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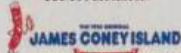
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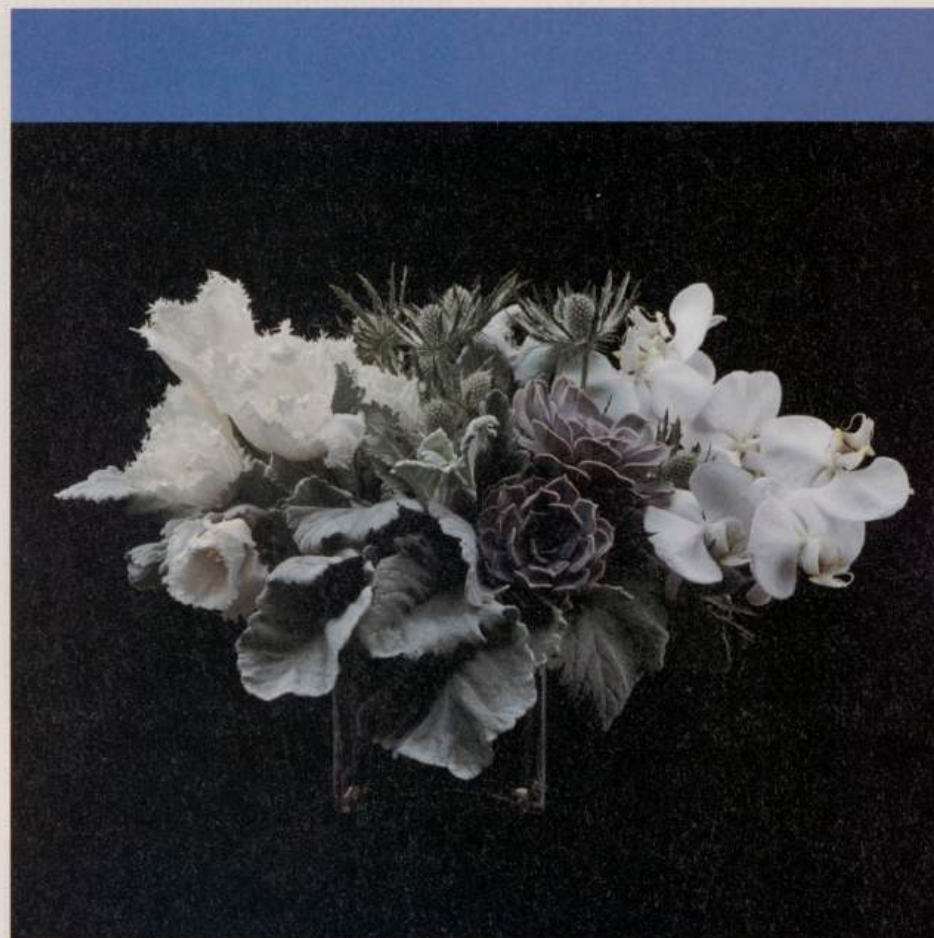
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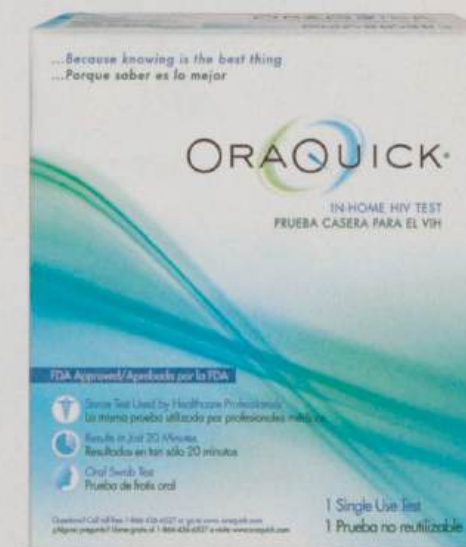


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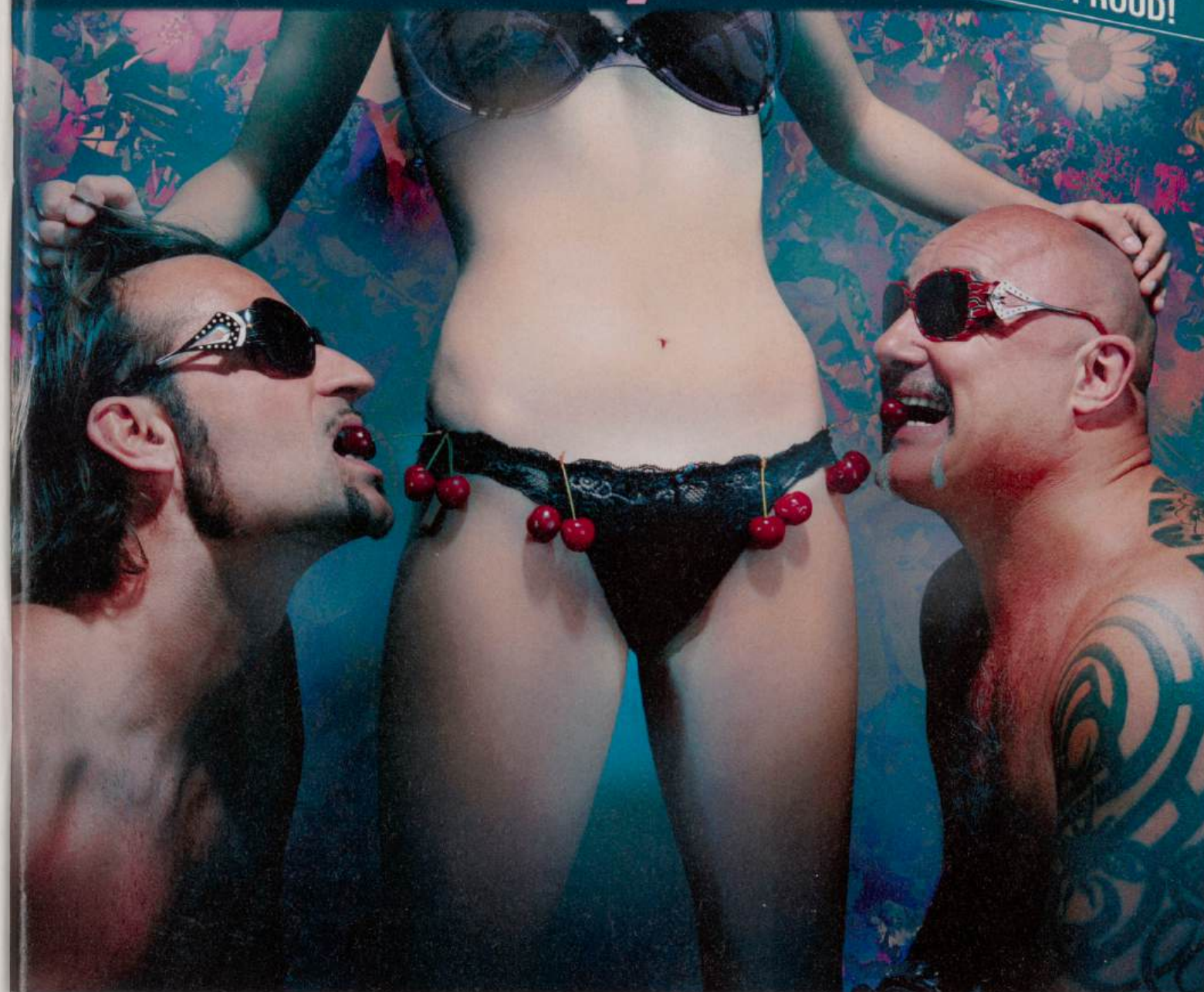
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Time for 'Modern Family' Couple to Wed

ACLU lobbies for gay couple to finally tie the knot

The American Civil Liberties Union is lobbying for the most prominent gay parents on U.S. television to get married.

The campaign aimed at *Modern Family* comes as momentum for gay marriage builds in parts of the country.

ACLU Action started a campaign to urge the show's producers to write a wedding episode for Mitchell and Cameron, fathers of an adopted child and one of three couples at the heart of the show.

The ACLU says it is appealing to the fictional family to draw more attention to the real issue as the Supreme Court deliberates on two important marriage equality cases.

"Mitch and Cam are a couple that America has come to know and love, and seeing them get married, and seeing the characters in the story grapple with their desire to get married, makes it real for a bigger part of America," said James Esseks, director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Project at the ACLU.

Supporters are invited to "RSVP" to the wedding online. The ACLU plans to deliver the online "guest list" to the show's producers but said it had not yet contacted the show.

ABC referred questions to 20th Century Fox Studios, which did not immediately respond.

Show creator Steven Levitan tweeted a link to the campaign with "Wow." Jessie Tyler Ferguson, who plays Mitchell, tweeted: "Love this! Thank you ACLU!"

Esseks said the petition was a departure for the group, but that along with filing lawsuits, lobbying for bills, or organizing ballot initiatives, the group saw public education and changing the culture as part of its mission. He applauded what *Modern Family* has done already for public perception of gay couples.

"It's a popular show, they're a lovable, very real couple, and it would be great to see them walk down the aisle," he said.

—Associated Press



Eric Stonestreet, as Cameron, right, and Jesse Tyler Ferguson as Mitchell in a scene from the comedy *Modern Family*. The ACLU is lobbying for this gay couple on *Modern Family* to get married. ACLU Action started a campaign to urge the show's producers to script a wedding episode for Mitchell and Cameron, already fathers of an adopted child and one of three couples at the heart of the show.

Boy Scouts to Allow Gay Youth, Leave Out Gay Leaders

ON MAY 23, THE BOY SCOUTS of America voted to lift its ban on admitting gay youth into the organization, but continues to exclude gay adults and leaders.

More than 1,400 volunteer leaders from across the country participated in the vote, with over 60 percent approving the measure that stated no youth may be denied membership "on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone."

Following the vote, Wayne Perry, president of the Boy Scouts of America, said, "This is a very difficult decision for a lot of people, but we're moving forward together. Our vision is to serve every kid."

Despite stark opposition from conservative affiliates, the vote put the Boy Scouts more in line with the rising acceptance of homosexuality, especially among younger families who are essential to the organization's future.

However, the Scouts did not consider the question of whether to allow openly gay adults and leaders to participate in the organization. While some view allowing gay youth as the first step in the process of ending discrimination, others argue there can be no compromise

for eliminating injustice. "They are continuing to discriminate against people," former Eagle Scout James Dale said. "They say let's get back to Scouting and move away from sexuality, but . . . the issue won't go away." —Megan Smith

Seminar: How to Have Sex without Breaking the Law If You Are HIV-positive

IN A 2011 HARRIS COUNTY COURT CASE, part of the indictment involving an HIV-positive female defendant who performed oral sex on her male partner reads as follows: "... as herein alleged that she (the defendant) used her MOUTH and SALIVA, a deadly weapon, . . . its intended use was capable of causing death and serious bodily injury."

This statement reflects the weak intellectual grasp that the Texas judicial system has regarding the possibility of HIV transmissibility—which, in this instance, is zero, unless both parties in the encounter have open and bleeding sores.

continued on page 18

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Inspiring Life At Home

Houston's LIVE Consortium, an HIV education and advocacy group, discusses this case and others in an educational forum entitled "How to Have Sex without Breaking the Law" on Tuesday, June 25, 6:30-8:30 p.m., at the Montrose Center, 401 Branard Street.

The legal ramifications of HIV transmission have been deliberated since the discovery of the virus. Local, state, national, and international jurisdictions have debated and enacted a variety of responses. Some have chosen not to criminalize HIV-specific transmission at all, while others have defined even the most innocuous encounters as lethal events and inflicted excessive punishments on defendants.

The forum includes a panel discussion on topics such as defending individuals accused of infecting others, representation of individuals who have been infected, and the psycho-social aspects of HIV status disclosure as it relates to dating and sexual situations. Additionally, medical experts and representatives from the Harris County Dis-

trict Attorney's office have also been invited to speak.

"LIVE is hosting this event because there are those who seek to criminalize the sexual behaviors of HIV-positive individuals—something we believe fosters stigma," Mitchell Katine, openly gay attorney and LIVE board



With checks in hand, representatives of the sixteen beneficiaries of **Bunnies on the Bayou** gathered at Pictures Plus on Sunday, April 28. BOTB 34 distributed a record \$110,000 after the Easter Sunday event, sponsored by Bud Light and Ketel One Vodka.

member, said. "Additionally, this criminalization [often occurs] absent proper medical information, especially with regards to transmissibility. Many outdated beliefs still persist and are utilized in Texas (and nationally) to

prosecute people. We want to foster a fair and lively conversation." —Rich Arenschieldt

For an expanded version of this article, visit OutSmartMagazine.com.

New FAFSA Guide Helps Students of LGBT Parents

PUTTING A CHILD THROUGH COLLEGE can be a major financial burden on any parent. However, when federal financial aid forms ignore non-traditional families and their needs, LGBT parents can find themselves smothering in debt. Luckily, NerdWallet has just released a free interactive guide to help students of non-traditional families navigate and properly complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to ensure their students' eligibility for federal grants, loans, and work-study funds just in time for its June 30 deadline.

Approximately twenty-two million FAFSA applications are submitted and processed each year, according to the Federal Student Aid Office. With the estimated number of children being raised by same-sex parents in the U.S. nearing six million, more and more students are having

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Community

Photos by Dalton DeHart



On April 26 the PFLAG/HATCH Youth Scholarship Foundation celebrated fifteen years of providing scholarships to local LGBT students with a fundraiser at The Gardens of Bammel Lane honoring the late Gordon Weisser and his wife **Blake Weisser** (pictured on left) with board members **Robert Shipman** and **Casey Holtzman**.



The Creating Change Houston Task Force hosts planning session took place on May 7 at The Montrose Center. Pictured are (l-r) **Christina Gorchynski**, **Augie Augustine**, **Bryan Hlavinka**, and **Lou Weaver**.



On May 11, **Mayor Annise Parker** kicked off her third term mayoral campaign with a grassroots rally at Stude Park in the Heights. Seated in front of Mayor Parker is local Democratic blogger **Carl Whitmarsh**.



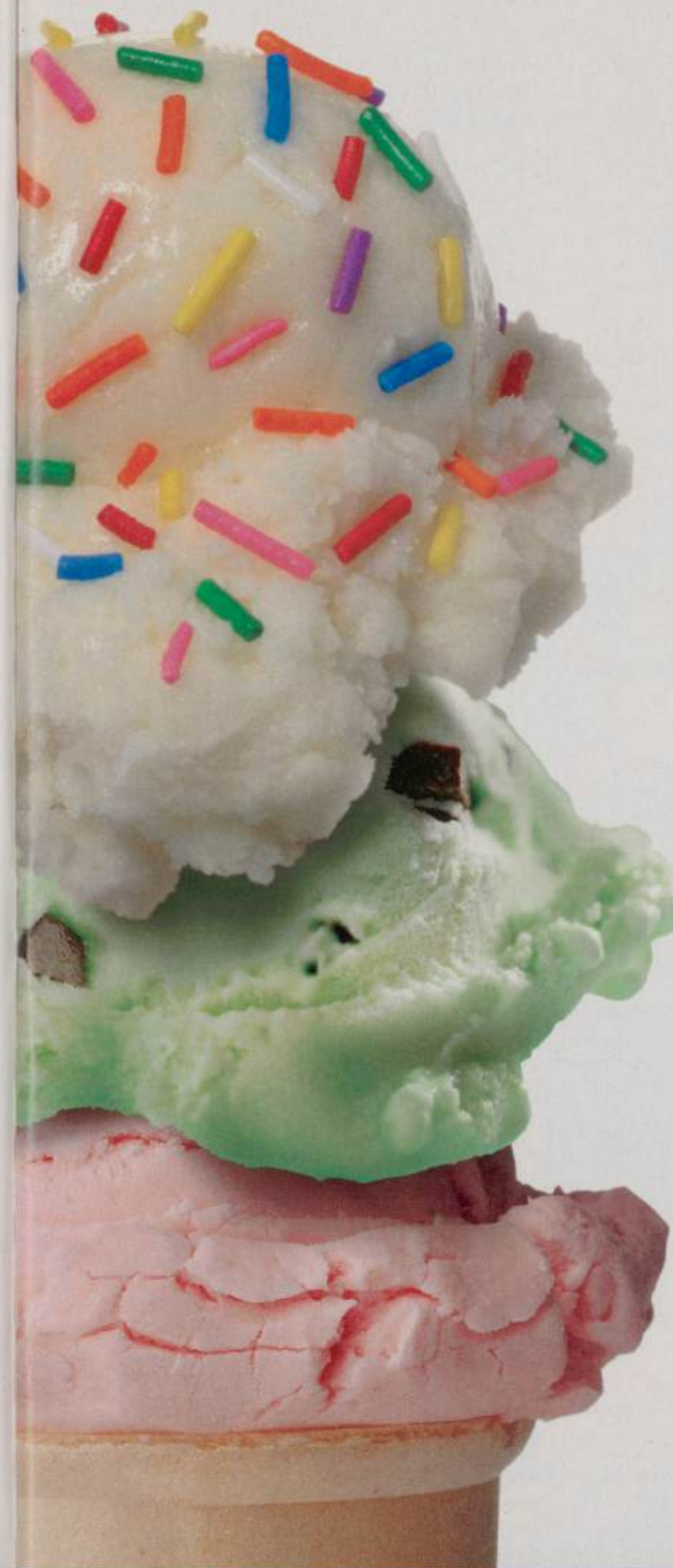
OUTSMART's own Dalton DeHart was honored by HISD during their Volunteers in Public Schools Program on May 22 at the Kingdom Builders Center. Pictured (l-r) are HISD Superintendent **Dr. Terry B. Grier**, Dalton DeHart, and School Board President **Anna Eastman**.



Lazarus House celebrated their eleventh annual Fiesta fundraiser on May 4 at their facility at 4106 Austin Street. Featuring fajitas, music by the Anne Mundy Band, margaritas, and, of course, cerveza supplied by Silver Eagle Distributors. Pictured (l-r) are **Tino Ramirez**, **Boyd Edwards**, **Danielle Sampey**, **Carey Hensley**, and **Marc Cohen**.



On May 15, the University of Texas Gender and Sexuality Center and Queer Students Alliance hosted Lavender Graduation, a special ceremony that honors the achievements of graduating LGBTQ and ally students on campus. Students (l-r) **Kelsey Gledhill**, **Vicky Pham**, **Alyssa Ramirez**, **Megan Smith**, and **Andra Steele** pose under the ceremony's lavender arch.



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What is STRIBILD?

STRIBILD is a prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before. It combines 4 medicines into 1 pill to be taken once a day with food. STRIBILD is a complete single-tablet regimen and should not be used with other HIV-1 medicines.

STRIBILD does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS. To control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses you must keep taking STRIBILD. Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions about how to reduce the risk of passing HIV-1 to others. Always practice safer sex and use condoms to lower the chance of sexual contact with body fluids. Never reuse or share needles or other items that have body fluids on them.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

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

STRIBILD can cause serious side effects:

- **Build-up of an acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious medical emergency. Symptoms of lactic acidosis include feeling very weak or tired, unusual (not normal) muscle pain, trouble breathing, stomach pain with nausea or vomiting, feeling cold especially in your arms and legs, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, and/or a fast or irregular heartbeat.
- **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.

- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you also have HBV and stop taking STRIBILD, your hepatitis may suddenly get worse. Do not stop taking STRIBILD without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to monitor your health. STRIBILD is not approved for the treatment of HBV.

Who should not take STRIBILD?

Do not take STRIBILD if you:

- **Take a medicine that contains:** alfuzosin, dihydroergotamine, ergotamine, methylergonovine, cisapride, lovastatin, simvastatin, pimozide, sildenafil when used for lung problems (Revatio®), triazolam, oral midazolam, rifampin or the herb St. John's wort.
- **For a list of brand names for these medicines,** please see the Brief Summary on the following pages.
- **Take any other medicines to treat HIV-1 infection,** or the medicine adefovir (Hepsera®).

What are the other possible side effects of STRIBILD?

Serious side effects of STRIBILD may also include:

- **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do regular blood and urine tests to check your kidneys before and during treatment with STRIBILD. If you develop kidney problems, your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking STRIBILD.
- **Bone problems,** including bone pain or bones getting soft or thin, which may lead to fractures. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your bones.
- **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.

The most common side effects of STRIBILD include nausea and diarrhea. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or don't go away.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking STRIBILD?

- **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.).
- **If you take antacids.** Take antacids at least 2 hours before or after you take STRIBILD.
- **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.
- **If you are breastfeeding** (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk. Also, some medicines in STRIBILD can pass into breast milk, and it is not known if this can harm the baby.

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

Please see Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information with **important warnings** on the following pages.



STRIBILD is a prescription medicine used as a complete single-tablet regimen to treat HIV-1 in adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before. STRIBILD does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.

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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 (Cafergot®, 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 (Vasacor®, Bepadin®)
 - bosentan (Tracleer®)
 - buspirone
 - carbamazepine (Carbatrol®, Epitol®, Equetro®, Tegreto®)
 - clarithromycin (Biaxin®, Prevpac®)
 - clonazepam (Klonopin®)
 - clorazepate (Gen-xene®, Tranxene®)
 - colchicine (Colcrys®)
 - medicines that contain dexamethasone
 - diazepam (Valium®)

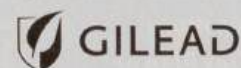
- digoxin (Lanoxin®)
- disopyramide (Norpace®)
- estazolam
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- flecainide (Tambocor®)
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- fluticasone (Flovent®, Flonase®, Flovent® Diskus, Flovent® HFA, Veramyst®)
- itraconazole (Sporanox®)
- ketoconazole (Nizoral®)
- lidocaine (Xylocaine®)
- mexiletine
- oxcarbazepine (Trileptal®)
- perphenazine
- phenobarbital (Luminal®)
- phenytoin (Dilantin®, Phenytek®)
- 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

From Boys to Men to Great Fathers

"That is just not appropriate," according to Rick Perry

Last month, Texas Republican Governor Rick Perry called being gay pop culture's "flavor of the month." If you don't believe me, Google "Rick Perry Flavor of the Month," and you get 149,000 mentions of it on the Internet machine. We're fixing to make that 149,001 as soon as this magazine gets published online.

Y'all, Governor Rick Perry is living proof that somewhere along the way, evolution took a wrong turn.

Pop culture flavor of the month. Now that's kinda odd coming out of the mouth of a governor whose favorite flavor is tutti-frutti.

Oh dear Lord, he thinks being gay is like disco music or the limbo. And although Barry Gibb singing "More Than a Woman" while doing limbo might be very charming to see, I seri-

"Y'all, Governor Rick Perry is living proof that, somewhere along the way, evolution took a wrong turn."

ously doubt it pre-dates Mesolithic rock art or would likely remain on the charts in the foreseeable future—say like until next Tuesday.

Rick says that the Boy Scouts have "helped millions of boys become . . . uh . . . uh . . . men and . . . uh . . . great

fathers and . . . uh . . . uh . . . that is just not appropriate." Really? (If you know Rick Perry, you know I'm not exaggerating with the uh's. Words are not his friends. Hearing him speak is like watching somebody try to run with their shoe laces tied together.)

Sure enough, the shoe-string thing caused him to say that becoming a man and a father are not appropriate. However, I suspect the "that" that's not appropriate for Rick is really the gays, who just totally ruin all that men and father stuff. Because, as has been well-documented by the research team of Right and Wing, if you're gay, you cannot be a man or a great father. You →



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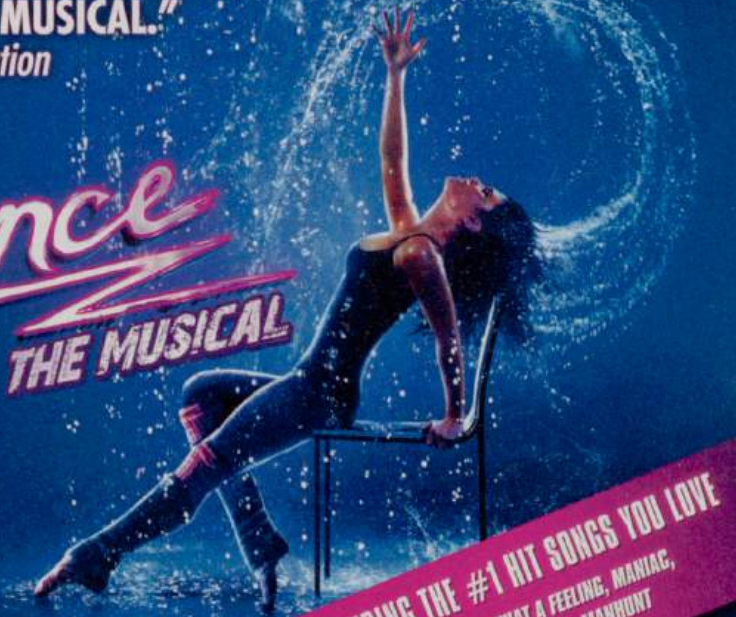
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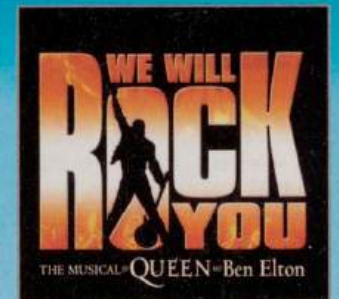
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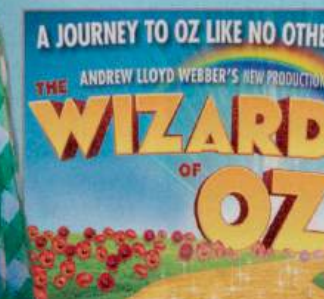
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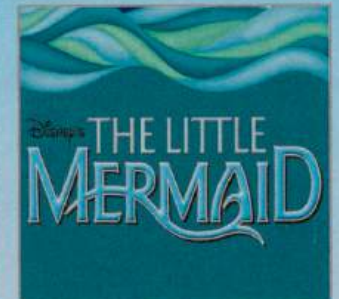
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LeftOut continued from page 24

just can't. And if you try, we will have you arrested, because that's the law in Texas. Rick, honey, I am delighted, charmed, and twinkling with shiny glitter in my eyes to be the one who gets to tell you this: gay is here to stay. It was not invented in the 1980s just to piss you off.

You know that old saying, "When you're in a hole, quit digging"? Well, Rick didn't learn that. I'm not saying he's stupid; he just has real bad luck when it comes to thinking.

In the same interview, Governor Perry compares the Boy Scouts' resistance of gay members to Sam Houston's opposition to slavery. He said we should have the courage Sam Houston had to oppose slavery in order to have the courage to support oppression of gay people.

I hope your head didn't explode reading that. But if it did, it was for good reason. Honey, I could eat a bowl of alphabet soup and poop a better argument than that.

Okay, Sam Houston did not oppose slavery. He owned slaves. He opposed secession. But, let's leave that alone and let it slide, because that detail is tiny and amusing compared to where this is going.

Obviously, Rick was absent from school the day they taught history and analogies. There is a big bear's-butt difference between opposing slavery and then fighting to keep other people oppressed. It's like saying, "Jesus had the courage to feed the hungry, so we should be like Jesus by having the courage to let those suckers starve."

I am not sure where he stands on the issue of gay slaves, and, frankly, I do not have the courage to ask.

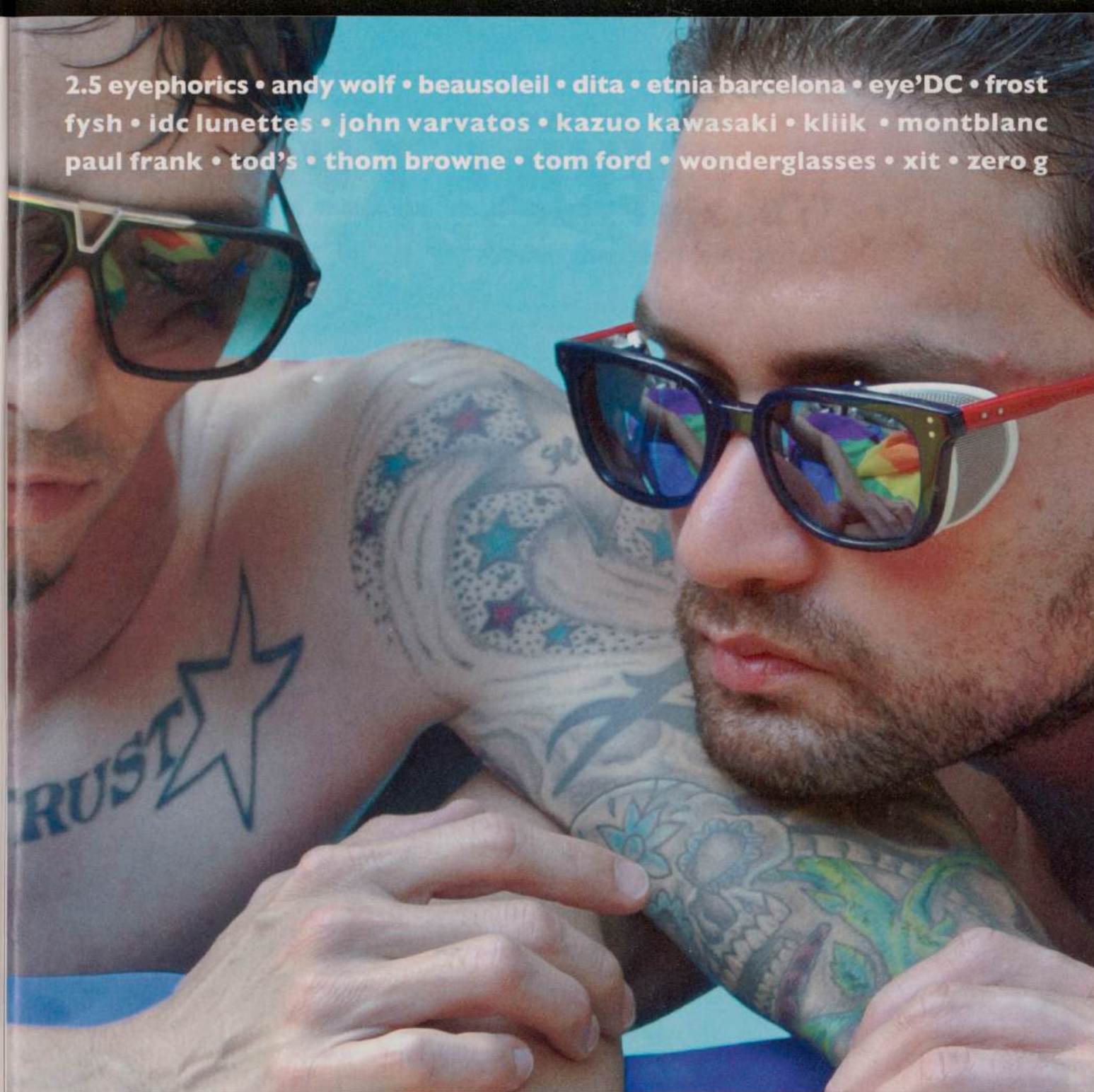
Can we just tell Rick that he's been elected King of Idaho and give him a one-way ticket? He'll never find his way back here on his own, and Idaho certainly won't mind having some guy walking around in a coon-skin-cap crown and cowboy boots. Unless that was *all* he was wearing.

And, hell, in Boise they probably wouldn't even mind that. They'd just build a museum around him.

Thelma gave me a little advice about dealing with Rick Perry that I'll pass along to you: if someone hates you for no good reason, give that asshole a reason, damnit.

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
Blake
Hayes

What Is Pride?

It's more than the dictionary definition

"The next time someone asks you why LGBT Pride marches exist or why Gay Pride Month is June, tell them 'A bisexual woman named Brenda Howard thought it should be.'"

Do you know who Brenda Howard is? That's okay, I didn't either, until I started to write this month's column and search for an answer to the question: What is Pride?

"Justifiable self-respect" (the dictionary's answer) is a good place to start.

Pride is certainly about standing up and saying, "I am gay, and I deserve to be equal, and here I am!"

But LGBT Pride is also about history, and remembering how our progress was made. Pride parades, after all, began as a modest commemoration on the first anniversary of the 1969 Stonewall Inn Riots, which took place at that gay bar on Christopher Street in New York City. And though we've made progress on equality, each year we've forgotten more and more of our history.

So this year, as we celebrate the forty-fourth anniversary of Stonewall, and the forty-third anniversary of Christopher Street Liberation Day, let's honor some of our early liberators.

Brenda Howard is one of them. This openly bisexual New Yorker helped create what we know today as Pride. She was one of the core activists who coordinated that first Christopher Street Liberation Day March in 1970. She and her contemporaries popularized the early use of the word "pride," and initiated the idea of a weeklong series of events each year. PFLAG began giving an annual award in her honor after she died in 2005. Brenda Howard, "The Mother of Pride," fought for equality for more than three decades. We should all know who she was.

José Sarria is another. He pre-

ceded Harvey Milk as an openly gay candidate for office. Sarria's life is fascinating: born in the 1920s, Sarria had a surprisingly open-minded family who embraced his love of dressing up in girls' clothes. He entered the military after the attack on Pearl Harbor, skirting the height requirement (he was not quite five feet tall) by seducing a major at the San Francisco recruiting station!

Later, Sarria would become a beloved drag queen at the Black Cat Bar in San Francisco. He used the position to encourage customers to live openly and stand together, becoming increasingly active against the bar raids and other discriminatory police action.

Eventually, Sarria turned in his heels for a suit and ran for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. He didn't win,

"Brenda Howard, 'The Mother of Pride,' fought for equality for more than three decades."

but he did show the power of the gay vote and paved the way for future LGBT candidates across the country, including Harvey Milk. Sarria continued to remain active in the fight for equality, and as far as I can tell, is still alive and living in New Mexico.

With his campaign in San Francisco, Sarria became the first openly gay candidate for office in the United States. It was 1961. Every gay person in America should know who he is.

There are so many others: Gilbert Baker, who created the rainbow Pride flag (did you know it originally had eight colors?). Cleve Jones, a tireless activist who worked on Harvey Milk's campaigns and went on to create the AIDS Quilt. Craig Rodwell (whose first serious relationship was with a young Harvey Milk), who, along with Brenda Howard, proposed the first Pride parade as "a nationwide show of support." His Bleeker Street apartment was where the first march was planned.

Finally, this last name is the one that I have a personal connection to: Medora Payne. I found her (okay, I stalked her) on

Facebook, and we've kept in touch for a couple of years now. Her part in the LGBT civil rights movement is much smaller than the other giants I've listed here, but it's no less important. She is a mom, a teacher, and a staunch ally of ours.

I found her shortly after reading what should be a required text for LGBT Americans: *The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk*.

In one passage, early in the campaign, author Randy Shilts writes: "Ryckman [Milk's new campaign manager] knew he had made the right decision a few days later when a half-giggling store employee told him a new campaign volunteer had arrived at the Castro Camera headquarters. At the counter stood a pert young girl in her Most Holy Redeemer uniform, a wool hat, and a school bag. Ryckman thought she might be a midget, but no, she was a sixth grader who had carefully printed out the volunteer card:
NAME: Medora Payne
AGE: 11."

I'm so honored to have found Medora, who has provided me with a small, indirect connection to Harvey Milk's legacy.

This, to me, is what Pride is. It's reaching back and connecting with our history. As LGBT Americans, we're not really a part of the curriculum yet, so it takes a little more effort to discover that history, but it's there.

From the eleven-year-old campaign volunteers to the fallen heroes whose memory we honor, keep them all in the back of your mind this month, and stay focused on the progress we still have to make.

And if you have the "justifiable self-respect" to rock some skimpy outfit on a parade float, you go ahead and do it, and I'll cheer you on. Just don't forget the other half!

Happy Pride!

Blake Hayes is the morning host at Mix 96.5 KHM.

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* Quote attributed to bisexual activist Tom Limoncelli, who is also a 2006 recipient of the Brenda Howard Award from PFLAG.



by
Grace S.
Yung, CFP

Implementation of Obamacare

How LGBTs can prepare

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, or PPACA, could be considered the most significant healthcare-related reform since the creation of Medicare and Medicaid more than forty years ago.

Thanks to this legislation, many LGBT individuals who were never able to afford health insurance—or even basic healthcare expenses—will soon be able to apply for Medicaid or affordable private health insurance coverage. Most importantly, they will not be subject to denial of insurance coverage on the basis of pre-existing conditions.

The Affordable Care Act will

also play a key role in expanding cultural competency in the healthcare workforce to include issues that are important to the LGBT community. Such changes are critical in recognizing the increasing diversity

"The law as a whole recognizes that there has in the past been a great deal of inequity and disparity in this community in the area of healthcare."

of American families.

Because many of the provisions of the PPACA will begin being implemented in 2014, it is important to have a good understanding of how this reform will

affect LGBT individuals and businesses, as well as how to prepare for the coming changes. Although there is only one provision in the Act that specifically addresses LGBT individuals, the law as a whole recognizes that there has in the past been a great deal of inequity and disparity in this community in the area of healthcare.

Individual Healthcare Issues

One of the primary aspects of the PPACA is the expansion of healthcare coverage that is comprehensive, as well as affordable and accessible. This includes an "individual mandate" that will require nearly all Americans to enroll in a qualified health insurance plan by 2014.

In order to help those with annual incomes between \$14,000 and \$42,000 per year, the Act requires that every citizen has online access to either a state or federal health insurance exchange. Beginning in 2014, these health insurance exchanges will act as the marketplace where individuals (and businesses) will be able to compare different health insurance plans, as well as to take advantage of the income-based premium subsidies that will help to keep the coverage more affordable.

In the past, those in the LGBT community have faced certain barriers to obtaining insurance and getting healthcare services. With this in mind, the new healthcare reform will ensure that HIV, high blood pressure, and various other conditions are not used by insurers to deny new coverage or to drop current coverage. In addition, policies may also be available that will cover both partners in a domestic partnership in those states that recognize such relationships.

The Effect on LGBT Business Owners

With the Supreme Court upholding the benefit-related provisions of healthcare reform in early 2013, it will now be essential that employers implement the insurance coverage mandates that were set forth in this legislation.

One of the primary requirements of this reform is that larger employers offer health insurance benefits to full-time employees. This "Employer Mandate" requiring employers with fifty or more full-time (or full-time equivalent) employees being offered affordable coverage was to become effective on January 1, 2014. However, due to several setbacks, the health insurance exchanges for small businesses may not be ready until 2015.

In any case, if employers opt not to offer such benefits, a tax penalty will be levied. Therefore, with some extra time to prepare, small-business owners will need to ensure that they are ready when these changes become effective.

Some of the key considerations in deciding whether or not your business will offer health insurance benefits should include:

- The number of full-time employees on staff
- The number of employees who are expected to enroll in the employer-provided health insurance plan
- Amount of employee wages
- Employee demographics such as age and gender
- The employer's tax rate
- The cost of providing benefits versus the penalty that would be levied if benefits are not offered to employees.

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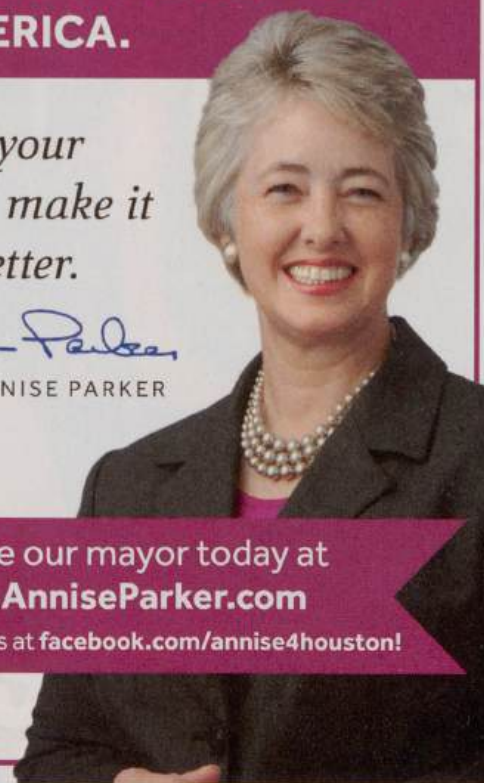
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MoneySmart continued from previous page

a number of additional factors that should be considered, such as:

- The type of plan or plans that will be offered
- How much coverage will be provided (i.e., will the company offer just the minimum amount of required benefits, or will a plan with wider coverage be provided?)
- How will the plan's premiums be paid?
- How will plan deductibles be handled?

Because the PPACA consists of more than two thousand pages of legislation, it is best to work with an advisor who can guide you through the maze of new rules. Likewise, when planning your insurance coverage and 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.

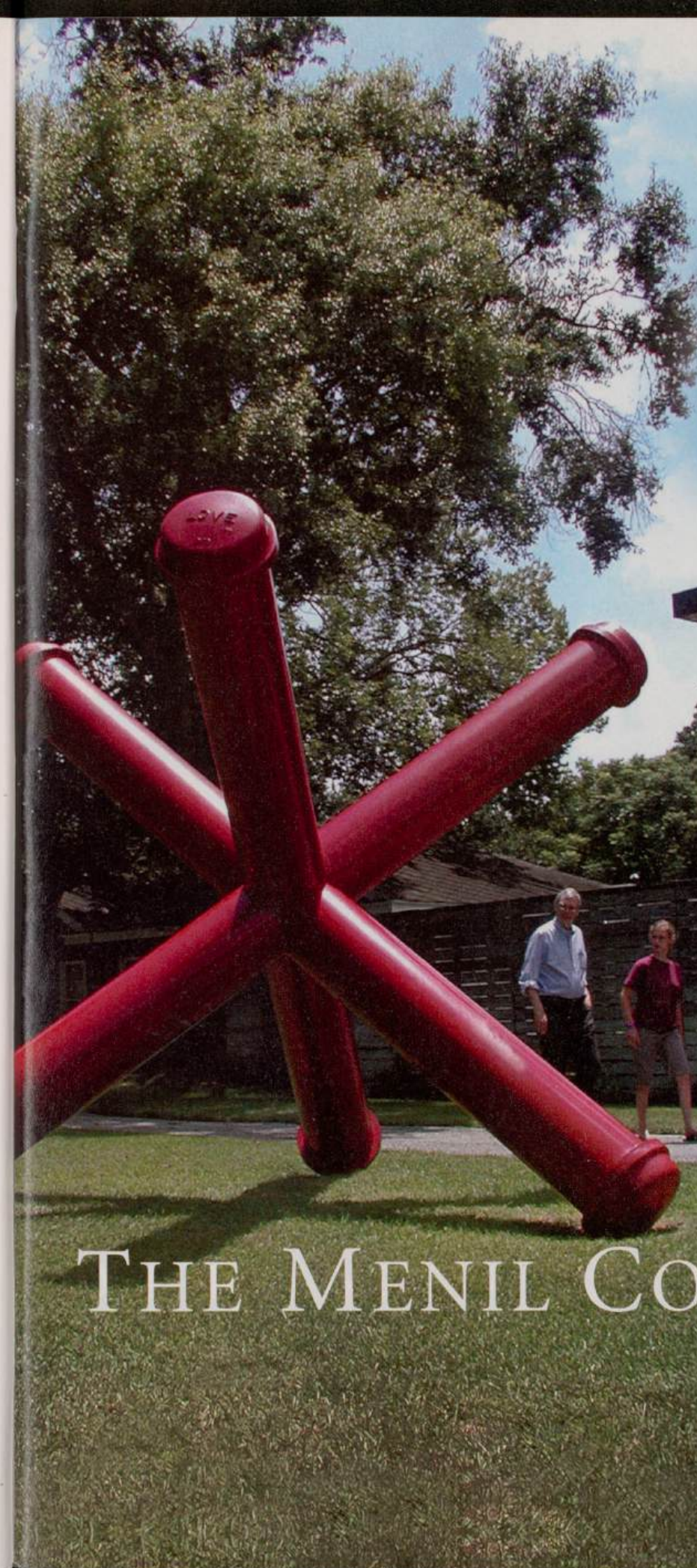
Grace S. Yung, CFP, is a certified financial planner practitioner with experience in helping domestic partners plan their finances since 1994. She is a principal at Midtown Financial LLC in Houston.

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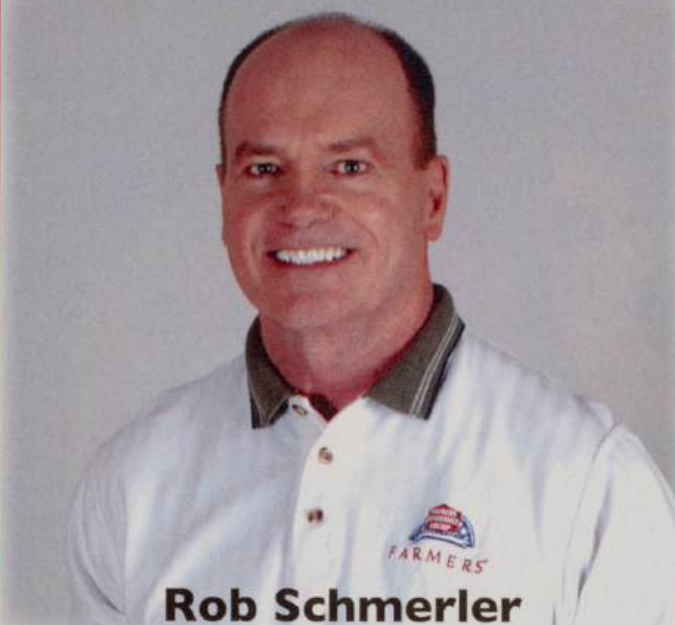
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upper 30s with snow on the ground
at the top."

David McAninch
took OutSmart to the
Temple of Angkor Wat
in Cambodia.



FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Check out these fabulous events
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June 1: LHI Spring Health Fair 2013
offering complimentary lifesaving tests
and services. INFO: lhihouston.org

June 1: Houston Pride Band
presents **The Great Outdoors**.
INFO: houstonprideband.org

June 6: Out@TUTS Night presents
Flashdance The Musical and *Dixie's
Tupperware Party*. Join us the first
Thursday performance of each show.
After the performance, mingle with
the cast and listen to fabulous cabaret
music with your LGBT friends.
INFO: tuts.com/out

**June 7-9: Galveston 3rd Annual Gay
Beach Weekend**. INFO: Facebook/2013
Galveston Gay Beach

June 8: Bayou City Performing Arts
presents **Glamorous Glee**.
INFO: bayoucityperformingarts.org

June 28: Rainbow on the Green. A free
celebration of and for Houston's LGBT
community. INFO: discoverygreen.com

June 28: Pride Houston
presents **Wonderland Houston**.
INFO: pridehouston.org

**June 29: Pride Houston Celebration
and Parade**. INFO: pridehouston.org

SAVE THE DATE

July 21: **Mint Julep 2013**

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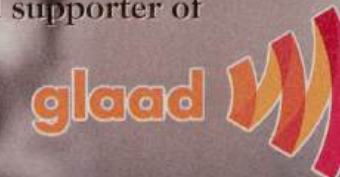
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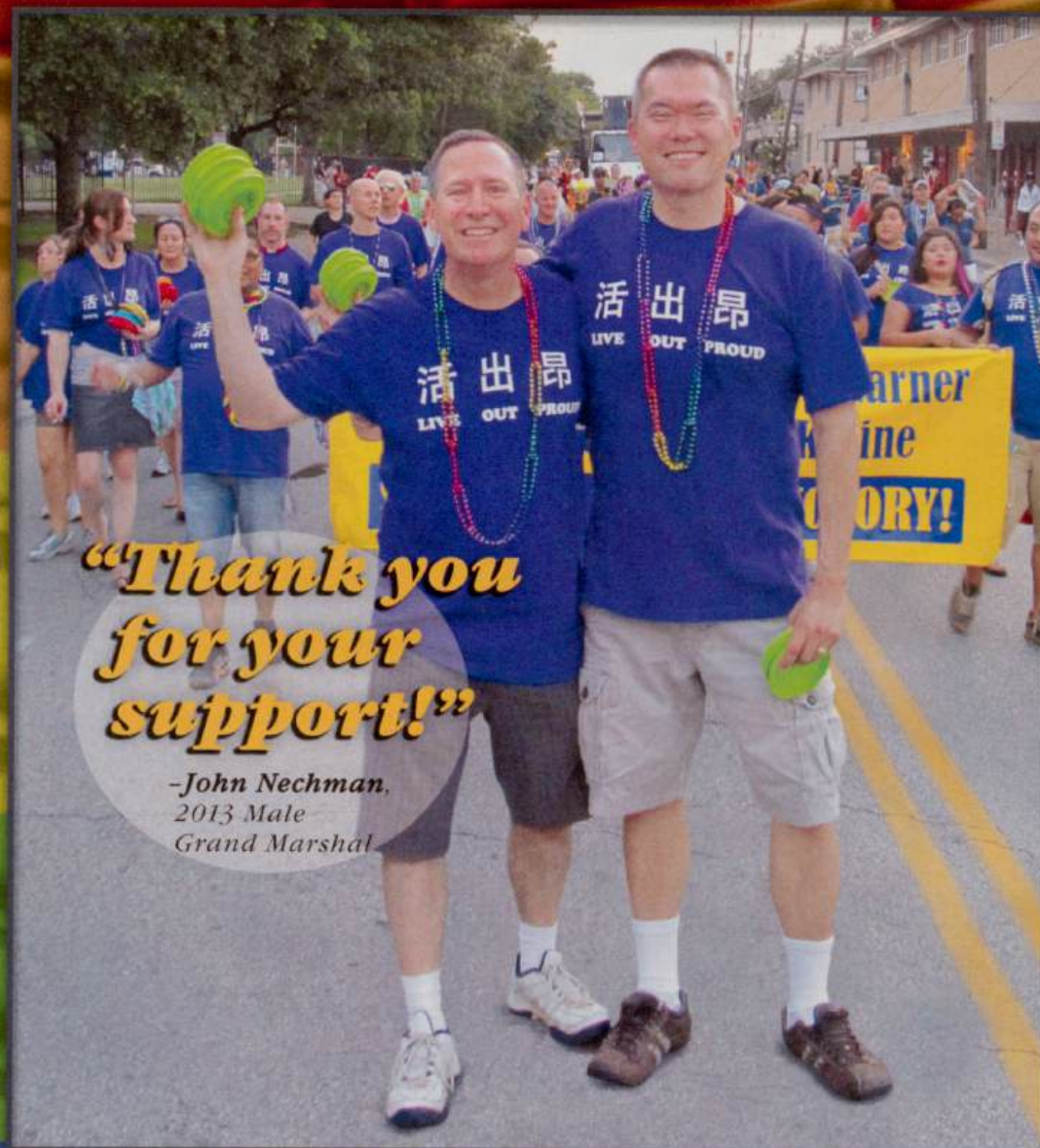


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It's Pride Month!

We'll show you our pride if you show us yours

Compiled by Marene Gustin

Photos by Dalton DeHart



Thelma Houston (pictured above) stole the show at Discovery Green during last year's Rainbow on the Green. Other events pictured here from last year include the Pride Superstar competition, Wonderland Houston, a fashion show, and the Pride festival.



For more than thirty-four years, Pride Houston has been a central part of our LGBT community. Sure, you know you're going to stake out seating early for the Pride Parade that closes the annual Pride Week on June 29, but you can also celebrate Pride all month long. Check out this list of events and get ready to par-tay.

Pride Calendar of Events →



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7 NIGHTS - 11TH ANNUAL LABOR DAY ALASKA CRUISE

August 31 - September 7, 2014

Departs from Seattle, Washington

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It's Pride Month!

continued from page 39

June 1

HOUSTON PRIDE BAND

The Great Outdoors Concert, the final concert of the 2012-2013 season. Resurrection MCC. resurrectionmcc.org

LESBIAN HEALTH INITIATIVE HEALTH FAIR

Offers no-cost screenings, including PAP tests/well person exams, mammograms, blood screenings, heart and vascular risk assessments. Legacy Community Health Services. lhihouston.org

FIRST SATURDAY QUEER BINGO

Tequila, tacos, and drag queens at El Real Tex-Mex. The Houston LGBT Community Center hosts this monthly charitable bingo game. El Real Tex-Mex. houstonlgbtcommunitycenter.org

June 2

PFLAG HOUSTON RECEPTION HONORING REV. JIM BANKSTON

St. Paul's United Methodist Church. pflaghouston.org

MONTROSE SOFTBALL LEAGUE SEASON PLAY

Week 8. Houston Sportsplex. montrosesoftballleague.com

June 4

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE DIRECTOR

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston presents therapist Dr. Ruth Westheimer and MFAH director Gary Tinterow. This discussion marks the second event in the new series that brings an eclectic mix of cultural figures to the Museum's Brown Auditorium three times a year. MFAH. mfah.org

June 6

PRIDE SUPERSTAR COMPETITION: ROUND 5

An official event of Houston Pride Week, this competition has showcased amazing LGBT artists that you have experienced not only at Pride Houston events, but at other LGBT events around the city. South Beach. southbeachthenightclub.com

ALLEY THEATRE ACTOUT

See *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Suicide Club* and enjoy fabulous pre-performance mixers with music, socializing, complimentary cocktails, and appetizers. Tickets available for purchase online. Alley Theatre. alleytheatre.org

OUT@TUTS NIGHT PRESENTS FLASHDANCE, THE MUSICAL AND DIXIE'S TUPPERWARE PARTY

Attend the first Thursday performance of these great shows, and after the performance mingle with the cast and listen to fabulous cabaret music with your LGBT friends. TUTS. tuts.com/out

June 7

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS HATCH PROM

Every year the HATCH youth come up with their own theme for their annual prom, and 2013's concept should lend itself to everything from the surreal and fabulous to the outrageous. The Montrose Center. hatchyouth.org

June 8

GLAMOROUS GLEE: GAY MEN'S CHORUS OF HOUSTON

For their annual Pride show, GMCH will perform a tribute to the tradition of glee-club choruses. Enjoy favorite male glee-club songs from the past and from present popular fabulous stage shows, presented as only these men can. Cullen Theatre at Wortham Theater Center. houstonfirsttheaters.com/worthamcenter.aspx

PRIDE SUPERSTAR COMPETITION: ROUND 6

An official event of Houston Pride Week, this competition has showcased amazing LGBT artists that you have experienced not only at Pride Houston events, but at other LGBT events around the city. South Beach. southbeachthenightclub.com

June 9

MONTROSE SOFTBALL LEAGUE SEASON PLAY

Week 9. Houston Sportsplex. montrosesoftballleague.com

ACCT CHAMPAGNE BRUNCH AT THE SAN LUIS RESORT

Step back in time at the "60s Boob Tube Mania" Champagne Brunch. The San Luis Resort. supportacct.org

June 13

SOBE PRIDE SUPERSTAR SPECIAL EVENT

RuPaul's Drag Race contestant Alyssa Edwards judges and performs live! No cover all night. South Beach. southbeachthenightclub.com

June 14

PRIDESCAPES SHOW: THIS SIDE OF THE RAINBOW

The third annual *Pridescapes* show is a song-and-dance revue featuring principal cast members from area musical repertory companies, directed by Carole Lamont,

celebrating the spirit of the diva in solo and ensemble pieces from Broadway, the movies, and the pop charts of yesterday and today. Creative Life Spiritual Center. creativelife.org

GRAND MARSHAL HAPPY HOUR PRESENTED BY BBVA COMPASS

Join the Houston Pride Celebration's Grand Marshals Robin Brown, John Nechman, and Januari Leo for a Friday evening cocktail. Hughes Hanger. hugheshanger.com

June 15

MONTROSE SOFTBALL LEAGUE'S JOCKS IN DRESSES

Benefits Legacy Community Health Services and Pet Patrol. South Beach. montrosesoftballleague.com

PRAIA URBANA HOUSTON 27

FEATURING CHUS + CEBALLOS AND JULIUS
Praia Urbana is Houston's all-day outdoor electronic music festival. Last Concert Cafe. flavorus.com/prai27

JASTON WILLIAMS IN BLAME IT ON VALENTINE, TEXAS

Follow Jaston, age four, as he singlehandedly destroys a dance concert in one of the smallest towns in Texas and becomes a local star in the process. It just gets funnier, as one of The Grand's favorites regales the audience with his stories based on his own experiences growing up. The Grand 1894 Opera House. thegrand.com (See page 113.)

I CAN DO ANYTHING!

The annual screening of film shorts by, about, and for kids celebrates children, who truly can do anything because they still know how to dream! Before the screening is a special youth music performance. Aurora Picture Show. aurorapictureshow.org

June 18

CENTER SENIORS & FRIENDS POTLUCK

The Houston GLBT Community Center organizes the monthly potluck. Bethel United Church of Christ. houstonlgbtcommunitycenter.org

June 19

STACHE BASH

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Coffee and Fellowship
Worship Celebration 11 am
Children's Ministry Ages 3-11 am

WEDNESDAY NIGHT
Spiritual Formation Class 6:30 pm
An hour of learning and activities



It's Pride Month!

continued from page 41

off their 'stache (real or fake) and the possibility of a straight razor shave provided by V's Barbershop. Complimentary grab bags given to guests. Kiehl's (Highland Village). pridehouston.org/events/stache-bash

June 20

LGBT IN AMERICA: THE LAST LEGAL DISCRIMINATION

Hosted by the Rothko Chapel, this lecture presents Councilman Joel Burns and Robert Leleux as they discuss the impact discrimination has on the community, the way younger citizens perceive these actions, and how to begin healing from bullying and homophobia. \$10 suggested donation. The Rothko Chapel. rothkochapel.org

PRIDE SUPERSTAR COMPETITION: ROUND 7

Now in its seventh season, this competition has showcased amazing LGBT artists that you have experienced not only at Pride Houston events, but at other LGBT events around the city. South Beach. southbeachthenightclub.com

June 21

RAINBOW ON THE GREEN AT DISCOVERY GREEN

Land Rover Houston Central's Rainbow on the Green presented by Legacy Community Health Services showcases musical performers and DJs at downtown's Discovery Green park. discoverygreen.com/rainbow-on-the-green

EDEN: A PRIDE GIRL PARTY

The Usual - Neighborhood Pub. theusualpub.com

June 22

PRIDE IN THE PARK

Come out to the Houston Dynamo game and show your true Pride colors while supporting your local soccer team. BBVA Compass Stadium. bbvacompassstadium.com

ELLE INDIE-FEST SUMMER 2013

It's Victoria Love's birthday party. Over 200 people attended the last event, and it was awesome. AvantGarden Houston. avantgardenhouston.com

June 23

SALVATION: A PRIDE POOL PARTY

Come wash away the sins of the past and

ones yet to come as Pride Houston presents this party. There will be an open bar and nibbles. Why sizzle in the sun if you can't get a little wet? HI-Houston: The Morty Rich Hostel. Official After Party following at FBar. pridehouston.org/events/salvation-a-pride-pool-party

June 24

DINE WITH PRIDE

When you dine today at Gratifi Kitchen and Bar, a portion of your food bill goes to benefit Pride Houston. Gratifi Kitchen and Bar. gratifikitchenandbar.com

June 25

THE DREAMGIRLS SHOW THEIR PRIDE

FBar. fbarhouston.com

ROCK THE RUNWAY

If you thought last year's Rock the Runway was swanky, you haven't seen anything yet!



Oh My Pride: grab your rainbow flags and get ready to scream, shout, and catch some beads at this year's Houston LGBT Pride parade on June 29.

This year, it features some of the hottest models in Houston walking the catwalk in this summer's latest styles in underwear, swimwear, and everything to wear on top! Free and open to the public. South Beach. southbeachthenightclub.com

June 26

REEL PRIDE PRESENTS BREAKING THROUGH

Openly LGBT-elected officials at all levels and from across the country—including the first gay U.S. senator, Tammy Baldwin—share their stories of self-doubt and triumph over multiple barriers ranging from race and poverty to gender and sexual orientation, revealing a deeply personal, rarely seen side of politicians and gay people. River Oaks Theatre. pridehouston.org/events/1673 (See page 110.)

MERRY GAY CONSULTANTS LAUNCH PARTY

Join this launch of a new business. Stereo Live. merrygayconsultants.com

June 27

PRIDE SUPERSTAR COMPETITION FINALE

Now in its seventh season, this competition has showcased amazing LGBT artists that you have experienced not only at Pride Houston events but at other LGBT events around the city. South Beach. southbeachthenightclub.com

THE ANNUAL INTERFAITH PRIDE SERVICE

The service brings together people from diverse religious traditions who join in unity to acknowledge and celebrate the spiritual presence found in every lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, questioning, and straight person. Cathedral of Hope Houston. cohhouston.org

DRAG ME TO FAME

Talented hopefuls compete for prizes and bookings hosted by Charo Beans DaBarge. FBar. fbarhouston.com

June 28

WONDERLAND HOUSTON

Follow the white bunny to a winter wonderland, benefiting Bunnies on the Bayou. Ages 18 & up. Bayou Music Center. wonderlandhouston.com

TGI PRIDE SHOW

Tony's Corner Pocket. tonyscornerpocketbar.com

June 29

The 35th Houston LGBT Pride Festival and Pride Parade

This is it, the big event! Join more than 325,000 people to celebrate who we are as a community. Montrose Blvd. pridehouston.org

OFFICIAL PRIDE HOUSTON AFTER PARTY!

This event is the only official After Party of the Houston LGBT Pride Celebration and a sanctioned Pride Houston event. South Beach. southbeachthenightclub.com

June 30

RAPTURE: A PRIDE FOAM PARTY!

This is the official Foam and closing party of Houston Pride Week. Get ready to swim in the suds with hot boys and girls all around! South Beach. southbeachthenightclub.com

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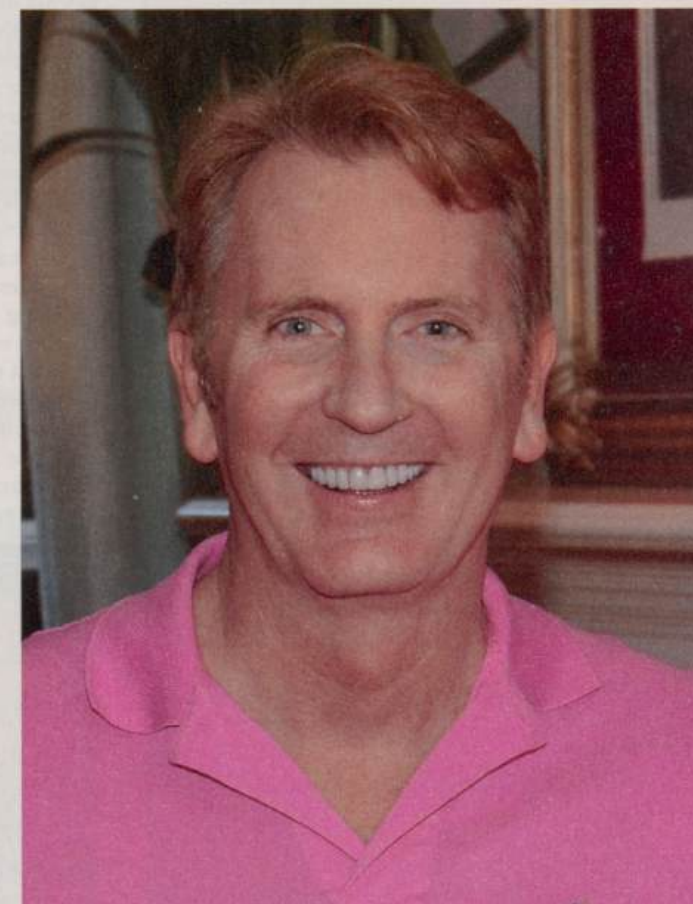


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Frank Billingsley

Pride Parade's Honorary Grand Marshal

by Marene Gustin • Photos by Dalton DeHart



Bright and sunny: KPRC-TV's chief meteorologist Frank Billingsley rides in his first Pride parade on June 29.

Blogger Mike McGuff once referred to KPRC-TV Channel 2's chief meteorologist as the Anderson Cooper of local television. Some viewers may have known he was gay, but most probably didn't—and didn't care.

But it may have surprised a few of Frank Billingsley's viewers when local media reported his wedding to longtime partner Kevin Gilliard last December. "We never hid our relationship," says Billingsley. "We had people over to the house as part of auction items at fundraisers, and as far back as the '90s he was always my date at station Christmas parties."

Still, it surprised some when news of his wedding last December 12 was reported. He and Gilliard and about seventy friends and family, including Gilliard's twenty-five-year-old son, gathered at the Eventi Hotel in New York City for the wedding.

"Morgan came into my life when he was seven," Billingsley says of the young man. "He's a lucky boy to have three dads."

Billingsley and Gilliard met at JR's on August 12, 1995, and as Billingsley says, "Since then we've maybe been apart for ten nights."

Raised in Alabama, the charismatic, blue-eyed Billingsley studied communications and journalism at Washington and Lee University and received his Broadcast Meteorology Certification from Mississippi State University. He says he leaned toward forecasting the weather because the weathermen had

more personality on air than the anchormen. "Plus," he adds, "the Weather Channel had just started with twenty-four-hour weather, and it just seemed very exciting."

He started out in Roanoke, Virginia, forecasting the weather for four years before moving to a Biloxi station and then to Texas.

The pair has two schnauzers named River and Ocean. "Because Phoenix would have been too obvious," Billingsley says, although two previous schnauzers were named Rock and Hudson.

He came to Houston in 1989 as the weekend meteorologist for KTRK-TV Channel 13 and then jumped ship in 1995 to become KPRC's chief meteorologist. "Houston is just a great market for meteorologists," Billingsley says. "We get snow here, we get hurricanes, we get

heat waves. It's a very big challenge to forecast the weather here. It's a lot easier to forecast weather in L.A. "Plus, we're a very outdoor city. People go to Memorial Park, they go to baseball games, and even outdoor weddings! So they are always interested in what the weather will be like."

And, in case you're wondering about this season's gloom-and-doom hurricane forecast, don't worry. "We've had nineteen named storms almost every season," he says. "It's not about the numbers, it's about whether or not it hits you. Make a plan, have an emergency kit, and watch me!"

Billingsley's TV schedule doesn't leave a whole lot of time for newlywed togetherness. "Kevin is in human resources. He works days and I work nights, so we aren't exactly social butterflies," he says. "We have a house in

Galveston that we're always working on, and, like every other gay couple, we love to travel and cook!"

And his favorite dish is coconut cream pie. "Kevin makes it from scratch because he knows I love it, but he hates coconut so he won't even take a bite of it," he says. Now that's love.

The pair also has two schnauzers named River and Ocean. ("Because Phoenix would have been too obvious," he says, although two previous schnauzers were named Rock and Hudson. So go figure.) They've always had dogs, except for a brief foray into goldfish that didn't end well. "They just ate →



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Frank Billingsley continued from previous page

each other," Billingsley says.

With such a cozy, longtime relationship, why did they decide to make it legal now? "We decided to get married legally because if you don't play the game you can't complain," Billingsley says. "And it's like that last week of college. You pretty much know everything, but you still want to walk down that aisle and get that diploma." Or walk down the aisle and get that marriage license.

There are now twelve states—the number seems to increase almost daily now—that recognize same-sex marriages. But Texas isn't one of them. To which Billingsley replies: "If it's good enough for the Boy Scouts, it should be good enough for the state of Texas. I thought that was a very brave vote they made. Things are changing. Eventually Texas will recognize our marriage."

What makes him most angry isn't that the state doesn't recognize his marriage but that it means that people still think being gay is a choice. "It's no more a choice than your eye color is," he says. "It bothers me that people just don't get that. Being



Out in Houston: Frank Billingsley with his husband, Kevin Gilliard, at the Marriage Equality rally in March, where he was a guest speaker.

gay is a fact of life, not a choice. It's just who we are, and the fact that some people can't recognize that and be okay with it and allow us to marry who we want discriminates against us."

As for Houston Pride Week, Billingsley is very excited about being named Honorary Grand Marshal. "I've never ridden in the parade before," he says. "We've watched it before and they have even asked me to be in it, but the parade always fell on June 22, which is my birthday and my mother's, so there were always too many conflicts."

This year, the festival and parade down Westheimer Road is June 29, making it a perfect post-birthday celebration for one of Houston's favorite weather guys.

Marene Gustin also writes about Dixie Longate in this issue of OutSmart.

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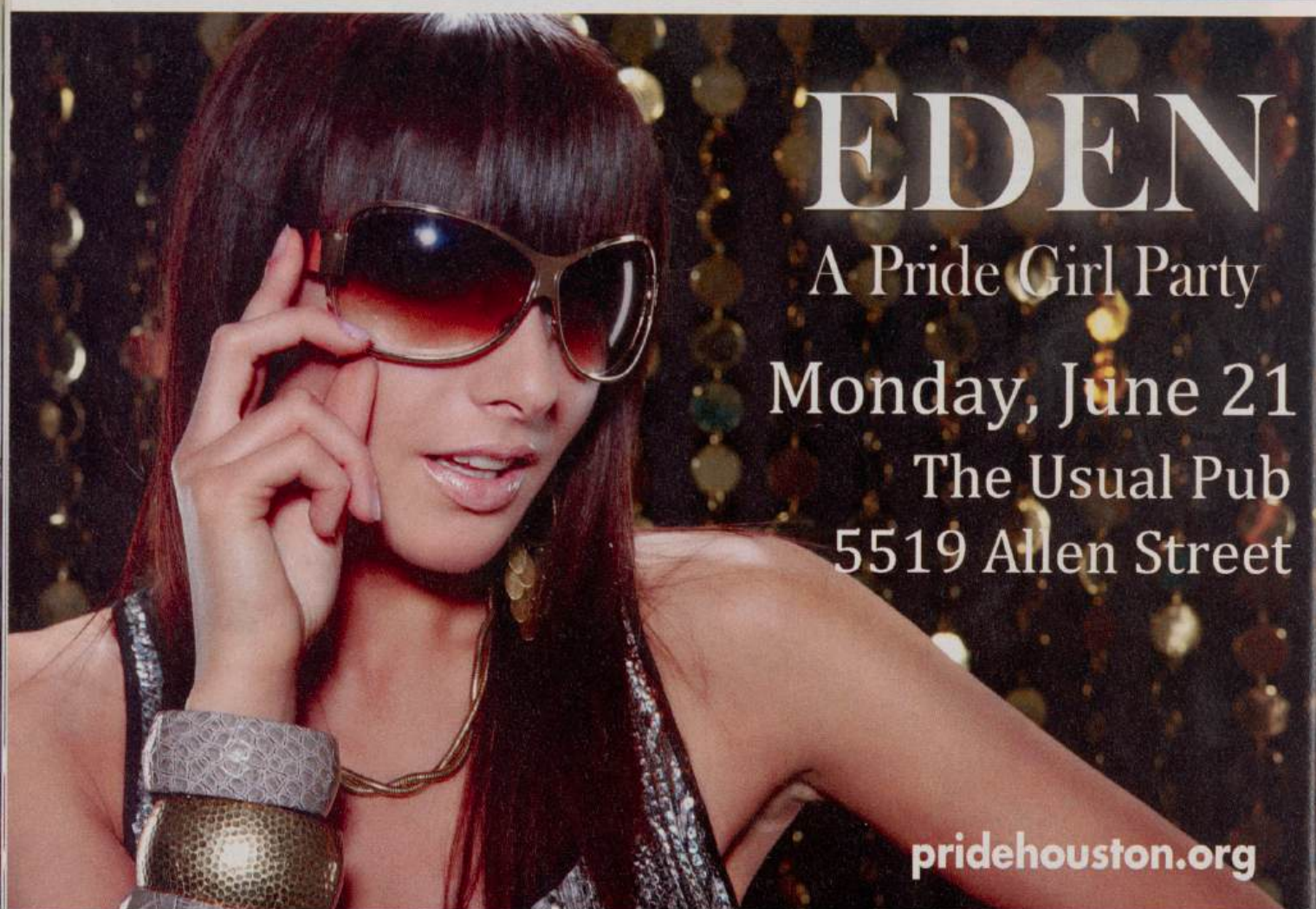
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From High Kicks to High Tech

After fifty years, Robin Brown shows no signs of slowing down

by Brandon Wolf

Photo by Brandon Wolf

Robin Brown was born on April 12, 1963, near Detroit, Michigan. Fifty years later, on the eve of her birthday, she was named the 2013 Houston Female Pride Marshal. "It was the best birthday present I could possibly have had," she says.

Born in the early spring, Brown was named for Michigan's famous robins. "Robins are considered the first sign of spring," she says with a warm smile. The name fits her well. Like her namesakes, Brown is cheery, hard-working, and colorful.

Athletic and Involved

Brown's parents divorced when she was eight, and although the breakup affected her, it made her stronger. She lived with her mother, who was young and very beautiful. "She was a department store 'demo girl,' then sold waterbeds, and eventually worked her way up to VP at a brokerage house," Brown says.

Despite the emotional effect of the divorce, Brown still remembers a happy school life—living in the same geographical area and attending elementary, junior high, and high school with the same group of friends. At the time, she thought the school was big—with 230 in her graduating class. But looking back, she says it seems small.

Brown's fundraising efforts earned her a seat next to singer Cyndi Lauper at the 2009 Obama inauguration.

Brown was athletic—playing golf and junior varsity basketball. On a dare, she tried out for the high school drill team, and to her surprise she secured a position.

The girls wore green sequin drill outfits, accessorized by white leather boots, white gloves, and white cowboy hats. The razzle-dazzle uniforms were typical for the type of drill team they were—high kickers.

The drill team days ended when she was hit by a negligent driver while riding her bike one evening. Brown remembers being propelled through the air, hitting the pavement, hearing the sound of squealing car tires, and seeing those tires stop just feet from her limp body. "I was carried to a nearby yard to await an ambulance," she

remembers. "Believe it or not, that's when the lawn sprinklers decided to come on." Brown recovered, but could no longer execute the high kicks.

At school, Brown took photos for the yearbook. She was president of the school's French club, and won election as class treasurer. When she graduated, she was given the fitting honor of being named "Most Spirited."

During her school years, at the age of fourteen, she also took up a job in her stepfather's golf shop. She began by sweeping floors, but it wasn't long before she proved her ability to sell shoes. She →



2013 Houston Female Pride Marshal Robin Brown shows pictures of her two famous grandfathers—on the left, King Gates, child actor in more than fifty "Our Gang" movie shorts, and on the right, Roy Brown, designer of the Edsel.

From High Kicks to High Tech

continued from previous page

quickly moved on to becoming the most successful sales clerk for golf clubs, with lots of regular customers, and nice sales commissions for her savings account.

The Grandfather Effect

Brown learned self-assurance early on. Both of her grandfathers were unique and creative, and mentored her. They both ended up working in the auto industry—one for General Motors and one for Ford. “I’ve always gotten great discounts on cars,” Brown laughs.

Her paternal grandfather was Roy Brown, the man who invented the Edsel. Despite the fact that the car became synonymous with failure, her grandfather was proud of the design he created. “And he lived to see it become one of the most iconic cars ever built, selling for over \$100,000 these days to collectors.” When

her grandfather died earlier this year, a relative texted Brown, “Your grandfather is trending on Yahoo!” (he was a headline item).

Her grandfather Brown also designed the Mercury “concept car” that became



Family: Brown in 2011 with her grandfather, Roy Brown, designer of the Edsel and the Batmobile.

Gala: Brown at the Human Rights Campaign Gala 2012 with her date, Alison Killebrew.

the Batmobile on TV. “The producers called and said they needed a Batmobile in one month. All Ford could do was take the futuristic-looking car and put Bat-markings all over it.”

Robin’s maternal grandfather was King Gates. “He was a Mensa, and graduated from college at age sixteen,” she says. He was also a child actor who appeared in more than fifty of the famous



PHOTOS COURTESY ROBIN BROWN

“Our Gang” movie serials of the 1920s and ’30s. “His mother was a secretary at Universal Studios,” says Brown.

College Days and Making Love ‘Somewhere in Time’

Brown studied hotel management through Michigan State University, and earned her bachelor’s degree. She says college was “great, but a busy blur.”

For her internship, she applied to the world-famous Grand Hotel on Michigan’s Mackinaw Island, the popular resort destination that bans all vehicles except for horse-drawn carriages and bicycles. She was accepted, but turned down the offer to work at the island’s lesser-known Murray Hotel.

“The Grand Hotel position was too limiting,” Brown says. “At the Murray, I was allowed to experience everything—cleaning rooms, waiting tables, bartending, and working the front desk.” Halfway through the summer, she was promoted to night supervisor.

The romantic cult classic *Somewhere in Time* was filmed on the island the summer before, so it was the buzz of the summer that Brown spent there. Although she had been attracted to other women for years, she found her first Sapphic experience on the enchanted isle that summer.

A Stellar Professional Life

Brown went on to work for the historic Pontchartrain Hotel in Detroit for four years. It was a rare five-star hotel, and she loved the atmosphere. Asked what the secret to achieving excellent customer service is in such a demanding industry, Brown says, “You stop, you don’t react, and you listen.” It’s a formula that has worked for her when organizing volunteers, too.

Brown’s abilities were quickly noticed. In 1984, she was courted by Sonesta Hotels to work for them in Fort Myers, Florida. Soon after, she was made a national sales manager for thirteen of their facilities.

Bell South wooed her to Atlanta in 1988. And when the company bought Houston Cellular, she found herself heading for Texas. Brown says she loves Houston. “It’s a great big small town.”

Brown continued to be in demand by hiring managers who were aware of her skills. Since moving to Houston, she has also been employed by Automated Data Processing (ADP) and CSI Healthcare IT.

The Biggest Challenge of Her Life

Brown currently works for the Cerner Corporation, a medical software →

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From High Kicks to High Tech

continued from previous page

company that brings in nearly four billion dollars in revenue annually. One of their largest ventures is the automation of medical records, which the U.S. government has mandated healthcare providers to achieve by the end of 2014.

As the executive director of consulting, Brown works with strategy and planning. Cerner implements systems, trains employees, and provides audit services. The company stresses "accountable health care."

Their systems can monitor the performance of physicians and staff members, making sure they are providing adequate care and promoting wellness. They can also help consumers lower their insurance rates with good health practices such as exercise and improved diet. The company developed a system to monitor the onset of sepsis and has nearly eliminated this number-one killer of hospital patients.

Becoming Political

Brown's political involvement began in Houston when she joined the local chapter of the Human Rights Campaign and worked on their fundraising galas for years. Her efforts earned her a seat next to singer Cyndi Lauper at the 2009 Obama inauguration.

For the last three years, she has raised money for the Victory Fund. In the 2012 elections, 180 LGBT candidates were endorsed at the national, state, and local levels, and a record 124 were elected. One of the sweetest victories was Tammy Baldwin's rise to the U.S. Senate. "I was standing next to Mayor Parker at Hughes Hangar on election night," says Brown. "It was exciting to watch as she shared tweets with Tammy."

Brown has also been a volunteer for the Uncommon Legacy Golf Tournament. In 2011, she organized the Victory Fund's 2011 Family Picnic in Cherryhurst Park during Pride Month. The event attracted 160 people. Future picnics are not on her agenda, but she says with a grin, "I'll be glad to show someone else everything that has to be done!"

Riding Down Westheimer

Brown got the news that she was the 2013 Female Pride Marshal while celebrating her fiftieth birthday in a resort near Cancun with thirty friends. She regretted missing the announcement party, but all of her vacation reservations had been made before the date of the celebration was announced.

"I was partying with my friends when last year's male marshal Nick Brines texted me the news," Brown relates. "The whole place broke into applause, and people I didn't even know came up to congratulate me." She admits that she broke into tears when the news came. "It's the ultimate recognition by the community—real icing on the cake, after twenty years of activism."

Riding in the Pride parade isn't totally new to Brown. When her friend Fiona Dawson was marshal in 2009, Brown was riding in the passenger seat of that convertible. "The driver of the car fainted from heat stroke," she remembers. With typical "get it done" leadership, Brown took over the wheel for the rest of the ride.

Looking back on her first fifty years, Brown sums up her life as "pluralistic." "I was put here to bring diverse groups of people together to accomplish things. But I think I need to slow down," she says. "I've been having way too much fun."

One can't help but see that Brown will never stop doing either.

Brandon Wolf also writes about Pride marshals John Nechman and Januari Leo in this issue of OutSmart magazine.

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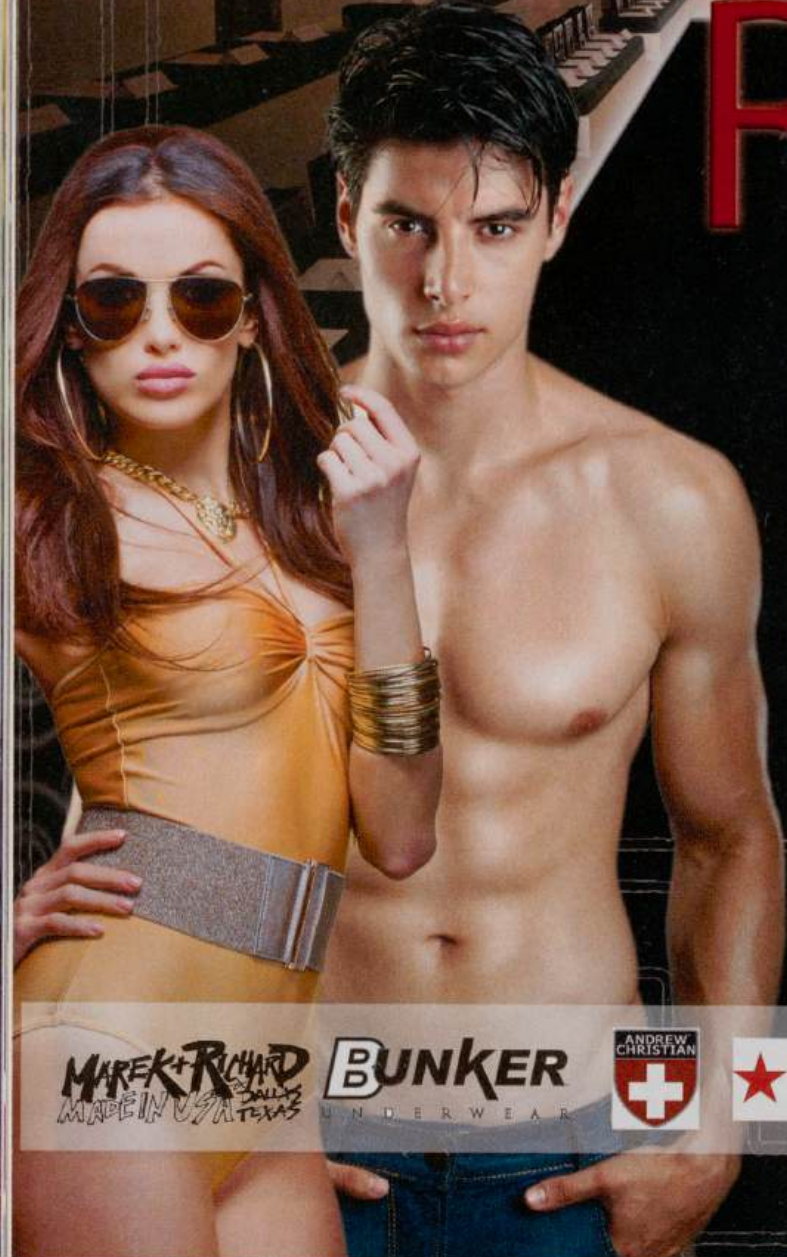
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A Very Global Pride Marshal

John Nechman lives the word 'diversity'

by Brandon Wolf

Photo by Dalton DeHart



2013 Houston Male Pride Marshal John Nechman has traveled to more than one hundred countries, so we are lucky that he has chosen Houston as his home.

When talking with John Nechman, it doesn't take long before the word "global" comes to mind. The child of a bi-racial couple, Nechman himself has been in a bi-racial relationship for seventeen years. He's traveled to more than one hundred countries, and his most passionate focus is on LGBT immigration issues.

Nechman was born to a Korean woman and an American G.I. in 1965. In 1998, he found the love of his life, a Colombian citizen living in the U.S. on a student visa. Asian, American, European, African, and Latin influences are all present in his life. "Watching the Miss Universe Pageant with relatives can get chaotic!" he laughs.

An Early Baby

The oldest of four sons, the Seoul, South Korea native weighed a mere three pounds when he was delivered by a midwife two-and-a-half months early. Nechman's Korean mother had spent much of her life in Beijing, China, where her father taught college.

By the time he was seven, his family had settled in Houston where his father continued a career as an insurance agent for John Hancock. His mother taught herself English and went to work as an accountant. Nechman was enrolled at Foster Elementary School in Humble, Texas.

The family later moved to the Forest Cove area of Kingwood. The area was so new that the local high school had only a freshman and sophomore class when he began. "Our class was the first to make the full cycle of four years," he remembers.

An Athletic Youth

Nechman was a good student—popular and athletic. He played on the football, baseball, soccer, and golf teams. At fifteen, he began waiting tables at the Kingwood Country Club.

Being gay wasn't something he thought much about. As an athlete, no one suspected he might be gay. "But I remember

"Ricardo was taken aside and questioned. When [Customs officials] figured out we were a couple, he was taken to a private room and grilled about our relationship."

all the butt-slapping and gay name-calling that was part of the locker-room culture," he says.

Nechman was a keen enough child to have been aware of the Houston Heights gay serial killings by Houstonian Dean Corll, which took the lives of twenty-eight known victims between 1970 and 1973. He remembers that it discouraged his interest in exploring his sexual orientation.

But eventually his interest was revived when he heard activist Ray Hill's speech at the Anita Bryant demonstrations in Houston in 1977, when thousands marched through the streets and circled the Hyatt Regency where Bryant has performing.

"Our family had gone to Chinatown for dinner that night," Nechman recalls. "Driving home, conservative talk show host Jon Matthews came onto the car radio and started talking about the gay mob that had descended on the Hyatt." Nechman's father quickly changed the radio station. When they arrived home, twelve-year-old Nechman ran to his room and took his transistor radio into the closet to hear →

A Very Global Pride Marshal

continued from previous page

the news reports. "I heard Ray Hill addressing the crowd that had gathered by

in any gay place. "That made the University of Texas in Austin very appealing to me as a choice for college."

College and Life on the Road

Nechman enrolled at UT, and earned a bachelor's degree in business and linguistics. His parents divorced during his first year of college, and his father remarried a woman from Mexico City. "She came from a large family and I didn't know Spanish," he notes. "So I decided to study the language as a minor."

To earn money, Nechman waited tables. He also found jobs as a doorman and bartender in clubs on Austin's Sixth Street.

College was followed by three years of backpacking across Europe, visiting more than one hundred different countries. "I got by with my wits, odd jobs, and the kindness of friendly people," Nechman says.

Every summer, Nechman ended up on the Greek island of Mykonos. He slept under the stars on the roof of a disco. "Some nights I danced on the disco floor—other nights I danced on the bar," he says with a grin.

Entering the Field of Law

Nechman says he was "devastated" by his parents' divorce, but he is proud that his mother used her savings to open a pharmacy



Baby, it's cold outside: Nechman (r) and his law partner, Mitchell Katine, in Washington DC to hear oral arguments in the two marriage cases in March. They waited in the freezing cold temperatures from 2 a.m. to assure being in the Supreme Court on the two days of argument.

in Houston's Fifth Ward. The area was one of Houston's most crime-ridden zones, but she still made the business successful. She also had a lengthy romance with an African-American gentleman who came to work at the pharmacy.

His mother was also successful at convincing her son to abandon his European wanderings and enroll at South Texas College of Law. "She bought me a dog to keep me grounded," he says. That dog, a Norwegian Elkhound that he named Björn, lived for nineteen years.

Nechman had a number of relationships with men over the years, ranging from a few weeks to deeper long-term commitments. One of those relationships, unfortunately, nearly cost him his life. An obsessive ex-lover from his years in Europe tracked him down in Houston and asked to meet.

"I showed up at the downtown YMCA and he was in a car," Nechman remembers. "Next thing I knew, there was a pistol at the side of my head." Nechman survived the attempt on his life, but did take a bullet in his upper arm. The bullet traveled about eighteen inches inside his arm before exiting.

"There was blood everywhere," says Nechman. "The EMTs couldn't figure out where I had been hit, and stripped me down to my undershorts. It was an odd feeling, standing there nearly naked and covered with blood, as local TV cameramen shot footage of me for the evening news."

Finding the Love of His Life

In 1996, Nechman went to work for Ritchie & Glass to learn criminal law. That same year, he met Ricardo Ruiz, whom he has lived with for the last seventeen years. "I first saw him in the Fiesta on Bellaire Boulevard, and it was love at first sight."

Ruiz, a native of Colombia, was living in the U.S. on a student visa. Courtship led to commitment. But unlike a heterosexual couple, there was no chance of marriage and citizenship. So Nechman quickly became interested in immigration law, and he went into solo practice for the next four years.

In 1998, the two were traveling together and had to go through U.S. Customs. "Neither of us had ever experienced problems with Customs officials before," Nechman says. "But that time, Ricardo was taken aside and questioned. When they figured out we were a couple, he was taken to a private room and grilled about our relationship." They were both shattered by the incident.

Ruiz, a dedicated schoolteacher →



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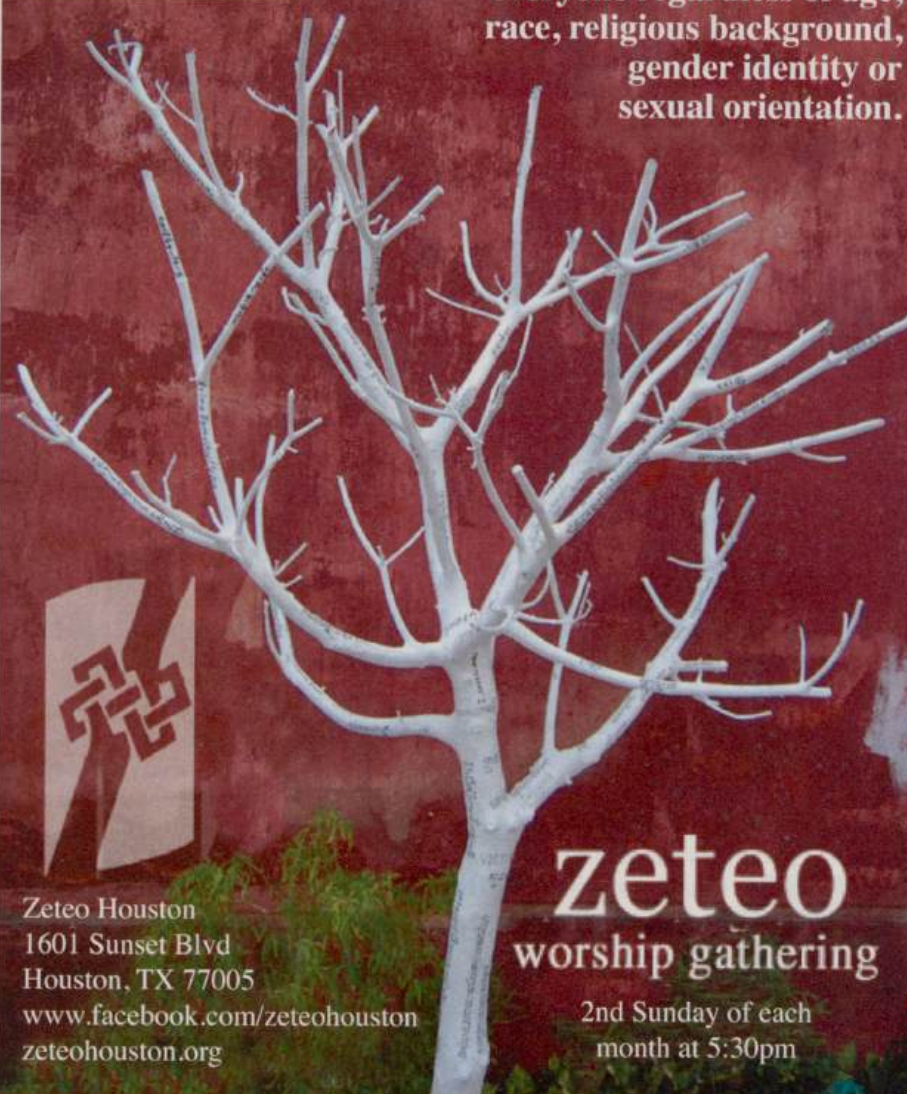
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A Very Global Pride Marshal

continued from previous page

who drives one hundred miles round-trip to teach in an impoverished area, hopes to gain his citizenship within the next year. "But it's cost us more than \$100,000 over the years in legal expenses to stay together," Nechman says.

Making a Difference

Nechman has been a strong leader in the fight for immigration rights for the LGBT community. Although he cheered the 2010 abolition of the U.S. travel ban on HIV-positive individuals, he emphasizes that there is still much to do. "People have little idea how much the gay community has been hassled by Customs officials over the years," Nechman says.

Nechman was present for the oral arguments in the two most famous Supreme Court cases in the past decade that affected the gay community. In 2003, he was John Lawrence's "bodyguard" during *Lawrence v. Texas*. And in March of this year he was present for the marriage equality Proposition 8 hearings. He's not sure how the justices will decide, but he hopes to be celebrating when this year's Pride Parade moves down Westheimer.

Now a partner at the Katine and Nechman law firm, Nechman keeps busy with his immigration law cases. He has successfully defended many clients seeking asylum in the U.S., preventing their forced return to countries where they could be persecuted for their orientation.

Nechman is also an adjunct professor at the South Texas College of Law and the University of Houston Law Center. He has taught courses such as "Sexual Orientation and the Law" and "HIV and the Law" since 2003.

Constantly busy "giving back," Nechman has served as an officer of numerous national, state, and local legal organizations. He is a frequent speaker on immigration, business, human rights, and LGBT/HIV-related legal issues.

Handsome and fit at age forty-eight, Nechman approaches life with an outgoing nature and a humble spirit, and considers his election as the 2013 Houston Male Pride Marshal to be a great honor. "I'm very thankful to have had a clear purpose in life," he says. "And because I'm an attorney, I've been able to make a difference in many people's lives. It's been a wonderful labor of love."

Brandon Wolf also writes about Pride marshals Robin Brown and Januari Leo in this issue of OutSmart magazine.

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A Vital Community Ally

Januari Leo embraces her core social values

by Brandon Wolf

Photo by Lynn Lane



The 2013 Houston Community Pride Ally, Januari Leo, has always found meaning in helping others.

Born in 1975, Januari Leo was only nine when the first news about Ryan White, a hemophiliac infected through an AIDS-tainted transfusion, broke in the media. "It was scary," she remembers. "And it broke my heart to see the way this thirteen-year-old boy was treated by his local community."

Leo grew up in a conservative Republican family, and although AIDS wasn't a particular subject of conversation in the house, she was already reading about it in newspapers and watching it on cable news. "I seem to always have been a truth seeker," she says.

Growing Up in Garland

Leo, the "2013 Houston Pride Ally" of the LGBT community (an honor bestowed upon a supportive heterosexual), grew up in Garland, Texas. Her father was a salesman and her mother worked as a secretary. She has one brother.

School wasn't a chore for Leo. She got good grades and had lots of friends. With a natural inclination to media, she served as the editor of the school newspaper.

Leo was also an accomplished dancer, whether it was jazz, tap, or hip-hop. In high school, she earned spending money teaching dance to younger children. She played the flute in her high school marching band.

Later, she transferred to the band's flag corps. Dressed in orange, green, and

white, the Rangers performed at every game and traveled as far away as Colorado to take part in competitions. She remembers lots of snappy routines, but thinks that the corps' rendition of Elvis Presley's *Fever* was probably her favorite.

A Strong Sense of Social Justice

Leo says she has always had strong core values that reflect her concern for the less fortunate

in our society—public health, social justice, equal rights, empowerment, and compassion. So it was no surprise when she majored in sociology and political science while earning her bachelor's degree at University of Houston's downtown campus.

Some of her early jobs also prepared her for a life dedicated to others. She once worked as a cashier in an adult video store. She laughs at the mention of the video rental scene in the cult classic film *Clerks*. Leo

also worked for a time as a hostess at the Birraporetti's Restaurant on West Gray in Houston.

During her senior year of college she met Brian, the man whom she would soon marry. "We talked at a party and discovered we had a lot in common." Their first child was born at the end of that class year. The day before her final exams, her doctor told her to head to the hospital. "I told him I couldn't because I had final exams the next day." The doctor won.

Leo describes her husband as "the logical side" in their marriage. "He works in finance and data analysis for Merrill Lynch. Actually, it's quite common for people in social work to marry someone outside their professional circle."

In 2002, Leo started graduate school at University of Houston, working on →

A Vital Community Ally

continued from previous page

a master's degree in social science. She put that goal on hold while devoting



All smiles: Leo happily poses with her husband Brian, son Seth, and daughter Maya.

herself full-time to raising two children. In 2010, she earned her graduate degree.

Entering the Political Arena

Leo's first "real" job came in 2010 when Texas state representative Jessica Farrar asked her to manage her District 148

re-election campaign. Leo had first met Farrar at a Planned Parenthood Lobby Day in Austin. "She spoke so well, and I was so impressed at her youth and sense of passion."

The 2010 election was hard fought. "Her opponent attacked her support of Planned Parenthood and the HPV vaccine. It was a horrible year for Democrats. The Tea Party nearly wiped us out. But Jessica won by an impressive 56 percent."

Election night was filled with mixed emotions for Leo. "I was very happy, but I was also exhausted." Farrar asked Leo to join her staff, but Leo had already set her sights elsewhere.

During graduate school, Randall Ellis, Senior Director of Government Relations at Legacy Community Health Services, had visited her political science class. "He



I do: Leo at Marriage Equality rally in Houston.

believed so deeply in his work with LGBT and HIV issues," Leo remembers.

Later that year, she worked with Ellis on a syringe exchange project as part of her graduate school practicum. "The bill almost passed in the Texas legislature," Leo says. "But the opposition derailed it at the last moment."

After earning her degree, Leo kept in touch with Ellis. "I found out what events he would be at, and I always

ended up placing myself in front of him," she laughs. "I kept asking if he had a job opening yet."

Her perseverance finally paid off, and in February 2011 she was offered a job as a public affairs field specialist for Legacy. "From the day I started, I had two weeks to coordinate an HIV Advocacy Day in Austin," Leo says. It was an impressive first assignment—more than one hundred people statewide showed up to lobby for HIV issues.

Mastering the Complexities of Public Health Policy

"My job is to help people understand public health policy," says Leo. "It's all very complex. I have to study it and make it comprehensible."

Toward that end, Leo issues action alerts, puts together advocacy days, and takes part in community organizing. "I go to lots of local meetings," she says. "Many of them are after hours." She also works with the Ryan White Planning Council and often travels to Austin to testify at committee hearings.

"A really big issue now is Medicaid expansion for HIV," Leo notes. "Ryan White funding has to be re-approved at regular intervals. We'd like to see it covered more comprehensively by Medicaid. That would make the funding sustainable."

Leo loves working for Legacy. "Katie Caldwell, the director, is amazing. She's been in politics, so she understands not only healthcare management, but also the political realities.

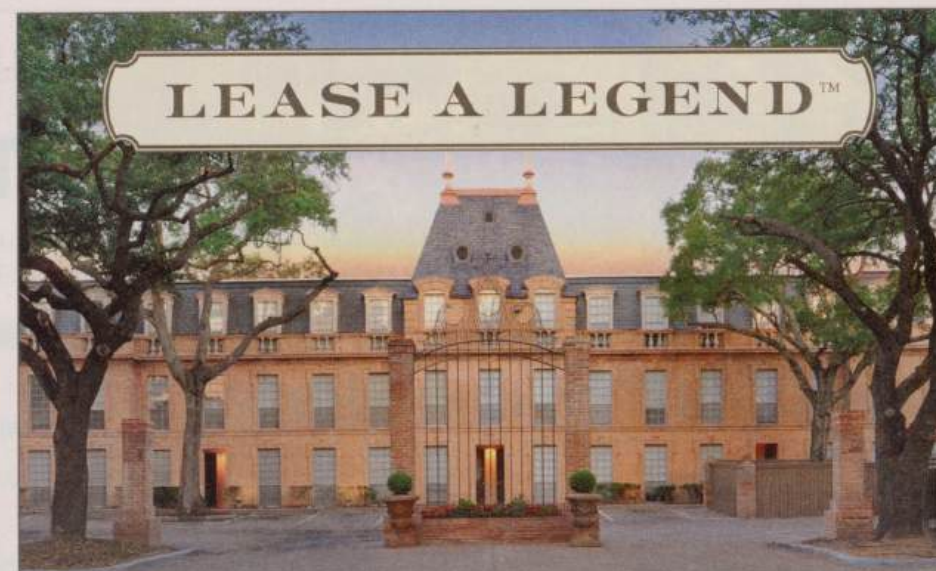
"I have been given great freedom to address issues," Leo says. She has already worked with Harvard University on a major academic study of HIV issues. Currently she is educating herself about federal HIV funding. "It's important to be at the table."

Leo says that the Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare") has already had a positive impact on Legacy. "More services are covered now, and that means we have more money to invest in broadening what we do."

The recent upswing in new HIV infection among youth concerns Leo. "Kids are getting careless," she says. "It's basically a lack of knowledge, so HIV education is very important to me."

Leo says that she is excited about being a 2013 Pride marshal. "I felt so honored when my name was announced. I admit I wasn't expecting it."

On parade night, her two children will join her on the back of a convertible as it rolls down Westheimer. "We're only supposed to have one additional person with us," Leo says. "But with two children, →



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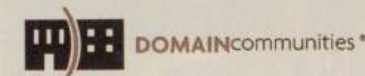


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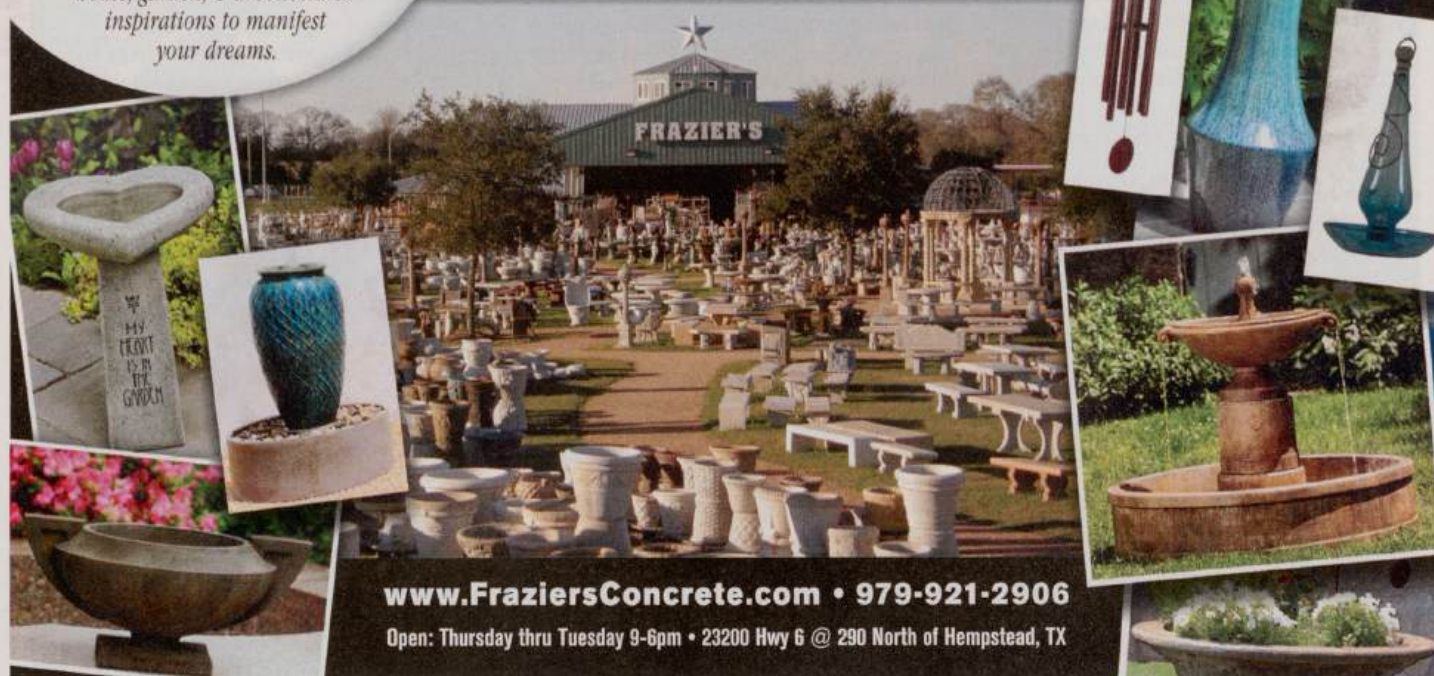


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A Vital Community Ally

continued from previous page

I couldn't leave one of them out, so the Pride Committee made an exception." Her husband will serve as either a banner-bearer or a wheel-watcher. It will be a special night for the family. "There are ten days of constant activity leading up to the parade," Leo says. "I'm trying to get a lot of rest before then."

The best thing about being a Pride marshal is the opportunity to advocate for her favorite causes, Leo says. Asked to reflect on her life up to this point, she feels that the word "grass-roots" is the most common thread. "I'm very community-oriented, and like to work directly with people."

Looking ahead, Leo says that things are definitely getting better—for the LGBT community and in the health services field. "No matter what happens in life, there will always be good people out there." And our 2013 Community Pride Ally is definitely one of them.

Brandon Wolf also writes about Pride marshals John Nechman and Robin Brown in this issue of OutSmart.

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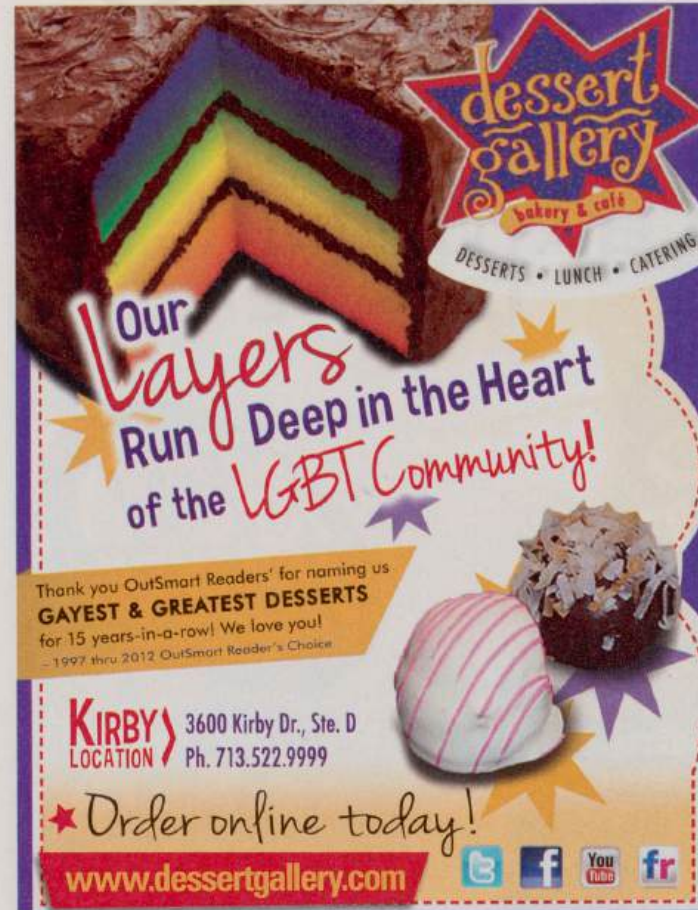
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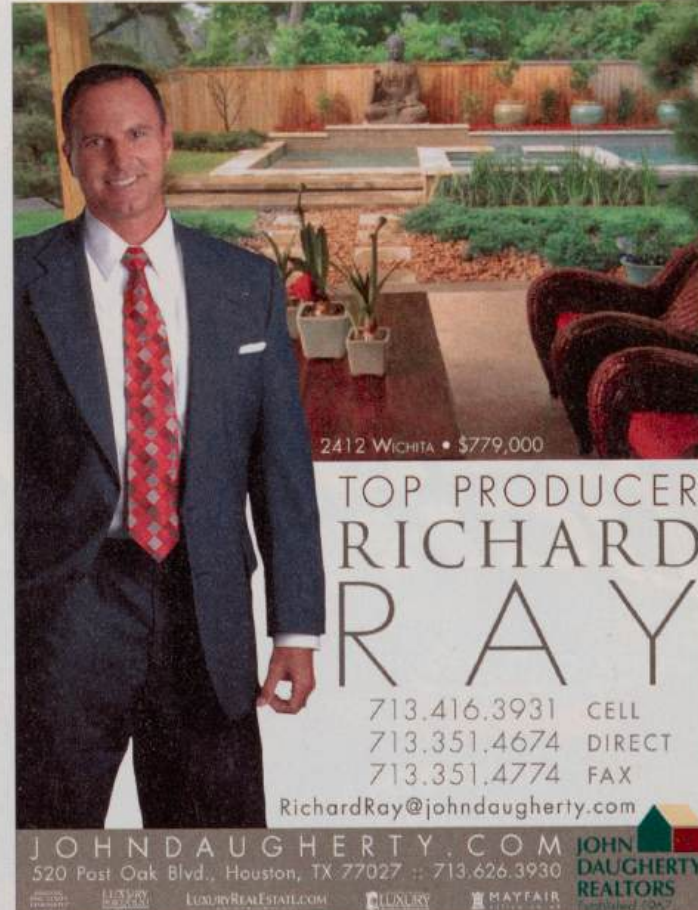
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Jaymes & James

Houston LGBT Pride Celebration Celebrity Grand Marshals

by Megan Smith

Photo by Gabriel Goldberg

When hunky Chippendale duo Jaymes Vaughan (l) and James Davis (r) entered *The Amazing Race*, fellow cast and audience members initially dismissed them as little more than pretty boys with six-pack abs. However, with unyielding determination to win the million-dollar prize money to help Vaughan's father fight his cancer, the pair soon became the team to beat.

Although Jaymes & James came in second place, their fans did not abandon them—they rallied behind the duo to raise over \$30,000 to help Vaughan's father.

Besides recording an album and producing a new travel show, the guys are currently using their newfound fame to help charities such as the American Can-

cer Society, the Human Rights Campaign, and Aid for AIDS. "The race gave us a platform, and it's our job to use that to help others," Davis says. "Especially since our fans did so much to help us after the race," Vaughan adds.

Vaughan, who is openly gay, and Davis will serve as this year's Celebrity Grand Marshals for the Houston LGBT Pride Celebration. "The amount of love and support we have received from the LGBT community has been beyond overwhelming," Vaughan told the *Houston Chronicle*. "And now Houston opening their arms to us as well is really just amazing. It's such a fun, exciting, big city—and we could not be more excited to actually get to perform there." ■



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Daddy Issues

Move over pageant moms, pageant dads coming through

by Donalevan Maines

Photos by Erin Beckwith



Pageantry's royal
parents: Albert Luiz
(l) and Amin Kabani
spend some quality
time with their
daughter, Magen
Sophia Luiz-Kabani.

On Father's Day (Sunday, June 16), five-month-old Magen Sophia Luiz-Kabani will attend her first Miss USA pageant, wearing a "Future Miss USA" sash. A fitting accessory, it seems, since her fathers are a pair of aces in the beauty industry.

Last year, for example, Magen Sophia's "papa," Albert Luiz, styled Miss Rhode Island, who won the pageant on her way to becoming Miss Universe six months later. Magen Sophia's future "daddy," Amin Kabani, assisted makeup artist Yuko Takahashi in the Fadil Berisha photo shoot of Miss USA contestants.

The fathers live in Houston and own An Albert Luiz Salon & Spa as well as Wardrobe: The Boutique, both in Sugar Land's Town Center.

Magen Sophia has already attended a Miss Houston-USA pageant and a Miss

Dallas-USA pageant. But what appears to be a charmed young life was years in the making. "It was a roller-coaster ride," says Luiz.

The couple met twenty years ago on the dance floor at a Montrose nightclub called Pacific Street Station. That both men desired a family with children "solidified" their attachment, they say.

In December 2010, the couple signed a surrogacy contract whereby they would purchase, for \$15,000, four eggs from an Australian woman that would be fertilized by Luiz as the sperm donor and carried to term by a woman in India.

"We daydreamed that on our first attempt we would get pregnant," recalls Luiz. But when it didn't happen in four attempts, the couple spent another \$15,000 for four more eggs.

"Amin and I would have arguments," says Luiz. "We were both stressed. We thought maybe it was a sign—Mother Nature telling us we should not have a child. We looked at adopting."

Then, on the seventh attempt, they learned they were pregnant with twins. As it turns out, however, it was an ectopic, or tubal, pregnancy, so it had to be ended.

"On the ninth transfer, we decided to change our odds completely," says Luiz, explaining that they purchased eggs from South Africa. "Sure enough, on the first →

**"We thought maybe
it was a sign—Mother
Nature telling us we
should not have a child."**

Daddy Issues continued from previous page

transfer of embryos, we got pregnant!" says Luiz. "That was just the beginning."

★★★

"First, we had lost twins," says Luiz, "and the first trimester is very iffy. We were very nervous. Everything felt really hectic."

"We passed the twelve-week mark and thought we were in the clear," he adds. "The doctor now said he would start testing for any genetic disorders. We thought, 'Oh, no!' and the first test showed a sign of a possible genetic defect."

"We would have to wait another few weeks to get a definitive result. So we were not sleeping. The wait was time enough for us to think about it, and we decided we would love our child regardless, no matter what," says Luiz.

The second test resolved the issue, basically assuring the couple that their child would be born perfect.

"A big sigh of relief," recalls Luiz. "Now, to prepare for parenthood. We kept vacillating between whether we would rather have a boy or a girl. We knew that with a girl, we would have a broke household because we would buy her all these clothes, all these shoes."



Wonder Baby: Magen Sophia Luiz-Kabani's is named after Magen Ellis Cherry, who was Miss Texas-USA 2006 who valiantly survived ulcerative colitis. Magen Sophia basically symbolizes two cultures cohabitating peacefully.

When their baby was born on January 14, the easiest part may have been naming her. They chose "Magen" and its spelling after Magen Ellis Cherry, who was Miss Texas-USA 2006 who valiantly survived ulcerative colitis, an inflammatory bowel disease, and became a spokesperson for the Crohn's

and Colitis Foundation of America and president of the leadership council for its chapter in southeast Texas.

"She has proven to have the qualities of a perfect Texas lady," says Luiz.

Kabani liked the name "Sophia" when he heard it on television. Luiz recalled

that Hagia Sophia was a church in Turkey that became a mosque. He calls it a symbol of two cultures cohabitating peacefully. The name, he says, serves as a tribute to Kabani's family, who are strict Muslims.

★★★

The 63rd Miss USA Pageant will be televised live from Las Vegas at 8 p.m., Sunday, June 16, on NBC. Whether Megan Sophia Luiz-Kabani will compete to become a future Miss USA is up to her, say her fathers.

"We do have pageant friends who are fans, and their daughters have chosen not to participate in the competition," says Luiz. "We would rather that she first concentrate on physical fitness and athletics. We want to expose her to music and singing, volleyball and soccer."

Besides, she might simply be the sister of a future Miss USA or Super Bowl quarterback, as Luiz and Kabani hope to build a big family.

"We would like to have five or six children," says Luiz.

Donalevan Maines also writes about Kristopher Sharp, the Tony Awards, and The Glass Menagerie in this issue of OutSmart magazine.

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Rising and Shining

An interview with Kristen Ellis-Henderson of Antigone Rising

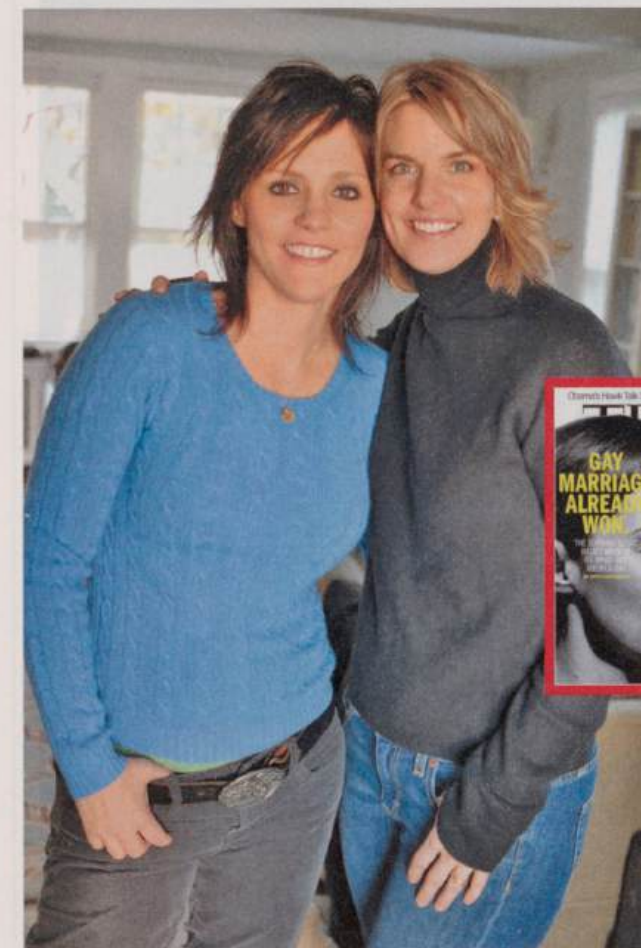
by Gregg Shapiro

Photo by Katie Ambrose

Kristen Ellis-Henderson has been busy the past couple of years. She and her Antigone Rising bandmates released the studio disc *23 Red* in 2011. That same year, Kristen and her wife, Sarah Kate, co-wrote a book, published by Simon & Schuster, about their pregnancies and the birth of their children. The couple also became outspoken marriage equality activists. Most recently, they appeared in a lip-lock on the cover of *Time* magazine for a story titled "Gay Marriage Already Won." Ellis-Henderson did all of that, in addition to being the mother of a pair of four-year-olds. Fortunately, she was able to find some time in her busy schedule to talk with me about music, motherhood, and recent events.

Gregg Shapiro: Kristen, in early April 2013, you could be seen kissing your wife, Sarah, on the cover of *Time* magazine. How did that come about?

Kristen Ellis-Henderson: Sarah and I wrote a book that came out in 2011 called *Times Two*, the story of how we got pregnant on the exact same day and gave birth to our son and daughter, Thomas and Kate. We got a lot of press when that book came out. We were getting a lot of phone calls from media outlets when New York State was voting again [as it had in 2009] on marriage equality in 2011. We ended up being vocal advocates for marriage equality in 2011, for obvious reasons, and when it passed we ended up getting married, and the *Huffington Post* followed us. There was a lot of press surrounding our wedding. When the Supreme Court was going to hold the hearings for DOMA and Prop 8, *Time* maga-



Timely: "We didn't realize it was actually going to be a cover story," says Kristen Ellis-Henderson (l) with her wife, Sarah. Inset: the couple on the cover of *Time*.

zine was doing this cover story. Somebody at the magazine knew of us and contacted us to see if we'd be interested in coming in to talk about the issues. We didn't realize it was actually going to be a cover story. We slowly learned there were going to be photos and it was going to be for the cover. That's basically how it went down.

How has the response to the *Time* magazine cover been for you?

I have to say I'm totally surprised. It has been a non-issue, practically. We were sort of bracing. In 2009, the first time we talked to the press, there seemed to be a lot more negativity. A lot more people were coming at us with different types of questions, let's just say. This time around, everyone we talked to was like, We're so happy, it's amazing what's happening, the tides have shifted. This time around, we spoke to Geraldo Rivera, who is pro-equality. Getting ready for some of these

interviews, I was expecting to speak to a right-wing-type interviewer, and they're all in favor—even Bill O'Reilly. It's been kind of an event that's a nonevent. I'm really happy about that.

Long before you kissed your wife, Sarah, on the cover of *Time*, you were probably best known for being in the band Antigone Rising. Did you always know that you wanted to make music?
Yes, definitely. My sister [Cathy] and I formed our first band when I was three. We were always grabbing kids in the neighborhood and creating bands. That was something that Cathy and I did, and she's still in the band with me to this day. →

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Rising and Shining continued from previous page

I'm so glad you mentioned your sister, Cathy. What's it like being in a band with your sister?

I've never not been in a band with my sister. It's one of those things where you blur the lines of codependency. I don't know how to be in a band without her. We started doing it together, and we always have. I was just talking about this with someone the other day. We were saying that brothers in bands tend to be kind of a mess. Look at Oasis or the Black Crowes. But sisters in bands [are different]—look at the Bangles or Heart. We love being in a band together.

What's the secret to Antigone Rising's staying power?

I think we just do what we do. Somebody gave me this advice a while ago. Julie Gold, the Grammy Award-winning songwriter...

She wrote "From a Distance."

That's right. Julie is a mentor. Back in the nineties she was mentoring our band. She said to us, "Never change what you're doing. Always do what you do, because you want to be authentic and real. Be yourselves. The music industry is such that it will rotate around and you'll keep coming around again. Don't worry about chasing whatever is the in thing." That's exactly what we've always done. Sometimes we may not be what the hip thing is in the music business, but as long as you keep doing what you do, eventually the music industry comes back around and catches up with you again. We've never tried to be anything we are not.

Would it be fair to say that the most consistent thing about Antigone Rising has been the country influence?
Definitely.

With that in mind, we all saw how country singer/songwriter Chely Wright was treated after she came out, how her record sales suffered. What is it like, from your perspective, for Antigone Rising being queer in the country music genre?

The biggest difference between us and Chely is that Chely was unquestionably a Nashville-marketed country artist. We were more pop/rock with a Southern/country feel. Our record label, the way we were marketed, would treat country as our secondary market.

We did spend a lot of time in Nashville. It's an incredibly different atmosphere in Nashville as far as acceptance and equality goes. I think it's gotten a lot

better, but I can tell you, without naming names, when we were down in Nashville, certain people didn't want to go out to dinner with us, in public, because it might draw into question their sexuality. That's what goes on in Nashville.

I think what Chely did is huge. That is not an easy town to come out in. We had a foundation; we had already been playing all over the country. To be quite honest, it's our gay following. We would pull into markets all the way across the country, so far away from home—there was no money being spent to promote, we didn't have a record label—and the room we are playing in, say in Colorado, would have seventy-five to eighty people there. There'd be all these lesbians who heard about us from their friends from all over the country. You can't really put a price tag on that kind of stuff. We always had a very strong gay following. So for us, coming out wasn't that hard.

Antigone Rising has undergone some personnel changes since the release of *From the Ground Up*. What makes this particular lineup work so well?

Right now, the lineup is my sister and me and Dena [Tauriello], our drummer who's been with the band forever, and Nini Camps is the lead singer. She's an old friend of mine. We've been friends for like twenty years. She's a songwriter, and she and I started writing songs together before this lineup change happened. So a lot of the songs that I was already bringing in to the band were co-writes with Nini. It was a very natural progression.

About five years ago, Nini's life and mine started tracking the same. She and her partner Brooke were getting ready to start a family, [and] they were getting ready to move out of the city. Our lives started making a lot of sense, the way our schedules were. We live in the same town now. She lives here in Seacliff with her wife. She's got a three-year-old son named Marco who's best friends with my kids who are four years old. It just works that easily—it's like a natural fit.

Nini's got a studio in her house where we work. We're a little bit older and we're a little more set in how we want to do things. We're not so much into the drama or controversy. We just want to play music and have a good time. It's like a family for real now. Not that it wasn't before, but there was a lot more at stake back in the days of *From the Ground Up*, with Starbucks and all these players involved.

The latest Antigone Rising single, "That Was the Whiskey," was co-written with singer/songwriter Lori McKenna. Can you please say something about the role that collaboration plays in →

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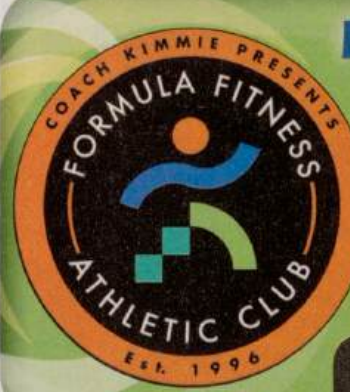
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Rising and Shining continued from previous page

Antigone Rising's songwriting process?

I find as a rule that when you collaborate, you're able to go places you wouldn't even think of yourself. Nini and I do most of the collaborating. We've written a few songs with Lori. She has such a great melodic sense. "That Was the Whiskey" was written based on a night that we had spent together with Lori.

We did the 30A Songwriters Festival in Florida with Lori.

We were headlining that night in a big, crowded, dirty drinking bar. It was the final show of that day's festival, so everyone from the festival was there. And it was Nini's birthday. Lori was at the show. I guess Jägermeister was one of the sponsors of the festival, and these Jägermeister girls, in their trucker hats, were coming up to the stage and handing us shots. The crowd was up on each other's shoulders. It was a raunchy show. Lori, who is a singer-songwriter who usually sits on the stage with her guitar, was so blown away after the show. She thought it was amazing to watch, all these bodies surfing around and all these shots go-



Melodious: Ellis-Henderson (l) with her bandmates (l-r) Nini Camps, sister Cathy Henderson, and Dena Tauriello.

ing on. She was really inspired by the show [laughs], which was kind of a drunken-mess show. But it was fun.

So we sat down to write with Lori. That song was inspired by that show that night. It was an easy thing. It was based on a night that we had all spent together.

Will "That Was the Whiskey" be included on the next Antigone Rising disc, and if so, when will that be coming out?

What we're going to do, I think, is release a five-song EP. We're trying to navigate our way through the industry right now [to see] where the music business is at. It seems that there's no point in doing a ten-song CD when

people are just downloading the songs they like, for the most part. We are in the process of finishing the five-song, and we'll press it onto a disc if people want a hard copy, or it can be downloaded as a five-song package. We're hoping that by sometime in June we'll have it ready, and "Whiskey" will definitely be a part of that.

Speaking of June, Antigone Rising has been booked to play Pridefests during the 2013 season. Have you been part of the Pridefest circuit before?

Yes, we've done a bunch of different Prides all over the country. We're doing Northampton Pride, and we've done New York City Pride and Atlanta Pride a couple of times.

What's the best thing about playing a Pridefest?

It's hard to even put into words. It's so intense, it's so powerful. There's something about playing to a group of gay and lesbian audience members who are all there for the same reason. It's great. I love to do that.

Gregg Shapiro also writes the GrooveOut column in this issue of OutSmart.

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The Defense of Marriage Act

A law from the Dark Ages

by Megan Smith

With overwhelming approval from both houses, the legislation on President Bill Clinton's desk the morning of September 21, 1996, was signed and, in the blink of an eye, became the law of the land. Relief set in throughout the Clinton administration—this new Defense of Marriage Act would not be an issue in the fall presidential election.

The act, better known as DOMA, set in stone that the federal government officially defined marriage as the union between one man and one woman. Section 3 of the law makes clear that no same-sex unions will be recognized for the purpose of federal laws, programs, or benefits—a total of 1,138 rights stripped away from gay and lesbian couples as of 2004. "I have long opposed governmental recognition of same-gender marriages, and this legislation is consistent with that position," Clinton said upon signing. "The Act confirms the right of each state to determine its own policy with respect to same-gender marriage and clarifies for purposes of federal law the operative meaning of the terms 'marriage' and 'spouse.'"

"I also want to make clear to all that the enactment of this legislation should not, despite the fierce and at times divisive rhetoric surrounding it, be understood to provide an excuse for discrimination, violence, or intimidation against any

person on the basis of sexual orientation," he later noted. "Discrimination, violence, and intimidation for that reason, as well as others, violate the principle of equal protection under the law and have no place in American society."

Although his words were laced with sincerity, little did President Clinton know



Love at any age: after being forced to pay over \$363,000 in federal taxes on the inheritance of her wife, Thea Spyer's (r) estate, Edith Windsor (l) is taking DOMA to the U.S. Supreme Court in hopes of bringing America's definition of marriage out of the Dark Ages.

The act outlawed "buggery," or any "unnatural sexual act against God," and made the offense, later clarified as sodomy, punishable by death. "And that the offenders being herof convicted by verdict confession or outlawry shall suffer such pains of death and losses and penalties of their good chattels debts lands tenements and hereditaments as felons do according to the Common Laws of this Realme," the law read.

The real rub didn't lie with the punishment by death clause, but rather →

King Henry VIII of England enacted the country's first civil law against homosexuality—the Buggery Act of 1533.



that he was signing into law a piece of legislation comparable to that of sixteenth-century England.

Nearly five hundred years before DOMA, a quick swish of a quill pen marked another historical injustice. Just like that, King Henry VIII of England enacted the country's first civil law against homosexuality—the Buggery Act of 1533.

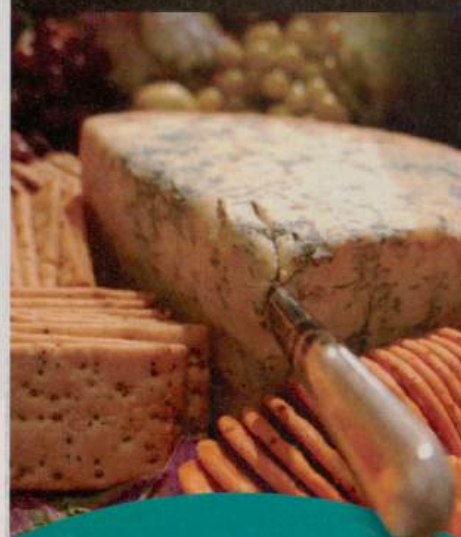


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The Defense of Marriage Act

continued from previous page

with the second half of the proclamation. According to the law, instead of having their estate passed down to their next of kin, the government would confiscate convicted sodomites' possessions.

Although never explicitly stated, it is speculated that King Henry VIII never cared much about the crime of sodomy at all, since Germanic codes up to that point ignored all sexual activities except adultery. Rather, the potential for acquiring additional land seemed more of a delight to the king. He often used spies to gather information to convict clergy members, taking their monastery lands as a result.

Dirty motives in politics didn't die with the end of the sixteenth century, pro-LGBT rights activists argued after DOMA was enacted. Senator Ted Kennedy, although he was a Democrat like Clinton, called the act "a mean-spirited form of legislative gay-bashing designed to inflame the public four months before the November election."

The true intention of DOMA might have been hidden beneath Clinton's cushy and comforting words about ending discrimination, but the House Judiciary Committee made things quite clear by

stating that the act was "intended by Congress to reflect and honor a collective moral judgment and to express moral disapproval of homosexuality."

More than a decade after its passage, an unlikely eighty-three-year-old former top IBM programmer and openly lesbian woman is standing up to the Supreme Court of the United States and saying, "No more."

Divorcing her husband only a year after their wedding, Edith "Edie" Windsor moved to New York City to, as she says, "let myself be gay." There, in a Greenwich Village restaurant, is where she met the love of her life, an impressive psychologist named Thea Spyer.

In 1967, during a drive in the countryside, Spyer proposed to Windsor with a diamond-encrusted circular brooch, so as to not spark questions from nosy coworkers and neighbors. Although Windsor said yes right away, the couple waited forty long years for the chance to be legally wed—an opportunity that almost never came about.

In 2007, Spyer's multiple sclerosis, a disease she had been diagnosed with years before, grew ever more severe. Not wanting to wait around any longer, the

couple traveled to Toronto to finally have the wedding they spent half a lifetime dreaming about. The two were joined in union by Canada's first openly gay judge, Justice Harvey Brownstone, on May 22, 2007. "The fact is, marriage is this magic thing," Windsor says. "I mean, forget all the financial stuff—marriage symbolizes commitment and love like nothing else in the world. And it's known all over the world. I mean, wherever you go, if you're married, that means something to people, and it meant a difference in feeling the next day."

The warm, blissful feeling of marriage was unfortunately short-lived for the couple—replaced by the cold reality of the Defense of Marriage Act. Spyer passed away in 2009, at a time when the couple's home state of New York recognized same-sex marriage. However, because of DOMA, their union was not recognized by the federal government. What resulted boiled down to that same centuries-old problem of estate inheritance rights.

Since, in the eyes of the law, Windsor was little more than a stranger to Spyer, she was ineligible to inherit unlimited tax-free property that all U.S. citizens can transfer to a spouse during life or

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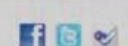


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Razor Sharp

*Kristopher Sharp takes down
bigotry on his way to the top*

by Donalevan Maines

There's never a dull moment for Kristopher Sharp.

He wins elections (student body vice president at the University of Houston-Downtown) and honors (the Human Rights Campaign's "Young Leader for Equality" award in April). He battles bigotry (including UH-D vandals who circulated a medical record identifying his HIV status as positive, in March) and The System (ongoing lobbying of elected officials for equality legislation and foster care reform).

Sharp has overcome a world of pain during his twenty-three years. Just reading about his bumpy ride, including ten years in almost thirty foster care homes and facilities, you might feel like you need a drink. So at least grab a glass to toast the young man's true grit, the long distance he's come, and the places he's headed for.

Kristopher Sharp was born on December 11, 1989, in Dumas, the middle child of three kids with different dads. "My mother was bad on drugs. She was abusive," says Sharp. "My father suffers from schizophrenia and bipolar disorder."

"I was picked on as a child because I was the poor kid in the trailer park," he says. "I wore the most horrible clothes and I begged teachers sometimes for food. I was a troublesome child, and I would get in trouble at school and they would send me home with deten-



Fostering care: Kristopher Sharp is the student body vice president of University of Houston-Downtown.

tion slips for my mother to sign. She would beat the shit out of me, and I would tell them, 'I do not want to go home.'"

When Sharp was eight, he says, he dropped a glass that broke, and his mother, in a drug-fueled rage, picked it up and threw it at him. He went to school bleeding.

"I was worried that I was going to die," he says, but he was terrified to tell his teacher what happened. "I was so scared it wouldn't be enough, that they would tell my mom and she would beat the shit out of me for telling."

On that day, however, school officials decided that enough was enough, and Children's Protective Services finally took action. "First, you go to an emergency shelter, a homeless shelter for kids," he explains. "I had to go to Amarillo, in a completely different town, and you're packed in there with thirty kids. It was traumatic."

"I stayed in twenty-seven different placements. I was literally moved at least every six months to a year."

Sharp stayed there for three months before getting placed in a couple's home. "I was their first foster child, and it didn't work out. I don't know what happened, but I don't think I dealt with it very well. I still cared about my mom."

"From that family, I was sent to an older lady," he continues. "I f--ked up that placement, too. Unfortunately, once you blow your first two placements, and you're disruptive, they institutionalize you. The State is not a good parent."

Between ages eight and eighteen, says Sharp, "I stayed in twenty-seven different placements. I was literally moved at least every six months to a year. You're never really grounded. I didn't have any friends. Being in the system, living in group homes, surrounded by boys who are maturing →

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Razor Sharp continued from previous page

at that age, I got molested several times. My story isn't unique."

Sharp's placements included a psychiatric hospital and a residential treatment center where, he says, doctors felt required to put a label on him.

"It's very easy to diagnose a kid, so the solution becomes, 'Take a pill,'" he explains. "I was diagnosed so many ways, I couldn't keep up with all of them. I was being given five or six medications a day."

When Sharp "aged out" at eighteen, he says, "the group home kicked me out onto the streets. They get paid per person, and typically the state quits paying, so you're out."

Although homeless, Sharp held down a job at a tanning salon, which is where he met his partner, Sean, six years ago this month. Sharp moved in with him.

During his first year out of the foster care system, Sharp continued to see a psychiatrist, until one day when the doctor advised Sharp to stop taking the last of his medications. "That was the game-changer," says Sharp. "From that day forward, I got into school and became active in the community."

Sharp is entering his senior year of college, majoring in social work. "Jesus was a social worker," he says. "Our purpose is to help people."

In March, as he and fellow senior Isaac Valdez prepared to seek the offices of student body vice president and president, respectively, copies of a flier were posted on campus with a photograph of Sharp, defaced by an "X," and the words "WANT AIDS? DON'T SUPPORT THE ISAAC AND KRIS HOMOSEXUAL AGENDA." On the other side of the flier was a medical record identifying Sharp's HIV status as positive.

The flier was followed by threatening graffiti, including "ISAAC + KRIS = AIDS" written on bathroom stalls, says Sharp, who told *OutSmart* he was "devastated" when UH-D's dean of students, Tommy Thomason, called him to his office on March 19 and showed him the flier. "I knew that my sexuality could be under attack, because that is an easy target," says Sharp, but he was shocked that his HIV status would be exposed. "Now, everybody knows."

However, rather than succumb to the bigoted attacks, he says, "I dug my feet in and decided to use the incident as an opportunity to educate my peers on the prevalence of HIV and AIDS-related stigma, and we went on to win the elections."

In May, Sharp announced that UH-D had officially recommended that

resources from the upcoming fiscal year be allocated for the creation and maintenance of a "Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion."

"Once the budget is approved by the UH System regents, everything will be official," Sharp explains. "I'm very excited to see this happen at UH-Downtown, and I look forward to working with the administration to see the center flourish."

Sharp also traveled to Washington DC to meet with members of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Care and discuss reforms in the foster care system.

"Change comes from the top," says Sharp, explaining his plan to seek elective office in the "very near" future.

"While I may not have any upcoming races, I do plan on assisting several LGBT candidates with their campaigns over the summer," he says. "Specifically, I plan to help Jennifer Rene Pool succeed in her race for Houston City Council At-Large Position 3."

Sharp also plans to lead his school's Safe Zone group in this month's Pride Parade. "Everyone at UH-D and UH-D alumni are welcome to join us," he says.

Donalevan Maines also writes about two gay fathers, the Tony Awards, and The Glass Menagerie in this issue of OutSmart.



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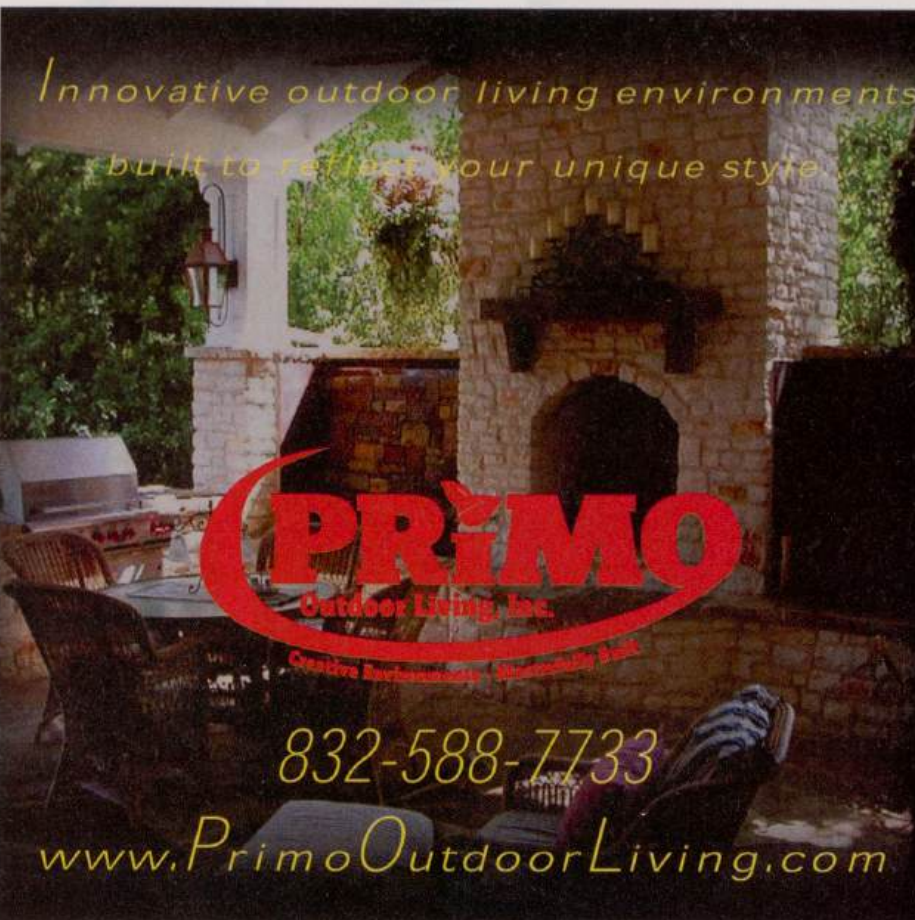
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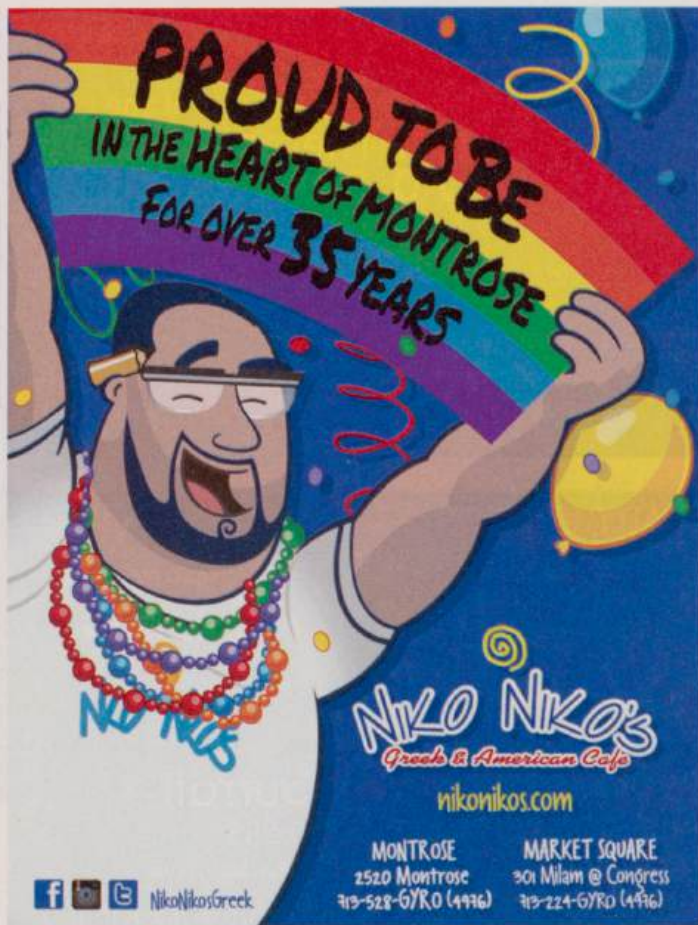


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Still So Cool

Cyndi Lauper does it all

by Blase DiStefano

Photo by Miranda Penn Turin

Cyndi Lauper is insane. Well, not exactly. Her schedule, however, is insane. The fifty-nine-year-old entertainer recently wrote a best-selling autobiography (*Cyndi Lauper: A Memoir*); she recently starred in her own TV show (*Cyndi Lauper: Still So Unusual*); she recently composed music for a Tony-nominated Broadway play (*Kinky Boots*); she is preparing for her thirtieth-anniversary tour (she will have turned sixty years old the week before she performs in Houston); she oversees the True Colors Fund, None to Forty Project, and the Give a Damn Campaign; and she plays wife and mom on a daily basis. One more thing: she took time out of that hectic schedule to answer a few of *OutSmart*'s questions via e-mail.

Blase DiStefano: I interviewed you in 1997 when you were very pregnant with Declyn. You said then that he and you "worked on the Tina Turner concert [in Houston]. He did [the 'Ballad of Cleo and Joe'] shoot with me. He went to the Halloween ball with me—we went as a belly dancer. We raised money for AMFAR..." Did Declyn turn out to be as cool as his mom?

Cyndi Lauper: Way cooler!

"When you see your family and friends' civil rights being stripped away, you speak up and do whatever you can to keep that from happening."

You also said, "This baby will probably teach us all a lot of things." What has he taught you?

I am learning something new from him every day. He's my greatest gift.

In that same interview, you said your sister, who is openly gay, was an acupuncturist and herbalist. Does she stick lots of needles in you?

Yes, she does... LOL. When we were kids, I followed her around everywhere she went. I just thought she was the coolest, smartest, funniest, and strongest person (I still do today). I followed her around like her own shadow. She couldn't shake me. My mom said

we were made to be best friends, and I took that literally. She is still my best friend.

You'll be touring throughout June, with three concerts in Texas. Houston's concert is June 28, which is during our Gay Pride

Week. What can we expect, besides a great concert?

I am doing the *She's So Unusual* album from beginning to end. Kind of a celebration for me, as this year is the thirtieth anniversary year of the album. Simon & Schuster published my autobiography this year, so it was a year that I spent a lot of time looking back and appreciating what an amazing ride my life has been. I have a musical on Broadway called *Kinky Boots* that the audiences love and was nominated for thirteen Tonys, so this summer I'm getting my dance shoes on and celebrating with my fans that have been with me for all thirty years through all my different twists and turns. →



Singing out: Cyndi Lauper visits Houston at the end of June during her "She's So Unusual" tour.

Still So Cool continued from previous page

You've been a gay rights advocate for what seems like forever. Do you remember when you first knew what "gay" was?

Listen, I am family and friend. My sister is part of the community, as are other family and friends. All I knew was that, where I come from, when you see your family and friends' civil rights being stripped away, you speak up and do whatever you can to keep that from happening.

The True Colors Fund does amazing work, and now there's the Forty to None Project. Including your involvement with your charity projects, where do you find the time to do all the things you do?

It takes a lot of coordination and a great team to help make it all happen. It is definitely overwhelming at times—it is the struggle of the juggle. Balancing time with my family, my career, and everything with the True Colors Fund is an art within itself. When we first started the True Colors Fund five years ago, it was just my manager Lisa Barbaris, our executive director Gregory Lewis, and myself. We tackled what we thought we could do and do well first with the Give a

Damn Campaign. When that was a success, we started to tackle the larger task at hand, and that was working to bring an end to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth homelessness. We did our homework—we built strong partnerships with people like Terrence Meck at The Palette Fund, and we built the Forty to None Project. Now, Gregory has brought on an amazing team at the True Colors Fund, including [former Houstonian] Jama Shelton, to take us to the next level. We just stay focused on the task at hand, and that is helping these kids, helping them overcome the rejection they have faced and help them move on to be happy and successful adults.

Brittney Griner with the WNBA came out, and Jason Collins with the NBA came out. Do you think huge changes in sports (and marriage equality) are finally taking place?

Absolutely. That is the case when anyone of notoriety has come out publicly. We will look back when equality has been achieved—and it will be—and we will see that it is primarily because people were brave enough to tell their stories, famous or not. From a gay or transgender person to a straight family member or friend, every time someone tells their story and how inequality has impacted their lives or the lives of people you care

about, that is change for the better in its purest form. Plus, if someone sees someone else being willing to share their story, then they will be inspired to tell their own. It is a ripple effect.

Thirteen Tony noms for *Kinky Boots*! What are you wearing to the Tonys?

I'm just so excited. Yea, Nikki Fontanella (my stylist) and I are working on that right now!!!

Are you in love with Billy Porter? I assume you're in love with the entire cast and crew.

It's the perfect cast. Billy Porter is amazing. He is a great actor and an amazing singer. Everyone is cast so perfectly. I wouldn't change a thing about it.

If there is anything else you want to tell *OutSmart's* readers, now is the time!

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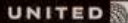


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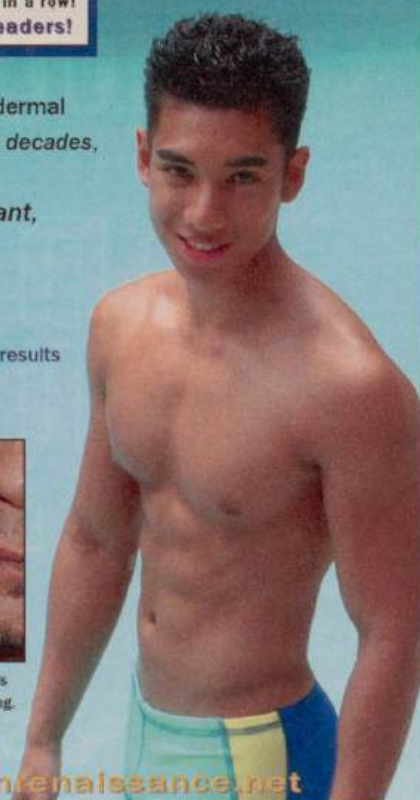
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Boot Camp

Cyndi Lauper brings true colors to Broadway with 'Kinky Boots'

by Lawrence Ferber

Photo by Matthew Murphy

Cyndi Lauper isn't sounding like herself these days. Instead, she's sounding like a sassy black British drag queen, a young, vanilla man tasked with keeping his family's business alive, his disgruntled fiancée, a homophobic blue-collar worker, and quite a few others.

These are characters in Broadway's exuberant new musical, *Kinky Boots*, for which Lauper made her first foray as a stage musical composer. Enlisted by *Kinky Boots*' librettist, Harvey Fierstein, Lauper immersed herself in the show's characters, writing so specifically for their individual voices that the songs were initially devoid of Lauper's own distinctive sound.

"We had to almost say, 'You're Cyndi Lauper—give us a f-king Cyndi Lauper song!'" Fierstein laughs. "Because she has this real love for musicals, she just abandoned what most other [theater] composers are too precious about—they want it to sound like them more than the characters. 'What sound would this character have?' is the question she asked, and we got an eclectic score with lots of different sounds, and each character really does have their own voice."

The Grammy- and Emmy-winning Lauper's own thick Queens accent is evident as she speaks about *Kinky Boots* and Fierstein, whom she credits as both having inspired her prolific LGBT activism—she co-founded the True Colors Fund, which runs programs dedicated to eradicating LGBT youth homelessness—as well as landing her the gig.

"I love Harvey dearly," she says. "He calls me Christina—as in he's 'Mommie Dearest.' To actually work with him now is a big honor. He's really funny, a good guy and storyteller, and he understands the stage. He's been doing it all his life. He invited me into this, and I took it on the basis that I always wanted to work with him. He's great."

Based on the 2005 film, which in turn was based on the real-life story of a Northampton, England, shoemaker who carved a niche by making sexy, funky women's boots in men's sizes—with a steel-reinforced heel for sup-

Charlie enlists Lola as a shoe designer, and a common bond between the two men helps forge what could save not only soles, but souls.

port—*Kinky Boots* stars Stark Sands as Charlie Price, who inherits his family's near-bankrupt shoe factory. Reluctant to fill his father's (ahem) shoes, and in fact recently moved to London with his fiancée Nicola, Charlie has an "a-ha!" moment

when he meets Lola, a brassy London drag queen (the fabulous, out Billy Porter) in need of fierce, sturdy, sexy footwear. Charlie enlists Lola as a shoe designer, and while some closed-minded workers initially balk at this potential savior, a common bond be-

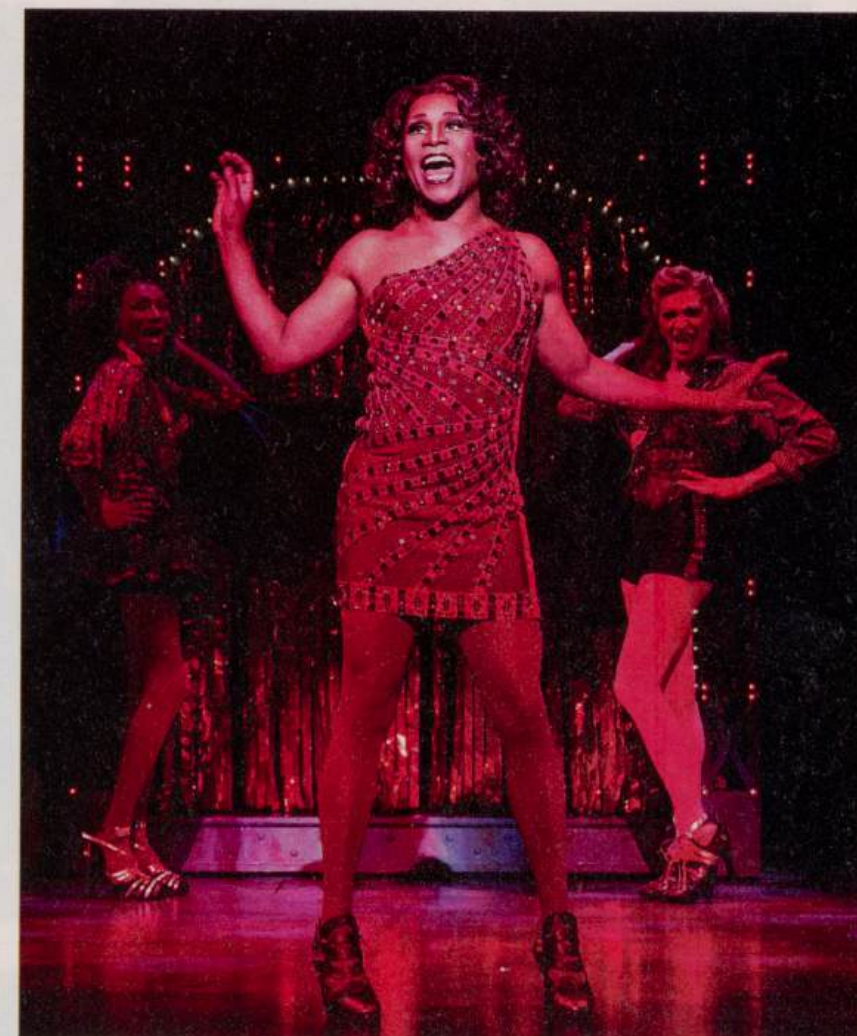
tween the two men helps forge what could save not only soles, but souls.

Directed and choreographed by Tony-winner Jerry Mitchell (*Hairspray*, *Legally Blonde*), *Kinky Boots* opened April 4, and it's an exuber-

ant production indeed filled with witty banter, incredible dance numbers—some involving Lola's clique of fellow drag queens, a couple of whom are downright acrobatic—ingenious sets and staging, emotional moments that bring tears to the eyes (or at least a gulp and heavy sigh if you're stone-hearted), and Lauper's superb songs, which sound like the work of a seasoned show-tune pro... and are as catchy as her best pop tunes.

The show's pre-Broadway test-run in Chicago last fall was captured in Lauper's recent WE network reality series, *Still So Unusual*, which aired during January/February. Also chronicled was her guest appearance →

Whatever Lola wants: Billy Porter stars as Lola in Broadway's *Kinky Boots*, which is nominated for a Tony Award for Best Musical. Porter is nominated for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Musical, along with Stark Sands, a co-star.



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Boot Camp continued from previous page

on *The Voice* (a "Money Changes Everything" duet with a contestant), the release of her self-titled memoir, and domestic life with actor husband David Thornton and 15-year-old son Declyn.

Parent-child relations are a powerful theme in *Kinky Boots*. Lola's professional boxer father, unsurprisingly, takes issue with his child's homosexuality and penchant for female clothing. Lauper, whose sister is queer, insists that sexuality and gender identity would play no issue in her love for Declyn.

"Let me tell ya something," she says. "I just want my kid to be healthy and happy. I don't give a hoot what he turns out to be. You want them to be who they are and help them as best they can to succeed in the world of who they are. You can never tell a kid 'you can do this or that.' It's my job to be there and help him."

Providing a safe space for queer youth abandoned by their parents and hostile home situations has been a priority for Lauper. She



Not so kinky: Cyndi Lauper sits on top of the world with Harvey Fierstein (c) and Jerry Mitchell.

visited Washington DC last year to accept an award for her efforts to help end LGBT youth homelessness—which includes the True Colors Residence in Harlem, New York City's first permanent housing development for young, previously homeless LGBTs—and to lobby Capitol Hill on the issue and drum up support for Sen. John Kerry's Reconnecting Youth to Prevent Homelessness Act.

"Well, a lot has come of it," she says of the latter effort, which included a meeting with Nancy Pelosi. "A lot has been going on with people on Capitol Hill. It made some noise and people are actually able to do something. But I'm not gonna lie to you. [The process] is an onion, and you peel away each layer. It certainly was a good poke in the eye to do that and listen to what the hell they're doing and who the hell's doing it and who the hell isn't."

One person Lauper doesn't care to court support from is Donald Trump. Lauper appeared on Trump's *The Celebrity Apprentice* in 2010, making it to sixth place and donating her winnings to →

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Boot Camp

continued from page 94

True Colors Fund and Stonewall Community Foundation. Trump's openly stated opposition to same-sex marriage and civil union rights, and his virulently anti-Obama behavior and tweets during the election, leaves her "deeply disappointed." Trump had called Cher "a total loser" after she tweeted: "I don't know if I can breathe the same air as [Romney] & his Right Wing Racist Homophobic Women Hating Tea Bagger Masters."

"I felt that what he said about the gay community was disappointing because a lot of gay people work for him," Lauper admits. "It's just sad. I thought he could have done better for his country than just go to the lowest common denominator and stir up the crap. It's our country, it's not wrestling. If you try and make our president fail, it doesn't matter who he is, you make our country fail. And if you really are a patriot, if you really give a shit about our country, you don't do stuff like that. First of all, you're an entertainer, and you make ugly buildings, and you're famous for it. And you have a reality show with very high ratings. Don't step into the forum like that. Become educated with all the facts. Don't just be a shit-stirrer. Our country is in trouble and he keeps wanting to make [Obama] fail. Let's call a spade a spade. The guy's a black man, and that's your issue? What kind of idiot are you? Come on."

Of course, the Tony Award nominations have brought even more attention to Lauper's work on the show, and fans have been clamoring for *Kinky Boots*' official Broadway cast album. May 28 finally saw the album's release—yes, iTunes has it—yet one of its songs, "Sex Is in the Heel," was first released last summer and carved a spot on Billboard's dance chart (iTunes stocks a 6-remix EP).

And yes, that's her own voice on the original version of the track. "I'm trying to get songs from the play to the people," she enthuses. "Some of the stuff sung by Billy and Stark might be really cool to get out to the clubs, too."

For more information, see kinkybootsthe musical.com.

Freelance contributor Lawrence Ferber is co-writer of the award-winning gay rom-com *BearCity*. His novelization of the film, *BearCity: The Novel*, will be released by Bear Bones Books this month.

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The Tonys Get 'Kinky'

It's just another gay ol' time at the Tonys

by Donalevan Maines



Sittin' on top of the world: openly gay entertainer Neil Patrick Harris, seen here performing at last year's Tony Awards, hosts again for the third year in a row. He also hosted the show in 2009.

Broadway is blessed with such an embarrassment of riches this season that an abundance of outstanding work was relegated to the sidelines for the Tony Awards, which will be handed out on Sunday, June 9.

Voters agreed that "sex is in the heel," nominating the joyous Cyndi Lauper-Harvey Fierstein musical *Kinky Boots* for thirteen awards (see interview with Cyndi Lauper on page 89), topping chief rival *Matilda*, which they welcomed from London with a dozen nods. They hailed the revival of Clifford Odets's *Golden Boy* with a TKO of eight nominations and dealt a winning hand to the late Nora Ephron's *Lucky Guy*, starring Best Actor in a Play frontrunner Tom Hanks in his Broadway debut.

But Bette Midler as Hollywood super-agent Sue Mengers? Stiffed. Alan Cumming performing *MacBeth* by himself? Move along. Sigourney Weaver starring in Best Play nominee *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*? Pushed aside in favor of cast-mate Kristine Nielsen. Same fate for Alec Baldwin in *Orphans* and Vanessa Williams in *The Trip to Bountiful*.

Jessica Chastain, Katie Holmes, and Scarlett Johansson were snubbed, as were Al Pacino, Jim Parsons, and Paul Rudd. *Jekyll & Hyde* got shut out, leaving stars Constantine Maroulis and Deborah Cox on the unemployment line just two weeks later. However, two other shows we saw en route to the Great White Way scored

nominations—*Bring It On* (Best Musical) and *Ann* (Holland Taylor for Best Leading Actress in a Play).

Who else will vie for Broadway's top honors at the 67th annual gayest-and-greatest awards fest? To begin with, both favorites for Best Actor in a Leading Role in a Musical look like contestants on *RuPaul's Drag Race*. In *Kinky Boots*, Billy Porter plays a sassy drag queen, while Bertie Carvel cross-dresses as Miss Trunchbull, the butch headmistress in *Matilda*. It's based on Roald Dahl's 1988 children's novel that Danny DeVito Americanized as a 1996 movie with a small role for Paul Reubens as FBI Agent Bob.

The fourth nominee for Best Musical is *A Christmas Story*, based on the holiday film classic from 1983. (Last year, the Library of Congress picked the movie for preservation in the National Film Registry.) Because of

the main character Ralphie's affection for a Red Ryder BB gun, the other nominees concede the NRA vote to *A Christmas Story*, which ran for two months but plans to return to Broadway as a seasonal offering.

Other than Ephron, practically everyone else who's nominated is gay. Even Ephron gets props for penning Cher's role as a lesbian in *Silkwood*. Legend has it that when Ephron bowed out of an appearance at the LGBT Community Center in Greenwich Village, she was replaced—fortunately—by gay activist

Larry Kramer, whose speech gave birth to ACT UP.

Kramer, who wrote *The Normal Heart*, will receive the Isabelle Stevenson Award at the Tony ceremony. The honor recognizes a member of the

theater community for volunteering on behalf of humanitarian, social service, or charitable organizations. Past recipients include Phyllis Newman, lesbian Eve Ensler, gay icon Bernadette Peters, and out actor

David Hyde Pierce, a popular Tony winner for the musical *Curtains* and a nominee this year for the comedy *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*. →

Both favorites for Best Actor in a Leading Role in a Musical look like contestants in *RuPaul's Drag Race*.



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The Tonys Get 'Kinky' continued from previous page

(I like that the news release put out by the American Theatre Wing identifies architect/designer David Webster as Kramer's lover. They've been together since back in the day, and back in the day there was no such term as "partner.")

Lucky Guy competes for Best Play amid the work of three out authors: Christopher Durang (*Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*), Richard Greenberg (*The Assembled Parties*), and Colm Tóibín (*The Testament of Mary*, a monologue).

Meanwhile, Greenberg's adaptation of Truman Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's* was snubbed, while Douglas Carter Beane was nominated for penning the book for Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* but not his Nathan Lane vehicle, *The Nance*.

Lane won a nomination for Best Actor in a Play, along with Hanks, Hyde Pierce, August: *Osage County* playwright Tracy Letts as George in yet another revival of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, and Tom Sturridge in *Orphans*.

Finalists for Best Actress in a Play include Nielsen, Taylor and Cicely Tyson in *The Trip to Bountiful*, Amy Morton as Martha in yet another revival of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, and Laurie Metcalf in *The Other Place*.

Tony voters also recognized the revivals of *Pippin*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and *The Trip to Bountiful*, which was directed by Michael Wilson (who got his start at the Alley Theatre) and designed by former Houstonian Jeff Cowie.

Among nominated new shows are *Motown: The Musical* and *Hands on a Hard Body*, snaring a nomination for Keith Carradine in out playwright Doug Hughes's adaptation of the 1997 film documentary about ten hard-luck Texans who brave days on end to win a brand-new truck by being the last contestant to keep his hand on the truck.

Houston's own version of the Tonys, the 11th annual Tommy Tune Awards, sponsored by Theatre Under the Stars (TUTS) to honor excellence in high school musical theater productions, was held April 16. The two-hour telecast of the ceremony, featuring production numbers from all eight nominees for Best Musical and medleys by finalists for Best Actor and Best Actress in a Leading Role, will be shown noon-2 p.m. Sunday, June 9, on ABC Channel 13.

What: The 67th Annual Tony Awards
When: Sunday, June 9, 7 p.m. (CST)
Where: CBS-TV.

Donalevan Maines also writes about Kristopher Sharp in this issue of OutSmart.

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Reconciliation

*A man's struggle to unite
Islam and homosexuality*

by **Sadiq Ali Sheraze**

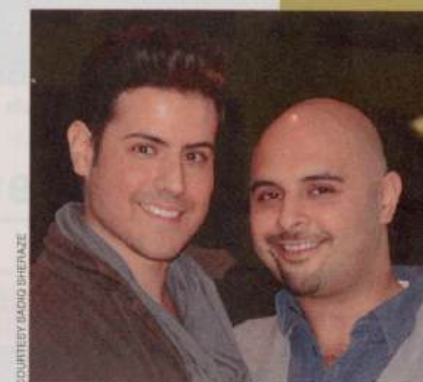
Photo by Dalton DeHart

I'll spare everyone the lengthy details of my coming-out story, but to sum it up, being a gay man in my family is no cakewalk. I imagine my story is similar to so many brave gay men and women who paved the way before me, the only difference being that I was born into a religious Muslim family in the heart of the Lone Star State. There have always been a number of challenges I have had to face being raised Muslim; however, the most difficult of them was attempting to reconcile the religion I was so zealously raised in with that of my innate sexuality. As global conditions bring Muslims into the forefront of political headlines, and with all of the legislation being adopted to recognize gay rights, I'd like to share what it means to be gay and Muslim in the world we live in today.

Growing up in a city about twenty-five miles north of Houston, where the only Muslims I knew were my family and a homosexual community was nonexistent, I didn't have much to relate to in terms of fitting in. It was complicated trying to make friends when our religious customs were so different from everyone else's. Many of the women in my family wore the traditional hijab veil, and during certain religious holidays we were obligated to wear cultural attire that would always turn heads. We were

"You could move mountains more easily than you could rationalize homosexuality to someone who believes so fervently in the literal words of Holy Scripture."

not allowed to date, even though all of our classmates had girlfriends and boyfriends (though this was always a great excuse for me to avoid dating girls). Moreover, while most kids were celebrating Easter and Christmas, I was busy defending my religion by explaining why we fast for one month out



COURTESY SADIQ SHERAZE

of the year or why we pray five times a day. Interestingly, as I assimilated into American life, I found that I also had to defend my Western customs to my parents—such as

why we had non-segregated school dances or why sleepovers were things kids did for fun. As an adult, I still have to explain certain aspects of Western culture to them, like why Lady Gaga wore a dress made of meat to an awards ceremony or why moving in with a significant other before marriage is the norm. Of course, cohabitation is not a huge issue for my parents because according to Islam, homo-

To be gay and Muslim: Sadiq Ali Sheraze says it is "exhilarating to be a part of this moment in history." Inset: Sheraze with his partner, Andrew.

sexuality is a sin and marrying my partner of six years would never be accepted. You could move mountains more easily than you could rationalize homosexuality to someone who believes so fervently in the literal words of Holy Scripture.

This dichotomy has always existed between my religious upbringing and my unfolding life. Nonetheless, I found it necessary to reconcile Islam, despite its interpretation on homosexuality, with the truth of my own sexuality. In order to truly know myself, I had to understand both sides and find a way to reconcile the differences.

Ironically, it was during my undergraduate career at Baylor, a conservative Baptist university, that I developed a deeper understanding of Islam. It was also where I found the courage to come out of the closet, although not all simultaneously. I joined the Muslim Student Association →

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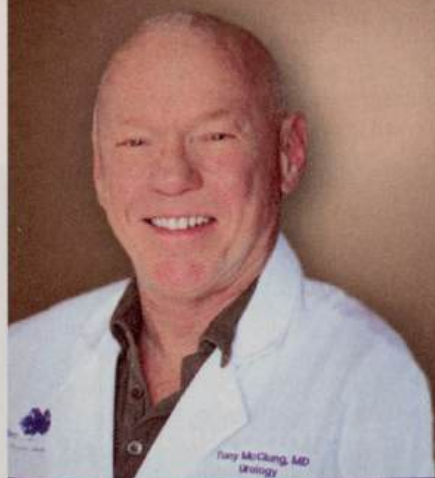
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Reconciliation continued from page 103

on campus, and for the first time in my life formed a strong community with other Muslim students. Although I was still in the closet, I had found a group I could relate to, that also understood the challenges of being raised as first-generation Americans. It was through these friendships that I learned how to understand Islam on a personal level, without falling victim to its interpretative meanings.

Not long after, a group of students developed "Baylor Freedom," an unofficial school organization that was prohibited because they were not in tune with Baptist principles. It was through Baylor Freedom that I could share my story with other gay individuals from various faiths. I spent many nights praying for resolution, but it was ultimately in the values of my own religious beliefs where I found the courage to be honest about who I am. Despite the taboo of being openly gay in the Muslim community—something that is punishable by death in certain parts of the Muslim world—I decided to come out to my family and friends.

Ultimately, it was in the unwavering friendships I developed within the gay community that I found the true reconciliation between my religion and my sexuality. The love and honesty I developed in my relationship to my partner strengthened my understanding of both life and religion. Islam had taught me the theoretical concepts of discipline, truth, and goodness, but it was my relationships with my partner and friends that allowed me to practice the concepts I was taught since I was young.

Although it was a challenge uniting the many aspects of my life, I have discovered the courage that lets me go against the grain. On my path toward reconciliation, I found what is truly important in my life, and that is to accept all of humanity, regardless of religion or sexuality. It is exhilarating to be a part of this moment in history. I am proud of the progress our country is making in the gay rights movement. It is our obligation to pave the way for all the closeted boys and girls growing up today. It is essential for us to speak out against hate, regardless of what form it takes. It is my responsibility to be a voice for those in the Muslim community who have their own difficulties reconciling their faith with their sexuality. It is just as important for me to proudly identify myself as a Muslim American and break any stereotypes that people have toward Islam. I do not consider myself traditionally religious, but I cannot deny that being raised Muslim is a significant aspect of who I have become. ■

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Sex for Its Own Sake

Author Eric Berkowitz discusses his new book and the history of gay sex

by Kit van Cleave

Photo by Jennifer Berkowitz

Eric Berkowitz is a San Francisco writer and lawyer with a master's degree in journalism from the University of Southern California. He has published in the *Los Angeles Times* and *LA Weekly*, and with the Associated Press. He has also served as legal editor of the daily legal newspaper *The Los Angeles Daily Journal*. No wonder he decided to base his new book, *Sex and Punishment: Four Thousand Years of Judging Desire*, on cases from pagan times to today, in which people were punished for their sexual choices.

Kit van Cleave: You begin your book by outlining traditions of sexual boundaries in pagan times. While not much was precluded then, was the case of Postimius against the Bacchus orgies the first time a powerful politician tried to close down a religious sect for personal gain?

Eric Berkowitz: I really don't know whether it was the first time, but it was indeed a major occasion. In this case, it was the fear of homosexuality being used against the upper-class boys of Rome, and thereby weakening them, that helped the scandal to spread across Italy. Fear of homosexuality was just used as a pretext to allow various political forces in Rome to tighten their grip on Italy. As is often the case, sexual fears—especially fears of deviant sex, such as certain kinds of homosexuality—are used for political gain.

At that time, male-to-male sex was widespread. Was the feminization of the sexual receiver seen as damaging the national spirit?



Eric Berkowitz



In pagan times, especially in Rome, sex was not governed by who was doing it, but how it was done. To be the passive party in any sex act was to be seen as being dominated, or taken. Conversely, to be the active party, to

be the penetrator, was to be dominant—to be the person who takes. In that equation there was only one winner. So, the feminization of men, turning Roman aristocrats into passive

homosexuals, was seen as not necessarily damaging the national spirit but turning the men who were supposed to defend Rome into women. Since women were not highly regarded, this was seen as weakening Rome itself.

What of Jewish prescriptions on homosexuality, which preceded Christianity's defining this activity as a mortal sin?

The Jews were unique in that period, in making all homosexual sex—passive and active—into a sin. They did that as part of

a general effort to define themselves as not being like other groups that lived around Israel at the time. Homosexuality was very widespread, and not really condemned in any major way then. So the Jews, like any other group who tried to define themselves, used sexual habits to achieve this. By saying, "We don't have people of the same gender having sex," they were saying, "We are not like those around us." That geopolitical move caused a lot of suffering for many people for thousands of years.

To read the complete interview, log on to OutSmartMagazine.com. To read a review of *Sex and Punishment*, see page 128 of this issue of *OutSmart* magazine.

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



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Catch the Double Feature

Two new LGBT documentaries

by Megan Smith

Whether you're lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or come from a home with same-sex parents, being different from society's idea of "normal" can really cast a shadow on one's thoughts and hopes for the future. However, every day, these individuals overcome unimaginable hardship to prove they are strong, loving, and capable of achieving their dreams. In upcoming months, two documentaries, *Unbreakable Threads* and *Breaking Through*, hit Houston's big screens, portraying the struggle, survival, support, and love of LGBT-identified people and their families with both honesty and clarity.

UNBREAKABLE THREADS

As a long-time elementary schoolteacher, mother of three daughters, and wife to her husband, first-time Houstonian director Stacey Summers has devoted herself to changing the lives of children. After living in more liberal cities like New York and San Francisco, she was shocked to find that in Houston, some of her students were bullied or teased because of the types of families in which they were raised.

As a visual learner, she decided the best way to stop this kind of behavior in schools, while changing others' minds, was to create a film under her company Poppy Pro Productions. This documentary, *Unbreakable Threads*, normalizes the

different types of families in Houston, with a special emphasis on families with same-sex parents. Interviews with the families of Mayor Annise Parker, KPRC Channel 2's Frank Billingsley, chef Monica Pope, and

advocate Zach Wahls are among the highlights. "If I could make a film that actually portrayed all of these beautiful families of today and show it in schools

and all over Houston and who else knows where it would go from there, maybe I can really make a difference," Summers says.

She hopes that the film, which portrays these families in a personal and intimate light, evokes heartfelt feelings from viewers, encouraging them to continue to promote diversity and tolerance. "All of these families are similar," she says. "They all want the same thing. They're all providing love and security and they want to provide happiness for their children. That's the ultimate goal—no matter where you come from or

who's raising you, if you love your family and your family loves you, you all have the same hopes of producing healthy and happy grownups."

Unbreakable Threads is currently in post-production and is expected to be released this fall. Summers has hosted several fundraising events to raise money for the project's final editing process and encourages anyone interested in donating to the film to contact her at unbreakablethreads@hotmail.com. "All children need to feel proud of their families and not have to worry about what anyone else thinks," she says.

Screenings for the documentary have already been scheduled at River Oaks Theatre and the University of Houston, with hopes for additional screenings at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, local schools, and the National Conference on LGBT Equality. →



Family affair (clockwise from top left): chef Monica Pope with daughter Lili, Houston dads with sons Alex and Reuben, Frank Billingsley and husband Kevin with son Morgan and his girlfriend, and Houston grandmothers and great-grandmother (all lesbians) with granddaughter Kenzie are just a few of the vibrant LGBT families featured in the upcoming documentary *Unbreakable Threads*.

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Catch the Double Feature continued from previous page

BREAKING THROUGH

Openly LGBT elected officials share their stories of overcoming barriers set by everything from race to sexual orientation to self-abuse and alcoholism in this award-winning documentary that reminds us all that the American Dream is alive and well.

Directed, produced, and written by Cindy L. Abel, *Breaking Through* offers inspiring and at times heart-wrenching stories from LGBT officials at all levels, including Mayor Annise Parker, Senator Tammy Baldwin, Judge Phyllis Randolph Frye, and former representative Barney Frank. "Though it features politicians, this film isn't about politics," Abel says. "It's about people—people who feel fear and shame and yearning to live meaningful lives, despite the barriers in their way. They reveal how they broke through barriers internally, daring to believe something different than what they were told, and externally as they pursued and achieved the future they envisioned."

The stories told in *Breaking Through*, which was awarded a Silver Remi for feature documentary at



Out in office: Houston's own Mayor Annise Parker (above, with director Cindy L. Abel) and Judge Phyllis Randolph Frye (r) share stories of battling barriers to achieve their dream careers in the award-winning documentary *Breaking Through*.



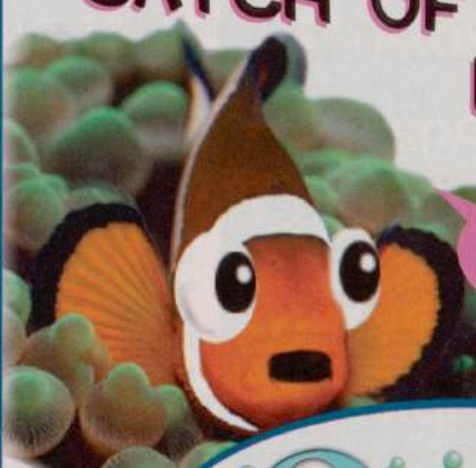
WorldFest Houston International Film Festival this April, prove that those who are in doubt about their futures because they are LGBT-identified are not alone. "I really thought that I would face a choice between being out and pursuing the career of my dreams," Tammy Baldwin says in the film. Along the same lines, California State Assembly member Toni Atkins says, "I just didn't think America was about me."

However, though each interviewee faced struggles and ignorance during their climb to the top, most emphasize that people will pleasantly surprise you more than they will disappoint. And, in the end, you can achieve your dreams. "You're denying things that are a part of you if you're not out," Rives Kistler, justice for the Oregon Supreme Court says in the film. "You're living something that is a lie in a lot of ways, and that's not a good way to live."

Breaking Through is also featured as an official part of Houston Pride Week. Presented by Reel Pride, the screening takes place on June 26 at River Oaks Theatre. Tickets are available for \$10 each and can be purchased online at pridehouston.org.

Megan Smith also writes about the Defense of Marriage Act in this issue of OutSmart.

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'Blame It on Valentine, Texas'

The creator of 'Greater Tuna' brings a new show to Galveston this month

by Rich Arenschieldt

Photo by Brenda Ladd

Jaston Williams, the man most closely associated with such mythical locales as Tuna, Texas (the state's third-smallest town), Didi's Used Weapons Store (whose motto is "If we can't kill it, it's immortal"), and the Tastee Kreme Diner, returns to Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House for his new solo show, *Blame It on Valentine, Texas*, on June 15.

"One of my inspirations for *Valentine* came from something that happened almost a decade ago," Williams says. "We were in Austin doing *Tuna* and I was at the gym working out and had a pain in my chest, which I ignored. It worsened and I ended up in the hospital, thinking I was having a heart attack. After several days of testing, it was found to be something less serious, but the process of facing my mortality for the first time was cathartic. What I learned was this: the best near-death experience to have is one where you aren't really that 'near death.' You get all the benefits of a quick retrospective of your life—and then you live."

"While in the hospital, I spent a lot of time thinking about what I hadn't done—places I hadn't been, plays I hadn't written, you name it. *Tuna* had been running for twenty-five years, and with that kind of success it was easy to become complacent," Williams says. "People love the show and I appreciate that deeply, but I realized there was a lot of other stuff I



Howdy, cowboy: see Jaston Williams in Galveston in *Blame It on Valentine, Texas*.

needed to do." Williams returned to his cabin on Lake Travis and began to work.

Childhood memories appear in much of Williams's works, and *Valentine* incorporates many of them. "While at the cabin, I woke up in the middle of the night having dreamt of an event from my boyhood in a tiny west Texas town.

In the dream I was about to be attacked by a very large and ferocious pig when a hired hand on our farm

intervened and actually saved my life." A second but equally chaotic inspiration for *Valentine* was Williams's ill-fated theatrical debut. "At the tender age of four, my mother enrolled me in a ballet class—something that explains my current marital status," Williams says. "During the performance, I missed all of my cues, angered all the little girls in the 'corps-de-ballet' and had what adults would call a 'nervous breakdown' onstage. Of course I felt compelled to write

about both experiences.

"Later, when I read what I had written, I realized that I was speaking with a 'new voice,' one that was completely devoid of fear or concern for what others may think. I just kept writing, and *Valentine* is the end product of those (and other) recollections."

Fans of *Greater Tuna* have come to expect a certain type of product from Williams—a zany cast of gender-bent characters intertwined in oddball circumstances. "*Tuna* has been such a joy to me over the years," Williams says, "but I have material that is important to me and, in some cases, is just as good or better than what audiences have seen before. *Valentine* is, in many ways, more meaningful."

Williams's new theatrical 'voice' is borne of a certain fearlessness that may surprise audiences. "You can't be →

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'Blame It on Valentine, Texas'

continued from previous page

on the road in the American theater for thirty years without undergoing some significant transformation," Williams says. "You can elect to repeat the same things that have worked in the past, or you can choose to embrace changes without worrying about what your fans will think. I know what I want to say, and I think audiences will be interested to hear it."

As with any artist, Williams's craft is heavily influenced by personal experience. "Ten years ago I was living a rather exotic existence in New Orleans' French Quarter, in a fabulous house with lots of unusual and interesting friends," Williams says. "Life, for me, has changed. Recently, several significant things have happened," Williams continues. "My partner and I got married in Canada and we have a special-needs child that we adopted from China. Both of these events are present in *Valentine*."

A second opportunity for fatherhood has been the catalyst for much of this transformation. (Williams was married at a young age and had a son who died in an accident). "I felt a strong need to 'parent' again," Williams says. "I used to sit and have drinks on a veranda in The Quarter; now I'm the taxi service for a youngster enrolled in a special-needs school, and I couldn't be happier." Having a family has enhanced the sense of connection that Williams feels with others, something evident in the "community" of characters that inhabit *Valentine*.

"Everybody has a connection with a small town somewhere," Williams says. "The characters in these places are often the same, regardless of where the town is located. Interestingly, many people move to a small town because they meet and fall in love with someone who lives in a place like Valentine. Also, many ballet teachers, artists, and musicians teach children from these dinky little hamlets. Like me, some grow up to live and work in the arts. I was a terrible dancer, but I was introduced to an audience and discovered the power of theater—all as the result of that one dreadful dance recital."

What: *Blame It on Valentine, Texas*

When: Two performances, Saturday, June 15, at 2 and 8 p.m.

Where: Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House

Tickets/information: thegrand.com or 800/821-1894.

Rich Arenschioldt is a frequent contributor to OutSmart magazine.



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This Ain't Your Grandma's Tupperware Party

Dixie Longate brings her hysterical show to Houston

by Marene Gustin • Photo by Bradford Rogne

Dixie's Tupperware Party rolls into the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts this month with all the class of an Alabama trailer park, which is where Dixie Longate hails from.

And yes, it's a real Tupperware party. You don't have to buy any plastic storage items, but after ninety minutes of Dixie, you probably will. There's a reason she's the Number One Personal Seller of Tupperware. She's hilariously funny, trashy, and inspiring.

And she's actually a he—show writer Kris Andersson—in a big red wig and skintight dress. I spoke with him recently by phone. Or actually, I talked with Dixie, since he's always in character.

"The tour is going real well," says Dixie in a thick Southern accent. "I just love being on the road and meeting new people. This all started when I got out of prison in 2001 and my parole officer said I needed to get a job to get my kids back." She has three—Wynona, Dwayne, and little Absorbine Jr.

"I've had three husbands who all died under mysterious circumstances, but I've never been indicted," she proudly adds.

Anyway, on the advice of her parole officer, Dixie starts selling Tupperware and finds that plastic, women, and lots of booze can add up to great sales.

As the story goes, she decides to take her act on the road in 2007, leaves off-Broadway howling, and then tours the country selling Tupperware and entertaining audiences. Oh, and she left the kids back at the trailer park in Mobile, but she Skypes with them every day. "As long as nothing's on fire, they're fine," she says.

As to her favorite item that she hawks, she says it's the Rectangular Cake



"I've had three husbands who all died under mysterious circumstances, but I've never been indicted."

Taker. "Sure, you can carry a cake in it, but it holds thirty-four Jell-O shots just as well," she explains. "I take it to church with me and it gets me right through the sermon."

She's also wild about the wine opener. "I can stop at a red light, grab a bottle from my stash in the back seat, and have that wine open before the light turns green."

Are you sensing a theme here?

But more than just boozing, Dixie encourages her audience to think outside the box (or plastic bowl) to come up with creative alternative uses for those Tupperware items. She

also throws in a little Tupperware history. And, although it's a one-drag-queen show, she invites audience members onstage for some spontaneous fun. Don't be afraid to go up—you might get a free Tupperware item out of it.

And while the show has been a hit across the country, this is the first time it's come to Houston. "I am just so excited to come to Houston," she exclaims. "I want to see the Space Center and maybe fly around in a spacecraft, and there's this restaurant I want to go to. It's called the Big Red... oh, I don't think I can say the last word. But I've heard it's really good."

That's okay Dixie, we just call it the BRC (Gastro Pub).

"And I'll knit. I love to knit on the road and just run around," she says. "Sometimes I'm runnin' from the law."

Oh, the life of a Tupperware saleswoman.

But sometimes she pines for life back at the trailer park. "It's so neighborly," she sighs. "If your lawn chair is on fire, they'll rush down to the gulley for water. And you're always meeting new people. Every time a hurricane blows through, you're like, Oh, where did they go? But then someone else moves in."

Hurricane Dixie blows in to Houston on June 4. And whether you need kitchenware or not, you should go because, as Dixie says, this show is more fun than you can shake a stick at.

What: Dixie's Tupperware Party
When: June 4-16
Where: Hobby Center, 800 Bagby
Tickets: tuts.com.

Marene Gustin also writes about Hotel Faust and Trey McIntyre in this issue of OutSmart magazine.

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ANDREW CHRISTIAN

He's a 'Glass' Actor

Donalevan Maines tells us about his
role in 'The Glass Menagerie'

by Donalevan Maines

"I have tricks in my pocket—I have things
up my sleeve—but I am the opposite of a
stage magician. He gives you illusion that
has the appearance of truth. I give you
truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion."

—Tom's opening lines in *The Glass Menagerie*

"What took you so long?" my cousin asks.
She wants to know why I haven't acted in
fifteen or twenty years. But the question
I ask myself is, "Why didn't I play Tom
Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie* before now?"

The oversight is due to be corrected in a production June
7–30 at Cast Theatrical Company in my hometown of Rosen-
berg, thirty miles southwest of Houston. Fittingly, because
that's where my life in the theater began.

I was only ten the first time I saw *The Glass Menagerie*,
but I remember rooting passionately for Tom's sister, Laura,
who was lame, when he brought her home a Gentleman Caller.
I rejected their mother Amanda's refrain that "things have a
way of turning out so badly."

Tom's monologues on the fire escape of the Wingfields'
ratty apartment in St. Louis frame the story, but the play, to
me, was always about the other three characters. Then, ear-
lier this year, I read *Gentleman Callers: Tennessee Williams,
Homosexuality, and Mid-Twentieth-Century Drama*, a book by
Michael Paller.

"Tom is gay," writes Paller.

Aha! Or to quote Tom in the final scene, "I'll be jiggered! I
didn't know."

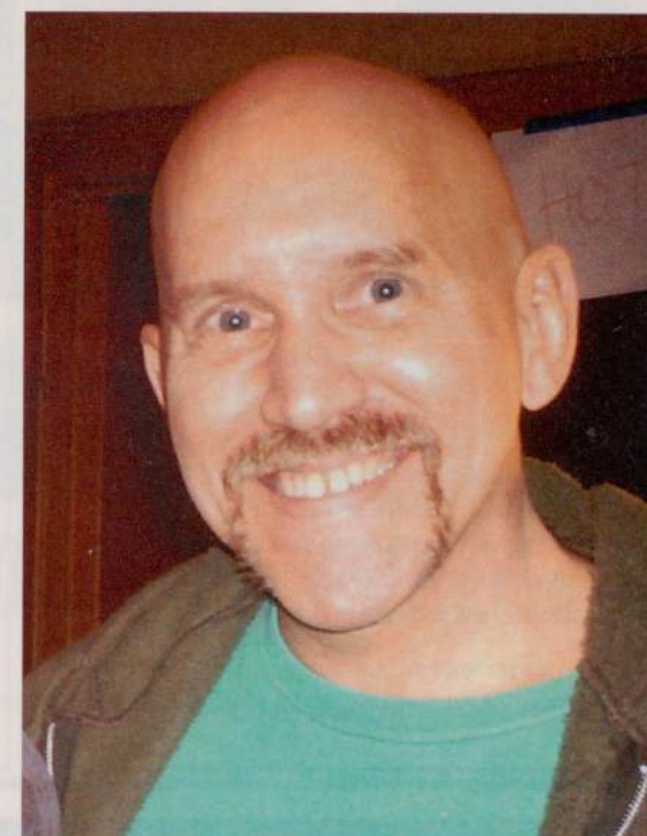
I don't think other actors have clocked Tom as gay, either.
Not William Holden in the 1950 movie, or Hal Holbrook oppo-
site Shirley Booth on *CBS Playhouse* in 1966. Not Montgomery
Clift or Sam Waterston. Well, maybe Montgomery
Clift and Sam Waterston. But mostly you hear
that Tennessee Williams revealed himself through
his female characters, such as Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar
Named Desire*.

The critic Mark Lilly, for example, saw Laura's lameness
as a metaphor for the playwright's struggle with his sexual
orientation in the 1940s. "It is seen as a disability that actu-
ally restricts sexual fulfillment," wrote Lilly.

Which makes it all the more fulfilling for me to return
home to play Tom as a young gay man who would become
one of America's greatest playwrights. Paller is a great help
toward my understanding of the role.

To begin with, Paller writes, "Tom is cagey. He is an
embodiment of Williams's intense conflict between the urge to

**"There seems to be a part of Tom
that wishes the Gentleman Caller
was calling on him."**



Maines 'Menagerie': Donalevan Maines returns to acting in
The Glass Menagerie.

conceal and the concomitant desire to reveal."

In Scene Three, when Tom and Amanda quarrel after she peers
over his shoulder at what he's writing, Paller suggests, "[H]e may
want to keep the work secret because its contents are gay—or just
intensely private."

Tom is also evasive about his nocturnal outings. "I go to the mov-
ies," he says. Paller explains, "Williams knew quite well why so many
men went to the movie houses that lined 42nd Street in New York,
and in Hollywood."

The Gentleman Caller, the poet Tom explains, symbolizes "the
long-delayed but always expected something that we live for." Paller
writes, "There seems to be a part of Tom that
wishes the Gentleman Caller was calling on
him."

I've merely scratched the surface of
Paller's theory that Tom is gay and that he
flees the Wingfields' apartment to find him-
self. Who he finds is the man I get to portray in the final monologue.

By integrating personal material as subtext, Tennessee Williams
rendered his emotions all the more powerfully, writes Paller: "When
boundaries are established against expression, expression must find
another way to break through. Igor Stravinsky had this in mind
when he observed, 'The more art is controlled, limited, worked over,
the more it is free.'"

It's been six years since I stepped onstage, and that was to greet
the opening night audience at Cast Theatrical Company's production
of *Wheels of Justice*, which I wrote in Edward Albee's playwriting →



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He's a 'Glass' Actor

continued from page 119

class at the University of Houston. Its gala premiere at the Alley Theatre in 1992 raised more than \$15,000 to launch the "estate planning for artists with AIDS" project at Texas Accountants and Lawyers for the Arts in Montrose. I got to return the next year to perform dual roles in *His Only Forgotten Son*, which is a series of monologues structured as a two-act play.

In 1945, *The Glass Menagerie* became Tennessee Williams's first hit on Broadway. Later, he won Pulitzer Prizes for both *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

Cast Theatrical Company (casttheatrical.com) is located at 1909 Ave. G in Rosenberg amid new restaurants, historic buildings, a railroad museum, a sock-hop soda fountain, and an array of shops with heavenly names. The theater's usually sold-out performances begin at 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, with two 2:30 p.m. matinees each run, one on Saturday and one on Sunday. For reservations, which are strongly recommended, call 832/889-3808.

Donalevan Maines also writes about the Tony Awards in this issue of OutSmart.






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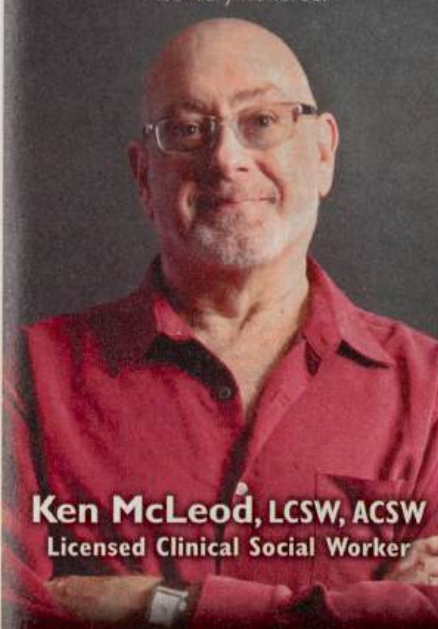
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Jairemie Alexander (l) and William Pontius star in Macklemore & Ryan Lewis's "Same Love" video.

Macklemore & Ryan Lewis

(rap duo)

(Entertainment Weekly, Summer Double Issue 2013)

Re: their gay-equality anthem "Same Love."

"As a straight male, how do I write a pro-gay song? I struggled with that for a while," says Macklemore, who grew up with two gay uncles. "And then I got it: just talk about my own perspective and experiences growing up."

Father of the Year?

(The Huffington Post, 4/13/13, Farah Miller)

If your child asks you for a *Sofia the First* DVD, there are some readily available reasons to say no. Maybe you think the first Disney princess aimed at toddlers is steeped in stereotypes and sends the wrong message to girls. Perhaps you remember there was controversy over whether or not Sofia is Latina. Or, like the father of a boy named Sam, you might just think your kid has too many DVDs.

[The following is Sam's dad telling his story on Facebook.]

"So, here's how Sam became the proud owner of the *Sofia the First* DVD. On Saturday, the kids and I headed to Wal-Mart to get diapers. . . . We are in line, and there is a display of *Sofia* DVDs next to the line. Sam says, "Oh boy, *Sofia the First* . . . I love *Sofia the First* . . . can I get this movie?" And I say, "No, Sam, we have more than enough movies right now" . . . which is very true. Then, the following dialogue:

Moron [in the same line as Sam and his father]: And those are girl movies . . . you don't want to grow up like a mommy, you want to grow up to be like daddy.

Me: Actually, I just want him to grow up to be whatever he is supposed to be . . . and if that's a boy that likes princess movies, then great.

Moron: You don't think that will make him funny.

Me: I sure hope so.

Moron: I don't mean that kind of funny, I mean he might like other boys.

Me: And I'd love him just as much . . . and he'd probably smell better as a teenager.

Moron moves to another line.

Old lady behind me in line: Let me buy that movie for him. You just made my day.

And that is how Sam came to own *Sofia the First*."

Susan Olsen

(Queerty, 3/27/13)

On Facebook, actress Susan Olsen (aka The Brady Bunch's Cindy Brady) steps forward for marriage equality—and her "gay dad" Robert Reed (who died in 1992):

"As a child, I was BLESSED to have another father figure in my life. . . . This wonderful man was a giant in my world, a true king among men. His name was, and is, Robert Reed (OK that's his stage name). • This tempestuous actor, who bottlefed puppies when he wasn't quarreling with the heads of networks, shaped my heart as much as my biological parents did. So I really can honestly say, "My dad was Gay." • I can also say that being gay killed him. Because it was so taboo, he could never make peace with himself. He never allowed himself to have a genuine love. He was forever taunted by his own disdain for the natural inclinations that he was BORN WITH. • Bob was a family man. Had he been allowed to



form a relationship with another man, he would have been the best husband ever and might still be alive. But Bob could not be at peace with this because the people surrounding him shoved their own judgement down his throat and, sadly, he bought into it. . . . I knew he was gay when I was nine years old. . . . I knew it was OK and none of my business. I knew with all certainty that this was a very good man. And so, any ideology that demonized such a good man would have to be evil itself. • Robert Reed, unwittingly, showed me the true nature of religion. And this is why I steer clear of it to this day. • God and I are good pals. We have a clear line of communication and I don't need religion's telephone service. It's full of static. • I could never worship, let alone LOVE, a God who would put my beloved father into the fires of Hell because he loved men. . . . If two people love each other enough to want their union consecrated by a mythological being—they are undoubtedly insane, but LET THEM HAVE AT IT!"

'Gaysweek' (35 Years Ago This Month)

On June 14, 1978, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office refused to register the magazine name *Gaysweek* on the grounds that the name was "immoral."

Bill Maher

(Real Time with Bill Maher, 5/3/13, HBO)

"Now that the first professional athlete [Jason Collins] in a major team sport has come out as gay, someone at the Tony Awards has to come out as straight."

Holly Near

(The Advocate, June/July 2013)

"If I had been asked in 1975 if I thought we would soon have out lesbian singers and comedians working in the music industry, be winning Grammys, be showing up at events with our sweethearts, be producing and directing films with positive lesbian images that are distributed by Hollywood companies, see gay characters on many TV sitcoms, have gay people in Congress and legislatures and on the bench, out gay athletes, marriage equality, and on and on—well, I would have been happy with the fantasy. But I'm not sure I would have believed it possible in such a short amount of time. It is worth pausing to celebrate."



Still singing out: one of the originators of the women's music movement in the 1970s, Holly Near is back with a new album titled *Peace Becomes You*.

Queer Quotes

Compiled by
Blase
DiStefano



No hate: out singers Tegan and Sara are all about equality.

Tegan & Sara

(NOH8 Campaign, 5/28/13, Photo by Adam Bouska, noh8campaign.com)

"Although [Sara and I] are Canadian, we have both vowed to remain unmarried in solidarity with the millions who don't have the same rights as us around the world. We hope that our voices (and in this case our photos) help raise awareness and assist in bringing equality to the masses."

DVDs



by
David-Elijah
Nahmod

'Vito'

Honoring a gay hero



And that's the truth: gay activist/author Vito Russo. *INSET:* Russo and Lily Tomlin do "Edith Ann" impressions. Tomlin says, "I was appearing on *Saturday Night Live* that week and needed footage of Edith Ann ice skating, so Vito and I took 'Edith Ann' to the rink" at Rockefeller Center. Russo used Tomlin and life partner Jane Wagner's house to write part of his classic book, *The Celluloid Closet*.

Vito Russo (1946–1990) had a short life, but one filled with great accomplishments. Today Russo is primarily remembered as the author of *The Celluloid Closet*, the seminal history of LGBT representation in the cinema. Many don't remember him at all, and those who do are unaware of his vast achievements.

Jeffrey Schwarz's documentary *Vito*, produced last year for HBO, pays tribute to Russo and puts him back in the public eye.

Long before it was safe to do so, Russo lived an openly gay life in New York City. "I never believed it for a second," he says in an old interview clip included in the film. He was referring to the Catholic Church's stands on homosexuality. In newly shot interviews, his cousin and brother recall Russo bringing boyfriends home to meet the family—fifty years ago.

Involved with the long-

defunct Gay Activist Alliance, he advocated for gay men and lesbians to work together at a time when men and women existed as two separate

communities. In a powerful video clip from the 1973 Gay Freedom Day Rally in New York City, Russo steps onto the stage when gay men began taunting lesbian activist Jean O'Leary. "Listen to her," he urged the crowd.

"That's the least we can do for each other."

A decade later, Russo hosted *Our Time*, a gay public affairs show produced by PBS affiliate WNYC-TV.

Entire *Our Time* segments are included in the *Vito* DVD extras menu. Gay men and lesbians had yet to forge an alliance. Undaunted, Russo interviewed gay rights pioneer Harry Hay, together with lesbian trailblazer Barbara Gittings. Both were treated with respect and given equal time to speak.

Years later, as he was dying of AIDS, an emaciated Russo participated in many ACT UP

demonstrations. His strength was fading, yet he took part in acts of civil disobedience.

He also toured the country, appearing in college lecture halls and theaters. His *Celluloid Closet* tours were conducted with an almost childlike enthusiasm. He spoke to packed houses, educating the LGBT masses on how we'd been represented, and often misrepresented, by the film industry.

Russo's death, on November 7, 1990, was a tremendous loss to the community. Indeed, he kicked open doors of all kinds wherever he went.

Available from First Run Features (firstrunfeatures.com).

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

'Come Undone'

The agony and ecstasy of first love

Hollywood, unfortunately, no longer has any interest in making intense, character-driven human dramas like this lovely French offering. Produced a dozen years ago, *Come Undone* is a beautiful story about coming out to oneself and experiencing first love.

Lyrical shot in a small French seaside town, *Come Undone* spends the summer with Mathieu (Jeremie Elkaim), a teenager who thinks he's straight until he meets Cedric (Stéphane Rideau), an impossibly sexy and far more open young man. The two fall deeply and intensely in love, as only the young can.

At first ashamed of the relationship, Mathieu, who had recently been dating a girl, slowly comes to accept the reality of who he really is. At the beginning of the film he chides Cedric for displaying affection in public. Much later, when he's questioned by his aunt and by Cedric's father, he admits that yes, they are indeed boyfriends. Soon after, he comes out to his mom. Mom already knew—don't they always?



French romance: Cedric (Stéphane Rideau, l) and Mathieu (Jeremie Elkaim) star in *Come Undone*.

The scenes between the two boys are simple and quiet. They lie on the beach and fall asleep. They walk around and talk. They kiss. There are no special effects, no car chases, no explosions. Yet *Come Undone*, which goes beneath the surface of its script to let us know who these characters are and how they feel, is far more riveting than any Hollywood blockbuster could ever hope to be. The emotional depth of their romance is mesmerizing, and it leaves Mathieu ready to face the world as an out gay man.

The film's sexuality is graphic: a sequence featuring Mathieu and Cedric making love on the beach is startling for a film that isn't pornographic. The sequence adds to *Come Undone*'s beautiful romanticism.

Come Undone—in French with English subtitles—is available on DVD via First Run Features (firstrunfeatures.com).

—David-Elijah Nahmod

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Jessie Ware
Devotion



The British soul chanteuse and two-time BRIT Award nominee releases her U.K. Top 5 debut album in the U.S., which contains two previously unreleased tracks—the Ware co-penned “Imagine It Was Us” and a “Wildest Moments” remix featuring ASAP. Cherrytree Records/Interscope (cherrytreerecords.com). —Suzie Lynde

Charli XCX
True Romance



It's got sweeping synths, crunchy beats, emotive vocals, coy raps, spiky and persuasive lyricism, and big ideas about life, love, and everything else. The album tracks (and soundtracks) the twenty-year-old's journey from teenager to young woman. IAMSOUND Records (iamsoundrecords.com). —S.L.

Alpine
A Is for Alpine



The 2012 debut album from this Australian band was chosen as iTunes' Australian Alternative Album of the Year. Producer Dann Hume helped the band experiment with sounds and textures. Band member Ryan Lamb says, “We wanted to represent the different sides of our music, so there's some sad moments, some dancey moments, some rocking out, and lots of harmonies.” Votiv (votiv.is). —S.L.

Fanny



Delivering on and surpassing the promise of its 2011 debut, Mount Moriah—currently a trio featuring out lesbian Heather McEntire, Jenks Miller, and new addition Casey Toll—burns it down on *Miracle Temple* (Merge). Sounding like an insurgent country band fronted by a young Dolly Parton, Mount Moriah lures us upward with “Younger Days” and then nearly blinds us with the flash of “Bright Light.” That's Indigo Girl Amy Ray providing backing vocals on “I Built a Town,” “Connecticut to Carolina,” and the bluesy gospel of “Miracle Temple Holiness.” “White Sands” would sound great blasting out of a radio at the beach, and the same can be said of the fragrant “Rosemary” (love that keyboard and those backup vocals!).

Banjo-plucking and -strumming Dar Stellabotta brings an aching quality that recalls Mary Gauthier to her ten songs on *The Black Owl Demos* (darstellabotta.com). Not to be taken lightly, these almost unrelentingly bleak songs offer up an unsettling portrait of small-town queer life. “Black Soul,” “Your Worry Today,” and “O What a Day,” for instance, unveil a litany of difficulties that would take down the average person. But Stellabotta's message seems to be that these challenges not only strengthen

her, but provide her with the material she needs to create her art. Album closer “Huntingtown” breaks up some of the monotony with a pleasant beat that fits its theme.

If not for the groundbreaking all-female rock band Fanny, many female musicians, gay and straight, might not have gotten the chance to rock out. The hard-rocking quartet, featuring lesbian music legend June Millington and her sister Jean (see, sisterhood is powerful!), broke all sorts of ground, including releasing an album on a major label in 1970 (!) and working with an in-demand producer such as

Richard Perry (now known as Jane Fonda's beau). But what really matters is that they were top-notch musicians, performing (mostly) original material—including knockouts such as “Come and Hold Me,” “I Just Realized,” “Seven Roads,” and “Conversation with a Cop”—on their self-titled debut disc, newly reissued by Real Gone Music.

Moody Brit-pop group The xx were already too cool for words before Romy Madley Croft came out as lesbian. But now that there is the addition of the queer factor, it just makes you love them more, doesn't it? The xx, now a trio, has a distinctive, immediately recognizable sound that has become their trademark over the course of two bril-

liant albums. The latest, the aptly titled *Coexist* (XL/Young Turks), is as darkly ethereal as its predecessor, although it does take its time serving up the sexy beats of “Swept Away” and “Sunset.” Nevertheless, songs such as “Angels” and “Reunion” make the journey worthwhile.

Also high on the hipness scale, Grizzly Bear, featuring out vocalist Ed Droste, had the challenge of following up their unexpectedly successful 2009 album *Veckatimest* with *Shields* (Warp). The good news is that they met the challenge head-on and don't disappoint listeners. Album opener “Sleeping Ute” is a twenty-first-century prog-rock tune, and “Speak in Rounds” is one of Grizzly Bear's most exhilarating songs. Further highlights include the irresistible “A Simple Answer,” as well as “Gun-Shy” and “Yet Again.”

Also “out” there: The prolific Melissa Ferrick returns with *The Truth Is* (MPress) on which she explores her torch-and-twang side on “Wreck Me” (featuring Paula Cole); *Book of Shadows* (daniellink.com) by Daniel Link, featuring a cover of Fleetwood Mac's “Save Me a Place” and ten originals; gay Canadian cowboy (!) Drake Jensen's third CD *OUTlaw* (drakejensen.ca).

Visit OutSmartMagazine.com for the complete article.

Gregg Shapiro is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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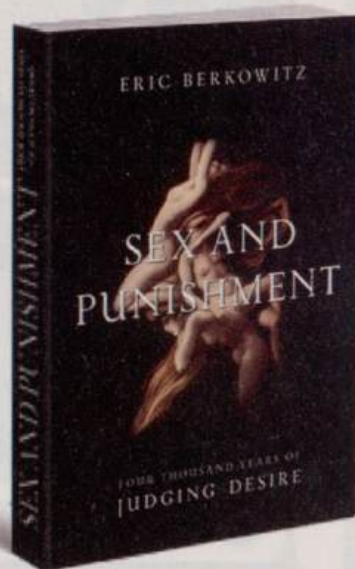
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by
Kit van
Cleave

Centuries of 'Sex and Punishment'

Author Eric Berkowitz discovers facts you might be surprised to read about



Sex and Punishment:
Four Thousand Years of Judging Desire
Eric Berkowitz
2013 • Counterpoint Press (counterpointpress.com)
352 pages, \$17.95, softcover

the ceremonies from typical marriages. Twelfth-century liturgies for same-sex unions, for example, involved the pair joining their right hands at the altar, the recital of marriage prayers, and a ceremonial kiss."

One version of the liturgy the priest recited included this blessing: "O Almighty Lord, you have given to man to be made from the first in Your Image and Likeness by the gift of immortal life. You have willed to bind as brothers not only by nature but by bonds of the spirit. . . . Bless your servants united also that, not bound by nature, [they be] joined with bonds of love."

In England and many Mediterranean societies (especially southern France), a new institution for same-sex unions was the *affrèrement* ("brotherment") contract, to permit couples to live together in peace.

But elsewhere in Europe, homosexual offenses brought burning at the stake and hanging by the "virile member." By 1300, laws were in place punishing homosexual behavior harshly in virtually every jurisdiction. Many of these same laws were used to punish and limit Jews as well. With such a patchwork application of laws about sexual acts, it's no wonder that people were confused.

A few other facts among so many discovered by Berkowitz:

- Throughout the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church ran the brothels.

- Protestants "accepted that sex was as essential for life as sleeping, eating, and drinking," at least within marriage, and "attacked Catholic morals as being too rigid in theory and too loose in practice."

- For the rest of society, it →

growth, natural seasons, doing what came naturally. Life was peaceful, the goddesses were pleasant, and people spent their time planting and harvesting, including sexually.

As society became more complex, the emphasis shifted to male gods and war. The goal became winning at all costs, killing those who disagreed, controlling the population, and devising ever-bigger weapons. The planet is still cursed with attitudes emphasizing power, wealth, and possession, including the fierce debate over how many guns, and which ones, some people think they need for self-defense.

One of Berkowitz's best qualities as a researcher and writer is that the density of his facts makes them easily linked to American society today.

Concerning gay marriage, Berkowitz reminds the reader that up until the thirteenth century, male-bonding ceremonies were held in churches all over the Mediterranean. "Such same-sex unions—sometimes called spiritual brotherhoods—forged irrevocable bonds between the men involved. . . . Other than the gender of the participants, it was difficult to distinguish

I was sitting on the patio of Nippon on Montrose, enjoying the slightly cool weather, reading lawyer Eric Berkowitz's new book, and laughing. It was a soft spring day, as Houston saw so often in March and April.

A woman passed my table and said, "Must be a good book. You seem to be really enjoying it. What is it?" I lifted the book with its cover showing intertwined nudes covered with type reading *Sex and Punishment: Four Thousand Years of Judging Desire*. She gave me an odd look, shook her head, and walked on.

Surprisingly, I found Berkowitz's book to be very funny in spots. The reader learns, in the midst of all of today's caterwauling about American decadence, about the actions that people snuck by the authorities with little punishment throughout human history. Berkowitz spent years looking for laws, restrictions, curtailments, tortures, and other punishments for various sexual acts.

By now, most people realize that in the gathering period of history, humans constructed their religious beliefs around Gaia, or Earth—fertility,

ReadOut Shorts

Autobiography of My Hungers
Rigoberto González



González is that rare writer whose words make you see life from a point of view you previously couldn't imagine. *Hungers* made this reviewer feel she understands the emotional impact of being a poor gay immigrant in a world without pity or shame. This rare and beautiful book is worth the price and your time; it will change how you see the world. University of Wisconsin Press (uwpress.wisc.edu). —Angel Curtis

The Revelations of Jude Connor
Robin Reardon



Reardon's prose is that quiet kind of storytelling that lets you see: see the place, see the character, see the issues, see the pain. Jude is trying to grow up with a deck that is stacked against him. People in his fundamentalist faith-identified community approve of him and support him, just so long as he is heterosexual. As he grows, he struggles to find a place for his real self. Kensington (kensingtonbooks.com). —A.C.

Best Gay Stories 2013
Edited by Steve Berman



Among the twenty short fiction pieces and essays that editor Berman has included in this anthology are a few diamonds in the rough, and a few that are just plain rough. However, Alex Jeffers's " . . . Salt for Sorrow, Blood for Joy" stands out, as does Eddie Sarfaty's "Next Year at Sonny's." Lethe Press (letheypress.com). —Jack Berger

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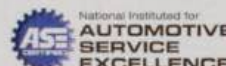
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ReadOut

continued from page 128

was not until 1563 that a formal ceremony with a priest was required for a marriage to be valid. Before then, "marriage began when the couple consented to wed each other and sealed the union with sex. The medieval marriage chapel could thus be a bed or a patch of soft ground."

Scattered through the book's 389 pages, with an additional 45 pages of notes and sources, are tucked stories of real people whose cases came up before the courts. Some are tragic, others hilarious. But they all provide a pattern of how the elites in society attempted to control the lower classes. In one of the sadder eras, English aristocrats continually refused to raise the age of consent for young girls, so for years it remained at age ten.

For anyone interested in the back-story of gay life and lives, this finely detailed and highly readable book is a great companion to *Victory*, Lisa Hirshman's history of the gay civil rights movement. Berkowitz has given us quite a worthwhile timeline of the history of sex legislation.

For an interview with Eric Berkowitz, see page 107 of this issue of OutSmart.

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



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Calendar of Events

Compiled by
Marene
Gustin

'Through Colors'

Not 'True' Colors, although we do love Cyndi Lauper

No, this is *Through Colors* by Kelyne Reis. It's a painting exhibit of big bold colors by Brazilian artist Reis going on now through July 7 at Galleria Regina at 1716 Richmond Avenue.

Reis, born in Brazil, lived in Germany and studied at the Art Institute of the University of Hannover, before moving to Houston in 2009. Her preferred medium is acrylic on canvas using big, bold swaths of vivid color.

"Influences of the German Bauhaus movement and of Pop Art can

be seen in my works," Reis says, "in which I play with bold colors, graphic shapes, and flat, clean surfaces, telling stories in a very simple way."

And speak her paintings do.

"Color is the voice of Kelyne's paintings," says Arthur Turner, artist and instructor at Glassell School of Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. "There is a 'pop' aspect to these works. They are also extremely optical. Even though they are 'cool' in their artistic stance, they are painted with a great passion. The paintings are like experiencing Bat-



man, Spiderman, and Joseph Albers all in one big gestalt. Even the small works have a big visual impact."

See more of her work and details of the exhibit at kelyne.de. —Marene Gustin

JUNE

PERFORMING ARTS

• 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 stagesrepertory.com for details and get "Crazy."

• THROUGH JUNE 30

Road Show. This is the first U.S. regional theater production of Stephen Sondheim's newest musical. Check out stagesrepertory.com for details.

• THROUGH 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/rememberedregained.

• JUNE 4-6

Flashdance the Musical. What a feeling! Celebrate the 30th anniversary of the hit movie live on stage at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. Presented by Theatre Under the Stars, tuts.com.

• JUNE 4-9

Blue Man Group. Those crazy blue guys are back with a new performance at Jones Hall this month. Tickets are on sale now and may be purchased by calling 713/224-4772 or visiting spahouston.org.

• JUNE 4-16

Dixie's Tupperware Party. The hilarious off-Broadway play about all things Tupperware. Critics and audiences have howled with laughter as Dixie throws a good ol'-fashioned Tupperware Party filled with outrageously funny tales, heartfelt accounts, free giveaways, audience participation, and the most fabulous assortment of Tupperware ever sold on a theater stage. Presented by Theatre Under the Stars, tuts.com. (See interview on page 117.)

• JUNE 4-29

Texas Music Festival. See the stars of tomorrow's orchestras today at this summer music fest. Details on concerts at tmf.uh.edu.

• JUNE 5

Swing, Jive and Pop! into Dance. Houston Metro-

politan Dance interactive performance for children is free at Miller Outdoor Theatre. Visit milleroutdoortheatre.com.

• JUNE 6, 13, 20, 27

15th Annual Rock Dock. Free concerts at the Kemah Boardwalk every Thursday evening through August, starting at 6:30 p.m. For bands see kemahboardwalk.com.

• JUNE 7

Sizzling Summer Dance. Houston Metropolitan Dance closes its 17th season at Miller Outdoor Theatre. Visit milleroutdoortheatre.com.

• JUNE 7-22

Suchu Dance Presents Bosk. A new full-length premiere by Suchu Dance founder Jennifer Wood. *Bosk* runs for eight performances this month at Barnevelder Movement/Arts Complex. Performances are pay-what-you-want. See suchudance.org for details.

• JUNE 8

Jacques Offenbach's La Vie Parisienne. High-jinks and can-cans abound in this spoof of Paris culture. At Miller Outdoor Theatre. Visit milleroutdoortheatre.com.

• JUNE 12-14

Disney's High School Musical. If you liked the movie, you'll like the musical, live at Miller Outdoor Theatre. See tuts.com for details.

• JUNE 13-23

Peter Pan. Houston Ballet presents Trey McIntyre's fairy-tale ballet. Details at houstonballet.org.

• JUNE 15

Jaston Williams in Blame It on Valentine, Texas. This solo show kicks off The Grand's summer series. Details at thegrand.com.

• JUNE 17

Children's Performance: Sounds Like Fun! Houston Symphony provides free music for the whole family at Miller Outdoor Theatre. Visit milleroutdoortheatre.com.

• JUNE 17-AUGUST 2

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.

• JUNE 17-AUGUST 12

Humphreys School Summer Camp. Theatre Under the Stars' musical theater camp for kids 4 to 6. See tuts.com.

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

• JUNE 21

Summer Symphony Nights Centennial Celebration. The Houston Symphony celebrates turning 100 with free music and fireworks at Miller Outdoor Theatre. Visit milleroutdoortheatre.com.

• JUNE 22

The Addams Family. Hilarious musical based on the wonderfully weird family. Details at thegrand.com.

• JUNE 22, 28, 29

Summer Symphony Nights. The Houston Symphony performs at Miller Outdoor Theatre. Visit milleroutdoortheatre.com.

• JUNE 24

Children's Performance: Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Musical prodigies perform at Miller Outdoor Theatre. Visit milleroutdoortheatre.com.

• JUNE 28

Cyndi Lauper. The legendary lady brings her "She's So Unusual" tour to Houston. House of Blues, houseofblues.com. (See interview on page 89.)

• JUNE 29

The Tenors. Their "Lead with Your Heart" tour hits Houston's Hobby Center, thehobbycenter.org.

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY

• THROUGH JUNE 7

Mary Beth Woicak exhibits a series of new artist books inspired by her travels at Caroline Collective, carolinecollective.cc.

• THROUGH 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 mfah.org for more information.

• THROUGH JUNE 15

Lawndale Art Center Exhibits. *Round 7*, an exhibit by the Lawndale Artist Studio Program. Other exhibits: *I'll Send the Message Along the Wires*; *Halls without walls, room to feel in*. *The door awaits, your return within*; *Precariot*; *Skywriting*. Fabulous exhibits this summer at Lawndale Art Center. See lawndaleartcenter.org.

• THROUGH JULY 7

Through Colors by Kelyne Reis. Painting exhibit at Galleria Regina. (See opposite page.) Details at kelyne.de.

• THROUGH JULY 27

The Ornamental Plumb Bob. A solo exhibition of objects and brooches by San Antonio metalsmith Gary Schott, at Houston Center for Contemporary Craft. See craftthouston.org for details.

• THROUGH 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 objects, reawakening a sense of how people in late antiquity experienced art and bringing Byzantium's aura into the present day. See menil.org.

• THROUGH 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.

• 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 chain-link fencing. See ricegallery.org for more.

• THROUGH 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 craftthouston.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 craftthouston.org.

• THROUGH OCTOBER 27

Through Soviet Jewish Eyes, Photography, War, and the Holocaust. Holocaust Museum Houston exhibits six decades of work by Soviet photojournalists. See hmh.org.

• THROUGH JANUARY 11, 2014

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

• JUNE 1-JULY 10

Orogenesis. Archway Gallery's exhibit of Larry Garmez's digital photography. See archwaygallery.com for details.

• JUNE 2-AUGUST 25

Faking It: Manipulated Photography before PhotoShop. Digitally altered photographs may be commonplace today, but they are nothing new. The ability to modify camera images is as old as photography itself—only the methods have changed. At the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, mfah.org.

• JUNE 9-SEPTEMBER 22

James Turrell: The Light Inside. A special exhibit of Turrell's light-based installations at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. See mfah.org for details.

RADIO

After Hours: Queer Radio with Attitude features the QM2 (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

• THROUGH JUNE 28

Call for Short Films. The Architecture Center Houston Film Festival is coming soon! They are seeking short films capturing contemporary urban life. Call 713/520-0155 for submission information.

• JUNE 8

16mm Filmmaking Workshop. Aurora Picture Show hosts this daylong filmmaking workshop for all ages. See aurorapictureshow.org for more information. →

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Calendar continued from previous page

• **JUNE 15**
I Can Do Anything! A screening of film shorts about amazing kids from around the world at Aurora Picture Show. See aurorapictureshow.org for more information.

• **JUNE 24-28**
Aurora Alternative Filmmaking Boot Camp for Teens. Aurora Picture Show hosts this camp where teens can learn about, create, and discuss film and video. See aurorapictureshow.org for more information.

AND OTHER FUN THINGS

• **JUNE 8-19**
Galveston Juneteenth Celebrations. The island hosts picnics, festivals, heritage exhibits, and concerts for this Texas holiday. See galveston.com/juneteenth for details.

• **JUNE 19**
Houston's Juneteenth Celebration. Celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation with Zydeco and more at Miller Outdoor Theatre. Visit milleroutdoortheatre.com.

• **JUNE 21-23**
2nd Annual Springboard South Music Festival. National rap and hip-hop artists perform during this event to mentor the next generation of musicians. At Warehouse Live. See springboardsouth.com for more.

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. Houston Area Community Services (HACS) offers free, confidential HIV testing—results in less than one minute (Mon-Thurs: 9 am-6 pm, Fri: 8 am-5 pm). No appointment necessary. 2150 West 18th St. HACS Testing Calendar with more locations: hacstx.org/testing.html. Contact about testing: testing@hacstx.org or 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, 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; RIPCORDER, 6:30-10pm • **FRIDAYS:** LEGACY MONTROSE CLINIC, 11am-4pm; CLUB HOUSTON, 1-4pm; LEGACY LYONS CLINIC, 1-5pm; TC'S SHOW-BAR, 4-8pm; TONY'S CORNER POCKET, 4:30-8:30pm • LEGACY TESTING CALENDAR: <http://www.calendarwiz.com/calendars/calendar.php?crd=legacytesting&services&>

• 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. • tgct.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 GLBTIQA 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 Deron Media Center, 2204 Crawford St. • 713/772-5175.

Houston Pride Band seeks all brass, woodwind, and percussion players of all skill levels for rehearsal. 7:30pm. Bethel UCC, 1107 Shepherd Dr. • 713/315-2525 • houstonprideband.org.

• WEEKLY (THURSDAYS)

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

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 LLP 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 • rwphouston.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. 520+materials. Locations vary. bhouse@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. rwphouston.org • 713-572-3724.

• MONTHLY (3RD WED.)

Log Cabin Republicans. Theo's Restaurant, 812 Westheimer • facebook.com/groups/1021994919797fref=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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PFLAG - HATCH "Pinstripes and
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News continued from page 18

difficulty maneuvering the federal financial aid process. "Although non-traditional families are becoming the norm among Americans, the FAFSA is not keeping up," NerdWallet said. "The convoluted government paperwork caters toward nuclear families, making it difficult for LGBT families, immigrant families, and students seeking a dependency override for a neglectful parent."

FAFSA presents applicants with four options when it comes to their parents' marital status: married/remarried, single, divorced/separated, and widowed. Although a student's same-sex parents may be legally married in their state, FAFSA, being a federal form, does not recognize gay or lesbian marriages and therefore forces the applicant to check "single" and only list one parent's income information. This complication often makes it difficult to fill out the application correctly, increasing the student's chance of being rejected from federal aid.

The NerdWallet FAFSA guide seeks to make completing the form a much smoother process by providing step-by-step instructions from financial aid

officers to help clarify the application for non-traditional families.

Although students of LGBT parents must still check "single" for their parents' marital status, the guide recommends first determining the "custodial" parent in the family. If the student only lives with one of their parents, that parent is automatically the "custodial" parent. If two parents are living in the home, determine which parent contributes more financial support to the student and then use that parent's income and asset information to fill out the form.

Do not include the "non-custodial" parent in the applicant's reported household size unless that "non-custodial" parent receives more than fifty percent of their financial support from the "custodial" parent and lives in the same home as the student. Instead, report the financial assistance the student receives from the "non-custodial" parent under the category of untaxed income.

The guide also advises students of LGBT parents to contact their university's financial aid office, explain their family situation, and inquire if they have any university-specific protocols.

For a full list of instructions and further advice on filling out FAFSA, visit the free NerdWallet guide at nerdwallet.com/nerdscholar/fafsa/guide. —Megan Smith

The Defense of Marriage Act

continued from page 83

after death, as long as that spouse is a U.S. citizen as well. As a result—as in the Buggery Act—the estate was not simply handed over to Windsor, Spyer's closest kin. Rather, she was forced to pay over \$363,000 in federal taxes on the inheritance of her wife's estate. "If Thea was Theo, I would not have had to pay that," Windsor explains. "It's just a terrible injustice, and I don't expect that from my country. I think it's a mistake that has to be corrected."

And trying to correct it, she is. Windsor has taken her case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, in the soon-to-be historic *United States v. Windsor*. University of Texas Associate Professor of Sociology Mary Rose said in a panel discussion on DOMA that the main question before the court is, "Does a good-enough reason exist to have this law, or is it solely discriminatory?"

"The principle involved, on the part of people who don't like same-sex marriage, is that by people of the same sex marrying each other, we will endanger the marriages of people who are not of the same sex," Carla

Petievich, a UT visiting professor of Asian Studies said in the panel presented to UT students, faculty, and the Austin public this April. "But when DOMA passed, of course, the people who pushed for this legislation said it's a strong statement against the immorality of same-sex marriage."

Although the final decision is in the hands of the Supreme Court, even the man behind the signature on the DOMA bill has changed his mind on the legislation. "Over the years, I was forced to confront the fact that people who oppose equal rights for gays in the marriage sphere are basically acting out of concern for their own identity, not out of respect for anyone else," Clinton said earlier this year.

The United Kingdom Parliament repealed the Buggery Act in 1967. Now it's up to the Supreme Court of the United States to do the same. Are we ready to move on from the Dark Ages?

For testimonials, possible outcomes, and more coverage on DOMA, visit onthepeciceofequality.blogspot.com.

Megan Smith also writes about two new LGBT documentaries, *Unbreakable Threads* and *Breaking Through*, in this issue of OutSmart magazine.



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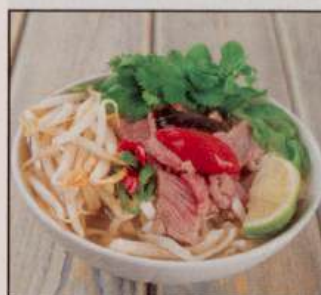
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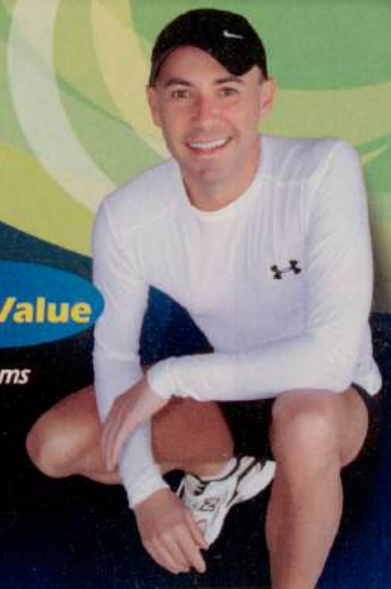


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Mitchell Gold
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On May 2, Mitchell Gold, chairman and co-founder of Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, the renowned home furnishings lifestyle brand, announced that they would open an 11,000 square foot flagship Signature Store this August in Highland Village. A grand opening is planned for September. While this is the second MG+BW store to open in Houston, this will be the first corporately owned Flagship Signature store. Pictured in this photo, co-founders Mitchell Gold and Bob Williams.



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By Duane Wells

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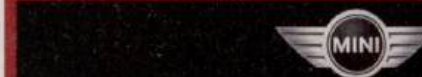


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2502 Woodhead 713/528-2010

Eye Contact
2055 Westheimer 713/520-6600

Eye Gallery, The
1806B Westheimer 713/523-1279

Eye to Eye
432 W 19th 713/864-8822

Spectacles on Montrose
4317 Montrose, Ste 2 713/529-3937

Spring Eye Associates
EyeCandySpectacles.com 281/355-9090

HEALTH CARE-PHYSICIANS

Octavio Barrios, MD
106 Westheimer, Ste A 713/942-7546

Gordon Crofoot, MD
Donnie Harvey, MPAS, PA-C
3701 Kirby, Ste 1230 713/526-0005

UT Physicians Health Center
6700 W Loop S, Ste 520 713/572-8122

McClung Clinic/Tony S. McClung, MD

1213 Hermann, Ste 520 713/528-3444
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HEALTH CARE-PLASTIC SURGERY

Facial Plastic Surgery Associates
6655 Travis, Ste 900 713/526-5665

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16605 SW Fwy, Ste 175 281/846-4692

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KatyFootCare.com 281/395-3338

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Montrose Mental Health/
Christopher L. Boehme, MD
1527 W. Alabama 713/492-0723

Daniel Garza, MD
2323 S Shepherd, Ste 805 281/610-8190

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Houston Area Community Services/HACS
2150 W 18th St 713/426-0027

Legacy Community Health Services
215 Westheimer 713/830-3000

Physicians Advanced Fitness
4150 Westheimer, Ste 110 713/621-0003

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

HEALTH CARE-SKIN CARE

Heights Dermatology & Aesthetic Center/
Alpesh Desai, MD
2120 Ashland 713/864-2650

Skin Renaissance Laser/Octavio Barrios, MD
106 Westheimer, Ste A 713/942-7546

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FiredUpAssemblers.com 832/726-3505

Frog at Home
2427 Westheimer 713/840-0844

IKEA
7810 Katy Fwy 713/688-7867

Solar X Window Film
Solarx.com 713/932-8832

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MetroRemodelingSystems.com 832/688-9256

Primo Outdoor Living
PrimoOutdoorLiving.com 832/588-7733

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Larry B. Lipton/Allstate
LiptonAgency.com 281/580-2510

David Lorms/Farmers
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GlenwoodWeberDesign.com 713/360-6281

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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 • brbtx.com.

CLUB 2020

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

CLUB CRYSTAL

If you miss the now-closed energy, 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 • crystalthelub.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-

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BEHIND THE BAR

WHO: Christopher Robinson

WHERE: Crocker Bar • 2312 Crocker • 713/529-3355

WHAT'S UP: Celebrating their 5th anniversary this month, this place is crazy on Sunday Funnies. Great drink specials all week, and Tuesday and Thursday nights award-winning Karaoke with Mardashian is a can't-miss.

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 Kofi, 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

Stylish 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 • thenpcord.com.

RUDYARD'S

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

THE 611

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

SOUTH BEACH

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

TC'S SHOWBAR

New owners Tim and Corey have revamped the deep-Montrose neighborhood bar, erasing any hint of its former occupant, Cousin's.

Numerous flat-screen televisions and day-long drink specials highlight the updated décor. 817 Fairview • 713/526-2625 • tcshowbar.com.

TONY'S CORNER POCKET

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

THE USUAL

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

VIVIANA'S

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

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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Montrose Softball League
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HRC Gala
GMCH & Bayou City Women's Chorus
Out @ TUTS Night at the Hobby Center
Act OUT/Alley Theatre
Black Tie Dinner
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Gimmie OSM!

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by
Lilly
Roddy

Mercury Goes Retrograde on the 22nd

Be sure to get projects started before then

Look for a period of review from the 22nd through the 26th. Mercury retrograde is a great time to revisit an old situation, review the past, and take care of what is already on your plate. • Keep your agenda very flexible on the 7th and 8th. We are likely to be a little raw during that time. Planetary activity is especially busy during the last half of July, so that is usually a good time for making decisions.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). Gaining clarity about your point of view is on the agenda this month. During the first half of the month, you are getting things organized—a great time to write, take classes, or even to get out of town. In the latter half of the month you are much more serious, and your tolerance is especially low. Decisions will need to be made as you focus on home and family issues. Things may not be easy as different points of view emerge, but you will be clear about what you must do.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). You are feeling much more active this month and getting some clarity about what you need to do. Watch your spending this month. It can be a very good time for long-term investing, even if that means just opening a savings account. You are still working on a long-term plan that may be put into action after the end of July. It's a good time to improve your career, seek a promotion, or even start your own business. You are even clearer about things by the end of the month.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). You are in a time of rest and retreat, especially during the first half of the month. This can be a good time for some meditation, writing, or just getting away from it all. The second half of the month is very busy, with all of the important things being triggered—home, relationships, career, and especially you. This can be a good time to push forward on some projects. Mercury goes retrograde in your sign at the end of June. You will have a whole month to rethink your actions and make sure your decisions are correct. You will be hearing from people from your past!

LEO (July 23–August 22). This is a great month for social activity, getting involved in community functions, or just visiting with your friends. You are continuing to work on making your personal life and home a more stable place. Decisions this year seem to have more weight attached to them, and that is making you be extra cautious. The end of

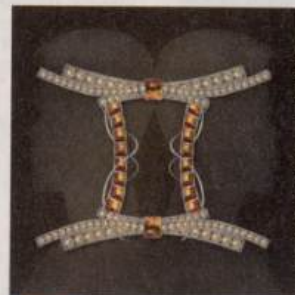
the month would be good for taking some time off, having a massage, or just watching some really entertaining movies. You are more sensitive toward the end of the month. Be careful who you invite into your life.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). Your career is in the spotlight this month. This is a good time to take a leadership role at work, or even to consider doing something on your own. You are very visible this month as people take notice of what you are doing. This is also a good time to be involved in community or group activities. With Mercury going retrograde in your friendship sector, you could have old friends coming back to visit. Friends can be very helpful with work or career issues. Be sure to take a break at the end of the month and review your work!

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). This is a more laid-back month for you. It could be an excellent time to get out of town or find an activity that really frees and expands your mind. By mid-month, you are getting back on track with your work and responsibilities. This is going to be a busy career time with lots of options opening up, especially after the end of July. But don't feel you have to decide right away. You will have Mercury retrograding through your career sector for most of July, so you'll have enough time to rethink where you are. You may want to correct the problems that exist with your job, or just move on.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). This is an emotional month of exploration for you as you look at how intimate you are with those around you. You are working to remove any blocks that create mistrust and withholding. Sexual energies are stronger as well, but only as your level of trust deepens. You remain in a time of review-and-renew until the last months of 2014. Keep only what really helps you. Toward the end of the month, you are ready for a more relaxed pace. Don't over-commit during this time.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). Relationships are on the menu this month. If you are involved, this is a wonderful time for you and your partner to have an adventure! This can be another courting or dating time. If you miss this opportunity



GEMINI (May 21–June 21). This is a very busy birthday time for you as the sun, Mars, and Jupiter move through your sign at the same time. Since this month marks your personal yearly cycle, you are evaluating what you did last year and what you would like to accomplish this year. With Mars, planet of action, moving through your sign, this is a great time to start new projects or confront things that you need to deal with. Your ruler, Mercury, is going retrograde at the end of the month, so no new projects from June 22 through the end of July. Review what you already have going, and deal with that.

for fun, negative emotions will come to the surface and you'll end up trying to fix things rather than having fun. If you are single, this is a fabulous time to put yourself out there. You are feeling very confident, and your charisma is very strong. The intimacy only gets stronger toward the end of the month.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). The first half of the month is about getting your job and work environment in better shape. People may not be getting along at work, and you may feel that you need to step in with a plan to help co-workers get along. This is also a great time to get on a health kick! Relationships take the spotlight after mid-month. If you are involved, this is a good time to be with your partner. If you are single, this is a great time to test the waters. Business partnerships are also improving. As we get to the end of the month, you will be in a nostalgic mood. Take some time to look back.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). You are very intellectually stimulated this month with so many of the planets in Gemini. This is a great time for creative activity, or spending time with your children or other young people. They can help to free up your mind. You still have a strong overriding theme of getting your career and life organized. You will do that as you go into a cleaning and organizing mood toward the end of the month. Don't start anything new until then.

PISCES (February 19–March 20). Home and family are the primary topics for the Mermaids and Mermen. This can be a great month for entertaining at home, starting home repairs and cleanup chores, or visiting with relatives. For some, your home is literally the place you escape to. For those of you born February 19 through the 23rd, the first part of the month may seem sluggish and you will want to be away from activities and people. This will lighten up by mid month. Take some time for creative activities toward the end of the month. If you have children, this can be a great month for them.

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



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OUT IN HOUSTON



Timmy Martinez, Ginger Grant, George Burch, Ann Reid, Bryan Hlavinka, Chree Boydston, and Keith Nappier at Mint Julep "Derby Day" kickoff at EJ's, May 4.



Elisa Sosa, DJ Kittie, DJ Athena, Clint Hudler, and DJ Photo at the HRC "Battle of the DJs" at the Usual, May 19.



Leon Johnson, Dr. Kristen Guillory, and Paul Guillory at the 16th annual HRC "Love Not Hate" Gala, April 27.



Mark C. Brown, Steven Shannon, David Gebro, DeDe Shelton, John Chakalis, and Mark Hardy at "Strictly Showtunes" event, May 3.



Rolf Ackerman and John Whiteside at the EPAH 35th anniversary celebration, May 4.



Rosemary Hennessy and Brian Riedel with presenters at Rice University seminar with the Center for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, April 24.



Justin Garcia, Michael Reed, Crystal Owens, Matt Adams, Sandy Stacy, and Dan Snare at Bering Omega's "Art for Hope" event, May 15.



Dominique Royem, Zachary Bryant, Sharon Williams, Paul Hope, Grace Givens, Charlotte Tribble, and Jay Tribble at BCCM fundraiser, May 15.



Michael Peranteau, Jennie Ash, Cara Rudelson, Zachary Gresham, and Kermit Eisenhut at the Art League Houston Montrose Art Party, May 3.



Manuel Lara and Ryan J. Clark with models at the Hollywood fashion show at JR's, May 19.



Christopher Cerda, Shelley Finley, Brandon Chandler, Lauren Pelletier, and Bill Sansom during Act OUT at Alley Theatre's *The Elephant Man*, April 25.

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