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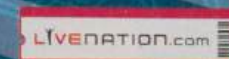


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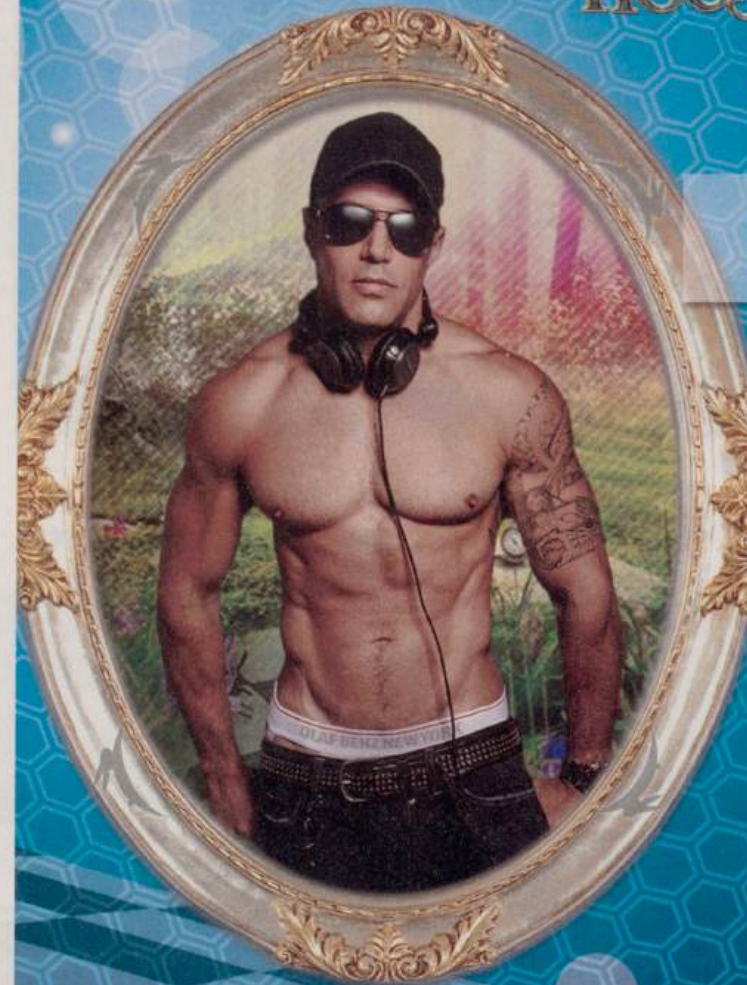
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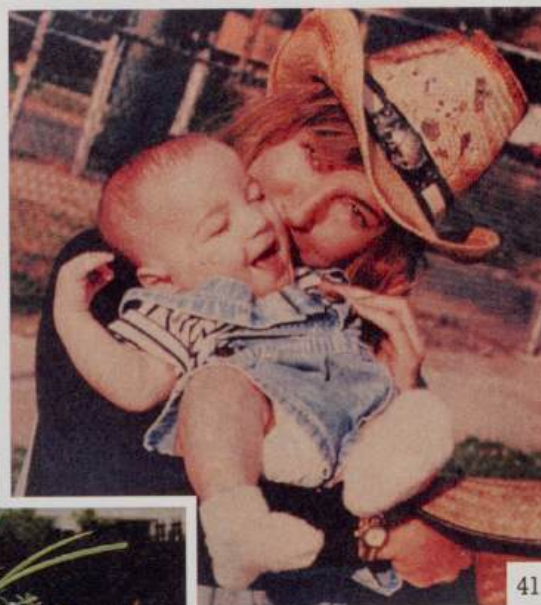
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NBA's Jason Collins Comes Out

Former Washington Wizards center receives widespread support via social media

by Joe Sterling and Steve Almasy, CNN

It's the biggest move of his career and it's off the court. Jason Collins, who played with the NBA's Boston Celtics and Washington Wizards this season, has disclosed that he is gay, making him the first active openly gay male athlete in the four major American pro team sports.

The center, who said he is now a free agent, made the disclosure in a column appearing in the May 6 issue of *Sports Illustrated*.

"I didn't set out to be the first openly gay athlete playing in a major American team sport. But since I am, I'm happy to start the conversation. I wish I wasn't the kid in the classroom raising his hand and saying, 'I'm different.' If I had my way, someone else would have already done this. Nobody has, which is why I'm raising my hand," he wrote.

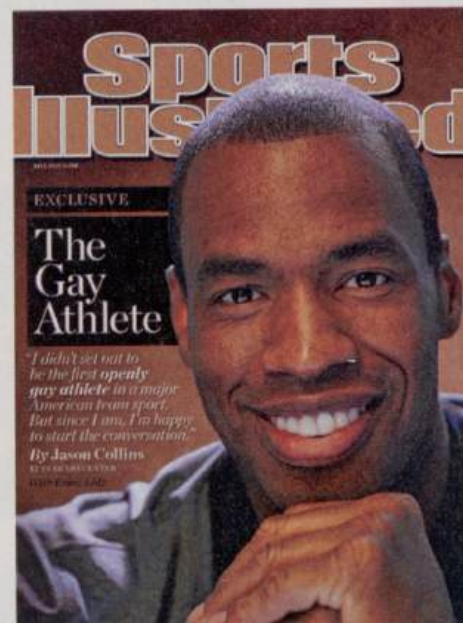
Collins also wrote that the killing of three people at the Boston Marathon persuaded him to make an announcement. Things can change in a moment, so why not start living more truthfully, he wrote.

On Twitter, Collins thanked everyone who sent him messages of support. "All the support I have received today is truly inspirational. I knew that I was choosing the road less traveled, but I'm not walking it alone," he wrote.

Sports Illustrated's managing editor said Collins was reticent about being a flag bearer. "It is a much simpler, more personal reason. He wants to have a family," Chris Stone told CNN. "He wants the same life that his twin brother, Jarron, has. This is a secret he's kept for a very long time. He didn't even inform his brother that he was gay until late last summer. . . . So much for twin telepathy."

Jarron, who played in the NBA for ten seasons and was Jason's teammate at Stanford, tweeted to his brother: "Very proud of you."

"Jason Collins has forever changed the face of sports," said the Human



Jason Collins, who played with the NBA's Washington Wizards this season, has disclosed that he is gay, making him the first active openly homosexual athlete in the four major American pro team sports.

Rights Campaign, a civil rights group fighting for gay rights.

It likened the announcement to Jackie Robinson, the first African-American to play in major league baseball in the modern era. "At a time when millions are reflecting on the life and legacy of Jackie Robinson, Jason Collins is a hero for our own times," the

"If I had my way, someone would have already done this. Nobody has, which is why I'm raising my hand."

group said.

Former NBA player Charles Barkley, now an analyst for *Inside the NBA* on TNT, told CNN that active players shouldn't be surprised that a teammate is gay. "I think anybody who thinks they never played with a gay player is an idiot," he said on *AC360*. "I played with several gay players. It's their own business, and I think they should get to be who they want to be."

Collins is a seven-footer who has played with six NBA teams—the Wizards, Celtics, Atlanta Hawks, Minnesota Timberwolves, Memphis Grizzlies, and New Jersey Nets—

over the past twelve seasons. He has averaged 3.6 points and 3.8 rebounds in 713 career games, and he has had a great deal of playoff experience with the Nets (who have since moved to Brooklyn) and the Hawks.

Momentum had been growing in recent months for an active player in the National Football League, National Hockey League, National Basketball Association, or major league baseball to come out.

Just a few weeks ago, the NHL announced a new program teaching tolerance and giving support to gay athletes. Commissioner Gary Bettman said the agreement made the NHL's policy of inclusiveness "clear and unequivocal."

"While we believe that our actions in the past have shown our support for the LGBT community, we are delighted to reaffirm through this joint venture with the NHL Players' Association that the official policy of the NHL is one of inclusion on the ice, in our locker rooms, and in the stands," Bettman said in the joint statement with You Can Play.

And NFL player Brendon Ayanbadejo, the *New York Times* reported, has been in contact with closeted players in several sports. "What we're trying to facilitate is to get them together and do what they want to do, do what is right for them," he told the *Times*.

In February, former professional soccer player Robbie Rogers announced on his blog that he is gay. His former U.S. teammates showed solidarity in response to the news.

Though reaction to Collins' announcement also was overwhelming support, not everyone had a positive response.

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News

Police Officer in Iconic Boston Marathon Bombing Photo Is Openly Gay

by Megan Smith

Although chaos and widespread panic ensues all around them, Boston policeman Javier Pagan, along with two other officers, spring into action in the now-iconic photo and *Sports Illustrated* cover of the Boston Marathon bombings taken by the *Boston Globe*'s John Tlumacki.

Pagan, an openly gay officer and the Boston Police Department's liaison to the LGBT community, is pictured in the far right of the photograph. He was standing behind the series of flags along the sideline when the first explosion went off, according to the *Dallas Voice*.

After the image went viral on social-media sites, the Facebook group Boston Pride posted a message addressed to Pagan: "The police officer on the far right is a good friend of Boston Pride! One of the first responders who was miraculously stand-

ing right behind the flags where the first bomb went off—Boston Pride would like to thank Javier for all you do!"

Pagan is a native of Puerto Rico, but was raised in Boston for most of his life. A long-time member of the Gay Officers Action League, he joined the police force in 1995. A year later, at twenty-six years old, he came out of the closet—a surprise to no one, he notes in a 2002 interview with Boston's *Bay Windows* LGBT newspaper.

"Literally, I've always known that I was gay. . . . I grew up in a Catholic home and I've got three older sisters, and being Hispanic, it's the big 'machismo' thing," Pagan said. "When I came out, my family was completely like, 'Who were you fooling? You're not fooling us.' In all honesty, I've had the best support from my family, my friends, even my colleagues. Like I said, I wasn't fooling anyone but myself."

Pagan's husband of four years, Pedro, is also no stranger to dealing with disaster. A retired sergeant from the New York Police



Boston *Globe* photographer John Tlumacki snapped this Boston Marathon bombing

Department, he rescued many people after the Twin Towers collapsed on 9/11, Pagan told the fitness website crossfit-southie.com in an interview earlier this year.

In 2004, Pagan escorted LGBT civil rights attorney Mary Bonauto to City Hall Plaza when the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled in favor of marriage equality. He also received an award for excellence by Boston's LGBT Chamber of Commerce in 2005 for

his outstanding service.

Although he first spoke these words more than a decade before the tragedy in Boston, Pagan's comment to *Bay Windows* still rings true: "People's main concern is going to be, 'I don't care whether you're black or white, gay or straight—when I need help, I just want someone there,'" he said. "I think when people see me walking through, they don't see me as a Hispanic gay man—I think they see me as a police officer. And that's all that should matter."

Community

2013 Pride Superstar Finalists Announced

by Donalevan Maines

Alaska, one of the top three female contestants still in the running on the current season of *RuPaul's Drag Race* on Logo TV, helps kick off Pride Superstar when the competition begins at 10 p.m., Thursday, May 9, at South Beach nightclub.

"It's so exciting because she will perform, guest-judge, and meet fans," said show director and judge Joey Guerra, the ubiquitous music writer/critic for the *Houston Chronicle* and star of *American Idol* chat on Fox TV. "Our luck is that Alaska could be the winner of *RuPaul's Drag Race* season 5 when it's announced on May 6."

Guerra and fellow judges Tianna Hall, an award-winning jazz vocalist, and singer/songwriter Benjamin Phoenix of 104.1 FM KRBE fame picked eleven finalists from about forty singers who lined up on Saturday, April 27, for auditions which about one hundred fans attended at South Beach. The finalists are competing



Eleven Pride Superstar finalists from Saturday auditions are (l-r) Patrick Montoya, Freddy Cauley, Juliana Wathen, Leo Laredo, Wendy Taylor, Victoria Bryan, Morena Roas, Hector David Avellaneda, Jenna Thong, Vernone Malik Garrett, and Cody Ray Strimble.

for more than \$5,000 in prizes, said Guerra.

A "wild card" will be chosen to join them with the help of voters on Facebook, he added. At the end of each weekly sing-off, the audience will get ten minutes to text their votes, which will be added to the judges' scores to determine who gets to continue in the competition. Concert tickets and CDs are among the weekly audience giveaways.

"I am so excited about the people in this

year's contest," Guerra said, emphasizing the diversity of music genres that audiences can expect. "We have two country-western, one who auditioned in Spanish, some pop singers, a quirky indie-acoustic musician, and one with hip-hop rap influence. Five of the finalists so far have previously been in the competition, so they have built up a following. People familiar with the contest will enjoy seeing them again."

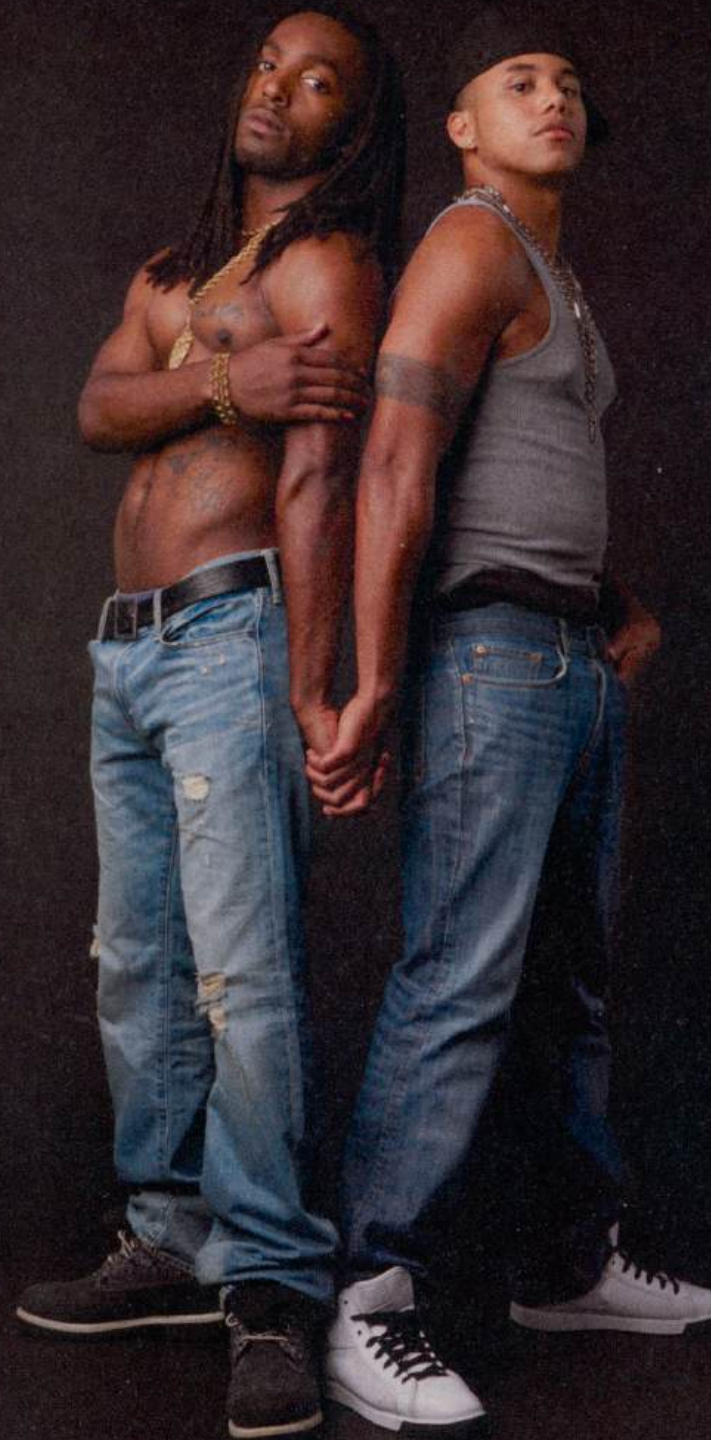
Now in its seventh season, Pride Superstar is an official event of Houston Pride Week. The competition has showcased a number of promising LGBT artists who have performed at Pride Houston and other events throughout Houston.

Returning as host of the weekly competition is Mix 96.5 FM morning show host and *OutSmart* columnist Blake Hayes.

Info: pridehouston.org.

COMMUNITY continued on page 71

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- **Serious liver problems.** The liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and fatty (steatosis). Symptoms of liver problems include your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice), dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored bowel movements (stools), loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, and/or stomach pain.
- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or serious liver problems** if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking STRIBILD for a long time. In some cases, these serious conditions have led to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any symptoms of these conditions.
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- **For a list of brand names for these medicines,** please see the Brief Summary on the following pages.
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- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people taking HIV-1 medicines.
- **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking STRIBILD.

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- **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis virus infection.
- **All the medicines you take,** including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. STRIBILD may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how STRIBILD works. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist. Do not start any new medicines while taking STRIBILD without first talking with your healthcare provider.
- **If you take hormone-based birth control** (pills, patches, rings, shots, etc).
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elvitegravir 150mg/ cobicistat 150mg/ emtricitabine 200mg/ tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300mg tablets

Patient Information

STRIBILD™ (STRY-bild)

(elvitegravir 150 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg) tablets

Brief summary of full Prescribing Information. For more information, please see the full Prescribing Information, including Patient Information.

What is STRIBILD?

- **STRIBILD is a prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before.** STRIBILD is a complete regimen and should not be used with other HIV-1 medicines.
- **STRIBILD does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** You must stay on continuous HIV-1 therapy to control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses.
- **Ask your healthcare provider about how to prevent passing HIV-1 to others.** Do not share or reuse needles, injection equipment, or personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them. Do not have sex without protection. Always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.

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

STRIBILD can cause serious side effects, including:

1. **Build-up of lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).** Lactic acidosis can happen in some people who take STRIBILD or similar (nucleoside analogs) medicines. Lactic acidosis is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Lactic acidosis can be hard to identify early, because the symptoms could seem like symptoms of other health problems. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms which could be signs of lactic acidosis:**

- feel very weak or tired
- have unusual (not normal) muscle pain
- have trouble breathing
- have stomach pain with nausea or vomiting
- feel cold, especially in your arms and legs
- feel dizzy or lightheaded
- have a fast or irregular heartbeat

2. **Severe liver problems.** Severe liver problems can happen in people who take STRIBILD. In some cases, these liver problems can lead to death. Your liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and you may develop fat in your liver (steatosis). **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms of liver problems:**

- your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice)
- dark “tea-colored” urine
- light-colored bowel movements (stools)
- loss of appetite for several days or longer
- nausea
- stomach pain

You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking STRIBILD for a long time.

3. **Worsening of Hepatitis B infection.** If you have hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection and take STRIBILD, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking STRIBILD. A “flare-up” is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before.

- Do not run out of STRIBILD. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your STRIBILD is all gone

- Do not stop taking STRIBILD without first talking to your healthcare provider
- If you stop taking STRIBILD, your healthcare provider will need to check your health often and do blood tests regularly for several months to check your HBV infection. Tell your healthcare provider about any new or unusual symptoms you may have after you stop taking STRIBILD

Who should not take STRIBILD?

Do not take STRIBILD if you also take a medicine that contains:

- adefovir (Hepsera®)
- alfuzosin hydrochloride (Uroxatral®)
- cisapride (Propulsid®, Propulsid Quicksolv®)
- ergot-containing medicines, including: dihydroergotamine mesylate (D.H.E. 45®, Migranal®), ergotamine tartrate (Cafegot®, Migergot®, Ergostat®, Medihaler Ergotamine®, Wigraine®, Wigrettes®), and methylergonovine maleate (Ergotrate®, Methergine®)
- lovastatin (Advicor®, Altoprev®, Mevacor®)
- oral midazolam
- pimozone (Orap®)
- rifampin (Rifadin®, Rifamate®, Rifater®, Rimactane®)
- sildenafil (Revatio®), when used for treating lung problems
- simvastatin (Simcor®, Vytorin®, Zocor®)
- triazolam (Halcion®)
- the herb St. John's wort

Do not take STRIBILD if you also take any other HIV-1 medicines, including:

- Other medicines that contain tenofovir (Atripla®, Complera®, Viread®, Truvada®)
- Other medicines that contain emtricitabine, lamivudine, or ritonavir (Combivir®, Emtriva®, Epivir® or Epivir-HBV®, Epzicom®, Kaletra®, Norvir®, Trizivir®)

STRIBILD is not for use in people who are less than 18 years old.

What are the possible side effects of STRIBILD?

STRIBILD may cause the following serious side effects:

- **See “What is the most important information I should know about STRIBILD?”**
- **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys before you start and while you are taking STRIBILD. Your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking STRIBILD if you develop new or worse kidney problems.
- **Bone problems** can happen in some people who take STRIBILD. Bone problems include bone pain, softening or thinning (which may lead to fractures). Your healthcare provider may need to do tests to check your bones.
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people who take HIV-1 medicine. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck (“buffalo hump”), breast, and around the middle of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from the legs, arms and face may also happen. The exact cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known.
- **Changes in your immune system** (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome) can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having any new symptoms after starting your HIV-1 medicine.

The most common side effects of STRIBILD include:

- Nausea
- Diarrhea

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

- These are not all the possible side effects of STRIBILD. For more information, ask your healthcare provider.
- Call your healthcare provider for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking STRIBILD?

Tell your healthcare provider about all your medical conditions, including:

- If you have or had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis B infection
- If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if STRIBILD can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking STRIBILD.
 - There is a pregnancy registry for women who take antiviral medicines during pregnancy. The purpose of this registry is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Talk with your healthcare provider about how you can take part in this registry.
- If you are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you take STRIBILD.
 - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
 - Two of the medicines in STRIBILD can pass to your baby in your breast milk. It is not known if the other medicines in STRIBILD can pass into your breast milk.
 - Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements:

- STRIBILD may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how STRIBILD works.
- Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you take any of the following medicines:
 - Hormone-based birth control (pills, patches, rings, shots, etc)
 - Antacid medicines that contains aluminum, magnesium hydroxide, or calcium carbonate. Take antacids at least 2 hours before or after you take STRIBILD
 - Medicines to treat depression, organ transplant rejection, or high blood pressure
 - amiodarone (Cordarone®, Pacerone®)
 - atorvastatin (Lipitor®, Caduet®)
 - bepridil hydrochloric (Vasor®, Bepadin®)
 - bosentan (Tracleer®)
 - buspirone
 - carbamazepine (Carbatrol®, Epitol®, Equetro®, Tegreto®)
 - clarithromycin (Biaxin®, Prevpac®)
 - clonazepam (Klonopin®)
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 - colchicine (Colcrys®)
 - medicines that contain dexamethasone
 - diazepam (Valium®)

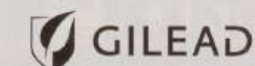
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- propafenone (Rythmol®)
- quinidine (Neudexta®)
- rifabutin (Mycobutin®)
- rifapentine (Priftin®)
- risperidone (Risperdal®, Risperdal Consta®)
- salmeterol (Serevent®) or salmeterol when taken in combination with fluticasone (Advair Diskus®, Advair HFA®)
- sildenafil (Viagra®), tadalafil (Cialis®) or vardenafil (Levitra®, Staxyn®), for the treatment of erectile dysfunction (ED). If you get dizzy or faint (low blood pressure), have vision changes or have an erection that last longer than 4 hours, call your healthcare provider or get medical help right away.
- tadalafil (Adcirca®), for the treatment of pulmonary arterial hypertension
- telithromycin (Ketek®)
- thioridazine
- voriconazole (Vfend®)
- warfarin (Coumadin®, Jantoven®)
- zolpidem (Ambien®, Edlular®, Intermezzo®, Zolpimist®)

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine. Do not start any new medicines while you are taking STRIBILD without first talking with your healthcare provider.

Keep STRIBILD and all medicines out of reach of children.

This Brief Summary summarizes the most important information about STRIBILD. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can also ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about STRIBILD that is written for health professionals, or call 1-800-445-3235 or go to www.STRIBILD.com.

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by
Susan
Bankston

Is North Carolina its Own Country?

Is it seceding from the Union?

Well, I'll be damned. We should have seen this coming. North Carolina just checked in to the Loco Lodge. Best I can tell, the Second Amendment up and shot the First Amendment with an assault rifle, unprovoked and with what little available forethought there is in a southern state.

Remember that thing about freedom of religion? Deader than a mink coat.

North Carolina Republican state legislators have proposed having an official state religion. If you're asking yourself how that can happen, since America was founded on freedom of religion, then you have to admit that you slept through the "Southern Ways of Gettin' around Crap We Don't Happen to Cotton To" lecture. In this same proposal, North Carolina would declare their state exempt from the Constitution, court rulings, and lawfulness in general. You know, like they are their own country, and darn tootin' no Kenyan socialist in the White House is gonna tell them what to do.

They wrote a bill that says each state "is sovereign" and courts cannot block a state "from making laws respecting an establishment of religion." Sound vaguely familiar? It should. It means they have decided that the Civil War should be decided on the best two out of three.

You know the United States of America? It appears that North Carolina is not all that fond of the *United* part. Or the *of*. And even the *America* part is suspicious as long as that Kenyan communist is in the White House.

With a little help from my crystal ball, I thought I'd advise the news media about the entertainment they can expect once North Carolina goes hallelujah rouge and the steeple

"The Second Amendment up and shot the First Amendment with an assault rifle, unprovoked and with what little available forethought there is in a southern state."

people are running the place like a Dixie hoedown.

There will be changes made, by gawd: "I'm Proud to Be an American North Carolinian Southern Baptist" will now be sung at all Duke University Blue Devils Red Angels basketball games.

Some freedom of religion will be allowed. You are free to be a Southern Baptist, a regular Baptist, a Free Will Baptist, a Jumpin' Jehoshaphat Holy Roller Baptist, or an Our Lady of Perpetual Virginity Baptist. Methodists will be tolerated but not liked. Catholics will be looked upon with suspicion, but, of course, that's no change from today in North Carolina.

Smokey Mountain National Park will become North Carolina Hills of Galilee and Hallelujah Lord Theme Park. The Sodom and Gomorrah ride will be closed on Sundays. Oh hell, who am I kidding? There's no Sodom and Gomorrah ride.

The historic coastal city of Wilmington will be renamed The Baptismal Font of Glory and Washing Away of Sins and Warts, where genders do not mix because of all those wet T-shirts after the dunkings.

Who will be in charge of skimming the hillbilly off the water after the dunkings, I dunno. That has not been decided yet, but probably the loser of the next NASCAR event will be in the running.

Baptists will still pretend not to see each other in the liquor store. They will still have bars and dance halls in North Carolina, but they will be renamed Holy Water and Rejoicing Centers. They will be no fun at all.

And all them Jesus-hatin' communists who are too chicken to kill someone for stealing a teevee or for lookin' funny at their wives will have to move to New York, where people's

plumb lines are crooked. Them's the rules, you Yankee first-amendment sumbitches.

Now, on the other hand, if there is an upside to this—and there is always an upside—think for just a minute about what this means that San Francisco can do after it secedes from the Union.

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



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by
Grace S.
Yung, CFP

The Aging Population

How LGBTs can prepare for living longer

Today, due in large part to advances in medical technology, life expectancy has significantly increased. Back in 1900, the average person in the United States lived only about forty-seven years. Yet, just a little over a century later, many people are living well into their eighties, nineties, and beyond. While longer lives are typically considered a sign of positive progress, more years can pose several challenges to individuals—primarily in the areas of healthcare and lasting retirement income sources.

Increased longevity creates an especially difficult situation for those in the LGBT community. One reason for this is because in most cases, LGBT

individuals must generally plan for retirement income as if they are “single”—even if they are involved in a long-term domestic partnership.

Even those who reside in states that

Increased longevity creates a difficult situation in the LGBT community.

support same-sex marriage are treated as single individuals, and oftentimes when one partner passes on, the other is not eligible for spousal pension or Social Security benefits.

The issue of retirement benefits can be a difficult one for most LGBT couples. This is because many company retirement plans specifically state that only surviving legal spouses (using the federal definition

of marriage between one man and one woman) or children are eligible for survivor benefits.

One way to help combat this is to take advantage of Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) as a means to save for retirement. The proceeds from these types of plans can go to a named beneficiary, and funds can transfer to that person (or persons) outside of probate. The same may be true for some 401(k) and 403(b) retirement plans—provided that the employee names a beneficiary to receive the proceeds of the plan at the employee's death.

Although IRAs and other qualified retirement plans do not allow domestic partners to roll proceeds directly into their own IRA like a recognized legally

married couple can, an individual may designate his or her partner as the plan beneficiary.

This can accomplish several things. First, it will ensure that your assets are distributed to the person (or persons) that you intend them to go to. In addition, designating your partner as your IRA or 401(k) plan beneficiary may also protect these assets from probate.

Other key areas that can affect LGBT seniors include:

- MEDICARE AND MEDICAID BENEFITS
- SOCIAL SECURITY
- LONG-TERM CARE
- ESTATE PLANNING

MEDICARE AND MEDICAID

People often confuse Medicare and Medicaid, as their names sound similar. However, these programs are quite different. Medicare is considered an entitlement program that is received regardless of one's asset and income level, whereas Medicaid eligibility is based on a “means” test.

Medicare is essentially the government-sponsored health insurance program for those who are age sixty-five and over, as well as for certain disabled persons who are under sixty-five. The Medicare program doesn't provide medical care directly, but rather it pays doctors and other medical service providers directly for their services, or reimburses patients who have paid bills themselves.

Currently, Medicare consists of four parts. These include:

- PART A - HOSPITALIZATION
- PART B - DOCTORS' SERVICES
- PART C - MEDICARE ADVANTAGE
- PART D - PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

In most cases, Medicare Part A is free for participants, provided that the individual paid Medicare taxes via wages during their working life. Medicare Part B, however, requires a monthly premium. In 2013, the Medicare Part B premium is \$104.90 per month. Should an individual opt to go with Medicare Part C (in lieu of Parts A and B) and/or Part D, a premium will also be required.

Although Medicare is considered good coverage by many, the program leaves a large number of “gaps” in terms of coinsurance and deductibles that must be paid out-of-pocket by enrollees. For example, in 2013, if an individual qualifies for Medicare-covered skilled nursing home benefits, only the first twenty days will be covered in full, and days twenty-one through one-hundred will require a co-payment from the patient in the amount of \$148 per day.

In order to help fill in some of the gaps in Medicare's coverage, many individuals purchase Medicare Supplement →



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MoneySmart continued from previous page

insurance, or "Medigap." This type of insurance is specifically designed to supplement Medicare's benefits. There are several Medigap plan options to choose from, depending on one's specific coverage needs.

Medicaid, the other government healthcare-related program, is considered by many as being welfare. This program requires that one qualify for health-related benefits based on an asset and income test.

When applying for Medicaid, federally recognized legally married couples are allowed certain income and asset protections (based on each state's definition of the poverty level) for the "community spouse," provided that he or she remains in the couple's home while the other is receiving care in a skilled nursing facility. Typically, this allows the non-ill spouse to keep a percentage of the couple's combined assets, as well as receive a small monthly "personal needs" allowance. LGBT and unmarried same-sex couples are not afforded these protections.

Because each state has leeway in determining the amount that is considered "poverty level," the means test for Medicaid qualification can vary depending on where an individual resides. In most cases, though, Medicaid benefits should be considered the payor of last resort when all other options have been exhausted.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Currently, the Social Security Act does not recognize same-sex partnerships. Therefore, LGBT couples are only entitled to their individual Social Security benefits. This means that there are no spousal or survivor benefits given to a surviving partner when the other passes away—potentially leaving a large gap in retirement income for the survivor.

In addition, non-biological children of one partner are not entitled to receive any Social Security benefits upon the death of that partner—even if that partner was providing the primary or sole support for the child.

LONG-TERM CARE

Living longer usually means that one's odds of requiring long-term care services will increase. In fact, statistically, nearly half of all persons who are age sixty-five or over will require care for at least some period of time.

In 2013, the average annual cost of a semi-private room in a skilled nursing facility hovers around \$80,000—and the cost of receiving care at home can be even greater, depending on the type and amount of care that is received. Because these costs are typically not covered by

regular health insurance, they can take a real bite out of one's savings.*

Medical conditions that require the services of a doctor or registered nurse typically qualify for Medicare coverage—although this care is usually limited in length. However, custodial care—the need for assistance with daily activities such as bathing and dressing—does not qualify for Medicare coverage, leaving most individuals to pay for such care either out-of-pocket or via a long-term care insurance policy.

Today's long-term care insurance policies usually cover care that is provided in a variety of different settings—including a skilled nursing facility, an assisted living care facility, and in the recipient's home. Recently, many insurers have begun to offer a premium discount on policies if both domestic partners apply for and obtain coverage at the same time.

PLANNING YOUR ESTATE

When planning your estate, it is important to keep in mind that intestacy laws (i.e., dying without a will) do not favor LGBT couples. Most states believe that the "natural" beneficiary is a decedent's biological family—regardless of how

* CNN Money, (April, 2013). Nursing Home Costs Top \$80,000 a Year. (money.cnn.com/2013/04/09/retirement/nursing-home-costs/index.html)

distant they are.

With this in mind, the avoidance of probate is essential. One way to accomplish this is through a living trust, which can allow individuals to transfer assets into a trust. Subsequently, a trustee is then named who is allowed to control assets during the lifetime of the trustor.

Another way to avoid probate is by having property and other assets automatically transfer when the holder of such assets passes away. This can be done through a transfer on death, or TOD, process. Oftentimes, joint tenancy with right of survivorship (JTWROS) is used for this purpose as well.

In any case, purchasing a life insurance policy that names your partner as beneficiary can help to provide him or her with the funds they need for future living expenses.

When planning your long-term finances, it is essential to keep in mind that all situations call for a plan that fits in with your specific needs and goals. Given this, all planning should be conducted using qualified professionals who are well versed in the areas of both tax and finance.

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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by
Blake
Hayes

Moms Always Know

A Mother's Day interview with my favorite woman

“We created you! We're the factory you came from!” I'm chopping vegetables to make soup as I catch up with my mom over the phone, asking her, “How is it that moms always seem to know about their gay sons?”

The question came up while we were talking about the Supreme Court decisions being handed down this summer. Luckily, we're on the same side of this argument. “I really don't get the other side. As people realize being gay is not a big deal, their argument is getting harder and harder to make,” she says.

Most of my mom's friends are on the same page, but she still has the occasional awkward grocery store run-in. “[I always tell them that being gay] is something about you—especially if I sense someone is going to make a gay joke or comment. I'll cut them off before that happens. I'll say, ‘Yeah, he's in radio and a big gay-rights advocate, because he's gay. And he lives in Texas now, which I was a little worried about, but he loves it.’ And they just hear the gay part as a part of you. It turns it into a positive, and you can see that person learn something.”

“They leave that conversation thinking a little bit differently,” I say.

“Right,” she says. “And you save them the embarrassment of saying something terrible to someone's mom.”

Moms can be our greatest allies and our proudest supporters. But despite her obvious acceptance and advocacy, I didn't come out to my family until I was twenty-two. No surprise: they already knew.

“We talked about who my first crush was,” I say.

“Michael?”

“Yep! I remember coming home from school on that first day of kin-

dergarten, when they put me on the wrong bus.”

“And then when you went to his house for a play date,” my mom remembers, “you wouldn't leave my lap. He was playing soccer with his older brothers, but you were like, ‘I really wanted to play with him alone.’”

“Right! ‘Why is he playing with all those older boys? I just wanna play toys inside with him!’”

“And this was another indicator,” she says. “The first back-to-school night we had, in kindergarten. You insisted on wearing this outfit—a plaid blazer, this patterned clip-on tie, and striped pants. It clashed. I said, ‘Blake, you don't need to dress up,’ but you were insistent on wearing it. Finally I said, ‘Just let him wear the damn thing.’ So we got to the school, and your teacher, Mrs. Rhodes, just gasped and said, ‘Blake, you look so

“Well, yeah, you were moving to this place for two of you, but with one bed—it was pretty clear!”

handsome!’ And you turned around and looked at me—‘See?!’ You were just so happy with yourself. ‘I look handsome! Told ya so!’”

“See,” I reiterated. “I already knew how to put an outfit together. Even if it clashed.”

“Yep!” she laughed.

“Isn't it ridiculous that some people think being gay is a choice? Obviously, I have always been!”

“Well, when you were even younger,” she recalls, “when I worked at the after-school program and you were like one and a half, you used to clog around in the high heels and dress-up stuff! And the girls just loved you. That older kid Teddy, a kindergartener, used to pinch you when I wasn't looking because he was jealous over how much attention you got from the girls. The other boys would be playing with their trucks, but you wanted to play dress-up with the girls, in high heels, clogging around.”

For the record, I gave up the heels by age three.

Despite this early flamboyance, I didn't come out to my family until I finished college and moved to New York, though at that point it was all but acknowledged.

“Daddy knew when he moved you and Brendan into your aunt's apartment.”

“Oh, he did?” I came out three months later, but wasn't sure he already knew.

“Well, yeah, you were moving to this place for two of you, but with one bed—it was pretty clear!”

Since then, my mom and the rest of my family have been nothing but supportive. “I hope that soon, people won't have to come out. When do people have to come out as heterosexual?”

“Yeah, it's like the law—innocent until proven guilty. Straight until proven gay,” I say, and my mom laughs.

“But it's changing,” my mom says. “Look at someone like Neil Patrick Harris. He plays a womanizer on that show [How I Met Your Mother], but he's also so open about his family, and now he and his husband

have kids. He's such a success. Having people like him coming out is a huge service to kids who are struggling, but see him . . .”

“... And say, ‘I can do that.’”

“Right. ‘I can be that.’ And the more people who come out, early on, that are high-profile, strong, self-confident, lovable people—like you—the faster it'll change. Hopefully, soon,” she continues, “coming out will be a thing of the past. And people can just be who they are.”

“Here's to hoping. I love you.”

“I love you, too. Now eat some of that soup—you look too thin.”

Happy Mother's Day, Mom.

Blake Hayes is the morning host at Mix 96.5 KHM.



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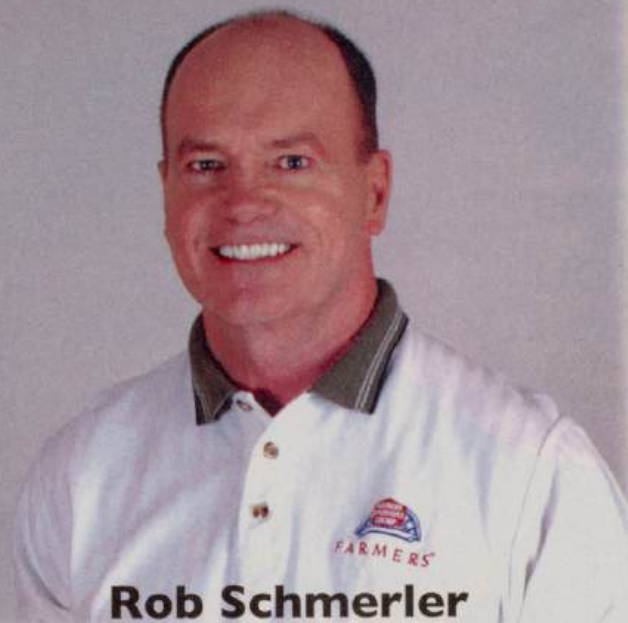
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June 7-9: **Galveston 3rd Annual Gay
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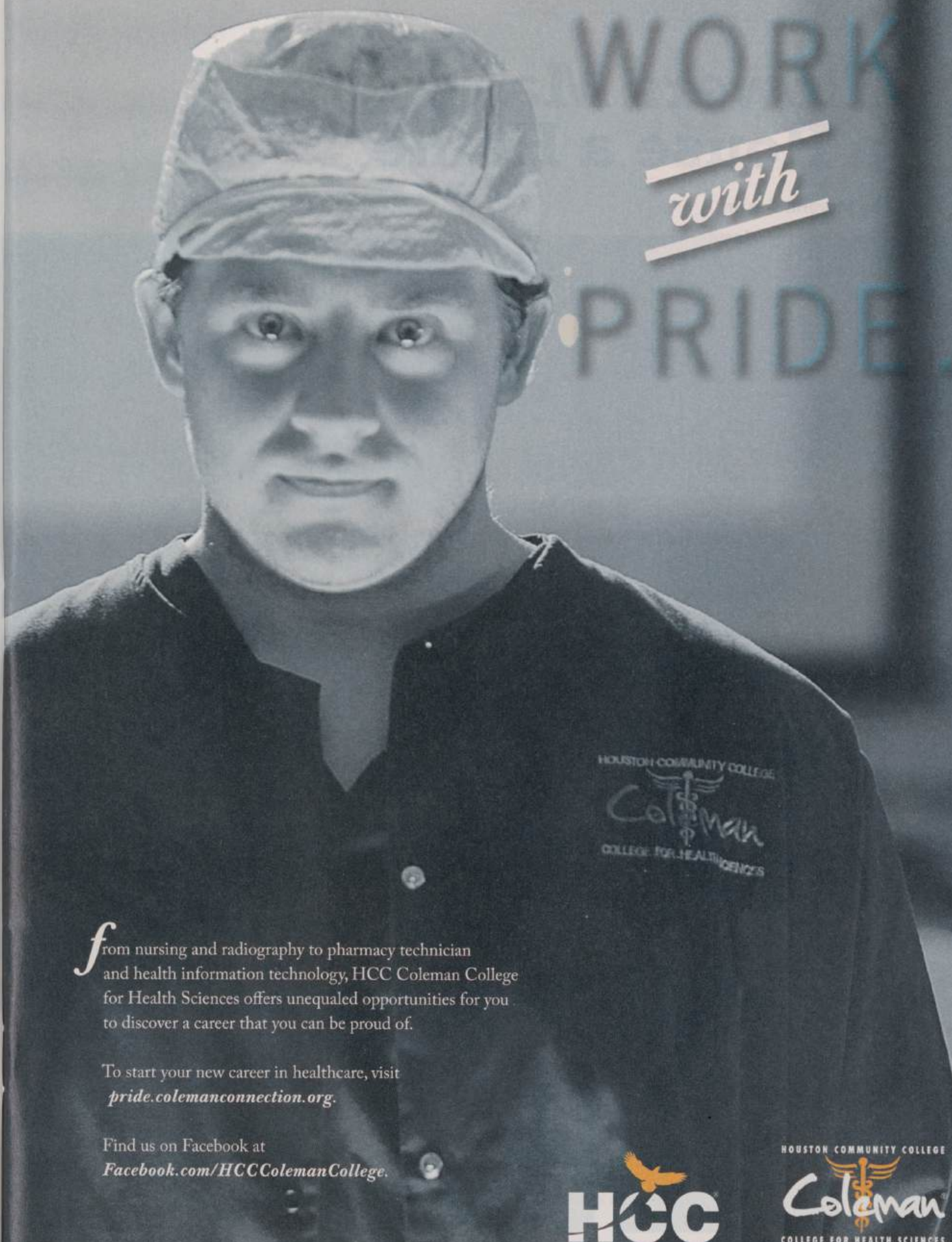


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Flowers Make a House a Home

by Marene Gustin

Photos by Yvonne Feece

Need to freshen up your abode and grounds? Why not take some tips from award-winning floral designers on how to decorate with flora, both inside and out? At the recent Houston Galleria Primavera Fashion Show, all three major floral and garden awards were won by members of Houston's LGBT community. Glenwood Weber took Best of Show and People's Choice Award, A.J.'s Urban Petals took home the award for Best Overall Floral, and Best Overall Garden went to Erin Spencer and her business and life partner Marjory Hawkins, owners of Theme Designs Studios.

Keep it Simple When Adding Floral Touches

And other tips from Glenwood Weber

Can't afford an interior decorator and new furniture, or don't have the time to spruce up your home with fresh paint and new carpets? Don't worry—sometimes the simplest little touches can make your place look new for spring. Glenwood Weber of Glenwood Weber Design has some excellent ideas that won't break your bank.

Weber should know his business—he's been in it a long time. "All my life!" laughs Weber.

Or, pretty close to it. Weber, born and raised in Corpus Christi, rebuilt an old lawn-

mower with his dad when he was nine. Next thing he knew, he had a thriving lawn-mowing business in the neighborhood. Then his dad bought a greenhouse, and young Weber started growing tulips to sell to H-E-B. "I put myself through college doing that," he says. College was Texas A&M University, where he studied horticulture and floral design. He got hooked on floral design after attending his first floral show in New York City.

"I wanted to design gardens, but also design floral arrangements for events and homes," says Weber. So he eventually opened his own business, Glenwood Weber Designs, where he and his eight employees do both. The single, forty-seven-year-old lives upstairs from his Montrose busi-

ness. He plays piano and owns two beautiful dogs: a seven-month-old yellow Lab puppy named Dahlia, and a three-year-old Cairn terrier named Jueves (Spanish for Thursday, the day he got him). "We love nothing better than to cuddle up in bed and watch Sex in the City reruns," Weber says.

And yes, he does have a beautiful garden that he enjoys tending, and he says that if you have even the tiniest piece of dirt, you can plant flowers that can be used to decorate your home. "The easiest way to spruce up the indoors for spring →



There's beauty in simplicity: Glenwood Weber has some excellent ideas that won't break your bank. Opposite page: a few of his floral arrangements.

Flowers Make a House a Home

continued from page 30

is if you have a flowering vine, passion flower, Clematis, or sweet pea," he says. "Just cut a few blooms and put one each in a shot glass. Put three glasses across a bathroom vanity or kitchen windowsill."

Voilà, instant festive décor.

Weber also suggests planting high-producing flowering or fragrant plants such as hydrangea, roses, gardenias, or a Japanese water iris. "With those blooms you can put little bunches in glass vases and make a collage of them on a table," Weber suggests hitting Ikea for inexpensive glassware for your designs.

"A long line of vases with cut flowers makes a great design for a dining room table," Weber explains. "It's

elegant and stylish, inexpensive, and really the easiest thing to do."

Perhaps even easier is Weber's tip of just clipping a stem off a bush to use as foliage along a fireplace mantle. "You can decorate with potted plants indoors, too," Weber says. "But be aware that they have a date stamp. People tell me they don't have a green thumb because their plants die. You can get a nice indoor plant at any grocery store in town for twenty dollars, and if it lasts for a month, you've gotten your money's worth."

So just go buy another one. He suggests ferns and potted herbs as nice touches that will last longer than flowering pots.

Weber looks for something a bit more unique than "grocery-store roses" when doing floral designs. "This time of year, I like working with lime green as a color," he says. "I'll work with grasses and succulents. For a

flower, he thinks a pink heart (a hot-pink version of a Wandering Jew) produces wonderful decorative blooms.

Of course, if you don't have a garden or your own window boxes or herb pots, you can still buy cut flowers and greenery and display them in simple glassware, vases, or whatever's on hand to perk up your abode.

Oh, and don't be afraid of the orchids you see for sale. No, they won't last forever, but they are beautiful, and Weber says they are actually easy to care for. "Stick it in a decorative pot," Weber says, "and just give it an ice cube once a week."

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But What about the Garden?

Tips from Theme Designs Studios and Patiogate.com

If you're lucky enough to have that backyard garden, you'll want to hear from Erin Spencer of Theme Designs Studios and Patiogate.com, the winner of Best Overall Garden at Primavera 2013. Spencer and her business and life partner, Marjory Hawkins, love the outdoors.

"We have open windows and

doors at our West Houston home looking over the backyard," says Spencer. "We love to entertain family and friends with cookouts. I have a fire pit and two grills. A sample menu might be a big rib eye with squash, broccoli, and asparagus. I love to grill vegetables, and Marjory is a baker. She makes great cakes."

The couple met twenty-four years

ago at a nightclub in Florida and have been together ever since. Spencer is an alumnus of North Carolina A&T State University and worked as head landscape designer for International Paper's 25,000-acre township in New Hampshire. Hawkins has a strong horticultural background. She started as a designer and →



Winning view:
one of Theme
Designs Studios'
colorful front
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Design duo: Marjory Hawkins (l) and Erin Spencer, winners of the 2013 Best Overall Garden award at the recent Houston Galleria Primavera Fashion Show.

Flowers Make a House a Home

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grower (45,000 flowers per season) for seven golf courses with clubhouse tournament events. Since that time, she has created and installed foliage and floral packages in over 300 restaurants, hotels, casinos, corporate offices, golf courses, and hospitals nationwide.

In 1993, the couple started Theme Designs Studios in Houston. "My family is from Texas," Spencer says. "We came here to work at Landry's

properties and loved the city. It's filled with the most dynamic people I've encountered anywhere. If you're talented, they don't care what color you are or who you sleep with."

The duo has designed outdoor spaces that make your head spin with beauty: the Kemah Boardwalk, Rainforest Cafes worldwide, and even the famous white tiger lair based on the ruins of an ancient Maharaja's temple at the Downtown Aquarium.

And they do some fabulous residences with water walls, floating ball fountains, swimming pools, and outdoor kitchens. But they're not intimidated by tiny outdoor spaces. Spencer says even a small yard can be a retreat from the world with

the right design. "There are degrees of grandeur," says Spencer. "Decide what you like and get rid of what you don't. If you don't like it now, you won't like it later. Make a list of what you want. I have a list for our backyard. I'm still working on it."

"For do-it-yourselfers, I'd say take that list and make a scrapbook, clip photos you like and download pictures from the Internet, make sketches and doodles. Take measurements and, if you can, get some graph paper and plot it out."

Love to entertain outdoors? Then start out by defining your entertainment area. As Spencer says, form follows function. Do you need a table for four or twelve? Also consider whether you'll want cooking items, water treatments, or maybe a pergola.

Oh, and where will you get all these things if you're creating your own perfect garden space? Well, for the DIY set, Spencer and Hawkins have started a second company. Patiogate.com sells everything from fire pits to that pergola, which comes as a kit that you build complete with red cedar slats and hardware to create the perfect patio shade.

They also sell faux rockwork, wood-burning and electric fireplaces, outdoor kitchen appliances, and lighting. Some of the most popular lighting details are the Tempest torches—twirling towers of flame that light at the touch of a button.

So what are you waiting for? Planning and creating your very own outdoor getaway will be fun. Just don't forget to invite us to that first backyard cookout.

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Flowers Make a House a Home

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You've Got the Garden Built, Now What Do You Plant?

A.J. knows

A.J. Benys Jr. started A.J.'s Landscaping & Design, Inc., in 1982, while still a student at Texas A&M University's landscape architecture school.

"I've always loved plants and working outside with nature," says Benys, a native Houstonian who spends his down time in his own garden at the Upper Kirby home he shares with his partner of six-plus years, Thomas Stringer, who happens to run one of Benys' three businesses. Besides A.J.'s, Benys also owns Garden Expo Wholesale Nursery and the award-winning A.J.'s Urban Petals that does floral design for events as well as garden design, flower sales, and gift and home décor sales. →



Business is his hobby: A.J. Benys Jr. offers clients a seasonal spruce-up to keep outdoor areas looking fresh.



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Flowers Make a House a Home

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"I guess business is my hobby," laughs Benys. "I used to love water sports, but as I get older, I like to bike more, especially on the beaches by our Galveston home."

One of the services A.J.'s Landscaping & Design offers clients is a seasonal spruce-up. "A lot of clients tend to do their own yards and gardens," Benys says. "But you can get behind on your pruning and planting, so we'll come out every spring and fall for a spruce-up."

By June and July it's probably too late to prune much, and you'll need to be selective about what you plant in the heat. Benys suggests the hardy and beautifully blue periwinkle, the sun-loving moss rose, and the colorful and aromatic lantanas.

Seasonal plants will last anywhere from two to six months, says Benys. But here's an idea that you



can use to spruce up your yard and garden anytime of the year: potted plants. "You can use potted plants as indoor or outdoor accents," says Benys, whose Urban Petals sells a variety of pots and decorative containers.

"For outside, the best are made of clay," he says. "Plastic sweats and causes root rot. But for indoors, or say a balcony that won't support heavy pots, we also sell polyresin pots. They can be designed to look

like terra cotta or porcelain pots and containers."

Benys says pots can be great for vegetables, greens, or flowers. But whether you're planting in the ground or in a pot, Benys says your first consideration should be whether it is sunny or shady. "That's what will determine the kind of flowers you want to put there," he adds.

As for his own garden at home: "I like to mix pastels to go with the peachy color of the house where the front yard is shady. The backyard gets very hot in the summer, so I do a lot of tropicals there for this time of year."

So there's your advice from some of the best in the industry. Whether indoors or out, make use of flowers, greenery, accents, and amenities for your home and yard this summer.

And then take time to stop and smell the roses.

AJ's Landscaping & Design
1223 West 21st Street
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ajsurbanpetals.com

Marene Gustin is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.



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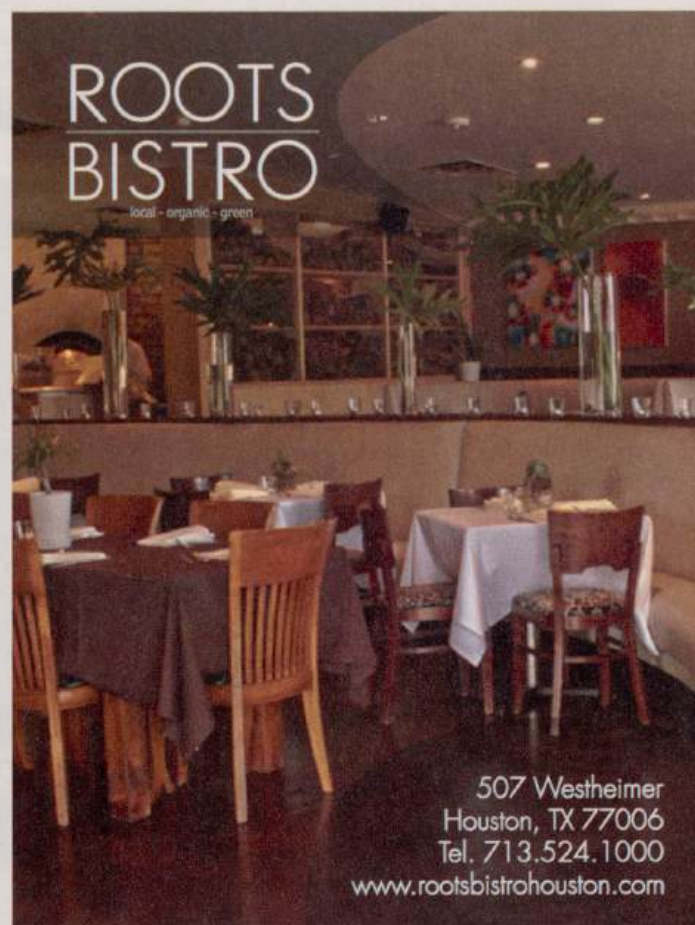


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It Takes a Village

A lesbian couple in Houston celebrates Mother's Day

by Donalevan Maines

Catherine Llewellyn and Cheryl Robin are a Houston Heights couple with some good reasons to celebrate this Mother's Day. Llewellyn says a loving LGBT Houston "village" helped raise her twenty-two-year-old son, Ryan. "I didn't buy him clothes for ten years because friends would say, 'Oh my God, look at that outfit!' and they would get it for him," she says.

"I love every single one of my aunts and uncles," adds Ryan, who has recently completed massage training and is preparing to take the exam to get his license.

"He and I had a little talk when he was just a baby," says longtime "villager" friend Marilyn DeAngelis. "I held him in my arms and said, 'You are going to grow up in a very warm atmosphere with some very special people.'"

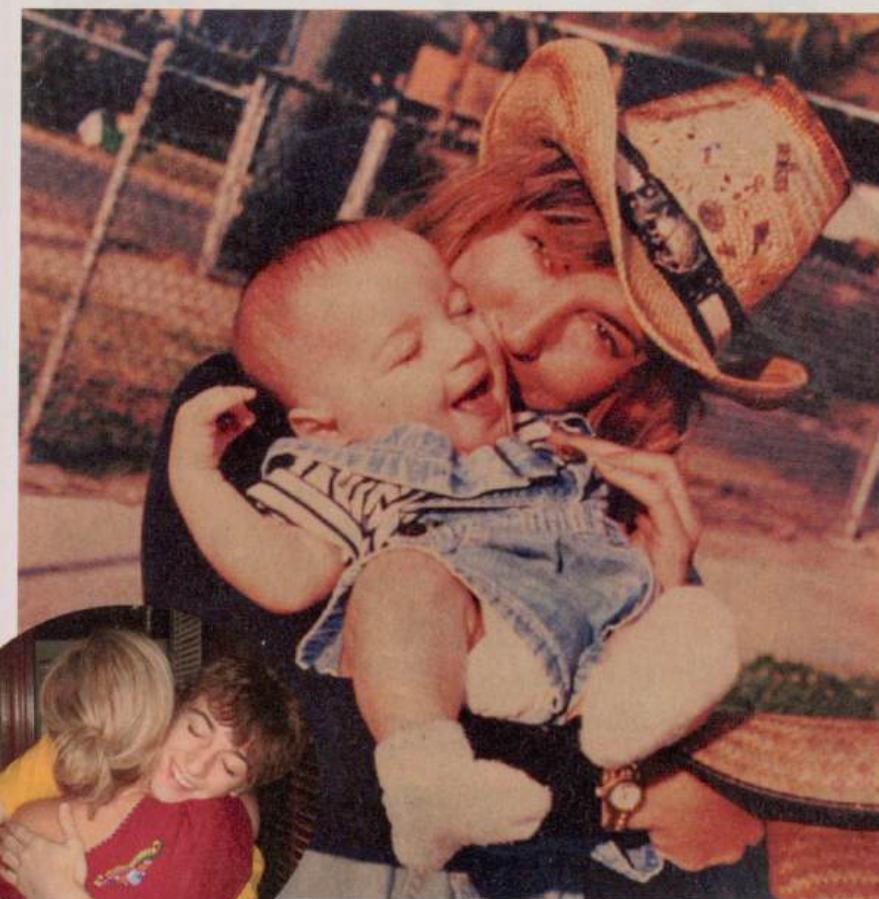
The addition of a child added diversity to Llewellyn's circle of LGBT friends, adds DeAngelis. "All of his birthdays and graduations and plays—oh my God, did we go see Ryan in plays!—there was so much tenderness and love."

Ryan calls Llewellyn and Robin his two moms. Llewellyn owns both a chair-massage company and a firm that provides interpreters and translators.

Last Mother's Day, she recalls, "Ryan cooked for us, which is not always my favorite thing, and he wrote us homemade poetry—I love anything he writes. He was broke, so he gave us each a gift certificate for a free massage."

"I was pregnant when I took my tests for massage school," adds Llewellyn.

Llewellyn is a pioneer among lesbian women who have had children by artificial insemination. "I went to San Francisco to look for donors. There were no clinics in Texas," she explains. "I had always wanted to have a child. I talked with some doctors, and I decided that I wanted my son to



1991: Catherine Llewellyn kisses her son, Ryan, who looks happy to receive the affection. *Inset:* Ryan looks just as happy hugging his mom in 2012.

know who his biological father was."

Mentioning this to her doctor—"one of my best friends," Llewellyn says—"I asked him if he would be the donor, and he said, 'I would be honored.' At his office,

I went for two days of insemination, and a week later, I was pregnant!"

Although Llewellyn and her doctor agreed to a contract that spelled out their rights, they later found out that the document wasn't legally binding

because it was signed before Ryan was born. Regardless, there haven't been any problems, and Ryan's dad has played an important role in his life, especially providing medical care for him.

"The baby was born two weeks late," says Llewellyn, recalling that on the day

Ryan was born, she was re-thinking her decision to give birth without drugs when Ryan's dad came in and asked, "Do you know what day it is?"

"I said, 'I'm in twenty-five-hour labor. I couldn't give a shit what day it is!' He said it was his birthday," recalls Llewellyn. "I thought, 'That's cosmically weird.'"

Ryan says it's cool having the same birthday as his biological dad. "He comes over once a year and we celebrate our birthdays," says Ryan. "And he taught me how to ride a bike."

Ryan learned about the opposite sex as he was growing up by watching movies and television. "I would see kissing, so I got off to an early start," he says. "The first girl I kissed, I was in pre-school. She was a little black girl named Joy. When I was in kindergarten, my mom would bust up our forts when she found me in them kissing a little girl." →



Two moms in 2005: Catherine Llewellyn (r) with Cheryl Robin, her partner since 2000.

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It Takes a Village

continued from previous page

A native of Santa Barbara, California, Llewellyn was sixteen when she moved from the Bay Area to Manvel, near Alvin. "I was the unruly teenager who was sent [to Texas to live with] dad."

In 1978, she graduated from Alvin High School, then struck out on her own



Ryan (c) with his "aunties": Doug Scott (far left) and Neil Sackheim.

in Houston. "I discovered gay bars," she says. "The Old Plantation, Cuddles—oh, we had good times."

After working for a collection agency, which is where she met DeAngelis, Llewellyn opened her own collection agency and private investigation firm. "It was a very negative business, but it made me a lot of money," she says. To deal with the stress, Llewellyn would get massages, and that led her to become a massage therapist.

"Besides getting out of a negative business, getting into a positive business, you're paying it forward in every way," she says. One of Ryan's perks of being Llewellyn's "little bundle of love" was getting a five-minute massage every day as a baby.

However, Ryan also remembers some kids in elementary school making fun of him for having two moms. "It almost turned me into a bully," he says.

Both mother and son say their worst experience was being shunned by the Boy Scouts. "Living inside the Loop, I guess I was a little sheltered. [That episode with the Boy Scouts] hit me in the face," says Llewellyn. The year was 1995, and progressive parents in the Heights were thrilled that Llewellyn and Robin were going to lead a Scout troop for Ryan and his friends.

"We got our uniforms. Then some scumbag redneck parents complained," recalls Llewellyn. "I bitched. I wrote to United Way. I tried to get publicity. [Finally I just said] to heck with it. I put Ryan in karate."

Ryan also enjoyed performing in a number of productions at HITS Theatre, his favorite role being Sky Masterson, who sings "Luck Be a Lady" in *Guys and Dolls*.

Ryan and his two moms count themselves lucky to be a part of Houston's LGBT guys and dolls who comprise the "village" that helped raise Ryan.

The feeling is mutual, says their friend DeAngelis. "He just touches my heart every time I see him and who he has become. He's turned into a quite polite and gentle boy—very, very sensitive. He's curious and yet independent. Very,

very loving—so many of Catherine's qualities."

Asked about the prospect of raising a family of his own, Ryan replies, "I hope to have a good one. I hope to find my soul mate. I would like to raise a child of my own, or adopt. Everything will fall into place."

Donalevan Maines is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.

Babs and Her Straight Son



In real life, Barbra Streisand has a gay son (Jason Gould); in reel life, there's Seth Rogen. As inventor Andy Brewster (Seth Rogen) is about to embark on a road trip to sell his latest product, he feels compelled to invite his mother, Joyce (Streisand), along for the ride. Across three thousand miles of adventure and antics, mother and son discover that while they have their differences, they also have more in common than they ever realized. Depending on your mom, this two-disc set (Blu-ray) of *The Guilt Trip* is an ideal Mother's Day gift. It comes packed with over an hour of bonus features including featurettes on Babs and Rogen, a look inside Streisand's world, an alternate opening and ending, over ten deleted scenes, and a gag reel. The film is also available as a single-disc DVD. From Paramount Home Media Distribution (paramount.com). —Tray Carrington

12



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Self-Made Man, Self-Made Success

Jason Robert Ballard, a
trans man who created
The Self Made Men

by Megan Smith

When Jason Robert Ballard smiles, his body exudes a level of confidence that makes you realize just how successful he's going to be in life. With a chin lined with bristly light-brown stubble and bright blue eyes gleaming with big goals for the future, this twenty-six-year-old entrepreneur bears a striking resemblance to Justin Timberlake straight out of *The Social Network*. Ballard, an open transman, has created, owns, and operates his own online company that serves as a one-stop, all-inclusive resource to drastically improve the visibility and awareness of the transgender male community—appropriately named *The Self Made Men*.

Just Your Average Mighty Morphin Power Ranger

With a stepfather who works for Wal-Mart, Ballard moved around New York state for most of his childhood—a slightly different experience than the glamorous New York City life portrayed by *Sex and the City*. Although he was both an athletic soccer player and creative oil painter throughout middle and high school, his biggest thrill wasn't making the winning goal or finishing his latest artistic masterpiece. Rather, it was when he entered an online chat room and, with the rush of the possibility of getting caught, presented as a guy named Jason for the very first time at age thirteen. "Every time someone treated a girl badly, I'd be like, 'I could be a better boy than that.' So, when I went in [to the chat room]," Ballard says, "I really [developed Jason] into this alter ego of the perfect male

"Every time someone treated a girl badly, I'd be like, 'I could be a better boy than that.'"

that tried to be super charming and funny, and I really became my idea of who I wanted to be."

When asked why he chose the name Jason and eventually made it his legal name, Ballard laughs. "I never really had any gender constrictions [as a child], so I had a lot of Power Rangers stuff because that was the big thing when I was growing up," he says. "I always identified with that badass leader role that Jason, the red Power Ranger, had. He was the leader, so why would you ever want to be any of the other guys?"

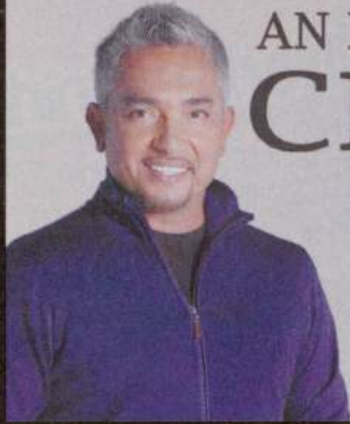
Over the next four years, the chat room became a vital part of Ballard's life, consuming the majority of his time. He even



Made in America: Jason Robert Ballard is CEO of *The Self Made Men*, which seeks to be a one-stop, all-inclusive resource for transgender males.

describes how, at a certain point, he'd sometimes only get three hours of sleep before school, just to stay in the chat room a little longer. However, the more time he spent online, the more his life outside of the virtual world depressed him. Being Jason was "far from the awkward little girl in middle school" that was his reality.

Eventually his chat room lies became overwhelming, especially as he began to develop romantic feelings for a specific girl he'd been regularly communicating with online. "It was horrible that I had to keep lying [to her] and that I couldn't experience the things I wanted to as Jason, but it was also very exciting, because I got to be someone else and live as the opposite gender in a safe space." →



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Self-Made Man continued from previous page

Things Will Look Male in the Morning
Soon after, Ballard's mother finally found out how he'd been presenting online. Since neither she nor Ballard knew exactly what to make of the situation, she conducted a Google search on "my daughter wants to be my son" and found some materials from PFLAG that described what he was feeling. This was the first time either of them learned what it meant to be transgender. But most of all, his mother assured him that this was normal and that he was okay.

However, Ballard didn't warm up to the idea of being transgender right away. Thanks to the skewed misrepresentations of trans people on shows like *Jerry Springer* or *Maury*, he associated a trans identity solely with these negative images. To make things worse, initial resources made transitioning seem next to impossible—each one describing different necessary steps, including moving to a different country to have the procedure, spending thousands of dollars, and the need to prepare for rejection by friends and family once the transition was complete. So instead, Ballard spent the next year simply hoping to wake up one morning in a biologically male body.

On his eighteenth birthday, although he had not taken any steps to physically transition, his very supportive family gave him the gift of male pronouns. "I got birthday cards addressed to Jason, and son, and grandson, and brother," Ballard says. "I [also] changed my name legally and, by some stroke of luck, my new ID had an 'M' on it, instead of an 'F.'"

Putting the T in Reality

It wasn't until he was twenty-one and living in Rochester that transitioning became a reality. The city's large, welcoming LGBT community helped Ballard get connected to the Mazzoni Center, a healthcare provider in Philadelphia that specifically targets the LGBT community.

Ballard has now been on testosterone therapy for almost four years. In 2010, he underwent chest reconstruction surgery performed by Dr. Kevin Maguire of Cooperstown, New York. "At the time, I didn't really know anyone who was trans, so I

didn't know what it was going to do," he says. "Top surgery was definitely what I wanted, because when I looked into the future, I saw myself growing into an older man, not an older woman."

Now, when younger kids questioning their gender identity come to him about the possibility of being trans, Ballard asks them about their own vision for the future and which gender they see for their aging selves. If their vision is different than their current reality, he tells them



At the Philly Transhealth Conference last year are (l-r) Alexa Courtney, Jason Ballard, and Rowan Collins.

that the time for change is now.

Ballard kept this notion in mind when he was assigned a project to design a logo and brand identity for a clothing company as part of a graphic design class. Coming out to his teacher and fellow students, Ballard presented his idea for a clothing company targeted to the male transgender community called The Self Made Men. His professor and peers were very intrigued and receptive to the idea, as they had never thought twice about his masculine name or presentation.

While developing his class project, Ballard, along with his friend Noah, started to volunteer as part of the Gay Alliance of Genesee Valley speaker's bureau. During this time, the two got to talking about the idea of The Self Made Men. From there, the pair became co-founders of the project. However, after two years of little progress, Ballard took the project into his own hands and became CEO of the company—paying out-of-pocket for The Self Made Men website and one hundred copies of the project's annual calendar. "I really wanted a resource where trans people could just come and be like 'What do I need to do this?' and they could easily get that information," he says. "And, at the same time, get a sense of pride and trans culture. They could look up how to shave, or anything like that, as well as find events in their area. [I just wanted to create] one place that did all of that." →



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Self-Made Man continued from previous page

Building Communi-T

From there, Ballard blasted the Facebook and Tumblr communities about his progress in creating an all-inclusive resource for transmen, and slowly started getting responses. Initiating some of The Self Made Men's first programs, Ballard opened registration on the site for participants to receive "Tversary" cards—postcards sent to transguys every year on the date they started testosterone therapy.

The site also offers community building for transmen through technology that wasn't even imagined a decade ago. Ballard, along with current Self Made Men staff members Rowan Collins and Alexa Courtney, actively posts Q&A-style videos to the company's YouTube channel. These videos are a great way to reach people who may not know anyone else who is trans, but can relate to the stories and know they're not alone, Ballard says.

The most interactive option on the site, Ballard emphasizes, is The Self Made Men chat room, held at tinychat.com/theseifmademen each Tuesday through Friday. "It's very ironic that I run a chat room now," laughs Ballard. "I really wish I had a chat room back then that I could have gone into, been Jason, and it would have been fine and normal."

For those who don't have the time to go into the chat room, or prefer a more traditional means of communication, The Self Made Men also offers a pen-pal system. Coordinated by Ballard's younger sister, participants submit their name, e-mail, and bio to the program and are then matched up with another transguy based on similar interests. Currently, the program has over 5,500 active members.

The site is also constantly updated with articles written by Ballard and other freelance writers on topics ranging from finding the right packer size to transman fashion to having sex with your biological anatomy. As part of The Self Made Men's Big Brother program, the authors take on a mentor role, recognizing the value of their experiences and seeking to share them with younger trans people.

Aiming to be very sex-positive, The Self Made Men also recently opened a new 18+ section, called Trans & Sexual. This element of the site, described by Ballard as a *Cosmo* for transmen, includes sex tips for transgender males and their partners.

What's the T?

The Self Made Men isn't just confined to a website—Ballard has taken the project on the road, hosting educational panels at colleges all around the Rochester area, including to the Rochester Institute of Technology, the University of Rochester, and the

College at Brockport. The panels educate both straight and gay audiences on trans issues. "A lot of spaces that [claim to be] LGBT end up just being LGB," Ballard explains. "There's a difference between sexual orientation and gender identity. [Being L, G, or B] doesn't automatically make you an ally to the trans community. You actually have to try to be a trans ally and try to understand, because there's a lot of transphobia in the LGB community."

Ballard says that audiences tend to be split pretty much down the middle in their perceptions of trans people. While some "just get it," others come with images of Jerry Springer's "freak show" dancing in their heads. Seeing transmen like Rollins and Ballard, who, as Ballard describes, "completely pass," makes most skeptical audience members rethink the misrepresentations of trans people they've seen in the past.

Constantly coming out as trans can open up a whole can of misconceptions, but for Ballard, the most common one isn't what you might think. "After I started passing and I would tell people that I was trans, they thought I was going to transition into being a woman," he says with a laugh. "So, I started having to tell people not that I was trans, but that I was born female."

The activism, at times, can become irritating, especially when people ask below-the-belt questions immediately after meeting him—a problem that Ballard mostly brushes off with humor. But when he's told what a big impact he's making, or asked how to be a better ally to the trans community, he is reminded that it's all worth it. "It's [not only] knowing that I make a difference," he says, "but actually having people tell me that I make a difference [that lifts me up the most]."

You Are Cordially Invited . . .

Ballard isn't quitting any time soon, either. The next step, he says, is starting The Self Made Men gender-affirming prosthetics and toys parties, as well as working toward expanding the company's online store to its first physical location. Although these definitely won't be your mother's Tupperware parties, they would be held in a similar fashion. The proceeds would initially go toward funding a smart car wrapped with The Self Made Men logo, to help bring the company's panels and other events to different states. "I don't want to just be a brand that does things for themselves," he says. "We're [primarily] all about helping out the community."

For more information on The Self Made Men, visit theselfmademen.com.

Megan Smith is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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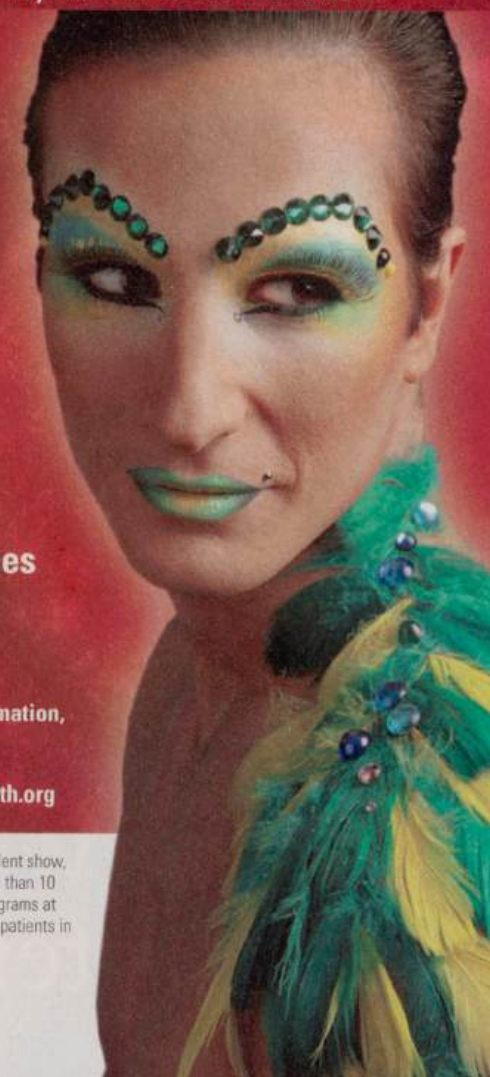
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**12-13
SEASON**

'Mystery' Solved

*An interview with singer/
songwriter Spencer Day*

by Gregg Shapiro

Photo by Reisig Taylor

Spencer Day, who came out as gay a few years ago, is that rare combination of both singer and songwriter. On his new disc *The Mystery of You* (Concord), Day has crafted a powerful and accessible song cycle about love and loss. Coolly crooned tunes such as the title cut, "Soul on Fire," and "Shadow Man" wouldn't sound out of place on the *Mad Men* soundtrack. But Day's sensitive singer/songwriter side shines brightly on "Love and War," "I Don't Want to Know," and "I'm Going Home." I spoke with Day shortly before the release of the album.

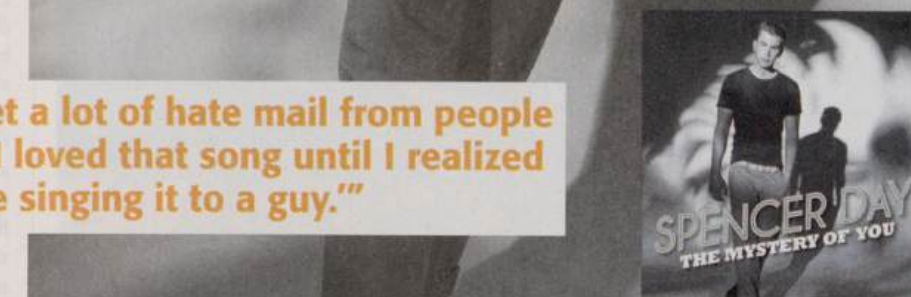
Gregg Shapiro: In the liner notes for your new CD *The Mystery of You* [Concord], you wrote that the past few years "have been a profound, strange, challenging, and wonderful time."

Spencer Day: What that meant for me and my discovery, which is something I kind of already knew, is that change is not easy, and personal growth can be very painful. Also absolutely necessary. I think when I was younger, I had perfected the art of running from things. I think a lot of humans do that. You either find someone new to date, you find a new drug, or you find a religion. [Laughs] All of those things can be fine if used in the proper way. I think I had mastered the art of escapism without realizing it. What happened after this breakup, for me, is that in the past three years all of my old vices weren't working any more. I have a lot of friends who said, "You have to go date someone new." My psyche was like, "No, you've got to face some of the less pleasant parts of yourself [laughs] and actually work on them." I was deeply depressed after this breakup, I was diagnosed bipolar,

"I still get a lot of hate mail from people saying, 'I loved that song until I realized you were singing it to a guy.'"

and I had a complete nervous breakdown. [Laughs] The reason I'm laughing about it now is that while it was so awful, it really was one of the best things that ever happened to me. It really snapped me to attention about how far off I was from truly loving myself. In a way, it inspired me and made me realize the potential of how much better things could get for me.

Has the man who is the subject of the songs on *The Mystery of You* heard the songs, and if so, what did he think of them?
I don't think so. I would hope that he would take it as the compliment and love letter →





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'Mystery' Solved continued from previous page

to that time and place that I intended for it to be. I certainly didn't want it to be, "You're a horrible person for breaking my heart" and pull a Taylor Swift [laughs] and drag someone else's personal life through the mud.

One Taylor Swift is plenty. You play keyboards on more than half a dozen songs on the disc. Is that how you write your songs, on keyboards?

Traditionally I've written everything at the piano and have always come up with the melody first. This is the first time I started writing a few things on guitar. One of the reasons I want to do that is because I'm not a very good guitar player, and sometimes your limitations can be really good—they can force you to be creative and employ techniques and melodies and rhythms that you wouldn't have otherwise done. You can't really strum a piano. It was also the first time I was very involved in the arrangements of the songs. I got better during this time using Logic and ProTools, too. Some of the songs were built by putting the beat first and building from the ground up, starting with the groove, which for me was unusual. Lately I've been doing that more. It changes the way things are phrased, what the melodic and rhythmic components of the song are.

The songs on the disc have what sounds to me like a mid-1960s influence.

I appreciate that you can hear that kind of influence. A lot of the music that I've been in love with, such as the Ennio Morricone spaghetti-western music for the Roy Orbison tracks I was really into at the time, are very guitar-driven. The instrumentation that conjures up that time period, such as the baritone surf guitar, helps to tell someone that this music is reminiscent of this time and place. More so than piano, the guitar is the key to that for this record.

The song cycles on *The Mystery of You* tell the story of a relationship. Were there other song cycles that you looked to in creating this album, or did you choose to follow your muse?

I didn't really look to any other song cycles, although I know that there certainly have been other ones done on the subject. I just wanted to document each stage of this relationship. I wanted it to be more of a discovery of what love means, what losing yourself means, and what reclaiming yourself after the love has died away means. It was more of a journey into my own psyche to understand what my rela-

tionship is to intimacy and love and loss, as opposed to just a series of songs about someone who broke my heart.

I recently interviewed singer Erin Boheme, and we talked about the duet you did with her on her latest CD. On your CD, you perform duets with Gaby Moreno on the songs "Love and War" and "I Don't Want to Know." What do you find appealing about duets?

I've realized that I'm not a person who needs to have the spotlight on me consistently. Personally, I prefer interacting and collaborating with other people, even if it's just the musicians I'm playing with. I really like not feeling like I'm an island. One of the great things about doing a duet is that it snaps you into the moment. You have to be taking in this other person. A good duet partner helps you get into the moment and the story. In some ways you get to act as a character that you previously hadn't thought of. It's very much an acting piece all of a sudden. You're creating a scene and they bring in a new context. Gaby and Erin are such beautiful singers. The Mormon choir kid in me still can't get enough of harmonizing with people. [Laughs] I want to do it to every song on the radio and turn it into a hymn.

Do you think you have an album's worth of EDM [electronic dance music] or country music tunes in you as well?

Yes to both. I've had the good fortune of being able to write on Music Row in Nashville in the last year. Some will hopefully be cut by other artists. That's why I like the term *singer/songwriter* better than *crooner* because I feel like with *singer/songwriter*, it's very open. Joni Mitchell can do a folk thing, then a jazz thing. [People have such a specific connotation with the term *crooner*] that it can kind of limit you. I'm such a fan of Zero 7, Air, and Danger Mouse. As a collaboration, I'd love to stretch myself and try out a completely different style that really takes me out of my comfort zone, but still feels authentic. At this moment in time, why the hell not? [Laughs]

How would you say that being gay comes into play in your music, if at all?

If you have the good fortune of being a gay role model, I think that's great. But I would really rather be someone who is thought of as living my life in an authentic and transparent way. That's what I feel is important. I feel like my art is better if I'm honest and true to myself. That's a personal choice for everyone to make. It's hard to acknowledge that in a lot of ways my career would probably be doing "better" if I had not come out when I did. There are still a lot of people for whom →

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'Mystery' Solved continued from page 53

if you sing in a sexy or romantic way, they still want to envision themselves in a certain setting with you, I guess. I still get a lot of hate mail from people saying "I loved that song until I realized you were singing it to a guy." That's sad to me. Unless I have something specific to say in a song, I want it to be like an abstract painting where listeners can find themselves in it whatever way makes sense for them. I do feel I have a responsibility to take the punch line out of it. I think it's a profound act of activism, in a way, to sing a song unapologetically and beautifully without a sense of irony. [Sings] "Someday he'll come along/the man I love." That's one of the most beautiful standards ever, but I'm not going to change it to "the gal I love." I wouldn't do that if I was straight [laughs], because it just sounds stupid. Jeff Buckley, who was straight, covered "The Man Got Away" and just sang it as it was, because to him that made the most sense. When I think about singing such things, it really inspires me because it feels like I'm here for a purpose. I can be a part of bringing people together in unlikely ways.

Gregg Shapiro is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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Right on Track

Director/photographer Robert Trachtenberg talks about his new Mel Brooks documentary, how he got Paul Rudd to drop his boxers, and more

by Blase DiStefano

Robert Trachtenberg is an award-winning photographer, filmmaker, and best-selling author whose latest documentary for the *American Masters* series is *Mel Brooks: Make a Noise* (airing this month on PBS). • "When they called me to say I had been chosen as the next 'American Master,'" says Mel Brooks, "I thought they said I was chosen to be the next *Dutch* Master. So I figured, what the hell—at least I'll get a box of cigars. When I realized my mistake, I was both elated and a little disappointed at losing the cigars," Trachtenberg says, "I asked him deep, probing questions for four months, and he got to keep the shirt we bought for him. So I think we both made out pretty well." • Trachtenberg's past films for *American Masters* include *On Cukor* (2000), about director George Cukor; *Gene Kelly: Anatomy of a Dancer* (2002); and the Emmy-nominated *Cary Grant: A Class Apart* (2005). For the Brooks doc, Trachtenberg interviewed Cloris Leachman, Joan Rivers, Nathan Lane, Tracey Ullman, Matthew Broderick, Carl Reiner, and many others. • Trachtenberg has photographed Meryl Streep, Jon Stewart, Amy Poehler, Justin Bieber, Sarah Silverman, the cast of *The New Normal*, Adam Lambert, Taylor Swift, Bradley Cooper, and the cast of *Glee*, to name a very few.



The history of Mel Brooks: during the filming of *History of the World: Part I* in 1980–81, Brooks poses for a photo for *Mademoiselle* magazine. Inset: Robert Trachtenberg.



Blase DiStefano: How long did it take to put this *American Masters* documentary together?

Robert Trachtenberg: From start to finish, about a year.

What was it like trying to gather all the celebrities for interviews, and was there anyone you tried to get who wasn't available?

This was a unique experience—the minute celebrities heard it was for Mel, they didn't hesitate. The only person we couldn't get was Gene Wilder, who I had

worked with in the past, but has essentially retired. [EDITOR'S NOTE: there are clips from an interview and from films of Gene Wilder in the documentary. Most are memorable.]

What was the average time you spent with each of the interviewees?

Depending on their involvement in Mel's life or career, anywhere from an hour on up. Obviously, someone →

Right on Track

continued from previous page

like Carl Reiner, who's known him for over sixty years, took a bit more time.

How did you get Mel Brooks to do this?

I didn't. *American Masters* did all the legwork, and they asked me to do the film.

How much time did you spend with him?

We spent approximately thirty hours over the course of four months doing interviews. It was just a pleasure to hear him tell stories—this easily could've been a four-hour film of just Mel talking. The crew was so happy at the end of each day.

I think you're going to be surprised at what you learn about Mel—work you didn't even know he had a hand in. And you should definitely watch all the way through the end credits, because even they're funny.

Now, about you: I had no idea you are such a fantastic photographer. I went to your website, and I was amazed at the quality and quantity of photos. When and how did being a photographer come about?

Oh, thanks. I've been a photographer for quite a while. The directing came afterwards. I worked for a celebrity photographer for a number of years in a variety of capacities, and finally thought I ought to give it a try on my own.

You've photographed a slew of celebs. Who have you not photographed that you would like to snap?

Anyone who brings something to the table, who really engages in the whole process and doesn't just stand there.

The photo of Maggie Smith [on your website] is gorgeous. Tell me about the photo shoot with her.

Well, funny I just said the above, because she just stood there. But there was a good reason: I had her for three minutes between shots, and being in costume, she stayed in character [as Violet Crawley, Dowager Countess of Grantham, in *Downton Abbey*].—



The humorously sexy Paul Rudd



The divinely sexy Melissa McCarthy

and that character would not be smiling and jumping around.

Tell me about the photos of Melissa McCarthy as Divine and Paul Rudd in bed.

Well, with Melissa we were doing her as different Queens—and Divine seemed like the natural Queen of Drag, and she was immediately into it. Paul was really terrific—he got the humor of the idea, and then was kind enough to drop his boxers and inch the sheet up to make the joke work visually.

In your book, *When I Knew*, celebrities tell when they first knew they were gay. When did you first know? Always.

When you told your parents, what was their reaction?

My parents were totally cool, and I have no coming-out story, which is why I put *When I Knew* together. I had heard all these great anecdotes and thought they should be collected. I wanted to focus on the humorous, touching side of coming out. The goal was a book you could leave on your coffee table so when your parents came over, they could pick it up and laugh and/or cry.

Does being gay affect the way you work?

Being gay has no bearing on the way that I work, or the subject matter I choose to work on. The one continuous thread that runs through all the subjects I've done documentaries on—Gene Kelly, Cary Grant, George Cukor, Irving Thalberg, and now Mel Brooks—is that they all have an unbelievable work ethic. They've all come from humble beginnings and pulled themselves up by their bootstraps to achieve their goals. That never gets old.

Mel Brooks: *Make a Noise* premieres nationally on PBS on Monday, May 20, at 8 p.m., and repeats Tuesday, May 21, 10 p.m., and Saturday, May 25, 10:30 p.m. (on the high-def Channel 8.2). The DVD is available May 21 from Shout Factory. For more on Robert Trachtenberg, visit roberttrachtenberg.com.

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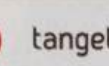
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More than Mel

Mel Brooks, Whoopi Goldberg, *OutSmart* covergirl Lily Tomlin, George Lopez, Bob Newhart, Richard Pryor Jr., and others recount the culture-defining influence of one of America's most brilliant, iconic comic minds in *Richard Pryor: Omit the Logic*. Directed by Emmy-winning filmmaker Marina Zenovich (*Roman Polanski: Wanted and Desired*), it was accepted into the prestigious Tribeca Film Festival where it made its debut on April 23. • While much is known of his rise to fame from a hardscrabble, at times tortured, upbringing, *Richard Pryor: Omit the Logic* uses never-before-seen concert footage, photos, and talk-show appearances to illustrate Pryor's complex career arc in a newly desegregated America. After a brief early stint honing a more mainstream, non-confrontational style, Pryor changed course and found his true, authentic voice. His brutal, uncanny observations challenged polite notions on everything from politics to race relations. In his four-decade career, Pryor changed the direction of comedy and paved the road for future comic agitators. • Friday, May 31, at 8 p.m. CST on Showtime (sho.com). —Suzie Lynde



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Vicious & Delicious

An interview with the mean and lean LISA LAMPANELLI

by David Goldberg

There are loud, politically provocative comedians, and then there's this comedian. When it comes to pushing the envelope of political correctness in America, it doesn't get much more vicious (or delicious) than Lisa Lampanelli. "The equal-opportunity offender" returned to Houston last month for another night of sickening stand-up. OutSmart chatted with the Queen of Mean about her recent marriage, losing over one hundred pounds, and her beloved gay audience.

David Goldberg: I have to confess that I saw you when I was seventeen when you hit Houston on your "Dirty Girl" tour. When I came for an autograph, you said, "What is this? The f--king Disney channel?" It was a moment for me.

Lisa Lampanelli: Well, good. I'm a life-changer. How old are you now?

I'm twenty-two.
You're old. As a gay guy, your days are numbered.

So, what do you think of the Supreme Court situation?

The whole gay-marriage thing? I always said if you're lucky enough to find somebody you want to spend the rest of your life with... every gay person should have the opportunity to be as miserable as us straight people. It's just ridiculous that they can't have what everybody else has.

You're on the vanguard of breaking barriers of political correctness. Over the last year, there's been a lot of talk about how the gay struggle is over and how gays have made it in this country. As someone who constantly pushes perceptions, stereotypes, and norms, do you think things have really gotten better?

I have a warped perspective, because I live in New York City. New



York has been comfortable with gay men for a long time, the way I see it. It's different when it comes to small towns. I got a bunch of e-mails and tweets from gay kids where I am now, which is deep in Iowa. And that's not somewhere where you go, "Oh my God, it's Gay Central!" But I've got notes from gay kids saying, "I worship you. I'm going to come see you, so you can make fun of my gay ass!" And it's like, if you're going to be out and proud in these little towns, maybe we're making some kind of progress. Obviously, there's a far way to go, but at least some kids are starting to feel more comfortable.

Do you think the world is too PC?

I've never let that bother me. I do what I do for a reason, and I make fun of every stereotype and poke fun at every word that people say and go for what they really mean. But *oh yeah*. You can't even say "black people" anymore without someone getting mad. But I don't let it affect me. This political correctness is ridiculous. I've started to say that political correctness is just retarded. I thought, Good, that will piss off some people who have retarded kids.

That sounds like the recent Down-syndrome storyline on *Shameless*.

Loved it! "Retard Nation"! That was great. Poor Joan Cusack. [Cusack's character, Sheila, takes her daughter, Karen, to a support group for families with Down syndrome children, because Karen has a baby with Down syndrome. Some in the group want to reclaim the word "retard" and begin chanting "Me-tard, You-tard, Retard Nation."] Her heart was in the right place, but she just didn't know how to get the message out there. I felt for her, because I've been in the situation where I've been panned for the language I use. You try to defend yourself, and then you're like, Wait a minute—these moron people aren't going to get it, so I might as well not even argue anymore. But that was a great scene. I loved that.

Why do you think you have so many gay supporters? In your →

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Vicious & Delicious

continued from
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specials, it looks as if your gay audience members are glowing.

I know, I know. I think it's because gay people feel really accepted around me. I surround myself with people of different minority groups—people who kind of don't fit in. Gay people can sense that I never felt like I fit in. I never liked how I looked. I never liked my thighs. I always felt a little ashamed deep down, and I feel like, unfortunately, some gay people have that shame, that place of "Oh my God, I'm not good enough." I hope that's why I have gay supporters. I hope it's not just because I'm funny and loud and they think I'm a drag queen, because I have a penis. But for whatever reason, people feel at home in my shows and feel included. And that's really the goal of the whole thing.

Are you seeing any other minority groups rally behind you in a similar way?

Since I used to have a reputation of dating black men all the time (even though I pretty much only had one black boyfriend for a while), a lot of jokes were made about it. I definitely had a lot of interracial couples at the shows, and I still do—which means that they haven't jumped ship even though I married a white guy. I always have tons of Latinos at the show. I don't know why. It's just that they have such a great sense of humor, and they can laugh at jokes about their heritage. Filipinos, Asians—it's just bizarre to me that people get that it's not poking fun at them, but at stereotypes. I'm really lucky that it spans a lot of different minority groups.

Even my mother got it after a few minutes. I think it's fascinating that that many people are in on the joke.

I do, too. In her defense, your mom is a real c--t.

Do you see yourself doing this for another fifty years? The next Joan Rivers?

I don't have a choice—I have to do this. I don't think people in my situation ever retire. They just do it. It's not about the money or the spotlight. It's just what you do and who you are. It's so much fun. It's so exciting just to go out there and do this show every single night because it's not scripted. It's probably not going to be another fifty years, but at least another thirty.

What's next for you?

I'm doing a one-person show on Broadway. It's been in the works for a couple of years. It's sort of different than stand-up, because it has a storyline. It's about my struggle with self-acceptance and food and men, and while it's not serious by any means, it

has serious moments. People will get to see what I'm about in a different way.

Would it be similar to the memoir you published?

Not really. Because that's a lot of old history—some of the crappy men I dated, some of the crappy diets I tried before losing the weight. It has a lot more heart and a lot more realism, but it's not exactly a daytime soap opera.

It seems like you're getting a different kind of press now that you are thin and married.

I think people were worried at first that I wouldn't be funny if I wasn't overweight, which is funny because it's not like there's a fat gene or a funny gene. You stay who you are no matter how you look, but you get more real with time. I think I take more chances now that I've lost the weight. I feel more secure and happy. I can say what I want and kind of defend myself, because I'm not bothered by a ton of self-hate. I still do have a ton of self-doubt. I think there was the initial "Oh my God! If you're thin, you can't be funny," which is weird shit, because Joan Rivers has never been overweight. Joan Rivers, in my opinion, has never been funny-looking. Whitney Cummings is beautiful and funny. There are very good-looking women out there who can still bring it home when it comes to comedy. But I think people who come to my show will say that I have gotten worse and crazier than when I was overweight.

It's as if you were expected to become more quiet and respectable when you got married. You are challenging the norm all over again.

I'm lucky, too, because I married a guy who knew that he could take a joke. He knew that I was messing with him on stage, bringing him up on stage, making fun of his balls. I would never be attracted to somebody who has those kind of hang-ups. Even though I am hooked up with somebody, it doesn't mean I'm going to be calmer or quieter. I don't think anybody would expect that out of me.

How does it feel when you are asked in public about your marriage and your love life?

I don't mind being asked. We make jokes about it. But when you're fifty-one years old, you're not exactly swinging from the chandeliers. We have sex once a week whether we want it or not, or need it or not. It's companionship; you've got a great friendship. You can run around and laugh a lot. I don't mind answering those →



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Vicious & Delicious

continued from page 63

questions, but it's not as relevant as other things going on right now.

You've performed in Houston before. What's your relationship with Texas?
It's twisted. [Houston and Dallas are] just two different demographics. It's not blue-collar in Houston, but it's closer to blue-collar than Dallas is. I just do what I do, and whoever likes to see it comes out. I never set out to get a certain group of people or a certain state or city to like me. I don't do jokes about where I am. I just be myself, and whatever comes out comes out. I've always had a great time in Houston and Dallas. Even though they hate each other, they both have groups that really get me. . . .

Anything else you'd like me to include?
Tell your mom I said hi.

Lisa Lampanelli's new radio show premieres Monday, May 6, at 6 p.m. (CST) on the Howard 101 Channel on SiriusXM and will air the first Monday of every month. Lampanelli also visits Howard Stern on Wednesday, May 22, at 7 a.m. on SiriusXM radio (with encores all day).

David Goldberg is a frequent contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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Song and Dance Man

Michaeljon Slinger makes his way up from Down Under

by Donalevan Maines



Not a lot of spam: actor/dancer Michaeljon Slinger. **ABOVE:** Slinger backstage in *Billy Elliot* (left and center) and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. **LEFT:** Slinger (l) backstage with Kevin Covert before performing "Brotherhood of Man" at the Tony Awards. Covert joins Slinger in Houston for *Spamalot*.



Friends call him "MJ," but out Broadway performer Michaeljon Slinger actually bears his grandfathers' names as a combo, along with his surname.

In last year's Broadway Bares/Equity Fights AIDS calendar, Slinger stripped down to just a red velvet ribbon tied in a bow, displaying the chiseled physique he's earned since beginning his dance training at age five in Queensland, Australia.

Slinger, in Houston to perform in *Monty Python's Spamalot* at Theatre Under the Stars, compares Queensland to Fort Lauderdale. "It's rather warm and humid, a big tourist destination," he explains. "I grew up five minutes from the beach."

On a family trip to England, Slinger saw his cousins dance and decided he wanted to give it a try. "I asked my

mother if I could take dance lessons, although I honestly didn't know what it entailed," he says. "She asked me what style of dance, and I said, 'I don't know. Rock 'n' roll?'"

Slinger squeezed in dance lessons one day a week, along with Boy Scouts, taekwondo, and other schoolboy activities.

My mother asked me what kind of dance lessons I wanted to take, and I said, "I don't know. Rock 'n' roll?"

However, at age ten, the other activities gave way to dancing as he found a studio that focused on tough dance competitions.

"Dance is where my heart and soul will always be," says Slinger, allowing that he took private voice lessons and "dabbled with drama" in high school, but relies mainly on "instinct" when it comes to acting. "I wanted to do musical theater in New York, which was an unrealistic goal for a kid in Queensland, but my pipe dreams somehow made it become reality," says Slinger.

At seventeen, he moved to New York City to go to American Ballet Theater. "I didn't grow up being gay in Australia," he says. "I didn't come out until I was eighteen, my freshman year in college."

The next year, Slinger switched to The Julliard School, where he studied dance until leaving during his senior year to accept the position of dance captain in the revival of *West Side Story* that originated in Washington DC in 2008 and bowed on Broadway in 2009. In addition, as the show's "swing," Slinger understudied the roles of all fifteen characters who comprise the rival Jets and Sharks gangs. "I ended up going on a lot," he says.

That show, for which *In the Heights* creator Lin-Manuel Miranda translated Spanish lyrics and dialogue into the libretto, →

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Song and Dance Man continued from page 67

was nominated for the Tony Award for best revival of a Broadway musical. It also won the 2009 Grammy Award for best cast album.

The understudy who later ascended to the role of Tony introduced Slinger to a college friend who would become Slinger's husband. "It turned out we lived across the street from each other, which was very random," he explains. "That made it easy to date, and we clicked, and it progressed to moving in together. He proposed, oddly enough, in Sydney, Australia, in January of 2012."

On October 22, 2012, the couple was married in Charleston, South Carolina. "Fifty people attended. It was a day all about love," says Slinger, explaining that his husband, who hails from Charleston, had been a performer for many years but is now studying to become a wine sommelier. They aspire to a future together in Charleston in which wine "will be an aspect," says Slinger.

Meanwhile, Slinger completed eighteen months with *West Side Story* before becoming dance captain and swing in *Billy Elliot*, first on the national tour, then for four months on Broadway, where he also understudied Older Billy, who performs a triumphant "Swan Lake" ballet with Younger Billy in Act II.

Next, Slinger worked with *Harry Potter* star Daniel Radcliffe and *Night Court*'s John Larroquette in 2011's *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, which was nominated for the Tony Award for best revival of a musical, as was Slinger's next project, *Evita*, opposite out actor Ricky Martin.

From his home in New York, Slinger told *OutSmart*, "I'm really excited to come down to Houston. *Spamalot* should be really fun. I've never seen it, but I've seen Monty Python and everyone I've ever spoken to had an amazing time doing it. My very best friend was in the national tour and said, 'You're going to love it.'"

The outrageous musical comedy, with music and lyrics by Eric Idle and John Du Prez and book by Idle, features a chorus line of dancing divas and knights, flatulent Frenchmen, flying cows, killer rabbits, a legless knight, and several show-stopping musical numbers. Among its hit songs are "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life," "Find Your Grail," and "The Song that Goes Like This."

What: Monty Python's *Spamalot*

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Donalevan Maines is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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Community continued from page 14

Peace, Love and Fur: Bearwatch 14 Scheduled for May 15-17

Peace, love, and fur" highlights BearWatch, the 1960s, hippie-themed convergence of manly men and their admirers May 15-17 in Galveston. "We take over the Inn at the Waterpark," said Ray Priest, chairman of BearWatch 14, the 14th annual Bay-watch-inspired beach weekend hosted by the Houston Bears.

This year's events adds bar socials, including a "bear bust" at the Pink Dolphin with a \$5 buy-in from 5 to 8 p.m., Friday, May 17, followed by party from 8 p.m. to 1:30 a.m., with an underwear auction at 10 p.m. at Stars Beach Club.

"Proceeds will benefit our charities," said Priest, who is also director of charities for the one-hundred-member Houston Bears. "There'll be drink specials, silent auction items, and raffles. Come, have a brew and see the hot guys."

This year's charities are HATCH, Bering Omega, and GCAM, the gay archives," said Priest, explaining that the three beneficiaries serve a trio of life experiences for members of the LGBT community. "HATCH is about coming into the world in a healthy, safe way. Bering Omega concerns our last days, going out. And GCAM is about documenting our lives."

Priest urged guests to sign up early because BearWatch has sold out the past few years, with walk-ups turned away. "We have a cap of 250," said Priest. "This way, people get to know each other. After a day or two, you get to recognize faces, and it gives everyone a chance to mingle more."

The annual event is held in Galveston, said Priest, "because we don't have a beach in Houston."

The event began with a few friends driving to Galveston, but it's turned into an annual romp with games of tug of war, greased pig wrestling, and an "infamous" pool and foam party.

"There'll be a canopy-decorating contest at the beach again this year," said Priest.

"We'll dig out all our best sixties and seventies kitsch and decorate canopies, tents, umbrellas, chairs, towels, or whatever we plan to hang out in."

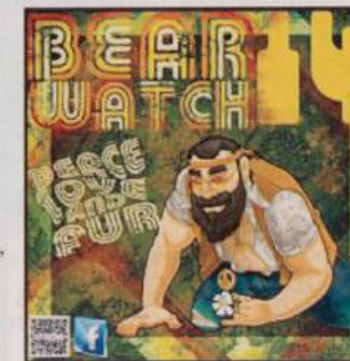
In addition, he said, "New this year is an optional trip to the Pleasure Pier on Friday. For \$27 additional, you can spend Friday night at the Pleasure Pier. This

includes admission and unlimited rides, but if that isn't your thing, we'll have a shuttle bus running a circuit between the hotel, the Pleasure Pier, and the local bars."

Priest, a South Carolina transplant whose first BearWatch was in its seventh year, said the Houston Bears welcome bear chasers and potential members to their monthly get-togethers 3 to 7 p.m.

on the first of every month at Tony's Corner Pocket. On June 2, the bears don drag for a turnabout show at the bar, said Priest.

BearWatch14: May 15-17 in Galveston, Texas • Info: bearwatch.net.



continued from page 89



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Brittney Griner (future WNBA star)

(Sports Illustrated Video, 4/17/13, Maggie Gray)

SI Video host Maggie Gray: Another big topic in sports recently is sexuality, especially with the NFL. In football it was rumored that maybe one or more players were going to come out—that would become huge news in the sports world and in general. In female sports, women's sports, in the WNBA, players have already come out, and it's really accepted. Why is there a difference between men and women in that issue? Brittney Griner: I really couldn't give an answer on why that's so different. Being one that's out, it's just being who you are. . . . Don't worry about what other people are going to say, because they're always going to say



The future of sports: Brittney Griner (seen here in a recent game reaching for a rebound) came out last month.

something, but if you're just true to yourself, let that shine through. Don't hide who you really are. You're in a different position where you're not just a regular person, you're a famous athlete, you're the number one pick in the WNBA draft. How difficult was it for you to make the decision? It really wasn't too difficult. I wouldn't say I was hiding or anything like that. I've always been open about who I am and my sexuality. So, it wasn't hard at all. If I can show that I'm out and I'm fine and everything's okay, then hopefully the younger generation will definitely feel the same way.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Griner was born in Houston and attended Nimitz High School.

Queer Quotes

Compiled by
Blase
DiStefano

Portia de Rossi

(Out, 5/13, Shana Naomi Krochmal)

"I had a project that I was shopping around for TV called *Butch and Fay*, about two gay people, very famous actors who marry each other for the sake of their careers. . . . Every single person that I brought it to was kind of titillated by the idea but ultimately shut it down, saying that being gay in the industry just wasn't an issue anymore. I know it's not very popular to bring this issue up, but it's still very difficult for actors to get certain types of roles. We need to hear it some more until things change."

Channing Tatum on George Clooney

(The Sun, 3/27/13, Bella Battle)

"Well, I've spent time with George Clooney, and he's the most interesting man on the planet. He can do it all. Yep. I guess what I'm saying is I'd have sex with him."



Portia's project: what's the news on *Butch and Fay*? De Rossi is seen here at her wife's (Ellen DeGeneres) "Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame" ceremony.

Andrew Garfield

(The Huffington Post, 4/18/13)

Actor Andrew Garfield, who starred in last year's *The Amazing Spider-Man*, tells *The Times* of London he has no qualms about backing same-sex couples' right to tie the knot. "Of course I'm in favor of marriage equality. Same-sex couples should have the same rights as anybody else. There is no argument against equality. How can anyone argue against compassion and understanding?"



Joel McHale (actor on Community, and host of The Soup)

(The Advocate, April/May 2013, Brandon Voss)

Re: rumors that he's gay.

"Oh, I still see that on Twitter every day. It's flattering. I always find it really weird when guys flip out over someone thinking they might be gay. If a guy gets offended by that, there's something's wrong with him. I take it as a compliment."

Dude crushes:

"Ooh, boy, I have so many. Josh Gad. Brian Williams. Patrick Stewart. Nathan Fillion. Kobe Bryant. Chaz Bono."

The rumor mill: what's going on with Joel McHale and Chaz Bono?



DVDs



by
David-Elijah
Nahmod

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Molly's Girl

Fed up with trying to score a male companion at a singles night event, Molly (Kristina Valada-Viars) rolls up to a bar and stumbles upon gay-marriage activist Mercedes (Emily Schweitz), who was recently dumped. The two spark a passionate conversation that leads to a one-night stand and Molly's first lesbian encounter. Neither turns out to be what the other had imagined. TLA Releasing (tlareleasing.com). —Troy Carrington

Broadway Musicals: A Jewish Legacy

Broadway Musicals examines the leading role of Jewish composers and lyricists in the creation of the modern American musical. It showcases the work of legends such as Irving Berlin, Leonard Bernstein, and more. It features interviews with Arthur Laurents and Mel Brooks, among others, and performances by Barbra Streisand, David Hyde Pierce, Nathan Lane, and Kristin Chenoweth, to name a few. May 7 from Acorn Media Group (acornonline.com). —T.C.

Les Misérables

Set against the backdrop of nineteenth-century France, *Les Misérables* tells the story of ex-prisoner Jean Valjean (Hugh Jackman), hunted for decades by the ruthless policeman Javert (Russell Crowe), after he breaks parole. When Valjean agrees to care for factory worker Fantine's (Anne Hathaway) young daughter Cosette, their lives change forever. Universal Studios Home Entertainment (universalstudioshomeentertainment.com). —T.C.

'Yossi'

The follow-up to 'Yossi and Jagger'



Ten years later: the closeted Yossi (Ohad Knoller, l) meets Tom (Oz Zehavi), an openly gay Israeli officer, who represents a new world.

A decade ago, openly gay Israeli film director Eytan Fox burst upon the international film scene with *Yossi and Jagger*. The tragic love story told of two Israeli soldiers who had fallen deeply and hopelessly in love while serving in war-torn Lebanon.

A decade later, Fox and his star Ohad Knoller (Yossi) return.

Still mourning the loss of his lover in battle, Dr. Yossi Gutmann is now a cardiologist at a large hospital in Tel Aviv. Clinically depressed and deeply closeted, Yossi has completely shut off his emotions. He's incapable of joy on even the most basic level.

A co-worker (Lior Ashkenazi) takes Yossi to a bar and tries to loosen him up. The doctor closes himself off even further. But when a patient turns out to be Jagger's mother,

he uncharacteristically comes out and tells her about his long-ago relationship with her son.

Yossi is a somber film about learning to love again. In

portraying Yossi's deep and quiet sadness, Knoller gives a sensational performance as a broken spirit who yearns to reconnect with the world, but has no idea how to do so. When he meets the younger, openly gay, free-spirited Tom (Oz Zehavi), Yossi's life

begins to change.

Through his films, Eytan Fox is primarily responsible for changing Israel's image from a religious, war-torn nation to that of a liberal, tolerant gay destination. The director and Knoller have a long-standing working relationship. In 2006, Knoller top-lined Fox's *The*

Bubble, a daring *Romeo and Juliet*-inspired tale of forbidden love between a gay Israeli and a gay Palestinian. The actor understands Fox's vision. The director knows how to bring out the best in his star.



Director Eytan Fox



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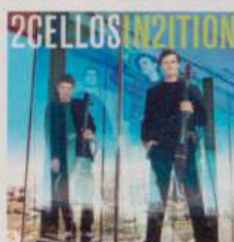
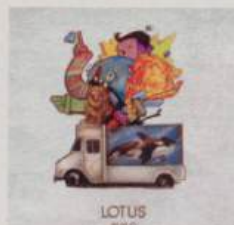
by
Gregg
Shapiro

Instrumental Cases

A couple of cellos, a fiddle, a band, and an orchestra

2 Cellos' eponymous 2011 domestic debut disc was an immediately accessible crossover delight. The Croatian duo fiddled about with songs by Muse, U2, Nine Inch Nails, and Kings of Leon, among others, finding a way to transform the tunes without turning them into a *Hooked on Classics* horror show. Expectations were high for their sophomore release *In2ition* (Masterworks), but to be fair, they're just stringing us along. True, they do uncover nuances in the boring and repetitive Rihanna cut "We Found Love," take rewarding liberties with Coldplay's "Clocks" (featuring none other than Lang Lang on piano), and express themselves clearly on the original "Orient Express." But some of their choices work against them. AC/DC's "Highway to Hell" and the Police's "Every Breath You Take" come off like a cross between elevator music and a high school recital. The addition of guest vocalists, particularly in the case of *Glee*'s Naya Rivera on Muse's "Supermassive Black Hole," are, well, super-massive black holes. Here's the thing—while a couple of the guest performers don't overpower the 2Cellos, next time out, they should trust their intuition, their (cat)gut feelings, and skip the guest stars.

Every once in a while, pop fiddlers come to the forefront



and get the attention they deserve. In the 1970s, there was Jean-Luc Ponty and the late Papa John Creach. Beginning in the 1980s, Lisa Germano and Susan Voelz played stints as fiddlers for John Mellencamp and Poi Dog Pondering, respectively. The first decade of the 21st century brought us the all-female string quartets Bond and Escala. More recently, The Dolls played some dates opening for queer singer/songwriter Mika. But it's YouTube hit Lindsey Stirling who seems to be making the most of her moment in the spotlight with her self-titled debut disc on Bridgetone.

A collection of originals, Stirling favors dance loops and synthesizers in the background on most of the songs. Definitely a new breed of dance diva, Stirling should have no trouble packing dance floors with "Transcendence," "Electric Daisy Violin," "Moon Trance," and the house-y "Spontaneous Me."

Bryan Ferry, the man who co-founded one of the most important glam/progressive/pre-punk rock bands of the 1970s and '80s, has never been shy about his affinity for music of the retro variety. His numerous solo records, including 1974's *Another Time, Another Place* on which he covered "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" and "You Are My Sunshine," are evidence enough

of his varied musical tastes. What makes *The Jazz Age* (BMG), credited to The Bryan Ferry Orchestra, different from the others is that it is an album of Ferry originals (not covers) performed in a vintage, instrumental, big-band jazz style that harkens back about seventy to eighty years. That's right, Roxy Music songs such as "Love Is the Drug," "Avalon," "Do the Strand," and "Virginia Plain" have been re-imagined in ways that you probably never imagined. The same holds true for Ferry solo numbers including "Slave to Love" and "Don't Stop the Dance." If this is meant to be a novelty, it sure is novel. It also allows Ferry fans to hear familiar songs in a sophisticated new setting.

One of the most popular jam/dance bands around, Lotus continues to blossom on their latest release *Build* (Sci Fidelity). As jammy jams go, the ten songs here are mostly (and gratefully) at around the four-minute mark and under. There are no long, masturbatory solos, and when Lotus wants to get you on your feet and dancing, they know how to do it. "Massif," "Uff," "Neon Tubes Part 1," "Cutinuo," and most especially "Neon Tubes Part 2" are respectable dance jams. If your taste runs toward improvisational instrumentals with pop music flair, then you should bring Lotus into your pad.

Gregg Shapiro is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.

GrooveOut Shorts

Michael Feinstein/André Previn
Change of Heart



The super-talented openly gay singer and pianist Michael Feinstein collaborates with legendary composer-conductor-pianist André Previn for an album celebrating Previn's repertoire from his lesser-known catalog of pop songs, including many that were written for film. Telarc International (telarc.com). —Suzie Lynde

Dido
Girl Who Got Away



The songs on singer/songwriter Dido's fourth album are ones of defiance, heartbreak, and hope. The majority of the new album's literate, life-affirming songs were written by Dido and her brother, Rollo Armstrong. Warm, evocative, and bursting with the emotion of life's little details, *Girl* is classic Dido: at once modern and timeless. RCA Records (rcarecords.com). —S.L.

She & Him
Volume 3



With fourteen songs, this is an effervescent, bleached-out-in-the-sun pop record that features some of the most dynamic, complex songs Zoëy Deschanel (She) has ever written, complete with tempo shifts, disco grooves, string arrangements on multiple tracks, and horn flourishes. May 7, Merge Records (mergerecords.com). —S.L.

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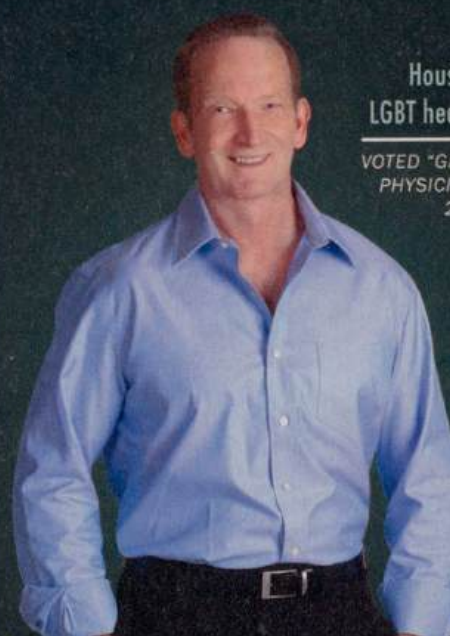
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by
Kit van
Cleave

'No Straight Lines'

The value of queer comics



No Straight Lines: Four Decades of Queer Comics
Edited by Justin Hall
2013 • Fantagraphics
(fantagraphics.com)
328 pages, \$29.99, softcover

No Straight Lines, an anthology of gay comics collected and edited by Justin Hall, was first printed in May 2012. But given its edgy nature, it was not reviewed in mainstream print or air media until the end of that year, when a discussion of the book finally came out in the *New York Times*. I spent several months trying to order a copy, only to find Amazon unable to produce one until very recently. Today, copies are more easily found, and this work is highly recommended for its artistic creativity and ample 307 pages of beautifully reproduced drawings.

Hall had plenty of places to find these creative works, given, as he states, the "wide range of subjects, themes, and styles in this unique and vibrant artistic underground." But the research must have been daunting. The reason for these comics to exist in the first place was the lack of communication among various parts of the national gay community. Moreover, "queer cartooning," as Hall puts it, was

and had long been marginalized, very rarely getting any shelf space at comic book stores, or awards, or attention at comic conventions and events.

In a short introduction, the editor gives a history of gay comics, created for artistic expression and awareness of a growing wider audience. Hall begins with Touko Laaksonen, "the first gay cartoonist," publishing in the mid-1940s, selling through mail-order in Europe. In 1957 Laaksonen began illustrating *Physique Pictorial*, using the pen name Tom of Finland. With the weakening of the U.S. obscenity laws in the 1960s, Laaksonen was, along with his contemporaries, able to distribute erotic gay cartoons openly.

When the Stonewall riots occurred in 1969, a wave of gay magazines and newspapers surged in New York, and needed comics, particularly strips like Joe Johnson's "Miss Thing" and Sean's "Gayer than Strange." Underground comics "exploded in San Francisco," with Robert Crumb publishing the first issue of *Zap Comix* in 1968. While part of the overall California

political scene included comics by straight men, Hall reports, they broke boundaries with depictions of sex, drugs, and other such adult topics, and "tended toward misogyny and homophobia."

Another leading artist in the early days was Trina Robbins, who in 1970 published *It Ain't Me, Babe Comics*, the first all-female comic anthology, followed by *Come Out Comix* in 1973, born in the basement of a local women's karate school. *Gay Comix* arrived in 1980, with major contributions by Howard Cruse, who was already producing *Barefoot* as a series; it survived for twenty-five issues during the next eighteen years. From the leather subculture of Cologne came the work of Ralf König, from Holland Tom Bouden, and from France Fabrice Neaud, but still Europe was less developed in the artform than the U.S. →

ReadOut Shorts

The Elephant of Surprise
Brent Hartinger

The *Geography Club* crew is back, and this time Russel, Mim, and Gunnar are a little older, a little wiser, and a whole lot more interesting. This book has all the charm of the earlier books in the series, but is a richer read. As always with this series, we're given a story of real-life teenage issues that doesn't lose the wonderful freshness and humor of youth. Buddha Kitty Books (brent.hartinger.com). —Angel Curtis

I'll Call It Like I See It
Sheila Morris

Sheila Morris is a Texas lesbian of a certain age. Her short stories are really personal essays, recounting life stories that show us how one woman became who she is. Entertaining and thought-provoking, these stories treat everything, everyone, and every issue as fair game for an honest reflection. Purple Books Publishing (purplebookspublishing.com). —A.C.

People of the Bear Mother
T.D. Austin

People of the Bear Mother tells the story of one soul through its journey of many lifetimes, some of which are gay. Basically it's an amalgam of *Clan of the Cave Bear*, Joseph Campbell's work, and a romantic revision of lives that were "mean, brutish, nasty, and short," and an assertion that ancient cave paintings hold timeless spiritual truths. Amazon.com. —A.C.

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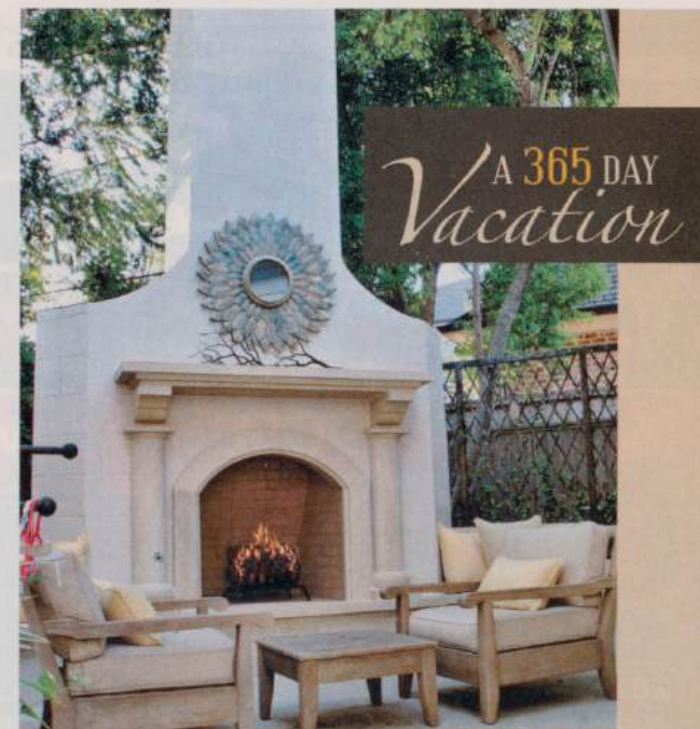
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ReadOut continued from page 78

Among those struggling to keep working in the field was Alison Bechdel; her *Dykes to Watch Out For* was first seen in 1983. Unlike earlier times, however, enough gay publications existed by that era that a fledgling cartoonist could make close to a living wage. The call for closer community arrived along with the AIDS crisis around that time, while outside the fences a backlash against gays roared, almost demolishing the community so carefully created underground. Queer cartoons could still educate, entertain, and move emotions, so the number of artists then working in the field became too numerous to list here, even in Hall's introduction.

Undoubtedly this is a valid and sought-after means of expression with a widening audience. Many of the comics included in Hall's book could be enjoyed by both straight and gay people. I regret that some of the book's visuals could not be reproduced here.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The New York Times Book Review discussion of *No Straight Lines* can be found in the December 2, 2012, archive.

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

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OutSmart

Calendar of Events

Compiled by
Marene
Gustin

Is It Art . . .

Or is it 'Artifice'?

What is the best/worst thing that can happen to an artist? He dies, and the value of his works skyrockets. That's the premise of *Artifice*, a Houston premiere comedy/mystery at Theatre Suburbia this month. Judy Reeves directs this romp about the artist's estranged wife, Maggie, and her gallery manager Richard, who must sell his art to avoid bankruptcy. Before the auction they host a private showing, inviting influential newspaper maven Judith Fontaine and rich real-estate mogul Mick Fitzgerald. A gorgeous actor, a sassy cocktail waitress, and a humorless art critic also attend. Mick is poised to buy, and Judith's coverage of the story will put the gallery on the map, but will a totally unexpected visitor, a snowstorm, and a jilted lover spoil the showing?



Dead artist, expensive art: Heather Gabriel (l-r), Jim Wyatt, Sabrina Rosales, and Christopher Conway star in Theatre Suburbia's *Artifice*.

Theatre Suburbia is Northwest Houston's longest-running all-volunteer playhouse and is currently celebrating its fifty-second season. Call 713/682-3525, or visit theatresuburbia.org for more information about this fun play that runs through May 11. Tickets top out at \$14, making Theatre Suburbia performances one of the best values in entertainment around. —Marene Gustin

MAY

PERFORMING ARTS

• THROUGH MAY 3

Daniel and the Dreamcatcher. Children's opera tells the story of a boy confronting the giant in his closet. Produced by HGO. Visit milleroutdoortheatre.com.

• THROUGH MAY 4

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee. Music Box Musicals presents Houston's first professional regional production of this play at The Music Box Theater. See themusicboxtheater.com for details.

The Night of the Iguana. The last and possible best masterpiece by Tennessee Williams at Theatre Southwest. Call 713/661-9505 or theatresouthwest.org for ticket information.

• THROUGH MAY 5

Tristan and Isolde. Houston Grand Opera introduces a new production of Richard Wagner's searing play, directed by Christof Loy. Contact HGO at 713/228-6737 or houstongrandopera.org.

The Red Velvet Cake War. A Southern-fried comedy about families and food at the historic Crichton Theatre in Conroe. Check out crichtontheatre.org for details.

• THROUGH MAY 11

Il Trovatore. Houston Grand Opera's 2012-2013 season concludes with Verdi's opera of passion and vengeance. Contact HGO at 713/228-6737 or houstongrandopera.org.

Artifice. Theatre Suburbia presents the Houston premiere of this comic mystery about art and artifice. See the company website at theatresuburbia.org for more information.

• THROUGH MAY 25

Legends of Wind & Fire. A bi-lingual (English/Spanish) retelling of classic Argentinian and Brazilian fables, told by Millartray and Mapu, two rambunctious Native American youth. Touring throughout the Houston area, see expressetheatre.com for dates and locations.

• THROUGH MAY 31

Skin, Embellished. An exhibition exploring not-so-

typical notions of skin by ceramic artists at Gallery 1724. See gallery1724.blogspot.com.

• THROUGH JUNE 23

Always . . . Patsy Cline. Stages Repertory Theatre's 25th-anniversary production of the beloved musical about Cline's relationship with a local fan. Check out stagesrepertorytheatre.com for details and get "Crazy."

• MAY 2-12

Elton John and Tim Rice's Aida. A musical-theater take on the famous opera presented by Bayou City Theatrics at Barnevelder Arts Complex. Details at bayoucitytheatrics.com.

• MAY 3-4

World Premiere of Sarah Rothenberg's 'In the Garden of Dreams.' Da Camera presents this fantastic obsession with dreams and the unconscious in the music, visual art, psychology, and theater of Vienna circa 1900. Check out dacamera.com.

• MAY 4

Lisa Loeb and Nine Stories. This concert in The Woodlands celebrates the Grammy winner's seventh album, *No Fairy Tale*. For information, visit 429records.com.

• MAY 10-25

There Is a Happiness That Morning Is. 2001's sold-out run of Maher's beautiful ode to love, sex, and the poetry of William Blake inspired *Houston Chronicle's* Everett Evans to begin his review, "I can scarcely contain my enthusiasm for Catastrophic Theatre's idealized presentation . . . so I'm not even going to try." Details at catastrophictheatre.com.

• MAY 14-26

Spamalot. Theatre Under the Stars presents Monty Python's *Spamalot*, the outrageous musical comedy lovingly ripped off from the film classic *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. Visit tuts.com for more information.

• MAY 18

Garifuna Punta and Paranda: Lumali and Special Guests. A three-concert series focusing on the expanding cultural traditions of Houston's newest Latino communities of Central America, the Caribbean, and South. Presentations will include a half-hour workshop with a ninety-minute performance to follow. See houstonartsalliance.com/folklife/remembereidregained for details.

Indigo Girls with Joan Baez. It's only a four-hour drive to Cherokee, Texas, so make the road trip to see these great gals at the Cherokee Creek Music Festival. Visit cherokeecreekmusicfestival.org for details.

• MAY 23

Anointed and Adorned: Indian Weddings in Houston Opening Reception. Details at houstonartsalliance.com/folklife/remembereidregained.

Houston Symphony and Jewish Federation of Greater Houston present a concert recognizing Israel at sixty-five years. Acclaimed Israeli singer David D'or joins the Symphony for an evening of pop, classical, and traditional Jewish music. For tickets, please visit houstonartsalliance.com/folklife/remembereidregained or call 713/224-7575.

• MAY 23-JULY 12

Anointed and Adorned: Indian Weddings in Houston. Exhibit paying tribute to the ritual and festive traditions of the Indian wedding ceremony. Details at houstonartsalliance.com/folklife/remembereidregained.

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY

• THROUGH MAY 25

Troy Dugas: Modernized for Mildness. Louisiana artist Troy Dugas has his first solo exhibition in Houston at McMurry Gallery. See mcmurrygallery.com.

Rusty Scruby: Sink Sketches. Rusty Scruby has challenged the boundary between sculpture, photography, and drawing. His newest exhibition in McMurry Gallery's micro space incorporates deft skill in mathematical composition alongside a keen humor in his choice of materials. See mcmurrygallery.com for details.

• THROUGH MAY 26

Reminiscential. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft exhibit paying homage to memento mori and funeral art. See craftshouston.org for details.

• THROUGH MAY 31

Jessica Dupuis Debuts New Work in Miniature. A ceramic exhibit at The Kenmore inside Gallery 1724. See the-kenmore.blogspot.com for details. →



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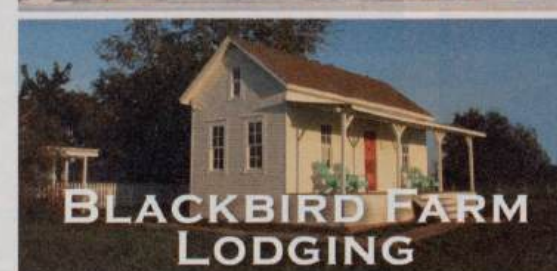
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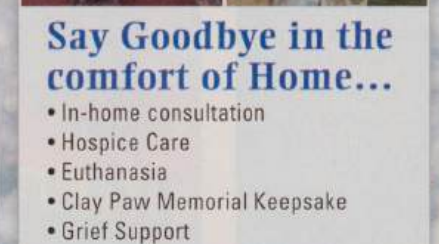
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Calendar continued from page 82

THROUGH JUNE 7
Mary Beth Woicak exhibits a series of new artist books inspired by her travels in Australia, China, and the American Southwest at Caroline Collective, carolinecollective.cc.

THROUGH AUGUST 30
Soo Sunny Park: Unwoven Light. A new installation by American artist Soo Sunny Park for Rice University Art Gallery is a suspended, undulating structure made from shaped sections of chainlink fencing. See ricegallery.org for more.

THROUGH JANUARY 11, 2014
Daniel Anguilo and Aaron Parazett Mural. See this beautiful mural, called *Skywriting*, at Lawndale Art Center. Visit lawndaleartcenter.org for more details.

MAY 3-JUNE 14
The Cyrus Cylinder and Ancient Persia. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston's acclaimed exhibition featuring one of the most iconic objects of world heritage on loan from the British Museum for this U.S. tour. See mfa.org for more information.

MAY 3-AUGUST 18
Byzantine Things in the World. Featuring works that date from circa 9,000 BCE to the present, but focusing especially on the Menil's rich collection of Byzantine art, the exhibition juxtaposes more than seventy remarkable objects, reawakening a sense of how people in late antiquity experienced art and bringing Byzantium's aura into the present day. See menil.org.

MAY 9-12
Art Car Parade Weekend. The largest Art Car Parade in the world is back again, and the Orange Show is bringing an entire weekend of events—most of which are free and open to the public. All information can be found at thehoustonartcarparade.com.

MAY 10-JUNE 15
Lawndale Art Center Exhibits. Fabulous exhibits this summer. See lawndaleartcenter.org.

MAY 24-AUGUST 25
Late Surrealism. This small and focused exhibition constitutes a fascinating aspect of Menil Collection holdings, specifically some of the most stunning drawings by Arshile Gorky and Mark Rothko. Visit menil.org for details.

MAY 31
Summer Exhibition Opening Reception. The reception features open studios by HCCC's current resident artists. See crafhouston.org for details.

MAY 31-SEPTEMBER 8
The Tool at Hand. The exhibition showcases the wonder of the process of making and, at the same time, sparks an important conversation about the nature of skill, production, and tool use today. See crafhouston.org for details.

Ctrl + P. Recent economic reports speculate that a third industrial revolution, shaped by digital technologies, is under way. This summer HCCC investigates the implications of such technologies on the making of sculptural and functional objects in the 21st century. See crafhouston.org for details.

RADIO

After Hours: Queer Radio with Attitude features the QMZ (Queer Music Zone) with Jimmy Carper. Sunday mornings, midnight–3am. 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.

FILM

MAY 4-5 AND 10
The Rhythm of Film. Society for the Performing Arts and Aurora Picture Show join forces to offer a collaborative music and film workshop for Houston teens. Visit aurorapictureshow.org for details.

GALAS & PARTIES

MAY 4
La Valiente 2013. Gala for Voices Breaking Boundaries to honor founders Marcela Descalzi, Jacsun Shah, and Sehba Sarwar. Visit vbbarts.org.

Movie Night on the Strand. Bring your lawn chair and head to the isle for a free movie at Saengerfest Park. *Dirty Dancing* starts at 7 p.m.

MAY 10 & 11
Yaga's Wild Game BBQ Cook-off. It's a wild game cook-off, live entertainment, silent auction, Run Wild 5K, and children's activities at Pier 21 in Galveston benefitting Yaga's Children's Fund. For details visit ycfund.org.

MAY 11
Wild Drag Safari! A wild and crazy top surgery fundraiser for LGBT artist Jack Silverman. There will be a silent auction, raffle, and drag show at El's Bar. Check out details on the Wild Drag Safari Facebook page.

MAY 16
Pink at the Brown Unplugged. A groundbreaking event showcasing premier arts organizations on the same stage to raise funds for breast cancer in a one-of-a-kind benefit gala. See pinkribbons.org for details.

Saint Arnold Brewery Pre-Party and Spalot Package. Hear Ye Hear Ye! Sir Lance and Sir Robin welcome all new recruits into the service of Arthur, King of the Britons. You are invited to Saint Arnold Brewery for a few well-earned comforts prior to joining them on their quest for the Holy Grail. After the festivities a bus will take patrons to Theatre Under the Stars' *Spalot* performance. Visit tuts.com for more information.

MAY 18
2nd Annual 2nd Chance Prom Dance. A fun event to promote unity and inclusion within the community, featuring live entertainment and dance music. For more info, like the Facebook page at Family Friendly Socials; or text or call Armando 832/454-3296, Chris 713/928-2818, Lisa 713/882-4513, Adam 713/667-9777, or Kathy 713/319-4664.

MAY 25
East Beach Grand Re-opening Celebration. Cruise on

down to the isle to celebrate the \$1.6 million makeover of East Beach. Enjoy live entertainment, a bonfire, fireworks, and more.

AND OTHER THINGS

MAY 1
Deadline for call for entries for 2013 Houston Fringe Fest. See freneticcore.net.

MAY 4
Gritty Goddess Fest Women's 5K Run. Watch women run, crawl, climb, slide, balance, hoist, swing, and stretch through a variety of muddy, sandy, and splashy obstacles at Moody Garden. The event benefits four charities, and you can find details at grittygoddess.com.

MAY 4 & 5
Houston's Annual Pond Tour. The Houston Pond Club and Lone Star Koi Club offer self-guided tours to the best backyard ponds in the area. Go to houstonpondsociety.org or lonestarkoi.com to find the home nearest to you, and plan your route.

MAY 4 & 5, 11 & 12
39th Annual Historic Homes Tour. The Galveston Historic Homes Tour returns for its 39th year the first two weekends in May featuring ten Victorian and Greek Revival homes. For ticket information visit galvestonhistory.org.

MAY 8
The Texas Exes LGBT Network. All are welcome to attend this membership meeting, to discuss the Texas Exes LGBT Network involvement with Houston Pride as well as upcoming events for the remaining calendar year. Questions, comments, or RSVP, please e-mail txeslgbt.houston@gmail.com.

MAY 11
Legacy's Handcrafted Health Care Event. Legacy's Montrose Clinic, located in one of Houston's largest cultural centers at 1415 California Street, provides tours of the new facility, free health screenings, and a family-friendly party with information necessary to make informed choices about your healthcare needs from noon to 4 p.m. Guests can pre-register for this event by phone at 832/548-5041 or by e-mail at events@legacycommunityhealth.org.

MAY 17 & 18
Galveston Island Beach Revue. Contestants model vintage beach-ware along the Seawall. There's also an evening parade and baseball game played by 1860 rules. See galvestonbeachrevue.com.

MAY 18
Island Market. Held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Beach Central, this market is an outdoor event where local artisans and crafters showcase their creations, including handmade jewelry, photography, artwork, candles, spices, and more.

MAY 31
Deadline for 2013–2014 Lawndale Artist Studio Program. The program is part of Lawndale's ongoing commitment to support the creation of contemporary art by Gulf Coast-area artists. With an emphasis on emerging practices, the program provides three artists with non-

residential studio space on the third floor of the Lawndale Art Center at 4912 Main Street in the heart of Houston's Museum District. Apply online at lawndaleartcenter.org.

• JUNE 1

27th Annual AIA Houston SandCastle Competition. This is some serious sand play. For over two decades in the first part of June, Houston-area architects, designers, engineers, and contractors have taken their tools to East Beach in Galveston for one of the world's largest amateur sandcastle competitions. See aiahouston.org.

SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 17-AUGUST 12
Humphries School Summer Camp. Theatre Under the Stars's musical theater camp for kids 4 to 6. See tuts.com.

Humphries School Summer Camp. Theatre Under the Stars's musical theater camp for kids 7 to 12. See tuts.com.

JUNE 17-AUGUST 12
The River Summer Camp. The River Performing and Visual Arts Center has been serving individuals with disabilities since 1996. The summer camp program at The River provides an accessible, affordable, fine arts education for children, ages 4–19, who have disabilities and their siblings. Summer camp registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Financial aid is available. To register for classes, call The River at 713/520-1220 or visit tuts.com/river.

JULY 9-12
Holocaust Museum Houston Summer Institute. Holocaust Museum Houston is now accepting applications for the 2013 Max M. Kaplan Summer Institute for Educators, a four-day program for teachers that moves beyond the general history of the Holocaust to explore the various dimensions and implications of that tragedy and other genocides. *Applications and payment must be in by June 20.* See hmh.org for details.

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. GREENSPRING: 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 MONTROSE CLINIC (1415 California St.), 11am–6pm; LEGACY LYONS CLINIC (502 Lyons Ave.), 1–5pm; GEORGE SPORTS BAR, 6–9pm; EJ's, →

GLBT CRUISES & TOUR EVENTS

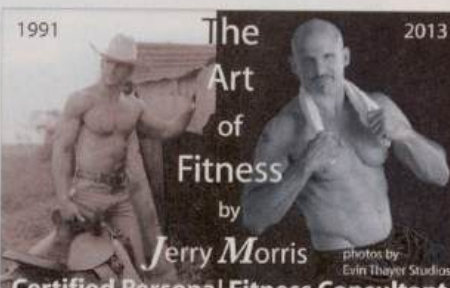
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Calendar continued from previous page

9pm-12am • **TUESDAYS:** LEGACY MONTROSE CLINIC, 11am-6pm; LEGACY LYONS CLINIC, 1-5pm; MIDTOWNE SPA, 5-9pm; 611 HYDE PARK PUB, 6:30-9pm • **WEDNESDAYS:** LEGACY MONTROSE CLINIC, 11am-6pm; LEGACY LYONS CLINIC, 1-5pm; WALGREENS-MONTROSE, 4-8pm; CLUB HOUSTON, 6-10pm; Crystal Night Club, 10pm-2am • **THURSDAYS:** LEGACY MONTROSE CLINIC, 11am-6pm; LEGACY LYONS CLINIC, 1-5pm; WALGREENS-LYONS, 2-5pm; MIDTOWNE SPA, 5-9pm; GUAVA LAMP, 6:30-9pm; RIPCORN, 6:30-10pm • **FRIDAYS:** LEGACY MONTROSE CLINIC, 11am-4pm; CLUB HOUSTON, 1-4pm; LEGACY LYONS CLINIC, 1-5pm; TC'S SHOWBAR, 4-8pm Tony's CORNER POCKET, 4:30-8:30pm • **LEGACY TESTING CALENDAR:** <http://www.calendarwiz.com/calendars/calendar.php?crd=legacytestingservices&>

• 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 • fathersfirstofhouston.com.

• WEEKLY (TUESDAYS)

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

HIV Support Group Lunch Brunch. 11am. Bering Memorial UMC, 1440 Harold, Room 214 • 713/526-1017, ext. 202.

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 GLBTQ youth ages 13-20. 6-9pm. 707 23rd St., Galveston • gulfprideforyouth.org.

HIV Support Group BSSG. 6:30pm. Bering Memorial UMC, 1440 Harold, Fellowship Hall • 713/526-1017.

Zumba exercise class with Crystal Wall. 6:45pm. House of Deréon 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.

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 THURS.)

OutLater. Gay fathers meet to discuss parenting, divorce, family, dating, relationships, and more. • facebook.com/outlater • outlater@resurrectionmcc.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.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 • facebook.com/groups/102199491979/?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 • 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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News continued from page 71

New Survey Shows Growing Support for Gay Rights among Houstonians

by Megan Smith

Attitudes among Houstonians have significantly shifted in favor of gay rights over the past few years, according to the thirty-second annual Kinder Institute Houston Area Survey.

Stephen Klineberg, co-director of Rice University's Kinder Institute for Urban Research, released the 2013 survey, which reaches representative samples of residents from the entire ten-county Houston metropolitan area, at a news conference at the university in late April.

Out of the 1,304 Houston respondents interviewed this year, 53 percent believe

that "homosexuality is something people cannot change," rather than "something people choose." An 8-percent increase from 2011 and a 13-percent increase from 2009, this year's figure proves minds are changing in Houston. "Increasingly, homosexuality is coming to be seen as a part of the natural variation in the human condition and not so much as a personal choice subject to moral censure," Klineberg said.

Positive opinions of marriage equality among Houstonians are at an all-time high as well, according to the report. The survey shows that 46 percent of respondents now support same-sex marriage—a jump from 43 percent in 2009.

However, an evident generational gap still exists when it comes to the idea of gay rights and marriage equality, the report notes. Sixty-five percent of younger participants, age sixteen to twenty-nine, believe that "homosexuality is morally acceptable," while only 32 percent of respondents over age sixty agreed with this statement. Similarly, even though 61 percent of the younger group expressed support for marriage equality, only 36 percent

of participants over age fifty-nine said the same.

In addition to collecting and analyzing views on gay rights and marriage equality, the survey also found that Houstonians' support for immigration reform has grown significantly, that there is overwhelming support in the city for expanding criminal background checks for gun sales, and that Houstonians report no improvement in their personal financial situations, despite the city's strong economy and low unemployment rates.

"Through more than three decades of systematic research, the annual Kinder Institute Houston Area Survey has measured this region's remarkable economic and demographic transformations and recorded the way area residents are responding to them," Klineberg said. "No other metropolitan region in America has been the focus of a long-term research program of this scope. No city more clearly exemplifies the trends that are rapidly refashioning the social and political landscape across all of urban America."

Boy Scouts to Consider Lifting Ban on Openly Gay Youths

by Katia Hetterm, CNN

The Boy Scouts of America would no longer deny membership to youth on the basis of sexual orientation but would maintain its ban on openly gay adult leaders under a proposal it is considering, the group announced in April.

The organization's executive committee made the proposal, which is expected to be presented to the Boy Scouts' voting members at its May meeting in Dallas. If the policy is approved, it will take effect January 1, 2014.

"If approved, the resolution would mean that 'no youth may be denied membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone.' The BSA will maintain the current membership policy for all adults," Boy Scouts public relations director Deron Smith said.

In February, the Boy Scouts' national executive board postponed a vote on lifting its outright ban on openly gay Scouts and troop leaders and ordered a survey of its members on the issue.

The survey showed a generational split between adults and youth in the scouting community. While most adults support the Boy Scouts' current policy of "excluding open and avowed homosexuals, young parents and teens tend to oppose the policy,"

according to the survey.

The change doesn't go far enough for James Dale, an Eagle Scout and former assistant troop leader who sued the scouts under New Jersey state law after he was kicked out of the Boy Scouts in 1990 because he is gay.

"This proposal continues to send a destructive message, offering the veneer of acceptance while still communicating that being gay is immoral," Dale said. "Fair-minded Americans will not again welcome the Scouts until they stop discriminating."

Dale's lawsuit, filed in 1992, said his expulsion violated the state's anti-discrimination law. When his case made it to the Supreme Court in 2000, the court ruled that it would violate the Boy Scouts' First Amendment protection of freedom of association to require that it accept gay members.

Lawyer Evan Wolfson, who represented Dale in that case, applauded the move to include gay youth in scouting but agreed that banning them once they're adults is wrong.

Former Eagle Scout John Stemberger, founder of OnMyHonor.Net, a group opposing the policy change, said the Boy Scouts currently allow anyone to participate, disallowing only "the open and aggressive promotion of homosexuality and political agendas," according to a statement.

"When it comes to young boys, parents should still have the final say on the issues of sexuality and politics," he said. "Allowing open homosexuality in the BSA injects both those topics right into the program. We urge the national council to vote against this resolution and uphold the time-tested member-

ship policy of the Boy Scouts."

The Family Research Council hopes to convince the voting members to vote no. The group is presenting a Stand with the Scouts simulcast on May 5, asking people to watch together in their churches and homes.

"The outcome of this decision will affect the very future of Scouting, as a shift in the policy would undermine the very principles held by the BSA for over a century," said the council on its website. "This decision is too important for those who value the Boy Scouts and its value to American communities to stand idly by."

Provo, Utah, Scout leader Paul Barker sees the glass as half full.

"I am forever an optimist, and I see it as a very big step forward in the right direction to which I will applaud," said Barker, an Eagle Scout and married father of four, ages four months to seven years.

Saddened by recent stories of Eagle Scouts turning in their badges, Barker launched Ally Patches to support gay Scouts and their allies and create an atmosphere that's more welcoming.

Barker's website is selling patches, similar to those that Scouts earn, to signal support for gay members. [The price tag is \$3.50 per patch, and \$1 goes to the Family Acceptance Project.]

"I had great, great leaders [in the Scouts]; they were like second parents to me," he said. "I took their example of love and compassion and wanted to do something." ■

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Dalton DeHart

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Business News



ReMax CityView Grand Opening. On March 27, ReMax CityView held their grand opening at the new Houston location at 2909 Baldwin. Joining the festivities are (l-r) Corey Thiege, Dr. Evan Mapes, Jared Cox, Elizabeth Seal, and Eric Gage, the broker/owner of the realty firm.

Night of Beauty at Urban Retreat.

On March 21, Urban Retreat celebrated a Night of Beauty with the launch of L'Vere, an exclusive makeup line now being sold only at Urban Retreat. Makeup artists were on hand to demonstrate L'Vere's amazing quality and unbelievable color selection. Pictured are (l-r) Sarah Day, Jesse Cougot, Joan Turley, Brad Collins, Saira Ali, Mike Butte, Alyssa Goldstein, Dynzle Kellebrew, and Kevin Batiste.



Torchy's Tacos Heats Up Houston. On April 17, Torchy's Tacos kicked off the grand opening of its new location in Rice Village at 2400 Times Blvd. A Heights location will open on 19th Street this June. Pictured are (l-r) Jay Walk (VP of Operations), Michael Rypka (VP of Marketing and executive chef), Alfonso Angelone (VP of IT), Rebecca Kubena (VP of Finance), and Farrell Kubena (VP of Development).



License to Love. Texas artist Kiki Neumann created some Big Texas Love with her marriage equality graphic "License to Love" T-shirts commemorating the Supreme Court's hearing of oral arguments for cases concerning the constitutionality of same-sex marriage on March 26 and 27. Neumann is a Houston folk artist who, for the last fifteen years, crafted useful items from found materials found on urban streets. Lately, her medium is license-plate art. "License to Love" T-shirts celebrate marriage equality. Proclaim your right to love at Pride this year! A portion of the proceeds from T-shirt sales benefit Equality Texas. T-shirts with this original design can be ordered online and are exclusively distributed by Suzette Cotto at createalovelylife.com.

News continued from page 12

ESPN basketball analyst Chris Broussard said the Bible calls homosexuality a sin. "If you're openly living in unrepentant sin, whatever it may be, not just homosexuality, adultery, fornication, premarital sex between heterosexuals, whatever it may be, I think that's walking in open rebellion to God and to Jesus Christ," he said.

NFL receiver Mike Wallace tweeted Monday: "All these beautiful women in the world and guys wanna mess with other guys SMH."

He tweeted again, saying he was being misinterpreted. "Never said anything was right or wrong I just said I don't understand!! Deeply sorry for anyone that I offended," he wrote.

The Dolphins, Wallace's employer, issued a statement saying the team has spoken with Wallace about the tweets. The team said it will address its policy of inclusion with all of its players.

NBA Commissioner David Stern said Collins, a 34-year-old veteran, is widely respected in the league. "We are proud he has assumed the leadership mantle on this very important issue," he said in a statement.

Washington Wizards President Ernie Grunfeld said the team is "extremely proud of Jason and support his decision to live his life proudly and openly."

"He has been a leader on and off the court and an outstanding teammate throughout his NBA career. Those qualities will continue to serve him both as a player and as a positive role model for others of all sexual orientations," Grunfeld said.

Boston Celtics head coach Doc Rivers called Collins "a pro's pro" and one of his favorite players he ever coached. "If you have learned anything from Jackie Robinson, it is that teammates are always the first to accept," Rivers said. "It will be society who has to learn tolerance."

Bill Clinton called the announcement an "important moment for professional sports and in the history of the LGBT community."

Collins, who had been traded by the Celtics to the Wizards this season, wrote in his essay that U.S. Rep. Joe Kennedy, D-Massachusetts, helped prompt his decision to come out as gay. Kennedy and Collins were roommates at Stanford. He recounts hearing about Kennedy, who is not gay, marching in Boston's Gay Pride Parade. "For as long as I've known Jason Collins, he has been defined by three things: his passion for the sport he loves, his unwavering integrity, and the

biggest heart you will ever find," Kennedy said. "I'm proud to stand with him today and proud to call him a friend."

President Barack Obama called Collins "to express his support and said he was impressed by his courage," a White House official said.

Active players posted their approval on Twitter. The Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant said: "Proud of @jasoncollins34. Don't suffocate who u r because of the ignorance of others." Steve Nash, also a Laker, said: "The time has come. Maximum respect."

Two Wizards players, Garrett Temple and Bradley Beal, said in tweets they were "proud" of Collins. "Much respect to my teammate," Temple said. "Great teammate, mentor, and better person," said Beal.

Collins' announcement comes after the end of the Wizards' season, and he is no longer under contract. He is an "old" player by NBA standards who has never been a star. So will he play in the NBA this fall?

ESPN.com said only six of fourteen team officials reached for an unofficial poll thought he would be back in the league. If he does return, he probably will play only a few minutes a game for a team that needs a veteran leader, the other executives told ESPN.com.

Some male athletes have come out as gay after they've left professional sports. One is John Amaechi, a former NBA player.

Amaechi told CNN he hopes Collins will be a catalyst for a wider acceptance of openly gay athletes, saying he believes Collins is better equipped than anyone who came before him to handle the attention that will come his way. But it may take more, Amaechi said.

People like to believe one iconic figure can change things, he said, "but the reality is that when there's this tipping point, or enough people coming together deciding that change is necessary, that's when change happens."

The Women's National Basketball Association, the women's pro league, has had its share of milestones and openness as far as gays are concerned. In 2005, Sheryl Swoopes, a top player in the WNBA, announced she is gay.

Brittney Griner, the No. 1 pick in this year's WNBA draft, recently said in an interview with *Sports Illustrated* that she is gay. Griner finished her college career as the NCAA's all-time leading shot-blocker with 748 and as the No. 2 all-time scorer with 3,283 points.

CNN's Brianna Keilar, Jason Hanna, and Jill Martin contributed to this report.

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2150 W 18, Ste 300 832/435-0692

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215 Westheimer 713/830-3000

Ryan White Planning Council
RWPCHouston.org 713/572-3784

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FiredUpAssemblers.com 832/726-3505

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Pam Ellis/State Farm
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David Lorms/Farmers
ETC Jester @ Loop 610 713/688-8669

Rob Schmerler Insurance Agency/Farmers/
Rob Schmerler
6575 W Loop S, Ste 185 713/661-7700

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3841 Bellaire 713/668-5000

Silverlust
1338-C Westheimer 713/520-5440

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DoggynWonderland.com 866/280-1818

Last Wishes/Animal Hospice
1302 Waugh 713/452-0474

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DaltonDehart.com 713/622-2202

Yvonne Feece Photography
yvonnefeece.com 832/876-1053

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5403 Kirby 713/224-DRIP(3747)

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Copy.com
1201-F Westheimer 713/528-1201

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Buildwealth Mortgage
DougLuza.com 832/220-3212

Zeus Mortgage
1776 Yorktown 713/275-9387

REAL ESTATE-REALTORS

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David Bowers/The House Company
DavidBowers.com/Galveston 409/763-2800

Mike Copenhagen/ReMax Metro
2626 Richmond 832-415-8484

Decardi Development Group
Decardi.net 281/412-4195

Karen Derr/Boulevard Realty
1545 Heights 713/875-7050

Robert Derr/Boulevard Realty
1545 Heights 713/875-7049

Pam Efferson/KellerWilliams
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Eric Gage/ReMax CityView
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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 • club2020.houston.com.

CLUB CRYSTAL

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

CROCKER BAR

Resident DJ Johnny spins on Friday and Saturday nights at this comfortably remodeled Montrose nightspot that also offers karaoke on Tuesdays and Thursdays and extended happy-hour prices throughout the week. 2312 Crocker • 713/529-3355.

THE 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-

BEHIND THE BAR

WHO: Stacy Hartoon

WHERE: Rudyard's

2010 Waugh Dr. • rudyardspub.com • 713/521-0521

WHAT'S UP: Fondly embraced as "The Living Room of the Montrose," this bar & grill and live-music venue has been serving the neighborhood for 35 years. Had it up to here with the nonsense? Then, welcome home... all day, every day.

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 • guavalamphouston.com.

JR'S BAR & GRILL

With house emcee Kafi, OutSmart's Gayest and Greatest reigning drag champion, this Montrose standard offers drag and strip shows throughout the week, karaoke Thursdays and Sundays, plus pool tables, male dancers, and award-winning cocktails. 808 Pacific St. • jrbarandgrill.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

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

MONTROSE MINING COMPANY

Study male dancers bump and grind every night at this leather/denim spot, offering Montrose's lowest vodka drinks with Trash Disco Sundays. The two-tier back patio bar provides a perch for viewing the Pacific Street scenery. 805 Pacific St. • theminehouston.com • 713/529-7488.

THE RIPCORD

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

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 repute, 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.

Beaumont

ORLEANS STREET PUB AND PATIO

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

Bryan/College Station

HALO VIDEO BAR

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

Clear Lake/Webster

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.

Spring

RANCH HILL SALOON

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

THE ROOM

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

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by
Lilly
Roddy

Lots of Planetary Activity in May

That should keep us busy—and sometimes on the edge of our seats

We continue in May with the second and third of this year's three eclipses. The solar eclipse is on May 9, and the Lunar eclipse is on May 24 at 11:25 p.m. This eclipse cycle is stimulating us to look deeper and harder at things. Information is often revealed to us during eclipses that changes our perspective about the world. These are highly energized days. • May 17 through the 21st can be volatile. Be sure to stay rational during that period. It will be hard to get enough sleep during that time, and our minds will just be very restless.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). Your focus this month should be getting a better handle on your finances and making better use of your personal skills. This is a very good time to review any stock or savings portfolios. You are moving more slowly and carefully. You are eliminating some people out of your life. After mid-month you are much more active, busy, and chatty. The 20th and 21st could be very testy days for work and relationships. You can always justify your actions, but consider if they really help you in the long term.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). You are in a time of rest and retreat. You are feeling more sensitive than usual, and normal conditions can seem more irritating. Choose your company carefully. You will be feeling especially sluggish on the 24th and 25th, and your psychic energies are very strong. Trust them. Your energy returns by the very end of the month, so you'll be ready to tackle new projects in June. You will get back to being extra busy.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). This month you are feeling a strong social current. You want to get out and see friends and even visit groups and organizations that you used to be involved with—but they still must convince you that they are worth your while. Relationship and career energies are very tense from the 19th through the 21st. Action may be required, but you have more time to act than you think. You are more creative toward the end of the month—a good time for writing or attending a seminar.

LEO (July 23–August 22). Since you have been in a generally serious time, this month you really focus on long-term goals, cleaning out the stuff you don't need and generally trying to create a more stable life. This can be a time when you are really pushing to es-

tablish yourself at work and earn some extra kudos. By mid-month you are feeling more social and want to get out and enjoy life. Friends and associates can be very helpful toward the end of the month, but you have to be open to receiving that help.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). This is a much more relaxing month for you. You are feeling creative and not experiencing as many mental blocks. This is a very good time to advance your career or some individual effort. The first two-thirds of the month is a busy time. Be sure to take a break from all the activity on the 25th and 26th. You will really need to get away from the madding crowd. Otherwise, this is a great month for most any activity.

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). May is a very introspective month for the Librans. You are really looking at your options and deciding what you want to do. For some, this is a time to pull up stakes and move on to greener pastures. Some of you are totally rebuilding your lives and your work. Tensions are high around the 19th through the 21st. Don't let the pressure force you into a decision. Relationships could be extra tense before life lightens up considerably after the 25th.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). With the eclipse that takes place in your relationship sector, there is a big focus on relationships this month. This will bring more awareness and understanding to your relationship. If your relationships are rocky, this is a very stressful time. If your relationships are in a good place, this is a time of setting new goals for the future. If you are single, this is a great time to put yourself out there. You will be cautious, but you will expect results. Overall, it's a great time to be getting organized and putting everything in its place.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). Your work environment is being spotlighted this month. Changes are possible there, and you are already attempting to get things more organized. Some people are grumbling, but you are ready for change. This is also a great month for any sort of diet or exercise regimen. If you are single, this



TAURUS (April 20–May 20). **May completes your yearly cycle when you look at what you have accomplished during the last year and determine which new goals you will take on this year. Taurus is slow and cautious in her movements. Particularly during this month, you are really looking at your future and where you are headed. This is a big time of decision-making—a cycle of endings and beginnings. By mid-month you lighten up and shift your attention to your financial picture. Good opportunities open up for a new job, a pay increase, or even a chance to start your own business. The eclipse on the 9th is for you!**

a spring cleaning. Some of you are considering remodeling or moving to a smaller location. You are planning ahead for the future—especially for your career. If you are pushing yourself at work, you are definitely making headway. Some of you will be concluding projects and looking for another project to commit to. You are more easygoing toward the end of the month.

PISCES (February 19–March 20). This is a very unusual month for you. First of all, the psychic energies are so much stronger than last month. This may make it difficult for you to get out there and just deal with the routine things. You will be most productive in the first half of the month. The lunar eclipse on the 24th is in your career sector. Look for some news around that time that will open new doors for you. Your energy will be very low during this time, and you will want to sleep even more than usual. You get your sea legs back at the end of the month!

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

is a good month to market yourself. If you are involved, this is a good time to spend some time together. The 24th through the 26th will be low-energy days for you. Try to get some time alone on those days so you can recharge. After that, you'll have a big burst of energy!

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). Generally, this is a more laid-back time for Capricorns—if we can ever say that the Kids and Goats are laid-back. This is a more creative time for you, and it can be especially productive if you are working on a new project. The 19th through the 21st will be tense as you try to divide your attention between work, home, and time for yourself. Be true to yourself and stay centered. You are much more motivated in the last week of the month.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). Your home and emotional security is very important this month, and you may be motivated to do

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OUT IN HOUSTON



Members and supporters of the "OUTLaws" Texas Southern University, Thurgood Marshall School of Law LGBT student organization, April 10.



Performers from the University of Houston, GLOBAL fundraiser for HATCH at Meteor, April 5.



Tournament winner **John Breau** and **Scott Greathouse** at the "South Texas Billiard Challenge" between Houston and San Antonio, April 7.



Andrew Rodriguez, Jason Gallegos, Javier Ramirez, Frankie Quijano, and Ester Medina at "Pride Uncorked," April 13.



Performers from the Rice University Queers and Allies fundraiser for HATCH, April 5.



Lou Weaver, Josh Corey, Bethany Townsend, Koomah, Rosemary Hennessy, Katrina Karkazis, Josephine Tittsworth, Brian Riedel, and (front) Monica Cortez at Katrina Karkazis "Gender Verification Policies in Elite Sport: Eligibility, Fair Play and the Question of Medical Need" presentation at Rice University, April 4.



Monique Starr, Carter Brown, Dana Hinton, Katy Stewart, Lou Weaver, Alexis Melvin, Susan Stryker, Phyllis Frye, Liz James, Trystan Reese, Becca Keo, and Cristan Williams at the Transgender Unity Banquet at the Sheraton Brookhollow, March 20.



Kim Gustavsson and Charles Caliba at BRB's final night before closing, March 30.



Jerry Rockwell, David Revils, Brandon Douglass, Melissa Flories, Donna Junker, and Sara Sjolander at the Crocker Bar "High Heel Race & Bonnet Contest" fundraiser for Texas United Charities, March 30.



Harris County Precinct 1 Constable **Alan Rosen**, Houston City Council Member **Ellen Cohen**, GLBT Caucus President **Noel Freeman** at the GLBT Political Caucus meeting, April 3.

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