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SUZANNE WESTENHOEFER

Laughing all the way to
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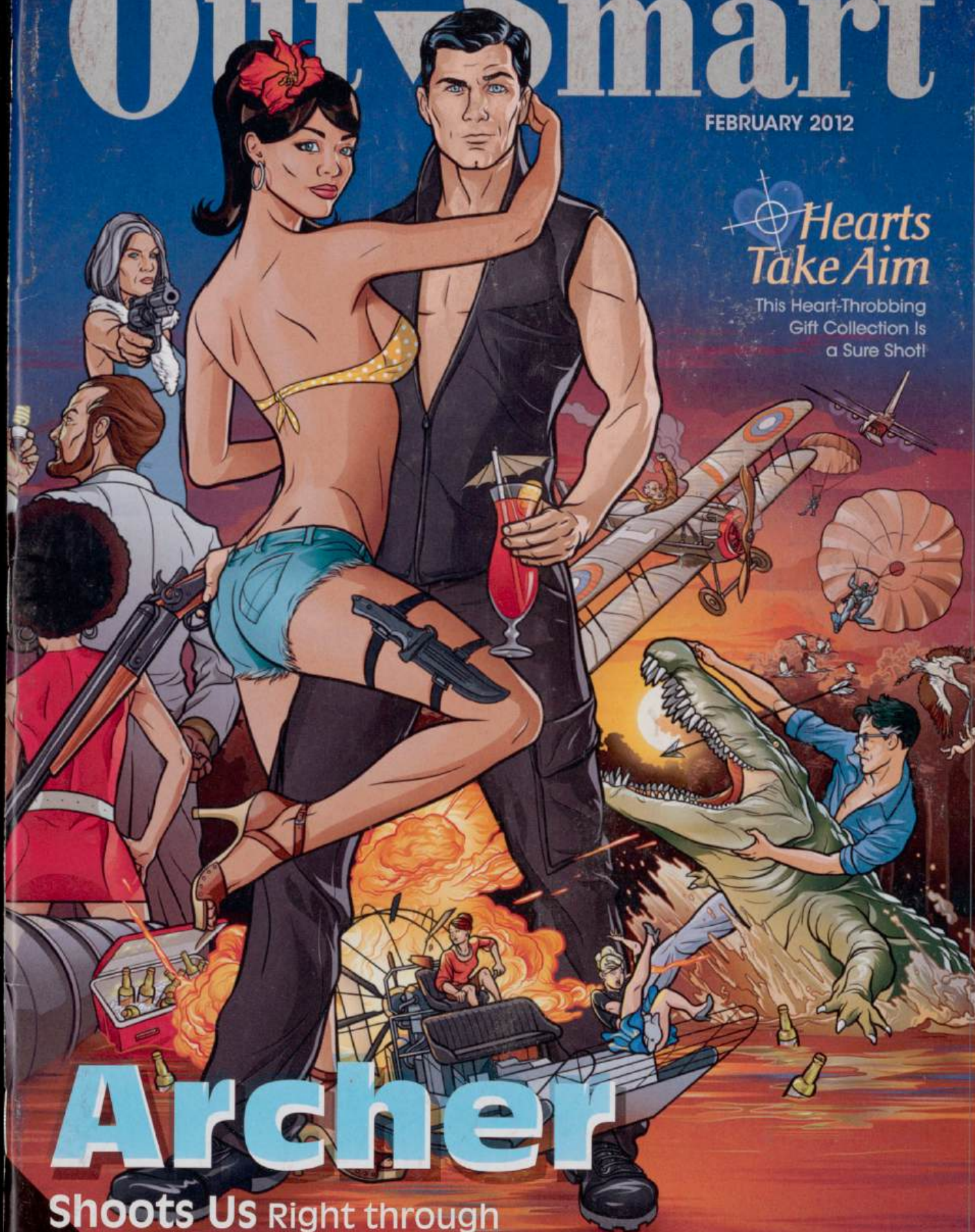
GCAM looks back as committed
couples look forward

EZRA MILLER

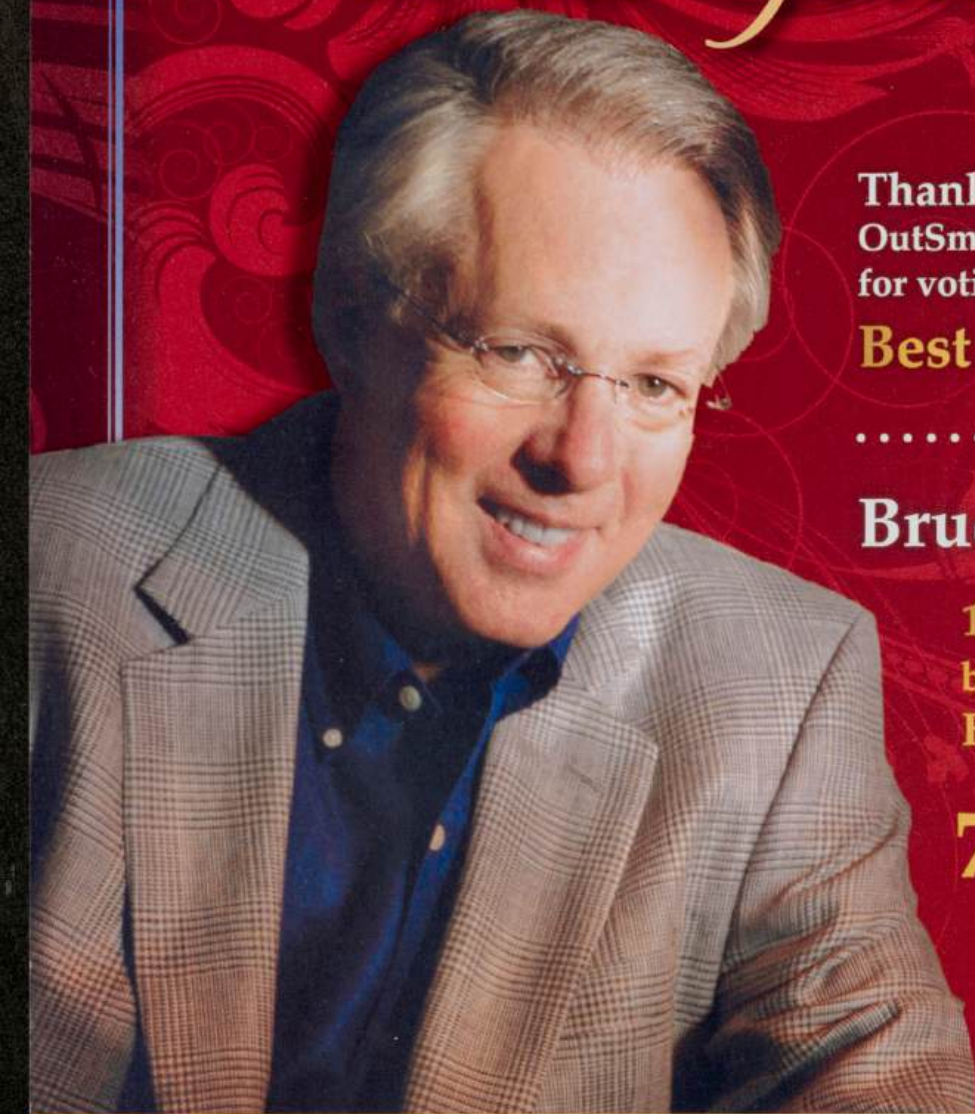
"Kevin" has been a
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CONTENTS

Vol. 19 • No. 1 • February 2012

News & Comment

- 8 Feedback**
- 10 News Briefs**
- 14 Commentary** Rick Perry messes with Texas.
- 16 What a World** TV and the GOP.
- 18 TimeOut** OUTSMART's readers and recommendations.
- 20 MoneySmart** Planning for your parents' future.

Features

- 22 COVER STORY** **Animated Bullseye** Archer aims to please.
- 31 Laughing, Loving, Saving Lives** Suzanne Westenhoefer headlines LHT's 10th annual Celebration of Love gala.
- 37 Uncivil Behavior** The fight for marriage equality continues.
- 39 Outlaws of Love** Houston couples plight their troth, anyway.
- 43 Victors of Circumstance** Attorney Mitchell Katine remembers John Lawrence and Tyron Gardner.
- 45 Another Bad Seed** We need to talk about Ezra Miller.
- 49 History, Houston, and Hollywood** GCAM is holding a divine auction.
- 53 Beyond Hearts and Flowers** Valentine gifts they'll love.
- 57 Stage Coach** Ron Jones introduces Celebration, Houston's newest gay theater company.
- 61 Finding Utopia** Tom Stoppard's trilogy stars three gay men.
- 65 Play(s)wright** Does the pen of Eric James ever rest?

Arts & Entertainment

- 66 Queer Quotes** Quips from Wanda Sykes, Nancy Pelosi, and others.
- 68 DVD** Onward through the *Steam*, plus *Bollywood Beats*, *Dirty Girl*, and more.
- 70 GrooveOut** A bunch of *Best of's*, plus new drops from Mary J. Blige, VV Brown, Rumer, and Elizaveta.
- 74 ReadOut** Emma Donoghue's *Inseparable*, plus new titles from Jesus Ramirez-Valles, Georgia Beers, and Dr. Howard Lawrence Scheiner.
- 76 DineOut** Giacomo's Cibo e Vino

Out & About

- 78 Calendar**
- 80 LookOut**
- 86 Out There**
- 94 Bar/Club Guide**
- 96 SignOut**
- 98 SceneOut**

Advertisers Index

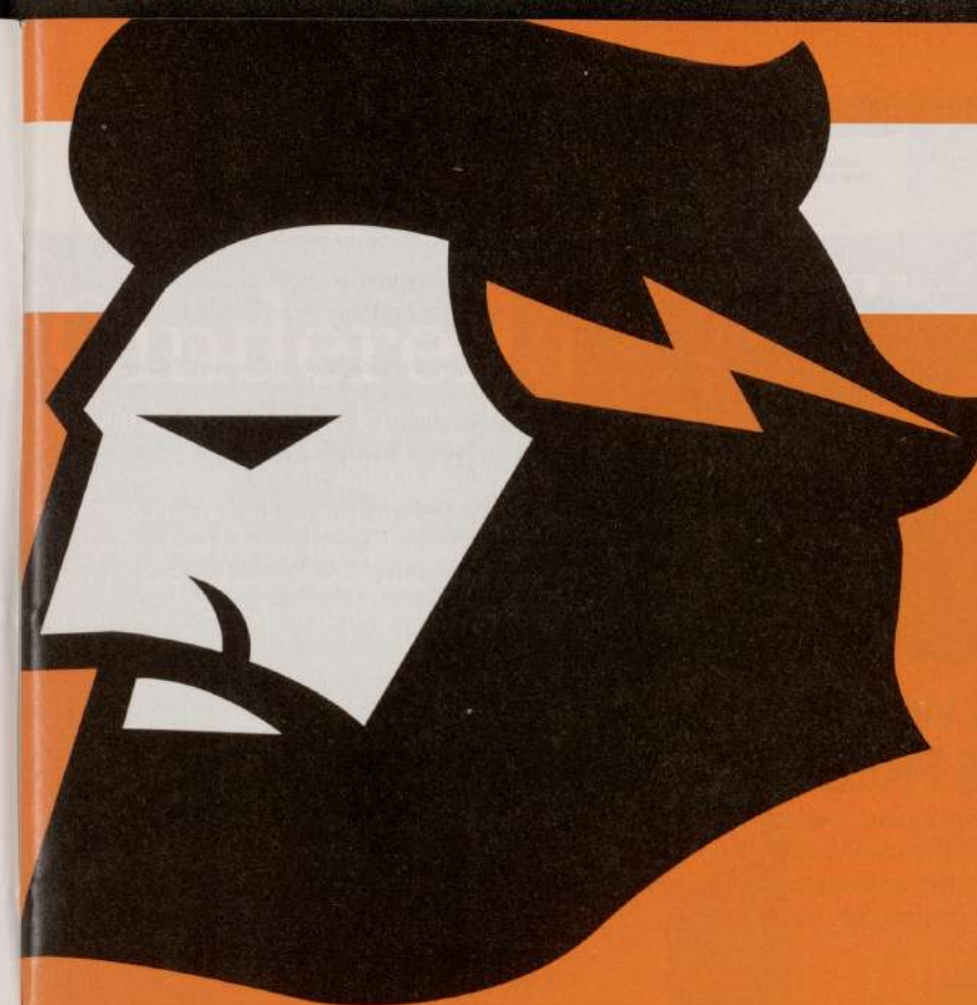
- 90 Classified Marketplace**
- 92 OUTSMART Advertisers**



- Steven Fales brings his solo show, *Confessions of a Mormon Boy*, to Houston's Theater LaB.
- More "5 Films" from Nancy Ford.
- A review of *Tuesday Night Miracles* by Kris Radish.
- Event photo galleries.



About the Cover
FX's *ARCHER* (see page 22)
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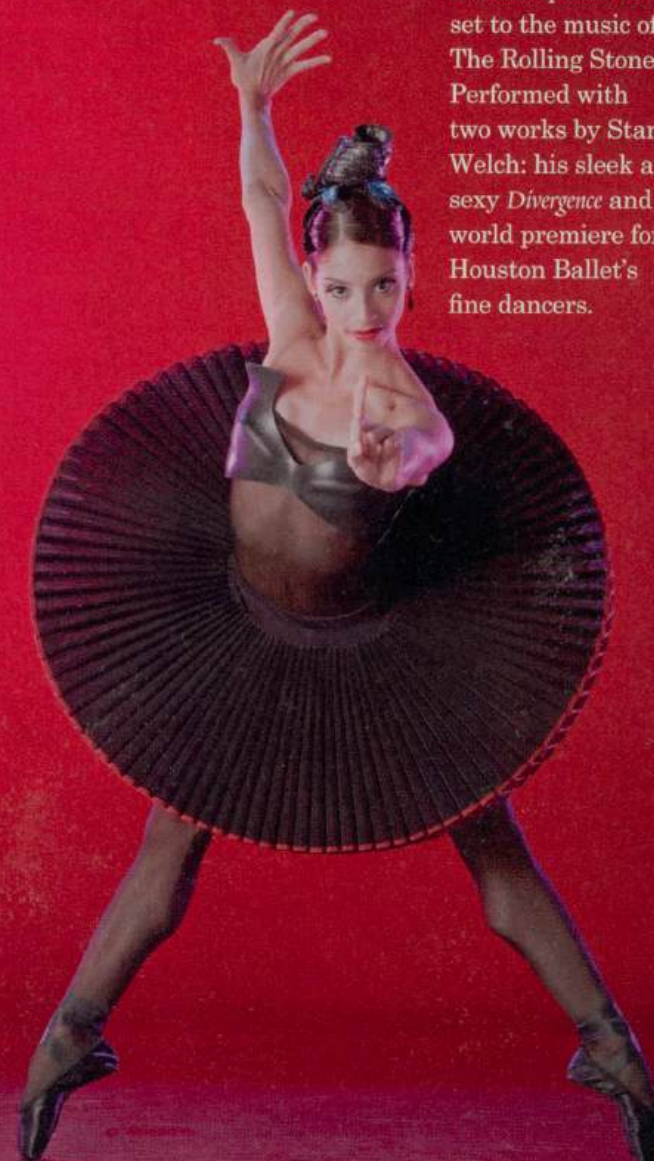


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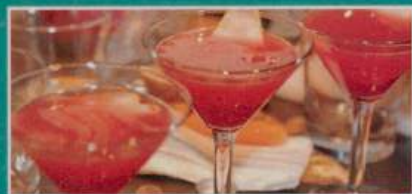
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Left: Emily Bowen and Ian Casady in *Cinderella* Right: Karina Gonzalez in *Divergence* Photos: Amitava Sarkar



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Feedback

Do Ask, Do Tell (January 2012 issue)

Re: Glen Maxey's new e-book, *Head Figure Head*, about Maxey's search for Rick Perry's "hidden life."

"Gay" and "straight" are such binary terms for relationships that may develop between two people. But who or what you have sex with doesn't define your sexuality. People who use vibrators aren't considered plati-sexual. Maybe he [Rick Perry] is bisexual. Maybe his (alleged) relationship with Geoff Connor was more than just sex. Hard to say.

Rick Perry would have to be honest with himself before he could ever be honest with the public. And I will say that Rick Perry is a man who covered up having put an innocent man to death using his cronies and contacts. You don't think he could cover up a gay scandal? This is probably the least of the skeletons in his closet.

—Clancy Nacht (*OutSmart* website comment)

Or it could be that Rick Perry is bisexual. Why is the default always "gay" when someone is known to sleep with both men and women? (Obviously, Perry has a wife and children by her.) Maybe we should start acknowledging the reality of the bisexual experience a little more, folks?

—Bet Power (*OutSmart* website comment)

I have no desire to read this book, but I have long suspected that Rick Perry is gay. And yes... gay. I strongly disagree with this author that Perry "isn't gay, he just enjoys sex with men." If you're married to a woman but enjoying sexual encounters with men on the side because that's how you're wired, you're gay. You're in the closet, and you're living a lie, but you're gay. Straight people aren't attracted to members of the same sex. Period.

—Scott (*OutSmart* website comment)

Just goes to prove not everyone looks good in a Carhart jacket. If having sex with men with no emotional attachment means you're not gay... well, just saying. Must have been a slow news month.

—CJ (*OutSmart* website comment)



OK, here's the thing: There are lots of men who do not identify themselves as gay (which they see as a cultural label) who may have girlfriends or wives and even children... and still occasionally have sex with other men. In the black community such men are perceived to be "on the down low."

For those of us involved in HIV awareness and prevention, such men are referred to by the somewhat clinical term "MSM": men who have sex with other men. These are the sorts of men who gravitate more toward furtive, anonymous sexual encounters in places like motels, roadside rest stops, and airport restrooms, rather than living their lives openly and honestly like respectable gay men should. It may be that political figures such as Larry Craig and Andre Bauer and Rick Perry are these sorts of men. So when they vehemently deny that they are gay, they may be speaking honestly. It's just that they like boy-ing around on the side.

—Chuck Anziulewicz (*OutSmart* website comment)

Mary's Mural (December 2011 issue)

Thank you MUCH for a little more history (and mystery) about Mary's and Scotty. I looked forward to seeing Scotty's art and his incredible talent as the windows changed. I stopped frequenting Mary's some time ago but would return Halloween night and New Year's Eve to reflect (on) and remember so many beautiful souls from days past. All long gone but still in my heart, it saddens me now to see the building literally crumble. Good to know Scotty's still bouncin' around, and hope to hear good things from others who are still living life.

—Lorenzo (*OutSmart* website comment)



ONLINE COMMENTS FROM
Facebook.com/outsmartmagazine

We very much appreciate the great story in the latest edition of *OutSmart* magazine regarding our Galveston Restaurant Week! Thanks very much!

—Galveston Restaurant Week

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Rep. Barney Frank To Marry Longtime Partner

by Andrew Miga, AP

Retiring Rep. Barney Frank, a gay pioneer in Congress, announced in January that he will marry his longtime partner, Jim Ready.

Frank spokesman Harry Gural said the liberal Massachusetts Democrat's wedding will be in his home state, but that no date had been set.

Ready, 42, lives in Ogunquit, Maine. He has a small business doing custom awnings, carpentry, painting, welding, and other general handyman services, Gural said. Ready is also a photographer. The two men have been together since spring 2007.

During an appearance on PBS's *The Charlie Rose Show* earlier in January, Frank said he was looking forward to leaving Congress and spending time with Ready.

"Look, I have a partner now, Jim Ready; I have an emotional attachment. I'm in love for the first time in my life," Frank said on the show.

Gay rights supporters saluted Frank's engagement but noted that because of the federal Defense of Marriage Act, known as DOMA, Ready would not enjoy the same rights as other spouses.

DOMA blocks the federal government from recognizing same-sex unions and says



On November 2, 2010, Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass. (r), thanks his partner Jim Ready at a party in Newton, Mass., after Frank won re-election in the 4th Congressional District. A spokesman for Frank confirmed on January 26 that Frank, a gay pioneer in Congress, plans to marry Ready, his longtime partner from Maine. Frank is retiring from Congress at the end of the 2012 term.

states that don't have such marriages don't have to recognize marriages performed in states that do.

"It is, of course, somewhat ironic that because of DOMA and because Barney is a federal employee, Jim won't be eligible for any of the benefits that any other spouse would be able to get," said Lee Swislow, executive director of Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, the Boston legal rights organization that brought the case that led to Massachusetts becoming the first state in the country to legalize gay marriage.

"I think it's always positive when public figures are role models in these critical societal institutions," Swislow added.

Frank, 71, won his House seat in 1980 and was one of the first lawmakers to come out of the closet.

Ready has made some headlines in recent years with Frank. He was charged in August 2007 with marijuana cultivation for allegedly growing more than five marijuana plants on his property, records from the York County, Maine, district attorney's office show. That charge was dismissed after

continued on page 12

In June 2011, Methodist minister Rev. Amy DeLong was tried on two charges that she brought against herself—being a self-avowed, practicing homosexual, and performing a same-sex wedding back in 2009.

Both of these affirmations of love are considered "chargeable offenses" and violate the United Methodist Church's *Book of Discipline*. The first charge was dropped because the court could not prove that Rev. DeLong and her partner of 16 years were "practicing." While openly acknowledging that she is a lesbian in a long-term loving relationship, Rev. DeLong refused, while on the stand, to reveal details of their intimate and private moments. As for the second charge, DeLong was given 20 days' suspension and the unusual sentence of working in collaboration with conference leadership to initiate a written document to help resolve issues that harm the "clergy covenant," create an adversarial spirit, or lead to future trials.

Rev. DeLong's trial opens the door for new debate on how the church deals with acts of conscience among its clergy and its members. On February 12, Reverend DeLong will be preaching at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. In light of her impressive history with the church, it is sure to be a sermon worth hearing.

—Alex Grandstaff

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The Houston GLBT Political Caucus elected new board members on January 4. Board members are (l-r) Ken Stewart, Guillermo Lopez Velis, Rex Humphries, Rose Wall, Maverick Welsh, Brittani Williams, LaRence Snowden, Lou Weaver, and Caucus president Noel Freeman.



AIDS Foundation Houston received a \$50,000 check from Marathon Oil at the 2012 AIDS Walk Houston kickoff event at Chelsea Grill. Pictured here are (l-r) Teri Pratts, chief development officer of AIDS Foundation Houston, Michael Stewart, VP of Accounting and Finance for Marathon Oil, Angiela Zielinski, CEO of AIDS Foundation Houston, and Isabella Rideaux of KBXX—The Box. The walk is scheduled for Sunday, March 11.



On January 15, supporters of **Legacy's Team to End AIDS (T2)** encouraged the T2 runners by "raising some hoopla" at the Chevron Houston Marathon—Aramco Half Marathon.



WatchOut

Video Debate: Girl Scout Grad Gives Supportive Shout-out to Trans Girl Scouts

Aloisamaria, a gold-member Girl Scout graduate, gives a spot-on counter-argument against transphobic and hateful Girl Scout Taylor's call to boycott Girl Scout cookies this season at towleroad.com/2012/01/taylor.html. With no wasted words, the Girl Scout grad gives a brilliant dressing-down to Taylor's long-winded and ill-informed argument that having transgender girls in the Girl Scouts endangers young girls and jeopardizes the sisterhood of Girl Scouts. Taylor ends her argument by asking Americans to boycott the cookies we are all addicted



to until Girl Scouts of the USA changes their decision (a plea that has everyone I know doubling their cookie orders). Aloisamaria reminds Taylor of all the important Girl Scout values she left out in her (now private) video. She talks about the important role Girl Scouts played in her life, and that the very point of Girl Scouts is to inspire

and support young girls, enabling their growth into confident, capable women—a support system that young transgender girls need when people like Taylor are trying to tear them down. She signs off with a call to transgender Girl Scouts, affirming that they are her sisters and inviting them to collaborate on service projects and to go camping with her. An awesome show of being an ally.

See the video: <http://youtu.be/aCDtaGCjuj4>

—Alex Grandstaff

Got a favorite LGBT video you'd like to share with OUTSMART readers? E-mail the details to feedback@OutSmartMagazine.com.

News

continued from page 10

Ready complied with a deferred disposition agreement and admitted to a charge of civil possession of marijuana.

Frank later told the *Boston Globe* that he was at Ready's house when Ready was arrested, but that he never saw the marijuana and has never smoked any. Frank has also said Ready has promised him never to repeat his mistake.

During Frank's 2010 re-election bid, Ready had a brisk exchange of words with Frank's Republican challenger Sean Bielat after the candidates debated. Ready was taking photos of Bielat.

A *Boston Herald* video showed Ready saying, "You better get used to it, dude," after Bielat asked him about the photos.

Ready then said, "It's a free country, isn't it?" and a chuckling Bielat replied, "It sure is, at least if we can get the Congress back."

Frank's campaign at the time said that Ready was an amateur photographer who took pictures at many campaign events and that no harm was intended.

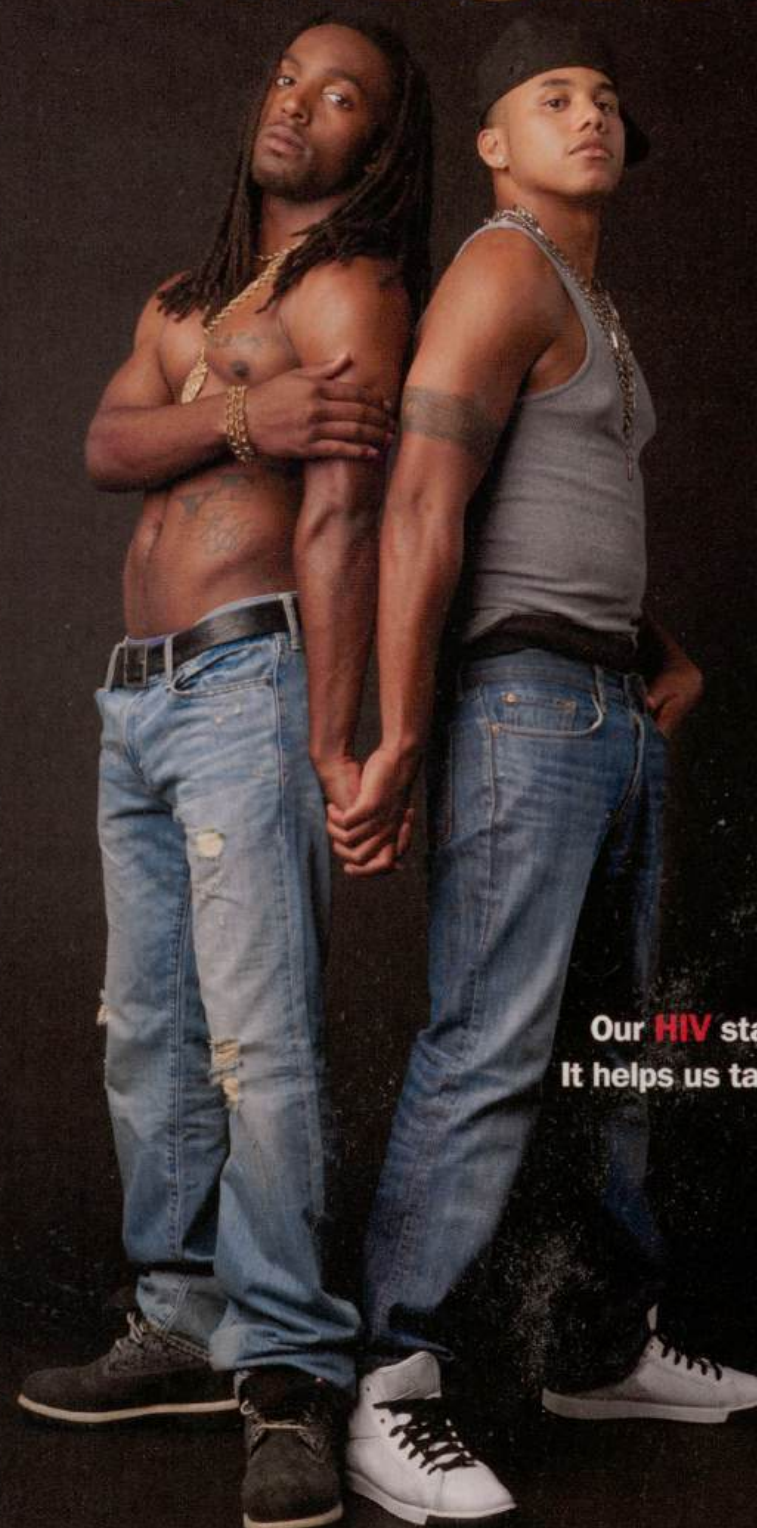
Last November, Frank announced that he was retiring at the end of his current term, his 16th in Congress.

He said he was retiring because his Massachusetts district has changed so much that he would have to spend too much time campaigning for re-election.

Frank has been in the House since 1981 and represents the state's 4th District, which stretches from the upscale Boston suburbs of Newton and Brookline to the working-class cities of New Bedford and Taunton in southeastern Massachusetts.

Associated Press writers Denise Lavoie in Boston and Clarke Canfield in Maine contributed to this report. ■

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PROOF THAT YOU CAN, INDEED . . . mess with Texas

Last month, Texas's pride and joy, Governor Rick Perry, said that he does not see much wrong with United States Marines, the cream of our crop, wizzing on enemy corpses.

I'm going to be honest with you and tell you that I grew up with only brothers, married a man, and gave birth to only sons. As far as I know, there are only two positions for a toilet seat—up or wet. I understand that men like to wizz on things. Face it, camping was invented solely so that men could wizz outside. The only other possible reason to camp is that you're homeless because Republicans like Rick Perry wizzed on the housing market.

Rick Perry wizzes on everything—taxpayers, school children, women in need of health care, property owners, gays, cute

little puppies, your lunch when you look the other way, Anita's meticulously planted flowers in the backyard, Ron Paul's paper sack of gold he carries everywhere . . .

You name it, Rick Perry has wizzed on it or is sincerely looking forward to doing so.

you name it, Rick has wizzed on it or is sincerely looking forward to doing so.

If you ever wanted to start a wizzing farm, you could use Rick Perry for breeding stock. It's the one and only thing he's really good at.

I had this abnormal fear that the next thing I was going to hear on the news is

Rick Perry saying with a twang, "Honey, we wizz on everything in Texas. Why, I got drunk once and wizzed on a homecoming queen." Yep, that's the Texas I luv.

Oddly, the one place he didn't wizz was the governor's mansion when it was on fire. He wouldn't wizz on that, because he'd had his eye on a \$10,000-a-month taxpayer-financed McMansion in a gated community with a swimming pool . . . that he could wizz in.

In fact, that's the entire

Republican economic plan: Wizz on It.

In Texas, using a toilet is for sissies . . . and men who are too dumb to remember up or down.

Susan Bankston lives in Richmond, Texas, where she writes about her hairdresser at The World's Most Dangerous Beauty Salon, Inc., at juanitajeane.com.

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And the award for television's best situation comedy goes to...
The Republican Presidential Candidates' Debates

Are you enjoying the Republican debates as much as I am? Who can resist the drama, the laughs, the surprises as we witness the winnowing down of candidates intent on leading the Right back to the White House? It's like watching a three-ringed circus featuring nothing but the elephants and their dung.

Who doesn't delight at Mitt Romney's idiot stammering as he imagines releasing his tax returns, or at Rick Santorum's clammy fidgeting as he imagines potential contributors' horror as they Google his name. The \$10,000 side bets. The sordid sexual tales of infidelity and betrayal? It's like crack for wonkheads.

At this writing, a mere four candidates still had their eyes on the electoral prize, down from a field of what seemed like dozens of conservative clones. But the memories of the original cast of White House hopefuls linger on. Just like that elephant dung.

It's a toss-up as to which makes us laugh harder: these GOP playoffs or my other favorite prime-time

TV show, *Modern Family*. Every week the Pritchett/Dunphy clan delights us with their unpredictable predicaments and kooky personality traits in ABC's much-lauded situation comedy. Have you noticed the stars of both *Modern Family* and the Republican debates possess striking similarities? No? Well, look closer.

Michele Bachmann = Gloria Delgado Pritchett. They both rock a stylish, sexy appearance. They both firmly believe what they believe—facts be damned. And we can't understand much at all of what either of them says, but whatever it is, it often makes us laugh. It did give us a bit of a scare, however, when Michele's poll numbers actually went up after it was revealed (in Season 2, I think it was) that she and her girlfriend Marcus owned and operated a magical homo-to-hetero conversion clinic.

Supporting player honorable mention:
Marcus Bachmann = Cam Tucker. Go ahead, deny it.

Newt Gingrich = Cam Tucker. Soft and

ruddy, quick with a quip, and inclined to high dudgeon, both Newt and Eric Stonestreet, the straight man who plays Cam, prove that somewhere deep within us all lies a queer gene just waiting to be tapped. Stonestreet is genius-like in his ability to tap that quality. But unlike Cam, Newt's pushed his gay sensibility down so hard that it squeezed out into his half-sister, Candace. But frankly, we can't imagine Cam asking his husband Mitchell for an open relationship.

Jon Huntsman = Haley Dunphy. From the beginning of his campaign, Mr. Huntsman clearly was not the most popular among his tribe, like Haley—but, also like Haley, clearly is the most intelligent. In June 2011, when he announced his run for the White House, Mr. Huntsman told re-

cally or morally." [The Ron Paul Political Report, June 1990.] Ay yi yi yi yi.

Rick Perry = Alex Dunphy. Both are so pretty. Both are so aware of it. Both seem smarter when silent. In "Strong," the notorious December campaign greeting featuring his exemplary coif, Governor Perry says, "I'm not ashamed to admit that I'm a Christian, but you don't need to be in the pew every Sunday to know there's something wrong in this country when gays can serve openly in the military but our kids can't openly celebrate Christmas or pray in school." Even Alex knows better than to sputter something like that. Plus, did you notice that when former Texas state representative Glen Maxey published a book about the gay rumors swirling and twirling around Perry for decades, the

governor jumped his sinking campaign ship quicker than captain Francesco Schettino abandoned the *Costa Concordia*? Oops.

Mitt Romney = Phil Dunphy. If Governor Romney stopped taking his robot meds, he would be virtually

indistinguishable from Phil: both are so wanting—make that *needing*—to be liked. But Phil is a man of conviction who is faithful to his tenets: if Phil supports marriage equality and reproductive choice on Monday, he likely still supports both of those concepts on Tuesday. Then there's that whole magic underwear thing which gives Mitt an odd visible panty line under those Everyman Jeans he looks so uncomfortable wearing. Like Mitt, the fanciful Phil might also choose to sport magic underwear, but only if they produced pigeons or helped him fly.

President Barack Obama = Jay Pritchett and Claire Pritchett Dunphy. It didn't seem fair to not assign a comparable *Modern Family* character to Obama; he is, after all, running for reelection, though obviously in opposition. Like *Modern Family*'s patriarch, Jay, the president's hair is getting grayer and grayer every day. And like Claire, we hope he doesn't lose any more weight.

Can't wait for the summer reruns. I mean, conventions. ■

Have you noticed the stars of both *Modern Family* and the Republican debates possess striking similarities? No? Well, look closer.

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THE REAL COST OF LONG-TERM CARE

How LGBT caregivers are paying the price

As baby boomers continue to reach retirement age, one topic that seems to be getting more attention is long-term care—but not necessarily for the obvious reasons.

Certainly, the cost of care continues to escalate. Due to inflation, according to Prudential's Long-Term Care Cost Study (2010) research, the annual increase in the cost of long-term care services has tracked almost double the annual CPI increase over the past several years. That, coupled with stock market losses and shrinking retirement-account assets, has made it difficult at best for many to pay for care.

The cost of long-term care and caregiving can hit the LGBT community especially hard. Because many of the same shared health insurance and retirement benefits available to heterosexuals are not available to LGBT couples, oftentimes those

couples must dip into savings in order to fund care expenses.

CAREGIVING HAS ITS PRICE

Jamie M. Grant (National Gay & Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute) estimates that in the U.S. approximately 80 percent of long-term care is provided by informal caregivers. This often comes at a high price. In fact, on average, those who provide care to others tend to experience:

- **Loss of Income.** Caregivers are much more likely to face the loss of income due to reduced work hours (or job loss), as well as the loss of employer-provided medical benefits.

- **Loss of Retirement Savings.** It has been estimated that because of time taken off from work and the added expense of providing care, informal caregivers can personally lose approximately \$650,000 over a lifetime—considering lost wages, retire-

ment savings, and Social Security benefits.

The cost of caregiving can be particularly intense for those in the LGBT community, starting with the likelihood of becoming a caregiver in the first place. A recent study conducted by Met Life found that because they are often considered "single" and do not have the usual time constraints of raising children, one in four lesbian or gay boomers is a caregiver, compared to one in five non-LGBT boomers.

Unfortunately for those in the LGBT community, there is less support available to them in terms of policies and programs designed to assist caregivers. For instance, the federal Family and Medical Leave Act offers many of those in a caregiving role job flexibility, job security, and even paid leave—but only if that caregiver is related to the recipient by blood or marriage.

Adding to the overall cost of providing care is the notion that even though at least

three quarters of LGBT boomers expect to become caregivers for someone else, the majority of these individuals are unsure of who will take care of them when the need arises, or how they will fund their own care.

THE SOLUTION

Amidst all of the physical, social, and financial strain of caregiving for LGBT boomers, there is a solution. Long-term care insurance can provide the funds necessary to pay for part or all of the cost of care—both in a facility, as well as at home.

Many policies today also offer cash benefits, meaning that funds can be made available from the plan to help cover the indirect costs that are associated with providing care to a family member or other loved one, while also allowing for the protection of savings and other assets that may otherwise need to be drained.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Long-term care insurance policies can be designed to fit your specific needs. Therefore, it is important to discuss a potential plan with a qualified advisor who understands long-term care needs as they relate to the LGBT community.

Grace S. Yung has over 18 years experience as a certified financial planner and is a principal at Midtown Financial Group, LLC, in Houston.



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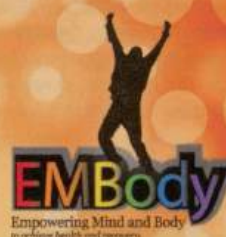
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MISSION: HYSTERICAL.

The jokes fly as fast as bullets. And the targets—every race, creed, color, religion, stereotype, gender, sexuality, and boundary-pushing deviance—receive a direct hit straight to the funny bone. Go undercover with 'Archer,' the gayest show on television

BY STEVEN FOSTER

He is movie-idol handsome. Strong-lined, angular face with a cleft, dimpled chin, arctic-blue eyes, and luxurious jet-black hair. His perfect pecs and an absolutely fabulous six-pack fill out a Savile Row suit as sensationally as a black turtleneck or, as he calls it, "tactical garment." (So gay.) Below the belt, his crotch bulges with a concealed weapon. His bubble-butt backside was on display in short-shorts during an undercover mission to →



Things are looking up in animation: *Archer's* characters include (clockwise from center) Sterling Archer (voiced by H. Jon Benjamin), Lana Kane (Aisha Taylor), Cyril Figgis (Chris Parnell), Malory Archer (Jessica Walter), Pam Poovey (Amber Nash), Cheryl Tunt (Judy Greer), and Ray Gillette (Adam Reed).



TOP PHOTO. I'd rethink the brooch: agents Ray Gillette (Adam Reed, in Malory drag), Sterling Archer (H. Jon Benjamin), and Lana Kane (Aisha Taylor) in Monte Carlo. BOTTOM PHOTO. Come here often?: Archer and his illegitimate son, Seamus.

Mission: Hysterical

continued from page 22

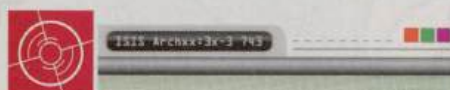
South Beach. (So gay.) He has a killer job (literally) and a stunning penthouse where he beds supermodel-hot Russian agents and gorgeous, trashy escorts in equal number.

He's also selfish, vain, arrogant, racist, sexist, lazy, and stupid. His narcissistic id is so me-me-me myopic that if he weren't so damn good at his job, he would be the most loathsome himbo alive. The lost Kardashian.

His name is Sterling Malory Archer (middle name the same as his mother—let's not go there . . . yet) and he is the biggest asshole on television.

And, with the exception of Louis CK, he's also the funniest—an achievement made all the more remarkable because Archer isn't real.

Archer is a cartoon.



EXT: TRAIN - NIGHT

Archer and Bilco, the Canadian freedom fighter, fight on the roof of the speeding train. Out of bullets, Bilco throws his empty gun at Archer, hitting him in the face.

Archer: Wow, and I thought I was mad before.

Bilco: Why? Did you see some old black lady sitting in the front of a bus?

Archer: What is your deal with calling me a racist?!

Bilco: You're American.

Archer debuted in the fall of 2009, and was FX's first foray into series animation after years of rumored exploration into the genre. At first glance, Archer seemed like a strange fit on a netlet famous for

previous phenoms like *Nip/Tuck*, critically acclaimed award bait like *The Shield*, *Damages*, and current prestige trophy-chasers *Justified*, *Louie*, *Sons of Anarchy*, and *American Horror Story*. Archer doesn't sit politely by these gold-standard series,

but it's not the redheaded stepchild in FX's lineup either. Fox's rowdy, undisciplined little brother is no stranger to farting at the broadcast dinner table. FX also airs the rebelliously sleazy *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, a proven slacker smash. After a rough first quarter, *The League* wisely punted its fantasy football premise, switching tactics to locker-room-humor sex comedy. Beloved *Louie* continues to bring the class

factor. But the universally loathed dog-comedy *Wilfred* needs to be put to sleep, and *Unsupervised*, FX's second animated series, needs serious supervision. *Unsupervised* has all the appeal of a teenage boy preoccupied with his own boner—might be fun for him, but nobody else is really getting off on it. And *Unsupervised* will be riding hard on Archer's impeccably tailored comedy coattails. If he knows what's good for him, he'll turn around and shoot the series like he would a rival agent.

But this is the beauty and freewheeling thrill of FX. Network prez John Landgraf lets programmer freaks Nick Grad and Eric Shrier play mad scientists with sometimes mixed, but often marvelous, success, and FX's menu is a zesty palate thrill compared to Bonnie Hammer's boiled-potato blandness over at USA. After all, it wasn't Hammer who just seduced epically meltdowning madman Charlie Sheen back to television with a series, appropriately titled *Anger Management*. And FX did that without even seeing a script.

It's that kind of leaping-without-a-net

lunacy (or crazy-like-a-FX brilliance) that brings us to *Archer*, the gayest show on television.

Comedy is subjective. You may adore the poverty-slut pandering of *Two Broke Girls*. Perhaps you find the meta of *Portlandia* revolutionary. No matter what lights your comedy fire, there's no debate about this: *Archer* is flaming.



INT: MALORY'S OFFICE - DAY

Malory tries to calm Nicolai, the head of the KGB.

Nicolai: What if the Cuban does not fall for the honeypot?

Malory: Ooh, I think he will. I've got my top man on it. Or, possibly, bottom.

Archer has been called an animated mash-up of *The Office* and *Get Smart*—which isn't just lazy journalism, it's lousy reporting. The former is never this deliciously nasty and the latter was never, well, this smart. Yes, it's essentially an office comedy set in the world of espionage and international intrigue. But in the halls of the top secret ISIS agency, the jokes fly bullet-fast and with deadly accuracy to each offending—and offensive—target. But just because the jokes are sometimes rude doesn't mean they're cheap. *The Hollywood Reporter* beamed that Archer is "brilliant" with "dollops of genius while being wholly original." *Entertainment Weekly* called it "the best animated series on television." As Sterling Archer would say, "Duh and/or hello!"

Archer's unique comedy island erupts volcanically, while blooming organically from jungle-maze plotting that tweaks all the standard spy-movie tropes with affectionately mocking, winking glee. In Archer, throughlines not only roundelay, they ricochet like a superball in a speed dryer. And the crackpot jackpot cast knows how to nimbly deliver the lines and the goods. One minute they step on each other with such spastic interruption, it would make an autistic kid seem well-behaved. (If that offends, then you queens better have a fainting couch nearby when you watch Archer.) Then, lightning-quick, the actors slam on the vocal brakes to play the silence and work a beat . . . 3, 2, 1 . . . before dealing a side-splitting deathblow joke. It's like the Krav Maga of comedy. Stunning work, but the real wow factor is that, except for a few frames of bowling with the FX advertisers, network up-fronts, or occasional Comic-



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Mission: Hysterical

continued from page 24

Con panel, the cast is never in the same room together. They voice their parts solo in sound booths in Atlanta (where *Archer* production is based), New York, or Los Angeles. The spy games on *Archer* aren't the only assignments these in-demand maniacs have.

The bi-polar H. Jon Benjamin, wicked-perfect as superspy Sterling Archer, recently starred in Comedy Central's *Jon Benjamin Has a Van*. Playing Archer's fellow agent/former girlfriend, the beautiful but "man-handed" Lana Kane, Aisha Tyler holds court on the CBS gabfest *The Talk*. *Saturday Night Live* alum Chris Parnell voices accountant Cyril Figgis, whose 12-inch penis has attracted both Lana and choke-enthusiast secretary Cheryl (*The Descendants*' Judy Greer). Voice vets Amber Nash and Lucky Yates play the plus-sized, omnisexual HR director Pam and R&D deviant Krieger, respectively. And starring as the cocktail- and cock-crazed, money-mad matron of ISIS (Archer's boss and mother) is *Arrested Development*'s Jessica Walter, who, if she doesn't win an Emmy soon, should at least be charged with grand larceny for walking off with the show.

The sole voice of reason at ISIS is the final lead character, Ray Gillette. Ray is the way-gay agent who made his first appearance in episode 5, the one where *Archer* hit its massively homo side and, coincidentally, its creative stride.

"The Honeypot" was the rainbow-colored riot where Archer's mother, Malory, ordered Archer to pull a "honeypot" assignment—sleeping with the enemy in order to get valuable intelligence. Except this time, the enemy was a gay Cuban spy who possessed a sex tape of Archer's mother with the KGB head who may or may not be Archer's father. "Honeypot" saw *Archer* truly beginning to master the jawdropping, oh-no-you-didn't! sex jokes, race slams, and stereotype-poking while keeping the jibes fully integrated within its spy movie conceit. By the next episode, gay Ray would join the cast as a major player.

Ray, by the way, is the only character not played by a seasoned pro. Ray is voiced



in full-on, totally out, sibilant sass by none other than *Archer* creator Adam Reed.



ISIS Archer: 3x-3-743

INT: BLIMP CARGO HOLD - NIGHT

Agent Ray Gillette walks Archer and Lana through how to diffuse the bomb via cell phone. The connection cuts in and out, and Ray grows angrier over Archer's ignorance of the NATO phonetic alphabet.

Archer: First letter, B.

Ray: Bravo.

Archer: Thanks. Second letter, (static).

Ray: M as in Mike or N as in—?

Archer: (static) as in (static)ancy. God!

You, of all people.

Ray: What?!

Lana: Archer...

Ray: Me of all people what?!

Archer: Nothing.

Ray: Mm-hmm.

Lana: Ray, can I shoot him?

Ray: In about five seconds, hon.

"His voice is basically my voice," Adam Reed explains in a pleasant, middle-of-the-road masculine timbre, slight Southern tang detectable, though hard to determine if it's from his North Carolina birthplace or his Atlanta residence. But when he voices Ray, the accent vanishes and the pitch is higher, a tad more gay and pinched. "And as for him being gay with a pencil-thin mustache and handsome and super-well dressed, I don't know where that came from. But I like that he's one of the best people on the show as far as, you know, not being a horrible person. He's usually the voice of reason."

A fine compliment, but that's really not saying that much in this crowd. For example, in one of season 3's upcoming episodes, the gang shows up at Malory's apartment to help her hide a dead body. That wouldn't be so bad if that body didn't happen to be the Italian prime minister shot dead, leather-strapped to a seat-less arm chair, wearing a latex bondage suit, shades of that other little FX hit *American Horror Story* (what is it with FX and S&M fetish wear?), with an eggplant-shaped "marital aid" inserted... wait. Do his parents watch this show?

"They don't," sighs Reed. "Years ago when I had done *Sealab* and I went home and I was like, 'Mom and Dad, sit down. This is my new TV show!'"

Reed showed his parents his cartoon, one of the first shows to air on Cartoon Network's wildly successful adult-oriented animation block, *Adult Swim*. *Sealab 2021* was a redubbed, perverse reworking of a shockingly boring 1970s Hanna-Barbera save-the-oceans cartoon. Even children, then at the mercy of only three channels, stayed away in droves. Comedy rarely ages

well, and the *Sealab* redux is fairly painful to watch today. But at the time, it was a hit with slackers, stoners, and animation enthusiasts hungry for something to go with those late-night bongos, Doritos, and Mickey big mouths. His parents, however, were not exactly in this dazed and confused demographic.

"They watched an episode, and they were just really quiet," Reed recalls. "And my mom turned to me and said, 'We just want you to be happy.'"

Sounds a lot like conversations many gay people have had with their parents—a similarity Reed sees vividly.

"It's like I came out to them with my sense of humor. Ugh. Christmas is ruined."

Reed's next show for Cartoon Network would not make Mom and Dad any more proud. *Frisky Dingo* was a sci-fi splatter-fest that had a hard-on for brazen sexuality and skewering corporate America. It was literate, incisive, and, of course, too smart for the network home of *Squidbilly*. Cartoon Network pulled the plug after two seasons. But *Dingo*, with its superhero-in-the-office leitmotif and its thick-lined, comic book, photo-influenced animation, was a harbinger of all things *Archer*.



ISIS Archer: 3x-3-743

EXT: SOUTH BEACH CAFÉ - DAY

Archer's cell phone rings. It's Archer's mother, Malory.

Archer: Mother, I have nothing to report yet. This is a lot harder than I thought it would be.

Malory: How hard could it be to talk a gay man into having anonymous SEX?!

Rick Santorum's pinhead might explode (along with the noggins of most social conservatives) if exposed to *Archer*, but it's probably the most red-white-and-blue show in animation today. Virtually every animated series is, like American manufacturing jobs, shipped elsewhere—Korea, mostly. *Archer*, however, employs everyone stateside. This proximity gives Reed tremendous control. When actors ad-lib in the booth, Reed can have the storyboard adjusted accordingly, revising the animation sequence with only mild aggravation to the art department.

"It's all done here in Atlanta," Reed says proudly. "Atlanta has got a great animation community. We've learned to make [cartoons] in a cost-effective way, which FX also likes."

FX isn't the only one. The dream →

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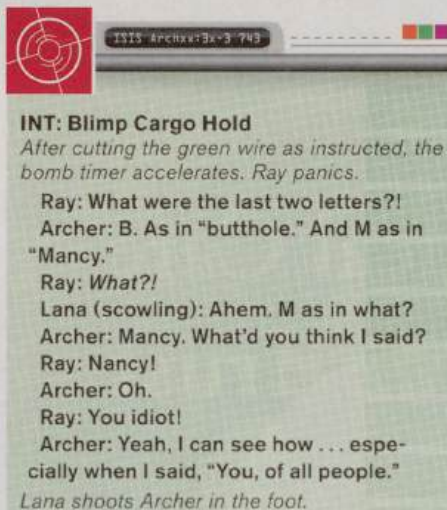
UT★Physicians

Mission: Hysterical

continued from page 26

cast can work remotely by just ducking into a recording studio, receiving Reed's direction via phone patch, and be out of the booth in just a few hours. And while voiceover is an entirely different discipline, most actors jump at the chance to flex a different form of acting muscle. Voice acting takes away all the usual tics and tricks of the body, limiting you to one instrument and, while not every actor has the chops to pull it off, many enjoy the freedom that it provides, as well as the challenge.

Archer's credits reveal hires as shrewdly planned as the jokes, with celebrity guest stars in witty bouts of elbow-nudging, in-the-know stunt casting. *Reno 911* dork-studs Thomas Lennon and Ben Garant padded their previous gay-for-pay résumés by queening it up as gay assassins. Ron Perlman went against his hetero stud iconography by playing a Cuban queer. Jessica Walter's *Arrested De-*



INT: Blimp Cargo Hold

After cutting the green wire as instructed, the bomb timer accelerates. Ray panics.

Ray: What were the last two letters?!

Archer: B. As in "butthole." And M as in "Mancy."

Ray: What?!

Lana (scowling): Ahem. M as in what?

Archer: Mancy. What'd you think I said?

Ray: Nancy!

Archer: Oh.

Ray: You idiot!

Archer: Yeah, I can see how... especially when I said, "You, of all people."

Lana shoots Archer in the foot.

Archer is Reed's creation, and he not only scripts every episode ("I think I've written all but two of the scripts, probably?") but directs every voice session. On the day we spoke, he had just finished recording Emmy-winner Cranston's dialog for an upcoming episode.

"Yeah, I was kinda starstruck. I forget that I'm supposed to direct people when it's somebody like that. So they'll read their lines, and it'll just be quiet, and they'll be, like, 'Is that okay?' And I'm like, 'Oh yeah, absolutely. Who am I to tell you? It's great! Let's move on!'"

In this way, he's still very much the young kid running around the halls of Cartoon Network, simply thrilled with the proximity to the animation catalog Ted Turner acquired

for a song in the '90s. And though he still lives and works in Atlanta, he's no longer in some midnight animated ghetto where the only "special" guest star willing to work with him is Erik Estrada. Now Reed has the prestige of a hit and the purse strings of FX, two attributes that attract a very different thespian clientele.

When he was first looking for the role of Malory, the call went out for a "Jessica Walter" type. In no time, Walter's agent rang him up and asked, "How about Jessica?" With Walter on board, others eagerly climbed on. Benjamin, Tyler, and Parnell all signed up for ISIS duty. Judy Greer auditioned for the role of Cheryl when the

role was still a walk-on.

"The running gag was going to be that Archer kept getting Malory's secretaries pregnant, and they would just wipe their memories and dump them on the street. But then Judy came in and read for the part, and we re-wrote the pilot because we thought, *Oh my God, we got Judy Greer. Yes, please.*"

Archer gives Reed the caché to work with movie stars and personal geek heroes alike, flying down to Jupiter, Florida, to record Reynolds in the star's hometown, or casting nerd icon and gay statesman George Takei.

"Oh yeah, he was *fantastic!*" says Reed, his voice approaching warp speed. "He plays this Yakuza boss and uses this super-scary voice. He sounds like the meanest dude in the world. When you see it, you won't even believe it's George Takei. He sounds like what you think the devil would sound like."

Archer is, of course, not for everyone. But Howard Stern's go-to gay sees nothing inappropriate with the show's late-night humor.

"Offended?" a surprised Takei asks. "Why on earth would I be offended? I find the show very funny. The scripts are just brilliant. And Adam is wonderful."

There is something about Archer that Takei did take issue with, however.

"My only regret is not being able to work with that extraordinary cast," he says in his river-deep, almost Shakespearean tone.

"I mean, Judy Greer. Have you seen *The Descendants*? Oh, you *must*."



INT: Ray's Hotel Suite - Day

When no rooms are available in Monte Carlo, Ray offers to share his suite with Lana and Malory.

Malory: No. I am not sharing a room with you.

Ray: No, I am sharing it with *you*, and it's the last one in the hotel. No view, but it's got two queens.

Malory: Where is the other one? Greasing up in the bathroom?

Gayest show on television? Bullseye.

Archer airs new episodes on Thursdays at 9 p.m. central time on FX.

Steven Foster is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.



Voices of experience: Burt Reynolds (above) plays himself, and Jessica Walter (right, of *Arrested Development* fame) plays Malory, Archer's mother.



PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANK MCELROY FOR F&A

velopment spouse Jeffrey Tambor shows up as one of her character's many lovers. This season will feature Bryan Cranston, George Takei, Patrick Warburton, David Cross, and, playing himself, Burt Reynolds—on whom both Archer and Reed both have an enormous mancrush.

"I'm crazy for Reynolds," swoons Reed. "I think we've talked about him in every episode we've ever done. I'm nuts for him. Growing up, if the ABC Sunday Night movie was *Hooper* or *Gator*, I was not doing my homework."

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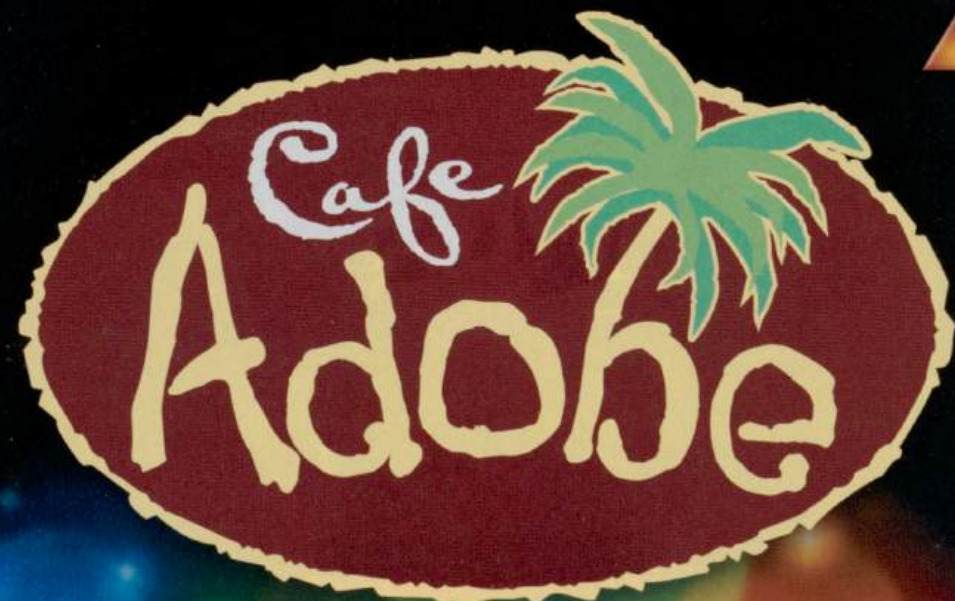


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In the Pink

Comedian **SUZANNE WESTENHOEFER** helps Lesbian Health Initiative Houston celebrate milestone anniversaries at Valentine gala

by Nancy Ford

Twenty years ago as the gay community was nearly exclusively focused on the fight against HIV/AIDS, a group of concerned Houston lesbians recognized the need to identify and respond to health threats facing their own community, like breast cancer, depression, and overall lack of medical services. From their efforts, Lesbian Health Initiative was born. Ten years later those same women, with the assistance of many more, recognized the need to raise big money to support their mission. That's when LHI's annual Celebration of Love was born.

"This is such an important annual event for LHI and the LGBT women we serve, as well as for the LGBT community and our supporters," says Liz James, LHI's chief executive officer. "We're expecting another sellout crowd!"

James estimates that 400ish women will be in attendance at LHI's chief fundraiser supporting the group's bi-annual, lifesaving health fairs. Houston Mayor Annise Parker and First Lady Kathy Hubbard are expected to be among the revelers.

The milestone double-anniversary event is scheduled February 11 at DoubleTree Hotel Houston Downtown, and honors Dorothy Weston Gibbons, co-founder and chief →



Hell on wheels: Lesbian Health Initiative Houston presents its 2012 Celebration of Love Gala, with dinner, dancing, and entertainment by legendary lesbian comedian Suzanne Westenhoefer. Among other items, the gala's silent auction/raffle offers a Vitacci Retro 50cc four-stroke scooter. Raffle tickets are available from LHI members (\$10 for one ticket, or three for \$25); winner need not be present to win.

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In the Pink

continued from previous page

executive officer of The Rose, a long-term breast-health provider for women who rely on LHI's services.

"LGBT women's lives have been and will continue to be saved through the mammograms and other breast-health services provided through and with the LHI/Rose partnership," James says.

With cocktails, a formal dinner, dancing to DJ Melle Mel, and Austin-based singer-songwriter Ginger Leigh emceeing, James promises "an elegant, entertaining, and fun event."

Making the evening even more special, acclaimed comedian Suzanne Westenhoefer returns to headline the gala's entertainment.

In 1991, Westenhoefer made history by being the first openly gay or lesbian comedian on television while appearing on an episode of the daytime talk show hosted by Sally Jesse Raphael—a distinction most people believe was achieved much later by Ellen DeGeneres or Rosie O'Donnell.

"I like to think that I got to open some doors, and I hope I get to open some more," Westenhoefer says modestly. "There are people who think that Ellen DeGeneres was the first openly gay comedian. Kate Clinton must be somewhere weeping!"

Westenhoefer long ago stopped trying to make sense of the historical rewrite. "It is what it is," she says in a recent conversation with *OutSmart*. "I just want the opportunity to keep working and to keep going with the message."

"It is what it is," she repeats, chuckling. "Sometimes the people who go first lay the pavement, and then get walked over."

If Westenhoefer harbors any residual bitterness, she is masterful at concealing it.

"I'm just glad I still get to work, and this is my job, and I love it," she reasons. "It used to bother me that it felt like Ellen was seemingly the only openly gay person ever. Now I'm just glad that she's on every day and Middle America loves her. That part makes her extraordinary for our community, and you know it and I know it. So I have to just let it go."

Westenhoefer's ability to "let it go" serves her well from a professional perspective.

"I've had such a ridiculous last two years," she says. "I've been through a breakup, divorce, back surgery," the comic says, blithely checking off her sources of new material. "My show is all over the place right now."

This is not the first time Westenhoefer

has brought her show to LHI's annual gala. She's visited Houston several times in support of it, as well as other LGBT causes.

"I'm a sucker for a good fundraiser," she says. "And now, especially as I get older, and my friends and my mom and my gay sister get older—[with] lesbian health stuff and women's health, how do you say no?"

"I don't know how you can write this without making me sound like the biggest cheese ball ever," Westenhoefer continues, "but at my heart I'm still that activist girl in my ACT UP T-shirt. I'm still, very deeply, a feminist."

"I know right now I don't sound like a fun-loving comedian, and I hate that, but it's really true! I am that person who every single day believes that we can still do something to change things and we should never stop."

"I'm that person," she repeats. "Isn't that awful? But then I get onstage, and I'm so skeptical. That's what makes me the comic."

Prior to her LHI gig, Westenhoefer talks with *OutSmart* about television, her bachelorette status, and this job she loves so much.

Nancy Ford: Did you know that LHI is raffling an adorable pink scooter at the dance that will go perfectly with your current press photos?

Suzanne Westenhoefer: Is it a scooter or is it a Vespa? I don't know the difference anyway. Isn't there one you have to get a motorcycle license for?

Probably. This one is a Vitacci Retro 50cc, four-stroke scooter [valued at \$1,450, courtesy of Apollo Scooters]. Is it possible you're just making words up?

It is possible, but in this case I'm not. The dance is going to be a lot of fun. And what's hotter than a lesbian on a little pink scooter?

Very little. However, for me, I need to see a big lesbian on a nice Harley. There's a very good possibility that I'm a femme bottom. [Both laugh] One of my best friends and her partner in New Jersey are Harley Davidson girls. I've never been on any of them. I'm an all-talk-and-no-action girl from way back.

So, speaking of no action, you're single now, right? That's something new.

[Laughs] This is my first time, since I was a gay girl in 1981, living alone. My first time ever. It's interesting, very interesting. I understand now why lesbians who →

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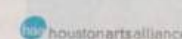
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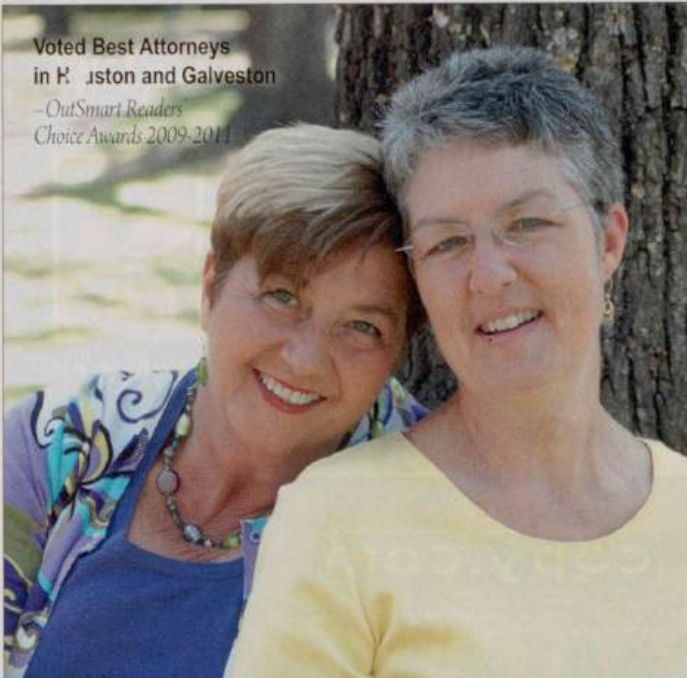
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In the Pink

continued from page 33

live alone get a little weird and get so many cats.

[Laughs] Oh, don't become a multiple cat lesbian. Please don't!

I'm not. So far. I'm just saying I can see how it can happen so quickly.

You've been doing stand-up for a long time. Is it easier to do out comedy, now that so many people are doing it, or more challenging?

Honestly, I think it's becoming more challenging, because you can't just say 'I'm openly gay' and that gets you in the door. You've got to be as funny as every other comic. I think there was a time when just being an openly gay comic got you work, and now that's not the way it is anymore. Now, you've got to compete with everyone else and be just as good.

I think that's good for us, you know what I mean? You really have to be able to bring it now, no matter what your thing is. If you're gay or black or Latino, it doesn't matter anymore.

It's kind of like the proliferation of gay characters on TV now—

Yes, they're not quite the same old stereotypes. And when they are stereotypes, they're like any other one.

So, we're not so special anymore?

I liked it when we were special. I thought that was fun. I miss that part of it.

It's like we've activist-ed ourselves right out of jobs.

Well, out of being special. I liked it when the Pride Parade was an actual march and it counted for something. That kind of thing.

Speaking of TV, have you ever considered doing a reality TV show?

I've tried everything; we never give up. It's a straight person's world, television is, and in the gay person's [television] world, I think we know [the programming] is mostly what appeals to straight people and boys. It's just that way.

So let's start a lesbian TV network!

I am not an entrepreneur. I say this all the time: I'm not a producer, but if you gather up the money and you create it, I'm there. And I'll even help you find some smart people to run it. But I don't have that entrepreneurial spirit. You know, there are women—and I have great admiration for them—who are, like, "Let's start a compa-

ny!" I'm the person who says, "Go for it! See ya later!" I'm a comic. That's what I do.

Have you ever been asked to do a show that you've turned down for political reasons?

I don't think so. And it's not the reverse of that—it's not because I did it anyway. The only thing I have been asked to do, and continue to be asked to do, is to make my act either completely not gay, or a lot less gay in order to get on some seriously awesome national television. But ultimately in my mind, while that exposure would be great, it kind of ruins the whole idea of what I did in the first place.

Well, it's not who you are.

It's like a step a backwards. It upsets my agent badly [laughs], but that's the whole point of what I'm saying and what I'm doing. The whole idea of Pride. The whole idea of not hiding.

So it is true that I'm missing, and have missed, some pretty major television opportunities—I'm not going to pretend. They'll say, "Well, you don't have to talk about your relationship or being gay. Just do stuff about your dog or your cat or regular stuff about travel—you know, in other words, just be generic." But I can't do that because the whole point is that people see, even if I'm generic, that—guess what?—I'm a big ol' lez, too.

I've never been in the closet for anybody. I'm not going to start now. It's not going to happen.

I turned 50 this year; I am not a fool. Obviously, I realized that I probably stunted my career. I like to call it the Pink Ceiling. I may have reached the Pink Ceiling because of it. I'm just glad there are people who get it.

But I have the best job in the world, you know what I mean? Look at what I do: I travel. People take care of me. I love meeting new people. I get paid just to stand up and make people laugh. Are you f--king kidding me? How is that not the world's greatest job? I pretty much call my own shots, I don't have to do the nine-to-five thing of the corporate intrigue, the corporate nightmare—

You're starting to piss me off.

I know. But I have a great job and I'm not going to bitch about it.

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Uncivil Behavior

The Fight for Marriage Equality Continues

by Josef Molnar

Photo by Kristin Korpos

With more and more states granting same-sex marriage rights to LGBT couples, it might be easy to think that federal gay marriage rights are right around the corner. But with the existence of the federal Defense of Marriage Act, making that critical leap from state recognition of married couples to federal recognition will be much more difficult. In Texas, which passed its own constitutional amendment denying state recognition of same-sex marriages, simply getting state recognition will be a huge battle for same-sex couples.

The Foundation for Family and Marriage Equality (FFME) was founded 10 years ago in Houston, and is celebrating its first decade this month. Barry Ouellette, president of FFME, says the group's mission is to promote marriage rights for LGBT couples and educate the public about what that means and how it helps to stabilize same-sex relationships.

"Even in the gay community, I'm surprised how many people don't understand the federal rights and protections that come with marriage," says Ouellette. "From Social Security survivor's benefits to medical and family leave for couples to adoption rights—all of [these benefits] are given to straight married couples, but not to gay [married] couples. . . . Most of us grow up and see our parents or other couples together, and, for some, we see the love and commitment they share," he says. "And we want that, and we picture ourselves doing that, and everyone understands that desire. We just want to be free to love the person we want to love, and marry them."

Ouellette explains that FFME's goals don't conflict with the goals of social conservatives in the U.S. who say same-sex marriage threatens traditional marriages. "If they want to protect the institution of marriage, I would think they would want people to get married," he says. "Only about 51 percent of people [18 years and older] in the U.S. are married now, which is down from 72 percent in the '60s. We can boost those numbers."

He pointed to a growing acceptance of LGBT people and quoted a recent poll that



Teresa Lassak (l) and Cecilia Clifford were married on October 15 of last year in Boston, Massachusetts.

says that more than half of Americans support same-sex marriage rights. The definition of marriage, he says, is evolving further away from its traditional origins, when it was mostly considered a financial and political transaction between wealthy families.

"There have been many different definitions of marriage over the centuries," he says. "At one time, women were considered property after marriage and what they had went to their husbands. No one is saying we should preserve that part of marriage."

The Foundation for Family and Marriage Equality has come a long way since its early years, says Jerry Simoneaux, a cofounder and organizer of the group. He says it started as a protest, pointing out the fact that immigration rights for straight married couples were not extended to gay couples. The lack of legal protections often meant that many bi-national couples were torn apart when one was deported, or placed a social and economic burden on one partner to support the other. →

Timeline of Foundation for Family and Marriage Equality (FFME) Activities throughout the Past Decade:

2002 – FFME was founded and performed the first public same-sex wedding ceremony in Texas.

2003 – The FFME wedding ceremony was briefly interrupted by a bomb threat. Clergy from many different faiths presided.

2004 – The FFME protest at the Harris County Clerk's Office in downtown Houston, with same-sex couples lining up to ask for

marriage licenses, was met by opposition protesters.

2005 – Wedding ceremony and County Clerk's Office protests and demonstrations continued. Other educational events were introduced.

2006 – Wedding ceremony, County Clerk's Office protests, and other events continued.

2007 – Previous year's events continued, and

marchers participated in the Houston Pride Parade and Festival.

2008 – The beginning of a downtown march and demonstration from the County Clerk's Office to Houston City Hall. Pride Parade float was built with the theme "All Families Are Equal."

2009 – Wedding ceremony, County Clerk's Office marriage license protest, downtown march and

demonstration at City Hall, and other activities continued.

2010 – County Clerk's Office marriage license protest, downtown march and demonstration at City Hall, and participation in the Pride festival.

2011 – County Clerk's Office marriage license protest, downtown march and demonstration at City Hall, and RMCC Marriage Day.

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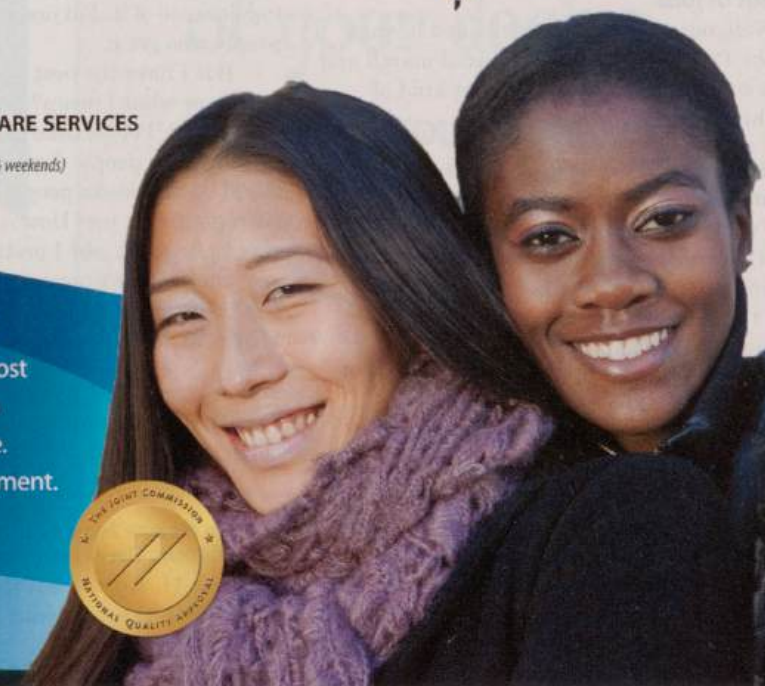
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Marriage Equality continued from previous page

"We also wanted to showcase the different religions and how they were all in agreement that gay couples can be married, but the government was turning its back on these couples," Simoneaux says.

In 2002, the group partnered with the National Freedom to Marry Week organizers, who typically choose the week between Valentine's Day and President's Day. In that first year, before Facebook and Twitter, Simoneaux and the other organizers relied on community bulletin boards, such as Brandon Wolf's Lone Star Advocates group, Yahoo!, and other organizations. It also involved a lot of face-to-face networking to make the 2002 event a success.

"About 50 couples [took part in our wedding ceremony] that first year, and the media covered it, and we got a lot of publicity," Simoneaux says.

The next year's event brought a bomb threat, but since then the idea of same-sex marriage rights has gained traction across the U.S.

"We've come a long way since the bomb threats and protests," Ouellette says.

"Now when we march through downtown, people honk their horns for us, so it's definitely improved. We have a lot more support from people."

The FFME now wants to extend its outreach to gay student groups as a way to show that long-term same-sex relationships are possible.

"We have some couples who have been together for years, and we have them come in and talk with parents and kids about what those couples have been through and what makes a marriage," Ouellette says.

The overall goal, however, is to keep pushing for same-sex marriage rights, especially for couples who can't afford to have a lawyer draft documents giving each other rights that a federal civil marriage law would allow.

"Marriage is important for people who don't have a lot of money, because of the federal rights they can get," Ouellette says. "Even if someone doesn't agree with the institution of marriage for gay people, they should support [the idea] that we have a right to protect our families and each other, as partners should."

For more information about the Foundation for Family and Marriage Equality and to volunteer, visit familymarriageequality.org or e-mail info@familymarriageequality.org.

familymarriageequality.org.

Josef Molnar is a frequent contributor to OUTSMART.

2012 "FREEDOM TO MARRY WEEK" EVENTS

Feb. 12 • 2 p.m. 10th Anniversary Texas's Big Gay Wedding Celebration

Couples who would like to get married can register at familymarriageequality.org and should arrive no later than 1 p.m. Ceremony starts at 2 p.m., with a reception following at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, 2025 West 11th St.

Feb. 14 • 11:30 a.m. Downtown Valentine's Day Protest and March

Protest begins at 11:30 a.m. at the County Clerk's Office, 201 Caroline St. Couples should arrive in time to apply for marriage licenses at noon. March through downtown to Houston City Hall, 901 Bagby St., immediately after the protest. Demonstration from 12:45 to 1:30 p.m. All are invited to participate in a mock-marriage ceremony. Protesters are encouraged to wear wedding attire for the march and demonstrations.

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We Got Married by Marene Gustin

These couples may not have gotten married in a fever, but they certainly got married out of state. Here are their thoughts on how and why they did it and how they feel about the state of Texas not recognizing their unions



Teresa Lassak (r) and Cecilia Clifford with the Boston Red Sox's mascot, Wally.



Teresa Lassak & Cecilia Clifford

Teresa Lassak and Cecilia Clifford were married on October 15 of last year in Boston, Massachusetts. Lassak, a geophysicist, and Cecilia Clifford, who works for a nonprofit, met more than five years ago when Lassak was a graduate student in Arizona. In 2009, she got a job offer from an oil company in Houston.

"We always said the one place we didn't want to live was in Texas," says Lassak. "So of course that's where we ended up."

After years of living on a student budget, they took their first vacation to Boston in 2010. When they returned, Clifford said, "We really need to get married, and we need to do it there."

And so they did. They hired 14 Stories, a LGBT wedding-planning

service to hire local vendors and help them through the legal process in Massachusetts. After days of rain, they woke up the morning of the wedding and found blue skies and perfect weather, so the outdoor wedding at the Fairmount Hotel in the Back Bay was on.

It was a moving, intimate affair. Lassak, a huge Red Sox fan, even got the mascot Wally to attend the reception.

"We wanted to get married, because we want to start a family," Lassak says. "But it really hasn't changed our relationship much. Except I tell her it's going to cost her a lot more to get rid of me now, because we'd have to go back to Boston to get a divorce!"

"But it is annoying that Texas doesn't recognize our marriage. That's one of the reasons we didn't want to move here." →

Tony Carroll & Dr. Bruce Smith

Psychotherapist Tony Carroll and dentist Bruce Smith share not only their offices in a Montrose bungalow, they also share their lives. And they've been legally married not once but twice.

"Some friends of ours wanted to go to Toronto to get married right after they legalized it in 2003," says Dr. Smith. "They asked us to be their best men."

As it turned out, both couples got married in a private room at a restaurant where they later dined and received several bottles of champagne from other diners who heard they had just married.

"At first it was more about the politics," Dr. Smith says. "But afterwards it was very emotional. It felt really good to introduce Tony as my husband."

"It had a much wider impact than we expected," adds Carroll, "both emotionally and when dealing with bankers and insurance people."

Then, last year when New York legalized same-sex marriages, they decided they wanted a marriage license from their home country and were wed there on November 28, exactly eight years to the day after their first wedding.

But even with two valid licenses, their home state still doesn't recognize their union.

"I'm old enough to remember the civil rights movement," says Carroll. "And it feels just like that. We're being discriminated against. But I think there will be court cases coming. I think Texas will have to recognize same-sex marriages one day."



Dentist Bruce Smith (l) and psychotherapist Tony Carroll got married on November 28 in New York.

William Flowers & Jim Evans

William Flowers and Jim Evans met at a support group for gay men who had been married to women and had children with them, at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church in 2007. By 2009 they knew they wanted to make a permanent union, and so they married legally in a small Connecticut town in 2010.

"To me marriage isn't just about being committed to each other," says Jim Evans, a family practice attorney. "It was important for our children and church members to see that we take our relationship seriously. We're not just boyfriends—we are in a permanent relationship."

You may remember Evans and Flowers from the September *OutSmart* article detailing the custody battle where the Hon. Charley E. Prine Jr., an associate judge for the 309th District Court and a former Regional Political Director of the Republican National Committee, issued a ruling stating that Flowers could not leave his children alone with any male to whom the kids are not related by "blood or adoption"—a ruling that has stirred many to decry it as a blatantly antigay move. The case is still in the appeals process.

For now, Flowers' three children are allowed to visit, as long as they aren't left alone with Evans.

"It sucks," says Evans. "It's hurtful to us and our children that Texas doesn't recognize our marriage. I was married to a woman for 17 years and, aside from the gender, it's pretty similar being married to William. It's a pretty routine life. He has three kids that visit, I have two. We have two dogs, and William's mom lives with us. It's just a regular home life."

Evans also doubts that Texas will ever voluntarily recognize same-sex marriages performed legally in other states.

"Not in my lifetime," he says. "But I do think the Supreme Court will eventually force Texas and other states to recognize these marriages, just as they forced Southern states in 1967 to recognize marriages between different races in *Loving v. Virginia*. I think that's just a matter of time."



William Flowers (l) and Jim Evans were married in Connecticut in 2010.

Fred Smith & Isaias Gregori Rivas-Guzman Smith

Wilfred Smith met Isaias Gregori Rivas-Guzman at church one day in 2006. It wasn't long before they knew they wanted to marry.

"Isaias is from Mexico," Smith says, "and we're trying to get him citizenship status here, so the attorney thought being legally married might help. We're hoping the judge will consider it." But that wasn't the only reason, Smith says. "It's the full package. We had talked about getting married for so long, we wanted to do it as a recognition of our love."

Smith had found memories of Provincetown in his home state of Mas-

sachusetts with its wonderful beaches and the Pilgrim Monument, so that's where the two tied the knot. And they couldn't be happier. They live in Sugar Land and enjoy going out to movies, dinner and theater, and just staying home with their rescue terrier mix. The only problem in paradise is that Texas doesn't recognize their marriage, and Smith doesn't think the state ever will.

"It's doubtful, in my opinion," he admits. "But I'm getting close to retirement age, and we may just wind up moving back to Massachusetts. The politics here are so backward."



Wilfred Smith (r) and Isaias Gregori Rivas-Guzman went to Provincetown, Massachusetts, to get married.

Donna Rickard & Marti Rickard

Donna Rickard took Marti Rickard's last name the first time they were married at Central Congregational Church on May 12, 2001.

"It wasn't legal, but it was a traditional wedding," says Donna Rickard. "I wore a white dress, and Marti wore a white tux. We had a honeymoon in Provincetown."

And, even though they felt married for all the years after, they decided to make it legal. So, 10 years to the day, they returned to Massachusetts and were legally married on a platform on the Pilgrim Monument.

"We wanted to get married on the beach," says Rickard, "but in May it was too cold."

She describes the experience as very

emotional for both of them, something they really wanted even though their status would not be recognized back home. But the Rickards recognize their union and are so proud of the status that they have the marriage certificate framed and hanging in the living room.

"Even though we count our anniversary from 2001, the second wedding was just very special for us, being able to legally marry," she says.

And now her daughter Belinda is planning an April 2013 to marry her partner, Rene.

"Rene is going in the Army, so my hope is that they will get stationed by then somewhere that they can legally marry as well. That would be wonderful."



Donna Rickard (l) and Marti Rickard got married in Provincetown, Massachusetts, in 2001.

Brad Prichett & Noel Freeman

This politically active duo—Prichett works for the Harris County Democratic Party and Freeman is president of the GLBT Political Caucus here—have been together 10 years. Six years ago Freeman gave Prichett a ring, but they decided not to get married since Texas wouldn't recognize their union.

"Instead of having a big ceremony, we bought a house," Prichett says.

But things changed in 2010 when they were headed to the National Stonewall Convention in Washington DC. Freeman proposed again, and they

were legally married in front of the Jefferson Memorial by the river with "a bunch of tourists and a Boy Scout troop watching." That scoutmaster probably had some explaining to do.

"It really hasn't changed our relationship much, although it's nice to have the wedding pictures in our living room," says Prichett. "But my mom always says she'll probably die before Texas recognizes same-sex marriage, and she's probably right. As a fifth-generation Texan, that's a little upsetting."

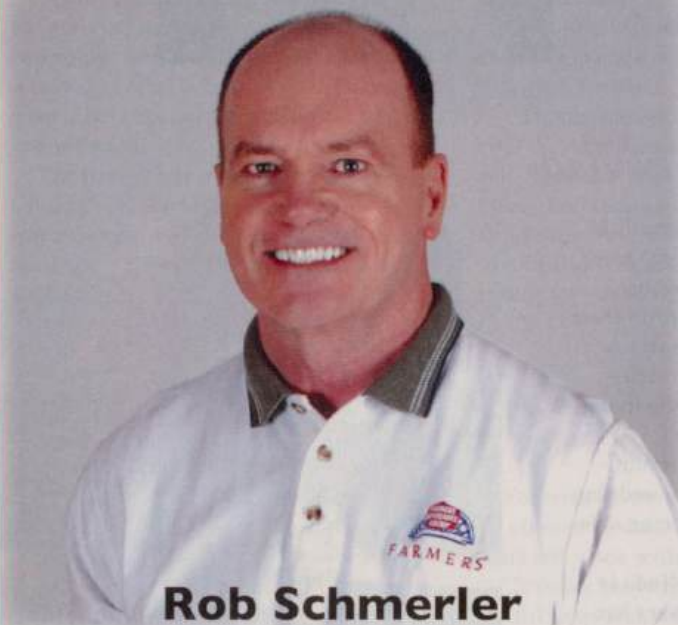


Brad Prichett (l), and Noel Freeman (r) were married by Rev. Bonnie Berger (c) in Washington DC in 2010.

Marene Gustin is a regular contributor to *OUTSMART* magazine.

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A Fight for Justice

John Lawrence and Tyron Garner pass away

by Mitchell Katine

Photo by John Conroy



With liberty and justice for all: Tyron Garner (l) and John Lawrence were "regular men who decided to fight against a terrible injustice through a legal battle that they ultimately won." *INSET: Garner and Lawrence graced the cover of the October 2003 issue of OutSmart magazine.*

John Lawrence recently passed away on November 20, 2011. Tyron Garner passed away in 2006. With the passing of John, the two men who have moved us closer than ever to marriage equality and helped

abolish "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" will unfortunately begin to fade away in history. It is important to remember the role John and Tyron played in the Supreme Court victory that strengthened the right to privacy for all Americans, and the freedom for LGBT

people to live their personal lives with dignity and without government interference.

In 1986, the United States Supreme Court issued a terrible ruling known as the *Bowers v. Hardwick* decision. The *Bowers v. Hardwick* case was brought by a gay man to try to overturn a Georgia statute that made oral sex a crime. To the surprise of many, instead of upholding the civil rights of gay and lesbian individuals, the United States Supreme Court declared that gay and lesbian people would not be protected in their private sexual activity by the United States Constitution. This decision gave states a "green light" to not only further criminalize gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals, but also to use "moral disapproval" as a basis to penalize all persons. From that moment on, LGBT people were legally discriminated against and considered criminals in various settings, such as child custody disputes, employment claims, and political campaigns.

In 1988, John Lawrence and Tyron Garner were arrested in the home of John Lawrence for allegedly engaging in intimate sexual conduct in the privacy of John's apartment. Although this allegation was false, John and Tyron were accused of homosexual behavior, arrested in the middle of the night, and brought to jail. Upon being released from jail, they decided to fight the charges. These two accused defendants were willing to put their names, reputations, and lives on the line to fight the unjust law. By creating a forum that would expose this injustice to the public, John and Tyron made this more than an "individual" fight. It became a platform to have every one of our country's "sodomy laws" put on trial once and for all.

At the time of John and Tyron's arrests, it was appropriate for courts to follow the *Bowers v. Hardwick* decision in dismissing any challenges to penal

continued on page 87



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Miller Time

Young actor stretches sociopathic muscles in 'We Need to Talk About Kevin'

by Lawrence Ferber

Photo by Ian Gavan

Ezra Miller plays a bad, bad boy in *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, director Lynne Ramsay's adaptation of Lionel Shriver's chilling novel about Kevin, a sociopathic teen, and his tormented mother, Eva. As Kevin, Miller exudes undiluted malice—with assist from his exotic, sculpted features—while Tilda Swinton, who helped develop the project with Ramsay (and is credited as an executive producer), turns in another devastating, awards-worthy performance.

Miller's own mother was moved to tears when she saw *Kevin* with him at its Cannes Film Festival world premiere last May. "I never heard her cry this particular way before," Miller recalls, "and it was the first testament to the possibility that the performance and film had been a success."

Mind you, the 18-year-old Miller has played his share of provocative young characters whose antics would inspire premature gray hairs in most parents, including a prep-school kid with a taste for violent Internet porn in 2008's *Afterschool*, a chubby-chasing horndog in 2009's *City Island*, and a gay teen in 2010's *Every Day*.

Via telephone, the New Jersey-born actor, who also plays drums in the band Sons of an Illustrious Father (which recently released their second album, *One Body*), dished about how Swinton measures up as a mom, his June 2011 bust for marijuana possession, and being gay (again) in the upcoming *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*... as well as off-screen. →



Still waters run deep: actor Ezra Miller is captured last October at a screening of *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, a new drama from screenwriter/director Lynne Ramsay, costarring Tilda Swinton. **INSET:** Miller gets appropriately sinister in *We Need to Talk About Kevin*; his performance as a serial killer earned him a pair of supporting-actor nominations in Britain.



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Miller Time

continued from previous page

Lawrence Ferber: You make poor Tilda Swinton's life a misery in *Kevin*. What would it be like to actually have Tilda as your mother?

Ezra Miller: It would be amazing. Honestly, having Tilda as a mother would be a beautiful, lovely, wonderful experience. She has two children and they're absolute angels, really wonderful people, and it seems like they're being raised so right. They stay away from technology, they have vivid imaginations, they play all the time. It would be very dreamy and quite the polar opposite from the relationship our characters had in the film.

Have you had any bad-seed moments in real life?

I remember I put chewing gum in my friend Devon's hair when I was in, I dunno, second grade. I did it for no reason. It was one of those things where you're holding chewing gum in your hand and see the hair and do it. I remember my parents were very horrified. In the exploration of life and your own capacity as human beings, kids naturally discover how to lie and hurt and deceive and manipulate, and have to do it—flex their muscles.

Tilda played another mother in crisis in *The Deep End*, in which her gay son gets caught up with dangerous characters. Did you watch that prior to working with her? I had seen that film before I was considering this one, but didn't refer to it in the work. One of the most important things about working with an actor whose work you know is to forget about that work, to the best of your ability. Those characters and situations are irrelevant. You're creating a story with someone who, in my mind, is a real person to my character. That was just my mother, Eva. [It's natural and easy] to actually detach all associations of other characters she's played, because she carves a lot of distinction into each of the characters she plays.

I read in an interview with Lynne that you were underage and lied about it to get cast in the film.

That is a bold-faced lie! They made a mistake. They just assumed I was of age. There was a sheet in the casting director's office that said, "Write down your birthday if you're under 18," and I wrote down my birthday. I admitted it. They've been trying to blame me for it since. You can't believe everything Lynne Ramsay tells you.

Was that a big problem?

I think they did have to make some accommodations and get a general verbal agreement from me that I would be willing to work any and all hours to make this film possible. I think the initial concern was trying to accommodate the hours [since minors have limited working hours on a low-budget shoot]. But I voiced great determination to be part of this film, and I think that commitment comforted them enough.

You play gay in *Wallflower* as Patrick, older brother to Emma Watson's character and friend to the protagonist, Charlie. What can you tell us about that character?

I can tell you he's an outstanding, charismatic, prideful young lad who has a beautiful ability to transform his circumstance into one of levity. He can make light of any situation, which I came to admire. He almost has this internal mechanism to bring the light out of any given situation.

Does Patrick have a boyfriend?

Yes! He has a boyfriend whom he keeps secret, because the boyfriend's closeted and ashamed. He's the high school quarterback. One of those.

It was nice to see you play a well-adjusted, kind, straight-edge gay kid in *Every Day*.

Right! He was a good, friendly character. People keep telling me I'm always playing one character. There's a range.

When Tom Hardy was asked about whether he had had any gay sexual experiences, he famously said, "Of course, I'm an actor, for f--k's sake." Have you ever had a gay moment in real life?

Of course! Many! I've had many, you know, "happy ending sleepovers" in my early youth. My period of exploration. I think that's essential. Anyone who hasn't had a gay moment is probably trying to avoid some confrontation with a reality in their life.

Do you have some gay moments still to come? Is there any hope for the guys crushing on you?

I'm not sure. Perhaps. I keep my options open. My spectrum remains broad. I've been in love with a lot of girls lately, but that doesn't necessarily suggest anything definite about the future.

In June you were arrested for marijuana possession—about 20 grams of it—and ultimately let off. I was shocked to read about the arrest, mostly because I keep forgetting they actually prosecute people for marijuana possession.

Right! They shouldn't. It's a ridiculous law based on ridiculous things. But I think people are coming around. Medicalization of marijuana is happening in more and more states. Of course, nonviolent drug convictions constitute a lot of what puts people in jail in this country, and the prison-industrial complex is one of our last booming industries. Pot also stands to take a lot of money away from the pharmaceutical industry. It's a painkiller and dopamine inhibitor. It serves all of these functions [that many] harmful, extreme drugs are prescribed to serve. So there's money to be made in the continued illegality of that plant. But I feel no shame. It's a plant. Everybody knows what pot is. And I don't care. It was a very enlightening experience to see the way the chief of police called the media, and it all results in me handing money to a judge in the form of a fine. Yeah—my journey in the legal system.

There's a website dedicated to hotties' mugshots, *Hot and Busted* [hotandbusted.tumblr.com], so perhaps we can at least make sure your mugshot gets up there. Yeah, I hope so. I hope I make that cut.

Lawrence Ferber is a frequent contributor to *OutSmart* magazine.

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Hooray for Hollywood and GCAM

Historical preservation group to auction show-biz stuff and more

by Nancy Ford

Gulf Coast Archive and Museum of LGBT History, or GCAM as it is better known to its fans, is having a purging, of sorts. And those who are collectors of entertainment memorabilia are in for a good time.

On February 19 at the GLBT Cultural Center, an array of enviable show-biz items and more are up for auction, all benefitting the history-sustaining programs of GCAM.

"We aren't calling it the 'Hollywood & DeVine Broadway Lights, & Television Sets Auction and Sale' just because we're fond of long names—although, obviously, we are!" GCAM curator Judy Reeves says.

Bidders should expect to see some interesting, if not downright eclectic, pieces on auctioneer Loyd Powell's auction block.

"From the Broadway aspect, we have a full-sized color poster of *Mame* starring Judy Garland, put out by the company that did that PR back then.

"Now, we all know that she never starred in *Mame* on Broadway, yet here's a poster," Reeves explains. "The story we got was that they made it to the contract-signing paper and the Broadway money pulled out, stating she was too much of a risk for a strong part like that. It was near the end of her career."

Sheet music for songs from many of Garland's Broadway plays including "You Made Me Love You," "Little Nellie Kelly," and "Babes on Broadway"—some of which are autographed—are also to be auctioned.

"It's not all Judy, though," Reeves adds. "We have more sheet music from *Torch Singer* with Claudette Colbert, *Love in the Rough* with Robert Montgomery, and some black-and-white studio shots." A selection of vinyl records in original jackets are also among the auction items.

The auction's Hollywood collection includes a set of seven limited-edition, numbered, *Wizard of Oz* sculptures. "Each is under a glass dome and has the title of a song from the movie, which it plays," Reeves adds.

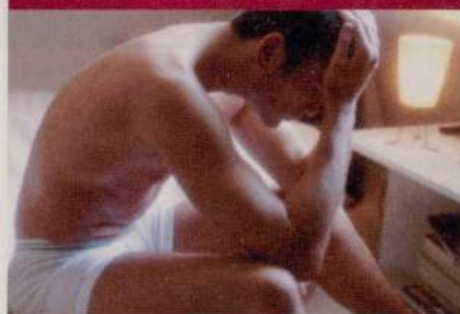
Television-related items include several *Star Trek* limited edition/numbered plates, *Star Trek: Next Generation* film cels, an *All in the Family* collage autographed by actor Jean Stapleton, a Howdy Doody doll, and more.

"We have 11 different pencil-and-ink drawings done by Fred Hinton, circa late 1970s. They are, for lack of a better description, Erté-esque in fashion." One drawing, in particular, has a definite Montrose theme: it depicts Torchy Lane with the phrases "Mary's Lounge," "Houston →



Sold to the highest bidder: among many other items, GCAM's auction includes a *Mame* poster starring Judy Garland (?), a sketch of Torchy Lane by artist Fred Hinton, and a Howdy Doody doll.

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Hooray for Hollywood and GCAM

continued from previous page

Motorcycle Club," and more embedded in the infamous local drag performer's feathered headpiece.

Other works of art include a stained-glass piece by Houston-based artist Jimmy Brown.

Perhaps the most notable among the auction items are two bar tops rescued from the historic, now-closed leather bar, Mary's Naturally. "One will be, hopefully, fully refurbished by the event; the other is in its original condition," Reeves says.

"It is a long and arduous process to clean these pieces and not cause any more damage than is already there. As our leather collection has grown in size, we are also planning to flank the bar tops with some of the vests of those who frequented the place for so many years."

GCAM received many of the auction items from the collection of a community member's grandmother after she passed away.

"We feel this would be a great way to remember the life of someone who really loved history," Reeves says. "Her collection of memorabilia from the Hollywood and Broadway era is immense."

Auction items, such as the Hinton art,

came from former Houston LGBT bookstore owner Larry Lingle, with Reeves herself donating the Oz pieces and Star Trek plates.

"We also have many celebrities of days-gone-by postcards that Jimmy Carper has thrown into the mix just to make it interesting.

"GCAM has a policy that we do not buy/sell/barter/trade for anything, so all of our items come to us as gifts," Reeves adds.

Pieces remaining from Jack Dorlan's "Spectacular Damage" series, which was exhibited last month by GCAM, are also available for purchase.

Reeves says the purpose of the auction is twofold: there's a need, she says, to have shelving in the office for some museum items that either need tender loving care or could too easily be lost.

"We are planning to give that project some priority with some of these funds. There is always the ongoing—the supplies for hanging exhibits, those frames and nails, etc. It can add up. It gets expensive after a while."

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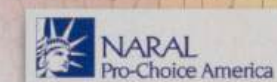
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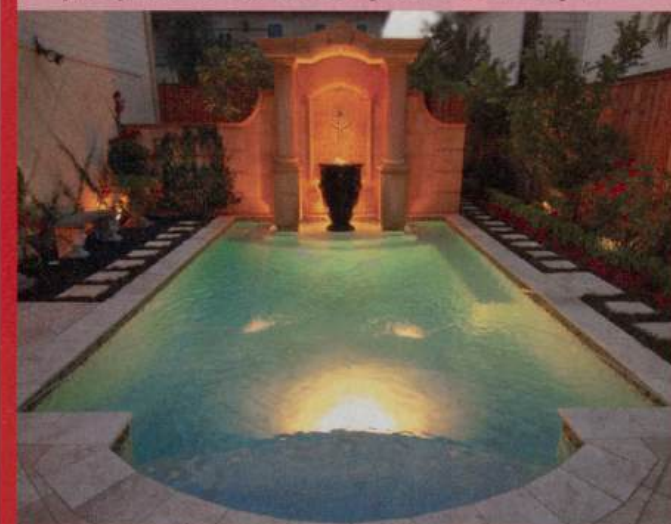
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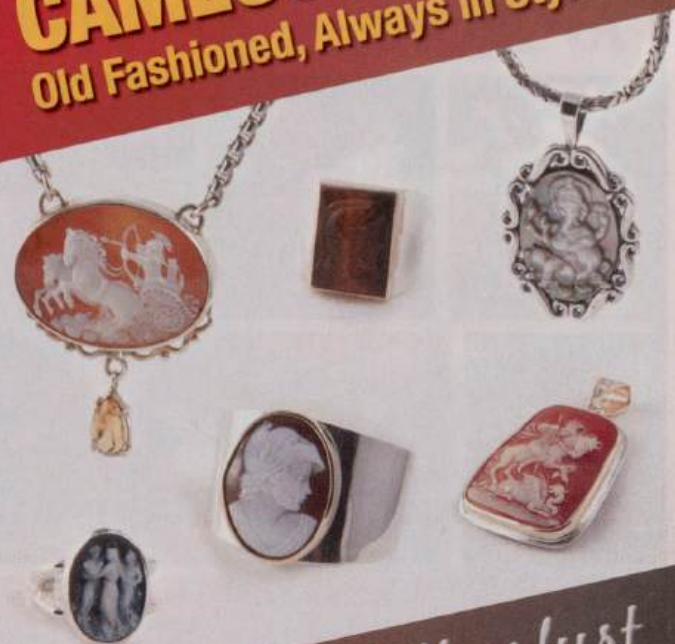
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Last Chance Romance

If Valentine's Day is breathing down your neck (sexy, right?),
OUTSMART comes to your emotional rescue with
some last-minute, foolproof gifts

by Steven Foster

Diffuse Me, Abuse Me

With crackling wooden wicks replacing traditional wax-coated fiber ones, WoodWick gave the candle business a frisky kick-spark. And, yes, there's nothing like a candle to induce romance. But if you want the scent of seduction to permeate your love nest 24/7 without the fire hazard, the WW innovators have done it again. The **WOODWICK SPILL-PROOF DIFFUSER** banishes the unruly, accident-prone sticks of usual diffusers and instead utilizes an ingenious wooden cap to delicately release the aroma in a method that's as subtle as it is beautiful. And at \$25, it's a scentsational steal. Available at Bliss on 19th Street in the Heights.

Jimmy Choo Who?

Fashion can be delicious, but no stiletto this year is as sweet as the one devised by Houston's toniest "by-appointment-only" chocolatier Expressions Fine Chocolate (3535 Wilcrest, between Richmond and Westpark). Their hand-made, entirely edible **DOROTHY'S RUBY SLIPPER** (\$75) is made of solid milk chocolate, coated in crystallized red sugar glitter, and filled with 1/4 pound of mixed truffles in such aphrodisiacal flavors as Chai Tea, Red Wine Raspberry, Champagne, Classic Dark, and White Chocolate Vanilla Bean. This shoe should take care of any Blah-nik gift choices you might be considering. To order, call 713/636-9081.

All Wet

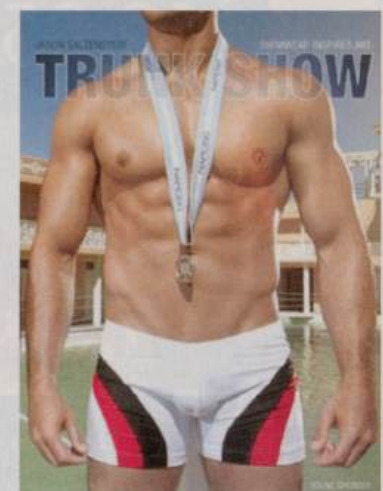
Granted, it's a little chilly to be thinking about swimwear right now. But you can get warmed up to the concept with Jason Salzenstein's tribute to watery wardrobe options, **TRUNK SHOW: SWIMWEAR INSPIRES ART**. Fashionista Salzenstein features sharply observed analysis of the sexiest suit designers in the business along with swooning, luminous photographs of beautiful boys of summer cavorting in swimming pool skivvies. \$32.11, on sale at Amazon.

Playing Your Song

Hannibal Gaddafi once paid \$2 million to homeslice Beyoncé Knowles just to have Mrs. Jay-Z sing at his St. Barts New Year's bash. And for that, the notorious wife-beating →



See, smell, taste, touch: invest in your romantic future with last-minute Love Day gifts, designed to appeal to the most discriminating senses and sensibilities. A few gifts include (clockwise from far left) chocolate vodka, chocolate ruby slipper, an adult virtual convention, a photo book, and condoms.



Last Chance Romance

continued from previous page

Libyan didn't even receive an original song! We've got a more affordable option: enlist the silken-throated services of **DAVID BERKELEY**. This crooner cutie will take your notes about your sweetie, then pen and record an original song about your beloved for a helluva lot less than Sasha's fierce asking price. More information is available on his website (davidberkeley.com), but the smart set will simply check out Berkeley when he appears February 9 at the cool new artspace, Photobooth on Montrose, located in the old dry cleaners next to the original BB's. Sure, you could compose your own tune, but... wait... seriously... could you?

Love in a Glass

Dirty martinis? Yes, please. Citron? Cheers! But enough with throwing any rind, pulp, or seed into the vodka barrel. (Whipped cream? Come on, Stoli, *ostanoviti!*) That said, we swoon over blissfully delicate **VAN GOGH CHOCOLATE VODKA** (\$29/750ml). Like the best partner, it's sweet without being cloying, and shows strength without ever being mean. And, like love, it just gets better with age. Available at fine spirit purveyors everywhere.

Beau Geste

Underwear seems more like a gift for yourself than your significant other, but we're sure neither of you would have a problem with that. **BAYOU BEAU** cruised onto the scene with their Gulf Coast Collection, influenced by the verdant colors found on coastal bayous. Their latest collection, provocatively titled **BAIT AND TACKLE**, sports combinations of black, purple, royal blue, olive green, aqua, and lime. Their graphic, segmented block prints could have been designed by a horny Piet Mondrian. But if you must go Valentine-trite, they do come in red. Visit bayoubeau.com for ordering and nearest retail locations.

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This may be the sexiest innovation in meat-sleeve marketing since incorporating the wrapper teeth-tear into porn. **SIR RICHARD'S CONDOMS** have taken the simplest idea—packaging—to turn up the safe-sex heat. They're 100-percent natural latex, vegan-friendly, and slicked with glycerin-, spermicide- and paraben-free lubricant, of course—but it's their white and matrix-black sleekness, with violet, butterscotch, and emerald coding that makes for a truly great first insertion impression.

The rascal wraps come in Pleasure Dots, Ultra Thin, Classic Ribbed, and, for you showoffs, Extra Large. Available at *Whole Foods, upscale boutiques, and hotels, as well as sirrichards.com.*

Utherworldly & Unconventional

Computers are as much a part of dating now as dowries were in the 7th century and fern bars were in the '70s. Constant sexual revolution has also brought play toys and bedroom gear out of the dark ages. Combine both your virtual and your paraphernalia fetishes with a date to the **ADULT VIRTUAL CONVENTION**. The first "3-D virtual convention" of its kind will bring together adult-entertainment fans indulging their wishes and industry players hawking their wares in a rowdily rendered space. Tight wraps are being kept on what the rooms of the con will look like—how very S&M of them—but the whole thing is put on by social platformer Utherverse, so it shouldn't suck. Just beware—that hot blonde dominatrix you're virtually chatting with just might be a 60-year-old accountant with a wife and three grandkids. February 24–36, go to adultvirtualconvention.com/index.aspx.

Steven Foster is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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Challenge and Celebrate!

Ron Jones believes gay theater has a responsibility to do both

by Donalevan Maines

It's cause for celebration when a veteran theater director surrounds himself with some of the city's brightest talents to take gay theater in Houston to the next level.

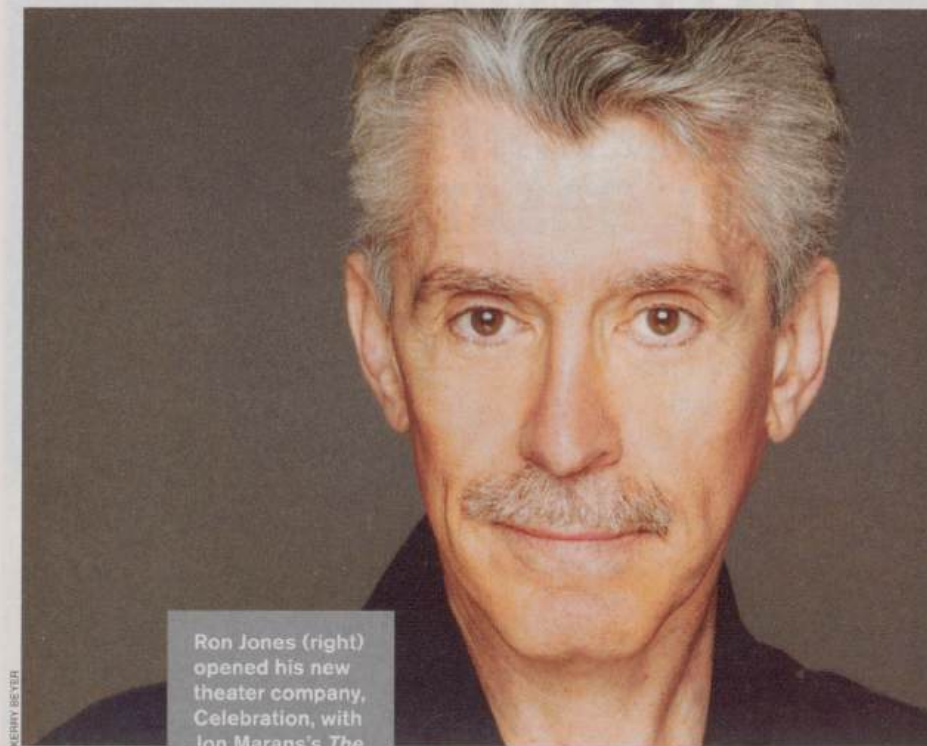
So, of course, Ron Jones christened his new theater company "Celebration."

The dream took flight when Celebration opened on January 19 with Jon Marans's *The Temperamentals*, a Houston premiere that epitomizes the theater's mission of both entertaining and enlightening audiences.

The play brings to life the true story of colorful agitator Harry Hay as he falls in love with costume designer Rudi Gerneich while co-founding the Mattachine Society, the nation's first gay rights organization. Set in early 1950s Los Angeles—almost 20 years before the Stonewall Rebellion—the intimate but intricate play is directed by the prolific Jimmy Phillips, with Steve Bullitt romancing Mitchell Greco as the leads and Jeffrey Dorman, John Dunn, and Rob Flebbe portraying multiple characters involved in the struggle to form a secret society.

"That [gays] were called 'temperamentals' was news to me," says Jones, still excited about things he learned from reading the play in manuscript form before *The Temperamentals* opened in New York City in 2009. With *Ugly Betty*'s Michael Urie as Gerneich, the docudrama played to packed houses, winning a Drama Desk Award for best ensemble cast, a Lucille Lortel Award for outstanding lead actor, and nominations for outstanding new play in the Lucille Lortel, Outer Critics Circle, and GLAAD honors.

"I've been thinking about doing this for a long time," Jones says



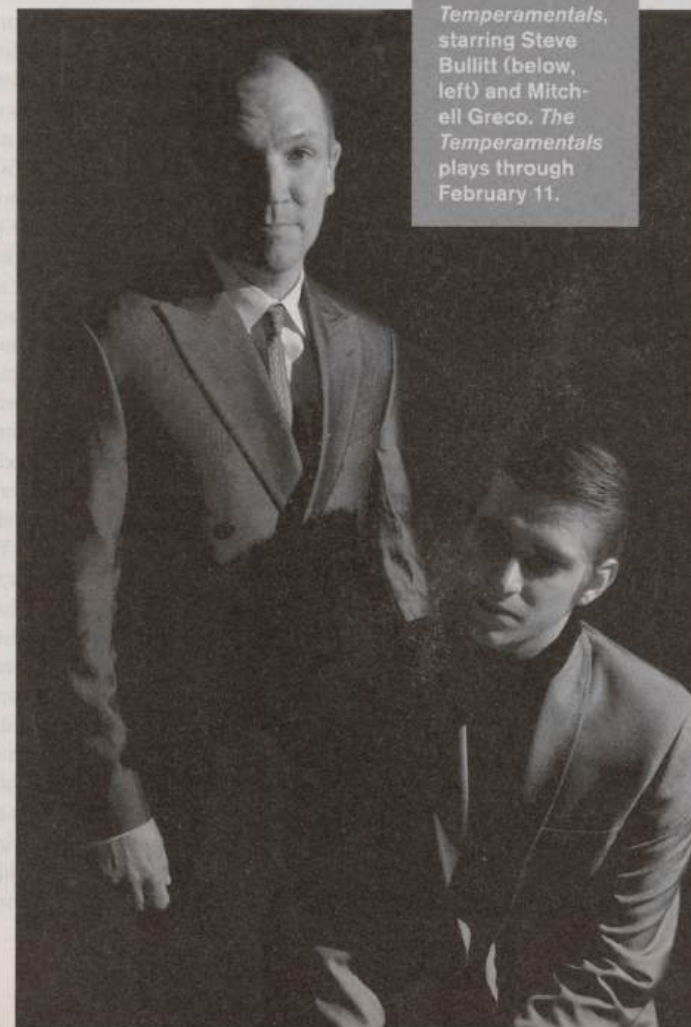
Ron Jones (right) opened his new theater company, Celebration, with Jon Marans's *The Temperamentals*, starring Steve Bullitt (below, left) and Mitchell Greco. *The Temperamentals* plays through February 11.

of creating a semi-professional theater company devoted to issues of importance to the LGBT community. "I have a life in the theater, and I want to make an additional contribution to my community."

At 63, nearing retirement after a storied career in higher education, he adds, "Now I celebrate who I am. Every play is a celebration of life. Every play has a story to celebrate who we are and celebrate our experiences. It's time to revel in what we have to offer."

As word got out that Jones intended to follow up his decades of work in theater with Celebration, thespians familiar with his work encouraged him to go for it. The dye was cast when the opportunity arose for Jones to present his first productions at Barnevelder Movement/Arts Complex on Preston Street. "It's well-equipped. It's in a good part of town. There is ample parking. In the beginning, it's a matter of patrons knowing we exist. A lot of that will be by word of mouth," he explains.

Jones has long been a magnet for attracting adventures in the theater, including a highlight about 30 years ago when he directed a Tennessee Williams drama, *A Lovely Sunday for Creve Coeur*, at Theatre Suburbia. The legendary playwright →



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Challenge and Celebrate

continued from previous page

flew in from New York to attend that opening. "It was in January and the temperature was 80 degrees," recalls Jones, "but he arrived in a stretch limousine with 16 people, including a bodyguard who was 6' 4", tremendously handsome, and Tennessee Williams stepped out in a full-length coyote fur coat!"

Jones said that Williams enjoyed the show and stayed around afterward, complimenting the cast and drinking champagne.

Last November, Jones had another brush with Tennessee Williams's work when he saw a production of the obscure one-act *Now the Cats with Jewelled Claws* starring Mink Stole, who has appeared in all of John Waters' movies. "I was in New York to see *Follies*. It was playing at La MaMa, and I just had to see it," Jones laughs. "It was visually terrific, but I didn't understand a word of it. Everything was a non sequitur!"

Jones has other ideas for future shows at Celebration, which will move to Obsidian Art Space in August.

"After *The Temperamentals*, I would like to do a musical—perhaps *bare: A Pop Opera*," he says. "I have some exciting productions planned." Among the scripts he's considering are Alexi Kaye Campbell's *The Pride* ("a dramatic comedy that alternates between 1958 and 2008 to examine the changing attitudes in male sexuality"), *The Beebo Brinker Chronicles* by Kate Moira Ryan and Linda S. Chapman ("based on the 1960s lesbian pulp-fiction novels by Ann Bannon which celebrate the era when 'the love that dares not speak its name' began breaking all the rules"), and Terrence McNally's *The Lisbon Traviata* ("part of the three-play cycle that deals with gay men who adore opera; *Master Class* is also a part of this trilogy").

A prolific reader of plays ("I hardly read novels anymore"), Jones also hopes to produce *The Judas Kiss* by David Hare ("which portrays what might have happened behind closed doors between playwright Oscar Wilde and his considerably younger lover, Lord Alfred Douglas"), *Thrill Me* by Stephen Dolginoff ("a musical drama based on the relationship between the infamous gay couple Nathan Leopold and Richard Lowe, who committed one of the most renowned murders of the 20th century"), *Xanadu* ("the Broadway musical based on the 1970s Olivia Newton John movie of the same name"), *Take Me Out* by Richard Greenberg ("the fascinating story of an astounding black baseball player who reveals that he is gay"), and *Nasty*

Little Secrets by Lainie Robertson ("portrays the tumultuous relationship between randy British playwright Joe Orton and his lover, Ken Halliwell, which will run in repertory with Orton's *Entertaining Mr. Sloane*, a raucous comedy about an older gay man who romances a young hunk").

"I am also negotiating for the rights to *Taboo*, the musical based on the life of Boy George," Jones allows.

"The mission of Celebration is to present quality theater to reflect the life experiences of diverse sections of the community through contemporary and alternative lifestyle themes and subjects," says Jones. "Our productions will explore such complex and varied concepts as relationships, family, prejudice, and values."

"We strive to present productions of plays and musicals that challenge audiences artistically, create cultural bonds and encourage positive awareness, acceptance, and tolerance through the performing arts."

Forty years ago, Jones acted in his first play, Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children*, at the University of Houston. He was directed by the legendary Cecil Pickett, with actor Dennis Quaid also in the cast. "Marietta Marich, who was the first lady of Houston theater, saw me and cast me in a show at the Dean Goss Dinner Theater," he says.

Jack Heifner's *Patio/Porch* at Theatre Suburbia was Jones's directing debut. "Over the years, I have directed plays of every genre, with no particular emphasis on subject matter, in many of Houston's theater venues," says Jones. "Of course, I have also acted in and directed plays that embrace a gay sensibility. Now, I feel that Houston is perhaps ready to support a theater company that will bring a sense of pride about being who we are. To me, this is something to celebrate!"

"I look at it as a means of giving back to my communities, gay and theatrical!"

The opening night performance of *The Temperamentals* benefitted the GLBT Community Center, and the January 20 performance benefitted Bayou City Performing Arts, said Jones. A special "industry" performance was presented on January 23 on a pay-as-you-like basis for artists and performers who brought a résumé and photo.

The Temperamentals opened on January 19 following a preview the evening before. Performances continue at 8 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays, and 3 p.m. on Sundays through February 11. All tickets are \$30 and can be purchased online at celebrationtheatrehouston.com. For more information, call 832/303-4758.

Donalevan Maines is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.



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Playing It Straight

Gay actors at Main Street Theater embrace straight roles

by Donalevan Maines

Joel Sandel would rather be kissing a man.

But rehearsing the role of 19th-century Russian literary critic Vissarion Belinsky, he leans down and plants one on the actress playing a prostitute in Belinsky's bed. "The basic impulse, it's the same," he shrugs. "What's the big deal? It's lips."

What is a big deal is Sandel starring in Tom Stoppard's epic trilogy *The Coast of Utopia* at Main Street Theater. No other theater in the country has attempted to

produce the work since it sailed into Lincoln Center in 2006 and broke the record for the most Tony Awards for a play, garnering seven of Broadway's highest honors including three design prizes and a win for Billy Crudup as Belinsky.

Spanning the years 1833 to 1866, *The Coast of Utopia* follows four men who came of age under Tsar Nicholas I and whose passions for political and intellectual change were mirrored in their personal pursuit of love and happiness. As the arcs of their lives intersect repeatedly, the seeds of the great social revolutions of the late 19th century are sown.

Sandel and two other gay men—Joe Kirkendall and Seán Patrick Judge—play three of the four leading roles in Main Street's production, the biggest project in its 36-year history. The fourth guy, who isn't gay... I can't remember his name. Oops.

"What's interesting to me is that not too long ago there was a discus-

sion about whether a gay man can be believable in a straight role," says Judge, referring to a columnist questioning out actor Sean Hayes romancing Kristin Chenoweth in the 2009 Broadway revival of *Promises, Promises*. "I suppose it could be a problem if the actor is effeminate, very 'pretty-pretty' and fine-boned—but he wouldn't be cast anyway," adds Judge. "It's really a non-issue for us. The only time it might come up is when we're sitting around and somebody brings up a hot celebrity, and we say, 'Oh yeah, he's really good-looking.'"

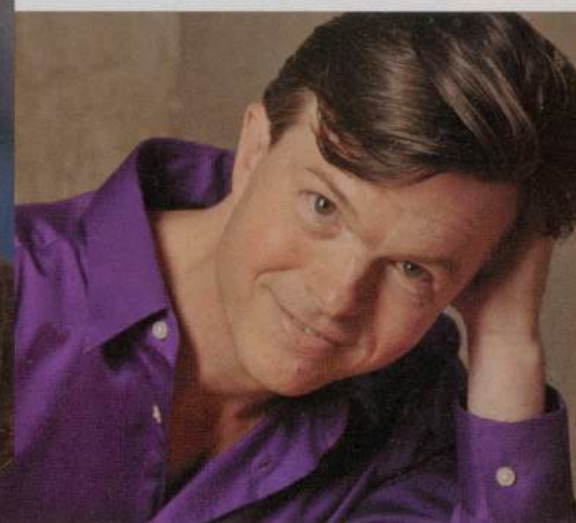
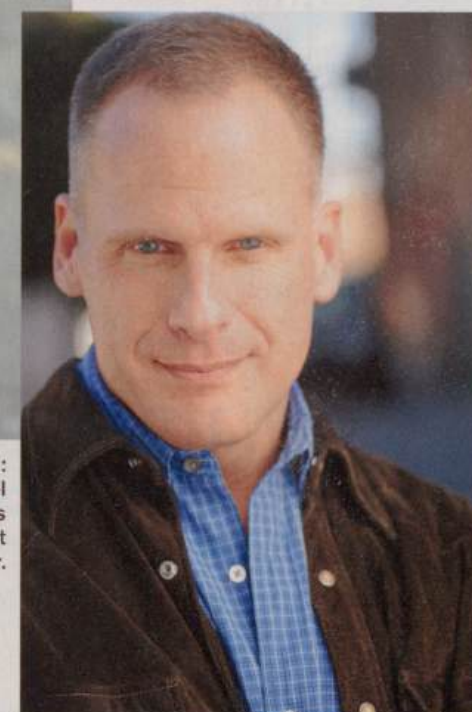
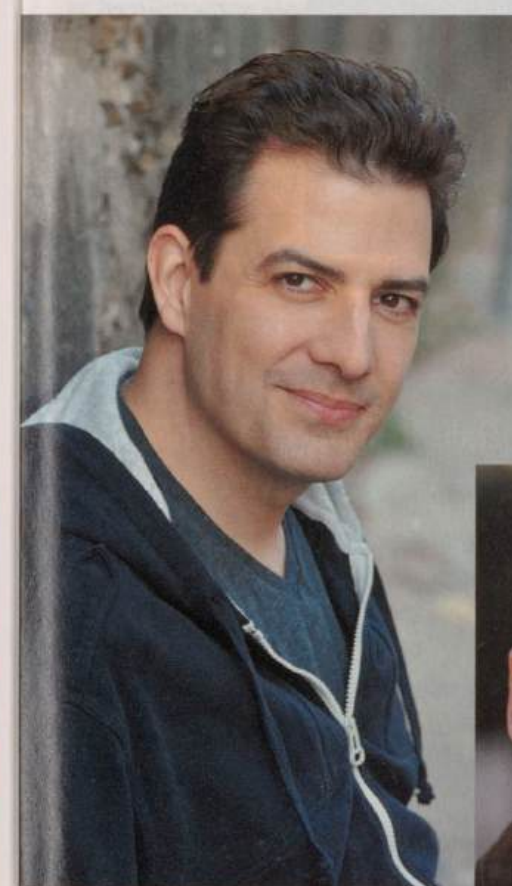
Judge's looks are often compared to that of actor Chris Noth. "Ah yes, I get that all the time. Just yesterday, someone said, 'Does anyone ever call you Mr. Big?'" he laughs.

Coincidentally, Judge and Kirkendall were both born in Iowa City, Iowa, with Judge moving to Houston in 2004 to claim a man he met online. Kirkendall and his family arrived in Houston when he was 10, but he spent the past 13 years in Los Angeles. MST's executive artistic director, Rebecca Greene Udden, who's also at the helm of the trilogy, lured Kirkendall back to Houston to play Alexander Herzen in *The Coast of Utopia*.

"How could I say no? It's like being in *The Ring Cycle*," says Kirkendall. (German composer Richard Wagner's monumental opera runs about 15 hours.) "Instantly, I thought, 'I want to be part of that shenanigan.'"

He adds that Udden gave him his start at MST. "He's one of our big guys and this is a really big undertaking," says Udden. "The only thing comparable to this is when we were able to do *Sweeney Todd* in 1991. Joe played the sailor who was in love with Johanna."

Another major collaboration was MST's signature production of Wendy Wasserstein's *The* →



Three men and a trilogy (from left): Seán Judge, Joe Kirkendall, and Joel Sandel star in Tom Stoppard's *The Coast of Utopia* trilogy at Main Street Theater.

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Playing It Straight

continued from previous page

Heidi Chronicles, with Kirkendall as Scoop.

Owing in part to his scruffy good looks (Judge's partner said, "Joe is gay?"), Kirkendall became a go-to guy for romantic leads in what he calls "heterocentric" plays. He also triumphed as the gay title character in *Jeffrey* at Stages. The part in Paul Rudnick's 1995 play about a guy who swears off sex because of the AIDS epidemic "really changed my life," says Kirkendall. "I was out already, of course, but the freedom to get to be gay on stage, to do something like that, I think it made me grow up."

In California, says Kirkendall, "I mostly did really shitty plays. L.A. has a lot of theater, but it has a lot of bad theater. I tried to work in TV, but I got poor and had to get a regular job." During the past 10 years, he worked at an L.A. United Way agency where he managed projects that were gratifying on both personal and professional levels. "I was the assistant to the president and CEO. I called myself Miss Jane Hathaway," he laughs.

Kirkendall says that in 2008 he got "a kick in the head" when Proposition 8 voters overturned the constitutional right

of same-sex couples to marry. "I was at the polling place handing out 'No on 8' stickers the day of the election. I never realized how conservative California is—once you get away from the coast, it's the Midwest. It was truly, truly a heartbreaking experience." However, Kirkendall is certain the amendment will be reversed by the U.S. Supreme Court. "Absolutely, because taking rights away from a group of people is really reprehensible."

Since returning to Houston, where he's being encouraged to stay, Kirkendall flew to New York City to attend the December 10 wedding of his longtime friends James C. Li and Richard Dowling. Growing up together, Kirkendall and Dowling attended Robert E. Lee High School, where Kirkendall performed as Motel the tailor in *Fiddler on the Roof* and the witch boy John in *Dark of the Moon*. "In eighth grade, I was Harold Hill in *The Music Man*," he says. "That was



Buttons and bows: despite the seemingly effeminate costuming, there's nothing gay about Joe Kirkendall (top left) and Joel Sander in *Voyage*, part one of *The Coast of Utopia*. Sander is also pictured with Seán Judge (bottom left). All three star in Tom Stoppard's trilogy at Main Street Theater through March 11.

the apex of my career."

Sandel grew up in Huntsville and attended Sam Houston State University before studying in Los Angeles at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts/West and the American Center for Music Theatre. In 1986, he moved back to Houston, where he has worked steadily for 25 years and counting. (Visit joelsandel.com for more on his accomplishments.)

Sandel was in the ensemble of MST's *Sweeney Todd* and recalls Kirkendall as "a dear, dear friend. It's wonderful to have Joe back," he says. Judge arrived in Houston halfway through Kirkendall's detour to California. "I understand he had quite a career here, and everybody's so excited that he's back."

While Sandel's role was huge in *Voyage* (the first part of *The Coast of Utopia* trilogy), Judge basically wrapped up both acts of that installment with his commentary as Ivan Turgenev. However, the characters played by Kirkendall and Judge will dominate *Shipwreck* (the second part of the trilogy) and *Salvage* (the final part).

Oh yes—I remember the name of the fourth leading actor, the one who isn't gay. He's Guy Roberts and he was fabulous in *Voyage*. With wonderful comic timing, he portrayed Michael Bakunin as clumsily clueless, vain, and self-centered—a rich man's son who truly earned his reputation as a flip-flopper. He could be the G.O.P.'s nominee this year.

Voyage ran through January 29 at MST-Chelsea Market, but MST's 99-seat home base at 2540 Times Blvd. in Rice Village hosts *Shipwreck* beginning February 10 and *Salvage* starting February 24. They will be performed in repertory through March 11. For tickets, visit mainstreettheater.com or call 713/524-6706.

- On February 27 there is a screening of *The Captivating Star of Happiness*, a 1975 Lenfilm historical drama sympathetic to the failed 1825 Decembrist uprising against Tsar Nicholas I. This event is free at MST-Rice Village at 7 p.m.

- On March 5, MST offers a poetry and philosophy night featuring the writings of Herzen, Belinsky, Bakunin, Pushkin, Turgenev, Gogol, and George Sand. The reading is free at MST-Rice Village at 7 p.m.

- Other events include MST's post-show discussion series on Sunday afternoons through February 19, with artists and special guests. Visit mainstreettheater.com for current information.

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



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Playfully Prolific

Three different one-acts by playwright Eric James are currently being staged by three different production companies

by Nancy Ford

It's already been a busy year for Houston playwright Eric James.

No less than three of the prolific playwright's works are currently being staged by three different theatrical production companies.

"I'm enjoying a nice run," James modestly admits.

James's work may also be experienced at *Drama-rama-thon*. Produced by Unhinged Productions, the showcase of short plays by local playwrights includes James's *Stop, Traveler*. Written by James in 2008, *Stop, Traveler* tells the Midwest homecoming story of a gay man. "The turmoil he feels is complicated by the crises facing the people he once knew and loved," James adds.

NightCap Theatre is a new production group formed by James and Peter Wittenberg Jr. James has penned one of two one-acts for NightCap, presented within *The Coitus Plays*, which revolves around two men who experience an unexpected turn of events during their one-night stands.

"Doug can't get it up," says James, describing the evening's first play, entitled *Pre*, written by Wittenberg and directed by Christine Weems. "Is it the writer's block or something more? And can his friends, ex-lovers, and a porn star help him discover the answer and maybe even find the solution?" James teases.

Post, a one-act authored by James for *The Coitus Plays*, is directed by Eva Laporte. It focuses on Chris and Dennis immediately following their one-night stand. "When Dennis is ready for Chris to leave, Chris makes a confession," James explains. "Then he makes another. Then Dennis has to examine himself and question whether he ever should have cruised through Craigslist in the first place."

James contributes a one-act to *Motel Tropicana: A Series of Adult No-Tells*, currently in production in conjunction with Big Head Productions.

"All plays in *Motel Tropicana* must take place in the same seedy motel room," James says. "I thought it would be perfect for a play about shooting a porno. In it, a straight porn actor shows up to shoot a part in what turns out to be a gay film."

"Hopefully, it's funny," James adds.

With a premise like that, how can it not be? ■

Motel Tropicana: A Series of Adult No-Tells
 Through February 4
 Big Head Productions at Obsidian Art Space
 3522 White Oak Dr.
 obsidianartspace.com

Drama-rama-thon
 February 2-11
 Unhinged Productions at Frenetic Theater
 5102 Navigation Blvd.
 unhingedproductions.com

The Coitus Plays
 February 9-25
 NightCap Theatre at Obsidian Art Space
 3522 White Oak Dr.
 nightcaptheatre.com • obsidianartspace.com



Author, author: a local playwright who also works at Bering Dental Clinic, James studied under Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Edward Albee who produced James's plays *In My Mother's Heels* and *Winter Tree* at the University of Houston. His short plays have been produced consistently around Houston since 2006; in 2011, his play *Blood* debuted in New York City. *INSET*: Zach Lewis (l) and Brad Goertz star in *Post*, the second act of *The Coitus Plays*.



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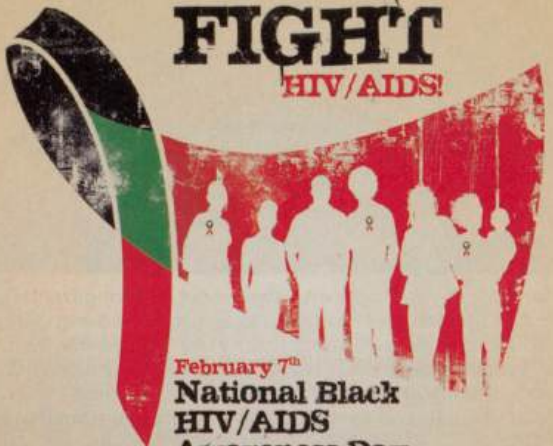
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Ricky Gervais (comedian, host Golden Globe Awards)

(The Golden Globe Awards, 1/15/12, NBC)

[In order to host the Golden Globe Awards] the Hollywood Foreign Press . . . actually gave me a list of rules. I'm going to ignore them, but I thought it would be good to read them out. No profanity. That's fine, I got a huge vocabulary. . . And I mustn't mention Mel Gibson this year. Not his private life, his politics, his recent films, and especially not Jodie Foster's *Beaver*. I haven't seen it myself. I've spoken to a lot of guys who haven't seen it either. But that doesn't mean it's not any good.

Bill Maher (comedian, host Real Time with Bill Maher)

(Chelsea Lately, 1/15/12, E!)

This guy [Rick Santorum] thinks about gay sex more than any gay man in America. There's a guy down in West Hollywood working at Dorothys and Dildos who does not think about gay sex as much as Rick Santorum.

Wanda Sykes (out comedian)

(The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, 1/19/12, NBC)

Rick Santorum is so antigay . . . it makes you wonder a little bit . . . you know, you protest a little too much, my friend. If you really believe that homosexuality is a sin and that we're going to hell, then why the fuss? If you think I'm going to hell, then you've already won. So shut the hell up and let God take care of it.

Nancy Pelosi (congresswoman, California's 8th district)

(The Advocate, 2/12, Andrew Harmon)

Criticism of [openly gay congressman] Barney Frank from gay Republicans especially sets her off. "Oh, but what about them [gay Republicans]?" she snaps. "[Barney Frank] chooses a party that supports his values. They've chosen a party that supports their income . . . a party that denigrates them and treats them with disrespect."

John Irving (novelist/screenwriter)

(Entertainment Weekly, 1/20/12, Stephan Lee)

Re: Irving's book *In One Person*, which will be published May 8, is about a bisexual man and the unforgettable label-defiers he meets over the course of the decades.

Was I ever gay or bi? No, but did I ever have unwelcome and sort of gripping crushes on the older boys—like probably half of the people who went to all-boys schools did? Sure, I did. There were older wrestlers I thought were kind of godlike. Typical of the time [Irving turns 70 this year], I hated myself for being attracted to males of any kind—but I knew what it felt like to be attracted to males. I knew what it felt like to be attracted to women, too, including my friends' mothers and faculty wives and all number of unlikely people.

Joan Rivers (comedian/author)

(Joan & Melissa: Joan Knows Best?, 1/25/12, We TV)

Before going in for plastic surgery, Joan talks with her daughter about the possibility of dying. The serious conversation ends with Joan's mention of her grandson Cooper, who is 11 years old: "The only thing that makes me a little sad is that Cooper's not gay."



Madonna (shown here presenting at the Golden Globe Awards): Is Ricky Gervais a girl?



Charles Busch (seen here in the play *Shanghai Moon* in 2003): did the teacup (inset) from Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* call him?



Queer Quotes

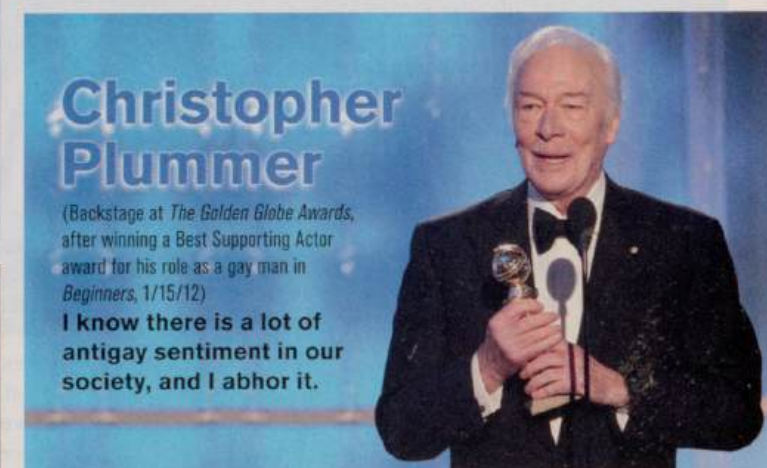
Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Madonna

(The Golden Globe Awards, 1/15/12, NBC)

Ricky Gervais: Okay, our next presenter is the Queen of Pop. Not you, Elton [John, pointing to him], sit down. She's all woman. I'll give you some clues: she's always vogue, she's a material girl, and she's just like a virgin. Please welcome Madonna.

Madonna: If I'm still just like a virgin, Ricky, then why don't you come over here and do something about it? I haven't kissed a girl in a few years—on TV.



Christopher Plummer

(Backstage at The Golden Globe Awards, after winning a Best Supporting Actor award for his role as a gay man in *Beginners*, 1/15/12)

I know there is a lot of antigay sentiment in our society, and I abhor it.

Charles Busch (actor/playwright/novelist/screenwriter/drag legend)

(Huffington Post, 1/20/12)

I was very briefly under contract to Disney Animation, to develop ideas for animated features. They don't like you to use the word "cartoon" around there. So, I had two chances to fail. The first one, they said was "too juvenile." I thought, "Wow, now I'm too juvenile for a cartoon." . . . Well, the second one they seemed to go for. . . . They give you, sort of, general areas to work in. So they said, "Set *My Fair Lady* in ancient Egypt." So, I came up with this idea about an Egyptian princess, and I gave her, as a sidekick, a little scarab. A little talking scarab beetle. So, I had a telephone meeting with the executive "handling" me, and he said, "I looked over the notes. Very cute. But lose the beetle." And I said, "Lose the beetle? The cute little talking beetle!" And he said, "Beetles don't talk." Well, how do you answer that? So, I said, "Excuse me just a moment, I've got a teacup calling me on the other line."

by Nancy Ford

SLIPPERY WHEN WET

'Steam: The Turkish Bath' offers a profound look at a centuries-old phenomenon

The Baths. The Tubs. The Shivitz. In Turkey, they're called Hamam.

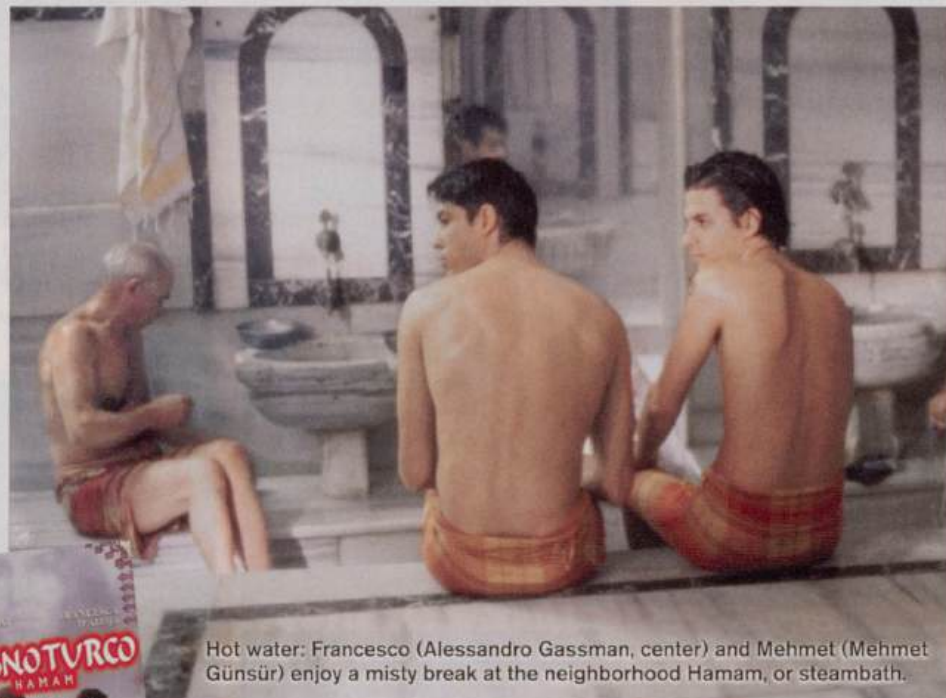
Within moisture-soaked marble walls, men gather to enjoy the vapor, the fitness equipment, the spas, the pool, and maybe an intimate encounter in a private room. Whatever name we choose to call them, they're an age-old, semi-secretive bastion of maleness where women generally aren't welcomed.

A haven for gay men? Not necessarily. The place, whose doors seldom close, is frequented by men of every circumstance, walk of life, and race—whether gay, straight, or bi, closeted or confused, married or single, professional or blue collar. Here they come and go, if you will, sometimes unwinding for hours, sometimes for just a few fleeting minutes. What they all have in common is their need to blow off a little steam.

But that level of release and rejuvenation sometimes carries with it extreme consequences. We get a glimpse of some of those consequences, as well as the benefits, in *Steam: The Turkish Bath* (*Il Bagno-turco: Hamam*).

In it, Italian businessman Francesco's (Alessandro Gassman) marriage to Marta (Francesca d'Aloja) is disintegrating long before he travels to Istanbul to inherit the neighborhood Hamam, or steam bath, left to him by his mysterious and removed aunt. Through letters, we learn that Francesco's never-married aunt recognizes something in her nephew that moves her to leave him the Hamam.

Upon his arrival in the ancient city, Francesco's love for the Hamam soon



Hot water: Francesco (Alessandro Gassman, center) and Mehmet (Mehmet Günsür) enjoy a misty break at the neighborhood Hamam, or steam bath.



grows. And how could he resist? The Hamam was "a welcoming and discreet place for a man and his pleasures," as the aunt described her business. His affection develops not only for the Turkish culture in general held so dear by his departed aunt, but also for young Mehmet (Mehmet Günsür) who frequents the Hamam.

Time passes, and Francesco becomes more and more consumed by the Hamam and its pleasures—and certainly by Mehmet. He is nearly unrecognizable to his wife who travels from Rome to confront her otherwise-occupied husband. The same

steam that has released and rejuvenated him eventually also scalds him.

Whether it's a metaphor for HIV/AIDS, a study of patriarchy vs. matriarchy, an indictment of infidelity, an examination of the power of gaydar, or something else entirely, this winner of multiple international cinematic awards well-illustrates the vast, vast differences between male and female sexuality and intimacy, despite its "no gay deed goes unpunished" 1950s-flavored climax.

1997. Ferzan Ozpetek directs. Italian and Turkish with English subtitles. Raro Video Cinema Art Visions (raro video.com). ■

DVD Shorts *Reviews/previews by Nancy Ford*

What Happens Next



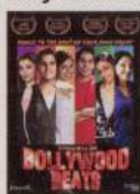
Sometimes finding love is difficult, but sometimes it's a walk in the park. Soap veteran Jon Lindstrom stars as Paul Greco, a lonely gay billionaire who searches for love with the help of his overbearing but well-meaning sister, Elise (Wendy Malick, of *Hot in Cleveland* fame). Jay Arnold directs. Feb. 7. Wolfe Video (wolfevideo.com).

Dirty Girl



The Gen X attitude of the 1980s takes over via soundtrack in this road-trip comedy revolving around notorious teen tramp (or so some think) Danielle (Juno Temple), her gay pal Clarke (Jeremy Dozier), and a bag of flour named Joan. Big-name actors Milla Jovovich, Mary Steenburgen, Dwight Yoakum, William H. Macy, and Tim McGraw provide varying degrees of support along the way. 2010. Abe Silvia directs. Anchor Bay Entertainment (dirtygirlmovie.com).

Bollywood Beats



Hip-hop dance instructor Raj (Sachin Bhatt) just lost his girlfriend, bombed in an audition, and may soon be homeless. But don't worry—he is soon distracted and comforted by an unlikely extended family as he begins instructing a dance class for Indian women. Mehul Shah, the writer and director, stars as a gay man who aspires to become a dancer despite his father's opposition. 2009. Breaking Glass Pictures (breakingglasspictures.com). ■

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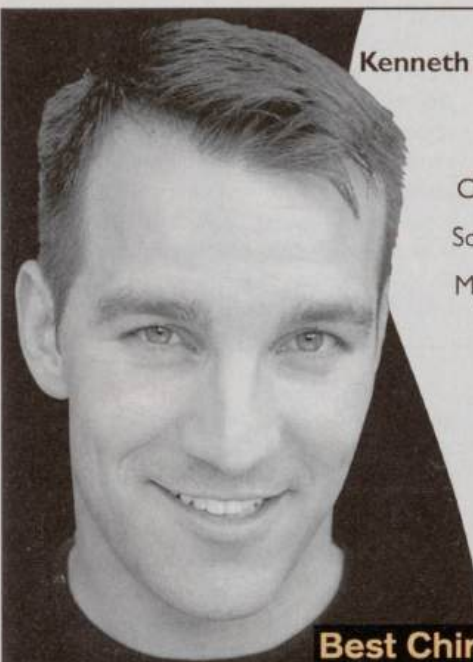
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Compilations afford fans all of the meat with none of the filler

Godmother of punk and National Book Award-winning memoirist Patti Smith is fêted with her first single-disc retrospective *Outside Society* (Arista/Columbia/Legacy). Consisting of 18 tracks from her 10 albums—from the groundbreaking *Horses* through the covers album *Twelve*—representing more than 30 years of music, *Outside Society* may not have the scale of 2002's *Land*, but it does bring the listener up to date where Patti is concerned.

Capping off a year in which art-rock legends Pink Floyd saw their entire catalog reissued (in both a box set and as individual discs), *A Foot in the Door: The Best of Pink Floyd* (EMI) sums it all up on a single 16-track disc. Naturally, "Money," "Another Brick in the Wall, Part 2," "See Emily Play," "Comfortably Numb," "Hey You," "Have a Cigar," "Wish You Were Here," and "Shine on You Crazy Diamond, Parts 1–5," are here alongside other favorites.

Preceding Adele by a few years, blue-eyed soul diva Joss Stone burst onto the scene at the same time that the late Amy Winehouse released her first album. While it took Winehouse a couple more years to catch on with listeners, Stone experienced

overnight-sensation status with her debut disc. Propelled by her cover of The White Stripes' "Fell in Love with a Boy," Stone rolled to stardom. *The Best of Joss Stone: 2003–2009* (Virgin) draws from four albums, favoring 2007's *Introducing Joss Stone* (her ironically titled third disc) with four tracks.

Hits from Yesterday & the Day Before (Warner Brothers/Rhino) is not the Bare-naked Ladies' first time at the compilation

rodeo. Disc One: *All Their Greatest Hits* from 2001 gets that title. But it is the first post-Steven Page collection, as well as the first to include the "Big Bang Theory Theme" song. As for the hits, they're all here, including "One Week," "If I Had \$1,000,000," "One Week," "The Old Apartment," and a live version of "Brian Wilson," among others.

Thanks to *Glee*, arena rockers Journey have experienced a revival of interest in their music. But you might not have thought that Journey warranted a *Greatest Hits 2* (Columbia/Legacy). Intended as a "companion" to the band's multi-platinum 1988 *Greatest Hits* disc, and featuring the original members, functions as a catch-all for the other singles and such that didn't make the cut on the first album.

Recording for the short-lived Improv Records label in the mid-1970s, Tony Bennett got the chance to make the kind of jazz vocal recordings that Mr. Bossy Pants Clive Davis wouldn't allow him to record for Columbia at that time. The 16 songs are a wonderful fit for Bennett, who sounds completely at ease and isn't trying to be something that he isn't. A delight from start to finish and a reasonable →

Diana Ross & The Supremes
50th Anniversary: The Supremes Collection 1961-1970



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THE COMPLETE COLUMBIA ALBUMS COLLECTION

GrooveOut Shorts

Reviews/previews
by Nancy Ford

Mary J. Blige
My Life II... The Journey Continues (Act 1)



We had to wait 17 years for Queen Mary to provide the next step she began with her signature album, *My Life*. Suffice it, it was well worth the wait. Blige's pedigreed pals like Nas, Busta Rhymes, and others provide assistance, possibly peaking with Beyoncé on their duo of "Love a Woman." The release closes appropriately with "Living Proof," the theme song from the hit feature film *The Help*. Geffen Records (mjbilge.com).

V V Brown
Lollipops & Politics

Led by the happy-go-lucky, reggae-tainted "Children," featuring Chiddy (of Philadelphia's Chiddy Bang),



Rumer
Seasons of My Soul



Despite her youth and inexperience, this British singer/songwriter has turned the heads of mega-superstars Sir Elton John, Carly Simon, and Burt Bacharach (all of whose influence we swear we can hear here). And with good reason: Rumer's sophisticatedly smooth and unaffected presentation is contagious and

Brown's second full-length album takes her appeal to the next level. Its quirky, backward-and-forward approach is just the thing to appeal to youth, whom Brown particularly reached out to in the making of this record. February 7. Capitol/EMI (capitolrecords.com).

welcomed, especially on the dreamy "Slow" and a re-do of the theme from *The Goodbye Girl*. Think Adele with a 1970s easy-listening twist, but without the pathos. Atlantic Records (atlantic.com).

Elizaveta
Beatrix Runs



Take a little Amy Winehouse, toss in a little Norah Jones, tap multi-Grammy Award-winner Greg Wells to mix it up, and you've got a debut album from a newcomer to add to your must-have collection. Burt Bacharach, the legendary composer who dominated film soundtracks especially in the '70s, receives more contemporary attention with the very best version of "What the World Needs Now Is Love" we've ever heard. Universal Republic (elizavetamusic.com). ■

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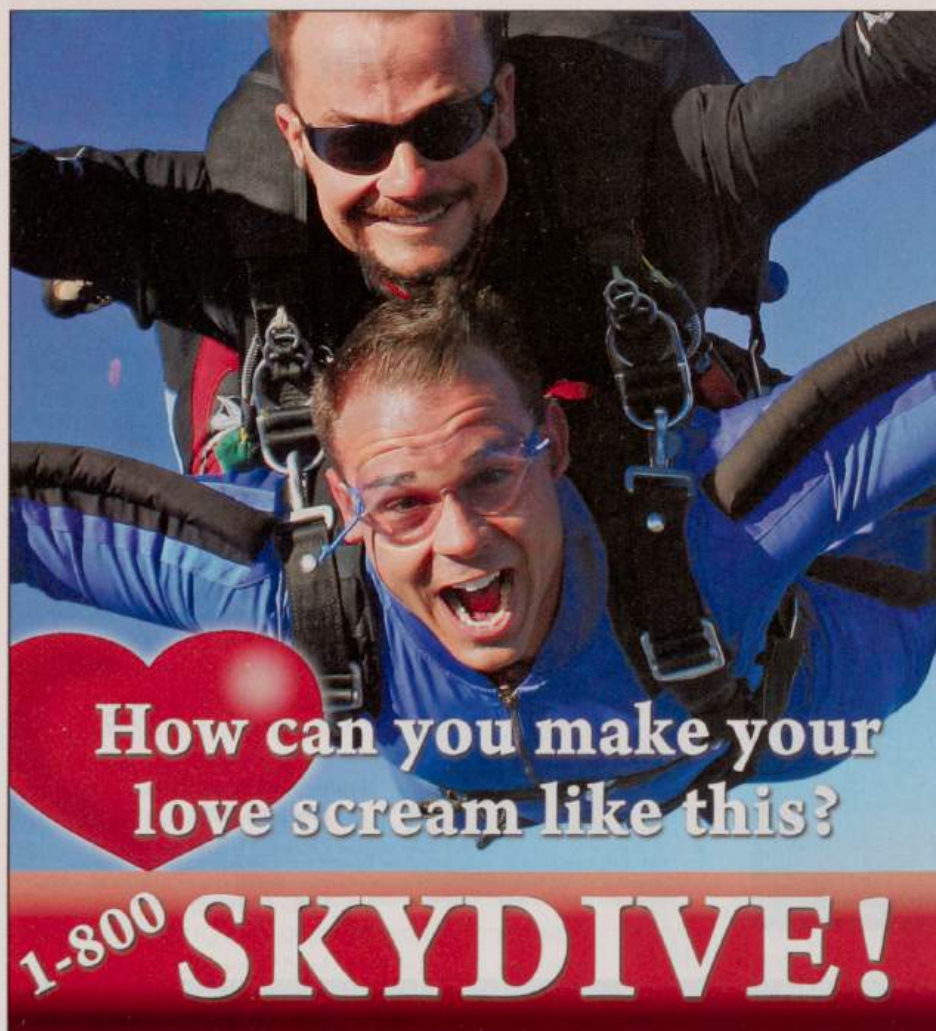


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GrooveOut

continued from page 70

alternative to his recent *Duets II* album.

A musical late-starter who has more than made up for lost time, Leonard Cohen, who is 77 at the time of this writing, is the true definition of a legendary singer/songwriter. Never a great singer, the Canadian poet/novelist nevertheless can be credited with creating some of the most beloved songs of the late 20th/early 21st century. Classic interpretations of his songs by Rufus Wainwright, Jeff Buckley, Judy Collins, and Jennifer Warnes, among others, are all essential to every music library. At 17 discs, you'd think that *The Complete Columbia Albums Collection* (Columbia/Legacy), including studio and live recordings, would be a Cohen-lover's dream. In many ways it is, reproducing original album artwork in miniature CD jacket form. But Cohen's lyrics, for which he is as well known as he is for his music, are found on only four of the CDs. Other than that, this box is sure to delight Cohen-heads everywhere.

The Smiths' eight-disc *Complete* (Rhino) box set is the alternative music generation's equivalent of the Beatles box. The team of reluctant sex-symbol Morrissey and guitarist Johnny Marr set the bar high for all those who would follow. The box assortment is comprised of the four studio albums, complete with occasionally homoerotic cover art and usually homoerotic lyrics sung in Morrissey's trademark queerly sexually ambiguous tone, as well as all three compilations and the live disc. Stunningly remastered, each miniature "album" version not only includes the original graphics, but also an inner-sleeve with lyrics and images (something from which the Cohen box would have benefited). It's enough to make even the ever-moody Morrissey crack a smile.

The words "handpicked by Paul Simon himself" should give you an indication that the double disc *Songwriter* (Legacy) is not your average "hits" collection. Sure, some of them are here, such as "Mother and Child Reunion," "Kodachrome," "Late in the Evening," and "Graceland." But if you listen to the disc with that in mind, you won't be disappointed that songs you might have expected be included here aren't. In Simon's hands, the selection process includes Aretha Franklin's stunning rendition of "Bridge over Troubled Waters," live solo Simon recordings of a couple of Simon & Garfunkel tunes, and far too many selections

from "Rhythm of the Saints" and "Songs from the Capeman."

Since they parted ways more than 40 years ago, Diana Ross & the Supremes have been the subject of a multitude of greatest-hits compilations. But the attractively packaged *50th Anniversary—The Singles Collection: 1961–1969* (Motown/Hip-O Select) is something else entirely. Spread out over three discs, the 72 tracks include A and B sides, as well as some alternate versions. Beginning with "I Want a Guy," when the Supremes were a quartet, the first disc includes breakthrough hits such as "Where Did Our Love Go," "Baby Love," and "Come See About Me," as well as some German-language versions. "I Hear a Symphony," "Stop! in the Name of Love," "Back in My Arms Again," "You Can't Hurry Love," and "The Happening," as well as the B side "Dr. Goldfoot and the Bikini Machine," Italian versions of hits, and an interview round out disc two. Late-career hit singles such as "Reflections," "Love Child," "I'm Livin' in Shame," and the all-time kiss-off "Someday We'll Be Together" are among the tracks found on the third disc. The Temptations fans will be pleased to hear that the all-male Motown group gets a similar 50th-anniversary treatment.

Twenty years after his death, Miles Davis continues to be a nearly endless source of musical discoveries. Subtitled "The Bootleg Series, Vol. 1," the (second) Miles Davis Quintet's *Live in Europe 1967* (Columbia/Legacy) is a three-CD/DVD concert recording featuring Davis, Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, and Tony Williams.

Deceased even longer than Davis, King of Rock Elvis Presley's 1956 albums *Elvis Presley* and *Elvis*, have been reissued as the double disc Legacy edition *Elvis Presley* (RCA/Legacy). Each album is augmented by a series of hit singles, including "Heartbreak Hotel," "Hound Dog," "Don't Be Cruel," and "Love Me Tender," to name a few.

Covering a period that ranges from 1979 to 2009, the double disc *The Definitive Chick Corea on Stretch and Concord* (Stretch/Concord) features 21 tracks by jazz-fusion pioneer Corea. Incorporating live and studio tracks, this collection features guest musicians such as openly gay vibes legend Gary Burton, as well as Bobby McFerrin, Stanley Clarke, Bela Fleck, Pat Metheny and the late Michael Brecker, among many others.

Gregg Shapiro is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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ROOTS

Extensive compendium of lesbian literature explains how we got here from there

Anyone wanting to research the vast field of women's relationships now has a one-stop source in Emma Donoghue's *Inseparable: Desire Between Women in Literature*.

Just out in paperback, Donoghue's encyclopedic discussion of genres, plots, myths, and tales is sure to set the standard in threading literature from various eras into one highly readable volume. (However, she acknowledges Terry Castle's 1,100-page *The Literature of Lesbianism* as "the best available.")

Avoiding what she calls "the 21st-century use" of the word *lesbian*, because it "does not begin to do justice to the variety of women's bonds in literature from the 1100s to the 2000s," Donoghue sets up six categories of recurring plot motif:

- **TRAVESTIES** – Cross-dressing . . . causes the "accident of same-sex desire."
- **INSEPARABLES** – Two passionate friends defy divisive forces.
- **RIVALS** – A man and a woman compete for another woman's heart.
- **MONSTERS** – A wicked woman seduces and destroys an innocent.
- **DETECTION** – Discovery of a crime also uncovers same-sex desire.
- **OUT** – A woman's life changes when she realizes she loves women.

In each case, Donoghue may start with the earliest work of the motif, then wend her way through various genres up to present writers. Thus, in "Travesties," the plot may involve a male character who "puts on skirts, winning access to women-only space, and under cover of



INSEPARABLE
Desire Between Women
in Literature

BY EMMA DONOGHUE

Inseparable by Emma Donoghue
2011 • Cleis Press (cleispress.com)
paperback • 288 pages • \$18.95

friendship [woos] a woman who may fear she is falling for one of her own sex." It's easy to see this same story worked out in the 1980s films *Yentl* and *Tootsie*.

The cleverness of the book's arrangement of so many eras and genres, and the vast detail covered by this Irish writer, is called "dazzling" by *The Washington Post*. Donoghue is the author of seven novels, but currently best known for her novel

Room, a best-seller and winner of many international awards. She has also published short stories, plays, screenplays, literary history, and edited anthologies. Her doctoral dissertation at Cambridge was on friendship between men and women in 18th-century fiction.

Born in Dublin, Donoghue grew up in a country long admired for a love of writing, reading, and books. She took over a decade to complete *Inseparable*, after being asked to write a history of lesbian literature. Writers include Chaucer, Shakespeare, Charlotte Bronte, Dickens, Agatha Christie, Sade, Diderot, Balzac, Thomas Hardy, and Elizabeth Bowen, among hundreds of others.

Her breezy discussion of the works she uses for reference may move from *Aelfric's Lives of Saints* to *Fried Green Tomatoes* and Sarah Waters' *Tipping the Velvet*. Illustrations showing various political and social eras make the book amusing and erotic.

Part of the fun of reading this book is seeing how plots which early on seem impossibly creaky start to turn into today's vampire legends (*Twilight* et al) or provide subtext for films or characters appearing on this year's Screen Actors Guild or critics' lists (*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*).

This is a must-have and must-read for all lesbians and lesbians-in-training. As Donoghue warns her readers in the opening pages of *Inseparable*, "The past is a wild party; check your preconceptions at the door."

Kit van Cleave is a freelance writer living in Montrose. She has published in local, national, and international media.

ReadOut Shorts

Reviews by Angel Curtis

Compañeros: Latino Activists in the Face of AIDS Jesus Ramirez-Valles



This slim volume provides a home for the stories of Latino gay men and transgender women to share their struggles directly with the reader. These stories are simply told and have the passion that comes with telling one's deepest truth. The concept of "compañero" runs through the book and shows the solidarity of the people who make up the movement for not only the gay community but for the ethnic one. While this book is an important addition to the history of AIDS activism, what will stay with me is the transformation these people experienced while trying to live truly authentic lives. University of Illinois Press (press.uillinois.edu).

96 Hours Georgia Beers



When my editor handed me this book, I thought "WTF? A lesbian romance novel set against the terrorist attacks of 9/11!" However, as soon as I saw that the author is Georgia Beers and that this book is published by Bywater, I knew I wasn't about to suffer death by bad writing and boredom. Okay, I'm not a big fan of the traditional lesbian romance novels (think *Naiad*), but Bywater has reinvented this genre so that it is worth reading. Imagine my surprise when I simply could not put this book down. Imagine my horror when I found this book brought me to tears. I'm not going to review this as a better-than-average romance novel; I'm going to call it what it really is—a tour de force of storytelling. Great writing, believable characters you care about, and an

impeccable sense of place combine to make this a must-read book. Bywater Books (bywaterbooks.com).

Reawakening: A Book of Life & a Story Beyond Time Dr. Howard Lawrence Scheiner



Dr. Howard Scheiner faced the problem many people with a rigorous scientific background face—how to reconcile the science they've been taught with the human craving for the divine. *Reawakening* details one man's journey to finding a spiritual life that works outside the dogma of religion. While readers may find they disagree with every precept in this book, they may not deny that this one man found happiness important enough to strive for and that he succeeded in finding it. I'll be thinking about this one for a long time. Available at amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com. ■



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LOVE, ITALIAN STYLE

... at Giacomo's Cibo e Vino

Hard to believe, but some folks still don't know that Lynette Hawkins is back.

Hawkins was the chef/owner of La Mora Cucina Toscana, a romantic Tuscan-styled restaurant that served sublime Italian fare for 16 years on Lovett Boulevard just down the street from the former Lovett Inn. Now the inn is a hostel, and when La Mora closed in 2006, the lovely old building was razed to make room for condos. Such is time.

The executive chef herself took a hiatus from the restaurant business for three years, but in late 2009 she opened Giacomo's Cibo e Vino, a cheery, casual Venetian eatery in River Oaks that offers some of the most authentic Italian fare in town.

"My dad was a petroleum engineer," says the jovial Hawkins. "He moved the family to Florence when I was a baby, so I grew up learning to cook Italian."

"Along with Mom, I learned the simplest of rustic Tuscan recipes taught by kind neighbors, shopkeepers, and the young farm girl who kept house for us. In the 1950s and '60s, the Italians adored Americans. In Florence, their hearts went out to a young American woman—my mom, whose husband was away on long trips most of the time. So she was left alone to fend for herself with her two baby daughters in a country very alien to her."

And so Hawkins seemed destined to run an Italian restaurant. After the family moved to Houston when she was 19, she got a business degree from the University of Houston and started working in restaurants. And she's never looked back.

While the food is just as fantastic at Giacomo's as it was at La Mora, the atmosphere is much more relaxed. Giacomo's, which is named not for the composer but for Hawkins's beloved late Labrador (whose pictures hang in the entryway) is bright, airy, and breezy. Where La Mora

was dark, earthy, and romantic, Giacomo's is comfy and casual with an interior designed by Kathy Heard of OPEN Restaurant Design. There's a wall of brightly colored trapezoids by artist Rachel Hecker, simple tables and chairs, a bar with bright

tangerine bar stools, and chalkboards above the counter and along the bar area announcing food and wine specials. It's all very retro mid-century, like an old neighborhood wine bar. There's also a charming vine-covered patio with red umbrellas for those lovely-weather days. But it is really the food that draws the crowds. That, and maybe the wine and coffee. The eatery has an extensive list of boutique wines from Italy, France, Spain, and California and probably one of the best

espressos in town.

"I love Italian wines," says Hawkins, "so about 95 percent of the wine list is from Italy. But I really try to pick well-priced wines that complement the food I serve. One of the benefits of being in the restaurant business is that you get to sample a lot of wines for free."

The wonderful coffee drinks are made from local roaster Katz Coffee, and many of the ingredients for the dishes also come from local producers.

Besides the small hot and cold tapas-like bites displayed at the counter, the menu offers huge servings of pastas, soups, salads, and some wonderful hot entrees like the Pollo Guido (stuffed chicken breast) and a whole grilled trout that melts in your mouth.

If you haven't been to Giacomo's yet, a good way to check out the offerings is the special four-course, prix fixe Valentine's Day Menu on Tuesday, February 14, from 5–10 p.m. The cost is only \$40 per person, or \$57 with wine pairings. And you'll certainly want the wine.

The dinner starts with crostini topped with smoked salmon mousse and caviar, paired with a three-ounce pour of Juve y Camps Brut Rose Cava followed by a plate of Tortelli di Bietola, one of Giacomo's most popular pasta dishes. The little pillows of ravioli are stuffed with goat cheese and red Swiss chard swimming in sage butter and paired with a delectable Pala I Fiori Vermentino white wine.

And if that isn't enough, there's also the *il secondo* (second course): a grilled hangar steak with roasted Yukon gold potatoes followed by an espresso-flavored frozen chocolate mousse.

"I just tried to come up with items I would like to eat if I were having a romantic dinner," Hawkins says. "Light, and not too much garlic or onions! And of course you have to have chocolate for a romantic dinner."

If you don't make the Valentine's Day dinner, you can always just drop in some day. Giacomo's is one of the those places that is open continually from lunch to dinner, allowing folks to pop in during the afternoon or early evening for a glass of wine, an espresso, or a quick bite. Maybe some spicy lamb meatballs or the

little sandwiches called tramezzini. Like Giacomo's motto says, *mangia poco, bene, e spesso*—eat a little, well, and often.

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Marene Gustin is a frequent contributor to OutSmart magazine.



Lynette Hawkins



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Calendar of Events

Compiled by Nancy Ford

Rodeo to the Rescue

Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo provides much more than a chap-slappin' good time

It's well-known in these here parts that the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo has a big heart—ever since the ropin' and ridin' started in 1932, the benevolent group of cowboys and girls has donated more than \$283 million in scholarships and assistance to the youth of Texas. The 20-day roster of entertainment provided to Houstonians and their families (as well as the nearly 2 million other fans of western arts and music who pour into the city for it annually) is legendary: this year, acts including Alabama (Feb. 28) Lady Antebellum (March 1), Reba McEntire (March 9), Brad Paisley (March 17), and other top-tier performers take to the mobile stage in Reliant Arena.

But what you don't know, perhaps, is that those rodeo folks' charity reaches beyond the bull ring. Last September, after wildfires had consumed a record amount of Texas acreage left vulnerable by record-breaking drought, members of the rodeo's Go Texan committee volunteered their time to aid Texas wildfire victims in Waller county. Essential items including water, clothes, food, feed, and hay were donated by rodeo volunteers during a two-day span.

Additionally, after wildfires destroyed 95 percent of the nearly 6,000-acre state park located near Bastrop, volunteers not only collected enough supplies to fill two pickup trucks, but also more than \$3,000



Entertainers include (clockwise from top left) Enrique Iglesias, Reba McEntire, John Legend, and Lady Antebellum.

in cash, donating it to the Bastrop Christian Ministries Alliance.

"The show prides itself on our amazing volunteers, and the efforts made by these Go Texan committees just proves what a dedicated group of individuals we have as the heartbeat of our organization," said Skip Wagner, rodeo president. "I am honored to be associated with people that are so willing to give of their time to help—be it for the show or a fellow man in need."

And that's something we can all yee-haw about. Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo 2012 Show, Feb. 28–March 18. Reliant Park, 1 Reliant Park • rodeohouston.com. —Nancy Ford

FEBRUARY

FILM

3D's: *Born to be Wild 3D*, *Dolphins and Whales 3D*, and *Dinosaurs 3D*. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr. • hms.org • 713/639-4629.

FlickerLounge unBlocked. Performance-based video. Through Feb. 21. Aurora Picture Show. Barnvelder Movement Complex, 2201 Preston St. • aurorapictureshow.org • 713/868-2101.

Iranian Film Festival. Feb. 3–5. MFAH at Rice Cinema, 6100 Main St. • mfa.org • 713/639-7300.

!Women Art Revolution (2010). The secret history of feminine art. Lynn Hersman Leeson directs. Feb. 5 & 12. Museum of Fine Arts Houston's Brown Auditorium Theater, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfa.org • 713/639-7300.

Motion Captured: An Evening of Dance on Film combines dance and technology. Feb. 12. Kaplan Theatre, IW Marks Theatre Center, 5601 S. Braeswood Blvd. • erjchouston.org • 713/729-3200.

Slacker 2011. Texas Independent Film Network pays tribute to the 20th anniversary of Richard Linklater's classic. Feb. 17. Museum of Fine Arts Houston's Brown Auditorium Theater, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfa.org • 713/639-7300.

PERFORMING ARTS

Avenue Q. *Sesame Street* for mature audiences. Through Feb. 4. Stage Door Inc., 284 Pasadena Town Square Mall • stagedoorinc.com • 832/582-7606.

Deadly Murder. David Foley's murder mystery/thriller. Through Feb. 4. Theatre Suburbia, 4106 Way Out West Dr. • theatresuburbia.org • 713/682-3525.

Motel Tropicana. A series of Adult No-Tells. Through Feb. 4. Big Head Productions at Obsidian Art Space, 3522 White Oak

Dr. • obsidianartspace.org.

Anna Bolena. Donizetti's opera about one of Henry VIII's unfortunate wives. Through Feb. 5. Opera in the Heights, 1703 Heights Blvd. • operaintheheights.org • 713/861-5303.

Bring It On: The Musical. The live show based on the movie about cheerleading. Through Feb. 5. Theatre Under the Stars. Hobby Center for Performing Arts, 800 Bagby St. • tuts.com • 713/558-8887.

La Traviata. Giuseppe Verdi's opera of love, sacrifice, and redemption. Through Feb. 12. Houston Grand Opera. Wortham Theatre Center's Brown Auditorium, 501 Texas Ave. • houstongrandopera.org • 713/228-6737.

The Toxic Avenger. A musical comedy about corruption and heroics in New Jersey. Through Feb. 12. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. • alleytheatre.org • 713/220-5700.

Hedda Gabler. Henrik Ibsen's drama about a manipulative bride. Through Feb. 18. Company OnStage, 536 Westbury Square • companyonstage.org • 713/726-1219.

Mistakes Were Made. Regional premiere of Craig Wright's solo comedy about a neurotic theater producer. Through Feb. 19. Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Pkwy. • stagestheatre.com • 713/527-0123.

Shadowlands. The romance between C.S. Lewis and Joy Gresham. Through Feb. 19. Texas Repertory Theatre Co., 14243 Stuebner Airline Rd. • texpereatre.org • 281/583-7573.

Joeljuniper: A Crack in Everything explores the emotional spectrum of justice and retaliation. Through Feb. 25. Diverse-Works, 1117 E. Frwy. • diverseworks.org • 713/335-3445.

Late Nite Catechism. Vicki Quade and Maripat Donovan's irreverent comedy. Through March 4. Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Pkwy. • stagestheatre.com • 713/527-0123.

Oscar in the Box. A salute to movie music. Through April 29. Music Box Theater, 2623 Colquitt St. • themusicboxtheater.com • 713/522-7722.

A Little Day Music. Feb. 1. Da Camera. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas Ave. • dacamera.com • 713/524-7601.

Steve Aoki: Deadmeat Tour. DJ/producer and electronic dance-music artist performs tunes from his *Wonderland* album. Feb. 2. Verizon Wireless Theatre, 520 Texas Ave. • verizonwireless.com • 713/230-1666.

Drama-rama-thon. Short plays by local playwrights. Feb. 2–11. Unhinged Productions at Frenetic Theater, 5102 Navigation Blvd. • comeunhinged.com • 832/408-1971.

The Ballad of Emmett Till. told in prose and jazz. Feb. 2–26. Ensemble Theatre, 3535 Main St. • ensemblehouston.com • 713/520-0055.

Richard Egarr: The Harpsichord's Golden Century. Feb. 3. Houston Early Music at First Unitarian Universalist Church, 5200 Fannin St. • houstonearlymusic.org • 713/432-1744.

The Rape of Lucretia. Benjamin Britten's tale of lust and power. Feb. 3–11. Houston Grand Opera, 501 Texas Ave. • houstongrandopera.org • 713/228-6737.

The Seagull. Gregory Boyd directs Anton Chekhov's masterpiece love story. Feb. 3–March 4. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. • alleytheatre.org • 713/220-5700.

Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet: Moulin Rouge. Feb. 4. Society for the Performing Arts. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • spahouston.org • 713/227-45PA.

Igudesman and Joo. A classical music comedy duo. Feb. 4. The Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice St., Galveston • thegrand.com • 409/765-1894.

Vienna 1828: Schubert's Invitation Concert. Feb. 4. Da Camera. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Sarofim Hall, 800 Bagby St. • dacamera.com • 713/524-7601.

Fascinating Rhythm: George Gershwin in His Prime. Feb. 6–20. Bayou City Concert Musicals at Ensemble Theatre, 3535 Main St. • bayoudcityconcertmusicals.org • 713/465-6484.

The Seagull. Anton Chekhov's masterpiece of romantic entanglements. Feb. 8–March 4. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. • alleytheatre.org • 713/220-5700.

Confessions of a Mormon Boy. Steven Fales goes from saint to sinner and back. Feb. 8–12. Theater LaB Houston, 1706 Alamo

St. • theaterlabhouston.com • 713/868-7516.

The Deconstructive Impulse. A loft concert in conjunction with the exhibit *Women Artists Reconfigure the Signs of Power*. Feb. 9. Musiq at Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd. • musiqahouston.org • 713/524-5678.

10th Anniversary Winter Mixed Rep Program includes works by Jiri Kilián and Dominic Walsh. Feb. 9–11. Dominic Walsh Dance Theater. Wortham Center for the Performing Arts' Zilkha Hall, 800 Bagby St. • dwdt.org • 713/315-2525.

The Coitus Plays. Eric James and Peter Wittenberg Jr.'s two one-acts about the act of. Feb. 9–25. NightCap Theatre at Obsidian Art Space, 3522 White Oak Dr. • 281/788-2319 • nightcaptheatre.com.

IMAGO Theatre: ZooZoo. Feb. 10. Society for the Performing Arts. Wortham Center's Cullen Theater, 501 Texas Ave. • spahouston.org • 713/227-45PA.



Cirque du Soleil: Michael Jackson The Immortal World Tour features more than 60 dancers, musicians, and acrobats. Feb. 10–12. Toyota Center, 1510 Polk St. • toyotacentertx.com • 866/446-8849.

Dvorák & Polovtsian Dances. Jakub Hruša conducts Houston Symphony and Chorus. Feb. 10–12. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • houstonsymphony.org • 713/224-7575.

The Coast of Utopia, Part II: Shipwreck. Tom Stoppard's tale of Russian intellectuals in tsarist Russia dreaming of revolution. Feb. 10–March 8. Main Street Theater–Rice Village, 2540 Times Blvd. • mainstreettheater.com • 713/524-6706. (See page 61.)

Gallim Dance Company: Mama Call and Pupii Suite. in conjunction with 32nd Annual Dance Month. Feb. 11. IW Marks Theatre Center, 5601 S. Braeswood Blvd. • erjchouston.org • 713/729-3200.

Chris Botti. Jazz trumpet king. Feb. 12. The Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice St., Galveston • thegrand.com • 409/765-1894.

A French Valentine explores Jean-Philippe Rameau's love themes. Feb. 14 & 17. Mercury Baroque. Cullen Theater, Wortham

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LookOut (It's like Calendar, only gayer)

by Nancy Ford

Mattachine Machinations. Celebration Theatre presents *The Temperamentals*, Jon Marans's true story of two men in love in the '50s who founded the first civil rights organization for gay men in America. **Through February 11.** Barnevelder Movement/Arts Complex, 2201 Preston St. • celebrationtheatrehouston.com. (See page 57.)

Hearts and Minds. Valentine's season is here. Are you looking for more than a wham, bam, temporary stand? Award-winning psychotherapist Denise O'Doherty, LPC, LMST, LCDC, RN, offers Secrets of Finding and Maintaining a Long-term Relationship, a two-hour class that covers essentials of a healthy relationship, how to seek suitable and compatible romantic partners, and what it means to be emotionally available. **February 4, 10 a.m.-noon.** (Repeats April 21.) Leisure Learning Annex, 2990 Richmond Ave. • llu.com • 713/529-4414.

Bring Your Own Ripped T-shirt. Comic playwright Rob Nash promises a "wicked funny and offensive" (but in a good way) time at a reading of his new show, *Menagerie on a Hot Tin Streetcar*, a Tennessee Williams mash-up. **February 4 and 11.** Frenetic Theatre, 5102 Navigation Blvd. • freneticcore.net • 832/426-4624.

But Is He GOP Material? In *Confessions of a Mormon Boy*, Steven Fales goes from saint to sinner and back. **February 8-12.** Theater LaB Houston, 1706 Alamo St. • theaterlabhouston.com • 713/868-7516.

A Caliente Night of Love. Baile de Amor, GALLO's Annual Valentine's Day Dinner, offers a romantic evening featuring dinner and dancing, champagne and chocolates, photos by Picture Perfect, a DJ, and a silent auction. Benefits Rainbow Place. **February 10, 8 p.m.** 812 Westheimer Rd. • houstongallo.org.

Lesbians and Love. Lesbian Health Initiative Houston presents its 2012 Celebration of Love Gala, with dinner, dancing, and entertainment by legendary lesbian comedian Suzanne Westenhoefer. The silent auction/raffle offers a hot pink Vitacci scooter.



Artful Hearts. The "theatrically inspired" whimsical art of Randall Jobe and the steel-and-found-object sculpture of Jonathan Lopez are featured in a Valentine-themed exhibit. Jobe, who created Crystal, representing Houston GLBT Community Center's 15th anniversary, says he sometimes adds prose to assist the audience with the message, but more often he leaves it to interpretation—"hopefully one of frivolity and bemusement to the viewer." **February 10-14;** reception, February 10, 6 p.m. The opening reception features live music and refreshments. Betz Gallery, 1208 W. Gray St. • betzgallery.com • 713/576-6954.

February 11. DoubleTree Houston Hotel Downtown, 400 Dallas St. • lhihouston.org • 713/426-3356. (See page 31.)

Holy Accusations. United Methodist minister Rev. Amy DeLong was put on trial in June 2011 for violating the United Methodist's rules which forbid self-avowed, practicing homosexuals from being ordained and United Methodist clergy from performing a same-sex union ceremony. She was found not guilty of the former charge, but was found guilty of the latter. Rev. DeLong discusses her experience at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, preaching Sunday morning at both services. **February 12.** Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold St. • beringumc.org • 713/526-1017.

Going to the Chapel. Foundation for Family and Marriage Equality presents its annual events in conjunction with National Freedom to Marry Week. Same-sex couples wishing to unofficially tie the knot are encouraged to register for the 10th anniversary of the group's Texas' Big Gay Wedding Celebration and Protest. A reception follows the ceremony. **February 12, 2 p.m.** Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, 2025 W. 11th St. Participating couples must pre-register at familymarriageequality.org.

Poppycock's Got Talent. Singer Prince Poppycock (John Quayle, of *America's Got Talent* fame) performs his unique brand of opera. **February 14.** 202 Tuam St. • fbarhouston.com.

Raising Voices for Marriage. Foundation for Family and Marriage Equality continues its annual events in conjunction with National Freedom to Marry Week with its annual Downtown Valentine's Day Protest and March Marriage License Protest. Couples requesting marriage licenses must preregister at familymarriageequality.org. **February 14, 11:30 a.m.** Harris County Clerk's Office, 201 Caroline St. A march follows, culminating with a demonstration for the right to marry and a mock-marriage ceremony. Costumes and protest signs (no sticks or poles) encouraged. **February 14, 12:45 p.m.** Houston City Hall, 901 Bagby St. • familymarriageequality.org.

Beautiful Music, Beautiful Women. Canadian singer/songwriter Nancy Beaudette performs for Sandi Glorfield's series of house concerts. **February 18.** Reception, 7 p.m.; concert, 8 p.m. \$15-\$20. 3203 Rustling Moss Dr. • nancybeaudette.com • 713/502-9297 • 281/444-7669.

Batter and Battress Up! Cheer your favorite local team at Kindred Spirits Foundation's Second Annual Softball Tournament. Mixed teams are currently registering to compete for trophies; hot dogs and cools drinks, commemorative Kindred Spirits T-shirts, and koozies available. **March 10.** Memorial Park. Benefits Kindred Spirits' women's charities. kindredspirithouston.org • 832/419-0165. ■

Calendar continued from page 79

Center, 501 Texas Ave. • mercurybaroque.org • 832/251-0706. **Music for Peace: Musicians in Exile.** Foundation for Modern Music performs a program of de Falla, Stravinsky, Yun, and Milhaud. Feb. 17. Rothko Chapel, 1409 Sul Ross St. • rothkochapel.org • 713/524-9839.

3rd Annual Texas Yoga Conference and Music Festival. Feb. 17-19. University of Houston's Recreation and Wellness Center, 4800 Calhoun St. • texasyogaconference.com • 713/839-9642.

Dirty Rotten Scoundrels musically follows two con men living on the French Riviera. Feb. 17-26. Masquerade Theatre. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby St. • masquerade-theatre.com • 713/861-7045.

The Beverly Hillbillies. Based on the '60s CBS comedy. Feb. 17-March 3. UpStage Theatre. Lambert Hall, 1703 Heights Blvd. • upstagetheatre.org • 713/838-7191.

In the Wings. A mysterious love story. Feb. 17-March 10. Theatre Southwest, 8944-A Clarkcrest Dr. • theatresouthwest.org • 713/661-9505.

Aerial Dance Workshop for beginners. Feb. 18. Frenetic Theatre, 5102 Navigation Blvd. • freneticcore.net • 832/426-4624.

French Evolution. Feb. 19. Houston Masterworks Chorus. Rice University's Stude Hall, 6300 Main St. • houstonmasterworks.org • 713/529-8900.



He's No Bozo. He was dragtastic in *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar*. "I did steal the show, didn't I?" he quipped in a 2001 interview with *OutSmart*. Experience the fabulousness of John Leguizamo as he brings his solo Broadway show, *Ghetto Klown*, to town. Feb. 23-25. Wortham Center Cullen Theatre, 501 Texas Ave. • explorehouston.org • 713/222-5400.

Beethoven's Fifth. Feb. 23-26. John Storgårds conducts Houston Symphony. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • houstonsymphony.org • 713/224-7575.

Cinderella. Feb. 23-March 4. Houston Ballet. Wortham Center's Brown Theater, 501 Texas Ave. • houstonballet.org • 713/227-2787.

The Coast of Utopia, Part III: Salvage. Conclusion of Tom Stoppard's trilogy about Russian intellectuals. Feb. 23-Mar. 11. Main Street Theater-Rice Village, 2540 Times Blvd. • mainstreettheater.com • 713/524-6706. (See page 61.)

Tao: The Art of the Drum. Japanese drumming and choreography. Feb. 24. Wortham Center's Brown Theater, 501 Texas Ave. • spahouston.org • 713/227-45PA.

The Crucible. Arthur Miller's classic metaphor for communist hysteria. Feb. 24-March 3. University of Houston's School of Theatre & Dance. UH's Wortham Theater, 133 CWM Center for the Arts • theatre.uh.edu • 713/743-2929.

Proposals. A Neil Simon family reunion. Feb. 24-March 4. The Country Playhouse, 12802 Queensbury Ln. • countryplayhouse.org • 713/467-4497.

Sequentia/Benjamin Bagby: Fragments for the End of Time. Feb. 25-26. Da Camera. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas Ave. • dacamera.com • 713/524-7601.

Galveston Symphony Orchestra performs a program of Tchaikovsky, Strauss, and Schubert. Feb. 26. The Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice St., Galveston • thegrand.com • 409/765-1894.

Million Dollar Quartet. The music of Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Carl Perkins. Feb. 28-March 4. Gexa Energy Broadway Across America. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Sarofim Hall, 800 Bagby St. • broadwayacrossamerica.com • 713/315-2500.

Preserving a Legacy: A Tribute to Houston's Blues with Houston blues legends Grady Gaines & The Texas Upsetters; guitarists Milton Hopkins and Texas Johnny Brown, and others. Feb. 29. Society for the Performing Arts. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • spahouston.org • 713/227-45PA.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. March 2-4. Society for the Performing Arts. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • spa-houston.org • 713/227-45PA.

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Freedom Train. Historical musical about a family traveling on the Underground Railroad. Through March 9. Express Theatre, 446 Northwest Mall • express-theatre.com • 713/682-5044.

ZooZoo Beyond the Stage. Family-friendly fun with IMAGO Theater. Feb. 6. Society for the Performing Arts. Houston

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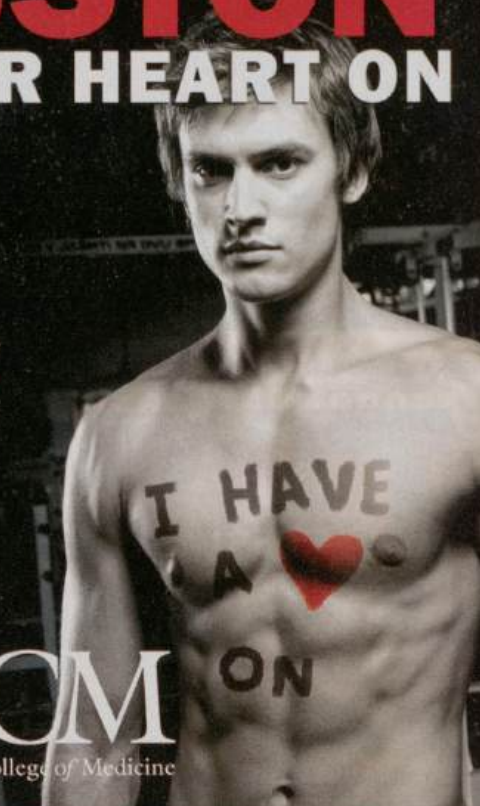
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Jackie and Me. About baseball great Jackie Robinson. Feb. 11 & 18. Main St. Theatre-Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. • mainstreettheater.com • 713/524-6706.

Mardi Gras Mask Decorating Workshops for kids and adults. Feb. 12. Galveston Arts Center at Moody Mansion, 2618 Broadway Ave. • contemporaryartgalveston.org • 409/763-2403.

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

Greetings from Houston: Vintage Postcard Views of the City. Through Feb. 4. Museum of Printing History, 1324 W. Clay St. • printingmuseum.org • 713/522-4652.

Highlights from the Collection: Bohuslav Horak Lithos. Through Feb. 4. Museum of Printing History, 1324 W. Clay St. • printingmuseum.org • 713/522-4652.

9. Mick Johnson explores architectural space. Through Feb. 10. Rice University Art Gallery, 6100 Main St. • ricegallery.org • 713/348-6069.

Cora Cohen. Through Feb. 11. D. M. Allison Art, 2709 Colquitt St. • dmallisonart.com • 832/656-7698.

Houston 175: Commerce celebrates Houston's 175th birthday. Through Feb. 11. Museum of Printing History, 1324 W. Clay St. • printingmuseum.org • 713/522-4652.

Sandi Seltzer Bryant. New works. Through Feb. 11. McMurtrey Gallery, 3508 Lake St. • mcmurtreygallery.com • 713/523-8238.

Since I've Been Away. Works by David Lozano. Through Feb. 11. PG Contemporary Gallery, 3227 Milam St. • pgcontemporary.com • 713/523-7424.

Crude. Works by Andrei Molodkin. Through Feb. 12. Station Museum of Contemporary Art, 1502 Alabama St. • stationmuseum.com • 713/529-6900.

Dutch and Flemish Masterworks. Through Feb. 12. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfa.org • 713/639-7300.

Game Night! Late 19th- to mid-20th-century games. Through Feb. 12. Heritage Society Museum, 1100 Bagby St., Sam Houston Park • heritagesociety.org • 713/655-1912.

Highlights from the Peter Blum Edition Archive. Projects by 23 artists. Through Feb. 20. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfa.org • 713/639-7300.

The Spirit of Modernism: The John R. Eckel Jr. Foundation Gift. Through Feb. 20. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfa.org • 713/639-7300.

Mary McCleary: A Survey 1996-2011. Through Feb. 24. Art League Houston, 1953 Montrose Blvd. • artleaguehouston.org • 713/523-9530.

Wall Paper as Art: If You Sprinkle When You Tinkle by Heather Bause. Through Feb. 24. Art League Houston, 1953 Montrose Blvd. • artleaguehouston.org • 713/523-9530.

Breaking Ground. Works by TJ Hunt. Through Feb. 25. Lawndale Art Center, 4912 Main St. • lawndaleartcenter.org • 713/528-5858.

Contact. Sculptures by Jade Walker. Through Feb. 25. Lawndale Art Center, 4912 Main St. • lawndaleartcenter.org • 713/528-5858.

Etchings of Bernhardt Wall: Following General Sam Houston. Through Feb. 25. Museum of Printing History, 1324 W. Clay St. • printingmuseum.org • 713/522-4652.

Luminous. Artistic approaches to light. Through Feb. 25. Box 13 ArtSpace, 6700 Harrisburg St. • box13artspace.com.

This Weird Place. New works by various artists. Through Feb. 25. Lawndale Art Center, 4912 Main St. • lawndaleartcenter.org • 713/528-5858.

Unfadeable So Please Don't Try to Fade Me. Works by Carlos Rosales-Silva. Through Feb. 25. Lawndale Art Center, 4912 Main St. • lawndaleartcenter.org • 713/528-5858.

And Everything in Between. New works by Curtis Gannon. Through March 2. 2101 Winter St. • spacemaker.org • 713/868-1839.

New Formations: Czech Avant-Garde Art and Modern Glass. Through March 11. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfa.org • 713/639-7300.

CraftTexas 2012. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft is accepting submissions for the juried exhibition showcasing

Texas-made contemporary craft. Deadline March 15. 4848 Main St. • craftthouston.org • 713/529-4848.

The Kenmore. Works by Cat Coombes and Edward Lane McCartney. Through March 17. Goldesberry Gallery, 2625 Colquitt St. • goldesberrygallery.com • 713/528-0405.

Shift. Works by Edward Lane McCartney. Through March 17. Goldesberry Gallery, 2625 Colquitt St. • goldesberrygallery.com • 713/528-0405.

Imprinting the Divine: Byzantine and Russian Icons from the Menil Collection. Through March 18. Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross St. • menil.org • 713/525-9400.

Perspectives 177: McArthur Binion. New paintings. Through April 1. Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd. • camh.org • 713/284-8250.

The Deconstructive Impulse: Women Artists Reconfigure the Signs of Power, 1973-1991. Through April 15. Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd. • camh.org • 713/284-8250.

Tutankhamun: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs. Through April 15. Museum of Fine Arts Houston's Brown Auditorium Theater, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfa.org • 713/639-7300.

Discovering the Civil War. Letters, diaries, photos, petitions, patents, and more from the National Archives. Through April 29. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr. • hmns.org • 713/639-4629.

Gemstone Carvings: The Masterworks of Harold Van Pelt. Through June 19. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr. • hmns.org • 713/639-4629.

Famous Monsters. Daniel Anguilo's exterior mural. Through June 30. Lawndale Art Center, 4912 Main St. • lawndaleartcenter.org • 713/528-5858.

The Impact of Racist Ideologies: Jim Crow and the Nuremberg Laws focuses on Houston's segregationist past. Through July 22. Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline St. • hmh.org • 713/942-8000.

Cells: The Universe Inside Us explores the complexity of the human body at the cellular level. Through Aug. 26. Health Museum, 1515 Hermann Dr. • thehealthmuseum.org • 713/521-1515.

Snail Mail. Correspondence from photographers. Feb. 1-May 6. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfa.org • 713/639-7300.

Joel Shapiro. New sculptures. Feb. 2-March 18. Rice Gallery, 6100 Main St. • ricegallery.org • 713/348-6069.

Alyssa Salomon: The Handmade Print. Alternative photography. Feb. 4-April 8. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main St. • craftthouston.org • 713/529-4848.

Bridge 11: Lia Cook. Feb. 4-May 13. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main St. • craftthouston.org • 713/529-4848.

Transference: Andy Paiko & Ethan Rose. Feb. 4-May 13. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main St. • craftthouston.org • 713/529-4848.

Eric Offerman: Paintings on Canvas. Feb. 9-March 10. Gremillion & Co. Fine Arts Gallery, 2501 Sunset Blvd. • gremillion.com • 713/522-2701.

Printmaking & Art Furniture Invitational Exhibition. Feb. 9-March 15. The Arts Alliance Center at Clear Lake, 2000 NASA Pkwy, Nassau Bay • taacd.org • 281/335-7777.

Revelation: Major Paintings by Jules Olitski. Feb. 12-May 6. Museum of Fine Arts, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfa.org • 713/639-7300.

Emancipation Proclamation. View the historic document issued on Jan. 1, 1863, declaring that "all persons held as slaves" within the United States, including its rebellious states, "are, and henceforward shall be free." Feb. 16-21. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr. • hmns.org • 713/639-4629.

Returning: The Art of Samuel Bak, a colorful journey to, through, and from the Holocaust. Feb. 17-Aug. 12. Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline St. • hmh.org • 713/942-8000.

Elegant Perfection: Masterpieces of Courty and Religious Art from the Tokyo National Museum. Feb. 19-April 8. Museum of Fine Arts, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfa.org • 713/639-7300.

The Historic American Buildings Survey: Preservation's Humble Beginnings. Feb. 21-May 20. Heritage Society Museum, 1100 Bagby St., Sam Houston Park • heritagesociety.org • 713/655-1912.

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lection 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., 8pm-12am; EJ's, 2517 Ralph, 10pm-1am; MIDTOWN SPA, 3100 Fannin St., 4-8pm. **THURSDAYS:** THE RIVERO, 715 Fairview Ave., 8pm-11pm; 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 (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 (Mondays)
Helping TransGenders Anonymous. 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 (Wednesdays)
Center Mid-Week Madness. Bring your own brown bag and board games. 11:30am-3pm. Houston GLBT Community Center, Historic Dow School, 1900 Kane St. • houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org • 713/524-3818.
Block 7 Running Club meets for a run followed by wine and snacks. 6pm. Block7 Wine Company, 720 Shepherd Dr. • ffrunningclubs.org.
Gulf Pride for Youth. a support group for GLBTQA youth ages 13-20. 6-9pm. 707 23rd St., Galveston • gulfpridefor youth.org
Houston Pride Band seeks all brass, woodwind, and percussion players of all skill levels for rehearsal. 7:30pm. Bethel UCC, 1107 Shepherd Dr. • 713/315-2525 • houstonprideband.org.

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 • 713/526-1018.
Southern Country. a country-and-western dance troupe, offers free dance lessons. Thursdays, 8:30 p.m. Brazos River Bottom, 2400 Brazos St. • southerncountryhouston.com.

Weekly (Saturdays)
Recycling Saturdays. Bring your glass, paper, plastic, and aluminum. 10am-2pm. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney St. • discoverygreen.com • 713/400-7336.

Semi-monthly (1st and 3rd Wed.)
Center Coming Out 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.

Semi-monthly (1st and 3rd Fri.)
Positive Brothers United. a social/support group for GLBT, HIV-positive men of color. Montrose Counseling Center, 401 Branard St. 6pm. csmtphbu@yahoo.com • 713/454-7548.

Monthly
Houston Gay and Lesbian Couples Meet-up Group. Time and location TBA. meetup.com/gaycouples-231/.
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.
Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Houston provides educational presentations of LGBT topics, small-group confidential discussions, and supportive fellowship. 2pm. St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 5501 S. Main St. • pflaghouston.org.

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. nwcorner.org.

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 West 19th St. Free admission. yalestreetmarket.com.

First Saturday Queer Bingo benefits Houston GLBT Community Center. 4:30pm. Houston GLBT Community Center, Historic Dow School, 1900 Kane St. • houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org • 713/524-3818.

Monthly (2nd Tues.)
Center Dinner. hosted by the Houston GLBT Community Center. Diners pay for their own meal. 6:30pm. Bibas, 607 W. Gray St. • 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.

Centro Grupo Latino. Spanish-language support group facilitated by Chris Escalante for individuals affected by HIV/AIDS. 4pm. Houston GLBT Community Center, 1900 Kane St. • houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org • 713/524-3818.

Monthly (3rd Sun.)
LOAF Meet and Greet. Lesbians Over Age Fifty meet for munchies and fellowship; bring some of both. 2-4pm. Montrose Counseling Center, 401 Branard St. • loafhouston.org • 281/467-2578.

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.)
HIV Testing. 1-2pm. Houston GLBT Community Center, Historic Dow School, 1900 Kane St. • houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org • 713/524-3818.

Share with PFLAG Houston in a safe, confidential setting. 7:30-9pm. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church's Chatham Room, 1805 W. Alabama St. • pflaghouston.org.

Monthly (3rd Fri.)
Triple D: Dykes, Dinner, and Discussion offers dinner and conversation about health, family, dating, equality, community awareness, and freedom of speech. 7pm. Houston GLBT Community Center, 1901 Kane St. • houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org • 713/524-3818.

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 Fri.)
Lesbian Discussion Hour. Facilitated support/conversation group. 6:30pm. Houston GLBT Community Center, Historic Dow School, 1900 Kane St. • houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org • 713/524-3818.

Through April 22
Coats for Cubs. Buffalo Exchange collects used furs to provide bedding for injured wildlife. Through April 22. 1618 Westheimer Rd. • buffaloexchange.com • 713/523-8701.

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February 18
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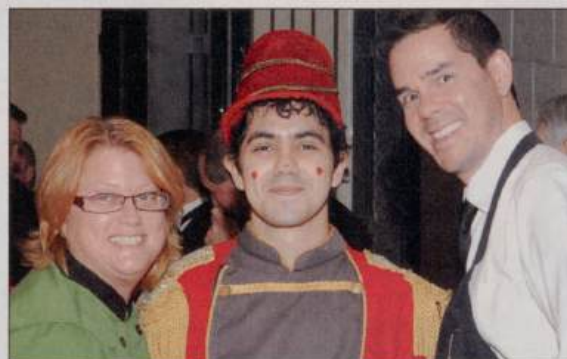
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A Fight for Justice

continued from page 43

code statutes and other governmental activity that penalized or criminalized conduct based upon sexual orientation. Under *Bowers v. Hardwick*, the Texas Penal Code provision 21.06 entitled "Homosexual Conduct" appeared to be constitutional. Hence, Texas was permitted to have a statute that made private, consensual, homosexual conduct between adults a crime. When John and Tyron were arrested in 1998, the chances of success in challenging the constitutionality of the law were bleak. John and Tyron were aware that their chances of winning were slim, but decided to go forward anyway. Both men hoped a judge would recognize and acknowledge the injustice that had taken place. Little did they realize that they were embarking on a five-year journey that would end in Washington DC.

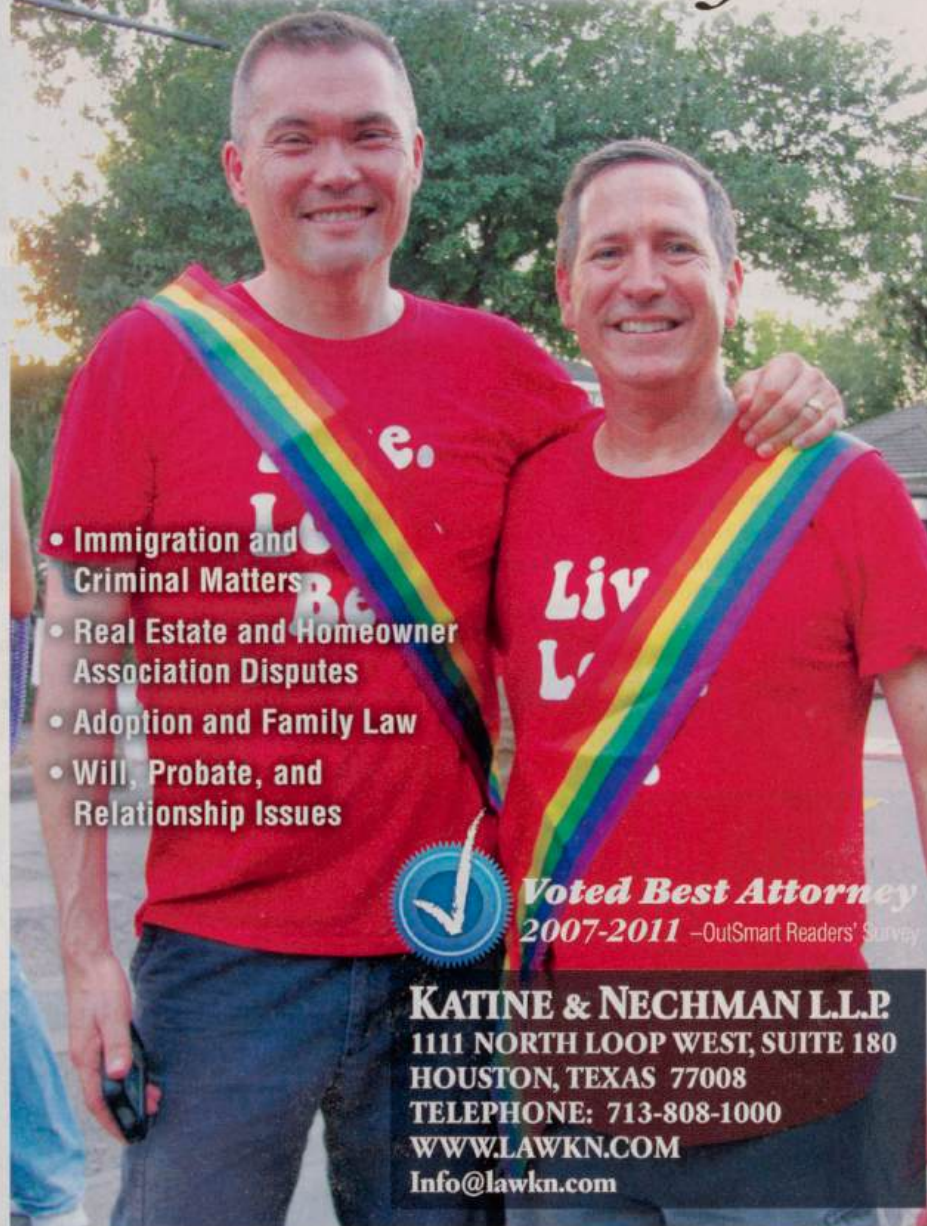
In Texas, all judges are elected. As such, regardless of the judge's personal beliefs, it is extremely hard for a judge to rule based upon constitutional principles when doing so is likely to result in their defeat in the next election cycle. Additionally, with the *Bowers v. Hardwick* decision issued by the United States Supreme Court, most Texas judges felt the *Bowers v. Hardwick* decision legitimized and authorized the Texas homosexual conduct statute. As a result, the *Lawrence v. Texas* case lost every judicial review throughout the Texas legal process.

Early on in our case, it was apparent that John and Tyron needed the assistance of constitutional law experts who were trained, educated, and experienced in raising constitutional challenges based upon sexual orientation. Private practitioners rarely have an opportunity to work on constitutional law issues. We needed the help of an experienced law firm that was well-versed in constitutional challenges. I contacted my friend Suzanne Goldberg at Lambda Legal in New York City and quickly engaged their services as lead counsel on the case. My role remained as local counsel and daily advisor to John and Tyron throughout the entire legal process. It was a privilege to work with the many constitutional scholars at Lambda Legal who brilliantly briefed, argued, and shepherded the case to victory.

Throughout the five-year process, beginning in a Harris County Justice of the Peace Court and ending in the United States Supreme Court in Washington DC, John and Tyron were unwavering in their commitment to seek liberty for all persons.

In 2003, the United States Supreme →

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A Fight for Justice

continued from page 87

Court indicated they would hear the case. John and Tyron felt the day of liberation was on the horizon. During oral arguments at the United States Supreme Court, it was apparent that the Supreme Court Justices were evaluating the case on constitutional principles, as well as on their personal experiences in dealing with gay and lesbian individuals.

In the end, the *Lawrence v. Texas* decision issued by the United States Supreme Court was more sweeping and forceful than any of us had anticipated. The United States Supreme Court admitted its error in the 1986 *Bowers v. Hardwick* decision, declaring that decision was wrong when it was issued and wrong today. Justice Kennedy further explained that gay and lesbian individuals have the right to seek dignity in their relationships without the interference of government.

Shortly after the *Lawrence v. Texas* decision was issued, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court issued its historic decision permitting—for the first time in United States history—marriage between persons of the same sex. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court's decision

cited and quoted from the *Lawrence v. Texas* decision. Other states soon followed, and ultimately the United States government did away with its ban on gay and lesbian individuals serving in the United States military. Undoubtedly, the decision in the *Lawrence v. Texas* case cleared the way for such historic changes.

After the *Lawrence v. Texas* decision was issued in 2003, John, Tyron, and I traveled around the country speaking at various law schools and universities on the impact of the decision and the freedoms given to LGBT individuals. John and Tyron particularly enjoyed meeting people. Seeing John and Tyron face-to-face gave the students a firsthand look into the lives of these heroes, whose ordinary lives were suddenly disrupted by a terrible, discriminatory event that became a turning point in American civil rights history. Neither John nor Tyron were politically involved or ever considered themselves political activists. They were simply willing to fight against tremendous odds for what they believed was right.

Now that John and Tyron are no longer physically with us, law students and others may view the *Lawrence v. Texas* as just another historical event in the fight for equality—failing to remember

that John and Tyron were regular men who decided to fight against a terrible injustice through a legal battle that they ultimately won.

Until the day they died, they never experienced negative comments or incidents. Many gay and lesbian individuals fear coming out and fighting for their rights. Fear is a terrible constraint on the fight for liberty. Due to many years of oppression, LGBT individuals often find a degree of peace in remaining closeted and hidden. John and Tyron were not out to their co-workers and many others at the time they were arrested. Hence, having their names and pictures on the front page of all of the major newspapers in this country made their saga even more difficult. However, John and Tyron never hesitated to proceed with the case despite personal issues that had to be resolved. The examples of John and Tyron should give all of us confidence to fight for our rights.

John and Tyron got the chance to change the world, and they did. History will remember them as heroes who fought for justice and won liberty for generations to come.

Mitchell Katine is a founding partner with the law firm of Katine & Nechman L.L.P.

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BAR & CLUB GUIDE

Houston

13 ENTERTAINMENT

Formerly In-N-Out, this comfortable club located in the northern Heights is a convenient alternate to inner-Montrose haunts. Patrons journey past the comfy seating and romantic lighting to find a spacious patio where they sometimes fire up the barbecue grill. 1537 N. Shepherd • 713/426-1313.

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. • throb parties.info.

BAYOU CITY BAR & GRILL

DJ Wild and DJ CJ provide tunes for this lively, down-home bar in the heart of Montrose known for its cheap drinks, Wednesday's steak night, and Thursday's 25¢ wings during happy hour. 2409 Grant St. • 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.

BOCADOS

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. • 713/529-1099 • barboheme.com.

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.

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 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 • 713-278-2582 • crystalthelub.com.

CLUB CURVE

This upscale, dual-level club carries a strict "no hats, no T-shirts, no sneakers, no shorts" policy, and offers "Gay Night" on Thursdays. 410 Main • houstonclubcurve.com.

CROCKER BAR

Resident DJ Johnny spins on Friday and Saturday nights at this comfortably remodeled Montrose nightspot that also offers karaoke on Tuesdays and Thursdays and extended happy-hour prices throughout the week. 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.

EAGLE HOUSTON

This 12,000 square-foot dance club with its private nooks and crannies for dancing and cruising is downtown's bar for masculine men. Resident DJs JD Arnold and Spinbear man the turntables. Sundays only, 4 p.m. 709 Franklin St. • eaglehouston.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 • ej sbar.com.

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BEHIND THE BAR

WHO: Jeff Mixon

WHERE: Bar None • Diamond Beach Resort, 10327 FM 3005 (The Seawall) in Galveston • 409/539-5125

WHAT'S UP: Bar None, the island's swankiest LGBT nightclub, celebrates its "grand re-opening" under new management on February 25.

EVO LOUNGE

Burlesque-style performers and the rooftop lounge's skyline view are highlighted at this lesbian dance club offering Boi's Night Out Sunday, Karaoke Tuesday, Working Women's Wednesday, Two-Step Thursday, with DJ Kittie spinning Friday, and DJ Melle Mel and DJ Joy De La O spinning Saturday. Bottle service available. Evo Lounge, 2707 Milam St. • 832/359-6624.

F BAR

This elegant yet "boutique club" offers a spacious patio with a fire pit, marble and slate components, a glass-enclosed quiet bar, VIP area, and express bar. DJ Joe Ross spins for "F-n-tastic Sunday," plus "Drag Live" on Tuesday, "L to the F" women's happy hour on Wednesday, and "F Tunes Live" karaoke Thursday and Sunday. 202 Tuam St. • 713/522-3227 • fbarhouston.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

This trendy and friendly video and cruise bar gets busy during happy hour and stays busy 'til closing. Karaoke on Wednesday and Sunday, sometimes offering prizes, always packs the place. 570 Waugh Dr. • 713/524-3359 • guavalamphouston.com.

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.

MAINSTAGE

Downtown's swanky new gay dance club starts the week with Weiner Wednesdays, serving free hot dogs and popcorn while screening movie musical and classic television series on video screens, and offers drink specials, DJs, and other enticements through Sundays. 2016 Main St. • leavetheboyfriendathome.com.

METEOR

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

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

Studly male dancers bump and grind every night at this leather/

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

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 • 832/884-7276 • pasadenaskybar.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. • 713/521-2792 • theripcord.com.

THE 611

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

SOUTH BEACH

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

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. • 713/659-5400 • statushouston.com.

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 • tcs showbar.com.

TONY'S CORNER POCKET

This comfortable club located close to downtown has one of the friendliest bar staffs in town, both inside & outside at its patio bar. The raised stage where local charities perform also features an amateur dance contest each Thurs., Fri., & Sat. 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 reprieve, especially on Wednesday, when "Her Usual" night packs in the women. Enjoy drink specials, dancing, karaoke, & gazing at the downtown skyline from the spacious front deck. 5519 Allen St. • 281/501-1478 • theusualpub.com.

VIVIANA'S

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

Spring

RANCH HILL SALOON

With its two pool tables, 52-inch plasma televisions, and large dance floor, this popular northside spot also offers Humpty Hump Wednesdays with DJ Brian Moya and a monthly drawing for a flatscreen TV. 247041 I-45N Suite 103 • 281/298-9035 • ranchhill.com.

THE ROOM

Northside GLBTs relax on couches & enjoy multiple television screens, pool tables, & an ample dance floor where famed local DJs Triple-S and Dylan Barnes rotate to provide the music on Retro Fridays, New Mix Saturdays, & Trash Disco Sundays. Open daily. 4915 FM 2920 #148 • theroombar.net.

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. • 409/765-9465.

BAR NONE

The island's newest gay gathering place offers stylish, modern surroundings with a wraparound veranda framing some of the best sunsets on Galveston Island. Located in the highly rated Diamond Beach resort, it boasts a luxurious Miami Beach lounge attitude with sleek appointments. 10327 Seawall Blvd. • galveston.com/barrnone.

PINK DOLPHIN

A familiar name returns to Galveston's roster of gay bars, with new owner Tom Long. The friendly, neighborhood BYOB spot offers affordable setups and an off-the-Seawall, downtown-based island escape. 1706 Tremont St. • 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.

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February is always a busy month—we'll need to get so much done in just 29 days this year. As the month opens, Mars, planet of action and competition, is retrograde until mid-April. This isn't a good time to initiate any new projects. It could be a good time to go back to a diet or exercise program that you have used in the past. People born in the signs of Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, and Pisces are the most affected by Mars. During the next few months, these folks are much more likely to tell you what they really think. • Neptune, planet of dreams and spirituality, is entering her home sign of Pisces for the first time since 1847. This will have the biggest impact on the same four signs that Mars is affecting, and those folks should expect to be pondering the meaning of life. • Good days for this month are the 1st, 9th, 13th, 16th, 18th, 25th, and 28th. Days to have an extra cup of tea and a Danish are the 3rd, 6th, 7th, 14th, 15th, 19th, and 23rd. • The Mercury retrograde is coming up on March 8. Plan ahead.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). This is an excellent month to be paying attention to your diet and health programs. Find one that worked and go back to it. You are really ready to do something different in your life. Don't be surprised if you are looking for a new career or planning to retire from the one you are in. You are more than ready for a new sense of adventure. Relationships can be edgy if there is not enough room for individual needs. If you find yourself feeling trapped, group activities, community groups, homeowner associations, or something less formal could be very beneficial to you.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). You are very focused this month on your career and public reputation. If you are unhappy where you are, or just need something new to do, January through April is a good time to plan. If you have been looking for a while, this is a great time to reconnect with those businesses that you talked with previously. Your social life is improving as the year progresses. It's a great time to get with friends that you haven't seen in a while. Relationships might feel restrictive unless your boundaries are updated.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). Family and home are still very prominent in your life for the next couple of months. This could mean something as simple as having a family get-together, or as major as doing home renovations or moving. Your temper is going to be short with family members. Don't let that bleed over into your



AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). This is your birthday month, when the sun returns to the same position in the sky as it was in when you were born. Your birthday is your personal New Year, when you review the past year and set new directions for the one ahead. You are rather focused on money and finances during February, and that will become stronger as the month continues. You are feeling more motivated and ready to tackle the world as you get more organized each day. After June, you will feel much clearer about your directions and choices.

pay attention to your health throughout February. Look for a dance class and not an exercise class.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). Your energies are finally being regenerated. You are more open and social than before. If you are single, you

are beginning to meet new people. Best to wait until mid-April to settle on someone. If you are committed, this new energy will really add some fun to your relationship. You're reviewing your friendships and group organizations during February, and you may find some disagreement there. This burst of energy eases during March.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). This month, Mars, planet of action and impatience, is spending a lot of time in your career area. This means that any past problems are likely to resurface so you can confront them. You will be very direct and in a reorganizing mode as you try to get your day-to-day life in order. Toward the end of the month, you begin to pay more attention to your home and your family. The latter part of the month is a great time for family reunions.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). This month you are focused on your money and your resources—and also on reassessing your sense of self-worth. You may feel that you deserve a raise. Some of you may use this time to consider doing something totally different in your career. It's best to put career changes into action after mid-April. You are trying to lighten your load at home, perhaps throwing things out or trying to install new windows so you can have more light. By the end of the month, you are ready for a break.

PISCES (February 19–March 20). Your ruling planet, Neptune, enters Pisces on February 3. This is going to have the most impact on those born in the first three days of the sign, or if you have a planet at those points. You are really considering the meaning of life. Be prepared to focus on your inner life. The rest of the Mermaids and Mermen are really stirred up in their relationships. Time for some renewal, an adventure, or a fight. You are also looking for a new way to use your skills and talents. You are more laid back during the first half of February before becoming much more active later in the month.

Read Lilly Roddy's forecast for all of 2012 at OurSmartMagazine.com. For more astro-insight, log on to lillyroddy.com.

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OUT IN HOUSTON



Carol Wyatt (l-r), Joe Licata, and Robin Brown during the Houston Texans vs. Cincinnati Bengals playoff party, January 7.



Members of "The Heathers" Montrose Softball League team during fundraiser, January 15.



Judge Vanessa D. Gilmore (l-r), Mayor Annise Parker, and Kathy Hubbard at Mayor Parker's inaugural ceremony, January 2.



Sam Byrd and David Greiss (in black shirts, l-r) with the Rockets Launch Crew during the "Bring It On: The Pep Rally" for *Bring It On: The Musical*, January 8.



Kenneth Claybourne (l) and Richard Hudkins at the BCPA Houston Holiday Hoedown, December 20.



Paul-David Van Atta (l) and Julie Eberly during the 9th annual Cabaret for a Cure, January 21.



Merlyn Pagano (l-r), Skip Willet, Judy Reeves, Alton Howart, and Ken Colby during GC2M showcase of Jack Dorlan's art, January 8.



Dominic Cellitti (top center); middle row, l-r: Terry Hamman, Raymond Garica, Mark Haukohl, and John Danielson; bottom row, l-r: Dustin Walk, Donald Lehde, and Michael Leibbert at the Diana Foundation holiday party, December 17.



Paul Ferrer staff and models during Bunnies on The Bayou's "Snow Bunnies 2012", January 15.

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