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The **POWER** to
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- ATRIPLA® (efavirenz/emtricitabine/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate) has been proven **TO LOWER VIRAL LOAD** to undetectable* in approximately 8 out of 10 adult patients new to therapy through 48 weeks compared to approximately 7 out of 10 adult patients in the comparator group
- ATRIPLA has been proven **TO LOWER VIRAL LOAD** to undetectable* in approximately 7 out of every 10 adult patients new to therapy through 3 years compared to approximately 6 out of 10 in the comparator group¹
- The most common (at least 5%) moderate to severe side effects in patients on ATRIPLA were diarrhea, nausea, tiredness, depression, dizziness, sinusitis, upper respiratory tract infections, rash, headache, trouble sleeping, anxiety, and common cold. Each of these was reported in less than 10% of patients

Real ATRIPLA patient.

INDICATION

INDICATION and IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION for ATRIPLA® (efavirenz/emtricitabine/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate [DF])

What is ATRIPLA?

ATRIPLA is a prescription medication used alone as a complete regimen, or with other anti-HIV-1 medicines, to treat HIV-1 infection in adults and children at least 12 years old who weigh at least 40 kg (88 lbs).

ATRIPLA does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS and you may continue to experience illnesses associated with HIV-1 infection, including opportunistic infections.

See your healthcare provider regularly while taking ATRIPLA.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

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

ATRIPLA can cause serious side effects:

- **Some people who have taken medicine like ATRIPLA (which contains nucleoside analogs) have developed lactic acidosis** (build up of an acid in the blood). Lactic acidosis can be a serious medical emergency that can lead to death.

Call your healthcare provider right away if you get the following signs or symptoms of lactic acidosis:

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

- **Some people who have taken medicines like ATRIPLA (efavirenz/emtricitabine/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate) have developed serious liver problems** (hepatotoxicity), with liver enlargement (hepatomegaly) and fat in the liver (steatosis). **In some cases, these liver problems can lead to death.**

Call your healthcare provider right away if you get the following signs or symptoms of liver problems:

- skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice)
- urine turns dark
- bowel movements (stools) turn light in color
- don't feel like eating food for several days or longer
- feel sick to your stomach (nausea)
- have lower stomach area (abdominal) pain

- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or liver problems** if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking nucleoside analog-containing medicines, like ATRIPLA, for a long time.
- **If you also have hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection and you stop taking ATRIPLA, you may get a "flare-up" of your hepatitis. A "flare-up" is when the disease suddenly returns in a worse way than before.** Patients with HBV who stop taking ATRIPLA need close medical follow-up for several months to check for hepatitis that could be getting worse. ATRIPLA is not approved for the treatment of HBV, so you need to discuss your HBV therapy with your healthcare provider.

Who should not take ATRIPLA?

You and your healthcare provider should decide if ATRIPLA is right for you. Do not take ATRIPLA if you are allergic to ATRIPLA or any of its ingredients.

*Undetectable was defined as a viral load of fewer than 400 copies/mL.

¹In this study, 511 adult patients new to therapy received either the meds in ATRIPLA each taken once daily or Combivir® (lamivudine/zidovudine) twice daily + SUSTIVA® (efavirenz) once daily.

²Symphony Health Solutions, Source® PHAST Prescription Monthly, equivalized counts, July 2006 – June 2015.



With over 9 years of
prescribing experience,

**ATRIPLA is the #1 prescribed
one pill, once-daily HIV treatment[‡]**

SELECTED IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

- Some people who have taken medicines like ATRIPLA have developed build up of lactic acid in the blood, which can be a serious medical emergency that can lead to death.
- Some people who have taken medicines like ATRIPLA have developed serious liver problems, with liver enlargement and fat in the liver, which can lead to death.
- If you also have hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection and you stop taking ATRIPLA, your hepatitis may suddenly get worse. ATRIPLA is not approved for the treatment of HBV.

Please see below for more information about these warnings, including signs and symptoms, and other Important Safety Information.

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.

Ask your doctor about ATRIPLA today.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking ATRIPLA?

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- **Are pregnant or planning to become pregnant: Women should not become pregnant while taking ATRIPLA and for 12 weeks after stopping ATRIPLA.** Serious birth defects have been seen in children of women treated during pregnancy with efavirenz, one of the medicines in ATRIPLA (efavirenz/emtricitabine/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate). Women must use a reliable form of barrier contraception, such as a condom or diaphragm, even if they also use other methods of birth control, while on ATRIPLA and for 12 weeks after stopping ATRIPLA. Women should not rely only on hormone-based birth control, such as pills, injections, or implants, because ATRIPLA may make these contraceptives ineffective.
- **Are breastfeeding: Women with HIV should not breastfeed** because they can pass HIV and some of the medicines in ATRIPLA through their milk to the baby. It is not known if ATRIPLA could harm your baby.
- **Have kidney problems or are undergoing kidney dialysis treatment.**
- **Have bone problems.**
- **Have liver problems, including hepatitis B or C virus infection.** Your healthcare provider may want to do tests to check your liver while you take ATRIPLA or may switch you to another medicine.
- **Have ever had mental illness or are using drugs or alcohol**
- **Have ever had seizures or are taking medicine for seizures.** Seizures have occurred in patients taking efavirenz, a component of ATRIPLA, generally in those with a history of seizures. If you have ever had seizures, or take medicine for seizures, your healthcare provider may want to switch you to another medicine or monitor you.

What important information should I know about taking other medicines with ATRIPLA?

ATRIPLA may change the effect of other medicines, including the ones for HIV-1, and may cause serious side effects. Your healthcare provider may change your other medicines or change their doses.

MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH ATRIPLA

- ATRIPLA should not be taken with: Combivir® (lamivudine/zidovudine), COMPLERA® (emtricitabine/rilpivirine/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate), EMTRIVA® (emtricitabine), Epivir® or Epivir-HBV® (lamivudine), Epzicom® (abacavir sulfate/lamivudine), STRIBILD® (elvitegravir/cobicistat/emtricitabine/tenofovir DF), Trizivir® (abacavir sulfate/lamivudine/zidovudine), TRUVADA® (emtricitabine/tenofovir DF), or VIREAD® (tenofovir DF), because they contain the same or similar active ingredients as ATRIPLA (efavirenz/emtricitabine/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate). ATRIPLA should not be used with SUSTIVA® (efavirenz) unless recommended by your healthcare provider.
- Vfend® (voriconazole) should not be taken with ATRIPLA since it may lose its effect or may increase the chance of having side effects from ATRIPLA.
- ATRIPLA should not be used with HEPSERA® (adefovir dipivoxil).

These are not all the medicines that may cause problems if you take ATRIPLA. Tell your healthcare provider about all prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, or herbal supplements you are taking or plan to take.

Important Safety Information is continued on the following page.

Please see Patient Information on the following pages.

ATRIPLA®
(efavirenz 600 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/
tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg) Tablets

POWER TO HELP YOU BE UNDETECTABLE

What are the possible side effects of ATRIPLA?

ATRIPLA may cause the following additional serious side effects:

- **Serious psychiatric problems.** Severe depression, strange thoughts, or angry behavior have been reported by a small number of patients. Some patients have had thoughts of suicide, and a few have actually committed suicide. These problems may occur more often in patients who have had mental illness.
- **Kidney problems** (including decline or failure of kidney function). If you have had kidney problems, or take other medicines that may cause kidney problems, your healthcare provider should do regular blood tests. Symptoms that may be related to kidney problems include a high volume of urine, thirst, muscle pain, and muscle weakness.
- **Other serious liver problems.** Some patients have experienced serious liver problems, including liver failure resulting in transplantation or death. Most of these serious side effects occurred in patients with a chronic liver disease such as hepatitis infection, but there have also been a few reports in patients without any existing liver disease.
- **Changes in bone mineral density (thinning bones).** Lab tests show changes in the bones of patients treated with tenofovir DF, a component of ATRIPLA. Some HIV patients treated with tenofovir DF developed thinning of the bones (osteopenia), which could lead to fractures. Also, bone pain and softening of the bone (which may lead to fractures) may occur as a consequence of kidney problems. If you have had bone problems in the past, your healthcare provider may want to do tests to check your bones or may prescribe medicines to help your bones.

Common side effects:

- Patients may have dizziness, headache, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams during treatment with ATRIPLA. These side effects may be reduced if you take ATRIPLA at bedtime on an empty stomach; they tend to go away after taking ATRIPLA for a few weeks. Tell your healthcare provider right away if any of these side effects continue or if they bother you. These symptoms may be more severe if ATRIPLA is used with alcohol and/or mood-altering (street) drugs.
- If you are dizzy, have trouble concentrating, and/or are drowsy, avoid activities that may be dangerous, such as driving or operating machinery.
- Rash is a common side effect with ATRIPLA that usually goes away without any change in treatment. Rash may be serious in a small number of patients. **Rash occurs more commonly in children and may be a serious problem.** If a rash develops, call your healthcare provider right away.
- Other common side effects include: tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, gas, and diarrhea.

Other possible side effects:

- Changes in body fat have been seen in some people taking anti-HIV-1 medicines. Increase of fat in the upper back and neck, breasts, and around the trunk may happen. Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these changes in body fat are not known.
- Skin discoloration (small spots or freckles) may also happen.
- In some patients with advanced HIV infection (AIDS), signs and symptoms of inflammation from previous infections may occur soon after anti-HIV treatment is started. If you notice any symptoms of infection, contact your healthcare provider right away.
- Additional side effects are inflammation of the pancreas, allergic reaction (including swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat), shortness of breath, pain, stomach pain, weakness, and indigestion.

This is not a complete list of side effects. Tell your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you notice any side effects while taking ATRIPLA.

You should take ATRIPLA once daily on an empty stomach. Taking ATRIPLA at bedtime may make some side effects less bothersome.

Please see Full Prescribing Information, including **“What is the most important information I should know about ATRIPLA”** in the Patient Information section.

Please see Patient Information on adjacent and following pages.



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ALERT: Find out about medicines that should NOT be taken with ATRIPLA.

Please also read the section **“MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH ATRIPLA.”**

Generic name: efavirenz, emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (eh FAH vih renz, em tri SIT uh bean and te NOE' fo veer dye soe PROX il FYOU mar ate)

Read the Patient Information that comes with ATRIPLA before you start taking it and each time you get a refill since there may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking to your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment. You should stay under a healthcare provider's care when taking ATRIPLA. **Do not change or stop your medicine without first talking with your healthcare provider.** Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you have any questions about ATRIPLA.

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

- **Some people who have taken medicine like ATRIPLA (which contains nucleoside analogs) have developed a serious condition called lactic acidosis** (build up of an acid in the blood). Lactic acidosis can be a medical emergency and may need to be treated in the hospital. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get the following signs or symptoms of lactic acidosis:**
 - You feel very weak or tired.
 - You have unusual (not normal) muscle pain.
 - You have trouble breathing.
 - You have stomach pain with nausea and vomiting.
 - You feel cold, especially in your arms and legs.
 - You feel dizzy or lightheaded.
 - You have a fast or irregular heartbeat.
- **Some people who have taken medicines like ATRIPLA have developed serious liver problems called hepatotoxicity**, with liver enlargement (hepatomegaly) and fat in the liver (steatosis). **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get the following signs or symptoms of liver problems:**
 - Your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice).
 - Your urine turns dark.
 - Your bowel movements (stools) turn light in color.
 - You don't feel like eating food for several days or longer.
 - You feel sick to your stomach (nausea).
 - You have lower stomach area (abdominal) pain.
- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or liver problems** if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking nucleoside analog-containing medicines, like ATRIPLA, for a long time.
- **If you also have hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection and you stop taking ATRIPLA, you may get a “flare-up” of your hepatitis. A “flare-up” is when the disease suddenly returns in a worse way than before.** Patients with HBV who stop taking ATRIPLA need close medical follow-up for several months, including medical exams and blood tests to check for hepatitis that could be getting worse. ATRIPLA is not approved for the treatment of HBV, so you must discuss your HBV therapy with your healthcare provider.

What is ATRIPLA?

ATRIPLA contains 3 medicines, SUSTIVA® (efavirenz), EMTRIVA® (emtricitabine) and VIREAD® (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate also called tenofovir DF) combined in one pill. EMTRIVA and VIREAD are HIV-1 (human immunodeficiency virus) nucleoside analog reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs) and SUSTIVA is an HIV-1 non-nucleoside analog reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI). VIREAD and EMTRIVA are the components of TRUVADA®. ATRIPLA can be used alone as a complete regimen, or in combination with other anti-HIV-1 medicines to treat people with HIV-1 infection. ATRIPLA is for adults and children 12 years of age and older who weigh at least 40 kg (at least 88 lbs). ATRIPLA is not recommended for children younger than 12 years of age. ATRIPLA has not been studied in adults over 65 years of age.

HIV infection destroys CD4+ T cells, which are important to the immune system. The immune system helps fight infection. After a large number of T cells are destroyed, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) develops.

ATRIPLA helps block HIV-1 reverse transcriptase, a viral chemical in your body (enzyme) that is needed for HIV-1 to multiply. ATRIPLA lowers the amount of HIV-1 in the blood (viral load). ATRIPLA may also help to increase the number of T cells

ATRIPLA® (efavirenz/emtricitabine/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate)

(CD4⁺ cells), allowing your immune system to improve. Lowering the amount of HIV-1 in the blood lowers the chance of death or infections that happen when your immune system is weak (opportunistic infections).

Does ATRIPLA cure HIV-1 or AIDS?

ATRIPLA does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS and you may continue to experience illnesses associated with HIV-1 infection, including opportunistic infections. You should remain under the care of a doctor when using ATRIPLA.

Who should not take ATRIPLA?

Together with your healthcare provider, you need to decide whether ATRIPLA is right for you.

Do not take ATRIPLA if you are allergic to ATRIPLA or any of its ingredients. The active ingredients of ATRIPLA are efavirenz, emtricitabine, and tenofovir DF. See the end of this leaflet for a complete list of ingredients.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking ATRIPLA?**Tell your healthcare provider if you:**

- **Are pregnant or planning to become pregnant** (see “What should I avoid while taking ATRIPLA?”).
- **Are breastfeeding** (see “What should I avoid while taking ATRIPLA?”).
- **Have kidney problems or are undergoing kidney dialysis treatment.**
- **Have bone problems.**
- **Have liver problems, including hepatitis B virus infection.** Your healthcare provider may want to do tests to check your liver while you take ATRIPLA or may switch you to another medicine.
- **Have ever had mental illness or are using drugs or alcohol.**
- **Have ever had seizures or are taking medicine for seizures.**

What important information should I know about taking other medicines with ATRIPLA?

ATRIPLA may change the effect of other medicines, including the ones for HIV-1, and may cause serious side effects. Your healthcare provider may change your other medicines or change their doses. Other medicines, including herbal products, may affect ATRIPLA. For this reason, **it is very important to let all your healthcare providers and pharmacists know what medications, herbal supplements, or vitamins you are taking.**

MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH ATRIPLA

- ATRIPLA also should not be used with Combivir (lamivudine/zidovudine), COMPLERA®, EMTRIVA, Eпивir, Eпивir-HBV (lamivudine), Epzicom (abacavir sulfate/lamivudine), STRIBILD®, Trizivir (abacavir sulfate/lamivudine/zidovudine), TRUVADA, or VIREAD. ATRIPLA also should not be used with SUSTIVA unless recommended by your healthcare provider.
- Vfend (voriconazole) should not be taken with ATRIPLA since it may lose its effect or may increase the chance of having side effects from ATRIPLA.
- ATRIPLA should not be used with HEPSERA® (adefovir dipivoxil).

It is also important to tell your healthcare provider if you are taking any of the following:

- Fortovase, Invirase (saquinavir), Biaxin (clarithromycin), Noxafil (posaconazole), Sporanox (itraconazole), or Victrelis (boceprevir); **these medicines may need to be replaced with another medicine when taken with ATRIPLA.**
- Calcium channel blockers such as Cardizem or Tiazac (diltiazem), Covera HS or Isoptin (verapamil) and others; Crixivan (indinavir), Selzentry (maraviroc); the immunosuppressant medicines cyclosporine (Gengraf, Neoral, Sandimmune, and others), Prograf (tacrolimus), or Rapamune (sirolimus); Methadone; Mycobutin (rifabutin); Rifampin; cholesterol-lowering medicines such as Lipitor (atorvastatin), Pravachol (pravastatin sodium), and Zocor (simvastatin); or the anti-depressant medications bupropion (Wellbutrin, Wellbutrin SR, Wellbutrin XL, and Zyban) or Zoloft (sertraline); **dose changes may be needed when these drugs are taken with ATRIPLA.**
- Videx, Videx EC (didanosine); tenofovir DF (a component of ATRIPLA) may increase the amount of didanosine in your blood, which could result in more side effects. **You may need to be monitored more carefully** if you are taking ATRIPLA and didanosine together. Also, the dose of didanosine may need to be changed.

ATRIPLA® (efavirenz/emtricitabine/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate)

- Reyataz (atazanavir sulfate), Prezista (darunavir) with Norvir (ritonavir), or Kaletra (lopinavir/ritonavir); these medicines may increase the amount of tenofovir DF (a component of ATRIPLA) in your blood, which could result in more side effects. Reyataz is not recommended with ATRIPLA. **You may need to be monitored more carefully** if you are taking ATRIPLA, Prezista, and Norvir together, or if you are taking ATRIPLA and Kaletra together. The dose of Kaletra should be increased when taken with efavirenz.
- Medicine for seizures [for example, Dilantin (phenytoin), Tegretol (carbamazepine), or phenobarbital]; your healthcare provider may want to switch you to another medicine or check drug levels in your blood from time to time.

These are not all the medicines that may cause problems if you take ATRIPLA. Be sure to tell your healthcare provider about all medicines that you take.

Keep a complete list of all the prescription and nonprescription medicines as well as any herbal remedies that you are taking, how much you take, and how often you take them. Make a new list when medicines or herbal remedies are added or stopped, or if the dose changes. Give copies of this list to all of your healthcare providers and pharmacists **every** time you visit your healthcare provider or fill a prescription. This will give your healthcare provider a complete picture of the medicines you use. Then he or she can decide the best approach for your situation.

How should I take ATRIPLA?

- Take the exact amount of ATRIPLA your healthcare provider prescribes. Never change the dose on your own. Do not stop this medicine unless your healthcare provider tells you to stop.
- You should take ATRIPLA on an empty stomach.
- Swallow ATRIPLA with water.
- Taking ATRIPLA at bedtime may make some side effects less bothersome.
- Do not miss a dose of ATRIPLA. If you forget to take ATRIPLA, take the missed dose right away, unless it is almost time for your next dose. Do not double the next dose. Carry on with your regular dosing schedule. If you need help in planning the best times to take your medicine, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.
- If you believe you took more than the prescribed amount of ATRIPLA, contact your local poison control center or emergency room right away.
- Tell your healthcare provider if you start any new medicine or change how you take old ones. Your doses may need adjustment.
- When your ATRIPLA supply starts to run low, get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to ATRIPLA and become harder to treat.
- Your healthcare provider may want to do blood tests to check for certain side effects while you take ATRIPLA.

What should I avoid while taking ATRIPLA?

- **Women should not become pregnant while taking ATRIPLA and for 12 weeks after stopping it.** Serious birth defects have been seen in the babies of animals and women treated with efavirenz (a component of ATRIPLA) during pregnancy. It is not known whether efavirenz caused these defects. **Tell your healthcare provider right away if you are pregnant.** Also talk with your healthcare provider if you want to become pregnant.
- Women should not rely only on hormone-based birth control, such as pills, injections, or implants, because ATRIPLA may make these contraceptives ineffective. Women must use a reliable form of barrier contraception, such as a condom or diaphragm, even if they also use other methods of birth control. Efavirenz, a component of ATRIPLA, may remain in your blood for a time after therapy is stopped. Therefore, you should continue to use contraceptive measures for 12 weeks after you stop taking ATRIPLA.
- **Do not breastfeed if you are taking ATRIPLA.** Some of the medicines in ATRIPLA can be passed to your baby in your breast milk. We do not know whether it could harm your baby. Also, mothers with HIV-1 should not breastfeed because HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in the breast milk. Talk with your healthcare provider if you are breastfeeding. You should stop breastfeeding or may need to use a different medicine.
- Taking ATRIPLA with alcohol or other medicines causing similar side effects as ATRIPLA, such as drowsiness, may increase those side effects.
- Do not take any other medicines, including prescription and nonprescription medicines and herbal products, without checking with your healthcare provider.

- Avoid doing things that can spread HIV-1 to others.
 - **Do not share needles or other injection equipment.**
 - **Do not share personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them, like toothbrushes and razor blades.**
 - **Do not have any kind of sex without protection.** Always practice safe sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.

What are the possible side effects of ATRIPLA?

ATRIPLA may cause the following serious side effects:

- **Lactic acidosis** (buildup of an acid in the blood). Lactic acidosis can be a medical emergency and may need to be treated in the hospital. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get signs of lactic acidosis.** (See “What is the most important information I should know about ATRIPLA?”)
- **Serious liver problems (hepatotoxicity)**, with liver enlargement (hepatomegaly) and fat in the liver (steatosis). Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any signs of liver problems. (See “What is the most important information I should know about ATRIPLA?”)
- **“Flare-ups” of hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection**, in which the disease suddenly returns in a worse way than before, can occur if you have HBV and you stop taking ATRIPLA. Your healthcare provider will monitor your condition for several months after stopping ATRIPLA if you have both HIV-1 and HBV infection and may recommend treatment for your HBV. ATRIPLA is not approved for the treatment of hepatitis B virus infection. If you have advanced liver disease and stop treatment with ATRIPLA, the “flare-up” of hepatitis B may cause your liver function to decline.
- **Serious psychiatric problems.** A small number of patients may experience severe depression, strange thoughts, or angry behavior while taking ATRIPLA. Some patients have thoughts of suicide and a few have actually committed suicide. These problems may occur more often in patients who have had mental illness. Contact your healthcare provider right away if you think you are having these psychiatric symptoms, so your healthcare provider can decide if you should continue to take ATRIPLA.
- **Kidney problems** (including decline or failure of kidney function). If you have had kidney problems in the past or take other medicines that can cause kidney problems, your healthcare provider should do regular blood tests to check your kidneys. Symptoms that may be related to kidney problems include a high volume of urine, thirst, muscle pain, and muscle weakness.
- **Other serious liver problems.** Some patients have experienced serious liver problems including liver failure resulting in transplantation or death. Most of these serious side effects occurred in patients with a chronic liver disease such as hepatitis infection, but there have also been a few reports in patients without any existing liver disease.
- **Changes in bone mineral density (thinning bones).** Laboratory tests show changes in the bones of patients treated with tenofovir DF, a component of ATRIPLA. Some HIV patients treated with tenofovir DF developed thinning of the bones (osteopenia) which could lead to fractures. If you have had bone problems in the past, your healthcare provider may need to do tests to check your bone mineral density or may prescribe medicines to help your bone mineral density. Additionally, bone pain and softening of the bone (which may contribute to fractures) may occur as a consequence of kidney problems.

Common side effects:

Patients may have dizziness, headache, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams during treatment with ATRIPLA. These side effects may be reduced if you take ATRIPLA at bedtime on an empty stomach. They also tend to go away after you have taken the medicine for a few weeks. If you have these common side effects, such as dizziness, it does not mean that you will also have serious psychiatric problems, such as severe depression, strange thoughts, or angry behavior. Tell your healthcare provider right away if any of these side effects continue or if they bother you. It is possible that these symptoms may be more severe if ATRIPLA is used with alcohol or mood altering (street) drugs.

If you are dizzy, have trouble concentrating, or are drowsy, avoid activities that may be dangerous, such as driving or operating machinery.

Rash may be common. Rashes usually go away without any change in treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. If you develop a rash, call your healthcare provider right away. **Rash may be a serious problem in some children.** Tell your child's healthcare provider right away if you notice rash or any other side effects while your child is taking ATRIPLA.

Other common side effects include tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, gas, and diarrhea.

Other possible side effects with ATRIPLA:

- Changes in body fat. Changes in body fat develop in some patients taking anti HIV-1 medicine. These changes may include an increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck (“buffalo hump”), in the breasts, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these fat changes are not known.
- Skin discoloration (small spots or freckles) may also happen with ATRIPLA.
- In some patients with advanced HIV infection (AIDS), signs and symptoms of inflammation from previous infections may occur soon after anti-HIV treatment is started. It is believed that these symptoms are due to an improvement in the body's immune response, enabling the body to fight infections that may have been present with no obvious symptoms. If you notice any symptoms of infection, please inform your doctor immediately.
- Additional side effects are inflammation of the pancreas, allergic reaction (including swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat), shortness of breath, pain, stomach pain, weakness and indigestion.

Tell your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you notice any side effects while taking ATRIPLA.

Contact your healthcare provider before stopping ATRIPLA because of side effects or for any other reason.

This is not a complete list of side effects possible with ATRIPLA. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for a more complete list of side effects of ATRIPLA and all the medicines you will take.

How do I store ATRIPLA?

- **Keep ATRIPLA and all other medicines out of reach of children.**
- Store ATRIPLA at room temperature 77°F (25°C).
- Keep ATRIPLA in its original container and keep the container tightly closed.
- Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. If you throw any medicines away make sure that children will not find them.

General information about ATRIPLA:

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for conditions that are not mentioned in patient information leaflets. Do not use ATRIPLA for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give ATRIPLA to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

This leaflet summarizes the most important information about ATRIPLA. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about ATRIPLA that is written for health professionals.

Do not use ATRIPLA if the seal over bottle opening is broken or missing.

What are the ingredients of ATRIPLA?

Active Ingredients: efavirenz, emtricitabine, and tenofovir disoproxil fumarate

Inactive Ingredients: croscarmellose sodium, hydroxypropyl cellulose, microcrystalline cellulose, magnesium stearate, sodium lauryl sulfate. The film coating contains black iron oxide, polyethylene glycol, polyvinyl alcohol, red iron oxide, talc, and titanium dioxide.

Revised: January 2015

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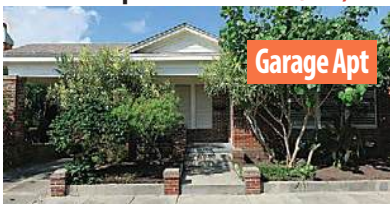
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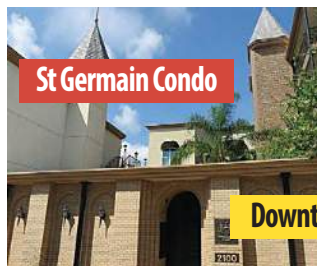
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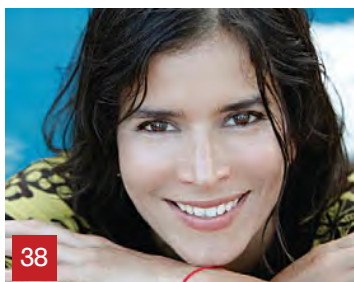


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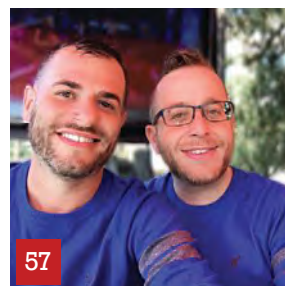
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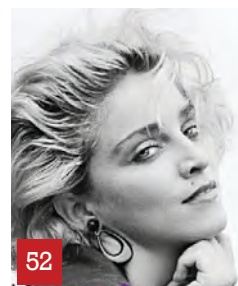
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WEB EXCLUSIVES

■ Feeling the Fear: A Transgender Hous- tonian's Thoughts about the HERO Defeat

Dee Dee Watters (pictured)
explains how the defeat of
HERO showed that discrimi-
nation and transphobia are real, and that an
ordinance is necessary to combat it.



■ Don We Now Our Gay Apparel: How to Throw an Epic Gay Holiday Party

In order to help rescue this fast-disappearing
staple of the holiday season, Tim Curfman gives
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Runoff Redemption on December 12

The future of the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance.

By John Wright

The future of the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO) will be determined by the outcome of the December 12 municipal election runoff, LGBT advocates say.

Rep. Sylvester Turner, D-Houston, who supports HERO, faces former Kemah mayor Bill King, who opposes the ordinance, in the race to replace Mayor Annise Parker, who is term-limited. Meanwhile, four runoffs for City Council, as well as the controller's race, pit candidates backed by LGBT groups against those endorsed by the anti-HERO Campaign for Houston.

After HERO's devastating defeat at the polls on November 3, Parker indicated the current Council could revisit the ordinance before she leaves office at the end of the year. However, Parker has since said she doesn't believe there's time to take up a new HERO before her third and final term expires.

"A lot of people are hurting. A lot of people are asking questions: What's next for us? How do we pick up the pieces?" said James Lee, president of Houston Stonewall Young Democrats (HSYD). "I think the clear answer is that Sylvester Turner is the candidate for HERO and the future of Houston."

Turner's campaign didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. But in his speech on election night after advancing to the runoff, Turner referenced the defeat of HERO, or Proposition 1. "In the city that I hope to build, given the opportunity, every single person has the right to ride on the streets I build," Turner said. "We should live in a city where no person is discriminated against based on group dynamics. We should live in a city where

if you work hard, if you play by the rules, you should be entitled to the benefits this city has to offer. That is Houston's future. We are not going to go back to Houston's past."

Lee said if there's a bright side to HERO's overwhelming defeat, it may be that it lit a fire under the LGBT community, which he hopes will turn out in large numbers for the runoff. "Maybe they didn't vote. Maybe they didn't know there was an election going on, but now they know," Lee said. "Houston's been in a lot of national headlines, and not in a good way."

Maverick Welsh, president of the Houston GLBT Political Caucus, said he's confident Turner would revisit HERO if he's elected, although he may not do so right away. "Obviously, HERO went down in flames, but I think there's an opportunity to fix it moving forward," Welsh said. "I think a bad result like that sometimes serves as a good wake-up call to move us where we really need to go."

Welsh added that Turner, who is black, is the best possible candidate for the LGBT community at this point, because he can reach out to the African-American voters who voted heavily against HERO based largely on the debunked myth that it would lead to sexual predators entering women's restrooms. "He's a favorite son in the African-American community, and I think he can allay a lot of these fears that were just lies," Welsh said.

Of course, even if Turner wins, he would need the support of a majority of Council members to pass a new HERO. In addition to Turner, the Caucus is backing openly gay incumbent Mike Laster in District J, Richard Nguyen in District F, incumbent David Robinson for At-Large Position 2, Amanda Edwards for At-

Large Position 4, and Chris Brown for controller. All five face candidates in the runoff who are endorsed by the Campaign for Houston.

Despite HERO's defeat, Welsh said the Caucus' slate fared well overall on November 3, with most endorsed candidates either winning outright or advancing to a runoff. "I've heard 40,000 or 50,000 people showed up just to vote no on that ordinance," Welsh said. "I don't think they're going to show back up."

The Campaign for Houston has already launched a round of 300,000 robocalls encouraging voters to ask Council members not to revisit the ordinance. "Our battle to keep men out of women's bathrooms, showers, and locker rooms is not over," Dr. Steve Hotze said in an email for Campaign for Houston on November 11. "I will not tell you that it is imperative that we elect a mayor and members of council who oppose Houston's Proposition 1, the Bathroom Ordinance. . . . If Sylvester Turner is elected mayor, then you can be sure that he will try to pass the Bathroom Ordinance again. The only way to prevent this is by electing a mayor and members of city council who oppose the Bathroom Ordinance."

Shortly after the November 3 election, former mayoral candidates Adrian Garcia and Steve Costello both endorsed Turner in the runoff election, citing him as the best candidate to move Houston forward.

In mid-November, progressive former mayoral candidate Chris Bell surprised political insiders and supporters by endorsing King for the December 12 election. While many question Bell's shocking endorsement, he stands by his decision. "I think Bill has given

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Houston's Next Leader?

Houston GLBT Political Caucus president Maverick Welsh (l) with Caucus-endorsed mayoral candidate Sylvester Turner.



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a tremendous amount of thought as to what he wants to accomplish as mayor and has real ideas that he can put into action beginning on his first day in office,” Bell told *OUTSMART*. “Of course I was a big advocate for HERO and nothing about that has changed. Bill knows that this has given Houston a black eye and that we need to do something about it. He plans to sit down with all stakeholders and try to figure out a way forward and to put forth a proposal that people can get behind. I don’t think it will look exactly like HERO, because of the fact that it didn’t pass, but I also don’t think that this runoff is about HERO, while the last one was. I don’t think we can just keep fighting over the same issue when it’s not even on the ballot. But if I thought that Bill was some kind of hater, I wouldn’t have considered supporting him.”

Lee said HSYD was the only LGBT group that interviewed mayoral candidate King as part of its endorsement process. King told the group he believed HERO needed to be rewritten, but also said he didn’t think the ordinance was necessary, Lee said. “Bill King couldn’t hold a consistent stance on any issue,” Lee noted, adding that HSYD also asked King how he would address anti-LGBT discrimination without an ordinance prohibiting it. “His response was that he would handle the situation personally, and that’s not leadership,” Lee said. “We need a mayor who’s going to make sure we have an ordinance and protection for all Houstonians, and that’s Sylvester Turner.”

Early voting for the runoff begins December 2 and ends December 8. Election Day is December 12. For information about early voting and Election Day polling locations, visit HarrisVotes.com.

Megan Smith also contributed to this report.

Galveston Big Gay Ball Celebrates Third Annual Event

The third annual Galveston Big Gay Ball—a nonprofit event that benefits a chosen local organization through proceeds and donations—will be held on January 23, 2016, at the Trolley Stop (2021 The Strand). This year’s beneficiaries include the Ball High School Drama Department and Access to Care of Coastal Texas (ACCT), an organization dedicated to supporting those living with HIV. The event will feature an open bar, food catered by Chopin Mon Ami, and music by The Mambo Jazz Kings. Black-tie attire or costumes are encouraged. Tickets are available at galvestonbiggayball.com. —*Megan Smith*

Community Photographer Dalton DeHart Launches Foundation to Create an Online Archive

By Megan Smith

If you’ve attended almost any Houston community event in the past 30 years, you most likely know Dalton DeHart. With a camera in hand, DeHart is an iconic figure in both the LGBT and Houston communities, having photographed thousands of nonprofit and community events since the mid-1980s. On November 15, DeHart launched his new foundation, The Dalton DeHart Photographic Foundation, to start digitizing, cataloging, and preserving his expanding collection of nearly one million photographs. The images will be accessible to the public in a searchable online database that aims to maximize their educational, historic, and cultural value. The foundation will also train new photographers to carry on DeHart’s work and to continue to expand the archives.

DeHart first ventured into photography after purchasing a 35 mm camera while living in Illinois. In 1980, he moved back to Houston and started photographing events for San Jacinto College, where he worked as an English professor. Through some friends,



Making History
Photographer Dalton DeHart (center) smiles with Ryan Oakley (l) and Deborah Oakley at the launch of his foundation on November 15.

DeHart was invited to join the Executive and Professional Association of Houston (EPAH)—an organization for Houston LGBT professionals—and take photos for the group’s directory. From there, he was introduced to other LGBT community organizations and was soon “taking photos of practically every event in Houston.” He recalls shooting more than 20 rolls of film at every Houston Pride Parade back in the pre-digital era.

When asked about his favorite events to photograph, DeHart said there are too many to name. “Back then, LGBT events were much

continued on page 100

COMMUNITY

Photos by Dalton DeHart



The Houston Transgender Day of Remembrance was marked on November 18 at the Progressive Open Door Christian Center. Pictured are **Koomah, Jolanda Jones, Nikki Araguz Loyd, Erica Kizzee, Ashton Woods, Fran Watson, Monica Roberts, and Dee Dee Watters.**



On November 15, **OutReach United** presented checks to its 2015 beneficiaries: SPRY, Project Remix, Out for Education, and LHI. Pictured are OutReach United board members and representatives from beneficiary organizations.



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Please see Brief Summary of Patient Information with
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Brief Summary of Patient Information about GENVOYA

GENVOYA (jen-VOY-uh)
(elvitegravir, cobicistat, emtricitabine, and tenofovir alafenamide) tablets

Important: Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about medicines that should not be taken with GENVOYA.

There may be new information about GENVOYA. This information is only a summary and does not take the place of talking with your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment.

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

GENVOYA can cause serious side effects, including:

- **Build-up of lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).** Lactic acidosis may happen in some people who take GENVOYA. 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

- **Severe liver problems.** Severe liver problems may happen in people who take GENVOYA. In some cases, these liver problems can lead to death. Your liver may become large and you may develop fat in your liver.

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 GENVOYA for a long time.**

- **Worsening of Hepatitis B infection.** GENVOYA is not for use to treat chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV). If you have HBV infection and take GENVOYA, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking GENVOYA. A “flare-up” is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before.

- Do not run out of GENVOYA. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your GENVOYA is all gone.
- Do not stop taking GENVOYA without first talking to your healthcare provider.
- If you stop taking GENVOYA, 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 GENVOYA.

What is GENVOYA?

GENVOYA is a prescription medicine that is used without other HIV-1 medicines to treat HIV-1 in people 12 years of age and older:

- who have not received HIV-1 medicines in the past **or**
- to replace their current HIV-1 medicines in people who have been on the same HIV-1 medicines for at least 6 months, have an amount of HIV-1 in their blood (“viral load”) that is less than 50 copies/mL, and have never failed past HIV-1 treatment

HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS.

GENVOYA contains the prescription medicines elvitegravir (VITEKTA®), cobicistat (TYBOST®), emtricitabine (EMTRIVA®) and tenofovir alafenamide.

It is not known if GENVOYA is safe and effective in children under 12 years of age.

When used to treat HIV-1 infection, GENVOYA may:

- Reduce the amount of HIV-1 in your blood. This is called “viral load”.
- Increase the number of CD4+ (T) cells in your blood that help fight off other infections.

Reducing the amount of HIV-1 and increasing the CD4+ (T) cells in your blood may help improve your immune system. This may reduce your risk of death or getting infections that can happen when your immune system is weak (opportunistic infections).

GENVOYA does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS. You must stay on continuous HIV-1 therapy to control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses.

Avoid doing things that can spread HIV-1 infection to others:

- Do not share or re-use needles or other injection equipment.
- Do not share personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them, like toothbrushes and razor blades.
- Do not have any kind of 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.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have any questions about how to prevent passing HIV-1 to other people.

Who should not take GENVOYA?

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

- alfuzosin hydrochloride (Uroxatral®)
- carbamazepine (Carbatrol®, Epitol®, Equetro®, Tegretol®, Tegretol-XR®, Teril®)
- 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®)
- midazolam, when taken by mouth
- phenobarbital (Luminal®)
- phenytoin (Dilantin®, Phenytek®)
- 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 or a product that contains St. John's wort

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking GENVOYA?

Before taking GENVOYA, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- have liver problems including hepatitis B infection
- have kidney or bone problems
- have any other medical conditions
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if GENVOYA can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking GENVOYA.
Pregnancy registry: there is a pregnancy registry for women who take HIV-1 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.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you take GENVOYA.
 - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
 - At least one of the medicines in GENVOYA can pass to your baby in your breast milk. It is not known if the other medicines in GENVOYA 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 over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Other medicines may affect how GENVOYA works. Some medicines may interact with GENVOYA. **Keep a list of your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.**

- You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for a list of medicines that interact with GENVOYA.
- Do not start a new medicine without telling your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider can tell you if it is safe to take GENVOYA with other medicines.

How should I take GENVOYA?

- Take GENVOYA exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to take it. GENVOYA is taken by itself (not with other HIV-1 medicines) to treat HIV-1 infection.
- GENVOYA is usually taken 1 time each day.
- Take GENVOYA with food.
- If you need to take a medicine for indigestion (antacid) that contains aluminum and magnesium hydroxide or calcium carbonate during treatment with GENVOYA, take it at least 2 hours before or after you take GENVOYA.
- Do not change your dose or stop taking GENVOYA without first talking with your healthcare provider. Stay under a healthcare provider's care when taking GENVOYA.
- Do not miss a dose of GENVOYA.
- If you take too much GENVOYA, call your healthcare provider or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.
- When your GENVOYA supply starts to run low, get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to GENVOYA and become harder to treat.

What are the possible side effects of GENVOYA?

GENVOYA may cause serious side effects, including:

- **See “What is the most important information I should know about GENVOYA?”**
- **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.
- **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 GENVOYA. Your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking GENVOYA if you develop new or worse kidney problems.
- **Bone problems** can happen in some people who take GENVOYA. Bone problems may include bone pain, softening or thinning (which may lead to fractures). Your healthcare provider may need to do tests to check your bones.

The most common side effect of GENVOYA is nausea.

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 GENVOYA. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.
- Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

General information about the safe and effective use of GENVOYA.

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Patient Information leaflet. Do not use GENVOYA for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give GENVOYA to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

This Brief Summary summarizes the most important information about GENVOYA. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about GENVOYA that is written for health professionals.

For more information, call **1-800-445-3235**

or go to **www.GENVOYA.com**.

Keep GENVOYA and all medicines out of reach of children.

Issued: November 2015


Genvoya™
elvitegravir 150mg/cobicistat 150mg/emtricitabine
200mg/tenofovir alafenamide 10mg tablets



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Calendar of Events

Compiled by Marene Gustin

'A Christmas Story, The Musical'



PHOTOS COURTESY TUTS



So much fun you'll shoot your eye out! Who doesn't love the 1983 movie about Ralphie, Red Ryder BB guns, leg lamps, Ovaltine, and pink bunny suits? Now TUTS brings us the musical version of this holiday staple. With songs by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul and a faithful yet inventive book by Joseph Robinette, you'll fall in love with the holidays all over again.

The musical is just as hilarious as the movie on which it is based . . . plus songs! Yes, there's a song about the BB gun, but also "Up on Santa's Lap," "Before the Old Man Comes Home," and the perky "At Higbees," where the store employees sing that they have "every toy a kid could crave!"

And it's not just the musical you can enjoy. Added events include a breakfast with Santa at the Downtown Aquarium, special kids' nights, a VIP package that includes

a photo-op with the cast, and of course, OUT@TUTS on December 10, when you can mingle with cast and crew while enjoying free bites and happy-hour drink prices at the upstairs Artista Restaurant. Bunny suits optional.

—Marene Gustin

A Christmas Story, The Musical
December 8–20
tuts.com

📻 Radio ★ Performing Arts 📷 Art & Photography 🔄 Ongoing + Other Things 📅 Save The Date

1

World AIDS Day + aidshelp.org
The Ice + thru Feb. 7 Lace 'em up and hit the ice! discoverygreen.com
Sister's Christmas Catechism ★ thru 27th CSI meets the Bible. stagestheatre.org

2

A Christmas Carol ★ thru 24th The Dickens' classic tale. classicaltheatre.org

3

The Nutcracker ★ thru 27th Classic holiday treat from Houston Ballet. houstonballet.org
Stepp Stewart's A Soulful Christmas ★ thru 21st Two children on a magical journey. ensemblehouston.com

4

Mayor's Holiday Celebration and Tree Lighting + Get ready for the holidays! houstonsspecialevents.org
A Christmas Story—A Ghost Story of Christmas ★ thru 28th The Alley's holiday treat. alleytheatre.org

5

Cantadas de Navidad ★ A Christmas music concert by Chatham Baroque. houstonearlymusic.org
Ice Land + thru Jan. 10 Ice carvers and two million pounds of ice. moodygardens.org

6

Christmas Belles ★ thru 20th The holidays are hilarious in this Texas play. stage-right.org
Ho Ho Humbug ★ thru 23rd A Christmas comedy. starknakedtheatre.com

The Snow Queen ★ thru 12th It's the original dance version of Frozen. freneticcore.net
Cinderella ★ Catch a free flick. Arrive one hour early for contests and activities! discoverygreen.com

8

Theatre Under the Stars Vine & Dine + An annual charity dinner for the theater's education programs. tuts.org/winedinner

9

Holiday Can Food Drive + thru 31st
Two dollars off admission with a can donation at the National Museum of Funeral History. nmfh.org



11

A Frosty & Frozen Christmas ★ thru 12th
Morning concerts for the kids. houstonsymphony.org

12

DWDT Book Launch + A gorgeous new book about the Dominic Walsh Dance Theater. deborahcoltongallery.com
Very Merry Pops ★ Holiday favorites. houstonsymphony.org

13

The Santaland Diaries ★ thru 31st
What's it like to be a Macy's elf? Not good. alleytheatre.org

14

Houston: Uncommon Modern 🖼️ thru Feb. 12
A photo exhibit of Houston's uncommon buildings. aiahouston.org

15

Somewhere in the Balance 🖼️ thru Jan. 10
Photos from four artists depicting their current state of mind at Houston Center for Photography. hcponline.org



17

Begin Wide ★ thru 19th
Suchu Dance opening for the season. matchhouston.org

18

Handel's Messiah ★ thru 19th
A holiday must with the Houston Symphony. houstonsymphony.org

19

The African Children's Choir ★ thru 20th
Gospel group performs. africanchildrenschoir.com
Day for Night 🖼️ ★ thru 20th
Experimental art and music festival. dayfornight.io

20

Tony Bennet at The Grand ★ The star crooner performs in Galveston. See page 28. thegrand.com

21

Humphreys School of Musical Theatre 22, 28, & 29 + Daylong theater camp for kids. tuts.com/hsmt

22

Merry Texas Christmas Y'all ★ Asleep at the Wheel performs holiday classics. thegrand.com
Lyle the Crocodile ★ thru 22nd
He's a singing and dancing reptile. mainstreettheater.com

23

The Secret of the Hanging Egg 🖼️ thru June 19
A Salvador Dali exhibit at The Menil. menil.org



26

Mark Rothko: A Retrospective 🖼️ thru Jan. 24
More than 60 paintings trace Rothko's full career arc and highlight milestones in the development of his signature style. mfah.org

27

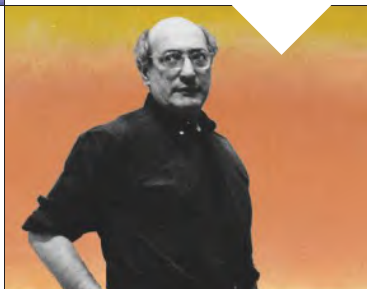
Bullets over Broadway ★ thru Jan. 2
A whiz-bang musical. broadwayatthehobbycenter.com

28

Debtfair 🖼️ thru Jan. 11
An exhibition that aims to expose the relationship between economic inequality in the culture industry and artists' growing debt burdens. artleaguehouston.org

29

A Christmas Story, The Musical ★ thru 20th
So much fun, you'll shoot your eye out. See top of opposite page. tuts.com



31

New Year's Eve Party! + Free, family-friendly party in the Theater District features B-52s, fireworks, and more. houstontx.gov



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Calendar of Events

continued from previous page

A Christmas Story: A Ghost Story of Christmas

December 1-28

1-28

Bah humbug! Just as iconic as Houston Ballet's *The Nutcracker*, this holiday offering from the Alley Theatre has enthralled Houstonians for years. See Charles Dickens' beloved characters come to life on stage surrounded by spectacular London sets complete with fog swirling around eerie ghosts from Christmases past, present, and future. God bless us, everyone! alleytheatre.org



Jeffrey Bean
as Ebenezer
Scrooge (I)
and John
Felch as Mrs.
Dilber in the
Alley Theatre's
*A Christmas
Carol—A
Ghost Story of
Christmas.*

Houston Symphony

December 4-20

4-20

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas . . . and sound like it, too. This month the Houston Symphony has a host of holiday happenings for you. First up is a screening of *Home Alone* with their live orchestra accompaniment on December 4. Then it's on to the traditional Very Merry Pops concert to put you in the mood for some holiday cheer, December 11 through 13. Wanna sing along to "Frosty the Snowman" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," and rejoice in Queen Elsa's reflective personal journey "Let It Go" from Disney's *Frozen*? Join the symphony on December 12 for A Frosty & Frozen Christmas concert. On a more somber note, enjoy the timeless *Messiah* December 18 through 20, when the orchestra performs Handel's Baroque masterpiece.

houstonssymphony.org

Tony Bennett at The Grand

December 20

20

Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House welcomes back the one and only Tony Bennett and his wonderful trio. Winner of 18 Grammy Awards, including a Lifetime Achievement Award and two Emmy Awards, Bennett is an NEA Jazz Master and a Kennedy Center Honoree who has sold over 50 million records worldwide. He'll "fly you to the moon" from Galveston on December 20. thegrand.com



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OliverMcMillan



Ben-Gay

... and other things your dad can spread on himself at your gay wedding.

What I'm fixin' to tell you is dead-solid-perfect true, and so damn uncivilized that you're gonna shake like a guy riding a three-legged horse.

There's a Colorado preacher by the name of Kevin Swanson. He's so popular that Republican presidential candidates Mike Huckabee, Ted Cruz, and Bobby Jindal came to his church to seek his blessing on their campaign to be president of the United States of America.

The Reverend Swanson was asked what he'd do if his son was getting gay-married. He announced, "Here is what I would do: sackcloth and ashes at the entrance to the church, and I'd sit in cow manure and I'd spread it all over my body. That's what I would do, and I'm not kidding, I'm not laughing."

Dude, I'm not laughing either. In fact, I called Mr. Gallup Poll to check, and he scientifically confirmed that no-damn-body is laughing. Not even snickering. That is gross. I am going to venture a guess that other people don't even think about doing stuff like that. Hell, my husband's mother didn't like who he married, but all she did was roll her eyes—and she was the craziest damn woman in Dallas, which is something that doesn't happen without a whole lot of practice.

Holy crap! And I mean that literally. When preachers do stuff like that, it is holy crap.

So, if you're considering sashaying down the aisle this holiday season and your dad does not approve of the spouse you've chosen, we've made a helpful list of things—other than manure—that your dad can spread on his body and get lots of news coverage like The Rev. Swanson did.

Things your dad can spread on himself in order to get news coverage at your gay wedding:

1. Nair. Bonus side effect: he can now wear short-shorts.
2. Trojan warming personal lubricant—because it's handy in his nightstand's top drawer, care-

COLLAGE BY BLASE DISTEPANO



3 Spreading It Thin

The Reverend Kevin Swanson is not kidding about where he would sit if his son was getting gay-married.

fully hidden under his high school yearbook and numerous expired fishing licenses.

3. Goat blood—far more horrific, yet conveniently biblical.

4. Hay—to satisfy his secretly held urban-cowboy urges.

5. Ben Gay—because that would be so, so, so punny.

Also in the Holy Crap category this holiday season is the Starbucks Cuproar.

Starbucks tossed the campy reindeer and tree ornaments in favor of a cheery red cup with the green Starbucks logo. The religious right went wilder than a tomcat with a tin can tied to its tail.

Minimalism does not play well in the Bible Belt. Honey, they have to have blinking lights and three pounds of glitter before they even voice the first *Ho*. The next two *Hos* are totally dependent on Santa kneeling over the manger yard art, enhanced by the entire sequin inventory from the local craft store.

The former head of the Southern Baptist Convention is telling his sheep to boycott Starbucks. He says they need to be outraged by this deliberate affront to Christianity. I

have come to the conclusion that outrage substitutes for foreplay in most right-wing homes. How else could there be so damn many of them? They reproduce like rabbits because they spend all day looking for things to be outraged about.

Also, I have zero-nada-nilch idea what reindeer on cups has to do with Little Baby Jesus. And if I did know, I'd try real hard to forget it.

The Southern Baptist guy suggests that if you are forced to go to Starbucks, you should tell your barista that your name is Merry Christmas, because that forces them to write Merry Christmas on your cup. Yeah, because baristas are

reasonably reliable spiritual advisors who can solidify your relationship to God with a felt-tip pen.

Here's hoping that the next Starbucks holiday cup is completely blank and comes with crayons and a jar of paste so that their overly victimized Christian customers can decorate it themselves, like the damn children they are.

There are 38 different religious celebrations during December, so when you get outraged and start a petition or boycott somewhere for not saying Merry Christmas, you are not "defending Christianity." You are just being a colossal asshole.

You know, I cannot leave without saying something about the Republican candidates for president. Honey, this GOP presidential race is three pounds of foolish in a two-pound sack.

I haven't chatted about this since Rick Perry dropped out, so I think I can bring you up to speed by simply saying that watching Rick Perry's second presidential campaign was like watching *The Sixth Sense* the second time. You already knew he was dead.

Donald Trump and Ben Carson are getting pretty damn close to being sued by the producers of *Dumb and Dumber* for copyright infringement.

Honey, if Donald Trump said the things he's said about women and immigrants, he'd be asked to leave Chili's.

And I don't care what they say, Ben Carson is no brain surgeon.

Hope your holidays are merry and bright, warm and wonderful. Be sure to hug someone who needs it.

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



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OliverMcMillan



Selling Appreciated Assets?

Watch out for the tax man.



In today's world of volatile stock markets and the uncertain real-estate landscape, it can be tempting for investors to sell when an asset has increased in value—especially when you aren't sure when, or if, it will ever reach that level again.

Yet, although it's easy to visualize all the things you could do with the newfound money, the very first consideration you really need to make is how much you could be handing over to Uncle Sam. This is especially the case when you're liquidating assets that are outside of your IRA or 401(k) retirement-plan accounts.

Tax Considerations to Consider

When selling any type of investment for more than you paid for it, you need to be aware of capital-gains taxes. The amount of your capital gain (or loss) is basically the difference between what you initially paid for the investment and what you sold it for.

So, for instance, if you paid \$3,000 to purchase shares of XYZ stock, and you then sold the shares two years later for \$5,000, your capital gain would be \$2,000—and it is this \$2,000 that you would owe tax on.

Investments Outside of Qualified Retirement Plans
When selling an investment such as a stock or a mutual fund, the amount that you pay in capital gains will also depend on how long you owned

that investment. That's because there is a difference between short-term and long-term capital gains.

You receive short-term capital gains on investments that are held and sold within a period of less than one year. Here, capital gains will be taxed at the investor's regular income-tax rate.

However, on investments that have been held for longer than one year, *long-term* capital gains are taxed at a rate that depends on your income tax bracket. In 2015, the tax rate on all long-term capital gains would be 0 percent for those in the 10- to 15-percent tax brackets, 15 percent for those in the 25- to 35-percent tax brackets, and 20 percent if you are in the 39.6-percent tax bracket.

It is important to note, though, that for those who are considered "high income" individuals (singles earning over \$200,000, or married-filing-jointly couples

earning over \$250,000), long-term capital gains will also count as qualifying income for the purpose of the 3.8 percent surtax on net investment income. In this case, the long-term capital gains rate would be an additional 3.8 percent of the rates listed above.

In addition to the sale of investments, there are other sources of income that could become taxable, including:

- **Interest** – The federal government treats most types of interest as if it were ordinary income.

Therefore, it will be subject to the marginal income tax rate that you currently pay.

- **Dividends** – If you receive dividends from your investments, you can get a small break here from Uncle Sam. That is because companies pay dividends out of their after-tax profits, so these funds have essentially already been taxed. Therefore, shareholders can receive a preferential tax rate of only 15 percent on the qualified dividends they receive.

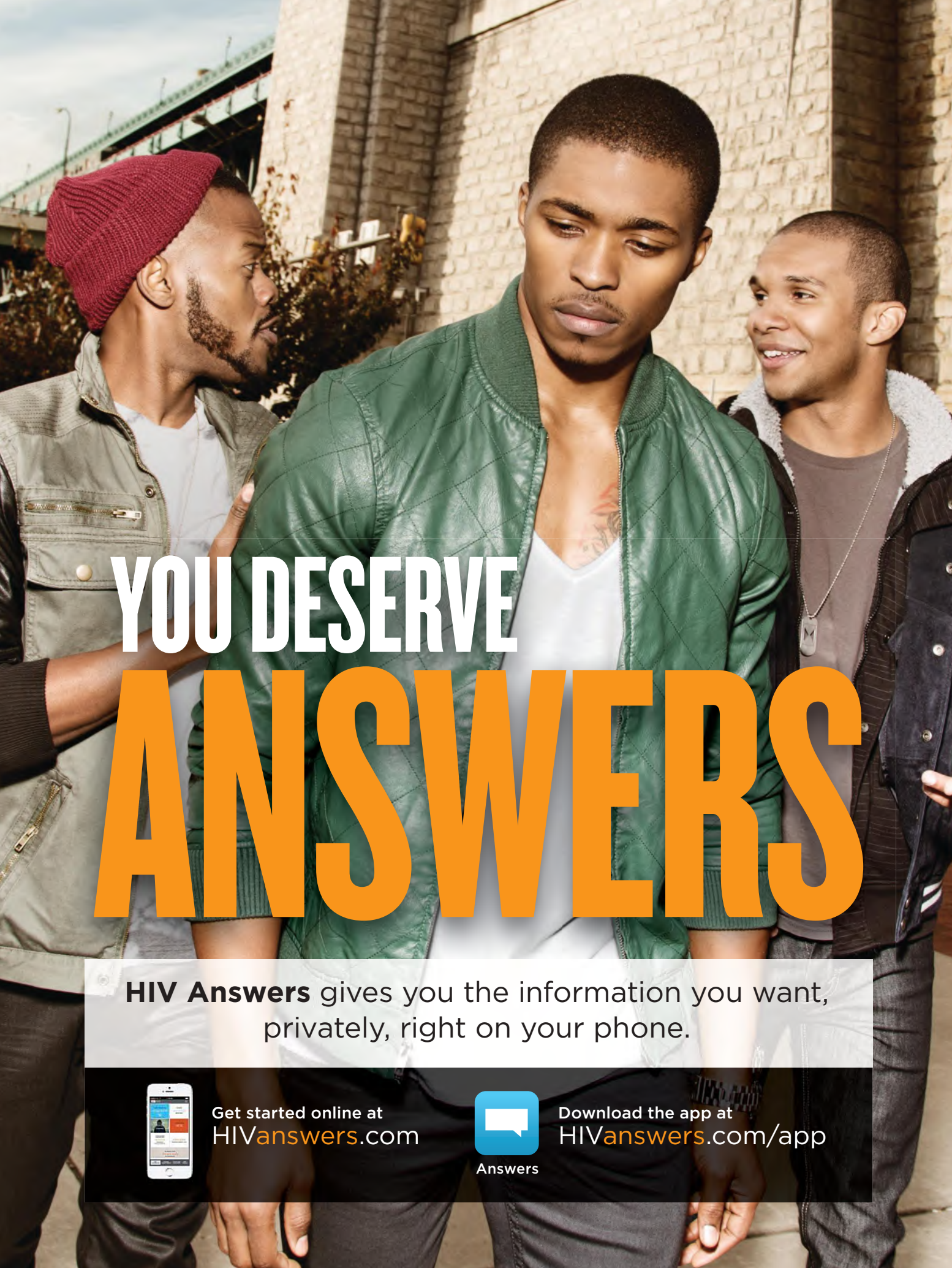
Selling Real Estate: Residence versus Investment

When selling real estate, your taxes can differ depending upon whether the property is your primary residence or an investment. In most instances, the biggest asset that people own is their home—and, depending on when you purchased it and how much equity you have, it is possible that you could realize a large amount of gain when you go to sell it.

The good news here is that you may be able to exclude some—or even all—of this capital gain, provided that you meet all three of the following conditions:

- You owned the property for at least two of the years in the five-year period prior to selling it;
- The home was used as your primary residence for at least two of the years within that same five-year time period; and
- You have not excluded the capital gain from the sale of another home within a two-year period prior to the sale.

If you qualify for all of the above, then you will be able to exclude up to \$250,000 of →



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MONEYSMART

continued from page 32

your capital gain on the sale if you are a single individual. If you are married and you file your taxes jointly, then you can exclude up to \$500,000 of the gain.

Selling real estate that you've owned as an investment can be different—starting with how long you've owned the property. For instance, if you've owned the property for less than a year, you can be hit with a short-term capital gain—which is the same rate as your marginal income tax rate. So, for someone who is now in the 28-percent tax bracket, they'll pay 28 percent of their gain from the investment-property's sale.

If you've held your investment property for longer than a year and sell it for a gain, then your long-term capital-gains tax could range from between 0 and 15 percent, depending on what your current marginal tax rate is.

In either case, you probably have many deductions that are associated with the property that you may be able to subtract from your "tax basis." These may help to lower the overall tax liability you owe.

Another possible strategy for deferring taxes on business or investment real estate that has appreciated is to do a "1031 exchange." Here, you won't be liable for any of the gain on a property that you use for business or investment, provided that it is exchanged for another "like-kind" property. According to the IRS, this basically means that the capital-gains tax won't be charged when you sell an appreciated property if you use the funds to buy another similar one. So you could sell a four-unit rental building, purchase a similar one, and simply defer the payment of the tax until you ultimately sell your last investment property *without* re-investing in another one.

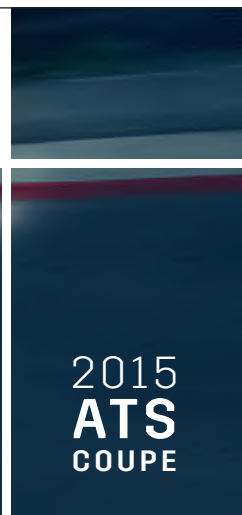
The Bottom Line on Selling Assets

When it comes to selling property, equities, or any other investment, the "right" time to do so will always depend on your specific situation. That's why it is essential to work with a professional who can guide you through the process before, during, and after the actual transaction takes place.

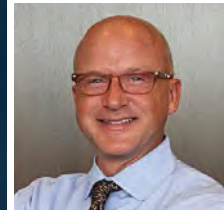
Sales of financial assets usually have tax ramifications, and they may even encompass legal issues. With that in mind, having the right advisors on your side can help ensure that your best interests are at heart.

Personal finance-related questions may be emailed to grace.yung@lpl.com.

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 and was recognized as a "Five-Star Wealth Manager" in the 2014 September issue of Texas Monthly.



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INFO: bcpahouston.org

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Walking Her Own Walk

Patricia Velasquez, the world's first Latina lesbian supermodel, talks about her inspirational new film.

By Megan Smith

Photo by Jenny Woodman

Venezuelan beauty Patricia Velasquez is no stranger to firsts. In the 1990s, she walked the runway for the likes of Dolce & Gabbana and Antonio Berardi, making her the first Latina to break into the high-end fashion industry. Having studied acting in New York and Los Angeles, Velasquez also graced the big screen in blockbuster hits like *The Mummy* and *The Mummy Returns* and was featured on television series such as *Arrested Development* and *The L Word*. And with the release of her new memoir, *Straight Walk: A Supermodel's Journey to Finding Her Truth*, Velasquez accomplished another first—she came out as a gay woman and, in turn, became the world's first Latina lesbian supermodel. Velasquez notes that her decision to come out was heavily influenced by the need to teach her young daughter, Maya, the value of being honest and proud.

Now, Velasquez is in front of the camera once more, starring in Venezuelan director Fina Torres' new film, *Liz in September*. The movie follows Liz (Velasquez), a seductive ladies' lady, as she celebrates her 37th birthday with fellow lesbian friends at a Caribbean retreat. Among these women, homosexuality is as natural as the waves rolling along the sandy shore—nothing is questioned, it just *is*. Although the trip is a tradition for these friends, this year is different—the women are blissfully unaware that Liz is secretly battling terminal cancer. The whole dynamic changes when straight newcomer Eva (Eloisa Maturen) finds herself at the beach lodge after her car breaks down in town. Never one to turn down a bet, Liz accepts when her friends challenge her to seduce Eva in three days' time. What Liz doesn't expect is to find love, personal peace, and a legacy to leave behind.

In mid-November, while Velasquez was abroad in London, I had the pleasure of speaking with her about *Liz in September*, fans' reactions to her coming out, and the push for LGBT equality in Venezuela.

Megan Smith: So you're finishing up work in London?

Patricia Velasquez: Yes, I have a beauty brand that I started five years ago called Taya Beauty that has expanded all over the world—in the U.S., it's on the Home Shopping Network, and here in the U.K., it's on QVC. So once or twice every month I have to travel to a different market. I'm very proud of my brand because key ingredients are from [businesses] in the Amazon that are funding indigenous communities, and are sustainable, organic, and environmentally friendly. There are no sulfites, no harsh chemicals, no glues, and no synthetics.

“If my coming out helps other people, and I can inspire them just by being who I want to be and living my life freely, then I welcome the idea of being a role model.”

Wow, it sounds like you're not slowing down a bit! So, *Liz in September* was released on DVD earlier this month. What initially interested you about Liz's role in that film?

Fina and I are both Venezuelans, so it was sort of fate that we would do something together. There aren't many people from our country who are in this industry. When we decided that we were going to work together, we initially started looking at a different script. I then asked Fina to come to a master class that I was a part of in Los Angeles, and when I came out to do a scene, it was actually a scene from the original play [on which *Liz in September*

is based], *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove*. Fina was sitting next to the teacher, and she leaned over and told her, “That's so funny that Patricia is doing a scene of this play, because I was offered [the chance] to make a movie of this play many years ago, but we couldn't get it off the ground.” So I come out, I do the scene, and I think Fina made the decision right then and there that this is the project we needed to work on. I really have to give it up to Fina, because she's a very well-known director, and she could have very well just taken the rights [to the play] and done the film in English. But she decided to do it in Spanish, and nothing like this has ever been done before in Spanish.

Torres notes that your personal life mirrors Liz's in a lot of ways—you're both seductive to women and know the power of beauty. Did you feel like starring as Liz was more autobiographical than acting?

No, actually, I don't feel that way. I do think Fina took a lot of elements from my life and incorporated them into the film, such as Liz being a model in the past.

I also had a dog, and Fina saw me running on the beach every morning with my dog, and wanted to add that to the film. That's what happens when you put yourself in the hands of a good director and have trust in them—and that's what I did with Fina. It doesn't matter what kind of character you're playing—you can always find similarities between yourself and that character. There are definitely things in the film that mirror my life, but I don't think Liz, as a whole, is really who I am. I think Liz is a mix of Fina's [creation] and myself.

***Liz in September* was released shortly before you came out as a lesbian in**



The Beautiful Trailblazer

Venezuelan supermodel, actress, author, and businesswoman Patricia Velasquez returns to the big screen in internationally-acclaimed director Fina Torres' *Liz in September*.

your new memoir, *Straight Walk: A Supermodel's Journey to Finding Her Truth*. In the film, Liz and her friends seem so natural and comfortable in their sexualities. Did starring in *Liz in September* impact your comfort level with your own sexuality in any way?

No, I wouldn't say that. But what I would say is that shooting the film made me realize how important it was to release the book. The film was definitely the seed of my last push to get the book out. It made me realize that it was time for me to inspire other people. I wasn't necessarily feeling uncomfortable in my sexuality—

I've lived my life openly for many years—I just didn't say it out to the world. What did happen in the process between the film and writing the book is that I became much more comfortable in my femininity. Before, I wouldn't say, "Yes, I am gay," because I thought that I would betray my fans—who were mainly →

guys—and that it might [impact the kind of work I would be able to get]. I didn't know it would be completely the opposite—I have much more work than I used to. But as a result of [being so accepted as a lesbian], I definitely realized that my femininity wasn't something that was only related to work, and that I could own who I was. The combination of the movie and the book had a lot to do with that.

The film takes place in your home country of Venezuela, where homosexuality is still relatively taboo. What is the country's current climate toward LGBT people, and how have your Venezuelan fans reacted to you coming out?
It's been very surprising, because in Venezuela we don't have any sort of legislation surrounding LGBT rights—zero. I don't necessarily think that it's something that the people or the government are against, I just think that because we are struggling with so many really,

really basic issues (like needing running water, or electricity, or having food on the table), LGBT rights haven't been on the agenda. But I definitely don't think the fact that we're dealing with day-to-day issues should take away from the need and the importance of trying to achieve legislation and rights for our community.

I think a movie like *Liz in September* creates a conversation. A book like mine starts a dialogue, for sure. I wrote this book really to inspire people to live their truth. Your truth may be that you're not practicing the religion

The Woman Behind the Camera

Director Fina Torres discusses her new lesbian-themed film, *Liz in September*.

For 30 years, internationally acclaimed Venezuelan director Fina Torres (*Oriana*, *Woman on Top*) has brought the stories of strong women to life on the big screen. Giving voices to characters who—more often than not—are silenced in Hollywood, Torres' honest and impactful films have given audiences a reason to rejoice time and time again.

Her latest film, *Liz in September* (*Liz en Septiembre*), stars openly gay actress Patricia Velasquez and is based on Jane Chambers' stage play *Last Summer at Blue Fish Cove*—a work that Torres deems “the first mainstream, quality literary play in lesbian theater history.”

In late October, I had the honor of speaking with Torres about *Liz in September*'s time on the film-festival circuit, working with Velasquez, and an upcoming project (**SPOILER ALERT: the main characters are women!**).

Megan Smith: I first saw *Liz in September* during Houston's QFest Film Festival, where you received the festival's inaugural lifetime achievement award earlier this year. What was that experience like for you?

Fina Torres: It was my first lifetime achievement award! It was an amazing experience. I can look back and say, “Oh look, I've accomplished something.” [Laughs] But really, [as a filmmaker] you don't always think about that. I was really very moved.

You've created numerous films on powerful women and their stories, yet *Liz in September* feels like the most intimate to date. Do you agree?

I do feel that *Liz in September* is a very intimate movie. It's the first time I've put more emphasis and thought into the characters than into the aesthetics. With this film, I tried to go more into the essence of the characters. It was a very interesting experience.

Patricia Velasquez brings an unmatched authenticity to the role of Liz. Do you feel that since Patricia is openly gay, she understood Liz's role more than most?

I think the fact that she's gay really helped her better understand the character. Not only that, but there are many characteristics that Liz and Patricia share. Liz is a model, she's seductive to women, and she knows the power of beauty—that's Patricia's biography. [Laughs] And I thought [having someone like Patricia play the role] would bring more strength to the character.

Funding can be so hard to come by—especially for female writers and directors—and that often prevents amazing movies from being made. Some of your biggest credits were made years apart. How much did funding play a part in that sequence?



A Lifetime of Filmmaking

Venezuelan director Fina Torres has brought the stories of strong women to the big screen for the past 30 years with hits like *Oriana*, *Woman on the Top*, and her latest work, *Liz in September*.

In my case, I think it was more of a personal issue. When you win a prestigious award—like the Golden Camera Award—for your first movie, you have this pressure that the next movie has to be better, and better, and better. And you really block yourself because your expectations are so high. It's very difficult to break away [from that mentality]. But, the more time goes along, the less time there is between my movies.

Can you give us a sneak peek at any upcoming projects that you've been working on?

I have a project that I'm working on now that I'm going to shoot in April. It's a comedy that's going to be shot in Venezuela. And, of course, the main characters are two women. The film centers on violence in Venezuela... but that's all I can say! —Megan Smith

Read the complete interview at OUTSMART Magazine.com

that you want, or just the fact that you're gay and you can't openly talk about it or be who you are. The book sends a message to people that it's okay to be whoever you want to be, and that you're not alone. People have been extremely supportive throughout the world—in my community in Venezuela and definitely in the United States. If anything, I have to say the LGBT community in the United States has been incredibly supportive of me coming out. It's been a very beautiful journey.

In the 1990s, you broke barriers by becoming the world's first Latina supermodel. After coming out, you accomplished another first by becoming the world's first Latina lesbian supermodel. In an industry where no one else really looks like you, whom did you look to as a role model?

That's such a good question. I don't know! In terms of the LGBT world, I didn't really have that role model. What I didn't know is that I was going to become one for so many people after I came out. Maybe the fact that I didn't have a role model is why I wasn't really looking to become one, and why—when the book came out and I became a role model for so many people—it was a little shocking to me. I wrote the book with the mentality that if I could help one person, then that would mean I had done my job. But along the way, we've helped so many people. If my coming out helps other people, and I can inspire them just by being who I want to be and living my life freely and showing them I'm a person like anyone else—successful, happy, and fighting for her dreams—then I welcome the idea of being a role model to people.

You're a supermodel, an actress, you've created your own beauty brand, and now you're an author. What's next on your list?

More than anything, I'm a mother. I'm very, very busy, and I'm extremely thankful that I've been given the opportunity to work and to do these projects. I tend to get bored quickly—I need to be creating different things at the same time. But my acting is definitely the thing that calls to me the most. What I would really like is to have a little more time to focus on my acting and to do more projects like *Liz in September*. When you work on projects that make a little bit of a difference in history, acting-wise, it's such an incredible experience. I think that when we—Latinos and South Americans—shoot our films, they take on a different dimension in the sense that we become part of the social change that's happening in our countries. And



I would like to have time to do many more of those, because they really fill my heart.

Liz in September is now available from Wolfe Video (wolfevideo.com).



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Teaching Local LGBT History in a Fast-Paced Society

Sara Fernandez wanted to tell the story of our community, but didn't realize she was also creating a story in the process.

By Brandon Wolf

In the spring of 2013, Houston activist Sara Fernandez was visiting relatives in New York City and planned excursions to several museums. At the New Museum and the Museum of the City of New York, she saw exhibits that she found especially fascinating, because each told a story.

Neither exhibit was dedicated solely to the LGBT community, but LGBT history was included in both. The New Museum focused on the year 1993 in the Lower East Side neighborhood surrounding the museum. In one room, a dozen television monitors ran looping videos, each of which presented a different subject. One of those subjects was AIDS. 1993 was a horrific time of suffering—the year before the death toll finally spiked, and two years before retroviral medications began to change the course of the disease.

At the Museum of the City of New York, a permanent exhibit about activists featured suffragettes, the civil-rights movement, and gay liberation. Fernandez remembered the many “History Tent” exhibits she had seen during Houston Pride festivals—exhibits that featured memorabilia, but didn’t tell a comprehensive story of our community’s evolution. She left New York with a passion for bringing just such a story to life.

The list included such well-known events as the enormous 1977 Anita Bryant protest. It also included little-known material, such as Houston’s gay art collective of the 1930s and the 1967 formation of The Tumblebugs.

Bringing History to the People

Ten months later, Fernandez’s dream was realized, and as a result we now have our first “pop-up museum”—32 colorful banners that relate the highlights of Houston’s LGBT history from the 1930s to the present day.

The banners employ a bold, colorful graphic design, using large photos and a minimum of text. With the pace of today’s society, people find it hard to visit a museum or special exhibit. Pop-up museums overcome this obstacle by bringing history to people where they are—a convention, a gala, or a large community event. (The May 14, 2015, issue of *Time* noted that the average attention span of an adult has dropped to eight seconds—the result of an increasingly digitized lifestyle.)

Fernandez’s project brings a basic under-

standing of Houston’s LGBT history to many different groups—those who have recently moved here, people who have come out or begun transitioning late in life, and new generations of teens. The exhibit gives viewers a quick perspective on where we’ve been and how we got to where we are today. It also helps each generation see how they fit into a bigger picture.

A Dream Becomes Reality

The birth of the banners is an inspiring story about believing in dreams, maintaining optimism, and welcoming new ideas. It also reinforces the folk saying that “it takes a village to raise a child.”

After returning from New York in 2013, Fernandez began to discuss her dream with others. She presented the idea at a meeting of Houston ARCH (Houston Area Rainbow Collective History), an umbrella organization that encourages cooperation among several of Houston’s LGBT historians. →



Houston’s LGBT History

Houston, We Have History: The Banner Project is featured above at its premiere showing during the 2014 Creating Change Conference. INSET: The Banner Project’s founder Sara Fernandez (r) and Houston LGBT historian J.D. Doyle pose in front of The Diana Foundation’s banner at the organization’s 2014 awards ceremony.



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Fernandez leaned in the direction of a visual timeline. On the ARCH website, she found a detailed timeline. Jo Collier, who works in the Texas Room of the Houston Public Library, has been piecing together the timeline for years, so Fernandez had a starting point.

A friend suggested *Rebels, Rhinestones and Rubyfruits* by James Sears, the most comprehensive history of the LGBT South currently in existence. Using the book's index, Fernandez found material about Houston that she had been unaware of. Dr. Brian Riedel, assistant director of Rice University's Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality, put her in touch with researchers of Houston LGBT history.

When it was announced that Houston would be the site of the 2014 National LGBTQ Task Force's "Creating Change" conference, Fernandez attended early planning meetings and asked the organizers about displaying a Houston history timeline.

The idea was approved. The conference would provide the space—three large sections of window space on one of the floors of the conference at the Hilton-Americas Houston Hotel. The exhibit's expenses would be covered by Fernandez.

Using a computer program, Fernandez came up with a prototype chronological timeline that events could be displayed on. But then the project began to falter. It simply wasn't coming together. It looked too academic, and it seemed impossible to pack all the history she was aware of on the timeline.

Two months before the conference, the project had still not achieved lift and thrust. Hoping for a breakthrough, Fernandez decided to display a large timeline draft at an ARCH meeting. The Hyde Park Gallery in Montrose graciously offered to let her use space on one of their long walls during the meeting.

Guests at the ARCH meeting found the timeline interesting. There were encouraging words, but Fernandez knew the project was hopelessly stalled. Still, she refused to forfeit her dream.

A Most Unlikely Breakthrough

Fernandez was mulling over the timeline when Dennis Murland, the owner of the gallery, offered some advice. The gallery has a production group that creates large banners, so Murland knew what he was talking about. He explained to Fernandez that a long horizontal timeline would be extremely difficult to produce and mount. It would sag easily, and it would be hard for people to read any text on it, since it would be mounted above their heads.

Fernandez asked about other options, and he suggested vertical banners, hung side by side. She consulted by email with people she knew to be knowledgeable about our history.

She was shown photos of a recent series of banners displayed on light poles around the Rice University campus that featured Rice history.

Fernandez sketched out a banner prototype and emailed it. Suddenly, the project took on life. Doing the math, it was determined that nine banners in each of the three allotted window sections at the Hilton Hotel could tell the story, with a total of 27 banners. Each banner would measure 2-1/2 feet in width and 5-1/2 feet in length.

Knowing the limits of what could be included, the email committee came to an agreement on the 27 topics considered to be the most important.

The list included such well-known events as the enormous 1977 Anita Bryant protest and the shocking 1991 murder of Paul Broussard. It also included little-known material, such as Houston's gay art collective of the 1930s and the 1967 formation of The Tumblebugs, a group of lesbians who stopped police harassment at Houston's gay and lesbian bars.

Countdown to the Creating Change Conference

Fernandez says the next six weeks were surreal, and that "the time went by in a swift swirl of activity." It was decided the banners would be made of vinyl. Those involved already realized they were creating what could be a pop-up museum for future use.

Fernandez had a specific and very talented person in mind to design the banners—Kirk Baxter, a graphic artist who specializes in signage. The two had met after Mary's bar was sold, and Baxter began a "Make Mary's Matter" campaign to memorialize the history represented by the years the bar was in operation.

J.D. Doyle, Houston's 2014 Male Pride Marshal, became deeply involved in the project. Doyle has preserved vast amounts of LGBT history on the Internet, so he provided a wealth of photographs to choose from, and located members of the community with a thorough understanding of the chosen topics.

The ad-hoc group also decided to produce a booklet with additional information about each banner, and have copies of it available at the conference. Doyle volunteered to produce an Internet version of the banner exhibit. The name *Houston, We Have History: The Banner Project* was a nod to America's space program, and the frequent messages from the astronauts that started with "Houston, we have..."

Baxter determined the cost of the banners would be \$2,500. Fernandez turned to the Kellett Foundation, which approved a grant request. Other generous benefactors in the community joined in with personal donations of their own. The project did not have 501(c)(3) charity status, so donations were made solely to expand our

community's awareness of its history.

The project was now at full throttle. Fernandez, Baxter, and Doyle often worked long into the night to meet the January 20, 2014, printer's deadline.

The day before the conference, the finished banners were hung. The hotel was a beehive of activity, with scores of volunteers preparing for the conference.

As more and more banners went up, the project's visual impressiveness and cohesiveness continued to build. Volunteers stopped to look them over, excited that visitors to our city would be learning about Houston's LGBT history. During the conference, either Fernandez or Doyle—or both—sat in a small table area by the banners, answering questions and introducing visitors to the booklets with additional information.

Fernandez enjoyed watching out-of-town guests taking in the banners, some wanting to duplicate the concept in their own cities.

"But it was the people from Houston who were the most fun to watch," she says. "I could see people looking at a particular banner and saying 'Oh, I remember that!,' then hurrying off to find friends to bring back to see the banners."

Expanding on the Vision

Happily, Fernandez's dream-come-true didn't end with the conference exhibit. Designed to be easily moved and displayed, the banners "popped up" at other Houston events in 2014: the HRC Houston Gala, the Transgender Unity Banquet, the Diana Awards, the Pride Festival History Tent, the Heritage Gala, and a campus LGBT group meeting at Rice

University that introduced graduate students to local LGBT history.

The banners were displayed earlier this year at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church for the visit of activist Urvashi Vaid, and left in place for churchgoers to see on the following Sunday. Several of the banners were utilized in the Heritage Society's groundbreaking *ThroughOut Houston* exhibit of Houston LGBT history that ran from June through October.

Between exhibits, the banners are carefully rolled up in acid-free paper and placed into large packing cartons. Then they go into Fernandez' closet. "That keeps the exhibit very compact," she laughs. "I have a small closet!"

The banners have also been recreated in reduced size and framed for the first-floor walls of The Montrose Center. The Center's Sally Huffer says, "When we saw these stunningly vibrant images on display, we immediately thought they would add color and remind all of our guests that we are a vibrant community—one with a proud history that's evolving every day, every week, every month, and every year." →



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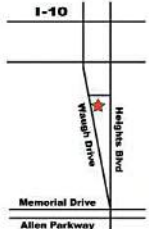
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TEACHING LOCAL LGBT HISTORY . . .

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Fernandez keeps a list of banner suggestions, and as time and funds allow, new banners are made. Since the initial exhibit, five additional banners have been produced. While she welcomes both ideas for banner topics and donations to create the banners, she is also careful to note that the two must be independent. "To preserve the integrity of the project, we can't allow history to be 'bought.'" However, when Queer Nation learned that a banner about them was in production, several alumni paid for the cost of that banner.

Fernandez says she has other ideas under consideration for the project. "I love to visit museums, and I keep my eye out for new formats that would complement the banners." She declines tipping her hand quite yet about those concepts, but based on what the project has achieved so far, it's a safe bet that they will be enjoyable and will continue to broaden the community's awareness of our local history.

The banner project can be accessed online at houstonwehavehistory.org. People interested in displaying the banners at an event, working as a volunteer, offering topic ideas, or donating funds will find contact information at that site.

Brandon Wolf is a frequent contributor to OUTSMART magazine.

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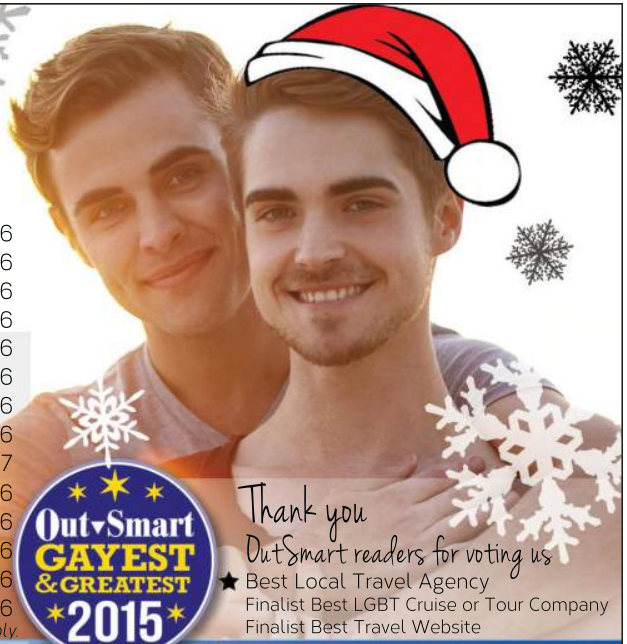
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Eastern Europe River Cruise - Emerald Bell	*NEW*	Oct 9 - 16, 2016
Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands - Isabela II		Jan 9 - 16, 2016
Burgundy & Provence - Avalon Poetry II	*NEW*	Jul 1 - 9, 2016
Prague & Danube - Amadeus Silver II	*NEW*	Aug 19 - 28, 2016
Splendors of India & the Ganges River- RV Ganges Voyager		Oct 9 - 23, 2016
Golden Myanmar River Cruise-R.V. Irrawaddy Explorer	*NEW*	Jan 30 - Feb 10, 2017
Navigator Caribbean Cruise - Navigator of the Seas	*SOLD OUT*	Jan 23 - 31, 2016
Southern Caribbean Cruise - Celebrity Summit	*LIMITED*	Mar 12 - 19, 2016
Club Atlantis Cancun		Apr 30 - May 7, 2016
Venice to Barcelona - Holland America Eurodam	*NEW*	Jul 29 - Aug 6, 2016
Barcelona to Athens - Celebrity Equinox	*NEW*	Aug 15 - 25, 2016

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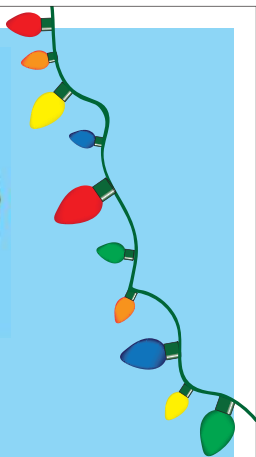
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What to Do on Christmas

... if you're Jewish.

By David Goldberg

Ever played hookie, or stayed in town through a hurricane evacuation? Each Christmas, Houston's Jews get to relieve the feeling of dropping all responsibilities (both occupational and familial) and doing whatever they please in an otherwise empty town. So hold off from agreeing to any stuffy ham dinners—you may be missing out on your greatest skip-days ever.

The Dark Side of Christmas

Feeling jealous of those happy Christian polar bears in the Coca-Cola commercials? Then experience the true horror of Christmas at *The Santaland Diaries*, a one-elf account of the frightening holiday-shopping frenzy at Macy's. This dark comedic play, based on David Sedaris' grim account of being hired to play one of Santa's elves, will make you thankful that gifts on Hanukkah aren't really a thing. *The Alley Theatre, Dec. 4–31; no performances on Christmas Day.*

The Night Before

While nice millennial-aged gentiles around town brace themselves for constricting sweaters and tense family confrontations, Houston's wiliest young Israelites will be partying like it's 5776 at the 29th annual Matzo Ball. The only caveat of this night of tribal tomfoolery is that you'll likely run into every single person you ever went to Hebrew school with. So beware: it may well be that your Bar Mitzvah-era crush aged very nicely—and he or she may also remember what you looked like with braces, and before you got your graduation nose job. *Vao Nightclub, Dec. 24, 9pm–2am. \$30.*

Run All Morning

For just one sweet day, you can exercise free from the judging eyes of hot people. While

While the sculpted Aryans of Houston unwrap their presents, dash through the streets with the knowledge that they can't offend you with their cheekbones.

the sculpted Aryans of Houston unwrap their presents, you can dash through the streets with the knowledge that they can't offend you with their cheekbones. And with a dearth of traffic, your neighborhood will make for a glorious personal jogging track.

Actually Go to Shul

Friday nights for most of us involve taking off our pants and lying supine until the ice cream thaws. But since you'll be feeling rested and refreshed on this December 25 Shabbat, why not head to temple, gather with the tribe, and get a spiritual jumpstart on 2016.

Sidebar 1: Movies and Chinese Food

If it ain't broke, don't fix it. If there's any day to waste money on popcorn, it's December 25, and theater employees with shifts on the biggest holiday of the year will be *overjoyed* to oblige you. If you don't want to be spotted by every member of your community-center board, aerobics class, school faculty, and book club as you celebrate the birth of Christ by going out for Chinese food, we recommend wearing a gorilla suit. Here's the best pick of flicks to catch on the big day. **Sisters.** Tina Fey and Amy Poehler reverse their shtick in this new light comedy. Longtime

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Sisters. Tina Fey and Amy Poehler reverse their shtick in this new light comedy. Longtime



Celebrate with the Stars

Cate Blanchett in Todd Haynes' *Carol*, Lady Gaga in *American Horror Story: Hotel*, Todd Waite in David Sedaris' *The Santaland Diaries*, and Jennifer Love Hewitt in *Jewtopia*.

SNL writer and out lesbian Paula Pell mined her own experiences as "the other sister" to write this gem about grown-up sisters cleaning out their childhood home. *Opens Dec. 18.*

Casablanca. You finally have time to watch one of the greatest love stories ever told. Take a nap and head out for a late night of gin joints, tarmacs, and Ingrid Bergman in hats. *River Oaks Theatre, Dec. 25–26, midnight.*

Carol. If Bogart and Bergman play it a bit too straight for you, then delight in the delicate romance between Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara in Todd Haynes' sumptuous new film, based on Patricia Highsmith's controversial 1953 novel. This mid-century affair will deliver your most electrifying queer Christmas since Heath Ledger and Jake Gyllenhaal made us all feel *very* merry in 2005.

Sidebar 2: Two Days to Binge

Spend your silent night catching up on essential new series and recent online movie releases.

American Horror Story: Hotel. Lady Gaga and Angela Bassett chew through scenery and men in the most decadent installment of this gay nightmare anthology. *FX*

Billy on the Street. The charismatic and batty Billy Eichner confronts strangers and celebrities about the monstrosities of mainstream culture—from Taylor Swift to *The Big Bang Theory*—with vicious glee. *TBS, truTV →*



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WHAT TO DO ON CHRISTMAS

continued from page 49

Crazy Ex-Girlfriend. If you're a single Jewess with nobody to kiss under the mistletoe, then you'll certainly find solace in Rachel Bloom's loony musical comedy series. *CW*.

Sense8. Take an hour (or 12) to play in The Wachowski's queer experiment of sci-fi, fluidity, and human interconnection. Don't let your neighbors hear you panting. *Netflix*

New Online On-Demand Additions

Labyrinth. This goblin song-and-sorcery classic is almost 30 years old, but David Bowie proves to be timeless when it comes to having a gas. *Netflix, Dec. 1*

Romy and Michele's High School Reunion. If your brushes with former Hebrew-school crushes leave you reminiscing, then revisit Sagebrush High with your favorite semi-employed Post-it queens. Tuscon, here we come! *Netflix, Dec. 18*

A League of Their Own. Double-down on '90s woman-worship with Geena Davis, Rosie O'Donnell, and Madonna as your holy saints. *Amazon Prime, Dec. 1*

Jewtopia. Decide on how convincingly Jennifer Love Hewitt plays a Jewess in love in this indie gem based on the hit play. *Netflix, Dec. 1*

David Goldberg is a frequent contributor to OUTSMART magazine.



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2015 OUTSMART Gift Guide

By Marene Gustin

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas . . . or Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Three Kings' Day, or whatever it is you celebrate this time of year and buy gifts for your loved ones (or for yourself—we don't judge). Here, then, are some useful, fun, and downright quirky gift ideas for your December shopping.



Sterling silver bracelet (l) from Loggins Jewelers and Persol sunglasses from Museum Eye District Center



(L-r) Cool specs from The Eye Gallery, Movado Bold watch from Select Jewelers, birch wood holiday moose and holiday arrangements from Downtown Blooms, and an instant film camera from Houston Camera Exchange.

THE GIFT OF BEAUTY

Aristotle said "beauty is the gift of God," but who are we to argue with something under the tree that will make us look better? Who wouldn't want to be prettier in the New Year?

BEAUTY TECHNIQUES

Eyelash Perms for Men and Women

Here's a resolution for 2016: throw away those nasty eyelash curlers! This service will give curly, wink-ready eyelashes that will last for six to eight weeks.

houstonpermanentmakeup.com
3701 Kirby Dr., Ste. 1184 • \$60

THE EYE GALLERY

Cool Specs

Get these for yourself or gift them to someone who needs some fresh eyes. Dare to be different this holiday season and shop the newest designer specs and the classics at any of three Houston locations. Choose from a variety of international designers who present a unique selection of styles that not only make you look good, but also offer the highest quality of eyewear protection.

eyegalleryhouston.com
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selectjewelers.com
2221 S. Voss Rd. • \$595

PETS NEED PRESENTS, TOO

According to the American Pet Products Association, we Americans spent an estimated \$60.6 billion (yes, billion) on our furry, feathered, and scaly babies this year. And the holidays are a big time for buying pet presents.

CATIO SPACES

DIY Outdoor Cat Condos

If you have an outdoor cat, these Catio Spaces protect and comfort your favorite kitty. Order one from this company that sells Catio plans complete with simple instructions, a list of materials and tools, and up to 25 diagrams that make the process simple. Three different designs in two sizes.

catiospaces.com • Under \$50

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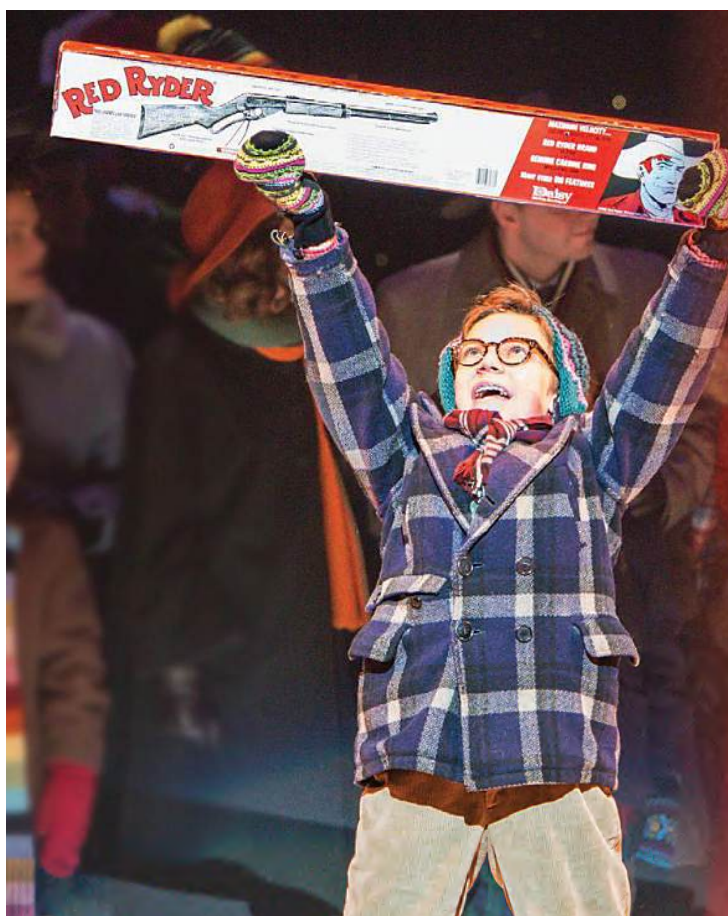
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THURSDAY, DEC. 10

2015 OUTSMART GIFT GUIDE

continued from page 52

EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY

"For tomorrow we die." Well, that's not a very cheery holiday quote, but the gist is that life is short, so why not enjoy a little tasty bite during the holidays?

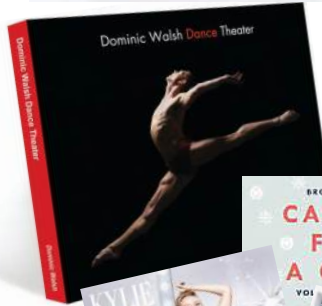
THE CHOCOLATE BAR

Aunt Etta's Chocolate Cake

We don't know who Aunt Etta is, but we can still eat her cake—an award-winning concoction of four layers of calorie-be-damned rich, moist, chocolate cake held together by creamy dark chocolate butter cream frosting! After all, you're not really planning to start that diet until January, right?

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(From top) Chocolate cake from The Chocolate Bar; Dominic Walsh Dance Theater book; CDs from Broadway, Kylie Minogue, and RuPaul's Drag Race queens; and tickets to Stark Naked Theatre's *Ho Ho Humbug 2.0*.

TICKETS TO HO HO HUMBUG 2.0

Stark Naked Theatre

Talk about being merry—how about gifting someone with tickets to see Stark Naked Theatre's *Ho Ho Humbug 2.0*. "Ho Ho delivers Ha Ha's," says Everett Evans of *The Houston Chronicle*. Give the gift of entertainment and laughter.

starknakedtheatre.com

Studio 101, 1824 Spring St. • \$29

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

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Houston Camera Exchange

And because you'll want keepsakes of your

home decorations and holiday fun, why not the Fujifilm's Instax Mini 8? It's a cute and compact instant film camera that comes in a variety of colors. This camera automatically determines brightness for taking a picture and informs you of the most suitable setting for your photo's lighting.

hcehouston.com

5900 Richmond Ave. • \$69.99

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tomorrowskey.com

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BOOKS AND MUSIC ARE FOOD FOR THE MIND

Humorist P. J. O'Rourke once said that you should read "something that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it," and we think that's true of music, too. Some of these fit that bill—others, well, not so much. But they're all fun.

DOMINIC WALSH DANCE THEATER

Our beloved DWDT is no longer, but it will be forever in our lives through this gorgeous book with photos and design by Gabriella Nissen, and narrative by Walsh himself. There will be a book launch party at Deborah Coltan Gallery on December 12.

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broadwaycares.stores.yahoo.net • \$25

CHRISTMAS QUEENS

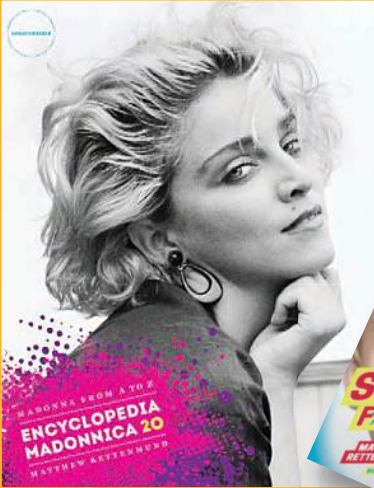
Oh my gawd! The stars of *RuPaul's Drag Race* have recorded a holiday album! This is a must-have for those who love funky holiday music: Detox sings "This Is How We Jew It," while Alaska Thunderf*ck, Courtney Act, and Willam pay homage to the perfect "Ugly Christmas Sweater" and Miss Fame sings "Toyland." You'll want several copies for friends—and one for yourself.

itunes.apple.com • \$9.99

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itunes.apple.com • \$11.99 ■



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SERVICE OF THE LONGEST NIGHT • 6 PM DECEMBER 21

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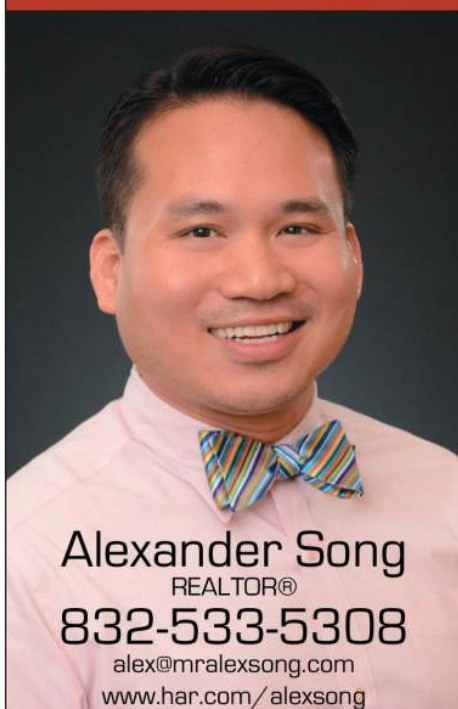


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Same Me, Different Me

Secrets can be devastating.

By Jaime Cryer

I found myself staring in the mirror the other morning, lost in the thoughts of the years prior—years that have been hard. My heart was heavy that morning with the reality of how much life had changed. My phone no longer rings like it did before. Nobody calls to check on me or to simply say “I love you.” If I don’t make the phone calls, it could be months before I hear from the ones I used to hear from daily. I remember saying out loud to myself, “I am still me.” But truth be told, I am different. I am still the same me, but a different me—all because I shared the secret that I thought would be buried in the ground with my body, without anyone ever knowing. The secret that I was gay.

Although I fought really hard, my secret didn’t lay dormant. The real me was buried far beneath layers of shame and fear. Religion had bullied me into being ashamed of who I really was. The fear of rejection—the kind of fear that claws at you in the empty hours of the night—had paralyzed me. Fear and shame drove me to live a life

different from the hidden person I was. For 35 years, I got up every day and put on a mask, a plastic smile, and played the part that I thought I was supposed to play. It all looked believable on the outside, but I was dying on the inside. Dying to live. It was an empty and lonely existence.

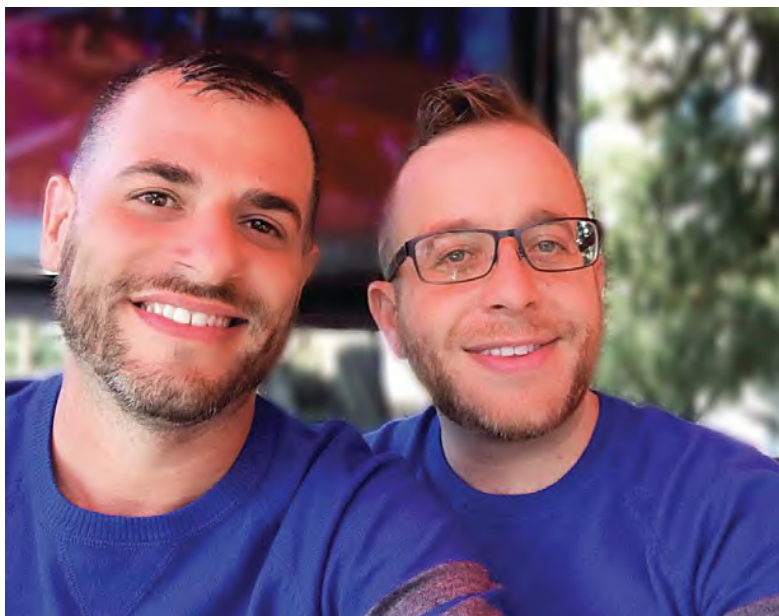
I can recall the details of that time in my life like it was yesterday. What I remember most was the overwhelming fear that consumed me when I thought about sharing my secret. I felt I would rather take my own life

For 35 years, I got up every day and put on a mask, a plastic smile, and played the part I thought I was supposed to play.

than to expose my secret to anyone. I had never told anyone of my struggle.

I grew up in a small town in Louisiana and in a very religious home. All of my life, I lived with an overwhelming desire to please everyone. The desire to be loved and accepted shoved me down this path. That same desire forced me to stay in empty relationships for far too long and tolerate things that I never should have. I believed that if I revealed what was hidden, it would mean complete rejection. I was in my second marriage, and I knew that my secret would destroy my wife, devastate my family, and leave my children confused. Death felt like an easy escape when compared with having to reveal that I was gay.

I remember the day that I told my secret for the first time. I was pacing the floor in my home, feeling completely hopeless and alone. To be honest, I planned to end my life. Too many people would be hurt by the truth. I was at the crossroads of who I really was and who I was pretending to be. Sometime during my breakdown, I heard my cell phone ringing. I looked at the phone and saw it was my Aunt Janice. I debated about answering it or not. I



Ⓢ **Happy Now**
Jaime Cryer (l) with his partner, Jonathan, whose family accepts their life together.

finally answered the phone and tried to sound normal. We made small talk at first, and then she asked me, “Are you okay? You have really been on my heart.” I tried to lie and I sat quietly, trying to swallow the lump in my throat. I said to her, “No, I am not okay, but I can’t tell you why.” She kept pushing me, and I finally just said, “I am gay.” Her reply to me was, “Who the f--k cares?”

After talking to her, I felt lighter. Fear began to dissipate. I then told my oldest sister, who has been so supportive. I told my twin brother next. I waited until after Christmas to tell my wife, and I told my mother last. To say it was hard is an understatement. I can tell you that a part of me died during that time.

I knew coming out was a risk, and I honestly never thought I would. I knew that the truth would devastate my family, and it did. People tried to get me to go to church for prayer, to have a “homosexual spirit” cast out of me. Some people walked away from me. I have been judged harshly, and I’ve paid a high price to be the person that I kept hidden.

I grew up in the church, and the fear that something was wrong with me consumed me. At age 10, I hid in the bookstore of my church, crouched behind a shelf in the dark,

continued on page 61

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SAME ME, DIFFERENT ME

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trying to read a book that was on sale about homosexuality and how to be "free." I spent years begging God to heal me. I prayed, I went to the altar for prayer, and I secretly went on my own twice to ministers to have that "spirit" cast out of me. My efforts were futile. Religion and fear bullied me into pretending to be someone that I was not.

It has been a few years since I came out. It has gotten easier. I look the same, but deep down I am different. I am the same, but changed. I am happy now. I no longer feel alone even when I'm surrounded by people.

I have an amazing man in my life who has shown me what love really is. But because I spent so many years hiding from who I really was and feeling so unlovable, it has not been easy to accept that someone genuinely loves me. My partner, Jonathan, and his family have accepted me—and all that comes with it. As we build our life together and make plans for the future, a part of me is sad that my family will never accept us as a couple and will miss out on our life. Some days may be hard, but at the end of the day I am happy. I am still the same me. A different me.

This is Jaime Cryer's first contribution to OUTSMART magazine.



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FOCUS on Self-Care and Healing

Dealing with the defeat of the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO) proposition.

By **Katie Springs**, MS, MEd, LPC, NCC, DCC

The opposition's campaign messages were based on myths and the perpetuation of fears that lacked any factual basis. Nonetheless, they persuaded a significant majority of voters to oppose Houston's Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO).

In the days and weeks leading up to the election, as well as in the days and weeks since, this heated campaign has been the focus of many counseling sessions in my office. The emotional impact has been real, and felt by both LGBT community members as well as self-identified straight allies.

In the LGBT community, the range of internalized emotional responses to both the outcome of the proposition, as well as the hateful messages used by HERO opponents, has included descriptors such as: pain, alienation, disappointment, frustration, anger, as well as feeling mislabeled, misrepresented, and misunderstood. For straight allies, the sentiment is often embarrassment, frustration, and disgrace. When unresolved, these internalized feelings often lead to increased incidents

of anxiety and depression, as well as a general decrease in the feeling of overall well-being.

It is not uncommon for a political event such as the defeat of the HERO proposition—or any other public message that is applied inaccurately in a broad-stroke fashion—to tap into an LGBT person's past hurts, feelings, and experiences. Often, it revives old conflicts or pain related to sexual orientation or gender identity, or dredges up memories of negative interactions with anti-LGBT people.

Social change rarely follows a linear path. Nor does the process of healing.

At the same time, it is not uncommon for a person who is uncomfortable addressing grief (most often involving a friend's or family member's loss) to avoid the topic (or even the person) altogether, hoping that with the passing of time, the pain will magically disappear and life will return to "normal." Allies who are uncertain about how to approach an LGBT friend or family member about the HERO defeat may be taking such a position of avoidance, unintentionally exacerbating the feelings of hurt and isolation that their LGBT friends feel.

Social change rarely follows a linear path. Nor does the process of healing. There will be bumps and curves along the way. However, we can all develop the capacity, ability, and strength to keep those bumps from becoming cliffs. Self-care and compassion are the building blocks for healing. The following tips (with the acronym FOCUS) may help us to focus on the healing journey:

- **F**ind three positive things in your life each day to celebrate. They may be as simple as "I ate a nutritious and delicious lunch," to something far more personal in nature.
- **O**bserve your feelings, acknowledge them,

but recognize that feelings are not necessarily facts. Be gentle and compassionate with yourself. When negative feelings arise, create a logical rebuttal to your internalized statements (e.g., "I *feel* like an outcast" does *not* mean "I *am* an outcast." A negative feeling/rebuttal sequence may look like this: "I feel like an outcast; however, I know I am not an outcast because I have family and/or friends who love and support me.").

Additionally, be cautious about over-personalizing. Not all opponents of the HERO proposition are anti-LGBT (e.g., instead of saying "I live in a city that hates me (or hates LGBT people)," a more constructive statement might be, "The defeat of the proposition is not about me personally; the community at large needs to be better informed of the facts.").

- **C**reate balance and dedicate energy to various components of your life that make you the unique and wonderful, multi-dimensional person that you are. Diversifying the way in which you identify yourself may lead to more balance and satisfaction. Realize that belonging to the LGBT community is only one dimension of who you are. What are some other key areas of your life that you identify with or need to create →



The emotional impact of the defeat of the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO) has been felt by both LGBT community members and their straight allies.

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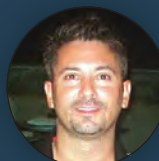
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FOCUS ON SELF-CARE AND HEALING

continued from page 63

space for? Possibilities may include: family life, career, exercise/competitive sports, volunteer work, a faith or spiritual community, etc.

- Utilize both individual and community resources available to you if you are concerned about the impact that negative thoughts or feelings may be having on your life (e.g., reach out to LGBT organizations, professional counselors, ministers, friends, family, etc.).

- Start a dialog with family and friends.

Speak *responsibly* and *respectfully* to everyone (especially the opponents of LGBT civil-rights protections), providing information you believe they should have in order to make educated and informed decisions about future legislation. Use facts, rather than feelings, when having the discussion, and provide links to credible sources when possible; once you place them on the defensive, it is unlikely that they will hear, or be open to, important messages (e.g., instead of saying "You're an idiot" or "You're a hater," consider "There is a great journal article that discusses the inaccuracy of the campaign messages that have been released. The link to it can be found here...").

Katie Springs is a licensed professional counselor in private practice in Houston, Texas. She can be reached at katie@dynamicinner.com.

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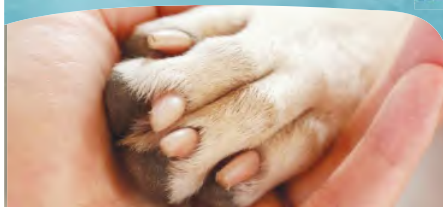
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Achieving Social Justice

Meet Dr. Alan Dettlaff, the new dean of the University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work.

By Januari Leo

Social workers aim to improve the well-being of the communities they serve by acting as advocates in private practice, schools, hospitals and clinics, mental-health facilities, and community organizations. College students who are trained in the art of mediation, conflict resolution, policy analysis, leadership, and human behavior receive the foundation for a lifetime of work. Since 1967, the University of Houston's Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW) has produced outstanding researchers and practitioners such as Tony Carroll, Sandra Lopez, and Dr. Brené Brown.

For the first time in 15 years, the GCSW has a new dean in Dr. Alan Dettlaff. Originally from Chicago, Dettlaff first arrived in Texas as an undergraduate. "I was an aimless junior-college student, and I didn't know what I wanted to do just yet," he says. "I knew I wanted to work with children and families in some capacity. I had dropped out of two universities by then, and my mom had a job opportunity, so I moved with her to Fort Worth."

After being accepted at Texas Christian University (TCU) as an education major, Dettlaff had a life-changing experience. "I discovered social work through a news story about Child Protective Services," Dettlaff says.

"I discovered social work through a news story about Child Protective Services. A reporter went on a ride with a case worker, and [the resulting article that I read] was really a light-bulb moment. I knew that was what I wanted to do."

"A reporter went on a ride along with a case worker, and [the resulting article that I read] was really a light-bulb moment. I knew that was what I wanted to do."

Drawing on his own experience as a child, Dettlaff pursued a career in child and family welfare. "My parents divorced when I was 10, and my sister and I lived with my grandparents and father," he says. "My mom told me that

it was better to live with my dad [since] he was more financially stable. But all I knew was that I wanted to be with my mom. I always remembered that [as an adult] when I was doing Child Protective Services (CPS) work. I felt passionately about protecting children that needed to be protected, but also working really hard to keep children with their families."

After both interning and working at CPS for a number of years, Dettlaff was given the opportunity to teach a child-welfare class at TCU. He discovered a love for teaching, and was offered a faculty position as the director

of field education, where he remained for five years. Wanting to pursue his passion from a more research-based perspective, Dettlaff earned a PhD from the University of Texas at Arlington, and then went on to teach at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Jane Addams College of Social Work.

Dettlaff saw becoming dean of a graduate social-work program as one of his long-term goals. "What was always exciting to me about social-work education was the opportunity to make a difference on issues of social, racial, and economic justice. I knew that I wanted the opportunity to be responsible for an entire school and develop a vision in terms of the type of education we're going to provide our students—and the type of graduates our school is going to produce."

When former GCSW dean Ira Colby announced his retirement, he approached Dettlaff about the opportunity. "Ira has always been a big supporter of my career," he says. "When he was president of the Council on Social Work Education, he appointed me to chair a committee called the Commission on Educational Policy, which develops all of the competencies that social-work programs have →



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Dr. Alan Dettlaff (l) is joined in Houston by his partner of 16 years (and husband of three), Vincent Pryor.



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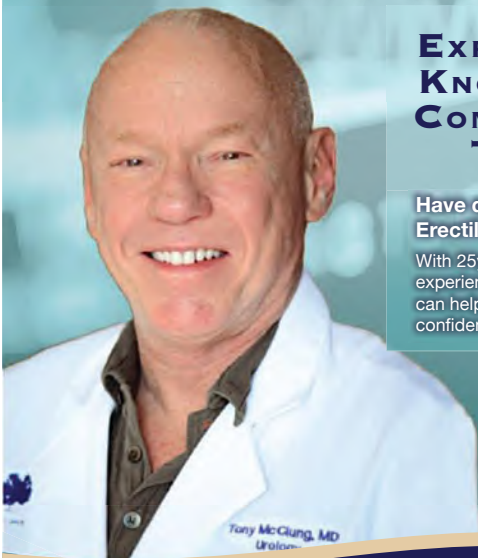
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ACHIEVING SOCIAL JUSTICE

continued from page 67

to demonstrate. That was a big opportunity for me, because over the past five years, I've been responsible for developing or revising the policies that all graduate colleges of social work have to demonstrate in order for their students to graduate."

Dettlaff is joined in Houston by his partner of 16 years (and his husband of three years), Vincent Pryor. They met at TCU when Dettlaff was talking to a social-work class about organizing the school's first LGBT student group, the TCU Triangle. Pryor was a football player and a social-work student sitting in the back of the class with some other football players. "I remember that they were snickering about me being gay," Dettlaff says. "After the class, he came up to me and wanted to talk about a paper he was writing because he had a family member who was gay. I was very suspicious and thought it was a ploy to get me somewhere so the football players could beat me up. But I gave him my number, and he called me later that night and told me he was gay." Pryor attended the secretive Triangle meetings as a friend of Dettlaff's—in spite of the fear that he would be discovered. "We didn't advertise the location of the meetings because we were afraid that people would come and disrupt them," Dettlaff says. "It was difficult—we would put up flyers and people would tear them down. This was over 20 years ago; it was a different time. Coming to the groups was helpful for Vince. He didn't have other gay friends."

After graduation, the two went their separate ways, but reconnected several years later at JR's bar in Dallas—this time romantically. When it came time to propose, Pryor surprised Dettlaff by popping the question in front of almost 500 people at an Atticus Circle fundraising gala in Austin. "Vince was speaking about being an out college athlete, and promoting inclusion in sports," Dettlaff says. "He hatched a plan with the executive director to propose to me during his speech. It was amazing." They were married in New York in 2013, and spent their honeymoon at President Obama's second inauguration.

Dean Dettlaff has big plans for the future of UH's social-work college and its students. "Our mission is to educate students to prepare them to achieve social, racial, and economic justice," he explains. "I've seen a lot of other schools that want to promote or advance social justice, but here at the GCSW, we want to *achieve* it. That's a subtle semantic difference, but it means a lot. My bigger vision is for social justice to be a reality, not just an aspiration. I want to prepare our students to go out in the world and do the work that will get us to that place. It *can* be a reality."

Januari Leo is the director of public affairs for Legacy Community Health's Montrose Clinic.

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Make a New Year's Resolution

... to get your health needs covered.

By Rosy Mota

This month, I, like many of my fellow LGBT Houstonians, will be taking time to reflect and celebrate as 2015 comes to a close and we look forward to what 2016 holds.

Whether your New Year's resolutions involve eating healthier, going to the gym more, or starting a meditation program to help with your emotional and mental health, I want to remind everyone of one way to ensure that you will have success in the New Year: getting health insurance coverage through the online Health Insurance Marketplace. If you enroll by December 15, your health insurance coverage will start on January 1.

Though LGBT Americans often face unique obstacles when seeking healthcare, the Affordable Care Act includes specific benefits and protections for the LGBT community that have helped to expand access to quality, affordable health coverage. In fact, according to a study by the Urban Institute, the uninsured rate for lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults has almost been cut in half since the middle of 2013. But many LGBT Texans who could benefit from the Affordable Care Act still remain unaware of their options.

It's important to remember that the Affordable Care Act provides historic new protections for the LGBT community, so nobody with health insurance can be denied preventive coverage because of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Additionally, people can no longer be denied coverage due to a pre-existing condition like cancer, HIV, or diabetes.

Also, every health plan must cover 10 essential health benefits such as prescription medications, emergency-room visits, and preventive services. Lifetime and annual caps on coverage are also prohibited, which means historic new protections for HIV patients. And insurance companies cannot deny transgender

New Year, New Health Plan

If you enroll online through the Health Insurance Marketplace by December 15, your health insurance coverage will start on January 1.



Americans the free preventive services they need, regardless of the sex they were assigned at birth or their current gender identity.

Under the Affordable Care Act, legally married couples—including same-sex newlyweds who have been married in Texas—can receive financial assistance as a married couple. In fact, 85 percent of Texans who enrolled in the Marketplace now receive financial assistance to lower their monthly premiums.

Free, one-on-one enrollment assistance from culturally competent experts is available, and Houstonians can visit the Get Covered Connector at EnrollGulfCoast.com to see where free local enrollment assistance is available in your area and schedule an appointment. These enrollment assisters are trained to provide this assistance, including in matters of cultural competency.

To help you pick the plan that best meets your needs and budget, Enroll America has also launched a free plan-comparison tool called the Get Covered Plan Explorer. In addition to giving you a personalized estimate of your yearly cost based on your medical and financial situation, the Plan Explorer can help you find out if your favorite doctors are covered by the plans you are considering. The Plan Explorer provides clear, easy-to-understand information about available plans, so you can

make an educated decision about how to get the best and most affordable coverage.

It's also important to keep in mind that this is not only an opportunity to gain access to quality, affordable healthcare for you and your family, but also to avoid paying a fine when you file your taxes. If you do not enroll in a plan by the deadline of January 31, 2016, you could face a fine of \$695 or 2.5 percent of your yearly income, whichever is greater. The fine will increase each year, making it more and more costly to delay complying with the law—on top of having to pay for health services throughout the year without the benefit of insurance coverage. That \$695 (or more) could better serve you and your family by helping to pay for a plan with free preventative care, prescription drug coverage, and other essentials for a healthy life.

The Affordable Care Act presents an unprecedented opportunity for LGBT individuals to get affordable insurance coverage. In Houston, Get Covered America is working with local partners like LHI, Out2Enroll, and Young Invincibles to assist you in getting and staying covered for 2016. While the open enrollment period goes until January 31, in order to have insurance on January 1, you must enroll by December 15, so visit EnrollGulfCoast.com today. Get covered and stay covered!

Rosy Mota is the regional director for Enroll America.



Houston Unites' Press Conference on HERO
August 12, 2015 | Hilton Americas-Houston



Houston Celebration of the Supreme Court Decision on Marriage Equality | June 26, 2015 | Discovery Green & Hughes Hangar



The Harris County Democratic Party's Living Legends Brunch
May 30, 2015 | Crowne Plaza Hotel-River Oaks



The Harris County Democratic Party's Toast to a Blue Year
January 29, 2015 | The De Gaulle



Harris County Democratic Party's Toast to a Blue Year | January 29, 2015 | The De Gaulle



PFLAG Houston's Meet & Greet With Prop 8 Plaintiffs
Paul Katami and Jeff Zarrillo
July 11, 2015 | Home of Tony Carroll and Bruce Smith



Houston Celebration of the Supreme Court Decision on Marriage Equality | June 26, 2015 | Discovery Green & Hughes Hangar

20 YEAR IN 15 REVIEW

Looking back, 2015 was a mixed bag of highs and lows for the Houston LGBT community. In June, we rejoiced after the Supreme Court ruled that marriage equality was the law of the land. In November, our community mourned the loss of the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO) at the polls, but vowed to carry on the fight for equality. Through it all, we've strengthened as a community, and proudly march on into 2016.



The Harris County Democratic Party's Living Legends Brunch
May 30, 2015 | Crowne Plaza Hotel-River Oaks



Houston GLBT Political Caucus
Endorsement Meeting
August 8, 2015 | IBEW Hall



EPAH's Mardi Gras Party in Galveston | February 14, 2015
Home of John Nagy & David Bowers

➡ LGBT folks joined forces like never before in 2015 to elect equality-minded leaders and to fight for HERO.

➡ Events like World AIDS Day and the Houston LGBT Pride Celebration showcased the power of building community.



Launch of The Dalton DeHart Photographic Foundation
November 15, 2015 | The Montrose Center



Out & Equal and My Gay Houston's April Happy Hour | April 22, 2015 | Triniti Restaurant



OutSMART Magazine's Gayest & Greatest Readers' Choice Awards Party
October 20, 2015 | Meteor Lounge



World AIDS Day Observances | December 1, 2014
Legacy Community Health & The Montrose Center



VIP Reception for The Heritage Society's "Throughout! Houston's GLBT History" Exhibit | May 31, 2015 | The Heritage Society



Houston LGBT Pride Celebration | June 27, 2015 | Downtown Houston



Mystery and Fantasy Mardi Gras Party | February 7, 2015 | Limelight



Kindred Spirits' Christmas Cabaret Sing-A-Long
December 7, 2014 | Meteor Lounge



Charity in Song Musical Series Featuring
Cast Members of "The Book of Mormon"
February 2, 2015 | Numbers Nightclub
& Michelangelo's Restaurant



Rainbow on the Green
June 12, 2015 | Discovery Green



Halloween Block Party | October 31, 2015 | Pacific Street



Pride Houston's Pride Superstar Competition
May 5-19, 2015 | South Beach Houston & Meteor Lounge



QFest Houston | July 22-27, 2015 | Various Venues



Houston Pride Band's "Houston's Most Fabulous
Wedding" | October 17, 2015
Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church



Pride Houston's Pride Superstar
Competition | May 5-19, 2015
South Beach Houston & Meteor Lounge

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The Houston Hurricanes' Flag Football Final Tournament
January 31, 2015 | Montie Beach Park

This year was a homerun for LGBT sports teams like the Montrose Softball League and the Houston Hurricanes.



Live Consortium's Charity Dodgeball Tournament
February 28, 2015 | Wakefield Crowbar



The Lone Star Volleyball Association's End of
Season Tournament | May 4 & 11, 2015 | Spike Sport Club



The Houston Toros' Kickball Tournament
August 2, 2015 | Houston Sportsplex



The Montrose Softball League's Season:
Week 5 | April 26, 2015 | Houston Sportsplex



The Houston Hurricanes' Flag Football Final
Tournament
January 31, 2015 | Montie Beach Park



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The Montrose Softball League's "Jocks in Dresses" Fundraiser
May 30, 2015 | South Beach Houston



The Diana Foundation's 62nd Annual Diana Awards Show
March 28, 2015 | St. Regis Hotel



AIDS Walk Houston | March 8, 2015 | Sam Houston Park



AIDS Walk Houston | March 8, 2015 | Sam Houston Park



Bunnies on the Bayou 36 | April 5, 2015 | Wortham Center Plaza



The Victory Fund's Champagne Brunch
March 1, 2015 | The Corinthian



HRC's "Together We Stand | We Strive | We Are for One America" Houston Gala
April 11, 2015 | Westin Galleria



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OutSmart Wedding Guide



Same-Sex Marriage Is Big Money

And the dough is just starting to roll in.

By Marene Gustin

Just how much money has same-sex marriage generated nationally? According to a new study released this month by California-based think-tank The Williams Institute titled “Estimating the Economic Impact of Marriage for Same-sex Couples after Obergefell,” by Christy Mallory, Senior Counsel and Anna M. Curren Fellow at the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law, marriages by same-sex couples have generated an estimated \$813 million boost since the landmark decision—not to mention an added \$52 million in state and local sales-tax revenue.

continued on page 85

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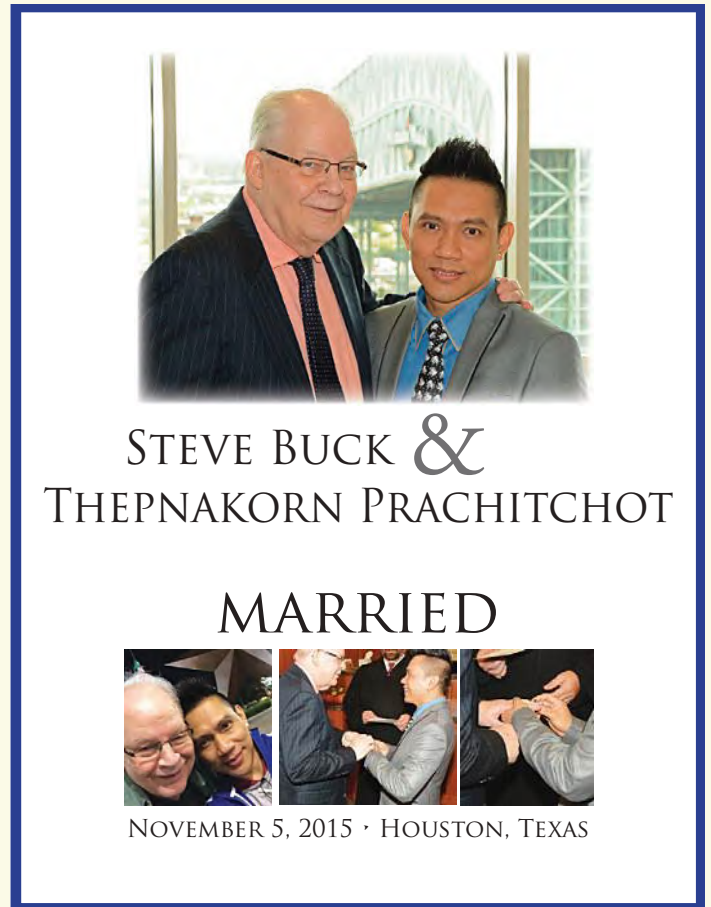
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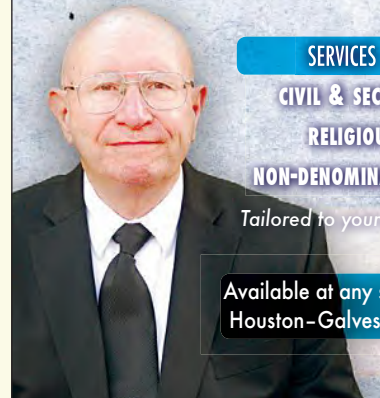
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At the time of the ruling, 13 states still banned same-sex marriage, with Texas being the largest one (and likely to be the one that benefits the most economically from the decision).

A 2014 Williams Institute report suggested that Texas could add \$181.6 million dollars to the Texas economy, and up to 1,500 jobs would be created. That report also estimated that 23,000 same-sex couples would marry in the Lone Star State in the first three years after the ruling. It should be interesting to see if that holds true come next summer when *Obergefell v. Hodges* will have been in effect for one year. Already, 96,000 same-sex couples have tied the knot nationwide.

"This study shows that businesses and governments have benefited from marriage for same-sex couples," Mallory says.

Some key points in her report:

- Total spending on those marriages generated an estimated \$813 million, including \$635 million for the weddings and \$178 million spent by out-of-state guests.
- This economic boost has added an estimated \$52 million in sales-tax revenue to state and local coffers.
- This spending could support an estimated 9,700 jobs for one full year.

The report also notes that, "According to *The Wedding Report*, average wedding spending in the U.S. in 2014 was \$26,444. Same-sex couples may receive less financial support from their parents and other family members to cover wedding costs due to persistent stigma, resulting in less spending than their heterosexual counterparts. Taking these factors into account, as in previous studies by the Williams Institute, we estimate that same-sex couples spend one-quarter of the amount that different-sex couples spend on wedding arrangements."

On the other hand, long-time same-sex couples without children and with

established careers might spend more than the average on a wedding. Either way, legalizing same-sex marriage is a boon to the wedding industry, which already adds roughly \$60 billion to America's economy.

And then there are the honeymoons—although, let's face it, most couples tying the knot here will likely

want to honeymoon somewhere more exotic. Still, they might spend their first night in a lavish hotel suite in Houston.

It's clear that allowing marriage equality in Texas was not only the right thing to do, but also the profitable thing to do. ■

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



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To Label or Not to Label

Sarah Paulson (seen here in FX's *American Horror Story: Hotel*): is she willing to define herself as bisexual?

Tina Fey

(*The Advocate*, 12/15, Brandon Voss)

On an Amy Poehler-Tina Fey love story:

Ooh, maybe we could do a lesbian period piece like a comedic version of *Carol*, that movie with Cate Blanchett. Really, we should just do a movie with all the women of *SNL* and set it on the Isle of Lesbos.



Sarah Paulson

(Between the Lines News, 11/18/15, Chris Azzopardi)

Sarah Paulson: You've been so matter-of-fact about your sexuality since unintentionally coming out in 2005. [When Paulson's then-girlfriend Cherry Jones was named a winner at the Tony Awards, Paulson planted a sweet kiss on Jones' lips.] How have you escaped becoming a pillar for the LGBT community?

Chris Azzopardi: Because I refuse to give any kind of label just to satisfy what people

need. I understand that everybody wants to have a person to look toward that is actively making change around this issue, . . . but I think that honesty is the most important piece of this for me.

All I can say is, I've done both, and I don't let either experience define me. I don't let having been with a man make me think I am heterosexual, or make me want to call myself that, because I know I have been attracted to women—and have lived with women. So, for me, I'm not looking to define

myself, and I'm sorry if that is something that is seen as a rejection of or an unwillingness to embrace [my sexuality] in a public way, but it's simply not. It's simply what's true for me, and that's all I can speak to.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Paulson is currently playing a hip '80s-inspired druggie in Ryan Murphy's FX hit American Horror Story, and she can also be seen on the big screen as Cate Blanchett's former flame in Todd Haynes' powerful lesbian love story Carol.

Yusaf Mack (professional boxer)

(In a statement, 11/2/15)

I am a bisexual man. I enjoy safely being intimate with whomever I choose.

President George H.W. Bush

(From his new biography *Destiny and Power: The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush*)

Personally, I still believe in traditional marriage. But people should be able to do what they want to do, without discrimination. People have a right to be happy. I guess you could say I have mellowed.

Taraji P. Henson

(*Entertainment Weekly*, 11/6/15, Tim Stack)

Re: *Jamal Lyon*, *Jussie Smollett's* character in *Empire*.

I think he puts a new face to what a gay man looks like. I think that image is very, very important. He's like America's boyfriend!

John Irving

(*Entertainment Weekly*, 11/6/15)

A Boy's Own Story [by Edmund White] is about the "impossible desire to love a man but not be a homosexual." The novel is a confession, a triumphant one, and an act of advocacy. A gay boy overcomes his fear that he'll "become a queer and never, never be like other people."

I am more confident as a novelist because of Edmund White.

Ted Cruz

At the 5th annual Faith and Freedom Barbecue in South Carolina, 8/24/15:

No man who doesn't begin every day on his knees is fit to stand in the Oval Office.



John Waters

Reward Gift-Givers
John Waters (seen here at the 2013 Independent Spirit Awards) thinks an appropriate thank-you for receiving a book as a gift is . . .

John Waters

(*The New York Times*, 12/8/13, Guy Trebay)

Guy Trebay: What kind of gifts do you give?

John Waters: I always give books. And I always ask for books. I think you should reward people sexually for getting you books. Don't send a thank-you note, repay them with sexual activity. If the book is rare or by your favorite author or one you didn't know about, reward them with the most perverted sex act you can think of. Otherwise, you can just make out.



'Do I Sound Gay?'

Documentarian confronts his anxiety about "sounding gay."



Mr. Holmes

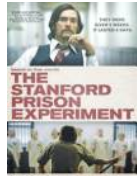


Oscar nominee (and openly gay) Sir Ian McKellen joins fellow Oscar nominee (and very gay-friendly) Laura Linney in this film directed

by Oscar winner (and openly gay) Bill Condon. For 30 years, Sherlock Holmes has been haunted by his final case—one that remains unsolved. Now, Holmes quietly slips out of retirement to confront the ghosts of his past as well as a spellbinding mystery that will take all of his deductive powers to solve. Lionsgate Home Entertainment (lionsgate.com) and Miramax (miramax.com).

—Suzie Lynde

The Stanford Prison Experiment



In 1971, Stanford University professor Dr. Philip Zimbardo (Billy Crudup) cast 24 student volunteers as prisoners and guards in

a simulated jail to examine the source of abusive behavior in the prison system. Participants went from middle-class undergrads to drunk-with-power sadists and submissive victims in just a few days. Ezra Miller (openly bi) costars. IFC Films (ifcfilms.com).

—Troy Carrington



PHOTOS COURTESY THINK THORPE



The Gender of Voice

Director David Thorpe (top right) seeks advice from vocal coaches, linguists, historians, friends, strangers, and celebrities—including (counterclockwise from top left) George Takei, Dan Savage, David Sedaris, and Tim Gunn—in order to better understand his voice. "Where does my 'gay voice' come from?" he asks.

After a breakup with his boyfriend, journalist David Thorpe finds himself seeking solace on a train to Fire Island, the prominent gay getaway. The chorus of gay men speaking over each other on the train suddenly irritates him, and he compares the noise to "braying ninnies." From there, Thorpe becomes obsessed with the thought that his own voice might "sound gay." He embarks on a journey to answer the questions, "Do I sound gay? And if so, can I fix it?"

Thorpe's film takes him from sessions with a speech pathologist and a Hollywood voice coach to interviews with well-known figures like Margaret Cho, Tim Gunn, Don Lemon, Dan Savage, David Sedaris, and George Takei—as well as informal conversations with family, friends, and strangers. Although largely unscientific, the documentary features a linguist who speculates that high-pitched

gay voices might be the result of young gay boys giving more weight to cues from female speakers than from male speakers.

At one point, the documentary touches on the bullying that results from vocal variation by highlighting the case of Zach King, an Ohio high-school student with a high-pitched voice who was beat up while his classmates idly stood by. Savage says of this issue, "Many gay adolescents are absolutely right to be very worried about how they sound, because it draws violence."

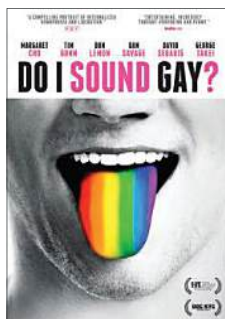
This seems to be the only moment in the documentary where vocal variation is cast as a life-and-death issue; unfortunately, Thorpe does not adequately explore this question of why vocal variation so often leads to violence.

The entire documentary is infused with self-hatred and misogyny. Thorpe admits early on that he would "love to learn how to sound straight," but George Takei

claims there is no such thing as sounding gay or straight. It seems that Thorpe's entire project stems from the obsession in gay male culture with hypermasculinity, and perpetuates the misogynistic notion that women are inferior and therefore must not be imitated even in something as innocuous as vocal quality. Takei continues by saying, "We are pioneers in our time in changing societal perceptions of what it means to be gay," but this project seems to do the opposite by subscribing to preconceived notions of masculinity and femininity. As Savage puts it, the last vestige of internalized homophobia is the hatred of one's own voice.

However, the film is somewhat redeeming in the end when Thorpe attributes the project to his need to reconnect with himself—which he does seem to achieve. The question that truly needs to be answered, though, is not "Do I sound gay?" but rather, "Why must we insist on gendering our voices?"

Do I Sound Gay? is available for purchase and streaming through ifcfilms.com. ■



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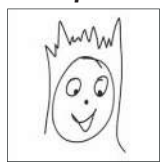
Shelita Burke *Transfixed*



While penning lyrics that reflected the deepening experiences in her adult life, Burke created a sound that incorporated her fascination with polyrhythms and the Middle Eastern scale—fusing them with the traditional Western scale to create dynamic textures. Her unique trademark sounds are fused on *Transfixed*. FYI: Burke identifies as queer, not lesbian, “because I date transgender people as well.” Details: shelitaburke.com.

—Suzie Lynde

Eric and Aaron *To Keep from Losing Our Minds*



Choosing six representative Eric and Aaron songs (from the 150 they've penned) to record for this new EP was

an inspiring challenge. The songs that Eric and Aaron finally picked are powerful showcases for their soaring vocals and rich musicianship—and offer dynamic insights into their creative and personal relationship. Their simple titles open the door to offbeat storytelling featuring lyrics that are sometimes direct, often metaphoric, and always charming and provocative. Aaron says of their partnership: “Eric is the person I didn’t know I dreamed about. He is a brilliant partner on every level of life, and as collaborators we complement each other.” Details: ericand aaron.com. —Troy Carrington

The latest version of **James Taylor at Christmas** (UMe/HRT), first released in 2006, expands on the original with the addition of two tracks. The first is Taylor’s radiant take on The Beatles’ “Here Comes the Sun,” which features Yo-Yo Ma on cello. The combination of these two talented artists is indeed a gift. “Mon Beau Sapin,” essentially the French version of the traditional “O Tannenbaum” (aka “O Christmas Tree”), is a lovely addition to the collection. The album, which also features a number of songs that previously appeared on Taylor’s 2004 *A Christmas Album*, strikes a pleasant balance between seasonally serious songs such as “Some Children See Him,” “Who Comes This Night,” and “In the Bleak Midwinter” and lighter holiday fare including “Winter Wonderland,” “Santa Claus Is Coming to Town,” “Jingle Bells,” and the Natalie Cole duet “Baby, It’s Cold Outside.” Taylor also does a reverent version of his dear old friend Joni Mitchell’s tune “River.”

Rod Stewart doesn’t mess around on the expanded deluxe edition CD reissue of his 2013 album *Merry Christmas, Baby* (Verve). Sung in the crooner style he has adopted on most of his 21st-century releases, Stewart teams up with some interesting duet partners. Modern-day crooning dude Michael Bublé holds his own against Stewart on “Winter Wonderland.” Cee Lo Green inspires Stewart to dig deep and unleash his most soulful self on the title cut, while Mary J. Blige brings out Stewart’s more serious side on “We Three Kings.” Stewart even tries his hand at an original yuletide tune with “Red-Suited Superman” (co-written with David Foster and Foster’s daughter,

Amy). “When You Wish Upon a Star,” the least holiday-oriented selection, is a pleasant surprise. Of the three bonus tracks, “The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire)” glows the brightest. A bonus DVD features six intimate live performances, including “Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!”

Taylor and Stewart were at their creative peaks during the 1970s, and made an effort to remain relevant through the 1980s. But as you can hear, the 1980s, as represented on **The Classic Christmas ’80s Album** (Legacy), were something else entirely. New wave, hip-hop, ska, boy bands, and divas were the order of the day. New-wave acts such as The

Waitresses (the ’80s classic “Christmas Wrapping,” later covered by Spice Girls), The Bangles (Simon & Garfunkel’s “Hazy Shade of Winter”), The Hooters (“Silent Night”), and gay music legend George Michael’s British pop duo Wham! (“Last Christmas”) all stand under the new-wave banner. The late Whitney Houston (“Do You Hear What I Hear?”) and ’70s-survivors-turned-’80s-superstars The Pointer Sisters (“Santa Claus Is Coming to Town”) have diva territory covered. Hip-hop forefathers Run-DMC (“Christmas in Hollis”) fly the rap flag, while the usually high-energy ska act Fishbone (“Slick Nick, You Devil You”) gets serious. For sheer ’80s hose-head novelty, there’s Bob and Doug McKenzie’s rendition of “Twelve Days of Christmas.”

Sarah McLachlan released her debut album at the tail end of the 1980s and then went on to become one of the female singer/songwriters most closely associated with the 1990s, due in part to her series of Lilith Fair music festivals. Her *The Classic Christmas Album* (Arista/Legacy) includes all 12 tracks from McLachlan’s 2006 *Wintersong* disc and adds five more songs to the mix. Merry and memorable selections from the recording include the McLachlan original title tune, covers of songs by fellow Canadians Joni Mitchell (“River”) and Gordon Lightfoot (“Song for a Winter’s Night,” which also appeared on the 1994 *Miracle on 34th Street* soundtrack), “Happy Xmas (War Is Over),” on which she is joined by the Sarah McLachlan Music Outreach Children’s Choir and Youth Choir, and “Christmas Time Is Here” featuring Diana Krall. Holiday highlights of the additional material include →



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GROOVEOUT

continued from page 92

her medley/duet with Barenaked Ladies on "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen/We Three Kings," and the originals "Find Your Voice" and "Space on the Couch for Two."

In his gray turtleneck sweater, head full of white hair, and white beard, **Plácido Domingo** is the very picture of the Christmas season on the cover of his new holiday album *My Christmas* (Sony Classical). With the exception of four songs, including "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" and Puccini's "Astro del cielo," Domingo is joined by a fantastic array of guest vocalists. French tenor Vincent Niclo helps Domingo keep the yuletide gay on "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." Idina Menzel soars alongside Domingo on "Guardian Angels," a song co-written by Harpo Marx (!). Young classical crossover diva Jackie Evancho and Hayley Westenra duet with Domingo on Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Pie Jesu" and "Loving Christmas With You" (co-written by Domingo's son, Plácido Domingo Jr.), respectively. Father and son get together to sing "White Christmas."

To read the complete article, log on to *OUTSMART MAGAZINE.COM*

Gregg Shapiro is a regular contributor to *OUTSMART* magazine.

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'What Color Is Your Hoodie?'

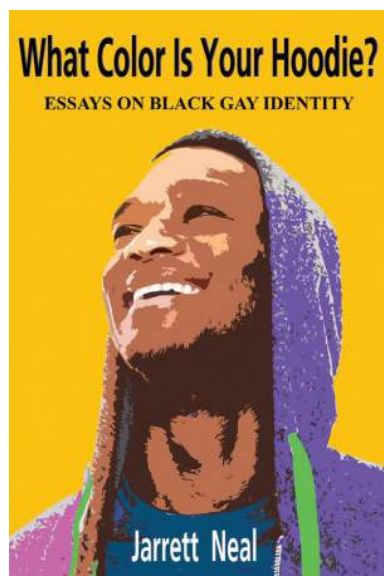
Essays on black gay identity.

Troublemaker Leah Remini



Remini has said that she doesn't regret spending 30 years of her life in the Church of Scientology, because it has made her who she is today and "it really did teach me a lot." That said, in her new book,

Troublemaker, she doesn't hold back in her account of the negative experiences she had—which were numerous, and include her encounters with Tom Cruise, (who comes across as, well, a spoiled child). And then, of course, there's Scientology's well-documented antagonism toward homosexuality. On the church's "Tone Scale," homosexuality is rated a 1.1 on the scale, which is "Covert Hostility." Remini says that that "is considered by Scientologists to be a person [who should be] avoided at all costs." At all costs, however, don't avoid reading this book. Ballantine Books (randomhousebooks.com). —Blase DiStefano



① **What Color Is Your Hoodie? Essays on Black Gay Identity** by Jarrett Neal
2015, Chelsea Station Editions (chelseastationeditions.com)
175 pages • \$18

Some days, it seems as though you have superpowers. That must be the explanation for being unseen—for having days when nobody looks at you. There's no acknowledgment that you exist. You're suddenly Invisible Man, and in the new book *What Color Is Your Hoodie? Essays on Black Gay Identity* by Jarrett Neal, the reason is not so transparent.

Born to a 14-year-old mother, raised in a household with an alcoholic grandfather, Jarrett Neal was in eighth grade when his gym class accidentally walked in on their coach while he was showering. It was Neal's first glimpse of a naked man, and it "ended my boyhood," he says.

He was well into college when he finally admitted to himself that he was attracted to men; still, the "daily taunts" from his more athletic, more self-confident peers and the absence of a father haunted

him for many years. To counteract it, Neal joined a gym and worked out tirelessly, until he realized that he'd never have a he-man's body. He was never going to make a living with his physique.

Instead, Neal knew that he had to write.

It was "write or die," he says, though he's been told that his style is "either too black or too gay." Even though he "wasn't supposed to care about books as a boy," he devoured the works of gay men—particularly those who were black.

That voracity for books led to a teaching career.

In his essays here, Neal discusses the dearth of gay black men in films and television, and he decries white readers' lack of interest in the works of black authors. He looks at the sexuality of gay black men who, like most African-American men,



Jarrett Neal

live under "sexual stereotypes" that cause "a tremendous onus . . . to live up to." He writes about black men (both gay and straight) who have made history and changed perceptions within their neighborhoods or industries. And as a black man married to a white man, he notes that racism within the gay community is as big a problem as it is anywhere else.

Author Jarrett Neal is not shy. There's no waffling in this book, and nothing is held back. Neal discusses gay porn as blithely as he does modern literature; he remembers his childhood and his coming-out story with equal passion. Such power and force in writing serves to give readers—straight or gay—a solid understanding of the points he tries to make. We might laugh or raise our eyebrows, but we also empathize (or sympathize, as the case may be).

What mars this otherwise well-done collection of essays is its sloppiness. *What Color Is Your Hoodie?* is riddled with so many misspellings and punctuation mistakes that I wanted to quit the book many times.

If you can forgive that distraction, then this unusual book is a good read that may actually change minds. Truthful, blunt, and thought-provoking, regretful mistakes aside, *What Color Is Your Hoodie?* should be seen.

Terri Schlichenmeyer has been reading since she was three years old, and she lives on a hill in Wisconsin with two dogs and 11,000 books.

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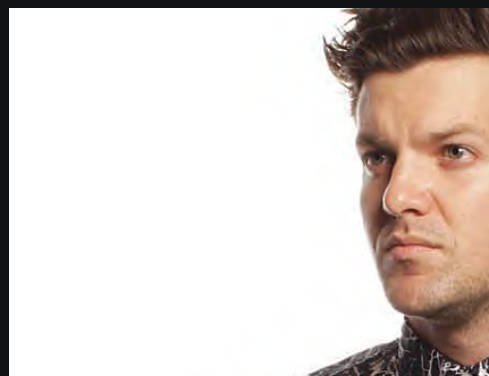
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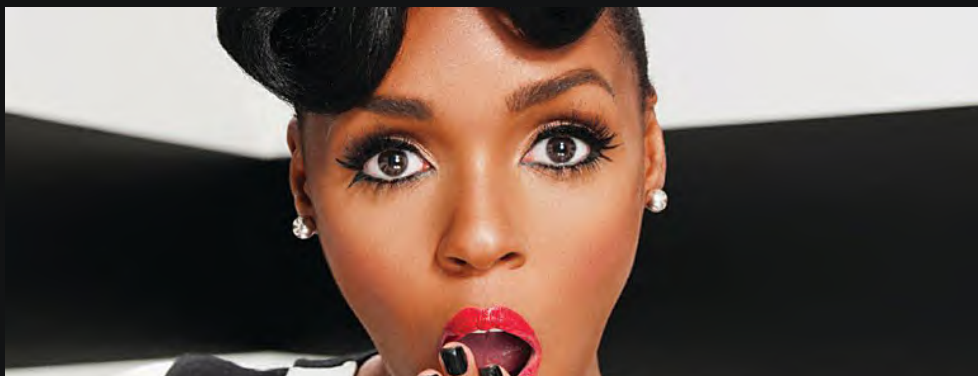


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PHOTOGRAPHER DALTON DeHART

continued from page 22

more under the radar," DeHart explained. "Now, there are so many events going on all the time. We have multiple events going on practically every day." He also became heavily involved in photographing nonprofit organizations that focused on helping those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, such as Omega House (now Bering Omega Community Services/HACS), AIDS Foundation Houston, and Body Positive Houston and the Montrose Clinic (both of which are now a part of Legacy Community Health).

During his photographic career, DeHart has even shot photos for prominent politicians, including Mayor Annise Parker and former president Bill Clinton. After she was elected to public office for the first time in 1997, DeHart's photo of Parker graced the front page of the *Houston Voice*.

In 2004, DeHart switched from shooting film to digital photography, and also launched his website, daltondehart.com. Since then, he's posted more than 500,000 photos from at least 1,000 events to the site. To this day, he continues to shoot at least five to 12 events per week. His digital photos currently occupy almost 20 terabytes of computer storage space.

Before retiring from teaching in 2006, DeHart was holding down his 35-hour-per-week job at San Jacinto College while spending an extra 35 hours per week photographing events—the majority of which were unpaid. "The most I've ever done in one day was 11 stops," DeHart said. "I started one afternoon and finished around 4 a.m. And that was in the days of film! It was nuts. I always said I needed to start a Photographers Anonymous group. But for me, photography has always been driven by passion, not by financial gain."

Although his digital photographs are available to the public through his website, DeHart still has over 400,000 photos shot on film waiting to be digitized—a pricey endeavor. From this need, The Dalton DeHart Photographic Foundation was born. Although the concept has been in the works for a number of years, DeHart notes that, "over the past five years, we've really gotten serious about it." He has since put together a board for the foundation and secured its 501(c)(3) nonprofit charity status.

The November 15 launch party raised nearly \$9,000 for the foundation. DeHart plans to have more fundraisers in the near future, he said. "The launch party was a huge success. Not only was it great to raise money for the foundation, but it was amazing to see so many different generations of Houstonians and LGBT folks come together to reminisce on years past through my photos. I look forward to what's ahead."

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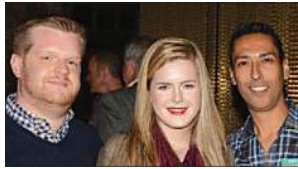
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Realtor Karen Derr Celebrates 20 Years, Opens New Office

Back in 1995, real-estate broker Karen Derr became the first Houston Realtor to market homes on the Internet after she launched her real-estate site on July 4 of that year. Hoping to connect directly with coveted relocation buyers, she and husband Robert shared photos of her listings, details of the neighborhoods in which she specialized, and served up content to waiting prospects.



Karen Derr

"This was before HAR.com and Realtor.com," Derr recalls. "I was surprised how confident my early Internet clients were in their choice to use me before they ever met me face-to-face." Derr believes a higher level of trust is created when you stake your

name on your business—that's why she is at the helm of a boutique firm called Karen Derr Realtors. Located at 1005 Heights Boulevard, the unassuming location is headquarters for a small group of agents providing service from Houston's inner loop to The Woodlands, Galveston, and all the way to Austin. Derr explains, "I want to focus on investing in top-notch professionals who I can work with shoulder-to-shoulder, providing keen negotiating skills and up-to-the-minute industry knowledge so our clients can make sound choices." Derr describes the Realtors who work with her as real-estate junkies, serial renovators, and owners of multiple homes. "We're all real-estate busybodies," she laughs, "but that has helped us hone skills that our clients value." Info: KarenDerr.com 713-875-7050.

OUTSMART Welcomes New Associate Creative Director and Marketing Manager Kelsey Gledhill



Kelsey Gledhill

OUTSMART welcomes new marketing manager and associate creative director Kelsey Gledhill to its staff. Gledhill has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Texas A&M University and a master of arts degree in advertising from the University of Texas at Austin. Prior to joining the magazine's team, Gledhill spent over two years as a copywriter for Freed Advertising in Sugar Land. Contact: Kelsey@OutSmartMagazine.com

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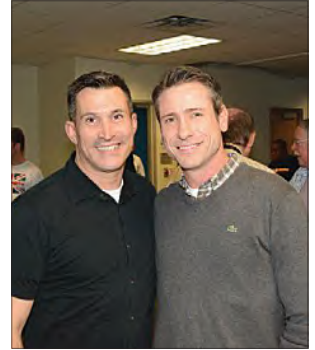
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OUT THERE

Photos by Dalton DeHart

The Dalton Dehart Photographic Foundation Launch Party November 15



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BUSINESS NEWS

continued from page 103

David Sanchez Joins OUTSMART Marketing and Sales Department



David Sanchez

David Sanchez has joined OUTSMART's sales and marketing team. Sanchez, a native Houstonian, previously lived in Miami and Los Angeles, and worked as an account manager for the *Los Angeles Business Journal* prior to joining OUTSMART. He is a graduate of Houston's John H. Reagan High School, studied at Houston Community College and San Jacinto College, and is also fluent in Spanish. Contact: David@OutSmartMagazine.com

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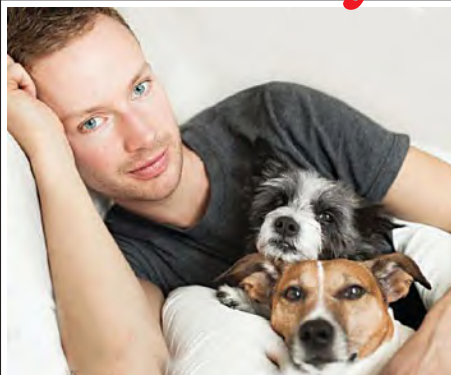
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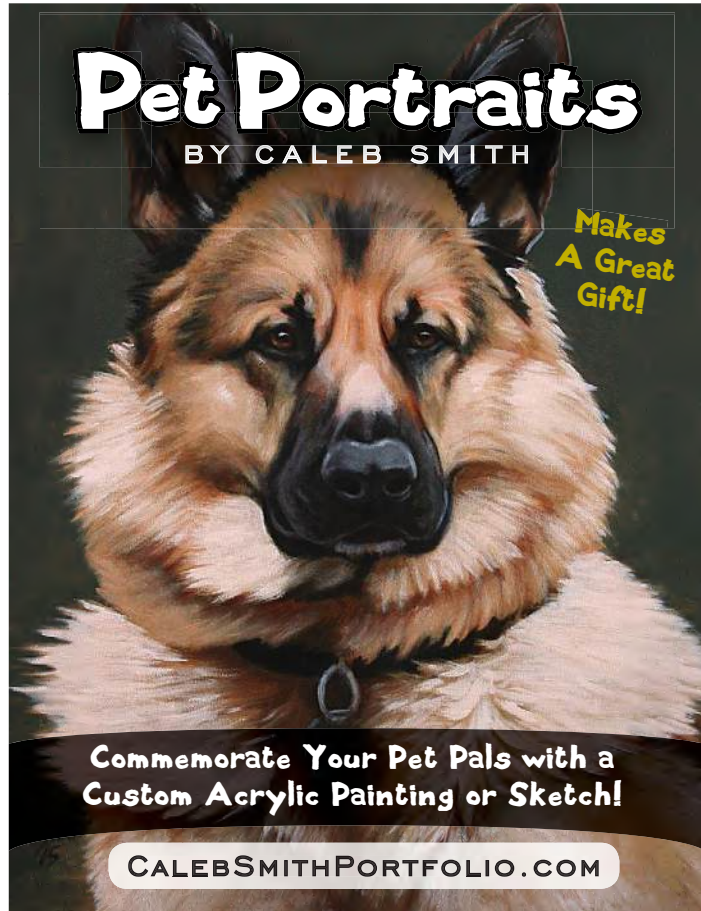
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Houston

13 ENTERTAINMENT

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BAYOU CITY BAR & GRILL

This cozy bar is the home for the famous Breakfast Club (which dates back to 1986), opens at 7am, and continues throughout the day with a full kitchen and menu along with late-night dancing! Known for Drag Bingo on Tues., Steak Night on Wed., and Wing Night Thurs. DJs nightly. 7 days a week. 2409 Grant St. • bayoucitybar.com.

BLUR

This multi-level dance club features a patio upstairs lounge and balconies that overlook Pacific St. Ladies enjoy Wet and Wild Wed., 18-year-olds are welcome on Thurs., resident DJ Lorenzo spins Wed.-Sat. nights, DJ Pollo spins Karumba Latin night on Sun. Happy hour 8-10pm; free cover before 11pm. 710 Pacific St. • blurbar.com.

CLUB 2020

Located downtown, this urban club features Clubbers Friday with male and female dancers. Its 6,400 square feet also offers theater-sized viewing screens and VIP rooms. 2020 Leeland • 713.227.9667 • club2020houston.com.

CLUB CRYSTAL

If you miss the now-closed Inergy, you'll find many of its former staff, management, and décor at this two-room Latin/hip-hop club. Sunday evening drag shows rule the roost. 6680 Southwest Frwy, next to Colorado • 713.278.2582 • crystaltheclub.com.

CROCKER BAR

Resident DJ Johnny spins on Fri. and Sat. nights at this comfortably remodeled Montrose nightclub that also offers karaoke on Tuesdays and Thursdays and extended happy-hour prices throughout the week. 2312 Crocker • 713.529.3355.

THE EAGLE

The Eagle has landed at its new location in the heart of Montrose, and it looks great. Sexy bartenders, lots of outdoor deck space, and even a gift shop to check out. Mon.-Sat., 4pm-2am; Sun. noon-2am. 611 Hyde Park • eaglehouston.com.

F BAR

Award-winning DJs spin nightly at this "boutique nightclub" that offers elegance without arrogance and features a stage, dance floor, VIP area, glass-encased quiet bar, and

attractive patio. Tues. and Sun. 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 3pm with dart and pool tournaments; Steak Night is Sun., 3-7pm. 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 Wed. and Sun., 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 Thurs. and Sun., 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 Athena on Friday and award-winning DJ Eddie E on Saturday. Open Thurs.-Sat. 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.

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WHAT'S UP: Tony's Corner Pocket is your friendly neighborhood bar with the best view in town of Downtown Houston's beautiful skyline, very friendly staff, and reasonable drink prices. Tony's is known for its Amateur Strip Contest hosted by Miss An' Marie Gill Thursday-Saturday. Regina Dane is featured during Sunday night's strip contest with happy hour prices all day and night. Stop by for details about holiday parties and events coming up soon.

PEARL BAR

This LGBT-friendly lounge is open under "familiar" management in the Washington corridor. Daily highlights range from open mic night to steak night to appearances by DJ Kittie and DJ Ben Phoenix from KRBE. Drink specials and more. 4216 Washington • pearlhouston.com.

THE RIPCORD

This well-kept, multi-roomed leather bar for men and their friends boasts a busy patio, especially on the weekends. The Black Hawk Leather shop is located inside the club, providing BDSM essentials. 715 Fairview Ave. • 713.521.2792 • theripcord.com.

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.

SOUTH BEACH

This mega-dance club is a frequent winner of OutSmart's Gayest and Greatest awards, with DJ Eddie E spinning on Fri., and DJ Joe Ross playing pop & dance music videos on Sat. No cover before 11pm. 810 Pacific St. • sobehouston.com • 713.529.SOBEE.

TC'S SHOWBAR

With the longest daily happy hours in Montrose (8am-10pm), it's no wonder this neighborhood watering hole is so popular. Owner Tim Pugh says TC's has built quite a reputation as the perfect spot to celebrate special occasions. Other big draws are the drag shows Wednesday-Sunday and karaoke Monday & Wednesday. 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 11pm. Opens daily at noon. 817 W. Dallas • 713.571.7870 • tonyscornerpocketbar.com.

VIVIANA'S

This club, in a new location, appeals to fans of Latino music and drag alike. 4624 Dacoma • 713.681.4104.

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Galveston

23RD ST. STATION

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KRAVE GALVESTON

Galveston's hottest, most modern nightclub and video bar (formerly 3rd Coast Downtown) is heating up the island's nightlife. Thursday-Saturday is a big draw for College Night, Tuesday is Trivia/Karaoke Night with Timothy Branstetter, Sunday & Wednesday is Karaoke Night with David P, and the weekend drag shows hosted by Kara Dion are fabulous! 4216 Postoffice St. • 409.765.6911.

ROBERT'S LAFITTE

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SPLASH BAR GALVESTON

Galveston's only gay bar on the beach is making a huge splash on the island. The club's Happy Hour and entertainment line-up sizzles with Hot Fridays and Saturdays featuring its "Splash Divas" drag shows, amateur strip contests, and the area's hottest DJs spinning your favorite tunes. Sunday's Tea Dance features Happy Hour noon-8pm, and count on lively entertainment every weekday. 3102 Seawall Blvd. • 409.974.4176 • splashbargalveston.com.

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THE ROOM BAR AND LOUNGE

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December

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The holidays in December will be a lot better than November's Thanksgiving holiday. We will all be feeling a lot less "heavy" and dragged down. We have a New Moon on the 11th that helps us to open up and feel better about the holidays and the world's condition. The Full Moon on the 25th helps us to focus on family—and the people we call family. Emotions and feelings are strong, and right there on the surface during this Full Moon. Make sure you have some quiet time for yourself. • Also on the 25th, Uranus (planet of reinvention and freedom) goes direct. We will all be more open to acting on our impulses, trying to satisfy our needs as well as looking for an adventure to stimulate our intellect.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). As December begins, you are in a good mood, looking forward to the holiday and enjoying connecting with people. You can also use these energies to help and promote your own career. People are more open to you. Your relationship needs your attention. Take some time to renew that physical and emotional connection with your partner, or your partner may be crankier than usual. Work and career take over as we get closer to the end of the month. You may feel like you've overdone it with the holidays by then!

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). The beginning of the month is a fairly introspective time, considering this is a holiday month. You are more focused on money than usual, and are trying to make some new long-term plans to make you feel safer in the future. Don't overthink this. Your personal relationships need some tending to. As the holidays approach, you are in a more relaxed time. This could be a great time for you to get out of town for the holidays just for fun.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). Relationships are really getting the spotlight. You are in a period of questioning your relationships and how you construct them. You are trying to establish new purposes and directions for your relationships. This can also be a time when you realize some of your relationships have outgrown their usefulness. There are some new opportunities for new jobs or a career shift. Your holidays should be nice, but you may be preoccupied with what's going on with your relationship and with work.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). You could be easily overloaded with things to do this month. You may have way too many "have to's" on your

dance card. Keep yourself focused on your current situation and don't overload your holiday schedule. Keep your schedule flexible on the 19th and 20th. You will not be very patient. As we get closer to the holidays, you are paying more attention to your partner. You both are beginning to look at long-term plans. If your relationship is not doing well, this could be a chilly holiday. Take the actions necessary to improve your situation.

LEO (July 23–August 22). This is normally a good time of the year for you, and this December is no exception. You are in a playful mood and will want to surround yourself with positive and optimistic folk. If you have children, this is an especially good time to be sharing the holidays with them. You are straightforward in your communications this month, and don't have time for people who can't "get it." As we get closer to the end month, you are ready to get back on your schedule and agendas. Watch what you eat over the holidays. You will be more sensitive than usual to food.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). The home and hearth are your focus not only for this month, but for the whole year. There is an overall shift in the family as everyone senses that they're getting older. The holidays may have more nostalgia for you than usual. You are also working to make your nest more secure. You may be considering moving or doing some needed repairs. You have been looking at long-term plans for improving your career. You are a bit more relaxed as we get closer to the holidays, and ready for some holiday cheer!

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). This is an especially active holiday month for you. Mars, planet of selfness and confrontation, visits your sign for the whole month. You will have the sense that you need to take care of everything right away. You may also have a harder time sleeping, and find that small things really irritate you now. You will certainly feel out of balance. This is a good time to start new projects or to make an investment in yourself. Try to slow down some during the holidays. Keep your holiday plans simple. You will not be up for much drama! Getting out of town for the holidays could prove to be really fun!

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). Overall, you are taking a hard look at your finances and potential new career or work goals. Time is money this year. When you invest yourself in something, you'll expect to get something back or you will withdraw your support. Groups and organizations can be especially good for business contacts this year. As we get closer to the holidays, you are gaining more clarity about your future plans. Be careful that you don't opt out at work—better to connect with others during the holidays.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). Your birthday is your personal yearly cycle



when you assess the last year and set new ambitions and purposes for yourself for the upcoming year. This is an especially significant year with Saturn, planet of future security and long-term planning, visiting for the next two years.

You are working on your boundaries and trying to make sure that your actions are used in the most efficient way possible. You are in a big, decisive time concerning relationships, career, your family, and what's best for you. As the holidays approach, you begin to lighten up some and get back to having a good time.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). Typically, the early part of the holiday season is more of a time for retreat rather than for lots of holiday parties. You go if you have to (because you are a Capricorn) and you instinctively know what is the right thing to do. There is a lot to do at work, and you are trying to get some new ideas off the ground. Work is more of a place for you to hide out for now. As we get closer to the holidays, you will be a lot more social and ready to get into the holiday season. Capricorn is the sign of tradition, and those old goats do love their traditions.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). This is a good time for you to be connecting with groups and organizations. You could easily take on a leadership role. You will also be focusing on some groups more and eliminating others that don't have any use. Your mind will still be fairly restless, especially in the first half of the month. You are in a good time for a debate or dealing with intense negotiations. As we get closer to the holidays, you are ready to retreat some and avoid the madding crowd. January is a busy month with Mercury retrograde in your sign. You will have plenty to do. Enjoy your rest.

PISCES (February 19–March 20). You have recently been enjoying more clarity and sense of purpose than you have had for a few years. You are working on your boundaries and telling people "No," which is never easy for the mermaids and mermen. This is a good month to look at new jobs, positions, or even starting your own career. As we approach the holidays, you are ready to be more social. This is a very good month to see friends that you have not had time to connect with. It may be easier than usual to spend money this month, so watch that impulse buying.

Read Lilly Roddy's 2015 forecast at OutSmartMAGAZINE.COM. More astro-insight at lillyroddy.com.

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OUT IN HOUSTON



On November 9, Out & Equal and My Gay Houston held their quarterly social at Lawless Spirits & Kitchen. Pictured are **AJ Mistretta, Autumn Holcomb, Mike Craig, Ky Huynh, and Robert Vasquez.**



Mayor Annise Parker declared November 15 as The Dalton DeHart Photographic Foundation Day. Pictured are **Dalton DeHart** and Parker.



The Homeless Gay Kids group held a wine tasting with **Ryan Levy** of Nice Winery on Nov. 7 at **Jim Bartley & Glenn Laible's** home. Pictured are **Bill McDugald, Jeff Hoffman, Ian Eastveld, Levy, Cindy Cuellar, Gary Wood, Franki Navarro, Kirk White, Bartley, and Laible.**



On November 13, the Progressive Open Door Christian Center held its Gospel Brunch at the Power Center. Pictured are **Damion Sam, Erica Kizzee, Kelvin Lane, Freedom Gulley, Maurice Griffin, and Derrick Nash.**



On October 27, Discovery Green held its inaugural Discovery Discussions: Dynamic Conversations with Changemakers event featuring **Jim Obergefell** and **Eric Alva**. Pictured are **Barry Mandel, Obergefell, Alva, Rebecca Robertson, and Joe Morton.**



Terry Hamman, Dr. Danielle Lutz, Kelser McMiller, Katherine Bravo, John Haggard, Carrie Grzelak, Jennifer Tiedt, and Clint Sosa at the Young Professionals Fall Social on November 12 at Design Within Reach.



Brennen Williams, Deborah Lawson, Jerlandrick Barnett, Alan Prewitt, and Chris Zulauf at Lambda NextGen's November Happy Hour held on November 17 at JR's Bar & Grill.



On November 8, **Dee Dee Watters** held a discussion on transgender media talking points at The Montrose Center. Pictured are **Veronika Simms, Vito Cammisano, Monica Roberts, Watters, Daniel Williams, Jessika Davidson, and Melissa Murry.**



EPAA held its November 2015 dinner meeting featuring special guest **Mayor Annise Parker** on November 17 at Damian's Cucina Italiana. Pictured are **Anna Tune, Parker, and Cindy Cuellar.**



The Diana Foundation held its November 2015 Jazz Happy Hour on November 4 at FBar. Pictured are **Rudy Hernandez Jr., Richard Fluhr, Charles Krenzler, and John Heinzerling.**



Trevor Eade-Hill, Bryan Cotton, Lisa Hopkins, and Stefan Eade-Hill at Out for Education's Moulin Rouge fundraiser held on November 6 at Audi Central.



The Gulf Coast Archive and Museum (GCAM) held its fourth annual Founders Show on November 8 at Tony's Corner Pocket. Pictured are (front) **SisterMarguerite De Sade, Domenic Cusano, Craig Farrell, Judy Reeves, KittyKim, Kody Klondyke Welch**, (back) **Alton Howard, Bruce Reeves, Jade Mykels (Joe Sims), and SisterCandice BLOVE.**



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