

OutSmart

Houston's LGBT Magazine
OutSmartMagazine.com

DECEMBER 2010

*Holiday
Gift Guide*
Yule Just Love It!

La Cage's
LOGAN KESLAR

DANCING WITH THE STARS
••Houston's Own Mark Ballas••

THE YEAR IN PICTURES
••LGBT Houston Highlights••

ORTHODYKES
••Jewish Lesbians Come Out••

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About the cover:

Les Cagelles: Terry Lavell (from left), Nick Adams, Logan Keslar, Sean Patrick Doyle, Nicholas Cunningham, and Sean A. Carmon, from *La Cage Aux Folles* (see page 21).

Photo Joan Marcus

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Joy to the World

Christmas Concert

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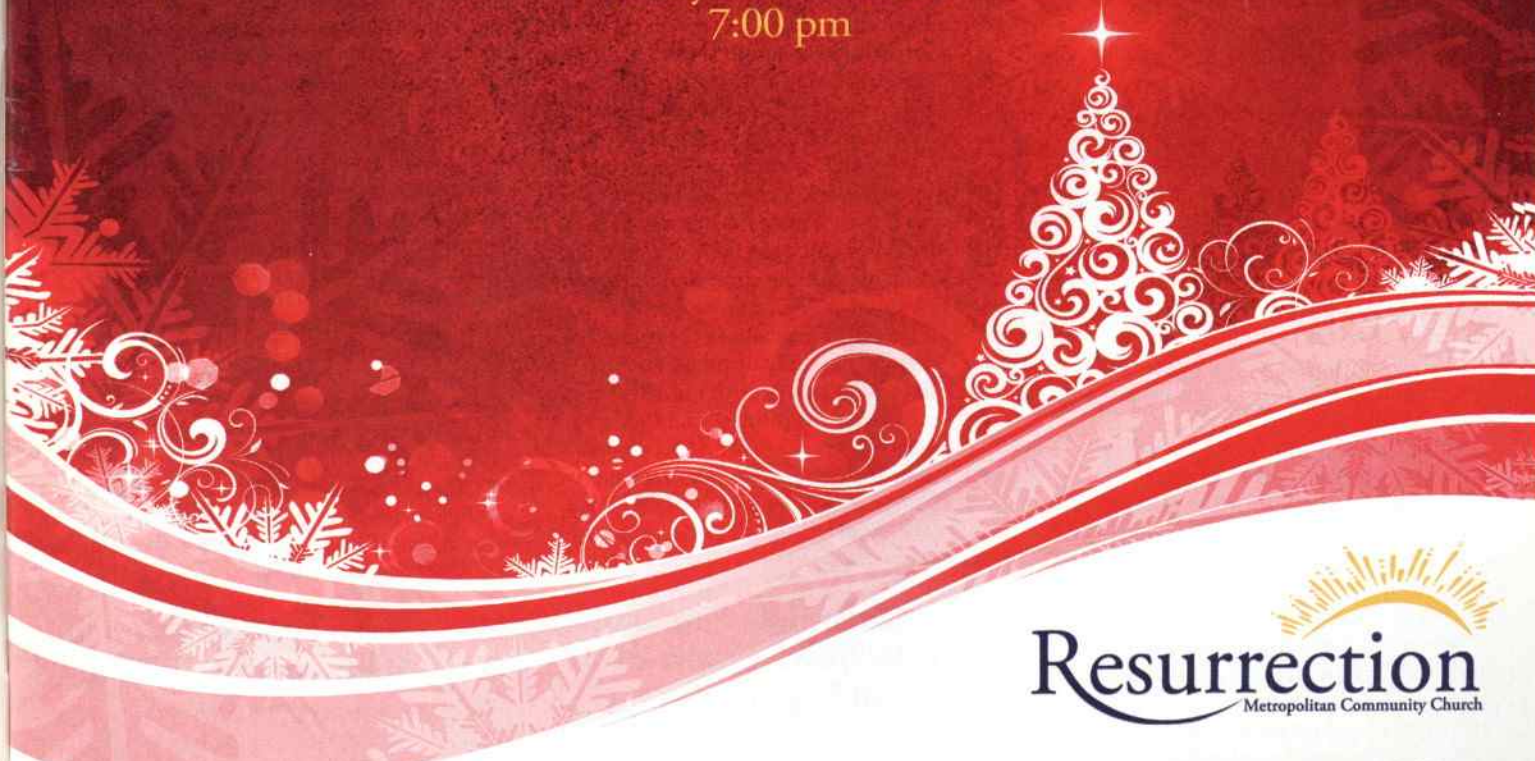
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Phyllis Frye Appointed Houston's First Transgender Municipal Court Judge

PHYLLIS RANDOLPH FRYE, a long-time Houston transgender attorney and advocate, has been appointed to Houston's municipal court system.

The appointment marks the first of its kind for the city of Houston and the state of Texas, and makes her one of a handful of transgender judges in the nation, including California's recently elected Victoria Kolakowski. Mayor Annise Parker nominated Frye to the position, and city council unanimously approved the appointment.

In a City Hall press conference on Nov. 17, Parker praised Frye's more than 30 years of legal experience and other profes-



Phyllis Randolph Frye

sional qualifications, which she said made Frye "a great addition" to the city's judiciary. Frye's work will allow her to work on court cases for the city, such as traffic tickets and the like, and will occasionally require her to judge cases.

"She is an associate municipal judge, which will give us a chance to put her through her paces a little," Parker said. "I'm very proud that I was able to nominate her, and she agreed to serve."

Frye will continue to represent her clients with Frye & Associates, although she will not personally represent her clients in municipal cases.

She was surprised at the outpouring of support and attention she has received from around the nation.

"I hope my appointment gives people courage, and gives other mayors and appointive bodies the courage to appoint other transgendered persons to the bench," Frye said. "I was cognizant of the significance of the appointment, but I did not know just how big this was going to be nationally."

When asked about any future plans to run for an elected office, Frye said she is happy to focus on her work with the city.

"That is not on my radar right now," she said. "I am thoroughly and completely enjoying my law practice with my six-person firm, and I am thoroughly enjoying the wake of the news. This has been an interesting and fulfilling and exciting ride." —Josef Molnar

Legacy Community Health Services Breaks Ground for New Clinic

A FORMAL GROUNDBREAKING ceremony was held on November 10 for Legacy Community Health Services' new 40,000-square-foot clinic at 1415 California Street. Legacy's executive director Katy Caldwell, staff, board members, supporters, and donors were on hand for the ceremony, as was Houston Mayor Annise D. Parker.

Currently the largest Federally Qualified Health Center in Harris County, Legacy provides low-cost or no-cost primary and specialized healthcare services to Houston-area men, women, and children.

"Legacy's vision is to continue to serve as a healthcare home by building a network of community clinics where people will feel welcomed and respected while receiving the highest quality healthcare services, regardless of their ability to pay," Caldwell said in a statement to the press.

Designed to meet the growing need for quality comprehensive healthcare for the uninsured and underinsured in the Houston community, the new clinic doubles the space currently utilized by three different Legacy locations. It will eventually house eight specialty clinics, 10 social service programs, and four health education programs. The new LEED-certified green building also offers 25 exam rooms, a dental clinic, eye clinic, pharmacy, a courtyard with seating, and more than 130 parking spaces.

The structure is being erected around three large 100-year-old oak trees. The trees serve as a reminder of Legacy's roots in the Montrose community, Caldwell added.

"The trees that we have preserved on this site to me are living symbols. Their roots represent the deep roots Legacy has in the Montrose community, the large trunks speak to the strength that the clinic had during the darkest days of the AIDS crisis, the ever-expanding canopy symbolizes the refuge we give to so many in difficult times, and the green leaves and new growth represent the hope we have for the future," said Caldwell.

"We are committed to serving a diverse community, including those persons who have traditionally faced problems accessing quality health care." Info: legacycommunityhealth.org. —Nancy Ford

Lewis Cloverdale Foundation Distributes Grants to Local Organizations

THE LTR LEWIS CLOVERDALE Foundation has announced the organizations that have been awarded grants from its 2010 grant cycle. Grant recipients include AssistHers (\$5,000), Houston Buyers Club (\$10,000), Montrose Counseling Center

(\$20,000), and the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund (\$75,000), which holds its leadership conference in Houston in December 2011.

"We thank all the worthy organizations who took the time to submit grant requests, and we regret we cannot fund them all," commented Foundation chairman Terrance P. Baggott. "We hope all the qualified community-based organizations will participate in our next grant cycle in the fall of 2011." Info: ltrlewisclloverdale.org. —N.F.

PFLAG National Elects Rabbi David M. Horowitz as President

REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE national board of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) have announced the election of Rabbi David M. Horowitz of Akron, Ohio, as its new board president.

"As the family voice of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender struggle for equality, I hope I can help to boost our outreach to straight allies even further—especially in the faith communities where their voices are incredibly powerful," Rabbi Horowitz said following the election. "I want to involve every one of our chapters in our mission of support, education, and advocacy more deeply than ever before, because we know that our family voices inspire change."

Rabbi Horowitz has been a part of PFLAG in Akron, Ohio, since 1990, when his daughter came out as a lesbian. He has been continually active in that chapter, currently serving on its board of directors. He joined PFLAG's national board of directors in 2002, and has served as its secretary and vice-president.

Rabbi Horowitz is the rabbi emeritus of Temple Israel in Akron, Ohio, where he served from 1983 to 2001. Prior to that post, he served congregations in Indianapolis, Indiana, and Hammond, Indiana. After he retired from Temple Israel, Rabbi Horowitz served a congregation in Gold Coast, Australia, for almost a year.

Calling Rabbi Horowitz "an integral member of PFLAG's national board," PFLAG executive director Jody Huckabee said Rabbi Horowitz's background as a PFLAG dad, an advocate for equality, and a religious leader has well prepared him to strengthen PFLAG's work across the country. Info: pflag.org. —N.F.

Film Screening, Discussion to Take Steps against Bullying

IN AN EFFORT TO ELIMINATE THE bullying of LGBT youth that often results in suicide, HATCH/Montrose Counseling Center and Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) have joined together to present a special screening of *Bullied: A Student, a*

continued on page 13

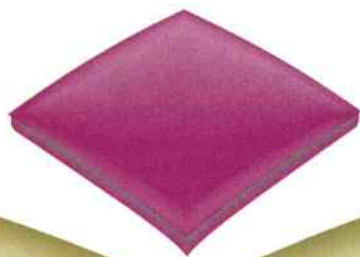
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The safety and effectiveness of ISENTRESS in children has not been studied.

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Contact your doctor immediately if you experience unexplained muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness while taking ISENTRESS. This is because on rare occasions muscle problems can be serious and can lead to kidney damage.

When ISENTRESS has been given with other anti-HIV drugs, side effects included nausea, headache, tiredness, weakness, trouble sleeping, stomach pain, dizziness, depression, and suicidal thoughts and actions.

Rash occurred more often in patients taking ISENTRESS and darunavir together than with either drug separately, but was generally mild.

I am a go-getter. I am romantic. I am a world traveler. I am HIV positive.

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Ask your doctor about ISENTRESS.

Not sure where to start? Visit isentress.com/questions

People taking ISENTRESS may still develop infections, including opportunistic infections or other conditions that occur with HIV infection.

Tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions, including if you have any allergies, are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed. ISENTRESS is not recommended for use during pregnancy. Women with HIV should not breast-feed because their babies could be infected with HIV through their breast milk.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription medicines like rifampin (a medicine used to treat infections such as tuberculosis), non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

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.

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School, and a Case that Made History.

Southern Poverty Law Center created the "Teaching Tolerance" documentary about LGBT bullying, focusing on the harassment Jamie Nabozny faced at the hands of his classmates and how he decided to fight back in the courts for everyone's right to be safe in their schools.

"It's amazingly powerful," HATCH youth coordinator Deb Murphy said of the film. "When I sat down to watch it, I thought, 'If this doesn't make people get it, nothing will.'"

SPLC's Lecia Brooks introduces the film. Following the screening, Murphy leads a community discussion/brainstorming session focusing on what can be done to stop harassment and bullying of youth.

Murphy told *OutSmart* that the time to combat bullying with a result-oriented approach had arrived. "No more 'kumbaya' meetings," Murphy said. "This is a very clear call to action."

Murphy hopes the community brainstorming session following the screening raises as many ideas about eradicating bullying as possible.

"We want to make sure everyone has a voice so we surface as many ideas as we can," Murphy said. "The next step is to take all these ideas and mold them into some kind of plan."

Partners scheduled to join HATCH and Southern Poverty Law Center at the meeting include PFLAG Houston and the Anti-Defamation League. More were expected to sign on, Murphy said. At the end of the evening, attendees will be encouraged to learn more at the partner organizations' information tables.

The event is scheduled for Dec. 7, 6:30 p.m., Montrose Counseling Center, 401 Brannard St. Info: hatchyouth.org. —N.F.

GLSEN Launches 'Safe Space' Campaign to Combat Bullying

IN EARLY NOVEMBER, THE GAY, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) launched its Safe Space Campaign, designed to promote visible support for LGBT students in American middle and high schools. The campaign aims to place a Safe Space Kit in every middle school and high school in the United States—more than 100,000 schools.

The kits contain Safe Space stickers and posters along with a guide for steps that individual school staff members can take to build support for vulnerable students and reduce anti-LGBT bullying and harassment in their school.

"At a time when we all are overwhelmed by tragic news, this campaign provides people with a way to take action and make a real difference in young peoples' lives," said Safe Space Campaign spokesperson and country music star Chely Wright, who came out in May. "GLSEN's Safe Space Kits—and the all-important sticker—make it possible for teachers and school staff to let students

know that they are not alone and they have somewhere to turn."

By placing a sticker in their classroom or office, members of a school's faculty or staff can let students know that they have support and are in a safe space with respect to anti-LGBT bullying and harassment. Research demonstrates that LGBT students who can identify supportive adults in their school are less likely to feel unsafe at school, are more likely to plan to graduate and go on to college, and are more likely to feel connected to the school community.

It is estimated that nearly nine out of 10 LGBT students experience some form of harassment in school each year because of their sexual orientation; nearly half report being verbally harassed, and almost a quarter report being physically assaulted. Three out of five LGBT students feel unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation.

Individuals can purchase Safe Space Kits and send them to the middle or high schools of their choice. Info: safespacekit.com. —N.F.

National Association of Realtors Expands Nondiscrimination Policy

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of Realtors (NAR) has extended its code of ethics nondiscrimination policy to include sexual orientation. The expanded policy means that Realtors cannot discriminate against buyers and sellers based on their sexual orientation, which NAR defines as being homosexual or heterosexual. In addition, Realtors are prevented from representing clients who discriminate against buyers or sellers based on their sexual orientation.

"We feel that we needed to be out front on this and go beyond what is required by law, as far as treating all clients and customers equally," said Lucien Salvant, an NAR spokesman.

"I think it puts our money where our mouth is," Salvant said. "Not only are we saying this is the way agents should conduct their business, but internally we are going to practice what we preach."

Leslie Wilson, a local Realtor who said about 75 percent of his clients are female couples, emphasized that "this affects millions of people. It's not something we could get from the federal government, but we have it in our profession." —J.M.

AIDS Walk Houston Scheduled for March 13

ONE OF HOUSTON'S MOST ENDURING charitable events also provides the perfect way to spend a Sunday morning with thousands of like-minded friends. Each spring since 1989, individuals have gathered in the shadow of downtown Houston's skyline to join in AIDS Foundation Houston's annual AIDS Walk Houston.

Presented by Marathon Oil and produced

by AIDS Foundation Houston, the walk raises funds for AFH and partner HIV/AIDS service organizations that are dedicated to helping improve the quality of life for individuals and families affected by the disease.

On Sunday, March 13, the non-competitive walk steps off from Sam Houston Park and winds along picturesque Allen Parkway and Buffalo Bayou. In previous years, proceeds have topped \$1 million, raised by as many as 15,000 walkers.

To donate or join a walk team, log on to aidshelp.org. —N.F. ■

Milestones

DIED. Edward Raymond Barnes. Born May 14, 1944, in Poland, Ohio, community activist Ed Barnes passed away November 11, 2010. He is preceded in death by his parents, Elizabeth and Kenneth, and his older brother, Warren. After attending Kalamazoo College in Michigan and Youngstown University in Ohio, Barnes moved to San Francisco, where he was employed for many years with Southern Pacific Railroad as a labor-relations negotiator.



During his time in San Francisco, Barnes worked with the YMCA as a calisthenics instructor, was a member of the San Francisco Men's Chorus, and also became a volunteer on the AIDS ward at San Francisco General Hospital, which became a model for AIDS hospices nationwide. His hospital work allowed him to develop his gift for providing loving end-of-life care with humor and compassion to patients, their families, and those who were shunned by loved ones.

After retiring, Barnes moved to Houston where he spent many years giving of himself to his church, neighborhood, animal advocacy groups, and the AIDS community as a patient mentor at the Thomas Street Clinic and volunteer at the Bering Support Network.

Memorial funds have been established through the Thomas Street Clinic Patient Mentor Program, the Bering Support Network, and The Cat Doctor. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in Barnes' honor to one of these programs.

A celebration of Barnes' life is set for December 11, 1 p.m., at the Montrose Counseling Center, 401 Brannard Street, Houston, Texas 77006.

ANOTHER YEAR IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR

A backward glance at 2010 proves that what doesn't kill us only makes us laugh

I've said it before and I'll say it again: what a year, what a year. It began with the dizzying high of our own Annise D. Parker riding her stellar qualifications and outstanding public service record into Houston's mayoral office, becoming The World's Most Famous Lesbian in the days following her inauguration. It progressed with the bends-inducing low of an epidemic of gay teen suicides. How it ends is anyone's guess.

Herewith are five top gay news stories of 2010 that seized this lesbian's attention with both hands and wouldn't let go.

In the "So What Else Is New?" category, a couple more homophobic religious leaders were caught in the Shakespearean act of doth protesting too much. Conversion therapy proponent George Rekers as well as the unfortunately named Bishop Eddie Long were both found, despite their famed rantings against the "abomination" of homosexuality, with their hands in the cookie jar. When I say "in the cookie jar," I mean "in another guy's pants." Still, neither of these men's hairstyles is as gay as Joel Osteen's.

You can tell it's springtime in the gay community when a story pops up about some brave queer student threatening the sanctity of his or her high school's prom by daring to attend it with a same-sex date. But this year's tale tops them all. When Mississippi high school student and young lesbian Constance McMillen wanted to take her girlfriend to their prom and wear a tuxedo, the decision-makers of Itawamba County School District were so outraged that they banished McMillen to a different prom, held in a different location than the school's regular dance. You know, separate but equal—a nasty old Mississippi habit that apparently refuses to die. McMillen and the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit, and in October, she was awarded \$81,000 by a judge who ruled that her rights had been violated. For her trouble, McMillen also received a \$30,000 scholarship on Ellen DeGeneres' talk show,

accompanied comedian Wanda Sykes to the GLAAD Awards in Los Angeles (with her girlfriend and wearing a tuxedo, no less), and was named one of *Glamour* magazine's 2010 Women of the Year. The press attention has also placed McMillen in contention for "Most Famous Native Mississippian" with open heterosexual Brett Favre, who gained notoriety this year not for retiring from the NFL, but for e-mailing a picture of his junk to a female sports reporter.

Mormons peeked their little *Mad Men*-esque lacquered heads out of the closet with the announcement of editorial changes in their new handbook. Perhaps displaying contrition for the doorbell-

since same-sex marriage is illegal in Texas. It turns out that Nikki was born male, according to the original birth certificate, and did not undergo gender reassignment surgery until after the nuptials. Some LGBT advocates rallied, hoping for a reversal of *Littleton v. Prange*, a 1999 state law that would uphold Nikki's former in-laws' claims that the marriage (Nikki's second to a male in Texas) was invalid and render Nikki ineligible to receive survivor benefits. But sensationalist details from Nikki's past that have emerged as this story unfolded via worldwide media have raised the skepticism of others. Will as-yet unrevealed information in this case further the quest for marriage equality or impede its progress even more? The court's verdict is expected soon.

Intimate pre-flight pat-downs and full-body security screenings implemented by the Transportation Security Administration have some modest travelers in an up-

roar, while others consider it incentive to fly more frequently. One loyal WAW reader suggests that the invasive anti-terror tactic should be viewed as a recruiting tool for previously closeted homosexuals who, having finally experienced a same-sex pat-down, will flock to the gay bars for more. Lemons, meet lemonade.

Finally, 2010's "If It Walks Like a Duck, Looks Like a Duck, and Quacks Like a Duck, Call It Daffy" award goes to America's Top (Not) Lesbian Power Couple, Oprah Winfrey and Gayle King. The Best Friends Forever who are married to their careers (well, the two are married to one of their careers) tangoed up and down our very last gay nerve with their incessant denials that they are way, way more than just BFFs when they embarked on that private, single-tent camping trip. Next year, expect the devoted duo to proclaim their mutual heterosexuality at Women's Week in Provincetown in October, in Greece while on an Olivia cruise, and in the hot tub at Perez Hilton's after-party following the GLAAD Awards.

Bring it on, 2011. We're ready. ■

Will as-yet unrevealed information in this case further the cause of marriage equality or impede its progress even more?

ringing bunch's role in helping fund the passage of California's homophobic Proposition 8, the handy God Guide no longer states that same-sex relationships "distort loving relationships" or that gays should be ashamed and atone for their "homosexual thoughts or feelings." Now the Mormons generously suggest that gay Mormons who are "worthy and qualified in every other way" should be welcomed—providing they are celibate. Granted, these are small, perhaps even laughably small, steps. But they are nonetheless steps in the right direction for a powerful sect of religious extremists that professes with a straight face that their underpants possess magical powers.

Former *OutSmart* employee Nikki Paige (Justin Graham) Purdue Mata Araguz made international headlines when volunteer fireman Thomas Araguz, a man Nikki married in 2008, was killed in July while responding to an egg farm fire in Bolin, Texas. After the blaze and as the death benefit checks started rolling in, the firefighter's mother and former wife filed suit to have the Araguzes' marriage annulled



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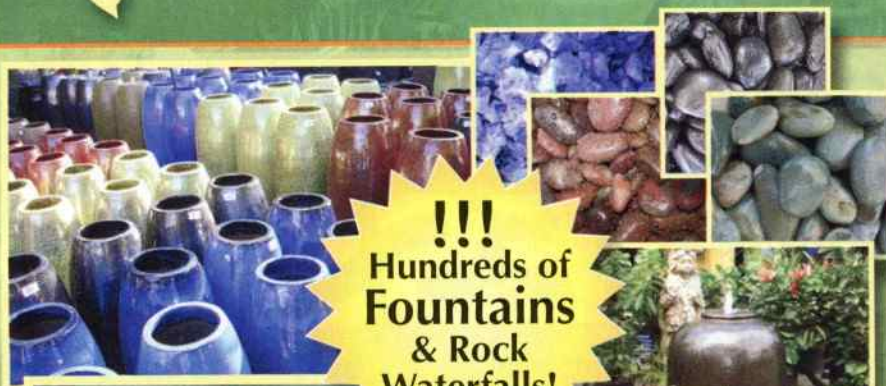
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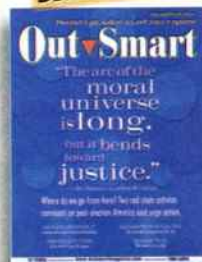
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PastOut

by Donalevan Maines

6 YEARS AGO IN 'OUTSMART'

DECEMBER 2004



After Republicans picked up six seats in the U.S. Senate to gain a 55-44 majority, **George W. Bush** was re-elected as president, and 11 gay-marriage bans in 11 states passed by wide margins, former Human Rights Campaign spokesman **Wayne Besen** declared, "Not even the fabulous **RuPaul** could find a shade of lipstick glamorous enough to pretty up this election pig." • "Waking up to the new reality," LGBT activist **Anita Renteria** stressed "the need to educate red-state America about our lives." The past president of Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce explained, "I can't believe that anyone who knows us as we are, who sees the contributions we make, who recognizes the common experiences that we share as Americans will resist supporting our full and equal inclusion in having the rights we are due as Americans." • President **Sandy Brauer**, board member **Barry Mandel**, and others in the newly formed Jewish Gay & Lesbian Social Group enjoyed the first Hanukkah champagne party at Meteor. • Dignity Houston met at Grace Lutheran Church for their Advent mass, and gathered again on Christmas Day for a potluck dinner. • **Christopher Garrett**, **Lillian Devereaux**, and **Jackie Thorne** starred in *All I Want for Christmas Is You!* at Keys West, then led the cast to Michael's Outpost for a late-night show called *Christmas Gone Wild*. • After 25 years at their tiny location with extremely limited parking, Niko Niko's expanded to 4,200 square feet with central air and 30 parking spaces. • Writing partners **Timothy Lambert** and **Becky Cochrane** read from their novel *The Deal*, which is set in Montrose, in an appearance at Hollywood Book & Café. • Gay musical-theater lovers mingled with the cast of Theatre Under the Stars' *Singin' in the Rain* and enjoyed cabaret music at Out@TUTS at Artista in the Hobby Center. • At a benefit for Krewe of Oz at Robert's LaFitte in Galveston, **Jerome Downey** celebrated being named a favorite bartender on the island in *OutSmart*'s latest Gayest & Greatest poll. • At Chances, which readers voted best women's bar in Houston, live music from the Fematics helped ring in the New Year.

Donalevan Maines is a regular contributor to *OutSmart* magazine.

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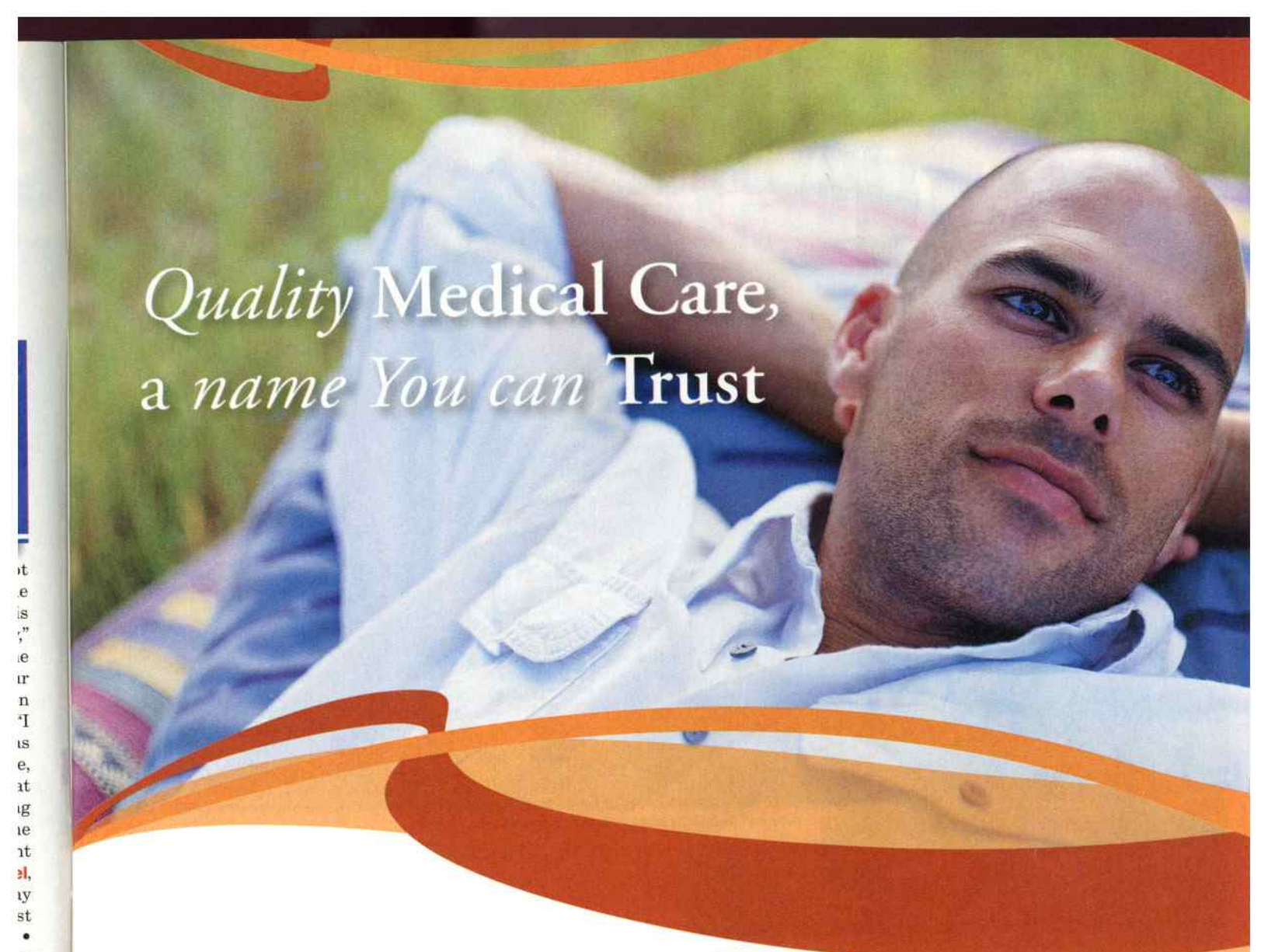
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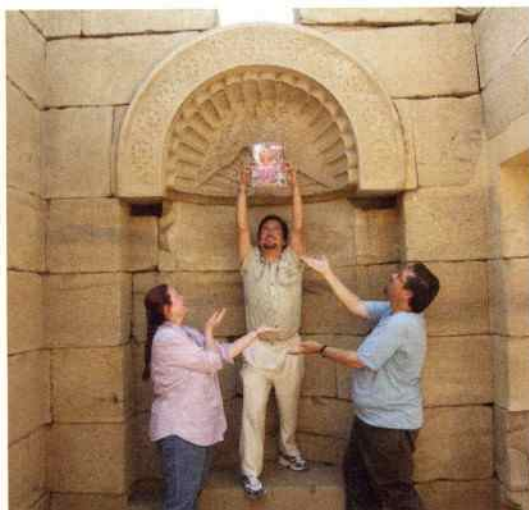


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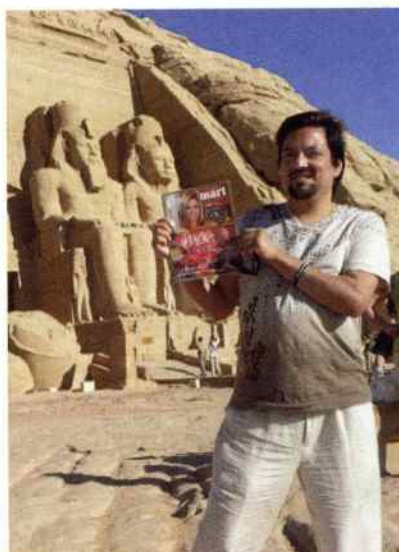
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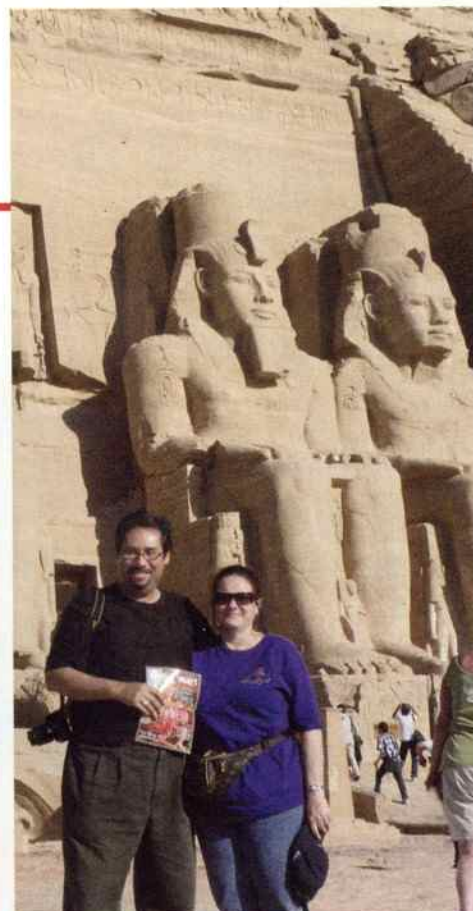
Vera Rogers, David Garza, and Jeffrey Crews with OutSmart at the temples at Karnak, the home of Ra, the mighty and revered sun god, outside of Luxor, Egypt.



Scott Murray, Blake Kottenbrink, Ed Smith, and Cherri Carbonara took OutSmart to Fire Island Pines.



David Garza (above), Jeffrey Crews and Vera Rogers (above, right photo) and OutSmart at Abu Simbel, the monuments built by and for Ramses II and his wife, Nefertiti.



FOR YOUR CALENDAR

December 1: World AIDS Day Luncheon, benefiting AIDS Foundation Houston. INFO: aidshelp.org/worldaidsday2010

December 1: Citywide Candlelighting World AIDS Day at Tranquility Park beginning at 5:30 pm. INFO: worldaidsdayhouston.org

December 4 & 5: Travel back in time to Dickens on the Strand. Benefitting the Galveston Historical Foundation. INFO: galvestonhistory.org

December 5: The Judy Garland Christmas Show & Sing-Along. Benefitting Kindred Spirits Foundation women's charities. INFO: kindredspirits-houston.org

December 14: "Hear The Bells" Concert by the Bayou City Performing Arts benefiting BCPA. INFO: bcpahouston.org

SAVE THE DATE:

January 16: Bunnies on the Bayou's SnowBunnies 2011
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Logan's Run

Houston's LOGAN KESLAR kicks up his (high) heels and makes a smashing Broadway debut in the dazzling Tony-honored restaging of the iconic 'La Cage Aux Folles'

by Steven Foster

On paper, a stripped-down, cabaret-styled reboot of the gay French farce *La Cage Aux Folles* doesn't squeal success, especially since its last Broadway bow stumbled like a newbie drag queen on Christian Louboutin heels. But *La Cage* is a big, fat, critical and crowd-pleasing hit. Kelsey Grammer offers more than just drawing power. Douglas Hodge gives a dazzling star turn as Albin. But the real show stealers are the dancing showgirls, the Cagelles.

With ferociously athletic choreography, wittily sexualized wardrobe, and identities that seem more co-star than generic chorus, the six young men who form the drag act of the titular nightclub practically pilfer the show from the more famous leads. Both press and public have fallen in rapturous love with these diva-men, and as a result, they've been *everywhere*. They killed at the Tonys, rendered Regis Philbin speechless, and were ranked #1 in the *Out* magazine Hot 100.

One of these whirling dervishes is Houston's own Logan Keslar, who in the opening sequence's nautical-themed number famously high-kicked the bejeezus out of one of the four giant audience-bouncing beach balls, reaching the Longacre Theatre's crystal chandeliers and raining glass diamonds onto the gape-mouthed crowd. ("They don't let us kick the balls anymore," Keslar admits.) It was another one of the priceless moments in a must-see show that seems blessed with memorable happy accidents. The evening I saw *La Cage*, Grammer's mincing wrist →



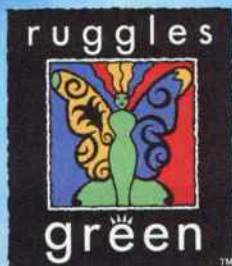
JOAN MARCUS



Dude looks like a lady: Houston-born actor and dancer Logan Keslar makes his Broadway debut—as the red-sequined drag queen Bitelle (inset), a member of the Cagelles drag troupe—in the Tony-winning musical *La Cage Aux Folles*, now playing at New York's Longacre Theatre.

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Logan's Run

continued from previous page

broke his watch clasp. The timepiece shot across the stage with a skid, causing Grammer and Hodge to have one of those giggly *Carol Burnett Show* moments where the stars break character, then effortlessly fold the break into the scene. Grammer even circled back to the gaffe in the warm yet rousing finale.

Keslar plays the trampiest member of the ensemble, the red-sequined slut Bi-

telle. Like all the Cagelles, he works the character with riveting, muscular physicality and lip-gloss-smacking relish. This slam-dance of masculine and feminine is key to the show's fresh take on an admittedly dated but still relevant work, and the genderbending continues far beyond the curtain call. The actors refer to themselves as "the girls," and when Keslar talks about onstage antics with one of his fellow dancers, he describes them as "lesbian lovers."

The gender play makes *La Cage* simultaneously comic and erotic, a conundrum that has given drag its goosy charm for centuries and is undoubtedly the reason for the straight world's endearing fascination with drag. As holiday gifts go, you couldn't give better than springing for one of the cabaret tables that are so close, you might just qualify for your Equity card. A present like this would guarantee your Santa sainthood.

After a quick tour backstage (where a decouped wall of nude male centerfolds leaves little doubt as to the Cagelles' offstage sexuality), we ducked into the trattoria next door for Italian dishes, and to dish on the show.

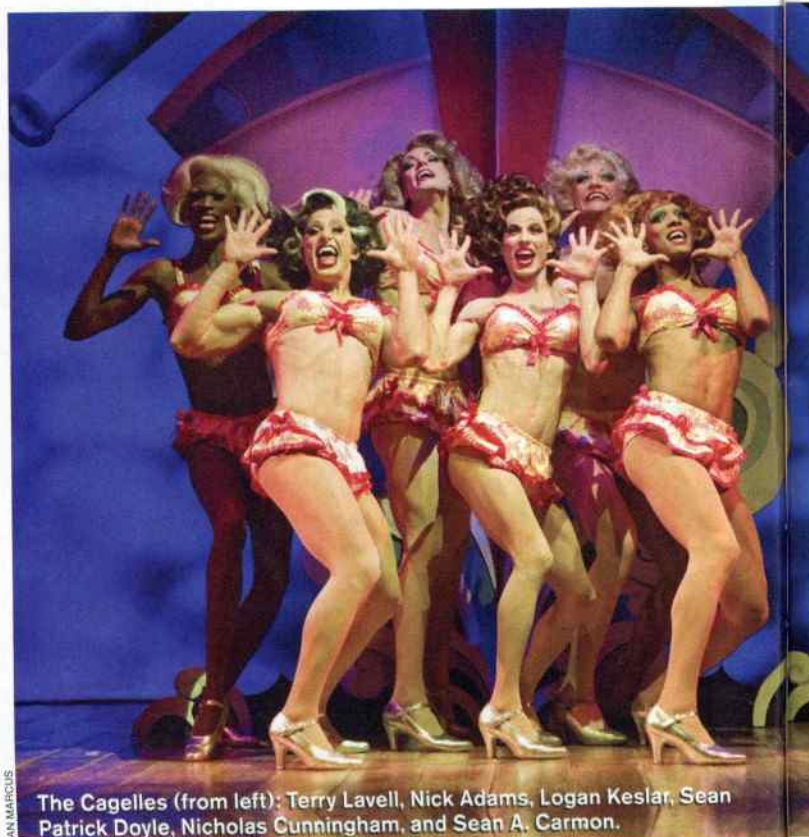
Steven Foster: It's so good to see you again. Loved the play, by the way.

Logan Keslar: You, too. And thank you. What I like about our show is that we all really fit together, but we're all so different.

[The producers have] given us a lot of wiggle room. We got to decide what kind of girls we wanted to be.

You'd expect all of you to just become wallpaper, but you're not. Each one of you has such a distinct personality that really works.

In rehearsals they wanted us to be really crazy. On each of the calls—I got called back three times for this—we had to tap, do turns, and go through the steps one by one. And then they would tell us, "Now we're going



The Cagelles (from left): Terry Lavell, Nick Adams, Logan Keslar, Sean Patrick Doyle, Nicholas Cunningham, and Sean A. Carmon.

to put some music on, and you have to give us a runway presentation. Be whoever you want, but we need tons of energy and point of view, and we need to know who you are in a *second*."

How long have you been in New York now?

I got my Equity card right after I graduated from HSPVA [High School for the Performing and Visual Arts] in 2005. But I've been doing equity shows since I was 10 years old. And I'd been around dancers from New York and I knew that's what I wanted to do. I was like, *I don't want to go to school. I'm done*. I didn't want to go to school four more years doing what I'd already been doing.

Did you feel like school had nothing more to teach you?

I probably could have learned tons more.

But I was ready to work. And there were times that moving to New York right after high school was hard. In the staircase of life, I probably jumped like five steps. But I've worked a lot. I've toured, I've worked on the West End. People always think I'm older than I am, because even though I've only been here around four and a half years, I've probably "lived" more like eight.

I remember when we were working together on [the gothic anime series] *Gilgamesh*, you kept going back and forth to New York during production. That wasn't for *La Cage*, was it?

I was in final callbacks for *A Chorus Line*. And they were filming that documentary which I'm in for probably three and a half seconds. If you're looking really hard, you'll find me.

But you're all over the *La Cage* program.

Right. Watch out, I'm in every shot of the program. The girls still make fun of me about that.

So you call each other "girls"?

Oh, absolutely. Especially when we're in full drag.

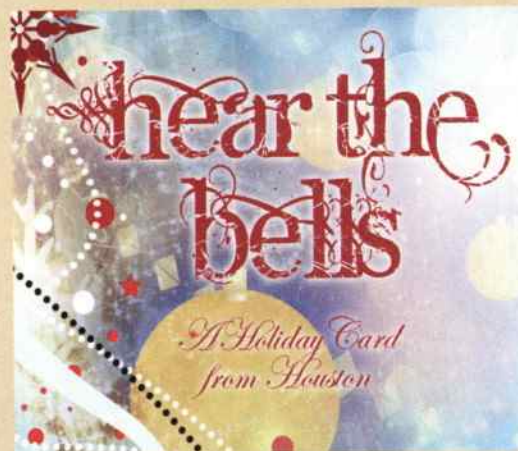
Are you all gay?

Except for Kelsey and Doug and maybe two people in the crew, everyone in that whole building is gay. [*Both laugh*]

So what is your schedule like? Because you are scarfing down your dinner. Are you always starving because the show is so demanding?

No. I was at first. The thing is, you have to get to your fighting weight. Once you get there, it's not hard to maintain. We do so much cardio in the show. And for that whole ballet section, the bird section, and then the can-can section, we're wearing corsets. And they're real corsets. So it's like doing cardio, holding your breath, and drinking through a stir straw. And that one dance number is like 20 minutes from beginning to end *and* we're changing costumes. It's such a task, but luckily all of the girls come together and we all really get along. We help each other. We're like sisters up there. But, yeah, it's really hard. And I'm really hairy and I have to shave almost every day. →

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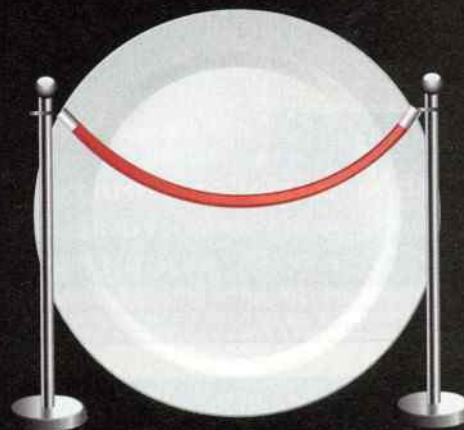
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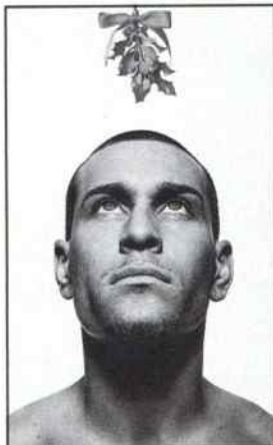
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Logan's Run

continued from previous page

Everything?

Yeah. Because we're not wearing hose. I mean, in that birdcage number where I'm on top of that guy, spreading my legs out over his head, I'm only wearing a black dance belt, which is like a thong—I mean, it just covers your junk—and then lacy panties over it. We wear hose at the opening, but the rest of that . . . I mean, with those tables at the front of the stage, we're there with our legs spread, you have to shave everything because [the audience] can see *everything*. You have to shave *your business*.

Guess that's why those stage-side cabaret tables go for such a premium.

Right! And I have such a dark beard, I have to shave right before I put makeup on, and the makeup is this super heavy-duty makeup called Dermablend, which is basically for burn victims and people with vitiligo, okay? I have to use a spatula to put it on. And we wax our eyebrows and draw on new ones. Fake eyelashes, top and bottom. I wear five pairs of eyelashes.

Drag queens everywhere are saying they do the same. But they're just lip-syncing and walking in a ball gown. This is a whole different ball game, so to speak. And this isn't Maybelline.

Maybe she's *not* born with it. Maybe she was born with "it" between her legs.

But you've always been very comfortable in drag.

Doing anything to that kind of extreme is good because it pushes your boundaries and helps you discover who you are. But then as soon as it's over, I take the lashes off and I wash my face, and something about having that experience, of being, um . . . of being a lady, or a drag queen, whatever you wanna call it. Some people would call it a clown. Whatever you want to say it is.

What do you say it is?

It's something that I've always been comfortable with. Even as a young child I wanted to run around in my sister's ruby slippers, or put my mother's dress on. That's very much a part of who I am. But being able to have an outlet for that? Being able to channel all that energy? It's fantastic. But being a man? I'm happy being a man.

What do you think the play says about the notion of gender identity? Or masculinity?

It always comes down to being about family and people who love each other. I think it

says not to take everything so seriously. Because we're up there and we're just having a blast, and we're being who we are, and we're reveling in that, and you should too. [The audience] should get on board. And they do. Doug and Kelsey are just so charming, and they have such great charisma.

Tell me about the Tonys.

The way that it happens is that there are so many people there, they bring you to the stage like just one minute before you go on. And there are hundreds of people all around you and they're all Broadway performers. There was one part when there were all the Cagelles and Kristen Chenoweth and Daniel Radcliffe and Katie Holmes and all these people, and it doesn't matter who you are, you're just scrunched in all together. But the Tonys were one of the scariest f-king experiences of my life. In the opening, we came out on top of this piano and [Tony host] Sean Hayes is playing it, and I was sitting dead-center on the piano in my red sequin dress...

Which you wear very well, by the way.

Oh, that dress! I love that dress. But I'm sitting there, and all I could keep thinking to myself was, *Bitch, if you fall right now...*

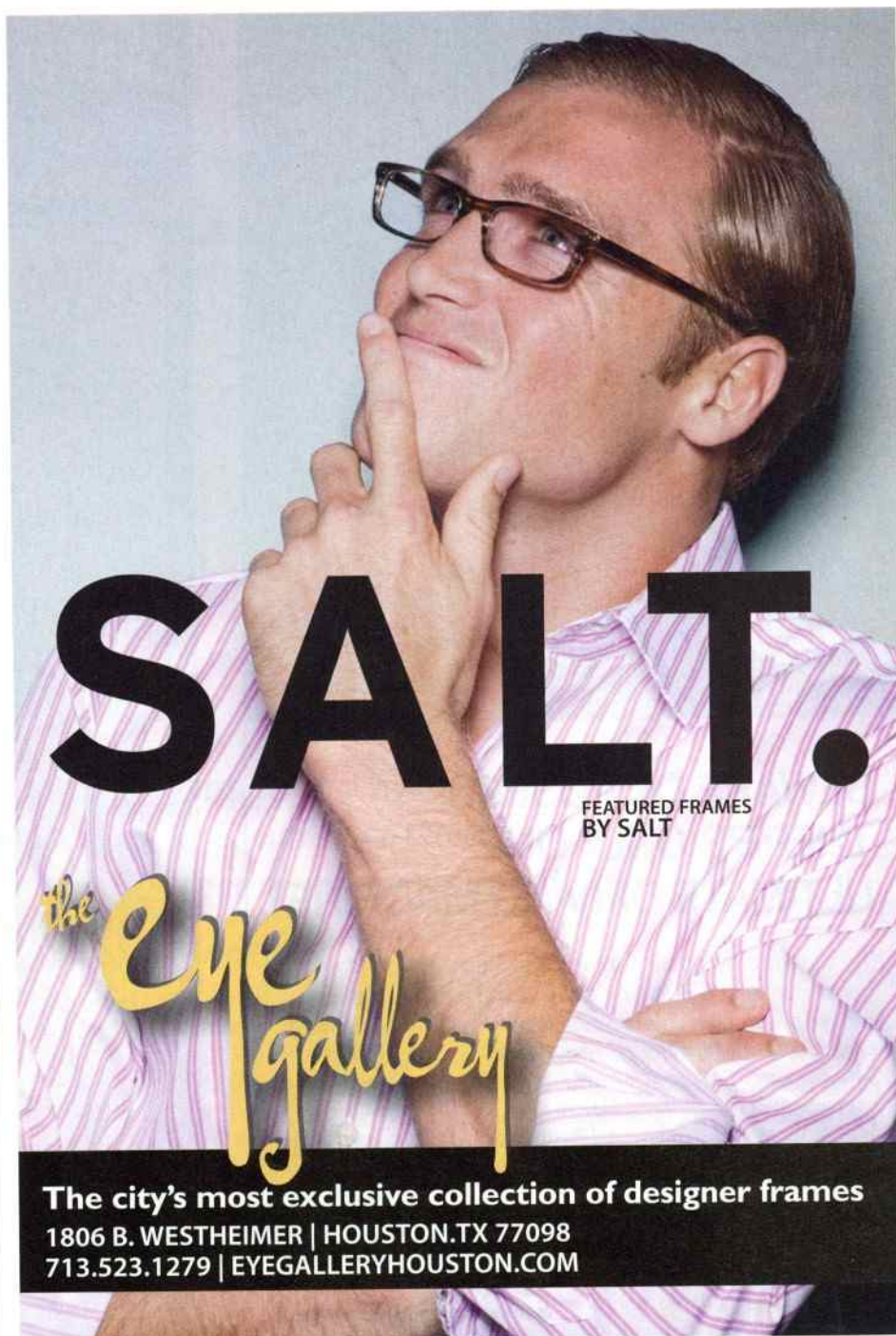
You'd be the drag queen who fell live on the Tonys.

You're gonna be the bitch everyone laughs at forever. But what's crazy is it doesn't hit you until that moment. The whole rehearsal process? Never crossed my mind. I was up there like this. [*Strikes a pose.*] But then, bam, you're just there. But it goes just as quickly as it came. The only thing I remember is getting up on that piano, which was on a three-foot platform that I also have to get off of—and I'm like, *Just take a f-king breath. You're gonna be great, you're gonna be fine.* And then, boom!, it starts and we start rolling out, and I'm looking at Sean Hayes and he's looking at me, and he just f-king winks at me like "Let's do this." And there's no reason for me to hold anything back because this is happening right now. And there's no guarantee this is ever going to happen again. Truthfully, I hope it will happen again and I think it will, but you never know.

Live in the moment.

Yes. I just feel so incredibly lucky, I just have to pinch myself. I mean, I could have made my Broadway debut in *Oklahoma!* as Boy #15 on the Right, you know what I mean?

Steven Foster is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.



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Very Glad Tidings

From the fabulous to the frivolous, this year's OUTSMART GIFT GUIDE offers something for everyone on your gift list

by Steven Foster

FOR THE MUSIC AFICIONADO

Let's Talk Chicks, Man

Before they were more famous as thorns in George Bush and Tobey Keith's sides, The Dixie Chicks were country's crossover divas. Shame their politics overshadowed their music. Hopefully their first comprehensive retrospective reminds people of their talent instead of their political tempers.

THE ESSENTIAL DIXIE CHICKS (30 songs for \$14.99, a steal on iTunes) covers the canon while also reminding listeners of such overlooked album gems as "Silent House," "Truth No. 2," and the rousing "White Trash Wedding." Available everywhere music is sold.

Where's a Time Warp When You Need One?

If you've yet to receive your AARP subscription offer in the mail, this will surely make you feel your age: *Rocky Horror* is

35 years old. So it's pretty much certain that if you have the DVD or, even sadder, the VHS, you might be in the market for **THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW** on Blu-ray. Restored picture, deleted scenes, and all the copious extras, yada yada yada.

But it's the Rocky-oke sing-along bonus that makes this the sweetest fishnet stocking stuffer around, which you'll need to wipe that terrible *Glee* tribute out of everyone's aging eardrums. Sale price \$18.49 from amazon.com.

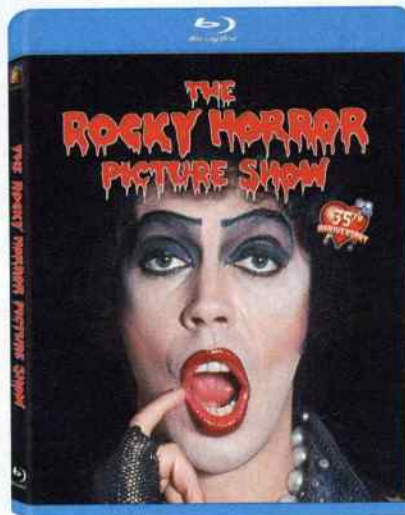
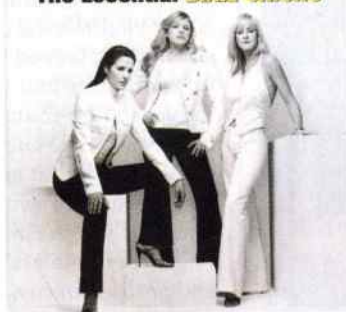
Hit a High Note HGO should change its name

to SRO. With barely a month of the opera season under their bravura belt, Houston Grand Opera has stunned buffs and novices alike with remarkable performances. A mesmerizing *Madame Butterfly* sold so many tickets the house was forced to add three more performances, also sellouts—and this is

opera we're talking about, a rare feat in this art form and, frankly, in this economy. They followed up with a furious version of the visceral, challenging *Peter Grimes*. Their next buzz show? An opera based on the Oscar-winning film **DEAD MAN WALKING**, with a libretto by lauded playwright Terrance McNally and an emotionally wrenching, elegant score by Jake Haggie. The brilliant, passionate HGO maestro Patrick Summers conducts, just as he did when the emotional stunner premiered

in San Francisco 10 years ago. Put a pair of tickets in a box under the tree this holiday season. It might not seem very heavy when your intended picks up the package, but this one will be an impressively weighty gift indeed. For tickets, visit houstongrandopera.org. →

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Very Glad Tidings

continued from previous page

FOR THE OENOPHILE

MEET YOUR MATCH

After suffering the extended summer (92 degrees in October? *Seriously?*), it's high time to put away the light and crisp pinot grigios and enjoy the indulgent riches of a complex, heady cabernet sauvignon and all its wondrous weight. Nothing against pinots, but that grape's for pussies. Knowing your way around a cabernet is like deadlifting 330 pounds at the gym. People look and take note: you know what you're doing. Show off your vineyard acumen with a gift of **MATCH CABERNET**. A good \$20 cheaper than usual suspects such as Stag's Leap or Silver Oak, this red is equally impressive for less. 2004 is the finest year, with two options. There's the Baconbrook, which is tight, with spicy currant, herb, sage, and mineral notes of modest depth and perfect proportion that ends with raw rustic tannins. The Butterdragon Hill unveils ripe, fleshy red cherry and berry flavors. A good \$20 less than either Silver or Stag, the stunning and seductive wines of Match offer a worthy opponent to the more expensive stars on most lists. Available at *Spec's* and at matchvineyards.com.

SOMEWHERE HARRY POTTER IS JEALOUS (OR DRUNK)

Is it simply tortuous to endure the 20 minutes of breathing a wine requires? For those of you alcoholics—er, oenophiles—who believe that's an eternity, there is the glittering and surprisingly functional **WINE WAND** by Philip Stein. A marvel of either engineering or magic, this slender silver stick, topped with a sparkling crystal containing four smaller crystals inside its sleek glass chamber, offers your recently released Côtes du Rhône the necessary breath of life that enhances the layers of fragrance and flavor. Presto! The wine is ready for you to now give proper mouth-to-glass resuscitation. \$325 at *I.W. Marks* and philipstein.com.

FOR THE READER

IN PLAIN SIGHT

HIDE/SEEK: DIFFERENCE AND DESIRE IN AMERICAN PORTRAITURE is the companion to the first major museum exhibition in American history to focus on lesbian and gay art and culture. This catalog is as elegant as it is comprehensive, covering seminal heavies such as O'Keefe, Warhol, and Jasper Johns (the heartbreaking work

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A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

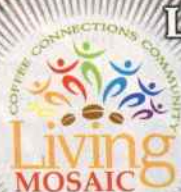
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of the usually joyous Keith Haring, the tragic, evocative "Unfinished" is worth the cover price alone). *Hide/Seek* ups the artistic ante with its inclusion of LGBT writers, musicians, and even architects—including Gertrude Stein, Ma Rainey, and Philip Johnson. The book is a forceful

statement to the persistence of gay artistry in our time. Some may not be officially "out," but their presence is powerfully felt nonetheless. \$45, available everywhere from Smithsonian Books (smithsonianstore.com).

STAR OF WONDER
Rebel Without a Cause co-star Sal Mineo was destined for stardom. Unfortunately, his stumbled career and violent death made Mineo a more likely candidate for a Frances Farmeresque biopic. The youngest Best Supporting Actor nominee in history, Mineo was ultimately undone by a stage mother turned micro-manager, rumored S&M obsessions, and a brutal stabbing that the national press had a gay-baiting field day with. Such a sordid Hollywood

tale makes Michael Gregg Michaud's *SAL MINEO: A BIOGRAPHY* a worthy gift selection for the tragedy-obsessed reader on your gift list. \$15.95, available everywhere from Crown Publishing.

STRAND & DELIVER

Local author Denise Alexander has just come out with *GALVESTON'S HISTORIC DOWNTOWN AND STRAND DISTRICT* which, despite its clunky title, is actually an impressive little book filled with vintage images of

the island jewel dating as far back as the 1870s. Sales will benefit the Galveston Historical Foundation and its mission to preserve and revitalize the architectural, cultural, and maritime heritage of our seaside sister. Swing by Custom House (512 20th Street in Galveston) on December 11 from 1 to 3 p.m. and get the gift signed by the author. \$21.99 at [arcadia publishing.com](http://arcadiapublishing.com).

BEYOND BVDs

Remember when Mark Wahlberg was known as Marky Mark and a Calvin Klein underwear ad was scandalous? (Neither do we.) See just how far male underwear marketing has come with *BRIEF ENCOUNTERS*, edited by male fashion maven Jason Salzenstein. Featuring star photographers like Rick Day and Justin Monroe, this lush and lusty look-back features some of the most visually striking skivvies campaigns ever captured, turning simple undies ads into high art. Hanes might make you feel good all under, but not nearly as good as these pics will make you feel all over. Sale price \$32.11 at amazon.com.

FOR THE FOODIE

THE BEST BUZZ WITHOUT BOOZE

A fine cheese is swoonworthy. Whether you get weak at the knees for luscious Camembert, or sigh when an aromatic Stilton is served, there's always room on your cheese plate for another marvelous milk. *BARELY BUZZED* by the Beehive Cheese Co. may be the most deliriously intoxicating cheddar you've ever tasted. Full-bodied, with a nutty flavor and oh-so-smooth texture, Barely Buzzed is rubbed with a mix of South American, Central American, and Indonesian coffee beans and French Superior Lavender. This strange fusion of seemingly disparate flavors gives this cheese a taste so multi-layered and complex, your head will spin. Order from beehivecheese.com. Also available at Spec's, though we discovered this buzzy gem at the sublimely cozy Sonoma Wine Bar.

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Very Glad Tidings

continued from previous page

time, and—get this—when adjusted to taste, it even remembers how you like your brioche browned. Just when you thought it couldn't get any easier? There's a big button on it that reads **TOAST** and, yes, it makes perfect toast every time. No more hitting the button after your English muffin isn't crunchy enough, and then being forced to rush through the house so you don't set off the smoke alarms. \$195, available at *Sur La Table*.

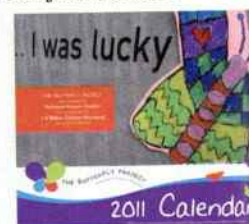
FOR THE PERPETUALLY TARDY

THEY'LL BE ON TIME NOW

You know who they are. The ones who are so fashionably late they're practically next year's runway look. The **WOMEN'S CONCERTO BY MOVADO** should get 'em to show up on time. This watch, with a stainless-steel case with diamonds, a white mother-of-pearl dial with discreet minute index, stainless-steel link bracelet with Swiss quartz movement, is a stunner, managing to be both butch and femme at the same time. \$1,995 at movado.com, or fine jewelers everywhere.

A WING & A PRAYER

But if they're really late, as in they don't even get there on the right day, you might want to consider something even more dramatic, but with a considerably less dramatic price point. **THE BUTTERFLY PROJECT CALENDAR**, for example. But just because the calendar isn't as expensive as a Movado doesn't mean it doesn't have the portent. The Butterfly Project was created by the Holocaust Museum Houston to memorialize the 1.5 million children murdered during the Holocaust, and all proceeds help support the museum. \$9.24, available at *HMH*, 5401 Caroline St., or hmh.org.



FOR THE COUCH POTATO

GLADIATOR TIDINGS

SPARTACUS: BLOOD AND SAND. That's four words. Here are four more: Hot gladiators, Lucy Lawless. 'Nuff said. \$29.99 at amazon.com, or at retailers everywhere.



ABSOLUTELY DREAMY

For those on your list who missed it at the multiplex, now's your chance to have them

wake up and smell the awesome. **INCEPTION** is coming to DVD and Blu-ray just in time for the holidays. The twisty, elegant, jawdropping crime thriller about a team of dream thieves who ransack people's sleep state raked in more than \$750 million at the box office this year. For stunning visual effects alone, this movie's a fantastic gift. (And, yes, by visual effects we're specifically referring to Tom Hardy.) \$25.95, available December 7, at various retailers.

FOR THE ULTIMATE COUCH POTATO

MAN, WHAT AN OTTOMAN!

Sometimes you just can't bring yourself to get off the couch and make those few steps to the bed. Well, *pomme de terre de sofa*,

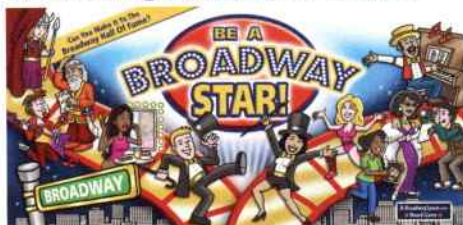


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FOR THE GAMERS

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created by Tony-nominated producer Ken Davenport, plays like a greasepaint Monopoly, if the geography was limited to the Great White Way. The game is sure to be a hit with all the Patti LuPone wannabes on your list. Our only quibble is there's no square where Hugh Jackman calls you out for your cell phone interrupting his performance. \$35 at beabroadwaystar.com. →

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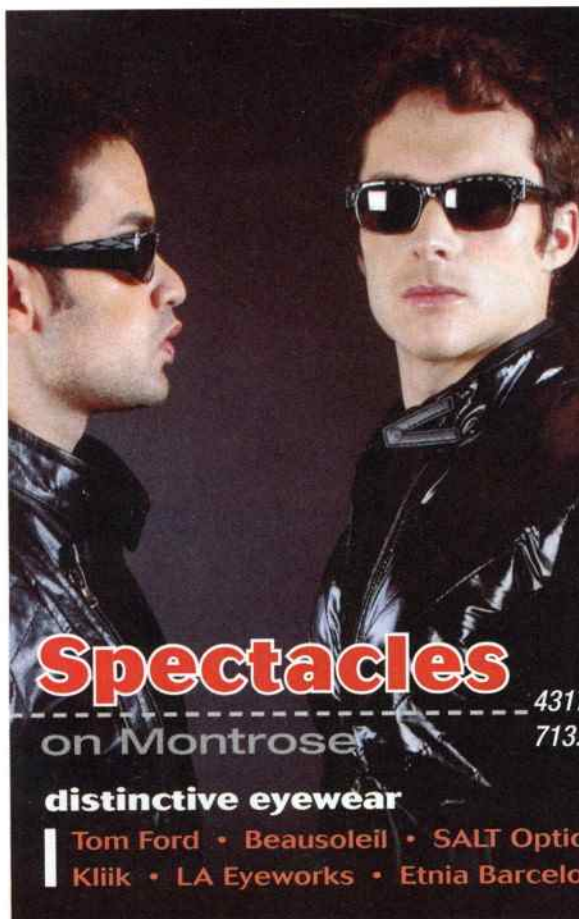
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Very Glad Tidings continued from previous page

NEW COOL

For those on your list more interested in bloodbath than Broadway, there is the latest installment of the mega-franchise hit, *Halo*. For those old queens who wouldn't know a plasma grenade from your granny panties, *HALO: REACH* is the epic sci-fi shoot-'em-up that drops you on the frontlines of a war between the human race and the big, nasty interstellar threat called the Covenant, who, like all alien races not dreamed up by Steven Spielberg, simply want to eighty-six mankind. *Halo's* like all war games where you get to blow stuff up, shoot enemies in the head, and, basically, revel in all things military. But instead of being stuck in an Afghan market or Iraqi dust-bowl, you get to play in breathtaking alien vistas and creepy alien spacecraft, all the while accompanied by one of the most lush symphonies ever scored. Like the previous incarnations, *Reach* ramps up the gameplay with new bells and whistles and, the best game innovation of the year... jet packs! \$59.95, available at various locations.

FOR THE SIZE QUEEN

HAIL TO THE KYNG

Condom dynasty Trojan caused quite a stir when they debuted the Magnum. What initially seemed like a punchline for late-night talk show hosts everywhere quickly became an in-demand bedroom essential. Turns out there were a lot more men of measure who were frustrated by the safe-sex scene than anyone knew. Well, rival prophylactic company LifeStyles is not taking this lying down anymore, waging an all-out size war with their own **KYNG CONDOM**, a bold, ballsy challenger to the Magnum throne. Anyone on your gift list deserving of this present? If so, please call 713... \$12.99, available at Walgreen's.

AND FOR THE OTHER QUEENS

OFF COLOR

No s--t. There is an actual Marilyn Monroe coloring book—**COLOR ME MARILYN**:



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Steven Foster is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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Holiday Harmonies

Seasonal tunes for Christians, Jews, and everybody else who deserves a gift

by Gregg Shapiro

The B-52s never put out a holiday record, and that's a shame. But fear not, out B-52s front man has teamed up with Noah Brodie and Dan Marshall to form The Superions and release *Destination... Christmas!* (Fanatic). Even without Kate (Pierson) or Cindy (Wilson), *Destination... Christmas!* sounds like it could be a lost B-52s record, in (Christmas) spirit, at least. The 11 new songs, with titles such as "Christmas Conga (Jungle Bells)," "Crummy Christmas Tree," "Jingle Those Bells," "Laughter at Christmas," and "Christmas Tears" have the kind of kooky lyrics we've come to expect from Schneider. There are also plenty of opportunities for dancing on "Santa's Disco" (as you might have guessed), "Fruitcake," "Santa Je T'aime," and the Cerrone-like "Teddy and Betty Yeti."

Schneider isn't the only out musician making the most of the holiday season. Amy Ray and Emily Sillers of Indigo Girls wrap up a dozen songs on their first holiday disc *Holly Happy Days* (IG Recordings/Vanguard). Originals such as the bouncy banjo number "The Wonder Song" and the inclusive "Your Holiday Song" are welcome additions to the Christmas music songbook. Their distinctive interpretations of standards such as "O Holy Night," "I'll Be Home for Christmas," and "Angels We Have Heard on High," as well as out singer/songwriter Chely Wright's "It Really Is a Wonderful Night" and Beth Nielsen Chapman's "There's Still My Joy,"

are glorious, while the inclusion of Woody Guthrie's "Happy Joyous Hanukkah" is a delight.

One listen to Annie Lennox's beautiful and abundant *A Christmas Cornucopia* (Decca) and you will wonder why she hasn't recorded an album such as this before. After all, she was born on December 25. The dozen songs range from the well-known selections, including "The First Noel," "In the Bleak Midwinter," and "Silent Night," to less familiar fare, such as "As Joseph Was a-Walking," "See Amid the Winter's Snow," and "Angels from the Realms of Glory." Lennox closes the disc with the original composition "Universal Child," a powerful number with a message that

extends beyond the holiday season.

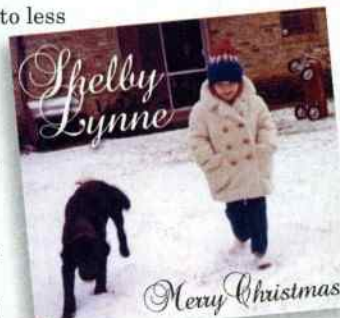
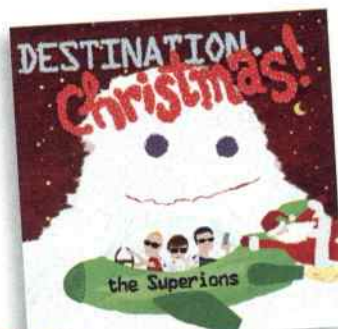
Shelby Lynne tosses her Santa hat into the ring with *Merry Christmas!* (Everso/Fon-tana). Like the Indigo Girls, Lynne combines her renditions of classics of the season—including a "Sleigh Ride/Winter Wonderland" medley, "Christmas Time Is Here," "O Holy Night," "White Christmas," "Silent Night," and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer"—with her own compositions. "Ain't Nothing Like Christmas" is a celebratory song of the season, while "Xmas" reminds us of Lynne's way with heartbreak, even during the holidays.

The Puppini Sisters sound like they were born to sing holiday songs. They put Elton John's "Step into Christmas" into their personal time machine on *Christmas with the Puppini Sisters* (Verve), giving the song a timeless quality. The same goes for George Michael's "Last Christmas" and even Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas." As for familiar favorites such as "Santa Baby," "Let It Snow," and the ukulele-driven "Mele Kalikimaka," they are given the respectful treatment one would expect from the Puppini.

A new cause for celebration, *Best Christmas Ever* (Bad Girls Sounds) marks Ronnie Spector's return to holiday music.

From the inclusive "It's the Time (Happy Holidays)" to the buoyant "My Christmas Wish" to the radiant "Light One Candle" and the retro "Best Christmas Ever," this is one Christmas gift you won't

want to return. The Canadian Tenors give *The Perfect Gift* (Decca) an especially Canadian flavor. The vocal quartet teams up with fellow country-person Sarah McLachlan on her "Wintersong," for example, and also performs "Huron Carol," written by Canadian Jesuit Jean de Brébeuf, as well as two songs co-written by Stephan Moccio (the title tune and "Instrument of Peace"). In an unusual twist, →



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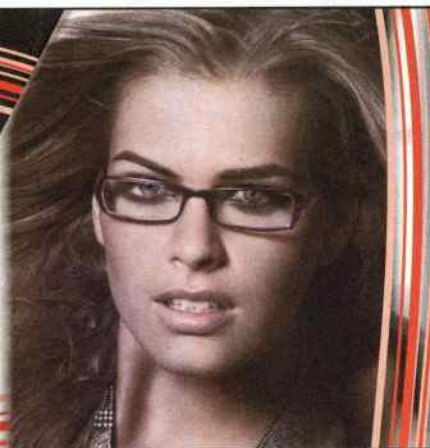
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Holiday Harmonies continued from page 34

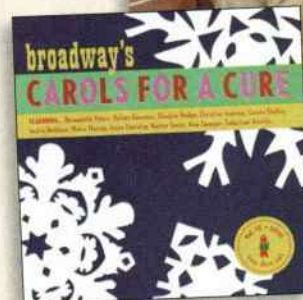
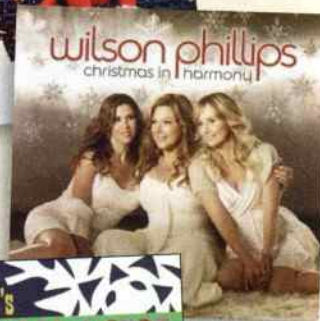
the Tenors extend the Canadian connection to include Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" (complete with bagpipes!).

Celtic Thunder keeps the thunder to a minimum on their holiday disc *Christmas* (Decca). They do, however, perform new or lesser-known songs such as "Christmas 1915," "Going Home for Christmas," "I Wish It Could Be Christmas Every Day," and "Our First Christmas Together," which serve to enhance the familiarity factor on the rest of the disc.

While it was awfully Christian, if you will, of the Indigo Girls to include a Hanukkah song on their holiday CD, it just serves to illustrate the dearth of music for the Jewish holiday. The various artists comp *Black Sabbath: The Secret Musical History of Black-Jewish Relations* (Idolsohn Society) doesn't have any Hanukkah songs on it, but it does feature Johnny Mathis performing "Kol Nidre" (for Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement). Additionally, "Fiddler on the Roof" is highlighted ("Sabbath Prayer" performed by Cannonball Adderley and a medley from the musical done by The Temptations), as well as Yiddish favorites including "Utt Da Zay" (Cab Calloway) and "Ich Hob Dich Tzufil Lieb" (Alberta Hunter), and much more.

As mystical as modern Jewish music gets (just listen to the sitar on "Bones Become

3 More Stocking Stuffers by Nancy Ford



Rainbows"), *The Low Hanging Fruit* (JDub) by The Wailing Wall (a.k.a. Jesse Rifkin) makes it safe for Brooklyn vegan hipsters and their contemporaries everywhere.

One thing you can say for the Jewish people: they have maintained their sense of humor. The late Allan Sherman, a purveyor of great musical comedy, released a series of albums during the 1960s that still produce well-deserved laughs today. Sherman's gift for parody lyrics have rarely been equaled (although the queer, half-Jewish Kinsey Sicks comes close on occasion) and are best exemplified on his first three albums *My Son, the Folk Singer*, *My Son, the Celebrity*, and *My Son, the Nut*, all three reissued on Collectors' Choice Music. Just try not to crack a smile when Sherman transforms "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" into "The Ballad of Harry Lewis" (a tribute to a mensch of the cloth—read: rag trade), revises the Harry Belafonte hit "Matilda" into "My Zelda," French kisses "Frère Jacques" into the phone duet "Sarah Jackman" (with Christine Nelson) on *My Son, the Folk Singer*, or sings his biggest hit, the letter-from-camp song "Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh," based on "Dance of the Hours" by Ponchielli from *La Gioconda* on *My Son, The Nut*. If this isn't Hanukkah party music, what is?

Gregg Shapiro is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.

Mariah Carey

Merry Christmas II You

Recording history's number-one top-selling female artist did what few before her have done: introduced a contemporary standard to the all-time classic holiday playlist with "All I Want For Christmas Is You." Here Mimi remakes her own holiday standard and adds a new hopeful to her stable of Yuletide chart-toppers with "Oh Santa." Island Def Jam Music Group (islanddefjam.com).

Wilson Phillips

Christmas in Harmony

To paraphrase lead singer Carnie Wilson's words, if you don't like Christmas music, you are an angry person. Here the Beach Boy-spawned, super-selling '90s pop trio reunites to harmonize on standards like "Little Drummer Boy," "Silver Bells," "Sleigh Ride," as well as a handful of new originals. Sony Masterworks (sonymasterworks.com).

Various Artists

Broadway's Carols for a Cure Vol. 12.

Tony winners and wannabes alike work for charity on this snappy collection of show tune-inspired holiday hits. Now with a dozen volumes under its belt since its founding in 1999, Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS has raised more than \$3 million supporting people with AIDS, as well as women's health issues. Cast members representing *Million Dollar Quartet*, *American Idiot*, *Wicked*, and other top-rated shows contribute to the double-CD collection. Rock-It Science Records (broadwaycares.org). ■

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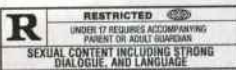
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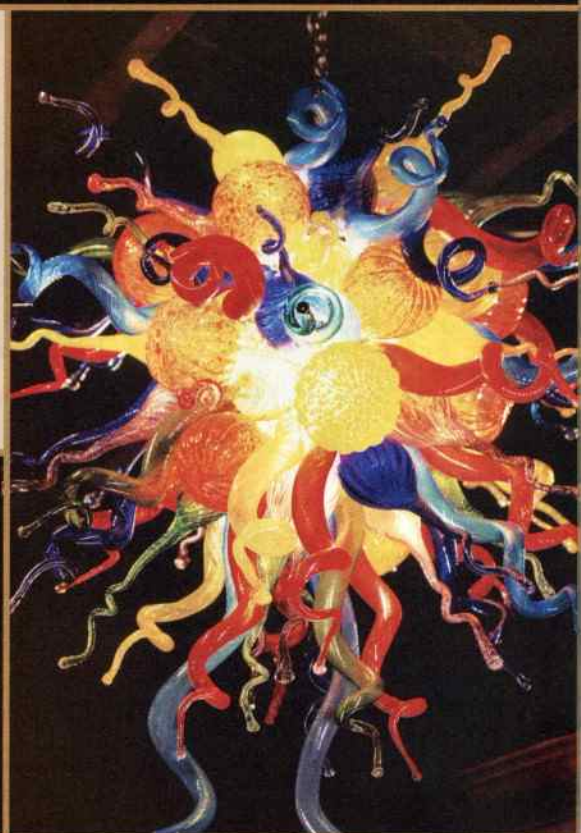
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Keep Your Wives Away from Them

An anthology of Orthodykes

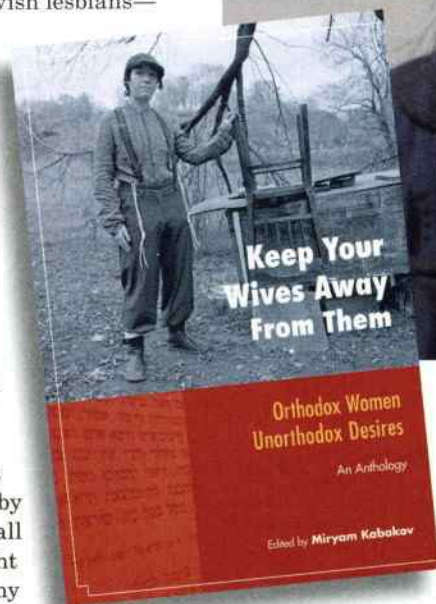
by Marene Gustin

Twenty-five years ago, Miryam Kabakov, a student at a Jewish Orthodox women's college who was just beginning to come out, read a book called *Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence* edited by Rosemary Curb and Nancy Manahan. Reconciling religion and sexual preference is often difficult, and the 1985 book was a revelation for lesbian Catholics. "Why isn't there a Jewish version of this book?" Kabakov wondered at the time.

Well, now there is. Kabakov, 46, has recently published her anthology *Keep Your Wives Away from Them: Orthodox Women, Unorthodox Desires*, a collection of essays by Orthodox Jewish lesbians—some who are out, some who are still closeted. She was in Houston in November for a reading at the Jewish Community Center's 38th Annual Jewish Book & Arts Fair.

When Kabakov, a St. Paul-based writer and arts administrator who helped start an Orthodyke support group in New York City, finally decided to compile the Jewish version of *Lesbian Nuns*, she was surprised by the many replies to her call for submissions. "I thought I would hear from all of my friends," she says. "I was surprised how many people I didn't know responded. It confirmed my theory there are a lot of GLBT Jews out there."

One of the people she didn't know was Houston's Leah Lax. The 54-year-old Lax holds a master's degree in creative writing from the University of Houston Creative Writing Program and wrote the libretto for Houston Grand Opera's 2007 *The Refugee*, an opera that tells the story of Houston's Mexican, Central American, Indian,



Chabad to the bone: as an Orthodox Jew, lesbian author Miryam Kabakov says she is "okay" with her faith's disapproval of same-sex marriage. "But I believe in same-sex civil unions," she adds.

Pakistani, Soviet-era Jewish, African, and Vietnamese communities.

"When I saw the call for stories for this anthology I'd never heard of anything like it in my life," Lax says. Her essay wound up being the lead one in the book, and she's now working on her own book, a memoir of her struggle. "I spent 30 years of my life as an Hasidic Jew," she explains. "I entered the community as a teen before I even understood myself. I had an arranged marriage and seven kids in 10 years. I wore a head scarf, stayed home, and didn't drive on the Sabbath."

But she knew something wasn't right in her life. Despite her faith, and trying to follow the *Halakha* (Jewish law), she knew she had to break away from the community. "There is absolutely no place in this system for lesbians," she says. "In some communities the women aren't even allowed to drive. I was ostracized when I fell in love with a woman."

But the secular Jewish community received Lax with open arms. Today she and her partner of seven years, Susan Baird, live as Jewish lesbians, following their faith and embracing their love. They share their home with their kids, terriers Maggie and Charley. As for her human children, they are still in her life. "Not →



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Keep Your Wives Away from Them

continued from previous page

all of my kids are Orthodox," she says. "The ones that are, are a little embarrassed—but I have warm relations with them all. For a while I didn't have contact with them, but I realized, Hey, I'm still the mom—I get to decide, not them. So I made the decision to contact them and to stay in touch."

Not all of the 14 essays in *Keep Your Wives Away from Them* have such resolution. Some writers are still in the closet, leading double lives or suppressing their natural desires in order to fit into the Orthodox world. "I'm hoping, with this book tour, to reach out to those women," says Kabakov. "Mostly I've been to bookstores and community centers that are supportive, but the next phase would be to get into those places where we can have those difficult conversations with Orthodox Jews. "I'm not an idealist about ever being accepted in the ultra-Orthodox world, but I think someday we will be able to talk about these issues."

In 2004, Kabakov and Mara Hillary Benjamin affirmed their partnership at the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in Connecticut, with Rabbi Sheila Peltz Weinberg officiating. "It was a big Jewish-style wedding," she says. "Only not a wedding, because Orthodox Judaism is very specific about what a marriage is. According to Orthodox Jewish law, a marriage is between a man and a woman. And I'm okay with that, I identify with Orthodox faith—it's a big part of who I am. But I wanted to be recognized as a couple. I believe in same-sex civil unions."

Besides her book, Kabakov is the director of The Sabes Foundation Minneapolis Jewish Film Festival, which last year screened the award-winning Israeli film *Eyes Wide Open* (see page 72), the story of an Orthodox Jewish married father of four who falls in love with his 19-year-old male apprentice. "We see maybe two films a year about Jewish gays," Kabakov says. "But that seems like an explosion to me. There is at least a presence in the gay Orthodox world now, and that's the biggest difference over the years."

Keep Your Wives Away from Them: Orthodox Women, Unorthodox Desires (North Atlantic Books) is available on Amazon.com and at local bookstores.

Marene Gustin is a frequent contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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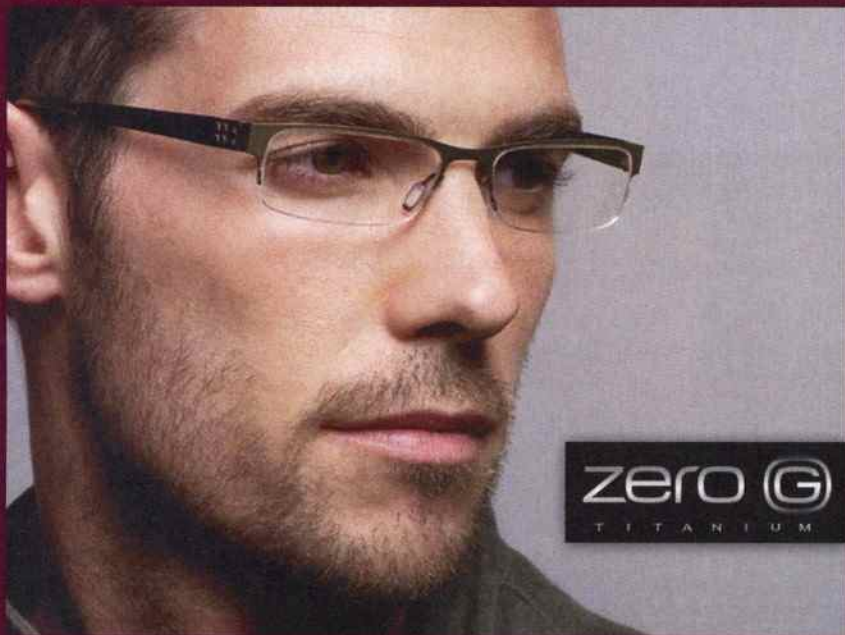
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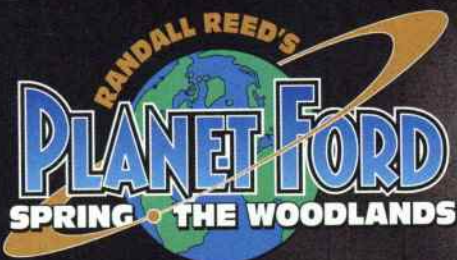
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The Beginning of the End of **BULLYING**

Part 1: The First Responders

by Brandon Wolf • Photos by Brandon Wolf

This past September was a month of shock and sadness, when as many as 11 gay teens throughout the nation took their own lives due to bullying, including Asher Brown from the Houston area. During October, bullying became a part of the national discourse, and a lot of talk was generated—a mixture of rhetoric, wisdom, and conversation. By November, talk was being turned into action.

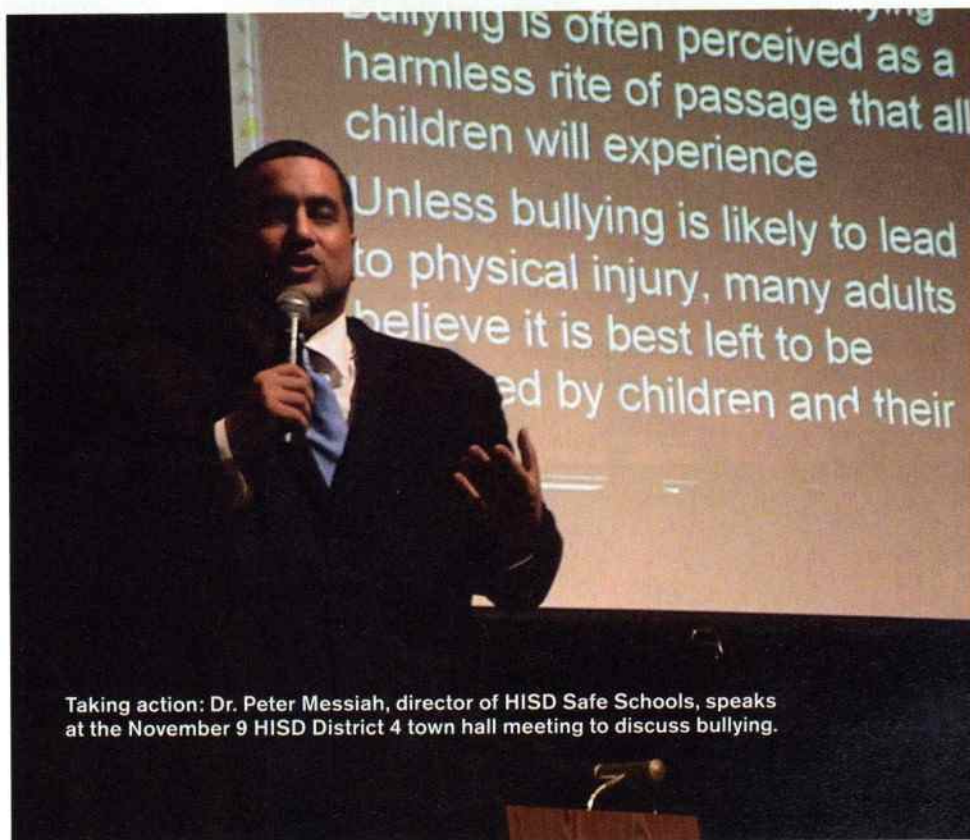
Last month, *OutSmart* featured an article titled “Bullying Comes Out of the Closet.” This month, we look beyond the shock, sadness, and talk, to focus on answers.

Houston School Officials Respond

The most proactive response came from the Houston Independent School District (HISD), Texas’s largest school district and the nation’s seventh largest. HISD released a statement saying, “We take bullying and bullying-related incidents seriously. Bullying is not acceptable behavior at HISD.”

At their meeting on November 11, the HISD Board of Trustees passed an anti-bullying resolution. It pointed out that bullying “is common and affects as much as 54 percent of children; can cause real and long-lasting physical and emotional harm to young people; and has triggered an epidemic of suicide among America’s youth.”

“The board decided to adopt this



Taking action: Dr. Peter Messiah, director of HISD Safe Schools, speaks at the November 9 HISD District 4 town hall meeting to discuss bullying.

resolution to send a clear message that we expect our students and staff to respect and accept all people,” says HISD board president Greg Meyers. “The recent news stories we have seen of children as young as 11 years old taking their own lives after being repeatedly bullied are tragic and unnecessary. No parent or child should have to go through that.”

But even before the passage of the board resolution, Dr. Peter Messiah, HISD’s manager of Safe Schools, was busy launching an anti-bullying initiative that had been developed during the preceding month. “We now have anti-bullying training which will be presented to all District staff,” says Messiah. “This training includes a common definition, best →

practices, and direction in handling bullying and bullying-related issues."

HISD includes 298 schools and is responsible for the education of some

Harris, called the first town hall meeting to discuss bullying on Tuesday, November 9, at Sidney Lanier Middle School. Among the speakers was Councilmember Jolanda Jones, who recalled the death of her own father, a victim of suicide. Messiah gave

points about what bullying is and why bullies bully. In addition, bulletin board and classroom door displays have been handmade by students.

On Saturday, November 13, Jackson Middle School held a three-hour Anti-Bullying Festival, organized by its 29-year-old principal, Gregg Cueller. Despite being an overcast and drizzly day, the school's auditorium was filled to capacity with students and parents. The event included motivational speakers, training sessions on bullying prevention, and promotional items such as bracelets, pins, and T-shirts. Representatives from the HISD Police Department, the Houston Fire Department, the Mayor's Anti-Gang Task Force, and Crime Stoppers were present to raise awareness and explain intervention techniques.

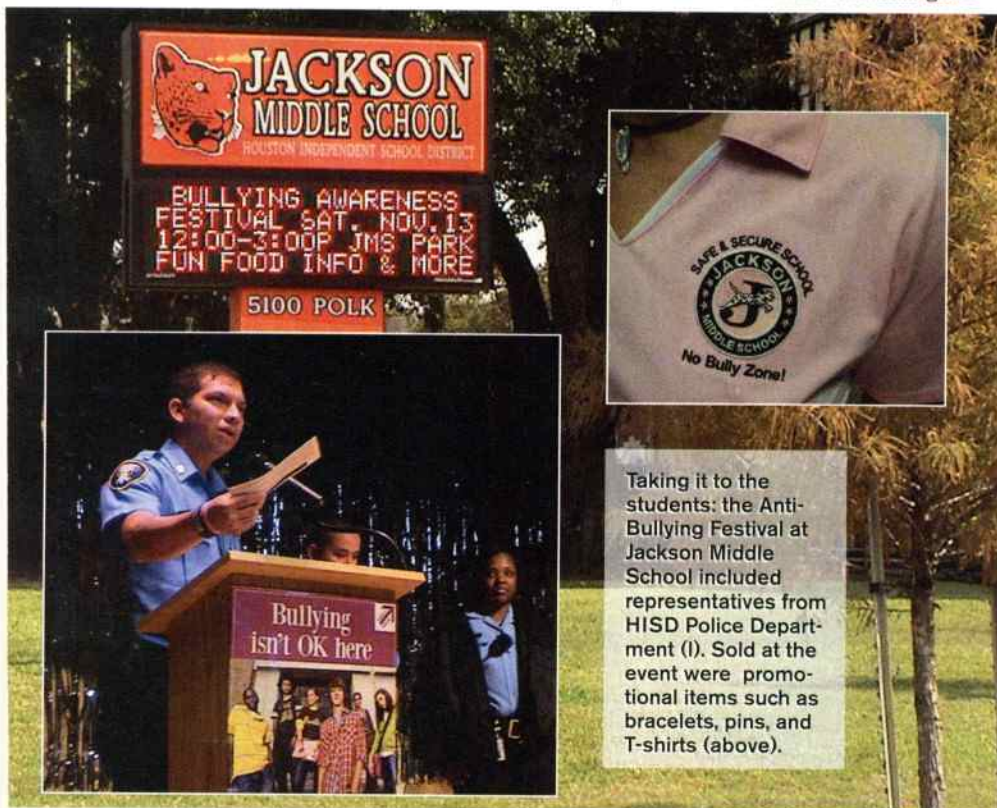
Texas State Representative Carol Alvarado encouraged everyone present to join her in "standing up against bullies by reporting harassment and helping to create a safe learning environment." Alvarado recently filed HB 130, which would require the establishment of an "Anti-Bullying Hotline" under the direction of the Department of Family & Protective Services (DFPS).

"Intimidation can be a traumatic experience for children, many of whom will not report their bullies out of fear and apprehension," Alvarado said. "Jackson's principal, Gregg Cueller, and HISD have done a fantastic job of setting up a friendly environment for kids to learn, but we need to spread the policy across our state."

Other Houston-Area School Districts

Harris County has 26 independent school districts: Aldine, Alief, Channelview, Clear Creek, Crosby, Cypress-Fairbanks, Dayton, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Houston, Huffman, Humble, Katy, Klein, La Porte, New Caney, North Forest, Pasadena, Pearland, Sheldon, Spring, Spring Branch, Stafford, Tomball, and Waller.

As a barometer of priorities within the county, *OutSmart* reviewed the websites of each district. Only four of the districts—Houston, Katy, Klein, and Pearland—mentioned anti-bullying on their home page. The majority of home pages featured news of district sports teams. The websites for two dozen local private schools showed no mention of the topic. However, Internet searches turned up at least two area schools that recently hosted week-long bullying awareness programs. Special activities were scheduled for each day to engage students in the fight against bullying. →



Taking it to the students: the Anti-Bullying Festival at Jackson Middle School included representatives from HISD Police Department (l). Sold at the event were promotional items such as bracelets, pins, and T-shirts (above).

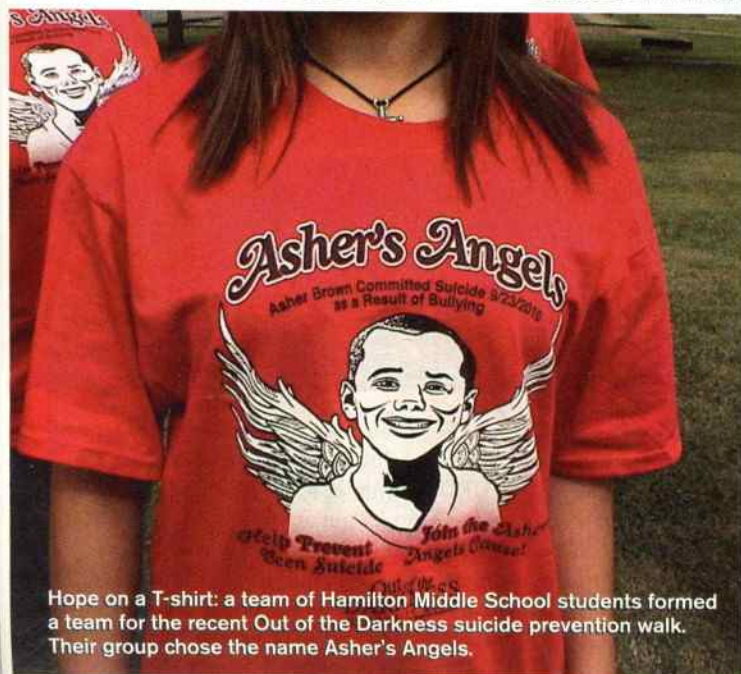
202,000 students. The training program means that all HISD staff members will speak the same language, follow the same guidelines, and understand the administration's sense of urgency in dealing with bullying.

HISD Trustee for District 4, Paula

an overview of the anti-bullying program now being implemented. Students from District 4 spoke about what they and their schools were doing to end bullying. Asher Brown's stepfather, David Truong, addressed the gathering, appealing for a new school environment in which the safety of each student is ensured.

Jackson Middle School Sets an Example

Another first responder was Jackson Middle School at 5100 Polk Street, which is a shining example of how bullying is being taken seriously in Houston. Walking down the halls of the school, one sees eye-catching anti-bullying posters on the walls about every 50 feet. The signs make dramatic



Hope on a T-shirt: a team of Hamilton Middle School students formed a team for the recent Out of the Darkness suicide prevention walk. Their group chose the name Asher's Angels.

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One of those schools was Cypress Ranch High School in Cypress-Fairbanks ISD, which offered daily activities to their 2,300 students. During a Monday social



A college-level appeal: Anti-Bullying Summit at University of Houston.

studies class, all students saw a bully-awareness play produced by the theater arts class. During Tuesday's English class, students were given a writing assignment pertaining to bullying. On Wednesday, students viewed short video clips, followed by discussion and students signing a Resolution of Respect. Thursday was "War against Bullying" day, and students wore camouflage to school. On Friday, students participated in a door decoration contest.

Pine Forest Elementary in Humble ISD also involved its students in bully awareness, sponsoring a weeklong "Buddies NOT Bullies Week" for its 700 students. Each day, students were asked to dress a different way. Monday, wearing slippers symbolized "give bullies the slip"; Tuesday, choosing mismatched clothes reminded students to appreciate differences; Wednesday, students paired up to dress like twins to find similarities in others; Thursday, wearing crazy hats symbolized taming teasing; and on Friday, students dressed like a celebrity to show that "everyone is a star."

U of H Anti-Bullying Summit

On Saturday, November 13, the Bauer School of Business at the University of Houston (U of H) hosted an anti-bullying summit. Craig Clayton, director & diversity strategist with the U of H International Institute for Diversity & Cross Cultural Management, organized a "Rally 4 Respect" and a "Summit for Solutions."

Sadly, the U of H event may be an

indication of weak local support for anti-bullying efforts. Clayton e-mailed 8,771 local educators, inviting them to attend the summit, which was free and offered complimentary breakfast and snacks. Clayton received about 10 responses. Fewer than

50 people took advantage of the event, and a number of those people were there as panel members. Four panels had been planned to run concurrently. Instead, two panels participated, each for an hour. Despite the tepid response, Clayton felt confident that the idea was a good one. "I know there are some people who

want more information and knowledge."

Other Local Events

In the Houston area, a group of students from Asher Brown's Cy-Fair school held a Saturday car wash and raised \$900. They also formed a team for the recent "Out of the Darkness" suicide prevention walk, calling themselves Asher's Angels and raising an additional \$1,100. A local business donated shirts for the team to wear—bright red (Asher's favorite color) with a design of an angel-winged Asher.

Local hip hop artist Jus E and openly gay performer Tim'm West wrote an original song for the It Gets Better campaign, enlisting many of Asher's Angels to appear in a video to be posted on YouTube.

Sally Huffer, spokesperson for the Montrose Counseling Center (MCC), reports, "Youth Services Specialist Deb Murphy, Anti-Violence Program Specialist Allison Vogt, and Clinical Director Chris Kerr, have been busy speaking about bullying to a number of groups, and the requests keep coming in. Getting the word out about our programs is our biggest barrier, especially since the schools operate independently of one another. Some are

receptive to having us come in and speak, but most are reluctant. If anyone in the community has connections for us to offer education and training around these issues, it would help us tremendously."

Local fifth grader Valor Carter recently became the first recipient of the Anti-Bully Hero Award, a joint initiative of HISD, KPRC Local 2, and *Houston Family Magazine*. Young Carter was honored for reporting a bullying incident to trusted adults, rather than choosing the violent alternative of employing skills he learned in becoming a red belt in tae-kwan-do.

On November 19, OutSmart partnered with Guava Lamp bar to sponsor a fundraiser for the Trevor Project's "It Gets Better" campaign. Mayor Annise Parker, a member of Houston's LGBT community, premiered her own "It Gets Better" video at the event. The very personal and sensitive video was produced by Houston's High School for Performing and Visual Arts.

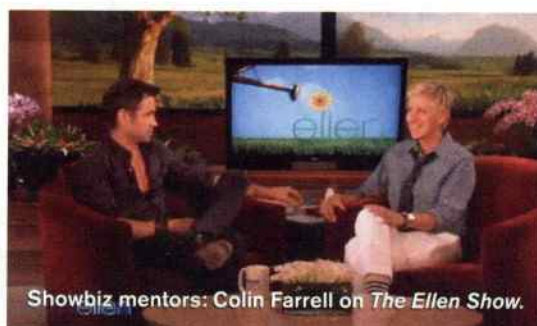
On December 7 at 7 p.m., MCC presents *Bullied: A Student, a School, and a Case That Made History*. *Bullied* tells the story of Jamie Nabozny, who took a stand against the bullying he endured. He went to court and won the case.

National Media Response

On a national level, the hit television show *Glee*, set in a fictional high school, has just introduced a new plotline dealing with bullying. Television talk shows continue to address the subject. Actor Colin Farrell made an especially moving call to end

bullying during a recent appearance on Ellen DeGeneres's popular daytime talk show, *Ellen*.

America became a different place after this September's tragedies. The deaths of so



Showbiz mentors: Colin Farrell on *The Ellen Show*.

many gay teens in such a short time have mobilized efforts within and beyond the LGBT community to bring an end to bullying. But the recent mid-term elections also changed the political landscape of our country and our state, putting the future of anti-bullying legislation into question.

Next month, OutSmart looks at the politics of anti-bullying and explains the need for mandatory anti-bullying training in every school.

Brandon Wolf is a frequent contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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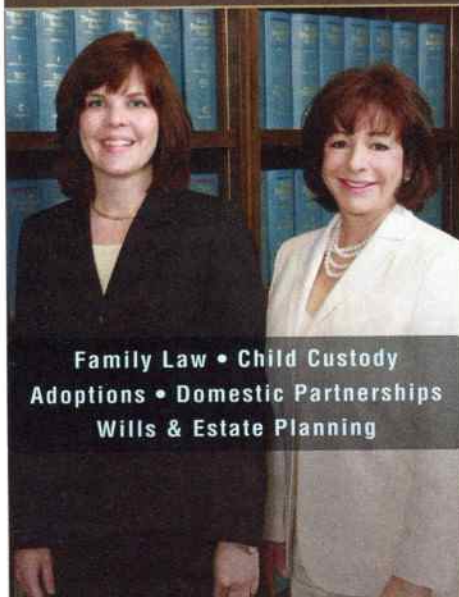
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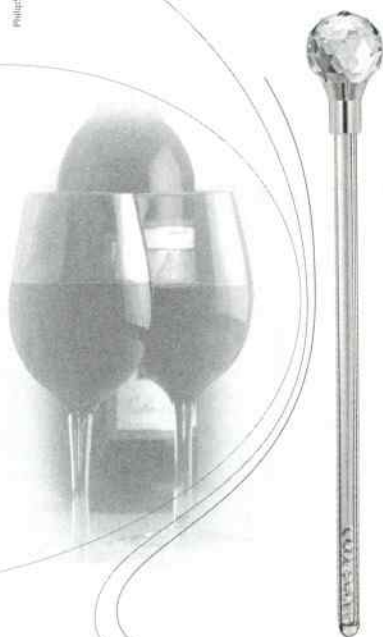
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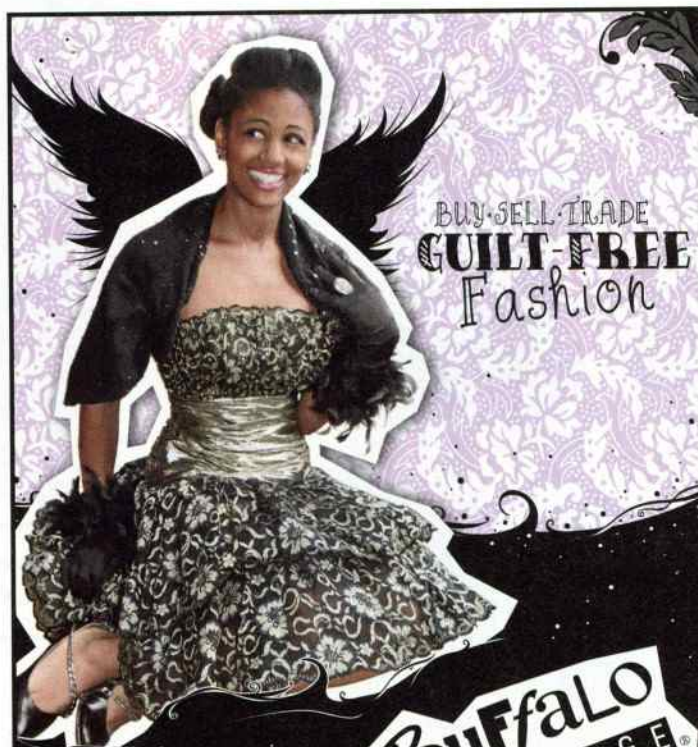
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Keeping It **SAFE** with Jason and deMarco

Gay Christian singing duo helps homeless youth

by Marene Gustin

Photo by Scott Ashton

It's not enough that married singing duo Jason and deMarco tour, record, and even star in Showtime's documentary *We're All Angels*. Now they're turning into real-life angels for homeless youth.

In June of this year, the couple's new organization—Safe, Affirming, Family Environment (S.A.F.E.)—received its IRS nonprofit status. “S.A.F.E. Spots” are being formed as meeting places for S.A.F.E. support groups and other special events, as well as a drop-in resource center where youth and young adults can get free food, clothes, books, Internet access, job leads, and other resources.

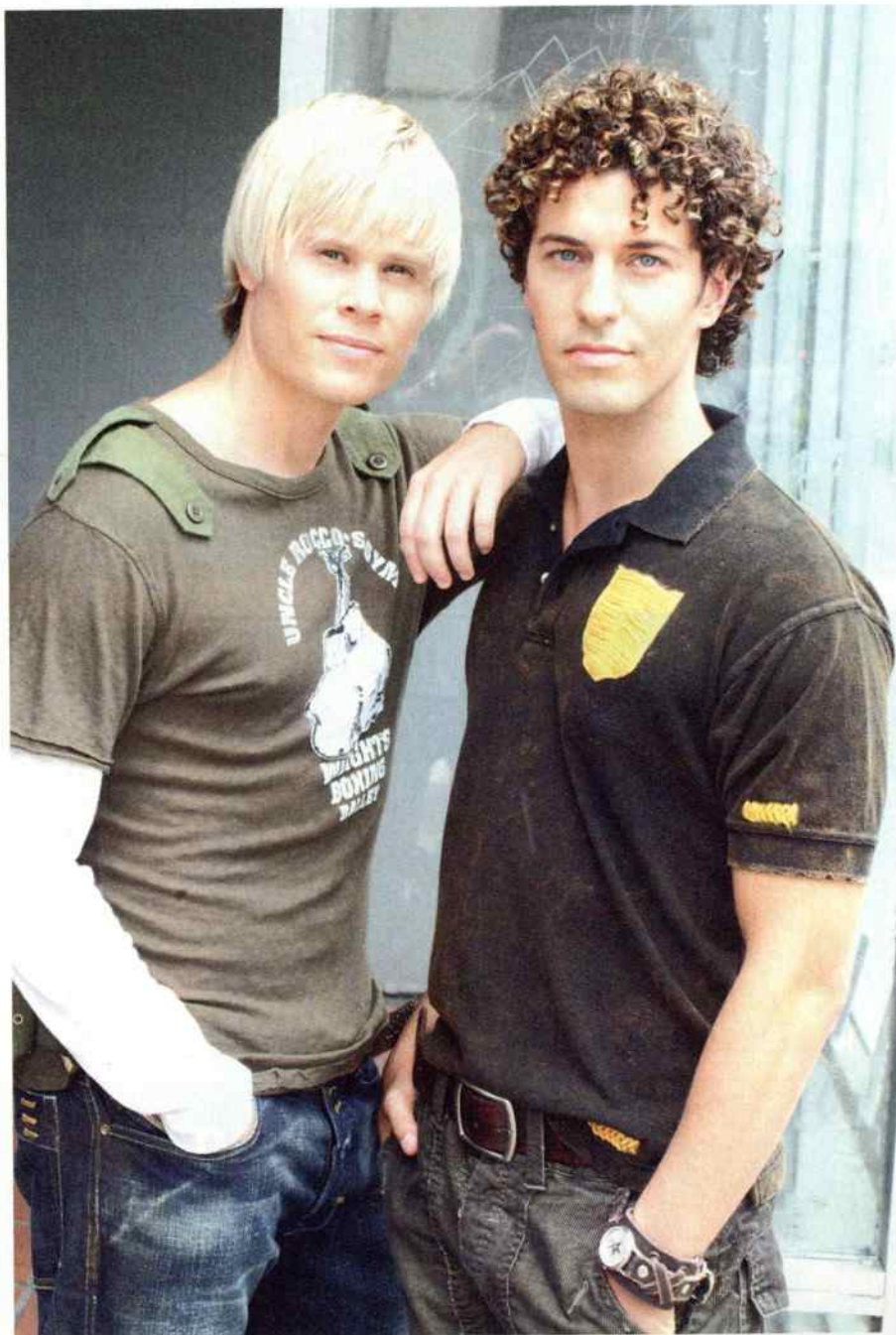
The organization will also eventually provide S.A.F.E. houses, certified LGBT-friendly foster families, and other families that are willing to take in young people who are aging out of the foster program. Tens of thousands of 18-year-olds are forced out of the foster system every year, many with nowhere to go and no resources. S.A.F.E. is also planning a program called Helping Intended Parents (HIP) that will help couples navigate the adoption and fostering process.

“Over our eight years of touring and spreading our musical message, we’ve received thousands of e-mails from teens and young people,” says Jason Warner. “Last year a young man e-mailed me. He had come out and been kicked out of his home. Finally a friend’s mother took him in. A couple of months later she contacted me to say he had killed himself.

“That’s when I said it’s time to do this.”

With the recent spate of teen suicides connected to antigay bullying, Jason and deMarco have become even more committed to providing a safe haven for those in need. “I wonder,” Jason says, “if those young people had a S.A.F.E. Spot to go to, could they have been saved?”

While Houston has many resources for LGBT homeless teens and youth, there’s no place that offers safe housing options—something Jason knows is important from personal experience. “I was kicked out of my band [in 1998 while we were on the road],” he says. “I was stranded in Houston and I had nowhere to live. I met a man who let me live in



Branching out: singers Jason and deMarco's new video shares its name with their new organization.

his apartment building in exchange for working in the office. That allowed me to get back on my feet.

“The community is urging kids to

come out younger and younger, and often they get bullied and kicked out of their homes. The shelters can be dangerous, especially for transgendered kids, so it's →

when your mother says... "try it, you'll like it"

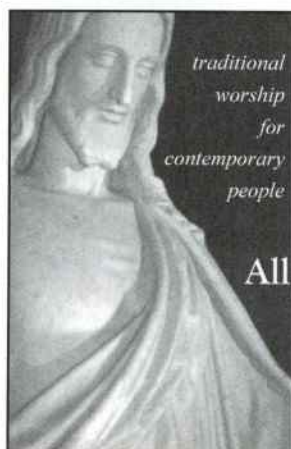


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Keeping It SAFE continued from previous page

about time we gave them safe places to live, and resources. It's the least we can do."

S.A.F.E. will work with other local organizations. Already they are networking at the monthly meetings that the Montrose Counseling Center holds for support groups, and they will hold a fundraising Christmas concert on December 18 at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church.

S.A.F.E. has already hired a director for its first S.A.F.E. Spot, which will open at a soon-to-be-announced location in January 2011. Jason has adopted a staff training program from a similar community program in another state, and will use strict policies and procedures to keep the staff and clients safe. Youth must sign a policy agreement and receive an ID card before accessing services.

If all of this sounds like a lot of work for a young couple, it is. But it's a labor of love. "We're taking some time off from the road," Jason says. "We're still recording, and we just finished a music video for the single 'Safe,' from our last album. And we'll be doing a new Christmas album next year."

The couple also works at Houston's Unity Church of Christianity, where they are the staff contemporary worship coordinators and Jason is the youth and young adult leader. "But if we weren't busy, we'd go crazy," says Jason.

And there's even more to come. The Helping Intended Parents (HIP) portion of S.A.F.E. has special meaning to Jason and deMarco because they are planning to start their own family. "We're looking at our options right now," Jason says. "So we'll have news on that soon."

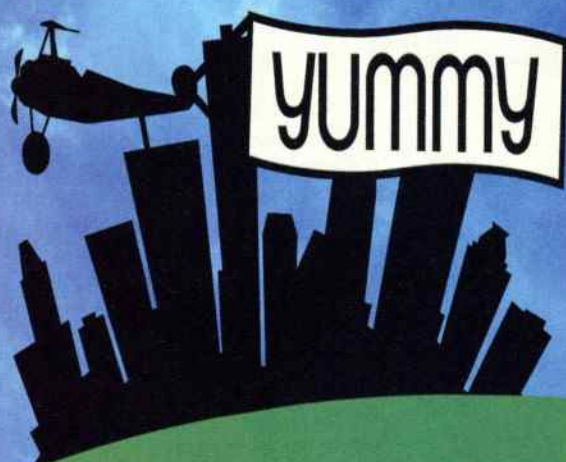
In the meantime, they're making plans to take their S.A.F.E. program national, and there's even a Facebook campaign to get Jason and deMarco on the *Ellen* show to talk about S.A.F.E.

Christmas Concert Fundraiser

Jason and deMarco will present a holiday concert on December 18 at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, benefitting S.A.F.E. and Bering's Open Gate Ministry. A silent auction begins at 1 p.m., and the concert is at 2 p.m. Homeless youth are welcome and will be given Christmas gifts and food. There is no admission fee, but donations will be accepted. The group has already raised more than \$36,000, and is hoping to raise \$100,000 by the end of the year. For more information, log on to safehouseforall.org.

Marene Gustin is a frequent contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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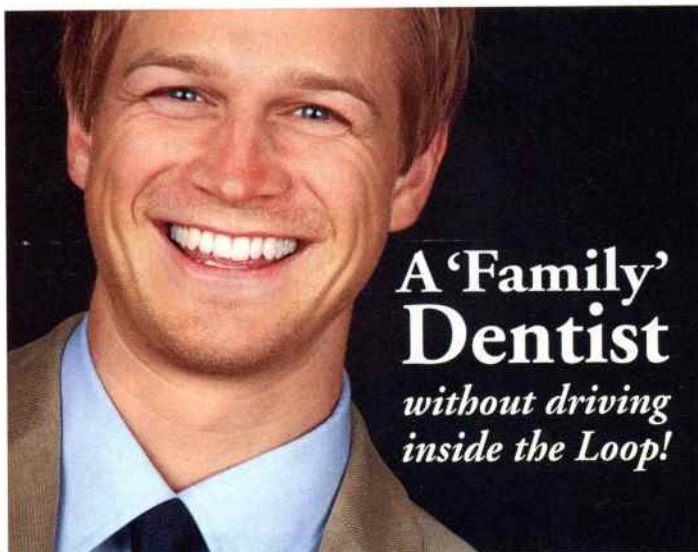


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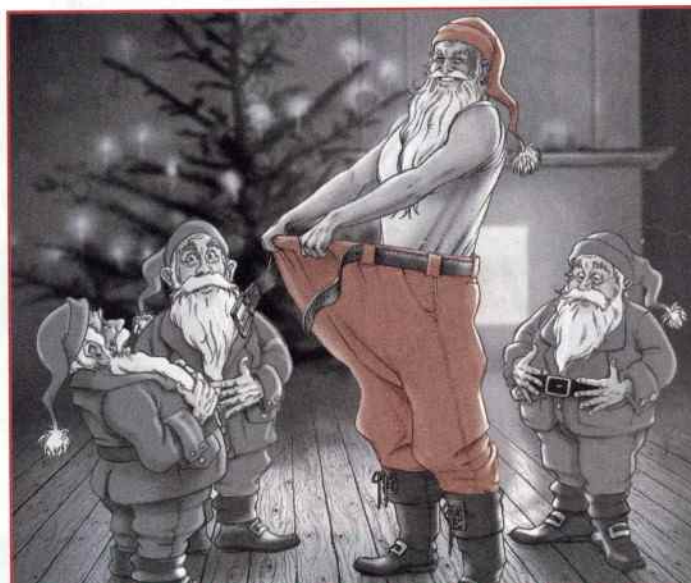
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ANNISE PARKER
MAYORAL INAUGURATION
JAN. 4

Sure, she was already out. But no one was completely convinced that an open lesbian could *really and truly* be embraced by voters and elected to serve as mayor of the largest city in the reddest state in the nation. But following a runoff election, Annise D. Parker did just that. "I want to speak now . . . to those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered," Parker said in her inaugural address. "I understand how much this day means. I feel your excitement and your joy, your apprehension and your longing for acceptance. I will gladly carry you forward. . . . And when the time comes I will just as gladly pass the torch to the next in waiting. . . . Your bravery in the face of threat, your grace in the face of insult sustains me. . . . Face the world with honesty and integrity. The pain is worth the reward."

2010 in PHOTOS

By Nancy Ford / Photos by Dalton DeHart

2010 will be remembered by some for its paralyzing economic recession, debilitating natural disasters, and Prince William's announcement of his engagement to Kate Middleton (thereby shattering the hearts of gay men across the globe). Here, *OutSmart* looks back on a few other memories that made this year unforgettable.



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VALENTINE BANQUET
FEB. 13



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WEEKEND
FEB. 18-24



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MARCH 12



JUDGE BARBARA HARTLE
SWEARING-IN
MAY 5

On April 21, Municipal Court Judge Barbara E. Hartle made history by being nominated by Houston Mayor Annise D. Parker to lead the city's municipal courts as Chief Presiding Judge. Hartle, an out lesbian, was appointed as a municipal judge in April 2009 after serving as an associate municipal judge, as well as working with the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.



"LET'S MISBEHAVE"
KATE CLINTON/ BCPA/ GMCH/ BCWC
JUNE 19

Bayou City Performing Arts tossed political correctness out the window with a summer concert that blended parody with a dollop of comedy. Legendary lesbian comedienne Kate Clinton emceed the show headlined by Gay Men's Chorus of Houston, Bayou City Women's Chorus and Bayou City Chorale that nearly sold out the opulent Jones Hall. The most successful production ever mounted (so far) by BCPA, the evening benefited Kindred Spirits Foundation and was capped by a unique high-stepping number starring Houston Mayor Annise D. Parker.



PROPOSITION 8
DECISION DAY RALLY
AUG. 4

On August 3, U.S. District Court Judge Vaughn Walker struck down the discriminatory Proposition 8, a ballot measure which was passed by voters in California in November, 2008, allowing same-sex marriages in the state. Walker declared the proposition patently unconstitutional. In Houston, 100 members and supporters of the LGBT community turned out the next day in front of City Hall to celebrate the victory. Judge Walker lifted a temporary stay on his ruling, but the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals granted a stay.



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MARCH 14



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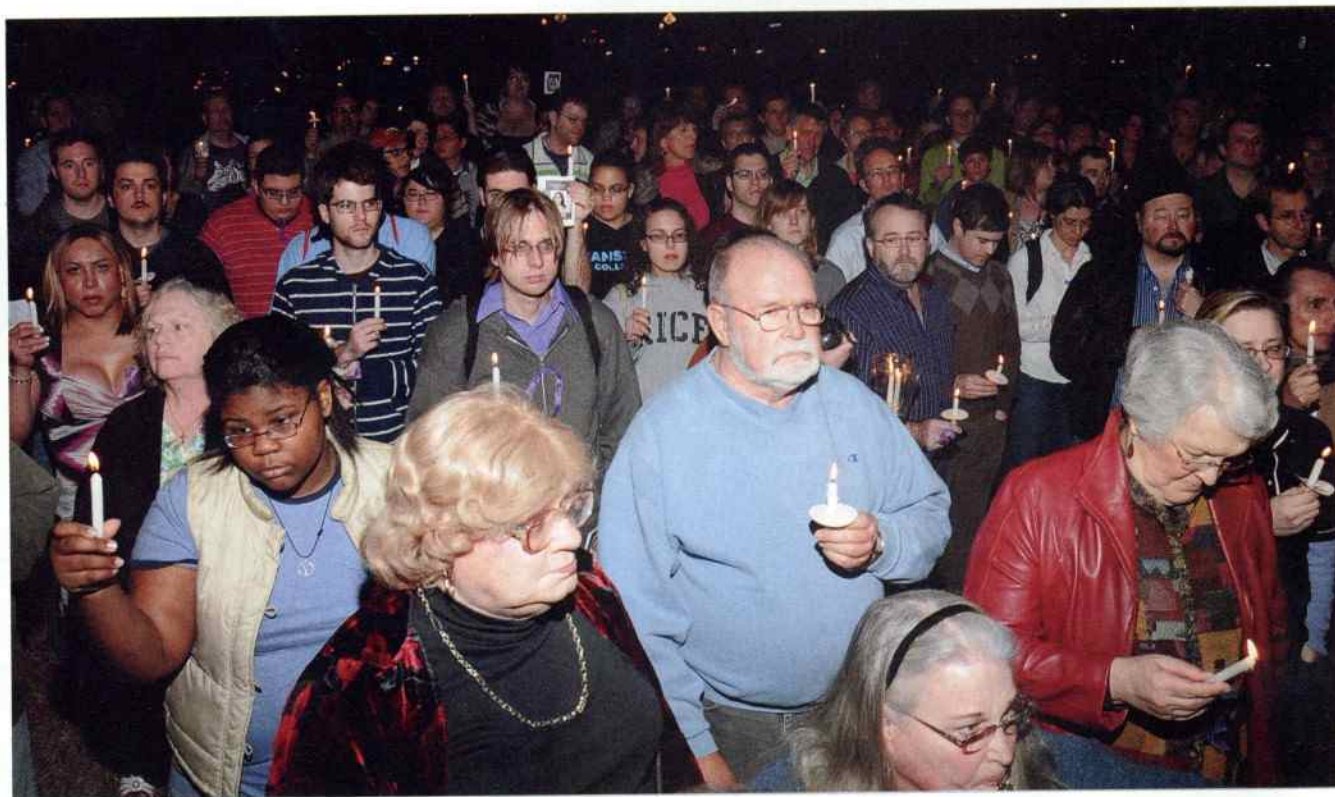
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MYRA ICAL
MEMORIAL AND CANDLELIGHT VIGIL
JAN. 25

Officers with the Houston Police Department reported that the partially clad body of Ruben Dario Ical, who upon first examination appeared to be male, had been found in the 4300 block of Garrott Street, an area known to be the scene of frequent criminal activity. Transgender activists and supporters protested the incorrect gender assumption as well as the implication of impropriety when the victim was discovered to be Myra Chanel Ical, a transgender male-to-female. A suspect has not been apprehended.



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KINDRED SPIRITS
30TH ANNIVERSARY
AUG. 28

It all started in 1980 when businesswoman Marion Coleman saw the need for a safe, clean, and positive atmosphere where lesbians and their friends could gather. Little did she know how that nightclub, Kindred Spirits, would impact a generation of women for generations to come. Thirty years later, the nightclub is no more, but Kindred Spirits Foundation continues its legacy with a series of events, including last summer's anniversary blowout that drew more than 1,000 partiers, Lynn Schwarzenburg (left) and partner, Linda Arnold, among them.



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AUG. 22



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SEPT. 18



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OCT. 9



ASSISTHERS
DECADENT DESSERT
OCT. 10

He's No Levi Johnston

A conversation with Mark Ballas from 'Dancing with the Stars'

by Donalevan Maines



Politics (not) as usual: Mark Ballas and Bristol Palin's (inset, right) wildly popular performances on ABC's ninth season of *Dancing with the Stars* made many Americans grateful that real elections aren't conducted via cellphone.

GREG ZABISKI/ABC; INSET: ADAM LARKE/WABC

Smooth-chested Mark Ballas, the Houston-born TV hunk who partnered with Bristol Palin on this season's *Dancing with the Stars*, remembers competing against many same-sex duos in dance contests in England after he and his family moved from Katy to London when he was just three.

The subject comes up in conversation with Ballas because this year's Israeli-TV version of *DWTS* includes a female same-sex duo. When will U.S. television be ready for same-sex dancing? "I have no idea," says Ballas, who stars in Broadway's scorching *Burn the Floor* December 14 through 19 at the Hobby Center in Houston.

OutSmart spoke with Ballas on November 16, just hours before he and Palin were voted into the finals of *DWTS* along with his best friend Derek Hough/*Dirty Dancing* star Jennifer Grey and Lacey Schwimmer/Disney Channel actor Kyle Massey.

That night, Schwimmer told *Access Hollywood* she would volunteer to be the first pro dancer to be part of a same-sex dance couple in the U.S.

In the days that followed, *DWTS* and ABC-TV were pressured

to add a same-sex duo by judge Carrie Ann Inaba, Brandy's pro partner Maksim Chermovskiy, and Gilles Marini, the naked co-star of the first *Sex and the City* movie, who placed second on the eighth season of *DWTS*.

Oh, and Ryan Seacrest reported on his radio show that actress Portia DeGeneres, wife of Ellen, was being considered as the first celebrity to compete with a same-sex partner on America's *DWTS*.

"They're planning to feature a same-sex couple," Seacrest told her. "You're at the top of the list."

She replied, "You never know."



Mark Ballas says he didn't let taunting bother him as a boy dancer in England. He had the advantage of going to the Italia Conti Academy, a renowned theater arts school, and he enjoyed nurturing parents and the peer support of Derek Hough, a fellow *DWTS* champion. Hough moved from Utah to England to study with Mark's father, Corky Ballas, when Derek was ten and Mark was eight.

Entering this season, Ballas had won *DWTS* twice, first with figure skater Kristi Yamaguchi (May 2008), then with gymnast Shawn Johnson (May 2009). Hough had also won twice, with →

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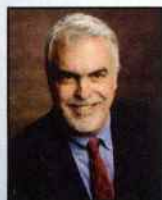
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Dancing with Mark Ballas

continued from page 58

model Brooke Burke (November 2008) and singer Nicole Scherzinger (May 2010).

Hough made his Broadway debut last January when he stepped into the final four performances of *Burn the Floor* during its New York run. *DWTS* pro Maksim Chermovskiy has also performed in *Burn the Floor*, calling it the most difficult thing he's ever done, but extremely rewarding because of his work with other professional dancers.

The sensuous style of *Burn the Floor* is called "international dance." It consists of five Latin American dances and five ballroom, or "standard," dances that have become household names, thanks to *DWTS*. The cha-cha, samba, paso doble, rumble, and jive are considered Latin American styles, while ballroom dances include the waltz, fox-trot, Viennese waltz, tango, and quickstep.

"It will be such a big difference from choreographing and mentoring," says Ballas. "I can slide in there, have them teach me the steps, and just do it."

His famous father said, "It will be like a duck to water. In five minutes, he will be seamlessly integrated into that show."

While in Houston, Ballas also hopes to play after-show concerts of songs he wrote for his debut solo CD, *The HurtLoveBox*, which drops in January. "It's John Mayer meets Maroon 5."

"I've been playing guitar just as long as I've been dancing," he explains.

As a musical theater actor, he's toured as the understudy for the role of Ritchie Valens in *Buddy—The Buddy Holly Story*, and he's played the lead role of Tony in the musical *Copacabana*. In week three of this season's *DWTS*, bisexual comedienne Margaret Cho danced the samba to that show's title song, "Copacabana," shaking her groove thing in a rainbow-fringed flapper-style dress and dedicating her performance with openly gay pro partner Louis Van Amstel to viewers struggling with their LGBT identities and their loved ones.

Cho called it "the gayest thing ever on *Dancing with the Stars*."

"I thought it was cool," says Ballas, adding that he would love to get on board with the NoH8 campaign.

After *Burn the Floor*, he says, "My dream is to play Judas in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Those songs are timeless. I think it's the best of the Andrew Lloyd Webber-Tim Rice musicals. I'm a Christian, too, so I love the story."

More info: burnthefloor.com.

Donalevan Maines is a regular contributor to *OutSmart* magazine.

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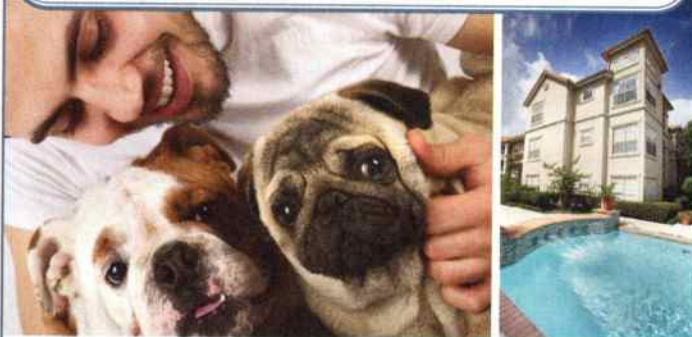
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Big-Screen Secrets

'The Little Dog Laughed' attempts to pry open Hollywood's closet

by Donalevan Maines

Like Rock Hudson, Tab Hunter, Richard Chamberlain, and many more (whom we won't mention), movie star Mitchell Green in the comedy *The Little Dog Laughed* at Theater LaB has this "recurring case of homosexuality" that threatens to ruin his image as a leading man.

It gives his agent fits. She's Diane, a lesbian—the outspoken type—and in Jimmy Phillips' production at Theater LaB, she's played by the straight Mary Hooper. By anyone's standards, Hooper is Houston theater's diva emeritus. In this role, Julie White won the 2007 Tony Award for best actress in a play.

Mitchell (Nate Suurmeyer) drunkenly tries to navigate Hollywood's tabloid-choppy waters by limiting his sex life to rent boys, including Bryan Kaplun as slow-but-sure-witted Alex, who charges \$200 a trick.

MITCHELL: You must be very good. At sex.

ALEX: That's not what people pay you for.

MITCHELL: What do people pay you for?

ALEX: To leave afterwards.

The Little Dog Laughed, a nominee for best play on Broadway, was written by Douglas Carter Beane, the gay screenwriter of *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar*, author of the play *As Bees in Honey Drown*, and book-writer of the stage musical *Xanadu* that starred Cheyenne Jackson.

Beane lives in New York, but he clearly had his hand on the pulse of Hollywood when he lampooned Tinseltown with *The Little Dog Laughed*, which also includes Rebekah Stevens as Ellen, Alex's girlfriend. (Whaaa? The rent boy has a girlfriend? Oh, well.)

In October, *The New York Times* reported that Beane's next project is *The Nance*, starring Nathan Lane. "Nance, or nancy boy, is disparaging slang for an effeminate or homosexual man, and nances were popular theatrical figures, akin to blackface performers, during the 1920s and '30s," explained the *Times*' Patrick Healy.

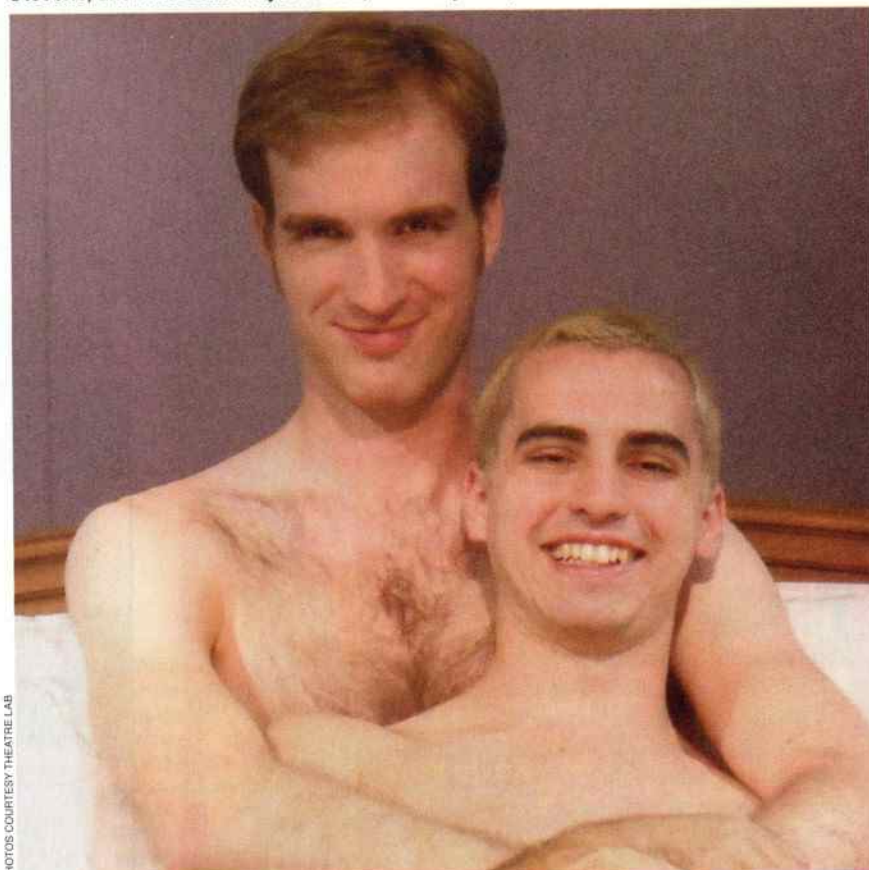
The Little Dog Laughed plays through December 12 at Theater LaB, 1706 Alamo (off 2100 Houston Ave.). Call 713/868-7516 for reservations or visit theaterlabhouston.com. Ticket prices are \$25 and \$30.

Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. through December 11; Thursday, December 9 at 8 p.m.; Sunday matinees at 5 p.m. on December 5 and 12.

Donalevan Maines is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.



Bedridden: the cast of *The Little Dog Laughed* includes (l-r) Bryan Kaplun, Rebekah Stevens, and Nate Suurmeyer in bed, and Mary Hooper above it all.



Men without shirts: Nate Suurmeyer (l) and Bryan Kaplun get it on in Theatre LaB's year-end production, *The Little Dog Laughed*.



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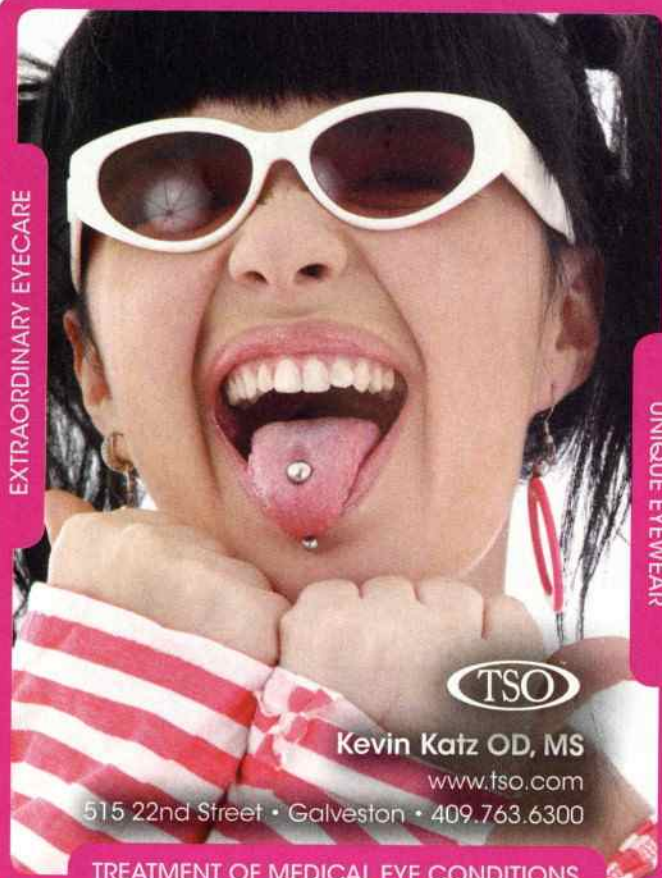
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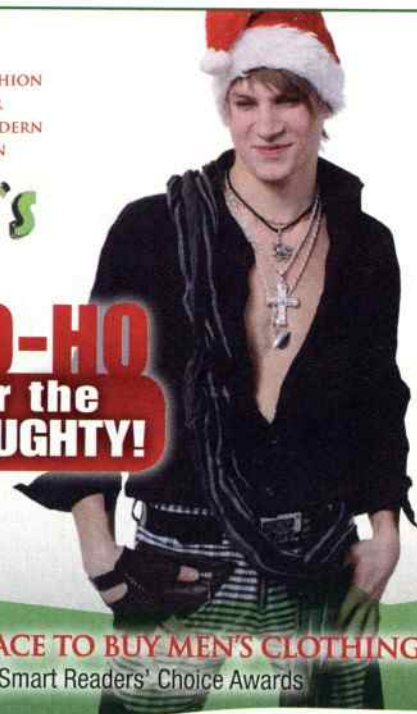
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The Ultimate 'Ro' Tamez

The homegrown fashion designer shares his reality

by Marene Gustin

Photo by Virginia Sherwood/Bravo

Because we can't have enough reality TV stars in town, along comes 24-year-old Rolando "Ro" Tamez, now starring on Bravo's *The Fashion Show: Ultimate Collection*.

"It just fell into my lap," says the slender, sexy, and long-locked fashion designer. "A friend texted me to e-mail someone about my designs, and I did. I didn't even know what it was for."

The next thing he knew, he was auditioning and then shooting the second season of the show hosted by fashion legends Isaac Mizrahi and Iman, whom Tamez calls "just great."

What's really notable about the national TV show is that it features two hometown contestants: Tamez and Cesar Galindo.

"They actually had us room together," Tamez says. "I think because some people still think we are riding horses down here. But Galindo's now my mentor—he says I remind him of him at my age. He's trying to drag me to New York right now, but I'm staying here. We have so much talent here [with fashion designers and] actresses. I want to stay here and raise the standard in Houston."

Galindo even flew back home to join his pal Tamez for the premiere viewing party at a packed Crocker Bar, along with a few fashion luminaries from New York City and Paris.

But it hasn't always been bright lights and fame for Tamez.

His teenage years weren't exactly a walk in the park for the budding fashionista, who describes his high school as Redneck Central.

"I went to Magnolia High School—I told you, redneck!" he cries in his rapid-fire speech. "Yes, I was bullied. I don't know if it was my long hair, or because I was so skinny. But you know what? It made me stronger."

"I actually tried not to end up in any kind of gay industry," Tamez admits. "But



Fashionista: at press time, Houstonian Rolando Tamez was still competing in Bravo's *The Fashion Show: Ultimate Collection*.

fashion became very important to my self-esteem. I want people to look at my creations and judge me by that, not by my sexuality."

Tamez started creating when his mom took him to a vintage shop when he was 12 and he fell in love with the clothes. He started to buy vintage clothing and reconstruct the pieces into gorgeous gowns for his girlfriends. At 18 he headed to Dallas, where he graduated from Wade College with an associate design degree in 2008. Now back home in Houston, he's creating a website portal (rofashions.com) to sell his unique vintage-inspired gowns. He's also working on a line of more casual clothes.

"I would love to have a storefront here someday," he says.

In the meantime, this darling, bubbly young designer is also big into physical fitness and having fun. He started working out with his gal-pals about a year ago, jogging and playing volleyball.

"They were all saying they were so fat—and they aren't! But we all decided to start working out, and now I just love it. Just like fashion, physical fitness is all about self-esteem."

And he's just started dating someone special. He says he's very happy right now with his love life, and life. And his tacos.

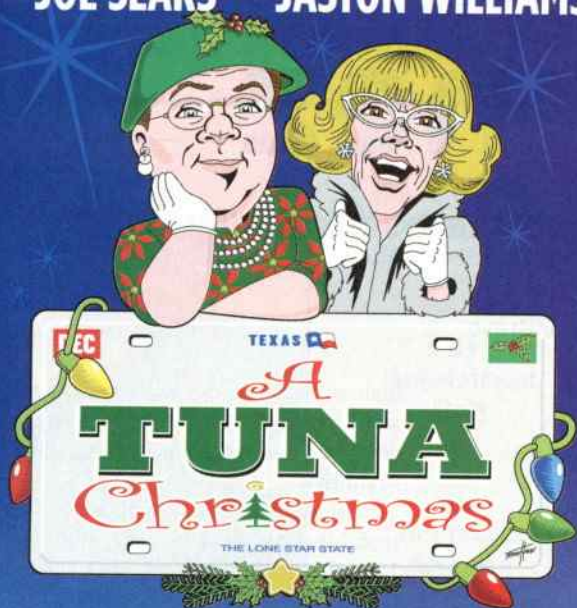
"I love Jack in the Box tacos," he says with no hint of guilt. "Really, I can eat eight of them! I'm not picky about my food."

Luckily, he *is* picky about his gorgeous designs. You can check out his style at bravotv.com/the-fashion-show-ultimate-collection/photos?field_collection_nid=72750.

The Crocker Bar, at 2312 Crocker Street, is hosting *Fashion Show* viewing parties Tuesday nights at 9 p.m. while Tamez remains on the Bravo series. Call 713/529-3355 for more information.

Marene Gustin is a frequent contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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Karen Carpenter

OUTSMART asked Randy L. Schmidt (author of the recent book *Little Girl Blue: The Life of Karen Carpenter*) about the lesbian rumors surrounding the singer. His reply:

Karen certainly struggled with femininity, especially in the early days of her career. She had grown up playing baseball with the neighborhood boys and then became the first female drummer in her high school band. Her best friend, Frenda Franklin, told me Karen used to walk across the stage like a "Mack Truck" but had a desire to dress and behave and even sing with a more feminine flair. Still, there was not enough evidence in my research to draw any conclusion in regards to her sexuality. Her life's dream—at least the dream she shared with those closest to her—was to have the white-picket-fence existence with a husband and children.

Isaac Mizrahi (fashion designer, co-hosts Bravo's *The Fashion Show: Ultimate Collection*)

(*The Joy Behar Show*, 11/10/10)

Joy Behar: Donatella Versace said that Italian designers are better than French designers. . . .

Isaac Mizrahi: Well, I think American designers are better than them all.

Do you really? Are Brooklyn designers better than Queens designers?

For sure. And then Brooklyn designers who are queens are the best.

Gavin Rossdale (husband of Gwen Stefani and lead singer of the rock band Bush)

(*Details*, 11/10, Johah Weiner)

Jonah Weiner: Last year, the cross-dressing pop singer Marilyn revealed that he was romantically involved with you in your teens—an assertion Boy George first made in 1995. Why haven't you talked about these claims?

Gavin Rossdale: I think at the outset there was a sort of fear—that was right at the beginning of Bush, and I didn't want it to be part of it. It felt like a cheap shot, so I was like, "I'm not getting involved." I've never wanted to appear closed about it. It's not something I've talked about really because it's always been in the glare of a tabloid world. It's just one of those things: Move on. When you're 17, Jesus Christ. I don't think there's anything strange about any form of—you're learning about life. It's a part of growing up. That's it. No more, no less.

So it was just a one-time experimentation?

Yeah. That was it. You have to know what you like, and I know what I like.

Seth Meyers

(*Saturday Night Live's Weekend Update*, 11/13/10)

Speaking in a video for an ad campaign aimed at ending the bullying of gay teenagers, Cindy McCain, the wife of Senator John McCain broke with her husband and called for the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." McCain says he and his wife have disagreed on other issues too, things like, "Where am I?" and "What the hell's going on?"

Betty White



(Parade, 10/31/10, Robert Moritz)

I don't care who anybody sleeps with. If a couple has been together all that time—and there are gay relationships that are more solid than some heterosexual ones—I think it's fine if they want to get married. I don't know how people can get so anti-something. Mind your own business, take care of your affairs, and don't worry about other people so much.

Jimmy Fallon

(Late Night with Jimmy Fallon, 9/3/10)

An airline in Sweden plans to host the first-ever in-flight gay wedding in December. Yeah, the entire flight crew is excited for the event—although, the right wing isn't happy about it.

↑ Betty White (seen here on her triumphant appearance on *Saturday Night Live*): what about gay marriage?
 ↗ Tina Fey (pictured here as Sarah Palin on *Saturday Night Live*): what about Sarah Palin?
 ↓ Cher (pictured here in her recent film, *Burlesque*): what about Chaz?

Cher

(Vanity Fair, 12/10, Krista Smith)

Re: her son Chaz.

Well, she's a very smart girl—boy! This is where I get into trouble. My pronouns are f--ked. I still don't remember to call her "him." She's really cool about it—such an easy-going person. Because I've hardly called her Chastity since her brother [Elijah] was born. . . . Elijah always called Chastity Da-Di-Da, so we shortened it to Da. . . .

If I woke up tomorrow in a guy's body, I would just kick and scream and cry and f--king rob a bank, because I cannot see myself as anything but who I am—a girl. I would not take it as well as Chaz has.

Queer Quotes

Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Tina Fey

(The Washington Post, 11/15/10, Paul Farhi)
 When the Kennedy Center's Mark Twain Prize for American Humor was broadcast on PBS on Sunday night, November 14, the following remarks were edited out of Tina Fey's acceptance speech, which she had given at the November 9 event:

And, you know, politics aside, the success of Sarah Palin and women like her is good for all women—except, of course, those who will end up, you know, like, paying for their own rape kit 'n' stuff. But for everybody else, it's a win-win. Unless you're a gay woman who wants to marry your partner of 20 years—whatever. But for most women, the success of conservative women is good for all of us. Unless you believe in evolution. You know—actually, I take it back. The whole thing's a disaster.



by Steven Foster

WHO CARES IF IT SUCKS?

It's Cher's long-awaited return to the screen. Roof-raising pop princess Xtina is starring in it. Will it be 'Cabaret'? Or 'Glitter'? Does it matter?

At press time, *Burlesque* had not yet hit theaters. *Burlesque*, as you know, is the most unrepentant run for the gay movie dollar since... well... since ever. The plot, about a compassionate Darfur orphanage worker diagnosed with an incurable case of Hodgkins lymphoma... oh, who cares what the movie's really about? It's got *Cher*!

There is some perverse pleasure in seeing our favorite diva and Bob Mackie's most famous mannequin actually sit on press junkets and try to sell us the reason she took the role was because the film "spoke" to her, or she at last found a script that was really "about" something.

Come on. We all know the real reason: someone just wanted to redo her manse. (See "Cher's New Hollywood Home," *Architectural Digest*, July 2010.)



He likes his divas: Cher and Christina Aguilera (inset) star in screenwriter/director Steve Antin's *Burlesque*. Antin caught industry attention in 1996 with *It's My Party*, a progressive (for the time) film focusing on AIDS and end-of-life issues.

Look, no one's walking into this sparkly, choreographed, gay wet dream expecting *Citizen Kane*. Those of you who are going to see

this movie are just looking for high camp, showgirlie costumes, fabulously over-the-top dance numbers, and Christina Aguilera reminding all the Britneys and Rihannas who's got the real pipes, while desperately trying to make us forget the underwhelming *Bionic*.

Oh, and you're also looking to see *Cher*! The only thing the producers have to worry about is if this movie comes out and people find out she's

only in it for 10 minutes. If so, Regal Cinemas is going to have a royal problem indeed—with a lot of angry queens.

Steven Foster is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.



BOTH PHOTOS: SONY PICTURES



The Soundtrack

Here the Goddess of All Things Gay teams up with Christina Aguilera on the soundtrack of her first movie musical. The prophetically titled "You Haven't Seen the Last of Me," Cher's first single new song in seven years, hints that her legacy lives on. The vocally untouchable Aguilera shines throughout with holiday blockbuster glitz, too, having co-written five of the powerful soundtrack's tunes. RCA Records (sonymusic.com). —Nancy Ford



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JONESING FOR IT

The long-delayed 'I Love You Phillip Morris' comes to the big screen at long last

How appropriate the Jim Carrey/Ewan McGregor vehicle shares a name most moviegoers think is some biopic about the tobacco king. The film has been so delayed, cinema buffs have been waiting for this flick with the anxiety of a two-pack-a-day puffer on a KLM flight. And why not? The story is practically as addictive.

In this true tale, Steven Russell, a married church organist and member of the local police force, has a car wreck and, along with the accident, an epiphany: he's gay and he's going to live

continued on page 70

Lovebirds/jailbirds: Jim Carrey (l) and Ewan McGregor share a tender moment in the locally rooted *I Love You Phillip Morris*.

SEPARATING THE GAY DEGREES OF CHER'S SIX FILMS

'Cher: The Film Collection' reveals why she is the greatest gay icon of all time

Perfectly timed to accompany her return to the big screen via *Burlesque* with Christina Aguilera, *Cher: The Film Collection* reminds us why Cherilyn Sarkisian LaPiere continues to captivate us after all these years. Presented as a comprehensive package, the filmography makes evident the bond weaving Cher to the loyal gay audience that has become increasingly committed to her with her every reel.

Take *Good Times*, Sonny and Cher's very first film together, shot in 1967. Though not the least bit gay in its premise or presentation, this silly, almost biographical romp marked the directorial debut of William Friedkin, who a few years later directed the controversial gay thriller, *Cruising*.

Then there's her first dramatic film, *Chastity*, released in 1969, the same year Cher released that other Chasity, her lesbian daughter who later would become her transgender son. On the run in Mexico, Cher's character starts working at a lesbian whorehouse, the madam of which is a lesbian who develops a crush on her.

From there, Cher glides comfortably into her role opposite serious actress Meryl Streep in *Silkwood* (1983), garnering an Academy Award nomination for her portrayal of (wait for it...) a lesbian.

Bridging the degrees of gay separation in Cher's next two movies is a bit of a challenge. True, the connections are buried, but they do exist.

Aside from all that opera, there is no stone-cold direct gay connection in *Moonstruck*, Cher's heady masterpiece for which she took home the top actress Oscar for her portrayal of "old maid" Loretta Castorini. But the role had been first offered to, and turned down, by Sally Field, who now plays the biggest gay-supportive mom in television history. That stretch aside, by the time *Moonstruck* was released in 1987,

Cher herself had long been enjoying her status as the ultimate gay icon.

Also in the gay stretch category falls 1990's *Mermaids*, directed by Richard Benjamin, who also directed *Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby*, which featured a gay racecar driver.

Finally, in *Tea with Mussolini* (1999), Cher plays opposite Lily Tomlin, whom you may have heard, is a lesbian. For good measure, Tomlin's *Tea* character is also a lesbian.

And the circle is complete. The gays are everywhere, and where there is gay, there is Cher. Is it too early to start looking for the gay connection in *Burlesque*?

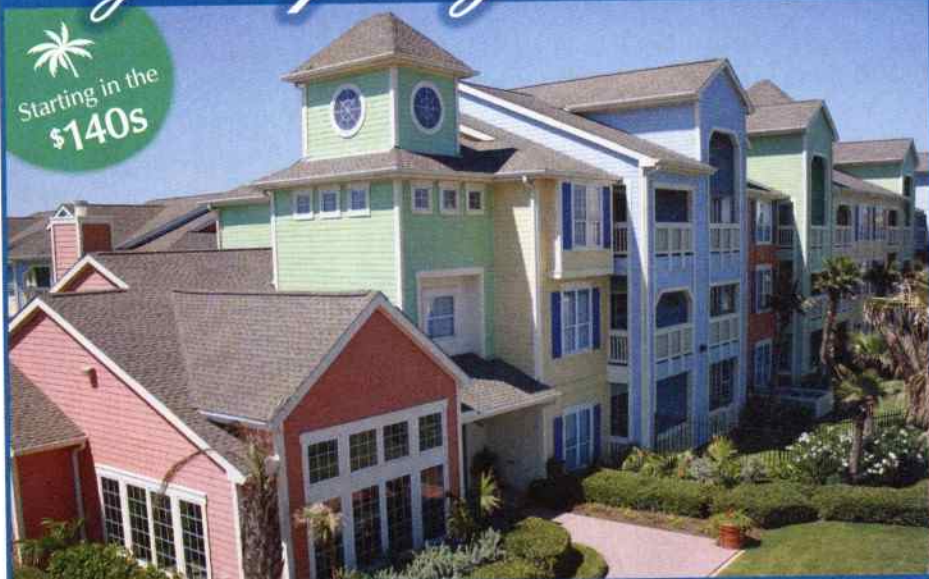
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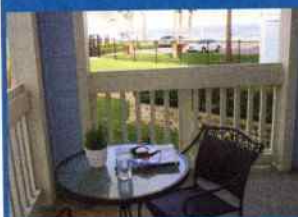
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Movies

continued from page 68

his life with flourish, even if that means breaking a few laws along the way to homo freedom. But when his cons land him in jail, Russell (Jim Carrey, in an attempt to get back some of that indie cred he gained with *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* and continues to squander in pandering crap like *Yes Man*) meets and falls in love with fellow inmate Phillip Morris (Ewan McGregor, *Star Wars*' Obi-Wan Kenobi).

By hook and by crook, Russell actually escaped from prison *four times*, driven by his desperate desire to be with his true love. Based on the novel by former *Houston Chronicle* reporter Steve McVicker, and written and directed by *Bad Santa* scribes Glenn Ficarra and John Requa, the movie's been on and off the release schedule almost as much as Russell was in and out of the slammer. Nice to see the pic is finally being set free on the multiplex. —S.F. ■



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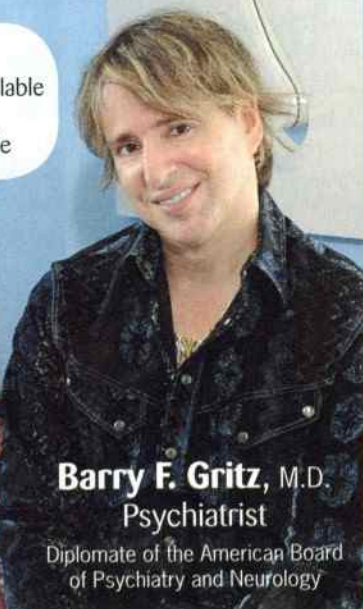
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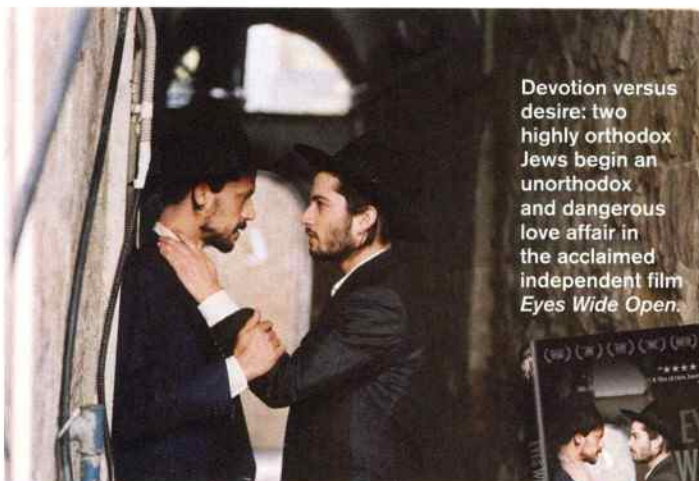
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DARE TO LOOK AWAY

The devastating 'Eyes Wide Open' examines what happens when gay love crashes into a fundamentalist religious order



Devotion versus desire: two highly orthodox Jews begin an unorthodox and dangerous love affair in the acclaimed independent film *Eyes Wide Open*.

In the opening scene of the riveting *Eyes Wide Open*, devout, respected husband and father Aaron takes a large stone and begins hammering at a locked door. The chained entrance is to the butcher shop he has inherited from his deceased father. But soon Aaron will break into other sealed rooms, these within his rigid psyche and suffocated sexuality.

The stone that liberates Aaron's emotional imprisonment is the handsome young Erzi, on whom Aaron takes

pity, giving him a job as an apprentice and residence in the storage room upstairs. After several haunted gazes and gentle touches, the two men eventually relent their undeniable attraction to each other and become

secret lovers. Their passion—primal, sensual, and raging beneath their devout skins—runs a nervy parallel with the threat of heartbreak, violence, and condemnation roiling just below the surface of the pious community in

Jerusalem where they reside. The doom of their relationship is obvious; the only questions being when will their punishment arrive and how wrenching will such recompense be.

Eyes Wide Open is a remarkable achievement, in both storytelling and the assured craftsmanship of first-time

director Haim Tabakman. Working from Merav Doster's delicate but nonetheless powerful script, every shot is impeccably framed with a minimalism that mirrors the self-sacrificing orthodoxy of this nearly ghetto-ized Jewish community. The film looks almost bleached to a pale blue or dying green, wherein the occasional lusty splashes of color—usually the crimson hues of parted lips, butcher shop meat, or drops of blood—provoke an almost horror-film response. Gay love has rarely seemed more dangerous.

The film elegantly unnerves with such potency that every time a character moves toward the meat slicer or meets a stranger from the community's self-appointed moral police, the aching dread is more anxiety-producing than any thriller to cross the screens in a decade. Comparisons to *Brokeback Mountain* are inevitable, but that's a compliment. This elegant independent is as exquisite and heartbreaking as its American sibling, from the violence of the opening image to the devastating final frame. *Eyes Wide Open* challenges you to view it the same way. Without flinching.

Steven Foster is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.

DVD Shorts *Previews by Nancy Ford*

Michael Jackson's Vision



This set represents the entire library of short films produced by the King of Pop during his career as a solo artist, offering more than 40 restored and remastered videos of his landmark cinematic collaborations with directors John Landis, John Singleton, Spike Lee, David Fincher, and Martin Scorsese. Epic/Legacy Recordings (epicrecords.com).

The Kids Are All Right



Commenting on this highly acclaimed film, former GLAAD chief Joan Garry wasn't so sure about how "all right" real-life kids are when they discover that one of their parents, regardless of gender, has cheated on the other parent. Regardless, Annette Bening and Julianne Moore give stellar performances as a lesbian couple in

this study of love, betrayal, forgiveness, and sperm. Universal Studios Home Entertainment (universalstudioshomeentertainment.com).

Betty White in Black and White



Long before she started carting home multiple Emmys for her work on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *Golden Girls*, Betty White had established herself as a television legend. Here the comedian and animal-rights activist is seen in episodes from her various comedy and variety series, as well as commercials, dating back to 1953 (hence the lack of color). Video Service Corp. (videoservicecorp.com).

Light Gradient

Recognized for excellence by Berlin, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Miami queer film festivals, this appreciation of the young male form finds Johann



(Sebastian Schlecht) and Robin (Eric Golub) enjoying the confines of a rustic farmhouse they happen upon while hiking. Jan Krüger directs. German with English subtitles. 2009. Strand Releasing (strandreleasing.com).

Release



Father Gillie (Daniel Brocklebank) committed a crime for which he has been imprisoned. But what is his true crime, and will he be able to find redemption in the arms of an understanding prison guard (Garry Summers)? Darren Flaxstone and Christian Martin write and direct. 2010. Dec. 7. TLA Releasing (tlareleasing.com).



More DVD previews at OutSmartMagazine.com



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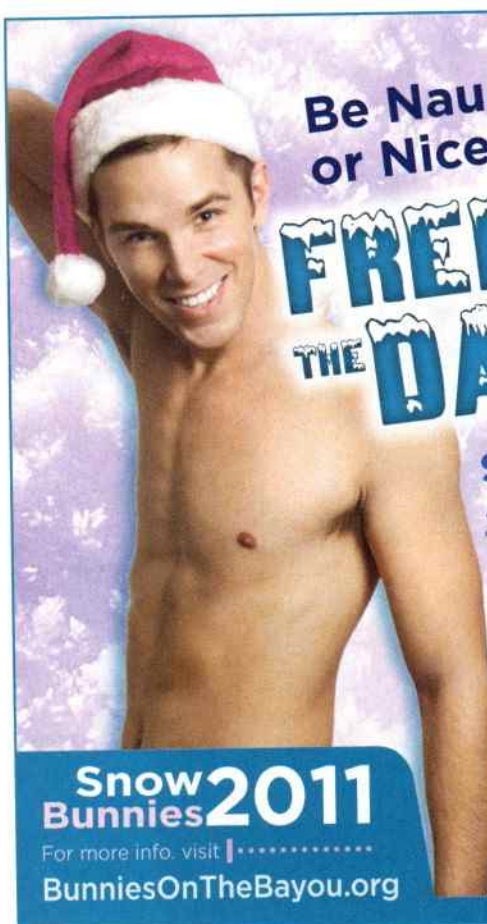
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by Steven Foster

DON'T DARE USE THE H-WORD

Logo and Bravo concede the gay high ground to Sundance Channel with their new reality series 'Girls Who Like Boys Who Like Boys'

Fag Hag" is actually a pretty ugly phrase, not very complimentary to the guy in the couple, and it certainly doesn't do anything for the girl. It's a sh--ty shorthand for what is, ultimately, a pretty complex relationship between two friends. Leave it to Sundance Channel to not only address this pas de deux intelligently but entertainingly with *Girls Who Like Boys Who Like Boys*.

Most gay shows are making homos want to turn into breeders just so they don't suffer from guilt by association. There are the bottom-feeding publicists of El's *Spin Crowd*, *The Rachel Zoe Project*'s fussy, fame-obsessed stylists, and the



Strange bedfellows: further illustrating the curious phenomenon that gay men usually bond more readily with straight women than with anyone else, Sundance Channel launches *Girls Who Like Boys Who Like Boys*.

ghastly coterie of morons on *The A-List*: New York who, every time they speak, unchecked ego, bitchy venom, or giant purses fly out of their mouths. If this is indeed the A-List, who the hell's blowing the curve?

Girls Who Like Boys, on the other hand, is raising the bar. It's "unscripted reality," so expect the usual staged situa-

tions, but Sundance Channel is to be commended for not (yet) intersecting these four couplings with some forced interactions. The couples stay separated and, thus, we are allowed time to become engaged with each of them, and they're fascinating for all their own reasons.

The hippie-dippy but deceptively intuitive Rosebud

is friends with the virtually closeted Sahil, a self-loathing Indian who can't see that he hates his own queeniness so much he only falls for straight bartenders, and views Rosebud's love affairs with almost toxic scorn.

Newly separated Elise leans on her pal David, a rageaholic who dresses up as a mime at a birthday party just so he'll →

Television Shorts

Previews by Nancy Ford



JAMIE RUEBLO/BRVO



RETE TANGEN/BRVO



JONAH KOCH/COURTESY CABIN FILMS



PLANET GREEN

VH1 Divas Salute the Troops

It's hard to imagine any military-themed program hosted by Kathy Griffin (pictured here from her Bravo series) not at least mentioning the inequity of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. It will be interesting to see how she gets around the delicate subject, especially during the holidays. Grace Potter, Keri Wilson, Niki Menaj, Sugarland, and other "divas" join Griffin from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in San Diego and other bases scattered around the globe for this USO show. Dec. 5, 8 p.m. VH1 (vhl.com).

Tabatha's Salon Takeover

Sassy lesbian Tabatha Coffey (pictured) brings her brush and attitude to perform makeovers on more struggling hair salons throughout the U.S. in her third season. Along the way, she veers off to work her magic with the five battling owners of Houston's Vendome, located in the Galleria (Dec. 20). Then she ventures into a très gay shop in Provincetown (Jan. 3) on yet another mission of follicular peace. Premieres Dec. 6, 9 p.m. Bravo (bravotv.com).

The Other City

With an estimated three percent of its residents living with the virus, Washington DC has the highest HIV/AIDS rate in the nation. This documentary reveals the politics, ideology, corruption, and bureaucracy that has fueled the epidemic. Susan Koch directs. In the above photo, José Ramirez, gay and HIV positive, educates other young Latinos about HIV and AIDS. Dec. 1, 6:30 p.m.; Dec. 4, 1:30 p.m.; Dec. 7, 7:30 a.m.; Dec. 12, 11:30 a.m. Showtime (sho.com).

The Fabulous Beekman Boys Holiday Special

The gay gentlemen farmers (Brent Ridge, left, and Josh Kilmer-Purcell) join holiday TV show alumni like Osmonds, Sonny and Cher, and Frosty the Snowman as they celebrate the season at their historic, 202-year-old homestead. The special features visits from Farmer John and his goats as well as their "diva llama," Polka Spot. Dec. 8, 8 p.m., and is repeated throughout the month. Planet Green (planetgreen.com). ■

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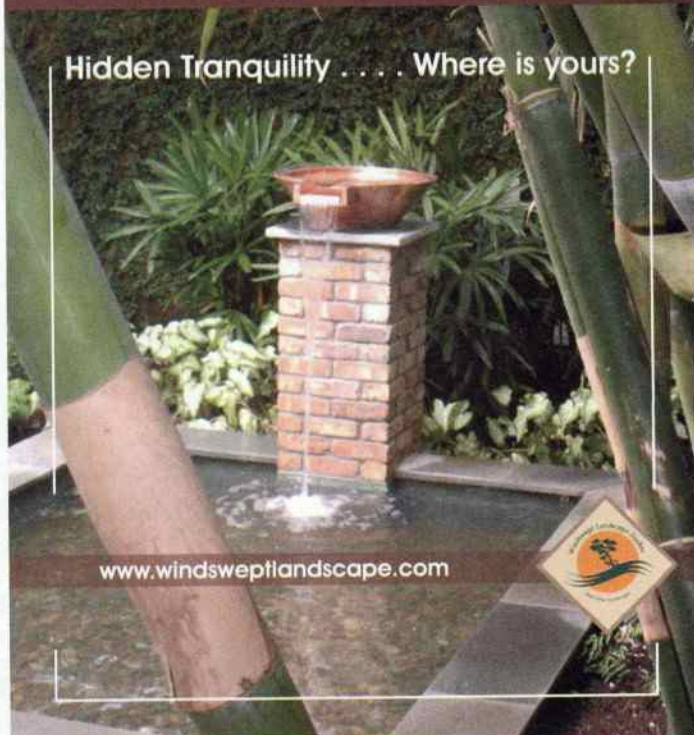


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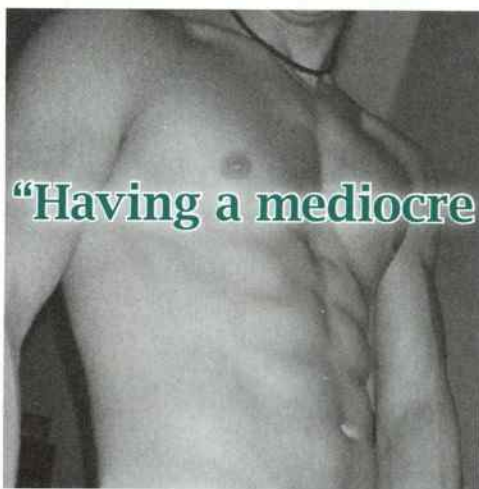
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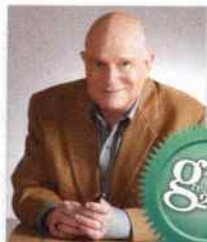
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Television continued from page 74

keep his critical mouth shut.

Crystal, a down-to-earth diva, can keep her mouth shut, and does, even when her best friend Nathan proclaims he wants to be a father, a particularly galling suggestion for the overworked single-mother Crystal. Nathan can't see that parenthood is his screwed-up tactic of working on his own daddy issues, making Nathan the most self-delusional person on television—and these days that's quite a feat.

Lastly, all poor Sarah wants to do is get married—which, cruelly, her gaymate Joel is actually doing. (Joel's nuptials, by the way, will be America's first-ever televised gay wedding.)

But the real landmark here is a show that deals with gay men whose flaws are tragically *real*, and as such far more interesting than a group of narcissistic nimrods bitching about a Fire Island cocktail-party snub or being dismayed that their Broadway musical fires them because *they can't dance*.

Premieres December 7, 10 p.m., on Sundance Channel (sundancechannel.com).

Steven Foster is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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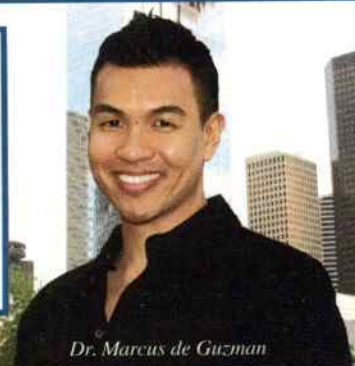
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BETTER THAN 'BEST OF'

Compilation albums give 'big picture' insight to musicians' bodies of work

Ani DiFranco dominated the alt-folk singer/songwriter scene of the 1990s. But don't forget about Dar Williams, who released three amazing studio albums during the '90s (including *End of the Summer* and *Mortal City*), and four more in the 2000s (such as *The Green World* and *My Better Self*). The double disc set *Many Great Companions* (Razor and Tie) refers not only to the 32 songs compiled here, but also to the fine musicians with whom Williams has worked over the years. As if to exemplify that, the first disc, *Songs Revisited with Guitar and a Few Friends* consists of a dozen acoustic renditions of Williams favorites re-recorded with guest musicians including Mary Chapin Carpenter, Gary Louris, Sara Watkins, and Sean Watkins. Ranging from "The Babysitter's Here" and "When I Was a Boy" (featuring out singer/songwriter Patty Larkin, who did something similar on her 25 disc, which included Williams) to "The Christians and the Pagans," "As Cool as I Am," and "What Do You Hear in These Sounds." The second disc, *The*



Best of Dar Williams, draws from her seven albums and includes "It's Alright," "Teens for God," "Spring Street," and much more.

If Williams and DiFranco had a male equivalent in the alt-folk world, it was probably the late Elliott Smith. The Oscar-nominee's tragic death in 2003 remains an unsolved mystery, but his musical legacy lives on, including a 2004 posthumous release. The 14-track single disc *An Introduction to... Elliott Smith* (Kill Rock Stars) includes an early version of his Academy Award-nominated "Miss Misery" (from *Good Will Hunting*), as well as songs from his independent and major label releases, such as "Waltz #2," "Needle in the Hay," "Pretty (Ugly Before)" and "Happiness," to name just a few.

Is it fair to call The Dandy Warhols a one-hit wonder? The 2000 hit single "Bohemian Like You," from their third album was inescapable (and subsequently used in a few TV commercials) and introduced us to the band from Portland, Oregon, with the clever name. But nothing from their prior albums or those →

GrooveOut Shorts Reviews/previews by Nancy Ford

Gadget White Band *Shut Up and Listen*

The Austin/Houston-based rock quartet did a fine job warming up the crowd at the recent Chely Wright/Girl Jam concert with tunes from White's third album. Particularly pleasing are the title track and "OMG There She Goes Again" highlighting the deft guitar work of local legend, Dana Starr. Self-produced (gadgetwhiteband.com).

Sugarland *The Incredible Machine*

The heart is the heart of the matter threading through the songs on these local gals' fourth album, which they say were specifically written to be performed in a stadium. The first designated, breakout

single, "Stuck Like Glue," is fine, but the powerful "All We Are" is the real standout here. Mercury Records (islanddefjam.com).

Original Motion Picture Soundtrack *The Sound of Music: 45th Anniversary Edition*



It's been almost half a century since that straying, singing novice, Maria, twirled on that mountaintop and into our hearts. This commemorative issue includes Rodgers & Hammerstein's masterpiece score, capped by *Glee*'s Lea Michele's abbreviated rendition of "My Favorite Things." Legacy Recordings (legacyrecordings.com).

David Campbell *On Broadway*

If you like show tunes (and if you're reading this, you likely do), you'll love this stellar collection of 14 Broadway



biggies delivered by the handsome, sometimes pink-tuxedoed-but-not-gay Australian actor/singer. This CD includes Peter Allen's semi-obscure "When I Get My Name in Lights" and 13 more stage staples. Masterworks Broadway (masterworksbroadway.com).

Black Dub *Black Dub*



Producer Daniel Lanais (U2, Bob Dylan, Neil Young, and others) polishes the organic essence of this trio's one-take, unedited approach to music. Clear-cut, straightaway melodies swathed in light Jamaican rhythms, especially "Love Lives" and "I Believe in You," make most of the selections a fun listen. Exceptions are "Slow Baby" and "Ring the Alarm," which seem garage-bandy indulgent. Sony Music (sonymusic.com). →

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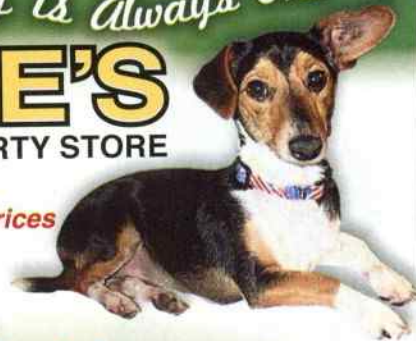
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GrooveOut

continued from page 78

that followed captured the Rolling Stones-like energy of "Bohemian." Nevertheless, the band has earned a 15-track compilation, *The Capitol Years 1995–2007* (Capitol), which includes "Not If You Were the Last Junkie on Earth," "We Used to Be Friends," and "Holding Me Up" to remind us of its contributions. Filter, on the other hand, could lay claim to two hits—"Hey Man Nice Shot" and "Take a Picture"—both of which can be found on *The Very Best Things: 1995–2008* (Reprise/Rhino), along with a dozen other tunes.

At the beginning of the 1990s, it seemed like the decade might belong to Nirvana, Pearl Jam, and other Seattle bands. But lo-fi heroes Pavement arrived, with its warped melodies and distinctive style, and changed the scene forever. Like the aforementioned Smith collection, the 23-track single-disc collection *Quarantine the Past* (Matador) draws on the band's independent and major label recordings, and provides a thorough overview. You can find everything from Pavement's "hit" single "Cut Your Hair" to "Unseen Power of the Picket Fence" (from the various artists Red Hot AIDS benefit disc *No Alternative*) to early tracks such as "Debris Slide" and "Frontwards," as well as fan favorites ("Rangel Life," "Here," and "Unfair") and later standouts including "Stereo," "Fight This Generation," and "Spit on a Stranger."

By now, Blur, probably Oasis's greatest rivals during the 1990s, has released at least two double-disc hits compilations. With the double-disc, 27-track complete singles collection *Time Flies . . . 1994–2009* (Big Brother/Columbia), Oasis catches up with Blur. Although not in chronological order, the anthology definitely strikes the right chords, beginning as it does with essential cuts from the band's superb first two albums, such as "Supersonic," "Roll With It," "Live Forever," and "Wonderwall." The rest of the set celebrates both the sensitive ("Stop Crying Your Heart Out," "Don't Look Back in Anger," "Champagne Supernova") and the raucous sides ("The Shock of the Lightning," "D'You Know What I Mean," "Cigarettes & Alcohol") of the brawling brothers Gallagher.

Like Liam and Noel Gallagher, the late Gerald LeVert (son of O'Jay Eddie) was part of a brother act (LeVert, with brother Sean and friend Marc Gordon) beginning in the mid-1980s. By 1991, Gerald released his first solo album, fea-



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GrooveOut Shorts

continued from page 78

Deluka

You Are the Night



Bold synthrock tracks led by Ellie Innocenti's vocals dominate here on the debut LP; it's as though she's channeling Deborah Harry. Dare you not to wriggle to "OMFG," "Cascade," and the driving "Trespasser."

"Waves" is as close as things get to a ballad here, but still holds up. VEL Records (velrecords.com).

Selena Gomez & The Scene

A Year Without Rain



The Disney diva does disco here on her second album, the pace set by this year's earlier hit single "Naturally," as well as "Round and Round." The title track, musically,

is just as strong, but its video is even better. (And now that the young starlet is 18, we can mention how hot the video is.) Hollywood Records (selenagomez.com).

Billy Joel

The Hits



Listening to the youthful essence and energy of 1971's "Everybody Loves You Now," the semi-hit that preceded 1973's "Piano Man," it is apparent that Joel would firmly ensconce himself as a musical titan.

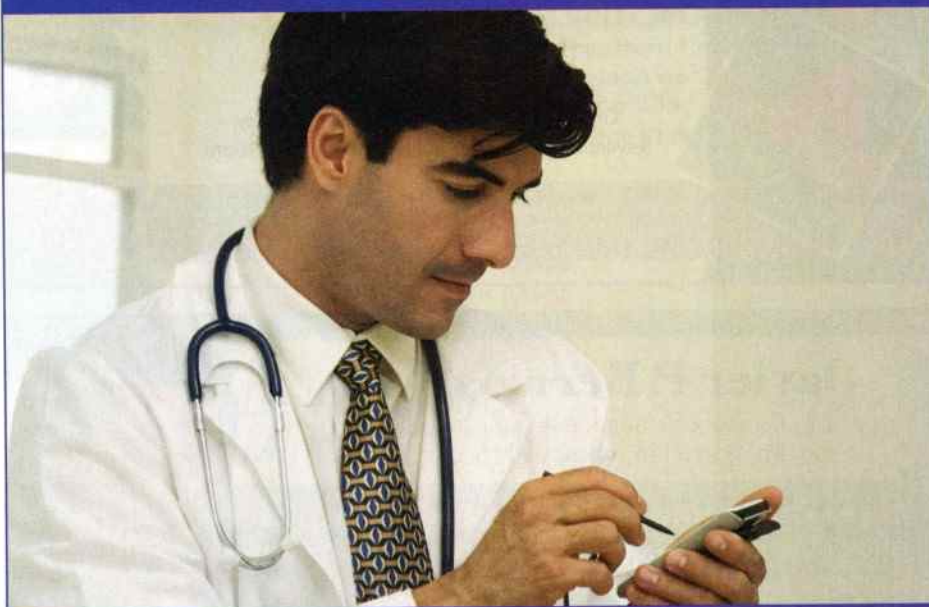
This collection of his crème de la crème chart-toppers precedes next year's 40th anniversary collection. Legacy Recordings (legacyrecordings.com). ■

turing the hit singles "Private Line" and "Baby Hold On to Me." *The Best of Gerald LeVert* (Atlantic/Rhino) compiles 16 of his classics such as "My Body" (as part of LSG), "Thinkin' Bout It," "Taking Everything," and the previously unreleased "Can It Stay."

In between releasing three self-titled albums whose only distinguishing marks were the colors of the covers, Weezer designed to give specific titles to albums such as *Raditude*, *Maladroit*, and *Make Believe*. The first of those titled albums, *Pinkerton* (DGC), has been reissued in an expanded deluxe edition. Described as Rivers Cuomo's struggle with his "inner-Pinkerton" (the name of the betraying sailor in *Madame Butterfly*), the disc is particularly notable to LGBT fans for the song "Pink Triangle." The song, which details Cuomo's attraction to a lesbian, contains the clever, if misguided, line "if everyone's a little queer/can't she be a little straight?" *Pinkerton* is meant to be played loud, so be sure to blast "Falling for You" and "Tired of Sex." The original →



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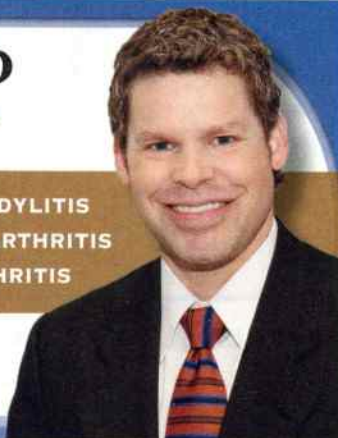
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GrooveOut

continued from previous page

album is expanded with the addition of nine "B-Sides and More," while the second disc boasts previously unreleased live tracks, alternate takes, and more. Weezer's latest disc *Hurley* (Epitaph) features Rivers Cuomo's songwriting collaborations with out music legends Desmond Child ("Trainwrecks") and Linda Perry ("Brave New World"), as well as Mac Davis (!), Ryan Adams, and Dan Wilson, among others.

Minneapolis' The Jayhawks reached its creative peak in the early- to mid-1990s with a pair of unforgettable albums, *Hollywood Town Hall* and *Tomorrow the Green Grass* (American Recordings), both of which have been reissued in expanded editions. Former Jayhawk Mark Olson's newest solo disc *Many Colored Kite* (Rykko) is deserving of your attention.

More '90s acts continue to make themselves heard in the 21st century, including Bettie Serveert with *Pharmacy of Love* (Palomine/ 2nd Motion) and Jimmy Eat World with *Invented* (DGC/ Interscope).

Gregg Shapiro is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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SIMON SAYS

A new book by a familiar author examines the 'nature versus nurture' argument

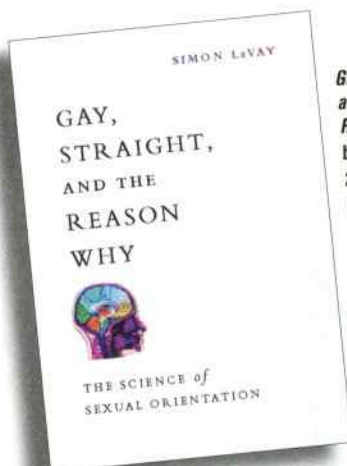
Some things just can't be tolerated. Take, for instance, when food touches other food on your plate. Or when socks don't match up. Or if, like, somebody, like, repeatedly uses a catchphrase without, like, thinking.

We all have our individual likes, traits, and dislikes. But are our selves shaped by outside influence, or did we enter the world this way? Was our behavior learned or innate? In the new book *Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why* by Simon LeVay, you'll find answers to similar questions of a more intimate sort.

Nearly two decades ago, Simon LeVay published a scientific paper asserting that gay men differed from straight men in brain structure; specifically, a cluster of nerve cells controlling sex drive were, in gay men, of the size that LeVay observed in straight women's brains.

Since the publication of his paper, a vast amount of further research has been done concerning same-sex attraction and the nature/nurture debate. In this book, LeVay takes a deeper look at new findings.

While some gays and lesbians are "surprised" later in life by feelings of same-sex attraction, LeVay says that sexual identity, while not always immediately apparent, is present at birth (although women, throughout life, appear to be more "fluid" and cannot always be categorized). As



Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why by Simon LeVay
2010, Oxford University Press
(oup.com/us)
412 pages, hardcover, \$27.95

small proof, he points to several cases in which male infants were, for one reason or another, "assigned" to live as the opposite sex. In most cases, upon reaching adulthood, the "assignment" turned out to be wrong.

Childhood abuse has been theorized to be an influence on gayness, but survivors deny it as a factor. Some theories claim that older siblings hold sway. And as for "choice," LeVay cites several quasi-claims of "conversions," in which therapy reportedly changed sexual preference.

Overall, LeVay says, nothing is "cut and dried," but the probable reason that someone is gay has to do with genetics, hormones, and stress that individuals receive

in utero. Studies show, for instance, that mice are influenced by chemicals secreted by their mothers and by littermates. Humans, likewise, are affected in similar ways, which could lay to rest so many questions.

And one of the hints may—literally—be at your fingertips.

While there is no doubt that *Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why* is an intriguing book that makes sense on several levels, there's one big problem with it: you almost need a PhD to follow much of what author Simon LeVay says. Yes, it's steeped in medical lingo. Yes, LeVay includes a glossary and heavy-duty notes to explain the scientific terms and acronyms. Still, this book is a challenge.

If you're up for that challenge, though, you'll be rewarded with a thought-provoking examination of a private subject that has a very public focus. LeVay leaves no hypothesis unexamined, which leaves readers satisfied that every corner of this argument has been thoroughly dusted off.

Give yourself some time if you decide to tackle this book, because it's nowhere near light reading. Still, *Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why* is surely food for tolerance.

Terri Schlichenmeyer has been reading since she was three years old, and she never goes anywhere without a book. She lives on a hill in Wisconsin with two dogs and 11,000 books.

ReadOut Shorts

• Freedom

Jonathan Franzen

• I, Too, Have Suffered in the Garden

Jennifer Hritz



The heroine of *Freedom* spends her late 1970s glory days in "Total Jockworld" as the straight girl on a Big Ten women's basketball team. Surrounded by lesbians, she dates Walter, a boy who's infatuated with another guy. Patty and Walter get married, but "the other guy" haunts them into the 21st century, when Patty briefly retreats to a stable same-sex couple to re-group. Patty and Walter's roller-coaster romance is rightly one of the year's most celebrated novels, but the lesser-known *I, Too, Have Suffered in the Garden*, at half its length, is twice as deep and detailed. Like *Patty*, its gay narrator, Adam, also confesses illicit affairs that torment him,



wreck his relationships, and browbeat his self-esteem. Fans of Schadenfreude will have a field day with both books, but Hritz seems more successful with creating flesh-and-blood characters whose miseries are palpable. It's set primarily in Austin, but ventures occasionally to a horse ranch in Kentucky. Read together, these two beautifully written novels—one penned by a straight man from a female character's point of view, the other by a straight woman told from a gay man's perspective—offer interesting views of life in the same rocky time period. • *Freedom*: Farrar, Straus and Giroux (fsgbooks.com). • *I, Too, Have Suffered*: self-published (jenniferhritz.com). —Review: Donalevan Maines

• Sorry, Not Dead Yet

Sven Paardekooper

This appears at first to be another "I was diagnosed with HIV, I was a drug addict, but look at how much better I

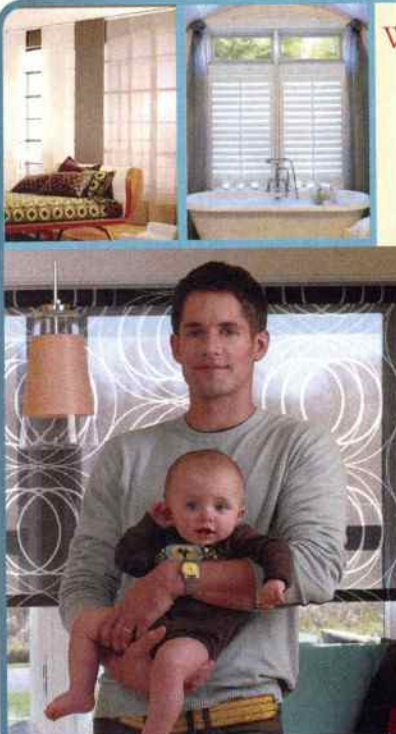


am now" story. Wrong—it is an everyman story about triumph over adversity, taking responsibility for one's life, and learning to be. Gut-wrenchingly honest and beautiful, this book should be given to anyone in the middle of a personal pity party. • Creative House Press (creativehousepress.com). —Review: Angel Curtis

Forever Dads: A Gay Couple's Journey to Fatherhood
Dr. Tony Zimbardi



This book starts slowly and badly, leading this reader to think, "No! No more angel crap!" Keep reading—this wonderful book about an "interracial couple planning to raise children in a very straight, very black-and-white world" will steal your heart. A highly personal—obviously written by a therapist—story →



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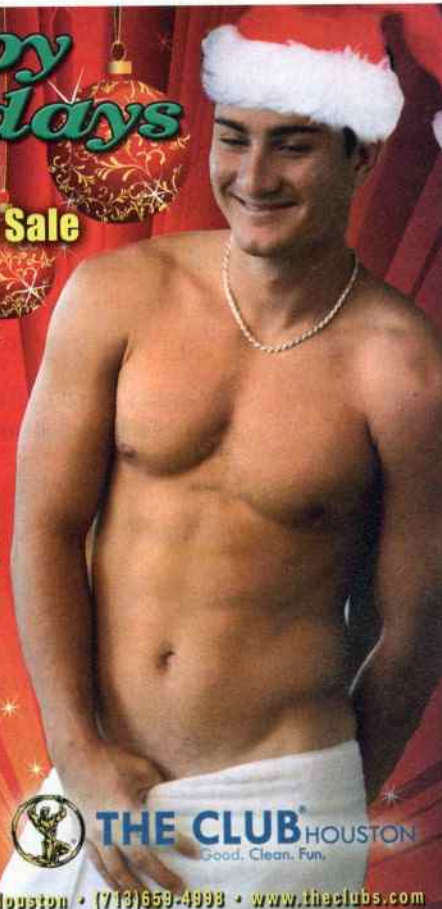
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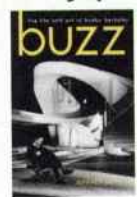
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ReadOut Shorts continued from page 84

about growth and healing of everyone involved makes this reviewer forgive the bland writing and instead focus on the transforming power of human relationships and love. • Creative House Press (creativehousepress.com). —Review: A.C.

Buzz: The Life and Art of Busby Berkeley

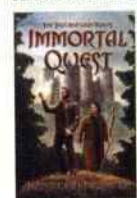
Jeffrey Spivak



This cloth-bound volume, featuring 62 historic images, well-illustrates the kaleidoscope that was the famed 1930s-era director/choreographer's art and life. Considering his battles with alcoholism, family suicide, AWOL and second-degree murder charges, and six wives, one wonders how the man ever found reason to dance. • The University Press of Kentucky (kentuckyupress.com). —Preview: Nancy Ford

Immortal Quest: The Trouble with Mages

Alexandra MacKenzie



Nick is a police officer interrogating a burglary suspect, Marlen, who seems to know all of Nick's deepest secrets. The two set out on a quest to keep three magical objects from Vere, who wants to destroy the world. Wizards want to destroy Marlen and take the objects for themselves. Marlen is immortal, Nick is continually reincarnated, and the two have been lovers across time. Marlen's problem is how to seduce Nick back into their love while completing the quest. Part romance, part fantasy, this novel is perfect for anyone who enjoys the two genres. • Edge Science Fiction and Fantasy Publishing (edgewebsite.com). —Review: A.C.

The Un-Natural State: Arkansas and the Queer South

Brock Thompson



Un-Natural State is a beautiful history of southern gay life in the 20th century. Author Brock Thompson deftly tells the story by weaving together oral history, gay history, Arkansas history, and his own story. This book goes beyond city life and looks at rural Arkansas gay life through the eyes of an academic while keeping the material accessible to every reader. • University of Arkansas Press (uapress.com). —Review: A.C.

Little Girl Blue: The Life of Karen Carpenter

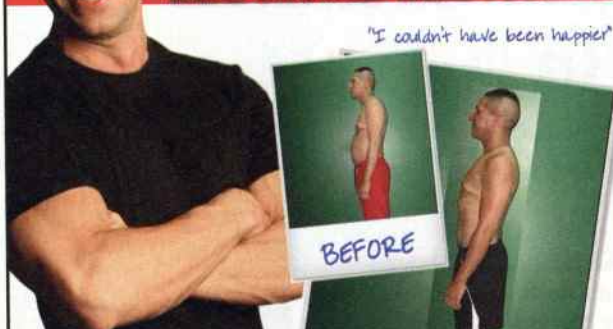
Randy L. Schmidt



Dionne Warwick, no stranger herself to the ups and downs of the music biz, provides the foreword to this revealing biography of one of pop music's most talented yet tragic figures. Author Schmidt, an openly gay music teacher in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, concludes that the more feminine half of the legendary duo was not, after all, a closeted lesbian. • Chicago Review Press (chicagoreviewpress.com). —Preview: N.F.

EDITOR'S NOTE: see *Queer Quotes* on page 66 for the author's take on Karen Carpenter's rumored lesbianism. ■

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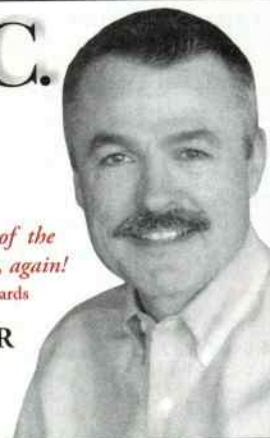
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Calendar of Events

Compiled by Nancy Ford

Plugged In

'Lights in the Heights' recalls a simpler time

Regardless of religious affiliation or level of humbuggery, most people who have experienced the warm fuzzies inevitably brought on by Lights in the Heights agree it is a metaphor for that ever-expanding borough itself: as one of Houston's most cherished holiday happenings, it combines the diversity and convenience of Big City life, paired with the friendliness and charm of a small-town street festival.

A calming, casual antidote for the mayhem and bustle that accompanies the holidays and all its trappings, Lights in the Heights invites participants to stroll the streets and sidewalks of the Woodland Heights area to soak up not only the elaborate decorations but also the overall spirit that permeates this time of year. Throughout the evening, residential porches become stages for carolers, musicians, and



Electrifying: bundle up and enjoy the wintry sights and sounds of Lights in the Heights, December 11 at 6 p.m.

DECEMBER

*Indicates holiday event.

FILM

Wild Ocean 3D follows the fate of billions of sardines migrating up South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal Coast. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr. • hmns.org • 713/639-4629.

Sam Green: Short Films presented by Aurora Picture Show. Through Dec. 18. DiverseWorks' Flickerlounge, 1117 East Frwy. • aurorapictureshow.org • 713/868-2101.

PERFORMING ARTS

***A Good Old Fashioned Redneck Country Christmas**, a holiday comedy directed by Judy Reeves. Through Dec. 4. Theatre Suburbia, 4106 Way Out West Dr. • theatresuburbia.org • 713/682-3525.

***Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical**. Through Dec. 5. Theatre Under the Stars, Hobby Center for Performing Arts, 800 Bagby St. • tuts.com • 713/558-8887.

***Christmas Belles**, a Southern comedy. Through Dec. 11. ETC/ East-End Theater Co., 2001 Postoffice St., Galveston • islandetc.org • 409/762-3556.

Bluefinger: The Fall and Rise of Herman Brood. Through Dec. 18. Presented by Catastrophic Theatre. DiverseWorks, 1117 East Frwy. • diverseworks.org • 713/335-3445, catastrophic

theatre.com • 713/522-2723.

Three Bags Full, Jerome Chodorov's larcenous comedy. Through Dec. 18. Company OnStage, 536 Westbury Square • companyonstage.org • 713/726-1219.

***Every Christmas Story Ever Told... and then some**. Through Dec. 19. Stage Door Inc., 284 Pasadena Town Square Mall • stagedoorinc.com • 832/582-7606.

***Forever Plaid: Plaid Tidings**, the do-wop holiday musical show. Through Dec. 23. Texas Repertory Theatre Co., 14243 Stuebner Airline Rd. • texreptheatre.org • 281/583-7573.

Cinderella, presented by African-American Shakespeare Company. Through Dec. 26. Ensemble Theatre, 3535 Main St. • ensemblehouston.com • 713/520-0055.

***The Nutcracker** features new principal dancer Jun Shuang Huang from China as The Prince. Through Dec. 26. Houston Ballet. Wortham Center's Brown Theater, 501 Texas Ave. • houstonballet.org • 713/227-2787.

***A Christmas Carol—A Ghost Story of Christmas**. Charles Dickens' holiday classic. Through Dec. 27. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. • alleytheatre.org • 713/220-5700.

The Heidi Chronicles, Wendy Wasserstein's Pulitzer Prize-winning comedy about feminism. Through Dec. 29. Main Street Theatre—Rice Village, 2540 Times Blvd. • mainstreettheater.com • 713/524-6706.

***The Santaland Diaries**, David Sedaris' irreverent holiday comedy. Through Dec. 31. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. • alleytheatre.org • 713/220-5700.

The Marvelous Wonderettes, a musical recalls do-wop hits of the 1950s and '60s. Through Jan. 2. Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Pkwy. • stagestheatre.com • 713/527-0123.

***A Fertile Holiday**. The final in-house showing of RMT's classic "radio" comedy. Through Jan. 15. Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt St. • radiomusictheatre.com • 713/522-7722.

***The Best Christmas Pageant Ever**. Barbara Robinson's holiday comedy. Dec. 4. University of Houston School of Theatre & Dance, Wortham Theatre • theatredance.uh.edu • 713-743-2929.

Andrea Bocelli. Eugene Kohn conducts the classical crossover singer, Houston Symphony Chorus, and Adderley School of the Performing Arts Children's Chorus. Dec. 8, 7:30pm. Toyota Center, 1510 Polk St. • houstonsymphony.org • 713/224-7575.

***Music of the Season** with Salt and Light, an activity-based

program for seniors. Dec. 9, 11 a.m. St. Paul's UMC, 5501 Main St. • stpaulshouston.org.

***The Best Christmas Pageant Ever**. Barbara Robinson's holiday comedy. Dec. 9–19. The Country Playhouse, 12802 Queensbury Ln. • countryplayhouse.org • 713/467-4497.

***Handel's Messiah**. Dec. 10–11. Mercury Baroque. Cullen Theater, Wortham Center, 501 Texas Ave. • mercurybaroque.org • 832/251-0706.

***Very Merry Pops**. Dec. 10–12. Michael Krajewski and Charles Hausmann conduct the Houston Symphony and Chorus. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • houstonsymphony.org • 713/224-7575.

Anders Osborne tours with his new album, *American Patchwork*. With the Stanton Moore Trio. Dec. 11, 10pm. Last Concert Café, 1403 Nance St. • lastconcert.com • 713/226-8563.

***A Celtic Celebration of the Winter Solstice**. Christmas Revels celebrates 20 years of culturally diverse music. Dec. 11–12, 18–19. University of Houston's Wortham Theater, Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts, Entrance 16, Building 507 • revelshouston.org • 713/668-3303.

***A Piper's Noel**, a Renaissance musicale, features Caramella. Presented by Houston Early Music. Dec. 13, 7:30pm. Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas Ave. • houstonearlymusic.org • 713/432-1744.

Burn the Floor, 20 champion ballroom dancers. Dec. 14–19. Broadway Across America. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Sarofim Hall, 800 Bagby St. • broadwayacrossamerica.com • 713/315-2500.

***Christmas Pops!** Aurora Picture Show's Sing-A-Long Fund-raiser Holiday Party and Raffle. Dec. 16, 7pm. El Dorado Ballroom, 2310 Elgin Ave. • aurorapictureshow.org • 713/868-2101.

Plaza Suite, Neil Simon's hotel comedy. Dec. 31–Jan. 22. Theatre Southwest, 8944-A Clarkcrest Dr. • theatresouthwest.org • 713/661-9505.

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

***Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical**. Through Dec. 5. Theatre Under the Stars. Hobby Center for Performing Arts, 800 Bagby St. • tuts.com • 713/558-8887.

***Madeline's Christmas**, based on the book by Ludwig Bemel-

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. **E-MAIL INFO TO:** calendar@outsartmagazine.com. **MAIL INFO TO:** OutSmart Magazine, 3406 Audubon Place, Houston, TX 77006. **FAX INFO TO:** 713/522-3275. **NO LISTINGS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DEADLINE DATE—5 P.M., WEDNESDAY, DEC. 8.**

even handbell enthusiasts to amuse families and friends, cooing couples, and hoards of hipsters, young and old alike. Plus, what better excuse is there to wrap a wooly scarf around your neck, fill your thermos with the spirits of your choice, and offer the season's greetings to some friendly neighbors?

Admittedly, parking can be a bit dicey, with the Bayland, Omar, and Norhill neighborhoods being barricaded to through traffic for the evening. For early-comers, parking is available at St. Mark's United Methodist, the Vineyard, and Zion Lutheran churches on Pecore Street, as well as Woodland and Stude parks.

December 11, 6 p.m. woodland-heights.org • 713/683-5188. —Nancy Ford

mans. Through Dec. 11. Main St. Theatre—Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. • mainstreettheater.com • 713/524-6706.

***Rudolph Rides Again.** Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer comes out of retirement. Through Dec. 18. Company OnStage, 536 Westbury Square • companyonstage.org • 713/726-1219.

***Frosty the Snowman.** Through Dec. 27. Express Theatre, 446 Northwest Mall • expresstheatre.com • 713/682-5044.

***The Snowman.** Robert Franz conducts the Houston Symphony in Raymond Briggs' classic children's story, featuring Westside High School Inertia Dance Company. Dec. 4, 10 & 11:30am. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • houstonsymphony.org • 713/224-7575.

The Best of the Fest! Children's Film Festival Seattle 2010. Dec. 4, 4pm. Presented by Aurora Picture Show. Winter Street Studios' Spacetaker, 2101 Winter St. • aurorapictureshow.org • 713/868-2101.

***Santa's Magic Timepiece,** a children's holiday musical. Dec. 4-19. UpStage Theatre. Lambert Hall, 1703 Heights Blvd. • upstagetheatre.org • 713/838-7191.

RADIO

After Hours: Queer Radio with Attitude features the QMZ (Queer Music Zone) with Jimmy Carper. Sunday mornings, 1-4am. KPFT 90.1 FM • kpft.org • 713/526-5738.

Queer Voices. Features, news, music, interviews, reviews, and commentary. Monday nights, 9-11pm. KPFT 90.1 FM • kpft.org • 713/526-4000.

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

D-17. Sarah Oppenheimer explores how light penetrates a glass façade. Through Dec. 5. Rice University's Rice Gallery, 6100 Main St. • ricegallery.org • 713/348-6069.

Brent Green: Gravity Was Everywhere Back Then. Video and sculpture installation. Through Dec. 9. DiverseWorks Art Space, 1117 E. Frwy. • diverseworks.org • 713/335-3445.

Peter Sacks: Recent Paintings. Through Dec. 11. Wade Wilson Art, 4411 Montrose Blvd., Suite 200 • wadewilsonart.com • 713/521-2977. →



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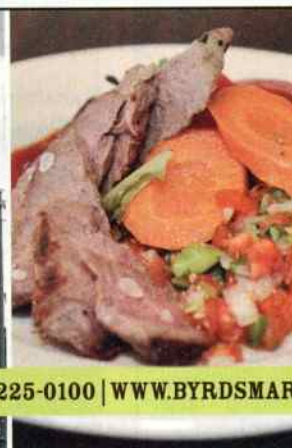
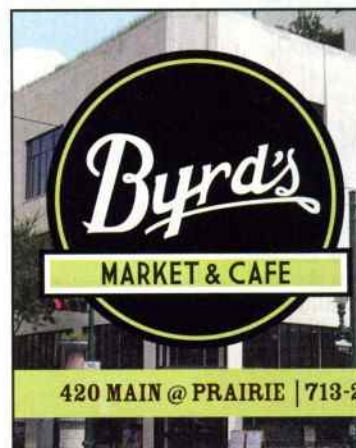
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The Little Dog Laughed. A movie star won't stay in the closet. **Through December 12.** Theater LaB Houston, 1706 Alamo St. • theaterlabhouston.com • 713/868-7516. (See page 63.)

Connecting Memories. Montrose Counseling Center presents its annual Paper Chain of Remembrance displayed in the center's lobby throughout the month of December. The chain is comprised of strips of paper bearing messages of hope and encouragement to those with HIV/AIDS. **December 1-31.** 401 Branard St. • montrosecounselingcenter.org.

Ask and Tell. Local AIDS service, business, and arts organizations commemorate World AIDS Day 2010 with Fierce Productions' *You Better Ask Somebody* by Dallas playwright Saleemah Jones. Community partners from supporting agencies discuss HIV/AIDS services. \$20 benefits HIV awareness activities. **December 4, 8 p.m.** St. John's United Methodist Church, 2019 Crawford St. • worldaidsdayhouston.com.

Hollywood Glamour. Bayou City Boys Club breaks out the red carpet for its annual holiday party featuring a toy drive and art show. Guests are asked to bring an unwrapped toy or a donation of \$30. Lana Blake hosts. Benefits AIDS Foundation Houston. **December 5, 4 p.m.** Bering Art Collective, 805 Rhode Place, Suite 500 • junglehouston.com.

Judy, Judy, Judy. The women of Kindred Spirits Foundation present the grand finale of their 30th-anniversary year: the 3rd Annual Judy Garland Christmas Show & Sing-Along. Grab a couch and enjoy this ultra-campy, black-and-white television special from 1963 starring Judy, Liza, dancing Santas, and more, comedically narrated by *OutSmart's* Nancy Ford. In addition to raffling a 46" SONY Bravia LCD TV, the evening also offers a sumptuous holiday buffet, silent auction, and special music. Benefits Kindred Spirits Foundation's women's charities. **December 5, 5-8 p.m.** Meteor Lounge (2306 Genesee St.). \$20 in advance and on-line; \$25 at the door. Limited reserved couch seating available for \$50. Tickets available from Kindred Spirits Foundation board members and kindredspirits-houston.org.

Fight Bullying. Responding to the multiple incidences of suicide plaguing bullied youth, HATCH, Montrose Counseling Center, and the Southern Poverty Law Center present a screening of the short film *Bullied: A Student, a School, and a Case that Made History*. A discussion follows the film. **December 7, 6:30 p.m.** GLBT Cultural Center, Montrose Counseling Center, 401 Branard St. (See page 43.)

Chat 'n' Chew. A2-40-euphoria.com gets together for socializing and networking the

second Friday of each month. **December 10, 7:30 p.m.** Zim's Martini & Wine Bar, 4321 Montrose Blvd. • a2-40-euphoria.com • 713/521-2002.

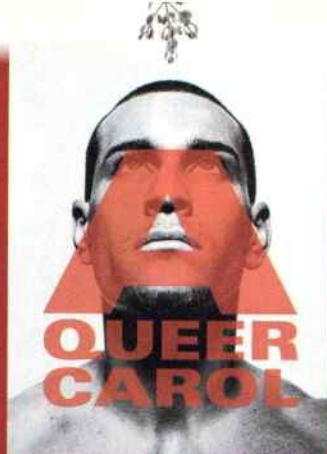
A Joyful Ringing in Our Ears. Gay Men's Chorus of Houston, Bayou City Women's Chorus, and Bayou City Chorale—all three slices of the great pie that is Bayou City Performing Arts—take part in *Hear the Bells: A Holiday Card from Houston*. Joining BCPA onstage that night for a yuletide concert that includes Camille Saint-Saëns' "Christmas Oratorio" are the Houston Medical Center Orchestra, KIPP Sharp Singers children's chorus, and the United Nations Association International Chorus. **December 14, 7:30 p.m.** Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • bayoucityperformingarts.org.

Transformers. Boston Bostian, Mel Reiff Hill, and Jay Mays have penned *The Gender Book*, a new book that aims to "transform communities one gender at a time." Join the authors for a discussion of gender and many of its implications and applications. **December 16.** Sedition Books, 901 Richmond Ave. • thegenderbook.com.

For At-Risk Youth. S.A.F.E. and Open Gate host a Christmas benefit concert featuring musical duo Jason and deMarco, with an after-concert reception and a silent auction. **December 18, 1 p.m.** Bering United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold St. • safehouseforall.org. (See page 49.)

Bethel Church UCC holds its annual Christmas Eve Service. **December 24, 7:30 p.m.** 1107 Shepherd • bethelhouston.org • 713/861-6670.

Need a Date? The LGBTs of Northwest Corner return to Sandtrap Grill for a New Year's Eve Gay-La. The party offers appetizers, party favors, gift bags, and dancing to the music of DJ Joy De La O; guests get to keep the commemorative champagne glass after the midnight champagne toast. **December 31, 9 p.m.** 7900 N. Sam Houston Pkwy W. • nwc-corner.org.



Gay Humbug! One of the holidays' most predictable traditions is the telling and re-telling—and re-retelling—of Charles Dickens' timeless classic, *A Christmas Carol*. Since its initial publishing in 1843, the play has been interpreted by such disparate live-

action and cartoon characters as Vanessa Williams, Bill Murray, Jim Carrey, Mickey Mouse, The Muppets, The Flintstones, Bugs Bunny, Rich Little, Henry Winkler, George C. Scott, Tori Spelling, Patrick Stewart, and even Mr. Magoo. • This season, Unhinged Productions stages yet another version with *A Queer Carol*, a very different, very gay twist on the holiday parable about the true meaning of Christmas. • Self-professed *Carol* fanatic, show director Joe Angel Babb tells *OutSmart* he was initially hesitant to stage this modern adaptation—"It's a dramedy," he says—despite Unhinged Productions' reputation for presenting edgy works. But the prevalent theme of Dickens' original story—the consequences of bullying compared to the rewards of a charitable heart—translates deftly to a 21st-century setting, Babb adds. • Scrooge and Jacob Marley? In *A Queer Carol*, they aren't employer/employee but, rather, life partners whose family business is interior design. Tiny Tim? Here, he's not Bob Cratchitt's crippled son, but is HIV-positive. Throw in a Marilyn Monroe representing the Ghost of Christmas Past and other not-so-straight characterizations, and we have the ingredients for quite the queer Yule. Through December 20. Recommended for adults, based on language and content. Frenetic Theater, 5102 Navigation Blvd. • comeunhinged.com • 832/250-7786.

Weekend-long New Year's Celebration.

Houston Marriot Energy Corridor Hotel, which opened earlier this year, is the site of the Regale NYE 2011 Bash. Guests are invited to enjoy the open bar, a champagne toast at midnight, heavy hors d'oeuvres and desserts, a "money balloon" drop, gift bags, and dance music spun by DJ Relentless. **December 31, 9 p.m.** with the after party at 3 a.m. The fun continues with Martinis & Massages & More, a New Year's Day party, **January 1, 6 p.m.** offering specials on full-body massages or 10-minute chair massages, sweet treats from the Chocolate Bar, and jazz music by the Best Known Unknowns. 16011 Katy Frwy. • a2-40-euphoria.com.

Transformative New Year. Make a wish for the New Year at the GenderMyn New Year Brunch, offering a traditional menu of black-eyed peas, cabbage, hush puppies, mimosas, and some not-so-traditional drag. **January 1, noon-3 p.m.** 2811 Washington Ave. • houstongendermyn.com. ■

Calendar continued from page 89

The Holocaust: An Artist's Glimpse of the Past. Portraits by Dallas Hill. Through Dec. 17. Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline St. • hmh.org • 713/942-8000.

Grand slam featuring Pilot (FX). Large-scale works by local street artists. Through Dec. 18. DiverseWorks, 1117 East Frwy. • diverseworks.org • 713/335-3445.

CraftTexas 2010 showcases Texas-made contemporary craft. Through Dec. 30. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main St. • craftthouston.org • 713/529-4848.

Perspectives 172: Kirsten Pieroth explores the development of early wireless communication. Through Jan. 2. Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd. • camh.org • 713/284-8250.

Secrets of the Silk Road, mummies from the Chinese desert. Through Jan. 2. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr. • hmns.org • 713/639-4629.

Winter 2010 Open Juried Exhibition. Through Jan. 6. The Arts Alliance Center at Clear Lake, 2000 NASA Pkwy, Nassau Bay • taacd.org • 281/335-7777.

Dynasty and Divinity: Life Art in Ancient Nigeria. Through January 9. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfa.org • 713-639-7300.

Literary Effigies: Woodcuts by Charles Jones. Through Jan. 15. Museum of Printing History, 1324 W. Clay St. • printingmuseum.org • 713/522-4652.

Lawndale Art Center. Maria Smits' *Adoration of the Mystic Dog*, David Sullivan's *Fugitive Emissions*, Rachelle Vasquez's *Where Pigeons Dare*, Kimberly Hennessy and Deb Karpman's *In and Out of Whack*, and Jill Wood's *Snack Projects*. Through Jan. 15. Lawndale Art Center, 4912 Main St. • lawndaleartcenter.org • 713/528-5858.

Michael Tole: Struck by Lightning More Than Once, She Didn't Yield. Photography-based paintings. Through Jan. 16. Galveston Arts Center, 2501 Market St., Galveston • galvestonartscenter.org • 409/763-2403.

Intimate Settings and Public Spaces: Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Drawings and Prints. Through Jan. 17. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfa.org • 713-639-7300.

Puuya Kuntha-Strong Heart, paintings by northern Queensland's Lockhart River's Art Gang. Through Jan. 26. Booker-Lowe Gallery, 4623 Feagan St. • bookerlowegallery.com • 713/880-1541.

Poems and Pictures: A Renaissance in the Art of the Book (1946-1981). Through Jan. 29. Museum of Printing History, 1324 W. Clay St. • printingmuseum.org • 713/522-4652.

Form Follows Function: Celebrating 10 Years of the American Institute of Architects Design Collection. Through Jan. 30. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfa.org • 713-639-7300.

Ready Made Africans, lithographs of hip-hop performers by David McGee. Through Jan. 30. Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross St. • menil.org • 713/525-9400.

Kurt Schwitters: Color and Collage. Through Jan. 30. Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross St. • menil.org • 713/525-9400.

Cosmopolitan Routes: Houston Collects Latin American Art celebrates the 10-year anniversary of the Latin American art department. Through Feb. 6. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfa.org • 713/639-7515.

Kissed by Angels: A Selection of Work from Southern California. Through Feb. 20. Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross St. • menil.org • 713/525-9400.

Forgotten Gateway: Coming to America Through Galveston Island. Through Feb. 20. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr. • hmns.org • 713/639-4629.

Everything Has Its Place. Photography by 17 University of Houston students. Through March. City Hall, 901 Bagby St. • uh.edu.

2010 School of Art Annual Student Exhibition. Dec. 4-18. Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston's Fine Arts Building, entrance 16 off Cullen Blvd. • blaffergallery.org • 713/743-9971.

James Myres: Polychromes and Monochromes. Works on canvas. Dec. 4-30. Archway Gallery, 2305 Dunlavy St. • archwaygallery.com • 713/522-2409.

The Color of Enamel: New Work by Leighelena. Contemporary jewelry. Dec. 4-Jan. 30. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main St. • craftthouston.org • 713/529-4848.

Justin Shull: Field Work. Dec. 5. Hungry's Café and Bistro's H Gallery, 2356 Rice Blvd. • thehgallery.com.

In the Lateness of the World: Singing in Dark Times features Carolyn Forché's poetry. Dec. 7, 7pm. Rothko Chapel, 1409 Sul Ross St. • rothkochapel.org • 713/524-9839.

WHAM. Spacetaker's Winter Holiday Art Market (WHAM) features handcrafted items by more than 25 local artists, plus entertainment, food, and more. Dec. 7-10, 11am-2pm. The



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WAS-H's Annual Small Paintings Exhibit with curator Katherine Veneman. Dec. 7-Jan. 6; reception, Dec. 10, 6pm. Benefits Make-A-Wish Foundation. Watercolor Art Society-Houston. 1601 W. Alabama St. • watercolorhouston.org • 713/942-9966.

Fall AIR. Artists-in-residence's open studio event. Dec. 9, 5:30pm. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main St. • crafthouston.org • 713/529-4848.

Bruce Brainard: *Oil on Canvas*. Dec. 9-Jan. 8. Gremillion & Co. Fine Arts Gallery, 2501 Sunset Blvd. • gremillion.com • 713/522-2701.

Interior/Exterior Views. Works by Ian Anderson and Lindsay Peyton. Dec. 11-12; reception, Dec. 11, 6-9pm. Winter Street Studios' upstairs gallery, 2101 Winter St. • winterstreetstudios.net • 713/862-0082.

Jill Moser: Editions features *The Introvert*, with poet Charles Bernstein. Dec. 11-Jan. 14; reception, Dec. 11, 6pm. Wade Wilson Art, 4411 Montrose, Suite 200 • wadewilsonart.com • 713/521-2977.

Tony Smith: Drawings. Dec. 17-April 3. Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross St. • menil.org • 713/525-9400.

DAILY

Daily (Mon.-Fri.)

HIV Testing. Free HIV testing, with no Gold Card or donation required or requested. 9am-1pm. HCHD Thomas Street Clinic, 2015 Thomas St. • 713/873-4157 • 713/873-4026.

Daily (Sun.-Fri.)

HIV Testing. Legacy Community Health Services offers free confidential rapid HIV testing using the OraQuick-Advance collection method with results available within 20 minutes. Free syphilis testing is also available. **MONDAYS:** EJ's, 2517 Ralph, 9pm-12am; **GEORGE SPORTS BAR**, 617 Fairview, 6-10pm. • **TUESDAYS:** BRAZOS RIVER BOTTOM, 2400 Brazos St., 6-9pm; **611 HYDE PARK PUB**, 611 Hyde Park, 6-9pm; **CLUB HOUSTON**, 2205 Fannin St., 8pm-12am. • **WEDNESDAYS:** CLUB HOUSTON, 2205 Fannin St., 6pm-10am; EJ's, 2517 Ralph, 10pm-1am; **MIDTOWN SPA**, 3100 Fannin St., 4-8pm. • **THURSDAYS:** THE RIPCORDER, 715 Fairview Ave., 8pm-11am; **GUAVA LAMP**, 570 Waugh Dr., 6-10pm. • **FRIDAYS:** EJ's, 2517 Ralph St., 10pm-1am. • HIV and syphilis testing is also offered at 215 Westheimer Rd., Monday-Thursday, 11am-7pm, and Friday, 11am-5pm. 713/830-3070.

Daily (Sun.-Fri.)

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

Weekly (Sundays)

The Women's Group, a feminist group for all women. 10:15am. First Unitarian Universalist Church's Sojourner Truth Room, 5200 Fannin St. • 713/529-8571.

Urban Harvest Farmers Market, presented by Central City Co-op. Noon-4pm. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney St. • discoverygreen.com • 713/400-7336.

Weekly (Mondays)

TG Support Group. Helping TransGenders Anonymous is a facilitated support group for all transgenders, supporters, family, and significant others. 7-9pm. 604 Pacific St. • tgctr.org.

Fathers First. Houston's original gay fathers group supports gay dads who are dealing with coming-out issues and family challenges of life after being married to a woman. First three Mondays of each month, 7:30-9pm. Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold St., room 230 • fathersfirstofhouston.com.

Gay Dads' Support Group helps gay men who are or were previously married to a woman and who had children within that relationship. 7:30-9pm. Grace Lutheran Church's parlor, 2515 Waugh Dr. • 281/608-8134.

Weekly (Thursdays)

Center HIV Support Group. New facilitated support group for HIV-positive individuals. 6pm. Houston GLBT Community Center, Historic Dow School, 1900 Kane St. • houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org • 713/524-3818.

GLBT-Friendly Depression & Bipolar Support Group. 7:15-8:30pm. Free. Eclessia Church, 2015 Taft St. • 713/526-1018.

Weekly (Sun., Wed., Sat.)

Love and Rackets. Houston Tennis Club welcomes players and enthusiasts of all skill levels. Sundays, 9am-noon; Wednesdays, 7:30-9pm; clinics, every Saturday 9-10:30am. Memorial Park Tennis Center, 1500 Memorial Loop. Annual membership, \$30; court fees, \$3 per session. houstontennisclub.org.

Weekly (Saturdays)

Recycling Saturdays. Bring your glass, paper, plastic, and

aluminum. 10am-2pm. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney St. • discoverygreen.com • 713/400-7336.

Monthly (1st Sun.)

Free Legal Consultations for PWAs. AIDS Foundation Houston and Katine & Nechman L.L.P. offer 30 minutes of free legal consultation on any legal issue to persons with HIV and AIDS, by appointment. Katine & Nechman, 1111 North Loop West, suite 180 • lawkn.com • 713/808-1000.

Monthly (1st Mon.)

Center Coming Out Group. Facilitated support group for LGBT individuals at any stage of the coming-out process. 7pm. Houston GLBT Community Center, Historic Dow School, 1900 Kane St. • houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org • 713/524-3818.

Monthly (1st Fri.)

First Friday Happy Hour. Northwest Corner, a social and civic organization for GLBT Houstonians living northwest of Loop 610, meets. Time and location TBA. nwcornr.org.

Monthly (1st & 3rd Fri.)

Positive Brothers Unite. a support/social group for HIV-positive men who have sex with men of color. 6pm. Montrose Counseling Center, 401 Branard St., room 110 • 713/454-7548 • csmithpbu@yahoo.com.

Monthly (1st Sat.)

First Saturday Arts Market. Local artists display and sell original works of art, and local musicians entertain. 11am-6pm. Wind Water Gallery, 548 W. 19th St. • yalestreetmarket.com.

Monthly (2nd Tues.)

Center Dinner Night. hosted by the Houston GLBT Community Center. Diners pay for their own meals. 6:30pm. One's A Meal, 812 Westheimer Rd. • houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org • 713/524-3818.

Monthly (2nd Sat.)

AssistHers helps lesbians coping with life-threatening illnesses by providing non-medical assistance. Volunteers meet for fellowship and education followed by lunch at a local restaurant. 9:30am-noon. Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold St. • assisthers.org • 713/521-4628.

Monthly (3rd Sun.)

LOAF Meet and Greet. Lesbians Over Age Fifty meet for munchies and fellowship; bring some of both. 2pm. 1034 W. 17th Street.

Monthly (3rd Tues.)

Center Seniors & Friends Potluck. organized by the Houston GLBT Community Center at Bethel Church UCC, 1107 Shepherd Dr. • houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org • 713/524-3818.

Monthly (3rd Wed.)

Bingo with the Divas. hosted by An' Marie Gill and Jessica Van Shelton. 8-10pm. Benefits Bering Omega Foundation. Tony's Corner Pocket, 817 W. Dallas St.

Monthly (3rd Thurs.)

Share with PFLAG Houston in a safe, confidential setting. 7:30pm. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church's Chatham Room, 1805 Alabama St. • pflaghouston.org.

Monthly (4th Sun.)

Share with the Clear Lake satellite of PFLAG Houston in a safe, confidential setting. 2-4pm. Bay Area Unitarian Universalist Church Fellowship Hall, 17503 El Camino Real, Clear Lake • pflaghouston.org.

Monthly (4th Wed.)

Lesbian Dinner Group. Single and coupled women come for a meal but stay for the camaraderie. 7:30pm. Cafe Express, 1422 W. Gray St. • lesbian.dinner.group@gmail.com.

DEC. 3

***Mayor Annise Parker's Holiday Celebration** features music, festivities, fireworks, and the lighting of the official holiday tree sponsored by Reliant Energy. Upper plaza at City Hall, 901 Bagby St. 6pm. houstontx.gov.

DEC. 3-4

***Holiday Greetings from the Houston Heights.** The 2010 Houston Heights Association Holiday Home Tour offers tours of six distinctive homes, a Victorian Holiday Market, and the First Saturday Arts Market. 548 W. 19th St. • houstonheights.org.

DEC. 4-5

***Galveston's Dickens on The Strand.** an annual holiday street festival celebrating 19th-century Victorian London, features Steampunk performers, Airship Isabella. Downtown Galveston • galvestonhistory.org.

DEC. 5

***Alternative Gift Market** supports fair trade vendors. 9am. St. Paul's UMC, 5501 Main St. • stpaulshouston.org

DEC. 24

***Christmas Eve Candlelight Services.** Services commemorating the birth of Jesus occur throughout the day. Noon: Service of Holy Communion with St. Paul's musicians. 5pm: Service of Lessons and Carols with St. Paul's Chamber Choir and Treble Choir. 7pm: Service of Lessons and Carols with the St. Paul's Choir. 9pm: Service of Holy Communion with the St. Paul's Choir. St. Paul's UMC, 5501 Main St. • stpaulshouston.org. ■



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*Peter Pan: the Boy Who Would Not Grow Up during Act OUT at the Alley theatre
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*Houston Reality Challenge 2010
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*Fantasy Ball 2010
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October 22*



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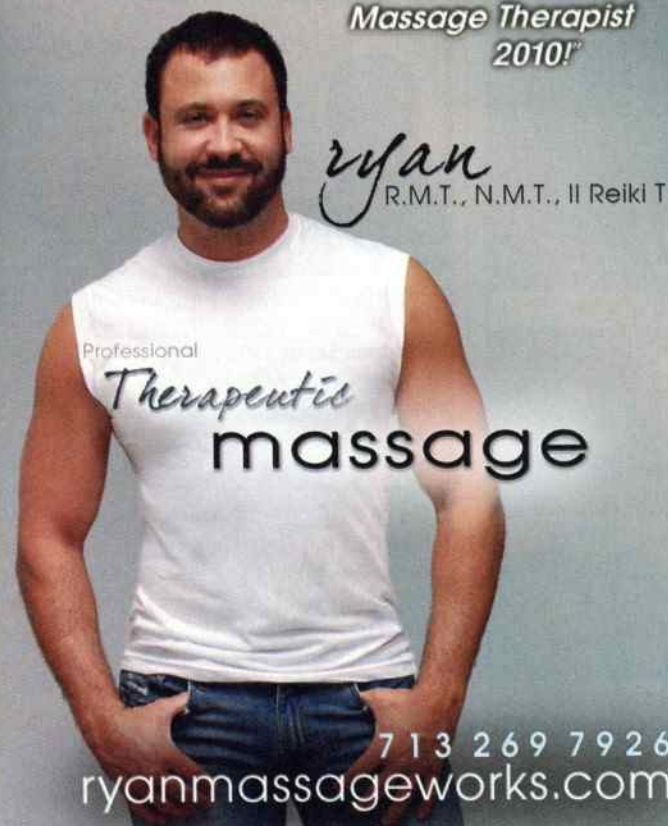


Halloween on Pacific Street, October 30-31



Lazarus House 8th annual
Halloween party, October 30

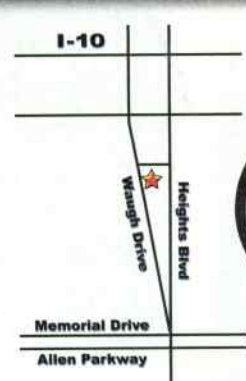
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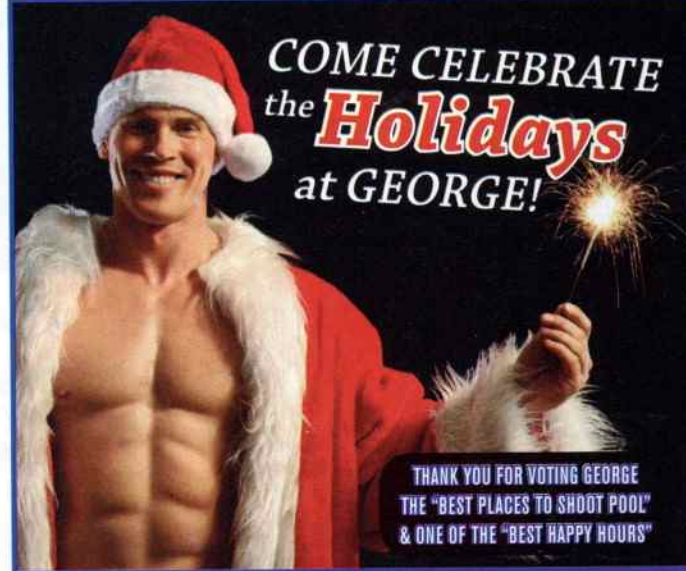
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Business News

by Nancy Ford



Crockett

Another Reason to Smile. One of OutSmart's "Gayest and Greatest" winners in the "Best Dentist" category, FLOSS Dental has opened a second office. In addition to its Midtown location, the new store located in the Galleria district offers four operator rooms, a Zoom2 Teeth Whitening room, and the expertise of Dr. Justin Crockett. 1801 Post Oak Blvd. • flossdental.com • 713/255-0780.

Visits from Santa. Santa Claus is joining John Daugherty Realtors for some special stops in Houston to chat with youngsters and pose for free holiday photos. "This tradition goes back 20 years," says John A. Daugherty Jr., president. "We are beginning to see our first friends of Santa return with their own children. It's a wonderful way to kick off the holidays." Santa's schedule includes stops at River Oaks Park (3600 Locke Ln.), Tanglewood Corp. (1661 Tanglewood Blvd.), Citycentre (800 Town & Country Blvd.), Colonial Park (4130 Byron St.), Nature Discovery Center (7112 Newcastle St.), Donovan Park (700 Heights Blvd.), and Briargrove Park (2301 Seagler St.). Children, grandchildren, and pets are welcome. Dec. 4, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. johndaugherty.com.

Ballet News. Stanton Welch, Houston Ballet artistic director, has announced that Danielle Rowe, currently a principal dancer with the Australian Ballet, joins Houston Ballet as a first soloist in January 2011. Rowe's repertoire highlights include productions of *The Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake*, Stanton Welch's *The Sleeping Beauty* in 2005, 2006, and 2007, and numerous other ballet classics. Rowe makes her first appearance with Houston Ballet in *Marie*, running February 24 through March 6. houstonballet.org.

Performance Partnership. Society for the Performing Arts has announced a new partnership with Neighborhood Centers, Inc., which organizers expect to impact hundreds of Houstonians. The program aims to bring SPA's diverse programming and performers to Neighborhood Centers locations. "Overcoming barriers of language, history, and culture, we come together in the shared language of the arts," says Angela Blanchard, Neighborhood Centers president and CEO. spahouston.org • neighborhood-centers.org.

Recruiting Film Buffs. MOVIES! The Store, now MOVIES! On Hiatus, is planning another revival. The eclectic Montrose-area film store closed its retail operation in early October, had been whimsically replaced by MOVIES! On Hiatus, which offers screening partnerships, free Wednesday movie nights at DOMY Books, and special fundraisers, according to founder Rob Arcos. Arcos says he would like to reopen the retail store within six months to a year, "but that all depends on recruiting additional investors, negotiating terms, locating a new space, and agreeing on the best business plan for the new store." He asks individuals interested in being a part of the new store to e-mail movies.thestore@yahoo.com.

Send your business news to OutSmart, 3406 Audubon Place, Houston, TX 77006, or e-mail to letters@outsmartmagazine.com.



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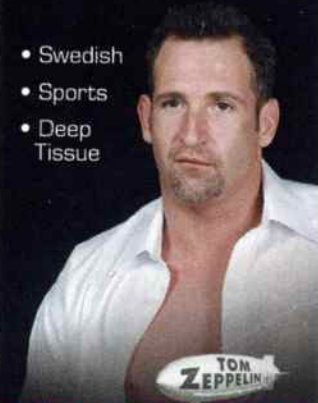
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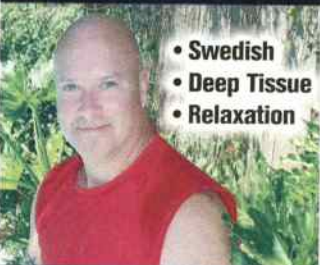
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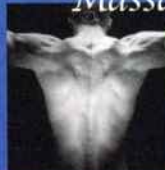
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808 Pacific.....713/521-2519
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2306 Genesee.....713/521-0123
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805 Pacific.....713/529-7488
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24704 I-45 North, Spring.....281/298-9035
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810 Pacific Street.....713/529-7623
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TUTS.com.....713/558-TUTS
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BAR & CLUB GUIDE

Houston

AZTECA'S VIP LOUNGE

The talented DJ Rocky B holds court and spins for "the best girl-4-girl night in Houston," held each Friday atop this Greenway-area Mexican restaurant. 2207 Richmond Ave. • throbparties.info.

BAYOU CITY BAR & GRILL

Experience a new attitude and new menu at this trendy Montrose spot. Open Tuesday through Sunday ("til 6 a.m. on Friday and Saturday) for lunch, dinner, and after-the-bars-close dining. 2409 Grant St. • 713/522-2867 • bayoucitybar.com.

BEER ISLAND

Tropical touches combine with Texas roadhouse chic at this comfortable Heights hangout. Beer is king, but the island is also becoming famous for their sake shots. 2631 White Oak Dr. • 713/862-4670.

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. • blurbar.com.

BODADOS

Patrons enjoy dining on the deck at this cozy Menil-area Mexican restaurant that also accommodates special events, like charitable dinners for AIDS Foundation Houston and American Cancer Society. 1312 W. Alabama • 713/523-5230.

BOHEME CAFÉ & WINE BAR

Located deep in the heart of Montrose, this European-inspired spot showcases art within and without, featuring a 40-foot bar and a huge garden space. 307 Fairview Ave. • barboheme.com • 713/529-1099.

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 • 713/528-9192 • brbhouston.com.

CHANCES

Connected to G Spot and the adjacent New Barn, Chances provides lesbians and those who love them with three separate clubs to satisfy their dance and live music needs. 1100 Westheimer • chancesbar.com • 713/523-7217.

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 • club2020houston.com.

CLUB ADAM AND EREN

Serving the collective party needs of the Clear Lake area's gay men and lesbians, the adjacent clubs are open seven days a week, offering a large video lounge, a martini bar, pool tables, a private VIP area, and a 1,200 square foot dance floor. 522 W. Nasa Parkway • 281/557-0434 • clubadam.net.

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 Frwy, next to Colorado • crystaltheclub.com • 713-278-2582.

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.

THE DRAKE

This upscale, usually straight bar on the Washington strip goes LGBT for FREEdom Sundays, starting at 8 p.m. 1902 Washington Ave. • areyoufam.com • thedrakebar.com.

EJ'S

Located on the western front of Montrose, EJ's retains the charm of a colorful, local hangout. Frequent shows, including community benefits, pack the stage. The upstairs martini bar offers a quiet retreat. 2517 Ralph • 713/527-9071 • ejjsbar.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 • 713/589-9780.

BEHIND THE BAR

WHO: Herman Hickman

WHERE: Tony's Corner Pocket
817 W. Dallas St. • 713/571-7870

WHAT'S UP: The friendly gang at Tony's celebrates the season with two holiday shows hosted by Ms. Mint Julep (Dec. 11) and Mr. Tony's Corner Pocket (Dec. 18).



MARCO FORO

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.

LADY BARBARA'S CLUB TRUE COLORS

Lady Barbara and MC Zip, who previously held court at Bella Aida Gardens and Bartini, have opened this southwest club for "everyone in the community" featuring "Free For All" open mic on Sundays. 2727 Crossview Dr. • 713/266-6505.

METEOR

The men of Manwatch and Muscles in Action rinse down in the newly added "Meteor Shower" stall, with VJs Tad Dvorak and Joe Ross playing videos every night in this posh but comfy lounge on the downtown edge of Montrose. 2306 Genesee St. • meteorlounge.com • 713/521-0123.

MICHAEL'S OUTPOST

Jerry Atwood, Clay Howell, Neil Massey, Steve Wheaton, and Roger Woest take turns at the keys at this comfortable neighborhood piano bar. 1419 Richmond Ave. • 713/520-8446.

MONTROSE MINING COMPANY

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

PABLO'S BAR & GRILL

Formerly known as the Pasadena Sky Bar, this LGBT-friendly venue located on the eighth floor of the Camden Plaza Hotel boasts a brand-new dance floor and resident DJ. 114 Richey St. in Pasadena • pasadenaskybar.com • 832/884-7276.

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 • therainbowroombar.com.

THE RIPCORD

This well-kept, multi-roomed, leather bar for men and their friends boasts a busy patio, especially on the weekends. The Black Hawk Leather shop is located inside the club, providing BDSM essentials. 715 Fairview Ave. • theripcord.com • 713/521-2792.

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 mega-danceclub is a frequent winner of *OutSmart's* Gayest and Greatest awards, with DJ Tucker playing pop and dance music videos on Fridays. *Billboard* contributor DJ Jimmy Skinner spins on Saturdays. Open Friday and Saturday with after-hours; 18 and older. 810 Pacific St. • southbeachthenightclub.com • 713/529-SOBE.

STATUS

DJ III Set spins for Lipstick Wednesday, a weekly "all girl" party at this lush and spacious dance club on the southern tip of downtown. No cover for 21+. 2404 San Jacinto St. • statushouston.com • 713/659-5400.

TC'S SHOWBAR

New owners, Tim and Corey, have revamped the deep-Montrose neighborhood bar, erasing any hint of its former occupant, Cousin's. Numerous flat-screen televisions and day-long drink specials highlight the updated décor. 817 Fairview • 713/526-2625 • tcshowbar.com.

TONY'S CORNER POCKET

This comfortable club located close to downtown has one of the friendliest bar staffs in town, both inside and outside at its patio bar. The raised stage where local charities perform also features an amateur dance contest each Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 11 p.m. Opens daily at noon. 817 W. Dallas • 713/571-7870 • tonyscornerpocketbar.com.

THE USUAL

Formerly a house of ill repute, this lesbian-owned neighborhood bar now has plenty of repute, especially on Wednesday, when "Her Usual" night packs in the women. Enjoy drink specials, dancing, karaoke, and gazing at the downtown skyline from the spacious front deck. 5519 Allen St. • theusualpub.com • 281/501-1478.

VIVIANA'S

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

Spring

RANCH HILL SALOON

With its two pool tables, 52-inch plasma televisions, and large dance floor, the gayest spot on the north side also accommodates private parties, holy unions, and receptions. Enjoy Wii tournaments Fridays, 7-9 p.m., and Sundays, 5-8 p.m. 247041-145N, Suite 103 • 281/298-9035 • www.ranchhill.com • myspace.com/ranchhillsaloon.

Humble

WHISPERS

Northerly GLBTs meet at this comfy neighborhood bar that offers pool, darts, video games, karaoke Thursday, and dancing. 226 First St. • 281/359-2900 • whispersbar.com.

Galveston

3RD COAST DOWNTOWN

Just because its owners moved the club from its longtime Seawall location, it doesn't mean it's not still one of the most popular spots for Galveston's GLBTs. Its new "urban chic" look maintains its tropical flair. 2416 Postoffice St. • 409/765-6911.

BACCHUS WINE BAR

Nestled snugly within the Crows Bar and The Mediterranean Chef, this purveyor of rare international wines also offers a 30-foot bar and a pub atmosphere with a sumptuous menu. 2404 Strand St. • 409/765-9463.

THE PINK DOLPHIN

This friendly neighborhood club that has changed location a time or two since Hurricane Ike still offers drag shows, karaoke, and set-ups throughout the week. • 904 Avenue M • pinkdolphinsgalveston.com • 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.

STARS BEACH CLUB

The island's newest entry into its ever-growing roster of gay bars is energized by visually stunning touches of light throughout. DJ Joe Rios spins for the spacious club, which also offers ample outdoor seating. 3102 Seawall Blvd. • 409/497-4113 • starsbeachclub.com.

Beaumont

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 p.m.-2 a.m. 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 • halobcs.com. ■



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December will be quite a busy month. With Mercury going retrograde on the 3rd, and then going direct on January 3, holiday travel could be very bad. If you are traveling, stay flexible and make changes as necessary. Wait to start new projects until January 3. Uranus goes direct on December 6—that will get us moving along, making everyone seem more focused and impatient than usual. • December 21 marks the first day of winter, the first day of Capricorn, and the beginning of the sun's light getting longer. We also have an eclipse during that day. It is a big day for communications and world affairs, but travel could be especially hazardous on the 21st. The 13th is another day to watch out for. Tempers could be very short and people could be incredibly demanding, so proceed with caution—especially that evening. • The sun enters Capricorn on the 21st. Mercury begins the month in Capricorn and moves back in Sagittarius on the 18th. Venus is direct, and her journey through Scorpio finally ends in January. Mars begins in Sagittarius and quickly slides into Capricorn on December 7. Jupiter is finishing her journey in Pisces. Saturn is happy in Libra, working on balance. Uranus is finishing her journey in Pisces. Neptune remains in Aquarius, and Pluto is just beginning her stay in Capricorn.

ARIES (Mar. 21–Apr. 19). New life changes are in play for the Arians, especially those born in the earliest days of the sign. Get ready—you are about to be super-busy. This month there is a big focus on career and future plans for security. You are rethinking your plans and trying to work out all the kinks. Make sure you watch your boundaries and don't try to please too many people, or you will make yourself unhappy. Your relationship with the boss could be edgy this month. Make sure you are ready for conflict. Relationships need new long-term goals. You may feel that your partner is too demanding. Don't overload yourself during the holidays.

TAURUS (Apr. 20–May 20). Relationships are playing a big role in your life this month. You will continue to review and renew your current relationships. You want a deeper level of commitment and trust from those in your life, either for romance or business. If that isn't working, this could be the time to end some relationships. As we get closer to the holidays, you are more laid-back and not taking life as seriously. Keep an eye on your health and diet this year. You will want to start an exercise and health program right after January 3.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). Personal relationships, as well as interactions with co-workers, continue to be under scrutiny. Some of your most difficult problems could involve your co-workers. Personal relationships are better this month, and if you are single, you are interested in meeting someone. Only see people you already know this month, and wait until next month to start with someone new. A review of your finances



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22–Dec. 21). Happy Birthday! You continue to be busy, active, and goal-oriented as the month opens. You have been maintaining your busy agenda for at least a month, and the upcoming holidays may be so busy that you won't have much time for anyone. Begin to limit some of your group activities since you are so over-committed. As the new year begins, you will want more freedom in your schedule. Travel plans look good, but not until next year.

also comes into play during the holidays. Watch your spending—you may have some unexpected expenses this month. Friends continue to be a big help to you. Don't forget to ask them for help.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). Yes, you are about to get very busy, starting with getting your workplace in order. Get those tasks finished before other activities begin to pick up, or you may not have time to get it all done. This month you are focusing on renewing your relationship with your partner. If things are not going well, you will both be able to see that clearly and correct any problems. Some relationships may end if no reconciliation seems to be possible. New career activities are on the horizon, so look for those in January. Get your life organized this month, and keep holiday visits short and peaceful.

LEO (July 23–Aug. 22). You have been vacillating between laziness and wanting to get your home cleaned up and redecorated. Don't overdo for the holidays. Try to keep things manageable this year. If you don't, you may feel unappreciated or resentful of others. Remember to do this for you and not for them. As the month comes to an end, you are more focused on health and diet plans. Don't overdo it as the holidays come to an end. At work, focus on cleaning up your work space and getting your files in order.

VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sept. 22). This is the time of year when you naturally focus on the family. With the holidays coming, this will be even more important. Even if you're getting along just fine, you may want to be more outspoken and truthful with them. They just may not want to hear it. Watch your temper on the 12th and 13th—you could be explosive on those days. As we get into Capricorn on the first day of winter, you will begin to relax some and not feel as much pressure. You may still experience some sleeplessness until after mid-January. Don't start any new projects until after January 3.

LIBRA (Sept. 23–Oct. 23). You are looking for new things to do in your life this month and in 2011. This is a big time of introspection as you look at your relationship with your family, your partner, and your long-term career goals. Relationships that are not very stable could be tested in 2011. Keep your eyes and your mind open to new strategies. You could feel you're being a little too serious during the holidays. You think everything needs to have some long-term purpose. Even if you're not in the holiday spirit, get out to those holiday parties and don't just sit at home. You may also be considering moving this month, but wait until January to finalize those plans if you can.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24–Nov. 21). It will be nice to have some "me" time during the holidays. Indulge yourself in luxury, love, and lavishness. You have been all too ready to spend money, especially on those you love. You are into your work mode as the holidays roll around—just don't drive yourself too much. It's a great month to contact your siblings, or people from your childhood. They will be especially glad to hear from you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22–Jan. 19). It's time to review the past and set some new goals for this new year. With Mercury retrograde in your sign, this is going to be an especially significant time of introspection for you Sea Goats. The past and nostalgia will play a big role during this holiday period. That will lead to a lot of rethinking about where your current career path is taking you. You will be making some momentous life changes, but please wait until January to decide on those.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20–Feb. 18). The holiday period is like a time of gestation for you. There is so much going on, and you are just "waiting for the baby to be born." With the planets in the area of spirituality, you are really examining your belief systems. You are more than ready to have your voice heard, and that will all be a part of the coming year. You may want to re-cultivate some old relationships. Your friends are mostly gone or have moved, so many of you are feeling a bit lonely and isolated. The holiday could provide you with a safe arena to be out and about with people.

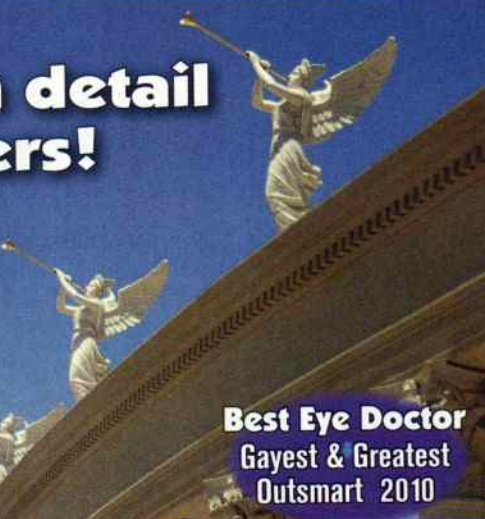
PISCES (Feb. 19–Mar. 20). Old friends are coming out of the woodwork. This is a great time to connect with people, for both business and personal reasons. You could make some headway with your career this month, as long as you contact people whom you already do business with. You could be tense and jittery on the 19th and 20th. Give yourself a wide berth on those days—you will react to things more vigorously than you normally do, and that will give people quite a shock. Otherwise, this should be a fun social month for you. Enjoy those holidays!

Read Lilly Roddy's forecast for all of 2010, which appeared in OutSmart's January issue. For more astro-insight, log on to lillyroddy.com.

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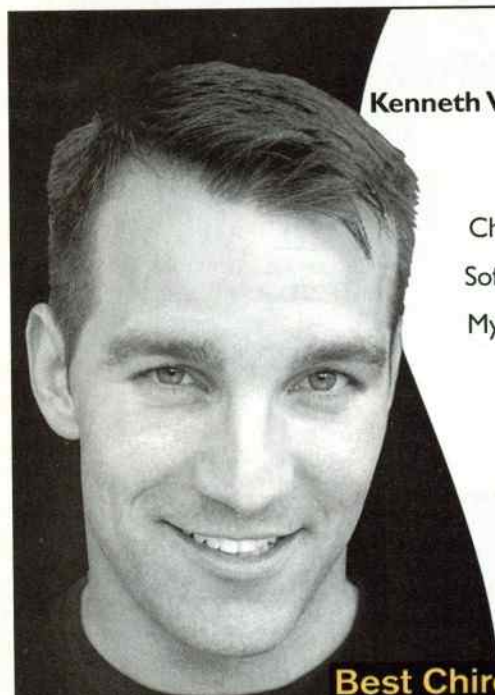


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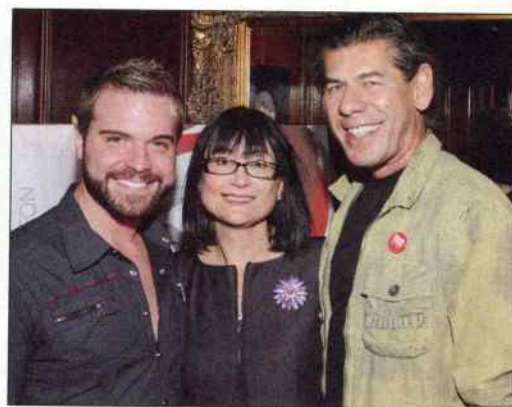
Photos by Dalton DeHart



Nick Brines, Fiona Dawson, and Cary Byrd at Dawson's kickoff of "Now with Fiona Dawson" at Mo Mong, November 3.



Joel Jones and Nathan Wright at the Diana Foundation's "Roundup Weekend," October 22.



Nathan Kasselder, Teri Prats, and Armando Palacios at AIDS Foundation Houston's World AIDS Day 2010 kickoff at Armando's, November 28.



Lorenzo Russo, Beau Miller, and Greg Moye during Live Consortium's "Live On: the Official After Brunch Experience," November 7.



Dennis Draper, Linda Smith, Carol Wyatt, and Linda Enger during a PFLAG-HATCH honor of Wyatt, and fashion show, at Meteor, October 21.



Stephanie and Christopher Lonsford, Bill Lidgard, and Robert Brooks during the Krewe of Olympus's "Gospel Brunch" at Sycamore Heights, November 7.



Ned Holmes, Ambassador Arthur Schechter, Mayor Annise Parker, and Michael S. Goldberg at the "Guardian of the Human Spirit" luncheon honoring Mayor Annise Parker, November 2.

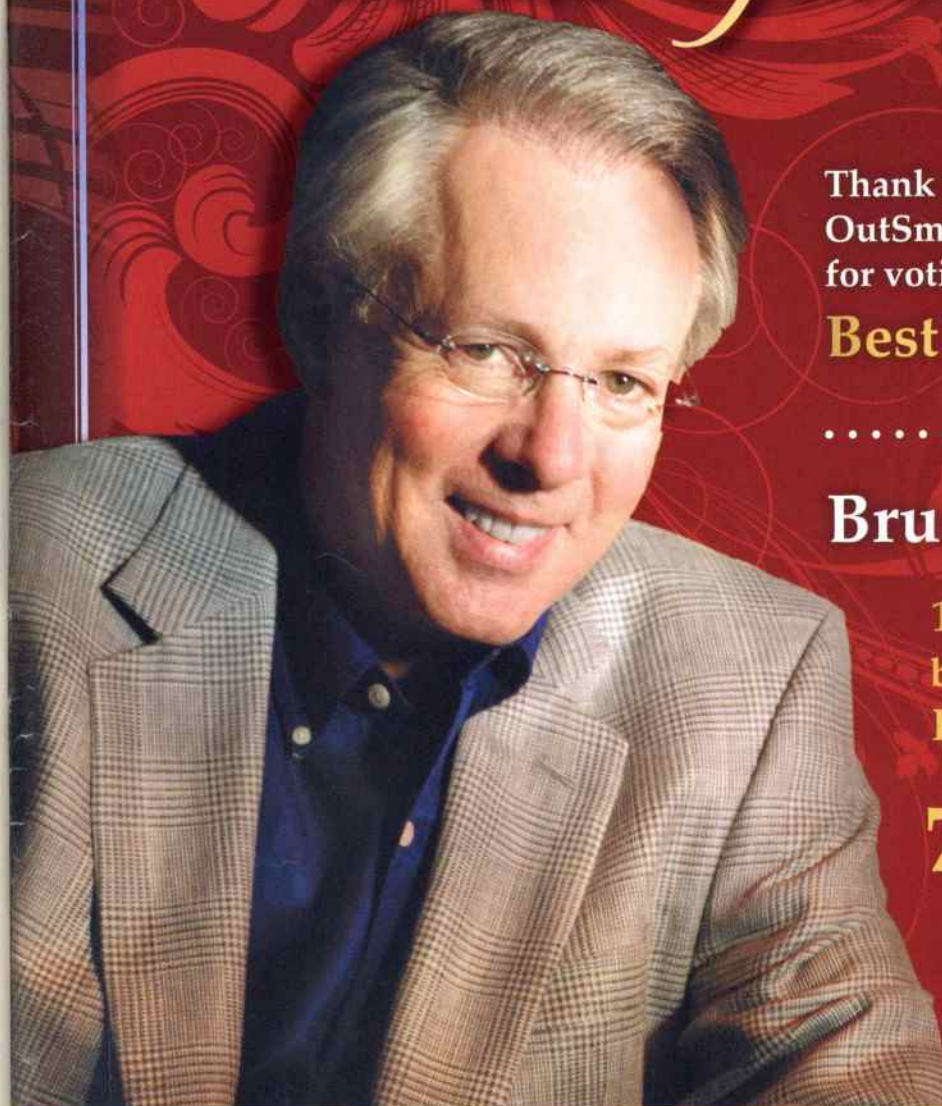


Club members at the Houston Classic Chassis Car Club's "Golden Girls 2010," October 23.



Melanie Gray, Ed Gonzales, Wanda Adams, Mayor Annise Parker, Sue Lovell, Katy Caldwell, Jim Reeder, and Jay Allen at the Legacy Community Health Services groundbreaking, November 10.

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