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FEBRUARY 2013

Houston's LGBT Magazine
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Greetings
from
Washington DC

"Our journey is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else under the law, for if we are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well."

— PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA



Eleven members of the Houston Pride Band marched with the Lesbian and Gay Band Association at the 2013 Inaugural Parade

After 44 presidents, 57 inaugurations, and 224 years, the LGBT community has finally been mentioned in an inauguration speech.

➡ ALSO INSIDE ⬅

Kate Clinton & the LHI Gala • THE BIG GAY WEDDING ON FEB. 14
THE OSCARS GET A FACELIFT • Michael Kemper & the Dianas
Jason & deMarco Family Style • PRIDE IN ISRAEL
ARE YOU BETTER THAN YOUR OTHER HALF? • And More!



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Photo: Courtesy Houston Pride Band
Design: Terry Klump



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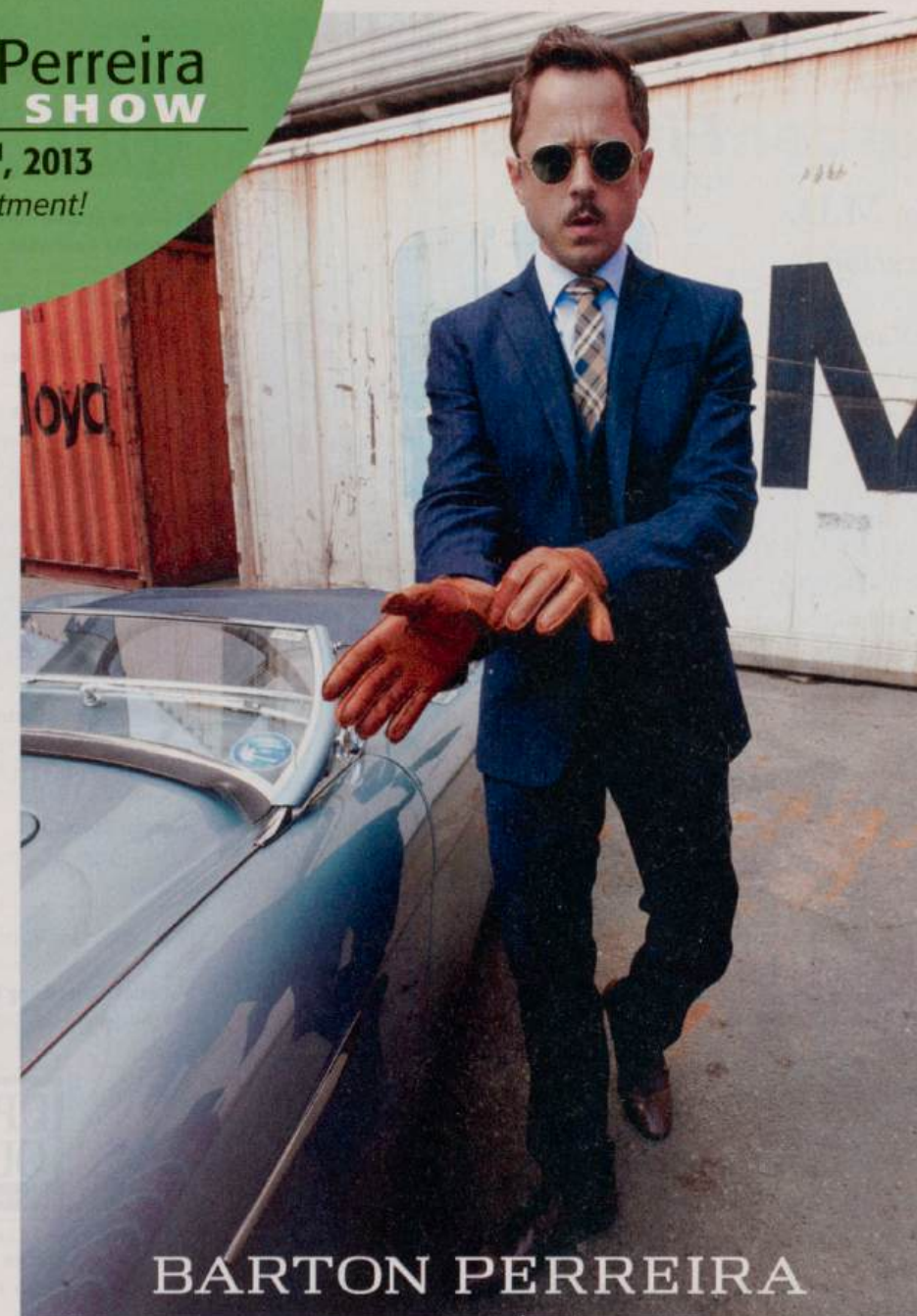
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by
Sally
Huffer

Rev. Ralph Lasher Retires

His Bethel congregation is hosting a retirement party on February 10

At age 84, Rev. Ralph Lasher is finally settling down. He lives in a retirement community on Houston's west side, and he has decided that, like many of his neighbors, it's time to retire professionally. With a laugh, he says Houston's heavy traffic is part of his motivation. He no longer wants to make the taxing 30-mile round-trip every Saturday and Sunday to Bethel United Church of Christ on Shepherd Drive, just north of Washington Avenue.

Lasher has felt a strong connection to his faith since he was a young boy serving as an acolyte in his church.

At age twelve, the seed was planted that God was calling him to the ministry. But then he found a passion for politics. When he was in school he would run for various offices, and he always won. He was the president of his fraternity.

After Lasher graduated from college, he was riding the train one evening from Hartford, Connecticut, to visit New York's Episcopal Seminary. The train stopped in New Haven, where senator Robert Taft got on board. They knew each other through family connections, and the senator asked him where he was headed. Lasher responded that he was on his way to the seminary, trying to decide if he should go into politics or the ministry. Taft, considered by many to be one of the most powerful U.S. senators in history, advised the young Lasher to go into the ministry. Pointing his finger at Lasher, he declared, "Don't go into politics, Ralph. It's the dirtiest business there is."

And that was it. He continued to the seminary, was accepted, and spent the next three years there. He was ordained at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Boston sixty years ago.

Lasher spent some time crisscrossing North America in the secular world, mostly writing and working in publishing. He landed in Houston in 1968 to follow the love of his life, Harry Gibson. Actually, they were living in Chicago at the time and they had just had a terrible snowstorm. Gibson was from Louisiana originally, and the two decided to move to a warmer city. Lasher and Gibson were together from 1955 until Gibson's passing in 2000.

Lasher and Gibson socialized in Houston as a couple and entertained a lot, volunteering their time for various nonprofit organizations and rubbing elbows with elected officials. It was the first time Lasher could be open about his relationship, and also around the time

that many other gay men were falling ill. Lasher learned as much as he could about HIV and AIDS, and was frequently called upon to speak to groups through his involvement with United Way.

He was the director of Montrose Clinic for a period in the late 1980s, and started a support group at Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection for people who were HIV positive. The church, which was on Decatur Street at the time, was the first place Lasher had ever seen gay couples embracing and holding hands.

After he became the pastor of the church, he started the Saturday evening El Noche class and was instrumental in starting a bilingual service there. He is very proud that several thousand people have attended his Scripture and Sexuality courses through the years. He has →

Pride Houston Announces 2013 Theme, Logo, and Pride Marshal Nominees

Houston Pride month is right around the corner. Once again, with promises of a celebration that will top all that came before. At an unveiling event on January 17 at Meteor, Pride Houston, Inc. presented the theme, logo, and grand marshal nominees for the 2013 Houston LGBT Pride Celebration.

After soliciting theme ideas from the community following last year's event, Pride Houston volunteers, directors, and officers narrowed down suggestions to the top three final selections. The community then had the final say, voting and selecting "PRIDE UNLEASHED" as this year's celebration theme.

The 2013 corresponding logo was designed by a student of the Art Institute of Houston. As part of their curriculum, students submitted designs that they felt best represented the event's theme. Pride Houston then made the final selection. The organization congratulated Rachel Rehrauer on designing this year's winning logo.

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Community



On January 17 at Club Meteor, LIVE Consortium received a \$2,500 check from Pride Houston from funds raised at the inaugural Lumiere Nouveau New Year's Eve celebration. L-r: **Frankie Quijano**, Pride Houston president; **Beau Miller**, LIVE Consortium founder and CEO; and **Javier Ramirez**, VP of Pride Houston.



The Harris County Democratic Party hosted "A Toast to a Blue Year" at Hughes Hangar to celebrate election results and look toward future party successes. L-r: **Chad Dunn**, **Gilberto Hinojosa** (State Democratic Party chairman), **Lane Lewis** (Harris County Democratic Party chairman), and **Scott Brazil**.

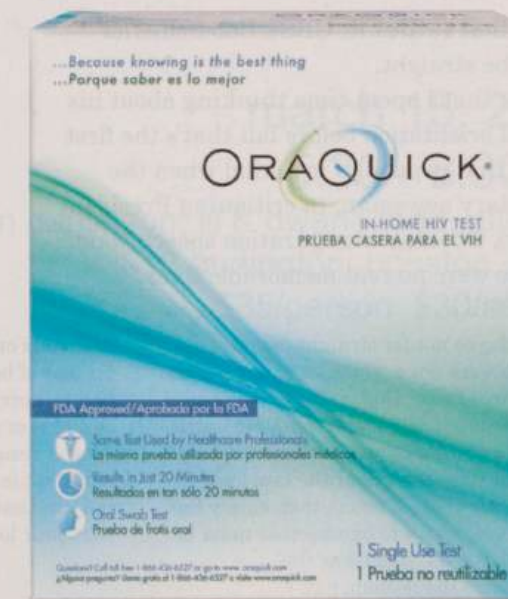


On National Day of Service, January 19, volunteers from **Pride Charities Inc.** met at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church to assist in the expansion of the church's food pantry and clothes closet.

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by
LZ
Granderson

Bob Schieffer Must Be Straight



Well, that settles it: CBS's Bob Schieffer must be straight.

Not that I spent time thinking about his sexual orientation before but that's the first thing that popped in my mind when the legendary newsman, in critiquing President Barack Obama's inauguration speech, said, "There were no real memorable lines."

Maybe not for straight people, but there were not a whole lot of gay people who will forget this:

"Our journey is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else under the law, for if we are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well." That was the first time the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community was mentioned in an inaugural address.

I'd say that passage was pretty memorable.

And while we've all heard this president mention the rights of gays in speeches before, what was unique about the inauguration, what really moved me and a lot of people engaged in this particular struggle—was this:

"We, the people, declare today that the most evident of truths—that all of us are created equal—is the star that guides us still; just as it guided our forebears through Seneca Falls, and Selma, and Stonewall."

Seneca Falls refers to the first women's rights convention held in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. His mention of Selma was a nod to the civil rights march in Selma, Alabama, in 1965.

And Stonewall?

After years of being harassed by police, even arrested for dressing differently or simply walking down the street,

the patrons of the Stonewall Inn finally had enough. So after another humiliating raid at a Greenwich Village bar by the name of Stonewall Inn, they fought back. That was June 28, 1969. That moment is credited with being the single most important event in the gay rights movement.

The community came together.

Groups were formed.

Significant cultural change had begun.

In mentioning Stonewall, with not only the nation, but the world watching, Obama gave more than a passing acknowledgment to a group of people who were instrumental to his reelection.

He stopped, looked us in the eyes, and said: I see you.

Maybe if you've never had to worry about not being promoted "if someone found out"; maybe if you've never had to switch

pronouns or leave your better half at home for fear of being fired; maybe if you've never had to worry about health insurance for your children or pay extra taxes because your state doesn't recognize your family; maybe if you've never sat in a church and had a preacher tell you that your family isn't a family at all, that your loving relationship is wrong, that

who you are is inherently wrong, then I could see how someone could view the president's speech as lacking in memorable lines.

But the Association of Bragg Officers' Spouses recently offered the wife of an Army lieutenant colonel an invitation to join the group as a "special guest"—not as a spouse—for one reason: sexual orientation.

So despite being legally married, despite a 15-year relationship, despite the overturning of "don't ask,

don't tell," the blatant discrimination and bullying of LGBT people continues.

So the mentioning of Stonewall did not pass by everyone's ears unnoticed. In fact, as I made my way from the frozen lawn in front of the U.S. Capitol, past the parade route and eventually to one of the evening's balls, it was clear to me that the passage in Obama's speech was more than a memorable line.

It was a rallying cry.

That's not to say the work is done, but rather Bayard Rustin, Harvey Milk, Del Martin, and the countless souls who have since moved on, did not fight for this notion of full

equality in vain.

It took 44 presidents, 57 inaugurations, and 224 years before the LGBT community was mentioned in an inauguration speech—but the community was finally mentioned.

That seems pretty memorable to me.

At the beginning of the ceremony, Sen. Chuck Schumer drew our attention to the construction of the Capitol, particularly the Statue of Freedom that stands at the top of the dome. He pointed out it was a freed slave, Phillip Reed, who helped to cast the bronze statue, which was placed there December 2, 1863, not even a year after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation.

To hear that story on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, as the nation's first black president was being sworn in for a second time, was a reminder to all of us that at times equality can feel like a slow train coming . . . but we cannot grow weary because it is coming.

LZ Granderson was named Journalist of the Year by the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association and is a 2011 Online Journalism Award finalist for commentary.

News: Rev. Ralph Lasher

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provided guidance to people through the Colby Project and Amigos Volunteering for Education and Services, two programs that no longer exist. He has been the acting interim pastor at Bethel United Church of Christ for the last seven years.

On Sunday, February 10, the Bethel congregation is holding a retirement party for the Reverend with a spaghetti luncheon at noon after the 10:30 worship service.

Claire Vasilioy is organizing the party at the church. Like many people who worship at Bethel, she followed Rev. Lasher when he left Resurrection. "I left because he was my pastor." She says that all are welcome to come celebrate Lasher's retirement after six decades as a man of the cloth.

Lasher is enjoying his time at the retirement community, although he says his neighbors don't know about his legacy in the LGBT and HIV communities. He says the community does offer three square meals, several programs, and religious activities—all of which he attends without wearing his clerical collar. ■



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by
Susan
Bankston

Those Smoldering Homosexuals . . .

We don't mind them—it's the flaming ones that bother us

The American Family Association isn't American, nor does it have any Family values. But it is an Association, so I guess one out of three ain't bad.

It is a political group that uses Sweet Jesus as their own personal weapon. So they were outraged—outraged, I tell you—that the proposed Employment Non-Discrimination Act might cause, in their opinion, "flaming homosexuals" to storm Christian bookstores and demand jobs.

Well, don't that just beat all?

You mean Christian bookstores where they have signs that say

"Love One Another"? Or maybe with this new law, they're going to take those signs down. I wouldn't know. They rarely consult me on these matters.

Brian Fischer, the leader of the

"Brian is so narrow-minded that you can etch glass with his head. So narrow-minded that his ears rub together."

American Family Association—henceforth known only as the Association—is having celestial visions. Bless his heart—Brian is so narrow-minded that you can etch glass with his head. So narrow-minded that his ears rub together. He can see through a keyhole with both eyes. Okay, you get

the idea.

Brian Fischer says that if the law goes into effect, "the homosexual lobby will send a flaming homosexual into that Christian bookstore to apply for a job. They'll send a guy in there wearing stilettos, a dress, and dangly earrings, and dare the owner of that Christian bookstore not to hire him."

Y'all, that's an exact quote. I do not want to know how much time or what thought process he used to come to that amazing yet insufficient scenario. Just reading that, you'd think Klinger had finally gotten out of his MASH unit.

Personally, I want to know →



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Commentary

continued from page 14

more about the dress. I know for a fact that it's real hard to be a-flame and keep a dress on without distracting singe and scorch marks ruining the whole thing. Plus, no self-respecting homosexual would wear just "a dress." It would be an outfit. An ensemble, if you will. And it would have accessories better than oh-dear-God dangly earrings.

It's not in the story, but I'm betting you that Brian got himself so enthralled with the prospect of RuPaul working behind his counter that he had to excuse himself for a minute to go take a cold shower and fan himself. Or whatever he does when he's enthralled, which most likely doesn't take a full minute.

Bless his heart—not knowing the difference between being a transvestite and a homosexual means that Brian probably already has homosexuals working behind his counter at Bed, Bath & Bibles. I take comfort in knowing that. Okay, let me clarify—not so much comfort as a wild case of the giggles.

Without this legislation, people will be discriminated against for their color, age, national origin, handicap, or gender—but it's worth the sacrifice to keep those damned dangly earrings out of Christian bookstores. Honey, Brian would rather go skinny-dipping with snappin' turtles—or at least send you to do it—than risk that.

The way I see it, Brian Fischer and his Association have issued a challenge with this "flaming homosexual" stuff.

So, if the "homosexual lobby" (which, best I know, is that room outside of most any Broadway musical) doesn't do this, I will. But first, does anybody have some dangly earrings I can borrow?

And Brian Fischer did not even consider another result of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act—he could demand to be hired at an adult bookstore. You know, while wearing that real Super-Deluxe Brand Christian Smug Look instead of far more respectable dangling earrings.

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

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by
Grace
S. Yung

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Even though 2012 is now behind us, there is still time to make your 2012 IRA contribution and enjoy the potential benefits of tax-advantaged investing. In fact, investors are allowed to make 2012 IRA contributions through April 15 of 2013. Even if you have not yet established an IRA, it is not too late to do so, as the IRS allows you to open an IRA account for 2012 through April 15, 2013.

Which Type of IRA Is Right for You?

Today, there are two main types of IRAs: the Roth and the Traditional. With a Roth IRA, you are not allowed to deduct your contributions. However, in most cases, the qualified distributions that are withdrawn from a Roth IRA are tax-free.

Those who have a Traditional IRA have the benefit of tax-deferred growth while the funds remain in the account. Contributions to a traditional IRA may be partially or fully tax-deductible—although the deduction may be limited if you are also covered by a retirement plan through your employer and your income exceeds a certain amount.

With a Traditional IRA, participants are required to begin withdrawing at least a portion of their funds—or a Required Minimum Distribution—when they reach age 70½. This also means that no more contributions may be made into the account. With a Roth IRA, however, there is no age limit as to when contributions may be made or when funds must be withdrawn.

Other types of IRAs include:

- **SEP-IRA.** A SEP-IRA, or Simplified Employee Pension Individual Retirement Account, is a variation of the Traditional IRA. These types of plans are used by business owners to provide a retirement savings option to their employees. Similar to a Traditional IRA, contributions to a SEP-IRA may be tax deductible, and the funds will be taxed as ordinary income upon withdrawal.
- **Beneficiary/Deceased/Inherited IRA.** These IRA accounts are left to a beneficiary upon the owner's death. If the original account holder was already receiving their required minimum distribution amount at the time of death, then the beneficiary who inherits the account may continue receiving such distributions. Typically, these funds may be received in the amount that has already been calculated for the original account owner, or at a different amount that is based upon the life expectancy of the beneficiary.

How Much Can You Contribute Each Year?

If you are covered by an employer's retirement plan, the following table outlines the amount of adjusted gross income (AGI) that can affect your personal traditional IRA contribution deduction.

YOUR FILING STATUS FOR 2012	YOUR 2012 MODIFIED AGI	ALLOWED DEDUCTION
Single or Head of Household	\$58,000 or less	Full deduction up to the amount of your traditional IRA contribution limit
	\$58,001–\$67,999	Partial deduction
	\$68,000 or more	No deduction

According to the IRS, if one partner in a traditional opposite-sex marriage is a stay-at-home spouse, they may still open an IRA account (even though they have no earned income), as long as the couple files a joint income tax return. This option is not available for LGBT partners. In fact, even if you and your partner live in a state where same-sex marriage is legal, IRA contributions are

subject to federal rules, so most LGBT couples must still file their income taxes as single individuals.

Regardless of which type of IRA you have, you may only contribute up to a maximum annual amount. For the year 2012, total annual maximum IRA contribution limits are as follows:

- \$5,000 for those who are age 49 or younger
- \$5,000 plus an additional \$1,000 catch-up contribution for those who are age 50 or older.

If the total amount of your earned taxable compensation for the year is less than these amounts, you may contribute only up to the amount of this compensation.

Calculating Your Partner's Share of Your IRA Benefits

As many investors are aware, IRA owners may begin taking penalty-free withdrawals from IRA accounts upon reaching age 59½. However, depending on which type of IRA you have, there is no requirement that you must begin withdrawing from your IRA until the Required Beginning Date, or RBD. This is typically April 1 of the year following the year in which you turn age 70½.

continued on page 20



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MoneySmart continued from page 18

Should an IRA owner pass away, the post-death distribution requirement is dependent upon whether the individual passes before or after the date of their RBD.

Other factors include:

- Whether or not there is a designated IRA account beneficiary
- The identity of the designated beneficiary.

The amount of the Required Minimum Distribution, or RMD, is usually calculated by using the life expectancy of the designated beneficiary. However, these distributions are calculated in different ways if the beneficiary is the IRA account owner's spouse or someone else.

• *If the IRA owner's spouse is the beneficiary:* If the sole beneficiary of the IRA account is the spouse of the IRA owner, this individual may have unlimited rights to the IRA funds and may even roll the funds into his or her own IRA account and delay account distributions until he or she reaches age 70½. Here, IRA distributions will be calculated during the surviving spouse's lifetime, and any of the remaining funds at the spouse's death will be paid using the spouse's life expectancy.

The surviving spouse may also decide to leave the funds in the deceased's IRA account. In this case, the option for calculating the amount of RMD can be quite beneficial to the spouse. For example, if the spouse does not roll the deceased's IRA funds into his or her own IRA account, then the RMD will be calculated by dividing the balance in the deceased's account (on December 31 of the year of death) by the spouse's life expectancy.

Going forward, the life expectancy of a spouse will be recalculated for each subse-

quent year. A surviving spouse is the only type of IRA account beneficiary who is allowed to recalculate his or her life expectancy, and all other non-spousal beneficiaries are required to use a fixed term. In this case, because spouses may delay the commencement of lifetime distributions until they reach their required beginning dates, spouses are essentially allowed a longer deferral of the IRA income.

Unfortunately, because LGBT partners are not allowed to marry under federal law, the same-sex partners of deceased individuals will not be allowed to roll their partners' IRA funds to their own IRA account.

- *If the beneficiary is not the IRA owner's spouse:*

Overall, domestic partners have far fewer tax-advantaged options when transferring wealth to a surviving partner or other unrelated individual. When an IRA beneficiary is not the spouse of the account owner, the RMD must be determined by dividing the IRA account balance on December 31 of the year of death by the life expectancy of the non-spousal beneficiary.

It is required that account distributions must begin by December 31 of the year following the year of the original IRA owner's death.

The Bottom Line

There is still time to establish and fund your IRA account for 2012 and take advantage of the tax benefits that investing in these types of accounts may offer. It may be wise to also make a 2013 IRA contribution at the same time. By doing so early in the year, account holders could essentially deposit \$10,000 or more and have an opportunity to grow these assets for an entire year in a tax-advantaged account, versus waiting until April of 2014 to do so.

It is important to keep in mind that all situations call for an investment plan that fits in with your specific financial goals. With this in mind, all planning should ideally be done via a qualified financial professional who is well versed in the area of investments and financial planning.

This information is not intended to be a substitute for specific individualized tax advice. We suggest that you discuss your specific tax issues with a qualified tax advisor.

Grace S. Yung, CFP, is a certified financial planner practitioner with experience in helping domestic partners plan their finances since 1994. She is a principal at Midtown Financial, LLC in Houston.

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Looking?

"Age/sex/loc?" Ah, the romantic line that led to my first hook-up. I was 17, not even close to being out, and too young to venture into a gay bar, so my teenage urges and sexual curiosity were relegated to an AOL chatroom.

His name was Chris—or, as I was first introduced to him, "CTKid860." Luckily, he turned out to be very attractive and not an ax murderer.

In 2013, as Grindr, Jack'd, Scruff, Growl, and other one-word-innuendo-named apps have become the new AOL, and "age/sex/loc" has morphed into a more direct heart-fluttering code that cuts right to the chase: "Looking?"

What does that even mean, anyway? I assume it's just shorthand for "Looking to hook up?" (Can't we even respect each other enough to thumb out those last three words, let alone wait to see photos?)

Don't get me wrong; I have a handful of those apps on my phone, too. It's just part of being single in 2013. And it's all in how you use it—some people just want to hook up, while others are looking for legitimate social networking opportunities. But where has the romance gone?

Let's jump back to the gay dating scene from half a century ago. There were no apps, no texting, no chatrooms. There were gay bars, but going to one risked not only a police raid but potential backlash at work and among friends if your presence there was made public. Even private parties faced the threat of a police raid.

There were cruising spots: truck stops, certain blocks in major cities,

piers, parks, and beaches where "the love that dare not speak its name" could be found.

Harvey Milk, for example, met one of his early lovers on Riis Beach, a gay cruising spot (which remains heavily gay today) in Queens, New York. After their first night together, the two exchanged romantic love letters and led a relatively normal middle-class gay life; going to the opera instead of the gay bars, eventually moving to Dallas together. (This was years before Milk's move to San Francisco and the beginnings of his political career.)

Other New York couples met at Central Park West, a popular cruising spot on the Upper West Side. Then there was Christopher Street, and the now-famous Stonewall Inn bar. This was a time when a curious man had

perfectly normal and natural word to apply to places where one has a good time. The continued use of such double entendre terms will make it obvious to the initiated that he is speaking with another person acquainted with the homosexual argot."

This code, and the lifestyle of cruising, shows how difficult gay dating was in the pre-Grindr era. And yet it's also representative of how much more meaningful any encounter was, for it required a lot more work before the Internet came along. "Looking" wasn't an introductory phrase, but a physical action that required travel—and a lot more balls.

I'm not saying we should all delete our networking apps, buy antique rotary phones, and go back to looking for sex in parks and bathroom stalls (though according to a brief Google search, these

places are still hopping). But in this month of love, maybe we can place a little more value in an introduction. And maybe while we're out drinking and socializing—without the threat of a police raid—we can put away our smartphones and meet a guy the old-school way.

"Looking? For a Valentine?"

Blake Hayes is the mid-afternoon host at Mix 96.5 KHM.

"His name was Chris—or, as I was first introduced to him, 'CTKid860.' Luckily, he turned out to be very attractive and not an ax murderer."

to venture outside his living room to find satisfaction; an encounter couldn't be arranged with a few clicks on a touchscreen. There was still mystery—and perhaps even exhilarating danger—associated with the beginnings of any gay relationship.

Let's go back even further, to the early twentieth century. This was the time when the term "gay" was first used as a sort of code to determine one's sexuality in a time when homosexuality was rarely spoken of. Anthony Rotundo's 1941 book *American Manhood* explained it this way:

"Supposing one met a stranger on a train from Boston to New York and wanted to find out whether he was 'wise' or even homosexual. One might ask: 'Are there any gay spots on Boston?' And by slight accent put on the word 'gay,' the stranger, if wise, would understand that homosexual resorts were meant. The uninitiated stranger would never suspect, inasmuch as 'gay' is also a



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Members of the Houston Pride Band in Washington DC at the 2013 Inauguration with OutSmart. Back row from left: Debbie Hunt, Jason Svatek, William Fu, Vince Pierce, Kevin Taylor, Jonathan Craft, Paige Kovar, and Connie Moore. Front row: Rory Pearce, Joe Dombrowski, and Jason Stephens.

Connie Moore joined Houston Pride Band (then known as the Lone Star Symphonic Band) in 1988, and her partner, Debbie Hunt, joined in 1994. She writes about her experience at the inaugural parade, marching with the Lesbian and Gay Band Association:

"Debbie and I have been involved with LGBA since 1990 and have had the opportunity to perform all over the world with this group, including two prior inaugurals, but no performance has ever been so emotional, overwhelming, awe-inspiring, humbling, and just plain incredible as this one.

"I listened to my president say, 'Our journey is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else under the law...' and I thought to myself that this might finally get a fire lit on some of the civil rights issues that are percolating and so ripe for positive action. ...

"The reaction was overwhelmingly positive. Many of us reported about young people approaching, telling us how glad to know that we were out there. The people on the parade route were screaming and yelling for us. It was so empowering. ...

"As the next day unfolded, we learned that the band was a news item from coast to coast, and even overseas. ... It seemed everywhere we looked we were seeing a video clip or a photograph taken of the band. Again, the message rang out loud and clear from mostly straight allies: 'It's about time!'

"... It is time, my friends. We have the people and the media behind us. LGBT equality was the hot topic after the inaugural address. Many of us have been doing it for a long time just by being out and visible. We are going to succeed. ... Know that equality will win. It always has. ..."

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Feb. 9: Society for the Performing Arts presents
Lily Tomlin. INFO: spahouston.org

Feb. 23: **Lesbian Health Initiative 2013 Annual
Gala & Fundraiser**, benefitting women's health
organizations. INFO: lhihouston.org

Feb. 23: Houston Pride Band presents **War and
Peace**. INFO: houstonprideband.org

Feb. 28: Out@TUTS Night presents **Man of La
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Creating Families of Diversity

With Jason and deMarco

by Mark De Lange

Local pop duo Jason & deMarco have achieved many accolades for their work over the years. They're gay, spiritual, real-life partners, talented, and chances are you've read their story before. What you may not know is that they are dads with twins and are quickly becoming the national face of gay parenting!

What's next on the horizon for the Jason & deMarco family? At the forefront is their new tour, "Celebrating Families of Diversity." I recently had a conversation with these two about the tour, their work, and their commitment to the modern family and community.

Mark De Lange: Your Celebrating Families of Diversity tour is getting lots of attention in our community and beyond. What's the main goal for the tour?

Jason Warner: When coming up with the concept for this tour, we really felt the timing was perfect. We're coming out of an election. Prop. 8 is being looked at by the Supreme Court. President Obama just gave his blessing on gay marriage. I felt there are a lot of diverse families out there that need to be seen. Why not ask these families to come out and celebrate one another for a great evening of music?

deMarco DeCiccio: We hope that our tour will inspire people and remind them that with love, commitment, intention, belief, and action, anything is truly possible.

What can people expect when attending

your concert? Do you guys plan on sharing your story about becoming dads?

deMarco: The concert is going to be a very intimate experience, taking people on a journey through our personal story of finding love, creating a life, and becoming parents through a mixture of storytelling, songs, and comedy. We'll be singing

"We each had to adopt the other's biological child."

most of the shows with an acoustic guitar player only, performing most of our original material with a few cover favorites. We will be dedicating a song to our boys, and my parents will bring them up on stage to meet the audience. We will also invite all parents with their kids up on stage at the end of the concert to be celebrated.

Jason: After a few of the shows, there is a VIP reception where we will offer a Q&A. We felt this may be a benefit to people bringing their parents who maybe aren't reconciled with their child's sexuality. Having my parents on the tour will be a

powerful statement of reconciliation, showing a mother's and father's acceptance and support of their son, his partner, and our non-traditional family.

There are a lot of diverse couples who want to expand and grow their family by becoming parents. Can you share how you created your family? Maybe give some pointers?

Jason: We originally wanted to adopt. Through our research in comparing surro-



And babies make four: Jason Warner (l) and deMarco DeCiccio (r) are the proud parents of Mason and Noah.

gacy versus adoption, we realized going the surrogacy route wasn't much more expensive than using an adoption agency if you had a donor and a surrogate who were willing to do this for little to no cost—basically a friend or relative. If you use a surrogacy agency, you're looking at anywhere from \$50,000 to \$150,000. Living as independent music artists, this wasn't an option for us.

However, the cost of harvesting and banking embryos with a known donor ended up costing around \$20,000 (the donor didn't ask for any money, as she is a close friend). Our surrogate had one hundred percent insurance coverage so we had no out-of-pocket expenses for her other than the clinic expenses to actually transfer the embryos, which ended up costing around \$10,000.

When it was all said and done, we probably spent close to \$40,000. This is about the same as it would have cost us going through a private adoption agency. Half of this was our savings and the →

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Creating Families of Diversity

continued from previous page

other half went on a credit card. We are still paying that card off gradually.

deMarco: It just so happens that we are both adoptive and biological parents. We harvested from our egg donor and split the eggs. We each ended up with an embryo and both were transferred and both implanted, so although the boys are considered fraternal twins, they are biological brothers through the egg donor, with one being mine and one being Jason's.

We each had to adopt the other's biological child because in the state of Texas, where Mason and Noah were born, two males cannot be listed on a birth certificate. I believe that one day we will adopt more children, but I personally wanted to experience the process of having a biological child first.

Jason: At the time, we didn't realize that fostering to adopt was an option. Fostering scared us because we couldn't imagine falling in love with a child and then having to send it back to the situation it was taken out of.

However, we have since learned through our work with our nonprofit that there are over six thousand children available for adoption in the foster system in Texas alone. The parental rights of these six thousand

children have already been taken away from their biological parents. If you were to foster these children, you could immediately go into the adoption process. In addition, you actually get paid by the state and these children qualify for the same benefits foster children qualify for, including a free college education up to a PhD level and medical insurance.

Even after adopting, parents still qualify for a monthly stipend when adopting a child out of the foster system. This is a great opportunity for same-sex couples and for anyone who doesn't have the finances to do otherwise, and there's a great need with so many kids in the system that need a loving home. If every gay or lesbian person or couple wanting to have a child fostered or adopted a child in the system, we'd probably have no foster children. If we have more children, this will probably be the route we take.

For information on the tour or to purchase tickets, visit jasonanddemarco.com.

Known for his extensive DJ background including his work on major-market radio, Disney Entertainment, XM Radio, and Billboard, Mark De Lange currently operates multiple nightclub venues throughout the city of Houston.

LGBT-friendly Adoption

Begin the process with a free online application at Lifelong Adoptions

Thinking of expanding your family like Jason and deMarco, but not convinced that the surrogacy route is for you? LifeLong Adoptions may be just the path you're looking for. Comprised of caring and compassionate individuals who have all been touched by adoption, the California-based group uses a nationwide network of professionals to reach birthmothers and potential adoptive parents all over the country, including Texas cities like Dallas and Houston. The agency seeks to make the adoption process simple, speedy, and most importantly, very LGBT friendly.

Although one-third of adoption agencies reject LGBT applicants based on sexual orientation or marital status, LifeLong is dedicated to helping all couples, gay or straight, achieve the family they've dreamed about for so long. Heterosexual couples will not necessarily be chosen over LGBT partners, either. "More and more birthparents are choosing to place their children with a same-sex couple, thus giving gay and lesbian adoptive parents an advantage, and making the

process quicker," the group's website says.

The adoption process, which several successful LifeLong members call "smooth, fast, and efficient," begins with a free online application. LifeLong only grants membership to four families each month, in order to make the process quicker for potential adoptive parents. The group provides a wealth of information to help guide accepted couples every step of the way, from creating unique online profiles to assisting in home studies that include interviews, background checks, and home visits, among other necessities.

Some recent LifeLong couples, both LGBT and straight, have been able to adopt within three to five

months. "We believe," says the group's website, "that everyone should have a fair chance at adopting and will fill you in on the tools necessary to bring your baby home."

For more information, visit lifelongadoptions.com or call 888/829-0891. —Megan Smith



Be my baby: the obviously happy couple, Jason (l) and Steven, pose with their son, Kyle, whom they adopted in four months.

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LHI Celebrates Community

The annual gala appropriately takes place in the month of love

by Megan Smith

The acronym LHI may stand for Lesbian Health Initiative, but that L stands for so much more—loving, learning, living, listening, and laughing. And at an organization that is dedicated to eliminating barriers to healthcare and promoting health and wellness for LGBT-identified women and transmen, that's exactly what the group's dedicated volunteers have been doing for over twenty years and counting.

The only one of its kind in Texas, the initiative was founded in 1992 after a group of Houston lesbians decided it was time to abate and bring awareness to the health risks that plagued their own community, including breast and ovarian cancers, heart disease, and stroke. As the prolific, heavily volunteer-based organization continues to grow and provide more services, the need for more staff and space is becoming more apparent each day. LHI hosts its annual gala and fundraiser this February to celebrate community, LHI's mission, and raise funds for future health projects.

With an estimated 90,000 to 180,000 uninsured LGBT Houstonians, LHI's staff and volunteers continue to have their work cut out for them. "Quite frankly, these same issues still exist today," says Liz James, Chief Executive Officer for LHI and recent female grand marshal nominee for Houston Pride 2013. "The reality is that LGBT people are not counted in any kind of survey with regards to health

issues and so we're invisible. If you think about women, in particular, that invisibility is higher for obvious reasons, but in the LGBT community, because there has been a lot more HIV funding, there's a little bit more visibility and more physicians that have more cultural competency

"Healthcare within the LGBT community is about to change for the better."

for serving men who may or may not be HIV positive."

However, barriers to receiving proper health services are not purely financial, James emphasizes. LGBT-identified people sometimes don't seek care, or they may even refuse care. This could be due to previous bad experiences,

not knowing a doctor they feel safe going to, or the misinformation that LGBT women don't need certain services, such as Pap tests, putting them at higher risk for certain cancers solely because they are not screened. "We had a member of our organization who was a senior VP in a multi-billion-dollar company," James says. "They had insurance, and even if they didn't have insurance, they could have paid for it out of pocket, but because of their fear and the barriers that existed, they didn't get the care."

LHI is determined to break down these



The other Clinton: Kate Clinton provides lots of laughs at LHI's 2013 Annual Gala and Fundraiser, February 23. *Inset: Liz James (l), LHI Chief Executive Officer, and Maria Fernandez, Associate Director for Health Promotion & Prevention Research at the University of Texas.*



barriers through access, education, and advocacy. Part-

nered with numerous healthcare groups such as CVS Pharmacy, the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, and Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast, LHI hosts biannual health fairs, which James calls "one-day multi-provider clinics," to offer a plethora of no-cost health services such as mammograms, Pap tests, blood tests, and heart and vascular risk assessments to over two hundred LGBT women and transmen each year. At the 2012 health fairs, the initiative served thirty percent more individuals and provided seventy percent more services (an estimated \$175,000 value) than the previous year, and aims to continue this pattern →

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LHI Celebrates Community

continued from previous page

in the future. "We're a gateway to care," James says. "We map out how somebody makes it from point A to point B. We don't want to just keep seeing the same people; we want to be able to help people find a more permanent healthcare home, like Legacy."

With the effects of the Affordable Care Act just around the corner, healthcare within the LGBT community is about to change for the better, James stresses. However, LHI is already planning to step up their education efforts, as details of the act are confusing to the community and the majority of individuals will need help enrolling for coverage, according to a CVS Caremark research study. "The Affordable Care Act and health insurance exchanges, which are prohibited by federal law from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identification, are going to be the first LGBT health policies, aside from hospital visitations, that have been granted under the Obama administration that this state has ever had," James says. "It is the biggest opportunity we have ever had to get our population care. The problem is, there hasn't been much education about what is coming down the pipeline."

Even after the enrollment process is finished, worries about finding an LGBT-friendly and culturally competent doctor still exist. This is the main reason, James explains, that LHI is determined to provide clinicians with LGBT sensitivity training to ensure a welcoming and safe healthcare environment. "About a year and a half ago, we expanded our mission to include transgender men," she says. "We want to make sure our physicians understand the issues that arise, like you might be seeing someone here that needs a pap test, but it's going to be a really different interactive experience than it would be with someone who was a lesbian-identified person."

To make all their goals a reality, LHI is hoping for and expecting a great turnout at their gala. The event kicks off around 6 p.m. and is honoring Dr. Maria Fernandez, Associate Director for the Center for Health Promotion & Prevention Research at the University of Texas Health Science Center's School of Public Health, for her dedicated work with cancer prevention among low-income and minority individuals. "She's an ally to the community through her work, and we really wanted to say thank you for the work that she's done with cancer prevention within underserved populations," James says. "She's a real innovative woman that's done amazing work, and we, as an organization, are

very pleased to be honoring her."

The iconic Kate Clinton provides guests with lots of laughs with a show from her current SIS-BOOM-BAH tour. VIP tickets are also available (and going fast!) for an exclusive reception with Clinton. "We're huge fans, and she gets the work that we do," James says. "She does a tremendous amount of work for the LGBT community, and we could not be more thrilled to have her."

The evening also includes a silent auction, dinner, cake, dancing, and a raffle for a four-day Carnival Western Caribbean cruise for two, plus a two-night stay at the Hotel Galvez and Spa in Galveston.

Tickets can be purchased online from lhihouston.org, with all proceeds directly benefitting LHI. James hopes to raise enough funds to expand staff, obtain a larger office space for the organization, and to formalize the group's education program. "It's corny," she says, "but we know that you can save somebody's life by telling them about us."

What: LHI 2013 Annual Gala & Fundraiser
When: Saturday, February 23
Where: DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Houston Downtown, 400 Dallas Street
Tickets: lhihouston.org

Megan Smith is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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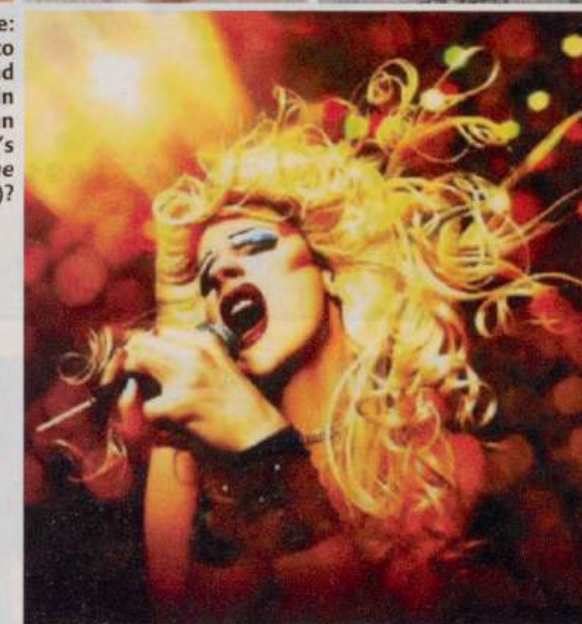
The Other Half

Is it a myth?

by Denis "Woodja" Flanigan



The origin of love:
what do Plato
(l-r), Socrates, and
Aristophanes have in
common with John
Cameron Mitchell's
*Hedwig and the
Angry Inch* (right)?



There is a belief in our culture that we are incomplete when not in a relationship. This distorts our thinking about relationships—frequently leading to bad behaviors, both in the pursuit of relationships and within relationships. As gays and lesbians, we tend to believe that having traditional relationships validates our sexuality in the eyes of society.

In John Cameron Mitchell's *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, the most popular song from this film musical is "The Origin of Love," which re-tells a story of the same name from Plato's *Symposium*. Plato's story has become popular among gays and lesbians because it puts homosexuality on par with heterosexuality.

"The Origin of Love" tells of a time when all people had round bodies with four legs, four arms, two faces, and two sets of genitalia. There were three types of people: those with two male sides, those with two female sides, and those with one male and one female side. When the people became haughty, the gods punished them by splitting them in half, creating individual males and females and scattering these "half-people" about the world, separating the halves by great distances. Thus for eternity these individuals have been roaming the earth to reconnect with their other half.

As the story goes, hugging is an effort of the two halves to merge after finding one another.

The story implies that love is grounded

in our yearning to be reunited with one's other half. It is also a very appealing myth in that it equalizes sexual orientations. However, it also creates the myth that each of us has an "other half," and without it we are incomplete—a romantic notion, but inconsistent with the realities of falling out of love, affairs, open relationships, polyamory, bisexuality, or transgenderism.

Plato's *Symposium*, in which the story appears, is presented as a dinner party in which each guest tells a story about love. "The Origin of Love" is told by Aristophanes. This is noteworthy in that Aristophanes is both a satirist and Plato's enemy. Consequently, scholars have classified the story as satire, at best, and mockery, at worst. Gays and lesbians can take some solace in that Plato was probably not mocking homosexuality, as his beef with Aristophanes was that he blamed him for Socrates' death, and Socrates was

a known homosexual. It would seem more likely that

Plato intended to mock the idea of one's "other half."

When clients mention desiring their other half, I always ask, "Why would someone want to date half a person?" I think that is a view that interferes with personal growth; if you are looking for another to complete you, it lets you off the hook for becoming whole on your own. I also firmly believe that waiting for someone to come along to make yourself whole will always

leave you incomplete. The idea that my partner and I combined are more than one hundred percent when we take on the world together feels more powerful than the idea that combined we can only achieve one hundred percent.

The Wonder Twins, Zan and Jayna from the 1970s cartoon *Justice League of America*, needed each other's touch to use their powers. In the same cartoon, many of the other superheroes—who could use their abilities independently—would team up and be more powerful combined. They enhanced each other, not completed each other. While I think Zan's power to take on some form of water is pretty cool, I think I would prefer to be any other of the superheroes, because I would not be powerless in the absence of my "other half," which is exactly how I see some of my clients. →



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The Other Half

continued from previous page

It is the desperation in the idea of being incomplete without a partner that disturbs me the most. I have seen a wide variety of unhealthy behavior enacted in order to feel "complete" with a partner—either in maintaining a bad relationship or in the pursuit of a relationship. In fact, the clients who speak in terms of being completed by another tend to be in more dysfunctional relationships or engaging in more self-destructive interpersonal behaviors. I have seen clients (and friends) sacrifice their money, their friendships, their integrity, and their happiness for the sake of having a relationship—not a good relationship, but just a relationship.

People cling to bad relationships in which they are miserable in order to avoid being alone. Others agonize that they are single and settle for partners with whom they do not feel a true connection. They are convinced that their happiness lies in another person, rather than in themselves. Consequently, they evade the responsibility of making themselves better or happier people—which would improve their chances of a healthy and rewarding relationship.

Being without one's "other half" generates anxiety and acts as a barrier to personal growth. There is a belief that one cannot work on himself or herself without having a partner, because only with this completion will he or she be able to self-actualize. How's that for irony—I cannot become fully myself unless I am in a relationship with (part of) another?

The flip side also seems to be true, that one does not have to work on oneself if one is "completed" by a relationship. I have seen people frantic to find their happiness within a relationship and consequently evade working on themselves. Whatever is missing inside them is supposed to come from their "other half." They look for their emptiness to be externally filled and refuse to look internally.

This perception of being incomplete without a partner has permeated our culture. Not only do we see ourselves as incomplete without a partner, we are imperfect or invalid without a partner. Having a partner shows us (and everyone else) that we have value, that we are desirable. Parallel to the belief that being single makes us incomplete is the perception that being single makes us flawed or inadequate—lesser than.

I think in the last thirty years this has become increasingly the case for gays and lesbians, but on a more community-wide level. In the attempts to prove that our sexuality is valid, we have adopted a model of heterosexual relationships and

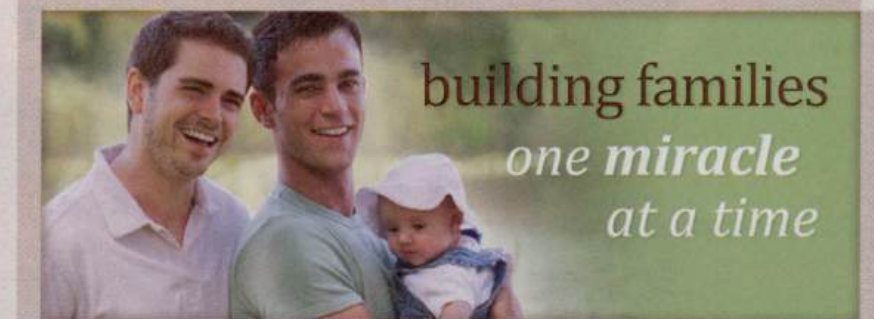
values. We have adopted the notion that sexuality is valid only if we are in sustained, long-term relationships, just like heterosexuals purport that they are. Gays and lesbians have been painted as promiscuous and serial monogamists, respectively, and this image was used to classify our sexuality as invalid, relative to heterosexuality. So if we can mimic heterosexual relationships (or at least the idealized image of heterosexual relationships), then we are worthy of validation.

This brings us back to our love of Aristophanes' origin-of-love story, which puts homosexuality on par with heterosexuality, and consequently validates our sexual orientation. We do a great deal of harm to ourselves, as individuals and as a community, in trying to complete or validate ourselves by being in a relationship. The emphasis that we put on being in a relationship distracts from focusing on ourselves, and we end up with a community of people who see themselves as defective.

Woodja Flanigan, MS, LPA, is a Houston-based psychotherapist and career counselor specializing in counseling for people in non-traditional lifestyles and relationships. He frequently speaks on gay and lesbian experience and mental health, transgender concerns, and body-modification issues.

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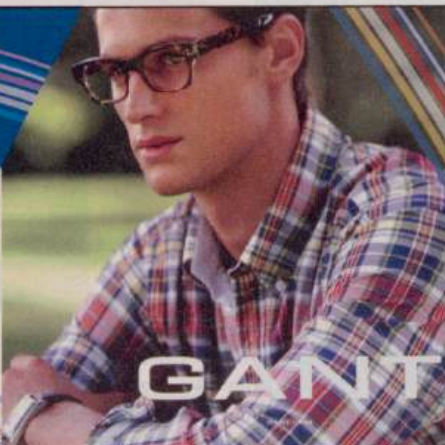
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Secret Agent Man

Derrick Parks plays Agent Cod in 'Catch Me If You Can'

by Donalevan Maines

His papa preached, his mama directed the choir, and Derrick Parks, who plays Agent Cod this month in *Catch Me If You Can* at the Hobby Center, lifted his voice to God at a church in Durham, North Carolina. "I was always singing at church," says the out actor, who's only a few steps into his first national tour of a Broadway musical. "I probably started when I was eight or nine years old."

A spiritual home is still important to Parks, and he found one in the Hillsong Church of New York City. "Hillsong Church is based in Australia," explains Parks, who now lives in Brooklyn. "Have you heard of the Hillsong Singers? I had listened to lots of their albums of inspirational music, and they touched me every time." He learned that the ministry, founded in August 1983, has grown from a congregation of forty-five souls to become the largest church in Australia. Hillsong Church now has churches across the globe.

"My boyfriend and I attend regularly at the church in lower Manhattan. It's such a mega-church that they have eight services every Sunday, and it's packed every time. It's accepting of everyone, regardless of sexual orientation. It's not judgmental," says Parks. It's a much more welcoming environment than the church where his parents still reign (more about them later).

First, here's how Parks got to Houston for the limited engagement of Broadway's high-flying musical inspired by the astonishing true story of Frank Abagnale Jr., the world-class con artist played by Leonardo DiCaprio in the 2002 hit film.

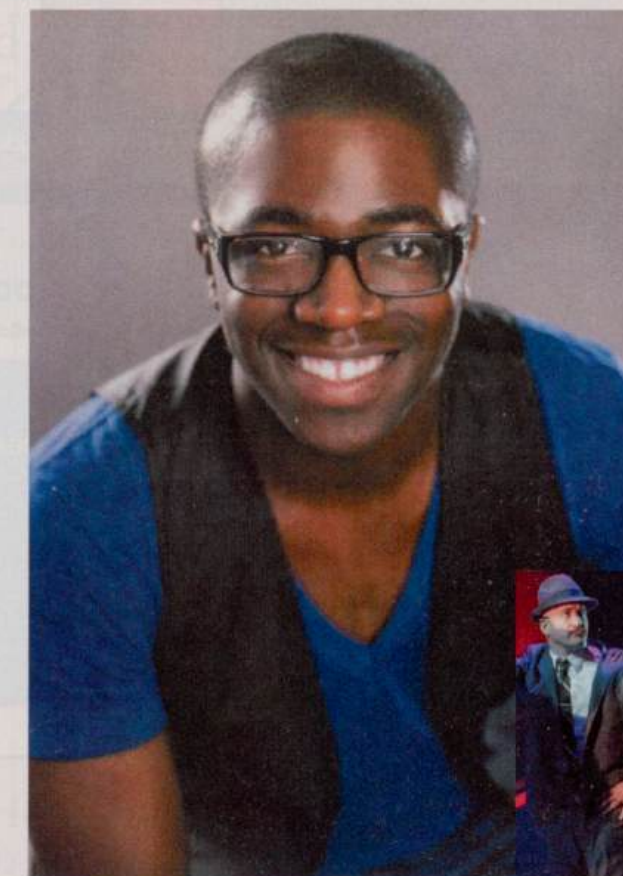
Abagnale passed himself off as a doctor, a lawyer, and a jet pilot—all before the age of 21. The show pays Parks to play make-believe as a doctor, a pilot, and an FBI agent—and he's still in his 20s.

"I went to the Savannah College of Art and Design, and I first majored in architecture," he explains. "I got my degree in industrial design, which completely has nothing to do with what I'm doing now."

Parks minored in vocal performance, which led to his working a year and a half as a performer

on Royal Caribbean International cruise ships that sailed around Europe and South America.

Docking in New York City, Parks landed the gig with *Catch Me If You Can*. It's a jet-setting, cat-and-mouse chase, with Agent Cod and straight-arrow FBI agent Carl Hanratty on the young con artist's trail, with a jazzy, swinging-sixties score accompanying the adventure. It's not much of a spoiler to reveal that, in the end, the



Parks and recreation: Derrick Parks majored in architecture but is now recreating the role of Agent Cod in *Catch Me If You Can* (below, second from left).



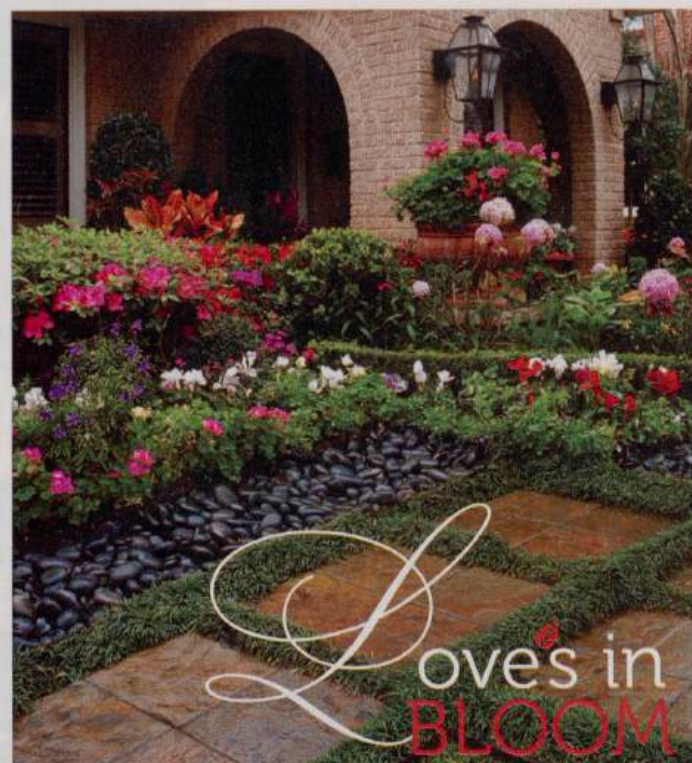
grifter and the FBI agents discover they aren't so very different after all.

"I very much enjoy playing Agent Cod," says Parks. "Over the course of the show, you see an arc. He goes from being a no-nonsense, power-to-the-people black guy, to scenes where the FBI agents relax, and you see he's very goofy. His character reflects how sometimes we have to allow ourselves to have fun. He's different from how you have to carry yourself as an FBI agent."

Parks also performs in the ensemble for the show's huge production numbers. "In 'Jet Set,' I play a pilot, courting these beautiful ladies around. Then I'm a surgeon, the only surgeon in the show, →

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Secret Agent Man

continued from previous page

courting these beautiful nurses around," he says. "The whole show, I'm courting beautiful ladies around."

Before embarking on the national tour in November, the cast rehearsed for two weeks in Providence, Rhode Island. They also met Abagnale, with the reformed scammer visiting several cities on the tour for talkbacks with the audience. "He seems like such an upstanding gentleman, and he believed in paying his dues," says Parks. "According to things he said, it wasn't about the money so much as he was trying to find himself as a young man. When his parents split up, he didn't know where to fit in."

Which brings us back to Parks and his church-going parents. They hold high positions in the church where Parks worshipped as a child, so when he came out to them, "It was not as pleasant as you wanted it to be. They were not big fans, of course." It's been less than a year, and things have gotten better, says Parks. In the playbill, he graciously acknowledges the "exceedingly abundant love and support" of his parents and family.

Like so many works of art, most if not all of the creators of *Catch Me If You Can* are openly gay. The multi-Tony Award-winning creative team includes Terrence McNally (book), Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman (score), Jerry Mitchell (choreography), Jack O'Brien (direction), David Rockwell (set), William Ivey Long (costumes), Kenneth Posner (lights), and Peter McBoyle (sound).

The Houston engagement follows hot on the heels of the recent Broadway run that starred Aaon Tveit (Enjolras in the movie of *Les Misérables*) and Norbert Leo Butz (winning the 2011 Tony Award for best leading actor in a musical).

The New York Times critic wrote, "Hot diggity! This portrait of the con artist as a young man comes to ecstatic life." *WOR*-Radio called it "absolutely marvelous... a real Broadway musical with showstoppers to enthrall just about everyone." *Vanity Fair* assured, "*Catch Me* will move you to live life to the fullest and dance past anything standing in your way," and urges "Get your seats now!"

What: *Catch Me If You Can*

When: February 5-10

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Donalevan Maines also writes about the Oscars in this issue of *OutSmart* magazine.

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Meet Eadie Scott

A true New Yorker heads to Houston

by Marene Gustin

Photo by Nick Granito

Oh, to dream the impossible dream. Get ready, because Theatre Under the Stars is presenting *Man of La Mancha* in all its glory: great story, famous songs, and some wonderful actors.

In particular, you might want to keep an eye out for the cameo role of The Housekeeper, played in this version by veteran New York actress, cabaret singer, and part-time holistic nutritional coach Eadie Scott.

Scott's regional credits include *Fiddler on the Roof* (with 13 Barrymore nominations) and *Evita* at the Walnut Street Theatre, *The Pirates of Penzance* at Pittsburgh Public Theater, and *A Christmas Carol* and *My Fair Lady* at the Geva Theater. Her New York credits include *Jonestown, the Musical* for the Fringe Festival, *Voice of the City* at the York Theater, numerous workshops, and several featured appearances at Town Hall as a solo vocalist.

Scott has also received awards for her solo cabaret acts.

But this will be her first performance in *Man of La Mancha*, and her first trip to Houston. "I'm really excited about both," Scott says. "I love to dine out, and I understand you have a lot of culture there. I just want to be a tourist and soak up the local color."

Scott knew from an early age that she wanted to be in musical theater. "I remember seeing a movie of *Porgy and Bess* as a child, and I started singing 'Summertime' in the bathtub that night!" Likely she saw the '59 version with Sydney Poitier and Dorothy Dandridge, but whichever one it was, she was hooked.

"I dated a few men." Then she met Colette Black. "And I just loved her. I was just a person who fell in love with another person."

After graduating from SUNY Fredonia with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in musical theater, she returned to New York City and has been based there ever since.

But while she always knew what her career would be, she didn't always know whom she wanted to be with. "I was busy going to auditions, and I dated a few men, but I didn't go out much," she says.

Then she met Colette Black at The Duplex, Greenwich Village's legendary cabaret and piano bar. "I was a singing bartender and she was the booker," says Scott. "It was 1991. And I just loved her. I was just a person who fell in love with another person."

At the time, the twenty-two-year-old

Woman of La Mancha: Eadie Scott has been active in the theater world for over twenty years, just about the same amount of time she's been in her same-sex relationship with Colette Black.



Scott was sharing an apartment with her sister Amy. She says Amy was fine with Black moving in. But her parents were typical Jewish New Yorkers "right out of a Neil Simon play."

She came out to them over the phone. "I called my mother, and I said 'Mommie, I need to tell you something. Remember Colette? I brought her to Passover last year. Well, she's moving in with Amy and me,' and she asks why, and I say it's because she's my girlfriend. And Mom sighs and asks if Amy is gay, too!"

Fast forward twenty-two years and the couple is still together, sharing a Manhattan apartment and both active in the theater world. Black just won a BroadwayWorld.com cabaret award for best director, and she's directed Scott in several projects including her starring turn in *Wished* →

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Meet Eadie Scott

continued from previous page

on the Moon: A Tribute to Dorothy Parker in 2009. "I love working with her," Scott says. "She knows all my tricks, and she'll call me on them."

And today her family is just fine with the relationship, with her father telling her that she and Black are the "normal" couple among the kids, hosting family events and cooking Thanksgiving Day feasts.

So, after more than two decades, is there a legal marriage in store? "We're domestic partners," Scott says over the phone from their New York City apartment. "When the law changed, we started talking about it, but . . . I don't know why we haven't done it yet."

To which Black yells in the background, "I don't know what to wear!"

Scott laughs uproariously.

Clearly, this is a happy theater couple with a long past and a bright future.

What: *Man of La Mancha*

When: February 26–March 10

Where: The Hobby Center, 800 Bagby

Tickets/info: tuts.com.

Marene Gustin also writes about El Tiempo Cantina restaurants and the Dianas in this issue of OutSmart magazine.

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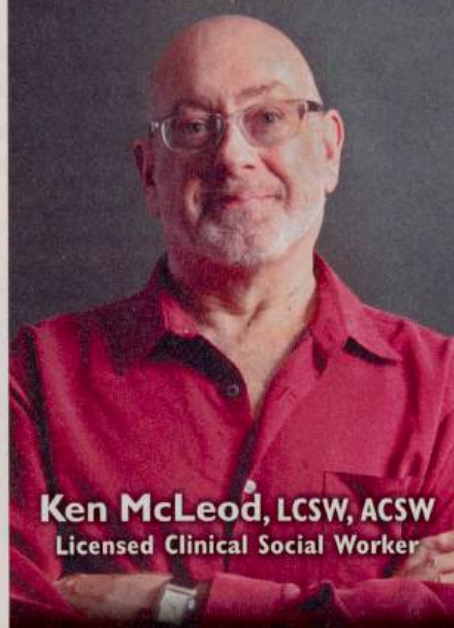
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'Undressing Israel'

The naked truth about the Holy Land

by David-Elijah Nahmod

When people think of Israel, they often conjure up images of suicide bombings, rocket attacks, and Orthodox Jews. During the opening moments of *Undressing Israel: Gay Men in the Promised Land*, the first non-pornographic feature from gay porn-king Michael Lucas, people in New York City's Times Square are asked if they think homosexuality is legal in Israel. Many say they have no idea, while some assume it's not.

For nearly an hour, Lucas reveals the other side of life in the Jewish State. He visits the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament), where Parliament member Nitzan Horowitz issues a Gay Pride proclamation. In Tel Aviv, the country's gay mecca, gay dad Yossi Berg, founder of Rainbow Families, walks with his young son and explains the importance of having children in Jewish culture.

Lucas takes us to an Israeli gay wedding. He interviews an openly gay personal trainer, who shares his experience of coming out in the Israeli army, where homosexuality has been accepted since 1993.

Throughout the film, Lucas makes it plainly obvious that much of Israel is a safe place to be openly gay.

"Israel is more progressive than the United States," he observes.

Undressing Israel is not the first time Lucas's camera has ventured inside the State of Israel. In 2009, he raised many eyebrows when he produced *Men of Israel*, the first in a series of gay adult features to be shot inside the country with an all-Sabra (Israeli-born) cast.

Lucas, who works in New York City and Tel Aviv, has become one of Israel's

most vocal champions in the gay community. Unafraid of controversy, he's been equally vocal in his condemnation of the virulently antigay regimes that exist in the Muslim world. His columns for publications like *The Advocate*, in which he harshly condemns the anti-Israel activism of queer-identified organizations like Jewish Voice for Peace, often draw fire, but he always stands his ground.

While preparing *Undressing Israel* for film festival screenings around the U.S. and the world, Lucas sat down with *OutSmart* for an interview.

David-Elijah Nahmod: Can you explain your personal connection to Israel, and why the country means so much to you?

Michael Lucas: I am ethnically Jewish. I was born to

a Jewish family in the Soviet Union and many of my relatives died in the Holocaust. Growing up, I experienced not only homophobia but also anti-Semitism. So I understood from a very early age the importance of the State of Israel.



Israel's diversity: director Michael Lucas (lowest tip of the star) interviewed a variety of people, from an Israeli gay filmmaker and community leaders to gay parents and an Israeli Arab.

What kind of responses have you gotten for the *Men of Israel* series?

It was my biggest commercial success to date. I got amazing responses, not only from the adult world but also from the mainstream media such as the *Los Angeles Times*. As for inside Israel, people were incredibly open-minded and helpful. Whenever I ran into problems, people were there to help. They were very excited to see this big production being filmed in Israel. I have a very good relationship with the gay community in Israel. By now, I think I have been interviewed by every Israeli newspaper.

Have you gotten harsh responses from the Orthodox community?

I have never been in contact with the Orthodox community.

What was your inspiration for embarking on the *Undressing Israel* project?

I was inspired by the country and its openness, friendliness, and tolerance towards minorities. But mainly [I undertook the project] because not a lot of people see

continued on page 49

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'Undressing Israel'

continued from page 47

that side of Israel. The media are only interested in covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I thought that this movie would be incredibly important for Israel.

How did you go about finding your interview subjects?

It was all because of the help of my co-director Yariv Mozer, of Mozer Films. He helped a great deal with casting. Plus, as soon as I announced the project, people started coming to me.

We interviewed a variety of people, from an Israeli gay filmmaker and community leaders to gay parents and an Israeli Arab. Plus, I was invited to the Knesset and interviewed openly gay Parliament member Nitzan Horowitz.

Were there any incidents in which a potential interview subject hesitated or backed away because of your work in the adult film industry?

I never had a problem with anyone who would not be in my film because I own a gay adult studio. Israelis know me as a friend of the country.

Do you have any concerns that your adult film notoriety might affect people's perceptions of *Undressing Israel*, or that they might not take the film seriously?

No. Absolutely not. I believe it's the opposite. I'm a well-known name in the gay community, so that can only help spread the word.

What is your message to queer activist organizations such as Jewish Voice for Peace, which often protests the policies of the Israeli government while ignoring the country's favorable record on gay rights? There is no point in having a conversation with that self-hating group whose members have already made up their minds and only care about the destruction of Israel.

What do you hope to achieve with *Undressing Israel*?

I hope to show Israel as it is—a country that is not only a champion of gay rights in the Middle East, but also way ahead of many Western countries. And, of course, I want to see more tourists go to Israel.

For more information on *Undressing Israel: Gay Men in the Promised Land*, visit undressingisrael-themovie.com.

David-Elijah Nahmod lives in San Francisco. His eclectic writing career includes LGBT publications, monster magazines, and the Times of Israel.

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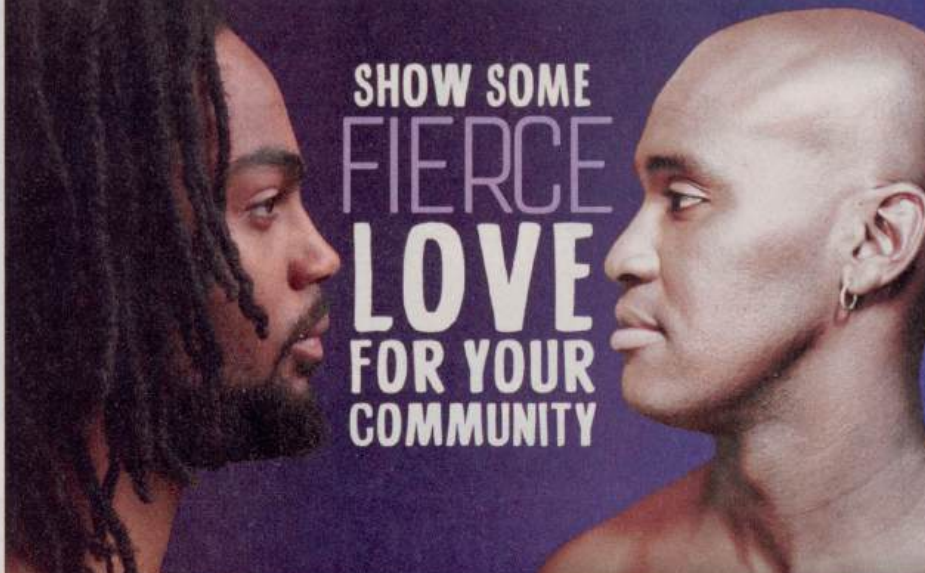
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I Do, but Do the Courts?

Understanding the U.S. Supreme Court marriage cases

by Connie Moore • Debra Hunt • Joshua S. Myers

The United States Supreme Court announced last December that it would review two cases that will affect same-sex marriage rights. The impact of these decisions has been a topic of much speculation among legal scholars and practicing lawyers alike. Although it is impossible to predict what the Supreme Court will decide, many people are already planning weddings. Before you set your date, read on to learn more about how the Supreme Court decisions might affect you.

What are the issues in the two cases that the Supreme Court will be reviewing this year?

The California case will determine whether Proposition 8 is unconstitutional. Prop 8, which was passed by California voters in 2008, nullified the previous California state court cases allowing same-sex marriages to be legally recognized in California. The courts in California overturned Prop 8, ruling that the voters do not have the ability to take away a right previously given by the state government. Supporters of Prop 8 have appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, and are asking to re-instate this law banning same-sex marriage in California.

The New York case challenges the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) Section 3, which defines marriage as only being between a man and a woman for federal benefits purposes. In this case, a surviving spouse of a same-sex couple

who was legally married in New York was denied the federal estate tax marital deduction for her wife's estate, resulting in a tax bill that exceeded \$350,000. If the marriage was recognized for federal



I do, I do: if the Supreme Court agrees that Prop 8 is unconstitutional, will the California case have any impact on Texas? It depends on how the court reaches its decision.

tax purposes, there would be no tax due. Lower courts have declared Section 3 of the federal DOMA to be unconstitutional. A congressional standing committee called BLAG (Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group of the House of Representatives) is defending the federal DOMA because the Obama administration refuses to do so.

If the court agrees that Prop 8 is unconstitutional, will the California case have any impact on states like Texas, which have a state constitutional ban on same-sex marriage?

The answer to this question will depend entirely on how the Supreme Court reaches its decision. In the event the court upholds the lower court rulings in California that dispose of Prop 8, there are several legal theories available that it can use to reach this conclusion. First, the court can rule that the proponents of Prop 8 do not have the legal right to challenge the previous cases. This theory would al-

low same-sex marriage to be recognized in California but would not affect any other state's laws. Second, the court can rule on the merits, finding that citizens in general may not vote to take away rights previously granted by state governments. This theory would only affect states where such voter measures are being considered. Finally, the court could issue a blanket ruling that all state laws prohibiting same-sex marriage are unconstitutional. A ruling under this theory would have a direct impact on states like Texas that have a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage.

What about the New York case? If the court rules in favor of requiring the feds to recognize same-sex marriage, what does that mean for married same-sex couples and federal benefits?

As in the California case, the impact of the New York case depends entirely on how the Supreme Court reaches its conclusion. If the Court determines that the parties in the case do not have the right to →

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I Do, but Do the Courts?

continued from page 51

appeal, then the lower court's ruling will stand and the surviving spouse will be entitled to have her marriage recognized and her tax payment refunded. That determination would not affect anyone outside of this particular case. If the court allows the appeal to proceed and rules on the merits, it will determine that Section 3 of the federal DOMA is unconstitutional for all purposes. Under this type of ruling, the federal government would have to recognize all same-sex marriages of couples who legally marry under state law. It would not be able to deny federal benefits that it offers to other legally married couples, and it would have to apply those benefits to legally married same-sex and opposite-sex couples uniformly.

For federal benefits purposes, will it matter if the same-sex married couple lives in a non-recognition state like Texas?

For those benefits that are entirely federal (such as income tax, immigration, and Social Security), it's expected that benefits will be uniformly available and it will not matter where the married couple lives. However, for benefits that are federally provided but state administered, there likely will be litigation for marriage enforcement in non-recognition states before the matter is completely settled.

When can we expect a ruling?

The court is scheduled to hear oral arguments in both cases during the last week of March, and should issue its rulings sometime in June before the end of term.

Moore & Hunt is the first women-owned boutique law firm in Houston to openly focus on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues. Operating in the same location since 1987, the firm is comprised of attorneys Connie Moore and Debra E. Hunt. Moore works with families of all types with formation issues (adoption, surrogacy, and parentage in assisted reproduction) and family dissolution (divorce and custody litigation). Hunt concentrates on personal document drafting (wills, trusts, and powers of attorney), estate planning, probate litigation, contract negotiations and disputes, corporation and small-business formations, and real-estate matters. Both attorneys are members of the National Family Law Advisory Council of the National Center for Lesbian Rights. The firm is a part of the co-operating attorney network of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund. Moore and Hunt are charter members of the Texas State Bar LGBT Law Section. Moore has been trained in collaborative family law and is a strong believer in the collaborative model to resolve family disputes. Joshua S. Myers is a recent graduate of South Texas College of Law.

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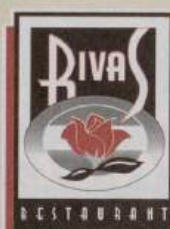
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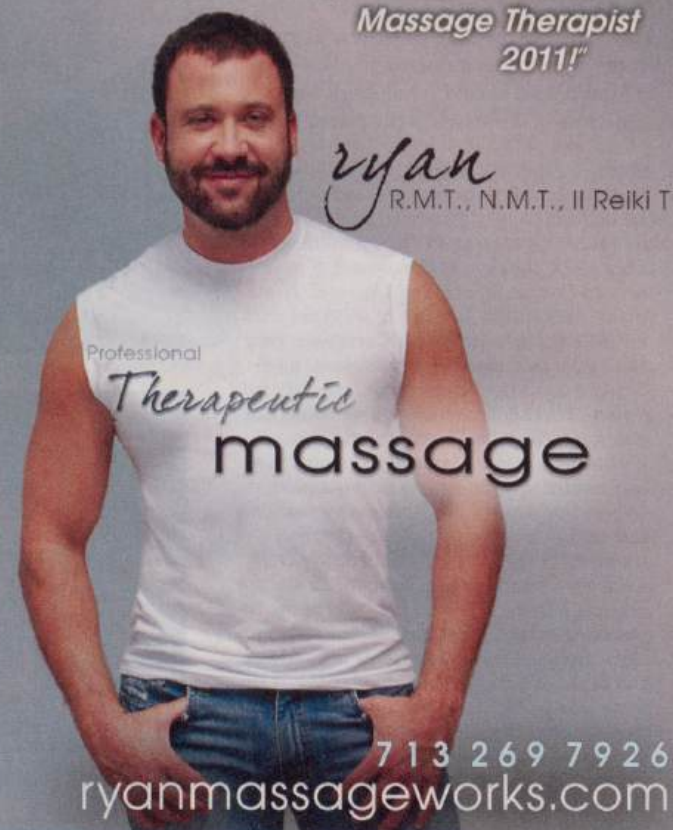
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Michael Kemper . . .

And the sixtieth Diana Awards gala

by Marene Gustin

Divas, Diamonds, and Dianas, oh my! It's time for the sixtieth annual Diana Foundation awards show. And that means the cocktails will flow along with the laughter come March 2 as the country's oldest gay social organization raises money for local community charities. The black-tie event this year marks Michael Kemper's twenty-sixth turn as master of ceremonies.

Many Houstonians know Kemper as the owner of his eponymous salon and day spa in Highland Village, or they may recognize him from his frequent television appearances commenting on beauty trends on shows like KHOU-TV's *Great Day Houston*. But if you know anything about Houston's LGBT community, you know him as a force of nature in the charity world.

Kemper's salon, Michael Kemper Salon & Day Spa, is a 4,500-square-foot space in the heart of Highland Village. There are sixteen styling stations along with two facial and massage rooms, five manicure stations, three pedicure stations, and a makeup room, all dedicated to beautifying Houstonians and visiting celebs. Kemper himself has counted Isabella Rossellini, Ivana Trump, and Queen Noor among his clients in the past. In the 1970s he ran Sakowitz department stores' hair and beauty salons, which were known as Michael Kemper at Sakowitz.

For fourteen years he also traveled the nation promoting

beauty products and setting hairstyling trends across the country for Seligman and Latz, the largest salon owner in the world. In 1985, as their head of education, he was responsible for ten thousand hairdressers

in nine hundred salons across the country. He was also one of only four individuals who consulted with Miss Clairol, and was the hairdresser for the company's famous "only her hairdresser knows for sure" commercials. And he did all that while managing sixteen Houston salons.

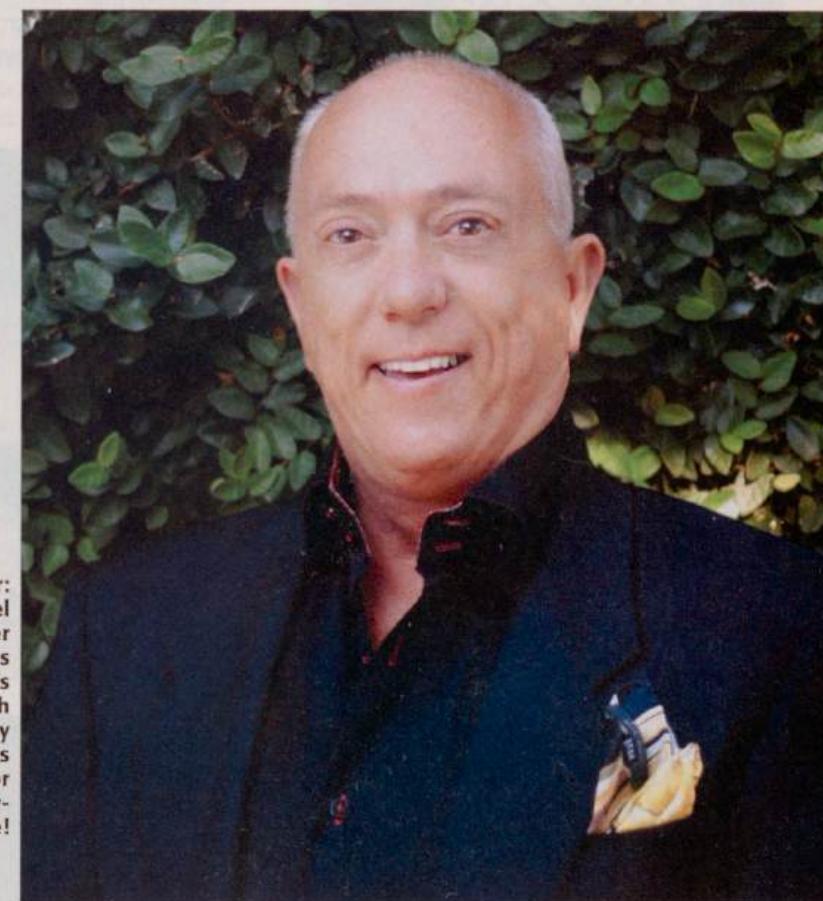
Professionally, he's slowed down some, running just the Highland Village salon

he opened more than two decades ago. And while he now stands behind the chair only

three days a week, he really doesn't have any more time to spend with Michael Grover, his partner of forty years, his family, or his piano. That's because he basically has a second job as president of the Diana Foundation.

"I joined the Dianas back in 1981," Kemper recalls. "But I had worked with

**The master:
Michael
Kemper
emcees
Diana's
sixtieth
anniversary
awards
show for
the twenty-
sixth time!**



them for several years. Back in those days you had to be a slave . . . I mean a pledge, and work hard on the annual awards show before they would invite you to join. And, just like today, there are only one hundred members."

The Dianas started as a social group for professional gays back in 1953 when David Moncrief bought a new TV and invited friends over for a fancy cocktail party to watch the first national telecast of the Academy Awards. He just happened to have a near-life-sized plaster statue of Diana, the Roman goddess of the hunt, in his home.

Despite the TV reception failing that night, the party was a hit and a core group of friends decided to repeat it year after year. Gag awards were given for some rather saucy roles, the party grew, →

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Michael Kemper...

continued from previous page

it turned into a huge annual review and roast, and in 1976 it became the Diana Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising seed money for local LGBT charities, many of which sprang up in the eighties during the worst of the AIDS crisis.

By 1988, when Kemper began emceeing the annual awards show, it was the social event of the season, attended by hundreds and even thousands, held in theaters and hotel ballrooms.

"In the early days, we didn't have corporate sponsors," says Kemper. "They didn't want to be involved in the community. It was all individual donations, never more than one thousand dollars from someone. And yet we raised more than one million dollars to fund organizations. I am very proud that the Dianas were the very first organization to donate to AIDS organizations in Houston. Every organization in existence today got their seed money from the Dianas. The AIDS Foundation got its start

in 1982 as KS AIDS of Houston. Many of the current organizations you see today—like Bering Omega, DIFFA, Pet Patrol, and Frost Eye Clinic—got started in someone's home with the help of the Dianas."

From its heyday in the late-eighties and nineties, the annual awards show has scaled down from its flashy theatrical productions and huge audiences to smaller events, but it's still a highlight of the season, a glamorous black-tie event that is still fun, always saucy, and even a little bit bawdy.

The theme this year is the sixtieth anniversary of the founding. "Diamonds are the traditional sixtieth-anniversary gift, so we're calling it Divas, Diamonds and Dianas!" says Kemper, who once again is co-chair and master of ceremonies for the event. "We'll have a big opening number, we have two hundred volunteers working on the production, and a thirty-minute show by Jimmy James."

James, who performed at the fiftieth anniversary event, is a renowned vocal impersonator. "If he sings Judy Garland, you really believe it's Judy Garland you're listening to," says Kemper.

And, of course, there will be awards:

Best Actress for an unsuspecting gay man who pulled some outrageous stunt, Best Supported Actress for some young thing kept by a wealthy old queen.

"But it's all in good fun," explains Kemper.

Except when it's not—like the times when awards went to Anita Bryant or a local gay man accused of pedophilia. "Don't put a black eye on the gay community," says Kemper, "because we will call you out on it."

Kemper himself has won three Diana awards, but, he says, not for hairdressing skills. "Mostly for my used cars or the falling-down Montrose mansion I had!"

At press time, very few of the 250 tickets for this year's bash remained to be sold.

What: The 60th Annual Diana Awards
When: 7-11 p.m., Saturday, March 2
Where: Royal Sonesta Hotel, 2222 West Loop South
Tickets/info: Sallie Woodell at s_woodell@msn.com or 832/877-2846.

Marene Gustin also writes about Man of LaMancha's Eadie Scott in this issue of OutSmart magazine.

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The New Oscars

Seth MacFarlane hosts the annual event

by Donalevan Maines

With *Family Guy* creator Seth MacFarlane as host, the 85th Annual Academy Awards ceremony promises to be the most fun Oscars ever.

As a down payment on that promise, the ever-smiling MacFarlane personally announced the nominees January 10 (along with funny girl Emma Stone) in the most entertaining pre-dawn announcement the Academy has ever held. The announcement set the stage for a dizzying month ahead as Oscarologists scrambled to read the tea leaves after a bizarre selection of nominees.

Among them is MacFarlane himself, a finalist for Best Original Song for co-writing the theme song for his live-action film *Ted*. MacFarlane is a staunch supporter of gay rights.

Nominated for Best Animated Film is *ParaNorman*, by out director Chris Butler and featuring a lead character who's gay. At least one gay critic grouched that the character's sexual orientation isn't revealed until the conclusion, but if your gaydar reaches to animated characters, that isn't a problem. The hunky character is voiced by Casey Affleck, a 2007

Oscar nominee opposite Brad Pitt in *The Assassination of Jesse James*.

Casey's brother, Ben Affleck, was snubbed in the Best Director category, although his film *Argo* was nominated for Best Picture. In the week following the nominations, Affleck won Best Director at the Golden Globes, and *Argo* won the Globe for Best Picture—Drama and the Broadcast Film Critics' Best Picture award.

So it's anybody's guess whether *Argo* could still win the Oscar. The directors' branch also snubbed Tom Hooper (*Les Misérables*) and Kathryn Bigelow (*Zero Dark Thirty*), while nominating Steven Spielberg (*Lincoln*), Michael Haneke (*Amour*), →

Family guy: as host of this year's Oscar bash, Seth MacFarlane will likely expose more than his pearly whites—like his great sense of humor and his wonderful singing voice.



Born This Way

In *ParaNorman*—an Oscar nominee for Best Animated Film and a GLAAD Media Award Outstanding Film nominee—Norman Babcock sees dead people, and that makes the eleven-year-old outcast a “freak” and a “weirdo” to his family, fellow students, and other residents of Blithe Hollow, Massachusetts, where a witch was executed three hundred years ago.

The witch has put a curse on the town that only Norman can remove, meaning that he will have to battle ghosts and goblins, heartened only by the advice of his dead grandmother (voiced by Elaine Stritch, who says, “There’s nothing wrong with being scared, Norman, so long as you don’t

let it change who you are.”).

Staying true to yourself, especially while being relentlessly bullied, is a major theme of the 3D stop-action comedy horror film that was co-created by out director Chris Butler. He’s said that the inclusion of animation’s first gay hero, Mitch (voiced by Casey Affleck), underscored the film’s message: “If we’re saying to anyone that watches this movie, ‘Don’t judge other people,’ then we’ve got to have the strength of our convictions.”

In a telling scene, Norman says, “I didn’t ask to be born this way,” to which his father grumbles, “Funny, neither did we.” His feelings hurt,

Norman’s mother tells him, “I know, sometimes people say things that seem mean, but they do it because they’re afraid.” Norman replies, “He’s my dad. He shouldn’t be afraid of me.” His mom replies, “He’s not afraid of you. He’s afraid for you.”



A gay first: Mitch (r) is animation's first gay hero. Casey Affleck (l, Ben's brother) voices Mitch in *ParaNorman*.

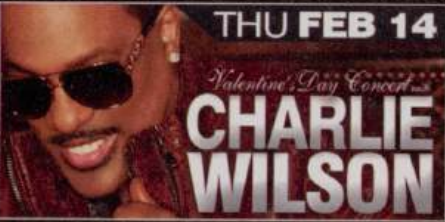
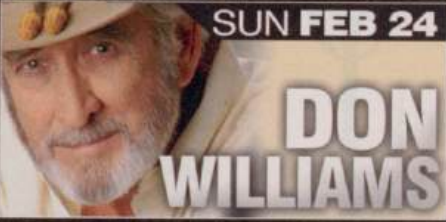
However, *ParaNorman* isn't preachy. It's mostly zombies gone berserk, scaring up an angry mob.

Among the voice cast are Oscar-nominated actors Casey Affleck and Anna Kendrick, as well as John Goodman and Leslie Mann.

Cinemaphiles will appreciate visual allusions to *Psycho*, *Friday the 13th*, *Frankenstein*, *The Flintstones*, and other classics.

Ironical dialogue includes a radio announcer advising, “Officials are urging people to panic.”

The Houston Film Critics Society also nominated *ParaNorman* for Best Animated Film, an honor which it won from the Alliance of Women Film Journalists and movie critics in Boston, Central Ohio, Chicago, Dallas-Fort Worth, Denver, Las Vegas, San Diego, San Francisco, Southeastern U.S., Toronto, Utah, and the Washington DC area. —D.M.

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The New Oscars

continued from previous page

Benh Zeitlin (*Beasts of the Southern Wild*), Ang Lee (*Life of Pi*), and David O. Russell, whose *Silver Linings Playbook* scored nominations in all four acting categories—the first time since 1983 when Warren Beatty's *Reds* accomplished that feat.

Lincoln, which is nominated for Best Adapted Screenplay, was penned by gay playwright Tony Kushner, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Angels in America*.

The powerful AIDS documentary *How to Survive a Plague* is nominated for Best Documentary.

Hugh Jackman, Broadway's *The Boy from Oz* (lesbians know him as Wolverine), is nominated for Best Actor, and recent Oscar co-host/marriage equality activist Anne Hathaway (lesbians know her as Catwoman), is nominated for Best Supporting Actress, both for *Les Misérables*.

For more on the Oscars, including a full list of nominees, visit oscars.org.

Donalevan Maines also writes about Catch Me If You Can in this issue of OutSmart magazine.

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—Greg Abbott, Attorney General of Texas, Brief on the Merits, In the Matter of the Marriage of J.B. and H.B., No 11-0024, Supreme Court of Texas, Sept 26, 2012

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Kathy Talamantez's 2013 New Year's Eve photo with Zoe, Max, Bella & Bruno



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They're Back

The Lorenzo family is back on Navigation Boulevard!

by Marene Gustin

Photos by Trey Ridings

If you lived in Houston in the mid- and late-seventies, you ate at Ninfa's on Navigation Boulevard. It wasn't just the fresh guacamole or the tacos al carbon—possibly the very first fajitas on a commercial menu—but it was also the jovial Mama Ninfa Lorenzo herself, fussing over patrons and checking on the kitchen. She was everyone's mama.

"I remember walking into the kitchen at the original restaurant holding my grandmother's hand when I was four or five years old. I grew up there," says Domenic Lorenzo.

Which is why the Lorenzo family is so happy to be going back to the old 'hood.

Mama Ninfa was a Texas icon—an Hispanic woman of humble origins who rose to be a business maven. From a small tortilla factory, she opened the first Ninfa's and went on to create a chain of Tex-Mex eateries. Sadly, in her latter years the rapid expansion proved to be too much and the family business went into bankruptcy, but Mama Ninfa was still revered as the success she was. When she passed away in 2001, Houston City Council postponed its weekly meeting so members could attend her funeral.

Over the years, Ninfa's was bought out of bankruptcy, and a few of the Houston locations bounded back. Legacy Restaurants bought the original location on Navigation and turned it back into an icon. Some of the other locations wound up as Maggie Rita's, most of which closed quickly.

As for Ninfa Lorenzo's family, they stayed in the business, creating four El Tiempo Cantinas, the El Tiempo Market, and Lorenzo's Prime Rib on Washington Avenue.

And now, they're back, baby. Back on Navigation, that is.

"It means a lot to us," says her grandson. "It's very sentimental for



Happy Valentine's Day: Domenic Lorenzo (r) says that the newest El Tiempo at 2814 Navigation Blvd. (pictured) is scheduled to open by Cupid's Day.



the family. It's where we grew up. It's like coming full circle."

Last October the family announced plans to return to the East End street with a brand-new El Tiempo Cantina within spitting distance of the original Ninfa's.

"It's going great," says Domenic Lorenzo from the construction site in mid-January. "We started in October and had great weather last year. I think we'll be finished and able to open by Valentine's Day."

The sprawling restaurant, designed by architect Frank Zeni at a cost of almost \$2 million, features an L-shaped patio facing a park-like setting of paths, benches, statues, a fountain, and a clock tower. And it's just a stone's throw from the new Esplanade on

Navigation, the Greater East End Management District's

pedestrian-friendly promenade and park with market stalls and kiosks.

All of which means that Navigation could become an important new eating destination in town.

As for the new El Tiempo, Lorenzo says the menu will pretty much be the same as at the other locations—a lengthy list of favorite Tex-Mex dishes (with a hint of his grandfather's Italian heritage), lots of margaritas, beer, and wine. As a bonus, he is

thinking of doing a few weekend brunch specials in the spacious 3,000-square-foot kitchen and storage area.

"It's very state-of-the-art, and we'll have room to do everything we want," he says. "I think because of the setting we'll do a big brunch business. Fifty percent of the space has windows that can open during nice weather for al fresco dining, and it would be nice to have a few special dishes just at this location—maybe molé and barbacoa."

And, of course, the popular El Tiempo mixed grill fajita platter of beef, chicken, and quail. "Without a doubt, it's our most popular order," Lorenzo says. "Even the serving for one can feed two to three people. Our customers know we oversize our portions so they can share them. It's all about a lot of good food for a good price."

For updates on the new El Tiempo Cantina on Navigation Boulevard, check out eltiempocantina.com.

Marene Gustin is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.



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No fragrance for Foster: Jodie Foster accepts the Cecil B. DeMille Award at the Golden Globes and comes out at the same time. Oh wait, didn't she come out in the Stone Age?

Superman

(Entertainment Weekly, 12/14/12)

Biceps? Handcuffs? Military uniforms? The only thing missing from this new Superman poster is Liza Minnelli.



"Our journey is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else under the law—for if we are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well."

—President Barack Obama, in his inaugural speech, January 21, 2013

Jodie Foster

(The 70th Annual Golden Globe Awards, 1/13/13, NBC)

This is not going to "be a big coming-out speech tonight, because I already did my coming out about a thousand years ago back in the Stone Age, in those very quaint days when a fragile young girl would open up to trusted friends and family and co-workers and then gradually, proudly to everyone who knew her, to everyone she actually met. But now I'm told, apparently, that every celebrity is expected to honor the details of their private life with a press conference, a fragrance, and a prime-time reality show. . . . No, I'm sorry, that's just not me. It never was and it never will be."



"I don't want to get married until all gay people can get married."

—Lena Dunham, backstage at the 70th Annual Golden Globe Awards



Judy Gold

(Joy Behar: Say Anything!, 1/17/13, Current TV)

Joy Behar: There's a "hot priest" alert going on. This month, gracing the cover of *Vanity Fair Italy* is Georg Ganswein, otherwise known as "the George Clooney of the Vatican."

Judy Gold: Well, he's the pope's assistant. And if anyone knows how to pick an attractive male assistant, it's gonna be the head of the Catholic Church. What are you saying? The pope is like 150 years old. I know, but there's Cialis.



At the Golden Globes ceremony, Ben Affleck "was one of the few men there whose beard wasn't on his arm."

(The New York Times, 1/3/13, Dave Itzkoff)

Dave Itzkoff: When you're going up against Maggie Smith—there's one scene [in *Downton Abbey*] where you serenade her a bit—how do you prepare?

Shirley MacLaine: . . . I told her I was going to sing [the song to her], and first she said to me, [genteel Maggie Smith voice] "You know, dear, when you do that, I'm going to fall off the chair." I said, okay. And then she said, "No, I think not. I think I'll fall asleep." I said, okay, that's good too. . . .

What she did instead was flirt back. [Laughs] I was so surprised.

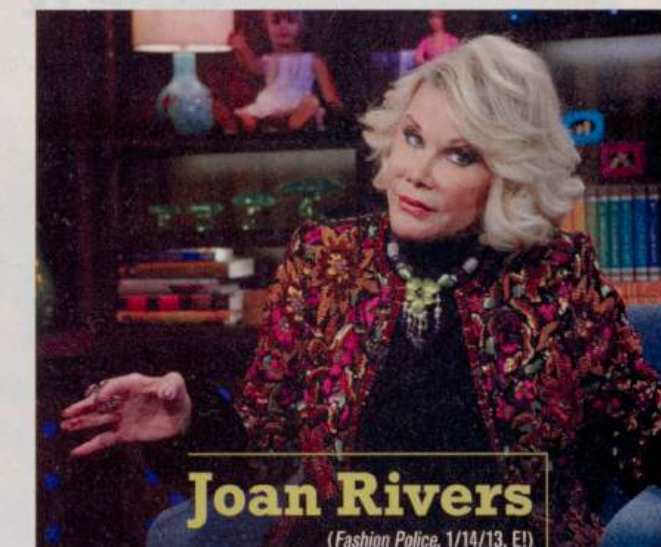


Gettin' it on?: Maggie Smith (l) and Shirley MacLaine flirt with each other on PBS's *Downton Abbey*.

Shirley MacLaine

Queer Quotes

Compiled by
Blase
DiStefano



Joan Rivers

(Fashion Police, 1/14/13, E!)



by
Gregg
Shapiro

'Edie & Thea'

A romantic courtship with a Supreme Court connection



Love story: the forty-year relationship between Edie Windsor (r) and Thea Spyer is highlighted in *Edie & Thea: A Very Long Engagement*. They are pictured here after their marriage on May 22, 2007, in Toronto. **INSET:** the couple enjoys some beach time in the Hamptons in 1969.



Edie Windsor and Thea Spyer, the subjects of Susan Muska & Gréta Ólafsdóttir's 2010 doc *Edie & Thea: A Very Long Engagement*, hold hands while affectionately making comments about the projected images of a 1960s slide show. Edie gets things started by recounting how in 1962 that she "couldn't take it anymore" and called a friend to find out where it was that the lesbians socialized. On that night, at Portofino's Restaurant, Edie and Thea met, danced together (as Thea puts it, their "bodies fit"), and eventually became a couple.

Edie & Thea is a beautifully rendered story of dancing and romancing, paralleling the couple's own coming-out stories with that of the LGBT community. The journey of Edie (from Philadelphia) and Thea (from Amsterdam) over the course of

their more than forty-year romantic partnership is uplifting and wondrous. Each woman's personal story of family and coming out, combined with the couple's extended courtship and eventual partnership, is utterly absorbing.

Additionally, Thea's longtime battle with multiple sclerosis (she died in 2009) figures prominently in their shared tale. Edie and Thea's longtime-in-

the-making wedding, which took place in Toronto in 2007, is the doc's emotional peak.

A substantial argument for same-sex marriage if ever there was one, *Edie & Thea: A Very Long Engagement* is an engaging and important cinematic work. The timing couldn't be better for watching this remarkable film—Edie, now a widow at



DVD Shorts

Cabaret



Bob Fosse's Oscar-winning musical drama starring Liza Minnelli celebrates its fortieth anniversary with a Blu-ray debut on February 5. Remastered

for the first time in over twenty years, *Cabaret* is offered in a Blu-ray book format, which contains forty pages of photos and text to complement a new featured documentary. A DVD version is also available. Warner Home Video (warnerbros.com). —Troy Carrington

Out in the Open



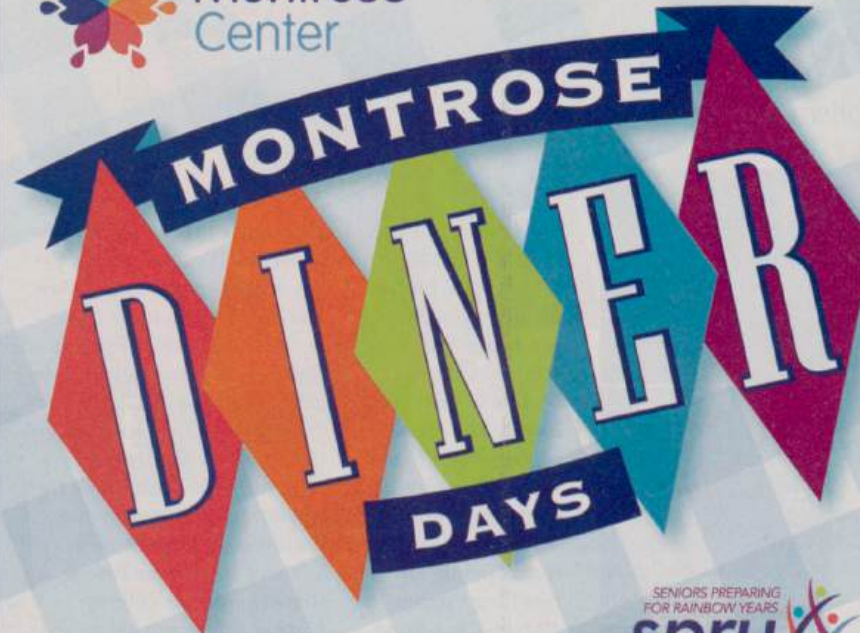
This documentary is comprised of a collection of interviews with gay celebrities, politicians, and straight allies who openly celebrate the LGBTQ community. They discuss how they coped with gay stereotypes by sharing personal experiences of coming to terms with their sexuality. Breaking Glass Pictures (breakingglasspictures.com). —T.C.

Enlightened: The Complete First Season



Forty-year-old Amy Jellicoe has a dramatic transformation that inspires her to adopt a new attitude of inner peace and healing. Unfortunately, her new outlook is

unwelcomed and even threatening to her co-workers and loved ones. A blend of comedy and drama, *Enlightened* stars Laura Dern, who executive-produces the series with openly gay Mike White (son of openly gay Mel White), who also co-stars, writes, and directs. —T.C. ■



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by
Gregg
Shapiro

Queer Music

Mary Gauthier, Johnny Mathis, Telly Leung, and others

For her first album since 2010's heartbreaking and acclaimed *The Foundling*, Mary Gauthier (pronounced go-shay, as you probably know by now) gives us the self-released concert set *Live at Blue Rock* (marygauthier.com). All but one of Gauthier's six studio discs are represented here, with three songs drawn from her breakthrough disc *Drag Queens in Limousines* (the title tune, "Karla Faye," and "Our Lady of the Shooting Stars"). Still deserving of the queer Lucinda Williams tag (that's a compliment), Gauthier is triumphant on "I Drink" and "Sugar Cane" (co-written with fellow queer singer/songwriter Catie Curtis). But perhaps the most revelatory aspect of the disc is that it includes not one, but three covers by kindred spirit Fred Eaglesmith—opener "Your Sister Cried," "Cigarette Machine," and "The Rocket." If he's wise, Eaglesmith will return the favor.

Now a one-man operation, queer electro act Dangerous Muse (not to be confused with Danger Mouse) continues to embrace the EDM esthetic on the five-song EP *Red* (dangerousmuse.com). DM plays with some of the newfangled toys on "Homewrecker," doing techno

tricks with the vocals. "I Can't Help It" sounds a bit like Ministry (in their pre-heavy-industrial period) won't be able to help but like it. The album's centerpiece, "Fame Kills," goes on a bit too long (at almost seven minutes), but it gets points for recalling vintage 12-inch disco vinyl.

Singer/actor Telly Leung is part of the new generation of Broadway performers who are stretching the bounds of cabaret, coloring outside the lines of the Great American Songbook. On his debut recording *I'll Cover You* (Yellow Sound), Leung isn't afraid to mix the seventies (Stevie Wonder's "Knocks Me Off My Feet" and Simon & Garfunkel's

"Bridge Over Troubled Water") with show tunes ("Children Will Listen," "Before the Parade Passes By," and the title track). An unfortunate reading of Madonna's "Papa Don't Preach" can be overlooked for more inventive selections such as Indigo Girls' "Galileo" and Katy Perry's "Firework" (really!). Leung must also be a Holly Cole fan since he covers a pair of tunes—"Cry (If You Want To)" and "I Can See Clearly Now"—found on the Canadian diva's debut.

Prince's influence on the band Avan Lava is immediately obvious on "Tear It Down," the opening cut on their six-song EP *Flex Fantasy* (avanlava.com). It

also comes through loud and queer on "It's Never Over," but it's never overdone. "Slow Motion" lives up to its name, and "Feels Good" delivers good feelings. Rumor has it that to get the full impact, Avan Lava must be seen live, so check out their website for dates.

Long before there was the smooth seduction of Prince, there was Johnny Mathis. Just as there is only one Prince, there is only one Johnny Mathis. Following his successful early years on Columbia Records, Mathis briefly parted ways with the label and recorded for Mercury. Four of those albums, and the unreleased *Broadway*, have made their way to CD on Real Gone Music. *Broadway* is paired up with *Love Is Everything*, from 1965. The themes of tenderness and fantasy are explored on 1964's *Tender Is the Night* and *The Wonderful World of Make Believe*, respectively.

An EP enthusiast, Chris Riffle is back with the dreamy six-song disc *Another Dream* (chrisriffle.com). As fellow out artist AG did on her *The Beatles* EP, Riffle puts a queer spin on a familiar Lennon/McCartney tune, transforming "And I Love Her" to "And I Love Him" with ease and success. Also deserving of your undivided attention is the gorgeous title cut "While You Run," as well as "Far from the Sea."

Read the complete article at OUTSMARTMAGAZINE.COM.

Gregg Shapiro is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.

GrooveOut Shorts

Ke\$ha Warrior

This album features tracks written by Ke\$ha, as well as collaborations with will.i.am, Iggy Pop, Cirkut, Ben Folds, Ammo, and Bonnie McKee, among others. Kemosabe/RCA Records (rcarecords.com). —Suzie Lynde

Sandy Stewart/Bill Charlap Something to Remember

Grammy Award-nominated vocalist Sandy Stewart and her son, jazz pianist Bill Charlap, perform classic songs by Rodgers and Hart, Henry Mancini and Leslie Bricusse, and Irving Berlin, among others. Ghostlight Records (ghostlightrecords.com). —S.L.

Alison May Earnest Keep

This debut album is the perfect introduction to May's multi-faceted talent, and it's a fitting title for an album she sang, played every instrument on, and co-produced. It's a detailed account of her musical coming of age that clearly reflects her inspirations and influences. Misery Loves Company (alisonmay.bandcamp.com). —S.L.



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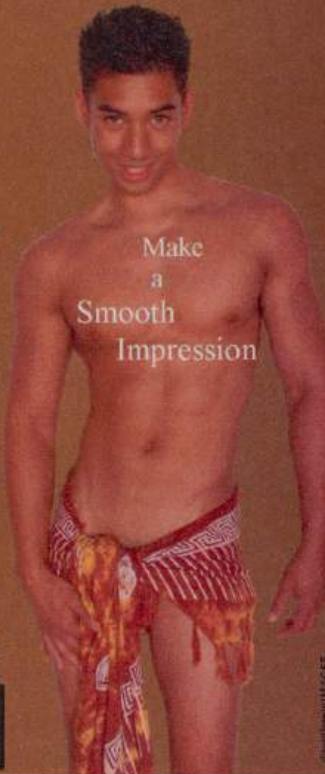
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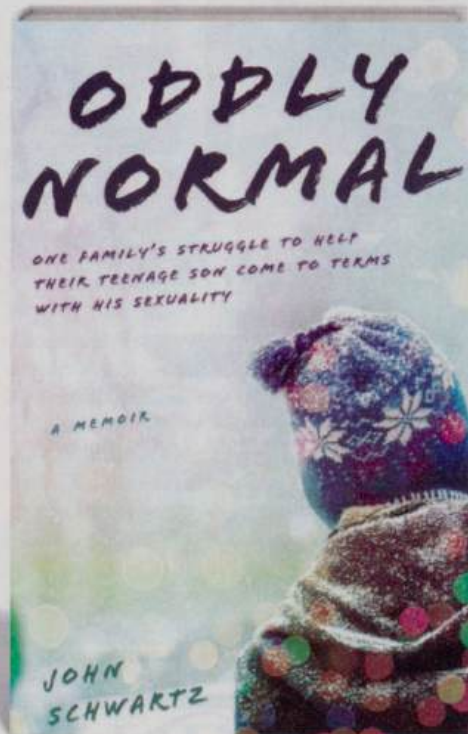




by
Kit van
Cleave

Unconditional Love

'Oddly Normal' shows that it can save a life



Oddly Normal
by John Schwartz
2012 • Gotham
(penguin.com)
304 pages, \$26

Joe's parents immediately put him in a hospital where he could recover from his overdose, and then asked themselves, "What do we do now?" They began to look at his school, peers, social skills, and an assessment by professionals.

The first roadblock the parents ran into was educators and psychologists trying to define Joe's problems as medical and psychological issues. "They offered a long series of diagnoses we found confusing, conflicting, and more limiting than helpful," Schwartz writes. Some even suggested Joe

should be taken completely out of school, leaving him less likely to go to college.

But more and more, the couple began to think that "growing up gay in a straight world was causing him stress and pressure. The refusal to see being gay as a big part of the picture meant a

lack of support for our son at critical times that could have made an enormous difference," Schwartz notes.

They started working more closely with Joe's school, suggesting that, for example, →

Of course, it's always helpful to have a dad who is a *New York Times* national correspondent to tell the story and do the research that saved Joe's life and helped him achieve amazing progress since that awful day.

The couple blamed themselves for missing signs of self-destruction in their son, though they had no reason to have seen Dan Savage's "It Gets Better" videos (which have helped gay and lesbian teens to battle through their formative years) or to have read data gathered by LGBT investigators showing gay youngsters are likely to "experience harassment, feel unsafe in academic settings, [and] drop out of school" or to have found the government report *Healthy People 2010*, which stated "gay male adolescents are 2-3 times more likely than their peers to attempt suicide."



Author
John Schwartz

When John Schwartz got the phone call from his wife, Jeanne, three years ago, he was horrified to learn that his twelve-year-old son Joseph had tried to commit suicide. "You have to come home," she said urgently. "Joe has taken a lot of pills," Schwartz recalls on page one of his new book, *Oddly Normal*.

Of the couple's three children, the youngest son had long been troubled. He was withdrawn and tempestuous, often leaving classrooms or having tantrums. Recently, he'd been dropping hints at school that he was gay. This increased his personal stress, especially when the reactions were different from what he expected. He had come out to his parents several weeks before, but they already knew (Joe's grandmother had said she thought he was gay even at age three).

ReadOut Shorts

The Trapeze Artist Will Davis



Some people have midlife crises and buy sports cars; some people run off with the circus and reinvent themselves. *The Trapeze Artist* tells this story in context, weaving together tales of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood to paint a picture of a tortured and tormented soul gripped by a strange obsession. Really, this is a morality play of internalized homophobia, not fitting in, and finally being true to oneself. In addition to superlative craft, the sheer beauty of the story and an unforgettable ending make this volume one to place in the permanent collection. Bloomsbury USA (bloomsbury.com/us). —Angel Curtis

The Rest of Us Guy Mark Foster



This author has been developing an avid following among those of us who like a good short story. Shedding a unique light on being a gay African-American man, his strong prose, sense of place, and well-defined characters leave the reader wanting more of his fine work. If you are unfamiliar with this writer and a fan of short stories, this short collection is not to be missed. February 5, Tincture Imprint (letheypress-books.com). —A.C.

Dazed: The Story of a Grunge Rocker Nikki Palomino



After a stint being homeless on the streets of Portland, Eric returns home to live out a classic coming-of-age story clothed in heroin addiction and punk rock. This is genre fiction at its finest—fascinating if you're into the scene and boring as hell if you're not. While mostly well plotted and written, there's a little too much *deus ex machina* for this reviewer's taste. —A.C. ■

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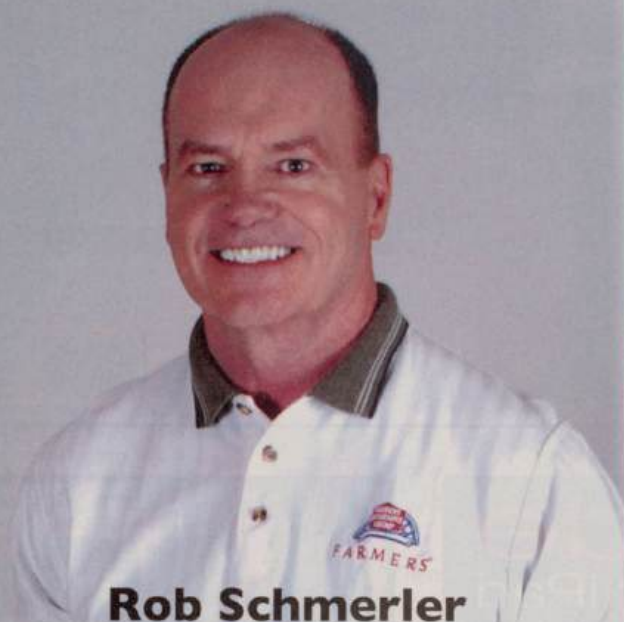
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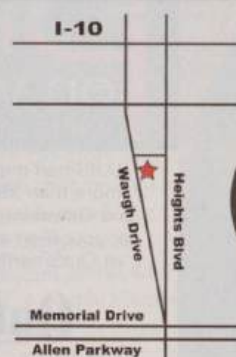
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ReadOut continued from page 70

he be allowed to work on a laptop rather than writing by hand, which had always caused him stress. If he left the classroom, they requested that he should be told where to go in the building to reduce his anxiety, such as the counselor's office. They already knew Joe had a low tolerance for stress and a learning disability that prevented him from performing on command under a time deadline.

They eventually met with doctors and psychiatrists whose evaluation of their son was more direct and helpful. What medications could he need? How could his array of symptoms be described? Did he fit into any description in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM)? Did he have ADHD? Autism? Asperger syndrome?

They also began seeking support for themselves, meeting with PFLAG groups, buying a baby monitor to keep tabs on his moods once he was home, and working more closely with school officials. They eventually found the Hetrick-Martin Institute in New York City, which provides counseling and other social services to gay teens in trouble. The Center's Youth Enrichment Services program offered a discussion group, drop-in

counseling, life skills, and even a camp emphasizing the arts.

They had also waited patiently for Joe to come out to them. When he did, they affirmed their love and support for him.

Slowly, then, Joe began to make friends, become more social, make progress in school, and move toward becoming a strong adult with a sense of identity.

For those trying to understand the gay community, Schwartz's detailed and highly readable book is an ideal companion to *Victory* (reviewed in the October 2012 issue of *OutSmart*), a vast overview of the gay civil rights movement. His focus is on helping other parents and gay kids make the difficult transition from teen years to adulthood—where to go for help, what services are out there, what medications work and which are over-prescribed, and how to negotiate with public schools for best results.

There's no doubt, however, that without the unconditional love of his compassionate parents, Joseph Schwartz's story might well have turned out quite differently.

For the unedited review, log on to OUTSMARTMAGAZINE.COM.

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

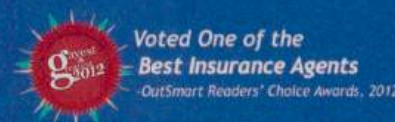
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~IN MEMORIAM~



Thomas (Tom) Poindexter

passed peacefully into the night on January 8, 2013, in Tomball, Texas, after a brief illness. Born February 25, 1947, Tom grew up in Mexia and Wortham, Texas. Tom called Houston home on and off since the early 1970s. He received degrees in chemistry from UT Austin in 1969 and microbiology from University of Houston in 1979.

He leaves behind his life partner, Roger French of Spring, Texas, as well as many family members and friends throughout Texas. Truly a one of a kind bear. "You did good!!"

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Calendar of Events

Compiled by
Marene
Gustin

It's the Month with Valentine's Day!

And that means Freedom to Marry and a Big Gay Wedding to boot

Ah, February: rodeo and hearts. Particularly hearts, as in love and weddings. But since you can't join all those hetero couples getting married on Valentine's Day, why not join a little peaceful protest?

On **February 14**, LGBT couples meet up at the Harris County Clerk's Office, 201 Caroline Street, at 11:30 a.m. to demonstrate for a Freedom to Marry Protest. At 11:45 a.m. they line up and march into the clerk's office to request marriage licenses—which will likely be denied.

Then at noon, they all march down along Main Street to Houston's City Hall on Bagby Street for another protest. Maybe if enough folks show up, the city and county will get the



Love is in the air: (l to r) Sophia Mroui, Amanda Horak, Michael Chou, Dustin Rynders, and Victor Martinez prepare for Freedom to Marry Week events.

FEBRUARY

Galas & Parties

Tonic. The Platinum rock group headlines a Mardi Gras kick-off party. Feb. 2. Saengerfest Park, Galveston • mardigrasgalveston.com.

Lee Brice. A concert with the country star for Mardi Gras. Feb. 8. Saengerfest Park, Galveston • mardigrasgalveston.com.

An Act of Love. Texas United Charities kicks off its fundraising efforts with TUC Red & White Ball featuring a show, raffle, a photographer, a matchmaking device, and more. Benefits LHI. Feb. 9. EJ's, 2517 Ralph St. • melissa.tuc@aol.com.

A Toast to Your Heart. Cocktails, dinner, and dancing at the 30th annual American Heart Association Ball. Feb. 9. Hilton Americas Houston, 1600 Lamar St. • heart.org • 713/610-5041.

See the Stars

Character Study. Legendary performer Lily Tomlin delivers her unique style of theatrical stand-up in a special one-night-only performance for Society for the Performing Arts. Feb. 9 at 8 p.m. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • spahouston.org • 713/227-45PA. (See interview in January 2013 issue of OutSmart.)

Film

Universal Pictures: Celebrating 100 Years. Film series at MFAH. Feb. 1-23. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfah.org • 713/639-7300.

Shades of Love: Romance in Contemporary African Cinema. Film series at MFAH. Through March 8. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfah.org • 713/639-7300.

Untitled (Structures): Leslie Hewitt in Collaboration with Bradford Young. The Menil Collection has commissioned this film installation on the Civil Rights era in partnership with the Des Moines Art Center and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Through May 25. Menil Collection, 1533 Sul Ross St. • menil.org • 713/525-9400.

Performing Arts

Macbeth. Verdi's take on Shakespeare's dark tale. Feb. 1-10. Opera in the Heights, 1703 Heights Blvd. • operaintheheights.org • 713/861-5303.

Dance Master Class with Motionhouse. Master class with a visiting dance company. Feb. 2. Jewish Community Center, 5601 South Braeswood Blvd. • spahouston.org • 713/227-4772.

Fishing. By Leighza Walker. Through Feb. 2. Cone Man Running Productions at Obsidian Art Space, 3522 White Oak Dr. • obsidianartspace.org.

Rothko Chapel. Free performance by Kim Kashkashian and the Houston Chamber Choir in honor of Da Camera's 25th anniversary. Feb. 3. Rothko Chapel, 3900 Yupon St. • dacamera.com • 713/524-7601.

The Mountaintop. Katori Hall's re-imagining of events the night before the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Through Feb. 3. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. • alleytheatre.org • 713/220-5700.

Camelot. Lerner and Loewe's chivalrous musical. Through Feb. 3. Theatre Under the Stars. Hobby Center for Performing Arts,

800 Bagby St. • tuts.com • 713/558-8887.

Girls Only—The Secret Comedy of Women. Keri Henson and Tracy Ahern's improv musical comedy. Through Feb. 3. Main Street Theater—Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. • mainstreettheater.com • 713/524-6706.

Mahler & Mendelssohn. Through Feb. 3. Christoph Koenig conducts Houston Symphony. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • houstonsymphony.org • 713/224-7575.

Ubu Roi. Philip Hays's avant-garde foray into the nature of greed and power. Through Feb. 3. Classical Theatre Company. Barnevelter Movement Arts Complex, 2201 Preston St. • classicaltheatre.org • 713/963-9665.

Catch Me If You Can. A musical about a con artist. Feb. 5-10. Broadway Across America. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby St. • broadwayacrossamerica.com • 800/982-ARTS. (See interview with Derrick Parks on page 39.)

Itzhak Perlman & Rohan De Silva. Violin and piano masters. Feb. 7. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • spahouston.org • 713/227-4772.

Music for Peace: Shouts, Cries, Prayers. Foundation for Music presentation. Feb. 8. Rothko Chapel, 1409 Sul Ross St. • modernmusic.org • 713/529-3928.

True West. By Sam Shepard. Opening Feb. 8 for three weekends only. The Country Playhouse, 12802 Queensberry Ln. • countryplayhouse.org • 713/467-4497.

Show Boat. Jerome Kern's great American musical. Through Feb. 9. Houston Grand Opera. Wortham Theater Center's Brown Auditorium, 501 Texas Ave. • houstongrandopera.org • 713/228-6737.

Auntie Shameka's Sixth Husband. A comedy about an urban Auntie Mame. Feb. 9 & 10. Houston Grand Opera. Midtown Art Center, 3414 LaBranch St. • banksbrotherspro-

ductions.com.

Don Giovanni. Mozart's opera of power and seduction. Through Feb. 10. Houston Grand Opera. Wortham Theater Center's Brown Auditorium, 501 Texas Ave. • houstongrandopera.org • 713/228-6737.

Benjamin Grosvenor. Young British pianist. Feb. 13. Cullen Theater, Wortham Theater Center, 500 Texas Ave. • spahouston.org • 713/9227-4772.

The Drowsy Chaperone. The uproariously funny and Tony Award-winning musical. Feb. 15-March 3. Crighton Theatre, 234 North Main Street, Conroe • crightontheatre.org • 936/441-7469.

Young Man from Atlanta. Horton Foote's drama set in Houston in the 1950s. Through Feb. 16. Company OnStage, 536 Westbury Square • companyonstage.org • 713/726-1219.

The Lion in Winter. A legendary king and an incomparable queen meet for one last Winter Court. Through Feb. 17. Texas Repertory Theatre Co., 14243 Stuebner Airline Rd. • texreptheatre.org • 281/583-7573.

Wittenberg. The regional premiere of David Davalos's play set in 1517 in the university town that was home to the legendary Dr. Faust, Martin Luther, and Shakespeare's fictional tragic-hero Hamlet. Through Feb. 17. Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway • stagesreptheatre.com • 713/527-0123.

Clybourne Park. Winner of the 2011 Pulitzer Prize, the 2012 Tony Award for Best Play, and the Olivier Award for Best Play (London). Through Feb. 17. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. • alleytheatre.org • 713/220-5700.

The Knights with Yu Man. These knights are on a crusading musical mission. Feb. 20. Cullen Theater, Wortham Theater Center, 500 Texas Ave. • spahouston.org • 713/227-4772. →

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Calendar continued from previous page

Motionhouse in Scattered: A Meteor Shower of Unlikely Moments. A mix of film and dance. Feb. 22. Cullen Theater, Wortham Theater Center, 500 Texas Ave. • spahouston.org • 713/227-4772.

Knock Me a Kiss. Charles Smith's drama about love and poetry. Through Feb. 24. Ensemble Theatre, 3535 Main St. • ensemblehouston.com • 713/520-0055.

Man of La Mancha. Classic about tilting windmills. Feb. 26-March 10. Theatre Under the Stars. Hobby Center for Performing Arts, 800 Bagby St. • tuts.com • 713/558-8887. (See interview with Eadie Scott on page 43.)

Leaving San Jacinto. By Diana Howi. Opening Feb. 28 for one weekend only. The Country Playhouse, 12802 Queensberry Ln. • countryplayhouse.org • 713/ 467-4497.

Houston Grand Opera Showcase. One of the most respected young artist programs in the country. March 1. Houston Grand Opera. Wortham Theatre Center's Brown Auditorium, 501 Texas Ave. • houstongrandopera.org • 713/228-6737.

And Other Stuff

Mardi Gras on the Island. Get ready to par-tay! Galveston's 102nd celebration, featuring 38 concerts, 24 parades, 20 balcony parties and five elegant masked balls. Feb. 1-12. Galveston.com.

Thirteen Therapists book signing. Russell Sanders' first young adult novel. Feb. 9. River Oaks Book Store, 3270 Westheimer Rd. • riveroaksbookstore.com • 713/520-0061.

Waltz with Viktoria Soto. Channel your inner Dancing with the Stars footwork with this class by Hope Stone. Feb. 21. Hope Stone, 1210 West Clay St. • hopestoneinc.org • 713/526-1907.

Houston Gaymers Meet Up. A new alternative in Houston's nightlife with great drink specials, a wide variety of classic board games, and video games provided that everyone can enjoy. The Fairview, 315 Fairview St. • houstongaymers.com.

2013 Reader Cup: Larry Dierker Celebrity Golf Tournament. Literacy Advance of Houston annual fundraiser. Feb. 25. Blackhorse Golf Club • literacyadvance.org.

Health Seminar, Exhibit, and Social. AIA's annual event for architects and designers from the Houston healthcare design community, along with hospital administrators and facility managers. Feb. 28. Treviso Restaurant, 6550 Bertner St. • aiahouston.org.

Radio

After Hours: Queer Radio with Attitude features the QM2 (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

Claes Oldenburg: Strange Eggs, Collages. Through Feb. 3. Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross St. • menil.org • 713/525-9400.

Picasso Black and White. The works of the master painter in black, white, and shades of gray. Feb. 24-May 27. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfa.org • 713/639-7300.

Multiple Exhibitions. Present, Tense, Doing It Like Dolly Does... How Does Dolly Do It; Don Rule: Neutral Ground; Kochi Solis: Rivers of Our Vision; James Ciosek: Human Hammer Wheel. Through March 2. Lawndale Arts Center, 4912 Main St. • lawndaleartscenter.org • 713/528-5858.

Curtis Gannon: Never Enough. Through March 3. Galveston Arts Center, 2501 Market Street, Galveston • galvestonartscenter.org • 409/763-2403.

Look to the Left by Wendy Wagner. Solo exhibition by Houston-based artist. Through March 14. Women and Their Work, 1710 Lavaca Street, Austin • womenandtheirwork.org.

Tony Fehér: Free Fall. Abstract, minimalist sculptures and installations. Through March 16. DiverseWorks, 4102 Fannin St. • diverseworks.org • 713/223-8346.

Princes and Paupers: The Art of Jacques Callot. With more than 150 objects on view—including prints, books, and tools—Princes and Paupers offers a glimpse into 17th-century Europe. Through May 5. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfa.org • 713/639-7300.

2013 NCECA Biennial and Constructing Solitude. Ongoing exhibits at the Houston Center for Contemporary

Craft. Through May 5. HCCC, 4848 Main St. • craftthouston.org • 713/529-4848.

Ongoing

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.

Daily (Mon.-Fri.)

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

Daily (Mon.-Fri.)

HIV Testing. HACS, 2150 West 18th • 713/426-0027.

Daily (Mon.-Fri.)

HIV Testing. Legacy Community Health Services provides free rapid HIV testing with results in 20 minutes at the following locations on a weekly basis. **MONDAYS:** LEGACY LYONS AVENUE CLINIC, 9am-4pm; GEORGE SPORTS BAR, 6-9pm; EJ's, 9pm-12am • **TUESDAYS:** LEGACY LYONS AVENUE CLINIC, 9am-4pm; MIDTOWNE SPA, 5-9pm; 611 HYDE PARK PUB, 6-9pm; TC'S SHOWBAR, 8-11pm • **WEDNESDAYS:** LEGACY LYONS AVENUE CLINIC, 9am-4pm; WALGREENS-MONTROSE, 4-8pm; CLUB HOUSTON, 6-10pm; Crystal Night Club, 10pm-2am • **THURSDAYS:** LEGACY LYONS AVENUE CLINIC, 9am-3pm; GUAVA LAMP, 5-8pm; MIDTOWNE SPA, 5-9pm; BRAZOS RIVER BOTTOM, 8-11pm; RIPCORN, 8-11pm • **FRIDAYS:** CLUB HOUSTON, 1-4pm; TONY'S CORNER POCKET, 5-9pm.

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.

Weekly (Mondays)

EMBody: Whole Health, Wellness and Resiliency peer group. 2pm. Montrose Center, 401 Branard St. • montrosecounselingcenter.org • 713/529-0037.

LBT Breast Cancer Survivors Support Group. 5pm. Montrose Center, 401 Branard St. • montrosecounselingcenter.org • 713/529-0037.

EMBody: Introduction to Yoga. 6pm. Montrose Center, 401 Branard St. • montrosecounselingcenter.org • 713/529-0037.

Depression Bipolar Support Group. 7pm. Montrose Center, 401 Branard St. • montrosecounselingcenter.org • 713/529-0037.

Helping TransGenders Anonymous. a facilitated support group for all transgenders, supporters, family, and significant others. 7pm. 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 and life challenges after being married to a woman. Meets every Monday except holidays. 7:30pm. Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold St., Room 230 • fathersfirsthouston.com.

Weekly (Tuesdays)

EMBody: Mindfulness, Well-Being, Stress Reduction. 11am. Montrose Center, 401 Branard St. • montrosecounselingcenter.org • 713/529-0037.

HATCH's Transgender Support Group and Speak Out for Youth. 5pm. Montrose Center, 401 Branard St. • montrosecounselingcenter.org • 713/529-0037.

Weekly (Wednesdays)

Gulf Pride for Youth. a support group for GLBTIQA youth ages 13-20. 6-9pm. 707 23rd St., Galveston • gulfprideforyouth.org.

Zumba exercise class with Crystal Wall. 6:45pm. House of Deron Media Center, 2204 Crawford St. • 713/772-5175.

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

OutLater. Gay fathers meet to discuss parenting, divorce, family, dating, relationships, and more. 7:30pm. Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, 2025 W. 11th St. • facebook.com/outlater.

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

Weekly (Fridays)

HATCH Youth Group. 7pm. Montrose Center, 401 Branard St. • montrosecounselingcenter.org • 713/529-0037.

Weekly (Sundays)

HATCH Youth Group. 6pm. Montrose Center, 401 Branard St. • montrosecounselingcenter.org • 713/529-0037.

Semi-monthly (1st and 3rd Fri.)

Positive Brothers United. a social/support group for GLBT, HIV-positive men of color. 6 pm. Montrose Center, 401 Branard St. • csmithpbu@yahoo.com • 713/454-7548.

Monthly (1st Sun.)

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 Sat.)

First Saturday Arts Market. Local artists display and sell original works of art. 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.)

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 • info@lawkn.com • 713/808-1000.

Monthly (2nd Thurs.)

Ryan White Planning Council. 11:30am. 2223 W. Loop South • rwpchouston.org • 713-572-3724.

SPRY Potluck for Seniors. 4pm. Montrose Center, 401 Branard St. • montrosecounselingcenter.org • 713/529-0037.

National Leather Association-Houston. Movie night. 7pm. Montrose Center, Room 106 • 832/744-8607.

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.

National Leather Association-Houston. Leather craft class. Noon. \$20+materials. Locations vary. bihouse@comcast.net.

Monthly (3rd Sun.)

LOAF Meet and Greet. Lesbians Over Age Fifty meet for munchies and fellowship. 2-4pm. Montrose Center, 401 Branard St. • loafhouston.org • 281/467-2578.

Monthly (3rd Tues.)

Affected Community Committee of the Ryan White Planning Council. Noon. rwpchouston.org • 713-572-3724.

Monthly (3rd Wed.)

Log Cabin Republicans. Theo's Restaurant, 812 Westheimer Rd. • facebook.com/groups/1021994919797?ref=ts.

Monthly (3rd Thurs.)

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

SPRY Counseling Center. 401 Branard St. • montrosecounselingcenter.org • 713/529-0037.

EMBody: Understanding Mental Health Issues. Rotating topics: addiction, depression, anxiety, bipolar. 5pm. Montrose Center, 401 Branard St. • montrosecounselingcenter.org • 713/529-0037.

EMBody: To Cook or Not to Cook. Demystifying raw foods. 6pm. Montrose Center, 401 Branard St. • montrosecounselingcenter.org • 713/529-0037.

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 (3rd Sat.)

Discovery Green Flea by Night. Local music, kids' activities, bicycle repair workshop, and 40+ vendors selling vintage clothing, antiques, collectibles, jewelry, and more. 6-10pm. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney St. • discoverygreen.com • 713/400-7336.

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.

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December 31

News: Pride Houston

continued from page 10

The celebration wouldn't be complete without honoring Male, Female, and Ally Grand Marshals. After asking the community to submit their nominations for "someone they feel has contributed most to the positive image and outlook of the Houston LGBT community," a Pride Houston committee selected final nominees to present to the community for a vote.

This year's Male Grand Marshal nominees include: JD Doyle, producer of Queer Music Heritage, a part of KPFT-FM's *Queer Voices*; and John Nechman, Houston lawyer with a long history of fighting for the rights of LGBT and HIV-positive immigrants.

Female Grand Marshal nominees include: Gay Nell Gulihur, assistant rodeo director for the 2013 Texas Gay Rodeo Association; Liz James, chief executive officer for the Lesbian Health Initiative; and Robin Brown, prominent LGBT event planner whose work includes the Women of Victory 4th of July Celebration and the Victory Fund Citywide Family Picnic.

Of course, the LGBT community would be nowhere without its straight allies. Ally Grand Marshal nominees include: Anna Eastman, Houston Independent School District trustee who continues to advocate for LGBT students and employees; and Januari Leo, long-time LGBT and HIV activist who is currently policy and community organizing with Legacy Community Health Services. "All of our grand marshal nominees have made great strides to further and stand for our community," Frankie Quijano, Pride Houston president, said. "They are all exemplary people involved in issues most important to the Houston LGBT community, and they are working to make a better life for all of us."

To make your selection for 2013 Male, Female, and Ally Grand Marshal, vote online at pridehouston.org. —Megan Smith

Night in Black Leather Variety Show

Scheduled for March 9 at Rich's

The 19th annual "Night in Black Leather" (NIBL), at 6-9 p.m., Saturday, March 9, at Rich's Houston, bewitches guests with mystery, magic, and illusion following this year's theme inspired by Erin Morgenstern's mesmerizing debut novel *The Night Circus*.

The variety show is a fundraiser for Lazarus House, whose location at 4106 Austin offers a unique multi-disciplinary program to promote the health of the chronically ill and help them live stronger and longer.

"You need not be into leather, or even wearing leather, to attend," explained Steve Oprea of NIBL Houston. "It does give attendees a chance for people to dress in leather for one night and come together to raise money for a good cause."

NIBL 2013 invites guests to surprise and astound, just as the book defies genres and expectations. Rachel Syme of NPR stated, "The world of *The Night Circus* is elaborately designed, fantastically imagined, and instantly intoxicating—as if the reader had downed a glass of absinthe and leapt into a hallucination."

Jim Benton, chair of the NIBL board of directors, selected the theme after reading the book, said Oprea. "He thought it would

add an air of mystery and make a unique event something even more special.

"The evening is a true variety show of different musical numbers, comedy, and a thrilling live auction featuring custom leather items, unique gift baskets, and special passes to the 2013 Folsom Street Fair in San Francisco," added Oprea. "We



A scene from Night in Black Leather 2012: (l-r) Jamie Guidry, Steve Carbone, Ann Marie Gill, Jason Sechrest, and Steve Oprea.

do expect to raise several thousand dollars. The live auction of unique leather items really helps us hit that goal."

Admission is \$20 per person, with tickets available at the door, 2401 San Jacinto St. There will be a cash bar, with VIP packages available featuring reserved seating, a dedicated bar tender, and more benefits.

The official after-party is at Eagle Houston, 213 Milam St.

About the show format, Oprea said,

continued on page 81

Tie One On for Marriage Equality

Yes, you can tie one on this Valentine's Day, but we prefer it to be a bow tie instead of a vodka martini.

A group of local individuals are coming together to support the Tie the Knot Foundation organized by actor Jesse Tyler Ferguson, of the hit comedy *Modern Family*, and his partner, attorney Justin Mikita.

Working with the Tie Bar Company, Ferguson and Mikita created a special limited collection of bow ties with 100 percent of the sales going to Tie the Knot Foundation

(tietheknot.org) in support of marriage equality.

The Houston team, made up of LGBT advocates and various not-for-profit organizations, has created a fun and stylish social media event for Valentine's Day.

Want to participate? Purchase a cool bow tie at thetiebar.com/JTF. Then, on February 14, post a photo of your stylish self to Facebook and/or Twitter with the caption: I Support Marriage Equality! #TieTheKnot.

"The beauty of this activity isn't exclusive to the LGBT community, nor is it set for a specific location," said Trevor Eade, one of the organizers. "This is an awareness cam-

paign where anyone who supports marriage equality has the opportunity to wear a bow tie on Valentine's Day, and post online.

"I hope this becomes one of those water cooler talking points in the workplace where social issues and personal stories are shared," Eade said.

At press time, close to 2,300 individuals had committed to participate and had begun sharing with their friends. So get busy and tie one on this Valentine's Day, and maybe someday soon you can actually legally marry on this romantic holiday. ■



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News

In Memory Of

A way to help others on February 25

Sometimes life can be overwhelming. Job loss, bad relationships, suicidal thoughts.

That's where Crisis Intervention Houston comes in. The local non-profit operates free, confidential, anonymous hotlines, including Crisis Hotline (713/HOT-LINE), Spanish Hotline (713/47-AYUDA), and TeenLine (713/529-TEEN) 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Since 1970, trained volunteers have answered 2.5 million calls from those in crisis.

"Until last year," says public relations specialist Stuart Rosenberg, "I was blissfully ignorant of the pain and issues that some of the closest people to me were dealing with, and suicide was effectively a foreign concept. As I would learn, however, no one is immune. The year began with a longtime family friend taking her life. That was followed by the suicides of two very special friends—

incredibly talented and beautiful individuals who brought unconditional love and happiness to so many. It was so difficult to understand how those who seemingly had so much to live for would choose this path. And then the grief was compounded as other friends and acquaintances began to share their stories of darker times, when they had also considered similar fates. I now understand how a resource like Crisis Hotline is so tremendously critical. But even more important is generating widespread awareness of this trained, confidential, and caring entity."

To that end, Libby Cagle is spearheading a fundraiser and awareness event for CIH on February 25 at Monica Pope's Sparrow Bar + Cookshop in Midtown. The event honors the lives of 34-year-old James William Craig and 44-year-old sculptor and performance artist Daniel Kayne, who both took their lives last year. Rosenberg is on the host committee for the event, Pope is donating the space, food, and her signature cocktails, and Land Rover Houston Central is underwriting the evening.



"Crisis Intervention of Houston, or more widely known as Crisis Hotline, is a volunteer-driven nonprofit that provides anonymous callers with unlimited access to crisis calls," says Cagle. "Each volunteer on the other end of the line is trained and ready to help the caller with whatever they are dealing with, be it a breakup, family drama, or a much more serious issue. The conversation and solutions are tailored toward each caller's problem."

Volunteers at all three hotlines, from 15 to 72 years of age, undergo intensive training by professional counselors before starting four-hour shifts answering calls. They use a database of 6,500 support agencies they can refer callers to, and CIH also hosts a support group for survivors of suicide attempts.

"I realized that success stories aren't abundant in relation to CIH," adds Cagle. "Not because there aren't any, but because of [the need for client] anonymity. CIH receives 250 calls per day—about five of which are suicide related. [If we achieve our goal] of creating more awareness, those calls will increase and more people will get the immediate help they need with nothing to lose and everything to gain. CIH needs a face and recognition that can only be achieved through [an awareness campaign]. This event will hopefully reach hundreds of people who are not familiar with the free, unlimited service provided by CIH. I pray that through these efforts we can salvage lives by at least providing immediate support and leading them in the direction of more help."

So check out the event at Sparrow to learn more about CIH. Twenty-five-dollar donations, in advance or at the door, are requested, and the monies raised will go to CIH in memory of Craig and Kayne.

Who knows, you might need CIH's services one day, or you may decide to become the volunteer on the other end of the line who saves someone's life.

—Marene Gustin ■

News: Night in Black Leather

continued from page 79

"We'll be drawing from elements of the novel. A review on amazon.com states, 'The circus arrives without warning. No announcements precede it. It is simply there, when yesterday it was not. Within the black-and-white striped canvas tents is an utterly unique experience full of breathtaking amazements. It is called Le Cirque des Rêves, and it is only open at night.'"

The event was first hosted by Don Gill, whose Don Gill Productions organized an entertainment show each year to raise funds for local charities, often focusing on HIV/AIDS in the Houston community.

"Within the last two years, Don wanted to bring in some new blood," Oprea explained. "Jim gathered a crew of folks who have a varied background from entertainment, marketing, and event planning."

"Lazarus House has and is wonderful about getting volunteers for the event. They are truly partners in this undertaking," Oprea added. "Also, we are blessed to have the Misfits Houston helping out. NIBL and the Misfits have a long history of helping each other at fundraising events."

The Lazarus House was once a four-plex apartment in need of much repair. Volunteers devoted hundreds of hours of labor and donated thousands of dollars to renovate it into a home where many cachectic clients have found hope, courage, strength, and happiness through an integrated program of exercise, nutrition, and spiritual awareness.

Last year's event attracted about one hundred guests, said Oprea. "It makes it a fun event without being overwhelming."

—Donalevan Maines ■

Milestones

DIED Manuel "Manny" Olivo, age 42, died on Thursday morning, January 24, in Houston. Olivo was very active in the local LGBT community, volunteering hundreds of hours to his most beloved charitable organizations. Among those organizations were Bunnies on the Bayou, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and PFLAG/HATCH.

Manny worked tirelessly to generate funds and attention for these groups and more. His work earned him Volunteer of the Year by the readers of OutSmart magazine in 2010. • He was known for his love of music, especially Kylie Minogue. He had traveled extensively following her career. • Private family services were held on Monday, January 28, which would have been Olivo's 43rd birthday.

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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.

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.

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.

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 • brbt.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 • crystaltheclub.com.

CROCKER BAR

Resident DJ Johnny spins on Friday and Saturday nights at this comfortably remodeled Montrose nightclub that also offers karaoke on Tuesdays and Thursdays and extended happy-

hour prices throughout the week. 2312 Crocker • 713/529-3355.

THE EAGLE

Houston's newest dance club for masculine men is full of private nooks and crannies for dancing and cruising. Resident DJs JD Arnold and DJ Rudy man the turntables. Friday and Saturday, 9pm-afterhours; Sunday, 6pm-afterhours. 213 Milam St. • eaglehouston.com • 713/236-8777.

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 • ejbar.com.

EVO

The spacious downstairs dance floor and upstairs rooftop lounge and bar's skyline view are highlighted at this Midtown club that caters to both gay men and lesbians on alternate nights. 2702 Milam St. • 832/359-6624.

F BAR

Award-winning DJs spin nightly at this "boutique nightclub" that offers elegance without arrogance and features a stage, dance floor, VIP area, glass-encased quiet bar, and attractive patio. Tuesday and Sunday drag shows feature frequent special guests. 202 Tuam St. • fbarhouston.com • 713/522-3227.

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 • guavalamp-houston.com.

JR'S BAR & GRILL

With house emcee Kofi, OutSmart's Gayest and Greatest reigning drag champion, this Montrose standard offers drag and strip shows throughout

BEHIND THE BAR

WHO: Beau Heyen
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WHAT'S UP: The bar for masculine men is in full swing weekly from Fri.-Sun. with unique theme parties, brand-name DJs, and hi-tech lighting/sound. It joins the list of Eagle bars around the world.

the week, karaoke Thursdays and Sundays, plus pool tables, male dancers, and award-winning cocktails. 808 Pacific St. • jrsbarandgrill.com • 713/521-2519.

METEOR

The men of Manwatch and Muscles in Action rinse down in the "Meteor Shower" stall in this posh but comfy lounge on the downtown edge of Montrose, accompanied by DJ Tad on Fridays and DJ Jimmy Skinner on Saturdays. Open Thursday through Saturdays. 2306 Genesee St. • meteorhouston.com • 713/521-0123.

MICHAEL'S OUTPOST

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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.

RUDYARD'S

The eclectic British pub is known for its craft beers as well as for the burgers. Most weekends you'll find up-and-coming local bands rocking the house. 2010 Waugh Dr. • rudyardspub.com • 713/521-0521.

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-dance club is a frequent winner of OutSmart's Gayest and Greatest awards, with Billboard contributor DJ Jimmy Skinner spinning on Fridays, and DJ Joe Ross playing pop and dance music videos on Saturdays. No cover before 11pm. 810 Pacific St. • sobehouston.com • 713/529-SOBE.

TC'S SHOWBAR

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

TONY'S CORNER POCKET

This comfortable club located close to downtown has one of the friendliest bar staffs in town, both inside & 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 • tonys-cornerpocketbar.com.

THE USUAL

Formerly a house of ill repute, this lesbian-owned neighborhood bar now has plenty of rep, 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.

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CLUB PRIDE

An acronym for "People Representing Individuality, Diversity, and Equality," Club Pride offers a near-Gulf Coast alternative with Karaoke Wednesdays, Flashback Thursdays, Forbidden Fridays with DJ Que, and Taste the Rainbow Saturdays. 229 E. NASA Pkwy. • clubpridehouston.com • 281/557-4800.

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 LGBTs. Its new "urban chic" look maintains its tropical flair. 2416 Postoffice St. • 409/765-6911.

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.

Humble

WHISPERS

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

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by
Lilly
Roddy

Plan Early . . .

Mercury (planet of travel and communication) goes retrograde on February 18

Get your activities planned early this month, as Mercury (planet of travel and communication) goes retrograde on February 18. After the 18th, go back and take care of existing projects but avoid starting anything new. Mercury is direct on March 22. The Chinese New Year of the Snake is on February 10. (The Chinese New Year always starts with the New Moon in Aquarius.) • We are more emotionally connected and sensitive to our environment this month. Make sure you have some down time, because so many of the planets are in Pisces during February. Mars is first into Pisces on the 1st. Mercury is gliding through Aquarius until the 5th, when she enters Pisces for a long visit. The sun begins the month in Aquarius and enters Pisces on the 18th. Venus enters Aquarius on the 2nd and joins Mercury in Pisces on the 25th. Jupiter remains in Gemini, Saturn in Scorpio, Uranus in Aries, Neptune in Pisces, and Pluto in Capricorn.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). As the month opens, you are still busy with work and a fairly active social life. The early part of the month is the best time to make headway with your career. Groups and organizations are good places for you to make connections to further your career. Toward mid-month, you will want to take some time to recoup. You will be more sensitive to things around you and will need time for meditation or yoga. With Mercury retrograde on the 18th, you will be ready for some cleaning out and reorganizing.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). This continues to be a “get your act together” year. The first half of the month is very good for focusing on your career and taking more of a leadership role. Make sure that you maintain connections with your friends, as they will be especially important this month. With Mercury retrograde, you could hear from old friends. Relationships are still tense, but you are more willing to compromise this month.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). You are back to being busy and moving a little faster than you used to. When Mercury, your ruler, goes retrograde on the 18th, you will have time to go back and take care of the things you missed. You will really be rethinking your work and career after the 18th. Don't operate as though you're alone—open up and ask others for help. Relationships are

improving, but it's not the best time to meet someone new.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). This will be a more peaceful month for you since so many of the planets are in water signs, your natural element. This can be a very creative month, especially if you are doing something that you really enjoy. You are more lighthearted, and some humor has crept back into your life. Although you continue to feel pressure in the background, you are able to take a breath now. Continue to work on reinventing your career and relationships. You won't find many roadblocks this month.

LEO (July 23–August 22). Relationships continue to be a primary focus for you this month. You really want to know who you can and cannot trust. You shift your interests around mid-month and want to connect more deeply with those around you. Old money issues or intimacy issues may show up as you get in touch with your own barriers. Keep working on rebuilding foundations with your home and family.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). You have really been working on getting your life cleaned up and in order, and that takes an even more intense turn as Mercury, your ruler, goes retrograde on the 18th. Most of the planets are in your relationship arena. This is a good month to discuss boundaries, long-term goals, and making sure that you and your partner are pulling the wagon in the same direction. Career continues to be busy, but continue to think long-term in your planning.

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). The emphasis this month is on health and work routines. You will be particularly attuned to how your work environment affects your health. You may want to avoid office politics and drama for the next six weeks if you can. You are supposed to be paying more attention to yourself and getting personal areas cleaned up. This is a great month to go back to any workout or diet program that you have done in the past. Work options are improving, but wait to act until after March 22.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). As the month opens, you have been setting better

boundaries with your family. You want to be clearer about their expectations and the responsibilities they foist on you. You continue to be in a reorganizing and restructuring time in your life. You want everyone around you to grow up. By mid-month, you are more than ready for a break. You are feeling more creative, and this would be a great time to get away from it all.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). You're feeling your life getting busy again. The first half of the month is a great time for marketing yourself or finding some new friends or a potential partner. By mid-month, you are more focused on your home and family. You may have to have some work done. And you will hear from (or about) family

members you haven't heard from in a while. You'll want some retreat time near the end of the month.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). You are still focused on money and financial matters. You have been working hard to get that part of your life in order, and you have lots to do. Toward mid-month, you will want to slow down and re-examine the progress you've made as you decide whether or not to continue on the same path. Take the time to make sure you're on the right path and not being blocked from moving forward. Otherwise, you may feel very restricted through March 22.

PISCES (February 19–March 20). This is a very good month for you to reflect. Many of the Mermaids and Mermen may just swim off to be by themselves. You will not have the patience or tolerance to deal with the normal day-to-day stuff. Find some time to get away from your routines and expectations. This can be a great month to reinstitute a diet or health program. Work and career continue to improve.

Read Lilly Roddy's 2013 forecast at OutSmartMagazine.com. For more astro-insight, log on to lillyroddy.com.



ILLUSTRATION: DAVID EDUARDO FLORES PEREZ

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). This month the planets enter the talent and resources area of your horoscope, so you'll be looking to make the best use of those resources. With Mercury retrograde there, you may take a fresh look at something you've done before, and this is an excellent time to revisit things. Personal self-worth is very strong this month, so you won't be able to tolerate ungracious people. You are still focused primarily on your career and getting your life in order.

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Frankie Quijano, Gay Nell Gulihur, Liz James, JD Doyle, Januari Leo, Ana Eastman, Robin Brown, and Javier Ramirez at the Pride Houston 2013 Logo unveiling and Grand Marshal nominee announcement at Metecor, January 17.



Blake Hayes, Matthew Mallay, Wassim Nasser, Vince Flickinger, and Jason Trippier during Bunnies on the Bayou's "Snowbunnies" at FBar, January 20.



Adrienne Meyers, Ken General, Anne-Elizabeth Brown, Alex Morua, and Vincent Meyers during "The Illusion of Precise" at Wade Wilson Art, January 11.



John Gremillion, Luke Wrobel, Kristina Sullivan, Rebekah Dahl, Brad Scarborough, and Gay Taylor after the Music Box Theater's "2012 in Review," January 12.



Jason Gallegos, Joe Ross, Frankie Quijano, and Javier Ramirez at Pride Houston's 2012 "Lumiere Noveu: A New Year's Masquerade," December 31.



Richard Holt, Mayor Annise Parker, and Robin Brown at the GLBT Victory Fund Houston's "Table Captain Event," January 14.



Brandon Brown, Woody Gould, and Colby Melvin during Andrew Christian's House Boys at Guava Lamp, December 8.



Friends who offered remembrances during community activist Delma Cummings' memorial service, January 13.



The Brunch Bunch celebrating at the New Year's Day LGBT brunch at El Real, January 1.

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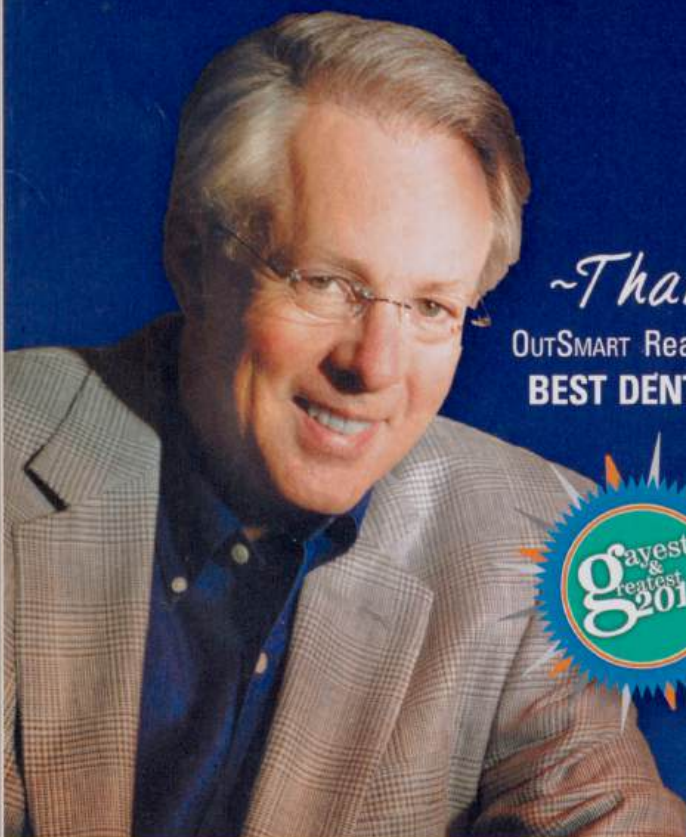
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