneapolis, Carpenter is a University of Minnesota Law School professor.



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SPECIAL ELECTIONS, SPECIAL CONCERNS

Statewide contests will be decided by a handful of faithful voters

Houston's newest City Council member will barely finish celebrating a special election victory May 12 before he or she jumps into extremely complicated city FY2008 budget discussions. In fact, the new Council member will arrive at the council table about the same time as the mayor's budget and will be expected to cast a vote on it by the end of June. The city should end this year with a "surplus," but don't expect that to go far in the new year with still-looming pension underfunding, dramatic increases in public safety spending, as well as continuously rising employee health-care costs.

Vote May 12

Special elections are won by those who show up! The very few who show up. Every registered Houston voter may cast a ballot in

the May 12 election. Perhaps seven percent of them will. There will also be a state constitutional amendment on the same ballot, having to do with *ad valorem* taxation of homesteads of the elderly, which should be dominated by city voters.

Eleven candidates are vying for the open at-large Houston City Council seat created by the resignation of Shelley Sekula-Gibbs. The front-runner appears to be Melissa Noriega. Many of you may have heard of Melissa because of her interim service as a state representative during her husband Rick's service in Iraq. The Houston GLBT Political Caucus, among many others, endorsed her. City employee Noel Freeman, head of the local Log Cabin Republican chapter, is also seeking the seat in his first run for public office. The winner will simply keep campaigning, because the seat must be defended on the November ballot.

Rainbow Across Texas

• **SAN ANTONIO** One-term incumbent District 7 City Council Member Elena Guajardo, an open lesbian, seeks her second and last term. Unfortunately, San Antonio boasts the country's strictest term limits, a total of four years. Guajardo (www.voteelena.com) received high marks in her first term. At a recent Houston fundraiser, she talked about how her presence at the political table has translated into GLBT progress: The police chief consults her; a GLBT rep will help pick the next police captain; police cadets will receive more training in GLBT issues from GLBT community members. When she talked about gaybaiting, the newly confident council member challenged, "Bring 'em on."

When I met her two years ago, she bristled at the thought of facing gaybaiters. →

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InsideOut

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But that was before her Victory Fund candidate training. Hopefully, she'll seek another position after her council service ends.

• **DALLAS** Openly gay City Council Member Ed Oakley is a serious contender as he campaigns to become the first openly gay mayor of a large U.S. city. Oakley (www.edoakley.com) has represented two council districts in the southern sector and near North Dallas.

A recent fundraising letter was signed by 49 prominent residents, including influential developer Trammell S. Crow. If not this race, look to see a breakthrough win in one of America's top 10 cities in the next few years.

• **AUSTIN** The state legislature's in session until June 1. If you want to stay connected to bills that affect the GLBT community, check www.EqualityTexas.org, our GLBT lobbyist's website.

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) at 2 and 8 a.m. and 2 and 8 p.m.



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UNTIL THERE'S A VACCINE

Envisioning a world without AIDS is the first step

The numbers are staggering. Since 1981, over 25 million people across the globe have died as a result of AIDS. Worldwide, it is estimated that 42 million people are currently living with HIV, and lamentably, another 14,000 become infected with HIV every day! The most heartbreaking aspect of this situation is that it doesn't have to be this way. We know how HIV is transmitted and we know how to prevent new infections.

Since the early 1980s, educational interventions and social marketing initiatives have raised awareness of HIV and AIDS and provided specific prevention information. Over the years, effective prevention strategies—condom use, reduction in the number of sex partners, diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections—have all been shown to slow the spread of HIV. The ultimate message is a vital one: HIV is preventable.

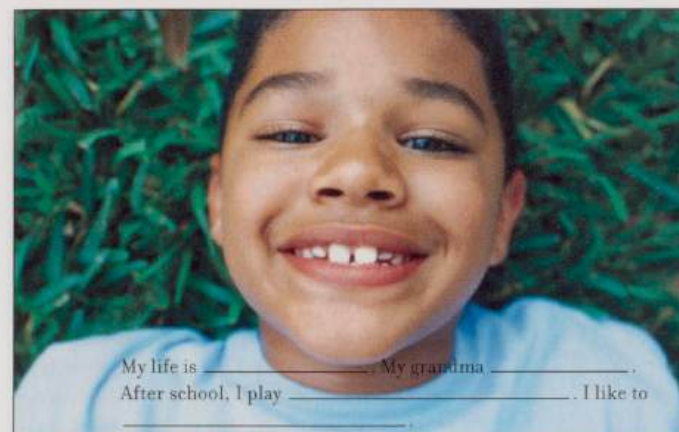
Sounds simple enough, but existing prevention methods require us to change our behaviors. Let's be honest—that's never easy. Behavior change is complex and influenced by a variety of political, cultural, educational, religious, and economic factors. In addition, we humans tend to resist behavior change, especially when it comes to activities that make us feel good and appeal to our hedonistic impulses. No wonder we have such a hard time changing the behaviors that allow for transmission of HIV.

What else can be done to put an end to HIV and AIDS? Researchers are working on microbicides that can be formulated in gels, creams, films, or suppositories and applied inside the vagina or rectum to protect against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. These substances will be particularly helpful to sex workers and women in developing countries who often do not have the option of requiring their male partners to wear

a condom. Once developed, microbicides will be another useful weapon in our HIV prevention arsenal, but no panacea. What we really need is a preventive vaccine for HIV.

Such a vaccine would prepare our immune systems to recognize and protect itself against HIV. Ideally, the vaccine would be given to uninfected persons in order to keep them from becoming infected with HIV. We've seen preventive vaccines developed to fight other deadly diseases like smallpox and polio, so why not HIV? Sounds simple enough.

Unfortunately, traditional approaches to vaccine development have been ineffective. Creation of an HIV vaccine has proven to be an arduous task because of the nature of HIV itself. First of all, HIV mutates quickly and frequently and has a knack for avoiding detection by the immune system, all of which pose significant barriers to the development of an effective vaccine. →



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AIDS Watch

continued from page 34

Another major obstacle to vaccine development has to do with HIV diversity. There are nine subtypes or clades of HIV, and those clades vary in prevalence around the world. For example, Clade B is the cause of the HIV epidemic in North America and Europe, while Clade C is the culprit in South Africa and India and is responsible for 50 percent of the HIV infections worldwide. Such diversity within HIV will require that scientists address the challenge of developing a single vaccine with a broad base of protection against multiple clades, or they must design several specific vaccines to address the various clades.

That's no small task. It is an endeavor that will take time, money, and coordinated approach. Over the past 20 years, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases has enrolled more than 12,000 volunteers in HIV vaccine clinical trials testing 52 different vaccine candidates. Currently, through the combined efforts of public and private entities, there are more than 30 vaccine trials under way on four continents, including a trial right here in Houston. Despite the considerable time and effort devoted to this cause, no preventive HIV vaccine is looming on the horizon. Most estimates suggest it will be 10 years and \$150-\$250 million before we see the development of a viable vaccine.

But don't despair. There is much we can do in the interim. We can educate ourselves and our communities about the importance of preventive HIV vaccine research. Visit the NIAID HIV Vaccine Research Education Initiative website at www.bethegeneration.org to learn more about vaccine trials and the progress being made in the development of a vaccine. Share what you learn with others and reinforce the idea that preventive HIV vaccines are the best hope for controlling the AIDS pandemic.

Keep working on your behavior change. Be abstinent or monogamous or limit your number of sex partners. Use condoms and other barrier methods every time you have sex. Don't share needles for any reason. It's that simple. Stay safe so you can survive to see the creation of an effective HIV vaccine.

Then, on May 18, the 10th annual HIV Vaccine Awareness Day, show your support for HIV vaccine research by wearing your red AIDS ribbon upside down to symbolize a "V" for vaccine. And on that day, let's all envision a world without AIDS.

Kelly McCann is the chief executive officer of AIDS Foundation Houston, which recently marked its 25th year of service. Details: www.aidshep.org.

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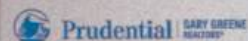
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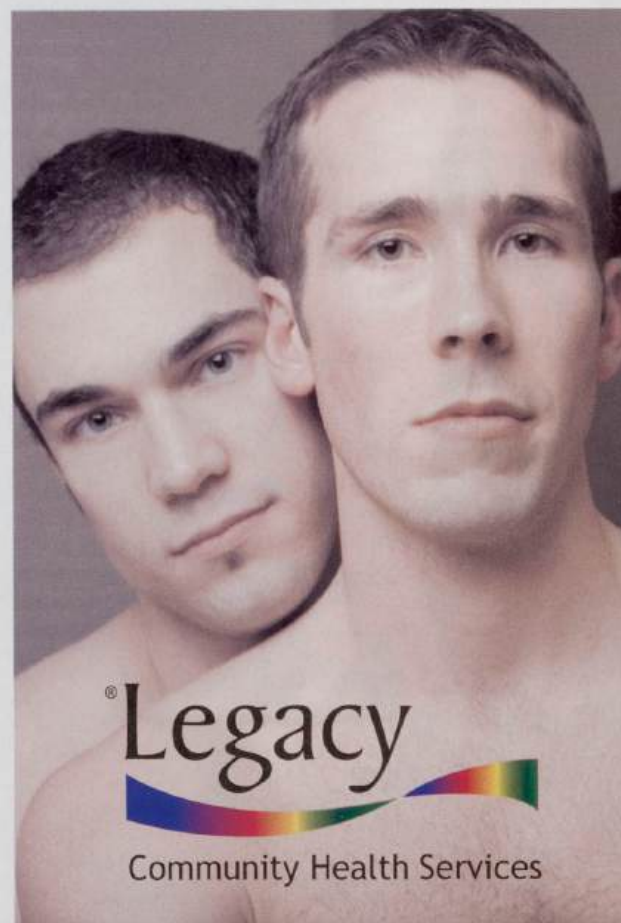


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Best Friends for Life

In the spring of 1933, at the small private school of Choate, in Wallingford, Connecticut, two young men began a friendship that was to last for the remainder of their lives. LeMoyne Billings, a closeted gay teenager, was immediately attracted to the young Jack Kennedy. Though evidence suggests Lem made early sexual advances that Kennedy spurned, their friendship flourished

by Blase DiStefano

For those readers too young to remember the White House in the early '60s, here are a few facts: It was home to the youngest president ever. President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was 43 years old (a first ... and a last) and Catholic (also a first ... and a last). The first lady was Jacqueline Ken-

nedy, and the couple had two children, Caroline and John Jr. The First Couple had many gay friends, though the early '60s was not a time when that was discussed.

I spoke with David Pitts about his new book, *Jack and Lem: John F. Kennedy and Lem Billings—The Untold Story of an Extraordinary Friendship* (Carroll & Graf Publishers).

Blase DiStefano: How did you find out about Lem Billings?

David Pitts: I found out because of my own interest in the Kennedy presidency. I read all the JFK books, and I became aware of Lem Billings over the years in these books. Some writers suggested that he was gay, and Gore Vidal in his memoir *Palimpsest* even called Lem "chief faggot of Camelot"—he definitely picks up on Lem being gay. So it was kind of hinted at, but nobody really looked into it.

What made you decide to go this route?

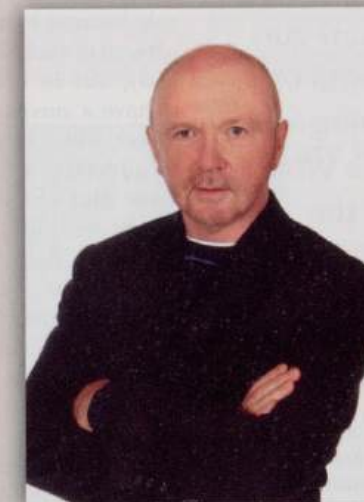
It was kind of a circuitous route. When I left full-time journalism in 2003, I knew I wanted to do a JFK book because of my interest in the Kennedy presidency. I didn't want to do the same old story that everybody keeps on doing every time about the Cuban Missile Crisis and so on. So I thought

to myself that Lem Billings—this kind of a shadowy figure that I'd read about over the years—was probably a close political confidant of the president and that there was a story here about his political influence behind the scenes.

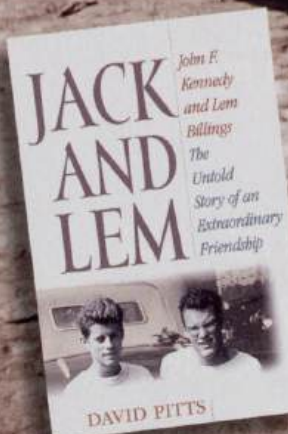
That's what I thought was going to be the story when I started this project. And it was only after I got into the interviews and started looking into the documents and the letters that I realized this was a personal friendship and not a political friendship.

Was it common knowledge in the administration that Lem Billings was gay?

It's not clear that anybody in the administration knew for sure. They certainly thought that because he was at the White House so often, he seemed misplaced there. Some other people who weren't in the administration but were friends of →



Kennedyphile: author David Pitts



Jack Kennedy and Lem Billings with Dunker, the dachshund they bought while on their trip to Europe in 1937. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM, COLUMBIA POINT, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
INSET: author David Pitts' new book about the relationship between President John Kennedy and Lem Billings.

Best Friends for Life continued from previous page

the president certainly picked up on it. I had an interview with Ben Bradlee [former executive editor of *The Washington Post*] for example, and he certainly sensed LeMoyné was gay. But it was a different time, and there was no real discussion about it, and Ben Bradlee told me he didn't bring it up with the president and the president didn't bring it up with him. So I would say it was generally sensed but not known.

Is there any indication that Lem was in love with Jack?

Yes. There are various indications of that. I think the best example is a quote that I used in the book. He's on the record as saying, "Jack made a big difference in my life. Because of him, I was never lonely. He may have been the reason I never got married." So there are various indications of his profound attachment to Kennedy.

Is there any indication of Jack's response to his finding out that Lem was gay?

There is a response early on in the friendship. LeMoyné attempted a sexual proposal to John Kennedy—this was at Choate.

About how old were they at this time?

This would be when Lem was 17 and Jack was 16. Although we don't have a record of what Lem wrote to Jack, we do have a record of Jack's response, and he essentially rebuffed the sexual advance but not the friendship.

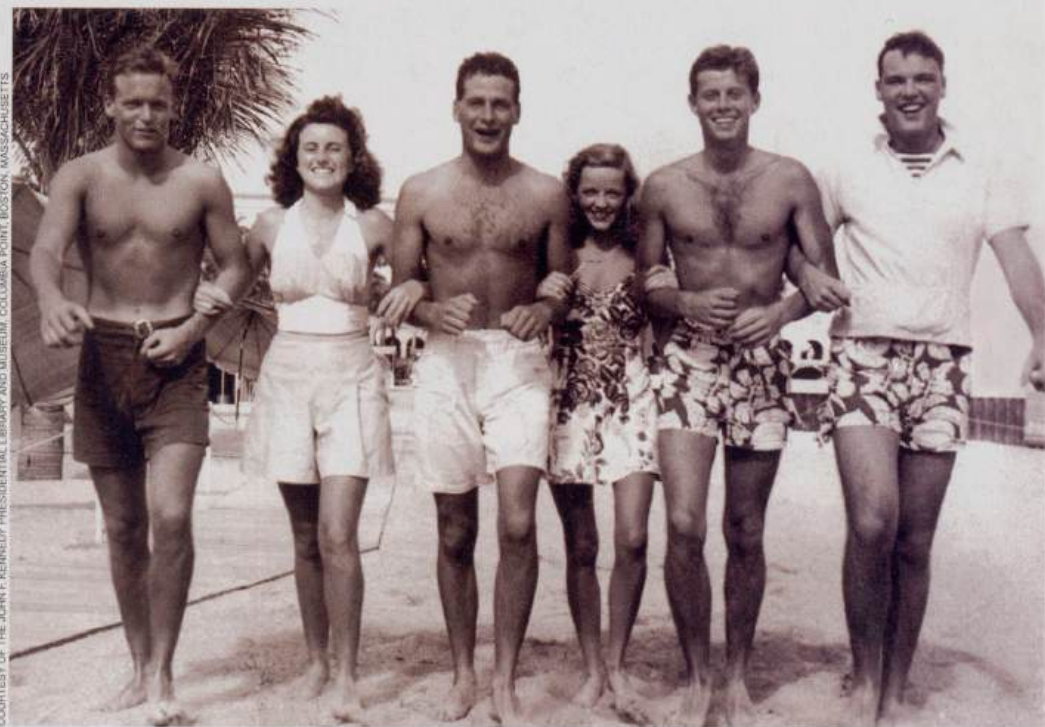
So how do you account for Kennedy, especially being Catholic, keeping the friendship going and not being homophobic?

Very, very surprising, especially in the 1930s before the Kinsey reports, before everything. This was a question I asked various people who knew John Kennedy, including Gore Vidal and Ben Bradlee.

"I mean, I could have had a wife and a family, but what the hell—do you think I would have had a better life having been Jack Kennedy's best friend, having been with him during so many moments of his presidency, having had my own room at the White House, having had the best friend anybody ever had—or having been married, and settled down, and living somewhere?"



—Lem Billings, as quoted in David Pitts' *Jack and Lem: John F. Kennedy and Lem Billings—The Untold Story of an Extraordinary Friendship*



Arm in arm (l-r): Harry Dixon, Kick Kennedy, John Coleman, Charlotte McDonnell, Jack, and Lem, Palm Beach, Christmas, 1940. Note the matching bathing suits worn by Jack and Lem.

They basically said he was a member of the upper class, that he was comfortable around gay people, even as president, and he wasn't a judgmental type of guy. This was the response they gave to me—that it was never a problem to him, not only with LeMoyné, but with other gay people he knew, such as Gore Vidal.

What must it have been like for Lem being gay in the 1930s?

Extremely difficult. Like almost every gay man at that time he felt compelled to live a secret life, not only because he was a friend of Jack Kennedy, but in order to have a successful career, which he did in advertising. He knew that was necessary, and, like all gay people, he paid a price for that, which became apparent later in his life when he began drinking quite a bit.

It apparently colored his entire life. And I guess it colored how he later talked

about his life, like the quote you mentioned about how he could have gotten married.

I hate to do what other authors always say, which is say read the book, but there is no substitute for reading the book and seeing what Lem himself said in the various letters and his 815-page oral history, which I used extensively for the book. You can see him struggling with trying to be candid about what he felt. He obviously wanted to be. He died in 1981, and certainly during the time when he was alive, he felt it was not possible for him to be that candid.

At the time that Lem and Jack met, basically it was OK for men to be intimate, affectionate without sex. I was thinking specifically of the photo of men and women arm in arm, with Lem and Jack the only two males arm in arm. That to me says a whole lot about that era, because in today's society, certain people would look at that and flinch.

That's one point I tried to make in the book in one of the chapters. Ironically, in some ways gay people had more license at that time than they do now. Homosexuality wasn't on the radar screen, the general population wasn't really aware of it, and so, in a sense, gay people could do certain things, such as the example that you gave, and it did not come under suspicion the way it clearly would today.

Today it would be assumed they were gay. And about the quote, about Lem never getting married—do you think his love for Jack

kept him from having a serious relationship with another man?

It seems to have. A major source for the book was a man named Larry Quirk, who is an editor and writer in New York and has published a number of books himself. He knew Lem and had a sexual involvement with Lem, but he told me that even though Lem had various sexual involvements throughout his life, including with him, that there was only one person he really loved and that was Jack Kennedy.

Do you think Kennedy's most important relationships were with men?

I've thought about it a great deal after writing the book. Our language in society is really inadequate to express the range of involvements and emotions that people have in this regard. But if I were to summarize John Kennedy, I think what I found out in writing this book is that his sexual preferences were women, but his attachments were to men. So I don't know what that makes him—there's no word for that, right? [Both laugh] He did have some pretty profound attachments to women, but he also seemed to want and need strong attachments to men that were not sexual.

At that time I think it was easier to do that. Now it's more suspect: "If I have this type of relationship with a man, people are going to think I'm gay..."

I think you're exactly right. I don't think it was uncommon at the time. This was before the women's movement when women were thought of as sex objects and they weren't allowed into certain clubs, particularly in Washington, or even in the National Press Club where women weren't allowed even as journalists. Women were considerably downgraded in importance in society at large, so it wouldn't be surprising, particularly in elite circles, if men's strongest attachments were to other men.

Do you think Jack used Lem as a gofer? It seemed like Lem allowed it, so it wasn't one-sided.

Doing the research for the book and talking to some people, I found conflicting evidence on that. Gore Vidal said he was the gofer. I think the phrase he used was, "Lem was the guy who carried the bags for Jack." And he called him "Jack's slave" at one point. But other people discounted that. Jack's sister, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, said that the friendship was very equal. And I did find evidence in the letters when they were both at college—Lem was at Princeton and Jack was at Harvard—I did find evidence when they got together in New York on weekends, it was as much Jack who was suggesting →

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Best Friends for Life continued from previous page

their getting together as it was Lem. So it wasn't always Lem asking for the time. The friendship seems to have been quite mutual. And in one of the interviews with Gore Vidal [Pitts had three interviews with him], he seems to concede that the friendship was a bit more than carrying the bags.

Lem was very useful in Kennedy's political campaigns.

Exactly. He wasn't very good [both laugh], but the important point that was made was that no matter how inexperienced Lem was politically, no matter how much he messed things up sometimes, Jack wanted him involved, which is another indication of the strength of the friendship, because the president didn't seem to care that he wasn't that efficient at times in the political sense.

It does seem like the friendship was serious, because Kennedy could have dropped him easily, especially considering that Kennedy may have been concerned about people finding out that Lem was gay.

That's one of the most amazing things. Of course, when it started in 1933 and Jack was at school, you can certainly argue that for the first 10 or 15 years, there was no political threat, but once he started on the road to the White House after World War II, this friendship posed a political threat, and if the Russians would have gotten hold of this information, it could have been problematic.

Lem was considered part of the Kennedy family, wasn't he?

He certainly was. All the evidence I've found was that every single member of the Kennedy family just adored him. It wasn't just Jack Kennedy. He became close to Robert Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Ethel Kennedy, and Eunice Kennedy Shriver. The only person who is a little circumspect in her affections was Jackie Kennedy, for maybe obvious reasons.

After Jack married Jackie, what was the relationship like between Jack and Lem? From all accounts, it stayed the same.

Jackie did like Lem, didn't she?

All the evidence seems to indicate she liked him quite a lot. In actuality, she had more things in common with Lem than she did with Jack. Jack was a political animal, and her main interest was in the arts, which was Lem's main interest. So they had much

in common. The other point that seemed to be very salient was the fact that in the early years of her marriage when she was having some difficulties with Jack Kennedy, Lem was a kind of humorous intermediary who helped break the tension. But he was always there, and on many occasions she wanted him there, but on other occasions she didn't.

What about Lem's relationship with Caroline and John Jr.?

With Caroline and John Jr., it seems to have been affectionate and close. After the assassination, Jackie was in New York for roughly five years before she married Aristotle Onassis in 1968. That's when both Caroline and John were quite young, so Jackie Kennedy was keen to have them spend time with Lem so they could learn all about the president in his younger days, pre-dating the time she knew him.



The three of us: Lem, Jackie, and Jack in Hyannis Port, 1963.

I remember reading in the book that Lem had all this information that nobody else seemed to have.

Most of the people around Jack Kennedy had met him after the war when his political career began, and Jackie hadn't met him until 1951. So almost nobody outside the family knew him from 1933. So that was important to her. And he saw much less of them when she moved outside of the United States after her marriage to Onassis. But when she returned in the mid-'70s and started working in New York, they were teenagers by then, and they would go over to his place by themselves. So they knew him quite well, Caroline probably a little bit more than John Jr.

Didn't Lem basically have his own room in the White House?

It was on the third floor. The chief White House usher at the time, J. B. West, confirmed that, and it was basically his room. And Lem himself talked about it in his oral history.

How important was that oral history?

That document was vital to this book. It's 815 pages. I was working on the book for three years, and for most of the time I couldn't get access to it, because although it's in the Kennedy Library, it's off limits to authors and journalists. The only person who can give you permission to get to it is Robert F. Kennedy Jr., and he finally gave me permission in the final months when I was preparing the book.

Do you know why he finally gave in?

I don't. I pestered him a lot, sending letters. That may have been part of the reason. He also probably checked me out as a journalist [Pitts has written various articles on John Kennedy] and realized I wasn't some kind of far-right writer. The Kennedys are getting kind of suspicious of journalists these days, because there have been a lot of trash books or political-attack books from the right about the Kennedys in recent years, so that may have been one reason for his caution, but I really don't know.

Wasn't Lem such a regular visitor at the White House that security would let him pass without some kind of badge?

Yes, they did. He never had a White House pass. He said all the guys knew him, and he just waltzed right on in there. He was also a frequent guest at the president's retreat outside Washington in Glen Ora, Virginia.

Where was Lem when Kennedy was assassinated?

He was in New York. He was on his lunch hour from his job at an advertising company called Lennen & Newell.

Is there any information on how it affected him at the time?

Not immediately. I wasn't able to talk to anybody who talked to him that day. I think the only person he did talk to was Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who was at the White House at the time. But his close friends, Frances McAdoo and John Seigenthaler, talked to him within the next few days after it happened, and they described him as you can imagine—devastated, just unable to process it all. →

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But at the time he was very helpful to the family.

He knew this was going to be a time of incredible anguish for the Kennedy family. He knew all of them from the early 1930s, when Jack used to take him to Palm Beach in Hyannis Port. He felt incredibly responsible and loyal to them. He held himself together through the funeral period and then just fell apart.

I found it very interesting that a gift from Lem was buried with Kennedy. Were there other things buried with him?

I don't know the answer to that, although I understand that Jackie Kennedy was going to have the ring he'd given her buried with him, and somebody persuaded her she should keep it. So that's the only other gift I know about. But the gift from Lem that was buried with him was a set of whale's-tooth scrimshaw. This is apparently something that Kennedy had been interested in collecting over the years, and Lem had given him some, and it had been on the desk of the president in the White House.

I find that fascinating. It brings it back again to how close they were. Did Lem ever recover from the assassination?

Not in total. Grief is a strange thing. Some days he'd be the same old Lem joking, and other days he would think about what had happened. It was something that he apparently was never able to come to terms with. The best way he seemed to be able to deal with it was to talk about JFK to the younger Kennedys, to journalists, really to anybody who would listen.

Didn't he remain a part of the Kennedy family?

He became very close to Senator Robert Kennedy. But that wasn't just the post-1963 phenomenon

either. He'd known Bobby since the early 1930s, and it was natural that they would become close since he'd seen so much of Jack Kennedy in Bobby, and he had it happen all over again in 1968 when Bobby was killed.

Did he help in Bobby's campaign?

He was very involved in his campaign first

when he ran for senator of New York in 1964 and then in the presidential campaign in 1968. And he was professionally involved. His company, Lennen & Newell, was involved in doing many of the political commercials that aired at the time. He was closely involved in Robert Kennedy's political efforts as well.

Wasn't Lem's boss not only a Republican but also charmed by President Kennedy?

A guy by the name of Adolph Toigo—yes, he was a Republican, as indeed was Lem until 1960. This is really one of the funny things because Lem's family was a Republican family, and Lem himself was a registered Republican—he switched his registration in 1960—and so were some of the other people we were just talking about. I guess it's part of John Kennedy's charisma. He met with some of Lem's friends, including Lem's boss, because he wanted Lem to help on the campaign, which was the initial reason, but then he also persuaded the boss to change his political allegiance. It's incredible his effect on people.

The Kennedys embracing the friendship between Lem and Jack says a whole lot about the family.

Yes, it does. There have been various rumors flying over the years, in some of the right-wing periodicals especially, that Lem, being a gay man, tried to seduce some of the younger Kennedys. I did look into that, but I was able to find no evidence of that, and certainly none of the younger

Kennedys, including Bobby Kennedy, has said that was the case.

How did Lem die?

He died of a heart attack in 1981 at the age of 65. Although when I looked into it a little bit more, he did have a heart condition for some time, and to what degree his drinking

contributed to that, I'm not really sure. But the technical cause of death was a heart attack.

Not long before that, didn't he still see the younger kids?

Right. After Senator Robert Kennedy's assassination in June of 1968, he then became close to Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the person who gave me permission to look at the documents. This seems to have been the instigation of Ethel Kennedy, who had 11 children. Again, Lem knew Bobby from when he was a little kid, and she asked various people to help out with the boys. Some other guys helped out with the other boys, and she asked Lem to help out with Bobby. So they became really close. Bobby Kennedy Jr. was only 14 when his father was assassinated. So Lem took Bobby under his wing, and they often went on vacations together, and Bobby was often at his New York townhome.

Did the fact that you are gay prove a help or a hindrance in writing the book?

I don't really feel that it either helped or hindered me in writing the book. I took a journalistic approach in writing this. I only included information in the book that I could verify either through documentary evidence or with interviewees in a position to know.

I think President Kennedy—if he were alive today—would be horrified at the resurgence of conservatism and the attack on civil liberties in the United States. Just a few weeks ago even, General Peter Pace, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called homosexual acts immoral—and survived in his job, despite the bigotry. But 47 years ago, we had a president whose best friend was gay and who seemed quite comfortable with it.

Blase DiStefano interviewed Leslie Jordan for the October issue.



Fit to a tee: Jack and Lem go for golf, Hyannis Port, 1963.

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Reader, Writer, Mother

Robin Reagler first heard about Writers in the Schools when she moved to Houston for a Ph.D. program in creative writing.

"When I learned about it, I blinked," says Reagler, a former public school teacher. "I said, 'You mean I can teach writing and not math and science and not have to go to faculty meetings? Sign me up!'"

And they did with haste.

Today Reagler is executive director of Writers in the Schools (WITS), a nonprofit organization started in 1983 that sends some 60 writers into 75 inner-city schools and other entities such as art museums, hospitals, community centers, private schools, and juvenile detention centers to teach children and young people to express themselves through creative writing. Once a week, writers arrive with inspiration and creativity to encourage young minds to create poems, stories, and essays. Some students go on to be writers and several of them are now teaching in the WITS program, sharing their passion for words with a younger generation. But all of them have benefited from the engagement in reading and writing that the program provides. Writers and students form a partnership during the year, one that adds to the teacher's relationship with the students and encourages them to learn and stay in school.

"We work with the same kids throughout the year," Reagler explains. "We believe in long-term programs. Writing is just like tennis or swimming. You have to practice it regularly. The students write, revise, and edit and then publish their best work at the end of the year." That means they leave with a hard-copy collection of their efforts to keep inspiring them.

This month, on May 7 and 8, elementary, middle, and high school writers will gather at The Menil Collection for the Young Writers Reading Series, the annual public reading of some of

the students' inspirational stories, essays, and poems. (More information: www.writersintheschools.org.)

This isn't the first time the students have been to The Menil, the museum founded by the renowned art patron Dominique de Menil, which this year marks its 20th anniversary.

"We take them to The Menil during the year," Reagler says of the students. "We take them in small groups for a field trip, a writing tour of the museum. They look at the abstract paintings there and get inspirations from the colors and shapes for their writings."

Reagler herself doesn't get into the classroom much anymore—only, she says, in emergencies—but she enjoys the challenge of running the program. Having been in the classroom, she knows first hand the benefits of the program on young minds, and that knowledge helps her in raising the organization's \$1.5 million annual budget from dozens of foundations, corporations, and individuals. Reagler has also instituted a business model on the nonprofit during her 10-year tenure so that schools pay a portion of the program, although the funding comes from grants and parent/teacher organizations, not from the kids themselves or school district budgets.

The job keeps Reagler pretty busy, but she still finds some time for her own poetry, which has been published in *American Letters & Commentary*, *Ploughshares*, and *VOLT*. She also writes two blogs: Big Window (www.bigwindow.org)—which she calls a "boing-boing type of blog for art and literature. You might think of it as an inspiration portal. I try to point out cultural wonders, with an emphasis on art, poems, sculpture, books, films, and websites"—and The Other Mother: Letters from the Outpost of Lesbian Parenting (<http://theothermother.typepad.com>).

Ten years ago, mutual friends introduced Reagler to Marcia Chamberlain, who also just happened to be a writer. Chamberlain has won Rice

Robin Reagler runs the non-profit Writers in the Schools, raises two girls with her partner, and blogs

By Marene Gustin
Photo by Mark Hiebert

The write stuff: "Writing is just like tennis or swimming. You have to practice it regularly," says Writers in the Schools executive director Robin Reagler, photographed in the organization's offices. "The students write, revise, and edit and then publish their best work at the end of the year." This month, some of the WITS students will also read their work during events at The Menil Collection.



University's Envision Grant while a graduate student, a Woodrow Wilson Foundation Practicum Fellowship, a Teaching Tolerance grant from the Southern Poverty Law Center, and an Emerging Filmmaker Grant from the Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County. Today Chamberlain teaches at WITS two half-days a week. But her primary job is as the biological mother to the two little girls, 3-year-old Pearl and 16-month-old Carrie, who she and Reagler are rearing.

"She's really a full-time mom," Reagler says of her partner. "Although I like the fact that she is a writer, it's nice to have a partner who can look at your work and with whom you can discuss writing." She adds: "We're not competitive at all."

Reagler says they waited a long time to have children, seven years before they had Pearl, and that the new family members have really changed their lives.

"No more summers in Vancouver," she laughs from their home in the Heights. "Vacations now are spent with relatives. The girls have cousins exactly their ages on both sides, so they love that."

They also love visiting the neighborhood park and outdoor concerts and playing with their cat, Maria (pronounced as in the song *They Call the Wind Maria*)—although, Reagler notes, the cat doesn't necessarily return the human affection.

Now that the girls are getting a little older, Reagler has more time to devote to her poems and blogs, usually writing after they have gone to bed. And she is thinking about turning The Other Mother blog into a book.

"That's really why I started it," she says, "but that's going to take a large block of time."

What's been really time-consuming, not to mention expensive, was completing the second-parent adoption.

"We had to go to San Antonio," Reagler says. "All the family court judges in Harris County are Republican and they wouldn't do it." While the state of Texas allows single-parent adoptions by gay, lesbian, and transgender individuals, only certain cities will grant second-parent adoptions for the non-biological gay, lesbian, or transgender partner.

But it was worth the added time and travel to protect her family, Reagler says. And as for the future of the little girls, whose two mommies are both writers, Reagler has no predictions.

"They can't even hold a pencil yet!" she laughs. "Although"—and here she pauses—"Pearl loves to make up stories. She'll pretend to be an animal or someone else, and she'll make up this whole story to go with it when playing with us or her little friends."

Sure sounds like a budding writer.

Marene Gustin reported on the new *Salud!* Winery in our April issue.

Writes of Summer
Encourage a young writer in your family: Sign him or her up for the Writers in the Schools June 11-29 Summer Creative Writing Workshop. WITS presents classes this year at Annunciation

Orthodox School and Aldine Academy for writers at three levels: kindergarten through second grade, third through fifth grade, and middle/high school. More info: www.writersintheschools.org.

Get Up and Go

Worldwide vacation ideas for the out and smart traveler

As the days grow longer and the nights grow warmer, GLBT travelers start to make their plans for summer travel. In the past few years, the options for queer travelers have exploded as more and more hotels and event organizers are beginning to realize the need for gay-friendly destinations, and more cultures are becoming tolerant of people across the sexual spectrum.

But those aren't the only cultural changes. While Pride festivals around the world continue to draw large crowds, some GLBT travelers are increasingly choosing more subdued experiences with a bit of culture thrown in. So when you're considering where in the United States or even around the world you want to spend your hard-earned off time, consider some of the following locations.



by Kim Gustavsson, Alan Moehle, B.J. Smith, and Josef Molnar • Photo by Bob Tanner

NORTH AMERICA

San Francisco

Always a favorite with gay people from around the world, this most European of American cities offers the hospitality of a tried-and-true gay utopia with the sophistication of a cosmopolitan tourist mecca.

For those with a taste for the great outdoors, visit Russian River to the north. The rustic scenery is sprinkled with multicultural wildlife of all kinds, and every summer weekend sees a West Coast version of Fire Island along its ridged length. Although most of the accommodations are less slick than found in the city, all social strata will find someplace to nest. The River is also close to the heart of the urbane and stylish California wine country, which increases its appeal for those who are less at ease with nature.

Returning San Francisco to its hedonist roots, leather men and women pour into the Dore Alley Fair on July 29 and Folsom Street Fair on September 30.

Fort Lauderdale

This Florida city's thriving gay community is giving San Francisco a run for its money, with more than 30 guesthouses catering to the community with amenities that appeal to both the no-frills and upscale travelers. The most upscale and consistently rated as one of the top guesthouses in the country is Pineapple Point.

From the sunny, sea-kissed beaches to gay-friendly Las Olas Boulevard, there's plenty of excitement to soak up in Fort Lauderdale. Gay Days at Disney, held on the first weekend in May, is an equal-opportunity visit with the fantastic. The four-day Celebration of Friends scheduled June 21–24 gives mature beachcombers of all genders a chance to let it all hang out.

New Orleans

Although New Orleans still has a long way to go to fully recover from Hurricane Katrina, the world-famous French Quarter is back to its own self. The biggest weekends here are Halloween, Southern Decadence, and Mardi Gras.

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

Cradled in the wedge of Banderas Bay and straddling the Cuale River, this bustling city on the Mexican Riviera is a quick two-hour flight away, very convenient for GLBT travelers from here. Visit the Playa de los Muertos, the famous "blue chairs" gay beach to the south of Los Muertos Pier, for an electric experience.

Old Town Vallarta is the home of several gay hotels as well as gay-owned and -operated restaurants, shops, and bars. The recently renovated Abbey Hotel now boasts that it is the largest gay hotel in Puerto Vallarta, with over 45 rooms. One of the nicer places to stay, the Abbey is a very clean hotel with a friendly staff and a restaurant that serves a delicious breakfast and lunch. Although not located on the beach, it is just a few blocks from Blue Chairs, another gay hotel but better known for its gay beach.

The whirlwind Mexico Women's Week in October and Latin Fever festival in November give fall visitors a chance to enjoy the sun when everyone else is cooling their heels.

Montréal

Canada took the North American lead in equal rights when it legalized same-sex marriages two years ago, but that's not the only cultural appeal. Nestled on a pair of islands in the St. Lawrence River, Montréal, with its narrow, winding streets, can make seasoned travelers think they have dropped into the heart of a European city. Enjoy the picturesque Old Montréal and Old Port areas on your way to gay-friendly Ste-Catherine Street East, Casino de Montréal, or the latest festival.

Montréal's legendary Pride celebration, Divers/Cité, this year scheduled July 29 through August 5, offers a world-class cultural festival complete with concerts, art, theater, parties, and the best open-air drag show you're likely to ever see.

In fact, the Pride celebrations in each of the three major Canadian cities of Montréal (July 29–August 5), Toronto (June 15–June 24), and Vancouver (July 28–August 5) compete with any U.S. Pride event in size, scope, acceptance, spirit, and parties. It is estimated that last year's Pride Parade in Vancouver had over 300,000 in attendance, and that is the smallest of the three! Toronto Pride is estimated to have over 1 million attendees throughout the 10 days of festivities, which culminates with the Pride parade.

SOUTH AMERICA

The two top destinations in South America for gay travelers are Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Buenos Aires, Argentina, but don't limit yourself to those locations. Rio's gay area is around Ipanema Beach. The Ipanema Plaza Hotel is located just a block off the beach and is a great location for a Rio adventure. Keep in mind that South America is in the southern hemisphere, so summers are the opposite of North American summers. This makes South America an ideal destination for those who want to escape to tropical breezes during the winter here. High season in Rio is Carnaval (February 2–5 in 2008) and New Year's (the fireworks off Copacabana Beach are spectacular and usually pull 4–5 million spectators).

Atlantis Events has scheduled a cruise that will end in Rio for three nights of Carnaval in 2008. Zoom Vacations offers both a great New

Year's packages as well as Carnaval package to Rio, usually with extensions to Paraty. Zoom also offers a great package to Buenos Aires and Iguaçu Falls.

Paraty, Brazil

A few hours south of Rio is Paraty, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and an increasingly popular destination for gay travelers seeking to avoid the hustle and bustle of the big city.

This quaint fishing village was a major shipping port for gold in the 1700s. Today, the real gold can be found in the hearts of its residents and in its picturesque sunsets. The old part of town, with its whitewashed walls, cast iron balconies, and colorful shutters and doors, is a world away from the gray and steel of modern life while still maintaining all of the modern amenities. The area is also blocked to automotive traffic, with all deliveries and pick-ups done by mules and carriages.

Buenos Aires, Argentina

The Argentine capital is another destination that is becoming increasingly popular in the community. Civil unions have been legal in the Buenos Aires and Rio Negro provinces since 2003, and this has created a gay-friendly atmosphere in this unique city.

Buenos Aires has a distinct European flavor and architecture, and the people are some of the most beautiful in the world. Gay Pride is celebrated here the first Saturday of November and is an ideal time to visit this lively city. The Alvear Palace or the Starwood Properties Park Tower are ideal for some visitors to this vibrant city.

Cuzco, Peru

Famous for both unrivaled natural beauty and fascinating archeological ruins, Cuzco lures gay travelers looking for a historical experience. While it lacks a significant gay nightlife scene, this former capital of the Inca empire is a very progressive, fun, and funky city by South American standards, and gay couples are fairly common (at least in touristy places). Visitors may be surprised to see the oft-shown rainbow Incan flag.

Two ever-welcoming establishments, both in the San Blas neighborhood, are The Witches' Garden, owned by three gay men from New York, and the hip cafe Macondo. Take time to see the religious Sacsayhuaman (pronounced "sexy woman") Fortress site and the nearby ruins of Machu Picchu, as well as the luminous waters of Lake Titicaca farther to the southeast.

EUROPE

Budapest

The city known as "The Paris of the East" is actually two cities separated by the Danube River: Buda, the western hilly side, and Pest, the flatter and more energetic side. Stroll along the historic Danube, take a day trip to nearby Lake Balaton for the golden beaches, or visit the imposing, 203-room Buda Castle on the west bank.

Whatever form of exercise you use them for, the famous Turkish baths are a very old and respected tradition, and the gay-friendly fifth district gives you access to such venues as Chaos Bar at Dohány and Nagydiófa or Darling Bar on Szepe. Pride Week is held in the first week of July.

Ibiza

The idyllic beaches and frenetic nightlife on this tiny Mediterranean island off of the Spanish coast never fails to amaze visitors, and more than one jaded partier has had his fires stoked at this exotic retreat. Most of the gay bars are situated on or near the Calle de la Virgen in the eastern end of Ibiza Town, and Anfora serves up a great dance mix. During the day, visit Playa Es Cavallet. This beach is almost 100 percent gay, with nude sunbathing a common occurrence. A small rock beach, Los Molinas, is a well-hidden retreat.

On the lighter side, be sure to rent a car and drive north to enjoy the island's secluded coves and splendid isolation. Santa Gertrudis, in the very heart of Ibiza, and Santa Ines, an area famous for its buttery almonds, are among the island's many picturesque villages.

continued on page 50

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Here are just a few of the GLBT vacation destinations and events around the world:

June 15–24. Toronto Pride Week • Toronto, Canada • www.pridetoronto.com

July 28–Aug. 5. Vancouver Pride Week • Vancouver, Canada • www.vancouverpride.ca

Aug. 29–Sept. 3. Southern Decadence • New Orleans, Louisiana • www.southerndecadence.net

Oct. 26–28. New Orleans Halloween • New Orleans • www.halloweenneworleans.com

Nov. 3. Buenos Aires Gay Pride • Buenos Aires, Argentina • www.turismo.gov.ar

Jan. 13–20, 2008. Gay Ski Week • Aspen, Colorado • www.stayaspensnowmass.com/p-gay-ski-week.php

Jan. 18–21, 2008. Mid-Atlantic Leather Weekend • Washington, D.C. • www.leatherweekend.com

Feb. 2–5, 2008. Rio Carnival 2008 • Rio de Janeiro, Brazil • www.rio-carnival.net

Feb. 3–12, 2008. Winter Pride • Whistler, Vancouver, Canada • www.gaywhistler.com

Feb. 5, 2008. Mardi Gras • New Orleans • www.mardigrasneworleans.com

Feb. 26–March 8, 2008. Gay Mardi Gras • Sydney, Australia • www.mardigras.org.au

March 21–23, 2008. The White Party • Palm Springs, California • www.jeffreysanker.com

March 22, 2008. The Black Party • New York, New York • www.saintatlarge.com

March 27–31, 2008. Dinah Shore Weekend • Palm Springs, California • www.dinahshoreweekend.com

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Venice

There is no question that the "City of Canals" is the quintessential place for romance, whether that romance is just budding or in full bloom. The placid waters allow the famous gondoliers to quietly paddle their way around the city, past the Doges Palace and the Bridge of Sighs.

When you tire of the waterways, Venice's famous glass factories, airy cafes, and quaint shops are always open to visitors. Enjoy the Venice Gay Film Festival in late June, or dance the night away at Movida Disco on via Belgio. Casa de Uscoli on San Marco or the Hotel Basilea on the Rio Marin offer gay-friendly accommodations.

Amsterdam, London, Barcelona, & Sitges

Europe can be a pricey choice at this time, given the weaker American dollar. However, in the winter, cheap weekend escapes to Europe can be quite exciting and fun. London is currently the bigger party city with big circuit-type venues. Amsterdam has its share of smaller clubs with backrooms and saunas. Barcelona has beautiful architecture and its own share of big parties. For those beginning or ending a Mediterranean cruise in Barcelona, a few days extension in Sitges is recommended. Sitges ranks as one of the top European gay destinations in the summer. However, it has its season, and once the summer is over, the city becomes deserted and the parties and clubs have sparse attendance but with the locals.

ASIA

Bangkok, Thailand

Thailand is considered to have one of the most open gay and lesbian cultures in the world with Bangkok, its capital, considered its epicenter. From its after-hours party streets to its sublime Buddhist temples, the city is guaranteed to satisfy anyone with a taste for the exotic. The best time to visit is November through February. A time not to go is September and October during the rainy season.

The eclectic Soi 2 and Soi 4 streets are conveniently close to the BTS (Sala Daeng) and MRT (Silom) transit stations. Short day trips can be had at nearby Phuket, an island destination with sandy beaches and Portuguese architecture, and Pattaya, a true beach resort with many gay venues as well. The diving here is splendid and will satisfy even the most avid divers. Wherever you go in Thailand, no visit will be complete without getting a traditional Thai massages.

AFRICA

Cape Town

With the recent recognition of gay marriages, South Africa's jewel is increasing its visibility as the gay mecca on the continent. Spreading out in a semi-circle next to the sea and dominated by the flat-topped Table Mountain, Cape Town's attractions include beguiling scenery and wild-life. Enjoy a day trip to the wine country or indulge in the beach-covered Garden Route along the southeastern coast. You can also schedule a safari through the region's game preserves.

Clifton Beach in Cape Town was recently named one of the world's best beaches by the Travel Channel. The best time to travel here is October through March when the foliage in the national parks is less dense and the sighting of big game is the best. While over here you want to make sure to visit South Africa's wine region on the Western Cape.

Be sure to stay in (or at least visit) the De Waterkant Village section of Cape Town, where rainbow flags hang from shops in abundance and the area lights up with festive men and women at night. Pick up a copy or browse the free biannual Cape Gay Guide (www.capegayguide.co.za) while you're there.

Coda International Tours, Zoom Vacations, and David Tours, as well as Gay2Africa, offer packages and safaris and visits to Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Victoria Falls

Appropriately labeled one of the "Seven Natural Wonders of the World," Zambia's Victoria Falls is more of a regional hub than the site of Africa's number-one tourist attraction. In fact, this juncture of four African coun-

continued on page 65

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A Peek at Pride

Gearing up for Houston's big, gay month of celebration

by Nancy Ford • Photo by Joann Toy

Pride month is right around the corner, so it's time once again to start marking that June calendar. We will have a more complete calendar in next month's issue. But in the meantime, note this advance word on a few select events to help you get started with your planning.

HOME FOR THE PRIDE HOLIDAY

What is Pride Month without a major tribute to Judy Garland? Gay Men's Chorus of Houston's annual June concert, *There's No Place Like Home: The Life and Loves of Judy Garland*, is a tribute to all things Gumm.

The gents are currently rehearsing songs from her films (yes, of course, including *The Wizard of Oz*) as well as from the Carnegie Hall performances and '60s-era television show. The program also integrates Stonewall history with the legend's life and how it paralleled the gay movement.

Saturday, June 16, 7:30 p.m. Jones Hall. Tickets: \$19-\$39. Details: www.gmch.org • 713-521-7464.

GREEK GODS AND MORE

Pride isn't just about the parade—it's a daylong festival, too, offering fun, education, and information to all members of the GLBT community and allies.

In addition to Black Tie Dinner Kid's Zone and Walgreen's Wellness World, headlining Houston's GLBT Pride Festival is pop/rock duo Nemesis. The identical gay twins Jacob and Joshua Miller—born and raised in Montana as Jehovah's Witnesses!—star in the Logo reality show *Nemesis Rising*. For a preview, go to www.logoonline.com.

Opening for Nemesis is *American Idol* 2 finalist and TV Guide Channel entertain-



Cyndi Lauper

ment correspondent Kimberly Caldwell. Currently recording a country/rock album, Caldwell also recently landed her first movie role in *Wrong Turn 2*, scheduled for release any day now.

Laurel, a Houston Women's Festival and Chances Nightclub favorite, rounds out the entertainment on the festival's main stage.

Saturday, June 23, 2-8 p.m. Commonwealth at Westheimer, in the heart of Montrose. Details: www.pridehouston.org.

SUPERSTAR!

Speaking of the Pride Festival, Pride Houston continues presenting its Houston Pride Idol competition. Additional qualifying rounds will be held this month and in June at Guava Lamp. The finals will be held on the Pride Festival main stage on June 23.

May 3, 17, 31, June 14, 10 p.m., at Guava Lamp. Semi-final round on June 17, p.m. at Guava Lamp. Details: www.pridehouston.org, www.myspace.com/houstonprideidol.

SHINING THROUGH

As the supreme maraschino cherry atop the ice cream sundae of Pride month, the True Colors Tour, presented by Logo, comes to town the day after the parade. Scheduled performers include The Misshapes, Dresden Dolls, Debbie Harry, Erasure, Cyndi Lauper, and Rosie O'Donnell, with emcee Margaret Cho, providing no less than five hours of nonstop music and entertainment with a decidedly queer twist.

Lauper, whose sister, Elen, is a lesbian, conceived the idea for the show as a result of her desire to thank the community for the love and support they have given her throughout her career.

"As an American, I was raised to believe that all people have the right to live with the same dignity, opportunity, and safety. This should include everyone no matter what gender or sexual orientation," she says. "This tour was created to celebrate our differences by raising awareness for liberty, fairness, and dignity for everyone—not just some of us. Our fans can come out to celebrate a great cause while also hearing some great music." (Look for an interview with Lauper in the June *OutSmart*.)

Sunday, June 24, 6 p.m. Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. Lawn seating starts at \$26, with one dollar of every ticket sold benefiting Human Rights Campaign (HRC). Co-presented by HRC, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, and The Matthew Shepard Foundation. Details: www.truecolorstour.com.

SUPREME EVENT

It's been four years since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that what consenting adults do in the privacy of their own homes is nobody's bees' wax but their own.

To celebrate, the Houston GLBT Community Center is planning its second annual *Lawrence v. Texas* commemoration and celebration. This year, the event will include a family barbecue (location and details had not been announced by press time). Lead plaintiff John Lawrence is scheduled to attend and offer comments (Tyron Garner, Lawrence's co-plaintiff in the case, died in 2006).

June 26. Details to be announced: www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.com.

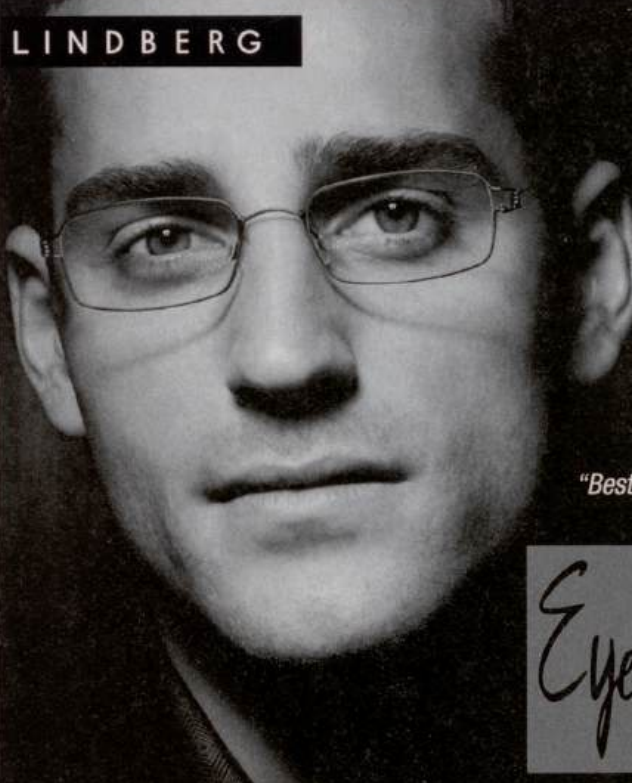
ON THE WEB: Find more Pride month preview information at www.outsmartmagazine.com.



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Spamalot I Am

The stage manager of 'Spamalot' leads Monty Pythonesque highjinks in Houston

by Donalevan Maines



Spammed: The national touring production of Monty Python's *Spamalot*, presented by Theatre Under The Stars and Cadillac Broadway Across America, opens on May 22 in Houston. Below: Ken Davis, the production stage manager.



Ken Davis

Have you ever met a gay man who doesn't love sparkling costumes, handsome knights and leggy showgirls? And what lesbian doesn't like a flying cow?"

To Ken Davis, those are rhetorical questions. For more than a year, Davis has been the out production stage manager for the national touring company of a Tony Award-winning musical showcasing all those elements. Lovingly ripped off from the film classic *Monty Python and The Holy Grail*, the show, playing May 22–June 17 at the Hobby Center, is *Spamalot*.

"Cross Camelot with a funny word [spam] and you get *Spamalot*," explains Davis, the Cincinnati native whose job is to keep every performance true to director Mike Nichols' and writer (and original member of the famed Monty Python troupe) Eric Idle's manic vision of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table as they embark on their quest for the Holy Grail.

"Flying cows, killer rabbits, flatulent Frenchman, our own show-stopping diva, and situations that are absolutely ridiculous—those are just a few of the reasons audiences everywhere are eating up *Spamalot*," says Davis.

Donalevan Maines regularly writes about entertainment for OutSmart.

IN 'SPAMALOT'! Theatre Under The Stars, which co-presents *Spamalot* with the Cadillac Broadway Across America series, hosts one of its Out@TUTS nights for GLBT musical-theater fans following the May 24 performance. Info: www.tuts.com. OutSmart is the Out@TUTS media sponsor.

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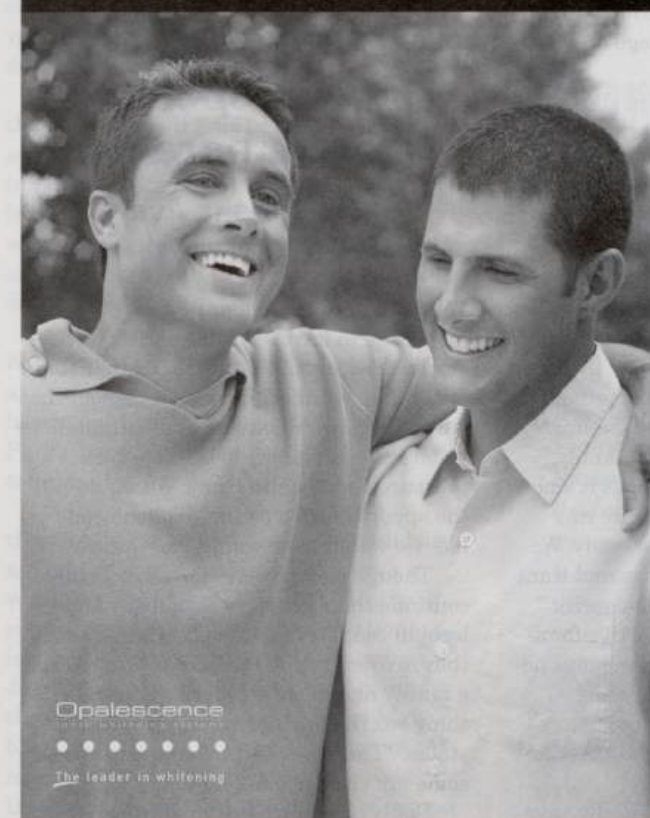
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Family Time

In 2005, the Montrose Counseling Center announced a program to help same-sex couples who wish to become foster parents to GLBT and questioning youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. In announcing the program, Ann J. Robison, the center's executive director, stated, "Up until now, Houston GLBTQ youth had very limited options, such as couch hopping at friends' homes, staying at a faith-based residential shelter for youth, or living on the streets. Our first step, obviously, is to identify GLBT and GLBT-affirming adults who are interested in becoming foster parents to these youth, provide them with training on GLBTQ youth issues and culture, and then through a collaboration with a couple of licensed foster care agencies, we will refer GLBTQ youth up to the age of 18 for placement."

Sean Reilly is one of those in the GLBT community who has stepped forward in response to the center's call for "GLBT-affirming adults." Reilly, who serves on the board of the Montrose Counseling Center, and his partner, Charlie Finch, say they are ready to take on parenthood. When they first merged their lives four years ago, Finch and Reilly had each expressed a desire to one day rear a family. Now they are certain that they want to do it together.

"We are a stable, loving and fortunate couple, and both want to start a family," says Reilly. "We have talked about it since we first started dating, and we are at a point in our lives where we are ready. We believe that we have a lot of love and want to have children to share our lives with."

Both men grew up in supportive families and now want to be there for someone who has not been as fortunate as they have. They are convinced that being gay is a plus in creating an environment of acceptance and unconditional love.

"Growing up gay is tough," Reilly says.

According to the National Foster Parent Association, there are 513,000 children in foster care in this country. May is National Foster Care Month, and this year, the organizers have announced that they are especially welcoming of same-sex prospective foster parents

By Natasha Avey
Photo by Dalton DeHart

"We both used to wonder how nice it would have been to have someone earlier on in our lives that could have told us that there is nothing wrong with me as a person, that our feelings were natural and nothing to be ashamed of, and how to manage society's pressures in a healthy way. We would like the opportunity to be there for someone like we would have wanted for ourselves."

Though conservative forces in Texas continue their pressure to ban gay and lesbian couples from adoption, Reilly says they are determined to find a way to raise a family and make a difference. "Everything worthwhile has its challenges," he states. "There are several success stories, some are close friends of ours."

Reilly and Finch are good friends with

a lesbian couple, one of whom has conceived and given birth to two children; the other has adopted the children. They also know a gay couple who adopted through an agency that works with gay couples, and another gay couple of their acquaintance have gone the route of surrogacy. Finch and Reilly are encouraged by these examples.

"I am confident that we will get there; it is just a matter of the way we get there," says Reilly.

Matt Kruger and Steve Riley, another gay couple committed to parenthood, have been foster parents to two young brothers, one 3 1/2 years old, the other 21 months. "We are still doing 'foster to adopt,' which



Their two dads: Steve Riley (l) and Matt Kruger have served as foster-care parents to two young brothers for a year. Because they have reached a delicate stage in the "foster to adopt" process, the couple asked to be photographed without the boys. "The unknown is the worst," Riley says.

basically means we are their foster parents until parental rights are terminated and the adoption phase can begin," Riley says. "There is a court hearing in about two weeks that may determine the future direction. We are still working with Spaulding For Children; they are a very gay-friendly adoption and foster care agency."

Like Reilly and Finch, both Kruger and Riley are successful professionals. Riley is an engineer at NASA and Kruger

manages a Kohl's store. The advice they have for GLBT prospective foster or adoptive parents is no different than the advice they would offer any couple preparing to take children into their home.

"Be realistic about the process," Riley says. "Children change your life 100 percent. I know for us that was quite eye-opening, although overall enjoyable. Know that the things you used to enjoy without kids may not be possible with kids. It totally transforms your lives. Know what you are comfortable with from a child's standpoint. For instance, are you comfortable with physical, mental, and/or emotional issues that some of the kids in CPS [Child Protective Services] care may have? Most of all, realize that having kids is possible, even in Texas, even though you are GLBT. There are so many couples doing it successfully!"

Riley adds that the waiting has been the most difficult part of the foster care-adoption process. "The unknown—waiting to see what happens with the birth family's rights so that we can proceed with adoption—is the worst. We are going on 12 months with the kids now, and still do not have closure."

Even with that frustration, Riley and Kruger encourage other gay, lesbian, and transgender people who want to become parents to pursue that dream. Parenthood is possible, even for same-sex couples.

"I think the one misconception out there is that adoption costs a tremendous amount of money," adds Riley, who is a volunteer facilitator with HATCH, the support group for GLBT and questioning youth. "It doesn't have to. There are different types of adoptions, and going the CPS route has low/no cost and high benefits, with the drawback being not too much say in the children or the issues they may have. Private adoption of course

costs a lot, and the children are more 'guaranteed' in terms of children available for adoption, but anyone can go to an agency that deals with the state and have kids as soon as just a few months later for pretty much nothing out of pocket. Matt and I were prepared to have to spend a lot of money and were shocked to find out it was going to be basically free—and the health care, college, and other benefits included were just amazing."

As we go to press, the 2007 session of the Texas legislature is stalled in its attempt to ban gay and lesbian adoption.

Natasha Avey reported on sports teams in the community in our March issue.

Parenthood

If you are interested in considering becoming a foster-care or adoptive parent, here are a few information resources:

- **EQUALITY TEXAS** (for state legislative updates), www.equalitytexas.org
- **HOUSTON GAY & LESBIAN PARENTS**, www.hglp.org
- **HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FAMILY PROJECT**, www.hrc.org
- **NATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN TASK FORCE PARENT & FAMILY PROGRAM**, www.thetaskforce.org
- **NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH**, www.fostercaremonth.org



THE LIFE OUTSIDE

A few treasures to make the outdoors really great this season

We are a hardy group in the Houston/Galveston area. Even as we confront the hottest months of the year, most of us still enjoy spending time outdoors—especially in our yards, on our patios, and around our pools. Here are a few of our favorite pieces to enhance your summer time.



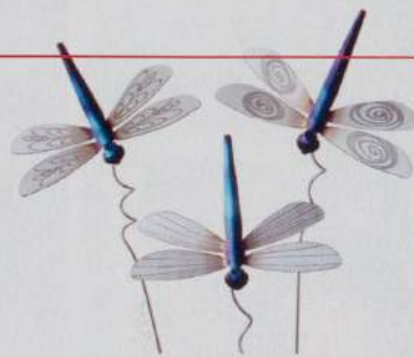
WOOD AND STONE. Dress up the yard with the teakwood "Lutyens Chair" (above left), inspired by the great English architect Sir Edward Lutyens, \$425; teakwood "Santai Chair" (below), \$450, upholstered in "Sunbrella" outdoor fabric (priced separately); and solid limestone, hand-carved Indonesian statue (above right), \$300. All from The Blair House, 4901 Rose at Durham, 713/869-5558.



HERON THERE. The Heron Pedestal, crafted from 1/4-inch steel, can be topped with a shallow bowl for use as a birdbath or a glass top to create a patio table. \$470. From The Artful Corner, 3423 White Oak, 713/426-4ART. The Heights shop hosts Artful Metal, the annual Houston Metal Arts Guild show, May 4-27.

ON THE TABLE.

The versatile Äppelrö gate-leg table is made of solid acacia and seats from two to four guests, depending on the configuration. \$59.99. From IKEA, 7810 Katy Fwy., 713/688-7867, www.ikea.com.



FLY AWAY. Accent the flower garden with stainless-steel dragonflies on 26-inch stakes. Butterflies also available. From The Artful Corner, 3423 White Oak, 713/426-4ART.



CHILD AT ART. Kids can be stylish outside, too. The 36-inch-high butterfly bench is handcrafted of 1/4-inch steel, coated with a weatherproof finish, and hand-painted. \$785. For bigger kids, there is a 60-inch-high adult-size dragonfly bench. \$2,350. From The Artful Corner, 3423 White Oak, 713/426-4ART.

SAND AND SEA. Heading for the beach? Perch at the water's edge in style with the Tärnö table and chairs, constructed of solid acacia and powder-coated steel. \$59.99. From IKEA, 7810 Katy Fwy., 713/688-7867, www.ikea.com.



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HISTORY BOY. What do Winston Churchill, Ronald Reagan, Bob Hope, Joan Crawford, Mae West, Johnny Depp, Muhammed Ali, and Pope John Paul II have in common with renowned gay showman Jade Esteban Estrada (pictured)? All have been honored with the title of Kentucky Colonel, Kentucky's highest acknowledgment of ambassadors of goodwill and fellowship around the world.

What most of them lack in common with Estrada (with the possible exception of Crawford, West, and JP2) is the ability to fill out a dress and hold an audience enrapt with a hysterical history lesson.

Bringing to life a passel of these new characters, Col. Estrada returns to Houston this month with his *ICONS: The Lesbian & Gay History of the World, Vol. 3*. The award-winning solo musical comedy show, scheduled May 9, 8 p.m., benefits Gulf Coast Archive and Museum of GLBT History and GALLO (Gay & Lesbian Latin Organization). 1415 Bar & Grill, 1415 California St. Details: 713/692-8735 • www.gcam.org.

BLACK PRIDE. Jensen Atwood, who plays Wade on Logo's *Noah's Arc*, and former Destiny's Child songstress, Latoya Luckett, headline festivities at the downtown Club 2020 for Houston Splash weekend.

The event, also known as Black Gay Pride, begins May 4 with parties, concerts, a Galleria shopping binge at citywide locations including Bartini, The Meridien, Toyz, Rich's, Warehouse Live, and Dave & Buster's. Partiers traditionally spend Sunday afternoon on Galveston's East Beach for some actual "splashing." Details: 832/443-1016 • www.houstonsplash.com • www.club2020houston.com.

OUR FAVORITE BAND. Local television personality and popular stylist Michael Kemper has been tapped to

host the final Houston Pride Band concert of the season, *Our Favorite Things*, conducted by the band's artistic director, Jason Stephens. Selections include Cole Porter's "Begin the Beguine," "Jupiter" from Gustav Holst's *The Planets*, tunes by Leonard Bernstein, and other favorite arrangements of Pride Band members. May 10, 7:30 p.m. Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church. Details: 832/265-3346 • www.houstonprideband.org.

YOU SNOOZE, YOU LOSE. Though barely two years old, the Bayou City Women's Chorus is already selling out its concerts. Such is the case for the May 19 presentation of *The Heart of the Home*, which explores the songs of "quintessential female singers and songwriters." The concert, fea-

turing selections by Cyndi Lauper, Holly Near, Carole King, Ann Reed, and others, may still have a few seats left for its May 22 repeat. 7:30 p.m. Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Details: 713/521-7464 • www.bcpahouston.org.

GAYLE FORCE. A follow-up to his successful one-man-show, *One Voice*, tenor Kenneth Gayle presents *One Voice, One Heart...Revealed*, a soul-stirring concert spanning opera to gospel. That night Gayle, who frequently performs in conjunction with the AIDS Foundation Houston Mukuru Arts for AIDS series, also performs selections from his new CD. May 4, 7:30 p.m. Unity Church of Christianity. Details: www.unityhouston.org. • 713/782-4050. ■

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Paul Verhoeven

(director, *Basic Instinct*)

(*Entertainment Weekly*, 4/6/07, Christine Spines)

Re: Verhoeven directing 1990's *Total Recall* with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

I remember rehearsing a scene where Sharon [Stone] sits on top of [Schwarzenegger] and it's slightly sexual. Sharon said, "How should I do that?" So I said, "Let me show you," and straddled Arnold. I think I even gave him a kiss. He didn't care at all.

Rose McGowan

(actress, *The Doom Generation*)

(*Radar*, Mar/Apr/07, Sarah Horne)

Sarah Horne: [*Grindhouse*] was shot in Austin. How did you like Texas?

Rose McGowan: I had my head down most of the time, but when I had time off, I was like, "Where can I line dance?" I would go out to the Rainbow Cattle Company, a gay and lesbian bar. It was hot. We'd be on the dance floor, and all of a sudden, it was like a silent signal and everyone knew to get in line. It was very *Brokeback*.

David Spade on Lance Bass

(*The Showbiz Show with David Spade*, 3/07)

Lance Bass is reportedly writing a tell-all autobiography called *Out of Sync*. The book will center around the challenge of being gay in the macho world of boy bands.

Brooke

(resident on MTV's *The Real World*)

(*The Real World: Denver*, 3/07, via *Entertainment Weekly*)

Re: On why she's watching her roommate Davis and his boyfriend have sex.

I'm sick of laying out and I'm sick of grocery shopping. So why not watch two gay men messing around?

Gore Vidal

(writer)

(*The Out Traveler*, Summer/07, Matthew Link)

Matthew Link: Gay travel is a multibillion-dollar industry now. Would you have expected that in your lifetime?

Gore Vidal: Well, I have never divided people between gay and straight. Everybody is the same. Sex is a continuum—different phases at different stages of life. Sexual activities may seem to be fashionable in one period and not another. It goes along with the general history of the human race. I have never paid much attention to these arbitrary divisions. And I have never lived in a ghetto.

Jack Klugman

(actor, *The Odd Couple*)

(*Entertainment Weekly*, 4/20/07, Paul Katz)

Re: He and Tony Randall as Oscar Madison and Felix Unger in TV's *The Odd Couple*.

The executives at the network figured two guys living alone together—they had to be gay, and that would [hurt] the ratings. Today you can't have a successful show unless you have a gay person in it.

Stephen Colbert

(*The Colbert Report*, 3/27/07, Comedy Central)

I won a GLAAD Media Award last night [March 27] for my positive portrayal of gays and lesbians in the media. I'm assuming it was some kind of clerical error, which is strange, given how neat those people are.



Stephen Colbert (seen here in his Comedy Central show *The Colbert Report*): Is he glad he won a GLAAD Media Award?



Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Tori Spelling

(actress, *Trick*, *Beverly Hills 90210*)

(*Entertainment Weekly*, 3/23/07, Lindsay Soll)

Lindsay Soll: Who would star in the movie of your life?

Tori Spelling: A really pretty drag queen. There's this one called Suppositori Spelling. I love drag queens and they love me.

Eddie Izzard

(comedian/actor)

(*TV Guide*, 3/26/07, G J Donnelly)

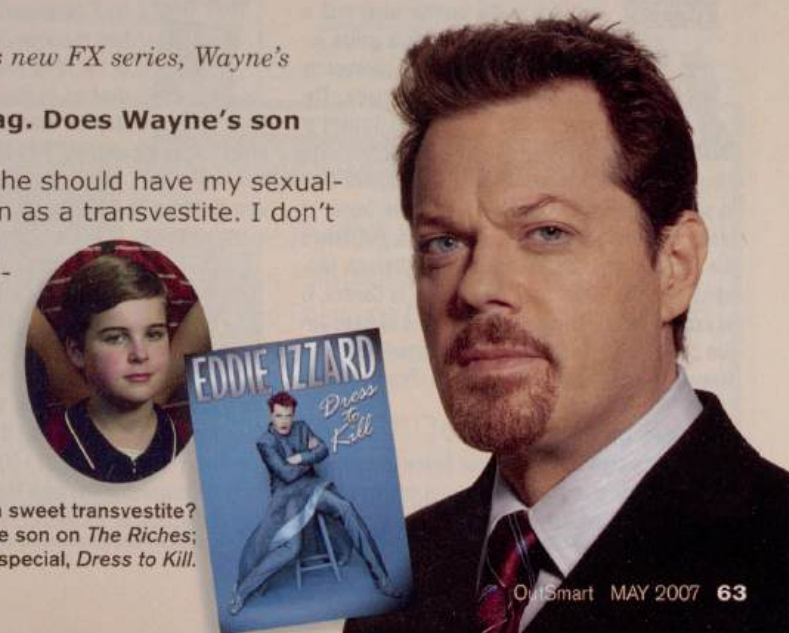
Eddie Izzard plays Wayne Malloy on *The Riches*. On this new FX series, Wayne's youngest son, Sam, is a transvestite.

G J Donnelly: You're known for performing in drag. Does Wayne's son Sam remind you of yourself?

Eddie Izzard: Well, yeah. I pitched it to the show that he should have my sexuality 'cause when I came onboard he was already written as a transvestite. I don't call it drag; I call it wearing dresses. Basically Sam is like what I would've been. Straight transvestite sexuality is sittin' here. Because I know it and you can keep checking with me where it should go.

How long does it take you to put on makeup? Well, I've been in boy mode for a while now, but the fastest I've ever done it is 20 minutes. Depends on what you're getting ready for. As women know.

Eddie Izzard (pictured here in a publicity photo from *The Riches*): Is he a sweet transvestite? INSETS: Aidan Mitchell plays Sam Malloy, Izzard's character's transvestite son on *The Riches*; the DVD cover of Izzard's Emmy-winning special, *Dress to Kill*.



MINDING THE GAP

'Notes on a Scandal' and 'The History Boys' provide higher learning

Notes on a Scandal swings like the pendulum do
by Nancy Ford

Life, she's a pendulum. For decades, cinematic and literary representation of homosexuality almost always ended badly: The story's finale found the hero/ine either swinging at the business end of a noose, or, perhaps even more damaging, switching teams to live happily ever after with the opposite-sex co-star.

After GLAAD raged at the producers of 1992's *Basic Instinct* in which Sharon Stone played a bi bad guy, the pendulum swung to the other side: Priscilla was queen of the desert, Billy got his Hollywood screen kiss, and Andrew Beckett won his lawsuit in *Philadelphia* (not to mention an Oscar for Tom Hanks).

These days the pendulum swings both ways, you should pardon the expression.



Girls and boys: Cate Blanchett (l) and Judi Dench star in *Notes on a Scandal*. Below: Richard Griffiths (l) and Stephen Campbell Moore star in *The History Boys*.



While *Brokeback* broke our hearts, neither of the protagonists was the villain nor the good guy... per se.

And now on DVD comes *Notes on a Scandal*, Zoe Heller's brilliant story of obsession and loneliness, a toxic combination that here blurs the line between hero and villain.

As Sheba, Cate Blanchett is a capable

yet unfulfilled wife, mother, and art teacher at a private and proper London school, preoccupied with "minding the gap"—that gap being the distance between life as one dreams it and life as it is.

The impeccable Dame Judi Dench, portraying Sheba's spinster colleague Barbara, does her best to fill Sheba's gap. After witnessing her friend indulging in an unspeakable LeTourneau-type act, Barbara schemes to elevate the women's friendship to something more substantial.

SPOILER ALERT: It doesn't end well for either woman. But clearly, the

villain here is neither the lonely Sheba nor the even lonelier Barbara, but the closet. Perhaps that's why *Notes*, despite its unflattering portrayal of same-sex attraction, elicited nary a peep of derision from GLAAD.

Swing on, big pendulum, swing on.

2006. Directed by Richard Eyre (*Stage Beauty*). From Fox Home Entertainment (www.foxhome.com).

It's all just a little bit of *History Boys* repeating
by John Stiles

The *History Boys* is smart, funny, touching, sensitive, sweet, and subversive.

Eight of the brightest boys this working class school has ever produced are vying for entry into England's version of Harvard and Yale—Oxford and Cambridge. The school's headmaster (Clive Merrison), a smarmy old twit, brings in a consultant (Stephen Campbell Moore) to hone the boys and give them the "edge" they'll need. The sharpener is a slick young fellow keen on the fresh approach, the odd angle, the alternative view that will distinguish his charges from the mass of boys jockeying for position.

His method stands in contrast to their "General Studies" teacher, Hector (Richard Griffiths, whose Broadway role as Hector won him a Tony last year). Hector is an aging, rotund, throwback more interested in kindling the boys' interest in learning than pumping their scores on an entrance exam. His interest in the boys extends well south of their fertile minds as he occasionally gives them a lift on the back of his motorbike. His ineffectual fumbling is tolerated by the boys as they each take their turn on Hector's hot seat.

These are some world-weary boys, to be sure, but they never lose their charm and we never cease to be entertained. (The boys are played by James Corden, Andrew Knott, Russell Tovey, Jamie Parker, Samuel Anderson, Sacha Dhawan, Samuel Barnett, and Dominic Cooper.)

Originally a multiple British Tony award winner, the play's author (openly gay Alan Bennett) also wrote the screenplay. The theater cast appears *en masse* in the film (shot in an amazingly brief six weeks) and their comfort with each other and the material shows through. In the words of two English beer makers, "...use the stage actors in the film? Brilliant!" *The History Boys* is brilliant indeed.

2006. Directed by openly gay Nicholas Hytner (*The Object of My Affection*). From Fox Home Entertainment (www.foxhome.com). ■

MORE DVD/VHS REVIEWS/PREVIEW

Young Soul Rebels



In *Young Soul Rebels*, an interracial sex act in the bushes turns into a murder, which sets off a police investigation and waves of controversy in London's black community. The year is 1977, and there is fighting in the streets, and the authorities seem more interested in harassing the victim's friends than in solving the crime. A riveting look at the forces of race, class, and sex that reshaped the U.K. just before the Thatcher years, Isaac Julien's breakthrough film, which won the 1991 Critics' Week Prize at Cannes, is as exciting as ever today. • 1991. Directed by Isaac Julien (*Looking for Langston*). • From Strand Releasing (www.strandreleasing.com). —Preview: Troy Carrington

Fun Down There

One of the early titles of the New Queer Cinema, this is a slice-of-life tale of coming out and coming of age. Buddy (Michael Waite) leaves his intolerant family for



NY. There he has his first sexual encounter and finds a partner, Joseph (Nickolas B. Nagourney), from whom he learns how to survive in a big city at the dawn of the AIDS virus. • 1989. Written and directed by Roger Stigliano. • Available May 15 from Strand Releasing (www.strandreleasing.com). —Preview: Eric A.T. Dieckman

Big Dreams in Little Hope



In this lesbian road comedy, Kelly (Emily A. Burton) gathers data for a market research firm. When assigned to a job in the tiny town of Little Hope, she is teamed up with Linda (Julie Goldman). Mismatched and without available rooms at the local hotel, the two are forced to bunk at a hostel. Will things get hostile? Or will they find a common ground? • 2006. Written and directed by Erin Greenwell. • Available May 29 from Wolfe (www.WolfeVideo.com or 1-800-GET-WOLFE). —Preview: E.D.

Idol



Who can resist a mockumentary? Kerry Mitchell (Scott Victor Nelson) is barely making rent in Hollywood. Mega-star Lance Hardcastle (Matthew Jett Schaefer) dies, leaving behind a role in the first TV spy-action show with a gay lead. Mitchell leaps at the opportunity, using his homosexuality as a means to getting the part. But he also has a juicy secret that could crush his career and discredit the network. • 2006. Co-directed by Chris Long and Mike Heim. • From Indie-Pictures (www.Indie-Pictures.com). —Preview: E.D.

Eating Out 2: Sloppy Seconds

In the first sequel to a gay feature in the history of American cinema, Kyle (Jim Verraros) has his eyes set on Troy (Marco Dapper), the hot new guy in town. Since his scheme for his roommate to land a girl by pretending to be gay (in the first *Eating Out*) →

Travel continued from page 50

tries—Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe—gives gay travelers more than enough to do in one trip. The thundering cacophony and misty air filled with rainbows (even more visible during a full moon) created by the Great Zambezi River is unforgettable. Gay-friendly hotels like the Royal Livingstone bring a welcome addition to safaris and trips through nearby jungles, the Kalahari, and Luangwa Valley.

Stewart Cole (www.stewart-cole.com/gay) offers a mid-July trip to the falls that includes a safari.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney & Melbourne

Gay Mardi Gras in Sydney is still hailed as one of the biggest gay parties in the world. It was recently named one of the top 10 international costume parties by *Conde Nast Traveler* magazine and the best gay event in the world by PlanetOut. The event actually kicks off with the Sleaze Ball in September. But Mardi Gras itself arrives in February or March. The week of Mardi Gras has over 100 different venues and activities, and 2008 will be the 30th-anniversary celebration. The Midsumma Festival and celebration in Melbourne will be in its 20th year in 2008. The festival runs three full weeks and four weekends and generally draws about 100,000 visitors. Melbourne is also home of the first gay and lesbian chorus, founded in 1990.

One of the most reputable tour operators for this market is Above and Beyond Tours, although there are several new operators even in this market.

GAY & LESBIAN CRUISES

Atlantis Events, RSVP Vacations, and Olivia are still the big three when it comes to gay and lesbian cruises. However, there are several smaller new tour operators in the cruise market. One of these, Travel Pride & Romance Voyages, is currently offering all-gay cruise charters to exciting and exotic destinations including the Baltic, Egypt, the Galapagos, and the Caribbean cruise for New Year's.

The biggest cruise of 2008 is Atlantis Events' Liberty of the Seas in January, with 3,700

passengers sailing the Caribbean departing from Miami.

The newest addition to the high gay seas is RSVP's Tahiti cruise, scheduled for Thanksgiving 2008 on the Star Flyer, with a capacity of only 170 guests. Expect this cruise to sell out quickly.

At press time, there was limited availability remaining for the RSVP transatlantic crossing on Cunard's Queen Mary 2, leaving from New York on May 29.

The final big North American cruise in 2007 is Atlantis' Mexican Riviera cruise, in October.

Both Atlantis and RSVP still have availability for their end-of-summer 2007 Mediterranean cruises. Both will offer Mediterranean cruises in 2008.

Olivia Cruises' Alaskan Frontiers excursion, setting sail September 9, will lure women with Indigo Girls and Meg Christian as its headliners. The main attraction of the weeklong tour, however, is Alaska's marvelous coastline and culturally rich port towns.

There are also several operators that book gay groups on regular cruises. These trips can always be found at lower rates than any of the all-gay charters. Some are more reputable than others, and some pull many more clients than others. The unfortunate aspect with these gay groups is that you have no guarantee regarding the number of cabins that will actually be part of your group.

TRAVEL RESOURCES

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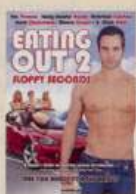
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worked so well, Kyle gets help from friends—and a support group for ex-gays—to play the straight card and get the Adonis. Look for Mink Stole of John Waters fame. • 2006. Co-written and directed by Philip Bartell. • Available May 29 from Ariztical Entertainment (www.ariztical.com).

—Preview: E.D.

Mr. Leather



Mr. Prime Choice and Daddy of Montrose hopefuls—or anyone who “cherishes the abnormal”—will love this explicit yet genial primer outlining the brotherhood, responsibilities, and accoutrement of all things leather. The film, with its generous bonus features, follows a fistful of contestants as they prepare for the 2003 Mr. Los Angeles Leather competition. Yes, sir! • Available May 22 from Liberation Entertainment (www.libent.com). —Preview: N.F.

The Queen

There's something gay and something good about *The Queen*, a story of the British Royal Monarchy during the time of Princess Diana's death. The “something gay” is a disparaging remark about homosexuals made by the Queen's husband; there's also film footage of



Elton John and Tom Cruise at Diana's funeral (not together, of course). The “something good” is Helen Mirren. You may very well appreciate the *real* Queen after seeing Mirren's touching portrayal of the stoic monarch. Michael Sheen's performance as Prime Minister Tony Blair is the perfect compliment to Mirren's Oscar-winning turn as Queen Elizabeth. • 2006. Directed by Stephen Frears (*My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Prick Up Your Ears*). • From Miramax Home Entertainment (www.miramax.com). —Review: Blase DiStefano

Mahogany



Tracy/Mahogany (Diana Ross) is an ambitious young secretary determined to make her dreams of becoming a fashion icon a reality. Anthony Perkins portrays Sean McAvoy, a gay fashion photographer who first shapes then attempts to derail her career. The film won an Oscar for Best Music with “Theme from Mahogany (Do You Know Where You're Going To?).” • FYI: Perkins, a closeted homosexual, once had a relationship with *OutSmart* cover boy Tab Hunter (see *OutSmart* November 2005). • 1975. Written and directed by Berry Gordy. • Available May 1 from Paramount Home Entertainment (www.paramount.com/homeentertainment). —Preview: E.D.

Little Children



Nominated for three Oscars, Sarah (Kate Winslet, who played gay in *Heavenly Creatures*) leads a seemingly mundane life in this drama. But is her husband cheating on her? Is her neighbor a transvestite? Does her husband's co-worker have rough gay sex in public bathrooms? It's as unclear as her relationship with Brad (Patrick Wilson, who played gay in *Angels in America*), a similarly disaffected stay-at-home hubby. Can they be friends, or does fate have something more treacherous in store? • 2006. Co-written and directed by Todd Field. • From New Line Home Entertainment (www.newline.com and www.littlechildrenmovie.com). —Preview: E.D.

Mind of Mencia: Season 2 Uncensored



This is a two-disc set featuring all 14 episodes, including the one in which Mencia hits the streets to ask, “Is gay the new black?” Bonus materials are completely uncensored and include over 30 minutes of extras (deleted scenes, bloopers, and outtakes). Guest stars featured include Dave Attell, Peter Boyle, Cheech Marin, Tracy Morgan, and Jamie Kennedy. • From Comedy Central (www.comedycentral.com). —Preview: T.C. ■

KATE, ERROL, & 7 BUTTS

Classic box sets for the film purist

Benjamin Franklin said the only certainties in this world are death and taxes. I would add (1) the strange popularity of *American Idol*, and (2) the endless supply of classic films turning up in fancy box collections. Since I have zero interest in Sanjaya's hairdos and less than zero interest in his vocal cords, I'll concern myself instead with the

rumors, and innuendos associated with heartthrob Errol Flynn (accused rapist, Nazi agent, bisexual), one almost expects, or *hopes*, to find him getting it on with a horde of Japanese soldiers in at least one of the films contained in *Errol Flynn: The Signature Collection Volume 2*. Unfortunately, you won't find anything like that in *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1936),



The Dawn Patrol (1938), *Dive Bomber* (1941), *Gentleman Jim* (1942), or even *The Adventures of Don Juan* (1948). However, Flynn was probably the “sexiest man alive” of his day, and in this collection you get him in top form as swashbuckler, rogue, and hero—if not rape victim. Actually, I didn't get around to viewing the rather suggestively titled *Dive Bomber*, so I'm not really sure what the rascal is up to in that one. ... *Essential Classics: American Musicals* includes only three examples of film musical Americana: *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944), *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954), and *The Music Man* (1962). While none of these are what I'd call personal favorites, I guess I'd agree that all three are essential viewing for expanding one's cinema literacy. For instance, you need to know that the really high point in *Meet Me in St. Louis* is the scene where cute little Margaret O'Brien brags about *killing an old man*! You need to hear Shirley Jones' version of “Til There Was You” in

The Music Man, so you can compare it with the Beatles' version. And although *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* is hardly what I'd call a great musical, it should be noted that those brothers do quite a lot of very athletic dancing. The film could have been called *Seven Butts on Seven Brothers*. • From Warner Home Video (www.warnervideo.com). The Katharine Hepburn set is available May 29. —Reviews: Jack Varsi ■



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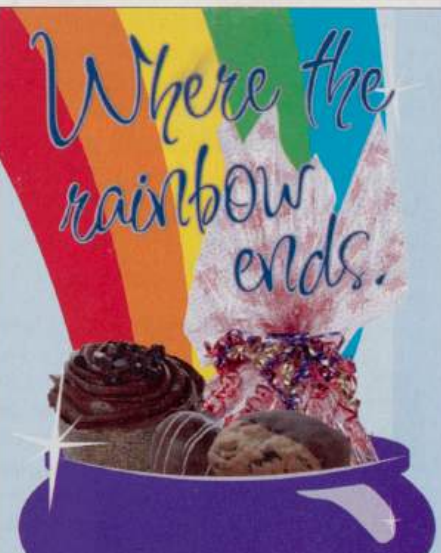
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TESTIFY, SISTER

Out singer Susan Werner releases 'The Gospel Truth'

Out performer Susan Werner has been making a name for herself on the singer/songwriter circuit for some 15 years. The Iowa-reared, Chicago-based singer began her career in the folk/pop realm, with acclaimed discs such as *Time Between Trains* and *New Non-Fiction*, and then later, reinvented herself as a crooner of original standards on *I Can't Be New*. On her latest CD, the groundbreaking *The Gospel Truth* (Sleeve Dog Records/susanwerner.com), Werner makes her boldest statement to date. The dozen songs (including a hidden track) capture the passion and praise-filled expression of spirituals and gospel music, but without the bible thumping. In fact, the subjects of the songs range from close-minded but loud-mouthed preachers in "(Why Is Your) Heaven So Small," to random acts of kindness and generosity in



Looking for a larger purpose: Out performer Susan Werner goes gospel with her new spiritually-laden CD, *The Gospel Truth*.

"Help Somebody," to losing one's faith in "Lost My Religion," to getting your fair share, regardless of your religious affiliation, in "I Will Have My Portion." But what gives these songs their glow is the way in which they are delivered, with a thundering gospel choir or an organ, or both.

Werner recently sat down for a breakfast interview at the bustling West Egg Café in Chicago before she headed out on tour, which includes the May 24-June 10 Kerrville Folk Festival in Texas Hill Country (she is scheduled to perform on May 28 and 29).

Gregg Shapiro: Your new CD *The Gospel Truth* addresses religion, but it's not the first time that religion has appeared in a song of yours. I was thinking about "Sorry About Jesus," a song from your 1998

album *Time Between Trains*. Susan Werner: Like many Americans I grew up in a church-going family. I think that stays with you whether you continue your parents' tradition or depart from it, but it's there. I think I finally reached a point in my life where, like a lot of people, I began to look for a sense of meaning, a sense of larger purpose, because I was happy in all other aspects of my life, and I wanted to look →

GrooveOut Shorts

Various Artists

New Arrivals, Volume 1

New Arrivals, Volume 2

The visually delicate yet heavily talented Rachael Sage, who played the 2005's Houston GLBT Pride Festival, performs on Vol. 1 and conceived Vol. 2. She and other like-minded artists, like Melissa Ferrick, Ellis, and Girllyman, have waved their fees, with all proceeds to hurricane relief and hunger projects. Good music for good causes. From MPRESS Records (www.mpressrecords.com). —Review: Nancy Ford

Original Cast Recording

The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin

Gender, race, and relationships are explored in this pop musical by Kirsten Childs, with LaChanze, last year's Best Actress Tony winner for *The Color Purple*, brilliantly leading the cast. "Sticks and Stones" and "Granny's Advice" make me want to see the whole show instead of just hearing it on

CD. From Playwrights Horizons and Ghostlight Records (www.ghostlightrecords.com). —Review: N.F.

Various Artists

Broadway Scene Stealers—The Women

Broadway Scene Stealers—The Men

These two discs focus on songs that were not runaway hits from their respective shows but perhaps should have been. Includes yummys like Dorothy Loudon's "Little Girls" from *Annie*, Paul Wallace's "All I Need Is the Girl" from *Gypsy*, Barbra Streisand's "Miss Marmelstein" from *I Can Get It For You Wholesale*, and many more. From Playbill Records (www.playbillrecords.com). —Review: N.F.

Mika

Life in Cartoon Motion

This London-based singing/songwriting Lebanese émigré hit big with "Grace Kelly," the kicky first cut on his debut CD. Mika describes himself as "Beck via Queen and Elton John with a touch of Rufus W." But it's Scissor Sisters who pop out, especially with "Big Girl

(You Are Beautiful)." From Universal Republic (www.universalpublicrecords.com). —Review: N.F.

Macy Gray

Big

Her remarkably unusual voice and fashion sense made her a huge success and distinguished her from her musical peers. *Big* is nothing like Gray's previous albums. This dynamic new recording features a variety of styles with a bit of hip-hop and rock. Along with guest performances by many notable artists, the soul diva's unique sound and soulful charms prevail. From Will.i.am Music/Geffen Records (www.geffen.com). —Review: Andrea Rodricks

Hilary Duff

Dignity

Like this CD's promotional material says, "Dignity isn't for sale. It comes from within." Stop laughing—she's serious. This former Houstonian and Lizzie McGuire star is listed as co-executive producer for her third release, an apt platform to →

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GrooveOut continued from page 68

for some way to be of larger service and feel like my life again had a larger purpose to it. So like many Americans I began to consider a return to the church. Evidently, I'm not alone in that, in going back to see what the church represents and if there's a way I want to relate to that now. One way of looking at it is that it's like going through childhood things and objects and deciding if you want to keep them or not.

What to keep and what to discard.

Yeah. Which memories and experiences you treasure and know that you always will—they'll always be a part of you—and which ones you're happy to drop off at Goodwill and never see again. Also, if your parents took you to church as a little kid, then that music is in your ears before you're even old enough to articulate it. Your ears are tuned to that music. So if in later life, you depart from the church and become a secular American, your ears are still Catholic. [Laughs] My ears are still in some way Catholic and still part of the church. It's been interesting to me to see how many other people have exactly these same struggles—how to integrate how they grew up with their adult selves. Religion is

one place where that shows up with people. What's interesting about this project is that music brings up memories. Music is more powerful than words. Music brings up things at a subconscious, nonverbal level both below and above what you can articulate in words.

It's almost like the sense of smell.

Right. [Laughs] If we could make a smell album about gospel, about religion... Wow, that would be a trip, right? What would it have? Incense, Cheerios...

Yes, Sunday morning breakfast smells. In an e-mail, you talked about the research that you did for this disc, such as attending various church services and soaking up the proceedings. Christian music itself has also worked its way into pop music. Did you listen to this music as well?

I did not listen to contemporary Christian pop, because I wanted to make many of these songs out of music of the church, if you actually went to a church. Which isn't necessarily pop music—which is choirs, which is bluegrass gospel, traditional music of the church made with traditional elements, B3 organ, the choirs, hymns, biblical language instead of contemporary language.

It's funny, because I was thinking about the song, "Loves Me Like a Rock" by Paul Simon. But here is this man of Jewish heritage backed up by the Dixie Hummingbirds singing in a gospel style. Yet it is the most unreligious song ever—it's a pop song about love, but he makes those worlds meet.

Because it's about love. I really admire Paul Simon's career because he's really been able to incorporate other musical languages into his songwriting. When you do think about Ladysmith Black Mambazo...

Of course, all the South African stuff...

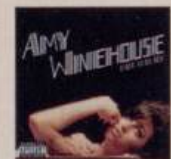
And the Dixie Hummingbird stuff. So my career is like Paul Simon's career, except no one knows who I am. [Laughs] But that's a good model for what it is that I'm doing with my career, going from style to style, but still it's songwriting—incorporating those original musical elements, those root elements into new songs. Let me say one thing about Christian elements in pop music. When I was a little kid, there were hits like, "Put Your Hand in the Hand of the Man"...

... "who stilled the water." And "The Lord's Prayer" was a hit single in the '70s, too. →

GrooveOut Shorts continued from page 68

distinguish her from her paparazzi-magnet contemporaries. From Hollywood Records (www.hollywoodrecords.com). —Preview: N.F.

Amy Winehouse Back to Black



Bluesy and ballsy, this "Ronette from Hell," as the *Village Voice* calls her, pays tribute to girl groups of the '50s and '60s—but with a dark, dark twist. "Back to Black" and "Some Unholy War" stand out. From Universal Republic Records (www.universalrepublicrecords.com). —Review: N.F.

Ultra Naté Grime, Silk & Thunder



This R&B/dance CD lifts its title from *Rolling Stone* magazine's description of Nirvana's *Nevermind*. And while we appreciate her tribute to Grace Jones with "Love's the Only Drug," U.N. is no Kurt Cobain (nor Grace Jones, for that matter). Tedious, at best. Available May 22 from Tommy Boy (www.tommyboy.com). —Review: N.F.

Ryland Angel Ryland Angel

This countertenor has saccharinized recognizable classical/sacred tunes for his debut CD, like "Salve Regina," "Jesu Redemptor," and "The Water Is Wide," most of



Joan Armatrading Into the Blues

Bold and unpredictable, Joan Armatrading has stood the test of time. Her definitive vocal style and superb lyrics have captivated fans since the '70s. A celebrated singer/songwriter, Armatrading proves just how much she enjoys playing the blues. She explores this classic American art form playing blues guitar and drawing from her rich soul vibe. *Into the Blues* features an eclectic mix of songs that incorporate various types of blues. From 429 Records (www.429records.com). —Preview: A.R.

Dr. Dog We All Belong



True, the name is terrible. Despite the lousy moniker, the band's style (early Beatles psychedelia) is compelling. After a couple listens, the harmonies are hard to forget. The vocals on "Worst Trip" are reminiscent of Ray Davies. "The Girl" has an early Flaming Lips vibe, in the vein of the Lips' "Tangerine" but without coming off derivative. From Park The Van Records (www.ParkTheVan.com). —Review: Eric A.T. Dieckman

which were recorded at London's famed Abbey Road Studios. Is that John Lennon we hear spinning in his grave? From Manhattan Records (www.manhattanrecords.com). —Review: N.F.

Paula Abdul Greatest Hits—Straight Up!



Well, shut my mouth and call me Sanjaya—did you know that Paula Abdul had enough "hits" for a greatest hits album? Neither did I, but all 18 of them are on this collection. Yes, 18! Available May 8 from Virgin Records (www.virginrecords.com). —Preview: N.F.

Tracy Young Danceculture 2



One of the circuit's most requested producer/DJs, Young was tapped by Madonna Penn Ritchie to spin at her more recent wedding. At press time, she was scheduled to have played her compilations at the Purple Party in Dallas on April 28. From Ferosh Records (www.ferosh.com). —Preview: N.F.

The Alan Parsons Project I Robot and Eye in the Sky



These two '70s-era classics have been digitally remastered and expanded to include 11 previously unreleased bonus tracks. The Eric Woolfson/Alan Parsons songwriting and producing team play overseers to this new project, assuring quality renditions of past hits, "Sirius," "I Wouldn't Want to Be Like You," and more. From Arista/Legacy (www.legacyrecordings.com). —Preview: N.F. ■

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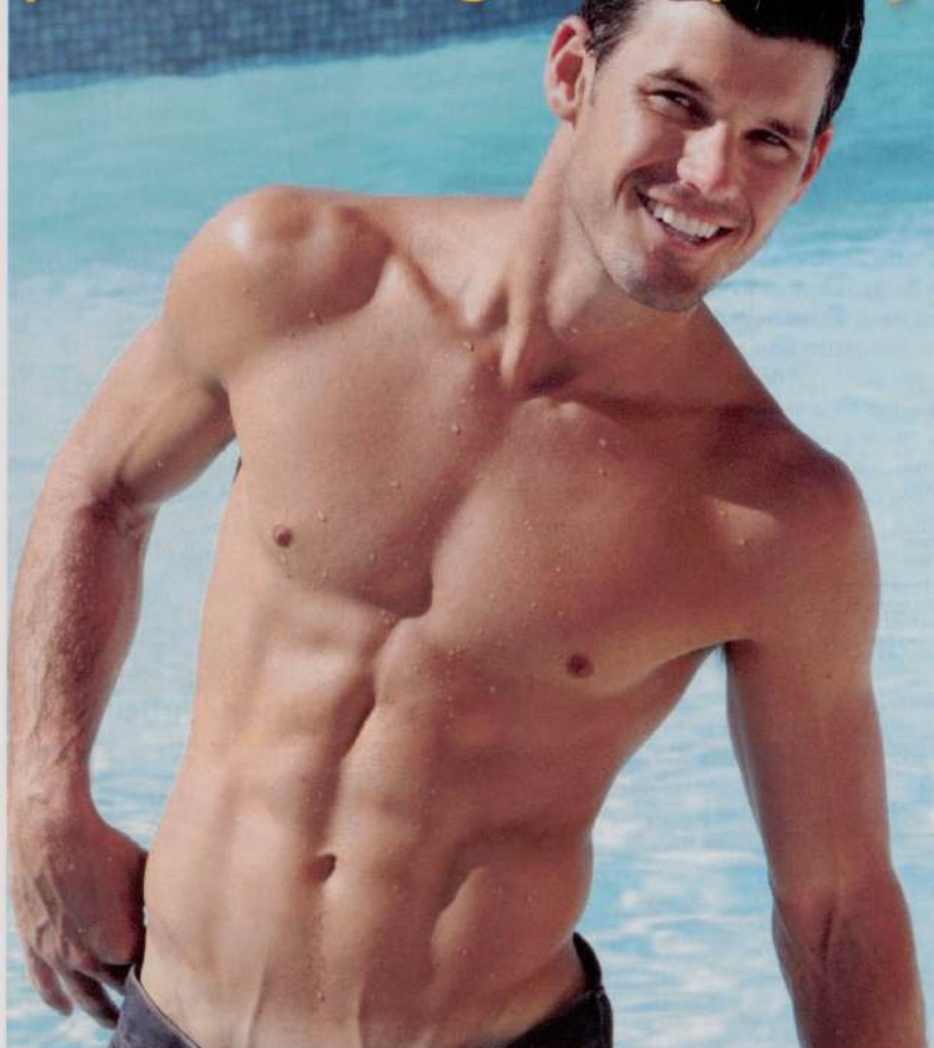
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GrooveOut continued from page 70

This stuff! Think about Pete Seeger writing "Turn, Turn, Turn," and the Byrds make it a hit. These are words from the book of the Ecclesiastes. "Jesus is Just Alright with Me"...

And the songs from *Jesus Christ Superstar* were all over the radio at that time as well.

There was this time before, and I think that there might be a parallel in that then, as now—we're in the later years of a very unpopular and tragic war. It's almost as if it's time now for "nice Jesus," because the fire-and-brimstone daddy god got us into some trouble here, and nice Jesus is going to get us out of it.

Your song "Forgiveness" is especially powerful, and I wondered if your being a member of the GLBT community played any part in your need to address the hypocrisy of organized religion, particularly in light of the Christian right's crusade against queer people?

The lines "How do you not hate those who have low to their bibles and armed to their disciples," it does feel like the conservative church has had it in for certain populations, in the last several years especially. The song

started out coming from there. Now I've found that you can telescope back from the song and get to an even broader point with it, which is that the planet has Muslims pointing guns and bombs pointing at Christians, and Christians pointing guns and bombs at Muslims, and Jews pointing guns and bombs at Muslims, and Muslims pointing guns and bombs at Jews. The Middle East is primed for bad things to happen any day, every day. So the song starts more local and personal and telescopes back to something larger.... What I tried to do with "Forgiveness," with "Heaven so Small," and many of these songs, is to use the music of faith with the lyrics of doubt, and in that contradiction there seems to be a lot of power. I don't know why, but it seems like nobody's tried it before.

In the press release, you mention attending Chicago's Gospel Fest with a Jewish friend who commented that he wanted to know where to find gospel's "joy without the Jesus." I've often wondered the same thing: why the same fervor and unbridled enthusiasm inherent in gospel couldn't be put to better use, such as singing about guaranteeing a woman's right to choose or the health benefits of vegetarian diet or some such.

[Laughs] This is a great question!

What you do is sort of throw it back at them with their own language and attitude. Was that particular moment at Gospel Fest the spark for you?

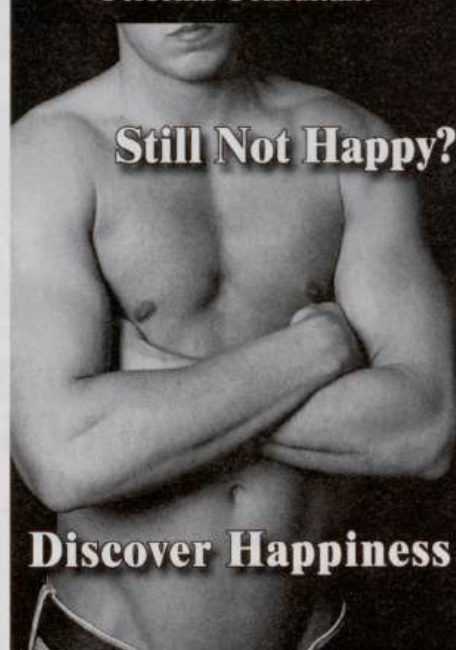
It was key. Standing there listening to the choirs—they made so much noise, so much volume, and intensity. And this is Millennium Park, and it was still loud. This was outdoors, and it was still loud as hell. And I had been to Blues Fest and Jazz Fest, all those, but this had something else going on. This was just fantastic and transcendent. I mean I was willing—you are willing to be converted. I think that the Chicago Gospel Music Festival is the best argument for God that I've ever heard. It still did not convert me, but it was the best argument I'd ever heard. It's something to experience. I don't know that you can get all the joy without the Jesus, but you can pull right alongside it and enjoy the feeling of being of service to other people, of anticipating that good things are coming. Hope, optimism—those are the sort of things you can get without God as the light at the end of the tunnel.

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.

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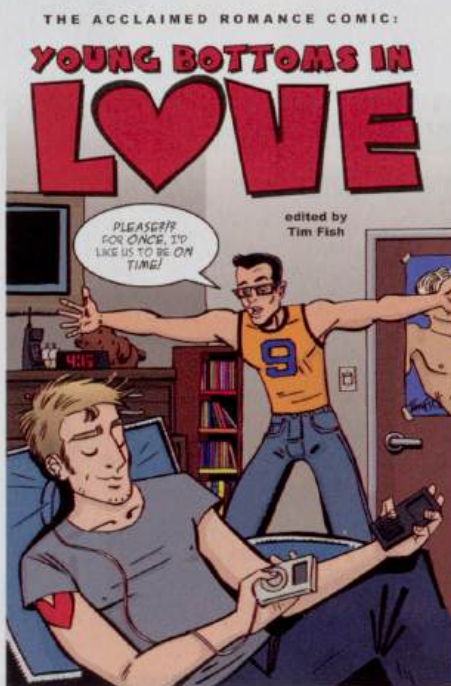
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BOTTOMS UP

The popular online comics collection 'Young Bottoms in Love' hits the page

A whopping, colorful tome—and a bargain at \$22!—of short gay comics, *Young Bottoms in Love* (Poison Press) is culled from six volumes' worth of online strips posted on the website Popimage.com between 2002 and 2006. Edited by Tim Fish (the romance series *Cavalcade of Boys*) and written and illustrated by dozens of creators, the stories in *YBIL*, released this month, are romance-themed, although quite diverse in style and content, from outrageously satirical to poignant and sad (notably, Dave Ortega's elegiac "Fish Story") to all-out fantastical.

A handful of Fish's send-ups of 1960s romance comics and their melodramatic conventions (lots of crying! foolhardy decisions!) kick off the collection, including "My Gay Romance," about a guy who can't choose between loving his wonderful best friend and an asshole/idiot who looks exactly like the best friend. A teen's first love with a pool boy is seen from his, his gay parents',



Fine lines: Tim Fish (right) is the editor of the new comics collection *Young Bottoms in Love*, which began life on the website Popimage.com. Proceeds from sales benefit advocacy organizations including Human Rights Campaign, The Trevor Project, and Prism Comics, the GLBT comic-industry group.

and the pool boy's perspectives in Francois Peneaud and Roger Zanni's "The Gardener." *Queer Eye's* Fab Five make an appearance perpetrating homo-superficiality in Michael DiMotta and Greg Lockard's skewed fairy tale "Beauty and the Beast," while Bill Roundy, Nate, and Mike K. serve up a ghost story with a *Tales From the Crypt* twist in "He's All Mine." Closing *YBIL* is "My Hypnotist," a funny and sexy tale from queer comics legend Howard Cruse (Wendel, *Stuck Rubber Baby*) about a college boy's ill-advised crush on a hot aspiring hypnotist. The genres, from superhero to storybook, and cute guys just keep coming. (Proceeds from book sales benefit advocacy groups including Human Rights Campaign, The Trevor Project, and Prism Comics, the nonprofit organization that promotes the work of GLBT creators in the comic industry.)

Rarely longer than five pages each, these stories read best in small batches. A minus if you're on a long train ride with only *YBIL* for company but a plus otherwise. You can have your fill, put it down, and find more love waiting when you come back again.

Lawrence Ferber reported on the Sundance Film Festival in our March issue.



ReadOut Shorts

The Hookup Artist Tucker Shaw

HarperTeens, a division of HarperCollins Children's Books (www.harperteen.com)



Tucker Shaw gives us another delightful look at teenage love and life. Lucas, everyone's favorite gay boy matchmaker, is suffering from a broken heart. His best gal pal, Cate, needs a hookup. Enter Derek, the new boy at school. Teenage angst explodes as Lucas tries to fix up Cate and Derek, all the while lusting for Derek himself. Wonderful characters, plot twists, and an unfailing sense of teenage life make this one a winner. —Review: Angel Curtis

Fellow Travelers Thomas Mallon

Pantheon Books (www.randomhouse.com)

Fellow Travelers provides a scary look at the time



when talented young people were suddenly fired and the question was "Is the problem pink or lavender?" Set in Washington during the McCarthy era, this compelling story of love and betrayal reminds us not only of what was, but of what could be. Well-written and meticulously plotted, Mallon gives us another not-to-be-missed story. —Review: A.C.

Strange Tribe John Hemingway

The Lyons Press (www.lyonspress.com)

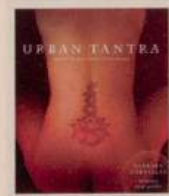


Ernest Hemingway defined what it means to be a man in America. His son Gregory died in a women's jail. In *Strange Tribe*, Gregory's son John shares a previously unavailable picture of the family dynamic resulting from the bipolar disorder Ernest and Gregory shared (they also shared

a fascination with androgyny). Containing previously unpublished letters and pictures, this compelling family story adds another chapter to the Hemingway family mystique. —Review: A.C.

Urban Tantra: Sacred Sex for the Twenty-First Century Barbara Carrellas

Ten Speed Press (www.tenspeed.com)



A special gift for the body as well as the spirit, this how-to guide for the harried city dweller is different in that it addresses pleasure for opposite-gender partnered, same-gender partnered, and even self-partnered sexual excursions. Author Barbara Carrellas' honey, Kate Bornstein (*Gender Outlaw*) loves it, and Annie Sprinkle, PhD (who knew?) penned the foreword. —Preview: Nancy Ford ■

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GOOD FORTUNE

Sally predicts the future

In my effort to piece together a living as a lesbian humor columnist, I pick up odd jobs. I mean really odd. I've been paid to castrate calves, uproot ivy, and haul five-year-olds to kindergarten. So taking a gig as a fortune teller at a company office party was not that out of character.

Decked out in borrowed froufrou and bling, I worked my way through the festive throng to my designated fortune-telling table. This was definitely not your *L Word* kind of crowd—my gaydar flatlined. I had to wedge between and around these people on my trek to the far corner of the hotel banquet room. Luckily, they were distracted by a barbershop quartet and the open bar. I laid out my moons-and-stars tablecloth, half dozen candles, and my homemade sign, *Contessa Vanessa, faux fortune teller*.

I don't know a thing about fortune telling. The talent agent who hired me talked me into it. "Just dress up, fake a Bela Lugosi accent, and improvise," she had said. "They'll love you."

"Velcome. Vaht would you like to ahsk de Contessa?" I sounded more like a cross between my Yiddish-speaking grandmother and Ricardo Montalban.

I wasn't so sure. Pretending to be a fortune teller I could probably do, but disguising my famous dyke-about-town face? If anyone recognized me, my cover would be seriously blown.

I had outlined my eyes blacker than Shane's and darkened my already somewhat bushy eyebrows. Topped off with a black Elvira wig, hoop earrings, and strands of Mardi Gras beads, could I pass?

A hired magician took the stage. He linked and unlinked steel rings for the now fairly soused crowd who ooh'd and ah'd at every trick. Gullible bunch. I would probably be fine. I lit my candles and pretended to slip into a trance.

There was already a long line of people waiting to get their fortunes told. Mary, the CEO who had hired me, was my first customer. I had to make a good impression. "Velcome. Vaht would you like to ahsk de Contessa?" I should definitely have practiced my Bela Lugosi impression before now. I sounded more like a cross between my Yiddish-speaking grandmother and Ricardo Montalban. It would have to do. →

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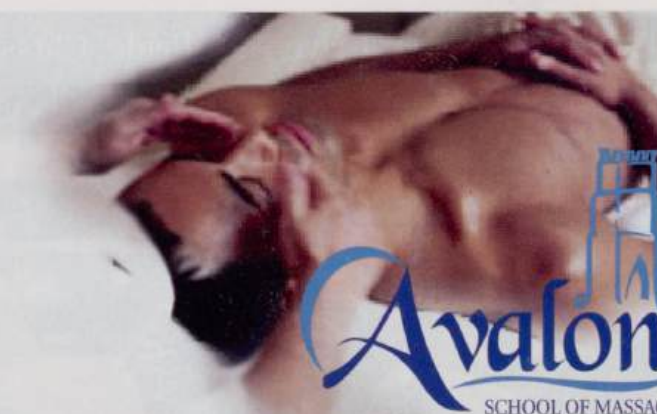


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OutLoud

continued from page 76

Mary's earnest eyes looked into mine. "Will things improve for me?"

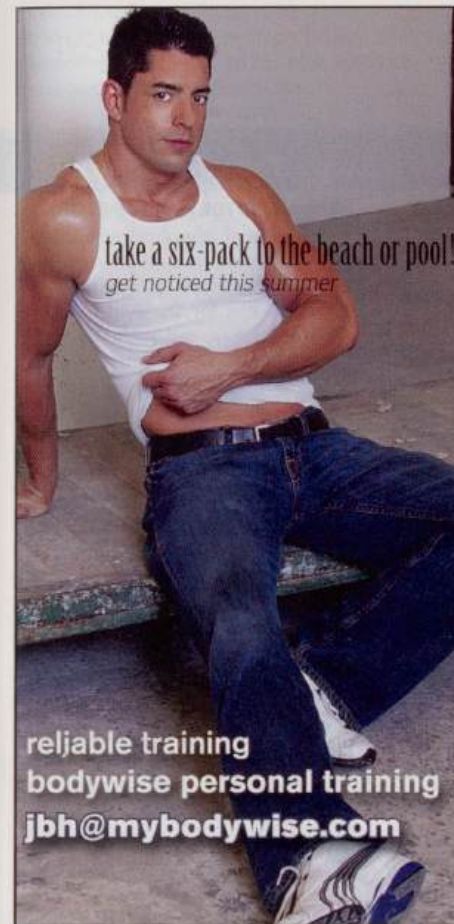
I took her hand—expensive bracelet, dangerously long nails, no wedding ring. I was tempted to suggest she get closer to the women in her life, but I was here to entertain, not recruit. I ran my finger over her palm's converging lines. "Tings vill come togezzer for you." The talent agent was charging Mary a substantial fee for my services, so I added, "Contessa see you a vize voman. You make-a da good choizes." Now I sounded like Chico Marx, but Mary didn't seem to mind.

I had 30 more fortunes to tell that night. I might as well use my disguise to dole out some happiness. "Every-ting fo' you gonna be okay," I told Mary. Who cares if my accent had morphed into Mrs. Swan?

Mary smiled. She squeezed my hands and thanked me. "You're doing a wonderful job."

Maybe Mary was in disguise, too.

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



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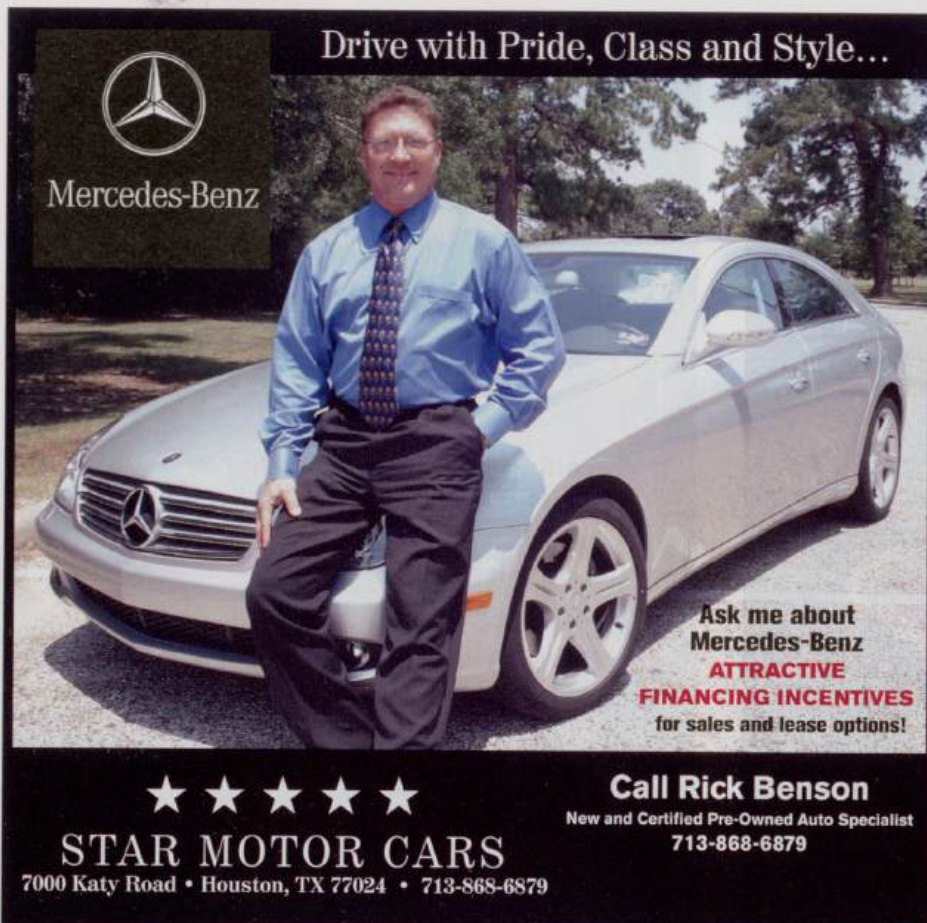
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Calendar of Events

by Eric A.T. Dieckman

Deadline for OutSmart's June issue is 5 p.m., Thursday, May 10.

MAY

Daily (Mon.-Fri.)

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

Daily (Sun.-Fri.)

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

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

Daily (Sun.-Fri.)

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

Weekly (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. Call ahead to verify time and place: Jan, 281/498-5301. 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, 900 Portway Dr. Info: 713/869-7722, ext. 127, or www.houstonspca.org.

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—THU., MAY 10.**

4 (Fri.)

In the Mood[afaruka]. As part of the 19th Street Spring Fling, Wind Water Gallery hosts a free concert in its parking lot with Moodafaruka, a multiculturally influenced band. The group mixes Flamenco, Middle Eastern, Spanish, and Western motifs. Wind Water Gallery specializes in pan-Asian antiques and home décor. Free. 7 pm at Wind Water Gallery, 548 W. 19th St. (Spring Fling 4-6 pm.) Info: 713/426-4885, www.windwatergallery.com, or www.moodafaruka.com.

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 4:30-10:30pm, Saturday noon-10:30pm, and Sunday noon-6:30pm at Hermann Square/Reflection Pond at City Hall, 901 Bagby. Info: www.bayoucitycrawfishfestival.com.

9 (Wed.)

OUTstanding Mystery. Gay Canadian sleuth Russell Quant returns to the page with Anthony Bidulka's latest work, *Stain of the Berry: A Russell Quant Mystery*. The award-winning writer will read from his novel set in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and throughout the globe. 6 pm at Murder by the Book, 2342 Bissonnet. (Writer Caro Soles will be at Murder by the Book at the same time.) More information: 713/524-8597 or www.anthonymbidulka.com.

10 (Thurs.)

These Are a Few of Our Favorite Songs. The Houston Pride Band presents its final concert of the season, "Our Favorite Things." Artistic director Jason Stephens polled band members for their favorite arrangements and assembled a program ranging from Cole Porter's "Begin the Beguine" to "Jupiter" from "The Planets" by Gustav Holst, with a little Leonard Bernstein thrown in just because (how can you go wrong with Bernstein?). \$10. 7:30 pm at Resurrection MCC, 2025 W. 11th St. More information: 832/265-3346 or www.houstonprideband.org.

10 (Thurs.)

An Eye for an Eye, A Smile for a Smile. The nonprofit "Give Back a Smile" program offers direct assistance, in the form of cosmetic dentistry, to survivors of domestic violence. This silent auction and fundraiser benefits the program. Have a drink, meet other altruists, bid on a few finds, and give someone else a reason to smile. 5:30-7:30 pm at LifeSmiles, 1722 W. Alabama. More information: 713/592-9300, Gail@LifeSmiles.us, or www.aacd.com/foundation/index.asp.

12 (Sat.)

Friends for Life presents its third annual fundraiser, "An Evening with Athena and Friends," to protect homeless animals in the Houston area. Come for the cocktail reception, stay for the silent auction. \$125 per person. Cocktail attire. 7-9:30 pm at Café Annie, 1728 Post Oak. Info/reservations: 713/861-9500, Athena@adoptfriends4life.org, or www.adoptfriends4life.org.

12 (Sat.)

The Mandalay Experience maps your individual journey through five elements: water (form), earth (feeling/sensation), fire (perception/recognition), air (intellect/formation or concept), and space (consciousness). Presented by Anke Nowicki, this program reveals your relationship with each element and is a tool for insight and liberation, a direct encounter with your limitations. 9 am-5 pm at The Houston Tibetan Buddhist Center, Dawn Mountain, 1925 Richmond. \$125. To register: 615/500-7637. More info: www.ankenowicki.com.

12 (Sat.)

Summer Kick-Off Fun Run. Take part in a 5K run, a 3K walk, or a 1K kids' run. Proceeds benefit scholarships through the James Glenn Foundation. Begins at 7 am at Clear Creek High School, League City. Info: www.jamesglennrun.com.

18 (Fri.)

Snappy Design. The Rice Design Alliance (RDA), in collaboration with Lawndale Art Center, invites Houston design professionals to participate in Snapshot '07, an open-call exhibition. The show provides an opportunity to view the wide variety of realized and unrealized projects designed in Houston. Look for photos taken by many gay Houstonians, including Christopher Olivier. Free. May 18-June 16 at Lawndale, 4912 Main St. Info: 713/528-5858 or www.LawndaleArtCenter.org.

19 (Sat.)

If It Ain't Baroque, It Just Might Be Classical. A first, Mercury Baroque presents an all-classical musical



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'20 LOVE SONGS'

The latest world premiere from Tamarie Cooper takes the syrup—and the piss—out of the syrupy love story

The last thing we need is another candy-coated *Sleepless in Seattle*. Tamarie Cooper (of *Tamalia* fame) brings us her latest world premiere. This one takes an honest, eclectic, eccentric look at the multi-pronged tip of Cupid's arrow. These vignettes deal with the love of food, lust, desperation, and the kind of love only a battery-operated tchotchke can deliver. • In the show Cooper describes as "a true fusion of dance and theater," Walt Zipprian (who is openly gay) performs in a piece entitled "Country Love" ("You can't have a show about love and not include a country song," says Cooper). An epicure (food lover), Cooper describes another vignette focused on greasy late-night pleasures. A sobbing Kyle Sturdivant eats a What-a Meal as a sad Schubert composition plays. "It gets very, very messy." • Other shorts include a choreographed heartache between two men, heart-wrenching goings-on at the Venture Inn, and a drag soiree gone awry. • Has Cooper's ticker ever been clocked? Yes indeed. Her first beau gave her a "non-stop drama fest. I cried ALL the time. He cheated on me with my best friend. I cheated on him with his best friend." And yes, you'll see this tale of amour d'horreur as well. —E.D.

For more on 20 Love Songs, visit www.outsmartmagazine.com.

The What: 20 Love Songs

The Where: The Axiom, 2524 McKinney at Live Oak

The When: May 3-June 16, 8 p.m.

The Wherewithal: 713/522-8443 or www.infernalbridegroom.com

PHOTOS BY GEORGE HIXON



The three faces of food: Tamarie Cooper gets a little messy in the world premiere of her latest show, 20 Love Songs.

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performance. Works include Haydn's *Symphony No. 26 Lamentations*, Haydn's *Cello Concerto in D*, and Mozart's *Symphony No. 29*. \$18-\$42. 8 pm at the Wortham Center, Texas at Smith. Info/reservations: 832/251-0706 or www.MercuryBaroque.org.

19 & 20 (Sat. & Sun.)

Houston Black Expo. The largest African-American tradeshow in the state of Texas brings you the best that the African-American culture has to offer. Hundreds of businesses display and sell their wares, ranging from health and beauty supplies to clothing to financial and real estate services. At the George R. Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida de las Americas. More information: 832/200-0540 or www.houstonblackexpo.com.

21-25 (Mon.-Fri.)

Warren Fellowship for Future Teachers. This week-long program introduces university students preparing to become educators to the history and lessons of the Holocaust. This prestigious program is by application only. 9 am-5 pm in the Avrohm I. Wiesenberg Classroom of the Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline St. For applications and more information: 713-942-8000, extension 123, education@hnh.org, or www.hnh.org.

PLANNING AHEAD

JUNE/JULY

June 2 (Sat.)

22nd Annual Fun Run. The Heights Fun Run gathers folks for fitness and festivity. Post-race party is at Marmion Park with food, juice, music, awards, and door prizes. First event begins 7:30 am at Heights Blvd. at 18th St. Information, reservations, and entry fee schedule: 713/861-4002 option 4, www.signmeupsports.com, or www.houstonheights.org.

June 2 & 3 (Sat. & Sun.)

Galveston Antique Weekend. Galveston Antique Dealers' Association and the Moody Mansion invite you to shop the city's 18 antique stores, see the special exhibits in each shop, and enter to win a grand prize package. The Moody Mansion's new exhibit, "The House on Tremont Street," includes a free lecture and reception. Shop Saturday and Sunday, 10 am-5 pm; drawing for grand prize Sunday, 5 pm; Moody Mansion exhibit and reception Saturday, 5-7 pm. More info: 409/770-7360, www.AntiqueGalveston.com, AntiqueGalveston@yahoo.com.

July 18-22 (Wed.-Sun.)

Tales of the Cocktail. Join the country's hottest chefs, authors, bartenders, and cocktail experts for this culinary and libation festival in New Orleans. Enjoy spirited dinners, seminars, cocktail hour, cocktail luncheons, walking tours of the French Quarter, and classic and contemporary cocktail parties in the city known for its deliciously devastating drinks. A bit of advice learned from N.O. revelers: Get rid of the straw; it promotes faster consumption. \$15 for wristband access to two parties. \$485 for multi-event pass. In the French Quarter. More information/reservations: www.TalesoftheCocktail.com.

RADIO

◆ **After Hours.** Sunday mornings, 1-4 am. Featuring the QM2 (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

◆ **Capote Tonight.** Lizzie Putnam has inherited her aunt's lake house. While cleaning out the attic, she and her ex-boyfriend find an old trunk containing a journal written by Truman Capote. Within are story lines and drafts, details of the Black and White Ball, and accounts of his enemies, friends, and lovers. \$15, \$12 for seniors and students. May 17-27, 8 pm (Sundays at 3 pm), at Express Theatre, 446 Northwest Mall. Info/reservations: 713/682-5044 or www.expresstheatre.com.

◆ **Chacona: Dancing in the Shadows of the Cross.** Ex Umbris travels across the soundscape of secular music of Spain during the time of the Inquisition. \$30, \$25 for seniors, and \$10 for students. May 12, 8 pm, at First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1311 Holman at Caroline. (preconcert talk at 7 pm). Info/reservations: 713/432-1744, www.HoustonEarlyMusic.org.

◆ **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. Through May 27 at the Alley Theatre's Neuhaus Stage, 615 Texas Ave. Info/reservations: 713/228-8421 or www.alleytheatre.org.

◆ **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. May 4-12 at the Wortham Center, Texas at Smith. Info/reservations: 713/228-6737, 800/626-7372, or www.houstongrandopera.org.

◆ **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? May 3-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.

◆ **Design for Living.** Noël Coward's tumultuous tale of a bizarre love triangle follows a painter, a decorator, and a writer from Paris to London to New York to madness. Thought the three drive each other crazy, they're crazier when they're apart. \$10-\$35 (pay-what-you-can May 13, \$5 minimum). May 5-June 3 (showtimes vary) at Main Street Theater-Rice Village, 2540 Times Blvd. Info/reservations: 713/524-6706, www.ticketweb.com, or www.mainstreettheater.com.

◆ **Gershwin's An American in Paris.** America's most popular 20th-century songwriter was no slouch at classical compositions, either. \$25-\$99. May 17, 19, and 20, 8 pm Thursday and Saturday, 2:30 pm Sunday, at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Tickets: 713/224-7575 or www.houstonsymphony.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. Through May 10 at Stages Theatre, 3201 Allen Pkwy. Info/reservations: 713/527-0123 or www.stagestheatre.com.

◆ **It Could Be Any One of Us.** An eccentric family struggles over a will in this comedy. That night, a murder is committed, but whodunit? \$14, \$12 for seniors, \$10 for students. May 4-June 9, 8 pm, at the Company OnStage, 536 Westbury Square. Info/reservations: 713/726-1219 or www.companyonstage.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.

◆ **The Lower Depths.** Maxim Gorky subtitled his play "Scenes from a Russian Life," which came to be considered the hallmark of Russian Socialist Realism. \$10 (pay-what-you-want May 3 and 10). May 3-19, 8 pm, at Freneticore Theater, 5102 Navigation Blvd. Info/reservations: 832/283-0858, dcommune@yahoo.com, or www.DosChicasTheaterCommune.com.

◆ **Monty Python's Spamalot.** Finally, nerds and devotees of musical have a common ground. The satirical six's campy cult hit movie *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* is now a campy cult hit musical. The knights of Camelot wouldn't hear Tim the Enchanter's warning about the deadly killer rabbit. Will they take heed if he sings his cautions? \$27.25-\$77.25. May 21-June 17 (GLBT-focused Out@TUTS performance May 24) at the Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. Info/reservations: 713/558-TUTS, 888/558-3882, or www.tuts.com.

◆ **Treasure Island.** In the world premiere of this adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's novel, Jim Hawkins races against time and the wits of treacherous pirates to find hidden treasure. Tickets start at \$19. May 19-June 17 at Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. Info/reservations: 713/228-8421 or www.alleytheatre.org.

◆ **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. Through May 13 at Stages Theatre, 3201 Allen Pkwy. Info/reservations: 713/527-0123 or www.stagestheatre.com.

PERFORMING ARTS

For Young People

◆ **Hansel and Gretel.** Produced by Houston Grand Opera, this inventive production of the fairy-tale opera by Engelbert Humperdinck brings the story, and giant puppets, to life. Free (free reserved covered seats available day of show). May 18-19, 7:30 pm at Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Dr. in Hermann Park. Info/reservations: www.milleroutdoortheatre.com.

◆ **Kids Play: Sweet Home Suites.** Kids Play is a year-long multi-media dance, video, and theater program for "at-risk" youth. Using the medium of art, music, and theater, Kids Play engages children and youth in an expressive art experience. Thursday and Friday, May 17 and 18, 7 pm, at DiverseWorks, 1117 East Fwy off Main at Naylor. Info/reservations: 713/223-8346 or www.diverseworks.org.

◆ **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. Through 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.

◆ **The Wizard of Oz.** Dorothy's still not in Kansas. Who'd want to leave if it meant abandoning those gorgeous ruby reds. \$7. May 5-June 9, 11 am 1:30 pm Saturdays, at the Company OnStage, 536 Westbury Square. Info/reservations: 713/726-1219 or www.companyonstage.org.

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

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exhibition themed Identity/Façade, collectively planned and executed by high school photography students from the Houston area. Participating schools are The Kinkaid School, HSPVA, St. John's School, Bellaire High School, Jack Yates High School, Lamar High School, and Jersey Village High School. Through June 3 at the Houston Center for Photography, 1441 West Alabama. More info: 713/529-4755 or www.hcponline.org.

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

♦ **Antennae.** Three-dimensional installations, video, and cell phone imagery take their place among more than 25 lens-based works. The subject matter of these 10 artists and collaborative teams varies from political to playful. Through June 3 at Houston Center for Photography, 1441 West Alabama in the Museum District of Houston. More info: 713/529-4755 or www.hcponline.org.

♦ **Art Car Weekend.** Art revs its engines, screeching out of the studio and into the streets. Hundreds of thousands of people from all over the globe visit for an eyeful. Go to the parade and marvel at how many languages you hear whilst you wonder at an endless variety of curiosities on wheels. May 11-13, various locations and times. The 20th annual parade begins May 12, 1 pm, at Allen Pkwy. Info/updates: www.OrangeShow.org.

♦ **Art for Profit: Rice Student Art Exhibition 44.** Works of graduating visual arts students have been selected by guest curators The Art Guys. Also on view: undergraduate works selected by department faculty. Free. Through May 13 at the Rice Gallery, ground floor of Sewall Hall off Entrance 1 at Main St. and Sunset Blvd. Info: 713/348-5761 or www.ricegallery.org.

♦ **CYP17.** André Gingras, recognized as one of the most important young dance makers in the Netherlands, turns in a solo dance and video performance that asks what our lives will be like after gene manipulation, super athletes, and alien pregnancies. May 11 and 12, 8 pm, at DiverseWorks, 1117 East Fwy off Main at Naylor. Info/reservations: 713/223-8346 or www.diverseworks.org.

♦ **Expansive Link.** The result of an international collaboration between DiverseWorks and Braga Menendez Arte Contemporaneo (Buenos Aires), the exhibit

features works by a carefully chosen lineup of emerging Argentine artists with strong ties to pop and surrealism. May 10-June 23 (opening reception May 10, 6-8 pm) at DiverseWorks, 1117 East Fwy off Main at Naylor. Info/reservations: 713/223-8346 or www.diverseworks.org.

♦ **The Future of Life.** Global conservation and "biodiversity hotspots" around the planet are highlighted and celebrated in this photographic exhibit in collaboration with FotoFest. May 16-June 30 at One & Two Allen Center, 500 Dallas Ave. Info: www.bg-group.com/about/sponsorship.htm or www.conservation.org.

♦ **The Great Wall of China: Photographs by Chen Changfen.** The first U.S. exhibition of work by this 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. Through August 12 at the Museum of Fine Arts, 5601 Main St. Info: 713/639-7300 or www.mfah.org (en Español: 713/639-7379, TDD/TTY 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).

♦ **The Last Supper.** In the state that leads the nation in capital punishment, this exhibit by Julie Green has a pertinent significance. Hundreds of china plates depict the last meals of death-row inmates in the U.S. May 10-June 23 (opening reception May 10, 6-8 pm) at DiverseWorks, 1117 East Fwy off Main at Naylor. Info/reservations: 713/223-8346 or www.diverseworks.org.

♦ **Mom's Favorite Watercolors.** Buy Mumsy some art to reflect her inner beauty. Styles range from abstract to realistic, just like the world's mothers' outlooks on life. May 11-June 1 (opening reception May 11, 6-8 pm) at the WAS-H Gallery, 1601 West Alabama. Info: 713-942-9966 or www.watercolorhouston.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 few places that stateless Jews could disembark without passports or visas. As a result, Shanghai became a refuge to thousands of Jews. The exhibit 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. Info: 713/942-8000 or www.hmh.org.

♦ **Slant 7: Bold Asian American Images.** Emerging Asian American filmmakers showcase is an eclectic blend of celluloid. \$6. May 19, 8 pm, and 20, 3 pm, at Aurora Picture Show, 800 Aurora St. Info: 713/868-2101 or www.aurorapictureshow.org.

♦ **Surviving Katrina and Rita in Houston: Who We Are.** An installation of photographs and audiotapes features Houston-based evacuees and survivors of the hurricanes, with photographs by Alice McNamara. May 8-June 15 (opening reception May 8, 6-8 pm) at Art League Houston, 1953 Montrose Blvd. Info: 713/523-9530 or www.artleaguehouston.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, 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.

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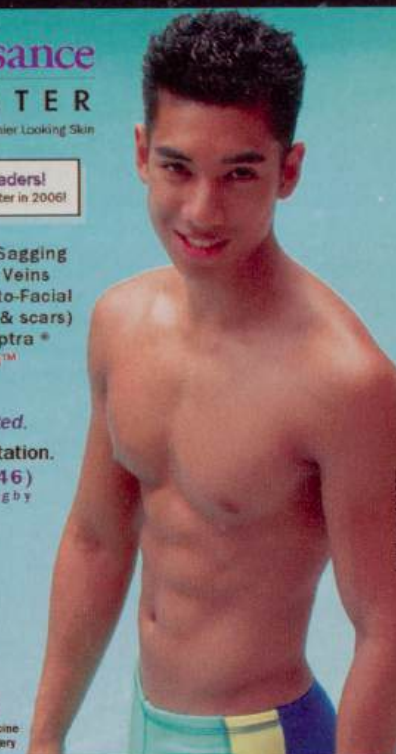
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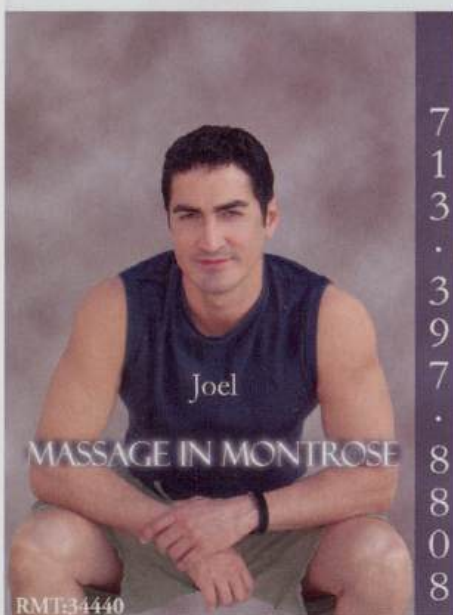
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Business News

by Nancy Ford



SMILING FOR LIFE

Randy Mitchmore (l), D.D.S., of **LifeSmiles** has been elected president of the Houston Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. On May 10, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Mitchmore hosts "Give Back A Smile" at his 1722 West Alabama office. The fundraiser, with refreshments, entertainment, and a silent auction, focuses on helping victims of domestic violence who have had their smiles damaged as a result of abuse. Details: 713-592-9300 • www.LifeSmiles.us.

THREE'S THE CHARM In June, Sugar Land will get a whole lot sweeter. **Dessert Gallery Bakery & Café** has announced it will open a third store next month in the Fort Bend County city. Located at 2260 Lone Star Dr. in Sugar Land Town Square, the bakery and restaurant is designed like the original Upper Kirby and the Galleria locations, offering board games and wireless Internet to patrons. Along with its decadent desserts, the bakery owned by Sara Brook is also known for its salads, sandwiches, and wraps. Catering services for corporate and private events are also available. Details: www.dessertgallery.com.

THINK OF IT AS A MINI-TRIP TO REHAB Aspen Detox has announced a second location in Houston, at 5510 Morningside Dr. in Rice Village. Just 23 minutes of sitting back in a comfortable chair while connected to an energy-rebalancing machine, Aspen Detox representatives say, enables your body to detoxify itself at the cellular level. Satisfied customers report increased energy level, improved endurance, performance and recovery time, reduced allergy symptoms, improved sleep, clearer skin, and enhanced focus and thinking. Details: www.AspenDetox.com.



SPEAKING OF...

Just in time for Pride festivities and the occasional over-imbibing that those events sometimes leads to, **Houston Buyers Club** (3224 Yoakum Blvd., 713/520-5288) has introduced PartySmart to its product line. A "unique herbal formula that protects your liver and provides drinkers a better morning after," the stimulant and anti-oxidant is endorsed by hip-hop star and notorious partier Snoop Dog himself. Details: www.partysmart.com.

DIFFERENT DOG, DIFFERENT CARE Earlier this year, **Pet Nanny's Pet Sitting, Inc.** passed the fifth year milestone in the pet-sitting business. Caring for animals of

all types in the Houston and Pearland-Manvel area, owners Alina Bolua and Carolyn Rice say their love of animals brought them to start the business, which has been "going strong, ever since." Members of Pet Sitters International, the women are insured and bonded and are dedicated to providing quality pet care in their clients' own home. Details: 713/771-5552 • www.petnannys.com.

COUNTING ON CRISTINA In April, **Gay & Lesbian Rainbow Pages** chief executive officer and publisher Cristina Martinez was elected treasurer of the interim executive board for UNID@S, the new national GLBT Latino/Latina rights organization (www.unidoslgbt.org). With directories in Houston, Dallas, and Austin (and additional cities to be announced soon, Martinez says), the **Rainbow Pages** hosts Rainbow Night, a weekly happy-hour event at La Strada (322 Westheimer) each Tuesday, 6-8 p.m. Details: www.rainbowpages.net.

SEEING DR. SCOTT

The **Frost Eye Clinic** at Legacy Community Health Services celebrates its expanded vision services with an open house on May 10, 6-7:30 p.m., at Legacy location at 3311 Richmond. The open house will also serve as the official welcome for ophthalmologist Scott Sawyer (above), M.D., who has accepted a full-time staff position with Frost, working with the clinic by offering affordable optometry and ophthalmology services. Details: 713/30-3033 • www.legacycommunityhealth.org.



MORE LEGACY NEWS Formerly the **Legacy Community Health Services** director of education, Eric Roland has accepted the recently created position of marketing director for the organization. Now in charge of internal and external marketing Legacy, Roland says his focus will be "to develop and grow the agency."

CLIMBING THE CHARTS

His new book *Body Brilliance: Mastering Your Five Vital Intelligences* ("Read-Out," March *OutSmart*) was recently rated in seventh place in the www.Barnes&Nobles.com Top 100 Books and took the top position in the international retailer's health-and-diet category. To celebrate, author Alan Davidson (above) discusses and signs copies of his book on May 25, 7 p.m., at BookStop. Look for Davidson's "name in lights" on the store marquee, he says. Details: www.throughyourbody.com.



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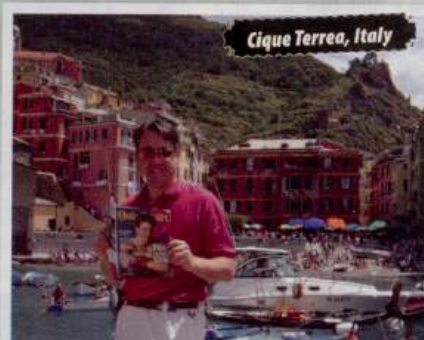
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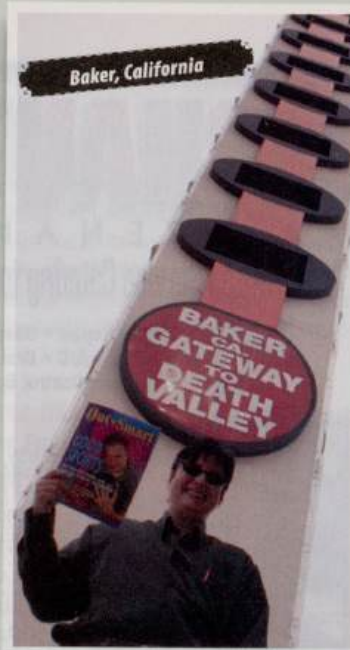
To accompany our travel coverage (see page 48), we open our bag of snapshots of readers with their magazines. Thanks for helping us make OUTSMART the most well-traveled magazine in Texas!



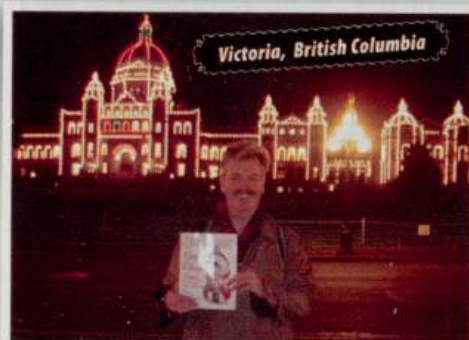
Marc Cohen of AIDS Foundation Houston took OutSmart to Camp Hope Malawi, the camp in Africa for children with HIV operated by AFH and the Baylor International Pediatric AIDS Initiative.



Cinque Terre in Italy was the scenic backdrop for **Tirey Counts** and his OutSmart.



On a drive from Las Vegas to Los Angeles, **Stephanie Peacock** and OutSmart paused at the World's Largest Thermometer in Baker, California.



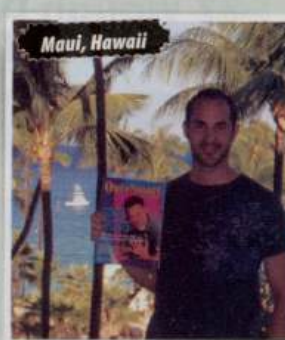
After visiting Houston for the first time, **Dale Roberts** sent this photo of himself with OutSmart once he returned home to Victoria, British Columbia.



Michael Goh posed with OutSmart at the Louvre in Paris during a visit with his partner, Christopher Kerr.



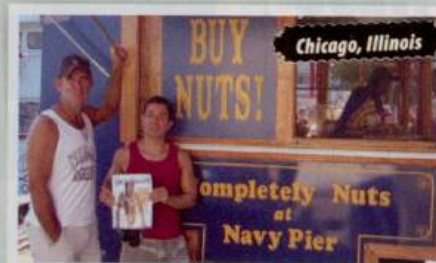
Speaking of Paris, **Greg Ruhe** (l-r), **Daniel Garcia**, and **Ron Foster** and their OutSmart stopped at the Eiffel Tower.



Eugene Ploch said "aloha" to Maui with his copy of OutSmart.



San Diego was the destination for **Frank Pugliese** and his OutSmart.



Rob Andrade (r) and **Ben Graves** carried OutSmart to the Navy Pier while they were in Chicago for Gay Games VII.



Carl Han and OutSmart took Manhattan.



Debbie Kelly toted OutSmart to Cozumel while on a cruise from Galveston.

SHOW US YOUR OUTSMART**Going out of town?**

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Please click on OutSmart Magazine to help us qualify our reader demographics.



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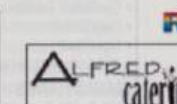
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3841 Bellaire Blvd 713/668-5000

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1338 C Westheimer 713/520-5440

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ajlandscaping.com 713/957-0449

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windsweptlandscape.com 713/263-7771

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Powell Company, The/Jeanie Powell
everyonehasastory.net 713/864-6800

Varsity Productions / John Conroy
6217 Edloe 713/542-8277

Yvonne Feece Photography
yvonnefeece.com 832/876-1053

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U-Plumb-It
1424 Montrose 713/942-2277

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BAR & CLUB GUIDE

HOUSTON

LA ACADEMIA

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

BARTINI

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

BELLA AIDA GARDENS

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

BLUR

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

BOCADO'S

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

BOOM BOOM ROOM

Manager/chef 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

If all is going according to plan, the burnt-out Chances side of this famed lesbian triplex is up and running once again with an expanded bar, custom design, live music, and more. If all is going not-so-much according to plan, renovations will certainly be completed by Pride season. 1100 Westheimer • 713/523-7217 • www.chancesbar.com.

CLUB 1415

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

CLUB INERGY

A nightlife institution for 12 years, this Southwest club offers an eclectic mix of Latin rhythms, mainstream dance, and hip hop. Sunday is special show night. 5750 Chimney Rock • 713/666-7310 • www.clubinergy.com.

GUAVA LAMP

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

GEORGE

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

and pool tables. DJ Kenny Jammz hosts karaoke night on Wednesday. 5742 Chimney Rock • 713/666-7472.

MARY'S, NATURALLY

The oldest gay club in Houston, this is a legendary 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 Lauri Gage, performs nightly. Tuesday-Saturday. 1419 Richmond • 713/520-8446.

MO MONG

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

MONTROSE MINING COMPANY

Sturdy 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.

PRIVE

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

RAINBOW ROOM

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

RICH'S HOUSTON

After a hiatus as a nongay music venue, Rich's has returned as the dance club you knew. The club now features Griz, a night of diva music (from Beyoncé to Whitney) with DJ Joe Ross, on Friday. 2401 San Jacinto • 713/759-9606 • www.richs-houston.com.

RIPCORD

OutSmart readers named this spot the best place to show off your leather in the 2005 Gayest & Greatest poll. The Black Hawk Leather shop is located inside the club. Another big draw is the Houston Big Men's Club's bi-weekly hamburger BBQ fundraiser. 715 Fairview • 713/521-2792 • www.theripcord.com.

HOUSE OF FINESSE

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

IN-N-OUT

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

JR'S BAR & GRILL

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

MANGO VIDEO LOUNGE

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

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THE 611

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

SOCIAL ROOM

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

SOUTH BEACH

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

TONY'S CORNER POCKET

Located in the space that was formerly Keys West, new owner Tony 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 bart. This Woodlands-area mixed club is also available for private parties, holy unions and receptions, and features the Wall of Fame and the famous saddle from its previous location. • 24704 I-45 North, Suite 103 • 281/298-9035 • www.ranchhill.com • http://myspace.com/ranchhillsaloon.

Galveston

3RD COAST BEACH BAR

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

GARZA'S KON TIKI

The phone number is no longer in service, and the website no longer exists. Evidently, following the 2006 death of long-time owner Jessie Garza, Galveston's oldest drag bar is no more. 315 23rd St.

THE PINK DOLPHIN

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

ROBERT'S LAFITTE

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

THE TREMONT HOUSE

Smart Island visitors stop by the atrium bar in the Strand district hotel to enjoy cabaret music at the grand piano. 2300 Ship's Mechanic Row • 409/763-0300.

UNDERCURRENT

This expansive, multi-level multi-bar is now under new management. Expect to see subtle changes to enhance the overall clubbing experience, but the entertainment component that Undercurrent has become famous for remains intact, including the Friday and Saturday night Gulf Coast Drag Mafia shows. 2409 Market • 409/750-8571 • www.undercurrentgalveston.com.

Beaumont

THE COPA

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

Bryan/College Station

HALO VIDEO BAR

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

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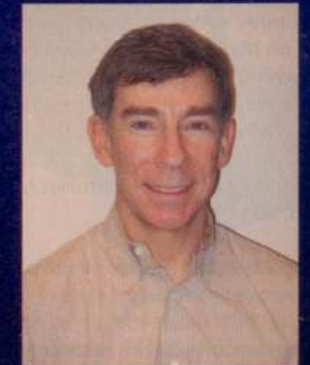
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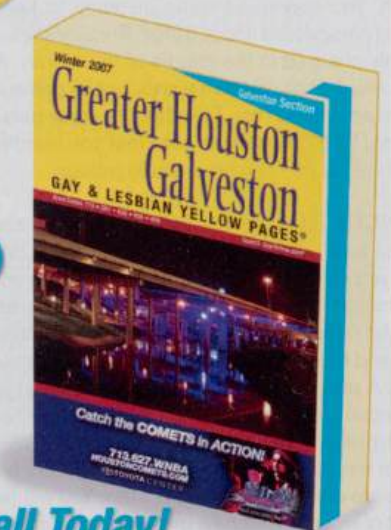
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SignOut

by Lilly Roddy

This month Neptune, planet of spiritual exploration and illusion, is going retrograde on the 24th. All planets from Jupiter out to Pluto go retrograde for about four months every year. This retrograde notion affects how we see the motion of the planets against the background of the signs. Neptune retrograde will expose more of what we think is real, as well as the truth, so that we will get to the deeper version of the truth. • Also this month, we have a Blue Moon on May 31. A Blue Moon occurs when there are two Full Moons in one month. This doesn't happen very often, hence the expression, "once in a Blue Moon." • Good days this month for enjoying life to the fullest: May 3, 20, 21, 23, 25, and 31. Days to keep a low profile: May 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, and 27.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). This month's focus is on your resources and financial state of affairs. This will bring up how much you are being paid at work and how much you are respected and appreciated by those around you. You may find that it is far less than you are happy with. With Mars, your ruler entering your sign on the 15th, expect those issues to come right to the surface. You will feel very motivated to start new projects after that date. Communications become clearer after the 21st.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). May is a mixed month of action surrounding your career but need for rest and retreat as well. This is a very big month for career. You will need new projects or you will be looking for other places to work. Some of you may be motivated to start new careers or retire. This is especially strong as the month begins and around the 18th, 19th, and 20th. You may need some distance to keep a good perspective about things. Relationships are highly charged in the middle of the month. And yet, another part of you wants just to get out of town and take a rest. Talk about multiple personalities. Yikes! Just make sure that you handle all of them so you can be a whole person.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). This is a very social time for you. There is a lot of activity that is bringing you to the forefront of things. Getting some of that private time that Cancers so often need will be difficult. You are seeing the big picture of life, and that is helping you have a larger perspective. A part of you is very concerned about your financial picture, and that concern seems to be ever-present against the background of all the other mental and emotional clutter. Career energies are extra strong after the 19th. You will have a lot of vigor to start new projects at that time. By the end of the month, you will need rest. Make sure that you put that on your schedule.

LEO (July 23–August 22). This time of the year represents the most serious that you may experience. You are clearly paying attention to all choices and options that come your way. You are

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). This is your birthday month and your time of the year to reflect on what you have accomplished since last year and what new projects you will start this year. You are more serious about getting on track this year than you have been in a while. During the last half of the year, you will find that you are really pushing to get your life organized and in order. Career decisions are a bit confusing, but even that clears up after the end of June. Relationship choices remain stable for this month. You are more focused on your finances after the end of the month.

weighing and measuring each of the choices and how they will affect your future. Your career is the area that is being affected the strongest. May 8 and 9th are very decisive days for you. After that time, relationships take the spotlight as you put them under the microscope, just as you did your career. They have to work and must be ready to move forward into the future. If they aren't, you won't be investing any more time in them.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). You are a bit more relaxed this month. This is a great time to sit back a bit and enjoy your life and spend some time with friends and those of like minds. This will help you get a better perspective on your relationships. Career aspects are stimulated after the 20th. Relationships are another story. There continues to be a need for renewal and invigoration of your existing relationships. Relationships that are being ignored or avoided will not last through this time, even if you could ignore them. Stay on top of this.

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). This month continues the theme of examination and renewal in relationships. I know you did some of this work last month, but this month you look deeper and want even greater levels of intimacy, honesty, and trust. With Mars moving into your relationship sector on the 15th, you will certainly need some fireworks in the fun and excitement area. Boring and routine just won't do. But you are still looking for deeper connections and more sharing. Some of your relationships won't survive this scrutiny because you want more participation than you have had in the past.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). Career, home, family, and relationships are all being highlighted this month. You may ask what else there is, and I would say money and health. Those are coming into play at the end of the month. You are at a decisive time and trying to make decisions about what will work best for you, your

partnerships, and your family. At the core is still the idea of security and not being controlled by others. If you can seek outside help and view all of this as a way to make the pieces fit together, you won't feel that you must sacrifice any part just to find some security. Going it alone will be the mistake.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). Health concerns and getting organized are important for you this month. You are certainly busy, and you feel that you are running from one place to another to follow through on commitments or to put out fires. You are feeling a bit rundown. Take some time to examine your schedule and trim away some of your overload; otherwise, your health will suffer. By the end of the month, you are looking at a shift toward relationships and interactions with others, which will help you get away from your over-scheduled activities.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). You are gradually moving into a more creative time-frame over this year. That process begins this month. You are in a more playful and relaxed mode, and you certainly don't want to spend as much time at your workplace as you have in the past. Overall, you should be considering activities that enhance the internal value of your life and focus less on the obvious future security aspects. Scheduling times for fun classes, massages, or zoo visits would really add meaning to your life. Family is a bit of an irritant this month. It's clear that you don't want to compromise there.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). The focus this month is on making your home and family a more safe, stable, and enjoyable place. You will be painting or moving furniture or potentially even moving to another location. Relationships are very serious as you really look to renew long-term commitments or find someone who is interested in a long-term commitment. Your tolerance is rather low for frivolous activities, and you may distance yourself from those. Your mood lightens up some by the end of the month, as you become more playful and chatty.

PISCES (February 19–March 20). This has been and continues to be an especially active, energetic, and busy time with Mars still visiting your sign until the 15th. You are not as patient or sleeping as well as normal. This is a great time for new activities and adventures. Your career path is full of opportunities, and you are not willing to compromise about what you want. This will add a sense of confidence to that part of your life. Relationships are slowly becoming more and more important. As the year ends, you will be looking for a long-term commitment.

Read Lilly Roddy's annual forecast for 2007, which appeared in our January issue ("Heavens to Lilly!"), at www.outsmartmagazine.com. Access Roddy's new podcast, "City of Ladies," at www.lillyroddy.com.

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OUT IN HOUSTON

1 Cindy Cuellar (l-r), Jim Bartley, Cleverly Stone, and Sam Harris at the Executive Professional Association-Houston's dinner held Feb. 20 at the Renaissance Hotel.



2 Rodney Hornerkamp (l), Michael Salinas, and John Frels at DIFFA's Sweetheart Soiree, held Feb. 13 at Saks in the Galleria.



3 City of Houston employees, Quality Assurance Division bureau chief **Barbara Sudhoff-McGill** (l) and Department of Health and Human Services director **Stephen L. Williams** (r), flank **Daniel Malachowski**, an Administrative Services Division contract administrator, at Malachowski's retirement party, held April 11.



4 Bocodos owner **Terry Flores** (r) helps singer/songwriter **Miss Lupita** celebrate her birthday, Feb. 27 at the restaurant and nightclub.



5 Danny Kallen (l-r), Jonathan Lanz, Jo Casady, Victor Cardova, Chree Boydston, Mike Adams, and Rick Dickson were honored at The Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce's annual "Honoring Our Allies" luncheon, held Feb. 16. Bayou City Boys Club (not pictured) was also recognized with an award.



6 Linda Morales (l-r), Houston Comets' team member **Sheryl Swoopes**, and **Esther Martinez** enjoy the first of Chances' "An Evening with Sheryl Swoopes" Wednesday night events, held Feb. 27.



7 Unseasonably chilly weather didn't prevent the **FlyBoys of Houston** from unfurling their flags at Bunnies on the Bayou, held April 8 in downtown Houston's Fish Plaza.



8 Joe Perez, with microphone, encourages members of the aerobics class at Houston Gym's March 28 open house.



9 Cat Sabih (l-r), Susan Pollack, Shane Underbarger, Jeffry Faircloth, and PFLAG-Houston president **Tim Suenram** at PFLAG's monthly meeting, Feb. 4.



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3 bed, 3 bath Montrose home has loft with full kitchen & bath, 12 ft ceilings, hardwoods and more on a corner lot! \$472,780
Call Bob Beszborn at 281-650-2726

Bob Beszborn
Independent Realtor Executive
281-650-2726



Charming 2 bed, 1 bath Heights home has hardwoods, crown molding and more! \$174,500
Call Bruce Chambers at 713-822-1577

Bruce Chambers
Independent Realtor Executive
713-822-1577



Exquisite 3 bed, 2.5 bath home offers designer colors, crown molding, french doors leading to tropical custom pool & hot tub and more. \$249,900 Call Heather Rayner at 713-875-4366

Contemporary modern loft has first floor bed with full bath. Upgrades include granite, wide plank pine floors and more! \$229,900 Call Heather Rayner at 713-875-4366



8-unit complex in lower Montrose remodeled with lush landscaping, new paint & private garages. A great investment! \$769,000 Call Heather Rayner at 713-875-4366



Heather Rayner
Independent Realtor Executive
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3 bed, 2.5 bath Heights home. Victorian charm with sophisticated in-town living. Open kitchen, huge formals, master with 3 closets! \$539,000

Matt Redden
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832-443-7299



3 bed, 2 bath Timbergrove home updated with granite counters on large, shaded, corner lot! \$335,900 Call Linda Shupe at 832-646-2570

4 bed, 2.5 bath Westmoreland is stunning with hardwoods, high ceilings, island kitchen, pool and much more. \$649,500 Call Linda Shupe at 832-646-2570



In Galveston's historic downtown. A YWCA in 1924, now 23 luxury units with stunning courtyard & pool. Ready June '07. Mid-200's to \$400's. Call Karen Derr at 713-875-7050

Karen Derr
Broker/Owner
713-875-7050



Linda Shupe
Independent Realtor Executive
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