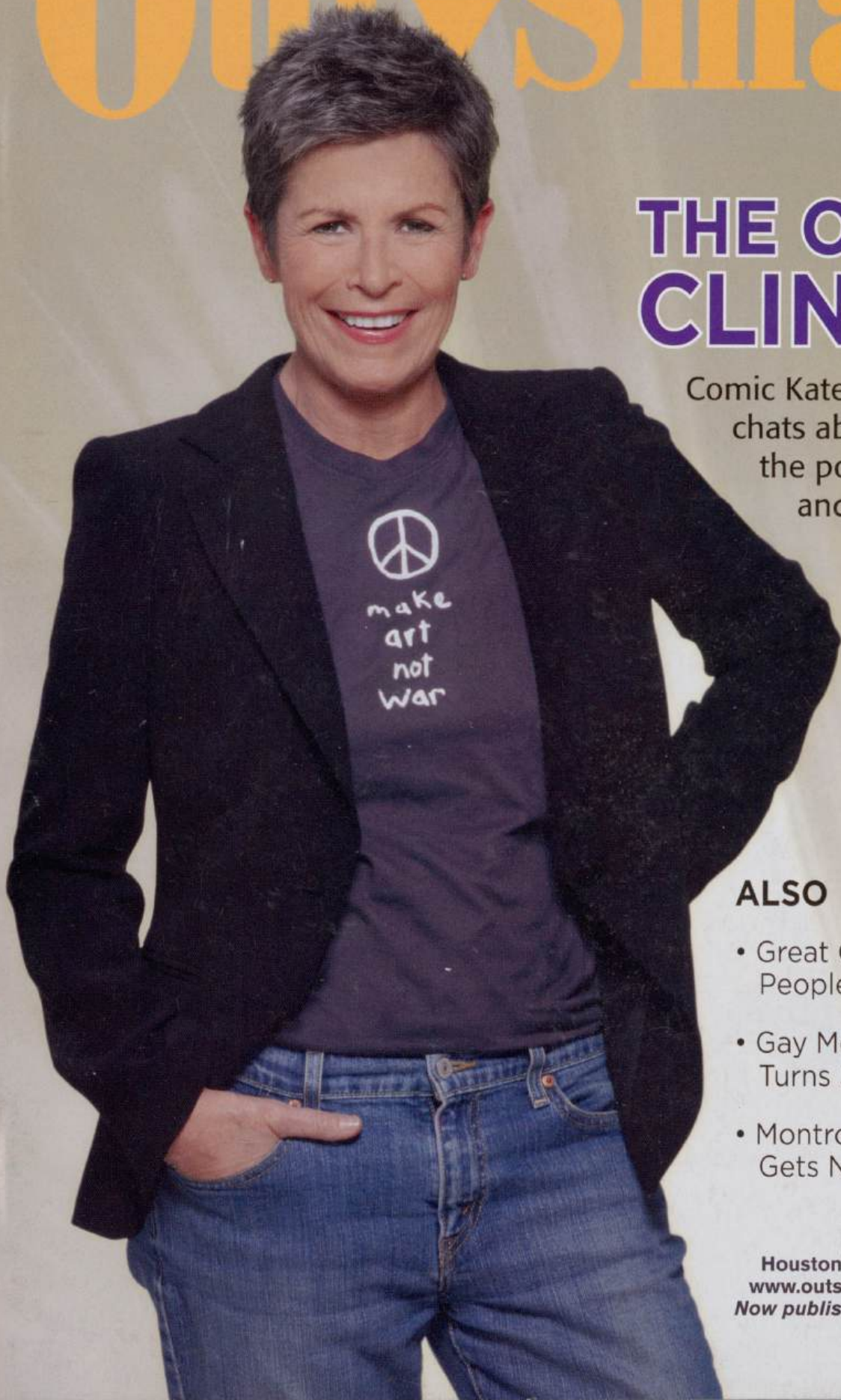


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CONTENTS

Vol. 15 • No. 6 • July 2008

News & Comment

- 10** Letters
- 16** News Briefs
- 25** **What a World** Is it hot enough for you?
- 29** **InsideOut** Banking on Houston.
- 30** **AIDS Watch** Learn to love your liver.
- 86** **OutLoud** Cheers.

Features

- 12** **OutFront** Tamarie Cooper returns, Bethel UCC at 90.
- COVER STORY 32** **Kate Clinton** She still has a lot to quip about.
- 39** **Bayou City Songbirds** Three melodic decades of gay choral music, and counting.
- 43** **Here She Stands** Grace Lutheran Church welcomes a new minister.
- 46** **Hot T-Shirt Mess** HRC benefits from Project Runway design.
- 48** **Gay in Galveston** OutSmart's annual guide to all things Island.

Arts & Entertainment

- 60** **Queer Quotes** Chris Matthews' man crush, Billy Crystal's vision, and more.
- 62** **DVDs** *I'm Not There*, *Ab Fab* and *Soap* collections, and more.
- 66** **Television** A chat with *Sordid Lives* writer, Del Shores.
- 70** **Movies** *Mamma Mia!* and *No Regret*.
- 72** **GrooveOut** A gay Broadway parody, Katy Perry, Alanis Morissette, and more.
- 78** **ReadOut** Don Roos is one of the directors interviewed in *The View from Here*.

Out & About

- 92** Calendar
- 102** Bar/Club Guide
- 104** SignOut
- 106** SceneOut

Advertisers Index

- 96** Business News
- 98** Classified
- 100** OutSmart Advertisers



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About the cover:
Comedian Kate Clinton (see page 32)
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Letters

BAND OF PRIDE

I just read the feature article on the band, and words cannot begin to express my delight with and appreciation of the article ["Let the Music Play" by Nancy Ford, June 2008]. I, along with the Houston Pride Band board and all band members—past and present—want to thank *OutSmart*, wholeheartedly, for placing such a bright, positive light on our organization and the upcoming anniversary concert.

The Houston GLBT community is truly fortunate to have a voice such as *OutSmart* to speak for and about us.

Many, many thanks,
Rudy Martinez
Marketing Director, Houston Pride Band
Houston, Texas

MORE BAND NOTES

In 1984, many members [of the Houston band] joined Dallas' Oak Lawn Symphonic Band to fly to Los Angeles and perform in the Hollywood Bowl. That has always been the biggest thrill I had from the band.

Elroy Forbes
Houston Pride Band
Founder, Tubas of Death
Houston, Texas

DADDIES DEAREST

Loved the gay dads story by Jack Berger ["Happy Father's Day," June 2008]. Great stuff!

Randy K. Holland
Houston, Texas

PASTORAL PRIORITIES

I don't get it. Just because a group of whatever sort (doesn't have to be gay—any type of self-made "group") says that they want to meet with a pastor on a particular date, he is supposed to do so? ["News Briefs," June 2008.] What if he already has something going on? A parent's birthday, a child's baseball game—whatever.

Is a pastor just supposed to stop life and honor this day that these people have created? To what purpose is this happening?

Jay Bakker and his church are the only ones who stand to gain attention. And if these churches don't notice them, then they are in the wrong.

A bit arrogant, if you ask me.

Beth Webb
Houston, Texas

CORRECTION

In the story about the Houston Pride Band ("Let The Music Play," June 2008), Yvonne Feece photographed "Young man with a horn" on page 85, and Dalton DeHart photographed "Music makers" on page 88. *OutSmart* regrets the error.

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Photographed by George Hixson



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HOLY ANNIVERSARY!

When the congregation that is now Bethel United Church of Christ was founded in 1918, its location on Shepherd (called Brunner at the time) was at the far western edge of Houston. After nine decades, Bethel now finds itself at the heart of one of the fastest developing sections of the city. Bethel, which began its life as a Lutheran church, in recent years joined the UCC, one of the few Protestant denominations that fully embraces gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people, support that includes the endorsement of marriage rights for same-sex couples. On July 27, the parishioners of Bethel UCC celebrate the 90th anniversary of the congregation with a day of worship and activities, concluding with the dedication of a 23-rank pipe organ followed by a recital. Details: www.bethelhouston.org. Ruth Ann Ethridge, who has been a Bethel member for seven years, is one of many GLBT people who attend the church. Ethridge also leads the social action committee at Bethel.

Photographed
by Yvonne Feece



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STATE POLITICAL PARTIES ADOPT DIVERGENT PLATFORM FOR TEXAS' GAY CITIZENS

Texas' major political parties both met in June to hammer out details of their parties' aspirations as the November presidential election approaches.

Convened June 12-14 at George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, members of the Texas Republican Party upheld antigay language in the 2008 state Republican platform. The document addresses homosexuality under the heading, "Celebrating Traditional Marriage," stating:

"We believe that the practice of homosexuality tears at the fabric of society, contributes to the breakdown of the family unit, and leads to the spread of dangerous, communicable diseases. Homosexual behavior is contrary to the fundamental, unchanging truths that have been ordained by God, recognized by our country's founders, and shared by the majority of Texans. Homosexuality must not be presented as an acceptable 'alternative' lifestyle in our public education and policy, nor should 'family' be redefined to include homosexual 'couples.' We are opposed to any granting of legal special entitlements, refuse to recognize, or grant special privileges including, but not limited to: marriage between persons of the same sex (regardless of state of origin), custody of children by homosexuals, homosexual partner insurance or retirement benefits. We oppose any criminal or civil penalties against those who oppose homosexuality out of faith, conviction, or belief in traditional values."

Regarding Texas sodomy statutes, struck down as unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2003, the platform states:

"We oppose the legislation of sodomy. We demand that Congress exercise its authority granted by the U.S. Constitution to withhold jurisdiction from the federal courts from cases involving sodomy."

Regarding adoption, the platform states: "We oppose mandatory open adoption and adoption by homosexuals."

Texas' state Democratic Party also held its state convention last month. During the weekend of June 6-8, Texas Democrats adopted a party platform in Austin, that nowhere contained the words "homosexual" or "homosexuality," stating: "We believe in equal opportunity for all Texans."

The Democratic state platform also calls for the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and

supports "the right of all military personnel to serve without discrimination, sexual abuse, or prejudice."

Regarding child protection and foster care, Texas Democrats' platform states:

"We oppose discrimination in the state foster care system. We support child protection programs that provide safe, secure environments for our children."

In a section designated "Rights and Freedoms," the Texas Democratic platform states: "Texas Democrats believe all people possess inalienable rights that are protected by freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution, which places responsibility on our government to protect and defend those freedoms just as those freedoms place responsibilities on us as individuals. We believe in and support equal opportunity and equal protection before the law for all people; full protection of civil and human rights; freedom from government interference in our private lives and personal decisions; and freedom of religion and individual conscience. Democrats believe our Constitution is intended to prohibit discrimination in all forms. Republicans wish to make it a tool of discrimination. To protect our rights and freedoms, we support action against all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment."

POLITICAL CAUCUS MAKES EARLY ENDORSEMENTS FOR NOVEMBER ELECTION

Following a meeting of its political action committee held June 4, the Houston GLBT Political Caucus announced a special early slate of endorsed candidates for the November 4, 2008, election.

Candidates receiving support from the caucus based on their favorable stance on equality include Rick Noriega, United States Senate; Michael Skelly, U.S. Congressional District 7; Vince Ryan, County Attorney; Brad Bradford, District Attorney; David Minberg, County Judge; Adrian Garcia, County Sheriff; Diane Trautman, County Tax Assessor-Collector; Loren Jackson, District Clerk; Kristi Thibaut, State Representative District 133; Ellen Cohen, State Representative District 134; Ginny McDavid, State Representative District 138; and Hubert Vo, State Representative District 149.

Maria Gonzalez, vice president of the caucus, explained the endorsements were made early so the group could spend the summer

months focusing on legislative priorities.

"By endorsing these candidates early, we will be block-walking and phone-banking in their districts this summer working to get them elected this fall," said Gonzalez.

Gonzalez said more endorsements are to come. "This is just a partial initial endorsement slate. We will endorse the rest of our slate at our usual August endorsement meeting."

The caucus is actively recruiting volunteers to work on its focused campaign this summer. The caucus meets the first Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. The monthly meeting is held at the Havens Center, 1827 W. Alabama. Details: 713/521-1000 • www.thecaucus.org.

FORMER SENATOR SAM NUNN FLIP-FLOPS ON ANTIGAY MILITARY POLICY

Former U.S. Senator Sam Nunn said in late June that he believes it is time to revisit the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law which bans lesbians, gays, and bisexuals from serving openly in the military. Nunn, one of the principal lawmakers responsible for the passage of the 1993 law, stated: "I think [when] 15 years go by on any personnel policy, it's appropriate to take another look at it—see how it's working, ask the hard questions, hear from the military. Start with a Pentagon study."

According to Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), 143 House members have already taken a look at the policy and responded by cosponsoring HR 1246, the bill to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

"It's a bit of a stretch for Senator Nunn to now suggest a Pentagon study when one was done by the Rand Corporation in 1993 and whose findings were totally at odds with the proposed 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' law," said Aubrey Sarvis, executive director of Servicemembers Legal Defense Network. "Unfortunately, Senator Nunn rejected that study and instead gave us 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.'"

Since its implementation in 1993, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" has resulted in the dismissal of more than 12,000 men and women from the armed forces. The cost to U.S. taxpayers for maintaining the ban is estimated at more than \$363 million.

Nunn is said to be on a short list of potential running mates for Democratic presidential hopeful Senator Barack Obama.

continued on page 18

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WOMEN DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED BY 'DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL'

Service members Legal Defense Network has released new data showing that while women make up approximately 15 percent of the armed forces, they account for nearly half of all "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" discharges from the Army and Air Force. The law forbidding openly gay Americans from military service has always disproportionately affected women, but the 2007 data shows a significant increase in the ban's impact.

"Women make up 15 percent of the armed forces, so to find they represent nearly 50 percent of Army and Air Force discharges under 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' is shocking," said SLDN executive director Aubrey Sarvis. "'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' is often used as a weapon of vengeance against service members. Women in particular have been caught in the crosshairs of this counterproductive law."

In fiscal year 2007 women accounted for 14 percent of the Army's active duty force while making up 46 percent of DADT discharges compared to 2006 when women represented 17 percent of the Army and made up 35 percent of DADT discharges. Similarly, 2007 data from the Air Force shows women are 20 percent of the force but made up 49 percent of DADT discharges.

Separation data shows the number of overall discharges under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" have fallen by 50 percent since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the beginning of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Meanwhile, the military's need for qualified and experienced personnel continues to grow. The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee recently released data showing the Army has doubled

the number of waivers it grants to recruits convicted of violent felonies including manslaughter, rape, and kidnapping. In an attempt to meet personnel goals, Pentagon leaders have relaxed enlistment standards regarding age, physical fitness, education, and criminal records.

POLICE ABUSE OF TRANS WOMAN PROMPTS CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

Released in June, a video out of Memphis, Tennessee, clearly shows a police officer abusing Duanna Johnson while she was held in the Shelby County Criminal Justice Center. Johnson is a transgender woman, and had been arrested on a charge of prostitution.

Surveillance video of the incident shows an unidentified officer hitting Johnson several times with handcuffs wrapped around his knuckles, as another officer holds Johnson's shoulders as she tries to protect herself. Johnson was also maced and called "faggot" and "he-she." The FBI investigation into possible civil rights violations is ongoing.

CONGRESS EXAMINES RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH PROTECTION ACT

In June, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (H.R. 5524), which connects youth to family reunification programs, outreach workers on the streets, emergency shelter, longer-term housing, and myriad additional support systems, including workplace preparation, education, health and behavioral health services, and other opportunities to ensure the safety and well-being of this vulnerable population.

"LGBT youth make up a disproportionate number of runaway and homeless youth, as many as 40 percent. It is a national disgrace that

continued on page 20



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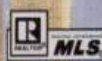


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News Briefs continued from page 18

youth are turned out of their homes and communities based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. These homeless youth deserve the same safety, food, shelter, access to education, and opportunity to a bright future that is the right of every child," said Rea Carey, acting executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund.

The Senate is expected to consider companion legislation (S. 2982) later this summer, reauthorizing the program for an additional five years.

In fiscal year 2007, runaway and homeless youth programs served more than 740,000 youth in crisis situations.

MARTIN AND LYON WED (AGAIN) IN CALIFORNIA

With even more reason to rejoice during Pride Month, same-sex couples celebrated marriage equality in California when, on June 17, same-sex couples were able to begin legally marrying in that state.

Leading the charge to the altar were lesbian equal rights pioneers Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, who were wed by San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom in a private ceremony at San Francisco City Hall. Thousands of other committed couples followed suit by holding or planning their own wedding celebrations.

"Del and Phyllis, pioneering activists now in their 80s, were the first couple to be married in San Francisco as same-sex marriages became legal in California," said Rea Carey, acting executive director, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

"From Sonoma to San Francisco to San Diego, these loving couples, their families, and friends are participating in a poignant and time-honored tradition. This is a momentous time not only for these couples, but for California and the entire country as well.

"We wish each and every one of these newlyweds much joy and happiness in their marriages."

The legislation also recognizes the legality of same-sex marriages performed in locations other than California.

Martin and Lyon were originally wed in February 2004 when Mayor Newsom issued marriage licenses to same-sex couples. California courts annulled the unions four months later, a move struck down as unconstitutional in the May 2008 decision.

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

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


Truvada 

200 mg emtricitabine • tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg

TRUVADA is the #1 Prescribed HIV Med*

TRUVADA does not cure HIV infection or prevent passing HIV-1 to others.

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.

TRUVADA must be used as part of combination therapy. TRUVADA should not be used with ATRIPLA® (efavirenz 600 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate [DF] 300 mg), VIREAD® (tenofovir DF), EMTRIVA® (emtricitabine), Combivir® (lamivudine/zidovudine), Epivir® or Epivir-HBV® (lamivudine), Epzicom® (abacavir sulfate/lamivudine), or Trizivir® (abacavir sulfate/lamivudine/zidovudine).

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:

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

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

- 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
- 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 TRUVADA and other anti-HIV medicines.

The most common side effects of the medicines in TRUVADA when taken with other anti-HIV medicines are dizziness, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, headache, 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® or Videx® EC (didanosine), Reyataz® (atazanavir sulfate), or Kaletra® (lopinavir/ritonavir) with TRUVADA

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

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

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*Based on data from PHAST retail monthly data; September 2005–January 2008; 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: to 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 any 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-30-10761 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

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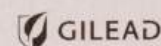
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by Annise D. Parker

SAVING OURSELVES

Bank on Houston program keeps money where it belongs

It's time to declare war on the predatory, high-cost payday loan companies and check-cashing stores that are draining \$70 million a year out of the struggling economies of our poorest neighborhoods. In my final term as Houston City Controller, I am working with other leaders on several economic development initiatives that will help stabilize families and individuals on the financial edge, strengthen neighborhood businesses, and improve our economy.

The first is Bank on Houston, a collaborative effort to bring people without bank accounts—including some of the poor, working poor, and those with bad credit—into the financial mainstream by helping unbanked residents open free starter checking accounts. This effort could have a multimillion-dollar economic impact on the Houston economy without costing Houston taxpayers a cent.

Remember when opening a savings account was a rite of passage for just about every child? Parents and child, with piggy bank in hand, would head down to the neighborhood bank or credit union and open a savings account. Each gift of money from grandparents, aunts, and uncles was

This effort could have a multi-million-dollar economic impact on the Houston economy without costing Houston taxpayers a cent.

recorded in that little passbook the child received upon opening his or her new account. It was exciting to watch the balance grow year to year.

This was how many of the Baby Boom children of depression-era parents were introduced to the banking system and the importance of safeguarding their personal

finances. Unfortunately, in many families, this is not the case because of cultural or perceived economic barriers or past problems with bank accounts.

An analysis conducted by the city's Planning and Development Department found as many as 51 percent of residents in the low-income African-American and Latino-dominated neighborhoods that ring the north, east, and south sides of downtown do not have bank accounts and are victims of the second-tier predatory financial system. It is estimated these residents pay \$70 million each year in fees to non-bank check cashers and payday lenders. In addition to high fees, residents without bank accounts do not have safe places to keep money. They carry it in their pockets or stash it under the mattress at home, often becoming robbery targets.

We had a firsthand look at some of these issues in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. →

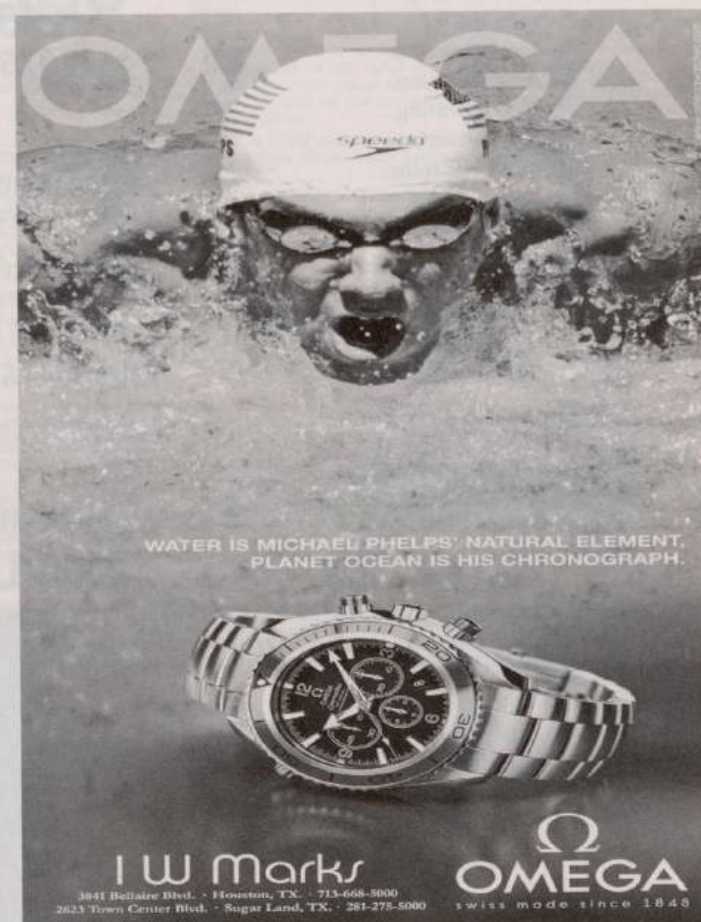


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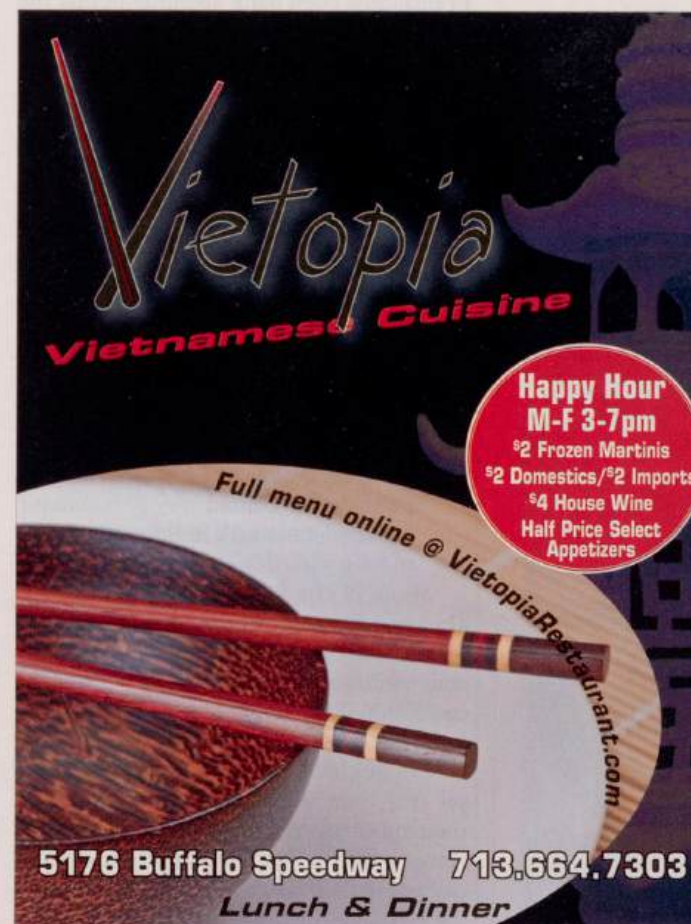


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InsideOut continued from page 26

Many of the evacuees who were trapped in the city were unbanked, literally losing their financial nest eggs to the floodwaters. But once the water receded, a new problem became apparent. Many of the evacuees were receiving disability or child support payments. Some were awaiting desperately needed final paychecks from struggling companies. Those checks stacked up in the New Orleans Post Office with no forwarding address. Had they been direct deposited to a bank account they would have been available almost immediately from anywhere in the country.

If we can connect these folks to banks, they will be able to keep more of their hard-earned dollars in their pockets. If we can connect these folks to banks, they can begin to build wealth and financial security because they will have a critical component of a credit history, which will open up access to mortgages and other tools of asset building.

My partners in this effort are the City of Houston; the FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.); the National League of Cities; the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, Houston Branch; and local banks and credit unions. The program is modeled after the very successful Bank on San Francisco effort that helped more than 11,000 unbanked San Franciscans open bank accounts in just the first year after its 2005 launch. More than 40 banks and credit unions, including Wachovia Bank, Bank of America, Washington Mutual, and JPMorgan Chase, have joined Bank on Houston. A steering committee will be selected to develop the Houston Account. I envision:

- No monthly minimum balance requirements;
- Bounce-proof features that lower the likelihood of overdrafts;
- Acceptance of alternative identification, such as Consular ID cards;
- Financial literacy training for those with bad credit histories. We are enlisting groups like Neighborhood Centers, the United Way of Houston, and Houston Asset Building Coalition to help with this component.

Many of the banks and credit unions already offer starter and second-chance accounts. What we will bring is a comprehensive and coordinated marketing campaign and the community-based organizations that already know and work with the target markets.

Studies have shown that people who are set free from the shackles of payday loan companies, pawn shops, and check-cashing stores spend a significant portion of their savings in their neighborhoods. Research by the Brookings Institute found that a full-time

worker without a checking account could save as much as \$40,000 during his or her career by utilizing a low- or no-cost checking account instead of check-cashing services.

Bank on Houston can help address the cycle of debt that keeps the working poor and those with higher incomes but bad credit from building savings and assets. In the process we will strengthen Houston's long-term economic vitality. That will benefit us all.

New Phone Numbers

The city is upgrading its antiquated 20-year-old phone system and must change most city government phone numbers. Old phone numbers are designed to roll over to the new ones for about three months. If you have trouble reaching an office, please dial 311. The Controller's Office new main phone number is 832/393-3460. My email remains the same, annise.parker@cityofhouston.net.

Annise D. Parker is Houston's third-term city controller and one of 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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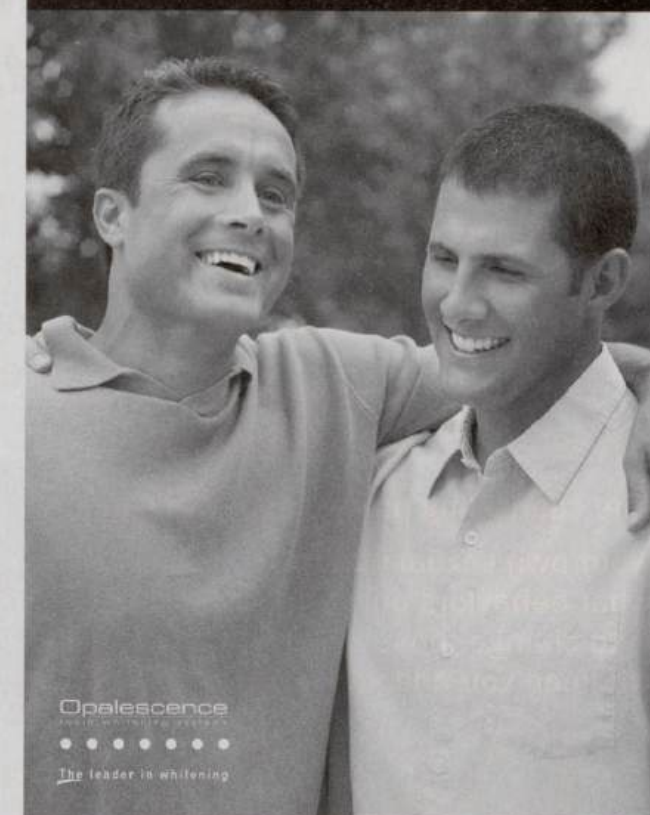
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FILTER FACTS

There must be 50 ways to lose your liver

In an old skit on *Saturday Night Live*, Dan Ackroyd portrayed chef Julia Childs cutting up a chicken. Throughout the bit, "she" encouraged us to "Save the liver!" Julia was so right. The liver, largely unheralded, is vital to our good health and even our survival.

The liver is both the largest internal organ in the body and the largest gland. In most adults, it is about the size of a football, and it is located on the right side of the upper abdomen. The liver plays a major role in metabolism, digestion, and blood clotting, and it performs about 500 other functions as well.

To give you some idea of how important that smooth, triangular, brown piece of meat (and I'm not referring to Mario Lopez) is to our health, consider this. Without a functioning liver, a person will usually die within 24 hours!

The liver can be damaged by alcohol abuse, overdose of certain medications, in-

gestion of, or exposure to, various chemicals, and viral infection. Currently, we know of six (and possibly seven) viruses that can lead to hepatitis, but three viruses cause the overwhelming majority of hepatitis cases in the U.S.

Hepatitis A Virus (HAV) is transmitted via a fecal-oral route, most often by consumption of contaminated food or water. But be aware, it can also be transmitted by unprotected oral-anal sex. Don't give someone a rim job without placing plastic wrap, a dental dam or some sort of barrier between your mouth and your partner's anus. The good news is that this virus causes an acute form of hepatitis, which lasts less than six months. It does not lead to a chronic infection and, thus, does not result in permanent liver damage.

Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) infection can cause both acute and chronic hepatitis. About 15 percent of people infected with this virus develop chronic hepatitis. As you

might imagine, chronic hepatitis is the more serious course of the illness, as long-term infection can lead to cirrhosis or scarring of the liver, liver cancer, and even complete liver failure. Like HIV, the hepatitis B virus lives in the blood and sexual fluids of the infected person and is transmitted in the same ways that HIV is transmitted, through unprotected sex, sharing needles for drug use, tattooing, or body piercing, and breastfeeding. There is even risk of transmission from exposure to blood on razors, toothbrushes, or other personal hygiene devices.

Hepatitis C Virus (HCV), originally called non-A, non-B hepatitis, was not identified until 1989. It is estimated that four million Americans are now infected with hep C, four times more than are living with HIV/AIDS! This virus is transmitted by blood-to-blood contact through blood transfusions received before 1992, needle-sharing, and even sexual activity if blood is

present. This infection can remain asymptomatic for 10 to 20 years, but often leads to chronic hepatitis.

In the early stage of acute hepatitis, one may experience symptoms like fatigue, fever, muscle and joint aches, and nausea. Later symptoms include jaundice or yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes, dark urine, and light-colored stool.

With chronic hepatitis (an infection lasting longer than six months), there are often no symptoms for many years. Once symptoms do appear, they often mimic the symptoms of acute hepatitis. Fatigue is by far the most common symptom, but persons with chronic hepatitis often report a feeling of pressure or pain below the right ribs. This is an indication of an enlarged liver.

The recommended treatment varies depending upon the virus one is infected with, the genotype of that virus, and whether the infection is acute or chronic. In short, the treatment for an acute hepatitis is no treatment. Just rest and let the infection run its course.

There are six FDA-approved treatment options for chronic hep B, including interferon and some anti-viral medications used to treat HIV, such as lamivudine. For chronic hep C, virus levels can often be reduced through a combination of interferon and the antiviral drug, ribavirin. However, it should be noted that certain genotypes of HCV do not respond well to treatment. In particular, genotype 1 is more resistant to therapy than other HCV genotypes.

For persons infected with HIV, it is important that they discuss hepatitis with their medical providers. There are vaccines to protect against infection with HAV and HBV, and it is strongly recommended that persons living with HIV/AIDS be vaccinated in order to prevent co-infection with HIV and hep. However, no vaccine exists for HCV at this time.

And if you have HIV and are already co-infected with HBV or HCV, there are important things to consider. Most studies suggest that viral hepatitis does not directly accelerate the progression of HIV disease, but HBV and HCV do appear to progress more rapidly in persons infected with HIV.

But do not despair! Positive treatment outcomes are possible for both diseases. However, the management of HIV/HBV or HCV co-infection can be complex, so seek out physicians who have experience with both diseases. And "save the liver!"

Kelly A. McCann is the chief executive officer of AIDS Foundation Houston. For testing information: AFH's Prevention Services Department at 713/623-6796 or visit www.aidshep.org.

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Genital warts are caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), which is the same virus responsible for cervical cancer in women. These warts can occur in the anal canal and perianal area, especially in individuals who engage in ano-receptive intercourse. Left untreated anal warts can grow larger and become **cancer** in some cases. Anal warts are difficult to **cure**, since once the virus infects the skin cells they are impossible to eliminate. Warts can be treated with topical medication, office procedures and/or surgery based on size and location. **Regular examinations** and treatment can keep this annoying and potentially dangerous problem in check.

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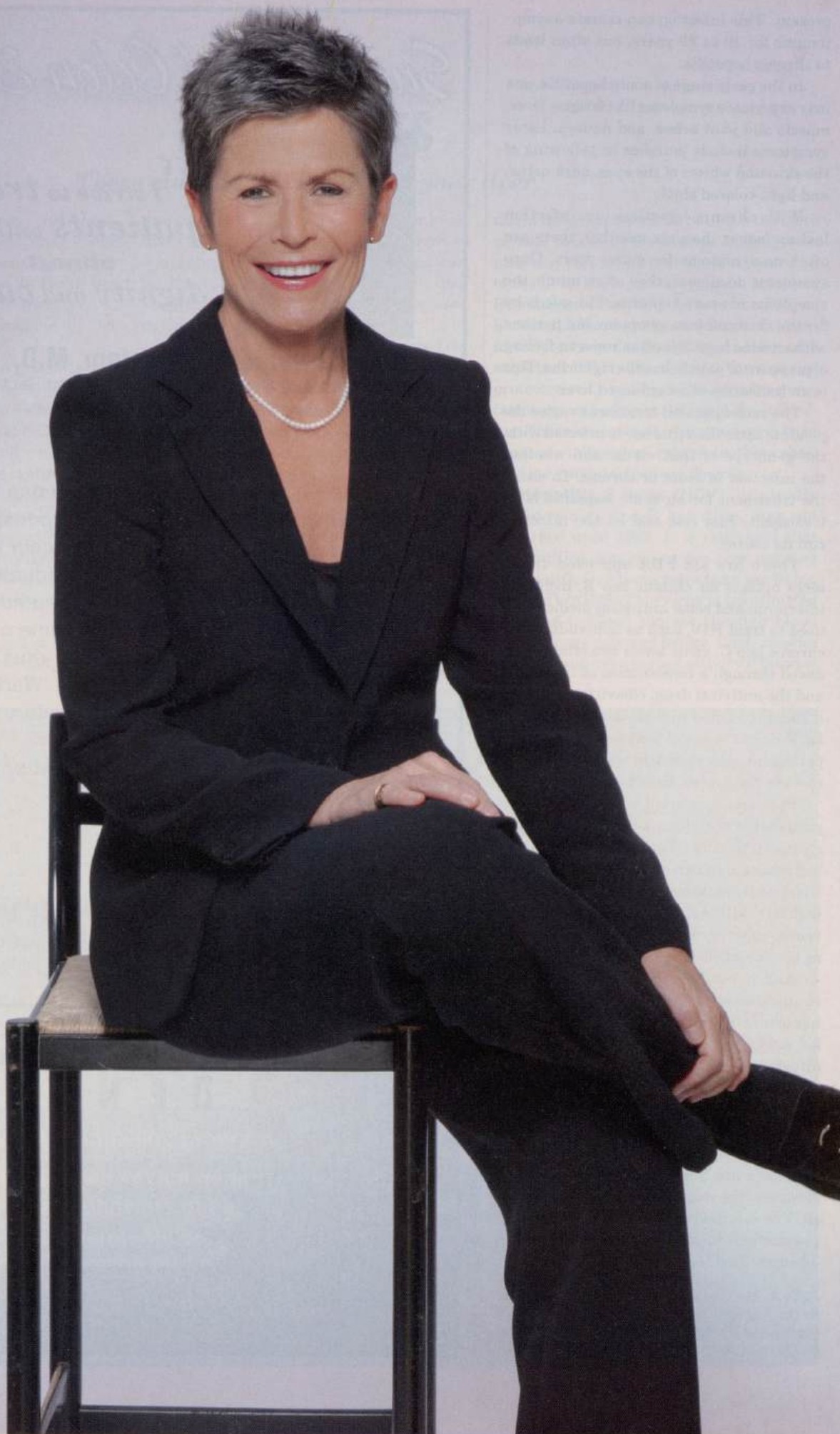
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Seriously Though, Folks

Straight talk—more or less—from comedian Kate Clinton

by Nancy Ford

Photo by David Rodgers

There's a lot to talk about."

That's how author, performer, and dynamic 27-year veteran of queer stand-up comedy, Kate Clinton, explains her apparently unceasing flow of material. Accordingly, the Queen Mum of gay comedy has just released her eighth CD, this one called *Climate Control*, which she is promoting between appearances with Cyndi Lauper's second True Colors tour.

"We used to call them albums, you may remember," the sexy sexagenarian quips.

With barely a moment to catch her breath, she's already on to the next tour, bittersweetly titled *Hilarity Clinton '08*.

"You can tell people are not careful readers," this former teacher says, an educator's scrutiny still popping through. "They see my button and they're like, 'Ewww!'"

"Read carefully," she implores. "Look beyond."

Peppering her wisdom with her famed wit, Clinton recently chatted remarkably seriously with *OutSmart* from her home in New York City. Among the hot topics on her mind: presidential politics, the environment, how the recent experience of another Clinton re-lit a fire under her feminism, and why she believes the children are our future.

Nancy Ford: Interesting that your new CD is called *Climate Control*. As you know, I'm calling from Texas, and hurricane season is here. What's in your hurricane evacuation kit?

Kate Clinton: Batteries.

[Long pause] That's it?

[Both laugh] Actually, I do have a terrorist kit here in New York, but the problem is, we keep chipping from it. We had cash; I should really check on how much is left. **[She improvises a domestic scene between herself and her partner, esteemed author/activist, Urvashi Vaid.]** "The delivery guy's here, do you have any cash?" "I don't have any cash. Go to the thing."

We changed the bottled water and batteries, of course. And for my dear girlfriend, sanitary products. She still needs them, poor thing!

Bless her heart!

I know. I try to have sympathy. She says, "I have cramps!" and I say, "Yes, I remember

that. Bwahahaha!"

So that's in our kit. I'm ready. On the album before this, I have tips for people and their terrorist kits. Mostly to help them freshen up.

What are they saying about the hurricane season?

They seem to say every year that this year is going to be worse than the last one.

Whoever "they" are.

Exactly. The Royal They. I haven't seen evidence of it yet, so we'll see what happens. It's not a pretty thing, trying to get five million Houstonians out of town in the same afternoon.

Yes, and the poor Midwest. Iowa is under water.

[Sarcastically] What global warming?

Oh my God. Get rid of him!

What are your recommendations on how to save the earth?

It starts at home. Stop taking long showers. Turn the lights off. Do we really need to run that air conditioner all the time? Do things like absolutely separating your trash. Although, when Giuliani was mayor, we'd do our careful separation and they just dumped it in one thing! **[She laughs, but not sincerely.]**

I've been reading a terrifying book. Wonderful and terrifying, but it's so informative. It's called *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan. It is brilliant. It starts with a meal and works backwards. What I know now about corn-fed cattle! I haven't eaten a burger since, let's put it that way.

I'm sure we would be horrified.

I'm sure the younger generation is all over it. And rightfully so. We just have to each of us do our part, even though Dick Cheney said that wouldn't make any difference.

Bless his heart. Or whatever is in his chest cavity now.

Exactly. →



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Seriously Though, Folks continued from previous page

Well, you're certainly doing your part, in terms of comedically addressing the problem on your CD. We know the best way to get any idea across is to make people laugh while thinking.

Thank you! Well, I think people can do both—laugh and think. Actually, I mostly want to make people laugh. Absolutely. I don't want to get away from that, because I find that pure pleasure. Pure pleasure. But if they walk away and they're thinking and talking—or disagreeing—that's even better.

Imagine this scenario: John McCain wins in November. What's the first thing you do? Resist the urge to go on a four-year cruise with Olivia? [Laughs] That just can't happen. But then, we had Bush. . . .

I really think that there are encouraging, exciting things happening at local and state

On this, her 8th—and possibly best—album, the Queen of Queer Quips reveals more inconvenient truth regarding the less-than Supreme Court, gay sheep, the incredible shrinking butch, and other hot-button topics. Testament to Clinton's hilarity is one audience member's fully audible leg-slap that accompanies nearly every punch line. She's going to be sore in the morning. WHYscrack Records (www.kateclinton.com). —N.F.



levels where governors are really stepping up and making the changes. They're doing things, environmental things that the federal level wouldn't do. They're doing things for gay rights that the federal level wouldn't do. I can get discouraged and think, "Oh my God, four more years of Bush/McCain. McBush. Whatever."

But you know, I travel and I see exciting things happening. You'll be cheered by this: I was in Columbus, Ohio, and 450 ordinary people from all over the state took a morning session on how to lobby your representative [via the GLBT equal rights organization, Equality Ohio]. Then they walked across the street to the state house and spoke to their representatives on gay rights. And I thought, "Oh my God, this is so exciting."

That's wonderful, especially with Ohio being a swing state.

Yes, amazing, absolutely amazing. The work of organizations at the state level, like the ACLU, was critical in the Massachusetts legislature, fighting off the ban on gay marriage. I performed at a dinner there, and met this woman who was retiring after 20 years as their legislative representative. She was this diminutive, Jewish grandmother, and

she had those guys by the nuts!

And Equality Massachusetts was incredibly important in flipping something like nine legislators to flip the ban. It can be done, and I think people don't realize how worried legislators are about what we think. They're worried about their jobs.

When I worked on the Rosie O'Donnell show and we'd get faxes from people, I always thought it was two guys with a fax machine just cranking out crap. But they really care about what people think. Legislators do care about what constituents think if they want to keep their jobs. I think we forget that.

It's easy to lose sight of, when you see all the shenanigans going on in the legislative process. Speaking of which, I couldn't help noticing on your CD that you noted "special thanks to George W. Bush, Larry Craig, Harriet Meiers, and the Cheney family."

Yes, they have been an unending source of

material. But I have a feeling I won't be disappointed in the next administration.

[Both laugh] I have a feeling you're right, regardless which way it goes. The liner notes also say you've been "blinded by the driving sleet of sexism."

Isn't that a great line? I'm just livid about the sexism. It was real during Hillary's campaign. It actually kicked me back to my feminist roots. You find yourself saying things like, "Well, at least, he didn't kill her." And then you think, "What is that?"

I really find myself again, like in my on-fire, early feminist days, back with that lens again of looking at everything like *Girls Gone Wild* ads that we would never have let pass.

So that's been great, and I'm recommitted to that. I really am committed to attacking the media. I think they were deplorable, and it just can't go on. It's like *TASS*. It's like *Pravda*. They were a mouthpiece of the administration.

I was talking to someone at dinner last night about already this back-stepping by Obama, like [he's saying] maybe we're not going to get out [of Iraq] as fast [as he implied]. →



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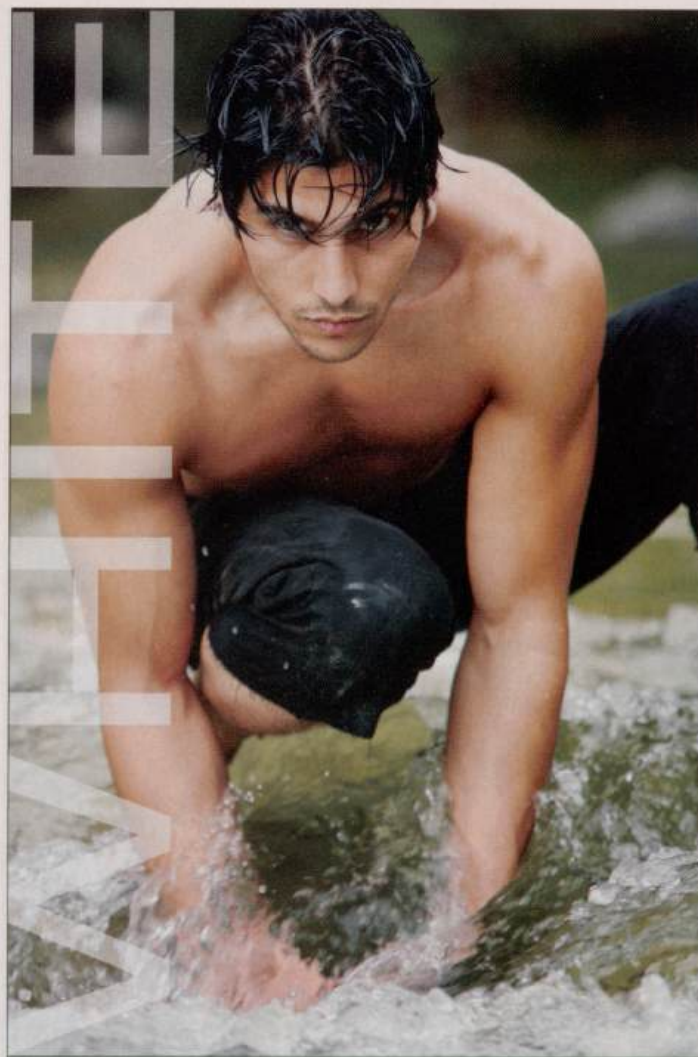
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Seriously Though, Folks

continued from page 35

That didn't take long, did it?

No. My darling girlfriend said, "Well, did you think he can fight against this really ingrained and warned-about-by-Eisenhower military industrial complex when a huge percentage of the media is owned by General Electric, which makes the on-and-off switches for war?"

So that's the fight. I'm cheered by what is happening in the blogosphere. Although I'm finding that the sexism of the blog world is like raw sewage, there are outlets. People are going elsewhere for their information.

[Laughs] Ah, it's a Pollyanna morning here! How's it going there?

[Both laugh] Oh, it's sunshine and lollipops! Hey, you're supposed to be a comedian. Now I'm thinking too much!

Yes, but you did laugh!

Well, I think that what we're really witnessing is the triumph of capitalism and all its horrible works masked as democracy. George says he wants to bring democracy: "I'm speaking to the Iraqi people." Well, they can't hear ya, honey—they don't have electricity. The rapacious maul of capitalism is what he's brought. And I think that's also our struggle. And it is a struggle, with food shortages, and oil prices where they are. Perhaps it will activate people. But CEOs can't make 141 percent times what the ordinary worker makes, thank you very much.

They think we're stupid. Maybe we are.

Well, it was pretty shocking, with his mid-term election. Try being in Europe or overseas, trying to explain to people. You have that awkward moment, trying to explain his election. I don't call it his re-election because he wasn't elected in the first place.

[Pauses] And how are you, dear?

[Both laugh] I'm just fine, thank you for asking. You know, [June was] Pride month—busybusybusy. We just had our youth prom. There's nothing more uplifting than the kids. Isn't it fabulous? You can't hold them down. You can't. I went to the Creating Change conference in Detroit and it was like 50 percent young people! I was so charged. I thought, "Well, it's OK, I can retire. They've got it."

The thing that I loved about it was that so many of them are employed at gay organizations. And they have this darling sense of entitlement! Why didn't I have that?

Because we gave it to them.

Oh, all right.

Nancy Ford interviewed Andy Bell in the June issue of OutSmart magazine.



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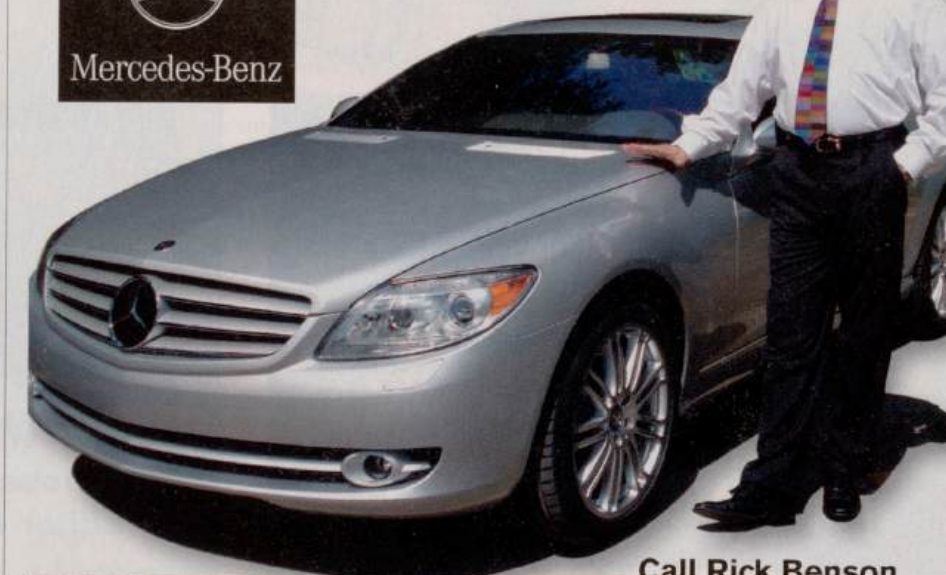
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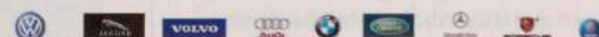
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Singing Out



**Celebrating 30 years of music
with the men and women of
Bayou City Performing Arts**

by Nancy Ford

Photo by Yvonne Feece

Make no mistake, there is an agenda. And they do recruit.

In the past 30 years, members of Bayou City Performing Arts have trolled karaoke bars, church choirs, and maybe even a few shower stalls in search of new members willing to contribute their talents to a group of impassioned, largely gay and lesbian warblers.

It all began in 1979 when Montrose Marching Band (now the Houston Pride Band) conductor Andy Mills branched out to add voices to the concerts the band was presenting.

Thirty years and many Streisand numbers later, the organization has umbrella'd under the moniker of Bayou City Performing Arts with 156 combined voices, male and female, gay and straight.

In those 30 years, the singers have melodically represented Houston well beyond Texas, with appearances at the 1990 Gay Games and Cultural Festival in Vancouver, as well as concerts in Denver, Tampa Bay, San Jose, and Montreal.

"We have clarity about where we're headed and what we're going to do, and how we are going to do it," BCPA artistic and managing director James Knapp says with confidence and enthusiasm.

"We have grown into starting a women's chorus and a mixed chorus," he says. "We are reaching out and I hope the community will hear us and come see us and [know] that we've got an incredible year planned for next year. We have a vision for the future."

Knapp credits the choruses' growth to the "tremendous dedication and the love and the nurturing that's taken place" within the organization. But the successful road BCPA currently traverses hasn't always been a smooth one, he admits.

"We got into a real financial hole about four years ago," Knapp says. "The organization made some hopeful decisions to move to downtown venues because we wanted to raise the bar of our musicality and where we made that music. But we didn't do as much research as we should have."

Following this dark period, Knapp

How do you get to Miami? Practice, practice, practice: Gay Men's Chorus of Houston, the original arm of the quadripartite Bayou City Performing Arts Association, prepares to sing with 130 other choruses at the Gay and Lesbian Choruses Festival VIII (GALA), scheduled this month in Florida.

says, the chorus' move downtown eventually proved expedient.

"We went from about zero dollars in grant money to about \$60,000 in grant money. And we now have five CDs and we're getting some good reviews."

The choruses' Pride concert, presented in June at Jones Hall in Houston's downtown theater district, proved successful despite heavy competition the same night from Cyndi Lauper's True Colors Tour. And Houston Mayor Bill White himself is a fan, honoring BCPA's 25th anniversary in 2003 by calling the group "one of the best faces of diversity in Houston." Since then the chorus has been a prominent mainstay at city events, including being chosen the featured chorus for Mayor White's tree lighting ceremony at City Hall. →

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Singing Out

continued from previous page

One of the places the chorus is "clear about where they're headed" this summer is Miami.

"Our celebration really begins in July when we attend and perform with over 100 Houston singers at the Gay and Lesbian Choruses Festival VIII," says Knapp. "This festival is held every four years, and this festival is a particular special one for us," Knapp says. "We are the only choral organization of the GALA choruses attending that will be bringing a women's chorus, men's chorus, mixed chorus, and a small ensemble of 12 voices. The only one!"

The 2008 concert, dubbed Echoes of Unity, marks the GALA debut of the Bayou City Women's Chorus, as well as the men and women's Bayou City Chorale and the Bayou Rhythms small ensemble.

BCPA has prepared performances of four newly commissioned works by gay composers Steven Milloy and Alan Shorter, "one for each group attending the festival," Knapp says.

Scheduled July 12-20 at Miami's Carnival Center for the Performing Arts, the GALA Festival is an international GLBT choral organization of more than 10,000 vocalists who sing in 200 choruses from all over the globe. No less than 130 choruses and ensembles are set to perform during the weeklong festival, with more than 5,000 singing delegates registered.

"It kind of reminds me of the Super Bowl in that all of the eyes of the GLBT chorale movement are in Miami at this gathering," Knapp says, barely containing his excitement. "Five thousand singers in one room lifting up songs to the movement and to each other and to empowerment. It is amazing."

This is not Knapp's first time conducting a mammoth chorus. In 2006, he conducted 300 voices at the Gay Games and Cultural Festival in Chicago. But Knapp accentuates the fact that the GALA concert is not a competition.

"One of the great things about it is that it's very much a supportive wonderful, wonderful festival as with the games in Chicago. You're there to support your personal best."

Knapp also appreciates the diversity the GALA gathering represents, in terms of the sizes and experiences of the choruses participating.

"You can have a group like Turtle Creek Chorale from Dallas or The Muse Women's Chorus from Cincinnati, an outstanding, highly auditioned group that has 15 CDs [and] performs for the top-notch



Très gay: Under the capable direction of artistic and managing director James Knapp (below), the Bayou City Women's Chorus (above) plans to treat the GALA festival to an arrangement of "Ordinary Miracles," a song first recorded by Barbra Streisand. "It's about the ordinary, everyday miracles that pass by us, and knowing that love is all that is necessary to make ordinary miracles happen," Knapp says.



conferences in America. And then you've got a group of 11 singers from Billings, Montana. They are a fantastic inspiration.

"Here in Houston we're light years ahead of where they are in Wyoming, in terms of GLBT issues," Knapp continues. "It's interesting to see the pulses around the country. I remember distinctly four years ago in Montreal, when I heard that group from Montana, the tears coming down my face. Because their story was like what our story was like 12 or 15 years ago. These people have the courage to stand up—in Billings, Montana! They walk into rehearsal and have their personal security threatened."

"These people are heroes."

Bayou City Performing Arts is always looking for new members who are willing to sing with the groups, or support those who do. Details: 713/521-7464 • www.bayoucityperformingarts.org.

For Lovers, by Lovers

BCPA members are set to perform a song at GALA—likely to be one of the festival's most moving performances—based on a poem by former Resurrection MCC director of music, Mark Unbehagen. "He wrote this poem in 2004 when he was watching hundreds of gay and lesbian couples stand outside of City Hall in San Francisco waiting to be married," James Knapp says.

'Love's Song'

BY MARK UNBEHAGEN

*imagine the sound of love . . .
swirling within your being
bursting forth on your breath
dancing past the world's ears*

*a resonance of two
when joined with creation
invites all to rejoice!*

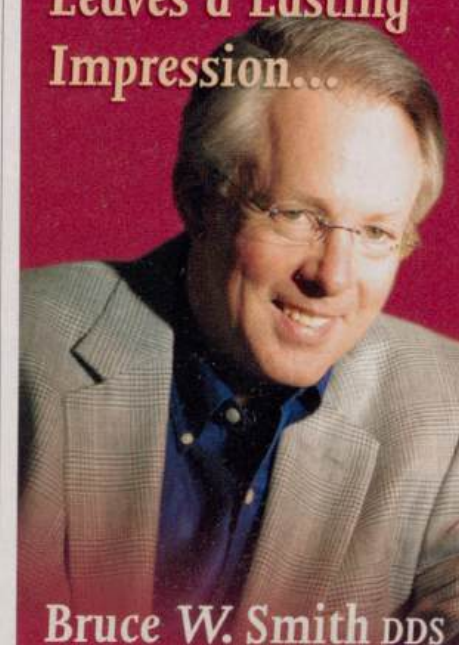
*imagine silencing your love . . .
forced to stir but inward
mixing with fear, deception and lie
pouring shame over the one you adore*

*so sing forth your love
and join with all lovers
to counter the clatter of fear*

*the tune may just be
so enticing and free
that the silence might just hum along*

*so sing forth your love
and join with all lovers!
Sing forth! Sing! Forth! Sing forth your
love! ■*

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The *Extra Ordinem* Ordination of Lura Groen



**Outside the rules of its denomination, Grace Lutheran Church
in Montrose calls an openly bisexual minister**

by Neil Ellis Orts

Photo by George Small

Lura Groen—professed Christian, lifetime Lutheran, graduate of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, out bisexual—has been tapped for pastoral duties by Houston's Grace Lutheran Church. American Lutherans embraced women clergy nearly 40 years ago, but Lutheran governing bodies have yet to include in that embrace men and women who openly live in same-sex relationships.

"I was raised in the Lutheran Church, and always was taught in Sunday School that God loves me and God loves everyone. I searched in various ways for what sort of career I could have to present that to other people," says Groen. She first explored lay ministry opportunities, working as a camp counselor and with the Lutheran Volunteer Corps as a case manager to homeless people in Baltimore and Washington, DC. As she sensed a call to ordained ministry, Groen enrolled in seminary, where her active community life continued. She served →

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The Ordination of Lura Groen

continued from previous page

as student body president, participated in numerous social justice activities, received a number of academic and leadership awards, and was on the dean's list. Despite her obvious success as a student, attending seminary represented a giant leap of faith for Groen. At the time, she knew her sexuality was not acceptable to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the national church body that would be responsible for finding (or not finding) a church post for her upon graduation.

The ELCA was formed in 1988. Since its inception, its guidelines have maintained that clergy who self-identify as gay or lesbian must remain celibate. This policy has been challenged over the years and is currently being reevaluated at the instruction of the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. At this assembly, bishops were also encouraged to exercise restraint in disciplining both clergy who are discovered to be in monogamous, homosexual relationships and congregations who call such clergy to be their pastors.

Grace Lutheran Church is a congregation of the ELCA and has a long history in Houston's Montrose neighborhood. Since its organization in 1922, Grace has seen many changes, the most significant to current events being the 1995 decision to become a "Reconciling" congregation, which means they made an official statement of welcome to GLBT folk. Grace has been without a pastor since 2003, and when they felt ready to start interviewing candidates, they informed the bishop's office that they would be considering not only approved candidates from the ELCA, but also from the roster of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries (ELM).

ELM officially came into being in 2007, but traces its history back to 1990. That was the year when two San Francisco Lutheran congregations called to service three openly gay pastors—Ruth Frost, Jeff Johnson, and Phyllis Zillhart. The eventual result of the *extra ordinem* ordination of these three was that the ELCA expelled the congregations who called them. In the ensuing years, ELM took form from the various networks of Lutheran pastors and churches who wished to fully include GLBT folk in all aspects of the church's life. Today, they evaluate candidates for ministry and maintain a roster, separate from the ELCA's, of people they have judged suitable for ordained ministry. Grace is the first congregation in Texas to call an ELM candidate.

All of these histories confront one

another with Groen's ordination. In calling her to be their pastor, Grace risks being removed from the ELCA, depending upon actions taken by the Churchwide Assembly in 2009. Bishop Michael Rinehart of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod says he will take advantage of the 2007 call for restraint until then, but has been in touch with Grace and Groen, outlining what he can and cannot do for them at this time. For one, Grace will continue to be officially listed as being without a pastor, so Groen will not be able to attend larger church gatherings as a pastor (although she will be eligible to attend as a voting lay member so long as Grace remains in the ELCA). Groen is not eligible for the ELCA insurance or retirement plans.

Still, there seems to be little overt controversy in this instance, certainly nothing akin to what happened in 1990 in San Francisco. As stated by Grace representative Rene Garcia and confirmed by bishop's representative Reverend Don Carlson, Grace Lutheran Church has "gone the extra mile to keep the Synod office updated" as the congregation traveled down this path. Everyone seems well aware of the stakes while remaining cordial in their interactions.

"I have been very pleased to receive the welcome of the bishop," Groen says. "I understand that the bishop is under many pressures and needs to do his job to be the bishop, so I have been very pleased that he has been personally welcoming to me."

The bishop's job includes answering concerns about Groen's ordination. In an email to area church leaders, Rinehart stated he could not participate in the ordination and reiterated current church policy. His one overtly negative comment came at the end of the email that, "... availability for press interviews ... and preferred seating for the press left me and others with the feeling of a publicity stunt."

When asked about being in the media spotlight, Groen says: "We are celebrating the opportunity to tell people what God is doing and how God is changing the church. We are celebrating the forum to say publicly that God loves everyone."

Lura Groen's ordination takes place at 2 p.m. on July 26 at Grace Lutheran Church (2515 Waugh Drive). It is a convergence of many histories and many players, and despite the actions that may eventually be taken against Grace, the mutual respect among the main players of the current drama speaks of hope for progress in the ELCA.

Neil Ellis Orts interviewed Tony Kushner for OutSmart's May issue.

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Back on the Runway

Heidi, Tim, and company
make it work again

by Tim Brookover
Photo by Brook Pifer



It seems only weeks since the young and flamboyantly gay Christian Siriano captured the top honor on the fourth season of *Project Runway*. Now the fashion-design-competition series returns for a fifth season, which debuts Wednesday, July 16, on Bravo. The familiar elements that made the show a hit are back: host Heidi Klum and her Teutonic glare; the insightful judicial team, designer Michael Kors and magazine editor Nina Garcia (who, fortunately for viewers, can also be wickedly catty); and presiding over all, the great gay mentor, Tim Gunn, whose line "Make it work" has entered the queer lexicon.

The big news, though, involves the future of *Runway*. With its sixth season, scheduled to begin in November, the series moves to Lifetime (where the Weinstein Company, which owns the show, scored a better financial deal, according to media reports). The *Runway* faithful are distressed, to put it mildly, burning up the blogosphere with remarks that range from snarky to anguished. "I'm guessing that now they'll be choosing contestants not on their designing abilities, but on how many abusive husbands they've murdered or how many times they've slept with danger," sniped a poster at Gawker. Other observers have expressed concern that a move from the urban-skewing, queer-positive Bravo to a network better known for programming that appeals to red-state America might imperil the gay nature of *Project Runway*. "I am ALSO afraid that Lifetime will try to 'tone down' the fierce gayness of the show. Let's face it, Bravo is NBC/Universal's 'Gay Network.' How will little old ladies in Kansas respond to people like Mango and Big Chris!?" wrote a poster at the blog *Opalescent*, referring to two recent gay *Runway* designers. A planned season-six change in location from New York to Los Angeles has also jarred the *Runway* faithful.

For their part, the producers have announced no immediate changes for season five. So the elements—including the sky-high gay quotient—that have made *Runway* the highest-rated reality series on cable are likely to remain, at least for now. ■

Something fierce: Christian Siriano, winner of the recently concluded *Project Runway* fourth season, models the new T-shirt that he designed for the Human Rights Campaign. The organic-cotton shirt features a drawing of a fabulous superhero named Fierce Equality and is signed by Siriano (whose favorite approving term on the show was "fierce"). \$38. Proceeds support the work of HRC, the GLBT advocacy organization. Order: www.hrc.org/siriano.

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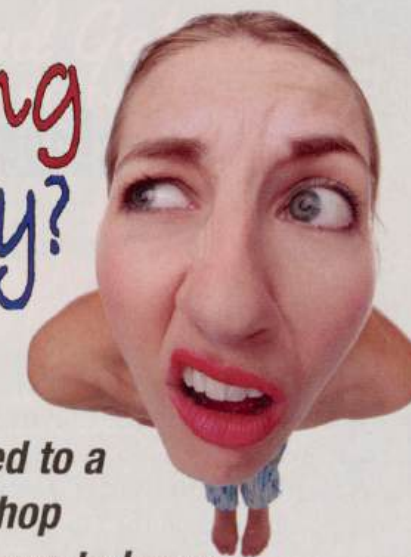
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Island-Grown Business

Entrepreneurs find fertile ground amid the dunes of Galveston

by Jan Johnson
Photos by Yvonne Feece

Galveston journalist Christie Mitchell (whose oil-magnate/developer brother, George, named the restaurant Christie Mitchell's Beachcomber after him) once observed that anyone could go to Houston and make a million dollars, but it took a genius to earn a living in Galveston. Small-business entrepreneurs do seem to be a dying breed on the Island. If you look closely enough, however, you'll find several unsung, independent businessmen successfully building a life here, hard at work in various industries, from traditional to cutting-edge

technology. They have risen above the special interests and beyond the Causeway to change niches into riches, proving the Beachcomber wrong.

Oh, and they all happen to be part of Galveston's gay community.



Renovations are nothing new for Galveston "partners" David LeBouef (front) and Don Clark. They've been at it in and around Galveston for 30 years and are still going strong.

Home-Grown and Firmly Planted

Comfortably reclining on couches that face each other, Don Clark sips peach tea while David LeBouef cuddles with Baily, his standard poodle who fancies herself a lapdog. Despite their ease during this pleasant interview, their success didn't happen randomly or overnight.

In 1978, Don refreshed his Island Cuisine by Clark catering company when he purchased a down-home country diner, the Busy Bee, in Santa Fe, Texas. He met his life partner, David, two years later at Galveston's favorite Christmas fête, Dickens on The Strand. Together they grew the cafe into a countywide chain.

The two invested in historic Galveston in 1984, buying a quaint corner restaurant at 8th and Postoffice. They updated the kitchen, menu, and decor, then changed the name to Schutte's Corner after the old grocery store that had stood there from 1885 until it became an eatery. Success of their new enterprise soon demanded more parking, so they bought the rest of the block. Reluctant to sacrifice all of the 1890s cottages and realizing their potential, they moved three to Ferry Road, where they restored them and sold them, using the proceeds to complete the new parking lot for Schutte's Corner.

For 14 years, they worked "like maniacs," quipped David, with a twinkle in his eye, literally side by side with their employees to ensure the success of their diners. In 1994, they sold their chain of Busy Bees but kept the Post-office Street location. With reliable management in place at Schutte's Corner, the two took time off to travel.

By this time, they were living in Hitchcock in a new Victorian home out in the country. Rested and ready for another challenge, in 1998 Don and David reinvested their profits in Galveston's Leticia Rosenberg Women's Home

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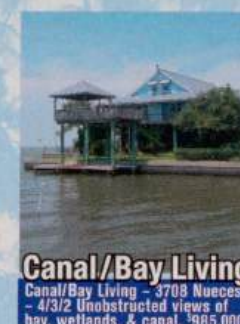
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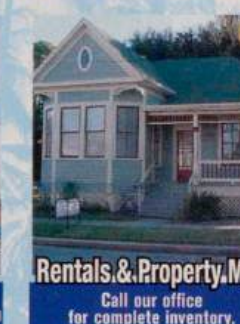
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Island-Grown Business

continued from page 48



Leticia Rosenberg Women's home at 1804 25th

on 25th Street, moving into the third floor the following year to begin their first major renovation.

The 1895 mansion had been uninhabited for 30 years. In 1983, Hurricane Alicia ripped off the roof and front south corner. Between that, termites, and vagrants, very little of the original interior remained. After reconstructing the foundation and load-bearing walls, the partners began restoring its 18,000 square feet.

To date, they've finished the front 5,000 on two levels. Complete on the second floor are the entry, living room, dining room, and kitchen, as well as a sunroom, which overlooks lush gardens that David planted. Three bedrooms on the third floor conclude their presently habitable space. Their current project is the Leticia Rosenberg Media Room, as they've dubbed it, an entertainment center featuring an extra-large, wall-sized plasma TV. With its lavishly unique decor, the mansion's future as a boutique hotel is evident.

To give back to their community, they opened their home for charity on April 1, 2006. Between the well-documented history tours of the home, a garden party, and the silent auction, the partners raised over \$65,000 for the Jesse Tree, a faith-based social service organization that aids the impoverished in their various needs.

But they weren't done yet. In 2002, Don and David quietly bought Galveston's landmark restaurant, Miller's Landing, and immediately updated the kitchen. Keeping the cook and most of the famously friendly staff, they combined the best of its menu with that of Schutte's Corner.

But merely expanding the dining area wasn't enough. In February 2008, Miller's Landing got a total retro makeover based on Don's vision of old Victorian Galveston on the Seawall. Architect Greg Lewis relied heavily on Don's sketches of steeply pitched peaks to update the 1960s building. Sacrificing three table tops, they added a smoking foyer and remodeled the restrooms to meet ADA requirements for the needs of handicapped patrons. However, the vintage is truly in its detailed decor. Hand-stenciled

beams crown darkly stained, salvaged bead-board, while large beveled mirrors reflect opulent light fixtures from the Texas capitol. To give the new Miller's Landing a distinct Caribbean, almost-Key-West, beachy feel, they decided on a chartreuse color combination for the exterior. *Texas Monthly* loved the new facelift on what they describe as a "Seawall standby."

Everything they undertake becomes a labor of love for Don Clark and David LeBouef, who are always doing something. Whether at the diner delivering meals or learning woodworking to create something wonderful at their Leticia Rosenberg Home, these complementary professional and personal partners define their secret of success as taking care of their customers with old-fashioned, hands-on hard work.

Self-Made Lone Ranger

Born in New Jersey, Thomas J. Schwenk is a dynamic, natural-born public speaker determined to capitalize on his skills to maintain a lifestyle that centers on spending time with and providing for his domestic partner, retired banker Jack Bell.

Tom received his degree in Business Ad-

ministration in 1978 from St. Bonaventure near Buffalo, the only Franciscan college in the United States, and immediately set out on a career in sales and marketing. Tom has successfully sold everything, from space on cargo ships to office equipment, which led him into New York City's famous garment district. Here, he fashioned an interest in architecture and interior design industries with a business perspective.

Scoring a sales job with Schumacher, he was transferred to Houston in 1984, where he capitalized on his Jersey accent to distinguish himself. Not only did he prosper, but more importantly, Tom gained great nationwide contacts through his work. Coincidentally, he met life partner Jack within a month of his Houston move.

Along his career journey, he never forgot two important principles preached at St. Bonaventure: community involvement and periodic self-reevaluation. Growing bored and stagnant in the corporate world after attaining VP status, Tom reasoned that, with the corporate climate at that time, the only way to achieve his preferred lifestyle was through independent entrepreneurship. When those he volunteered with declared they would pay him for his skills, he took the plunge into self-employment.

In 1999, he formed his first company, Jordan Thomas and Associates. To arrive at this distinguished-sounding name, he combined his



Community service and involvement is at the foundation of the relationship for Jack Bell and Thomas J. Schwenk. Volunteerism led to Tom becoming the only certified Eco Broker on the Island.

middle name with his mother's maiden name; Jack is his "and Associates." As a strategic planning consulting firm, Jordan Thomas

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Island-Grown Business

continued from page 50

helped creative people become more business minded and profitable. Its clients knew where they wanted to go without a clue how to get there; Tom mapped out strategies for their long-term success.

Two years after launching Jordan Thomas, Tom partnered with Donna Vining, FASID, to found Seminars By Design. Recognizing a need for new ways to fulfill necessary continuing education requirements among interior designers, architects, and their suppliers, they filled that niche. Each year, they research and write eight courses on health, safety, and welfare issues, as well as effective business practices. In addition to marketing their presentations nationwide, which include four workshop cruises, the company is hired directly by many companies, associations, and organizations throughout the United States and Canada.

Inherent in these ventures is a flexibility that allows Tom and Jack the freedom to live anywhere. In 1987, they chose Galveston Island. They began as weekenders, restoring a Southern townhouse on Avenue L, which they made their year-round home in 2001. Jack retired from 30 years in the banking industry the following year. He now volunteers at the University of Texas Medical Branch as a standardized patient, which means that he role-plays illness to help educate medical students in diagnostic and communication skills. Tom works quite comfortably from their home's second floor. The third member of this contented family is Gus, Jack's 14-year-old West Highland Terrier.

Community service continues to be an important part of Tom's life. He serves on the boards of the Downtown Rotary Club and the AIDS coalition, but most of his time is spent working with the Galveston Historical Foundation (GHF). He will be sworn in as their honorary president on July 25 at their annual meeting at the Garten Verein.

In this capacity, Tom recently conceived a new role for an old house. The foundation closed the 1839 Samuel May Williams Home at 36th and Avenue P, making its future uncertain. He first proposed, and then facilitated, using the house as a Spring Designer Showhouse for GHF, which was unveiled during their annual Historic Homes Tour. As a service project for the Texas Gulf Coast Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers, 12 design teams from the area collaborated in making one area of the 19th-century house a livable and sustainable residence in the 21st century. Its "First Impression" a success, the Williams Home opened on the weekends in May, as a fundraiser to pay for the project. Afterward, its show-house furnishings were removed,

making way for a new resident curator.

"I felt that the foundation took a tremendous leap of faith in me," said Tom. "I did my best to bring people together and provide the way for all involved to succeed."

In 2006, his volunteerism led yet again to a new profession. Recognizing another niche that needed filling on Galveston Island, Tom moved into the real estate industry as the only certified Eco Broker on the Island. Associated with Tramonte Realty, he refers and consults on maximizing energy-efficient, sustainable, and healthier design features in both new and old houses and buildings.

Tom Schwenk believes that the secret of his success is not to worry about what you don't have . . . and lives to treasure what he does.

Forward to the Future

Casually dressed in T-shirts and shorts, Lee Roane and Jim Cordell, life partners since 1991, looked more like surfers than business men as they sat in the boardroom of their 24th Street office. Dominating the room at the head of the table, a computer flat screen screamed for attention, and the two proud papas showed off their progeny—Galveston.com. Bringing the World Wide Web to Galveston Island was Lee's brainchild, and Jim helped nurture the fledgling, growing it into an innovative destination-marketing company within six years.

Working at NASA afforded Lee a connection to the cutting-edge technology of cyberspace. In 1994, he invested in its potential when he bought the domain name of Galveston.com for \$100, writing that check with quivering hand. His growing hatred of alarm clocks prevailed, and he literally quit his day job to work for himself. The two moved to the Island, buying an 1894 cottage on Ave K to restore. Here, Lee started his first business venture in a closet on a Mac laptop, learning the technology step-by-step.

At this time, Jim was perfectly content to work in Houston for a large wholesale foods distributor as senior copywriter/video producer. When he saw his partner's somewhat graphically crude website, he realized that his "boy needed some help, and fast!" In his spare time, Jim helped Lee give a more sophisticated and professional look to Galveston.com.

Anything or anyone who might bring visitors across the Causeway and keep them here was offered a free member page, thrusting old Galveston into the new age of all Internet-connected destination travelers. Special events like ArtWalks, Mardi Gras, and Dickens on The Strand were considered headline newsworthy, with story and photo coverage following. Online banner advertising was also made available. However, the Internet in general and Lee's website in particular was a hard sell to the suspicious and somewhat provincial Island business community. →

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Island-Grown Business

continued from page 52

"It's like we were Martians or something," Jim observes. Two years later, Galveston.com moved out of the closet when members of the hotel/motel industry, led by the bed-and-breakfasts, bought into their online reservation system, which met with nearly immediate success. Restaurants and the larger attractions like Moody Gardens soon followed. With business booming, the two became professional partners in 1998, when Lee signed on as webmaster of Galveston.com. Their venture came of age two years later when they formed a private/public partnership with the Parks Board of Trustees to become the Island's official tourism website.

Coincidentally, that was the same year that cruises to the Caribbean began sailing from the Port of Galveston. After attending a presentation by Carnival in 1999, Lee and Jim jumped at the opportunity and established

blogs about various tourist topics. Their latest business venture, DestinationNext, customizes the software they have developed for their own business and leases its suite of services to other visitor destinations.

In 2006, their company received national attention when the American Business Awards bestowed the coveted Stevie for Best Website Design. Being recognized as #1 in the U.S. business world was a huge win, considering that Island-born Galveston.com was up against mega-companies like Ralph Lauren. While they scored another Stevie in one category last year, their company was named finalist in both the "Website: Video & Film" and "Video & Film: Tourism & Travel" categories in 2008.

What are the secrets of their success? While Jim credits his obsessive "work is play, play is work" attitude, Lee ponders the question more philosophically. In a mellow, deep-throated accent that hints of his Louisiana-bayous beginnings, he thoughtfully answers, "I'm proud to have hired the right people to create a good



Lee Roane and Jim Cordell at their office located at 24th and Church streets. Their Island-based websites are award winning and have led to even more work with visitor-destination websites.

Galvestoncruises.com. Totally devoted to their firstborn, they hired Clair Johnson to manage their second business, which has since added a call center for other visitor services, from airport shuttle service to reserving theater tickets.

With every innovative component of Galveston.com, Lee and his programmers developed and built software specific to each task, insuring exclusivity and control. Most importantly, they designed it to be user-friendly so that their sales staff could easily update information. Their never-ending quest to improve the website has led to weekly pod casts, virtual videos, popular Web cams, and interactive

team that works, because Jim and I try to be the bosses we never had."

In these small businesses, you won't find arrogant supervisors "cracking the whip" over their workers or endless, unproductive meetings. Instead, what succeeds in the business world is an atmosphere of mutual respect, fair pay for hard work, and a focused goal to get the job done. And isn't this truly the American Way?

Freelance writer Jan Johnson is a fifth-generation Galveston native. Look for her new book this fall, *Walking Historic Galveston: A Guide to Its Neighborhoods*.

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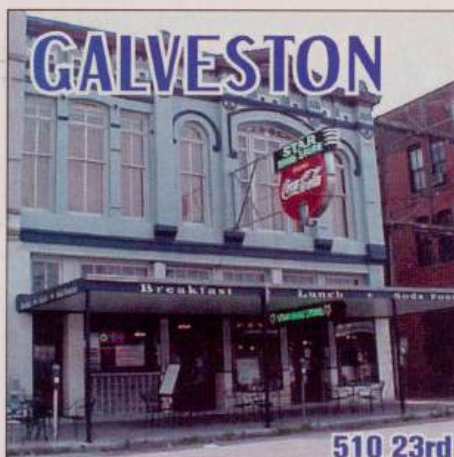
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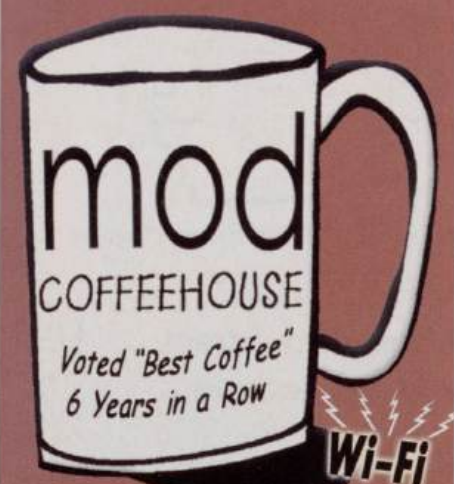
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A Piece of Island Paradise

There's no sinking feeling to Galveston's real estate boom

by Leigh Bell

Seems like Galveston is the city with nine lives. The strip of island known as the Jewel of Texas before being ripped apart, first by a series of hurricanes in the early 1900s and later by labels of high grime and crime, shines once again. Folks, we've found a diamond in the rough.

Real estate is hopping. Business is good, and strips like "The Strand" and Postoffice Street (think the travel-size version of Austin's 6th Street) have revitalized nightlife in a city once linked to blue hairs and kitschy cruise ships.

If a recession looms, Galveston doesn't know it. The coastal city is peppered with brand-spanking-new high-rise condos, brownstones, and other developments.

Take the new Emerald by the Sea, a 15-story oceanfront complex with an infinity pool deck, a movie theater, and an in-house concierge. Ninety percent of the 121 units are already sold, says Theresa Hill, broker with Personette and Associates, a company that handles sales and marketing for the condos.

Former beach bums are already moving into the glass-covered twin towers of Palisades Palms. And the recently built brownstones downtown took advantage of a building ruined by fire in Hurricane Rita, says V.J. Tramonte of Joe Tramonte Realty,

which represents the townhomes.

If you're the HGTV type, Galveston has a surprising amount of historical homes, including many larger ones built back in the day for ship captains.

"Galveston is kind of getting to be known as a hot spot mainly for the cost, as compared to buying on the east or west coast," Hill says. "We are still very reasonably priced . . . you just can't have a national weather report and you just can't have a national real-estate report. It's educating the people that we're still OK."

The entertainment biz is steady, which means people are still spending cash on creature comforts like nice meals, martinis, and beachfront hotel rooms. All this while most of America pinches pennies on the sidelines of soaring gas prices and threats of a national economic implosion.

"It's still a buyers' market in Galveston," Tramonte says. "We are just trying to get people to come down here and not listen to the doom and gloom that you hear every day in the news."

And maybe that's just the reason Galveston's economy went from trot to gallop in the last year. The 50-mile trip from Houston requires far less gas than, say, a jaunt to Austin, Corpus Christi, and Padre Island, plus real estate remains relatively

affordable after available property increased following recovery from Hurricane Rita.

"Buyers can still go there [to Galveston] and have plenty to choose from," says Karen Derr of Karen Derr Realty, which has offices both in Houston and Galveston. "It's not like a Florida or bubble-and-boom market. We've all decided that's not healthy. A steady market is probably the best."

Derr says the majority of purchases in Galveston are second homes for Houstonians. Owners represent a little of every demographic, from empty-nesters who want to get away to young professionals looking for an investment. Only about 30 percent of Galveston is primary residences.

In fact, \$232 million of the city's tax income—a big chunk—comes from accommodation, food service, arts, and entertainment, according to the Chamber of Commerce.

"Each weekend we have an extra 60,000

people [in the city]," says Ronny Palmer, manager of Yaga's Tropical Café and Club located on The Strand. "And we haven't seen a drop [in clientele]. We haven't felt the pinch that everyone is talking about."

The city has a surprising amount of cultural arts, and a cluster of young, beautiful people are drawn there by the University of Texas Medical Branch and Texas A&M at Galveston. You might find them on Postoffice Street, sipping mixed drinks at 21, and then saddling up to fresh shrimp at the Saltwater Grill. Or shoe shopping on the Strand.

Galveston just obeys a different clock than Houstonians, a clock that doesn't move as quickly. Even if you're just 50 miles away from the cement jungle, Galveston still feels like a mini-vacation.

"Houston, San Antonio, and Dallas—we all love it," says Derr, who has a second home in Galveston, built in 1876, that

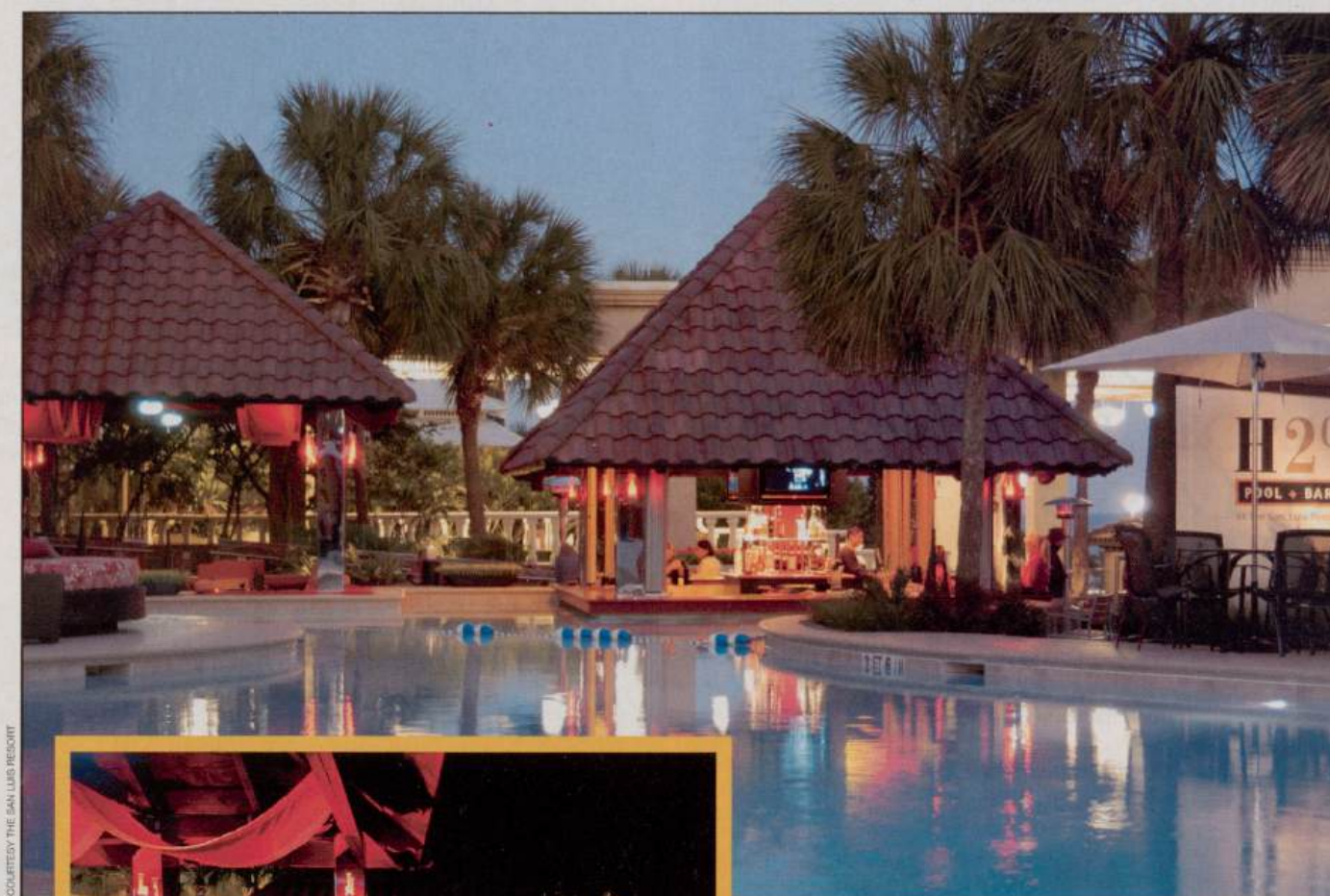
doubles as her office. "The dining has just gotten better and better. The galleries. It's not just a beach town."

Population shrinks.

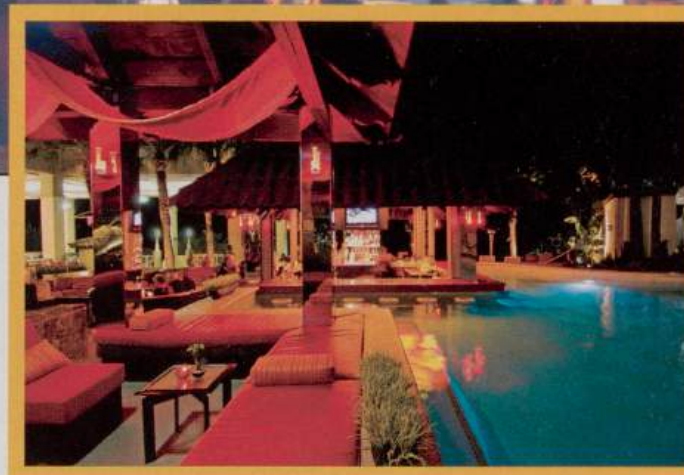
Popularity grows.

Oddly enough, the population of Galveston has steadily decreased. The city's population, which is roughly 57,000 according to the latest count by the U.S. Census Bureau, is down four percent from about 10 years ago, while the state's population increased by almost 23 percent in the same time frame.

Galveston's lifeblood is tourism and second-home owners. Galveston County has grown by 13 percent in the last several years, which indicates Galveston, the city, is experiencing the same exodus to the suburbs—driven by "more home for less money"—that many U.S. cities are.



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EATcetera's Chilled Cucumber Soup

INGREDIENTS

3 cucumbers, peeled
½ tbs butter
½ tbs extra virgin olive oil
¼ cup chopped red onion
1 tbs unbleached flour
2 cups vegetable stock
2 tbs fresh dill
¾ cup low fat milk
¼ cup half-and-half

DIRECTIONS

Heat butter and olive oil in a heavy saucepan. Add two of the peeled, sliced cucumbers and chopped onions and cook until tender. Stir in the flour and continue to cook for one minute, stirring constantly. Add the vegetable broth and simmer gently for 20 minutes. Puree the remaining cucumber in a food processor. Add fresh dill (reserve a few sprigs for garnish). Transfer to large non-reactive bowl. Puree the cooked cucumber mixture to the same texture and combine. Add half-and-half and milk, chill completely. Serve in cold bowls with sprigs of dill.
4 servings

This recipe was provided by EATcetera Restaurant, 408 25th Street, Galveston. 409.762.0803



Michael Kriticos will welcome you to his family's Greek restaurant for healthy eating in a great family atmosphere at the Olympia Grill. There will soon be a second Olympia Grill opening at Pier 21 (21st and Harborside).

Kota kapama

Braised chicken in tomato
and cinnamon sauce

INGREDIENTS

2-3 lbs of chicken cut into serving pieces
Salt and black pepper to taste
4 tbs olive oil
1 medium yellow onion chopped
1 clove of fresh garlic chopped
6 whole clove spice (remove after cooking)
1 3-to-4-inch whole cinnamon stick
¼ cup fruity Greek white wine
1½ cups peeled can tomatoes, drained and chopped
2 tbs tomato paste diluted in a little (3-4 oz) water
2 cups water

DIRECTIONS:

Sprinkle chicken pieces with salt and black pepper. In a large sauce pan, heat the olive oil and sauté the chicken pieces until all sides are browned. Add onions and garlic and sauté until onions are transparent. Add cloves and cinnamon stick, then stir. Add wine, tomatoes, and diluted tomato paste. Mix well with chicken pieces. Add 2 cups of water, bring to a boil, reduce heat to a simmer and cover. Cook the chicken for 30-45 minutes, or until tender. Stir occasionally during cooking. Taste for seasoning . . . you may want a little more salt or pepper. This serves 4-6 and goes well with pasta or rice.

This recipe was provided by Olympia Grill, 4908 Seawall Blvd., Galveston. 409.766.1222

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Adam Carolla

(comedian, *The Adam Carolla Show*)

(*Dancing with the Stars*, 5/20/08, NBC)

Re: season finale of *Dancing with the Stars*.

This is why the terrorists hate us: We've got black and white, Hispanic and Asian, gay, straight, and Guttenberg, all working together for one common goal.

David Sedaris

(out author, *When You Are Engulfed in Flames*, *Me Talk Pretty One Day*)

(*Entertainment Weekly Summer TV Preview*, Steve Daly)

If you ask Sedaris, the [James] Frey backlash, culminating in a public shaming by Oprah Winfrey, was overblown. "His punishment outweighed his crime," says Sedaris, "I don't recall Oprah Winfrey calling George Bush a liar when he was on her show. And those lies cost thousands of people their lives."

Billy Crystal on Jake Gyllenhaal

(*Entertainment Weekly Summer TV Preview*, Jeff Labrecque)

Re: 10-year-old Jake Gyllenhaal's debut in *City Slickers* as Crystal's son.

"He was always performing. He would sing from *South Pacific* and we'd all go, 'He's gay, he's going to be gay.'"

'Beverly Hills, 90210'

(*Entertainment Weekly*, 6/13/08, Diablo Cody)

Re: a Beverly Hills, 90210 spin-off coming to The CW in September.

There's even rumored to be an openly gay character on the new series, which is arguably more progressive than that one time Kelly [Jennie Garth] was a lesbian for five minutes.

Man Crush

(*Vanity Fair*, 7/08, James Wolcott)

"[President Bush] looks great in military uniform. He looks great in that cowboy costume he wears when he goes West," Chris Matthews [host of MSNBC's *Hardball*] proclaimed on May 1, 2003, intoxicated by the deus ex machina cool of the First Dude. A week later, the afterglow of Bush's photo op [in his "Mission Accomplished" getup] still steaming the goggles, Matthews hosted one of the most breathless testosterone effusions ever heard on cable news, with guest ogler and convicted Watergate felon G. Gordon Liddy kvelling over how the president's parachute harness had boldly outlined the picnic basket of his "manly characteristic," letting us in on a big little secret: "You know, all those women who say size doesn't count—they're all liars. Check that out." As Eric Alterman wrote in "The Many Man-Crushes of Chris Matthews" (*The Nation*, March 22, 2007), "Matthews's man-crush on Bush continued longer than that of most of the mainstream media, leading him, for instance, to assert that 'everybody sort of likes the President, except for the real whack-jobs,' at the moment when the percentage of Americans telling *New York Times*/CBS pollsters that they 'liked' Bush had fallen to 37 percent. But nobody, save Fred Barnes [executive editor of *The Weekly Standard*], thinks Bush is cool anymore, and so Matthews has had to go cruising for a new crush."

Jon Stewart

(*The Daily Show*, 6/17/08)

Jon Stewart: At 5:01 p.m. Pacific time, the first gay marriage in California took place, thanks to a recent ruling from the state supreme court. And yet, the state of California continues to exist. . . .



By the way, gay people get married in California, so why is God taking it out on the Midwest? . . .



The first wedding was actually between Del Martin and Phyllis Lyons, a couple in their 80s who have been together since 1953. They're actually part of a whole wave of women that were turned gay by Eisenhower. . . .



Among the other couples were these two women [Robin Tyler and Diane Olson] married by their rabbi. . . . I don't have a problem with them having children because they're gay, but I am concerned for the welfare of any child with two Jewish mothers. . . .

Hopefully, this important decision and these marriages are one more step toward recognizing the common humanity of all those in the gay community and the equality that they deserve. . . .

Queer Quotes

Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Mary-Louise Parker & Elizabeth Perkins



Weeds costars Mary-Louise Parker (l) and Elizabeth Perkins as Edina and Patsy?! Would it be fabulous?

(*TV Guide*, 6/16/08, Brantley Bardin)

BRANTLEY BARDIN: Exactly why is bad behavior so fun to watch?

MARY-LOUISE PARKER: 'Cause people are so repressed. And, also, there's just something delicious about watching people misbehave without any sense of conscience. I loved *Absolutely Fabulous* because of that. [Speaking to Elizabeth Perkins, her *Weeds* costar:] Hey, Elizabeth, I'd like to remake that with you!

ELIZABETH PERKINS: I watch it every time they rerun it.

PARKER: OK, that's what we'll do after *Weeds*. [Laughs] God, we'd be fabulous!

Mary McCormack

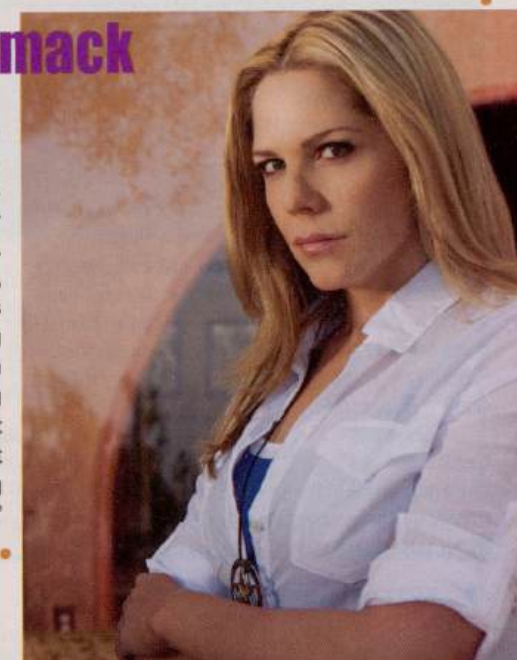
(actress, *In Plain Sight*)

(*In Plain Sight*, 6/08, USA Network)

McCormack's character, Mary Shannon, to a woman about to shoot her husband:

"Men lie. They cheat.

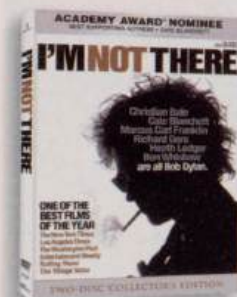
They start wars. They're slobs, unless they're gay, and there's precious few of them walking the planet worth putting on lipstick for, let alone throwing your life away, which is what you'll be doing if you shoot your festering crap bag of a husband."



SIX DEGREES OF DYLAN

'I'm Not There' satisfies in a cinematically schizophrenic sort of way

The DVD cover wrap of *I'm Not There*, Todd Haynes' dynamic paean to musical iconoclast Bob Dylan, is

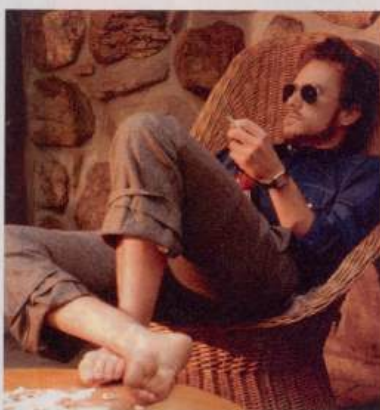


deceptive when it states that six actors "are all Bob Dylan." The six actors are not meant to portray Dylan, per se, but, rather, seven periods of his life. For example, Marcus

Carl Franklin's Dylan is an eleven-year-old, boxcar-riding itinerant musician—a young black boy calling himself Woody Guthrie, no less—who specializes in early folk songs, like the real Dylan professed having done in his early youth. Dizzy already? Keep going. The chameleon-like Cate Blanchette's "Jude," a character that reflects the Dylan who toured in the mid-'60s with The Beatles, delivers the most astonishing among these seven distinctively different entities. The gender non-specific Blanchette's scrawny, strung-out reluctant poet laureate is emblematic of the time of Vietnam and race riots when America looked to music for answers as much as for entertainment.

Haynes deftly lifts some of the film's dialogue directly from Dylan's original interviews and archival press footage, lend-

I'm Not There's exquisite imagery of recognizable LP covers and hat-tips to the '60s folk/protest era accent all its actors' brilliant performances, and not just Cate Blanchette's (r, top). Comedian David Cross as the unapologetically gay author, Allen Ginsberg, is surprisingly on mark, lecherously pursuing one of Dylan's "personalities." The remarkable Julianne Moore represents an amalgam of the Rambling Boy's female contemporaries Judy Collins and Joan Baez, sounding almost too much like Baez when she speaks. But it's an excruciatingly introspective Heath Ledger (r) in one of his final roles that reminds us "behind every beautiful thing, there's been some kind of pain."



ing a solid doc-feel to his screenplay. Listen for gems like "You never know how the past will turn out," and Dylan's forward-thinking, pro-gay sentiment, "It's not what goes into a man's mouth that defiles him, it's what comes out of it."

But from the surreal, homoerotic tones of "Mr. Jones" to the seldom-heard "One More Cup of Coffee," *I'm Not There's* soundtrack proves that the whining troubadour's true message is still found in his music.

Reading the DVD's special features commentary helps prepare the Dylantente's palette before viewing this movie. But for the Dylanphiles among us, *I'm Not There* is an orgasmic banquet. If its multi-actored, back-and-forth-in-time editing is dizzying, it's dizzying in a good way. Like a tilt-a-whirl in a sideshow carnival, Haynes jerks us one way with Dylan's magical mystery profane poet period, to his heretical electric era, to the born-again evangelical man of God, and back again. It is to Dylan what *Across the Universe* is to The Beatles.

If we're left feeling dizzy, imagine how Bob feels every single day. Genius Products (www.geniusproducts.com). Details: www.imnotthere-movie.com.

DVD/VHS Shorts

A Love to Keep



Some things never change. Set during notorious Spanish dictator Francisco Franco's homophobic regime, Juan Carlos Claver's acclaimed true story of lesbian teachers in love illustrates the horrific and, sadly, still-contemporary tragedy of "conversion therapy." Painful, yet triumphant. • 2006. Originally aired as *Electroshock* on TV in Spain. Spanish with English subtitles. • Picture This! Home Video (www.picturethishomevideo.com). —Preview: N.F.

Back Soon

Like a gay version of the Nicole Kidman vehicle *Birth*, the straight Gil Ramirez comes to the home of widower Logan Foster (also straight), looking to buy his house. Neither



can explain one's attraction to the other till it is revealed that Gil's mortal coil also embodies the soul of Logan's departed wife. (One night, Logan staggers toward Gil and makes out with him; is he sleepwalking? In a trance? Either way, it's steamy.) • 2007. Written and directed by Rob Williams. • TLA Releasing (www.tlareleasing.com). —Review: Eric A.T. Dieckman

Love My Life



The post-anime manga craze permeates this feel-good coming-of-lesbian-age tale of a university student, her first girlfriend, and the family secrets their romance uncovers. • 2006. Directed by Kōji Kawano. Japanese with English subtitles. • Wolfe Video (www.wolfevideo.com). —Preview: N.F.

The Wayward Cloud



Director Tsai Ming-liang's kinky, voyeuristic musical fantasy won the Berlin International Film Festival's Alfred Bauer Prize that honors films that open "new perspectives in the art of filmmaking." • 2005. Mandarin with English subtitles. • Strand Releasing Home Entertainment (www.strandreleasing.com). —Preview: N.F.

The Witnesses



Paris, 1984. For the GLBT community worldwide, the AIDS crisis has just begun to jab its frightening dagger into the hearts of the unsuspecting. Enter the free-spirited Manu, who has recently been diagnosed with the killer. Concentric circles of those involved →

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DVD/VHS Shorts continued from page 62

with him must deal with the news, each in their own way. This film is full of beautiful cinematography, and some fun tunes in its '80s soundtrack. • 2007. Co-written and directed by André Téchiné. French with English subtitles. • Strand Releasing (www.strandreleasing.com). —Review: E.D.

2 Minutes Later



Abigail (Jessica Graham) and Michael (Michael Molina), a gay and a lesbian private detective, go undercover in this thriller with a comic edge. But how do they find the killer of Michael's photographer twin brother when they're both so gorgeous and everyone wants to get their sleuth on with Abi and Mike? Molina doubles up the drama as both hero (the PI) and cad (the photog); in one scene he's genuinely cruel when he forces a model to tinkle his trousers during a shoot (although in a sick way, it's a little funny). • 2007. Written and directed by Robert Gaston. • TLA Releasing (www.tlareleasing.com). —Review: E.D.

Icons of Adventure



Icons of Adventure resurrects four Hammer classics that somehow got ignored by the World Film Registry of Essential Cinematic Masterpieces. If you have a taste for pirate movies (with killer piranha fish), you might want to begin with *Pirates of Blood*

River (1962), starring swashbuckler Kerwin Mathews and horror icon Christopher Lee. Lee also appears in 1961's *Terror of the Tongs* and 1964's *Devil-Ship Pirates*. You also get 1960's *The Strangers of Bombay*. Proceed at your own risk. • Sony Pictures Home Entertainment (www.sonypictures.com/homevideo). —Review: Jack Varsi

TV on DVD

Absolutely Fabulous: Absolutely Everything



Edina (Jennifer Saunders) and Patsy (Joanna Lumley) have never been so fabulously available. Yes, darling, the entire award-winning series can be found in this box set, along with outtakes, commentary, and French & Saunders sketches. All you need is a few bottles of Stoli and Boli, and your weekend of colossally campy viewing is complete. • BBC Video (www.bbcamericashop.com). —Review: E.D.

Dante's Cove, The Complete Third Season

If you like beefy men's buns, here's some eye candy. Season 3 of this *Queer as Folk* meets *Dark Shadows* supernatural soap opera gets much sexier with a lot more nude hot tub and locker room scenes and, this time, a



(fiery-hot) lesbian love triangle. Set six months later than season 2, a tsunami has destroyed Hotel Dante, Grace has returned (vengefully) from exile, and the bisexual Griffen is scheming for a takeover. (There's the beginning of a scintillating bi-ménage moment with Griffen in the deleted scenes extras, three sexy people, not one body hair among them.) • Liberation Entertainment (www.libent.com). More: www.heretv.com. —Review: E.D.

Soap: The Complete Series



All 90 episodes of the groundbreaking, controversial soap opera spoof exhibit the wit, hilarity, and sensitivity of the series. Billy Crystal plays Jodie, one of the first homosexual characters on TV to be played with equal parts comedy and pathos. • Sony Pictures Home Entertainment (www.sonypictures.com/homevideo). —Review: E.D.

The House of Venus Show: The Complete Second Season



Canada's clever, yet makeshift GLBT sketch comedy series inches along through its second season, with a strong focus on drag queens. Some sketches, like "the heterosexual agenda," are entertaining, but others are just too bizarre to handle. • 2006. Alluvial Filmworks (www.villagelighthouse.com). —Review: David Goldberg

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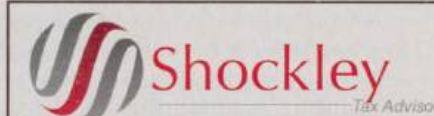
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DAYS OF OUR 'SORDID LIVES'

Texas boy Del Shores brings his popular story and characters to television

When you curl up in front of the telly to watch the debut of *Sordid Lives: The Series*, you can take pride in knowing that Houston represents in the latest version of Del Shores' take on the wacky side of small-town Texas. Five of the actors on the new Logo show have Bayou City ties. Newell Alexander and Ann Walker portray two of the main characters—Wardell Owens, the owner of Bubba's bar, and saucy LaVonda Dupree, respectively. Emerson Collins, Bob Downs, and Allison Tolman also have featured roles over the 12 half-hour episodes.

Shores, who hails from the West Texas town of Winters (also the name of the town in *Sordid Lives*), first introduced the wildly dysfunctional Ingram clan and their neighbors on stage in 1996, then in a campy 2000 film. He is one of the producers of the Logo series, which stars Rue McClanahan, Leslie Jordan (returning as Brother Boy, Tammy Wynette-loving drag queen), Olivia Newton-John, Bonnie Bedelia, and Caroline Rhea. The crisscrossing storylines include one that follows Ty (portrayed by Jason Dottley, who is also Shores' husband), the son of one of the kooky sisters (a dead-on big-haired turn by Bedelia), and his struggles with coming out to his Baptist family while pursuing a show-biz career in Los Angeles. Turning the queer dial even higher: Newton-John, who plays bisexual ex-con Bitsy Mae Harding, performs five original songs written for the series. Also watch for guest-star bits by Candis Cayne, Margaret Cho, and Carson Kressley.

Before the launch of the latest *Sordid*



Del Shores



Beth Grant (l) and Rue McClanahan



Leslie Jordan (l) and Tammy Wynette

chapter of his career, Shores answered a few questions via e-mail:

Tim Brookover: For *Sordid Lives* fans, what might be the most noticeable change in the transition from stage to big screen to television?

Del Shores: Well, first of all, the production value of the show is much better than the film. We had more budget and great producers (Emmy winners Stanley M. Brooks and Damian Ganczewski of *Once Upon A Time Films*) who surrounded me with the best crew, great lighting, and an amazing director of photography (David Sanderson). So, we're prettier this time. As far as content and characters, Beau Bridges and Delta Burke weren't available, so David Steen and Caroline Rhea embodied G.W. and Noleta to sheer perfection. And Kirk Geiger had aged out of the role of Ty, so Jason Dottley replaced him and is so vulnerable, beautiful, f-ked up, yet is a strong leading gay man. We get to see a lot more of Ty's journey in the series, as we do all the characters. More dimensions, more of their twisted stories. Oh, and there is a new Odell, David Cowgill, who is really fantastic. The tone and humor of the series really honors the play and the movie, so I think our fans are going to be very happy. I feel it'll be like visiting friends you haven't seen in a while.

Can you give us an update on the movie version of your play *Southern Baptist Sissies*? The production seems to have been delayed.

Yes, unfortunately we were in production with Funny Boy Films (*Latter Days*, *Adam & Steve*) →

WHAT A DRAG!

There is still time to vote online for your favorite contestant in what is sure to be America's most fabulous reality show, *RuPaul's Drag Race*. The Supermodel of the World serves as host, mentor, and judge for the series, set to debut in early 2009 on Logo. At press time, there were 50 competitors from Texas. The seven from the Houston/Galveston area include the local diva Isis Champagne (her tag line: "If it doesn't sparkle it isn't Champagne"). Details: www.logoonline.com, www.rupaulsdragrace.com.



L-r: RuPaul, Chad Allen, Margot Kidder

WHAT A MYSTERY!

Had Allen returns on July 25 as gay detective Donald Strachey in the third installment of his mystery series, *On the Other Hand, Death*, on here! TV. In the latest episode, Strachey is investigating local hate crimes. Besides openly gay star Allen, the highlight is the performance by the always-welcome Margot Kidder, portraying half of a threatened lesbian couple. Allen can also be seen later this year in *Save Me*, a drama in which he stars as young gay man committed to an ex-gay compound. The 2007 Sundance and Outfest hit is scheduled for a September theatrical release. Details: www.heretv.com. • On stage, Allen performs with Valerie Harper in the world premiere production of *Looped*, a play about Talulah Bankhead, at the Pasadena Playhouse through August 3. Details: www.pasadenaplayhouse.org. ■

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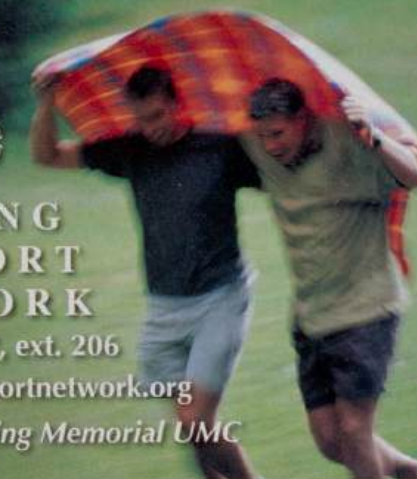


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Television continued from page 66

and they lost a big piece of financing. Hopefully, with Bush out of office and the economy getting better (I'm an optimist), along with the success of the series, we'll be able to put it back together. It's such an important piece for me. I have literally hundreds of letters from gay men and women—and their families—who have had a healing experience because of that play. I even had one young man tell me he didn't commit suicide because he saw *Southern Baptist Sissies*. I'm hoping that an angel with a bunch of money and passion for this project wants to be in the movie business and will join us in sharing *Sissies*. It's not often you get to be involved in a project that changes lives.

What is the next project are you working on?
Well, the second season of *Sordid Lives: The Series*, of course, so LOGO, order up! I hope to direct *Sissies* soon. I have a new play in the works and a couple of new TV shows in development, as well as two other feature projects. I stay busy, but this series has consumed my life for the last couple of years.

You recently visited Dallas for a benefit for the Uptown Players theater company. Will your fans in Houston see you here anytime soon?
I don't have any plans to come, but if someone will bring me in, I'll gladly come to Houston. Truthfully, various Dallas organizations, film festivals, theaters, even bars in Dallas have brought me and Jason Dottley (my husband, who plays Ty in the series) for various events. So, Houston, bring it on! We're ready. You can't let Dallas trump you now, can you?

Sordid Lives: The Series debuts July 23 on Logo. Details: www.logoonline.com, www.delshores.net.

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by David Goldberg

HERE WE GO AGAIN

ABBA's 'Mamma Mia!' resurrects a simpler, gayer time



Super troupers: Meryl Streep (left, center), flanked by Christine Baranski and Julie Walters, performs as Donna and the Dynamos in the movie version of *Mamma Mia!* Stellan Skarsgård (below, l-r), Pierce Brosnan, and Colin Firth also star in the ABBA musical as the three possible fathers of Donna's daughter Sophie, who has invited all three to her wedding.



BOTH PHOTOS: PETER MOUNTAIN/UNIVERSAL STUDIOS

It was the '70s, and ABBA, the chart-topping disco foursome, was performing sold-out concerts throughout the world. Each show promised big hair, tight Lycra jumpsuits, and songs you would never forget. The cheesy flamboyance of it all was just too fabulous to resist. If you ever attended an ABBA concert, it was probably when you first realized you were gay.

And how does today's youth connect with their inner sequined selves through

ABBA? When we are not stealing our mothers' copy of *ABBA Gold*, we have *Mamma Mia!*, the upcoming movie based on the stage musical of the same name. The stage show, which opened in London in 1999 featuring more than 20 ABBA songs, has moved on to play in 170 cities worldwide and earn more than two billion dollars. That's a lot of vegemite.

The story takes place on a perfect Greek Island, where Sophie (played by *Mean Girls*' adorable Amanda Seyfried)

is about to tie the knot with her fiancé (the yummy Dominic Cooper). Before she can go through with the ceremony, she must find out which of three men (Pierce Brosnan, Stellan Skarsgård, Colin Firth) that her mother (Meryl Streep—huzzah!) was involved with is her father. With a lot of glitter and spontaneous dancing, she may get her wish.

The past few years have seen musicals like *Hairspray*, *Dreamgirls*, and *Chicago* transform from Broadway hits to big-screen blockbusters. *Mamma Mia!* (opens July 18) looks to be appreciated by millions of new fans worldwide, and has what it takes to be the gayest movie of the year. The divine *Sex and the City* movie may have to let go of that crown.

With such a healthy cast and a soundtrack that is produced by ABBA's two founding men, *Mamma Mia!* is a sequin sensation that should not be missed. Plus, if you close your eyes when you hear Meryl Streep's deep voice, you can pretend she's Cher. What could be better? Or gayer? ■



Korean romance: Lee Young-Hoon (l) and Lee Han star in *No Regret*, now in the U.S.

'REGRET' NOTHING

Korean film focuses on troubled gay pair

When released in 2006, *No Regret* was one of the first gay-themed movies made in Korea. The feature debut for director Leesong Hee-il, the drama focuses on a relationship between two young men, one the child of a wealthy, conservative family, the other a factory worker who turns to sex work after losing his job. *No Regret* is now receiving a limited theatrical release in the United States, opening first in Los Angeles and New York this month. • From Regent Releasing (www.regentreleasing.com). —Preview: Tim Brookover

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ALL SHOW

The new crop of musical releases is (surprise!) rife with gay talent

The gays do love their musicals. Whether you are talking about the current crop of Tony Award-nominated shows including *Xanadu*, *Cry-Baby*, and the *Gypsy* revival starring Patti LuPone or top-notch touring companies of *The Drowsy Chaperone* (in Houston last month) and *Avenue Q*, you are sure to find a sizable representation of the GLBT community in the audience—not to mention behind the footlights.

The musical *A Catered Affair* (PS Classics), based on the 1956 Bette Davis-Ernest Borgnine-Debbie Reynolds movie, certainly has a gay pedigree. Two out gay men, book author Harvey Fierstein and composer/lyricist John Buchchino, have created a serious show—about the efforts of a working-class Bronx couple to plan an expensive wedding for their daughter—in the same serious-minded class as the 2004 Tony winner, *The Light in the Piazza*. That said, there are still light moments, as when Fierstein (who is also in the cast, as bachelor Uncle Winston) sings “Immediate Family.” Combining issues of class and the complicated matters of a family, *A Catered Affair* also has memorable tunes, including “Coney Island” and “Married.”

Like *A Catered Affair*, the Disney musical *The Little Mermaid* (Disney Broadway/Walt



Forbidden fruit: Since 1982, the Forbidden Broadway company, created by Gerald Alessandrini (center, in suit, surrounded by cast members) has relentlessly spoofed shows. The 25th-anniversary edition cast recording targets 2007 Tony winner *Spring Awakening* as well as other recent shows, including *Grey Gardens*, *Jersey Boys*, *The Light in the Piazza*, and *The Little Mermaid*.

Disney Records) has gay bloodlines. The book was written by Doug Wright (of *Grey Gardens* and the Pulitzer-winning *I Am My Own Wife*).

renown) and the lyrics were co-written by the late Howard Ashman (*Little Shop of Horrors* and others). The stage adaptation incorporates more than half a dozen of the songs from the original Disney animated feature and bolsters the score with a multitude of new compositions including "I Want the Good Times Back," performed by sea witch Ursula (Sherie Rene Scott).

The original cast of *Make Me a Song: The Music of William Finn* can be heard celebrating the contributions of the gay composer—of *March of the Falsettos*, *Falsettoland*, and *A New Brain* fame—on the new double-disc live recording (from Ghostlight) of the off-Broadway show. Performed by Sandy Binion, D.B. Bonds, Adam Heller, and Sally Wilfert, the impact of Finn's songs take on renewed life and vigor in this setting.

In its third Broadway production since its New York debut nearly 60 years ago, the revival of *South Pacific* (Masterworks Broadway) arrives as a reminder of the cost and effect of prejudice, still a matter of concern today. *South Pacific* is also packed full of classic and enduring Rodgers and Hammerstein numbers including "Some Enchanted Evening," "There Is Nothing Like a Dame," "Bali Hai," "I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair," "A Wonderful Guy"—

GrooveOut Shorts

Houston Grand Opera
The Refuge



Houston Grand Opera premiered this contemporary opera by out librettist Leah Lax and composer Christopher Theofanidis in late 2007 to rave reviews. It retells the courageous and uplifting stories of our city's immigrant communities. Albany Records (www.houstongrandopera.org). —*Preview: Nancy Ford*

G
CD Global 2



This double CD set contains music from 14 different countries, all of which apparently appreciate a thumpy, humpy club mix. A stand-out: the interesting, multi-layered "Act Up, Fight Back" final cut on the first CD, an inspiring tribute to the notoriously "unpolite" AIDS organization of the '90s. Woobie Bear Music (www.woobiebearmusic.com). —*Review: NF*

Alanis Morissette
Flavors of Entanglement



That Angry Woman admits to often writing "in retrospect," but this new release, she says, "was written in real time." The breakout single, "Underneath," is lovely, profound, and inspiring, just as you might expect. Maverick/Enterprise (www.alanismorrisette.com). —*Review: N.F.*

Cherish The Truth



Destiny's Child is done. TLC went down in a painful inferno. Who will the next generation turn to when craving a "Don't Go Chasin' Waterfalls"? These four young sisters of Cherish bring some much-needed bounce in their second CD, and prove their potential as future hip-hop sensations. Sho'Nuff Records (www.sho-nuffrecords.com). —*Review: David Goldberg*

Julian Yeo
Unusual Passage



Julian Yeo In his second album, Mr. Yeo brings his soothing and drama-free style to the big-band genre. The Gay Aussie of Asian descent has potential to make a lovely splash in the post-Sinatra world. A good disc to keep around the house. Yeomo Productions (www.julianyao.com). —*Review: D.G.*

Chanté Moore
Love the Woman



Moore offers solid vocals and messages of female empowerment. So does Mary J. Blige—and better. When it comes to strong female R&B artists, we must bow to Queen Blige. Moore clearly has the talent to pull off a successful solo career, but not the unique sound. Peak Records (www.peak-records.com). —Review: D.G. →



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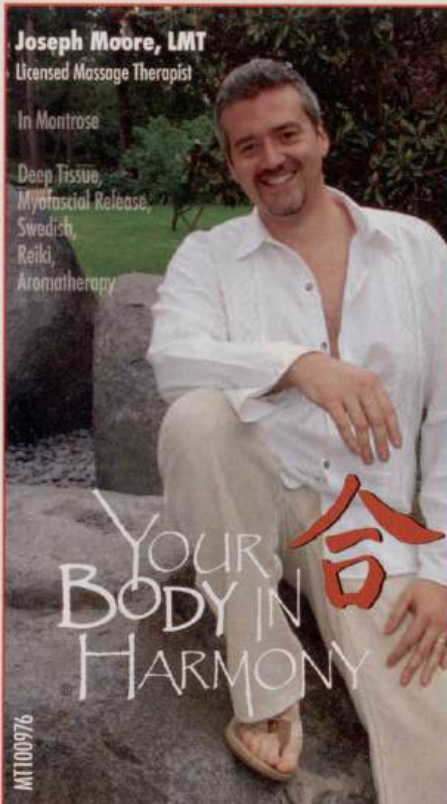
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GrooveOut continued from page 72

"Happy Talk," and the particularly timely "You've Got to Be Carefully Taught." The musical's messages of tolerance, acceptance, and social consciousness, especially during a time of war, continue to resonate today. The exceptional cast includes Kelli O'Hara, Paulo Szot, Matthew Morrison, and Loretta Ables Sayre.

In the midst of more expected Broadway fare this season, two shows, *In the Heights* and *Passing Strange*, appeared to shake up the status quo and turn the theater world on its ear. The two shows, as you can hear on the original Broadway cast recordings (both on Ghostlight), incorporate elements lacking in the usual Broadway experience, including hip-hop, salsa, soul, and rock. Both shows are also notable for starring the men—Stew, *Passing Strange*, and Lin-Manuel Miranda, *In the Heights*—who wrote and conceived the works.

In the same non-traditional vein: songwriter David Yazbek (*Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *The Full Monty*) continues to sow his rock-and-roll oats over the course of 14 songs on his latest album, *Evil Monkey Man* (Ghostlight).

Songwriter and lyricist Carol Hall may have only one hit musical to her credit, but what a hit it was. *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, her perennially popular 1978 show, continues to be revived on a regular basis. On

Hallways: The Songs of Carol Hall (LML Music), the Abilene-born Hall—who also created the less successful *Best Little Whorehouse Goes Public* with fellow Texan collaborators Peter Masterson, Larry L. King, and out choreographer/director Tommy Tune—is joined by a host of cabaret performers including out artists Scott Coulter, Rick Jensen, Tom Andersen, Tim Di Pasqua, and Steven Lutvak, as well as the legendary Lesley Gore and others who provide new perspectives on songs including "Hard Candy Christmas" and "It's Only a Broken Heart" (sung by former Houstonian Sally Mayes).

Of course, what would a theater season be without the wicked and wonderful Gerard Alessandrini applying his rapier wit to the parody lyrics he concocts for his long-running *Forbidden Broadway*? The 25th anniversary edition of the show, *Forbidden Broadway: Rude Awakening* (DRG), slices numerous shows into colorful ribbons. Victims, some of which are still running on the Great White Way, include, of course, *Spring Awakening*, as well as *The Little Mermaid*, *Wicked*, *Hairspray*, *A Chorus Line*, *Spamalot*, *Jersey Boys*, and *Mary Poppins*. Even those who have only the most cursory familiarity with current Broadway productions are certain to be entertained.

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

GrooveOut Shorts

continued from page 72

Katy Perry One of the Boys



Plying songs like "I Kissed a Girl" and the somewhat controversial 2007 semi-hit "Ur So Gay," Perry is one of a new wave of performers who teases she may or may not be gay, but knows where the smart pop money is. Capitol Records (www.katyperry.com). —Review: N.F.

Duffy Rockferry



The concept of reincarnation receives new support with these original tunes from this Welsh-born singer/songwriter. Swear to God, it's like Dusty Springfield has been reborn, especially with the title cut and "Sleeping Stone." Deliciously retro. Mercury Records (www.iamduffy.com). —Review: N.F.

New Broadway Cast Recording South Pacific

Since many people (myself included) consider *South Pacific* to be the greatest musical ever written, it seems rather incredible that it is only now enjoying its first Broadway revival since the 1949 opening. Check out



the new Broadway cast recording of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific* and judge for yourself. Original star Mary Martin will always be missed, but this Tony-winning new production, on CD at least, may be the best ever. —Review: Jack Varsi

Capathia Jenkins & Louis Rosen One Ounce of Truth



Singer Jenkins (whose credits include a featured role in the Tony Kushner/Jeanine Tesori show *Caroline, or Change*) and composer/performer Rosen team up again for a 13-song cycle inspired by Nikki Giovanni poems. Tracks range from luminous art songs ("The Moon Shines Down") to an unexpected lullaby ("Kiss a Frog"). PS Classics (www.psiclassics.com). —Review: Tim Brookover

Billy Joel The Stranger: 30th Anniversary Edition



Thirty years have passed since The Piano Man released the breakout album that brought him two Grammys. Help him celebrate with two separate CD and DVD packages containing remastered versions of the original recording, the previously unreleased Live at Carnegie Hall 1977 →

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GrooveOut Shorts continued from page 74

concert, and more. Available July 8. Columbia/Legacy (www.legacyrecordings.com). —*Preview: N.F.*

Hercules and Love Affair
Hercules and Love Affair

With a sound that is somewhere in between Blondie and the Black Devil Disco Club, Hercules is simultaneously bizarre and intriguing. It may not be accessible enough to be played in the clubs, but it is still a hell of a lot of fun. DFA Records (www.herculesandloveaffair.com). —*Review: D.G.*

Ashanti
The Declaration

Overblown as Pamela Anderson's silicon injections, Ashanti's fourth album is just too much: too much synthesizer, too much drama, and definitely too much glitter. Ashanti has always had trouble finding her place in the hip-hop/R&B scene—she's no Alicia Keys, and she's definitely no Beyonce. Unfortunately, *The Declaration* just sinks her more and more into the boring middle. The Inc. Records (www.theincrecords.com). —*Review: D.G.*

DJs Nicolas Matar and Willie Graff
Cinco

The New York City nightclub Cielo celebrates its fifth anniversary with this collection of its dance hits, mixed by DJs Matar and Graff. Available July 8. Tommy Boy Entertainment (www.tommyboy.com). —*Preview: N.F.*

Jay Brannan
Goddamn

Jay Brannan's music is like a revival of Tracy Chapman... except nobody liked Tracy Chapman. The soft guitar tunes and overcooked lyrics don't make Brannan special, they just make him boring. Great Depression Records (www.jaybrannan.com). —*Review: D.G.*

Neverdie
No Rock Un Rolled

More than 700,000 users have helped elevate the online Club Neverdie to the status of "the most famous and highest-grossing virtual nightclub in the world." Offered here: 14 tribal rock/blues/electronica anthems. Neverdie Records (www.realityport.com). —*Preview: N.F.*

Portishead
Third

This British electronica trio's deceptively titled fourth album starts with the intense dissonance of "Silence" and doesn't let up all the way through this 11-cut selection. Weird, drippy, and oddly appealing. Mercury/Island (www.mercuryrecords.com). —*Review: N.F.*

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An award-winning anthology features interviews with queer filmmakers

In May, the Los Angeles-based Lambda Literary Foundation presented its 20th annual awards for fiction, nonfiction, and poetry written by gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender authors. The winners included *The View from Here: Conversations with Gay and Lesbian Filmmakers*, from Arsenal Pulp Press, a Canadian publisher known for its queer and alternative titles. (Another Arsenal title, *First Person Queer*, edited by Richard Labonte and Lawrence Schimel, was honored with the Lambda award for top GLBT anthology.)

In *View*, the film pros interviewed by the author, Montreal critic Matthew Hays, include familiar names



(John Waters, Pedro Almodovar, Bill Condon, Gregg Araki, Gus van Sant, and John Cameron Mitchell) as well as cult and porn figures (Kenneth Anger, Bruce LaBruce, Wakefield Poole). One name that is not as recognized is Don Roos.

Roos—surprisingly candid and melancholy in this interview excerpted from Hays' book—is next set to direct *Love and Other Impossible Pursuits*, based on the Ayelet Waldman novel (with a screenplay co-written by the novelist and the director). With Jeffrey Dean Morgan, Jennifer Lopez, and Lisa Kudrow set to star, *Love* is scheduled for a 2009 release. —Tim Brookover

DON ROOS: THE OPPOSITE OF THE NORM

Like so many gay filmmakers, Don Roos has a knack for conjuring up powerful women. Many will recall the girl-on-girl rivalry in *Single White Female* (1992), the suspense film that Roos wrote in which Bridget Fonda takes in roommate Jennifer Jason Leigh, only to discover that Leigh is insane and obsessed with taking on Fonda's identity. He also wrote the critically savaged remake of *Diabolique* (1996), in which Sharon Stone plays a (surprise!) scheming murderess. And in *The Opposite of Sex* (1998), which he directed and wrote, an embittered Christina Ricci manipulates those around her, including her gay half-brother and his boyfriend whom she seduces.

Roos began his film career as a writer, taking a screenwriting course at the University of Notre Dame when he was in his early 20s. In the 1980s, he contributed to a number of popular television shows, in particular *Hart to Hart* and the *Dynasty* spin-off *The Colbys*. Roos also earned a reputation as a script doctor, working to improve screenplays others had already written. (Roos says he is too much of a gentleman to name the



Don Roos is pictured here when he was in Houston in 2001 to publicize *All Over the Guy*, a film he produced with his life partner Dan Bucatinsky, who starred in the film. Roos' directorial efforts include *Single White Female*, *Boys on the Side*, *The Opposite of Sex*, and *Happy Endings*.

films he's been brought in to doctor.)

A turning point for him came in 1998 with the release of his directorial debut, *The Opposite of Sex*, the ensemble comedy that made many critical top-10 lists that year. After this success, Roos expected that getting studio support for films featuring gay characters—or even heterosexual characters who happened to be complex—might get easier. But not so, according to Roos, who says that studio executives interfered with his follow-up film, *Bounce* (2000), starring Ben Affleck and Gwyneth Paltrow, which resulted in its box office failure. This made his next feature film, *Happy Endings* (2005), all the more difficult.

His experience thus far has been somewhat disappointing to Roos, not only because of how studios treated him, but also by the critical and public reaction to the kind of narrative complexity and character ambiguities common in his films. He now lives in Los Angeles with his partner, actor-writer Dan Bucatinsky, and their adopted daughter. A conversation with Roos is much like one of his films: insightful, intelligent, sometimes digressive, and always sharp and witty.



the graphic novel to a level of page-turning suspense, with a surprise twist at the end worthy of its characters' duplicitous disguises. —Review: Donalevan Maines

Twisted Triangle
Caitlin Rother

Jossey-Bass (www.josseybass.com)

Twisted Triangle is a true crime story about an FBI agent husband's revenge against his FBI agent wife. Although the cover leads one to believe his revenge was motivated

solely by the wife's affair with out author Patricia Cornwell, the couple's bilking of the FBI seems to have played a large role in the whole mess. True: no woman should be kidnapped and assaulted by her husband. True: none of us want our ill-advised affair partners to be used to hype a book. False: this book should be purchased and read by anyone other than true crime aficionados. —Review: Angel Curtis →

Sadly, even in the post-*Brokeback Mountain* Hollywood, Roos still sees problems getting gay characters portrayed honestly on the big screen.

In interviews, you've talked about the fact that when you were growing up, homosexuality was a huge taboo. Some of the filmmakers and writers that I've spoken to said they began writing precisely because they were gay. Was that your experience? Did part of the act of writing have to do with wanting to talk about something?

No, it didn't for me. I think I became a writer because I felt very different and strange, and writing gives you a sense of control. When you're writing, you're not playing ball, you're not with people; you're very much alone. I think writing is a good refuge for misfits of all shapes and sizes. Being an outsider or a minority or an oppressed person in the kind of society that I grew up in—which included my own home—I think I wrote just to get some kind of power, just to make a little world for myself where I could punish people or make them do things. Of course, it's connected to being gay, but I didn't start writing to talk about gay issues, at least not consciously.

Was your home life tough?

I grew up in a Catholic family in the 1950s, which was a very rough environment for a child to grow up in. Morality permeated everything, as did group thinking, discipline, and lessons about appropriate and inappropriate feelings—you know, your typical repressed '50s household.

You've talked about the importance of gay images on the screen and what that can do for people. Do you remember the first gay character you saw on film or television?

No, but I remember Peter O'Toole with his shirt off in *Lord Jim* [1965]. The first gay image . . . that's really hard. I don't know what that would be aside from the camp images or the mysterious images that have a lot of power over gay men, like from *The Wizard of Oz* [1939] or *Peter Pan* [1960]. Mary Martin playing Peter Pan is a very strange image for a kid to hang on to, but I was obsessed with the yearly broadcast of *Peter Pan* on television. I couldn't have been more than four or five. But an openly gay image . . . my God, was there one? There were a few people who appeared on talk shows, like Truman Capote, and Paul Lynde, who made me uncomfortable.

Why?

Because I sensed that he was something different or maybe like me. There was a lot of disapproval of how he was—my →

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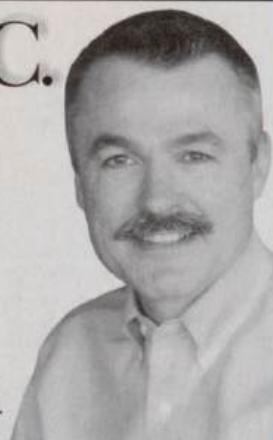
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ReadOut continued from previous page

mother would laugh at him, my father would frown.

Both of those examples are people I grew up with too. They were both entertaining figures who were also train wrecks, in a way. Both Capote and Lynde died alcoholics.

There's a lot connected to those kinds of images. They suggest not only a sinful lifestyle, but an unhealthy one too. It's a strange feeling that leads people to sense their own damnation and extinction. That was what was so awful about AIDS. It seemed to some of us like, "This is the nightmare of our childhood come true," that being gay leads to death.

You began your career as a screenwriter. Can you tell me about your first writing gig?

My very first one was for *Hart to Hart* [1979-84], a television show in the early 1980s [starring Robert Wagner and Stefanie Powers] with quite a camp sensibility. I wrote four spec scripts, meaning scripts that aren't commissioned. I got to meet the producer who happened to be Mark Crowley, who wrote *The Boys in the Band*, the very important early gay play. He took an interest in me and gave me some assignments, so I suppose the gay mafia helped me in the very beginning. I wrote for television throughout the '80s, mostly for undistinguished shows, because I was very shy and didn't feel confident pitching to better shows. I also thought I wasn't capable of writing for cop shows or medical shows, that I was more soap opera. So maybe that was my own internal homophobia at work, or maybe it was my natural shyness or insecurity. I don't know. Finally, I wrote a script on my own, a feature-length film called *Love Field* [1992], and managed to get it to two producers who liked it, and then Michelle Pfeiffer got on board [who was nominated for an Oscar for the role in 1992]. After that I forgot about television for a long time.

You talk about internalized homophobia, but personally I'd rather be writing for *Dynasty* than a cop show.

I wrote for *The Colbys* [1985-87], which was a *Dynasty* spin-off, and a series called *Paper Dolls* [1984] that was a drama about two young models. I wrote for shows that dealt with human emotion and interaction—the things that people said or did to each other rather than gunshots or legal cases or medical problems. I was really attracted to soap opera. A lot of people call my movies soap operas.

Soap operas have such a bad reputation, but shows like *The Sopranos* or *Six Feet Under* are essentially soap operas.

Absolutely. When I started doing film, the powers that be didn't care what I'd done in television. I thought making films was going to make it easier for me to write about things that I cared about. The television censors were crazy and the networks were timid. Television, I think, is a terrible, terrible place to work even today because of stupid people telling you what you can and can't say to America. I just think that the people working in television aren't very intelligent.

Like a salivating gay dog, I recently purchased the first, pre-Joan Collins season of *Dynasty* on DVD. There is some really interesting stuff in that show, including the gay son who's an outcast and getting drunk all the time. I'm sure the writers went through a terrible meat-grinding process to get that character on the show. It's a really interesting cultural artifact, a reflection of America in the '80s.

I agree. I think television shows can't help but be a reflection of the age in which they are made because they have to be popular to succeed so they have to somehow speak to →

ReadOut Shorts

continued from page 78

Would Jesus Discriminate? The 21st Century Question

Rev. Dr. Cindi Love

Trafford Publishing (www.trafford.com)



Cindi Love, executive director of the Metropolitan Community Churches, comes to ordained ministry from a business background—and her prose shows it. This book isn't so much inspiration for church members as it is a marketing model for church professionals. It's interesting, especially for the results this specific campaign has shown, but the writing is dry, even when she references potentially moving personal stories. —Review: Neil Ellis Orts

Thinking Straight

Robin Reardon

Kensington (www.kensingtonbooks.com)



For the first three-quarters of this novel, Reardon's story of a gay teenager sent to a religious camp to be turned straight shows surprising shades of gray. For example, the main character grows in both faith and certitude about his sexuality despite his reprehensible surroundings. Then Reardon descends into cliché and melodrama. For those who like irredeemably hateful villains, this might be an enjoyable book. Those who prefer more subtlety will want to skip it. —Review: N.O. ■

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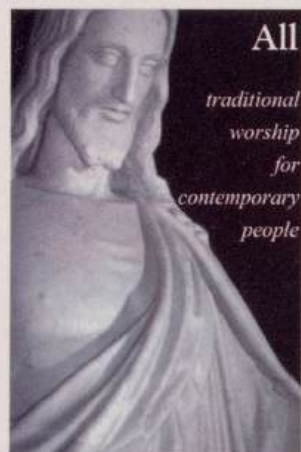
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ReadOut continued from previous page

the masses, even if it's unconsciously to the desires of the public at the time. Television can't help but be a great way to look at a culture, and what the values of that culture are. For someone who is in opposition to the culture, though, again, television is not the greatest place to work—although I watch an awful lot of television and I love shows like *The Sopranos*, *Six Feet Under*, *Sex and the City*, and *24*. There's a lot of great British television too. But in general, American television is pretty much unwatchable. Characters are never deeply unlikable or deeply complicated.

Going back to your writing, you speak of camouflaging gay characters in some of your screenplays.

I did that a lot in the beginning. But I may have to go back to it, just because sometimes putting gay characters out there hurts you. The studio will say, "Oh, there are gay characters, it's a gay film, we have to market it a certain way," which is very frustrating. I don't know how *Brokeback Mountain* got made. It will probably do us more harm than good because it will be pointed to as an example of the fact that Hollywood is open and that things are changing, but believe me, on the frontlines they aren't changing, they are getting worse. It's harder to put gay characters in a film now than it was 10 years ago when I did *The Opposite of Sex* [1998]. Camouflaging gay characters can take many forms. A popular way is making the lead character's best friend sassy, but female. Or the lead can be an outcast who is not a happily accepted member of traditional heterosexual Christian society. A black character can also masquerade as a gay character, as well as any character who is out of step with the mainstream.

Of course, there is the popular theory that many of Tennessee Williams' characters, particularly his strong women characters like Blanche DuBois, were in fact gay characters.

I don't know if they were for a fact, but they probably were. I think Williams probably drew out their internal spiritual life and soul from his experiences as a gay man. Of course, if they were actual gay characters, their experiences would be quite different, and they would be perceived quite differently. But camouflaging is a way for the gay writer to get inside his characters and to tap into a little of the anger and anxiety that you feel as a minority person.

The fact that you wrote *Single White Female* [1992] makes sense to me, seeing as

a character is murdered by getting a high heel in the head.

That was all kind of unconscious. I thought, "Oh, that will be fun." I was thinking, "What is the most dangerous thing about a woman?" She wasn't going to hit him over the head with her vagina, so I thought, "Well, she'll hit him over the head with her high heel shoe."

Were you conscious of other issues—I mean, it's about these two powerful women.

Well, I was conscious that none of the straight white men in the film were good guys. The only man who survives is the gay neighbor upstairs. The characters who had power, compassion, or intellectual ability were either gay or female. That [characterization] was very consciously done. I was tired of those movies where the girl is just a victim to be offered up to the evil person, where women are stupid and weak and teetering in high heels.

In *The Opposite of Sex*, you bring a lot of these sexual issues to the fore. I've always felt that Christina Ricci's character was your voice, was the voice of a gay man at the center of the film.

Yeah, I think you're right. I can talk about her being a real character in her own right. If you look at it, she is a woman defined by her sexuality. [In the film], Christina's character doesn't really have any sexual appetite, but she is defined by society as what she is because of her sexual attributes, because of her breasts and because of her attitude, independence, and unwillingness to obey convention. She's defined by society because of her sex or her interest in sex—or what they presume to be her interest in sex—and, of course, that is very gay. Gay men are defined [in that way] by people all the time. They think that the most important thing about a gay man is that he wants to sleep with another man. So in that way, Christina's character is a gay man. She's also very thoughtful and confused about sex. She's unconscious about it in the beginning and over the course of the film it begins to trouble her, which is very much like my experience of being a gay man: what's this thing that separates me from everyone else? Where is it located? What does it mean about me that I want to be with a man instead of a woman? Why does that define me, because my taste for chocolate or vanilla does not define me nor does my taste in sports? What is it about my desire for the same sex that totally separates me? What is everybody's desire? Christina's character is a rebel, she's impatient with a morality she doesn't really understand, and in that way she's a very brave character; unlike myself →

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ReadOut continued from previous page

through most of my life. She also does what she wants to do and doesn't spend too much time in any kind of moral argument, but I don't think that's very gay. I think gay people spend a lot of time agonizing over the things they do.

I think that's why she's so refreshing. That's wish fulfillment, because so many gay people would like to say, "F--k off."

She's very powerful that way. That's what I liked about her. In fact, that's why we wrote the character. I wrote all the voiceovers for her narration before the movie began. We shot the film without her voiceovers, though, and I directed everything as straight scenes. I've discovered that characters behaving honestly can be funny. We shot everything without pushing for laughs, so it didn't seem to us to be a comedy at the time. I knew it was, but we were more concerned with the internal lives of the characters. When I finally edited her voiceover narration into the picture, it was really, really shocking because I had come to treat these characters very intently and lovingly, but there she was in her voiceover making fun of them, being very bold and not being particularly discriminating in her hostility and not re-

ally taking an empathetic view of anybody. I thought, "Oh my God, I hate her! She doesn't know anything, she's a kid, she's a punk. This is complicated." I grew to love it, but it was a shock in the beginning. I do think she says some horrible things and her language is terrible. She's pretty awful. But I appreciated her spirit more and more.

I was really struck by the film when I first saw it. We talk about how far we've come, but there's still something radical about a film where gay and straight characters are given equal time and equal respect.

It's hard to pull it off. There was this time during the 1990s when movie people weren't paying a lot of attention and you could get an independent film made quite easily. And let's face it: Christina Ricci is a very cinematic person. She's very beautiful and compelling. I think people thought it was going to be a "funny" comedy, but once we got the audience in there, we started dealing with difficult things like sex and death and being gay. In that way, it was kind of a stealth bomb. It's very hard to surprise audiences now. I think audiences are more alert to signs of gay culture, signs of what they don't want. I think every year the audience gets stupider and stupider and that they've been trained to get that way. I mean, what can you say

about a country that re-elected Bush? How much can you admire their intelligence? Seriously, it's not fun.

I was in shock on election night.

It's a deeply stupid country. I think when we grow up we think everybody is like our family or like our neighborhood block and that they're all smart and they all care. Well, they're not. They're very difficult, and a lot of them are dumb. And the ones who are smart are distracted by what's fashionable and in vogue. I think it's difficult for thoughtful films to get a good reaction from movie audiences in America because they want to be soothed by movies; they don't really want to go to the movies to think. You get a highly praised film like *Pride & Prejudice* where not a single real disturbing thought or feeling occurs in the entire film. That's America's idea of a thinking-man's film today. Maybe I sound bitter, but as you grow older you lose a little of that sense of, "It just takes a good film and they will come." I don't think that's true. There are some barriers in the business that work against that. The principal one is really the culture as a whole. Where is this culture going? A culture that is based on fear, one that is controlled by its fears, and is not going to be open to anything challenging in their entertainment? As for films with

gay characters or content, studio types will say, "Well, it's not that I don't want to see that," and ask, "Do they have to be gay?" After I made *Happy Endings* [2005], which took two and a half years to make and fell apart several times, my own producer told me, "In the next movie, don't put a gay person in it. It's so much harder." So, even your own team will dissuade you, just because it is so impossible.

I don't know how Ang Lee got *Brokeback Mountain* [2005] green-lit, but he is an award-winning director who can do what he wants. The problem with *Brokeback Mountain* is it will take up the space that a lot of smaller independent films could've taken up. There are people in the business who will point to it and say, "We're not bigoted, we made *Brokeback Mountain*." So it'll work against us for the next 10 years. I think a lot of gay filmmakers are consumed with jealousy that he was able to do it. "Why could he do it and I can't?" And they are also aware that it will be used against us for years and years.

I think another part of the reason Ang Lee was able to make *Brokeback Mountain* was because he's straight.

He's the gayest straight man I ever met. *The Wedding Banquet*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Brokeback* . . . and I think he's a very open guy in terms of what appeals to him. I wish he was gay. I would love to claim Ang Lee for our team, but he's not. That is one of the reasons it's safe. In order to put a gay thing over in this country, it helps if it's shepherded through by a straight person. In fact, one of the ideas I had for *The Opposite of Sex* was, "I have to make this lead character a buxom, beautiful, blonde straight girl who hates gays, or has the normal contempt for gays that most Americans have, and she will shepherd the gay themes and characters through this film and people will trust her."

Excerpted from The View from Here: Conversations with Gay and Lesbian Filmmakers, published by Arsenal Pulp Press. Reprinted by permission.

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

MORE LAMBDA WINNERS

The Lambda Literary Award winners include *A Push and a Shove* (Alyson Books), by Christopher Kelly, who is the movie critic for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. Kelly's novel was honored for best gay debut fiction. Read the complete list of winners at www.outsmartmagazine.com.

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Celebrate. You deserve it. Waltz and party and toss your garters.

Then brace yourself. The bridal (and groomal) path will be bumpy. Not only because sharing life with another person can be challenging for the best of us, but also because the haters will stop at nothing to interrupt your marital bliss. Their campaign

will haul out every scary, phobic, disgusting stereotype to bully voters into voting against equality in November. Who better than the homo-boogeyman (boogeyperson?) to advance the bad guys' regressive politics? They will whine and cajole and whip up a frenzy about

You gotta wonder what makes the homophobes so phobic—could it be their own dreaded desires?

protecting the children. (Never mind that thousands of children are left unprotected when their parents can't legally marry.) The well-funded fundamentalists are hell-bent on banning your vows to love, honor, and cherish (or obey, if that floats your boat) one another.

These anti-gay-marriage wackos have yet to provide one single sane answer to any of our probing questions (and how we love to probe). How do other people's marriages threaten theirs? What's so holy about hetero matrimony? (Note the divorce rate.) What about the reams of research proving that children of same-sex parents fare no worse—and, statistically, even function somewhat better—than het spawn? Ya gotta wonder what makes the homophobes so phobic—could it be their own dreaded desires?

Truth is, they have an agenda. And the more they rail, the more they expose their true colors. We all know the religious right's wet dream is to install an all-out theocracy.

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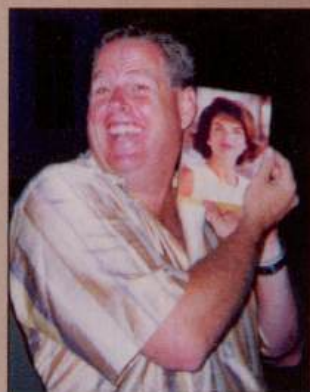
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OutLoud continued from page 88

and the champagne is already flowing.

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Leave it to the Golden State and the movie capital to proclaim, "Show me the money!" If anything will win us our equal rights, it's the good ol' ca-ching, ca-ching.

Ellen's got it right. Don't let the evildoers' nasty initiative rain on your parade. You're going to the chapel—and, more importantly, the courthouse. Let your love-light shine. Love changes hearts and minds. Go ahead, plan your honeymoon and celebrate your freedom to marry the woman (or man) of your dreams. Even John McCain, despite being a total hypocrite, wishes you every happiness.

Award-winning writer Sally Sheklow cries at weddings in Eugene, Oregon.

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Calendar of Events

Compiled by Sheri Taylor Bockelman

JULY

Deadline for OutSmart's August issue is 5 p.m., Wednesday, July 9.

Daily (Mon.-Fri.)

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Daily (Sun.-Fri.)

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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.

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Free Summer Band Concerts in Galveston. Bring the family to enjoy live band performances at the historic Sealy Gazebo on 24th Street and Avenue I across from Rosenberg Library. Now in its 81st year, the Island Beach Band, directed by Frank Incapera, is as a part of Galveston summers as snow cones, flip flops, and trips to the beach. Performances start at 7:30 pm every Tuesday in July. Info: 409/621-3177.

Weekly (Thursdays)

TG Potluck Social. The "Transgender Potluck Social" offers friendship, support, fellowship, and a hot meal to transgender-identifying individuals, friends, and family. Please remember to bring food to share. Free. 7-9 pm, at the GLBT Community Center, 3400 Montrose, Ste. 207. More info: 713/526-0555 x 228 (ask for Cristan) or www.transhouston.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. GLBT friendly. Free. Groups meet at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold, Room 232, 7:15-8:30 pm. Info: 713/526-1018.

Weekly (Sun., Wed., Sat.)

Love and Rackets. Tennis players and enthusiasts of all levels are invited to join the Houston Tennis Club at Memorial Park tennis center. The club gathers Sundays from 9 am-noon, Wednesdays from 7:30-9 pm, and offers clinics every Saturday from 9-10:30 am. There are also social activities throughout the year. Annual membership \$30, court fees \$3 per session. More

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—WEDNESDAY, JULY 9.**

info: www.houstontenniscub.org

Monthly (Every 4th Saturday)

FTM TG Support Group. The Female-To-Male transgender support group, "STAG," welcomes all female-to-male transgender-identifying individuals, friends, and family members. All new attendees must first contact Georges prior to attending. Free. 5-6 pm. More information (including location): 713/526-0555 x 228 (ask for Georges) or www.transhouston.com.

Monthly (Every 4th Saturday)

TG Support Group. TS Support Group. The transsexual support group, "TATS," welcomes all transsexual-identifying individuals, friends, and family members. All new attendees must first contact the Cristan prior to attending. Free. 4 to 5 pm. More information (including location): 713/526-0555 x 228 (ask for Cristan) or www.transhouston.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. More info: 713/862-0082 or www.winterstreetstudios.net.

Monthly (Sundays)

Read On. Want to spend at least one afternoon each month sharing with other titillating women like yourself? The Exchange

meets the first Sunday of each month, 2 p.m. at Baba Yaga Restaurant. Bring your favorite nonfiction and/or fiction to this new book club to ruminate, and even cogitate, in public. Details: ycnightheron@gmail.com.

Monthly (Tuesdays)

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

4 (Fri.)

Blood and Oil. Documentary based on the work of Nation magazine defense correspondent Michael T. Klare, dispels the notion that it is nonsense or mere conspiracy that oil motivates America's military engagements in the Middle East, and points out that concerns about oil have been at the core of American foreign policy for more than 60 years. \$5 in advance, \$7 at the door. The Strand Theatre, 2317 Ship's Mechanic Row, Galveston. Info/tickets: www.bravenewtheatres.com or 409/457-4914.

6 (Sun.)

Before Stonewall is the third film in Creative Life Center's six-week series, "100 Years of Gay History." Includes group discussion and guest speaker, popcorn, and drinks. \$7. 2-5 pm. Space limited, reservations: 617/480-2004. Info: www.the.creativelifecenter.org.

Houston Symphony for \$1. The Houston Chronicle Dollar Concert features László Mezo-Arruda on cello, Gold Medalist, 2008 Ima Hogg Young Artist Competition. Programs are Brahms *Academic Festival Overture*, Lalo's *Cello Concerto*, and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 6, Pastoral*. \$1. 7:30 pm at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St., www.houstonsymphony.org or 713/224-7575.

Bringing Up Baby... free movie day at MFAH. Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant are superb in this screwball comedy with a plot that could have been hatched in a mental institution, and one of director Howard Hawks' most inspired lampoons of the battle between the sexes. 2 pm. Museum of Fine Arts, 1001 Bissonnet St. Info: www.mfah.org or 713/639-7300.

10 (Thurs.)

The Real (Art) World Residents. What happens when four artists are selected to share a studio and have their creative process documented for a year? Come meet the talented four selected to take part in DiverseWorks' third consecutive summer of The Real (Art) World Visual Arts Residency Program. Provided a large space, a stipend, and supplies to create new work in a pressure-free environment, this year's residents are Maria Guzman, Tina Kotrla, Kia Neill, and Eric Zapata. Free. 6-8 pm. DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway. Info: www.diverseworks.org or 713/223-8346.

11 (Fri.)

Thunder Within the Earth is a drawing exhibition featuring the works of Jack Livingston, Philip Mayles, Matthew Sontheimer, Marco Villegas, and Liz Ward. Selected Houston artists whose collections create symbolic imagery radiate an amazing quietude but powerful force. Curator and artist talk, 6:15 pm. Reception, 6-8 pm. Art League Houston, 1953 Montrose Blvd. Info: www.artleaguehouston.org or 713/523-9530.

11-12 (Fri. & Sat.)

The Music of Pink Floyd. The Houston Symphony, a full rock band, and Zebra's lead singer Randy Jackson perform quintessential hits like "Money," "Learning to Fly," and "Comfortably Numb." Charts by conductor/arranger Brent Havens capture the essence of Pink Floyd's ethereal flow of music while lavish lighting effects take fans back to the feel of the Pink Floyd's live shows. Tickets start at \$25. 7:30 pm. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Info: www.houstonsymphony.org or 713/224-7575.

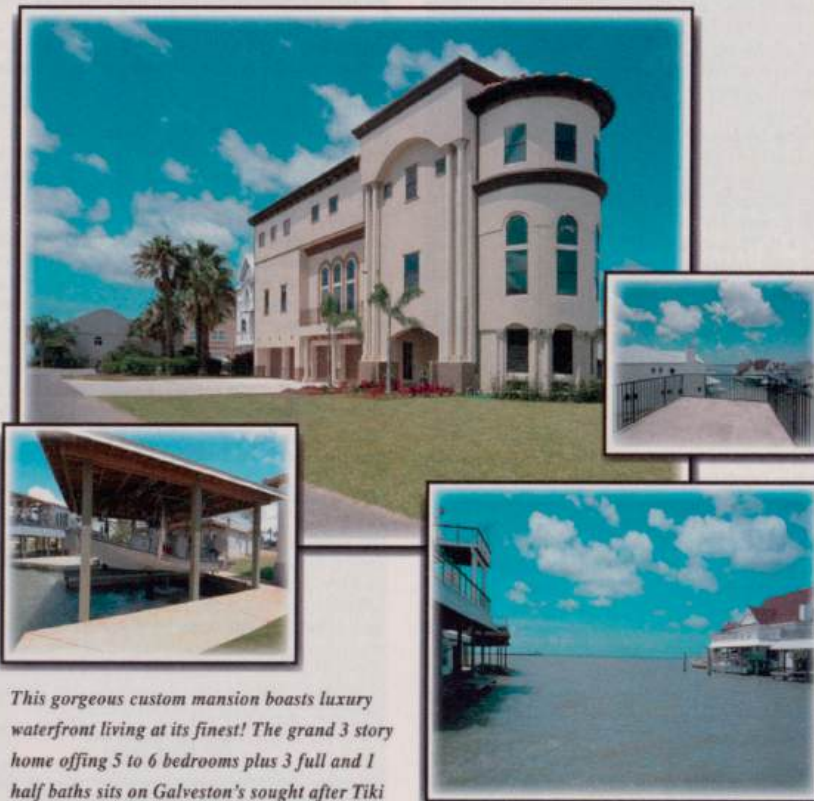
12 (Sat.)

ArtHouston 2008 Summer Event opens today at 35 galleries along Colquitt, in the Museum District, downtown, and the Heights. Artists and exhibitions range in works from realist to abstract, sculpture, mixed media, drawings and paintings, and photography—from local and regional talents to established names. Many galleries participating represent the GLBT community including Devin Borden Hiram Butler, Wade Wilson Art, and others. Free and open to the public. Galleries, hours, and info: www.arthouston.com or 713/520-7767.

17-18 (Thurs. & Fri.)

Not the Messiah (He's a Very Naughty Boy). Inspired by Monty Python's hilarious *Life of Brian*, this zany oratorio is a tragicomic tale of a man mistaken for the Messiah. Eric Idle and John Du Prez crafted this comic parody for chorus, soloists, bagpipers and a lone sheep—along with the Houston Symphony. As John Du Prez leads this merry troupe on a musical journey to the bright side of life, Idle sings (in a manner of speaking), reprising some of his best-loved characters from *Life of Brian*. From the team that created *Spamalot*. Tickets start at \$35. 7:30 pm at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Info: www.houstonsymphony.org or 713/224-7575. →

1219 Oahu Drive - Tiki Island



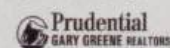
This gorgeous custom mansion boasts luxury waterfront living at its finest! The grand 3 story home offering 5 to 6 bedrooms plus 3 full and 1 half baths sits on Galveston's sought after Tiki Island and was newly constructed in 2008 and features over 6,500 sq. ft. of living space.

Breathtaking views of Galveston's West Bay can be enjoyed from not only the private balcony off the dramatic master suite but many other areas of this home. The Mediterranean style home will impress guests and give the host or hostess boundless entertaining options with a fabulous floorplan plus an option of taking the fun out on the water! Exquisite Cherrywood floors and extensive Travertine marble can be found throughout the home. Resort style living to be enjoyed everyday!



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GEE, IT'S G. LEIGH!

Before releasing her new acoustic CD, the hot rocker returns to Houston

Out international recording artist and Texas flower, Ginger Leigh, is back from her early 2008 European tour—Italy, precisely—and is once again hitting the road, much to the delight of her Houston fans. A long-time staple of the burgeoning "listening room" venue movement where she won over many of her devoted fan base, Leigh is currently a dominator of the weekly www.Famecast.com competition where she hopes to win gear, festival appearances, and other prizes.

"I could use the gear, since mine was stolen recently!" she adds.

Though based in Austin with her home mic plugged in at the "Love. On The Lawn" concert café, Leigh says the heart of her fan base is in Houston. "Remember, Houston, it was you who shot the videos at Mucky Duck that have been instrumental in my success on Famecast.com. It is you, Houston, who listens diligently at my shows and who interacts with me with utmost enthusiasm."

Leigh adds that she plays more solo shows in Houston than anywhere else. "My acoustic show experiences in Houston are substantially meaningful, due to the fan support I receive. They have given me encouragement and confidence in my music and acoustic performance."

That encouragement and confidence has resulted in the release of Leigh's first acoustic CD, *Rain Down*. "After many requests by fans for an acoustic CD, I decided to go for it!" she says. "I pulled the reigns and chose to strip it back to the organic sound of vocals, guitar, and lyrics."

Rain Down, as are Leigh's six previous CDs, is available by pre-order on Leigh's website, as well as at her July 19 concert at Mojo Rosin' (1600 Shepherd Dr.). Details: www.gleigh.com.

—Nancy Ford

19 (Sat.)
Galveston Island Bicycle Day. Family fun for all ages, including a bicycle show and contests, safety demonstrations, booths, and a bicycle parade. To participate, you must register and bring your bike to the event. Prizes awarded in several categories; all kids 12 and under will receive a ribbon for decorating their bikes. Early registration available at T.F. Hippi's, Island Cycle Repair, Island Bicycle Company, and Mod Coffee House. Early registrants can get an official Bicycle Day T-shirt for \$5 (T-shirts will be \$10 the day of event and will be limited). Participation is free and open to the public. 10 am-4 pm. Saengerfest Park at The Strand, Galveston. Info: www.downtowngalveston.org or 409/762-1969.

Hear the von Trapp Children Sing. The great-grandchildren of that gruff captain-turned-family-man by the winsome charms of Fräulein Maria revives memories of the original musical, with songs from *The Sound of Music* by Rodgers and Hammerstein. Includes "My Favorite Things," "So Long, Farewell," plus American classics such as "Amazing Grace." Tickets start at \$25. 7:30 pm. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Info: www.houstonsymphony.org or 713/224-7575.

24 (Thurs.)
ACTOUT at the Alley: Agatha Christie's *The Unexpected Guest*. GLBT theater fans and friends are invited to celebrate the Alley Theatre's production of this classic "who done it," which first debuted in 1958. Free pre-curtain event features music by DJ Mike Bell and Six Degrees Mercury, complimentary hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and beverages, plus a specialty drink. 6:15-7:15 pm; curtain at 7:30 pm. Tickets \$21-\$35. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. Tickets/info: use/mention promotion code "ACT OUT" at www.alleytheatre.org or 713/220-5700, enter 1.

27 (Sun.)
100 Years of Gay History continues with *After Stonewall*, Creative Life Center's fourth film in the series focusing on human rights and its historical evolution as it relates to the gay community. Guest speaker, group discussion, and refreshments served. 5:2-5 pm. Space limited, reservations: 617/480-2004. Info: www.thecreativecenter.org.

30 (Wed.)
California Dreaming: Building a Better World for Old Lesbians begins today in Los Angeles at the Hacienda Hotel. This four-day gathering, hosted by Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (OLOC) includes dynamic and well-known keynote speakers, all over 60: award-winning author Jewelle Gomez; community activist and former California State Assembly member Jackie Goldberg; and blues singer, founding member of Saffire and lifelong lesbian activist Gaye Adegbalola (who will also perform). Entertainment features singer, writer, & raconteur Alix Dobkin; comedian and activist Robin Tyler; Motherlounge Feminist Readers Theater; and the Los Angeles Women's Com-

munity Chorus reunion, plus the OLOC chorus, both conducted by Sue Fink. Lesbians over 60 include the generations who came out in eras of great discrimination, as well as women who built the lesbian feminist movement in the '70s. Info: www.oloc.org.

FOR THE SUMMER

Houston Arboretum's Day Camps for Kids. The Houston Arboretum & Nature Center offers two weeklong day camps for boys and girls ages 5-12. • City Critters is focused on ecology with an urban twist. Learn about the creatures who manage to live close to humans while still staying wild. 9 am-3 pm, July 14-18. • Nature Rangers to the Rescue! Campers learn the skills real rangers use to protect and improve ecosystems through experiments, games, and hands-on activities. 9 am-3 pm, July 7-11 or Aug. 11-15. Fees for each camp: \$230 members; \$270 non-members. Half-day mornings, 9 am-noon, \$120 members; \$150 non-members. Pre-registration required. 4501 Woodway Dr. Info: www.houstonarboretum.org or 713/681-8433.

Hike Amid Botanicals and Wildlife. The Houston Arboretum & Nature Center offers five miles of trees, botanicals, and native wildlife along walking trails. Located in Memorial Park, 4501 Woodway Dr. Arboretum grounds open to the public, 7 am-7 pm; Nature Center hours 9 am-5 pm; The Discovery Room houses interactive educational exhibits such as aquariums, touch screens, a 15-ft. model learning tree, and microscopes with video monitor displays, open 10 am-4 pm. Free admission. Info: www.houstonarboretum.org or 713/681-8433.

Camp Xplorations Summer Science Adventures. Weekly camps for ages 5-12, through August 15, at The Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Drive. Satellite locations: Woodlands Xplorations Station, The Woodlands Mall, 1201 Lake Woodland Dr., near Barnes & Noble on the lower level; in Fort Bend County at Christ United Methodist Church, 3300 Austin Parkway, Sugar Land. Register online at www.hmns.org. Info: xplorations@hmns.org or 713/639-4629.

The Houston Museum of Natural Science, host to world-class and ever-changing touring exhibitions, features the Wortham IMAX Theatre, Cockrell Butterfly Center, Burke Baker Planetarium, and George Observatory. One Hermann Circle Drive. Info: www.hmns.org or 713/639-4629.

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

Agatha Christie's The Unexpected Guest. In dense fog near the South Welsh coastline, a stranger runs his car into a ditch and arrives at a nearby house. Inside, he finds the murdered body of a former big-game hunter. The dead man's wife is near the body with a gun in her hand. Is she guilty or is she protecting someone? Appearances are sure to deceive in this twisty mystery. Tickets \$21-\$35. July 11-Aug. 3. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. Info: www.alleytheatre.org or 713/220-5700.

Electile Dysfunction. Laugh out loud at what is, and is not, presidential "hopefuls" in this zany look at national politics, in the land of Precious Trees (Houston's most planned planned community). When Spy Eye News turns the divided family into local celebrities, and a popular Houston minister gets involved, things spin even more hilariously out of control. \$22. Through Nov. 15. Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt. Info: www.radio-musictheatre.com or 713/522-7722.

Galveston's Curt Miller Magic & Comedy Show. A dazzling Las Vegas-style show that captures all ages with a mesmerizing mixture of large-scale illusions and comedic flair. You'll be left amazed and laughing out loud as Miller makes audience participants disappear, levitate, and break up into different pieces. Tickets \$11-\$25 adults; \$9-\$16 children. July 2-13. Moody Gardens Convention Center, Seven Hope Boulevard. Tickets/info: www.moodytickets.com or 888/939-8680.

Galveston Island Musicals. The 2008 season continues with *Country Roads*, as John Denver's character takes you on a patriotic journey, focusing on what's right with America today. July 2-20. Mendith Wilson's *The Music Man* follows a fast-talking traveling salesman who works his way into the hearts of River City, Iowa, citizens—and eventually is transformed by its librarian. July 25-Aug. 3. • Tickets \$25-\$35. 7:30 pm Tues.-Sat.; matinee 2:30 pm Thurs.-Sun. Galveston Island Musicals, Moody Garden Convention Center, Seven Hope Blvd. Info/tickets: www.galveston-musicals.com or 409/316-0346 or (800) 54-SHOWS.

Galveston's Strand Theatre. Documentaries that speak to what's going on in America and the world today—opening up minds and conversations with viewpoints and images. • *Blood and Oil*, based on the critically acclaimed work of *Nation* magazine defense correspondent Michael T. Klare, unearths declassified documents and highlights forgotten passages in prominent presidential doctrines to show how concerns about oil have been at the core of American foreign policy for more than 60 years.

July 4, 8 pm. • *Freedom to Fascism*, Aaron Russo's incendiary political documentary which exposes many of the governmental organizations and entities that have abridged the freedoms of U.S. citizens had its international premiere at Cannes and won a standing ovation. July 11, 8 pm. • *Iraq for Sale: The War Profiteers* is the story of what happens to everyday Americans when corporations go to war. Acclaimed director Robert Greenwald takes you inside the lives of soldiers, truck drivers, widows, and children who have been changed forever as a result of corporate greed in the reconstruction of Iraq. July 18, 8 pm. • *9/11: The Birth of Treason*. This stunning new documentary features in-depth interviews with Dr. Steven Jones and Kevin Ryan of Scholars for 9/11 Truth and Justice. July 25, 8 pm. • Admission to each film, \$5 in advance, \$7 at the door. The Strand Theatre, 2317 Ship's Mechanic Row, Galveston. Info/tickets: www.bravenewtheatres.com or 409/457-4914.

Gilbert & Sullivan's The Yeomen of the Guard . . . or the Merry Man and His Maid. The classic Shakespearean-England love story takes place in the Tower of London, where dashing Colonel Fairfax, a man of science, is unjustly doomed to be executed for sorcery. Phoebe Meryll, daughter of the sergeant who leads the Tower guards, is secretly in love with the colonel but is pursued by the odious head jailer, Wilfred Shadbolt. Enter strolling jester, Jack Point, and charming singer Elsie Maynard . . . will the evil cousin inherit the Colonel's estate, or will Elsie agree to help thwart his plot? Music by Sir Arthur Sullivan, book by Sir W.S. Gilbert. \$19-\$41. Pre-show lecture 45 minutes before curtain. 8 pm, Fri., July 18 & 25, Sat., July 19 & 26; matinee 2:30 pm, Sun., July 20 & 27. Wortham Center Cullen Theater, 500 Texas St. Info: www.gilbertandsullivan.org.

Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park. One-hour daytime performances specially geared toward children offer an excellent opportunity to expose youngsters to the delights of performing arts. 11 am. No tickets necessary; seating first come, first served. Evening shows are family-friendly. Admission is free for all performances, but this evening show requires reserved tickets for covered seating, available only on day of performance, 11:30 am-1 pm at the Miller Theatre box office; any remaining tickets released one hour before curtain. Maximum four tickets per person. *Disney's When You Wish . . .* over 71 years of Disney favorites come to life in song and dance presented by TUTS. Many of the most memorable and loved songs from popular Disney films including *The Lion King*, *The Jungle Book*, and *The Little Mermaid*, among others. 8:15 pm, July 15-20. Info: www.milleroutdoortheatre.com or 281/373-3386.

Oklahoma! From the legendary team of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II comes this classic musical story of love in Claremore, Oklahoma, at the turn of the century. \$25 adults/\$12 children under 10. Fri.-Sat., July 11-26, 8 pm; Sun., July 20, 2 pm; Thurs., July 24, 7:30 pm. Country Playhouse, 12802 Queensbury Lane. Info: www.countryplayhouse.org or 713/467-4497.

PERFORMING ARTS

Beauty and the Beast. Completely revamped in the folkloric setting of Mexico, Beauty has an important lesson to learn from the beasts of the forest. Father comes face to face with a creature from the legends of his childhood. What hides behind the horrible face of the Beast? Can Beauty overcome her past and learn the meaning of true beauty? The classic story of friendship and kindness unfolds in a colorful musical adaptation presented in English and Spanish. \$5. 11 am, Fri., July 11, 18, and 25; 2 pm, Sat., July 12 and 19. Express Theatre, 446 Northwest Mall, www.expresstheatre.com or 713/682-5044.

If You Give a Moose a Muffin is the hysterical sequel to *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*. In this comical adventure, a hungry moose is the unexpected guest, and when the little boy gives him a muffin, well, he wants blackberry jam, and then he wants more. \$8. July 19-31, Mon.-Thurs., 11:30 am; Sat., 1 and 4 pm. Main Street Theater, Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. Children under 3 not permitted in theater. Advance tickets at the Main Street Theater Box Office at Rice Village, 2540 Times Blvd. Info/tickets: www.mainstreettheater.com or 713/524-6706.

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

Blaffer Gallery's 2008 Houston Area Exhibition. Sixteen artists were chosen through careful portfolio review and a series of on-site studio visits to exhibit their work in this exhibition, held only once every four years. Designed to introduce artists who are young or new to the Houston community and offer more seasoned artists the opportunity to develop new work and to be seen in a fresh light, the Houston Area Exhibition has been a part of Blaffer since the museum's inception. Free. Through Aug. 2. Blaffer Gallery, 120 Fine Arts Bldg, University of Houston, Entrance 16 off Cullen Blvd.

Charles 'Teenie' Harris: Rhapsody in Black and White.

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THAT'S UNCANNY
Red Bull brings its canned exhibition to Houston
 Red Bull, the caffeinated energy drink, gives you more than wings (to echo the ad campaign for the product). The container is something of a canvas, as the traveling *Red Bull Art of Can* exhibition displays when it lands in Houston this month. The 47 objects crafted from recycled aluminum beverage cans in the show at the Galleria include *Big Ass Boot*, a piece (pictured) by local talents Christian Azul, co-owner of Aerosol Warfare Gallery & Boutique, and professional ice sculptor Reverend Butter. The four-foot footwear model incorporates 220 cans—it's a "size 36," Azul says. Another locally produced piece is *Alteza*, a soaring, mythology-inspired female figure (the title translates as "highness" in Spanish) made by John Fitzgerald Sanchez, a LaPorte stylist and University of Houston art student. Gallerist Wade Wilson (his self-named space is located at 4411 Montrose Blvd.) curated the Houston edition of the exhibition, the only 2008 U.S. stop in an ongoing art series sponsored by the Austrian beverage maker. An eight-person judge panel, which includes Houston Arts Alliance CEO Jonathon Glus, will select three winning pieces. The public can cast votes for a people's-choice selection at the exhibition and online at the Red Bull site. *Art of Can* is on view at the Galleria (5085 Westheimer) from July 12 through July 25. For more information, visit www.redbullartofcan.com. —Tim Brookover

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The world's largest known collection of photographs depicting urban African-American life, Harris' work captures the spirit of the African-American community in Pittsburgh from 1936-1975. His photographs range from images of everyday people in the city to those of soldiers, jazz legends, baseball teams, and pivotal events in the city's civil rights movement. Free. Through Aug. 2 at Blaffer Gallery, 120 Fine Arts Bldg. University of Houston, Entrance 16 off Cullen Blvd. Info: www.mitchellcenterforarts.org.

Folklore Art: The Old, Weird America. The first museum exhibition to explore the widespread resurgence of folk imagery and mythic history in recent art from the U.S. features 18 artists who explore native, idiomatic, and communal subjects from America's past. From the first Thanksgiving in 1621 to the beginning of the Space Age in 1957, colorful storytelling works illustrate the creative composition of fact and myth. Through July 20. Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd. Info: www.camh.org or 713/284-8250.

Geopalooza! A Hard Rock Anthology. Featuring "greatest hits" of Earth's natural treasures, this interactive exhibition is built to draw visitors into all of the fascinating facets of mineralogy. From trilobite fossils to sparkling amethyst, crystallized petrified wood and massive geodes, the collection is nothing short of spectacular. Experiences include touching the metallic surface of a meteorite that has traveled millions of miles, and panning for gold. \$15 adults; \$10 children (3-11), seniors (62+), and college students w/valid ID; \$7 museum members. Through Aug. 24. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Drive. Info: www.hmns.org or 713/639-4629.

George Washington: A Landmark Portrait. Gilbert Stuart, known as the image-maker of George Washington, painted this portrait for a wealthy merchant who commissioned the work for Alexander Hamilton. Traveling exhibit for a limited time, since the New York Public Library sold the famous painting last year to Crystal Bridges, a new museum of American art scheduled to open in Bentonville, Arkansas, in 2009. Through July 31 at the Audrey Jones Beck Building, Museum of Fine Arts, 1001 Bissonnet St. Info: www.mfah.org or 713/639-7300.

Lucy's Legacy: The Hidden Treasures of Ethiopia has been extended in Houston through Sept. 1. She's the most fascinating exhibition ever, original fossilized remains of the 3.2-million-year-old hominid known as Lucy. With 40 percent of her skeleton intact, Lucy remains the oldest and most complete adult human ancestor fully retrieved from African soil. Learn more at www.lucyexhibition.com. Tickets: \$22 adults; \$15 children (3-11), seniors (62+), college students w/valid ID; \$9 museum members. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Drive. Info: www.hmns.org or 713/639-4629.

Max Neuhaus: Circumscription Drawings. A pioneer in the use of sound in the visual arts, Neuhaus invented the term "sound installation" to describe his practice based on the creation of unique sounds for specific locations. As opposed to the temporal experience of hearing a piece of music, his work presents sound as a continuous material used to engage our perception of the physical space around us. Through Aug. 10 at The Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. Info: www.menil.org or 713/525-9400.

NeoHooDoo: Art for a Forgotten Faith brings together an intergenerational group of artists who address ritual in the artistic process and the wider implications of spirituality in contemporary art. The term "HooDoo," which originated in 19th-century America, refers to folk traditions derived from the Haitian religion of Vodun, itself preceded by the religion and culture of the Yoruba people of present-day Nigeria. The artists in the exhibition frequently use everyday objects that resonate both within the confines of a gallery or museum and among members of their own local audiences. While the emphasis of the exhibition is on sculpture and the three-dimensional experience of walking around art, there are photographic works addressing themes such as slavery and colonization. Through Sept. 21 at The Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. Info: www.menil.org or 713/525-9400.

Perspectives 161: Tim Lee. This imaginative Vancouver-based artist uses video, photography, and performance to insert himself into cultural events and icons. Lee plays the role of Sunday philosopher, anthropologist, and ethnomusicologist, dissecting and re-envisioning revealing aspects of popular culture, film, and music. Using low-tech photography to develop self-portraits, he becomes hockey player Bobby Orr scoring a winning goal, or rocker Neil Young playing a famous concert. In high-tech videos, he simulates playing Bach's intricate piano compositions. He inputs humor into art, as his illusionist craft works to create unique imagery. Through July 13. Zilkha Gallery, Contemporary Arts Museum, 5216 Montrose Blvd. Info: www.camh.org or 713/284-8250.

Pink Ladies and Crimson Gents highlights photographer Don Glentzer's ability to bring roses to life in a rich melding of horticulture and human culture. Viewed through 40 large-scale photographs, and drawn from the new book of the same title, the exhibition pays homage to old-fashioned roses that, through

their names, bring an evocative sense of history, humanity, and gentility to the garden. Rather than focus strictly on the botanical, Glentzer puts characterization to his images. General admission: \$10 adults; \$7 kids (3-11)/seniors (62+)/college students; free for museum members. Through Sept. 1. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Drive. Info: www.hmns.org or 713/639-4629.

The Road to the Promised Land: Martin Luther King Jr. & the Civil Rights Movement. Twenty black-and-white panels feature photographs, reproductions of landmark documents, and quotations by Dr. King and others engaged in the struggle for civil rights in 20th-century America. Organized by Humanities Texas, this inspiring exhibit displays a wide range of subjects including environmental racism; the Lorraine Motel, site where Dr. King was murdered 40 years ago reinvented as a museum; and trailblazers like Rosa Parks and Texas' own Barbara Jordan. Free. Through July 27 at The Heritage Society Museum, 1100 Bagby St. Info: www.heritage-society.org or 713/655-1912.

Sterne and Steinberg: Critics Within. Romanian-born artists Saul Steinberg (1914-1999) and Hedda Sterne (b. 1910) met in New York City in 1943 after the Nazi occupation forced them to flee Europe, became U.S. citizens, and married in 1944. The couple exhibited at the same gallery, yet as artists had little aesthetic ground in common, but each questioned the ability of an artist's personal aesthetic style to communicate a stable identity. By placing a small number of works by Sterne and Steinberg in dialogue with one another, this exhibition amplifies the artists' joint (and unique) position as critics within their artistic milieu. Through Sept. 7 at The Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. Info: www.menil.org or 713/525-9400.

Thunder Within The Earth—featuring the works of Jack Livingston, Philip Mayles, Matthew Sontheimer, Marco Villegas, and Liz Ward—specifically refers to the hexagram "Fu" (Return or the Turning Point) and conjures up an image of a quiet but powerful force. July 11–Aug. 22, Art League Houston, 1953 Montrose Blvd. Info: www.artleaguehouston.org or 713/523-9530.

Yale Street Arts Market is in its summer evening hours, cooler for enjoying the Heights festival atmosphere. Local artists display and sell original works of art, and local musicians entertain. The Yale Street Arts Market is held every month on the 1st Saturday at 548 West 19th at Wind Water Gallery's parking lot. Free. July 5, 6–10 pm. Info: www.YaleStreetMarket.com. Stop by The Artful Corner at 3423 White Oak Blvd., 713/426-4ART. ■

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Business News

by Tim Brookover

IN THE RESTAURANT Well-known Houston restaurant pro Jon Paul (right) has joined the Steakhouse at the San Luis Resort, Spa & Conference Center in Galveston as general manager. Paul was most recently general manager at Polo's in Houston and he previously worked for 16 years with the Vallone Restaurant Group. He was the general manager of Tony's, the white-tablecloth society restaurant owned by the Vallone firm, from 1989 to 2005. More recently, Paul owned and opened 1308 Cantina on Montrose Boulevard, before selling the restaurant to the Laurenzo family, owners of the El Tiempo Cantina restaurants.

The San Luis is located at 5222 Seawall Blvd. (409/744-1500 or 800/445-0090). The website is www.sanluis-resort.com.



Jon Paul

Interstate 45 North (281/598-4980). The website is www.carmensboutique.com.

HOTEL DEAL Among the American businesses capitalizing on the recent California Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage in that state is the Kimpton Hotel & Restaurant chain with its Summer of Pride promotion. Through Labor Day, Kimpton hotels in 15 North American cities, including Dallas, offer 10 to 20 percent off the current best available rate. California, Massachusetts, and British Columbia also offers same-sex wedding ceremonies.

The San Francisco-based Kimpton chain was the first hospitality company to receive a 100-percent score on the Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index. All properties are members of the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association.

The Kimpton hotels in Dallas are the Hotel Lumen (www.hotel-lumen.com) and the Hotel Palomar (www.hotelpalomar-dallas.com). Details: 1-800-KIMPTON, www.kimptonhotels.com.



L-r: Bob Williams, Sheila Jackson Lee, Mitchell Gold, and Tipper Gore

WELL FURNISHED

U.S. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee and Tipper Gore, wife of former vice president, 2000 presidential candidate, and Nobel Prize winner Al Gore, were special guests at the May 29 grand opening of the Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams retail store in Houston. Bob Williams (left, second photo from top) accepted a Congressional certificate from Lee (second from left), joined by Gold and Gore. Lady Bunny, the renowned New York drag performer (right), also made an appearance at the opening. The 11,500-square-foot store is located at 3303 Kirby Dr. (832/242-9470). The website is www.mitchellgold.com.



Lady Bunny

THE OTHER RAINBOW ROOM

With its recently opened fifth location, Carmen's 24 Hour Boutique has introduced the Rainbow Room, which will offer "the largest GLBT selection of adult products in the Houston area," according to a Carmen's spokesperson. Merchandise includes adult DVDs, novelty items, and clothing.

The newest Carmen's and its Rainbow Room is located at 9924



Hotel Palomar

MEDIA NEWS The Washington, D.C.-based National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce has launched an on-line magazine, *Biz* (www.nglcc.org/biz). The new e-zine focuses on the GLBT business community and its corporate allies. The chamber and its co-publisher, the communications firm OmniStudio, are seeking contributors and advertisers. The Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce (www.thechamberhouston.org) is an affiliate business organization of the national chamber.

Red, the Phoenix-based monthly gay magazine that also covered Houston and Dallas, ceased publication with its May issue. Co-publisher Chris L. Smith made the announcement in a June 9 e-mail. ■

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Meteor 2306-08 Genesee	713/521-0123
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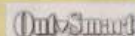
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BAR & CLUB GUIDE

Houston

LA ACADEMIA

Hot salsa and Latin flavor rule at this dance bar on the southwest side of Houston. Weekends often offer high-production drag shows, drink specials. 5829 S. Cessner • 713/334-5422 • www.myspace.com/laacademiadance

ANITA'S BAR & GRILLE

Well-known drag queen Anita Bump serves up tasty casual food at this new Montrose location with "Anita-ritas" leading the full-bar menu. You never know when the headliner might take the stage for an impromptu performance. Open Wed.-Sun. 2409 Grant St. • 713/522-BUMP (2867) • www.anitabump.com

BARTINI

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

CROCKER

New ownership has taken over this durable Montrose nightspot that boasts "the longest happy hour in Montrose." Miss Jenny hosts Wii tournaments, with gay boxing on Wed. and gay bowling on Sun. 2312 Crocker • 713/529-3355.

COUSINS

Drag fans frequent this club in the heart of Montrose for its campy shows Thurs.-Sun. 817 Fairview • 713/528-9204.

DECADES

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

EJ'S

Located on the western front of Montrose, EJ's retains the charm of a colorful, local hangout. Frequent shows, includ-

BEHIND THE BAR

WHO: David Quinte (l-r),
Louie Johnston, Chris Fleming

WHERE: Groove,
2416 Postoffice, Galveston

WHAT'S UP:
Get your groove on at
Galveston's newest spot for the
gay gang and their friends.



BELLA AIDA GARDENS

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

BLUR

This multi-level dance club features an expansive patio upstairs lounge, and balconies that overlook the busy Pacific St. traffic. The ladies enjoy Wet and Wild Wednesdays, 18-year-olds are welcome on Thurs., resident DJ Lorenzo spins Wed.-Sat. nights. DJ Pollo spins Karumba Latin night on Sun. Happy hour, 8-10 p.m.; free cover before 11 p.m. 710 Pacific St. • www.blurbar.com.

BOCADOS

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

BRAZOS RIVER BOTTOM

The BRB, Houston's leading gay country-western bar, is located in Midtown, just outside Montrose. Expect to see some fast and fancy two-stepping. Southern Country dance club offers lessons on Thurs. night. 2400 Brazos • 713/526-9192.

CHANCES/THE NEW BARN/G-SPOT

Houston lesbians and those who love them enjoy three separate clubs under one roof, satisfying their C&W, urban dance, and live chick-music needs. Expanded and renovated bars include multiple video screens, banquet seating, and more. 1100 Westheimer • 713/523-7217 • www.chancesbar.com.

CLUB 2020

Located downtown near the Toyota Center, this urban club features Clubbers Friday with male and female dancers. Its 6,400 square feet also offers theater-sized viewing screens and VIP rooms. 2020 Leeland • 713/227-9667 • www.club2020houston.com.

CLUB CRYSTAL

If you miss the now-closed Inergy, you'll find many of its former staff, management, and décor at this two-room Latin/hip-hop club. Sunday evening drag shows rule the roost. 6680 Southwest Fwy, next to Colorado. www.crystaltheclub.com • 713-278-2582.

CLUB EDEN

Finally, a GLBT-friendly oasis between Houston and Galveston. Located in the Webster/Clear Lake area, this spacious, multi-barred dance club caters mostly to women with weekend drink specials and the Girls of Eden dancers. 20701 Gulf Frwy • 281/554-EDEN.

ing community benefits, pack the stage. The upstairs martini bar offers a quiet retreat. 2517 Ralph • 713/527-9071 • www.ejsbar.com.

GEORGE

Regulars rule at this comfortable neighborhood sports bar, just like most other neighborhood sports bars in town. But George's occasional benefit drag show makes it a wonderful, campy alternative. Sports Saturdays start at 3 p.m. with dart and pool tournaments; Steak Night is Sun., 3-7 p.m. 617 Fairview • 713/528-8102.

GUAVA LAMP

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

IN-N-OUT

Heights residents appreciate this nearby alternative to Montrose haunts with state-of-the-art large digital displays, Internet jukebox, comfy seating, and daily drink specials. 1537 N. Shepherd Dr. • 713/589-9780.

JR'S BAR & GRILL

With house emcee Kofi, OutSmart's Gayest and Greatest reigning drag champion, this Montrose standard offers shows Sun.-Wed., as well as pool tables, go-go boys, and karaoke. 808 Pacific St. • 713/521-2519.

MANGO VIDEO LOUNGE

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

MARY'S, NATURALLY

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

METEOR

Check out the classy baby-grand piano at this posh but comfy lounge on the downtown edge of Montrose. The spacious double-room bar offers multiple giant plasma video screens; the updated patio accommodates smokers in style. 2306 Genesee • 713/521-0123 • www.meteorlounge.com.

MICHAEL'S OUTPOST

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

MONTROSE MINING COMPANY

Studly male dancers bump and grind every night at this

leather/denim spot. The two-tier back patio bar provides a perch for viewing the Pacific Street scenery. 805 Pacific • 713/529-7488.

THE PEACOCK INTERNATIONAL

This comfy neighborhood spot is helmed by local Latina legend, Mela Contreras. The musical theme is Tejano, of course, in addition to classic Latin favorites. 2324 Crocker St.

RAINBOW ROOM

Every Thursday, Heather Moon hosts karaoke at this north Houston club. DJ Kenny supplies music on Fri. and Sat. 527 Barren Springs • 281/872-0215 • www.therainbowroombar.com.

RIPCORD

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

THE 611

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

SOUTH BEACH

This expansive, ultra-chic dance club is a frequent winner of OutSmart's Gayest and Greatest awards with DJ Jimmy Skinner; local spin legends, DJ Rocky B, spins for Goddess Wednesdays. The club offers frequent high-production-value drag shows. 810 Pacific • 713/529-SOBE • www.southbeachthenightclub.com.

TONY'S CORNER POCKET

Includes "Booze & Cruise Night" on Thurs., when "shirtless, in-shape guys" enjoy \$1 well drinks. Sunday Brunch starts at 11 am. 817 W. Dallas • www.tonyscornerpocket.com.

VEGAS NIGHTCLUB

DJ Rocky B's Throb Parties, the popular Fri. night traveling club for lesbians and friends, has moved to this southwest location, featuring drink specials, contests for cash, and hard-pumping music. 5720 Harwin Dr. • www.throbpatties.info.

VIVIANA'S

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

Spring

RANCH HILL SALOON

The gayest spot on the north side has a new owner, a new website, and a new storefront for your GLBT gift-giving needs. With its two pool tables, 52-inch plasma televisions, and large dance floor, the club still also accommodates private parties, holy unions, and receptions. 24704 I-45 N, Suite 103 • 281/298-9035 • www.ranchhill.com • www.myspace.com/theranchhillsaloon.

Humble

WHISPERS

Northerly GLBTs meet at this comfy neighborhood bar that offers pool, darts, video games, karaoke Thurs., dancing to the Internet jukebox and live DJ on Fri. and Sat., and Steak night on Sun. 226 First St. • 281/359-2900 • www.whispersbar.com.

Galveston

3RD COAST BEACH BAR

OutSmart readers voted this Seawall spot the island bar with the best happy hour in the 2005 Gayest & Greatest poll. Thurs. is karaoke night, with cabaret/variety shows on Fri. and Sat. nights. 31st and Seawall Blvd. • 409/765-6911 • www.3rdcoastbeachbar.com.

GROOVE

Located in the purple building that was formerly a carriage house, Groove boasts a 5,000-square-foot dance floor, with live DJs and male and female dancers on the weekends. 2416 Postoffice St. • 409/766-7771.

THE PINK DOLPHIN

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

ROBERT'S LAFITTE

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

Beaumont

THE COPA

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

ORLEANS STREET PUB AND PATIO

The place to hang for food, fun, and booze in a newly renovated pub, in good weather or bad. Open every night from 7 pm-2 am. 650 Orleans • 409/835-4243.

Bryan/College Station

HALO VIDEO BAR

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

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SignOut

by Lilly Roddy

Overall this is a smoother month than June, and we should see some relief from the economic pressures we have been dealing with for a while. Most of the planets are in water or earth signs, which will create a greater sense of ease with most things. • On the 2nd, there is a new Moon in Cancer as our country gets ready to celebrate its 232nd birthday. This will instill in all of us a sense of wanting to be closer to our family or finding a "family" that we can feel a part of. Many of us may feel a strong disconnection if we don't have that family or clan tie. The full Moon on the 18th will be in Capricorn. This will stimulate us to be safer and more security-conscious and will inspire many to work on becoming financially prepared in these times of economic stress. • The Sun flows through Cancer and blazes through Leo on the 22nd. Mercury is back up to speed and finishes her journey through Gemini and enters Cancer on the 11th and finally makes it into Leo on the 26th. Lovely Venus begins the month in Cancer but also enters the sign of Leo on the 12th. Mars moves into the sign of Virgo on the 1st. The rest of the planets stay in their current positions.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). June is always a family month for you. You will want to recreate that sense of family this month. You may be looking to make your current living quarters more comfortable or have even been looking for a new place to live. With the 4th of July, you will want to have people into your home. The career sector is full of opportunity this month, and you are more prepared to act on openings. Exercise and diet programs are on your agenda. At the end of the month, you are more playful and may want to slack off some of the projects you started in early July.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). You are getting your message across better this month. And you are definitely in an organizing mood. Some of you are restless and will need to get out of town and break up your routines. Money and career activities seem to be more successful without your really trying. Relationships are a bit touch and go through the first half of the month but get much better later. At month's end, family relationships take over the spotlight. Make sure you have put family time on your calendar.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). I know you are all glad that Mercury, your ruler, is no longer retrograde, because that has made your life so, so, so much better. You are turning your attention to your financial picture. Get that part of your life organized. By mid-month, you are even able to get a raise or increase the fees your charge others. If you are considering asking for a raise, the best time is between the 10th and the 22nd. Some of you are thinking about starting your own business. Keep moving forward on that notion. Relationships require more work than you are prepared for. Family time is more stressful. Avoid your family and others' families as well.

LEO (July 23–August 22). July is a time of rest and retreat for you. Even with the holiday time, you are inclined to spend more time alone. Be sure that you don't overextend yourself, at least during the first half



CANCER (June 22–July 22). You are in an upbeat mood for your birthday this year. There is such a sense of change, and you can feel it. In fact, you have already begun to start cleaning out things and throwing things away. This can include stuff in your attic, old lovers, and excessively bitchy family members. People need to be on their toes around you since you are not holding back with people this year. Relationships are still very good. If you are single, this is a good time to find someone to be involved with. Your social magnetism is very high for the rest of this year, but especially strong for this month. Make sure you have a party for your birthday.

of July. Pay attention to your financial condition this month and next month. If you have been avoiding some problems, they will be showing up this month. However, work opportunities are still out there. Even your current situation can improve as long as you don't assume the role of the victim. Keep a low profile at the end of the month.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). You have an interesting month with Mars, planet of action, entering your sign for the next 45 days along with Saturn, planet of focused concentration and structure. Sometimes when these planets meet, as they will on the 9th, 10th, and 11th, you will feel rather repressed, having to stifle your anger. You may even feel that those around you judge you unfairly. Try to listen and most of all, don't take this too personally. You are just more sensitive than usual, and you will want to strike back. You may feel justified now but regret your actions later. Get some rest at the end of the month.

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). Career activity is highlighted for you this month. Certainly, this is a great time for you to take action. There are several opportunities opening up for you. People are going to be ready with open arms to accept you. Friends will play an especially important role in this part of your life. Do plenty of networking if you are looking for a new job or career path. Remember that you are looking for something different, so don't just take the first thing that comes along because it satisfies your financial needs. Relationship energies are a bit smoother. Keep working on them.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). A change of routine, habits, and environments are just what the doctor ordered. Make sure that you reconnect with some friends that you haven't had time to visit with. By mid-month, you will be ready to get back to work and hit the ground running. There are plenty of things to do, and you are ready to take a leadership role. By the end of the month, you and your partner

need to take some time for yourselves. If you are single, taking time for yourself is still important.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). You have to focus on relationships. Most of this involves how you choose to interact with others. In personal or romantic relationships, you are very likely to be more aware of the way you have created negative relationship patterns and allowed them to continue while not really confronting the problem. You will be less tolerant of this pattern. You need to have some real communication with your partner. A therapist might be of help. Career demands are showing themselves. You may be eliminating from your life those who are not treating you well or appreciating your skills if you can't find common ground. This is especially true during the first two weeks of the month. In the later part of the month, the tensions ease.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). You have a mixed bag of tricks this month. First, the planets are in your relationship sector, which means this is a good time to renew your current relationship. If you are single, get out there and mingle. Second, the aspects in the sky are very good for you to improve your career, seek employment elsewhere, or start your own business. You are in a more creative mood than before, and what you do has to better reflect your inner personality than ever before. Those of you born at the very beginning of the sign are going through massive life change. You will just have to hold on for the ride.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). This month you are focusing on habits and routines and getting more organized, especially around the office. You definitely want to make your office process more efficient. So this is a great time to clean up old computer files, improve communication, and even get some new equipment. If you work at home, this may mean attempting to make things in your residence function more efficiently. By mid-month, relationships become the hot topic. Make sure that you have someone special to spend time with. Be cautious on the 30th and 31st. Those are days that are ripe for misunderstanding.

PISCES (February 19–March 20). What a great month for you to play, take time off, and just be your creative self! You are certainly not in the mood for work or dealing with anything that is too difficult. For the next 45 days, relationship energies are hot for you, with Mars stirring up the embers and adding logs to the fire. If there are problems there, they will show up. You are in a great place to solve them without much trouble. Friends and any sort of group association are supportive this month. You can find a lot of good people to party with if you are out there looking. By the end of the month, you are back in the grind, so enjoy your playtime.

Lilly Roddy celebrates her 25th in business with an open house on July 6, 2–6 p.m. For details, contact her at lillycath@aol.com. Read Roddy's annual forecast for 2008, which appeared in our January issue ("The Planets Say"), at www.out-smartmagazine.com.

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OUT IN HOUSTON



1 Los Angeles entertainer **Jackie Beat** performed at the Guava Lamp ninth anniversary event on May 7.



2 The Diablos, one of 19 teams that participated in the Montrose Softball League spring season. On July 12, the league holds its awards banquet at the Sheraton Brookhollow.



3 Participants in the Apr. 24-26 Transgender Law Roundtable, held at the Simoneaux & Frye law firm offices, included (seated, l-r) **Sharon McGowan**, ACLU GLBT Project; organizer **Phyllis Randolph Frye**, Simoneaux & Frye; University of Houston grad student **Josephine Tittsworth**; (standing, l-r) **Jody Marksamer**, National Center for Lesbian Rights; Maryland attorney **Alyson Meiselman**; **Denise Brogan-Kator**, Rainbow Law Center; and **Ben Lunine**, Transgender Law Center.



4 In the eighth week of the Montrose Softball League season, **Liz Luna** of the Ultra Hurricanes competed on June 1 at Slo-Pitch City.



5 On May 30, Montrose Counseling Center hosted a 50th birthday celebration for board member **Ralph Herring** (second from r), which was a fundraiser. Herring welcomed (l-r) **Ken Malone**, **Ann Robison**, and **Joseph Culotta**.



6 On Apr. 20, **Israel Tabago** (c) celebrated his birthday at Guava Lamp with mother **Josie Tabago** (l) and sister **Jennifer Farias**.



7 **Chastity Bono** (r), with **Lowell Kane** of Rice University, spoke at the May 14 Texas Diversity GLBT Summit at Rice.



8 City Council members **Jolanda Jones** (l), **James Rodriguez** (second from r), and **Wanda Adams** (r) attended the May 7 Houston GLBT Political Caucus meeting and posed afterward with caucus president **Jenifer Pool**.



9 Members of the Royal Sovereign and Imperial Court of the Single Star of Houston, including monarchs **Kimberly O'Neill** and **Bob Skinner** (fifth and sixth from l, respectively) attended May 6 performance of *The Gershwins' An American in Paris* at the Alley Theatre.



10 **Beau Mitts** (l-r), **Marlene McNeese-Ward**, **Ereka Philip**, **Mark Colomb**, **Hyron Hall**, and **Justin Frazier** participated in the May 1 YMSM Summit at Club 2020, addressing the issue of HIV and young men who have sex with men.

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