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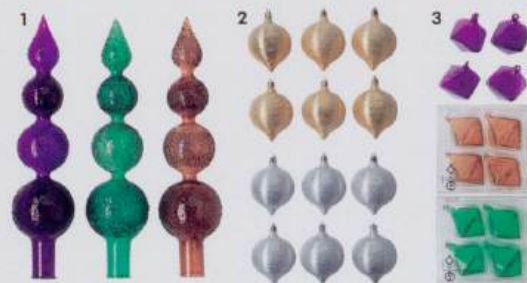
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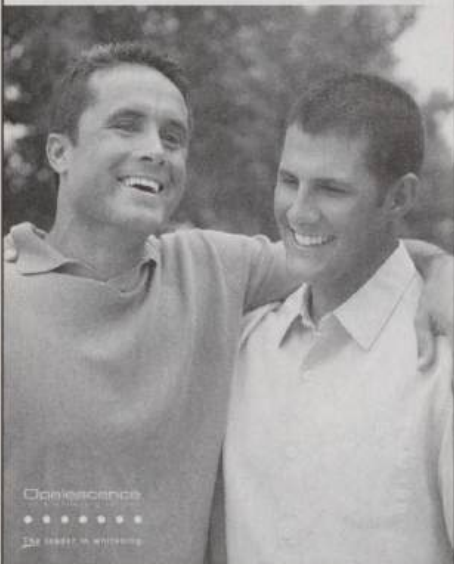
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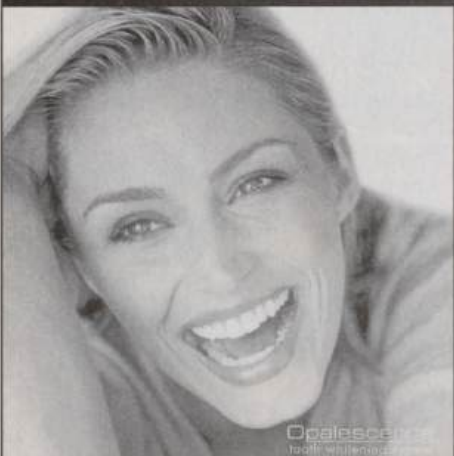


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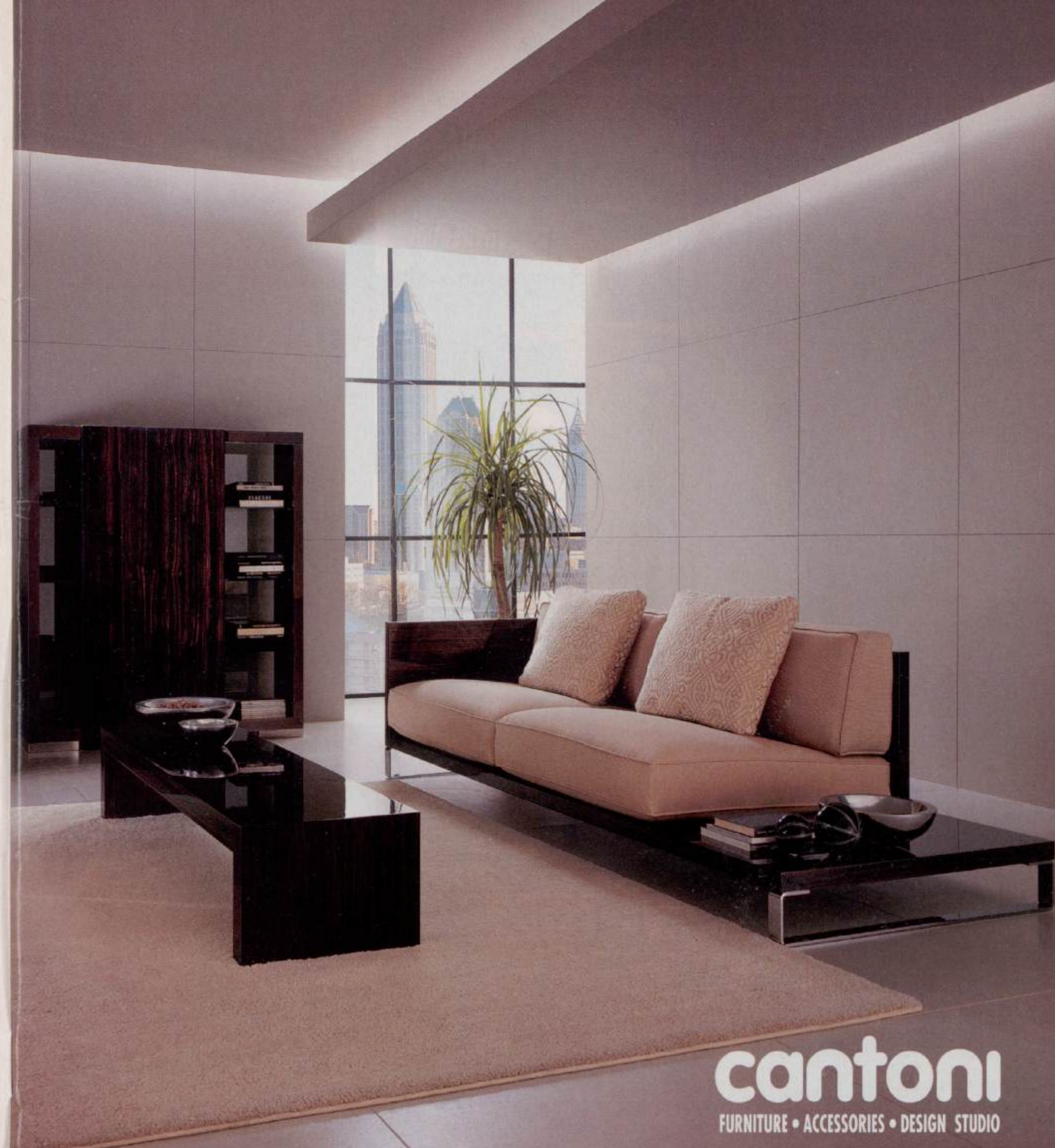


About the cover:

Carnie Wilson chats about the holidays. See page 38.

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Letters

QUEER CALL

Who, if not American gay men and lesbians, should celebrate our freedom more? Instead it seems we stifle ourselves with labels. Masc., femme, top, bottom, tv, ts, bi, and probably the most destructive to our collective psyche, straight-acting. What does a straight person act like? I know plenty, and they all act differently. So why shouldn't we?

Halloween night, my best friend and I went to a popular bar that had a "Pimps and Hoes" theme. Of course, we went as hoes. I am not a drag queen or a cross-dresser or a tv (feel free to insert any label you wish), and I make a very ugly woman. I am, however, a gay man, and drag at Halloween is perfectly acceptable. Or so I thought. I guess I didn't get the memo telling us that Halloween wasn't supposed to be fun anymore. Apparently, we are all to wear some sort of sports uniform or military uniform or dress as a Spartan or wear no costume at all, but most importantly we are to stare at any one that doesn't conform to the new queerness.

Frankly, I am sad. I am sad that queers have lost a sense of self. I am sad that queers have lost a sense of community. I am sad queers have lost a sense of humor. Most of all I am sad that queers have embraced this bizarre notion of "straight-acting."

Being queer isn't a curse, but hating yourself for it is.

Shannon Jacobs
Houston

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Montrose Counseling Center will honor *OutSmart* photographer Dalton DeHart at its 30th anniversary kick-off event "Past, Present, and Future: A Special Evening of Celebration." For details, see News Briefs beginning on page 14.

Lawrence Ferber, who frequently writes about entertainment for *OutSmart*, has made his comic-book debut. He is the writer, and Robert Kirby is



the illustrator, for "Life Lessons #24," a two-page contribution to the new queer comics anthology *Juicy Mothers 2: How They Met* (Manic D Press), edited by Jennifer Camper. Read more at Ferber's new blog, Ewelthorpe, at <http://ewelthorpe.blogspot.com>.

OutSmart contributor Brad Williams was recently accepted to the Writers Colony at Dairy Hollow in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. Williams has settled in that GLBT-friendly town and has launched a blog, Email from the Ozarks, <http://emailfromtheozarks.blogspot.com>.

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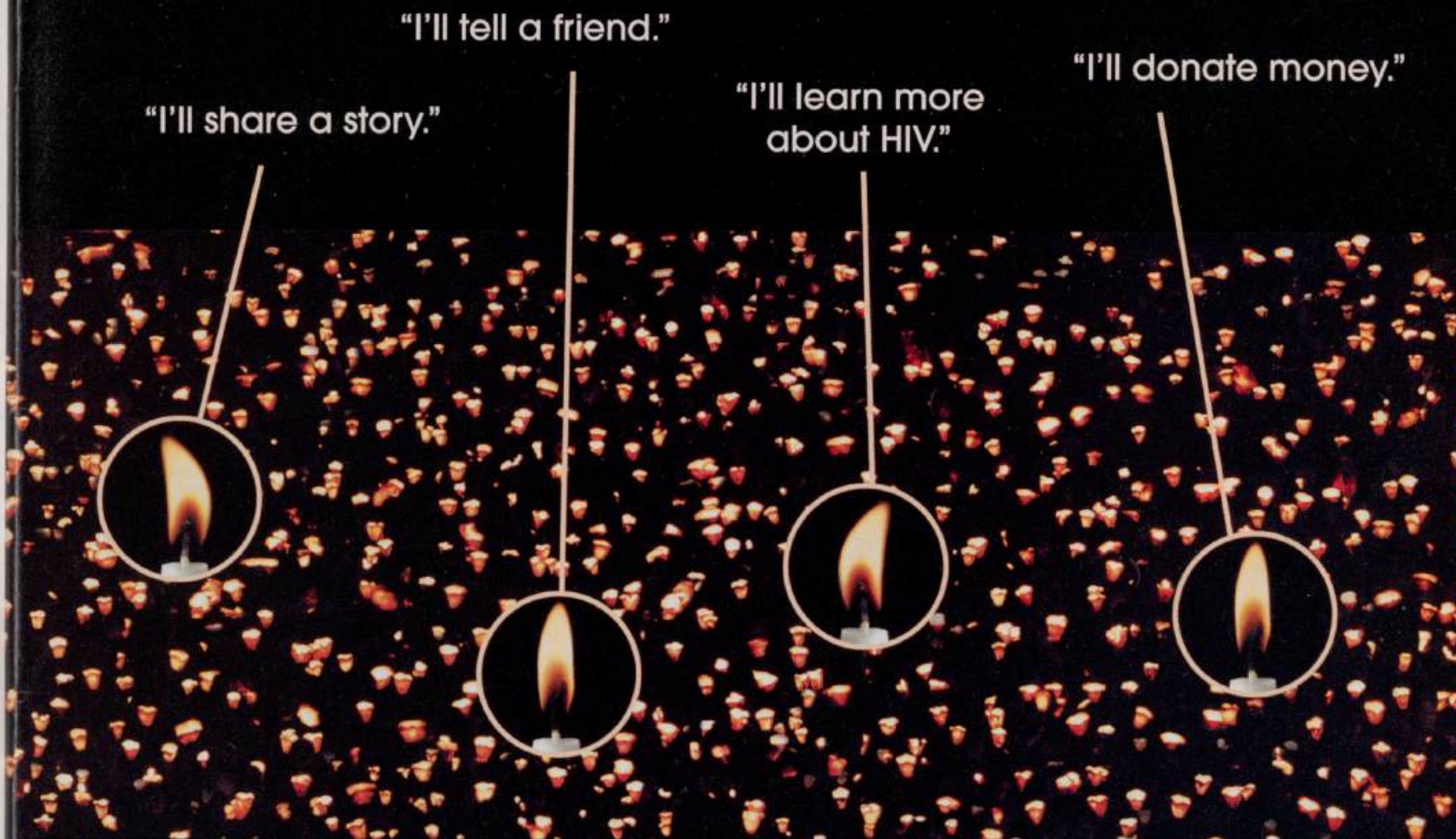
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THIRTY AND FABULOUS

No need for the Houston Pride Band to be coy about turning 30. Our town's premier GLBT instrumental musical group enters its third decade with more performing members and this month once again presents its annual holiday concert, *Celebrate the Season*. The free performance is December 9, 7:30 p.m., at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, with the church chorus providing vocals. • The program is mostly traditional and familiar in nature—"something that people look forward to," says Cary Byrd, a French horn player who joined HPB two years ago. "It really kind of fills in the season, and makes it complete." • Selections, conducted by music director, Jason Stephens, include "Christmas Festival" as well as arrangements of "Come O Come, Emanuel" and "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring." • Though the band currently boasts more members than ever before, including clarinetist Rudy Martinez (pictured here), Byrd says the group is always looking for new talent. No formal audition is required to join the band—just desire and enthusiasm. The band rehearses each Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m. at Resurrection. Details: www.houstonprideband.org. • "We accept people at all levels, and provide people with the assistance they need to catch up to where we are," Byrd says. "And you get to do something that you really care about doing with a bunch of like-minded people."

Photographed
by Gary Laird

Ralph Lauren Polo sweater from Macy's.



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TRUE THEATRE At 46, Casaundra Black says she now has so many professional options before her that deciding which one to take poses a challenge. She has her professional barber's license as well as her commercial driver's license, required to achieve her dream of becoming an over-the-road, 18-wheeler driver. Both, she believes, are honorable ways to support her two children, ages 6 and 16. • "I want to become the professional black woman who can give back to society and be my own boss," she says. • Mother, barber, trucker, lesbian—Black is all of these things. She is also a recovering alcoholic and drug addict, and the survivor of a brutal rape, 15 years ago, by four men. • Her history of violence and abuse is one of the subjects of *Voices in the Woodwork: Honoring Six Women Who Survived to Tell*. Inspired by the true stories of battered women, the performance piece is a collaborative project of co-producers Jordyn Lorenz and Cheryl Tanner and their Yellow Wood Productions and In Alignment Productions, respectively. • After her addiction led to two arrests in one year, Black had a revelation. "I just really got tired of living the way I was living," she says. "I know I'm a better person than what I was living. It was time." • Participating in *Voices* gives her a way to help other women who may feel trapped by their own addiction, Black believes. • "It's made me a stronger woman, most definitely. I don't mind telling the world who I am: a lesbian and a recovering alcoholic," she says. "There's a way out, and the only thing that I have to do is continue doing what I've been doing." • Onstage, Lauren Lanier plays the role of Black. "Representing Casaundra in *Voices in the Woodwork* is a very powerful and emotional experience," says Lanier, also an out lesbian. "This show is groundbreaking for women, giving voice to those that would have otherwise been silenced. It's a brutal story, a true story, and it is our story." • *Voices in the Woodwork* runs through December 8 at M2 Gallery in the Heights. Future performances are planned, according to co-producer Lorenz. Proceeds from ticket sales benefit the Houston Area Women's Center. Details: 281/330-4499, www.voicesinthewood.com.

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GAY AND POLITICAL CAUCUS-ENDORSED CANDIDATES WIN IN NOVEMBER. TWO FACE RUNOFF THIS MONTH

All but one of the candidates endorsed by the Houston GLBT Political Caucus were either elected in the November 6 elections or advanced to the December 8 runoffs.

Propositions endorsed by the caucus—to create a Texas cancer research fund and to fund both Port of Houston and Houston Independent School District projects—also passed in November.

Two openly gay candidates (“Some of Our Own,” October *OutSmart*) did not win their races. Kevin J. Hoffman, a candidate for the Houston Community College System board of trustees endorsed by the caucus, lost by 250 votes to Yolanda Black Novarro. Openly gay candidate Ray Ramirez, who was not endorsed by the caucus, received 4 percent of the vote for City Council At Large Position 5 in an eight-person race.



City Council District D candidate Wanda Adams, pictured with election-night supporters on November 6, finished first of seven candidates in the general election with 33 percent of the vote. Adams faces Lawrence Allen in the December 8 runoff.

“We had an outstanding day on Tuesday, November 6,” caucus president Jenifer Pool said in a post-election statement. “This is a very rare moment. The caucus almost had 100 percent. We are now immediately turning our attention to the runoffs. We have two extraordinary people we have to get elected, Jolanda Jones and Wanda Adams.”

Caucus vice president Maria C. Gonzalez concurred. “This is truly amazing. The caucus almost called every race.”

Adams, a candidate for City Council District D, and Jones,



City Council At Large Position 5 candidate Jolanda Jones, pictured with election-night supporters and media, was top vote-getter with 27 percent out of an eight-candidate field in the November 6 general election. On December 8, Jones faces Joe Trevino in the runoff.

candidate for City Council At Large Position 5, advance to the runoffs. To assist these two candidates, the caucus seeks volunteers for block walking, phone banking, and data entry of voter information. Interested persons can contact the caucus through its website, www.hglbtpc.org.

Openly gay, lesbian, or transgender candidates endorsed by the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, including Houston City Controller Annise D. Parker and Houston City Council At Large Position 2, Sue Lovell, fared similarly well. Both incumbents won their races; Parker had no opposition. The Washington, D.C.-based national organization endorsed a total of 71 candidates across the country, with at least 31 winning races on November 7. Ten others were elected to office earlier in the year. Three Victory Fund-endorsed candidates advance this month to runoff elections, including Fort Worth City Council candidate Joel Burns.

“This is the path to change,” Victory Fund president Chuck Wolfe said. “We are not content to sit on the sidelines and hope that others do the right thing for our community. We will step up and lead the fight for a more equal and fair America, and we will win.”

or expression, regarded as protections for transgender Americans. The bill prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The 235–184 House vote did mark the first time that either chamber of Congress has passed employment protections based on sexual orientation.

On the day of the House vote, Representative Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin proposed an amendment to the ENDA bill providing transgender protections. She then withdrew the amendment, in →

ENDA PASSES HOUSE SANS GENDER-IDENTITY LANGUAGE

In a vote that many community activists and observers considered a partial victory, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) passed the House of Representatives on November 7 without language protecting individuals based on gender identity



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form, color, illumination:
Suzan Frecon painting
March 7–May 11, 2008



LOCAL DEMS ATTEND NATIONAL EVENT

a move previously arranged with House Democratic leaders.

"Some people have asked why I insisted on bringing an amendment to the floor, only to withdraw it without a vote," Baldwin, who is a lesbian, said in a statement following the House vote. "The reason is simple. Those left behind by this bill deserve to hear, on the floor of the House, that they are not forgotten and our job will not be finished until they, too, share fully in the American dream."

A companion ENDA bill has not yet been introduced in the Senate. Edward Kennedy, the Democratic senator from Massachusetts, has pledged to present a bill that includes language that specifies protections for transgender individuals as well as gays and lesbians. The White House has indicated a likely veto of any ENDA bill.

On November 1, eight local community organizations, including the Houston chapter of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), hosted a town-hall forum on ENDA at Berling Memorial United Methodist Church. Participants included Mike Holloman and Jani Lopez, Houstonians who serve on the HRC national board of directors.

A contingent of GLBT Democratic activists from Houston participated in the National Stonewall Democrats Presidential Weekend & Leadership Training, held November 16-18 in Manchester, New Hampshire. These

local individuals belong to the recently organized Houston Area Stonewall Democrats chapter. The three-day event included workshops intended to help provide members with the "skills needed to create national change at the local level," according to materials from Stonewall Democrats, the national network of GLBT people involved in Democratic Party politics. Participants also heard from party leaders and Democratic presidential candidates.

"I've really seen that the political process is accessible," Jeffery Downs, Houston Area Stonewall Democrats secretary, reported in an e-mail to *OutSmart* from New Hampshire. "Politics doesn't happen in some faraway place you can only see on



Houston Area Stonewall Democrats members participated in the recent Presidential Weekend & Leadership Training, organized by the National Stonewall Democrats organization: (l-r) local chapter secretary Jeffery Downs, founding member Amy McIntyre, local chapter president Teresa Herrin, and treasurer Pat Gandy with Ray Buckley, New Hampshire Democratic Party chairman, and Jesse Garcia, president of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas.

TV. It happens right around the corner and even on your own block. Political action can take place right at your own kitchen table. It is within the reach of each of us."

Houston Area Stonewall Democrats meets on the second Tuesday of the month, 6-8 p.m., at Ziggy's Healthy Grill (2202 West Alabama location). The meeting this month is December 11. More info: www.houstonareastonewalldemocrats.com. →

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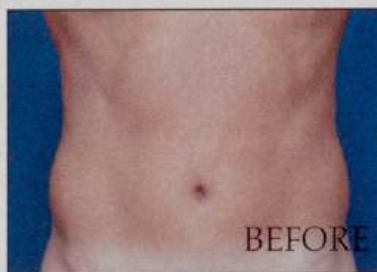
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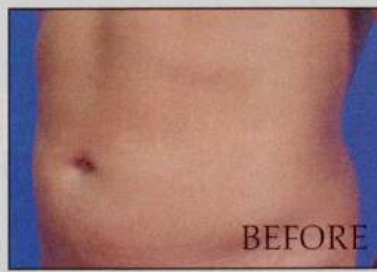
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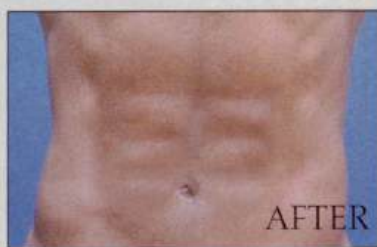
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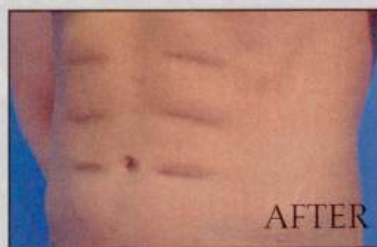
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Milestones

CELEBRATING
Annie Mayes
(l) and **Terry Sullivan**
marked their
26th anni-
versary as
a couple on
October 26.



DIED Jeannette Vaughn, co-founder and "Imperial Queen Mother" of the Royal Sovereign and Imperial Court of the Single Star social and fundraising group, died on October 15 at her home. She was 71 and had been suffering from breast cancer.

Vaughn helped raise money for local organizations including AIDS Foundation Houston, Legacy Community Health Services, Colt 45's AIDS Trouble Fund, and PWA-Holiday Charities. In 1998, she helped orchestrate a mass commitment ceremony for same-sex couples at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church. Vaughn was elected Female Grand Marshal of the GLBT Pride Parade in 1996.



Vaughn was preceded in death by life partner Dot Thompson. She is survived by her son, Bill Thompson of Memphis, Tennessee, and lifetime friend, Lonnie McElwain of Houston.

A memorial service honoring Vaughn was held at Bell Park on October 27. Vaughn's family requests that donations in her name be made to AssistHers (1116 Jackson Blvd., Houston, 77006; www.assisthers.org).

News Briefs continued from page 16

KILLER OF GAY DENIED PAROLE

Jon Buice has been denied parole once again for his role in the killing of a gay man. The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles denied Buice's parole request in October, just as it did in 2003 and 2005.

On July 4, 1991, Paul Broussard, a 27-year-old bank employee, was attacked by Buice and a group of nine other teens as he walked through Montrose after leaving a gay bar with two friends. The assailants, all high school students from the Woodlands, the suburban community north of Houston, became known as the Woodlands Ten. Broussard was beaten and stabbed to death. Broussard's two friends escaped injury.

Now 33, Buice received a 45-year sentence for his role in the slaying. At trial, testimony revealed that Buice was the assailant who delivered the fatal stab wound to Broussard.

Buice, who says he was influenced by drugs and alcohol at the time of the slaying, is eligible for a fourth parole hearing in 2009. Five of the other men who participated in the crime received probation, and three received prison sentences that ranged from 15 to 20 years. Buice is the only one of the Woodland Ten who remains in prison.

30-YEAR-OLD MONTROSE COUNSELING CENTER TO HONOR DALTON DEHART'S 30TH PROFESSIONAL ANNIVERSARY

On December 6, the Montrose Counseling Center honors long-time community photographer and *OutSmart* contributor Dalton DeHart at "Past, Present and Future: A Special Evening of Celebration."

In addition to recognizing DeHart for providing a three-decade history of the local GLBT scene through his photographs, the evening kicks off the 30th anniversary of the counseling center and a campaign to raise funds for its new facility, located at 401 Branard.

For the 6-8:30 p.m. event, organizers encourage guests to dress in business-casual attire or construction garb, in recognition of upcoming renovations on the first floor of the center building.

Tickets are \$30 at the door (RSVP: 713/529-0037, ext 371). Details: www.montrocounselingcenter.org.

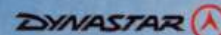
CHAMBER ELECTS NEW DIRECTORS

The Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce installed its 2008 board of directors at a November 8 meeting at the Sheraton Houston Brookhollow.

Chamber board members are Dustin Ruffato, Sean Carter, Jeff Wallace, Doug Hord, Jack Berger, Steve Ryan, Cristina Martinez, Robert Candelario, John Frels, Victor Cordova, Sonna Alton, Danny Kalen, Shane McShane, and Jonathan Lanz.

Chamber members are organizing Diversity Houston, a day of business seminars, scheduled for February 15 at the Crowne Plaza hotel. The event will take place in conjunction with the annual Honoring Our Allies luncheon hosted by the chamber. Details: www.thechamberhouston.org. ■

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So why settle for an HIV med
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Once a day TRUVADA® can help get you to undetectable and keep you there. As part of an HIV regimen, the meds in TRUVADA:

- Can be taken with or without food
- Reduce viral load and increase CD4 cell count

Ask your doctor how TRUVADA can be part of a complete once a day regimen.

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TRUVADA is the #1 Prescribed HIV Med*

TRUVADA® does not cure HIV infection or lower your chance of passing HIV-1 to others and must be used as part of combination therapy. TRUVADA should not be used with ATRIPLA™, VIREAD®, EMTRIVA®, Combivir®, Epivir®, Epivir-HBV®, Epzicom™, or Trizivir®.

USE OF TRUVADA:

TRUVADA is indicated in combination with other antiretroviral agents (such as non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors or protease inhibitors) for the treatment of HIV-1 infection in adults.



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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:

- **Lactic acidosis** (a buildup of acid in the blood) can be a medical emergency and may need to be treated in the hospital. **Call your healthcare provider right away** if you have nausea, vomiting, unusual muscle pain, and/or weakness
- **Serious liver problems** (hepatotoxicity), with liver enlargement (hepatomegaly) and fat in the liver (steatosis), may occur. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have light colored stools, dark colored urine, and/or if your skin or the whites of your eyes turn yellow
- **Flare-ups of hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection:** If you have HIV and HBV, your liver disease may suddenly get worse if you stop taking TRUVADA. Do not stop taking TRUVADA unless directed by your healthcare provider

How to Choose the Best Running Shoe and Shoe Tips

Wear shoes designed for running. (Seems obvious doesn't it?) Cross training shoes tend to have extra support and are *not* designed for running distances.

Three Types of Shoes

1. Motion-control shoes use firmer materials in parts of the midsole to minimize inward rolling, and are best if your feet overpronate (roll inward excessively).
2. Cushioning shoes emphasize shock absorption and may be better if your feet underpronate (roll inward very slightly).
3. Stability shoes (and some cushioning shoes) blend cushioning and control, and may be better if you have a neutral running style (roll inward slightly).

How do you tell what kind of shoe you need? Check your arch. Generally, overpronators have low arches, underpronators have high arches, and neutral runners fall in between. To test yourself, wet your feet and then step on a brown paper bag or piece of cardboard.



Tips

- Shop for shoes later in the day. Feet swell as the day progresses, and you should try on shoes when your feet are larger
- Bring your old shoes with you. A knowledgeable salesperson will be able to look at the wear patterns and help you in your selection



Daniel Reynen
Certified Personal
Trainer

- Bring the socks you run in. Wear them when you're trying on the shoes for a proper fit
- Don't be blinded by brand. Try shoes from different manufacturers. You're looking for the best fit to protect your feet. It's not about the name on the shoe
- Try on both shoes. One foot may be larger than the other, so you want to make sure they both fit properly
- Make sure the shoe is flexible. Be cautious of a shoe where the forefoot doesn't bend
- The toe box should be spacious. You should be able to wiggle your toes and the space should be long enough so that a thumbnail-size space remains in front of the longest toe. Make sure to test this while standing, not sitting
- Your heel should be snug, and not move from side to side
- The shoe's collar shouldn't be so high it cuts into your ankle or so low that your heel slips out
- You should be able to lace the shoes snugly over your instep
- You don't break running shoes in. They *should not* have any pressure points and *should* fit properly right away
- Don't wear your running shoes for anything but running. If you wear them for everyday activities, they will wear down much quicker. If you're a serious runner, you may go through as many as 3 or 4 pairs of shoes a year
- Runners should replace shoes approximately every 4 months or every 300 to 500 miles

Dan Reynen's Health and Fitness column is brought to you by Gilead Sciences.

For more health and fitness tips,
visit www.WeBeFit.com

- **Kidney problems:** If you have had kidney problems or take other medicines that can cause kidney problems, your healthcare provider should do regular blood tests to check your kidneys
- **Bone changes:** It is not known whether long-term use of TRUVADA causes damage to your bones. If you have had bone problems in the past, talk to your healthcare provider before taking TRUVADA

Changes in body fat have been seen in some people taking anti-HIV medicines. The most common side effects of TRUVADA when taken with other anti-HIV medicines are dizziness, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, headache, abdominal pain, depression, rash, and gas. Skin discoloration (spots and freckles) may also occur.

Discuss all medicines you take with your healthcare provider and be aware:

- Your healthcare provider may need to follow you more closely or adjust your therapy if you are taking Videx®, Videx® EC, Reyataz®, or Kaletra® with TRUVADA

For more information, please visit www.TRUVADA.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5 (1-800-445-3235) and select option 2. Please see Patient Information on the next page.

*Based on data from PHAST retail monthly data, April 2006–February 2007, Wolters Kluwer Health.

Patient Information

TRUVADA® (tru-VAH-dah) Tablets

Generic name: emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil fumarate
(em tri SIT uh bean and te NOE' fo veer dye soe PROX il FYOU mar ate)

Read the Patient Information that comes with TRUVADA before you start taking it and each time you get a refill. 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 TRUVADA. **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 TRUVADA.

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

- Some people who have taken medicine like TRUVADA (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 TRUVADA 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 medicines, like TRUVADA, for a long time.
- If you are also infected with the **Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)**, you need close medical follow-up for several months after stopping treatment with TRUVADA. Follow-up includes medical exams and blood tests to check for HBV that could be getting worse. **Patients with Hepatitis B Virus infection, who take TRUVADA and then stop it, may get "flare-ups" of their hepatitis. A "flare-up" is when the disease suddenly returns in a worse way than before.**

What is TRUVADA?

TRUVADA is a type of medicine called an HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) nucleoside analog reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NRTI). TRUVADA contains 2 medicines, EMTRIVA® (emtricitabine) and VIREAD® (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate, or tenofovir DF) combined in one pill. TRUVADA is always used with other anti-HIV medicines to treat people with HIV infection. TRUVADA is for adults age 18 and older. TRUVADA 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.

TRUVADA helps block HIV reverse transcriptase, a chemical in your body (enzyme) that is needed for HIV to multiply. TRUVADA lowers the amount of HIV in the blood (viral load). TRUVADA may also help to increase the number of T cells (CD4 cells). 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).

TRUVADA does not cure HIV infection or AIDS. The long-term effects of TRUVADA are not known at this time. People taking TRUVADA 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 TRUVADA.**

TRUVADA 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 TRUVADA?

- Do not take TRUVADA if you are allergic to TRUVADA or any of its ingredients. The active ingredients of TRUVADA are emtricitabine and tenofovir DF. See the end of this leaflet for a complete list of ingredients.
- Do not take TRUVADA if you are already taking ATRIPLA™, Combivir (lamivudine/zidovudine), EMTRIVA, EpiVir or EpiVir-HBV (lamivudine), Epizcom (abacavir sulfate/lamivudine), Trizivir (abacavir sulfate/lamivudine/zidovudine), or VIREAD because these medicines contain the same or similar active ingredients.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking TRUVADA?

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- are pregnant or planning to become pregnant. We do not know if TRUVADA can harm your unborn child. You and your healthcare provider will need to decide if TRUVADA is right for you. If you use TRUVADA while you are pregnant, talk to your healthcare provider about how you can be on the TRUVADA Antiviral Pregnancy Registry.
- are breast-feeding. You should not breast feed if you are HIV-positive because of the chance of passing the HIV virus to your baby. Also, it is not known if TRUVADA 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.
- have kidney problems or are undergoing kidney dialysis treatment.
- have bone problems.
- have liver problems including Hepatitis B Virus infection.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Especially tell your healthcare provider if you take:

- Videx, Videx EC (didanosine). Tenofovir DF (a component of TRUVADA) may increase the amount of Videx in your blood. **You may need to be followed more carefully if you are taking TRUVADA and Videx together.** Also, the dose of didanosine may need to be reduced.
- Reyataz (atazanavir sulfate) or Kaletra (lopinavir/ritonavir). These medicines may increase the amount of tenofovir DF (a component of TRUVADA) in your blood, which could result in more side effects. You may need to be followed more carefully if you are taking TRUVADA and Reyataz or Kaletra together. TRUVADA may decrease the amount of Reyataz in your blood. If you are taking TRUVADA and Reyataz together, you should also be taking Norvir (ritonavir).

Keep a complete list of all the medicines that you take. Make a new list when medicines are added or stopped. Give copies of this list to all of your healthcare providers and pharmacist every time you visit your healthcare provider or fill a prescription.

How should I take TRUVADA?

- Take TRUVADA exactly as your healthcare provider prescribed it. Follow the directions from your healthcare provider, exactly as written on the label.
- The usual dose of TRUVADA is 1 tablet once a day. TRUVADA is always used with other anti-HIV medicines. If you have kidney problems, you may need to take TRUVADA less often.
- TRUVADA may be taken with or without a meal. Food does not affect how TRUVADA works. Take TRUVADA at the same time each day.
- If you forget to take TRUVADA, take it as soon as you remember that day. **Do not take more than 1 dose of TRUVADA in a day. Do not take 2 doses at the same time.** Call your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you are not sure what to do. **It is important that you do not miss any doses of TRUVADA or your anti-HIV medicines.**
- When your TRUVADA 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 TRUVADA and become harder to treat.
- Do not change your dose or stop taking TRUVADA without first talking with your healthcare provider. Stay under a healthcare provider's care when taking TRUVADA.
- If you take too much TRUVADA, call your local poison control center or emergency room right away.

What should I avoid while taking TRUVADA?

- Do not breast-feed.** See "What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking TRUVADA?"
- Avoid doing things that can spread HIV infection** since TRUVADA does not stop you from passing the HIV infection to others.
 - 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.
- ATRIPLA, Combivir (lamivudine/zidovudine), EMTRIVA, EpiVir or EpiVir-HBV (lamivudine), Epizcom (abacavir sulfate/lamivudine), Trizivir (abacavir sulfate/lamivudine/zidovudine), or VIREAD. TRUVADA should not be used with these medicines.

What are the possible side effects of TRUVADA?

TRUVADA may cause the following serious side effects (see "What is the most important information I should know about TRUVADA?").

- 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 doctor right away if you get signs of lactic acidosis.** (See "What is the most important information I should know about TRUVADA?")
- 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 TRUVADA?")
- "Flare-ups" of Hepatitis B Virus infection**, in which the disease suddenly returns in a worse way than before, can occur if you stop taking TRUVADA. Your healthcare provider will monitor your condition for several months after stopping TRUVADA if you have both HIV and HBV infection. TRUVADA is not approved for the treatment of Hepatitis B Virus infection.
- 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 TRUVADA 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.

Other side effects with TRUVADA when used with other anti-HIV medicines include:

- Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking TRUVADA and other anti-HIV medicines. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the main part of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from the legs, arms and face may also happen. The cause and long term health effect of these conditions are not known at this time.

The most common side effects of EMTRIVA or VIREAD when used with other anti-HIV medicines are: dizziness, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, headache, rash, and gas. Skin discoloration (small spots or freckles) may also happen with TRUVADA.

These are not all the side effects of TRUVADA. This list of side effects with TRUVADA is **not complete** at this time because TRUVADA is still being studied. If you have questions about side effects, ask your healthcare provider. Report any new or continuing symptoms to your healthcare provider right away. Your healthcare provider may be able to help you manage these side effects.

How do I store TRUVADA?

- Keep TRUVADA and all other medicines out of reach of children.
- Store TRUVADA at room temperature 77 °F (25 °C).
- Keep TRUVADA 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 TRUVADA:

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

This leaflet summarizes the most important information about TRUVADA. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about TRUVADA that is written for health professionals. For more information, you may also call 1-800-GILEAD-5 or access the TRUVADA website at www.TRUVADA.com.

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

What are the ingredients of TRUVADA?

Active Ingredients: emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil fumarate

Inactive Ingredients: Croscarmellose sodium, lactose monohydrate, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, and pregelatinized starch (gluten free). The tablets are coated with Opadry II Blue Y-30-10701 containing FD&C Blue #2 aluminum lake, hydroxypropyl methylcellulose 2910, lactose monohydrate, titanium dioxide, and triacetin.

Rx Only

May 2007

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21-752-GS-20

What a World

by Nancy Ford

WHAT A YEAR, WHAT A YEAR

Saying goodbye to 2007. And not a minute too soon

Anna Nicole's surreal Funeral du Soleil. A diapered-yet-determined astronette. The birth of Dick and Lynn Cheney's grandson, whose parents are two mommies. There are no homosexuals in Iran.

2007—what a year it was. Undeniably, the assorted sordid events of these troublesome past 365 days deemed 2007 no slice of heaven.

On the other my-glass-is-half-full hand, we were never bored.

Before moving on to 2008, let's take one last look at some of the more significant events of these 12 whacky months, reminding ourselves that those who do not learn from the past are destined to pay extra to take the online course until they do.

GORE WINS AT LAST. Thanking his lucky, evaporating stars that former Florida state attorney general Katherine Harris doesn't count votes in Sweden, Al Gore and his team of scientists were honored with the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for sounding the alarm about global warming. I mean, global climate change. I mean, the end of days. Wait...what are we calling it now?

In any case, the victory marked the first time any winner of the prestigious award could boast having Melissa Etheridge's phone number on speed-dial.

BUT IF THEY CAN'T BRING IT WITH THEM TO JAIL, WHY CALL IT A CELL PHONE? Paris, Nicole, and Lindsay all spent time in the pokey for various offenses ranging from driving while intoxicated to driving while famous. Reports that Barry Bonds, O.J., and Britney have all presciently placed Ray Hill on retainer as their Prison Coach have been wildly exaggerated.

HOLY CRAP. Houstonians were reminded in June that, despite growing acceptance of and tolerance for GLBTs, extreme danger still lurks.

After the two met in a Montrose bar, Terry Mark Mangum murdered Kenneth Cummings Jr., a gay flight attendant, in

Cummings' Pearland home. Mangum, a self-proclaimed reincarnation of the Old Testament prophet Elijah, said he was doing God's bidding when he "sacrificed" a homosexual by stabbing him in the head, tossing his body into a shallow pond in nearby Dickinson.

It bears noting that, to date, no religious extremists have been assaulted after being picked up in, let's say, a Chik-Fil-A by any gay man or woman claiming to be the reincarnation of Freddie Mercury.

It took a heart attack to finally silence the man famous for saying that gays and lesbians helped bring about the attacks of September 11.

MAKING HER STORY HISTORY. Houston city controller and *OutSmart* columnist Annise D. Parker was not only re-elected as the highest-ranking out lesbian municipal official in the United States, but is obviously doing such an exemplary job that she ran unopposed for her final term. Take that, Dr. Steven Hotze.

You don't get that punch line, you say? Google "Hotze" and "Straight Slate."

THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD. World-champion antigay evangelist Jerry Falwell died at age 73. It took a heart attack to finally silence the man famous for saying that gays and lesbians helped bring about the attacks of September 11 and Teletubby Tinky Winky is a homosexual recruiting tool of the very young. We wonder if Falwell's May prom-

enade through the pearly gates has prompted God to rethink that whole Christians-spending-eternity-in-heaven idea.

PUTTING THEIR MOUTHS WHERE THEIR MONEY ISN'T. Larry Craig, Mark Foley, Bob Allen—the list of hypocritical Republican homos, led by now-deposed evangelical leader Ted Haggard, seemed to grow daily.

It took a mere three weeks of intense conversion therapy earlier this year until Brother Haggard cried uncle, proclaiming he is now "100 percent heterosexual."

In truth, Haggard's miraculous conversion will likely take longer than just three weeks. A lot longer. But time always seems to pass more quickly when you're tweaking on crystal meth.

SURVIVOR GUILT. Even though ENDA (you know, that embattled Employment Non-Discrimination Act originally designed to protect all GLBTs in the workplace) was approved last month by the U.S. House of Representatives, the victory was at best bittersweet for gays and lesbians.

The importance of any federal legislation protecting any of us in the GLBT community can't be overstated, even though W has promised to veto ENDA if a separate version passes the Senate and a final bill lands on his desk. But the last-minute deletion of language protecting gender identity, proposed by Massachusetts Congressman Barney Frank and condoned by national operatives of the Human Rights Campaign, was a killer to those of us who understand what that deletion means to the T in GLBT.

Now gays and lesbians know how the Unsinkable Molly Brown must have felt in her lifeboat as she watched passengers of the working class wave to her from the deck of the Titanic.

When the time comes for us to write our 2008 GLBT to-do lists, grabbing an oar might be an excellent task to place at the top. ■

HILLARY'S 'MEN-ARE-PILING-ON' STRATEGY

Methinks the lady doth protest too much

I just wrote about Hillary and her candidacy last month, and not in a very favorable way. This month, I find myself writing about her again, and not in a very favorable way. Perhaps some in Hillary's campaign would charge me with "the-politics-of-piling-on" Hillary because she is a woman. That's what her campaign did after Hillary's poor outing in the last Democratic presidential debate when the other candidates went after her: It implied that the other candidates, all male, had "piled on" Hillary because she is a female. Methinks Lady Hillary doth protest too much.

Indeed, the same week that Hillary's campaign accused her male counterparts of "the politics of pile on," she also appeared at her alma mater, Wellesley. When addressing a crowd of "Hillblazers," young female supporters, Hillary said, "In so many ways, this all women's college prepared me to compete in the all-boys' club of presidential politics."

Well, apparently it didn't. If it had, Hillary would have known the difference between being singled out because she's a woman and being singled out because she's got a 20-point lead on the men.

Whether I think Hillary is the best Democrat in the field is irrelevant to the fact that, before playing the gender card after the last debate, Hillary had run the smartest campaign of anyone in the Democratic primary. Even though she's not my candidate, I thought that she had outperformed Obama, Edwards, and the others every time. During the debates, she projected strength, experience, knowledge, and self-assurance. She never got ruffled. She was virtually untouchable.

Then, in the last debate, she was asked about whether New York governor Eliot Spitzer's plan to offer illegal immigrants driver's licenses was the right decision. Hillary waffled, saying first one thing, then another, and then finally accused Tim Rus-

sert of asking her a "gotcha" question when it became apparent that her answers were doublespeak. If it was a "gotcha" question, it certainly didn't "get" any of the other candidates. And even if it had been a "gotcha" question, it's a debate, Hillary. That's the point: to ask candidates tough questions to see how they handle them under fire. Hillary had been great under fire. In the last debate, she wasn't.

In short, the last debate wasn't Hillary's finest performance. She should have simply acknowledged that after the debate and come loaded for bear the next time.

But she didn't. Instead, she had her campaign accuse the male candidates of "piling on," implying that six men piling on one woman was unfair. She played the gender card, which was stupid. Until then, Hillary hadn't played the gender card. She didn't have to. Everyone knows she's a woman. She's not exactly in the closet.

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CHECK THE NUMBERS

Does United ENDA represent the community?

In the recent debate over ENDA, it has frequently been said that "the community" solidly opposes the first-ever federal gay civil rights bill unless it includes transgenders.

The evidence for this surprising unity is the fact that more than 300 organizations have signed an online petition, available at www.UnitedENDA.org. "United ENDA," the website boasts, "effectively communicated the strong opposition of hundreds of organizations and millions of members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community."

The correctness of an all-or-nothing approach to civil rights is not determined solely by the number of organizations or people who favor or oppose it. The strategy could be wrong even if everybody supported it; conversely, it could be right even if everybody opposed it. But in a society that values representative politics, claiming that you speak for millions of people lends moral authority and

democratic legitimacy to your cause.

So is it true that United ENDA speaks for the community? The answer depends on which "community" we mean. If we mean "the community of gay and trans activists" who lead organizations like the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, the answer is "yes."

This is a select group of people, however. They are very liberal, highly educated, and unusually politically aware. They long ago bought the idea that the "I" is necessarily part of the "GLB." This view is strongly influenced by academic queer and gender theory that, whatever its merits, is probably not widely understood or actively embraced.

This does not mean that the leaders of these organizations are wrong; their dedication to their beliefs is admirable. It is only to suggest that they may not be representative.

But, it might be answered, they lead more than 300 organizations that collectively do represent millions of members of the community. To determine whether this might be

true, I looked at the organizations listed on the United ENDA website. The list is much less impressive than it first seems.

Some of the groups are well-known players on the national stage, like NGLTF and Lambda Legal. The vast majority are very obscure local and state groups. One is called "Coqsure," described online as a "social group" in Portland, Oregon, "for people who were born or raised female who don't presently identify as totally female."

Missing from the list is the largest and most influential gay political group, the Human Rights Campaign. There are no gay Republican organizations listed, yet more than 25 percent of gay people regularly vote Republican in national elections.

The list is padded. The National Stonewall Democrats are there, but so are a dozen of the group's state and local chapters, including both the Colorado chapter and that chapter's "Transgender Caucus." The national PFLAG organization is listed, but →

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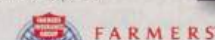
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More importantly, the men on the stage didn't go after Hillary because she's got a va-jay-jay. They went after her because, until then, she was more than 20 points ahead of her nearest male competitor.

Frontrunners have bull's eyes on them, whether the frontrunners are males or females. If Hillary learned anything at Wellesley, in the White House, or in her time in the Senate about the "all boys' club of presidential politics," she should have at least learned that.

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

OutRight continued from previous page

so are half a dozen of its subsidiaries. On and on it goes like that.

The list also includes numerous nongay organizations, like the Alliance for Jewish Renewal and a single local chapter of the American Federation of Teachers. They're free to oppose a bill that protects gay civil rights, of course, but they don't represent the gay community.

There are about ten million gay Americans, of whom perhaps 7.5 million are adults. How many of them are "represented" by the United ENDA signatory groups?

One way to determine that is by asking how many active members the groups have. Unfortunately, membership figures are mostly unavailable and are often inflated when they are available, consisting of little more than a mailing list.

Membership in the listed organizations also overlaps. The active membership of most of these groups, especially the more than 70 transgender groups listed, is probably tiny. Even many of the gay groups aren't very large. To take just one example, the Houston GLBT Political Caucus, "representing" gays in a metropolitan area of more than four million people, regularly gets fewer than 30 people at meetings.

Let's assume very generously that the 300 groups average 1,000 non-overlapping members each. That's a total of 300,000 people—well short of "millions" and less than five percent of the 7.5 million gay adults in the country.

Do the listed groups even represent their own members? A fascinating recent article in the *Washington Blade* about growing defections from the United ENDA front quoted gay Democratic activist Peter Rosenstein as saying that few of the 300 groups canvassed their members before taking a stand.

For example, Geoff Kors, head of Equality California, acknowledged that his group →



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did not poll its members. But, he added, he had received lots of supportive e-mails. Getting e-mail from people who agree with you is not a vote.

United ENDA could assert that it speaks for many in the community who aren't members of the signatory groups. The problem with that claim is that there are no reliable polls telling us how many gay people would forego their civil rights until "gender identity" is included.

More than two-thirds of the United ENDA signatories appear to be headquartered in states or cities where gay people are already protected from discrimination. I'm confident many members of the Harvard Transgender Task Force and the Alice B. Toklas LGBT Democratic Club of San Francisco fully support making gay people in Mississippi wait until ENDA is ideologically pure, but they don't speak for anyone outside their privileged precincts.

In short, there is simply no good evidence for United ENDA's claim that the community opposes an incremental approach to civil rights.

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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WORDPLAY AND POLITICS

Avoiding 'a Howard Dean moment' is a full-time job

I will have been in elected public office 10 years this month and have been writing for *OutSmart* for six of those years. I like to write, so having a column can be fun. And, as I do a lot of public speaking, I am sometimes able to re-craft speeches into my monthly article. But I must confess that too often it is a real grind to churn something out as that deadline approaches.

The magazine editors do not edit my work or request certain topics, although from the beginning they have requested personal observations and insights as much as possible. I try to balance articles about my personal life and feelings with articles about political topics, and then I'll throw in a "grab bag" of disparate short items when I feel uninspired.

Personal pieces have included ones on what it means to be a GLBT candidate, how I choose which events to attend from the multitude of daily invitations I receive,

my experiences at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, and how it felt to turn 50. Political pieces inform about what is happening in city hall, explain the importance of voting, or analyze upcoming ballot items.

The four-part series I wrote about adopting my two daughters with my life partner Kathy garnered more comments and touched more people than anything else I've done. It was also the hardest, being both very personal and involving the feelings of three other people. I may revisit it someday and try to expand on what was a very emotional and sometimes painful experience. I have shared copies with people who are going through the adoption process.

I am regularly asked by readers to do more of the personal articles, and I'd certainly like to. There are three drawbacks. One is that those articles can't be delegated. I can't ask my staff to gather info and

shoot me a paragraph or two (reference those uninspired moments mentioned earlier) when other responsibilities are overwhelming my schedule.

Another drawback is that I am conscious that anything I write may be thrown back at me by an opponent in a future campaign. The desire to be plainspoken and honest often conflicts with the desire not to shoot myself in the foot. In this current media age, stupid quotes, bonehead jokes, and less-than-tasteful pictures are forever available on the Internet. While I don't believe I have to fear any of those indiscretions, quotes out of context can sting.

Of course, even the political articles can come back and bite me. Talk about unintended consequences. An early article about people who contacted my council office with complaints about HPD led to me being deposed for a lawsuit by someone suing the

continued on page 32

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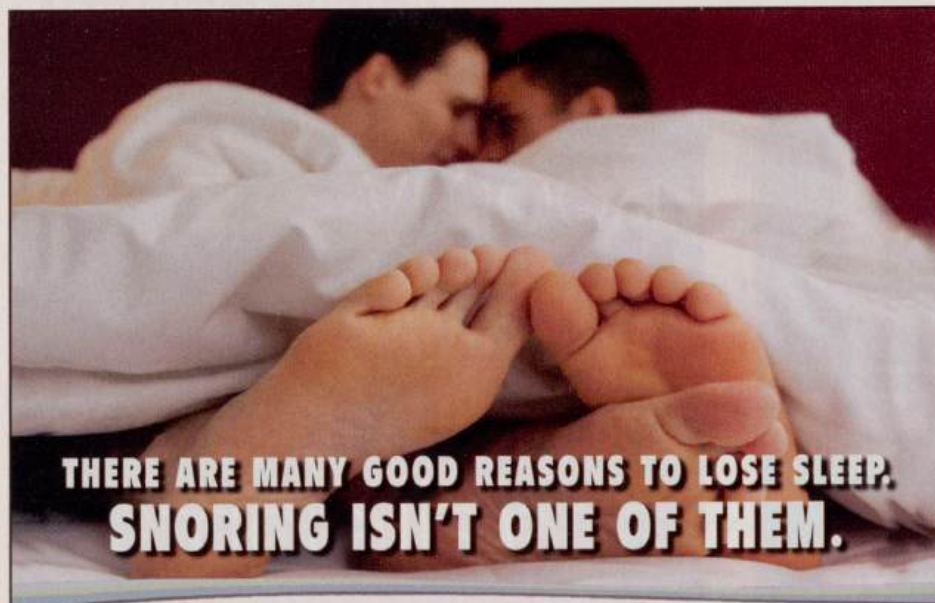
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InsideOut

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city. I spent hours being grilled on the accuracy of every word I wrote.

Finally, my personal positions can have implications for the city. I was incensed when the antigay adoption legislation was considered in the State Legislature in 2005 and felt a personal responsibility to speak out, including some rather pointed comments on the evening news shows directed at the bill's sponsor. At the time, I had legislation dealing with financial reporting by municipalities pending in the House.

Former state representative and now Houston Council Member Melissa Noriega was carrying it for me. There was no opposition, and it went to a hearing in committee the following week. As luck would have it, who do you think was chair of that committee? (My bill finally passed in 2007.)

The trickiest thing for a politician (or any columnist) is humor, which is so much a matter of personal taste and too much a matter of the latest fashion of political correctness. Of course, starting with a joke is a staple of public speaking. Making a joke that is clean, topical, and funny is a juggling act few can master.

Things I might say in person are often more direct than what appears in print because they aren't scripted. But even then I am aware that the microphone is always on! I take my responsibilities as both a public figure and as a community role model very seriously, so there are few opportunities to let my hair, or my guard, down. The phrase "a Howard Dean moment" has entered the political lexicon for good reason.

These are not complaints, only observations. I am honored to have both roles and am always thankful for what I consider a sacred trust. I am fairly reserved by nature, so it isn't much of a problem. It is, however, the reason for my personal rule that I don't drink alcohol when I'm working. Since I'm almost always working (in one sense or another) when I am in public, I make a good designated driver. Notwithstanding all that, my daily prayer would still be somewhere between "Make them proud of me" and "Don't let me screw up today."

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 (Comcast) at 2 and 8 a.m. and 2 and 8 p.m. The City Controller's webpage is www.houstontx.gov/controller/index.html. To receive the controller's newsletter, send an email to cicely.wynne@cityofhouston.net.

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In the fall of 2007, Merck & Co., one of the large pharmaceutical companies studying potential preventive vaccines for HIV, halted its trial of a genetically engineered vaccine being tested on four continents. The reason? Preliminary results indicated it simply wasn't working.

This major setback, after two decades of research and billions of dollars spent, has many scientists saying they are uncertain if an effective vaccine for HIV will ever be developed. In response to this disappointing outcome, many HIV experts are calling for a shift away from 'technological' fixes like vaccines and vaginal microbicides to the old tried and true, lower tech strategies like monogamy and circumcision.

While the results are disheartening, I hope this study will serve to remind us all of some vitally important facts:

VERY SIMPLY PUT, HIV IS PREVENTABLE. PRE-VENT-A-BLE. Except in a very few cases of sexual assault or occupational exposure, people either choose to engage

Research indicates a person with HIV/AIDS can expect to survive an average of 24 years, thanks to antiretroviral medications. However, it comes with a staggering price tag of \$618,900.

in risky behavior or they choose to protect themselves. Self-esteem, substance abuse, and other factors can certainly influence one's judgment and behavioral choices, so it is important to address mental health and addiction issues.

Nevertheless, the bottom line is this. One must actively engage in specific sexual or needle-sharing activities in order to become infected with HIV. My hope is every person reading this will vow to make better, healthier decisions and avoid such risky behaviors.

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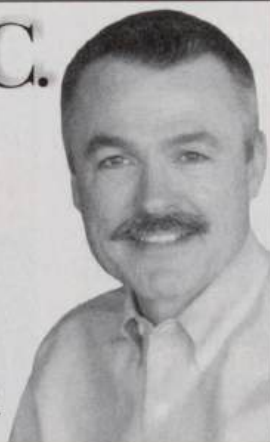
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AIDS Watch

continued from page 34

research indicates a person with HIV/AIDS can expect to survive an average of 24 years, thanks to antiretroviral medications. However, it comes with a staggering price tag of \$618,900 over the course of a lifetime!

A MAN'S RISK OF CONTRACTING HIV FROM HETEROSEXUAL INTERCOURSE CAN BE CUT IN HALF (PLEASE EXCUSE THE PUN) BY CIRCUMCISION, according to National Institutes of Health studies in Africa. Granted, heterosexual intercourse is likely not the favorite flavor of most *OutSmart* readers, but circumcision is still an important factor to consider. Here's why:

The foreskin often experiences small tears during intercourse and those breaks in the skin could provide an easy portal of entry for HIV. Also, the underside of the foreskin is rich in immune cells that easily bind to the virus.

So, getting circumcised could help reduce a man's chances of becoming infected. But before you schedule an appointment with your surgeon or pull the pink shears out of the kitchen drawer, know circumcision is not absolute protection.

WITHOUT A SAFE AND EFFECTIVE VACCINE, PREVENTION EDUCATION AND THE USE OF BARRIER METHODS ARE THE BEST WEAPONS WE HAVE IN BATTLING THE SPREAD OF HIV. Make sure you and your loved ones know how HIV is transmitted and how to employ safer sex techniques.

Remember, condoms and other barrier methods like dental dams are the answer. Correct and consistent use of them will drastically reduce one's chances of becoming infected with HIV and/or other fluid-borne sexually transmitted diseases.

Latex condoms come in a variety of flavors, styles, and sizes to fit the, um, tastes and sensibilities, as well as the length and girth, of the man wearing it. He can increase his pleasurable sensations by putting a drop of water-based lube inside the tip of the condom before he rolls it onto his erect penis. The lube on the inside helps the condom to move around more on the head of the penis, and that makes it feel better to the man wearing the condom. Friction is our friend!

And if the man wearing the condom wants to be a true gentleman and considerate lover, he can lube up the outside of the condom once he's got it on. That will help to increase the pleasurable sensations experienced by his partner.

Latex condoms are relatively inexpensive. You can get a box of 12 for about \$9 at any drug store. That's a cost of just 75

cents each. Or you can find them for free or at drastically reduced prices at local community-based agencies like AIDS Foundation Houston, Planned Parenthood, or Montrose Counseling Center. And don't forget, many organizations have staff members and volunteers who conduct outreach activities, including the distribution of condoms at local gay bars and bathhouses.

Now you know. You know condoms are the best way to protect yourself from HIV. You know how to make them feel better during sex. And you know they are inexpensive and come in a variety of models.

So, no excuses. Now is the time for you to make better, healthier decisions for you and your partner.

Realize you are worth protecting. If booze or drugs cloud your judgment, seek help so you can get into recovery and stay sober.

Realize you are worth protecting. Get into the habit of using a condom every time you engage in penetrative sexual activity, whether it is oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse.

Realize you are worth protecting. And enjoy a safe and happy holiday season.

Kelly A. McCann is the chief executive officer of AIDS Foundation Houston, which recently marked 25 years of service. Details: www.aids-help.org.



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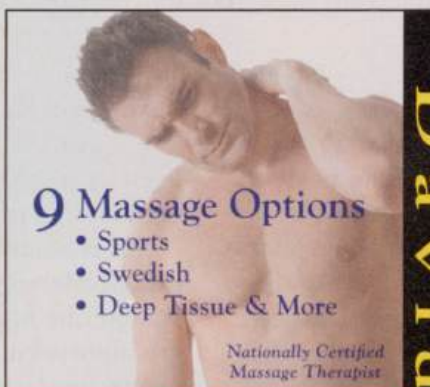


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Wouldn't It Be Nice?

Carnie Wilson chats about her new Christmas album, reality TV, trees, and why people who oppose same-sex marriage suck. Really suck

by Nancy Ford

It's a busy time for Carnie Wilson. When I called her at the appointed hour for this *OutSmart* interview, she had just returned to her home on the West Coast from Nashville and was leaving the next day for Las Vegas, all in service to the best-gal-pal media identity she has deftly parlayed into a successful pop-culture career.

At that moment, she was in line at her local Starbucks, where she had just purchased a mid-afternoon snack of a regular drip coffee and a slice of banana bread.

"I'm going to have two bites, and then I'm going to throw it out," Wilson promised, ever mindful of what too many calories can do to her high-profile battle of the bulge.

"I really shouldn't be here, but today is one of these days where I just want two little bites of banana bread and a sip of coffee, and I'll be happy."

With or without benefit of banana bread, Carnie sounds quite happy in general. After shedding the bulk that labeled her "the fat chick" of that mega-popular '90s recording group, Wilson Philips, she went on to host her own television talk show, record two solo albums, author three books, and generally become the go-to girl ready to

liven up a celebrity reality or interview show with her ingratiating persona and salty banter.

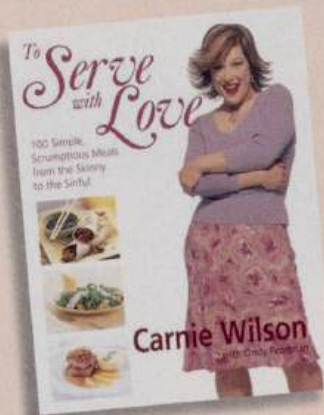
It's reasonable that she should be surrounded by all things celebrity. She is, of course, the daughter of Brian Wilson, the musical genius behind the Beach Boys, the groundbreaking, multi-harmonied, '60s pop group. This month her father is one of five recipients of the Kennedy Center Honors, the 30th annual national celebration of the arts (televised on December 26), along with pianist Leon Fleisher, actor and writer Steve Martin, singer Diana Ross, and film director Martin Scorsese.

"I'm really excited for him," Carnie says of her father with more than a little awe in her voice. "It's funny—Elton John called him about a week ago and said, 'You know, it's a shame I got [the Kennedy Center honor] before you. You should have gotten it before me!'"

"They're just such good friends, it's really neat."

Before heading to Vegas, Carnie chatted with *OutSmart*—while simultaneously balancing her cell phone, her banana bread, and her coffee—about what keeps her sane and sober, what keeps her busy, and what really, really sucks. →





In addition to being a wife, mother, daughter of a pop culture legend, singer, and reality-TV-show star, Carrie Wilson has published two memoirs, *Gut Feelings: From Fear and Despair to Health and Hope* in 2001 and *I'm Still Hungry: Finding Myself Through Thick and Thin* in 2003. She followed the autobiographies in 2005 with *To Serve with Love: Simple, Scrumptious Dishes from the Skinny to the Sinful*, an inspirational lifestyle cookbook written with Cindy Pearlman (all three books from Hay House).

Here Carrie shares one of her favorite holiday recipes with *OutSmart*, and with you.

Carrie Wilson's Berry Berry Delicious Bars

2 sticks of butter (room temperature)
1 cup sugar
1 egg
1/2 tsp. vanilla
2 cups flour
3/4 cup chopped pecans
3/4 cup white chocolate chips
1 jar raspberry preserves

Lemon glaze:

Combine:
2 cups powdered sugar
Juice of 1 lemon
1 tbsp. milk
1/2 tsp. vanilla

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, mix butter and sugar with an electric mixer on a medium speed until the ingredients are light and fluffy, for approximately 30 seconds.

Separately, combine lemon glaze ingredients. Reserve.

Add the egg and vanilla to the butter and sugar mixture, mixing until incorporated. Reduce mixer speed to low and slowly add the flour, one cup at a time. Mix in the pecans, then the white chocolate chips.

Reserve one cup of the dough. Pat the remaining dough into a 9-inch-by-9-inch nonstick metal baking pan, pressing it down to make a crust about a 1/2-inch thick.

Spread raspberry preserves onto the dough, leaving about half an inch around the sides as a border. Gently dot the layer of preserves with the reserved dough. Bake for 30 minutes until dough is a light golden brown.

Let cool, then drizzle with lemon glaze. Slice into bars. Serves 1-25, depending on individual eating disorder.

Wouldn't It Be Nice? continued from page 38

Nancy Ford: Christmas means a lot of things, but two things specifically, to me: good music and good food—way more than two bites of banana bread!
Carnie Wilson: [Laughing] Oh, Jesus! Well, I love to cook, and I love to bake. I'm really serious about it.

What are some of your favorite holiday foods that you prepare?

Every year I like to make a really nice cranberry sauce that has just fresh cranberries and sugar and orange zest and water and lemon juice. You make it from scratch—it's so good. And I just love to make the stuffing. That's my thing.

I also make a really great green-bean casserole dish in the crockpot with canned green beans, cream of chicken soup, and cream of mushroom soup together. And then you layer it with a shitload of cheese and dried basil, salt and pepper, and French onion. Oh man, oh my god!

You are a traditionalist, Carnie Wilson.

Yes, I am. I am. And of course, I have to make my macaroni and cheese, and I have to make a bread pudding that I've been perfecting for the past two years.

What keeps me sane is cooking. Honestly, it keeps me sober. I'm in recovery for three years, so I cook for my daughter. I cook for my husband. I cook for everybody that comes to my home. I actually find reasons to cook at night. I'm a workaholic, so at night when I should be sleeping, I'll go in the kitchen and start baking, and then I'll give food to people. No matter, if I'm doing an interview for *Entertainment Tonight* or if I'm going in to have my nails done, everybody is going to have some of my food every week.

Lovely! You can tell you really have passion for cooking and preparing food.

Yes, I'm going to open up a restaurant one of these days. It's going to be called Shut the F--k up and Eat. [Laughs] I'm kidding! I'm kidding!

[Laughs] What's your advice on how to avoid overindulging during the holidays?

Oh god!

I know, I know. Who wants to, right?

[Laughing] I'm going to wear a muzzle that says "Merry F--king Christmas..."

...Now shut the f--k up and eat!"

Yeah, exactly! For overindulging...it's so hard. This is what I say: Know yourself. Know your kryptonite. Know your weakness.

For two days before Christmas, have a 500-calorie diet where you're just eating vegetables and chicken. Or for breakfast, have a couple of scrambled eggs. No snacks, lots of water. For lunch, have a salad with grilled vegetables and chicken. For dinner, have a piece of salmon and grilled vegetables, and maybe a Weight Watchers snack bar at night.

Just take two days of really clean eating before [the holiday]. And then, if you have the willpower to resist, just cut everything in half. So instead of having a 3,000-calorie day with all the stuff, maybe you'll have a 1,000- or 1,500-calorie day.

That way, you still get to have all the taste pleasure involved.

Yes, it's smart if you don't mind having a little portion of everything. Have one plate of food, and don't go back for seconds. Drink a ton of water before the meal so you're full already. That's about the best advice. Otherwise, I say just enjoy it and diet a couple of days before.

So, besides keeping busy with the Christmas album and cooking and everything else, what's coming up for you?

Oh boy. I just got back from Nashville. I was part of a show for the CMT channel called *Gone Country*. It was the best experience of my life—just absolutely the most fun, and the most challenging. There were a lot of issues in my face, like alcohol. I was watching certain people's behavior and I saw a lot of myself.

The best news is that I wrote a song with two of the top country writers in Nashville. I didn't win, but I came close. But I'm really happy with the song that I wrote, and I got to meet some great people. We had a performance at the Wild Horse Saloon, and there were almost 500 record executives there. It was the largest gathering of record-executive people in history.

The show is going to be huge. It's like Anna Nicole meets *The Simpsons*. It's just wackadoo and great. It was spearheaded by John Rich from Big & Rich. I just loved the whole thing. I lived in a house with Maureen McCormick, Bobby Brown, Dee Snider. It was a blast!

We're actually going to buy a house in Nashville. We love it there so much.

We will definitely be tuning in to that. I'm glad we're talking about this, →

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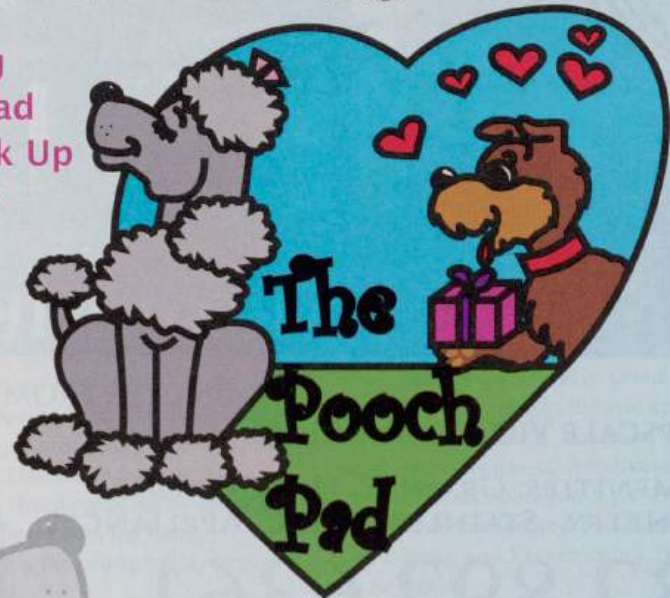
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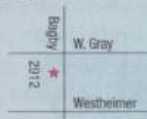
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Wouldn't It Be Nice? continued from page 40

because I read recently that one of the members of Big & Rich made a comment about gay marriage. [In an October 2007 interview with *The Tennessean*, Big & Rich's John Rich said, "I think if you legalize [gay marriage], you've got to legalize some other things that are pretty unsavory. You can call me a radical, but how can you tell an aunt that she can't marry her nephew if they are really in love and sharing the bills? How can you tell them they can't get married, but something else that's unnatural can happen?" Rich later retracted his remarks, pointing to his Christian upbringing as the reason for his earlier statement.] Are you serious? I didn't know that! Ooh, that sucks!

Yeah, it does.

That sucks! That's not cool. That makes me feel sick to my tummy. I'm glad I didn't know this when I was there, because I definitely would have talked to this guy. That sucks!

Yes, well, what with *OutSmart* being a gay magazine, we especially thought it sucked pretty hard. What do you think—is it a country thing? Is it a Nashville thing, saying something like that?

Oh, I don't know. It's probably his upbringing or just a mindset. Who knows? I can't speak for anyone that would say something like that. I just know, for me, that my mind and heart is so open to love. Whoever somebody wants to be with, or whatever they want to do in their life as long as that person is true to their heart and is happy, I believe in it. Unless it's a killer or a murderer.

I mean, how can you, how can you—I've never understood prejudice against gay people, fat people, white, black, yellow—anything. I don't get it! It's just not part of my chemical makeup.

Well, thank you for that.

Well, it's the truth! I think also it's your upbringing and who you're with your whole life and what you're exposed to. A lot of people are just scared of something. They can't open their minds.

You know, if you look outside, you see a million different-color trees. Why would you alienate one color tree? It doesn't calculate in my brain. I'm on my street in front of my house, and I'm looking at all the trees. There are pointy ones that are tall and dark green. There's a palm tree. There's a weeping willow. There's a pine tree. [Laughs] You could really get into that analogy, you know, but it's just true!

My best friend in the whole world is gay. She's a hardcore lesbian! [Laughs] I love her

so much, she's my heart and my soul. I've been through so much with her.

I don't know—I just love people. I'm a people person.

That's obvious. Well, thank you so much for your candor. I think it is something our readers will be very, very happy to learn.

Oh yeah! I mean, oh god, I wish I was a gay man! Jesus Christ!

[Laughs] Why is that?

Because I love dick! I love men! I think I'm a straight woman, I'm a gay woman, and I'm a gay man, all in one!

The best of all worlds, *Carnie*. The best of all worlds.

[Still laughing] I know!

Well, do you have anything to add to this lovely conversation?

No, just Merry Christmas. And everybody be safe.

Nancy Ford interviewed Judy Collins for *OutSmart's* November issue.



You might call Carnie Wilson's newest album, *Christmas with Carnie*, a family affair.

Her husband, Rob Bonfiglio, penned one of the selections, "Warm, Lovin' Christmastime," in addition to providing background vocals on the peppy, seasonal tune. That's her not-quite-two-year-old daughter, Lola Sofia, voicing "Merry Christmas, everybody!" at the tail end of "The Christmas Song." And three of the tunes on the CD are re-do's from *The Beach Boys Christmas Album* (1964).

"I grew up with my dad's version of 'Blue Christmas' and 'White Christmas,'" Carnie says. "And when I was looking for the songs, the ballads really got me. 'I'll Be Home for Christmas' is just a killer! I just knew that that was one I had to do."

Bravely opening with "Merry Christmas, Darling," the tune made famous by the pitch-perfect Karen Carpenter, this selection of pleasant Christmas favorites is sure to make your Yuletide gay—or, at least, gayer.

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—N.F.

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HUMMING ALONG WITH THE HOLIDAYS

Suggestions for seasonal tunes,
some with queer spice

by Gregg Shapiro

Have you ever been to a holiday party where the music was so lame you wanted to run screaming from the room? Did you ever wish that you could load up your iPod with the coolest new holiday tunes and share them with your hosts and the other party guests? Here are a few suggestions for holiday music, most with queer spice, for a variety of tastes:

"(Christmas) Baby Please Come Home," Darlene Love's early 1960s holiday hit, remains the cornerstone for all rock-and-roll carols that followed. The combination of Love's stunning vocals and stellar production by the currently not-convicted Phil Spector are simply hard to beat. Love, who turns 70 next year, is still in good voice on her new CD, *It's Christmas, Of Course* (Shout! Factory). Some 40 years have passed since she recorded "(Christmas) Baby Please Come Home," and there is a considerable pool of more recent material from which to choose. Among her best choices on the album are her interpretations of Tom Petty's "Christmas All Over Again," NRBQ's "Christmas Wish," James Brown's "Santa Claus Go Straight to the Ghetto," the Pretenders' "2000 Miles," Billy Squier's "Christmas Is the Time to Say 'I Love You,'" and John Lennon and Yoko Ono's "Happy Xmas (War Is Over)," featuring guest vocals by Cissy Houston. A new track,



"Night of Peace," was co-written by frequent Cyndi Lauper collaborator Jan Pulsford.

Speaking of the Lennon/Ono classic, which has become a holiday staple, Celine Dion includes a cover version of "Happy Xmas (War Is Over)" on the expanded reissue of *These Are Special Times* (Columbia/CMV/Legacy). The remastered 16-track CD showcases Dion's trademark belting on traditional selections as well as other newer tunes including "Feliz Navidad," "Blue Christmas," and a couple by a pair of nice Jewish girls—"The Prayer," co-written by Carole Bayer Sager, and the title tune by Diane Warren. Dion's 1998 CBS special of the same name can be found in its entirety on the previously unreleased bonus DVD and features a surprising "Do You Hear What I Hear?" duet between Dion and Rosie O'Donnell.

Like Celine Dion, Alvin & The Chipmunks also made an impact on TV. In the early 1960s, following the success of a novelty hit in which sped-up vocals resulted in a charming (to some) high-pitched sound, Alvin, Theodore, and Simon, and their long-suffering manager Dave became cartoon characters. As you might expect, *Christmas with the Chipmunks* (Capitol) includes the holiday hit "The Chipmunk Song (Christmas Don't Be Late)." The release also expands on the Chipmunks' holiday legend →



Holiday Love: "Darlene Love's thunderbolt voice is as embedded in the history of rock-and-roll as Eric Clapton's guitar or Bob Dylan's lyrics," according to the *New York Times*. Now Love brings that vocal gift to her first holiday CD, *It's Christmas, Of Course*. On December 24, Love makes her 22nd consecutive Christmas Eve appearance on *The David Letterman Show* on CBS (KHOU Channel 11 in Houston). Love is the talk-show host's favorite Christmas performer, he has remarked. If you are spending the Yuletide season in New York, check out Love's annual Christmas concert on December 17 at Lincoln Center. • In addition to the musical gift suggestions on these pages, you will find even more ideas on page 88.



Dave Koz

Humming Holidays

continued from page 44

with the addition of a 1968 collaboration between the Chipmunks and Canned Heat (yes, you read that right) on a Christmas boogie number.

On the compilation *Memories of a Winter's Night* (Capitol), his third holiday CD, openly gay smooth jazz saxophonist (and nice Jewish boy) Dave Koz puts a brassy shine on an array of festive favorites, including "Deck the Halls," "Winter Wonderland," and "O Tannenbaum." Special guests join in, including Brenda Russell on Leon Russell's "Boogie Woogie Santa Claus," *American Idol*'s Kimberley Locke on "Please Come Home for Christmas," and recent concert tour-mate Kelly Sweet on "White Christmas." Koz also includes the original title track with the parenthetical phrase "A Song for Hanukkah."

How can you not love a Christmas

music compilation that kicks off with Elton John's "Step Into Christmas" and follows that with the Dolly Parton medley of "Winter Wonderland/Sleigh Ride"? Such is the case with *Christmas #1s* (Hip-O), a 17-track collection that also includes Brenda Lee and Burl Ives, Gene Autry and the Jackson 5, and much more merriment.

Clean-cut piano man Jim Brickman returns with another CD of Christmas music, *Homecoming* (SLG). More than half the tracks are Brickman's arrangements of traditional compositions. The remaining tracks are originals, including "My Angel (Christmas)," featuring vocals by the late rhythm-and-blues crooner Gerald Levert. The song "I'm Coming Home for Christmas" appears on both Brickman's CD and on *If Every Day Could Be Christmas* (LoRemoma), the solo debut from Lubbock-born Richie McDonald, former lead singer of the country band Lonestar.

Evangelical emo band Relient K shows remarkable restraint and respect on the →

IN THE TUNEFUL SPIRIT

For me, the holidays haven't begun until I hear Mariah Carey warble "All I Want For Christmas Is You." Yep, I'm gay. We wanted to know what a few musically inclined people in the community liked in their holiday music. So we asked them, What song makes the season bright for you? —Tim Brookover

JD Doyle (producer/host of the *Queer Music Heritage* segment on KPFT *Queer Voices*) "Jimmy James, as Bette Davis, 'Feliz Navidad,' on *Have Yourself a Merry Jimmy James Christmas*. Note for out-of-key note, this song probably gives me the most smiles each year... It's pure Christmas camp."

Melissa Murry (entertainer and co-chair of the transgender Community Advisory Board) "'Silver Bells' by Bing Crosby. It just sums up the whole Christmas spirit for me...busy sidewalks, people laughing, soon it will be Christmas day—all that good stuff!"

Madalyn Sklar (founder of *GoGirlsMusic.com*, the independent online source for independent musicians) "My favorite Christmas song would be from Annette Warner, our editor at the *GoGirlsMusic.com* website. She is based in Wilmington, North Carolina. Her song is 'Ole Ms. Kringle.' You can take a listen at <http://www.myspace.com/annettewarner>. It's guaranteed to put a smile on your face."

Cindy Pruitt (member of the band *Fluff the Kat*) "I am a Beatles freak, and the holidays aren't happening until I play the CD *Xmas! The BEATMAS!* by The Danish Beatles tribute band, Rubber Band. My favorite tune is 'White Christmas,' set to the Beatles melody 'Ticket to Ride.' But all the tunes are fun. The CD is hard to find, but a real treat for Beatles fans and a very cool change from the usual holiday fare!"

Jack Varsi (OutSmart entertainment writer) "Of the countless versions of 'Sleigh Ride,' my favorite has always been the Ronettes' version, originally released as part of Phil Spector's *A Christmas Gift for You*, first released in 1963. That legendary Christmas album came out within days of the John F. Kennedy assassination. I don't know if there's a connection."

Abel Rodriguez (co-founder and executive director of Gay and Lesbian Latin Organization [GALLO]) "One of my Christmas favorites is 'Christmas to Christmas,' the Jay Perez version originally done by Toby Keith. Jay has that unmistakable voice that says Merry Christmas, *mi amor*. Second would be the 'Carol of the Bells' by none other than Mr. Raul DiBlasio, the Piano of the Americas. If you want the Latin flavor in your Christmas, try a little Raul in your holiday."

Darrin Brindle (Houston-based music producer) "For me, it wouldn't be Christmas without hearing these two songs! Dean Martin's 'Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!' and Brenda Lee's 'Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree,' both from *Now That's What I Call Christmas*."

DJ Rocky B (named Favorite Female DJ in the OutSmart 2007 Gayest & Greatest reader poll) "'Let It Snow,' by Boys II Men from the album *Christmas Interpretations*."

Alan Lett (performer and music producer) "My favorite Christmas song is 'Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence.' It's an old hymn that we used to sing in church and not only do I love the words, the haunting melody takes me to a place where I really understand what Christmas is about."

Gregg Shapiro (OutSmart music writer) "'The Truth About Christmas,' written by David Friedman, as sung by Lea DeLaria on *Winter Moon: A Celebration of Gay and Lesbian Singers and Songwriters...and Friends*."

Find CD information at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

ON THE WEB: Read more recommendations at www.outsmartmagazine.com. Then tell us your favorite. Click on the link at the end of the article and send us a note.

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HANUKKAH MIRACLE

Sandra Bernhard gets unexpectedly serious for the holidays with "Miracle of Lights," a track on the compilation CD *Breaking for the Holidays*. Written by Bernhard and Mitch Kaplan, her longtime musical director/pianist, the song is a plea for peace in a conflict-torn corner of the globe.

"I wanted to do something that was in keeping with Hanukkah, but I didn't want to do something schmaltzy and silly," the actress, comic, and performer told the CBS entertainment program *The Showbuzz*. "So I thought, What would I really like to achieve through the holiday message? And that was to

put out a word to the Middle East between the Palestinians and the Israelis and say, 'Who's gonna like step back, who's gonna like make the first move towards relinquishing all of this ego and this stress and tension and hatred?'

"You look at the Israelis, you look at the Palestinians, and, first of all, so many of them look exactly alike. I mean, we are cousins. It's such a fine line between our culture and our history. It just seems a waste that we can't mend that gap."

Bernhard's new song is one selection on the CD from the gay-owned music company Breaking Records. *Breaking for the Holidays* was quietly released at the very end of 2006, but the independent label, which relies on consumer buzz, is rolling out its first holiday product again. "It was a very soft release because we didn't have the set-up time we needed," Breaking Records vice president Sherrie Fell explained to *OutSmart*. "We're sort of considering it a 2007 release, and people seem to be just discovering it. Since we're indie, our marketing has been very word-of-mouth."

JD Doyle included Bernhard's new song in his holiday-edition Queer Music Heritage program in 2006. You can check out video of Bernhard performing "Miracle of Lights" on the *New York CW 11* morning program on YouTube (enter Bernhard's name and Miracle of Lights in the search field at the home page, www.youtube.com).

In preparing to record "Miracle of Lights," Breaking Records asked Iranian superstar singer Sussan Deyhim to provide additional vocals. Deyhim's haunting chant underscores the lyrics and deepens the mystical air of the song. "Sandra's idea was to make this song a song of peace," Fell says. "And due to our troubled times in the Middle East, she had us seek out a Middle Eastern female singer to be a part of this song."

More info: www.breakingrecords.com.

This month, Bernhard is touring the United Kingdom in support of her decidedly non-seasonal comedy release, *Everything Bad & Beautiful* (also on Breaking Records.) "For years Sandra Bernhard has scandalized America with her bisexuality and savage wit. And she's not letting up on her latest tour," *The Independent* of London reported last month. And that's a holiday gift for us all.

HOLIDAYS ON AIR



Every December, JD Doyle's Queer Music Heritage segment on the *Queer Voices* radio show is one of the highlights of the season. Doyle, the renowned GLBT music historian and enthusiast who lives in Houston, once again promises "Christmas music you won't be sick of by then" for his annual extravaganza. In 2006, the three hour-long shows included queer carols you would never hear during the Sunny 99.1 holiday-music marathon. These included Sandra Bernhard's Hanukkah song "Miracle of Lights," "Frosty the Snowman" performed by the delightfully twisted cabaret act Kiki & Herb, two songs from Roger Kuhn's *Happy Holidays* EP (pictured), and the Pansy Division track "Homo Christmas." Doyle promises similar tasty Yuletide treats for his 2007 shows.

The Queer Music Heritage holiday show will air on Monday, December 24, at 9 p.m. on KPFT 90.1FM. Doyle generally offers special Internet-only content (which includes saucy holiday fare not suitable for the public airwaves) at his website, www.queermusicheritage.org.

Humming Holidays

continued from page 46

recognizable holiday tunes they reinterpret on *Let It Snow Baby...Let It Reindeer* (Capitol), including "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," "Sleigh Ride," and "12 Days of Christmas." Of course, they save their musical ministry work for originals such as "Merry Christmas, Here's to Many More" and "In Like a Lion (Always Winter)."

Modern country diva Mindy Smith has recorded an album of originals and covers, *My Holiday* (Vanguard). On it she adds her own distinctive touch to familiar numbers such as "The Christmas Song," "Silver Bells," "I'll Be Home For Christmas," "Away in a Manger" (with harmony vocals by Alison Krauss), and "What Are You Doing New Year's Eve?" Her own Christmas compositions, including the gorgeous "Santa Will Find You," the bluegrass ballad "Follow the Shepherd Home," and the rocking "Come Around," are welcome additions to the ever-growing canon of Christmas music.

And what's holiday cheer without a little, you know, holiday cheer? Promising "yuletide cheer throughout the year" is the Ultra Lounge compilation *Best of Christmas Cocktails* (Capitol). Break out the martini shaker, kick off your shoes, and dance into the wee small hours to chilled numbers such as "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer Mambo" by Billy May, "Happy Holiday" by Peggy Lee, "The Merriest" by June Christy, "Jing-A-Ling" by The Starlighters, and "(Everybody's Waiting for) the Man with the Bag" by Kay Starr. Holiday cheers!

Gregg Shapiro interviews *The Cliks*, performing in Houston on December 15, on page 86.

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Share the Wealth

In the true spirit of the holidays, you can help others when you give presents this season. Here are just a few of our favorite ideas

by Nancy Ford

The Birthday Boy himself said it is more blessed to give than to receive. Accordingly, at each year's end we all are driven to give our loved ones gifts that they will treasure and remember for years to come and that will, we hope, even make a positive difference in their lives. It's unlikely that a

quick dash into the local 24-hour drug store on the way to the gift exchange for a pre-wrapped scented candle would fulfill those lofty ambitions.

With that in mind, we offer our annual Share the Wealth ideas, with suggestions that will not only make good gifts, but will also make you feel good about gifting.

It Takes Ten Thousand Villages

It began when Edna Ruth Byler, a Mennonite missionary to Puerto Rico, returned home to Canada with handcrafted items made by impoverished residents of the island to sell to friends and neighbors. Byler thought the items might make unusual gifts while simultaneously providing a means of income to the villagers.

That was in 1946. All these years and many global crises later, Byler's idea has grown into Ten Thousand Villages, a retailer designed to benefit artists rather than maximize profits. The company promotes free trade through a network of more than 270 organizations in 60 countries, not only improving the livelihoods of these artisans but also promoting a sense of justice. You can't get that at Wal-Mart.

These Ten Thousand Villages gifts suggested here are available online and at the Houston outlet of Ten Thousand Villages, located at 2424 Rice Blvd. in Rice Village. The Rice Village store also hosts special events nights from which proceeds are donated to local charitable organizations, which have recently included Bering Omega Community Services. Details: 713/533-1000 • www.villageshouston.org



Holiday Light

Holiday Light

Inspired by the voluptuous swirls of Viennese artist Gustav Klimt, the Klimpt Candleholder is hand-painted with gold and silver decoration. The 8-inch high wooden holder is made by an artisan group in Indonesia, APIKRI (the Indonesian People's Handicraft Foundation). \$24

Star Bright

The Ten Thousand Villages holiday collection for 2007 shimmers with silver and gold treasures. This 5-inch star ornament is hand-beaded and stuffed by a skilled woman's artisan group in India. \$8



Star Bright

Scarf This Up

It takes a special breed of Himalayan goats to provide the material for pashminas, like this striking wool-and-silk scarf. Weaving pashminas is a traditional art that originated in Nepal, and this scarf pro-

duced by Sana Hastakala stays true to that tradition. Sana Hastakala represents approximately 1,000 artisans, most of whom are women, ensuring fair wages and marketing assistance. \$64

Care for Kids

The effect of AIDS on the African continent and other impoverished regions is well known. AIDS will orphan more than 25 million children under the age of 15 by 2010, according to UNICEF calculations.

For less than the cost of three top-shelf martinis, you can arrange for a child who has lost his parents to AIDS to receive nutritious meals for a full month, compliments of the Mennonite Central Committee. \$19.

Barnyard Bliss

Stuffing a cow, a goat, a pig, a sheep, and 18 rabbits into a stocking and hanging it on the mantle of an impoverished family would prove a challenge. But the gift of livestock ensures sustainable nourishment for struggling communities around the world, providing low-cost food for hungry families, as well as a source of income to build safe housing or send children to school. \$330. →

Merry Christmas!

Celebrate the Season!

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Monday, December 24
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Bette Davis was right: "Old age is no place for sissies."

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According to the recently released National Gay & Lesbian Task Force Report on Aging, an estimated 3 million gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender elders are currently living in the United States. By 2030, that number will nearly double.

Fortunately for GLBT Houstonians who are at least 60 years old, there is Seniors Preparing for Rainbow Years, a collaborative program of the Montrose Counseling Center and Legacy Community Health Services. Better known by its apt acronym, the SPRY program is dedicated to "shining the light into the lives of GLBT seniors for them to be able to experience prideful, bold, and bright rainbow years."

Offering individual support groups for men and women, as well as a co-ed group, SPRY outreach workers also provide valuable information to health-care providers about the sometimes-special needs of GLBT seniors and educate retirement

communities and assisted-living facilities about the likely GLBT seniors in their populations.

But, like everything else of value, maintaining SPRY costs money. Seniors are not charged any out-of-pocket expense to participate in this program, which is largely funded by a grant from the federal government. "We're trying to look for ways to keep the hearts of these programs going," SPRY program director Chris Kerr says.

The group readily welcomes donations made to the counseling center in SPRY's name. Just designate your contribution be earmarked to SPRY, and your gift will help fund peer support, counseling, case management, and psychiatry for SPRY clients.

Details: 713/529-0037 • www.montrosecounselingcenter.org

Healing Arts

This holiday season, StubDog Events, the Houston-based provider of last-minute tickets to select area performances and attractions, is partnering with Children's

Cancer Center to raise money for young artist patients.

Between December 5 and 12, StubDog is donating 100 percent of its profits to the center's Arts in Medicine program. The program provides enjoyable, educational, and artistic opportunities to patients and their families while the children are in the hospital, affiliated with both Texas Children's Hospital and Baylor College of Medicine. Works by these youthful talents



Healing Arts children's painting

include *Ocean Scene* (above), a painting on Styrofoam. You can view additional creations from the Arts in Medicine program at the StubDog website.

Founded last year, StubDog includes philanthropy in its business plan—even at times other than the holidays. A portion of every ticket sold on StubDog.com benefits community organizations.

Details: www.stubdog.com • 866/573-0454. →

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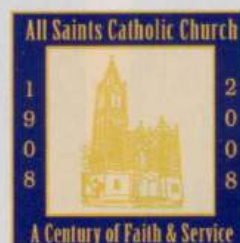
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Jewelry to Live By

The holidays are traditionally a time of joyous celebration with family and friends. But for those whose loved ones are no longer here to share that joy, the season can become a difficult time.

Dennis and Judy Shepard, whose son Matthew's death in 1998 shed unprecedented light on the horror of hate crimes, have found a new, constructive way to cope with their grief during the holidays.

They are encouraging shoppers to buy the Erase Hate pendant created in their son's memory and honor. It is an attractive titanium circle that swings from an adjustable leather cord necklace and is stamped with the message "Understanding. Compassion. Acceptance." Even more attractive is the fact that 100 percent of net proceeds from the necklace sales support the Matthew Shepard Foundation.

"Wearing the Erase Hate pendant is a great way for people to express how they feel and promote the values of understanding, compassion, and acceptance that were so important to Matthew," says Judy Shepard, who is executive director of the foundation. Prominent celebrities, including Cyndi Lauper, Peter Paige, T.R.



Judy Shepard (r) and Lily Tomlin at the Matthew Shepard Foundation Honors in Los Angeles in October. *INSET: the Erase Hate pendant*

Knight, and Judith Light have already been spotted wearing the pendants.

Udi Behr, creative director of Love & Pride, the first high-end jewelry collection created for the GLBT market, designed the Erase Hate pendant. His goal is to sell one million in five years, generating significant funding to help the Shepards promote their message through education, outreach, and advocacy. \$59. Details: www.loveandpride.com • www.mathewshepard.org.

True Hilarity

Do you believe in "America's true values of openness, fairness, and compassion" and "participating in an effective government is the best way to be mutually responsible for our community"?

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Ben Cohen of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream fame started TrueMajority to monitor federal accountability based on the principles of peace, justice, and sustainability. Its members number at 500,000, making the online group a powerful force in the capital. When you sign up, the group sends out a short e-mail alert that explains the situation, so you can voice your opinion to the powers that be without ever having to leave the comfort of your own mouse.

Details: www.truemajority.com. →

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A Little Holiday Help

Twice a year, at Thanksgiving and Easter, PWA-Holiday Charities donates a supply of Kroger gift cards to AIDS Foundation



Several PWA-Holiday Charities members recently presented AIDS Foundation Houston staff with the latest batch of holiday gift cards: (from left) Jerry Morales, Sylvester Dove, David Adams, John Szewczyk, Vera Johnson of AFH, Gerry Cantu, Daniel White-Brown, and Gary Grier of AFH.

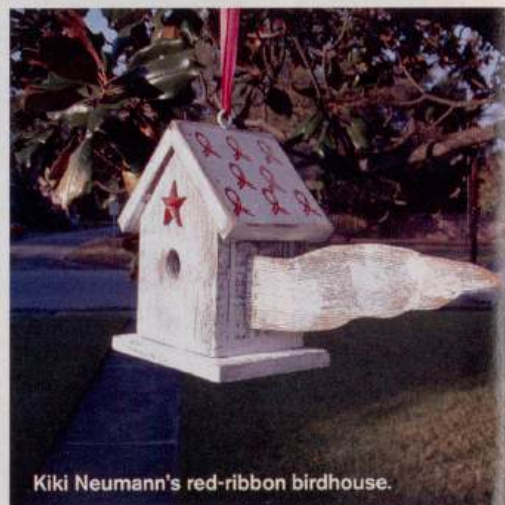
Houston to present to clients of its Stone Soup Pantry. Each \$15 card enables a client to buy something extra—perhaps

the ingredients for a special holiday meal. To raise the \$45,000 to \$50,000 required to purchase all the gift cards needed, and to maintain other programs that serve people living with AIDS, PWA-Holiday Charities presents two major annual benefit events, a Valentine's show in February and a Halloween show in October,

and other fundraisers throughout the year. The group, founded by the late, great Lady Victoria Lust and a community mainstay since the early years of the AIDS crisis, also seeks additional donations to help it continue Lady Victoria's legacy of service ("Share the Wealth," December 2004 *OutSmart*). "We have a lot of new members who have a lot of energy and new ideas," PWA-Holiday Charities chairman John Szewczyk says. "The heart is

still there and it is as strong as ever." Details: www.myspace.com/pwaholidaycharities, pwahc@yahoo.com.

For More Than the Birds



Kiki Neumann's red-ribbon birdhouse.

Kiki Neumann, one of our favorite local artisans, crafted this fanciful birdhouse, which will be auctioned during the holiday market at The Artful Corner (3423 White Oak, 713/426-4ART). All proceeds from the raffle—of Neumann's birdhouse as well as artwork donated by other featured artists—will benefit AIDS Foundation Houston. Artful Corner owner Margarete Sanchez-Ripps also encourages browsers and shoppers at the December 7-9 →

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Share the Wealth continued from page 56

holiday market to bring new, unwrapped toys for the Red Ribbon Toy Drive, the annual holiday program of the AIDS Foundation.

WANTED: Money and Elbow Grease

The following groups have been chosen as OutSmart's recommended Share the Wealth organizations for 2007, based upon their demonstrated contribution to Houston's GLBT community. All of these groups are worthy of a little extra holiday cheer.

Perhaps the wealth you wish to share is more voluntary in nature. All of these agencies and groups eagerly welcome new participation.

For more recommendations, review our previous December-issue Share the Wealth lists at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

Health & Wellness

AIDS Coalition of Coastal Texas
 • www.aidscoalitionofcoastaltxinc.com
AIDS Foundation Houston
 • www.aidshep.org
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 • www.legacycommunityhealth.org
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 • www.lesbianhealthinitiative.org
Planned Parenthood of Houston & Southeast Texas
 • www.pphouston.org
PWA-Holiday Charities
 • pwahc@yahoo.com
Montrose Counseling Center
 • www.montrosecounselingcenter.org

Political

Houston Equal Rights Alliance
 • www.hera.org
Houston GLBT Political Caucus
 • www.hglbtpc.org
Human Rights Campaign Houston
 • www.hrchouston.org

Philanthropic Social Groups

Bayou City Boys Club
 • www.bcbc.info
Bunnies on the Bayou
 • www.bunnies.org
Colt 45's Houston
 • www.colt45s.org
Empire of the Royal Sovereign Imperial Court of the Single Star
 • www.ersicss.org
Houston Black Tie Dinner
 • www.houstonblacktiedinner.org
Imperial Court of Houston
 • www.spacecityempire.org

Kindred Spirits Reunion Celebration

• www.kindredspirits-houston.org
Krewe of Olympus
 • www.mardigrastexas.com
Texas Gay Rodeo Association
 • www.tgra.org

Community & Support

Gay Lesbian Switchboard Houston
 • www.gayswitchboardhouston.org
Gay and Lesbian Latin Organization
 • www.gallo.org
HATCH
 • www.hatchyouth.org
Houston Gay & Lesbian Parents
 • www.hglp.org
Houston GLBT Community Center
 • www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org
Houston Transgender Unity Committee
 • www.houstontransgenderunity.org
PFLAG Houston
 • www.pflaghouston.org
Lambda Gay and Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous
 • www.lambdahouston.org
The Men's Gathering of Houston
 • tmghoustontexas@gmail.com
Pride Houston
 • www.pridehouston.org

Just Fun

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 • www.houstonprideband.org
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 • www.teamhouston.org



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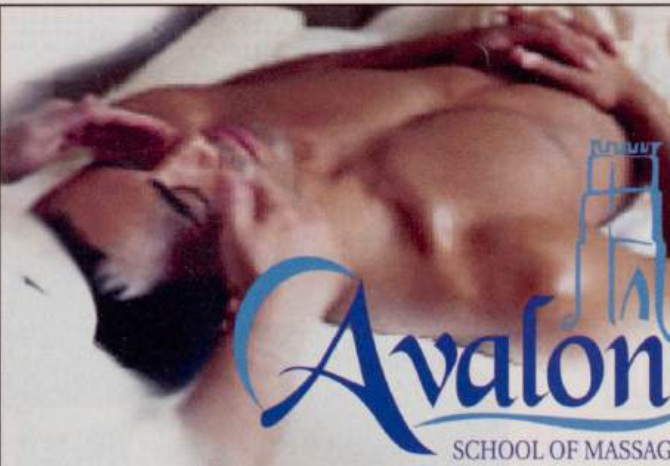
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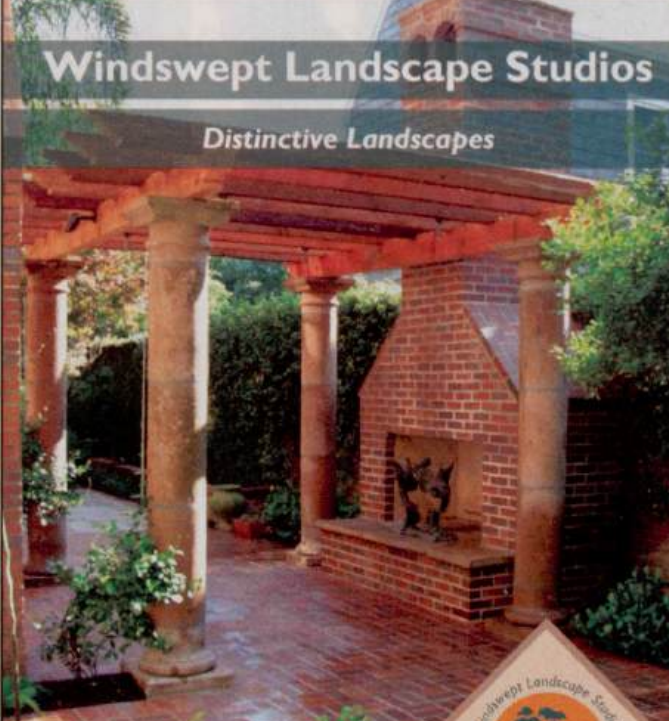
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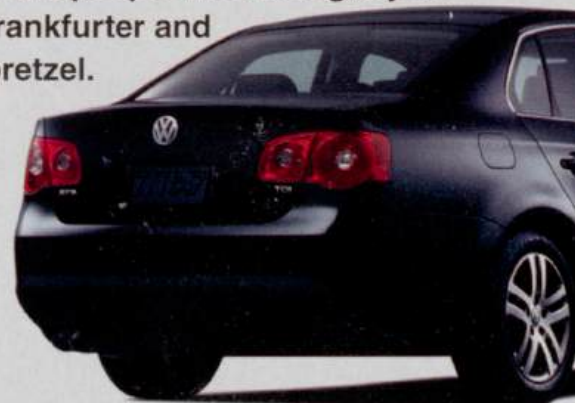
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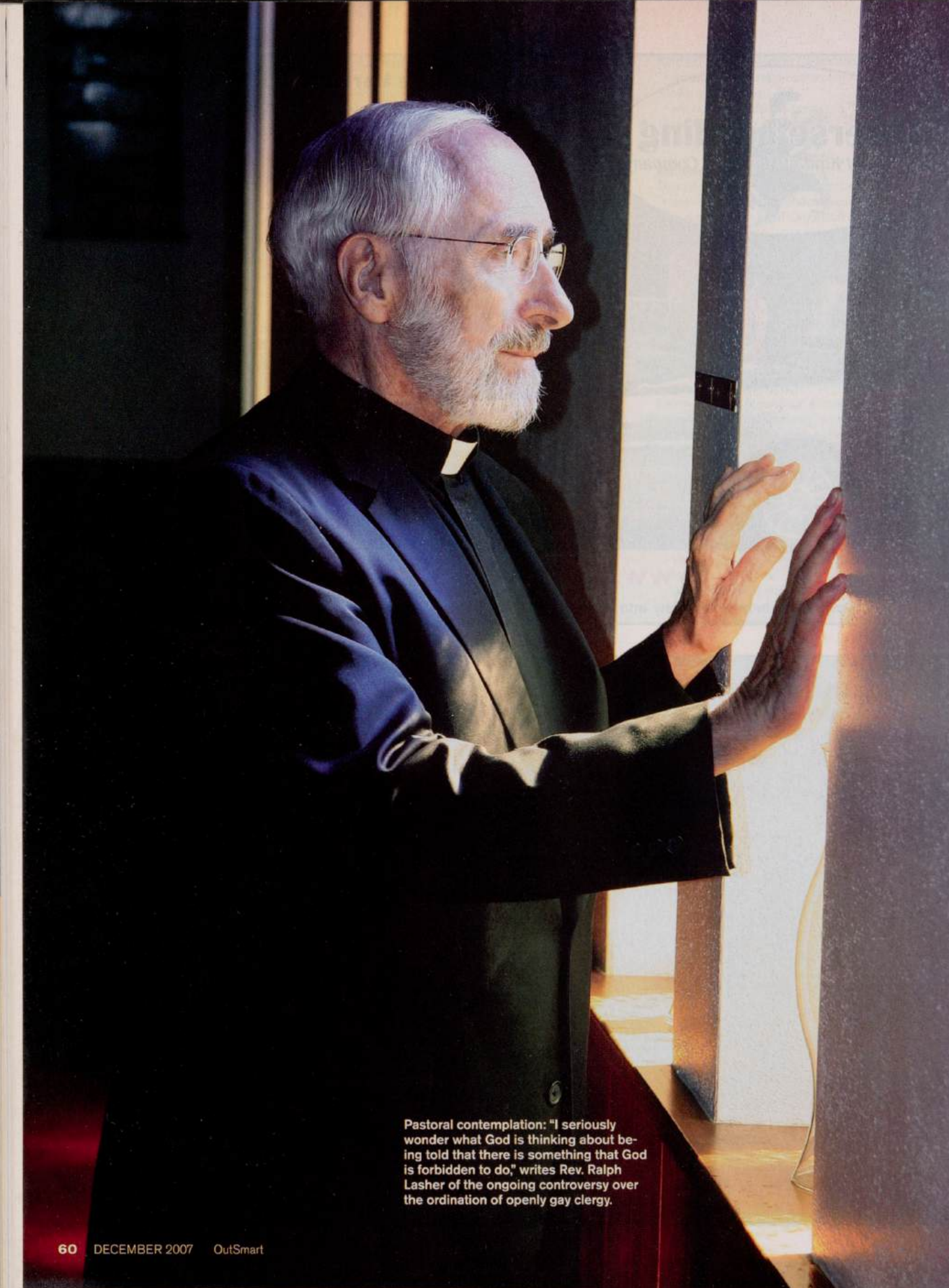


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Debating the Mind of God

One of the senior clergy in the community provides a unique pastoral perspective on the ongoing turmoil in the Episcopal Church, one that resonates in churches, synagogues, mosques, and other houses of faith across the country

by Rev. Ralph Lasher

Photo by John Conroy

Many churches today are suffering fractures and threatened schisms because some among their numbers believe that homosexuality is a sin, and others believe that homosexuality is a normal variant in human sexuality. No doubt with an eye to the 2008 Lambeth Conference, a meeting of the world's Anglican bishops, a volume of essays by nine Cambridge theologians has been published in the UK. *An Acceptable Sacrifice? Homosexuality and the Church* (SPCK Publishing, 2007) has generally been greeted with kudos. John Habgood, former Archbishop of York, writes in his review for the *Times Literary Supplement*, "While there are texts which might at first sight give the claim [of homosexuality as a sin] some credibility, it is clear from reading them in context that they are not actually answering the kind of questions which today's protagonists on both sides want to ask. ... To extract a number of texts purporting to be about homosexuality, and to condemn a whole group of people for a personality trait which is not of their mak-

ing, may look at first sight like faithfulness to the biblical text. In reality it is not to treat the Bible seriously, through failing to take account of its ultimate message about the sovereignty of love and the process by which this came to be."

Judging from the reviews, these Cambridge theologians reasonably and successfully present a case that requires a thinking person to conclude that homosexuality is not incompatible with Christian teachings. Nonetheless they are being criticized in some quarters for not stating this unequivocally, but rather allowing readers to draw their own conclusions. Perhaps the contributors, in their presentations of fact and logic, failed to take a hard stance, but Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, writing in the Foreword, has no such reserve:

"No. It is not acceptable for us to discriminate against our brothers and sisters on the basis of sexual orientation, just as it was not acceptable for discrimination to exist on the basis of skin colour under Apartheid."

At the crux of this struggle of dual sexuality versus a continuum of sexuality

lies hermeneutics, the study and application of theories of literary interpretation (most frequently the Bible). The Bible, it seems, like statistics, can be made to say anything. Both right thinkers and wrong thinkers struggle with various translations of contemporary and archaic words, tossing out a phrase here and a phrase there, forcing the text to say whatever will support their positions.

Most scholars and theologians, both past and present, would likely find this exercise quite beside the point. It has been their contention that the Bible was never intended to be literally accepted, but rather is an engaging blend of literature and history—wisdom stories for teaching values and the inspirational story of a people's developing sense of God. In a 1993 interview with the *Arizona Daily Star*, Reform Rabbi Joseph Weizenbaum of Tucson's Temple Emanu-El stated, "All books, including the Bible, are written in a time-place situation. If we took the Bible literally, we would be dropping stones on bad kids and chopping off arms and legs. Imagine cooking an animal in your back yard to please God!" →

Pastoral contemplation: "I seriously wonder what God is thinking about being told that there is something that God is forbidden to do," writes Rev. Ralph Lasher of the ongoing controversy over the ordination of openly gay clergy.



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Debating the Mind of God

continued from previous page

Setting aside the biblical argument altogether, Rev. Ralph Lasher of Houston's Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church turns to Episcopal Church doctrine and practice to provide a unique perspective on the attempts of some within the Episcopal Church who seek to outlaw homosexual clergy.

I was baptized, confirmed, and ordained first as a deacon and later as a priest in the Episcopal Church. I have many fond memories of the Episcopal Church, but sometimes wonder about what appears to be happening in both the Episcopal Church and in its spiritual parent, the Anglican Communion. Large numbers of clergy and laity in both are seriously pondering legislation, which in effect would prohibit God from taking certain specific actions. To those of us who have been accustomed to thinking of God as "all powerful" and "omnipotent," this legislation appears to be nothing short of rebellion against God.

What are these specific actions God would be prohibited from taking?

The Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church states that a bishop who is going to ordain someone as a priest is required to ask that person, "Do you believe that you are truly called by God and his Church to this priesthood?" The candidate for ordination replies, "I believe I am so called." To me this is a very clear statement that the Episcopal Church believes that God "calls" persons to the ordained priesthood.

The Book of Common Prayer also states that when someone is being ordained as a bishop, the presiding bishop is required to ask the bishop elect, "Are you persuaded that God has called you to the office of bishop?" The bishop-elect replies, "I am so persuaded." In a prayer just after the bishops present have laid their hands on the head of the bishop-elect, the presiding bishop prays, "To you, O Father, all hearts are open; fill, we pray, the heart of this your servant whom you have chosen to be a Bishop in your Church, with such love of you and all the people..." It could not be any clearer that the Episcopal Church believes that God has called this person to the office of bishop.

For as long as I've known, the official belief in both the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion has been that God is allowed to call persons to be ordained as deacons, priests, and bishops. When I was ordained as a deacon and priest in 1953, both times I stated that I believed that God had called me to those positions as an ordained minister. I still



Rev. Gene Robinson, the openly gay priest whose ordination as bishop of the New Hampshire diocese led to the latest controversy in the Episcopal denomination, posed at the national conference of Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays in October with Sue Null (l), the former Houston resident who now lives in North Carolina with her husband, Jim Null. We interviewed the activist couple for our April 2007 issue ("Null Void") as they prepared to leave Houston.

believe that God has called me.

In 2007, many clergy (including deacons, priests, and bishops) and laity in both the Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion are talking about passing church laws stating that God is not allowed to call a homosexual to be ordained as a deacon, priest, or bishop. Some geo-

GOTTA HAVE FAITH

These resources provide information on the policies of many faith traditions toward GLBT individuals as well as clergy:

- **Faith in America**, which works for "the emancipation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people from bigotry disguised as religious truth." The website provides an extensive list of reading materials. www.faithinamerica.info
- **Human Rights Campaign Religion and Faith Program**. www.hrc.org
- **The Institute for Welcoming Resources**, a program of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. www.welcomingresources.org
- **Soulforce**, the Austin-based organization that seeks "freedom for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people from religious and political oppression through the practice of relentless nonviolent resistance." www.soulforce.org

graphical segments of both the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion are threatening to secede from these denominations and form new ones in which God is not allowed to call homosexuals.

In September, the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church met in New Orleans to discuss this issue. This meeting was also attended by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, who urged the American bishops to take action to halt the ordination of gays as bishops. He called for this action to prevent a split in the Anglican Communion. This split has been rumored ever since the Episcopal Church ordained Gene Robinson four years ago as a bishop. Robinson is openly gay and lives in a relationship with another man.

After they had met for six days to discuss this matter, the American bishops voted in effect that they would no longer approve anyone who had been elected a bishop by a diocese. Since the Episcopal Church by its own Book of Common Prayer has for centuries clearly stated a belief that God calls persons to the ordained ministry as deacons, priests, and bishops, their action, in effect, says that God is forbidden to call any homosexual to be ordained as a deacon, priest, or bishop. I seriously wonder what God is thinking about being told that there is something that God is forbidden to do.

About four years ago, Fox News interviewed me regarding my thoughts concerning the pending ordination of Gene Robinson as the bishop of New Hampshire. I concluded that interview by saying truthfully that I knew for a fact that Gene Robinson was not the first gay bishop in the Episcopal Church because I had been personal friends of four gay Episcopal bishops.

Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church is a United Church of Christ (UCC) congregation. Since 1980, the UCC has been welcoming the ordination of gay men and lesbian women as a matter of church policy, as well as performing commitment ceremonies. Previously an assistant pastor at Bethel Church, Rev. Lasher was recently appointed interim pastor following the resignation of longtime minister Rev. Walter McFadden. Lasher has also previously served on the staff of Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church and was one of the first directors of Montrose Clinic (now Legacy Community Health Services). At Bethel, he presides over the Saturday-evening bilingual worship service. His article for the premiere issue of OutSmart, "In God's Name—Gays, Lesbians, and the Bible," appears in Our Lives and Times, the 10th-anniversary commemorative book published by the magazine in 2004. ■

Searching For The Perfect Party Partner?

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When Insurance Is Not Enough

A controversial new model in medical private practice called concierge care, which places an additional fee on patients, arrives in Houston. One popular local physician who treats a number of individuals in the community has signed on

News Analysis by Rich Arenschioldt

Are you seeking a health plan that offers same-day medical appointments, comprehensive physical examinations, extended-length office visits, and immediate access to your favorite physician? All this can be yours, provided you have health insurance and \$1,500 for an annual fee, if you have been a patient of some local physicians, including one prominent physician who serves the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community.

"Concierge care," a fairly new model for private medical practices in which patients pay an additional out-of-pocket fee in order to retain access, has recently confronted some patients in the community. In a letter that patients of Shannon Schrader, M.D., received in August, Schrader, one of the best-known and admired HIV specialists in Houston, announced that he had signed onto a concierge-care program. "Providing health care that is focused on you, and fits within the demands of your busy life, is my goal," Schrader wrote in the letter. "In order to have the time required to provide this level of personalized care, I will need to limit the size of my practice." The benefits to patients,

the letter continued, include "same or next day appointments that start on time and last as long as needed" and the ability "to reach me directly 24 hours a day, seven days a week via my cell phone or pager."

The "concierge care" concept was devised in 1996 by a group of internists in Seattle to meet the needs of wealthy patients seeking the best in specialized medical services. Since then an increasing number of physicians across the nation have been converting to this model. In transitioning his practice, which took effect in mid-November, Schrader is working with an industry leader, Boca Raton, Florida-based MDVIP.

Schrader is not the only Houston-area physician to adopt the concierge-care model. In a front-page September 2 article, the *Houston Chronicle* reported on several other local doctors who have made or are considering the same move. "[Nationwide] the number of concierge doctors still is small—probably about 300, an amount a federal study found too tiny to worry about yet—but the movement is slowly building momentum," *Chronicle* reporter Todd Ackerman wrote. "Initially concentrated on the coasts, it has infiltrated a majority of states."

Still, the concierge-care trend has come under Congressional scrutiny. "Concierge care is like a country club for the rich," California representative Pete Stark said at a 2004 congressional hearing into the practice. "The danger is that if a large number of doctors choose to open up these types of practices, the health-care system will become even more inequitable than it is today."

As costs associated with maintaining a medical practice continue to increase and reimbursements from public and private insurers decrease, physicians have been increasingly vocal about how unprofitable the medical profession has become.

"This concept has been around for a while, and depending on your perspective, it makes a great deal of sense," says Thomas Giordano, M.D., the medical director of Thomas Street Health Center and an assistant professor at Baylor School of Medicine. "From the point of view of the individual patient who's able to enroll, it's a good thing. Patients who can pay receive care that is much more attentive to the niceties of medicine. However, from a societal perspective it's not. It exposes a significant weakness →

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When Insurance Is Not Enough

continued from page 64

within the current system."

Giordano, who practices in the public health-care system, concurs with many other providers who fault the inherently inequitable health-care delivery system in this country. "Our entire health-care system is discriminatory based on resources," he says. "Those with more money get better health care. This isn't specific to HIV. It occurs throughout medicine."

MDVIP, which works with 190 physicians located in 19 states and Washington, D.C., has capitalized on this structural flaw within American health care by offering its services to accomplished but weary practitioners. The firm promises prospective physicians "financial and professional freedom," according to company marketing materials. At the same time, the MDVIP model guarantees patients "individualized service with a focus on wellness and preventive care."

In addition to Schrader, the MDVIP website lists two other affiliated physicians in the Houston area: John A. Burpeau, M.D., and William A. Lent, M.D. (As the *Chronicle* reported in September, Burpeau explained at a meeting of his patients about his switch to concierge-care, "Under managed care, medical practice is now run like a mill. I'm having to see more and more patients and spend less and less time with them.")

OutSmart attempted to obtain an interview with Schrader and offered him opportunities to respond to questions. He declined to comment through an MDVIP representative but indicated that he will consent to an interview with the magazine in the future.

In a recent interview on the CNBC network, Darin Englehardt, MDVIP president, described services that participating physicians provide as "comprehensive preventive care much akin to what you would find in an executive physical program." He likened doctors to "wellness coaches as opposed to just treaters of illness."

This medical model sounds perfect if one is treating retired corporate executives in Palm Beach, but does it translate well to individuals negotiating HIV disease? According to a brief statement issued on Schrader's behalf by MDVIP, "Dr. Schrader's new practice will focus on prevention and early detection which will provide better results and improved outcomes to the healthcare system by reducing hospitalizations and lengths of stay."

This boilerplate language misses the mark. Long-established standards of care for HIV already focus on close virologic, immunologic, and systemic monitoring. It

is unclear what will be discovered by "early detection" since many patients are already HIV-positive. Major tenets of wellness and HIV haven't changed since the dawn of effective treatment: adherence to an effective medication regimen, regular monitoring and doctor visits, avoidance of activities that harm the immune system, and stress management. HIV-positive patients don't need a wellness coach. They need more physicians who are adept at managing HIV and its constellation of serious medical complications.

No one can fault Schrader for deciding to refocus his practice after 15 years of compassionate GLBT-friendly care that, unlike most doctors, also includes a large cadre of transgender patients, concur the numerous observers contacted for this article. As the first HIV practitioner in the community to make a move to a concierge-care model, Schrader is in the unenviable position of serving as a lightning rod for the larger discussion of how health care is delivered. Physicians certainly have the right to determine what kind of practice they want to operate, just as any business owner does. However, when a DeBakey-like figure suddenly makes such a dramatic change, the frailties of our current HIV treatment infrastructure are glaringly exposed.

Despite Houston's status as a world-class medical center, there are currently only about a dozen highly experienced local

HIV doctors. Of these, only a handful has provided treatment over the last decade, experience that is critical when treating patients with AIDS.

This limited pool of clinicians is of specific concern to Paul Simmons, RN, the executive director of the Center for AIDS in Houston. In discussing concierge care, Simmons says, "It is very clear that we have a finite number of experienced HIV practitioners in Houston. If for any reason we lose one of them, our medical infrastructure is not set up to absorb that loss well."

He continues, "A potential shortage exists in the private sector. We haven't had a new dedicated HIV private practice open here in quite some time. Also, as a rule, any HIV practice will have a more acute population, many of whom will be accessing a public subsidy resulting in inadequate levels of reimbursement."

"Private practice HIV care is very tough," points out Thomas Street's Giordano. "There aren't a lot of procedures [which generate revenue], and reimbursements for office visits are not good. As a result, these physicians face an economic struggle. I'm not surprised a move [to concierge care] is happening."

This view is shared by Katy Caldwell, the executive director of Legacy Community Health Services. "More and more physicians are doing this," Caldwell says. "It's a national trend. For the last five years, we have seen a significant shrinkage in the industry as providers become less willing to see patients with certain types of [insurance] payors." Commenting on the dearth of new doctors interested in treating HIV, she said, "Lots of experienced physicians are no longer practicing here. There's a lot less brainpower focused on HIV treatment within this community."

As a provider with an emphasis on primary care for the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community, Legacy also deals with specific issues of tolerance as well as knowledge when hiring experience-d, sensitive medical staff. "It's a challenge to recruit physicians who are HIV specialists," Caldwell adds. "Legacy has a diverse patient population with complex medical issues. Some physicians love this type of medicine, but this kind of practice doesn't appeal to everyone."



Systemic problem: "From the point of view of the individual patient who's able enroll it's a good thing," Dr. Thomas Giordano of Thomas Street Health Center says of the concierge-care model. "However, from a societal perspective it's not. It exposes a significant weakness within the current system."

Indeed, one local physician, who requested anonymity, explains that fewer medical-school students in the United States are pursuing HIV care than in the past, further reducing the number of skilled doctors working in the field.

The GLBT community once again finds itself in the middle of a classic clash between care and resources. HIV incidence continues to increase, infected individuals have more medical complications associated with their increased longevity, and fewer qualified doctors are available to address their needs.

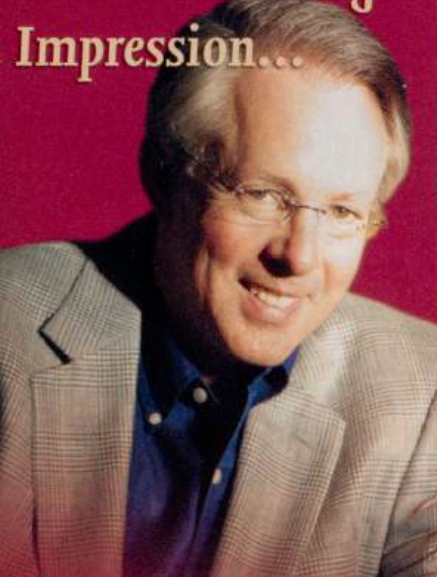
What does the arrival of the concierge-care model portend for medical care here? Is there a future crisis looming for HIV-oriented private practice? Will patients be shifted to entirely different modes of medical care? Due to the dynamic nature of HIV disease, patients may be required to engage a variety of HIV specialists over time, medical observers say. "At different stages of HIV disease, patients may need to see physicians with specific expertise," Legacy's Caldwell says. "This further limits the choices patients have."

"There's a paradox here," Simmons of the Center for AIDS says. "For individuals who receive their care through the public sector, those resources seem adequate. These institutions are staffed by medical personnel from universities, providing some of the best physicians in this community." Giordano of Thomas Street, which is part →



Trend watcher: "More and more physicians are doing this [adopting the concierge-care model]," Legacy Community Health Services executive director Katy Caldwell says, adding, "Lots of experienced physicians are no longer practicing here. There's a lot less brainpower focused of HIV treatment within this community."

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When Insurance Is Not Enough

continued from previous page

of the Harris County Hospital District, agrees. "Practitioners at publicly funded facilities like Thomas Street can match those of any private practice in the country."

The primary difference between public and private systems is not the quality of medical expertise that a patient obtains, but the manner and timeliness in which that care is delivered. "When patients have resources, the care they receive is delivered in a much more efficient manner," Giordano says. "These patients with private insurance have greater access to specialists and needed procedures."

Insured or not, more than 5,000 of Schrader's patients, many of whom do not have HIV, are now looking for another physician. One of those patients, Irma Copeland, acutely feels Schrader's departure. The 52-year-old mother of three discovered she was HIV positive in 1996 and has seen Schrader since 2001.

"I will never forget my first meeting with Shannon," Copeland says. "I knew right away that he was completely awesome. He answered every question I had, and I never felt rushed during my appointments. Shannon was so much more than a doctor. He became a friend, someone who always had the time to talk with me. Since Shannon is so knowledgeable about HIV, I felt completely comfortable with him."

Copeland, like all patients in the practice, received the August letter notifying her of the impending switch to concierge care. "I was completely lost, totally devastated," she says. "I believed that I was going to lose my access to medical care because I didn't have the money that was required."

Like many patients in the practice, Copeland is concerned about finding a new medical provider. "I was contacted by a representative from MDVIP who suggested another doctor, one I had moved from to see Shannon. I'm not sure what happens now. Being over 50 and having HIV for almost 15 years, it's terrible to start all over again. I have one last appointment coming up. I'll be incredibly sad."

Other patients have opted to stay with Schrader. "I decided to keep seeing him," Jerry Boice, a patient for 14 years, says. "He knows me and my medical history. When I've faced challenging situations, Shannon has always provided excellent care and extensive follow-up."

Boice did not hesitate to make the switch to the MDVIP-administered plan. "I actually signed up during an office visit," Boice

plans to renew annually. "This gives me increased accessibility, makes it easy to get an appointment, and I know Shannon will spend more time with me at each visit," Boice says. In fact, two September meetings originally scheduled at a local hotel for Schrader's patients to learn about the concierge-care plan were canceled when the program was quickly fully subscribed.

The overwhelming consensus from those interviewed for this article is that Schrader's move is regrettable, but necessary. "As the result of Dr. Schrader's generosity and sincere desire to provide care, over time, he bit off more than he could chew," says Simmons of the Center for AIDS. "This made his life and his practice unmanageable. He either had to gain control of his practice or leave medicine," Giordano echoes that sentiment: "I can't fault Shannon for making this decision. He has certainly paid his dues to this community."

Even as Schrader moves his private practice to the concierge-care model, he continues his long-standing voluntary involvement with Legacy Community Health Services (previously known as Montrose Clinic prior to a 2006 merger with the Assistance Fund), seeing patients there one evening per week. "We are thrilled to have Shannon here at Legacy," executive director Caldwell says. "I know the recent decision to change his private practice

HIV Docs Join Legacy Staff

Last month, Legacy Community Health Services announced the addition of two physicians with HIV/AIDS-care experience to its staff:

• **Natalie Vanek, M.D.**, first began working with HIV-positive patients at Thomas Street Health Center while a medical student at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. After graduation, she held two positions at Thomas Street, first under the auspices of the UT Health Science Center-Section of Infectious Diseases (as medical director of UT work there), then the Baylor College of Medicine Section of Infectious Diseases. Vanek, who grew up in Vernon, Texas, had been in private practice since 2003. She completed undergraduate studies at Baylor University in Waco.

• **James Carroll, M.D.**, previously served as staff physician for both the Early Intervention Clinic of the Arc (Association for Retarded Children) in Baton Rouge and the Louisiana State University health-care network. He was also assistant professor of Clinical Medicine-Department of Internal Medicine at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center. The Shreveport, Louisiana, native completed undergraduate studies at Louisiana State School of Medicine, then completed his internship and residency at the university Earl K. Long Medical Center in Baton Rouge.



Health care for all: "Of course we recognize that concierge medicine is not available to everyone, so we look forward to a day when all people receive quality care regardless of their ability to pay," says Joel Ginsburg, executive director of the Gay & Lesbian Medical Association.

insured have a small portal to swim through if needed, and the elite insured can rush down the gangway into waiting lifeboats as the ship hits the iceberg.

Aside from the issue of patient access, The MDVIP model doesn't necessarily fit the diverse needs of patients within an HIV practice. Ballooning baby boomers with routine medical issues, sizable discretionary income, and adequate medical insurance may embrace the concept of concierge care. The increasing number of new and aging HIV-positive individuals with no or limited access to any medical specialized care will not.

Observers outside the GLBT community note their concern about this new movement in American health care. "The dark side of concierge medicine is that every physician dramatically reducing his or her patient load leaves thousands of patients to look for a new primary-care physician," Sandra Carnahan, a South Texas College of Law professor who has written about concierge medicine, told the *Chronicle*. "And they're doing it at a time when primary-care physicians are already in short supply."

The San Francisco-based Gay & Lesbian Medical Association has not yet taken a formal position on concierge care but continues to monitor its spread, says executive director Joel Ginsburg. "GLMA's mission is to make sure that healthcare—wherever and however it is delivered—is competent and respectful," he wrote in an e-mail to *OutSmart*. Of course we recognize that concierge medicine is not available to everyone, so we look forward to a day when all people receive quality care regardless of their ability to pay."

As Houston ponders how HIV care will be delivered in the future and also copes with losing one of its favorite physicians, patient Irma Copeland sums up the views of many. "I have to be strong," she says. "In spite of everything that has happened, I will always remember Shannon as the best doctor I've ever had."

Rich Arenschioldt is an HIV treatment educator who has previously written on HIV/AIDS issues for *OutSmart*. His review of the book *Body Count: Fixing the Blame for the Global AIDS Catastrophe* appeared in our November 2006 issue, and his essay "The HIV Fight Now" appeared in our January 2005 issue.

has been extremely difficult for him."

The classic conundrum in rationing health care is painfully evident. Is it better to provide fewer people exceptional care or to give more individuals adequate care? Most patients would prefer 12 minutes with an insightful physician like Schrader to an hour with a less talented practitioner.

Why are such drastic measures necessary to deliver competent medical care and preserve the sanity and ability of talented but overburdened physicians? With concierge care, a four-tier *Titanic*-style health-care access system is now in place: the uninsured occupy the lowest berths below the waterline, the underinsured exist just above, the



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Play Misty for Us

The Galveston diva celebrates more than two decades of fundraising and entertaining and 50 years of a very glamorous life

by Natasha Avey

Photo by Giselle Monte

It all started over free hot dogs and 10 free-drinks tickets. When you are a young man waiting tables and trying to get by, any bar that offers free food and adult beverages after a long shift is a sure stop. No one, including Rolando Suniga, realized that nearly 25 years of charity work and entertainment would develop from those frequent Sunday-night stops, which actually were an accident in the first place.

Misty Valdez, dubbed "the original Island diva" by friends and fans, is the fabulous creation that evolved from that young man's visits to that bar to quench his thirst and watch drag shows. Misty, Suniga's other, and perhaps better-known, diva name, has been seen performing all over Galveston for almost a quarter of a century. Suniga/Misty celebrates a 50th birthday on December 23. Though she jokes about retirement, Misty shows no sign of stopping her legendary Island shows.

"I got interested in doing drag when I accidentally walked into Robert's Lafitte," Suniga says. "I started with nothing and learned as I went. I was so nervous—I needed all 10 drink tickets to get on stage"

Suniga, who was born and raised in

Galveston, began doing shows as Misty armed with only some fabric and a pair of Dr. Scholl's shoes that he used to fashion a costume. As he performed in the Misty persona, Suniga became more comfortable on stage and perfected his craft. Now Misty needs no drink tickets—nor any introduction, for that matter.

Suniga's reason for taking to the stage derives not just from an obvious love of performing, but also from a desire to raise money for a beloved cause, the AIDS Coalition of Coastal Texas (ACCT), the nonprofit organization in Galveston that provides a host of HIV and AIDS-related services for residents of Galveston as well as Brazoria and Matagorda counties.

Suniga's work with raising money for AIDS care and research began in 1987, when Misty Valdez raised \$387 at a show. Since then, Suniga estimates that he has collected as much as \$15,000 at a single event. Misty holds several fundraising events every year, including her popular benefit tour for ACCT. Earlier in 2007, she celebrated the 20th anniversary of that annual tour, which consists of shows at various Galveston clubs held over six months.

The tour is a highlight of GLBT life on the Island and attracts numerous, prominent divas from Galveston and Houston. At her finale show this year at Undercurrent, the array of guest stars included SoFonda St. John, Serena Sky, Felicity Bliss, Symphony Oz, and Trecenia St. James. The 2008 tour begins in January.

"I have had too many people I love, too many good friends, pass away due to AIDS," Suniga says of Misty's work. "This is my way of keeping their memories alive."

A good friend, who Suniga lovingly refers to as Tina, was the inspiration for the years of charitable work for the AIDS coalition. Tina passed away in 1986, in those early, frightening years of the epidemic. The first charity event presented by Misty Valdez took place in 1987.

Over her years of volunteer work, Misty Valdez has appeared on stage with drag performers from across Texas and the United States. However, her work on the Island is what has made her famous. Misty is arguably the longest-serving drag diva performer in Galveston and without doubt the biggest name. Misty packs the house every Friday night at 3rd Coast Beach →

Hail the queen: "I have had too many people I love, too many good friends, pass away due to AIDS," says Misty Valdez, the Galveston diva and fund-raiser, photographed at Eiband's Luxury Condominiums. "This is my way of keeping their memories alive."

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Play Misty for Us continued from page 70

Bar and every Saturday and Sunday at Robert's Lafitte, the club where she got her start so many years ago.

Even with her prominence, Misty acknowledges her fans, as a gracious star should. "None of my charity work would be possible without the support of the many people who not only donate money, but help make my shows possible," she says.

To state that Misty is a fixture on the Galveston scene seems a bit too obvious. Misty—as well as Suniga, the generous man behind the diva—is a beloved and significant part of GLBT history in Texas. That designation is more accurate and does true justice to a legacy of good work—not to mention countless hours of entertainment. Now, at 50, Misty plans to throw a huge birthday bash, scheduled for December 22, at one of the clubs on the Island. In typical Misty fashion, she plans to make the event an appreciation party for all who have supported her. At press time, Misty hadn't yet determined the precise venue. "I can't decide which club to have it in!" she laments. Misty fans should check her recently launched MySpace blog, at www.myspace.com/theoriginalislanddiva, for updates. (In



Misty forecast: Catch Misty Valdez (shown here and below in performance) every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday night in Galveston. On December 22, Misty presides over her 50th birthday bash.

true diva style, on her blog Misty imparts some tart advice to readers and fans: "I am very friendly and outgoing and also trustworthy and easy to get along with. But never take my kindness for weakness, 'cause my parents did not raise no fool!")

With her 21st benefit tour around the corner, Misty's busy season is almost here. The diva offers to help any club that will let her perform and is interested in raising money for charity. And Misty bestows this piece of guidance to anyone interested in performing for the first time or helping in other ways. No matter how intimidated or scared you may be, the best way to proceed is "to remember the people that motivated you to think about performing in the first place." Remember the Tina in your own life.

"The people I have met over the years and the many people I have been able to honor by doing these shows, makes it all worth it," says Suniga, reflecting on the years in the role of Misty Valdez. "Be yourself and take the criticism that comes with it. When they stop criticizing, then you should worry."

Natasha Avey profiled Sandy Clough and Stephanie McClain, who were honored with the 2007 Humanitarian Award at the Houston Black Tie Dinner last month, in OutSmart's November issue.



EVERYONE KNOWS IT'S MISTY

Misty Valdez performs on Friday, 10:30 p.m. and midnight, at 3rd Coast Beach Bar (Seawall Boulevard at 31st St., 409/765-6911) and on Saturday, 10:30 p.m., and Sunday, 9:30 p.m., at Robert's Lafitte (2501 Avenue Q at 25th St., 409/765-9092). On December 22, she hosts a 50th birthday party. The location had not been determined by press time. For updates, check Misty's MySpace blog, www.myspace.com/theoriginalislanddiva. Misty will also soon announce on her blog the dates and venues for the 2008 AIDS Coalition of Coastal Texas Benefit Tour.

Misty's favorite cause, the AIDS Coalition, is located in downtown Galveston (707 23rd St., 409/763-2437). The website is www.aidscoalitionofcoastaltxinc.com.

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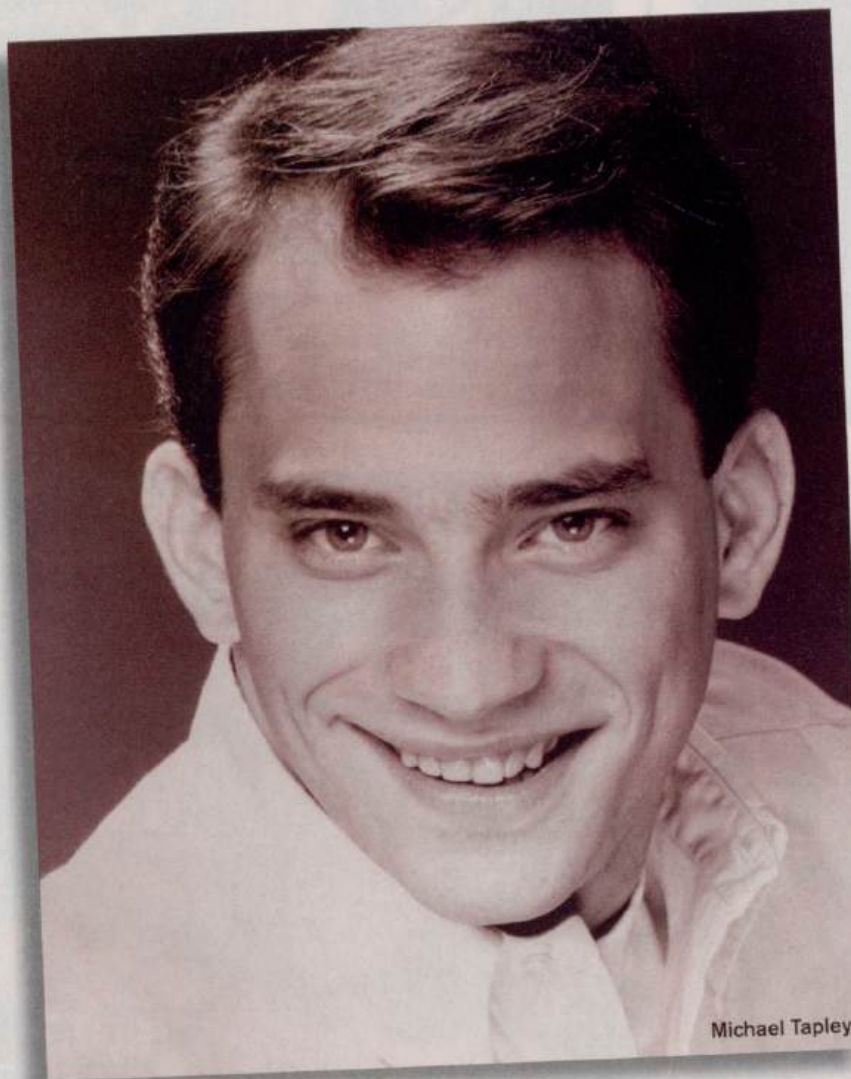


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It's His Wonderful Life

Michael Tapley appears this month in the musical version of the classic movie about Frank Bailey and his guardian angel. The local performer and teacher chats about this holiday show, working with Debbie Reynolds, and his early love for the theater

by Eric A.T. Dieckman



Michael Tapley

"My mother gave me my first record player," recalls Michael Tapley of an early Christmas. "And my grandmother gave me the soundtrack to *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. I was such a Julie Andrews freak that I wore it out. You couldn't even play the record after the first few weeks." These two gifts played a major role in shaping Tapley's life. Then, when he was only four or five, his mother

took him to *The Sound of Music* (more Julie Andrews). "I fell in love with the music and every aspect of it. And then I got the record. To this day, the score can make me cry." The desire to go on stage took root.

Tapley was in his first Theatre Under The Stars (TUTS) show at age 10. At that point, he realized that some people made a living on the stage. "So I decided that that's

what I wanted to do," he says. Tapley has since acquired a lengthy list of credits, which includes performing in, choreographing, or directing numerous productions for TUTS and other theater companies across the country. Tapley has also performed in the national touring companies of *42nd Street*, *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, and *Mame*. He did a stint on Broadway in the 1993 stage version of *The Who's Tommy* as alternate for the title role.

Among the major names with whom Tapley has shared a stage is Debbie Reynolds, with whom he appeared in *Molly Brown*. "She was very generous and loving," he says. "She wanted us to call her Mother, long before her movie of that title came out." At the beginning of the show run, he remembers, Reynolds would hold court with the cast, treating them to fine champagne and stories of the glory days of MGM. "It was fantastic for the first four weeks. And then we started hearing those stories four and five times, so the late nights got shorter and shorter," he says with obvious affection.

For busy entertainers like Tapley, the holiday season can mean time away from family, performing in a show far from home. Fellow theater people can become one's surrogate family. One example of that reality for Tapley took place in New Mexico in the late '80s. A number of theater peers, some with time off between shows, had flown in from around the country to rent a house for the holidays. But the snowfall was particularly heavy that season, and everyone got snowed in for a few days. The group spent that time peacefully sitting about, engaging in arts and crafts. It remains one of Tapley's fondest memories.

Tapley shares another holiday remembrance, this one a heart-warming tidbit about Frank Young, the TUTS founder and show impresario. Young has a seasonal tradition of his own for artists displaced by holiday shows. He treats out-of-towners to →

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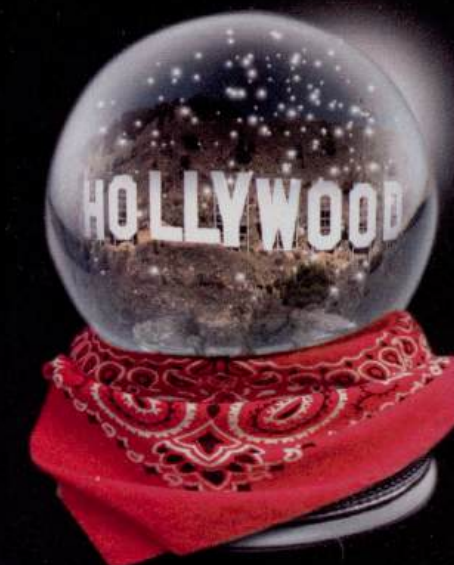
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It's His Wonderful Life

continued from page 74

Thanksgiving dinner, either at a restaurant or in his own home. "It's called the orphans' supper," Tapley says. "I've spent many a Thanksgiving with Frank."

For some, spending so much time on the road can take a toll on relationships. When asked if he is single, Tapley promptly answers, "Yes!" He discloses that he is currently in the market for a boyfriend. (So, get those tickets and backstage passes, fellas!)

Tapley was drawn to *A Wonderful Life*, in which he can be seen this month at the Hobby Center, knowing that the classic story of Frank Bailey would be popular holiday fare. The stage musical is of course an adaptation of *It's a Wonderful Life*, the 1946 Frank Capra classic that starred Jimmy Stewart as Bailey and Donna Reed as his radiant wife, Mary. Performing in a show about a man who learns what the world would be like had he not been born can make a person wistful about his own existence, Tapley (who plays Bert, the cab driver, in the show) admits. How might the world be different if Michael Tapley were never a part of it? "There'd be some kids out there who wouldn't know how to tap dance," muses Tapley, who teaches dance at the Academy at the TUTS Humphreys School of Musical Theatre. He is also artistic director for the annual TUTS Tommy Tune Awards, which recognize excellence in area high-school theater productions. Imparting his love of theater and his talents over the years, Tapley has seen some of his students graduate to performing on Broadway. "It's really gratifying."

Perhaps that's what keeps him in theater. After having surgery done on both feet, Tapley doesn't dance as much as he once did. But as he explains, "Once you're in it, it never leaves you."

Eric A.T. Dieckman wrote about his shaping-up experience at Fitness Exchange (now Crew Health & Fitness) in the October OutSmart.

Wonderful, Wonderful

The Theatre Under The Stars production of *A Wonderful Life*, the musical version of *It's a Wonderful Life* opens on December 11 at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. This Texas premiere of the 1986 musical by prolific composer Joe Raposo, whose work enriched several PBS children's programs, including *Sesame Street* (two memorable numbers: "Bein' Green" and "Sing"), and lyricist Sheldon Harnick (*Fiddler on the Roof*, *Fiorello!*) runs through December 23. Tickets: 713/558-8887, www.tuts.com.

The Out @ TUTS night for GLBT musical-theater fans is December 13. *OutSmart* is Out @ TUTS media sponsor.

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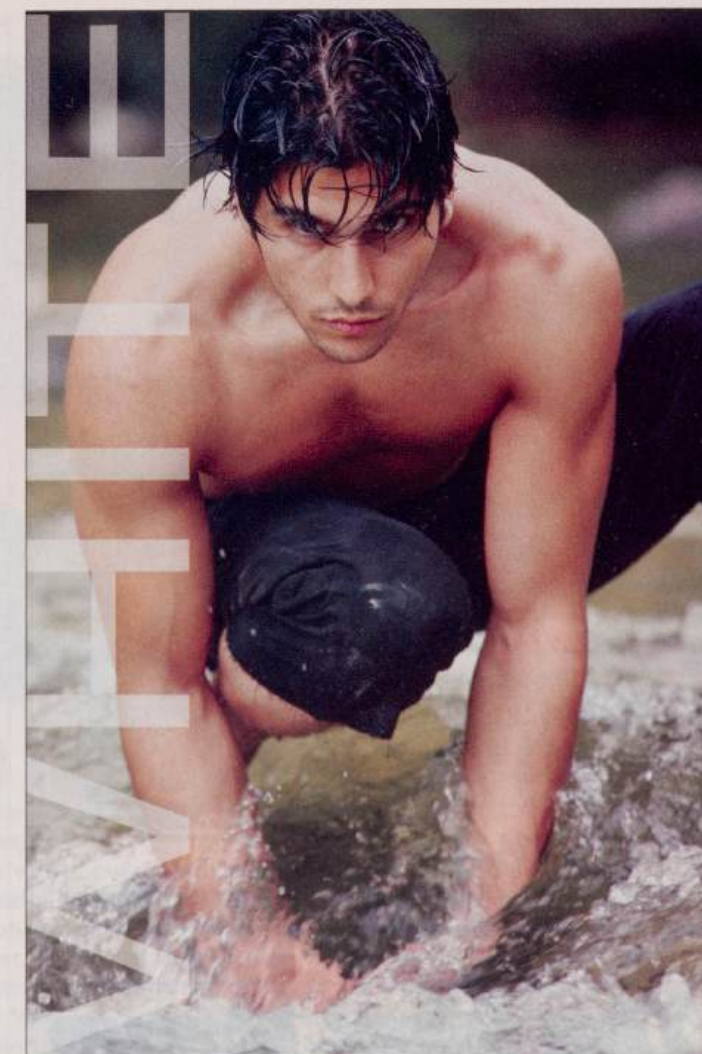


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Rosie O'Donnell

(actor, *Nip/Tuck*, and comedian)

(*Entertainment Weekly*, 11/16/07, Jennifer Armstrong)

Re: O'Donnell's sympathy for Britney Spears.

I want her to come live with me, but I have to stop saying that; I'm a 45-year-old lesbian.

Chaka Khan

(singer)

(*Out*, 12/07, Naomi Krochmal)

In September [Chaka Khan] admitted on the air, almost offhandedly, to New York DJ Wendy Williams that she'd had lesbian relationships during her early career. "All little girls and all little boys experiment," she says plainly.

Khan, 54, says that, after a lifetime of trying to unlearn Catholic repression, sex is "not a real big thing" for her. "If men could be more like women, I would definitely be more interested in them. A lot of men are denying their feminine side, which I think is their loss. When a woman meets a man who understands her, who gets her because he feels it too—I can't think of anything more beautiful than that."

Justin Timberlake

(singer)

5 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

(*The Advocate*, 12/24/02, Larry Flick)

Larry Flick: What did you think when you found out [that one of your best friends was gay]?

Justin Timberlake: I always knew. It just took him a while to get the courage up to tell me. When he did, I told him that it didn't matter. It didn't change the fact that he was my friend. I wasn't thinking that he wanted to be more than my friend, and he wasn't.

It's funny, men are taught by TV and other types of media to exploit women—to look at them as sex objects. Men are taught to see anything on the opposite side of themselves as something sexual, and I guess that includes gay men. It's crazy. But I think that's why there's sometimes tension between straight and gay men. We've been taught to be predators, and straight men don't always know what to do with the idea of another man as something to be pursued or exploited sexually.

Margaret Mead

DECEMBER 16, 1901

(Today's Out Look Calendar)

Anthropologist and bisexual Margaret Mead was born on this date. She once declared her belief that "extreme heterosexuality is a perversion."

Larry the Cable Guy

(comedian)

(*Vanity Fair*, 12/07, George Wayne)

George Wayne: Well, among your greatest fans are the Bears of America.

Larry the Cable Guy (Dan Whitney): Oh yeah? Yeah, the Bears—homosexuals who worship and fetishize big, burly, hairy blue-collar guys like you who love wearing cutoff flannel shirts.

Too bad I'm married and off the market.



Queer Quotes

Compiled by Blase DiStefano



Parker (seen here in a publicity shot from Showtime's *Weeds*): Is she a freak?

Mary-Louise Parker

(actor, *Boys on the Side*, *Angels in America*, *Weeds*)

(*Out*, 12/07, Bill Keith)

When the actor is forced to generalize about why she connects with gay audiences—and gay writers and directors—so well, she offers some insight: "I've always felt like one of those people who is a little to the left of the dial. And I never felt like I fit in until I got to drama school with other kids who were the freaks of their towns, searching for something else because they didn't fit in with the norm. That was me."



Portia de Rossi (I, pictured here with Joely Richardson in FX's *Nip/Tuck*): Will she be typecast as a lesbian?

Portia de Rossi

(actor, *Ally McBeal*, *Arrested Development*, and Ellen DeGeneres' girlfriend of three years)

(*Entertainment Weekly*, 11/9/07, Henry Goldblatt)

The beginning of my career was about constructing this actress named 'Portia' who looked a certain way," explains de Rossi.... "But people really celebrate honesty. And the decision I made to be very public [about my lesbianism] was a decision to choose love over anything else—over my career, over public opinion, over what my family thought."

...She recently turned down lead parts on two new network series in favor of an arc on the FX plastic-surgery drama *Nip/Tuck*.... [She] appears as Olivia—an acupuncturist and mother of an 18-year-old hellion of a daughter—who is romantically involved with Joely Richardson's Julia. It's her first onscreen gay role.

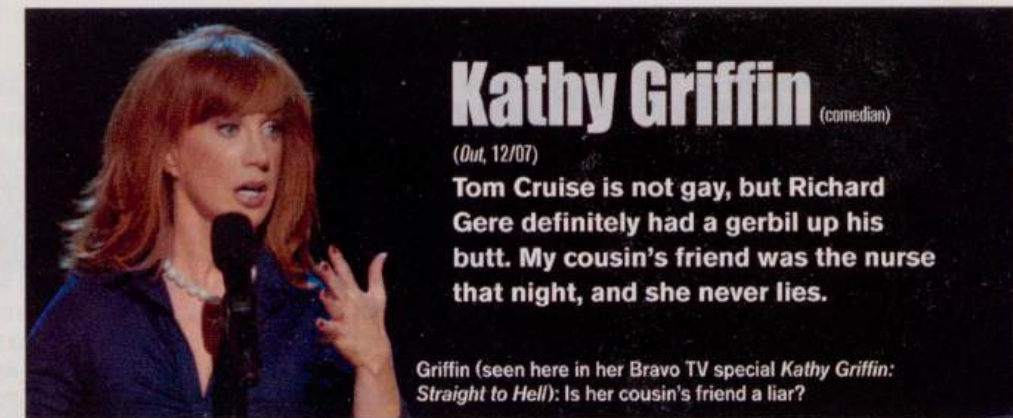
"I had a conversation with Ellen, who was 100 percent behind me playing this role, asking her, 'What if I get typecast as a lesbian?' She said, 'So what?' And I thought, 'Yeah, it has to be so what.'"

Ellen DeGeneres & Portia de Rossi

(*TV Guide*, 11/5/07)

Re: One of "TV's Top Ten Power Couples."

"Ellen and Portia aren't just Hollywood's token lesbian power couple. They shatter all stereotypes," says Tom O'Neil, columnist for *theenvelope.com*, a Hollywood news site. "A few years ago, it would've been unimaginable to think that a lesbian would be the only Hollywood star entrusted to host the Oscars, Emmys, and Grammys, but Ellen's been ringmaster at all three. Portia's a proven talent in her own right, not a lesbian trophy wife."



Kathy Griffin

(comedian)

(*Out*, 12/07)

Tom Cruise is not gay, but Richard Gere definitely had a gerbil up his butt. My cousin's friend was the nurse that night, and she never lies.

Griffin (seen here in her Bravo TV special *Kathy Griffin: Straight to Hell*): Is her cousin's friend a liar?

HIGH HAIR

'Hairspray' still holds up after all these years

It was a simpler time, when pregnant women smoked cigarettes, inappropriate hair height was a threat to decency, and "nice girls" didn't swim in integrated pools.

Such was the Baltimore where quirky film auteur John Waters came of age in the 1960s. In 1988, Waters' Kennedy-era take on racism, the power of dance, and big 'do's became *Hairspray*, his most mainstream film at that time. It not only introduced us to the enchanting Ricki Lake, but also legitimized Divine's theretofore poo-munching career.

One Broadway musical version and nearly 20 years later, *Hairspray's* story still revolves around Tracy Turnblad's (newcomer, Nikki Blonsky) attempt as a fat girl to land a plum dance role on *The Corny Collins Show*, a local version of Dick Clark's *American Bandstand*. But Tracy's greater challenge is to integrate the show with her African-American friends, who, as chance would have it, are far better dancers than Corny's all-white cast.

Pivotal to *Hairspray's* glory is Tracy's agoraphobic, morbidly obese mother, played by John Travolta, who longs "to get



Fat and feminine: Edna Turnblad (John Travolta, l) and her daughter Tracy (Nikki Blonsky) enjoy dessert in the newest *Hairspray*.

out there and experience life." Filling out a skirt just as femininely as Divine in the first version, Travolta's gyrations made me want to stuff a dollar bill into the folds of her fat suit.

I mean *his* fat suit. That's how convincing he is. Safe to say, Travolta was born to drag.

The two-disc "Shake and Shimmy" edition offers fabulous bonus extras, like step-by-step instructions to *Hairspray* dance numbers, making it a must-have for drag performance troupes. The set's finest extra, by far, chronicles Lake joining Waters in "The Roots of Hairspray," tracing the

evolution of the show.

A stellar cast of Michelle Pfeiffer, Christopher Walken, Jerry Stiller, and others, elevates John Waters' finest hour from a fun movie musical to a morality play, deftly skewering the idiocy of racism. Watch it and, like Tracy, you'll "wish every day was Negro Day."

Unless, perhaps, you're Dog the Bounty Hunter.

New Line Home Entertainment (www.newline.com). More: www.hairspraymovie.com.

'Hairspray' Soundtrack

This soundtrack of the Broadway musical of the original movie is so peppy, positive, and perverse, it could easily be subtitled "Up With John Waters' People." Almost every song is a toe-tapper (but not in the Larry Craig sense, of course). As Motormouth Maybelle, Queen Latifah soars with "Come So Far," a song so inspirational it could easily become the next gay anthem, replacing the antiquated "I Am What I Am." A must-have companion piece to the DVD, the enhanced CD also offers more than 20 pages of lyrics, access to the games website, music videos, and more. New Line Records (www.newlinerecords.com). More: www.hairspraymovie.com. —N.F.

DVD/VHS Shorts

Absolutely Fabulous: White Box



This never-before-released 2004 special is in true form as Edina (Jennifer Saunders) drags Patsy (Joanna Lumley) about town in search of inspiration to redesign her kitchen. Nathan Lane's hysterical guest appearance alone makes the episode worth seeing. Lane plays a Euro-chic shop owner who keeps putting his bifocals on upside down and shrieking at everyone's enormous heads. With Laurie Metcalf and Miranda Richardson. • From BBC Worldwide Americas (www.BBCAmericashop.com). —Review: Eric A.T. Dieckman

Driftwood



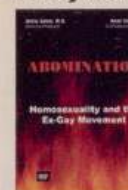
Despite some lackluster makeup effects, the story of David, a young man forced into an "attitude adjustment" camp, is nicely done with some effective scare factors. One of David's fellow inmates, Noah, is there for "reparative therapy," conversion from homosexuality to heterosexuality. David is not only haunted by his deceased brother, but also by Jonathan, the spirit of a former inmate who mysteriously died at the camp. • 2006. Co-written and directed by Tim Sullivan. • From Image Entertainment (www.image-entertainment.com). —Review: E.D.

East Side Story



Easily one of the most impressive, overall well-made independent gay romantic comedies to grace *OutSmart's* DVD player in a while. Diego waits tables at his grandmother's Mexican restaurant in L.A. and lives in the closet. When a white openly gay couple moves next door, Diego falls into mutual attraction with his new neighbor, Wesley, who encourages Diego to come out of the closet and follow his dreams of becoming a chef. • 2006. Directed by Carlos Portugal. • From Wolfe Video (www.WolfeVideo.com). —Review: E.D.

Abomination: Homosexuality and the Ex-Gay Movement



As one report put it in this documentary, "...more than 477,000 health and mental health professionals have all taken the position that homosexuality is not a mental disorder and thus there is no need for a 'cure.'" Four gay Christians are interviewed who attempted "reparative therapy," the conversion of homosexuals to heterosexuality, including the mother of a lesbian who eventually committed suicide in response to the pressures to change. • 2006. Directed by Alicia Salzer, M.D. • From the Association of Gay and Lesbian Psychiatrists (www.aglp.org). —Preview: E.D.

Trantasia



Trantasia offers a compelling, behind-the-scenes look at the lives of six transsexual ladies as they vie for the title of "World's Most Beautiful Transsexual" in Las Vegas, Nevada. A must-have for all who follow the transgender pageant circuit. Even those who don't will enjoy the candid personal interviews as we visit the ladies' hometowns and meet their families. Best part of all: short clips of the ladies after the pageant with some losers so bitter, you can almost taste them! • TLA Releasing (www.tlareleasing.com). More: www.trantasiathemovie.com. —Review: Vanity Wilde

I Don't Want to Sleep Alone



A little hard to follow, this tale set in Kuala Lumpur finds Hsiao Kang, a young drifter, beaten by con-men. Rawang, an immigrant worker, happens upon him and nurses him back to health, sharing his tattered mattress with him. Chyi, a waitress, meets Kang and takes a fancy to him. Together, the two men and woman develop an erotic love triangle. • 2006. Written and directed by Tsai Ming-Liang. Chinese Mandarin, Malay, and Bengali with English subtitles. • From Strand Releasing (www.StrandReleasing.com). —Review: E.D.

Rock Haven



Brady, a devout 18-year-old Christian, moves with his mother to northern California. There, he meets and falls for his neighbor, Clifford. The two are diametric opposites, Brady a conservative and Clifford a free-spirit. What's more important: Brady's beliefs or his and Clifford's budding romance? • 2007. Written and directed by David Lewis. • From TLA Releasing (www.tla-releasing.com). —Preview: E.D.

Boy Crush

What could be more entertaining than a film about gay romance? How about a collection of short films about gay romance? Seven shorts totaling over →

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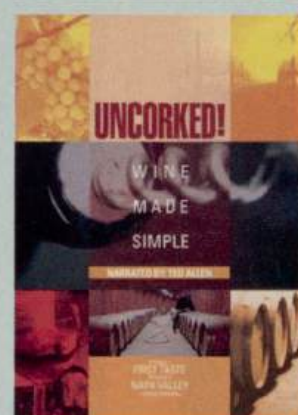
Little Britain:

The Complete Collection

Learn everything you've ever wanted to know about the strange inhabitants of the lesser-known crevices of Britain. Also, in their farewell special, the bizarre characters played by openly gay David Walliams and openly straight Matt Lucas travel the globe. But the real adventure here is the documentary following the Little Brits through their Australian tour, wherein they meet their idol Dame Edna. (When Matt Lucas tells her he has a civil union with someone named Kevin, the Dame's response is classic.) Also in the extras is their hysterical live contribution to Comic Relief. • From BBC Worldwide Americas (www.BBCAmericashop.com).



natural gay series, there's more. Take the soap opera horror and mystery and add the never-before-seen pilot episode. The mystery and treachery on this seemingly peaceful island resort just got more deliciously devious. • From Genius Products, Inc. (www.geniusproducts.com).



Uncorked!

Wine Made Simple

Openly gay culinary expert Ted Allen (*Queer Eye*) takes us on a tastefully tasty tour of wine and the wine country. In his six-part series designed for both the oenophile and neophyte alike, Allen starts off with a basic explanation of the world of viniculture, then takes us through Napa Valley, Sonoma, the Central Coast, and France. After that, you're ready for the extra features including cooking demos and pairing info. • From Adirondack Pictures (www.adirondackpics.com).



Dante's Cove: Guilty Pleasure Collection

As if the first two seasons weren't enough of a fix of this sexy, campy, super-



Queer as Folk:

The Complete Series

This 28-disc holds every episode from all five seasons, a cast reunion shot in '07, and the first two episodes of *The Tudors* to yield a total running time of over 70 hours, enough to literally fill a three-day weekend. The groundbreaking series about the lives of a group of gay friends in Pittsburgh presents an honest depiction of gay life and tackles critical social and political issues with a style that is both sexy and endearing. • From Paramount Home Entertainment (www.paramount.com).

DVD/VHS Shorts

continued from page 81



100 minutes include *Hitchcocked* from the U.S., with yet another take on the shower scene, and Germany's *Out Now*, about a boy bullied by his classmates when they learn he's been crushing on a candy kiosk worker. • From Wolfe Releasing (www.WolfeReleasing.com). —Preview: E.D.

Sicko



There's lots of talk these days about the role the feds should take in providing health care. In his most recent documentary, Academy Award winner and provocateur Michael Moore provides excellent talking points supporting the outrageously progressive notion. In addition to the doc itself, fabulous extras include "Who Would Jesus Deny?" "What If You Worked for G.E. in France," and more rabble-rousing shorts. Dog Eat Dog Films, Inc. (www.michaelmoore.com). —Review: Nancy Ford

Project Runway: The Complete Third Season



The popular fashion-based reality show that gave Houstonian Chloe Dao's career a mad boost gives its fans a seamless view of international supermodel cum hostess Heidi Klum, fashion icons, and 15 fashion icon wannabes. Watch the rebellious Jeffrey Sebelia, the free-spirited Uli Hezner, the urban Michael Knight, and others as they compete for fashion fabulosity. • From Genius Products, Inc. (www.geniusproducts.com). —Preview: E.D.

Nick Swardson: Party



The young stand-up comic also known as Terry, the roller-skating gay hustler on *Reno 911*, shows us how he's grown with this pairing of his Comedy Central specials recorded in 2000 and 2006. Swardson defends using the word "gay" derisively: "I'm sorry, but how else am I supposed to describe a fanny pack?" The accompanying CD includes stand-up and sketches. FYI: Swardson plays a supporting role in the yet-to-be-picked-up pilot *Gay Robot*. He also does *Gay Robot's* voice. The pilot can be found on MySpace and YouTube. • From Comedy Central (www.comedycentral.com). —Preview: E.D.

The Best of 'The Colbert Report'



Extracted segments of the show, like "The Word" and "Better Know a District," tout Colbert's knack for conservative news show parody. Certain vignettes are strung together for the sake of following story lines, like the baby bald eagle that was named after Colbert which spread its wings only to flee the country (shockingly) for Canada. • From Comedy Central (www.comedycentral.com). —Review: E.D. ■

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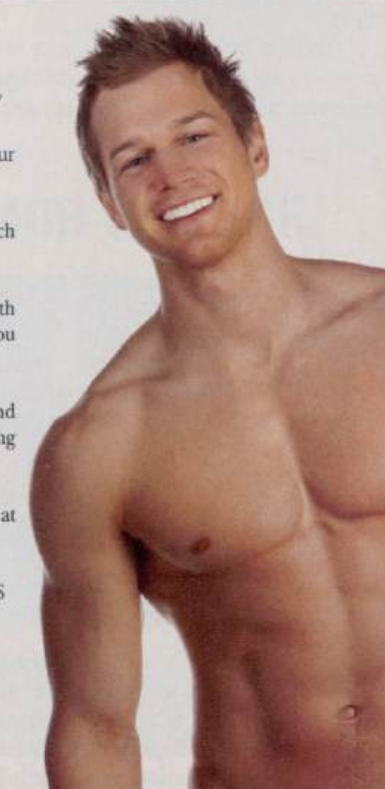
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YOU CAN HANDLE THE TRUTH

Out playwright Tony Kushner speaks the truth in this doc airing on PBS

I've always loved the Prophets. Not the ones who live in the wormhole in *Star Trek's* Deep Space 9, but the ones who stood outside the city cursing the uncaring, evil ways of the people. They had everyone's number and weren't bashful about speaking the truth.

"Speak the truth" was how Tony Kushner ended his commencement address to the 2002 graduates of Vassar. As is his wont, he read his own words at breakneck speed, as if he couldn't wait to be done and off the stage. His magnificent address is one of many high points in Frieda Lee Mock's documentary airing December 12 on PBS' *P.O.V.* The 20th anniversary of the original television documentary series concludes with Mock's *Wrestling with Angels: Playwright Tony Kushner*. She tells his story in three acts and an epilogue. Through her lens we see the creative process, introspection, action, hilarity, and a prophet at the height of his powers.

If you're busy December 12, stop whatever you're doing and tune in to the last 20 minutes to see the epilogue. If you're



Tony's truths: Playwright Tony Kushner in the documentary *Wrestling with Angels*.

lucky and can see the two-hour program in its entirety, you'll see large parts of three of his plays: *Homebody/Kabul*, about a woman traveling in Taliban-occupied Afghanistan (which he wrote before 9/11); *Caroline or Change*, nominated for a Tony Award for Best Play of 2004 and set in Kushner's hometown of Lake Charles, Louisiana (see—you can be from anywhere

and be great); and the play that earned him a Pulitzer, *Angels in America*.

But *Wrestling with Angels* isn't about his work as much as it is about him. He heads for Texas at one point and shares his apprehension about being around "all those scary Texans." He meets with a small group of students at Southwest in Georgetown and the result is heartening.

Heartening marks *Wrestling with Angels* as it marks the life of Tony Kushner, our very own prophet. Although I've admired the Prophets for their work, I don't think I'd want to spend much time with one, what with all the stridency and judgment that normally accompanies their work—until I saw Kushner in this film. This is a prophet I'd have over for dinner. And I'd make sure I had a pen and paper handy. This guy knows how we should live, and he's happy to tell you. Take notes.

Airs Wednesday, **December 12**, at 9 p.m. on PBS (www.pbs.org).

John Stiles (www.johnwstiles.com) writes regularly for *OutSmart* magazine.

PBS HAS HOMOPHOBIA & HBO HAS GEORGE MICHAEL



'The Paper'

Sensationalism vs. hard news, ethics vs. objectivity, commercialism vs. integrity—all are issues facing Pennsylvania State University students as they publish *The Daily Collegian*. Watch these young journalists grow old before your very eyes as they attempt to balance issues like homophobia and racism with football scores and shrinking readership. This documentary by Aaron Matthews airs **December 11**, 9 p.m. as part of PBS' *Independent Lens* series (www.houstonpbs.org). —Preview: Nancy Ford

Two gay couples kissing sparks a homophobic letter-writing controversy in *The Paper* (left). Meanwhile, a cap-clad George Michael joins Ricky Gervais in *Extras: The Extra Special Series Finale*.



'Extras: The Extra Special Series Finale'

Carrying with it the appropriately wry greeting, "Bloody Merry" is the second season's last installment (and series finale) of Ricky Gervais' best effort since his highly successful export, *The Office*. Guest stars George Michael, Clive Owen, and other British luminaries help "Andy Millman" bid his adieu in high style. The extended, 80-minute episode debuts **December 16** with repeats throughout the month on HBO (www.hbo.com). —Preview: N.F. ■

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MAKING THE CLIKS CLICK

Chatting with front man Lucas Silveira, in Houston with the band this month

Queer bands are becoming more and more visible and are finding ways in which to distinguish themselves from the pack. The Cliks do so in a couple of ways. Musically, the group's sound has a harder rocking edge to it than some of the others, which goes a long way in setting them apart. Also, having a transgender front man, as The Cliks do in Lucas Silveira, is the kind of thing that is destined to earn the band more attention. The Cliks, whose debut disc *Snakehouse* (Silver Label/Tommy Boy) was released in April 2007, was one of the acts on Cyndi Lauper's multi-act True Colors tour last June, and I spoke with Lucas shortly before he and The Cliks hit the road (at Fitzgerald's in Houston on December 13).

Gregg Shapiro: Nine of the 10 songs on *Snakehouse* are credited to you as writer. What can you tell me about your songwriting process?

Lucas Silveira: It kind of depends. Every song is different. But I can do something as simple as sit in a room—I usually just kind of like to be on my own. I'll sit in a room and come up with something that's knocking at my gut. I can come up with the guitar first, then the lyrics after or a melody first, and then add guitar. Sometimes I'll have a tune



Clik this: The Cliks, with front man Lucas Silveira (in white T-shirt), perform on December 13 at Fitzgerald's with Girl in a Coma.

in my head that I'll be humming for days. I actually have this cell phone that records stuff, so a lot of times I end up singing stuff into my phone. [Laughs]

So people see you walking down the street doing that, and they think, Wow, that's so sweet! He's singing to someone on his cell phone.

[Laughs] That's funny!

Who would you consider to be your biggest musical influences?

I think in the last few years Jeff Buckley had a huge impact on me. My roots are kind of all over the place. I listened to the Beatles a lot when I was a kid because of my parents [and] a lot of old rock and roll like Kiss, Blondie, The Pretenders. Then when I got older I listened to a lot of R&B and soul music. I listened to a lot of Motown. Some Concrete Blondie, and Motley Crue and Ozzy Osbourne. I kind of go all over the place.

I'll say! That's interesting because a number of the songs, including "Misery," "Eyes in the Back of My Head," "Start Leading Me On," and "Whenever," have a bluesy quality to them.

Well, I listened to Jimi Hendrix religiously for about two to three years of my life.

The Cliks also do a cover of Justin →

GrooveOut Shorts

Billie Holiday

Lady Day: The Master Takes and Singles



How can anybody be so bitter, and yet so sweet? Ah, Billie. In this handsome four-CD set, we get Lady Day in a razor-blade smooth collection spanning from when she was a young singer first discovered in 1935, to 1944, when she started to use the hard stuff, and her life and her voice began to crack. Accompanied by copious jazz info and essays in a glossy collectors' book, this overview of Billie's best has been remastered to produce the most heartbreaking clear reproductions of the blues diva's siren songs that we've yet to hear. (Although be forewarned, because only Holiday's Columbia recordings are included, there are strange omissions, such as the absence of "Strange Fruit.") Holiday was openly bisexual, and among her rumored Hollywood hookups were both Orson Welles and Tallulah Bankhead. Other rumors from this lady who sang the blues: She would hire female prostitutes for what she called a French Kiss, although only one tongue was involved, and it wasn't Billie's. • From

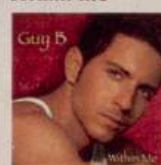
Columbia/Legacy (www.columbiarecords.com, www.legacyrecordings.com). —Review: Ann Walton Sieber

Mary Cutrufello



The growling Miss Mary rocked the 2007 Houston Women's Festival with selections from this indie production, and rightly so, with winners like the driving "Bring on the Night." Cutrufello penned all the tunes on this sold collection, except for her strong rendition of Springsteen's "Take 'em as They Come." If "I'll Still Love You Forever" doesn't break your heart, maybe you don't have one. www.marycutrufello.com. —Review: Nancy Ford

Guy B.



It's always a bit worrisome when ever CD art prominently features the artist's physicality. That said, the openly gay Guy's perfect torso and butt likely helped land the title track's video on Logo's music video rotation. So, enjoy! Self-produced (www.guyb.biz). —Review: N.F.

Betty Buckley



Even after a Broadway career that has included *Cats*, for Grizabella's sake, Buckley's first album, recorded when she was the 19-year-old former Miss Fort Worth, has only now been released. It is a delight. Among the best of the joyous tracks: a bouncy version of "One Boy," from *Bye, Bye Birdie*. Playbill Records (www.playbillrecords.com). —Review: Tim Brookover

Angie Stone

The Art of Love & War



Stone addresses all three topics on this largely self-penned CD—sex, politics, and religion—that polite people don't discuss in public, and she does it right. Her delightful "My People," with James Ingram, with its surprise ending, should be required listening for everyone with a voter's registration card. Stax Records (www.angiestoneonline.com). —Review: N.F. →

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Happy Holidays!



From your queer birds at OutSmart.

GrooveOut Shorts continued from page 86

DJ Roland Belmares & DJ Mike Cruz
Global Groove: Live 2



For those wishing to polish their circuit party groove in preparation for the White Party, this release is a fine warm-up. Features tasty twists from Debbie Holiday ("Piece of My Love"), Taxi Doll ("Be With You"), and other thumpa-thumpa stars.

Centaur (www.centaurmusic.com). —Review: N.F.

Keyshia Cole
Just Like You



When you team with Missy Elliot and Li'l Kim for your CD's very first cut, how can you go wrong? This R&B/hip hop-py release is a full one, with 15 separate cuts including a solid visitation from Diddy on "Last Night." Geffen Records (www.geffen.com). —Review: N.F.

Nicole Atkins
Neptune City



Rolling Stone magazine picked this talented folk/pop artist as one of its Top 10 Artists to Watch, and for good reason. You'll hear traces of Roy Orbison, Stevie Nicks shining through her sensitive, accurate vocals, especially on the hopeful "Maybe Tonight"

and the dramatic "The Way It Is." Columbia (www.nicoleatkins.com). —Review: N.F.

Emily King
East Side Story



Somewhat reminiscent of Joss Stone's youthful vocal sophistication, but hip-hopier, King's solid debut album scores, especially with "Walk in My Shoes" and her funky tip of the hat to Bruce Hornsby on "Alright." Her autobiographical "Colorblind"

is both catchy and moving. J Records (www.emilykingonline.com). —Review: N.F.

Original Motion Picture Soundtrack
Across the Universe



Songs written by the Beatles (John, Paul, George, and Ringo) were the inspiration for the fictional love story in the film *Across the Universe*. You may be familiar with the original versions, but these excellent rearrangements are worth a listen. Features artists

Bono and Joe Cocker, among many others. Interscope Records (www.interscope.com). More: www.acrossuniversesoundtrack.com. —Review: Andrea Rodricks

New Broadway Cast Recording
Grease



Producers mounting a new production of *Grease* cast their newest "Sandy" and "Danny" via a televised competition earlier this year. This CD features them singing all the faves that made *Grease* one of the most successful Broadway musicals in

history. Masterworks Broadway (www.sonybmgmasterworks.com). —Preview: N.F. ■

JOYFUL NOISE

Five new CDs make the season merry and tuneful



Various Artists

Broadway's Greatest Gifts: Carols for a Cure, Vol. 9

Tony Award winner David Hyde Pierce, Rosie's Broadway Kids, and others from some of Broadway's most popular shows come together for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS' most recent annual holiday CD project, which to date has raised more than \$2.5 million in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Can be ordered at www.broadwaycares.org or by calling 212/840-0770, ext. 250. —Preview: N.F.

Patti LaBelle

Miss Patti's Christmas

The only thing better than listening to these soulful holiday sounds from this delicious diva might be if she were cooking for you while you were listening. Contains traditional songs like "Do You Hear What I Hear" and "Away in a Manger," four new tunes by the CD's producers, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, and more. Def Jam Recordings (www.defsoul.com). —Preview: N.F.

Barry Manilow

In the Swing of Christmas

A wonderful Christmas album that showcases 10 newly recorded songs by music icon Barry Manilow. Produced and arranged by Manilow, *In the Swing of Christmas* features traditional Americana songs, including his exclusive rendition of "Silver Bells," featuring 26 background vocals, all performed by Manilow. Available through December only at Hallmark Gold Crown stores (www.hallmark.com). —Review: A.R.

The Isley Brothers featuring Ronald Isley

I'll Be Home for Christmas

These classic funksters celebrate their 50th year in show business with a collection of contemporary Christmas standards and a couple of newbies ("I'm in Love" and "What Can I Buy You?") written by the CD's producers, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis. Def Soul Classics (www.defsoul.com). —Preview: N.F.

Choir of King's College, Cambridge

I Heard A Voice: The Music of the Golden Age

The choral selections from 16th-century Renaissance-era composers provide an excellent soundtrack to your most traditional and formal holiday events. The 30-voiced choir, which traces its roots to the 15th century, is directed by John Frasier. EMI Classics (www.emiclassics.com). —Preview: N.F. ■

GrooveOut continued from page 86

Timberlake's "Cry Me a River." Why was that song chosen for inclusion on the disc?

I came into the band, one time, kind of singing it because I had been in a situation where I was in a really bad breakup. I had a long-term relationship that ended after six and a half years. I really connected to the lyrics of the song. It's a really great song, and I brought it in. I've always thought that the song itself, even though it's great—I felt a little more aggressive about what was being said. We started doing it as a band and when our producer, Mo Berg, came in, he was, like, "You guys have to put that on the album." I think it really fit with the content of the album. It's kind of a breakup album. It was pretty much right in there with the rest of it. It fit the whole mood.

Has there been any feedback from Justin or his camp?

Not yet. We know he apparently has gotten a copy. We met his booking agent from Germany named Steven who told us that he gave him a copy, but we haven't heard anything. It would be really cool to know what he thinks of it, actually.

The Clicks performed on the True Colors Tour in June 2007. How did that come to pass?

Essentially, our record label and our A&R woman, Rosie Lopez, have been working alongside Logo, the MTV network who sponsored the event. They have been extremely supportive of our band. [At the time of the interview] our video is number one on the Click List. Also, Cyndi Lauper's manager was very into the band and asked us to come on board. I think it was pretty perfect for a band like us right now.

As a transgender person, you represent the T in the GLBT community. What did it mean to you to be a representative of the trans community on the True Colors Tour?

It was an honor. It's pretty much new to a lot of people and I think a lot of people are a little inquisitive about the T in GLBT, because it hasn't been talked about and a lot of people aren't very open about. I am hoping that I can open a lot of people's eyes to this, including the gay, lesbian, and bisexual community, because, I think on both sides of the camp, there's a lot of education that needs to be done. I'm not there to educate people, per se, but I'm there to go, "We do this, too, and we're here, just like everybody else." It feels cool and I'm looking forward to hearing what people have to say.

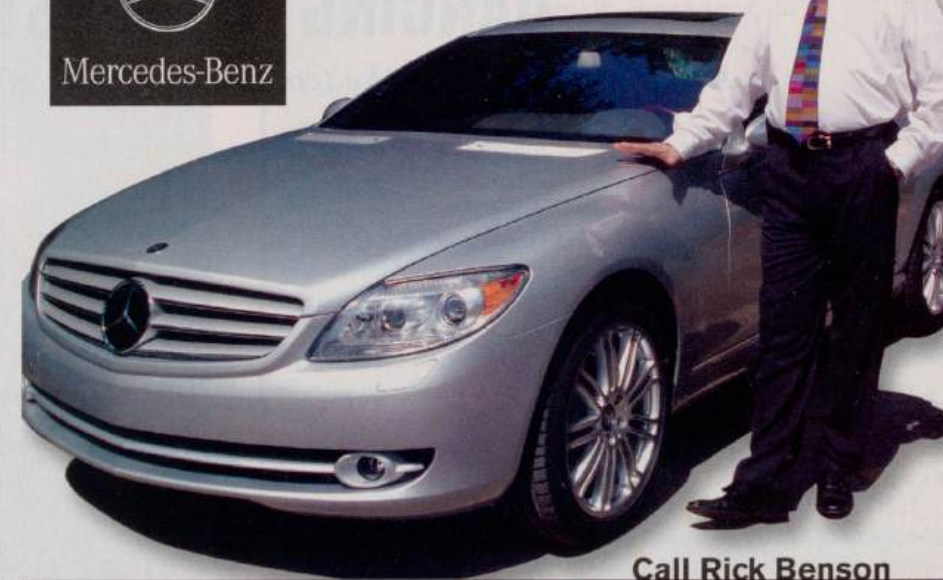
ON THE WEB: Read more of the interview at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

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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DANCING WITH A STAR

A new bio spotlights the (complicated) life of Rudolf Nureyev

If the "difficult artiste" is a cliché, Julie Kavanagh's *Nureyev: The Life* (Pantheon Books) suggests Rudolf Nureyev created, broke, and then remade that mold in his own image.

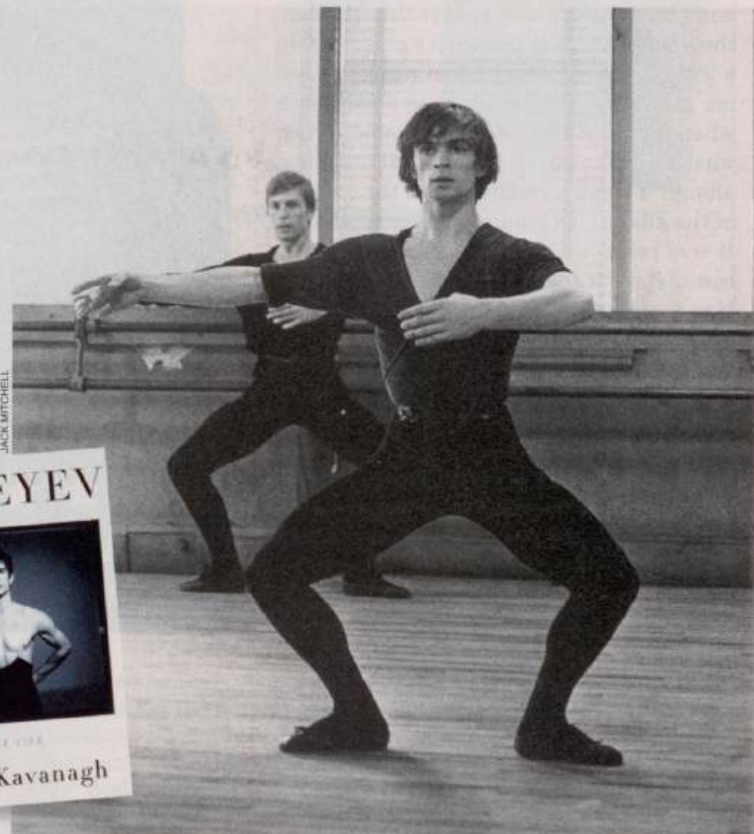
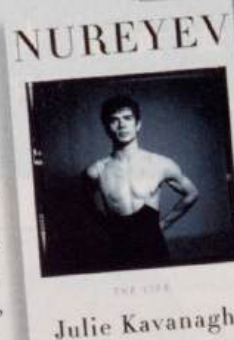
Quoted reviews make one think his career was built almost on stage presence alone—and yet it's clear that his innate talent drew to him ballet's best teachers and dancers. He was arrogant about his artistry and star status—and constantly lamented his lack of technique. He pursued his career with a cut-and-burn approach, using and discarding people as needed—and he agonized over what his defection to the West cost his family and friends back in Russia.

"Complicated" seems too subtle a word for the portrait Kavanagh paints.

It is also a fascinating portrait. Kavanagh's exhaustive research gives us not only the glamour (appearances by the likes of Jackie Onassis, Martha Graham, Mikhail Baryshnikov), but also personal stories from obscure figures. Readers who know ballet will receive insight from the technical terms explaining Nureyev's weaknesses and strengths. Those looking for tabloid dish will be enthralled: Kavanagh does not shy away from Nureyev's sexual adventures (besides his famous love affairs with Erik Bruhn and Wallace Potts, there were endless anonymous encounters around the world).

Of course, the last chapters are harrowing, as we are given a stark reminder of that first decade with AIDS. Nureyev's refusal to quit dancing is painful and poignant, as is the devotion of his much-abused friends.

In the end, this is no hagiography, but a page-turning look at an artist of deep, conflicting passions and charisma to spare. This is a book not only for ballet fans, but for anyone intrigued by complex personalities. ■



Men in tights: Dancing together wasn't the only thing that Rudolf Nureyev (r) and Erik Bruhn did with each other. A new biography addresses Nureyev's many sexual adventures as well as his undeniable artistry and fame.

ReadOut Shorts

A Little Fruitcake: A Childhood in Holidays
David Valdes Greenwood

Da Capo Lifelong Books (www.dacapopress.com)

Memories of family holidays define where we came from in a very real way. In *A Little Fruitcake*, Greenwood shares the Christmas experiences of a gay Cuban boy growing up in rural Maine. Witty and full of characters we all recognize, this charming story is sure to become a gay Christmas classic. —Review: Angel Curtis

Pierre & Gilles: Double Je, 1976-2007
Paul Ardenne, Jeff Koons, Gilles Blanchard, Pierre Comboy
Taschen (www.taschen.com)

The rather amazing photographic art of Pierre Comboy and Gilles Blanchard, more widely known as Pierre et Gilles, was celebrated in Paris recently with a



See for yourself. —Review: Jack Varsi

Biting the Apple
Lucy Jane Bledsoe

Carroll & Graf (www.carrollandgraf.com)



retrospective of the French gay duo's work of the past 30 years. You can find all of it, and much, much more, in *Pierre & Gilles: Double Je, 1976-2007*, from Taschen publishers, of course. The photographs are highly stylized, phantasmagorical, and, well, dreamy.

—Review: Jack Varsi

Eve is a kleptomaniac selling grace and is obsessed with a poet in Maine. Nick is Eve's ex-coach and ex-husband and has spent his adulthood running Eve's life. Joan was Eve's first lesbian lover, and is now a high-powered reporter stalking Eve for a story. Alissa is an image consultant,

sure she can remake Eve into the woman she needs to be. *Biting the Apple* deftly shows that the price we pay for obsession is the loss of our truest selves. —Review: A.C.

Longhorns

Victor J. Baines
Carroll & Graf (www.carrollandgraf.com)



Victor J. Baines is the granddaddy of gay pulp fiction. Writing as Victor Jay, J.X. Williams, Don Holliday, Lynn Benedict, and Jan Alexander, Baines brought us such pulp classics as *C.A.M.P.*, which infused the whole James Bond thing with a very gay sensibility. In *Longhorns*, Baines gives us a gay pulp version of the cowboy. Full of hot sex among the mesquite, this is what some people really wish *Brokeback Mountain* had been. —Review: A.C. ■

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THE QUEER YEAR THAT WAS

Sally reflects on 2007

At the end of the year in the month of December, I like to take stock, take some time and remember that even though much is oppressive and hateful, The world's full of reasons that I should be grateful.

I may not have wealth stashed away in Swiss banks, But I still have a lot for which I can give thanks. My wife and my friends and my health, just for starters, And also my freedom from girdles and garters.

I'm thankful I'm free to be out as a dyke And to dress just as butch (or as femme) as I like.

I'm glad I am me, and I'm thankful because it Feels really good to be out of the closet.

I'm thankful for Pride day and queer celebrations And all of our national organizations Like PFLAG and GLAAD and the ACLU, For GLSEN and Lambda and Queer Nation, too.

I know it's important to stop and revere The shoulders I stand on and who got me here— My feminist forebears, that suffragist force Who won me the vote and the right to divorce.

Our heroes at Stonewall, those drag queens and dykes In dresses and heels and on big motor bikes, Who fought the police in their wagons and cars In the riot protesting the raiding of bars.

To all who have struggled and joined in the fights, For hate crimes protection and our civil rights, Who've called on the Congress with e-mails and notes, And sent in their money and spoken with votes.

I'd like to say thanks for our U.S. democracy, Except for the fraud and the blatant hypocrisy.

The Christian far right and the family Bush Are running a scam that's a pain in the tush.

Health care's in shambles and children are sick, And nobody's fixing the mess very quick. Our billions on war are not finding the answer To homelessness, AIDS, or ovarian cancer.

While bigots in power continue the plague, Like hypocrites Haggart and Senator Craig, Our lawmakers cave to the war-machine spenders And balk at a bill to protect our transgenders. →

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OutLoud continued from page 92

The president says he is earnestly trying
To make it all better, but oh, how he's
lying.
Yes, lying and stealing and cheating us all
For reasons Gonzales just couldn't recall.

I'm sick of the war and of all the bad news
That makes me disheartened and gives me
the blues.
I'm stressed about bigotry, war, and
injustice,
And cannabis laws that are set up to bust
us.

I fret over apathy, gloom, and inaction
And how our good minds are so prone to
distraction.
We let media images mangle and warp us
And barely say boo over habeas corpus.

As if giving up freedom could be the
solution
To threats to our country and our
Constitution.
It's crazy, it's nuts, so much violence and
fear,
And it's taking away what we used to hold
dear.

But here I am focused on all that is wrong,
So I need to remember my "good" list is
long.
Despite the intolerance, greed, and
exclusion,
Sweet blessings abound in abundant
profusion.

I've plenty to eat and clean water to drink
And an outlet to write and to say what I
think.
I'm more or less free to speak out with
impunity,
Thanks to my friends and supportive
community.

Tune in and refocus, I tell myself now,
And watch what goes on without having
a cow.
Try to stay open, serene and aware—
Change what you can, for the rest, say a
prayer.

So even though much is oppressive and
hateful,
I still have a lot for which I can be
grateful.
That's why I take time to take stock and
remember
At the end of the year in the month of
December.

Sally Sheklow is a multiple winner in the Lone
Star Press Awards. She writes and fights for
rights in Eugene, Oregon.

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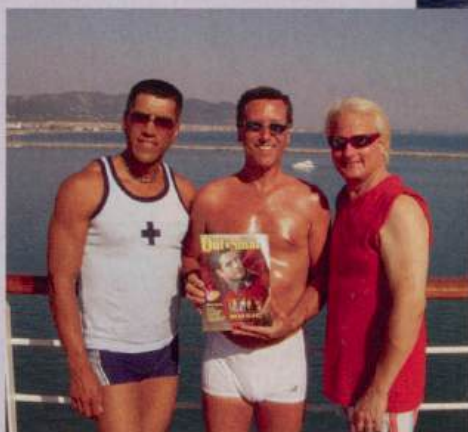
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Summer wishes, wintry dreams with our readers

Ruby Hamilton (l)
and Robin Turrell
toted OUTSMART
on an Olivia
cruise to Alaska.



Cesar Castaneda (l)
and Welsey Hiatt posed with
their OUTSMART at the
bottom of the Spanish
Steps in Rome.

Shanna Konetzke of
Galveston traveled to
another coastal town,
Santa Barbara, Califor-
nia, with her OUTSMART.



JR Valdez (l-r), David
Tauzin, and Les Wood
took OUTSMART to the
coast of the Italian port
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Calendar of Events

by Eric A.T. Dieckman

DECEMBER

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. Legacy Community Health Services offers free confidential rapid HIV testing using the OraQuick-Advance collection method with results available within 20 minutes at the following community-based locations: 611 HYDE PARK PUB, 611 Hyde Park, Tues. 4-8pm; ALL STAR NEWS AND VIDEO EMPORIUM, 3415 Katy Freeway & Studewood, Thurs. 4-8pm; BRAZOS RIVER BOTTOM, 2400 Brazos, Thurs. 8pm-12am; CLUB 1415, 1415 California, Thurs. 10pm-1am; CLUB HOUSTON, 2205 Fannin, Tues. & Wed. 8pm-12am; COUSIN'S, 817 Fairview, Thurs. 8pm-12am; DECADES, 1205 Richmond, Wed. 6-10pm; EJ'S, 2517 Ralph, Wed. & Fri. 10pm-1am; EROS 1207 BOUTIQUE, 7330 Southwest Frwy, Wed. 3-7pm; GEORGE SPORTS BAR, 617 Fairview, Mon. 6-10pm; IN & OUT, 1537 N. Shepherd, Thurs. 4-8pm; MARY'S, NATURALLY, 1022 Westheimer, Wed. 4-8pm; MICHAEL'S OUTPOST, 1419 Richmond, Tues. 4-8pm; MIDTOWN SPA, 3100 Fannin, Tues. 4-8pm & Fri. 10pm-1am; RIPCORN, 715 Fairview, Wed. 9pm-12am; TONY'S CORNER POCKET, 817 W. Dallas, Thurs. 8pm-12am. • A complete listing of locations is also available by calling 713/830-3070. Free confidential syphilis testing is also offered. HIV & syphilis testing is offered at the main clinic located at 215 Westheimer, Mon.-Thurs. 11am-7pm and Fri. 11am-5pm.

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.

Deadline for OutSmart's January issue is 5 p.m., Saturday, December 8.

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

Monthly (Saturdays)

Second Saturdays at Winter St. Studios. It's open-door policy at Winter St. Studios every second Saturday of the month. This is a great way to meet and hang with the varied artists working in many different media and styles in their studios. Participating artists have a large red dot on or near the door of their studio. All are welcome between 1 and 6 pm. Winter St. Studios, 2101 Winter St. Info: 713/862-0082 or www.winterstreetstudios.net.

Monthly (Sundays)

Liberal Bible 101. If you've had enough of biblical quotes hurled your way without any form of theological reply, this is the discussion group for you. Noted resident scholar Laura Emerson teaches biblical literacy from a liberal point of view. Each class addresses a

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, TX 77006. **FAX INFO TO:** 713/522-3275. **E-MAIL INFO TO:** calendar@outsmartmagazine.com. **NO LISTINGS CAN BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DEADLINE DATE—SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8.**

singular point, covering the Old Testament this Fall and the New in the Spring. This month's discussion: the 65 abominations of Leviticus (homosexuality receiving the most publicity). Third Sunday of each month (the 16th this month), 10-11 am, at Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church, 1900 Bering Dr. Info: 713/782-8250 or (for curriculum/suggested readings) www.emersonhouston.org/about/adultEd.html.

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.

1 & 2 (Sat. & Sun.)

What? No Cream Rinse? Dance students from the University of Houston School of Theater and Dance present original works by Alex Abarca, Allison Chavez, Mechelle Flemming, and others in *Apply Precision—Rinse. Repeat.* 2 pm at Lyndall Finley Wortham Theater, Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts, U of H Central Campus. Info: 713/743-2929, www.myspace.com/uhtd.

7 (Fri.)

Lost and Found [Magazine]. Found Magazine returns to Aurora Picture Show for its "There Goes the Neighborhood Tour 2007." Celebrating the fifth issue of *Found Magazine—The Crime Issue*, creator/editor Davy Rothbart shares brand-new, newsworthy finds, and musician Peter Rothbart accompanies him with new music based on this issue of the magazine. \$6. 8 pm at Aurora →

DATEBOOK

World AIDS Day events on Dec. 1 include *The Illumination Project*, the annual dance performance at the Hobby Center. \$25-\$50. Proceeds from the 8 p.m. event benefit Bering Omega Community Services and the Baylor Pediatric AIDS Initiative. Tickets: 713/315-2525, www.illuminationproject.org. Religious observances include a bilingual World AIDS Day Service at Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church (United Church of Christ), 7 p.m., hosted with the Gay and Lesbian Latin Organization and the Center for AIDS. For information on additional events, read the World AIDS Day preview in the November OutSmart (sidebar to the Carson Kressley profile, "More Than Just a Queer Eye") or at www.outsmartmagazine.com. Details: www.worldaidsdayhouston.org.

On Dec. 4, **The Rothko Chapel** offers a noon-1 p.m. Catholic meditation directed by Sister Adeline O'Donoghue of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word and director of the Ruah Spirituality Center at the Villa de Matel convent. This is the concluding program in the "Twelve Moments: A Year of Meditation at The Rothko Chapel" series. RSVP: 713/524-9839, www.rothkochapel.org.

Lesbian Health Initiative meets on Dec. 4, 6:30 p.m., in the Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church library. Details: 713/426-3356, www.lhihouston.org.

AIDS Foundation Houston **Positive Opinion Leaders** group has resumed meeting at the Houston GLBT Community Center and meets on Dec. 4, 7 p.m., and every Tuesday Info: Jennifer Daniels, jdaniels@afhouston.org.

Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce hosts its holiday party on Dec. 4, 5:30-8:30 p.m., at Salud! Winery. \$20. Details: www.thechamberhouston.org.

OUTfront, the local GLBT interest group of Amnesty International, meets on Dec. 5, 6:30 p.m., and every first Wednesday of the month, in the Olive Branch Room (2360 Rice Blvd. at Greenbriar, in the garage apartment). Details: 281/587-5386, www.amnestyhouston.org.

Instead of a monthly general meeting, the **Houston GLBT Political Caucus** hosts a holiday party and fundraiser on Dec. 5, 6-8 p.m., at the home of Bruce Smith and Tony Carroll. RSVP: 713/521-1000, rsxp@thecaucus.org.

The **Community Advisory Board** transgender group holds its weekly social at the Houston GLBT Community Center on Dec. 6, 7 p.m., and every Thursday. Details: www.transhouston.com.

HIV+ Healing Art Group, led by painter Kermit Eisenhut, meets on Dec. 7, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., and every Friday at Art League Houston. Throughout December, group artists exhibit work in a World AIDS Day show at the Houston GLBT Community. Details: Eisenhut, kermitart@earthlink.net, www.artleaguehouston.org.

AssistHers holds its general monthly meeting on Dec. 8, 8:30 a.m., at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Details: 713/521-4628, www.assisthers.org.

The new **Houston Area Stonewall Democrats** meets on Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m., at Ziggy's Healthy Grill (West Alabama location). Details: houstonareastonewalldemocrats@gmail.com

Houston Area Bears holds its monthly business meeting on Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m., at Biba's One's A Meal. Details: www.houstonareabears.com.

Pride Houston makes available applications for the 2008 Pride Parade beginning Jan. 1 on the organization website. Entrants receive parade placement in the order of their application submission. Details: 713/529-6979, www.pridehouston.org.

More: www.outsmartmagazine.com

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IT'S A SISTER THING
Memories like the corners of DiverseWorks

Sisters Becky Beaulieu Valls, a performer/choreographer in Houston, and Babette Beaulieu Wattigny, a sculptor in New Orleans, present *Memoirs of the Sistahood—Chapter One*. Based on their large Catholic family in south Louisiana, the series fuses the sisters' individual work with childhood "sense memories" of family, home, and religion. This first installment of the sisters' collaborative works includes Babette's 1998 New Orleans exhibition *Trinity III*, and Becky's choreographic work *White Bird*, which premiered in 2004 at the University of Houston. —Nancy Ford

• December 7-8 and 14-15 at 8 p.m.
• \$10-\$15
• DiverseWorks Arts Space, 1117 East Freeway
• 713/223-8346 or www.diverseworks.org

Chicks in a box: At DiverseWorks this month, *Memoirs of the Sistahood—Chapter One* features an exhibition of found objects constructed by sculptor Babette Beaulieu Wattigny, reflecting aspects of her five sisters' personalities.



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Picture Show, 800 Aurora St. Information and reservations: 713/868-2101 or www.aurorapictureshow.org.

8 (Sat.)

I'm Dreaming of a Black Christmas. The hippest, most eclectic mix of dance music slams the holiday season with December's installment of Danseparc, themed "Black Celebration: Anti-Holiday Party." Punk and post-punk, electro-pop, new wave and indie and beyond fill the air the second Saturday of each month, courtesy of DJ's Michael, Shoe, and Stacey (the latter two being openly gay). Dead Bang spins goth and all things dark and danceable upstairs. 9:30 pm - 2 am at Numbers, 300 Westheimer. \$5, \$3 until 11 pm. \$1 draft beers and \$2 wells all night.

PLANNING AHEAD

JANUARY

January 12 (Sat.)

Kids on Stage Open House. Encourage an interest in the performing arts. The Spring Kids On Stage teaching staff leads kids of all ages in mask-making, arts and crafts, theater games, and dance. Free. 11 am-1 pm at Main Street Theater-Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. More info: 713/524-9196, ext. 104, or www.mainstreettheater.com.

RADIO

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

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

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

PERFORMING ARTS

◆ **The BFG (Big Friendly Giant).** Based on the book by Roald Dahl, Sophie is whisked away from her orphanage home in the middle of the night. From there, it's nothing but mad adventure with an amiable giant. But, like pudding in Mom's cake, there's peril in the mix. Will Sophie learn the value of friendship and the deficit of selfishness? Recommended for pre-kindergarten and up and their families. \$9 for kids and students, \$11 for adults. Dec. 8 & 15 at Main Street Theater-Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. Info/reservations: 713/524-6706, www.mainstreettheater.com, or www.ticketweb.com.

◆ **Winter Break Theater Camp.** In this three-day mini-camp, students work on short-term projects such as improvisation, storytelling, mask-making, mime, and dance routines. (For ages 6-11.) \$200 for week 1 or week 2, \$340 for both weeks. Dec. 26-28 (week 1), Jan. 2-4 (week 2), 9 am-3:30 pm, at Main Street Theater-Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. More info: 713/524-9196 x 104 or www.mainstreettheater.com.

◆ **Winter Break High School Workshop.** Older students hone their developing craft, learning characterization techniques, script analysis, and scene study. Mini-workshops on playwriting, design, and marketing supplement the curriculum. (For ages 15-18.) \$150. Dec. 26-28, 1-4 pm, at Main Street Theater-Rice Village, 2540 Times Blvd. More info: 713/524-9196, ext. 104, or www.mainstreettheater.com.

◆ **Winter Performing Arts Camps.** TUTS' Humphreys School of Musical Theatre offers a selection of performance workshop camps for both professional and amateur performers, ages 4-18. Various age groups involve appropriate amounts of allotted time and age-appropriate material. Performances salute a different musical each day. No audition required, classes are limited. Dec. 20 is registration deadline. Jan. 2-4 at the TUTS Studios located at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts (800 Bagby at Walker). Info/registration: 713/558-8801 or www.tuts.com.

PERFORMING ARTS

For Young People

◆ **Claude Wampler-PERFORMANCE (career ender).** New York-based visual and performance artist Claude Wampler returns with her latest work. The piece marks the completion of her 10-year cycle of creating experimental artworks that call attention to the viewers' role as audience. Through Dec. 15 at DiverseWorks, 1117 East Fwy. Info/reservations: 713/223-8346 or www.diverseworks.org.

◆ **Mr. Pim Passes By.** A.A. Milne, the author of the Winnie the

continued on page 102

HAVE A HOLLY JOLLY HOLIDAY

A Bay Area Christmas Carol. Dickens gets a makeover and a present-day setting. \$14, \$12 for seniors and students. **Through December 16** at Clear Creek Community Theatre, 18091 Upper Bay Rd. in the Nassau Bay Shopping Village. Reservations/info: 281/335-5228 or www.clearcreekcountrytheatre.org.

A Christmas Carol-A Ghost Story of Christmas. Scrooge your brains out with the Alley's spectacle-centered treatment of Dickens' Christmas classic. Tickets start at \$38. **Through December 29** at The Alley Theatre's Hubbard Stage, 615 Texas Ave. Info/reservations: 713/228-8421 or www.alleytheatre.org.

The Nutcracker. If little Clara and her magical doll have never stirred your spirits, it's not too late, especially with this being the show's 20th-anniversary production at the Houston Ballet. The Christmas tree that grows to 40 feet makes the trip worthwhile, to say nothing of the Rat King and all those Sugar Plum Fairies. \$17-\$125. **Through December 29** at the Wortham's Brown Theater, 501 Texas Ave. at Smith St. Info/reservations: 713/227-2787, 800/828-2787, or www.houstonballet.org.

Santa's Elves and the Shoemaker. In this musical for kids both big and small, two elves sneak into the home of a struggling, slumbering shoemaker and his wife in hopes of saving his career and perhaps their marriage. \$8. Saturdays, **December 1, 8, 15, & 22**, 2 p.m., at Express Theatre, 446 Northwest Mall. Info/reservations: 713/682-5044.

It's a Wonderful Life: The Radio Production. In addition to watching it on television innumerable times this season and seeing the Theatre Under The Stars stage musical, fans of the James Stewart holiday classic can also enjoy *It's a Wonderful Life: The Radio Production*. Directed by Stephanie Epstein for Frisco Community Theater, all voices and sound effects will be done live in the "studio" with audience members filling the role of the studio audience. **December 6-7 & 13-15**, 8 p.m. \$10-\$15. 6821 Main St. in Frisco. More: 800/595-4TIX, www.FriscoCommunityTheater.com.

The Irish Tenors Christmas Special. The second most successful Irish touring act next to U2, these sultans of high-C harmony stop by with a holiday inspired song list. \$22-\$72. **December 7**, 8 pm, at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. Info/reservations: 713/227-4772 or www.spahouston.org.

The Jewish Community Center's Gay & Lesbian Social Group of Houston's Fourth Annual Chanukah Party. This party coincides with the fifth night of the eight-night holiday.

Expect plenty of wine, food, and music, and the return of renowned caricature artist "Texas Tim" Webb. Attendees are encouraged to bring non-perishable canned goods to be donated to the JCC's Meals on Wheels program. **December 8**, 8-11 pm at a private home. More info: 713/729-3200, ext. 3298, or Diana Howard at dhoward@jcc-houston.org.

The Christmas Revels. Revels Houston relives the seasonal celebrations of America's founding cultures. Among other items on the roster are a Native American Storyteller, the songs and dances of the "Shaking Quakers," and the holiday festival of the Caribbean Jonkonnu. \$18-\$30, half off for kids 15 and under. **December 8-16**, Saturdays at 2:30 p.m. and 8 p.m., Sundays at 2:30 p.m., at Moores Opera House, University of Houston, Entrance 16, Cullen Blvd. Info/reservations: 713/668-3303, 713/669-9528, or www.revelshouston.org.

Ho-Ho-Ho-Down to Hollywood. Bayou City Performing Arts' annual holiday show features performances from Gay Men's Chorus of Houston, Bayou City Women's Chorus, and Bayou City Chorale (combined voices of GMCH and BCWC). \$19-\$39. **December 18**, 7:30 p.m., at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. Info/reservations: 713/521-7464 or www.BayouCityPerformingArts.org.

It's a Wonderful Life. TUTS rings in the holidays with a staged rendition of Frank Capra's popular 1946 Yuletide film. See the story live instead of on basic cable at 4 a.m. \$29-\$93. **December 11-23** at Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby at Walker. Info/reservations: 713/558-8887, 888/558-3882, or www.tuts.com.

Handel's Messiah. Hear it the way music lovers heard it when the composer was alive. Mercury Baroque performs the holiday standard on period instruments, just as it

was played when it was first performed. Afterward, join the Mercury gang for a holiday party with food, drink, and a silent and live auction. \$32-\$59. **December 14**, 7 pm, at the Wortham Center's Cullen Theater, 500 Texas at Smith. Info/reservations: 713/533-0080 or www.MercuryBaroque.org.

HOLIDAY PRIDE

Pride In Action seeks 25-50 volunteers to participate in a couple of holiday charitable efforts. First, the subsidiary group of Pride Houston joins the Jingle Bell Express on Dec. 7 by dressing as elves for Santa and helping to sort toys for children. Then on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, Pride In Action volunteers gather at the George R. Brown Convention Center to help with the Houston City Club's annual Christmas dinner. Details: 713/529-6979 • www.pridehouston.org.

the eve. \$35. **December 16**, 7-9 pm, departing from the Orange Show, 2401 Munger St. Info/reservations: 713/926-6368 or www.orangeshow.org.

Ho-Ho-Ho-Down to Hollywood. Bayou City Performing Arts' annual holiday show features performances from Gay Men's Chorus of Houston, Bayou City Women's Chorus, and Bayou City Chorale (combined voices of GMCH and BCWC). \$19-\$39. **December 18**, 7:30 p.m., at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. Info/reservations: 713/521-7464 or www.BayouCityPerformingArts.org.

Messiah. 'Tis the season for Handel's most famous composition. \$19-\$65. **December 21-23**, 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 2:30

p.m. Sunday, at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. Info/reservations: 713/224-7575 or www.houstonsymphony.org.

Clandestine Classics. Ars Lyrica's program of entirely legal—though seldom-heard masterworks by Bach and Handel—appeals the tastes of those with a penchant for the classic and obscure. After the concert, head upstairs to the Founders Club to ring in the New Year with the annual holiday party, silent auction, champagne, and dessert. \$25, \$20 for seniors, \$15 for students. **December 31**, 9 p.m., at Zilkha Hall, 800 Bagby. Info/reservations: 713/315-2525 or www.arslyricahouston.org.

New Year, New Party. Resuming the tradition of the January 1 open house hosted by the late activist and educator, the Houston Transgender Unity Committee begins 2008 with the inaugural Brenda Thomas Memorial New Year's Day Social. The event features a potluck meal. There

is no admission charge, but donations are encouraged for Unity Committee programs, including the Peggy Rudd Transgender Scholarship Fund. Proceeds from a silent auction will raise additional funds. The committee is inviting interested individuals to join a donors' group, Brenda's Betty Boop Circle, in honor of Thomas and her favorite cartoon character (\$25 membership). **January 1**, 2 p.m., Houston GLBT Community Center,



GIFTED GALLERY

At its Holiday Art Extravaganza, the recently relocated Eastman Gallery features more than 40 new, emerging, and established Houston-area artists exhibiting paintings, sculpture, glasswork, pottery, and jewelry. The opening reception is Dec. 6, 6 p.m. The exhibition opens on Dec. 8 and remains on view through Jan. 11. Eastman hosts an evening with the artists on Dec. 14, 6 p.m. 1110 N. Post Oak Rd., Suite 310. Details: 713/688-6969 • www.eastmangallery.com

3400 Montrose Blvd, Suite 207. More: www.htuc.org. ■



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Pooh stories, penned this yarn about a traditional English household thrown into turmoil when a man drops in. The information he shares with them nearly unravels everyone's painfully ordinary lives. \$20-\$35 (previews \$10). Through Dec. 23 at Main Street Theater-Rice Village, 2540 Times Blvd. Info/reservations: 713/524-6706, www.mainstreettheater.com, or www.ticketweb.com.

♦ **Saucy Jack and the Space Vixens.** Unhinged Productions presents this high-energy, electronic musical set in a futuristic cabaret. Melding the audience into the setting, the crowd is actually seated within the bar, making the raunchy score and intense atmosphere just a little more sensational, seedy, and titillating. Through Dec. 22 at Silver House Theatre, 1107 Chartres St. Info/reservations: www.u-p.org.

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

♦ **Arts of Korea Gallery.** The first and only gallery in the Southwest devoted to Korean art, this exhibition combines contemporary Korean art with traditional works. Opens December 8 at the Museum of Fine Art's Caroline Weiss Law Building, 1001 Bissonnet. Info: 713/639-7300 or www.mfah.org (en Español: 713/639-7379, TDD/TYY for the hearing impaired, call 713/639-7390).

♦ **The Buffalo Hunters.** Artist Eric Michael Jones' digital photographs are inspired by fairy tales and contemporary fiction. See if you can recognize anything from the Brothers Grimm. Compiled from numerous sources, a single body in one of Jones' digital works may have been assembled from multiple images. Through Dec. 21 at Art League Houston, 1953 Montrose Blvd. More info: 713/523-9530, alh@artleaguehouston.org, www.artleaguehouston.org, or www.ericmichaeljones.com.

♦ **Contemporary Conversations: Robert Ryman, 1976.** This exhibit focuses on a single year in the work of this minimalist painter. Using only square frames and white paint since 1958, Ryman turned to the way a painting exists in space and the materials used in placing a work on a wall. Through Feb. 17 at the Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. Info: 713/525-9400 or www.menil.org.

♦ **Devendra Banhart-Some Drawings.** Known mostly for his music, Banhart's small, fine-line ink drawings combine strange and sometimes beastly human and animal figures, ornamental framing devices, abstract symbols, and bits of language to create eccentric works that defy definition. Through Dec. 15 at Diverse Works, 1117 East Fwy. Info/reservations: 713/223-8346 or www.diverseworks.org.

♦ **Dr. Robert O. Fisch.** Holocaust survivor, doctor, and distinguished artist, Fisch presents illustrated works from two of his books. Free. Through Feb. 3 at the Holocaust Museum Houston's Laurie Milton Boniuk Research Center and Library, 5401 Caroline St. More information: 713/942-8000 or www.hmh.org.

♦ **Kirsten Hassenfeld.** The New York artist's new installation is a series of translucent hanging sculptures. The shapes, six to eight feet in diameter and reminiscent of the structure of crystals, are made from paper but possess an extravagant look. Free. Through Dec. 9 at Rice Gallery, Sewall Hall off campus entrance 1 at Main and Sunset Blvd. More info: 713/348-6069 or www.ricegallery.org.

♦ **Holiday Heroines.** Extraordinary women from three centuries are celebrated during the 2007 Yuletide event at Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens, the MFAH house museum. The central figure is Houston philanthropist Miss Ima Hogg, who lived at Bayou Bend from 1928 to 1957, when she gave the estate to the museum. Also celebrated are Dolley Madison, Harriet Beecher Stowe, poet Phillis Wheatley, Elizabeth Murray, and Sarah Kemble Knight. A variety of visiting options exist. Call or check online for details. \$10 adults; \$8.50 seniors/students; \$5 children 10-17. Through Dec. 30 at Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens, 1 Westcott Street at Memorial Drive. More info: 713/639-7750 or www.mfah.org/bayoubend. Reservations required: 713/639-7750.

♦ **Houston Wilderness.** Over 50 photographs offer unique interpretations of the diverse eco-regions that encompass and surround Houston. Through Jan. 6, 2008, at the Museum of Fine Art's Caroline Weiss Law Building, 1001 Bissonnet St. More info: 713/639-7300 or www.mfah.org (en Español: 713/639-7379, TDD/TYY for the hearing impaired, call 713/639-7390).

♦ **Lizards & Snakes: Alive!** Get close and intimate with a menagerie of scaly pals. Play peek-a-boo with the veiled chameleon, but don't simmer the Campbell's milk snakes. That's a no-no. \$15, \$12 for kids 3-11, students, and seniors. Through Jan. 6 at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr. Info/reservations: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

♦ **Lucy's Legacy: The Hidden Treasures of Ethiopia.** Meet Lucy, or at least what's left of her. The original fossilized remains of this 3.2 million-year-old hominid visit Houston. With 40 percent of her skeleton intact, Lucy's remains remain the oldest and most complete adult human ancestor fully retrieved from African soil. Over 100 artifacts illuminate the rich heritage of Lucy's homeland, including fossils, historical manuscripts, musical instruments, and implements of daily use to name a few. \$20 adults; \$12 kids (3-11)/seniors (62+)/college students. Through April 20 at the

Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr. More information: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

♦ **Mary Heilmann: To Be Someone.** Known as an "artist's artist" for her impassioned following among younger painters, Heilmann's abstract paintings and sculptures are influenced by popular culture and craft traditions. The retrospective features works from 1967 to the present. An accompanying video featuring a soundtrack with influential rock music explores the inspiration behind much of Heilmann's work. Through Jan. 6 at The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd. More information: 713/284-8250 or www.camh.org.

♦ **Morena Moderna: Virgin de Guadalupe.** Practically everyone knows her image. Some have seen it in person, most have seen it on clothing, tattoos, art, and the tailgates of pickups. Through a comprehensive collection of photographic images, see the reverence, expression, and emotion she evokes in so many people. \$9 adults; \$7 kids 3-11, seniors, and college students. Through April 23 at Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr. Info/reservations: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

♦ **Ornament as Art: Avant-Garde Jewelry from the Helen Williams Drutt Collection.** This collection showcases a broad array of national and international pieces from the 1960s through today. In addition to approximately 275 works of jewelry, the exhibit also holds drawings, watercolors, sketchbooks, and sculptural constructions of over 175 artists from 18 countries. Through Jan. 21 in the MFA's Audrey Jones Beck Building, 5601 Main. Info: 713/639-7300 or www.mfah.org (en Español: 713/639-7379, TDD/TYY for the hearing impaired, call 713/639-7390).

♦ **Otabenga Jones & Associates.** Four young African-American artists, who met as students at TSU, seek to address African-American identity politics through installation and performance art. Through Dec. 9 at the Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. More info: 713/525-9400 or www.menil.org.

♦ **A Rose Has No Teeth: Bruce Nauman's Formative Years.** Though Nauman is recognized today as one of the most innovative living artists today, there was, of course, a time when he had to develop his vision, struggling as an unknown. Such works in conceptual photography and sculpture are on exhibit. Through Jan. 13 at the Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. Info: 713/525-9400 or www.menil.org.

♦ **Through the Eye of the Needle: Fabric Art of Esther Nisenthal Krinitz.** While many Holocaust survivors have chosen to write their survival stories, at age 50, Esther Nisenthal Krinitz chose a unique medium—sewing. Trained as a dressmaker but untrained in art, Krinitz created 36 fabric pictures. Meticulously stitched words beneath the pictures provide a narrative, and vivid colors and detailed images bring a fascinating sense of realism to the cloth. Free. Through Feb. 10 at Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline. More info: 713/942-8000 or www.hmh.org.

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

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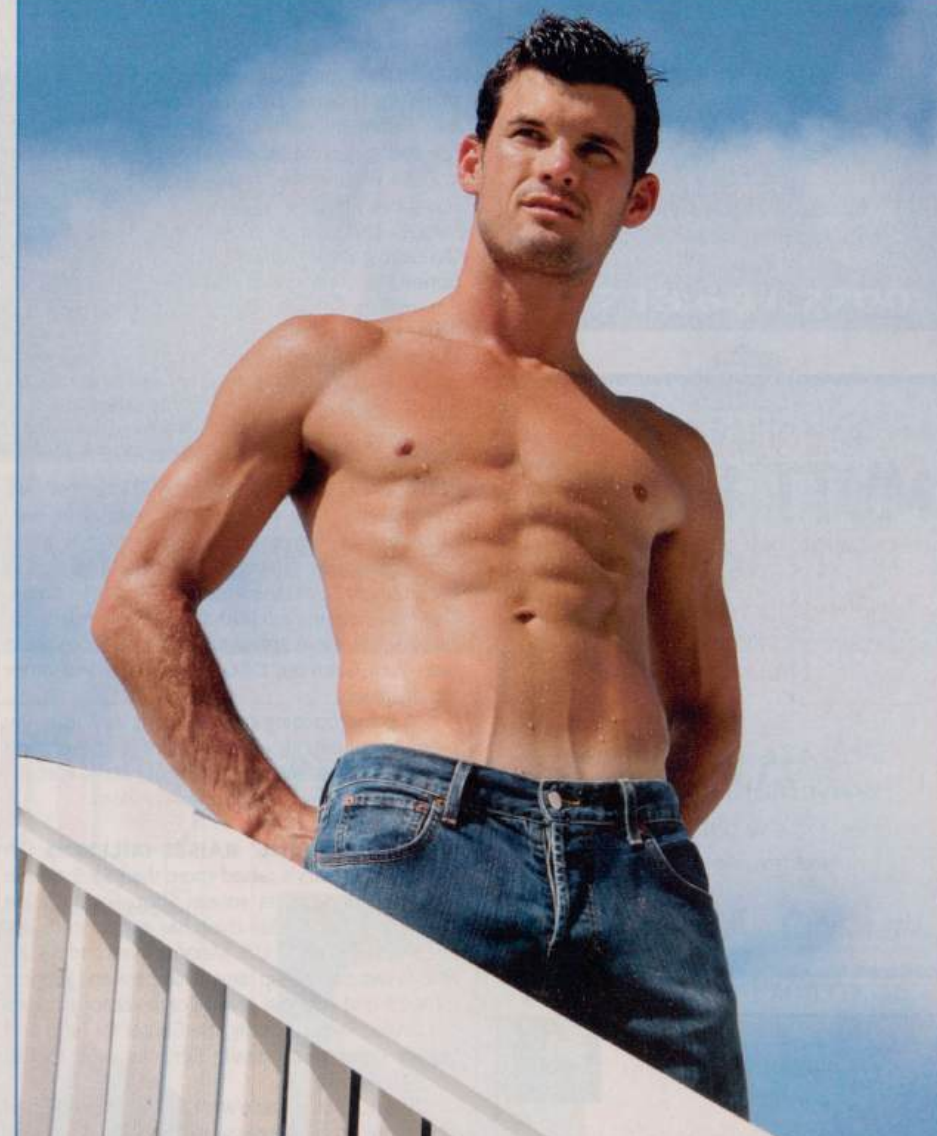
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Business News

by Nancy Ford

FIVE GOLDEN RINGS... Club owner Charles Armstrong and his Charles Armstrong Investments will host the annual Twelve Days of Christmas charitable event on December 18 at South Beach. At that reception, Armstrong presents donations for \$1,000 each to 12 community nonprofit organizations (list not announced by press time).

GO WEST Male UWear, Montrose's premier shop for men's unmentionables, has opened a second location at 6134 Westheimer, in the Briargrove Plaza. And don't forget: The annual Male UWear Big Basket drawing, benefiting Bering Omega Community Services, takes place December 20 at its Montrose location, 415 Westheimer, Suite 104. Details: 713/527-8499 • www.maleuwear.com.



Male UWear has opened a second location in Briargrove Center staffed by Jeremy Blake (l), Christian Smith (second from r) and manager Kyle Herring (far r). Tim Wilde (second from l) is Male UWear owner.

M2M MOVES Trendy clothier M2M Fashion will celebrate the new year in grand style at its new location and with a new name. Now known as M2M Style Lounge, the retailer moves to 3407 Montrose Blvd., directly across the street from its former home. The move means a 5,000-square-foot expansion, allowing for more space to house creations from Jean Paul Gauthier, D&G, Hugo Boss and other top designers.

"A grand opening celebration as well as many promotional events will take place in the coming months," says M2M owner Michael Malik. Details: 713/533-1699 • www.m2mfashion.com.

'CAUSE-SHOPPING' RAISES MILLIONS On October 13, Macy's raised more than \$9.5 million nationally through its annual Shop For A Cause charity event, the retail chain has announced. The event was held in all U.S. Macy's stores and on the Macy's website to help raise awareness and support for local and regional charity organizations across the United States. Locally, the Center for AIDS and Legacy Community Health Services were two of the beneficiaries.

"It is truly remarkable what can be accomplished when you partner the passion of local charity groups and the generosity of our customers with the reach and enthusiasm of an organization like Macy's," Macy's corporate marketing president Peter Sachse says. "That together we can make an impact of this magnitude in just one day serves as a catalyst and inspiration for future endeavors."

Details: www.macys.com.

VERY FRIENDLY SKIES Houston-based Continental Airlines has signed on as exclusive airline sponsor of New York City-based Out Professionals, the gay and lesbian networking group. The sponsorship combines cash support from Continental with in-kind contributions including airline tickets, according to Out Professionals president Michael Tracy.

With more than 1,200 members nationwide, Out Professionals celebrates its 25th year in 2008. Tracy reports that his group intends to establish

chapters next year in Texas, possibly Houston.

Details: www.continental.com • www.outprofessionals.org.

WORKPLACE PROTECTION Human Rights Campaign Foundation and the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce has released "Small Business Basics: How Small Businesses Can Create Fair

Workplaces for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Employees." The toolkit is a brand-new resource created to help small businesses provide equal benefits, employment protections, and an inclusive work environment for all their employees.

"Each day over 41 million Americans go to work at small businesses—which face unique challenges and opportunities in addressing diversity and inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender employees," says Joe Solmonese, HRC president. "By releasing this guide, we provide practical advice to fair-minded small-business owners so they can recruit and retain productive GLBT employees, as their big corporate competitors have done for years."

To download the guide, log on to www.hrc.org/about_us/small-business.asp.

WHICH ONE ARE YOU? A new study sponsored by New American Dimensions, LLC, and Asterix Group has revealed what motivates purchasing decisions of gays and lesbians.

"This landmark study reveals comprehensive, never-before-released information on the gay and lesbian demographic," says David Morse, president of New American Dimensions. "We have segmented the LGBT market in all its diversity, revealing a more detailed picture of the gay and lesbian customer, providing highly sought-after insights to mainstream advertisers."

To identify shopping habits, the study divides the gay and lesbian market demographic into five distinct segments, highlighting a wide range of lifestyles, values, and consumption preferences. The "Super Gays," the study says, are "educated, sophisticated, activists, and most likely male." "Habitats" are described as "serious, responsible, older," and "likely in a stable relationship." "Gay Mainstreamers" possess a "high gay identity," while maintaining a "conservative, low profile." "Party People" are "youthful, cutting edge" risk-takers who reside in big cities. Those in the "Closeted" category, the survey says, possess the "lowest gay identity," and are older and single.

The study also finds that more than 70 percent of gay and lesbian consumers are willing to spend more for products developed by companies that support the gay community.

Details: www.newamericandimensions.com/lgbt.

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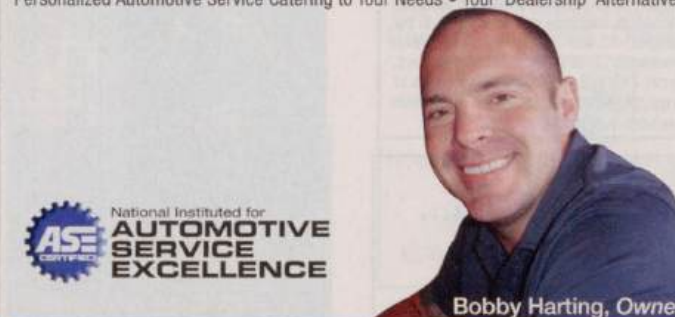
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We start the month with Mars retrograde. I know that many of you are accustomed to Mercury retrograde, but Mars retrograde is somewhat unfamiliar. Mars retrograde is a time to reconsider actions that we have taken in the past, a time for problems that have been on the back burner to come to the front so that they can be dealt with. Often, old anger comes to the surface. This is not a good time to start a new project because there usually isn't enough momentum to finish. Mars will go direct at the end of January, and our pal Mercury will be retrograde at that time. So we are stuck in a non-action time until February 23. Take a break from starting any new projects until then. • The Sun enters Capricorn on December 22, the first day of winter. Mercury enters Sagittarius on December 1 and eventually enters Capricorn ahead of the Sun on the 20th. Mars is moving through Cancer and reenters Gemini on the 31st. Jupiter enters Capricorn, a busy sign this month, on the 18th for the next year. Saturn goes retrograde on the 19th in Virgo. Uranus remains in Pisces, Neptune in Aquarius, and Pluto in Sagittarius.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). This is usually a very busy and active time, with you looking forward to the holidays. You are always ready for the celebrations and the traditional get-togethers. You certainly don't want to have too much work on your agenda for the first half of this month. Mars is retrograding through your area of family and home, so you may want to make sure that all of your holiday plans are fun so you can avoid arguments and disagreements that can arise with family. You will want holiday plans to take place at your house this year. Be careful, because about the time winter officially arrives, you could easily overload your schedule. Some of you are due for a career change. Keep your options open and get ready for some news in January.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). December brings a very introspective time when you look at the trust between you and those you consider the closest around you. You are seeking a deeper understanding so that you can regenerate your commitments in order to work with others while not worrying about hidden agendas. Prepare for some secrets to be revealed, as they should be. By the end of the month, you will be in a much more easygoing mood. Many of the problems that you face will have a positive resolution. Relationships can be especially beneficial during the holidays. If you are promoting your business, make sure your contacts are one on one. That will work best for you.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). As December begins, relationships are the primary thing on your to-do list. If they are doing well, this is a wonderful time to enhance that. If they are not, this is a great time to get some couple's therapy. If you are alone, then get out, girl, and make the best use of this time. Your sexual desires increase as we approach the holiday time. Maybe Santa will bring you something special. You are also doing a lot of nesting. One of your primary agenda items this year is making your home the place you want it to be. You could move, redecorate, or move somebody out. Clean out those emotional closets. It is that time of the year.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). With Mars, planet of action and response, moving retrograde through your sign this month, you are certainly not a person to be



SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). Happy Birthday to the Sagittarians. You have had quite a decade. Pluto, planet of major transition and change, is finally leaving your sign after 13 years. Jupiter has spent a year in your sign, regenerating your energy and giving you hope and faith once again after it had been lost. Now Saturn steps in to help you choose a clear and concise path to get your career and life back on track. So this birthday period is an especially significant one as you reexamine not only the past year but also the past 12 years. Where will you take your life and what areas will you focus on? Even more important, what areas will you eliminate from your life? Just start with what is broken and move on from there. The holidays have a celebratory feeling, in the sense that you have been reborn and that there is so much more for you to do.

ILLUSTRATION: DAVID EQUARDO FLORES PEREZ

messed with. You could easily be an angry crab if someone chose to irritate you. Nevertheless, this is a great month to deal with problems, especially those from your past. You are about to enter an especially busy period in your life. This has already partially begun. You should watch your commitments. You could easily overdo yourself, especially after January. Relationships are very active, and there will be an increase in your social life toward the end of the month.

LEO (July 23–August 22). You are feeling energetic, creative, and playful. This month is a great time for you to indulge your childlike, playful side. You are not very interested in work, but if you can combine play and work, this can be a very successful time. You are more intellectually creative and can find solutions to problems much easier. You are taking more care with your finances and making sure that you are more valued by those around you, including your boss and your clientele. Right after the holidays, work is about to be extra busy. In the earlier part of this month, try to get your work arena cleaned up. You won't have time when January gets here.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). As the month opens, home and family activity are the main concerns. You can expect to hear from family, especially those that you haven't heard from in a while. There could be lots of activity around your home. You could be the person having everyone over for the celebration or the person planning the activity. You also want to get your home in better shape. Your home environment could be expanding by having someone new come to live with you. Work is active, but you are not into drudgery right now. You want something new and exciting to draw out your passion and lure you back into your work. Organizational skills are returning with gusto.

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). You are speaking your mind this month and not being the usual peace-loving person that you are. You have had it, and you are willing to let everyone know about how you feel. Listing your injustices is very easy this month. This is a great month to break away from routines and really do something different. The holidays may call for tradition, but you are looking more to a vacation. Moving is a big possibility as the month comes to an end. This likelihood will actually increase as we get into next

year. Keep your holiday plans light, fun, and in several different locales so you won't get bored. Career opportunities open up with the beginning of the year.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). Focusing on money, your financial future, and how much you earn are the topics this month. You are feeling a bit restricted by your financial picture and are exploring ways to get out of this enigma that you are in. You are in a fairly creative time, even though some of your ideas may seem off the wall to others. Relationships are better for you after the 6th. Your magnetism is particularly strong, and you will be drawing others to you. By the holidays, you are ready to indulge in the tradition. This is a time for you to reconnect to your past. Seeing family and old friends will be good for you this year.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). Certainly, this is a time of rest and relaxation for you Seagoats. You should really enjoy it as much as you can. As Jupiter enters your sign for the next year, you are going to be extra busy. With that, this can be an excellent career year for you. So take some time to contemplate whether you are happy with your current position. If you are in the mood to change, that can easily happen with very positive results. With Mars retrograde in your relationship sector, relationships are not so easy. If there is a problem, expect your partner to bring it up about several thousand times until you have a talk and solve it. This is also a great time for renewal of those relationship commitments with some extracurricular activity. Keep your expectation for the holidays realistic, and you will have a good time.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). Time to get in touch with your groups, friends, and business associations. There is plenty of activity there for you, especially with the holiday time. You can make some great contacts for business or just for fun. You are in a chatty mood, and getting out and altering your schedule will give you some extra energy. You also can focus on getting your work place or home organized. This is a great time for some heavy-duty cleaning, if you like. With your charm on the increase after the 9th, business contacts will go well. By the end of the month, you are ready to spend time with those who mean the most to you. For the holidays, choose your family members carefully.

PISCES (February 19–March 20). You have moved into a serious mode and will stay there for the next couple of years. This month really pushes on your career stuff. If you are not happy, it will show. If you need to change, you will have plenty of impetus to do that. If you need to get your existing situation organized and more efficient, you will have plenty of vigor to complete that task. You may be more critical than usual. You are not as likely to let things pass as you used to. Clearly, you are saying how you feel and not burying it as you have in the past. Give others time to adjust to the new you. The holidays are a break from your serious mood, and you will be happy for it. Make sure you have contact with friends from the past. They will really perk up your mood.

Next month, look for Lilly Roddy's 2008 forecast, which will appear in our January issue. Read her annual forecast for this year, which appeared in our January 2007 issue ("Heavens To Lilly!"), at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

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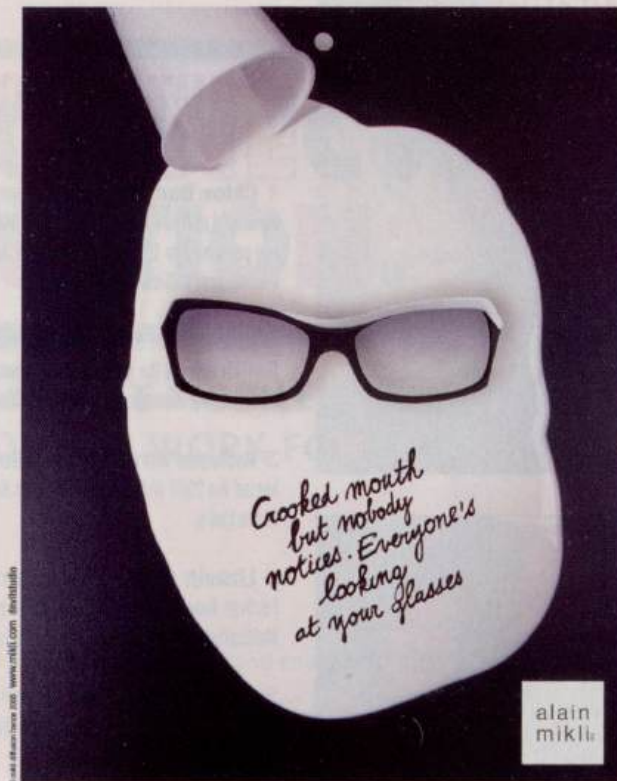
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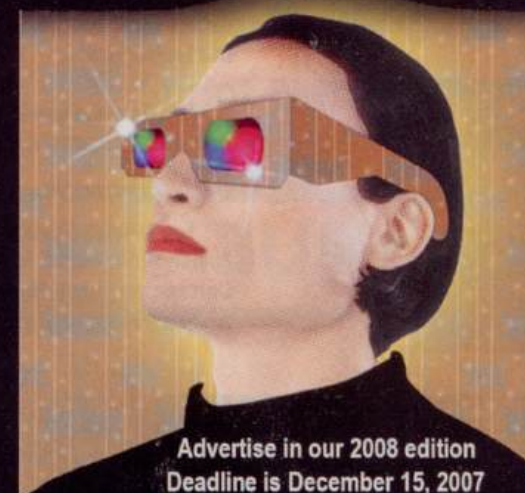
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OUT IN HOUSTON

1 Chloe Dao, second-season winner of Bravo's *Project Runway* and owner of Lot 8 in Rice Village, greeted **Kenneth Pursley** (r) after she performed in Main Street Theater's Autumn Follies Gala on Oct. 5 at the company's Chelsea Market theater.



2 Municipal Court Judge **Steve Kirkland** (l) and **Peggy Smith** enjoyed the goodies at the Chocolate Bar, the site of a fundraiser for Houston Equal Rights Alliance, October 25.



3 Mockingbird Bistro Wine Bar's **Violetta** and **John Sheely** hosted the 2007 Culinary Excellence in Houston Awards, held October 7 at the bistro.



4 **Lizbeth Ortiz** and **Marc Garcia** at the Day of the Dead Festival: Honoring Our Past & Celebrating Our Future held October 27 at Multicultural Education and Communication through the Arts (MECA).



5 Author **Wayne Besen** read from his new book, *Bashing Back*, at an October 25 gathering hosted by the Houston GLBT Community Center at Salud! Winery.



6 **Roland Strobel** (l), **Johan Everstijn**, and **Dane Powell** at Everstijn's 40th Birthday Competitive Wine Tasting event held at Strobel and Everstijn's home, Oct. 19.



7 On Oct. 27, costumed Houstonians (l-r) **Easy**, **Lavender**, **Fuschia**, and **Twinkle** posed at Undercurrent with Galveston Island Pride Festival entertainer **Pepper Mashay** (second from r), one of the headliners at the inaugural Galveston event.



8 **Michael Gonzalez** (l), special guest **James Getzlaff** from the Bravo series *Boy Meets Boy*, **Brad Odom**, and **Albert Garcia** celebrated national Coming Out Day with a party hosted by Pride Houston, October 6.



9 The multi-costumed hosts of the 29th annual Mystery Halloween Party enjoyed the highest of the gay high holy days at the Brazos River Bottom, Oct. 19.

PHOTOS: 1, JEFF FITLOW, MAIN STREET THEATRE; 2, 4, 6, 10, DALTON DEHART; 3, COURTESY MY TABLE; 5, 8, VIVIANE FEECE; 9, COURTESY PARTY HOSTS

10 **Eva Luchak** (l), **Gandhari Bouligny**, **Angela Taylor**, **Janie Miller**, **Michelle DeGraffenried**, **Kit Cutrone**, and **Susan Hedman** of Bayou City Women's Chorus performed in the Sing for the Cure concert, Oct. 23 at Jones Hall.



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