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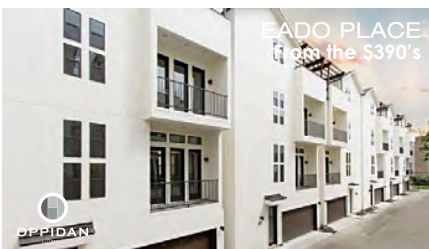
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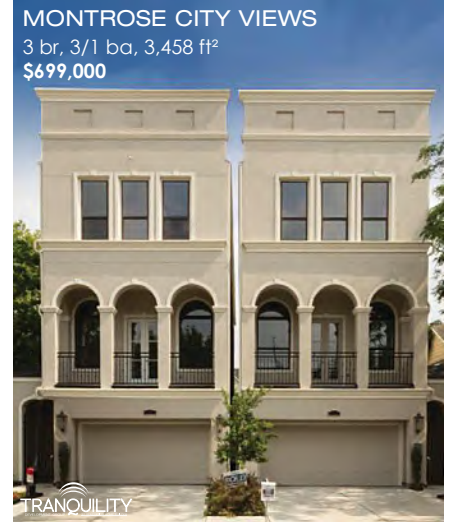
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EXCLUSIVES**

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The Edenmeyers are fathers to Ty, a 12-year-old linebacker. Having two dads doesn't seem to bother Ty, says L. Jay (r). "He kind of adjusted to the idea that things are going to be a little different. When you're 12, you're embarrassed by your parents because you're 12. He knows his parents love each other and that we love him dearly."

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Dakota Carter Wins Election Runoff for State Board of Education

By John Wright

After finishing 12 points behind in the March 1 Democratic primary, Dr. Dakota Carter says he surprised a lot of people by recording a 20-point victory over Jasmine Jenkins in the May 24 runoff for the District 6 seat on the State Board of Education.

Now, the 28-year-old Carter is looking to pull off a much bigger upset by defeating Republican incumbent Donna Bahorich, who chairs the SBOE, in the November general election.

Four years ago, Bahorich outpaced the Democratic candidate by 18 points in the district that's home to two million residents of west Houston and its northwestern suburbs.

But Carter, the first openly gay person in Texas' history to become his party's nominee for an SBOE seat, said he believes the incumbent is "arrogant and entitled."

"I think she thinks she's already got this won, and just like this last race, I'm going to outwork her," Carter said a day after the runoff. "I know what it's going to take to win."

Bahorich didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

A former campaign manager and communications director for GOP Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, Bahorich is a member of the SBOE's "radical faction of social conservatives," according to Dan Quinn, a spokesman for the Texas Freedom Network (TFN), a progressive group that monitors the board.

In 2012, Bahorich's campaign platform included opposition to same-sex marriage, even though the SBOE has no jurisdiction over the issue. She's also a strong supporter of Texas' abstinence-only education policy, which Carter blames for the state's high teen pregnancy and STD transmission rates.

The SBOE, which sets curriculum and textbook standards for Texas public schools, has consistently made headlines for ideological fights over topics including evolution, climate change, religion, and racial minorities.

"Currently, there's a political agenda on the state board, and instead of teaching kids, we're indoctrinating them," Carter said.

A first-generation college student from a small town in the Texas Panhandle, Carter served as student body president at the University of North Texas, where he earned his bach-



COURTESY DAKOTA CARTER

Looking Ahead

Dakota Carter is the first openly gay person in Texas' history to become his party's nominee for State Board of Education. He hopes to defeat Republican incumbent Donna Bahorich in the November general election.

elor's degree before attending medical school at Houston's UTHealth.

Carter, who now works in the juvenile justice unit of an inpatient psychiatric hospital, is also seeking a doctorate from the University of Houston. His partner is a 10th-grade English teacher, and Carter has co-founded two nonprofits, including one that serves troubled LGBT youth.

"Through all of that, I've always appreciated the power of education," Carter said, touting his experience over Bahorich's. "It changes people's lives. It changes their means. It can change their social standing. I want every kid to have that opportunity, and unfortunately that's not what's happening currently."

Carter is endorsed by the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, the Houston GLBT Political Caucus, and Stonewall Young Democrats of Houston.

Thus far, the District 6 SBOE race has been overshadowed by the Republican primary in District 9, where candidate Mary Lou Bruner drew national attention for her incendiary statements and bizarre conspiracy theories, including that President Barack Obama once worked as a gay prostitute. Bruner was defeated by Lufkin school board president Kevin Ellis in the May 24 Republican runoff.

Carter said that although Bahorich isn't as outspoken, he believes she shares some of Bruner's right-wing views. He also blamed Ba-

horich for not disavowing Bruner's statements in the media.

"We don't need Mary Lou Bruner [on the SBOE] to be an embarrassment," he said. "It's already happening."

TFN's Quinn said that although she's consistently voted with the board's socially conservative bloc, Bahorich hasn't gone out of her way to attack or demonize people.

"She's been a lot more careful about what she says than some of her colleagues," he said.

When Bahorich was appointed SBOE chair by Governor Greg Abbott last year, she faced criticism for home-schooling her three children rather than sending them to public school.

"That seems problematic to us," Quinn said.

Although the board hasn't directly addressed LGBT issues in recent years, Quinn expects that to change when members review the health curriculum and textbooks within the next few years. In 2004, the SBOE cleansed the health curriculum of all references to LGBT people, and a 2009 TFN report found that some schools were still teaching that same-sex relationships are illegal and sinful.

"It's always important for a governmental body to look like the people it represents, and there are no LGBT people on the board now," Quinn said. "I think Carter could add something to the board simply by bringing a new perspective that it doesn't often hear."

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Carl Edward Whitmarsh

Local activists mourn the loss of longtime Democratic Party leader.

Legendary Democratic activist Carl Edward Whitmarsh died unexpectedly of natural causes on Sunday, May 8, 2016, at his home in northwest Houston. He was 64.

A native of Brenham, he studied political science at Texas Tech University and made Houston his home “as fast as he could.” He was very active in his neighborhood civic club and was a constant resource for all his neighbors.

Whitmarsh’s political career began in the heyday of the Texas Democratic Party. He soared as an aide to Senator Lloyd Bentsen, and his activism continued until his death last month. Despite being active on the state level and contributing to many national elections, his true love and purpose was for local politics. He formerly served as the executive director of the Harris County Democratic Party and, at the time of his death, as president of the Oak Forest Area Democrats, a local grassroots group whose meetings were always crowded and routinely attended by prominent elected officials.

“Carl Whitmarsh’s passing is an incredible loss to Harris County Democrats,” says James Lee, president of the Houston Stonewall Young Democrats. “He was one of those people who was willing to listen to and encourage young people. He was always encouraging of me and the Houston Stonewall Young Democrats. We didn’t always agree on everything, but he was supportive nonetheless. I’ll miss him.”

Whitmarsh virtually invented what could be considered the art of political blogging by today’s standards through the persistent and prolific use of his deep email list. That contact list was a byproduct of his vast institutional knowledge, local Democratic activism, and a lifetime of networking that started in the days of LISTSERVs, AOL, and Yahoo Groups—all of which morphed into email and eventually social media. Safe to say, if you never received an email from Carl Whitmarsh, you were probably not a Texas Democrat.

“Carl was an unapologetic Democrat who defended the party till the end,” says Fran Watson, Houston GLBT Political Caucus president. “One of his qualities I will remember is loyalty. If he supported you, that support would be uncompromising. Carl provided words of



Unapologetic Democrat

For decades, Carl Whitmarsh worked tirelessly for the Texas Democratic Party. He passed away on May 8, 2016, at the age of 64.

encouragement, and it was appreciated. Rest in Power, Carl.”

“Carl was a party loyalist and always put the party first,” says Lane Lewis, Harris County Democratic Party Chairman and Whitmarsh’s best friend. “He believed and understood that the party is a living-breathing singular being that must always come before any individual or agenda.”

Carl was always a leader, whether serving in an official party role or on the sidelines; he carved out his own brand of politics that endured the shifting winds of Democratic Party dominance in Texas. The Whitmarsh trademark was brutal honesty, stitching together unlikely coalitions and relentless party loyalty. He knew his style was not for everyone, even if uniquely effective. You could have heated arguments while agreeing with him at the same time. Whether you were a local activist or powerful politician, he could scream at you one day and sing your praises the next, and intend both wholeheartedly.

“Carl left an indelible mark on Democratic politics in Houston and beyond,” says former mayor Annise Parker. “Sometimes that mark was a kiss on the cheek. At other times, it was a kick in the pants. He was fierce and fearless.”

He advertised and proudly exemplified the words of former U.S. speaker of the House Sam Rayburn: “I am a Democrat without prefix, suffix, or apology.” Carl repeatedly joked that when he died, there would be as many people ready to dance on his grave as to cry over his death. It is certain that he is delighted by the knowledge that, once again, he was right.

“Carl was a Democratic activist and made it his life’s work to elect Democrats at every level, from the presidency down to the smallest local post,” State Democratic Executive Committee member Shelley Kennedy says. “He was a gentle giant who believed at his very core that we are all equal and deserving of respect. His celebration-of-life service was an iconic snapshot of the diversity that he promoted through both his work and his personal relationships. The LGBT community may never fully know the breadth of his contribution to their fight for equality because that contribution was made every day through his lifelong commitment to electing Democrats and the Democratic Party—locally, statewide, and nationally.”

“Carl always encouraged me to continue down my path,” says LGBT activist Ashton P. Woods. “These are some of his last words to me: ‘Whether you know it or not, you are a real hero. What you are doing is what so many folks want to do and do not have the courage to do. Trust me on that one, my friend . . . trust me.’ Always cherish people who believe in you, and honor their memory when they are gone too soon.”

Carl Whitmarsh is preceded in death by his father, Vernon Gray Whitmarsh, his mother, Lucretia Mae Whitmarsh, and his brother, Chris Albert Whitmarsh. He is survived by his honorary brother, Lane Lewis, his honorary niece, Kqisha Worsham, and his dear friends and honorary siblings Mary and Floyd Schlett, with whom he lived for more than three decades and considered family. ■

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Phoenix Rising

Hope for LGBT teens of color.



Everyone deserves to feel like they belong. Because of that philosophy, HATCH Youth is launching a new program for LGBT youths of color called Phoenix Youth. The first meeting will be June 3, with bi-monthly meetings throughout the year. The almost 30-year-old HATCH program has lead community outreach programs and served as an affirming gathering space for some of Houston's most vulnerable youth through the Montrose Center. Now, realizing that LGBT youths

of color face some special challenges, the advocates and program leaders have created a special program for those young people. The target youth—age 13 to 20—often face racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia, and often experience lower educational attainment and higher rates of homelessness than their peers. Schools, families, and employers often discriminate even more against these young people of color than others. Now, they have people to advocate for them and a place where they

can come together with program leaders to share their stories so they won't feel so alone or disenfranchised. The Montrose Center has been a safe and affirming place for the community since 1978. Please, if you know LGBT youth of color in need, please tell them about this wonderful new program designed with their special needs in mind. This program should serve a very important need in Houston.

—Marene Gustin

**First Meeting of Phoenix Youth
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1

The Divine Sister ★ *thru July 3*
Charles Busch's nuns-in-drag send-up.
celebrationtheatrehouston.com
(See page 119)

2

Holocaust Museum Houston Twenty Years of Hope + Celebrate their 20th anniversary with Ted Koppel. hnh.org
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aiasandcastle.com
Wings of Wonder + *thru Aug. 20*
A new live bird show at Moody Gardens. moodygardens.org

5

HIV Long-Term Survivor's Awareness Day + 35 years later, and still much to do. letskickass.org
Plenty of Time ★ *last day* A southern deb and a Black Panther fall in love.
ensemblehouston.com

6

Wine and Food Week 2016 + *thru 12*
The theme may be New York, New York, but there's a Sip, Suds, & Taco event and a Taco Takedown.
wineandfoodweek.com

7

Mark Flood: Greatest Hits 📷
thru Aug. 7 A collection of the musician's art. camh.org

8

In Residence ★ *thru Aug. 27*
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crafthouston.org

9

Saint Joan ★ *thru 18* George Bernard Shaw's classic. starknakedtheatre.com
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10

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James and the Giant Peach ★ & 11 TUTS' Humphrey's School of Musical Theatre free presentation. tuts.com

11

The Music of David Bowie ★ The Houston Symphony pays tribute to the musician. houstonSymphony.org
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12

Taking Flight: The Butterfly Project 📅 *thru July 31* Handmade butterflies commemorate the 1.5 million children who perished in the Holocaust. hnh.org

13

Alla Prima and Sprezzatura 📅 *thru July 6* Barbara Able's exhibition. archwaygallery.com

14

Houston Symphony ★ *thru 25* Free outdoor Houston Symphony concert in Hermann Park. houstonSymphony.org

15

Essential as Dreams 📅 *thru Oct. 16* Eighty drawings, watercolors, sculptures, paintings, and works in mixed media by 37 artists. menil.org

16

Nitty Gritty Dirt Band ★ Country rock at the Stafford Centre. staffordcentre.com
Fade to Black Play Festival ★ Check out the finalists in this annual play fest. fadetoblackfest.com

17

Galveston Cajun Crawfish Festival + *thru 19* Mudbugs, music, and more. gccrawfishfestival.com

18

Shrek the Musical ★ *thru July 31* The ogre sings! mainstreettheater.com
Totemic Lore 📅 *last day* A solo exhibition by artist Alex Trimino. artleaguehouston.org

19

Juneteenth Celebration + Free fun in Hermann Park. milleroutdoortheatre.com
The Secret of the Hanging Egg 📅 *last day* A Salvador Dali exhibit at The Menil. menil.org



22

Film Submission ★ *thru July 31* Submissions open for NASA's CineSpace short-film competition. cinespace16.org

23

A View Within *thru Sept. 4* 📅 Fiber art at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft. crafthouston.org

24

Houston Symphony & 25 ★ Free outdoor Houston Symphony concerts in Hermann Park. houstonSymphony.org



25

Houston Pride Festival + Parade and party downtown! pridehouston.org (See the complete Pride calendar starting on page 43.)



27

Art 📅 *thru July 9* Three new exhibits at Box 13. box13artspace.com

28

In Residence 📅 *thru Aug. 27* Work on view by resident artists. crafthouston.org

29

Hear the Artists of Tomorrow: Houston Young Artists' Concert ★ Free fun for the family. milleroutdoortheatre.com

30

Star Wars: The Force Awakens ★ Free movie at Hermann Park. milleroutdoortheatre.com

More CALENDAR →





2016-2017 SEASON

BRINGING THE WORLD'S
BEST TO HOUSTON

DAVID PARSONS DANCE

CULLEN THEATER,
WORTHAM CENTER

■ Fri., Sept. 23, 2016, 8pm

SMOKEY ROBINSON

JONES HALL

■ Fri., October 7, 2016, 8pm

DANIEL TIGER'S NEIGHBORHOOD LIVE!

JONES HALL

■ Sun., Oct. 9, 2016, 5:30pm

DAVID SEDARIS

BROWN THEATER,
WORTHAM CENTER

■ Sat., Oct. 22, 2016, 8pm

UNDERWATER BUBBLE SHOW

CULLEN THEATER,
WORTHAM CENTER

■ Fri., Oct. 28, 2016, 7:30pm

CIRQUE DREAMS HOLIDAZE

JONES HALL

■ Fri., Nov. 18-20, 2016

WE THREE KINGS— AN IRISH TENORS CHRISTMAS

JONES HALL

■ Wed., Dec. 7, 2016, 8pm

BALÉ FOLCLÓRICO DA BAHIA

JONES HALL

■ Fri., Jan. 13, 2017, 8pm

NEIL DEGRASSE TYSON

JONES HALL

■ Tue., January 17, 2017, 8pm

PILOBOLUS: SHADOWLAND

JONES HALL

■ Fri., Jan. 20, 2017, 8pm

ODD SQUAD LIVE!

JONES HALL

■ Sat., Jan. 21, 2017, 5:30pm

STOMP

JONES HALL

■ Feb. 10-12, 2017

JOEY ALEXANDER

CULLEN THEATER,
WORTHAM CENTER

■ Fri., Feb. 17, 2017, 8pm

THIRD COAST PERCUSSION

CULLEN THEATER,
WORTHAM CENTER

■ Sat., Mar. 4, 2017, 8pm

LES BALLETS

TROCKADERO

DE MONTE CARLO

CULLEN THEATER,
WORTHAM CENTER

■ Fri., Mar. 24, 2017, 8pm

ANNIE THE MUSICAL

JONES HALL

■ Apr. 8-9, 2017

ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

CULLEN THEATER,
WORTHAM CENTER

■ Fri., Apr. 21, 2017, 8pm

ALTON BROWN LIVE: EAT YOUR SCIENCE

JONES HALL

■ Thu., April 27, 2017, 7:30pm

GINKGOA

MILLER OUTDOOR THEATRE

■ Sat., May 6, 2017, 8pm

THE 5 BROWNS

JONES HALL

■ Fri., May 12, 2017, 8pm

JESSICA

LANG DANCE

CULLEN THEATER,
WORTHAM CENTER

■ Sat., May 20, 2017, 8pm

CIRCUS 1903

JONES HALL

■ June 9-11, 2017

NEIL GAIMAN

BROWN THEATER,
WORTHAM CENTER

■ Sat., July 8, 2017, 8pm

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DAVID SEDARIS ILLUSTRATION: RANDY GLASS



SMOKEY ROBINSON



DAVID PARSONS DANCE PHOTO: LOIS GREENFIELD



TROCKADEROS PHOTO: ZORAN JELEVIC



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Calendar of Events

continued from page 27

Art League of Houston

Now thru June 18

Thru 18

Three new exhibits at Art League of Houston run through June 18. You won't want to miss these. *Array* (an interactive audio-visual display) is an exhibition by Houston-based interdisciplinary collective {exurb} in ALH's Main Gallery. *Totemic Lore* (colorful, modern totem poles that will amaze you) is a solo exhibition by Miami-based artist Alex Trimino, and *Intervalo* (haunting small works on paper) is a solo exhibition by Colombian artist Johan Barrios mounted in the Hallway Space. Parking and admission is free, so stop in for an enlightening afternoon of art. artleaguehouston.org



Alex Trimino's
Totemic Love

Miller Outdoor Theatre

All through June

Thru 30

Check out all the free performances this month at Houston's beautiful outdoor venue. METdance presents its Sizzling Summer Dance concert, The Accordion Kings and Queens return for some conjunto music, sounds of the Houston Symphony in the Exxon Mobil summer series, and more musical events just for kids. There's also a free showing of this year's biggest movie, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, and festivals like the Journey through China and the annual Juneteenth Celebration. Dress for comfort and do purchase snacks and sodas from the concession stand, as those profits help keep the shows free of charge. milleroutdoorthatre.com

James and the Giant Peach

June 8-11

8-11

This musical based on the Roald Dahl beloved children's story takes center stage at the Miller Outdoor Theatre this summer. As Theatre Under The Stars' Humphrey's School of Musical Theatre's free summer presentation, the musical runs June 8, 9, and 10 at 11 a.m. as an abbreviated children's show perfect for youngsters with short attention spans. Full-length performances are June 10 and 11 at 8:15 p.m. You can get free tickets for the evening shows the day of at the box office, but all are welcome to cop a squat on the grassy hill and watch the fun. tuts.com

The Music of David Bowie

June 11

11

The Houston Symphony probably hasn't had time to plan a Prince tribute yet, but they are doing an homage to the legendary David Bowie on the 11th at Jones Hall. Brody Dolyniuk, the Houston Symphony, and a full rock band put on a stunning musical odyssey that showcases the incredible range of Bowie's astounding career. Expect to hear "China Girl," "Under Pressure," "Space Oddity," and more. Any true Bowie fan won't want to miss this. houstonssymphony.org



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Head Lice

... and Donald Trump.

The first thing I gotta say is this: Listen up, fellow Bernie Sanders supporters. If it gets down to Hillary Clinton vs. Donald Trump, come November I'll vote for Hillary so hard it'll blow your hemp socks off and namaste your butt back to last Thursday.

Donald Trump cannot be president of the United States of Damn America, y'all. Hell, I don't even think he should be student-council president at Our Lady of Perpetual Virginity Middle School.

Honey, have you noticed that his spray tan is turning him increasingly tangerine? I don't mean the good tangerine that's kinda cute for a pop of color on your couch. I mean the is-that-even-in-the-visual-color-spectrum kind of tangerine. Lord, some days he is so orange that you gotta wonder if he farts Cheetos dust.

I haven't decided yet who is scarier, Trump or his supporters. Last I heard, 23 percent of Trump fans think President Obama murdered Chief Justice Antonin Scalia with a combination of vaccinations and trans bathrooms because Scalia had discovered Obama's secret home mosque and his certified Iraqi birth certificate.

Darlin', it used to be that you had to visit armed compounds in Idaho to hear crazy crap like the Republicans are openly saying.

This is how nuts it is: one of Trump's political supporters announced that Planned Parenthood was just like the KKK. Well, I can see how he got confused. After all, they're *both* all about putting hoods on dicks.

I am not suspicious of all Muslims.



I kinda hate that Trump won the nomination so soon, because it was fun to see which state Texas senator Ted Cruz would lose next. Face it, he had already lost the last four primaries, his dignity, and any right to claim he did not elbow his wife in the face on national teevee, twice.

New York Magazine conducted a poll and asked people, "What do you have a higher opinion of, Donald Trump or head lice?" Turns out that 54 percent prefer head lice.

I guess that's a little stunning, until you realize there's a list of reasons why people prefer head lice to Donald Trump. Well, I lied—there wasn't actually a list until I made this one:

Top Eleven Reasons Why People Like Head Lice Better Than They Like Donald Trump (Because Ten Just Wasn't Enough)

1. Head lice also had a reality show, but it got boring by the middle of the second season. Bite, chew, bite, chew, bite, chew, fire Gary Busey, bite, chew . . .

2. Head lice are not suspicious of all Muslims. They are, however, indiscriminately and cruelly suspicious of all hairpieces.

3. Head lice beat Donald Trump's hair in the bathing suit competition at the one-and-only huuuuuge Mr. World Obnoxious Pageant in Des Moines, Iowa.

4. Even head lice know that taller walls mean longer ladders.

5. Head lice rarely seek medical help for a rejection lasting more than four hours.

6. Head lice just bite you. They rarely know any seventh-grade-locker-room names to call you.

7. Head lice have been known to form complete sentences.

8. You can get rid of head lice.

9. Head lice will show you their tax returns.

10. Head lice don't have Rick Perry and Chris Christie sucking up to them.

11. Head lice wouldn't be caught dead in a trucker gimme hat.

A couple more things: at their state convention, the Texas Republican Party called for an "immediate and orderly" phase-out of Social Security, and an immediate and we-don't-give-a-big-bear's-butt-if-it's-orderly-or-not repeal of "Obamacare." That means your mother is coming to live with you. Your sister is also coming—and, of course, she won't have any health insurance now.

Let me end by saying the most important thing that I'll say all day: if you're upset that trans people just want to use the correct bathroom, the odds are about 100 percent that you've been wrong about pretty much everything since 1992.

Here's a map of how it's gone for the LGBTQ community.

- ✓ Exist
- ✓ Serve
- ✓ Marry
- ✓ Adopt
- ✓ Buy a cake
- ✓ Pee

All we need to do is never run out of checkmarks.

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



The Categorically Bouncingly Insane People are boycotting Target stores over their enlightened trans bathroom policy.

Saturday, June 4, is "Hell Yeah, Target! Day." I have asked OUTSMART to put the Target logo with a heart in it right here on this page for you to cut out or reproduce, and then sashay your sweet patootie to Target to thank them. Sign your name to it, and bring a little tape to stick it on their bathroom door or front door to thank them for being good Americans who love their fellow Americans.

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Estate Planning

... isn't just for the rich.

When you hear the term “estate planning,” you might automatically think of people like Bill Gates or Warren Buffet who have a large amount of assets to protect. But the reality is that this type of planning is actually important for everyone, regardless of how many assets you have or what your marital status is.

This is because planning not only allows you to decide who gets your property at your passing, but it also allows you to set up your assets in ways that can potentially minimize taxes. If you have minor children, an estate plan can provide you with a way to choose a legal guardian for them. The right estate plan may also prevent your assets from going through a lengthy, time-consuming, and sometimes-costly probate process.

Estate planning can be particularly important for those in the LGBT community, because if you have a blended family, it can allow you to clarify your wishes rather than simply relying on what the law automatically dictates.

The Ins and Outs of Probate

Probate is a legal process where a person's will is reviewed in order to determine whether or not it is valid. This process also refers to the general administration of a person's will, as well as the estate of a person without a will.

If you pass away in the State of Texas without having a will, the law states that your assets will go to your next-closest relatives. Those who don't have a will are referred to as dying “intestate,” and their assets therefore pass under “intestate succession” laws. In Texas, only assets that would have passed through your will are affected by these laws—which typically only include assets that you own in your personal name.

According to Texas law, if you are married and you pass away without having a valid will,



the assets that your spouse will receive depends in part on whether you and your spouse owned your property as community property or as separate property.

Typically, community property is considered to be property acquired while a couple is married, as opposed to the separate property acquired by one or the other spouse prior to marriage. There are, however, some exceptions. These include inheritances and gifts that were given to one spouse. These are considered to be separate property, even if they are obtained during the time the couple is married.

Upon death, your spouse would inherit half of the community property. If you have separate property, however, your spouse could inherit either all or just a portion of it. How much he or she inherits will depend on whether your parents are still living, as well as whether you have children and/or siblings. If you do, then your spouse will share the separate property with these individuals.

Bypassing Probate by Designating a Beneficiary

In some cases, you can bypass probate. This is because certain assets allow you to designate a beneficiary (or beneficiaries) who can directly inherit or acquire the funds or property upon your passing.

For example, some assets where you designate a beneficiary include:

- Life insurance
- Annuities
- Retirement Accounts (IRAs, 401(k)s, 403(b)s, etc.)

You can also establish a transfer on death (TOD) or payable on death (POD) beneficiary designation on a bank account, as well as on some types of brokerage accounts. The assets that transfer to your heirs automatically upon your death won't generally be subject to the terms of your will. In other words, the beneficiary designation will take precedence over the will.

Trusts and Other Planning Considerations

Estate planning can ensure that you have control over your assets, as well as your final arrangements such as your funeral and memorial plans. Now that same-sex couples are legally allowed to marry, many couples can take advantage of the different types of trusts that are used in the estate planning process.

For example, one type of trust known as the Qualified Terminable Interest Property (or QTIP) trust can be set up that allows a person to provide for their surviving spouse, while at the same time maintaining control of how the trust's assets are distributed after the surviving spouse's death.

With a QTIP trust, the income (and sometimes the principal) that is generated from the →

continued on page 36



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Please see Brief Summary of Patient Information with
important warnings on the adjacent pages.

Brief Summary of Patient Information about ODEFSEY

ODEFSEY (oh-DEF-see)

(emtricitabine, rilpivirine and tenofovir alafenamide) tablets

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

There may be new information about ODEFSEY. 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 ODEFSEY?

ODEFSEY 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 ODEFSEY or similar medicines. Lactic acidosis is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Lactic acidosis can be hard to identify early, because the symptoms could seem like symptoms of other health problems. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms which could be signs of lactic acidosis:**

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

- **Severe liver problems.** Severe liver problems may happen in people who take ODEFSEY. 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
- nausea
- pain, aching, or tenderness on the right side of your stomach area

- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking ODEFSEY or a similar medicine for a long time.**
- **Worsening of Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection.** ODEFSEY is not approved to treat HBV. If you have HBV and take ODEFSEY, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking ODEFSEY. A “flare-up” is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before.
 - Do not run out of ODEFSEY. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your ODEFSEY is all gone.
 - Do not stop taking ODEFSEY without first talking to your healthcare provider.
 - If you stop taking ODEFSEY, 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 ODEFSEY.

What is ODEFSEY?

ODEFSEY is a prescription medicine that is used to treat HIV-1 in people 12 years of age and older:

- who have not received HIV-1 medicines in the past and have an amount of HIV-1 in their blood (“viral load”) that is no more than 100,000 copies/mL, **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 a viral load that is less than 50 copies/mL, and have never failed past HIV-1 treatment.

It is not known if ODEFSEY is safe and effective in children under 12 years of age or who weigh less than 77 lb (35 kg).

When used to treat HIV-1 infection, ODEFSEY may help:

- 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).

ODEFSEY does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS. You must keep taking HIV-1 medicines to control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses.

Ask your healthcare provider about how to prevent passing HIV-1 to others. Do not share or re-use needles, injection equipment, or personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them. Do not have sex without protection. Always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.

Who should not take ODEFSEY?

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

- carbamazepine (Carbatrol®, Epitol®, Equetro®, Tegretol®, Tegretol-XR®, Teril®)
- dexamethasone (Ozurdex®, Maxidex®, Decadron®, Baycadron™)
- dextansoprazole (Dexilant®)
- esomeprazole (Nexium®, Vimovo®)
- lansoprazole (Prevacid®)
- omeprazole (Prilosec®, Zegerid®)
- oxcarbazepine (Trileptal®)
- pantoprazole sodium (Protonix®)
- phenobarbital (Luminal®)
- phenytoin (Dilantin®, Dilantin-125®, Phenytek®)
- rabeprazole (Aciphex®)
- rifampin (Rifadin®, Rifamate®, Rifater®, Rimactane®)
- rifapentine (Priftin®)
- the herb St. John's wort or a product that contains St. John's wort

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking ODEFSEY?

Before taking ODEFSEY, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- have liver problems including hepatitis B or C virus infection
- have kidney and bone problems
- have had depression or suicidal thoughts
- have any other medical conditions
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if ODEFSEY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking ODEFSEY.

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 ODEFSEY.
 - 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 ODEFSEY can pass to your baby in your breast milk. It is not known if the other medicines in ODEFSEY 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.

Some medicines may interact with ODEFSEY. **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 ODEFSEY.
- Do not start a new medicine without telling your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider can tell you if it is safe to take ODEFSEY with other medicines.

How should I take ODEFSEY?

- Take ODEFSEY exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to take it. ODEFSEY is taken by itself (not with other HIV-1 medicines) to treat HIV-1 infection.
- Take ODEFSEY 1 time each day with a meal.
- Do not change your dose or stop taking ODEFSEY without first talking with your healthcare provider. Stay under a healthcare provider's care when taking ODEFSEY.
- Do not miss a dose of ODEFSEY.
- If you take too much ODEFSEY, call your healthcare provider or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.
- When your ODEFSEY 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 ODEFSEY and become harder to treat.

What are the possible side effects of ODEFSEY?

ODEFSEY may cause serious side effects, including:

- **See “What is the most important information I should know about ODEFSEY?”**
- **Severe skin rash and allergic reactions.** Skin rash is a common side effect of ODEFSEY. Rash can be serious. Call your healthcare provider right away if you get a rash. In some cases, rash and allergic reaction may need to be treated in a hospital. **If you get a rash with any of the following symptoms, stop taking ODEFSEY and call your healthcare provider right away:**
 - fever
 - skin blisters
 - mouth sores
 - redness or swelling of the eyes (conjunctivitis)
 - swelling of the face, lips, mouth or throat
 - trouble breathing or swallowing
 - pain on the right side of the stomach (abdominal) area
 - dark “tea-colored” urine

- **Depression or mood changes.** Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following symptoms:
 - feel sad or hopeless
 - feel anxious or restless
 - have thoughts of hurting yourself (suicide) or have tried to hurt yourself
- **Change in liver enzymes.** People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus infection or who have certain liver enzyme changes may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening liver problems during treatment with ODEFSEY. Liver problems can also happen during treatment with ODEFSEY in people without a history of liver disease. Your healthcare provider may need to do tests to check your liver enzymes before and during treatment with ODEFSEY.
- **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 ODEFSEY. Your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking ODEFSEY if you develop new or worse kidney problems.
- **Bone problems** can happen in some people who take ODEFSEY. 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 effects of rilpivirine, one of the medicines in ODEFSEY, are depression, trouble sleeping (insomnia), and headache.

The most common side effect of emtricitabine and tenofovir alafenamide, two of the medicines in ODEFSEY, 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 ODEFSEY. 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.

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

For more information, call **1-800-445-3235** or go to **www.ODEFSEY.com**.

Keep ODEFSEY and all medicines out of reach of children.

Issued: March 2016

Odefsey[™]
emtricitabine 200mg/rilpivirine 25mg/
tenofovir alafenamide 25mg tablets



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MONEYSMART

continued from page 32

trust can be provided to the surviving spouse with the goal of ensuring that they are taken care of for the remainder of their life.

For those who are charitably inclined, trusts can be used to benefit both individuals and favorite organizations such as the AIDS Foundation Houston, The Montrose Center, or Lazarus House. As an example, a donor can place assets into a Charitable Remainder Trust (or CRT) and then have the trust pay a named beneficiary for a certain period of time. After that period has passed, the remainder of the estate is then transferred to a charity beneficiary. CRTs can also be set up in such a way that when the grantor of the trust passes away, his or her spouse can become an income recipient of the trust for the remainder of their life. After that person dies, the charity will receive the remainder of the assets from the trust.

Keeping Other Financial Plans in Check

In addition to planning your overall estate, it is important to ensure that all of your financial and insurance plans are reviewed regularly in order to ensure that they are still meeting your current needs. This is because you could end up either unintentionally disinheriting someone or including someone in an inheritance that you no longer wish to have included.

Here's an example. If you had a will while you were married, but now you are divorced, the will becomes null and void. However, you still have other financial and insurance plans that include beneficiary designations. You may, for instance, still have an ex-partner listed as the beneficiary of your IRA or your 401(k) plan. If something should happen to you, would you still want these funds going to them?

This is why all of your financial plans should ideally be reviewed at least once per year—and more often if you've had some type of major, life-changing experience such as a birth or death in the family, marriage or divorce, a new job, the purchase of a new home, or retirement.

It's also important to note that you really shouldn't have your "estate" listed as your beneficiary. That would force those assets to go through probate, and it can open up your estate to creditors during the probate period—presenting even more potential issues for your loved ones.

It's Never Too Early to Plan Ahead

While many may think that estate planning is just for the wealthy or for those who are close to retirement, the truth is that it is never too early to name guardians for your children, state who you want to have certain assets, and ensure that Uncle Sam doesn't take most of your money in taxes. Your estate plan isn't something that you can simply "set and forget." Since life is constantly changing, you should regularly review your plan in order to make any necessary changes and adjustments. →

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MONEYSMART

continued from page 36

When you're putting your estate plan in place, it can typically take the efforts of several professional advisors because of the mix of financial, tax, and legal issues at hand. Therefore, you may need a trusted investment advisor, as well as an attorney, a tax professional or CPA, and a trust company. It is best if all of these entities can work together and communicate the details of your plan with one another.

It is also a good idea to choose professionals who have a focus on working with the LGBT community. That way, you can be more assured that your advisors are updated on any new planning strategies and/or legislation that pertains to you and your needs.

The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual.

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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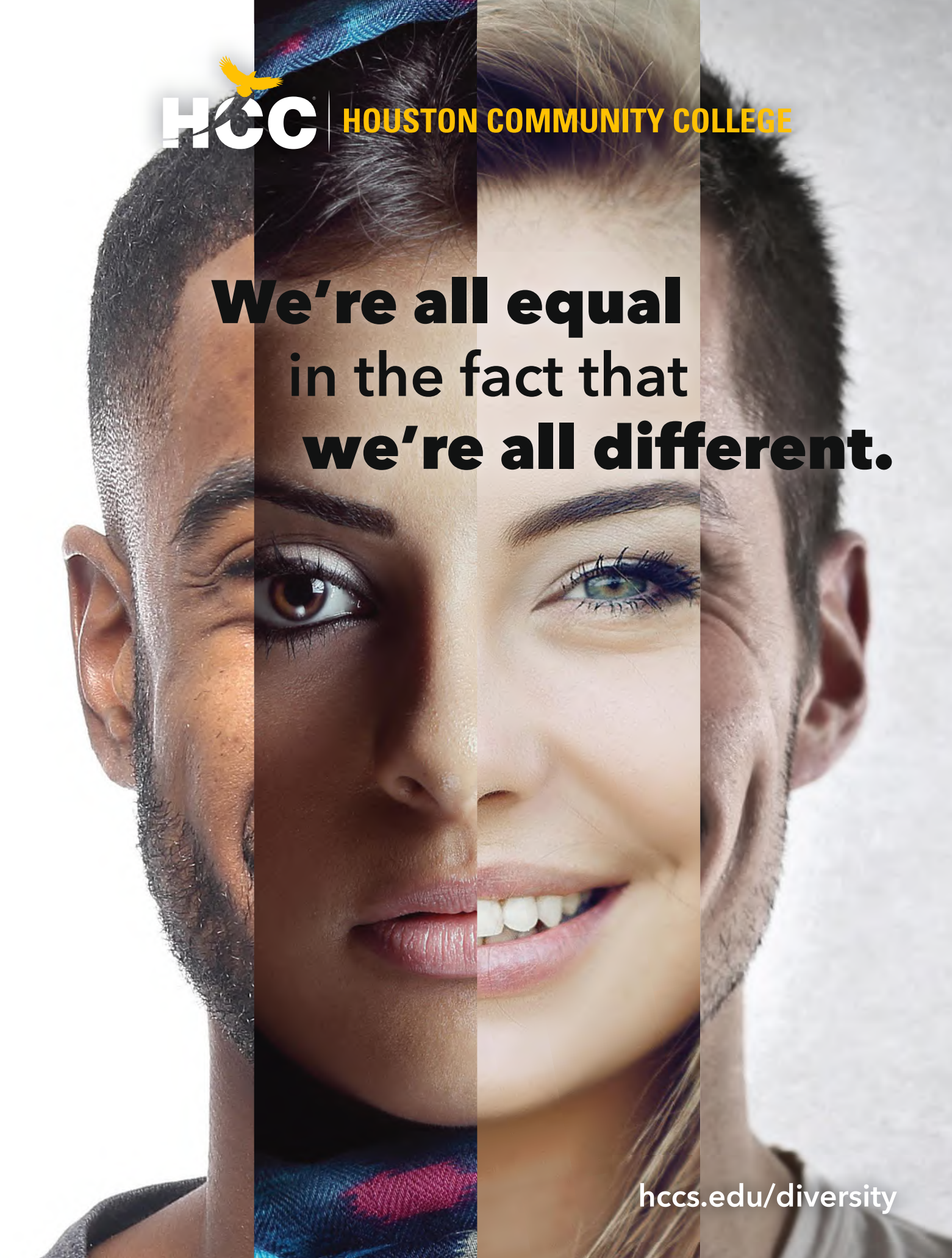
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Pride Month!

Don't miss out on any of the events in store this month.

Compiled by Marene Gustin

Photos by Dalton DeHart



Since Houston's first Pride parade in 1978, our LGBT community's event has grown into the largest and most lavish Pride Week in the Southwest. We've got a fabulous nighttime parade, a free festival, fashion shows, and much, much more. Be sure to visit OutSmartMagazine.com for updates on the last-minute parties and events. So fly your rainbow flag and party on, for the cause of diversity. →



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PRIDE MONTH!

continued from previous page

June 1

♦ **Pride Superstar Round 4**

Season 10 of this artist competition sponsored by Elite Care at Meteor. Free and open to the public. The event starts at 9 p.m.

pridehouston.org

♦ **Houston Pride Band**

Band social from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at HSPVA.

houstonprideband.org

June 2

♦ **HATCH Youth Prom**

Free for youth 13 to 20, HATCH celebrates LGBT awareness and the upcoming Pride Week at Numbers Night Club. The event kicks off at 7 p.m.

hatchyouth.org

June 3

♦ **Stripper Circus**

Hot male dancers every Friday at South Beach, with no cover during June. Doors open at 9 p.m.

southbeachthenightclub.com

♦ **Phoenix Youth Program**

The first program for LGBTQ youth of color in Houston launches at the Montrose Center.

hatchyouth.org

June 3-5

♦ **South Texas Bear Weekend**

The Bear and Leather Corps of Corpus Christi and the Renegade Bears of San Antonio have teamed up this year as hosts.

bearandleathercc.com



Rainbow on the Green

Coco Montrese rocked the stage at last year's Discovery Green Pride event.

June 4

♦ **LHI's Health Fair**

The Lesbian Health Initiative will provide a limited number of no-cost health services to lesbian women and transgender men, as well as distribute information about accessing ACA healthcare insurance. The event runs 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Houston Area Community Services (HACS).

lhihouston.org

♦ **Pride Volunteer Orientation**

If you're volunteering for the festival and parade, get up early and get on down to The Montrose Center for orientation. Starts at 9 a.m.

montrosecenter.org

♦ **Gender Identity Family Gathering**

Families with transgender, gender-diverse, and questioning children and adolescents are welcome to attend. There will be discussion-based support groups for parents and young people as well as playtime for the little ones. The event runs 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Montrose Center.

genderinfinity.org

♦ **Beaumont Pride Coming Out Ball**

A celebratory run-up to Beaumont's Pride parade. The event kicks off at 7 p.m. at MCM Eleganté Beaumont.

beaumont-pride.org

June 5

♦ **HIV Long-Term Survivor's Awareness Day**

Thirty-five years later, there is still much to do. This day spotlights those living longest with HIV worldwide.

letskickass.org →

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PRIDE MONTH!

continued from previous page

♦ Turn the World Around

The Gay Men's Chorus of Houston celebrates Pride with a concert about love and inclusion. The event starts at 3 p.m. at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church.
bcpahouston.org

June 8

♦ Pride Superstar Round 5

Season 10 of this artist competition sponsored by Elite Care at Meteor. Free and open to the public. The event starts at 9 p.m.
pridehouston.org

June 11

♦ Rainbow on the Green

The Discovery Green park party runner-up to Pride Week, this event downtown is expected to draw 4,000 fans for entertainment, food, and fun. The event kicks off at 7 p.m.
discoverygreen.com/rainbow

♦ Beaumont Pride Festival and Parade

The third annual Beaumont Pride parade. Festivities kick off at 10:30 a.m., parade begins at 8 p.m.
beaumont-pride.org

June 15

♦ Pride Superstar Round 6

Season 10 of this artist competition sponsored by Elite Care at Meteor. Free and open to the public. The event starts at 9 p.m.
pridehouston.org



Pride Superstar

The annual Pride singing competition celebrates its 10th anniversary at Meteor. Who will be this year's top talent?

June 17

♦ Pre-Pride Alumni Mixer

Show your school spirit at the happy hour/mixer at JR's Houston hosted by Aggie Pride LGBTQA Former Student Network, Texas Exes LGBT Alumni Network, UH LGBTQ Alumni Association, Rice LGBTQ Alumni, and Lambda NextGen Houston. The event kicks off at 6 p.m.

June 22

♦ Pride Superstar FINALE!

Season 10 of this artist competition sponsored by Elite Care. Come root for your faves at Meteor Lounge. The event starts at 9 p.m.
pridehouston.org

June 23

♦ Rock the Runway

Cocktails, nibbles, and all the best fashions starting at 8 p.m. at Audi Central Houston. RSVP to get into this free, must-see event. And wear your best!
pridehouston.org

June 24

♦ Pride Shabbat Dinner

Keshet Houston and community partners will host Houston's second annual LGBT Pride Shabbat Dinner. The event begins with Friday evening services at 6 p.m., followed by a festive kosher dinner. Location TBA.
keshethouston.org →



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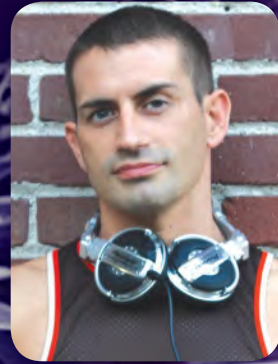
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Joe Ross starts at 11PM.



PRIDE MONTH!

continued from page 47

Between Two Worlds: A Hymn for Black Gay Men on Race, Religion, and Rites of Passage

Dance theater installation/performance created by Harrison Guy about the lives, experiences, and memories of black gay men, crisscrossing generations, nationalities, expressions, identities, and beliefs. The question: "Can we be many things at once?" The event starts at 7:30 p.m. at MATCH and a few other nearby spaces. Tickets are \$25.

matchhouston.org, blackgayhou@gmail.com

Amazons

Dedicated to the women of the LGBT community—but open to all!—this gal party at Pearl Bar has a \$5 donation. Presented by Comcast and sponsored additionally by Bud Light, the New HOT 95-7, and Mix 96-5. Must be 18 to attend. The event kicks off at 9 p.m.

pridehouston.org

June 25

Houston Pride Festival and Parade

This is the big event! Join us downtown for the daylong festival and the exciting nighttime parade. It's all free and open to the public—about 600,000 of them. The festival starts at noon and the parade kicks off at 8:30 p.m. V.I.P. tickets are also available.

pridehouston.org



Pride in Our City

The Houston Pride Festival and Parade draws in about 600,000 attendees from all over the country.

Official After Party

When the parade's over, head on over to South Beach for the official after party. Be 18 or over, drink responsibly, and don't forget to have fun. The event starts at 11 p.m.

pridehouston.org

The Rocky Horror Pride Show

A performance like none other, the beloved Rocky Horror Picture Show hits the stage at the Premiere Cinema Theatre in Webster, TX. Specially-themed for celebrating Pride and diversity, this torrid affair will astonish and arouse. The tickets will sell at 11:45 p.m., and the preshow will begin at midnight.

June 26

Hot-Tea Dance

And it's not over yet! For one final Pride Week blowout, join the Hot-Tea Dance at the all-new Rich's Nightclub starting at 5 p.m. Lights, lasers, and Hot-Tea Go-Go Boys.

pridehouston.org

July 2

Bigger than Texas Pride

San Antonio's main Pride event, held at Crockett Park. The festival starts at 11 a.m., followed by the parade at 9 p.m.

pridesanantonio.org ■



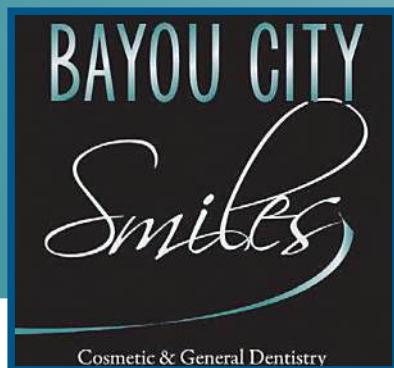
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2016 Female Pride Marshal Fran Watson

“That which does not kill
us, makes us stronger.”
—Friedrich Nietzsche

By **Brandon Wolf**

Photo by *Brandon Wolf*

She never met her father. She lost her mother at age 13. She was expelled from the local school system at age 15.

But today, 38-year-old Fransheneka “Fran” Watson has her own law practice, a partner of 12 years, and is the first African-American female to serve as president of the Houston GLBT Political Caucus. Reflecting on her life, Watson says, “It’s been a roller-coaster ride.”

A Lot to Deal with at an Early Age

Watson was born in 1977, when her mother was a 15-year-old high-school student. Although she never met her father, relatives have told her that he played professional football for the Green Bay Packers, and died young of a drug overdose. “That’s one door I decided not to venture behind,” Watson says, although she did look him up on the Internet to confirm his Packers career.

She lived her childhood with her mother, grandparents, and a brother who was three years younger. Her mother, a certified nursing assistant, worked in local nursing homes. Her grandfather was a chef, and her grandmother was an elevator operator.

In elementary school, Watson was a good student. She loved to read—especially books about adventures in foreign lands. Although she was introverted, she excelled in track and kickball.

Middle school gave her the opportunity to expand her interests, and she became a member of the concert band, playing the bass clarinet. At home, she learned how to pay the bills and reconcile the checking account. She also learned how to confront the fact that her mother had become addicted to crack. “She picked the wrong boyfriend,” Watson says.

At one point, Watson helped her mother get into a methadone recovery group, where she alternated between recovery and addiction.



2016 Female Pride Marshal Fran Watson overcame many hardships in her childhood, including losing her mother at age 13. Now, Watson owns her own law practice and is the first African-American woman to serve as the president of the Houston GLBT Political Caucus.

A True Leader

When she was a high-school freshman, Watson came home one afternoon and found her mother dead of an overdose.

“She was so full of fun, and had such a wonderful, hearty laugh. She loved to turn up the music and convert our living room into a dance floor,” Watson remembers. The loss devastated her. Although motherless herself, Watson was now faced with filling a maternal role for her younger brother.

Adversity Takes a Toll

Watson made it through her freshman year, still traumatized by her mother’s passing. But as she “became rebellious at times” in her sophomore year, the school’s marching band gave her the only avenue to channel her anger and sense of loss.

That same year, her grandfather became very sick, and Watson had to accompany him to the doctor often. “We had to use the bus system to get my grandfather to the doctor and

back,” Watson remembers.

In general, her life was very restricted by her grandparents. “It wasn’t a religious thing—I didn’t grow up in a faith home. But my grandparents worried that what happened to my mother would happen to me, so they limited my activities and refused to let me get a driver’s license.”

She ended up missing a lot of classes her sophomore year. As she entered her junior year, her grades improved. But then, just when she thought she had her life under control, she was stunned to learn that because of the sophomore classes she missed, she was being expelled from the school system. “I begged, cried, and pleaded with the principal, but he was unyielding. To this day, it still makes me angry.”

Life in the Fast-Food Lane

With no school to attend, and needing income, Watson went to work at Wendy’s in Montrose. She started by wiping tables and trays. Then →

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2016 FEMALE PRIDE MARSHAL

continued from previous page

one day, she had to fill in for a cashier, and everyone noticed how fast she could count money and make change.

Watson was promoted to be the drive-through cashier. "I was friendly and I was fast," she says with a laugh. The supervisors liked her potential, and tried to convince her to apply for a management position.

But Watson was embarrassed by the fact she did not have a high-school diploma, so she kept brushing off the subject. One day, she finally told a manager about her dilemma.

The manager told her that another employee had been coping with the same problem. He studied for and passed the GED high-school equivalency test. She hadn't even known that was an option before she enrolled in the study course.

Watson took the exam at the University of Houston-Downtown. When she returned to get her grade, a counselor told her, "You have tremendously high scores on the GED—enough to win a scholarship."

That prompted Watson to apply—and win—the scholarship, enabling her to attend UH and earn her bachelor's degree in psychology in 2005. She also entered the research-assistant intern program. It was a busy life, juggling classes, the internship, and work as a drive-through cashier—now at Luther's BBQ.

Gaining More than Just a College Degree

In 2004, Watson met Kim Atkins, who was also a UH research assistant. They began to "hang out together"—or at least that is what Watson thought.

She'd once kissed another girl at age 14, but lacking any support for her feelings, she decided it was not right. As she had from elementary school on, she accepted her attraction to women as simply feelings of "strong friendship."

After several months, Atkins took her to Fuddruggers for dinner and asked her about the future of their relationship. Watson was totally surprised. Atkins asked her, "Didn't you realize we've been dating?"

Watson actually had no clue, since she'd had a total of one date in her life. Atkins proposed, Watson accepted, and they exchanged vows in a very private ceremony—just the two of them—at the Galleria Waterwall.

The Challenge of Law School

After graduation, Watson worked as secretary in the UH-Downtown Conference Center. But she longed for something more challenging.

Now in a stable relationship, she applied to the Texas Southern University Law School, and was admitted for the 2006 school year. She remembers the late Gene Harrington, a law professor and a notable HIV and LGBT activist. "I didn't have him for a professor, because he taught estate planning and that wasn't the



Eyes on the Future

Despite being expelled from high school, Watson worked diligently to earn her GED. Here she's pictured at 16 years old at AstroWorld.

downtown at the time made jobs very hard to get. Eventually, Watson opened up a private practice in her home, doing LGBT estate planning—a career path that opened unexpectedly. In 2006, she and Atkins had joined the Community Gospel Church. When members discovered she was a law student, they came to her asking for help with estate planning. At the time, marriage equality was barely on the societal radar, and LGBT couples had to draw up lengthy contracts to give them the same rights as a married couple. Nothing equaled marriage, but a portfolio of legal documents came as close as possible. Watson and Atkins celebrated their fifth anniversary with a commitment ceremony at their church.

Since same-sex marriage in Texas seemed even more unlikely a decade ago, Watson's LGBT estate-planning services were in demand. She liked having her own practice because it gave her the ability to spend part of her time volunteering.

Wanting to Give Back

Watson was eager to give back to the community she now could call her own. It began with helping her church make floats for the Pride parade every year and marching alongside the floats, giving out trinkets.

She also involved herself in her church's "reconciliation" outreach, helping LGBTs who had been spiritually rejected and condemned

by their own churches. Watson had not been raised with a fire-and-brimstone version of religion, but she could see how deeply it had affected others. Her background in psychology made her a good choice to counsel these walking wounded.

Watson also did pro-bono work through the Lone Star Legal Aid group. She helped a variety of people down on their luck and without money, such as homeless individuals and veterans. In 2012, she won the organization's "Pro-Bono of the Year" award.

In 2011, Watson proved that you just can't keep a good woman down. While scaling a rock-climbing wall in Austin, she fell 28 feet—two and a half stories—to the ground. Both legs were broken, and doctors marveled that she was still alive.

She was limited to bed for three months, and then nine months in a wheelchair. Nevertheless, she wheeled herself alongside her church's float in the Pride parade that year, once again giving out trinkets.

Drawn to the World of Politics

In 2012, Watson joined the Houston Stonewall Lawyers Association. Her networking there led her to volunteer for the 2013 Creating Change Conference held in Houston. Having learned firsthand the difficulties of life in a wheelchair, Watson took on the responsibility of transportation and hospitality efforts for →

direction I was drawn to."

What she *was* drawn to was advocacy law, such as the wrongful-conviction project that was working to overturn the sentences of innocent African-American men. She was also the executive editor of the school's Law Review publication for two years.

In 2009, she passed the test to be admitted to the Texas State Bar. However, the economic

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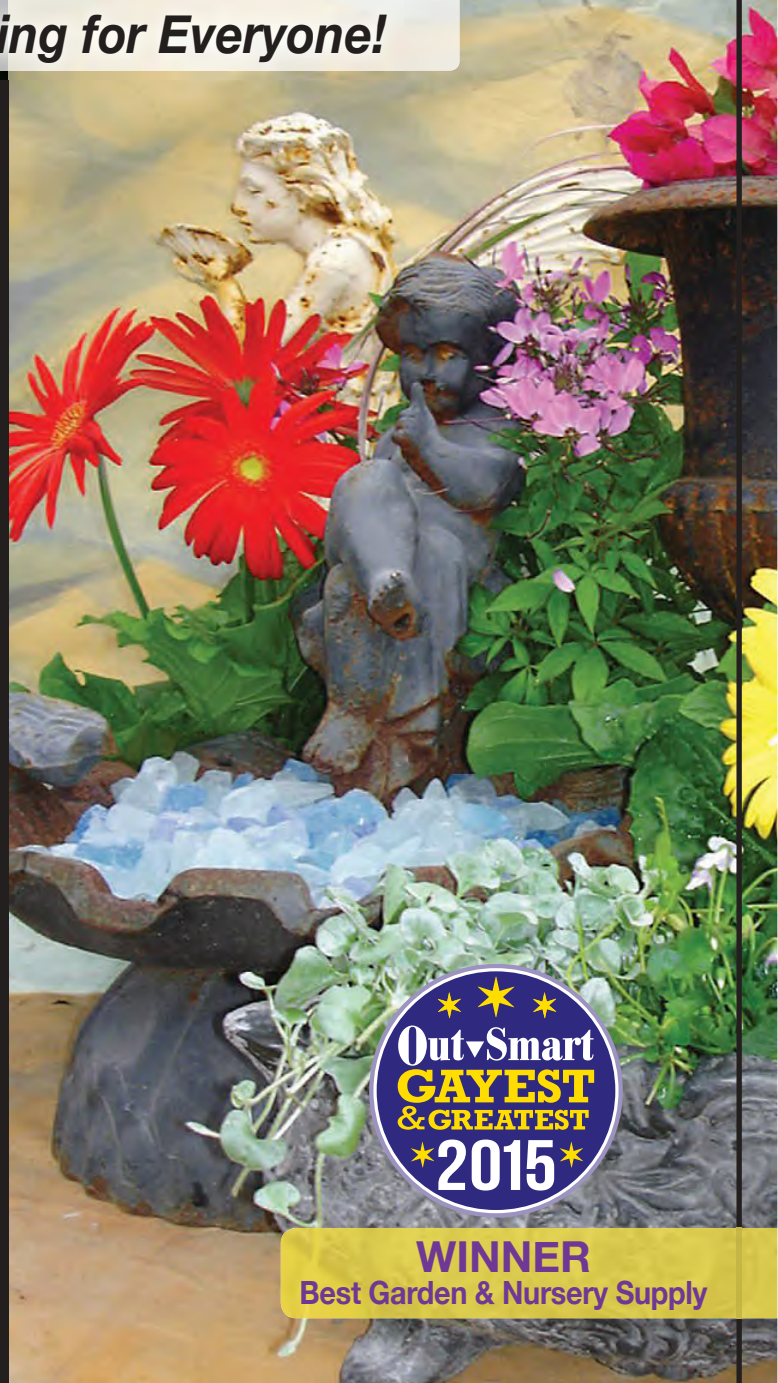
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2016 FEMALE PRIDE MARSHAL

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the disabled at the conference.

Later in 2013, Watson attended her first meeting of the Houston LGBT Political Caucus. Mayor Annise Parker, running for her third term, was at that meeting. Watson was fascinated to see the mayor up close, and watch the Caucus membership grill her.

That led Watson to join the Caucus screening committee and run for a position on the Caucus board. She also chaired the volunteer committee and began a tradition of holding volunteer appreciation parties.

In 2014, Watson threw herself into the efforts to pass HERO, Houston's equal rights ordinance. That same year, she and Atkins celebrated their 10th anniversary by legally marrying in New York's Central Park. (Atkins had legally changed her last name to Watson the previous year.)

In 2015, Watson worked hard to defeat the repeal of the city's HERO law, but that effort failed due to a highly emotional and deceptive ad campaign by the opposition. She also ran for the presidency of the Caucus, and won, becoming the first African-American female to hold the office. In that capacity, Watson says she is working to bridge the gap that she



Classmates and Soul Mates

In 2014, Watson (l) married her partner, Kim, in Central Park in New York City. The two met during their undergraduate studies at the University of Houston—Downtown.

senses between longtime activists and a new generation of LGBTs who are getting involved.

When she was voted the 2016 Female Pride Marshal, Watson says: "I was very humbled by the honor, and touched by the trust that

the community has placed in me." It also seemed more than a bit surreal. "I withdrew into myself for so long, never wanting anyone to know that I liked women. Now I'll be riding in a convertible with my female partner, waving to over 700,000 people along the parade route in June."

Looking to the future, Watson has an eye on elective politics, especially the Texas legislature. Life has been an amazing journey for this 38-year-old powerhouse of energy and optimism.

Although Watson is a post-civil-rights child, she is aware of her past and her family history. "My great-great grandmother was a slave," she says. "My grandmother used to tell me stories that her mother had passed down to her about those days. It had a deep impact on me."

As an African-American lesbian, Watson understands the intersectionality of being a woman, a person of color, and a member of the LGBT community. She has had a lot to deal with, including some harsh curveballs along the way—all of which have made her stronger. Her amazing journey seems to be on the verge of becoming even more amazing.

Brandon Wolf also writes about 2016 Male Pride Marshal Brad Odom-Harris in this issue of OUTSMART magazine.

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2016 Male Pride Marshal Brad Odom-Harris

Pride has a very special place in his heart.

By **Brandon Wolf**

His first visit to a gay bar wasn't an epiphany for Brad Odom-Harris. Born post-Stonewall, he's always known a world in which gays were visible. He lived in the Museum District for a while, and often went to Rich's Disco on "straight night," so clubbing with gay men wasn't anything unusual.

But his first Houston Pride Parade in 1996 was a defining moment. "I'd never seen tens of thousands of gay people together in one place at one time. It changed my whole perception of being a gay man," he says.

Growing Up in Richmond, Texas

Odom-Harris was born in Hermann Hospital in April 1973, and except for a few years in other cities, Houston has always been his home. His family lived in the Sugar Land area at the time of his birth, but moved to a 14-acre tract of land in Richmond when he was in the third grade. The land had a big house and a lot of pecan trees.

Middle school was an awkward period for Odom-Harris. While most of his schoolmates lived in the suburbs and could mingle outside of school hours, he was a "country kid" who was bullied for being different. That ended when he started fighting back. "But that really was not the best solution," he admits.

Odom-Harris describes himself as a bit of a nerd in those days, and he hung out with just a few friends. He was smart and popular, but still didn't sit at "the cool table." "I saw other kids get called names and beat up, so I kept my feelings hidden."

Being gay was simply not an option for him. "It was a dark and bad side of me," he says, looking back. "There was a long spell I went through where I was deeply depressed and suicidal."

Fortunately, when he was 12, his family started to attend the socially progressive



2016 Male Pride Marshal Brad Odom-Harris (l) met his husband, attorney David Harris, at a Pride event in 2006. The two were married in New York in 2011.

Love & Pride

Unity Church in Houston, and the depression lifted. "I became part of a youth group that was inclusive and loving of all people—more than just [with] words, but also in practice."

In high school, Odom-Harris joined the school band. He wasn't fond of the marching band, but it was required if he was to perform with the concert band, where he could indulge his real passion for playing a drum set. He also began to learn how to DJ.

Odom-Harris played basketball for two years before the coach took him aside and said, "Next year there won't be a B-team." That precipitated his switch to the swim team. During his junior and senior years, he earned medals at both the regional and state levels of competition before graduating in 1991.

On to College

Odom-Harris spent the next two years study-

ing marine science at Texas A&M-Galveston. During his time in Galveston, he volunteered as a docent at Moody Gardens. In 1992 he was chosen to lead a 20-minute tour of the facilities for Robert Kennedy Jr., who was there to receive an environmental award.

"Just being a few feet from a Kennedy was quite awesome," Odom-Harris says. He remembers that Kennedy took a special interest in the blind batfish that use sonar to swim.

Realizing there was more to becoming another Jacques Cousteau than he had imagined, Odom-Harris transferred to the University of Houston (UH) in 1993 to major in communications. His coursework included extensive training in video production. He also began working part-time as a marketing assistant at his father's software company, Symon Communications. The company produced call-center management software that was becoming →



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2016 MALE PRIDE MARSHAL

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an industry standard used by such corporate giants as Discover and American Express.

1996—A Very Busy Year

Besides graduating from UH in 1996, the year was also memorable for Odom-Harris because he had finally accepted his sexual orientation earlier in the year.

He came out to his parents, and found them to be very supportive. "I wanted to be something for them that I wasn't, and I feared rejection. I am fortunate that they are [among] the good ones, full of love and support. It felt good to no longer be hiding or parsing my pronouns when talking about relationships."

In June of that year, Odom-Harris attended his first Pride parade. He was overwhelmed. "When I arrived at the parade, I was flooded by the undeniable fact that I was not alone. I finally realized that I was part of a community."

The next month, Odom-Harris traveled to Atlanta and stayed with a friend to volunteer for the Summer Olympics. He worked with transportation for the media, getting members of the press to the right location at the right time.

Odom-Harris then began working for his father as a systems analyst. The job took him to Dallas, and for the first time he lived openly as a gay man. "It was wonderfully liberating," he says.

Odom-Harris continued to work for Symon Communications through 2005. After a year as a systems analyst, he began doing marketing work that built the business with record sales. Utilizing video production skills he had learned in college, he produced training videos for the company's staff, which resulted in substantial savings over instructor-led classes.

Following the installation of the Symon software at one company, Odom-Harris remembers sitting down with the supervisor of a company that had just installed Symon software. to show her incoming calls statistics on her computer monitor, including those in queue. "They are in queue right now?" she exclaimed and dashed out of her office. When she returned, she said, "My agents already knew." Prior to the Symon software, she had to personally alert her employees about the workflow status, but now they could see the details of incoming calls at their workstations.

Sadly, Odom-Harris lost his father to leukemia in 2002. At his father's memorial service at Unity Church, he talked about his high-school days when his father would tow a catamaran trailer to church on Sundays, parking it in the church's lot so the family could go sailing in the afternoon. After the funeral, Rev. Howard Ceasar said to him, "I always wondered who was having fun on the water after church, while I had to spend the afternoon indoors in my office!"



Ready for the Rodeo

Odom-Harris moved to a 14-acre tract of land in Richmond, Texas, when he was in the third grade.

Venturing Outside the Box

By 2005, Odom-Harris and his brother had decided to sell their father's company and open

a wine bar. Salud! Winery and Bistro opened the next year in the 3939 Montrose Boulevard shopping strip. The interior was remodeled to look like a small Italian street exterior, with the bar and winery as two street-level businesses and the main dining area under 25-foot ceilings painted black.

Salud! became a unique corporate "team building" venue. Many of their clients were among the leading companies in Houston's business community.

In 2005, Odom-Harris also joined the board of Pride Houston. Years earlier, in 1999, he had been asked by his friend and then-Pride president, Nick Brines, to join the new Friends of Pride group. He did join and had remained a member over the years. Now he was given the opportunity to further that initiative and to develop community events.

In 2006, 10 years after attending his first Pride parade, Odom-Harris met attorney David Harris at a Pride event. They started dating and fell in love, and the following year they moved in together as a couple.

After two years on the board, Odom-Harris was elected president of Pride Houston. In that role, he oversaw the 2008 and 2009 celebrations. One of his proudest accomplishments was the decision to make the Pride Festival free. The attendance jumped from the usual 5,000 people to over 50,000 in the first year.

Under his leadership, fencing was extended

along the entire parade route to improve spectator and participant safety. Also, the letters "GLBT" were removed from the official name of the organization. "It is my sincere belief that, in relation to a day meant to celebrate our community's strength and unity, letters which define us as different from each other and divide us into groups have no place," Odom-Harris explains. "I believe that Pride is about celebrating our one beautiful and vibrant community."

In 2008, Salud! was voted Best Wine Bar in OUTSMART's Gayest & Greatest awards, and Odom-Harris was the runner-up to Charles Armstrong as Favorite Male Business Owner.

Unfortunately, in 2009 the business closed as a result of Hurricane Ike and the severe national economic downturn. Team-building experiences were among the first things to be struck from corporate budgets.

A New Career and a Wedding

After the demise of Salud!, Odom-Harris joined Primas, a call center software firm, as director of sales. In 2011, he moved to CXM, also a call-center software firm, for a similar position that he currently holds. CXM ended 2015 with their highest sales in five years.

In 2011, Odom-Harris and his partner traveled to New York to get married. "It seemed like marriage equality would be a long time coming to Houston," he says. They were married on →



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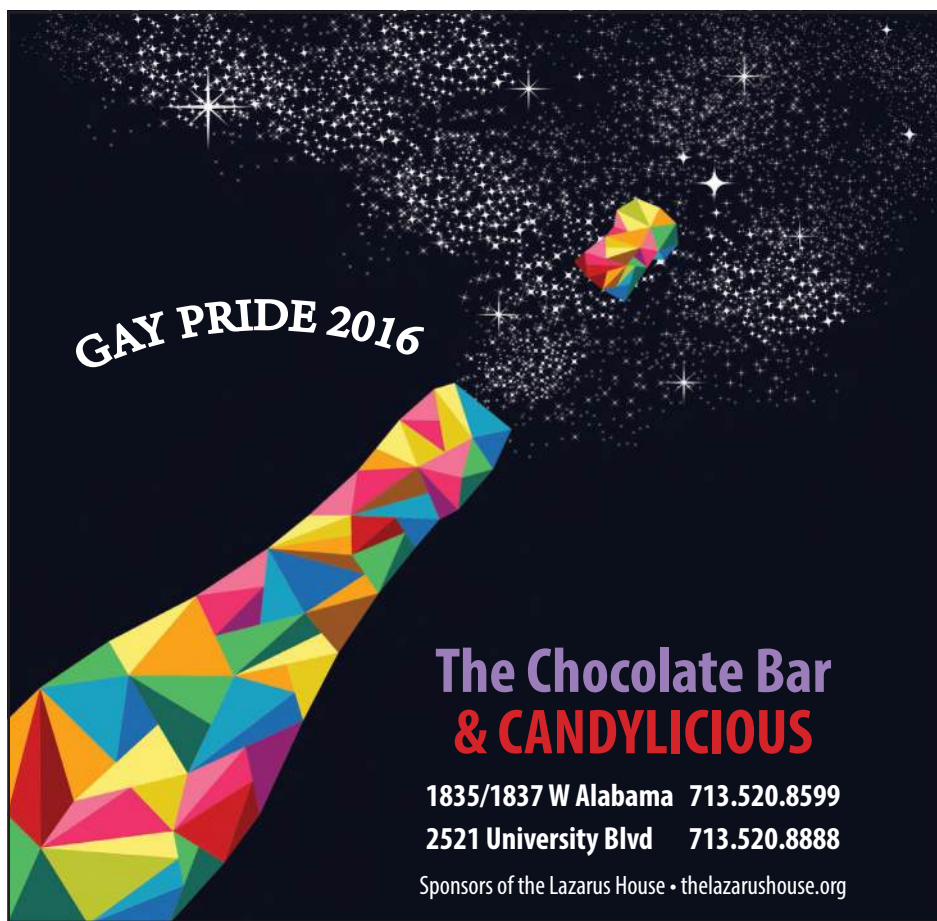
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11/11/11, a date the couple liked because of the folk saying, "It's 11:11. Make a wish."

The men decided to take the same last name, Odom-Harris. "Deciding which name came first was easy," Odom-Harris says with a slightly wicked smile. "We considered the abbreviation and decided 'OH' was more acceptable than 'HO.'"

Returning to Houston, the couple went to the Division of Motor Vehicles to change the names on their driver's licenses, but the request was rejected. "We talked with the supervisor, and although she was warm and polite, she indicated that it was a matter of Texas state law." They were left with no option but to go through the costly process of legally changing their names.

Giving Back to His Community

One would suspect after talking with Odom-Harris that he is an extrovert. "My Myers-Briggs Personality Test scored me at the top of that classification," he confirms. This is fortunate for Houston's LGBT community, because of the long list of volunteer efforts that Odom-Harris has involved himself in during the two decades since his coming out.

In addition to his involvement with Pride Houston, Odom-Harris has been (and



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Brad and David chose the date of their special day because they love the folk saying, "It's 11:11. Make a wish."

is now) an active member of the Executive & Professional Association of Houston (EPAH) and the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Houston.

He has supported, with time or money, The Montrose Center, the Montrose Softball League, World AIDS Day, and the HERO cam-

paign, to name just a few. He has used his DJ passion over the years to provide music and lighting for countless events, free of charge, saving organizations and political campaigns thousands of dollars in rental charges and service fees.

In 2010 Odom-Harris became aware of the

crisis of LGBT youth homelessness in Houston. He helped open the Safe Affirming Family Environment (S.A.F.E.) Spot, a daily drop-in shelter for homeless teens. "On any given night, there are over 150 kids between the ages of 13 and 21 without a home, who self-identify as LGBT. Sixty percent of them were kicked out after coming out. These are good, smart, loving kids in bad situations," he says.

Odom-Harris is currently focusing on implementing the HRC Foundation's "Welcoming Schools" program, helping children feel more comfortable with being themselves—which leads to better student performance and reduced dropout rates.

Odom-Harris is humbled and grateful for his election as the 2016 Male Pride Marshal. This is a perfect year for him to receive that honor, because it marks the 20th anniversary of his first Pride parade—an event that is near and dear to his heart.

He is excited about riding down Bagby Street in a parade convertible in June with his husband, David Odom-Harris. During that ride, he will be thinking about his first parade two decades ago—and also about all the people who will remember 2016 as the year they first attended their first Pride parade.

Brandon Wolf also writes about 2016 Female Pride Marshal Fran Watson in this issue of OUTSMART magazine.

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2016 Ally Pride Marshal Dena Hughes

She turned to the LGBT community when diagnosed HIV-positive, and has been giving back to us ever since.

By Brandon Wolf

Photo by Brandon Wolf

Dena Hughes has always been a person on the move. “People tell me that as soon as I could walk, I was everywhere,” she says. Sports helped her channel some of that energy when she was growing up, but she still seems to have an endless supply.

Even being diagnosed as HIV-positive at the age of 21 didn’t slow her down. With her typical optimism, she turned a huge lemon into lemonade. “Dealing with my health situation brought me into close touch with Houston’s LGBT community, and that has been an enormous plus in my life,” she says.

Boundless Energy

Although her mother lived in Beaumont, Hughes was born in Seattle while her mother was visiting relatives there in 1971. Houston’s Meyerland area became her new home at the age of three, and she has put down roots there that remain today. Her mother was a nurse for years, and then moved into the oil and gas industry’s geo-science field.

Hughes’ elementary-school days were focused on gymnastics, and she longed to become the next Mary Lou Retton. She was a good gymnast, but found the bar to be the most challenging. “I learned how to land back on the bar after a back flip by *not* landing on the bar. Missing the bar is a powerful motivator to get it right,” she recalls.

By middle school, the gymnastics classes had become too expensive, so Hughes switched to running track and working out at the local YMCA.

In high school, she became involved in volleyball and dancing. She also loved to roller



Since being diagnosed as HIV-positive in 1991, Dena Hughes (I) has been a tireless advocate for the HIV community. Here she’s pictured with her stepfather, Tom Russell, and mother, Carolyn Russell.

Positive Living

skate. There was a roller rink nearby where parents felt safe dropping their children off on Saturday afternoons. When Fame City opened nearby, weekends became even more special.

Hughes was especially fond of her classes in black history. She was fascinated with Harriett Tubman—an appropriate choice in light of the recent announcement that Tubman will be replacing Andrew Jackson on the U.S. \$20 bills.

She loved socializing, and from a young age learned the value of allies—those special friends who are always there for you, and you are there for them. By the time she graduated from high school, she had a sizeable network—friends from elementary, middle, and high school; friends from church; friends from the roller rink; and even friends in Beaumont whom she saw when visiting her grandmother.

Off to College

Hughes spent her first year of college in San

Antonio at St. Mary’s University, majoring in theater and drama. She was a member of the college’s volleyball team. But after the first year, she grew lonely for Houston and moved back.

At age 19, she entered the University of Houston as a sophomore, and chose a career path in journalism and public relations. “That was when my life really started,” she says. She joined a sorority, did well in her classes, and had an active and happy social life.

The path to happiness lay before her as she entered her junior year. She was happy, healthy, attractive, and loved her classes. She had no idea that a very dark cloud lay ahead—one that would change the course of her life forever.

In late 1991, Hughes got a call from her best friend. “That man that you were dating a couple years ago has been diagnosed with HIV,” her friend said. She suggested that Hughes get a blood test, just to be sure of her HIV status. →

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Hughes visited the university clinic and asked for an HIV blood test. Then she waited for two weeks for the results. "It was a long two weeks," Hughes remembers. She spent the time mentally reviewing what little she knew about AIDS. "I knew it affected gay men, and that wasn't me. I knew it affected intravenous drug users, and that wasn't me," she recalls. "There was no conversation in the black female community about AIDS, so the whole subject was rather remote to me."

Dealing with the Bad News

Hughes showed up at the clinic to get her test results, and the doctor who greeted her asked her to come back to her office. "I noticed that her face wasn't very relaxed," Hughes says.

The doctor told her, "I'm so sorry, Dena, but you've been diagnosed as HIV-positive." Hughes remembers that day, December 14, 1991, vividly. "After I heard those words, I felt like I was falling—falling backwards—and that there was no one to catch me. The doctor was still talking, but as I looked at her I couldn't hear any words. I only saw her lips move."

After leaving the clinic, Hughes called the friend who had advised her to get a test. She then told a second friend, but otherwise kept the news to herself throughout the holidays. There would be time enough to deal with it in January, and she wanted her Christmas to be free of anxiety.

But it was a lonely secret. Unlike the gay men in Houston who had a strong support network in place to deal with an HIV diagnosis, Hughes had none. She had no idea where to turn or what to do. And the thought that kept running through her mind during that holiday season was "Who would want to marry a girl with HIV?"

A month after the diagnosis, Hughes told her mother and stepfather, Carolyn and Tom Russell. They were both totally supportive. Her stepfather went to a bookstore and bought every book he could find about HIV, and began to immerse himself in the subject. Her mother provided spiritual support.

Hughes had a healthy T-cell count of 1,300, so she decided not to begin the medication regimen yet. (She finally began taking retrovirals in 2013.) She also decided to be open about her status. "I began to tell the people who knew me. It was up to them how they wanted to deal with it," she says.

Faced with a serious health issue, Hughes knew she needed to connect to a community that was already expert. She also needed a community that would be open and receptive to her. Houston's LGBT community fulfilled both of those needs.

Moving Forward

In early 1994, Hughes became Dena Gray, mar-

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Step by Step

Hughes married in 1994 and soon after gave birth to her daughter, Kandace (pictured with her step-grandmother, Mary Russell). In 1997, she met longtime HIV survivor Magic Johnson.

rying a good friend after their relationship deepened. Having a baby wasn't on the agenda, but she did become pregnant.

This was the only time she turned to medications, taking AZT until her daughter Kandace was born in November 1995. Kandace was tested for HIV, and the results were negative. Although the marriage didn't last—the couple divorced in 1996—the friendship remained.

Hughes had dropped out of school after she became pregnant. But once her life was again

stabilized, she returned to the University of Houston to earn her degree in 1997.

One of the groups Hughes had initially turned to was AIDS Foundation Houston. Her dynamic personality and her speaking effectiveness were quickly noticed, so she was asked to volunteer as a health educator and community speaker.

Hughes was hired on to the staff of Bering Omega in 1997, and then went to work for the People with AIDS Coalition in 1999. She also

became a member of the Harris County Ryan White Planning Council, and served in various capacities with other AIDS organizations. From 2002 to 2005, she worked on the staff of former Houston City Council member Ada Edwards.

A state of emergency in Houston's African-American community had been declared in 1999 by mayor Lee Brown, when demographic studies showed an alarming increase in HIV cases. Hughes worked with everyone from church pastors to civil rights activist Quanell X to address the problem.

Hughes had the ability to bridge gaps and work with communities that were not dealing well with AIDS. "You have to meet people where they are at," Hughes says. "But the important thing is to stop the transmission of the virus and provide treatment for those who are already living with it."

From 2005 to 2008, Hughes worked as a housing and community development program manager for the City of Houston. She then served as the executive director for Bread of Life, Inc., for two years. In 2010, she returned to the City, working as a program manager in the Department of Health and Community Services.

In the spring of 2011, Hughes was notified that she had been chosen as a White House "Champion of Change." She flew to Washington DC and, along with a dozen other →

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2016 ALLY PRIDE MARSHAL

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recipients, spent a full day with President Obama's top AIDS advisors and policy makers. Upon her return, Mayor Annise Parker honored her with a "Dena Gray Day."

Finding Love Again

In February 2012, Hughes met Daniel Hughes on the HIV Dating Online website. In August they were married. Both of them live openly as HIV-positive.

The next year, Hughes left her job with the City to work full-time with the resource-management and consulting service she had been building up for several years. Today, she and her modern-day "Brady Bunch" family live right next to the house she grew up in, where her mother and stepfather still live. Her family now includes her husband and seven children—her daughter, her husband's son, a grandson, and stepchildren from her former marriage. None of the kids are into labels, and consider everyone to be an equal member of a happy family.

The household also includes two dogs. Lou looks like an exotic canine breed, but in reality is just an affectionate little creature with some dermatology issues. Riley, a German Shepherd, is known for slipping through an open door at lightning speed. "He doesn't go anywhere—just walks up and down the neighborhood side-



A Second Chance at Love

In February 2012, Dena Hughes met Daniel Hughes (l) on an HIV online dating website. In August of that year, the two married.

walk. But once he's out, he's hard to get back in," Hughes says. Thus, the front door now leads to a holding area with a second door.

Hughes is an upbeat, animated person. As a mom, she can be firm when she needs to, but she's not one to dwell on things. "How long am I usually angry?" she asks her daughter. "About a minute," comes the reply.

Reflecting on Her Life

Looking back, Hughes admits she has had an interesting and challenging life. She understands how people relate to each other and to the world. She indicates with circular motions of her hands the different groups in her life—

her women friends, black friends, HIV friends, and LGBT friends, church friends, professional friends, parents, and family.

She starts to draw lines in the air with a finger, explaining the intersectionality of all the groups with her at the hub. Then she shrugs her shoulders slightly and smiles, indicating that "it all just works out."

Compassion and concern for others is an integral part of Hughes' nature. So is her genuine affection for Houston's LGBT community.

When her name was announced as a Pride marshal in April, Hughes says "It just made my heart so happy." The fact that she is not LGBT makes an award from that community even more meaningful. Her eyes start to mist up as she ponders the honor. "I felt a bit like Sally Field at the Oscars—'You like me. You really like me!'"

Although her husband, Daniel, was in Virginia on business and not able to attend the announcement party, he will be riding with her in the Pride Ally Marshal convertible on June 25 as it makes its way down Bagby Street. As people call out her name and wave, Hughes will discover just how vast the network of community allies is that she has cultivated over the past 25 years, by being there for us in so many ways.

Brandon Wolf also writes about Pride marshals Fran Watson and Brad Odom-Harris in this issue of OUTSMART magazine.



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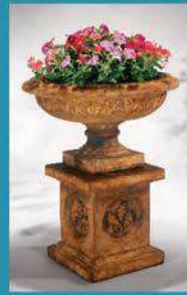
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Rainbow on the Green

Our fave outdoor party of the year!

By **Marene Gustin**

Come out! Outside, that is, and get ready for one of the biggest parties of the year, Rainbow on the Green at downtown's Discovery Green park.

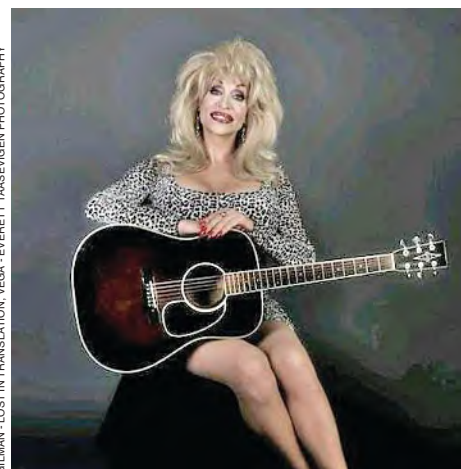
It's the official prequel to Pride Week here in Houston (June 16 through 26), and it's not to be missed. This is the sixth annual park party and citywide LGBT celebration, this year sponsored by Land Rover Houston Central and presented by Legacy Community Health. Big-name acts will be country's darling gay singer and last month's OUTSMART coverboy Billy Gilman ("One Voice" and the recent "Red to Blue") and dance-party queen and same-sex-marriage proponent Taylor Dayne ("Dreaming") as well as Texas' own Vancie Vega appearing as Dolly Parton.

"Performing as Dolly these last 25 years has brought many special gifts," Vega says. "Gifts I'm able to share through works in my community and with anyone who needs them—or me, for that matter. I'm honored to be billed along with legendary songbird (I may have fanned out!) Taylor Dayne and our very own LGBTQ country-music star Billy Gilman. This year will be one amazing show!"

And it will.

"Rainbow on the Green is our annual salute to Pride," says Discovery Green president and park director Barry Mandel. "Each year it continues to grow, and this year, especially, we think we have something for everyone. There is no place quite like Discovery Green to celebrate Pride with great entertainment under the stars and Houston's skyline as a backdrop."

The verdant oasis in the midst of downtown concrete is an almost-12-acre man-made park created on the site of a former parking lot. With its lake, fountains, dog runs, kids' areas, public art, and two eateries—including The Grove, with its rooftop patio overlooking the treescapes—it is a perfect spot for outdoor



GILMAN - LOST IN TRANSLATION; VEGA - EVERETT TAASEVIGEN PHOTOGRAPHY

The Stellar Lineup

Clockwise from left: openly gay country singer Billy Gilman, LGBT ally Taylor Dayne, and drag star Vancie Vega will light up the stage at Discovery Green's Rainbow on the Green Pride event on June 11.

events. The event is free (sorry, no V.I.P. tickets available this year) and open to the public, so come on down—but do bring some folding money to get snacks at the Lake House, which has a huge patio along Kinder Lake. Grab a big ol' bacon cheeseburger, hot dog, or tacos and find a shady spot to nosh and enjoy the music from the stages.

Organizers are expecting around 4,000 people to show up to celebrate Houston's LGBT community and the kickoff to Pride Week here in H-town, so come early—the event starts at 7 p.m. You can bring lawn chairs or blankets to hunker down on the grass, but no pets or glass containers, please.

Houston Gaymers—the largest "gay gamer" community in Texas—will be on hand again this year, offering you the opportunity to play

Super Smash Bros., Wii U, and Mario Kart.

You can drive downtown to the event—there is garage and street parking available—but your best bet is to take a bike, bus, or the downtown jitney service.

Rainbow on the Green is the larger, flashier sister of the winter Rainbow on Ice event, when the LGBT community grabs ice skates and hits up the iced-over lake for a party.

What: Rainbow on the Green (OUTSMART is an official media sponsor)

When: June 11, 7 p.m.

Where: Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney St.

Details: discoverygreen.com/rainbow

Marene Gustin is a regular contributor to OUTSMART magazine.

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The First National LGBT Monument

President Obama memorializes the Stonewall Inn, commemorating resistance and inclusivity.

By Josh Inocêncio

“Do you think homosexuals are revolting? You bet your sweet ass we are,” read a flyer for a July 1969 meeting in New York City. In spite of being the city with arguably the largest gay population in the United States at the time, New York City fiercely upheld its anti-sodomy laws.

That 1969 meeting, consisting of members from New York City’s most prominent LGBT group in the late 1960s, Mattachine, was responding to the Stonewall Inn riots one month prior on June 28, where LGBT civilians revolted against N.Y.P.D. officers after yet another routine raid of the popular gay tavern.

And now, President Barack Obama, who has used his presidency to transform the national conversation on gay and transgender rights, is poised to designate the historic Stonewall Inn as the first-ever national LGBT monument to honor those who have fought for equal rights over the decades. Like African-American history or women’s history, Obama recognizes that LGBT history is American history.

Gay groups in the United States existed before the clash at Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, but that moment served as a catalyst for emerging gay-rights groups to coalesce around specific agendas. From the wake of the Stonewall Riots emerged the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and, later that year, the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA). Throughout the 1970s, the LGBT movement witnessed the rise of the Street Transvestite Action Revolution (STAR), the National Gay Task Force (NGTF), and, in the 1980s, the “in your face” AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), which demanded that the U.S. government recognize the AIDS epidemic that was obliterating gay men.

Since 1969, the combined efforts of LGBT rights groups have achieved federal action on HIV/AIDS research, the overturning of draconian laws that banned gays in the military and



Home of the Stonewall Riots

President Obama is poised to designate the historic Stonewall Inn as the first-ever national LGBT monument to honor those who have fought for equal rights over the decades.

criminalized sodomy, and, as of last summer, the freedom for gays and lesbians to marry nationwide in a decisive yet narrow Supreme Court ruling.

And while the designation of a national LGBT rights monument is overdue, there is urgency in the timing. Even though gays and lesbians have achieved marriage equality in all 50 states, the conservative backlash against the LGBT community has resulted in both physical violence and discriminatory legislation. *The Guardian* reported on 30 alleged hate crimes in and around Oak Lawn, the Dallas gayborhood, over the last year; Republican-led states are passing “religious freedom” policies seeking to undermine adoption and even marriage rights for gay couples; and, perhaps most disturbingly, there are the erroneously titled “bathroom bills” inspiring transphobia in North Carolina, Mississippi, and in 2017, most likely in Texas, among other places.

Aside from the obvious historic import that Stonewall carries, President Obama couldn’t have chosen a better site, given that the riots were led by two trans women of color: Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera. Much more than

a museum commemorating past struggles, the Stonewall Inn is a beacon that can unite the LGBT community now.

In the aftermath of the Stonewall Riots, the LGBT community splintered as white gay men (who largely set the agenda for political activism in New York City and beyond) neglected the needs of the trans community in favor of securing their own rights. This harsh division led Johnson and Rivera to launch the aforementioned STAR group, which focused explicitly on trans rights. As the *We’ve Been Around* docu-series iterates, Johnson and Rivera fought for “people who fell between the cracks of the gay and straight worlds.”

While the “T” remains firmly entrenched in the queer movement’s core acronym, activists have worked to add Q (queer or questioning), I (Intersex), A (Asexual), among other groups. Still, the fracture remains between gays, lesbians, and their trans brothers and sisters. Indeed, before the unexpected backlash after the *Obergefell* marriage ruling, many gay rights activists believed the fight for equal protections was nearly over. And the lack of historical awareness of Johnson’s and Rivera’s roles →



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THE FIRST NATIONAL LGBT MONUMENT

continued from page 75

in the Stonewall Riots was evident in director Roland Emmerich's film, *Stonewall* (2015), where a classically attractive white gay man from the Midwest sidelines the contributions of trans women. This, along with other historical misrepresentations, has prevented transgender Americans from achieving full equality in the United States, both in the eyes of conservatives and fellow LGBT individuals.

But as attorney general Loretta Lynch emphasized in regard to North Carolina's HB2 last month, "No matter how alone you may feel today, know this: the Department of Justice—and, indeed, the entire Obama Administration—want you to know that we see you, we stand with you, and we will do everything we can to protect you going forward." Only days later, President Obama issued his directive for public schools to allow trans students to use the restrooms that correspond with their gender identity.

By designating the Stonewall Inn as the United States' first LGBT monument, President Obama is crystallizing the nation's commitment to civil rights for not only gays and lesbians, but for transgender individuals, too.

Josh Inocencio is a frequent contributor to OUTSMART magazine, a playwright, and a freelance writer. Read all of his OUTSMART articles at outsmartmagazine.com/author/josh-inocencio.



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Swinging for the Fences

Houston's Phyllis Frye paved the way for the modern transgender movement.

By **Kim Hogstrom**

Photo by Kim Hogstrom

“Phyllis didn't work out for the team,” Houston's former mayor Annise Parker tells OUTSMART.

“Phyllis always swung for the fences.”

Parker is referring to America's first out, transgender judge, Phyllis Randolph Frye. As a friend of Parker's, Frye played on a lesbian softball team Parker was coaching at the time. The comment amounted to only a few moments in the conversation, but it held significant insight.

Phyllis Frye is a woman who has always swung for the fences.

As a result of Frye's 40 years of fierce courage and determination, she has earned the title “Grandmother of the Transgender Movement” and is largely responsible for adding the “T” to the inclusive “LGBT” term we use today. That is to say, Frye was the face and force behind the inclusion of transgender issues in the gay and lesbian civil rights movement. Now the T is recognized worldwide, forever. For good.

And, we proudly add, Phyllis Frye is ours.

“It was a depressing and difficult time,” says Frye regarding her early efforts for inclusion in the civil rights movement of the 1970s. “One of the saddest parts was having to fight my own gay and lesbian brothers and sisters for recognition,” the judge states quietly.

“In the 1970s, the national gay and lesbian movement was working with the objective to assimilate into society,” explains Mara Keisling, a trans woman and executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality in Washington DC. NCTE was founded in 2003 by transgender activists who recognized the need to advance equality.

“The movement started excluding people who [put the goal of assimilation at risk],” Keisling continues. “Transgender people were a part of that exclusion, but it wasn't limited to us. The movement also excluded drag queens, bears, leather daddies, and anyone



Phyllis Frye (r) and Ray Hill formed an impenetrable bond during their LGBT activism in the 1970s. Their friendship—and activism—continues today.

The Movement's Godmother and Godfather

they thought might not fit in. Slowly, over more than 30 years, that changed.”

The change to which Keisling is referring came about in large part due to Frye's contention that homophobia and transphobia sprang from the same root of ignorance and hate—simply two horns on the same snorting, slobbering, charging bull.

Not all the advocates of the time were lacking empathy. Ray Hill, the “godfather of Houston's LGBT movement,” played a notable role on the national level moving LGBT civil rights forward. He went to bat for the inclusion of his dear friend Phyllis Frye, but neither of them could turn the tide—at first.

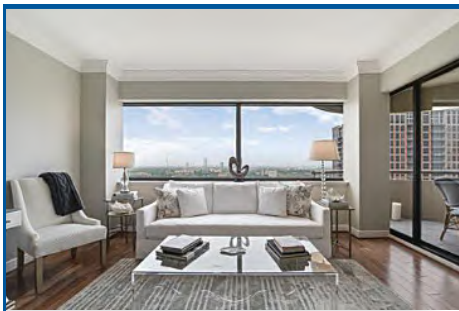
“When we organized the Gay and Lesbian March on Washington in October 1979, the transgender community was not welcomed by the national conference. But Phyllis was on a crusade,” Hill explains.

“She went to the march anyway, and marched with Texas. Then, when we organized the second March on Washington in 1987, the transgender community was still not recognized [by the national conference]. This time, Phyllis marched with a transgender contingent, and in the middle of the parade, she made them all stop. Stop! Right there on the street in Washington. That sent a message that was heard in the highest reaches of the gay and lesbian movement.

“For the third Gay and Lesbian March on Washington in 1993, the ‘T’ was added and the transgender community was included,” Hill says with a sly smile and a twinkle in his eye.

The Early Years

Born Phillip Randolph Frye in the 1940s as the middle son of three children, Frye proved to be a remarkable youngster. Frye excelled in the →



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SWINGING FOR THE FENCES

continued from previous page

Boy Scouts of America, was a celebrated cadet in the corps at Texas A&M University, a lieutenant in the U.S. Army, and a multi-degreed engineer. “I was a man’s man, and I had a terrible potty mouth,” Frye says with a laugh. “I really played the game.”

Still, Frye knew at a young age that there was a different person inside: a person who enjoyed woman’s clothing, high heels, lovely hats, and things normally associated with womanhood. It would take years before she found her voice.

By 1972, while still in her 20s, Frye found life increasingly difficult. She was not out, and married her high-school girlfriend. It soon ended in divorce. She also suffered a debilitating discharge from the Army for the crime of “a compulsive need to wear woman’s clothing.” If that wasn’t enough, she was professionally blackballed as an engineer, lost several jobs, and perhaps cruelest of all, Frye’s family threw her away. “My mother and father went to their graves hating me, and my brother and sister are estranged to this day,” she says quietly.

The year 1976 marked a milestone for Frye and, as a consequence, for transgender people everywhere. The disconnect between Frye’s identity and appearance came to an end. “I was still presenting as Phillip when I married my second wife, but she also knew I was cross-dressing. What she didn’t know was to what degree I was transgender. Neither did I, actually.”

That’s when Frye’s remarkably compassionate new wife spoke out: “Living like this is making you nuts. You need to be yourself. Let’s try you being you, and I will see if I can hang on.”

“I knew it would either send us flying apart, or bring us closer together. Soon after that, I started my transition,” Frye pauses for a long moment. “We’re celebrating our 43rd wedding anniversary next week,” she says, her blue eyes sparkling.

That same year—1976—Caitlyn Jenner, who famously transitioned in 2015, won global notoriety as an athlete at the summer Olympics. Jenner, with all of the recent accolades for her courage, came out nearly 40 years behind Phyllis Frye.

Life as a Woman

Always swinging for the fences, Frye sent letters to hundreds of friends, college mates, and family members to notify them that she was no longer Phillip, but Phyllis, and requesting their support during her transition. She also left fliers on the neighborhood homes to keep them informed.

“My wife and I had a home in Westbury, and we had a mortgage. We couldn’t just move and start over. So I started to transition,” the judge explains. Frye’s journey included hormone therapy, electrolysis, and some surgery. “I did not choose full sexual reconstructive

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surgery. For some, that's important, but each person is different. Each person must make that decision," she explains.

And Frye's letters of outreach to friends and family? Her effort was met with a dark silence mingled with occasional disgust. And sadly, Houston's Westbury neighborhood was not inclined to silence. Frye's home was vandalized many times with paint and eggs, her tires were slashed, and the couple was harassed.

Fortunately, Frye was also studying for a legal degree at the time. "After I let the neighbors know about the transition, we received horrible, obscene phone calls," Frye recalls. "But all of it stopped when I achieved my law degree. As a lawyer, they were frightened of me."

It is with pride that the judge adds that things slowly changed in her neighborhood. Today, Frye has been elected to serve on the Westbury Civic Association Board of Directors for eight consecutive terms. "I am now a valued member of the community," she states.

Armed with her law degree, Frye is now serving her sixth year as a municipal court judge for the city of Houston. In addition to her active personal life and commitment to public service, she was able to build a remarkable full-ser-



BLAISE DISTRANO

The Third Time Is the Charm

Though the national conference didn't welcome the transgender community at the 1979 March on Washington, Texans did. That's Phyllis Frye left of center holding the American flag. Transgender people were not welcome at the second march in 1987, so in protest Frye stopped the transgender contingent in the middle of the parade. At the third march, the "T" was added.

vice law firm—Frye, Oaks, Benavidez, and O'Neil—dedicated to "serving the needs of the LGBTQI and supportive-straight community."

The Defeat of Houston's Equal-Rights Ordinance

According to the Kinder Institute's 2016 Houston Area Survey released in April, 70 percent of area residents say it's "very important" for Houston to pass an equal rights ordinance. Add another 16 percent who say it is "somewhat important," and you get 86 percent of the population wants some form of LGBT civil-rights protections. Notably, the survey was conducted only a few months after the HERO ordinance failed. What the heck?

"I was furious," Frye says. "When the ugly people started running that campaign with a child in a restroom with a predator—it was not true. That was a lie!"

According to PolitiFact, a highly regarded fact-checking website, "There are no known instances of criminals convicted of using transgender protections as cover in the United States."

PolitiFact Texas took the issue a step further. "It's not accurate to say that transgender women are men. →



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SWINGING FOR THE FENCES

continued from previous page

Though there is not universal agreement on this point, medical experts typically agree that a transgender person is someone who identifies differently from their assigned sex at birth. In short, a transgender woman is a woman, and not 'a grown man pretending to be a woman.'

"It made me mad to hear the HERO lie on TV and the radio over and over again," remembers Frye, "but I couldn't say anything, because I'm a City judge and it was a Houston city ordinance in debate. Besides that, we already have a restroom ordinance. It's Houston's Ordinance 28-20 and it's been on the books since 1968."

The ordinance to which Frye is referring mentions nothing about birth gender, and protects every citizen from a "calculated disturbance." It reads: "It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly and intentionally enter any public restroom designated for the exclusive use of the sex opposite to such person's sex without the permission of the owner, *in a manner calculated to cause a disturbance.*"

"We already have protections," Frye continues. "In Texas, it's a felony if it involves a child, whom the anti-HERO people were claiming were unprotected. It's a crime that would result in serious jail time."

With 86 percent of the population of Houston interested in the protections provided by HERO regarding race, age, pregnancy, religion,



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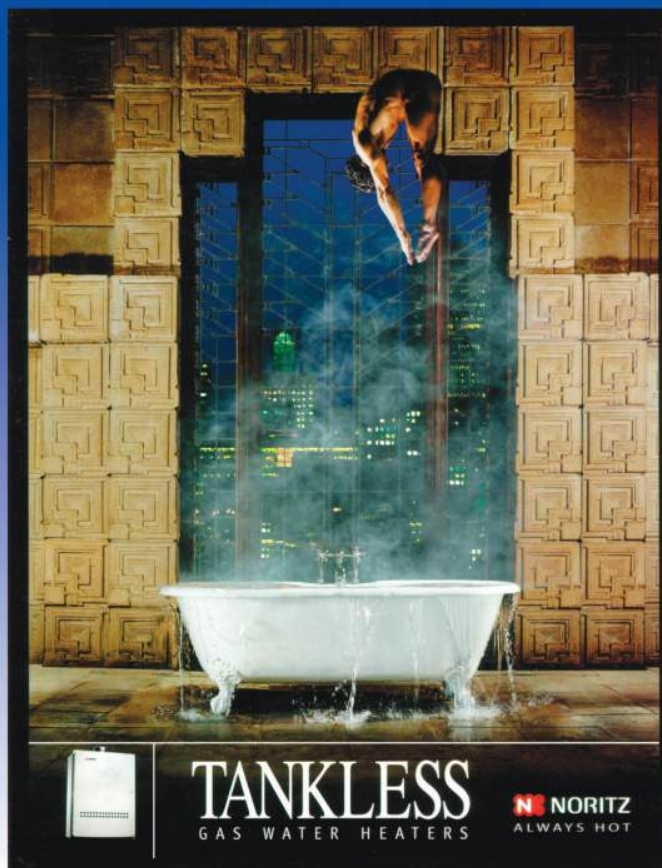
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sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or military status, can we expect to give HERO a do-over? OUTSMART contacted Mayor Sylvester Turner's office for comment.

"Right now, Mayor Turner is focused on getting his budget passed, working on pension reform, and removal of the voter-imposed revenue cap," the mayor's director of communications responded in an email.

What Now?

"We've made some headway, but there's still a lot of work to do," says Lou Weaver, a trans man representative with Equality Texas, a non-profit agency dedicated to securing rights for LGBT Texans. "It's important for us to speak out, to be visible, so we can create a culture of inclusion instead of fear. Phyllis has done a lot of work before us, and it's an honor to stand on her shoulders," Weaver concludes.

Appreciation for Frye's honesty and courage is not limited to Texas. The National Center for Transgender Equality in Washington DC presented her with a lifetime achievement award in 2013. "Phyllis played a significant role in the movement, and laid a foundation that allows thousands of us to step up today," says NCTE director Keisling. "We need Phyllis as long as we can have her," she adds firmly.

It's safe to say that Phyllis Frye's eye for home runs has changed our culture. However, that same driving force is woven into the fabric of her character, observes Ray Hill. "Phyllis has lived her entire life with fearless honesty while reaching for the stars. It wasn't enough for Phyllis to be a Boy Scout—she had to earn too many merit badges to fit on her sash," he says.

"And it wasn't enough for Phyllis to attend Texas A&M University—she had to be a commander in the corps. Then, she had to return to A&M as Phyllis, not Phil, in new red boots and brag about how much more fashionable they were than the cadets," Hill laughs.

"In the Army, Phyllis couldn't just keep her panty hose in the closet like other people—she had to wear them, get caught, and get kicked out," Hill continues his good-natured diatribe, grinning.

"And it wasn't enough for Phyllis to earn two engineering degrees—she had to be an engineer with a tool pouch! When was the last time you saw an engineer with a tool pouch?" he asks, laughing out loud.

"It wasn't enough for Phyllis to win over her neighborhood—she had to be elected to the civic association eight times. Today, she is not just a judge, she is an outstanding lawyer and a great judge. That, in a snapshot, is Phyllis Frye," Hill concludes.

With a life like the one Frye has lived, what is her proudest achievement? "That I am no longer needed," she responds without a moment's thought.

Frankly, Ms. Frye, we're not so sure.

Kim Hogstrom is a guest writer to OUTSMART magazine. She is also a documentary film producer and slave to a spoiled Chihuahua.

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Old School vs. New School

Can gay Generation Xers and Millennials find common ground?

By Tim Curfman
and Josh Inocêncio

The LGBTQ community has witnessed vast cultural changes over the decades. Even in the short span from the 1980s to today, attitudes about dating and careers have shifted so dramatically that an older gay man may feel like he grew up in a completely different world than the one his younger counterparts are now experiencing. Tim Curfman, a Generation Xer in his late 40s, and Josh Inocêncio, a Millennial in his mid-20s, explore the question, “What has changed and what has stayed the same?”

Tim: So, Josh, how old are you? 14?

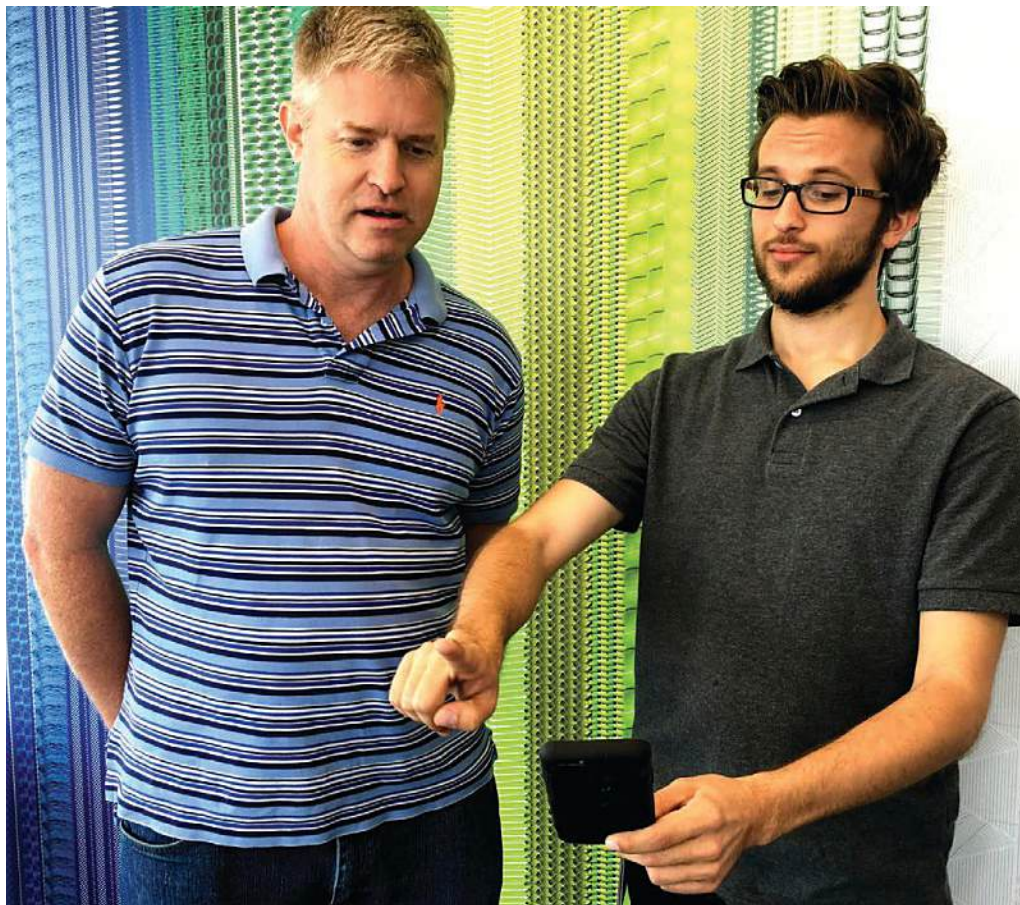
Josh: Close. 25.

Tim: Oops! That’s a side-effect of getting older. I walk across the Rice University campus saying to myself, “I didn’t know they let five-year-olds go to college.” (*Looks Josh up-and-down and thinks to self, “I have ties that are older than you.”*)

So, here’s the thing I’m the most curious about: does anyone go to clubs anymore? Or is everyone meeting each other through dating apps?

Josh: Guys definitely still go to clubs. I’ve been to a few myself in Chicago and Austin. However, I think apps are increasingly taking precedence. I don’t meet people at clubs; I mostly stick to apps. I don’t really do Grindr, which is often just chest pictures or worse, but I enjoy Tinder, which is more dating-oriented. On Tinder, everyone has to have a Facebook account, which means there are fewer fictitious identities. I’ve even made friends on it!

Tim: But how does this Tinder-Box-of-Magic-Love work?



Millennial Josh Inocêncio (r) shows Generation Xer Tim Curfman how to “swipe right.”
Welcome to the New Age
What is this magic Tinder-Box-of-Love?

Josh: You swipe right on the pictures of guys that you’re interested in chatting with, and if they swipe right also, it’s considered a match! You can chat with each other and arrange a meeting place from there. I’ll find a match and arrange a date, which usually consists of dinner and some barhopping—La Carafe downtown or Stone’s Throw in Montrose. Or something a little less traditional. The best first date I’ve gone on was a day trip to the zoo! It’s surprising how much you learn about a person while feeding giraffes and observing red pandas.

Anyway, the biggest downside is that you usually know in the first five minutes whether there’s any chemistry or not, and if there isn’t, then the rest of the evening can be a real drag. For better or for worse, people’s personalities are always vastly different in person.

Tim: Sounds horrific.

Josh: Well, how did one meet guys in the early ‘90s?

Tim: I would hit up JR’s or Rich’s, and I would stand next to someone cute, and I would sip on my first drink and be shy and demure and wait for them to talk to me. And they didn’t. Then, I would drink my second drink while we continued to aggressively ignore each other. After my third drink, I would lunge at them, shouting “Hi!” and cause them to spill their cocktail. Sometimes this approach worked. Mostly it didn’t.

Josh: How inefficient and embarrassing!

Tim: Oh, it was! But I did meet Jim, my husband of 20 years, at a *Houston Press* singles →

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OLD SCHOOL VS. NEW SCHOOL

continued from previous page

gathering at JR's. I walked in the door, saw Jim, and yelled, "Hold your cards, folks! I think we've got a Bingo!" Twenty years later, we're still going strong.

Josh: Congrats!

Tim: That was after a decade of bad dates. So, how serious are modern gays in their 20s about long-term relationships?

Josh: Depends. It's probably as varied as it was for your generation. I know guys in their 20s who are searching for love and marriage, and I know some in their 40s enjoying the bachelor life—and on Tinder, too!

The apps can be just as precarious as clubs, though. The people you meet can flake out by un-matching you or deleting their whole Tinder account. It's called "ghosting."

Tim: In the '90s we accomplished the same thing through the use of "fake phone numbers." My friends and I got more serious about coupling up as we got closer to the age of 30. That may never change.

So, let's talk about careers. I was a child of the '80s, where teens wanted to dress like they were in prep-school and we all wanted to make the big bucks. Think the young Tom Cruise in *Risky Business*.

In college, I switched majors from psychology to computer science, mainly to guarantee a lifetime of gainful employment. I don't regret that decision, but every once in a while my inner child tempts me to start a new career as an artist or writer or therapist, and I take that little brat and spank him till he squeals!

Josh: I'd like to say that Millennials are more likely than Generation Xers to take financial risks and follow their dreams, but that assumption stems from my artistic background as a writer and a performer. Artistic people from every generation have taken bold leaps in their career trajectories. I have friends who are doing temp work in New York, Chicago, and L.A. while pursuing theater or film careers, and I also have friends who are accountants, teachers, and engineers.

I do think, however, that our largely Baby Boomer parents who sought financial security encouraged many of us to pursue more passionate career paths than they did. However, reaching adulthood in the wake of the financial crisis has certainly texturized Millennials' views on stability.

While I do save money, I sometimes spend like every day is my last. I've never earned a lot of money, but I've managed to take trips to Korea, Japan, and road trips across the United States, among other places. As a burgeoning playwright, though, all of those experiences provided new material to write plays.



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Tim: You're just baiting me, aren't you? You realize that we older guys feel that it's our moral imperative to tell you younger guys that the world is cruel and will stomp up and down on your dreams with sharpened cleats. *STOMP! STOMP! STOMP!* But I'm not going to say that.

Josh: But you just did...

Tim: On the flip side, adulthood lasts a very long time, and there's nothing wrong with guys in their 20s wanting to bounce around a bit. I didn't buy my first house or have my first serious boyfriend until I was 28, so I can't really talk, now, can I? (*Deep breaths all around...*)

What was your experience with coming out of the closet? Is there even a closet to come out of anymore?

Josh: I didn't come out to anyone until I was 23, just two years ago.

Tim: *No! Why?* What's the point of all of this social advancement if guys are still waiting so long to come out? I'm still mad about not being able to date other guys in junior high. I was in my prime!

Josh: Well, don't forget that while the nation is progressing, we are still in the South. I brooded on the question of my sexuality for a long time. I'm an only child and there were expectations about bringing a daughter-in-law into the family. I was also raised in a very religious household, so the subject was difficult to broach.

Tim: The fear of being different is a universal experience. It's always going to be difficult to take that first step away from your family's expectations and to make your own way in the world.

Josh: Well, some guys have done much better than me! I know plenty of guys who came out as gay when they were teenagers, even in middle school!

Tim: Okay, let's do a Lightning Round—New School vs. Old School.

Organic Food:

Josh: Tainted by hipsters, but I do prefer fewer toxins.

Tim: My body has adapted to the toxins, and now I need them to live. *Mmmm, Cheetos...*

Texting:

Josh: It's like letter-writing for Millennials.

Tim: Why won't young people answer their damn phones? What's wrong with talking?

Most recent thing that made you feel older:

Josh: A weekend visit to a college town.

Tim: Buying arthritis cream.

Advice to your own generation:

Josh: Get out and vote!

Tim: Take more naps.

Dating:

Josh: An audition I'm never quite prepared for.

Tim: Horrific memories of dating continue to strengthen my 20-year relationship. →

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OLD SCHOOL VS. NEW SCHOOL

continued from previous page

GLBT vs. LGBTQ:

Josh: LGBTQ is more feminist, thus more inclusive!

Tim: What's the Q? Who are the Q's? Do they get to use our designated parking spaces?

So, what do you think, Josh? Is it possible for gay men of different generations to be friends?

Josh: You mean, despite the older guy's tendency to give unwanted and unneeded advice?

Tim: And despite the younger guy's painful naiveté about the ways of the world?

Josh: And despite the older guy's condescension and the oppressive weight of his long-dead dreams?

Tim: Well, sure!

Josh Inocencio is a frequent contributor to OUTSMART magazine, a playwright, and a freelance writer. Read all of his OUTSMART articles at outsmartmagazine.com/author/josh-inocencio.

Tim Curfman owns and runs Scenic Hill Vacation Cabins in Brenham, Texas, (scenichillvacations.com) with his husband, Jim Rolewicz. Read all of his OUTSMART articles at outsmartmagazine.com/author/tim-curfman.



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‘She’s Just Not That Into You’

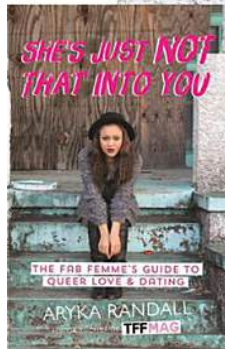
Houston author Aryka Randall talks navigating the dating world as a queer, femme woman.

By Megan Smith

Girl meets girl, girls fall in love, and girls live happily ever after. If only it was that easy. From dating apps to blindsiding breakups, navigating the modern world of relationships as a queer woman can be challenging, to say the least. How are we supposed to know if that edgy brunette at the bar is “the one,” or simply our next big heartbreak? Author and femme lesbian Aryka Randall explores these questions and more in her new book, *She’s Just Not That Into You: The Fab Femme’s Guide to Queer Love & Dating*. At 24, the Houston transplant started *The Fab Femme* Mag, an online media outlet for feminine queer women from all walks of life. Now, more than five years later, Randall has become a go-to source for girl-on-girl culture. In mid-May, I had the pleasure of speaking to Randall about her new book, Millennial dating culture, femme invisibility, and the hardest thing of all—loving ourselves.

Megan Smith: The past eight years have been quite the journey for you. Coming out, moving across the country, and taking a risk by starting TheFabFemme.com. Now, you’re the published author of *She’s Just Not That Into You*. What motivated you to make the jump from the blogosphere to writing a book?

Aryka Randall: I’ve always wanted to write a book—in fact, I did an interview with *GO! Magazine* a couple years ago where I said I wanted to write a book. Then, the marketer from Mango Media reached out randomly—completely randomly—and emailed me one day



📖 **The Fab Femme**
Author and Houston transplant Aryka Randall divulges the best and worst of dating as a femme lesbian in her new book, *She’s Just Not That Into You*.

and said that they’d been looking at my blog and wanted me to write a book. I was like, “Is this some kind of joke?” I even Googled their email addresses to make sure it wasn’t some kind of scam. [Laughs] But turns out it was real! It was really dumb luck—I had no idea about publishing, and I didn’t even have any ideas of what I wanted to write about. When they emailed me, they asked me to put together three concepts. One of them was this *She’s Just Not That Into You*, and they took it and ran with it. I’m not somebody that likes to write on deadline, so it was challenging in that way, but I was like, “Oh my God, Aryka, if you screw this up and don’t do this just because you want to be lazy, you’ll regret this forever.” [Laughs]

The book itself is set up like a journey—eliminating toxicity from our lives, getting to know ourselves, then opening up to organic love. How has your personal quest for love been affected by these stages?

“The two or three people I’ve met online damn near catfished me.”

Oh boy! [Laughs] My views on love have changed dramatically. I’ll be 30 this year, and looking back on what I wrote, it was almost as if I was writing to myself—to remind myself that in order to have a good relationship, you have to have a good relationship with yourself first. But my views on love have changed in a way—I don’t think it should be so romanticized. It’s a lot of hard work. I’m not a hopeless romantic anymore. I used to have that, *bad*.

Relationships are very, very important to me. I love the opportunities I’ve been given with everything else, but some-

where in there, I am never completely satisfied when my love life is in shambles—which is most of the time. [Laughs] I think I’m just more realistic now—I don’t think I’m going to walk into Pearl Bar or Whole Foods or somewhere and meet someone and then live happily ever after and never argue. That’s just not realistic. So I think when people stop romanticizing the idea of finding someone, it will be easier for them—and me. →



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SHE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU

continued from previous page

You also address in your book that false idea that if only we could find "the one," things would be perfect and effortless. There was a recent *New York Times* article that discussed how Millennials want the perfect relationship, but without the commitment. We want that second coffee mug in our morning Instagram photo, but we don't want the realities that come along with a relationship. How are we supposed to navigate the modern dating world and get the real relationship we desire in the end?

I think people need to get off the Internet! That's what I think. Put your phone down and engage in daily activities where you could meet somebody. I can't even wrap my head around it! I have a very old soul. I have to be online for [my blog's] social media, but if I didn't have to, I wouldn't have anything. I don't have a SnapChat, I update my personal Instagram account *maybe* once a week, and sometimes I just don't update because I don't feel like having to be immersed in this BS media culture. People are complaining on Facebook, someone who was just dating someone is now engaged to somebody else a week later. People do things for instant gratification and to illicit a response out of their followers. I think because of social media, people have literally forgotten how to interact with each other in person. For me, I will not talk to you if I met you online. The two or three people I've met online damn near catfished me. Again, this would have been avoided if I had met them in person and it had been an organic connection. If you really get out there, I think that people will get so much more real about their expectations of relationships and expectations of longevity if they can understand that it's not going to navigate itself through the World Wide Web.

The topic of toxic relationships, including emotionally abusive relationships, isn't talked about nearly enough in the queer community. I loved that you spend a lot of time talking about identifying signs of toxic relationships in *She's Just Not That Into You*.

Well, thank you. I think in general, it's not something we want to talk about. We don't want to air our dirty laundry and have these types of conversations that need to be had about relationships. For a long time, I felt like the reason gay relationships failed was that we never had anything to work towards. We were never able to get married, we weren't even recognized under common law for a long time. So there was never really an end goal—not that marriage is a goal for everybody, but what's the point of being with someone for 20 years if you can never commit to them legally?

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In my opinion, one of the hardest things for queer women to learn is to love themselves—to know that we are enough—especially if we faced rejection or hardship during the coming-out process. Why do you think that process is so difficult, and what are some simple steps to make things easier?

I truly believe that some of the traumas that we go through as children affect us later in life. For me, my dad hasn't been in my life for a long time, so that affects the way I navigate my way with anybody who is masculine of center. I think that a lot of people haven't figured out how to love themselves because they haven't gotten to the core issue of the problem. They've kept themselves distracted. I'm still a bit of a workaholic, but when I went through my first really bad breakup, I would sit on my laptop for, sometimes, 10 hours a day. I wasn't dealing with what was going on. Every relationship will end the same way if you're not learning your lesson. It's all about people dealing with their personal demons before they ever try to get into a relationship—that's just the bottom line.

Once we are ready to open up to love, many queer femme women worry they won't find someone because they don't present as →



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SHE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU

continued from previous page

traditionally “queer”—however one defines that. What are your thoughts on the current state of femme invisibility?

Femme invisibility is a problem—it's a huge problem. I don't feel like there's necessarily a space for us, because we do look “straight.” I've had gay women question my sexuality before, and I'm like, “Are you serious right now?” I'm very feminine—I get my nails done every two weeks, I wear lipstick. I'm sorry, but it is what it is. I think femme invisibility is getting better within the community, but as far as it goes in the media, I think it's getting worse. Any time you see a gay, feminine woman playing a role outside of *The L Word*, she always ends up with a guy, or ends up being sexualized to accommodate male viewers. Or it's like in *Empire* where the two femme lesbians get killed off. Come on, really!?

One of the most interesting topics you touch on in *She's Just Not That Into You* is the concept of the “twin flame,” or your soul's other half. Tell me more about how you became familiar with this theory and why you incorporated it into the book.

My best friend, Chanel, who was on *The Real*

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L Word, is a very spiritual person and is the one who introduced me to the twin-flame concept. The only thing I'd ever heard about was the idea of a soul mate. But anybody can be a soul mate—a dog can be a soul mate, friends can be soul mates, it's not limited to romantic relationships. But a twin flame is different because this person was literally cut from the same cloth as you when the universe was creating you. That's much bigger than just meeting someone who you get along with very well. The twin-flame concept really ties into everything, because according to that theory, if you are going to find your twin flame, you have to be the best version of yourself—there's no way around it. That sheds light on why so many people aren't with who they're supposed to be with or why they are in a relationship that's complacent. The only real loyalty you owe is loyalty to yourself. And once you've found yourself, it's a whole new playing field.

What's next on your personal journey? Will we see *She's Just Not That Into You* turned into the next *Lemonade*?

[Laughs] Actually, I've already started writing my second book! The editors asked me to do a short anecdote at the end of each chapter of *She's Just Not That Into You*. I came out somewhere between age 19 and 20. So, since I'll be 30 this year, I thought it would be really cool to take all of those anecdotes—which are all real—and turn them into “confessions of a femme,” which will be all of these experiences that I've had and what I've learned over a decade. From getting catfished, to my first girlfriend of five years dumping me on Facebook, it's been interesting. [Laughs]

I'm also working on a pilot that I want to pitch to Netflix. I did a web series a couple years ago called *Girl Play* that did very well, but I was underdeveloped as a screenwriter, so my character development kind of sucked. Plus, it was very expensive. So I cut it midway through and shelved it. But now, instead of pitching it as a web series like I did last time, I'm just doing the pilot. It's basically about four lesbians, a straight girl, and a gay guy who have been friends for a long time. It's a young, fresh take on what it's like being a late-20s, early-30-something dealing with relationships. You have the couple who has been together forever and has kind of lost the flame, you have the token straight girl who finds out her boyfriend is cheating on her with the dog sitter—there's just a lot going on. I think what sets it apart from a lot of these gay web series that are out is the fact that I let the jokes write themselves. A lot of the things that have happened in my life, and in my friends' lives—you wouldn't believe me if I told you. So, the drama writes itself. [Laughs]

She's Just Not That Into You is available for purchase on Amazon.



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A Message of Healing

Randy Roberts Potts, the gay grandson of Oral Roberts, talks to OUTSMART.

By Shirley Knight

“Being closeted is a lot like being on stage all the time,” Randy Roberts Potts says. “You’re always trying to play a role that you’re not, and you’re always nervous that someone will see through the wig.” Potts was raised in a very prominent and active Christian community in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He is the grandson of the pioneering televangelist, faith healer, and fundraiser Oral Roberts.

“When I was in my 20s and closeted, I wore baggy clothes and huge Coke-bottle glasses, and I didn’t really take care of myself,” Potts says. “I didn’t want any sort of attention.” He says he used to stutter and shake when he had to do any sort of public speaking. “Coming out allowed me to be comfortable in my own body. It changed me dramatically,” he says. Now he is a confident featured speaker, and he no longer hides behind an asexual persona.

Like many people, his 27th year was “monumental.” That’s when he came out to himself and began attending counseling. He’d married at age 20, telling himself and his wife that his lack of sexual attraction to women was because he was a good Christian. He tried to live up to expectations. His wife became a doctor, and they had three children. “It felt pretty bleak to realize you’re gay, but you’re married and you love your kids, and you don’t really know what to do about it,” he says. “I didn’t feel

“As a minority, we have an obligation to represent ourselves and represent our rights and vote for the people who respect us the most as people.”

like there was a good option for me. I wasn’t religious any more, but I still had this fear that gay people went to hell,” he continues.

His message to people in similar circumstances is: “Don’t go through this alone. Find resources. Watch videos. Join groups. Make contact. There’s so much available—you don’t have to go through being LGBT alone.” Potts says his conversations with other gay people

helped him see that a good future was possible.

One of the issues Potts faced is that he was sexually abused in his childhood by a family member, and he had to realize that his attraction to men was separate from, and not a product of, the abuse. “Therapy is really important,” he says, “and talking about it openly to people who care about you is really important, because often the worst thing about sexual abuse is the shame you feel. You shouldn’t suffer through something like that alone.”

Potts first came out publicly in a video for the “It Gets Better” project in which he honored his gay uncle, Ronald Roberts, who com-



At 27, Randy Roberts Potts finally came out to himself as gay. At the time, he was married to a woman, had three children, and was afraid his homosexuality would doom him to hell. Through therapy and conversations with other wonderful gay people, he now knows that’s not true.

It Gets Better

mitted suicide in 1982. By all accounts, Ronald was a brilliant intellectual who taught English, Russian, and Chinese. Ronald’s interest in higher learning helped inspire the founding of Oral Roberts University.

“I was really terrified to talk about my relationship with the Roberts family,” Potts says. “I got messages from family that I was dragging the Roberts name through the mud and that I was being selfish and horrible. I’ve been disinherited by my family,” Potts continues, “and I regard myself as not really a member of the family any more—and that’s okay.”

Potts’ mother, Roberta, who was Oral Roberts’ youngest daughter, is an attorney in Tulsa and still very active in the evangelical community. Her only other child, Potts’ brother, is also gay. Although Randy Potts describes himself as “a very private person” who disliked the public life surrounding his family when he was growing up, he says he is very committed to being open about his life. “I know it would have helped me to hear people like me when I was closeted,” he says.

After 11 years of marriage, Potts went through a divorce and prevailed in a custody battle to maintain joint custody of his children. →



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A MESSAGE OF HEALING

continued from previous page

After all he has been through, one way Potts releases anger and pain is by focusing on art, which he finds cathartic. Potts is a writer and a photographer, and in the fall of 2016 he will release a 300-piece photo essay in which he explores past relationships. “I’ve gone back and re-read a lot of my grandfather’s sermons,” he says. “I’ve read about his life. I’ve visited the compound. I’ve tried finding things I could actually appreciate about Oral Roberts, and I have. It’s been hard, but I have.” The project is called *The Bible Went Down with the Birdie Jean* and will be on Instagram with the handle @thebirdiejean beginning in September.

Potts says he’s coming to accept his role as a spokesperson, and the idea that his message can foster healing, even though he’s had an aversion to the word *healing* “because of the association with faith healers. So many times when I would go around the country speaking,” Potts says, “men—sometimes women, but mostly gay men—would wait in line to talk to me, and then hold me and just start bawling, and I knew it wasn’t about me. They had grown up with all this fear inspired by people like my grandfather, and I know that just me standing up and saying I’m gay was enough to let people let go of some of that hurt.”

One of the most common questions Potts gets is from people who feel rejected by the church of their youth but who still want a spiritual connection. “There are all kinds of churches that LGBT people can go to now that are accepting,” Potts says. He mentions the Metropolitan Community Church, “a whole denomination that is LGBT-affirming. But beyond them,” he continues, “there are so many congregations in America that are becoming gay-affirming. Maybe the entire denomination isn’t, necessarily, but the local church might be.” Another resource he recommends is the Gay Christian Network, where people can chat with someone who is LGBT.

At the time he was coming out, Potts said he “had too much baggage with Christianity to accept it,” so he started going to a Buddhist temple and found messages about being mindful without the fear he’d experienced in his youth. “Probably if I’m anything, I’m Unitarian,” he says. “When I do actually spontaneously pray, it’s always when I’m almost so happy I can’t contain it,” he adds.

Potts attended the University of Oklahoma where he studied literature, languages, and Eastern philosophy. Because of his sheltered upbringing, he says he felt culturally isolated back then. “I might as well have been from a different country,” he says. “People would ask me about popular bands, and I wouldn’t have a clue. I’d never even heard the name. In college, I spent a lot of time trying to catch up,” he adds. “For about five years I worked really hard to not be so awkward socially.”

When he left for college at age 18, he was already at odds with his parents and rarely went home to visit. Even though he was on his own for the first time, he says, "I really didn't go that crazy in college. For me, being crazy was what most people would think of as normal—like having one beer."

Today Potts is married to a man, has 50/50 custody of his three children, and lives in a suburb of Dallas. Regarding politics, he says, "We always have to vote. As a minority, we have an obligation to represent ourselves and represent our rights and vote for the people who respect us the most as people. No one else is going to look out for us if we don't initiate that."

Potts will be in Houston on July 9 and 10 to participate in events with Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). He says, "PFLAG is my favorite LGBT organization. You can find PFLAG volunteers on the ground in almost every city in America. The parents are concerned about their kids, so they've already done the legwork looking for resources. No matter how small a town it is, there's probably a PFLAG mom or dad out there. It's an important organization in isolated communities because those people care, and they are really invested in those communities. If you really want to affect a local community," Potts adds, "to me, PFLAG is the best way to go."

Shirley Knight is the founder of AwakeNow.org.

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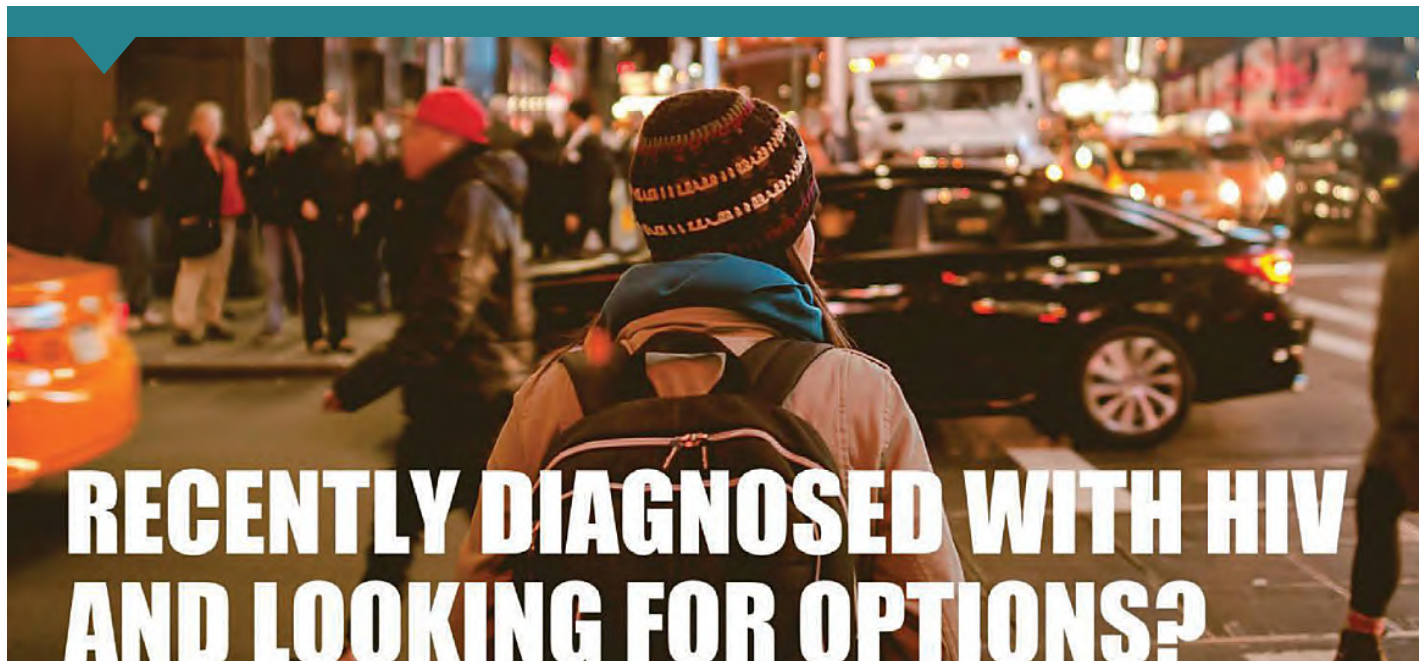
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Portrait of the Artist as a Gay Man

David Hockney documentary chronicles the gay working-class rebel who led the vanguard of British pop art.

By Andrew Edmonson

As he nears his ninth decade, the great gay British artist David Hockney shows absolutely no signs of slowing down. He still works in his studio seven days a week.

In July, the Royal Academy of Arts in London will exhibit 82 portraits that he created in his Los Angeles studio over the last two years, despite having sustained a stroke in 2012.

From February 9 to May 29, 2017, Tate Britain will present a major retrospective of his work, which will then travel to the Centre Pompidou in Paris and The Met Breuer in New York.

And on July 8 and 10, 2016, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, will present the local premiere of the acclaimed documentary *Hockney*, chronicling the life of the working-class rebel with a shock of blonde hair who led the vanguard of British Pop Art movement in the early 1960s and went on to emerge as one of the most popular British artists of the second half of the 20th century. The film is directed by Brit Randall Wright, and it incorporates never-before-seen video and photos from Hockney's personal archive.

"It has been observed that there is something of the holiday about David Hockney that, despite personal loss, he sees the world with holiday eyes, as if for the first time," remarks Wright. "I wanted to capture this attitude without taking away the magic and mystery of a great artist."

Born in 1937 into a loving working-class



JEAN-PIERRE GONCALVES DE LIMA, INSET - RICHARD SCHMIDT



family in the industrial city of Bradford in northwestern England, Hockney always marched to the beat of his own drummer. "One of the things my father thought was not to worry too much what the neighbors think," he recalls in the film. "I took that lesson."

In 1959, he moved to London to study at the Royal College of Art, and began to quietly explore his sexual orientation in his work, most notably in the four "Love" paintings he created around 1960. He came out at age 23, seven years before homosexuality was decriminalized in staid, straight-laced Britain. "When you said you were gay in the 1960s, people said it was illegal," he recalls. "Well, I said 'I lived in Bohemia, and Bohemia is a tolerant place.'"

At this same time, his star in the art world was ascendant.

John Kasmin, the British art dealer who discovered Hockney at the age of 24, recalls, "He'd already become a blonde, a flamboyant dresser, a maker of public statements—the sort of person who draws the attention of journalists."

"It was the very moment when the eye

of the press and the tastemakers was on the British art world and fashion world," Kasmin continues. "And David stood out as one of the banner-carriers for the new approach to art, life, and, in fact, the emerging openness of gay life."

In 1964, he travelled to California and fell in love, both with Los Angeles and a handsome UCLA student named Peter Schlesinger, with whom he would maintain a tumultuous relationship for the next decade.

"When I went to Los Angeles, it was really three times better than I thought it would be," he recalls. "I had just read the American novel called *City of Night* by John Rechy, which has accounts of the kind of low life in American cities [that] I thought was wonderful and colorful. I wanted to get up to Hollywood to see what it was all like—to see the hustlers."

The movie charts how Hockney, keenly curious and ever inventive, explored the world of opera as a prolific designer of décor, and how he embraced technology in his artistic practice, from photocopying, Polaroids, →

The Eccentric Bohemian

On July 8 and 10, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, will present the local premiere of the acclaimed documentary *Hockney*, which details the life of openly gay British pop artist and trailblazer David Hockney.

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PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A GAY MAN

continued from previous page

fax-machine images, to iPad drawings. His greatest hero and inspiration was Pablo Picasso, both for his longevity and his many phases as an artist.

Perhaps the most affecting section of the film deals with the staggering losses Hockney sustained during the AIDS crisis. "At the time I couldn't write down all the people," he observes quietly in the film. "You think about them every day, and then you stop it because there's too many, actually. It would rather drive you mad if you think about it. Slowly it's become part of your life, something you never, ever expected."

Hockney has also influenced many artists, curators, and museum directors, among them Bill Arning, the director of the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, who completed his undergraduate senior art-history thesis on Hockney's designs for the Metropolitan Opera's version of Erik Satie's *Parade*. "As someone who has always felt that the history of queer image-making needs to be available in a clear, concise form for tomorrow's art students, just as the legacy of African-American artists is today, Hockney's place in this tradition is paramount," Arning observes.

"My other connection with Hockney had to do with my first experience of seeing the exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, of Hockney's portraits over three decades," Arning recalls. "The great double-portraits of the 1960s looked tremendous, like a contemporary Velázquez. But the work of the 1980s and 1990s is very painterly—quickly rendered, cartoony portraits that seemed altogether less interesting and slightly amateurish, not at all by the same artist."

"But for some reason, I returned to hear the artist's public lecture," Arning continues. "He explained that after that period when so many friends were dying, whenever someone in his inner circle passed away he felt a compulsion to draw those people he loved that were alive around him and record their faces as quickly as possible, as a way of saying to the heavens 'We are still here.' Given the collective grief of that period, I walked back through the show and found the same paintings intensely moving. Now when I encounter one on its own, I find them irresistible."

As Hockney himself once observed, "New ways of seeing mean new ways of feeling. I do believe that painting can change the world."

What: *Hockney*

When: July 8 and 10

Where: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Details: mfah.org/films

Andrew Edmonson serves on the advisory board of The Oral History Project, which is capturing the personal stories of the AIDS crisis in Houston, Harris County, and Southeast Texas.

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‘A Murder in Montrose’

Houston Public Media documentary chronicles impact of pivotal moment in Houston LGBT history.

By Andrew Edmonson

It was a watershed moment in Houston LGBT history, galvanizing a community, igniting a wave of activism, and ultimately sparking a national debate about antigay violence and hate crimes.

On July 4, 1991, 27-year-old gay Houston banker Paul Broussard was attacked, stabbed, and murdered by a group of 10 teenagers from The Woodlands after he left a Montrose nightclub. The crime received little media attention until Queer Nation, a direct-action group formed to confront and defeat homophobia, organized a “Take Back the Streets” march nine days later to channel the simmering anger of Houston’s LGBT community. The protest mobilized 2,000 people and stopped traffic at the intersection of Montrose and Westheimer for an hour in a spontaneous act of civil disobedience. It put the story on the front page of newspapers and at the top of every newscast.

In the wake of the murder, the Houston Police Department launched Operation Vice Versa, deploying undercover officers in Montrose posing as same-sex couples. The level of violence that they experienced was so overwhelming, and it came so swiftly, that the officers were quickly pulled off the streets. The operation provided vivid proof of the harassment that many LGBT Houstonians regularly endured.

In November 1991, Phillip W. Smith was shot in the 600 block of Pacific Street as he walked to his car. His subsequent death again confirmed the high level of lethal antigay violence. Queer Nation went on to form the spinoff organization Q-Patrol, a community-watch group that patrolled the streets around the gay bars on weekends to monitor for potential gay-bashers and report suspicious activity to the police.

Emboldened by their success, and with their ranks swelling with new recruits, Queer Nation went on over the next two years to stage high-profile actions protesting discrimination against people living with HIV, employment discrimination based on sexual orientation, defamatory depictions of LGBT people in films and popular culture, and homophobic politicians. They organized kiss-ins at City Hall and parties for National Coming Out Day. Their efforts culminated in August 1992, when they welcomed chapters of ACT UP and Queer Nation from across the nation to spearhead protests and marches decrying the 1992 Republican National Convention at the Astrodome—one of the most homophobic presidential conventions in living memory.

With its raucous street-theater protests and in-your-face confrontational style, Queer Nation generated extensive media coverage, greatly raised the visibility of the LGBT community, and forced a discussion of antigay violence and LGBT civil rights. In a November 1991 column in the *New York Times* that referenced the Broussard murder, veteran journalist Abe Rosenthal captured the unfolding national discussion, observing, “Harassment and assault of gays and lesbians is an illness in our society. What will it take to recognize it and try to treat it by legal medicine?”

Twenty-five years after that seminal moment, Houston Public Media looks back at that time by exploring how it changed Houston in several profound ways. On Thursday evening, June 23, a documentary titled *A Murder in Montrose: The Paul Broussard Legacy* will premiere on Channel 8/Houston PBS, followed by a live town-hall discussion.

This is not the first documentary to examine the murder of Paul Broussard. In 2015, Houston hosted two screenings of *The Guy*

with the Knife, directed by Canadian journalist and filmmaker Alison Armstong. That film took a revisionist look at the killing of Broussard, the rehabilitation of one of Broussard’s murderers, Jon Buice, and Buice’s long struggle to secure parole. Many media reports at the time of the Broussard murder asserted that “The Woodlands Ten”—as the teenagers who committed the murder came to be known—had driven an hour from the suburbs with the intent of finding gay people to bash in Montrose. Armstrong’s documentary posited the controversial theory that the killing had not been premeditated, but instead erupted spontaneously when a group of drunken teenagers, high on drugs, became angry because they had been refused entry to the Montrose nightclub Numbers.

When contacted by the *Houston Chronicle*, Broussard’s mother, Nancy Rodriguez, responded, “I remember Buice testifying in court that the group made a unanimous decision to drive to Montrose and ‘go beat up some queers’ and even put what they called ‘queer rocks’ in their pockets.”

The goal of the Houston Public Media documentary is not to re-litigate the murder of Paul Broussard. Instead, the film takes the

continued on page 161



Remembering Paul

In 1991, gay Houston banker Paul Broussard was attacked and murdered by a group of 10 teenagers after he left a Montrose nightclub, sparking a nationwide conversation on the safety of LGBT people.

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Igniting Your Life

What started as a photographic series is now so much more.

By B. Root

Sarah Gish is a Houston-based artist who created the art project and community campaign Ignite Your Life! in 2013. Ignite Your Life! came about after Gish's brother, Geoffrey, died of alcoholism. "I wanted something good to come out of that horrible experience," Gish says, "so I created Ignite Your Life! for two reasons: to memorialize Geoff and to inspire others to be ignited for their lives so that they would hopefully not go down that same path."

With Ignite Your Life!, Gish wants to discover what ignites people's lives and what makes their hearts sing. According to the project's website, the goal of Ignite Your Life! is to inspire people to "light a fire to their own passions and to create connections among people."

Ignite Your Life! initially began as a photographic series and short interviews in which Gish asked people how they ignite their lives. The project has since grown into more of a community-based project with: workshops, talks, classes, and retreats based on the Ignite Your Life! concept; bracelets made with sober teens; T-shirts, greeting cards, and playing cards that help spark conversation about art and igniting one's life; two songs commissioned for the project; "free hug" marathons; giving flowers to strangers; bus stop dances; and road trips in Gish's art car, Phoenix Rising, that foster new connections and relationships.

The Ignite Your Life! project revolves around Gish's "12 Ways to Ignite Your Life Daily." She wrote these concepts after being inspired by the hundreds of stories and photographs she gathered while working on the project. They also draw from what she has learned throughout her studies of addiction and psychology.

1. Trust in spirit.
2. Take care of yourself.
3. Meditate each morning.
4. Commune with nature.
5. Listen to your heart.
6. Be of service.
7. Connect with love.
8. Always be grateful.
9. Allow forgiveness.
10. Explore your creativity.
11. Learn something new.
12. Enjoy life.

The Ignite Your Life! campaign kicked off in July of 2013 with an inaugural road trip taken by Gish and Houston filmmaker and musician Amanda Smith. Gish and Smith traveled from Houston to California, with many stops in between, to discover how people ignite their lives. This summer, Gish will be hitting the road with Houston singer and songwriter Ellen Reynolds for another Ignite Your Life! road trip to Michigan and Canada, which will include pop-up exhibitions of the photographs along the way. New photographs taken during the trip will be posted to the project's Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages. Gish will be fundraising for this summer's trip by hosting screenings of road-trip movies at MECA.

Following this next road trip, Gish will focus her efforts on writing a book about the project. The book will include tips on igniting your life, as well as accounts of the first and second road trip—the people she connected with on the trips and the stories heard. Gish says, "When I interview people about how they ignite their lives, their stories inspire others to ignite their own lives. And when we set this inspiration in motion, we can change the world. Imagine a place where everyone lived from their heart! That's what happens when you ignite your life."

Gish wants to create an "Ignition Revolution" around the world so that people start waking up, listening to their hearts, and following their dreams. "Happy people make a happy planet!"



TWO BIRDS PHOTOGRAPHY



Lighting a Fire

Ignite Your Life! creator Sarah Gish (top) hopes the campaign helps others discover their own unique passions.

For more information about Ignite Your Life! film screenings, photos, and donating, visit igniteyourounlife.com.

B. Root is a regular contributor to OUTSMART magazine.

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The Paper Anniversary

... for marriage equality.

By Ryan M. Leach

June 26, 2016, marks the first anniversary of the Supreme Court of the United States handing down their historic ruling in the case of *Obergefell v. Hodges*—the decision that deemed bans on same-sex marriage unconstitutional throughout the United States. Marriage, as explained by many a conservative, is deeply rooted in tradition. It is traditional to give the gift of paper on your first anniversary, and in the first year since the ruling, same-sex couples everywhere have finally been given the only piece of paper that really counts—their marriage license.

Marriage equality is certainly not the end of the struggle for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. We are still fighting for our rights to live free from discrimination, to not be banned from certain restrooms, to access public services without literally causing a federal case. But marriage was big. It still is. The right to marry legally finally validated what the LGBT community has known for so long: that their relationships are the same as relationships everywhere. Gay and lesbian couples are just as loving (or boring, or argumentative, or exciting, or terrible) as any other couple. There are bride- and groom-zillas. There are terrible dresses and weird tuxedos. All of the things we know about relationships and marriages are the same—just gayer.

June 26 is a significant day for the LGBT community for many reasons. It marks the day in 2013 when the Defense of Marriage Act was overturned by the Supreme Court in *United States v. Windsor*, thus allowing federal agencies to recognize same-sex marriages performed in states that allowed them.

June 26 marks the day in 2003 when the Supreme Court ruled anti-sodomy laws unconstitutional in the case of *Lawrence v. Texas*.

More importantly, the last weekend in June is traditionally when we celebrate the June 28, 1969, anniversary of the Stonewall Riots—the event that many say sparked the modern gay-rights movement.



One Year Later

On June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court validated what the LGBT community has known for so long: that their relationships are the same as relationships everywhere.

The fight for LGBT civil rights had its ups and downs before and after Stonewall, and we certainly have a long way to go to achieve full equality under the law. But marriage was a major victory in this storied sector of American History, and this first anniversary of marriage equality throughout the nation is one that will never be forgotten.

“I remember I got the news around 9 a.m. when I had just taken the bench,” says 151st Civil District Court Judge Mike Engelhart. “We knew that the decision was going to be coming down that day, because I think it might have been the last day of the session. We thought it was going to be in favor of marriage equality, and it was. I was so excited. Then the county clerk tried to stall the issuance of those licenses. I asked my coordinator to keep an eye on things and let me know what was going on. I knew there would be a lot of couples racing to the courthouse who could finally get married.”

In the hours following the decision, County Clerk Stan Stanart refused to issue marriage licenses, a major responsibility of that elected role. Stanart claimed that he could not issue licenses until he received new forms from the

state that did not include the gender markers of “male” and “female.” You may have heard of another more infamous county clerk in Kentucky by the name of Kim Davis. “It really broke my heart to see the county clerk still denying marriage licenses to people. As a judge it is our responsibility to follow the law and to treat people with equality, dignity and respect,” says 125th Civil District Judge Kyle Carter.

Because the clerk initially failed to do his job, same-sex couples continued to face unlawful discrimination until County Attorney Vince Ryan intervened. In a letter issued to Stanart shortly after the ruling, Ryan stated, “In light of the opinion issued today in the case of *Obergefell vs. Hodges* et al, our opinion is that the law requires [that] you immediately begin issuing marriage licenses to all qualified applicants without regard to gender.” Ryan was prepared to file a suit compelling Stanart to begin issuing licenses. Stanart eventually announced that he would begin issuing them at 3 p.m., regardless of the forms he had stated he needed only a few hours before. It was Judge Carter who was able to perform the first →

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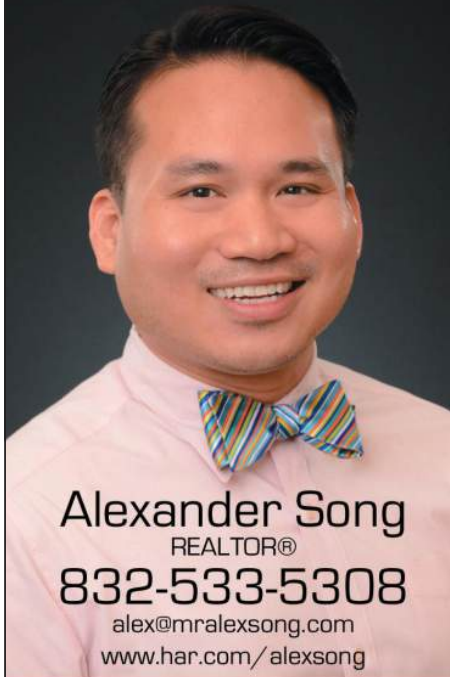
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THE PAPER ANNIVERSARY

continued from previous page

legal same-sex marriage in Harris County shortly after 3 p.m. He and other judges waived the 72-hour waiting period required under Texas law due to the special circumstances. "I was so thankful to have the opportunity to perform that ceremony," says Carter. "I think I performed nine ceremonies that day. The first couple was a gay couple, the second a lesbian couple, and then a couple that included a transgender woman who married her husband."

Judges Carter and Engelhart performed almost 20 marriages that day. Throughout the county, other judges supportive of equality also began performing ceremonies, like presiding judge for the Houston Municipal Courts, Barbara Hartle. Hartle also just happens to be a lesbian. "I am going to be 58 this year, and I have been out since I was 21," she says. "This is truly something I never thought I would see happen."

At Hartle's directive, the municipal courts advertised on their website that they would perform ceremonies for same-sex couples. Since the *Obergefell* decision, Hartle guesses that they have performed over 200 same-sex ceremonies since June. "It is interesting, when I perform these ceremonies, I always ask how long the couple has known each other, and straight couples usually say about six months, but consistently with gay couples they say 15, 20, 30 years," Hartle says. "It isn't hard to guess which of these couples has a better chance at staying together."

Hartle continues, "Pretty much all of the judges at the municipal courthouse are willing to perform same-sex ceremonies. We do have a few judges who have stopped doing ceremonies based on their religious objection, but that's fine. That's their right."

Under Texas law, a judge is not required to perform marriage ceremonies for same-sex couples as long as they refrain from performing marriage ceremonies entirely. Several justices of the peace have also discontinued performing wedding ceremonies in their courts since the ruling. However, judges like Justice of the Peace Dale Gorczynski, a long-time and vocal supporter of marriage equality, welcomes same-sex couples to come to his courtroom. Judge Gorczynski has served as justice of the peace for decades after also serving as a city council member. He will be retiring at the end of this term.

The year since the decision has not been without controversy. Many politicians in Texas and throughout the U.S. continue to fight against it. But public opinion has slowly but steadily moved in favor of LGBT rights. In response, opponents to equality have begun to focus on creating other nonexistent threats like "men in women's bathrooms" and cake-makers being forced to bake same-sex "sin" cakes. All of these "monsters" would be terrifying if they

were, in fact, real. LGBT Texans are gearing up for a fight when the legislature reconvenes in 2017, preparing for what promises to be the most anti-LGBT legislative session in Texas history. Governor Greg Abbott and Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick have already vowed to support and pass legislation that would effectively discriminate against the LGBT community and others.

The backlash to marriage equality was to be expected. In response to other landmark rulings like *Brown v. Board of Education*, which ended segregation, new discriminatory laws popped up in states throughout the South. For some, the concept of "equality for everyone" can feel like a loss of liberty for them. In reality it is the loss of their privilege at the expense of progress. America doesn't operate on privilege. Privilege is the byproduct of a prolonged imbalance of power and opportunity. It may feel comfortable, but it doesn't make it right. America has always been about progress and about breaking free from the chains of oppression, whether they are imposed by our government or our neighbor. And freedom, once achieved, must also be preserved and protected. The fight continues. That's what America is actually about.

Happy first anniversary, marriage equality! Look, I got you some paper!

Ryan Leach is a community activist, lawyer, professor, writer, and humorist. You can email him at ryanleach@outsmartmagazine.com.



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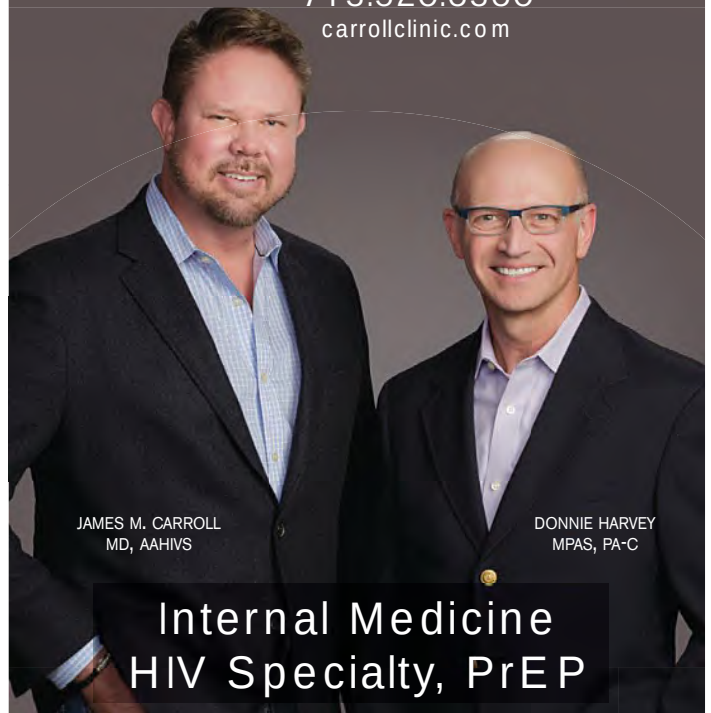


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Letting Go

My experience coming out as a gay dad.

By Jaime Cryer

The hospital exam room was trashed. The vital-signs monitors that had been screaming were all silenced. We stepped away from the stretcher, exhausted. All efforts at resuscitation were futile. As people began to leave the room, I began the normal task of an ER nurse whose patient had died, cleaning up the room and preparing the body for the family to view.

I was at a point in my career where I was burned out from years of being a nurse in the emergency room. But still, even after years in the ER and seeing life at its worst—and often being horribly cut short—there was something so humbling about watching someone take their last breath and slip out of this life. As I was disconnecting wires and pulling out tubes, I stopped what I was doing and stood there for a moment. I looked down at the lifeless face of this patient. His eyes were empty and, oddly enough, his expression carried no worries. I thought to myself, “I wonder what he carried with him before he let go of this life? What troubled him from the years prior?” None of it mattered now, but I can assure you that a few hours before he left this life, he was still holding on to something from the past.

What does it mean to let go? For me, I reached a point in my life in 2012 where I could no longer hold on. I had a secret that I had carried for my entire life. I wanted so badly to let it go, yet I was fighting so hard to hold it in. I was a husband, a father, a son, a brother, but I was gay and I wanted to let go. Everything in me wanted to take the mask off and let it shatter on the floor. That is exactly what I did. I had been hiding behind religion, a church, a family, and I was holding on for dear life. But I let go. The aftermath of coming out was more than I expected. I faced judgment,

I was a husband, a father, a son, a brother, but I was gay and I wanted to let go.



Living His Truth

Three and a half years ago, Houston father Jaime Cryer (r) came out as a gay man. Although he's had to navigate complications with family members since then, he also found the love of his life—his fiancé, Jonathan (l).

rejection, harsh words, and I carried a heavy weight of guilt for what I had done to my family. I picked up the words and the actions that were hurled at me, and I carried it.

That was three-and-a-half years ago. One particular morning not too long ago, I got out of bed before daylight. I felt heavy. A phone call the day before (basically a verbal assault) had tipped me over the edge, and I realized I could

not carry the weight of this any longer. I wanted to release my knuckle-white grasp and let it all go.

Since coming out, I have had to walk this road a few times. I have found myself holding on to people and places that were not meant for me, unaware of how toxic it all was until I could no longer stand under the weight of it all. So I let it go. Sometimes I pick it up again, but I am learning to let go. Maybe you are like me and you want to let go of everything you're carrying. It may be guilt or fear, or it may be the heaviness of a secret that you have kept hidden. Let it go. Maybe it is a one-sided, empty relationship—giving your all with nothing be-

ing reciprocated back to you. Maybe you have loved and poured yourself out, only to be met with mediocrity. All of the hurt, the anger, the guilt and shame—let it go. Be you. Be real.

I lost a dear friend years ago because he could not let go. He had a secret that he carried with him, and revealing it was too much for him. He fought really hard to let go and find the freedom that comes with being real, but unfortunately he reached a point where his truth was too heavy, and he took his own life. I can't help but wonder what his life would have been like had he just let it all go and found his freedom.

Letting go is never easy. It means change. Sometimes you grieve for what you let go of. It is a scary process. It is difficult to find happiness when you feel responsible for the loss of other people's happiness. But what I can tell you is that it was truly eye-opening to let go of everyone, and all the things I had been told, and all the things that others expected me to do and act like. It is a humbling moment, just as it was in that ER room littered with resuscitative paraphernalia and a lifeless patient. I told →

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LETTING GO

continued from page 113

the truth—I started a new life, and for that I am forever grateful. I've found the life I had always wanted. I met the most amazing guy and the love of my life, my fiancé, Jonathan.

Sometimes it takes tragedies in life to bring about change, and sometimes it doesn't. I let go of everything, started over from nothing, and found the life I had always hoped for. For that reason, I am a better father and soon-to-be husband.

If it had been my life that ended in that hospital room and I was the one lying on a stretcher, I know that the people and places of my past would not haunt me in those final moments. I will now be surrounded by my children, my family, my husband, and his family. Even though letting go is easier said than done—and it is a natural instinct to pick up the past again because you feel responsible—you will find freedom by simply letting go.

Happy Father's Day.

And even more, Happy Pride!

Jaime Cryer is a registered nurse who enjoys writing, reading, fishing, and talking medicine with his fiancé, Jonathan, who is a family nurse practitioner. His children are a big part of their lives, as well as their families. They enjoy cooking together and traveling.

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Pair a museum visit with a complementary meal for the perfect Father's Day.

By Joanna O'Leary

Since taking your dad(s) to dinner on Father's Day is par for the course, why not supplement the meal with some pre- or post-prandial art, history, and culture? Houston's robust museum scene offers a wide selection of exhibits guaranteed to appeal to diverse interests, providing the perfect opportunity to create your own themed "dinner and a museum" experience. Here are some ideas to get you started:

Mummies on Father's Day? Why not, especially those on display at the Houston Museum of Natural Science? Their *Hall of Ancient Egypt* exhibit offers a well-curated array of artifacts that have a way of making you consider changing careers to become a hummus-craving Indiana Jones-style archaeologist. Although there is a dearth of specifically Egyptian restaurants in Houston, many of that country's culinary staples—such as kebobs, dolma, schwarma, moussaka, and baba ganoush—can be found at many Middle Eastern establishments. For quality as well as quantity, take Dad to Fadi's Mediterranean Grill or introduce him to that wondrous condiment known only as "white sauce" with a gyro platter from The Halal Guys.

The *Degas: A New Vision* exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, is a comprehensive survey of the painter's rich body of work that pays special attention to his lesser-known pieces (i.e., those not involving ballerinas). Before or after perusing the exhibit's more than 200 works, indulge in some dishes from the French capital (birthplace of Edgar Degas) at Au Petit Paris. Located in an unassuming cottage in the heart of Montrose, this restaurant is known for serving creatively constructed dishes in a welcoming atmosphere. Standouts include the house-made foie gras terrine paired with spring salad dressed with a black truffle vinaigrette infusion and brioche toasts and the unctuous coq au vin with fingerling po-



LEFT: COURTESY HMNS; RIGHT: JOANNAOLEARY

Ancient Fare

Complement a Father's Day trip to the Houston Museum of Natural Science's *Hall of Ancient Egypt* exhibit with a gyro platter from the newly opened Halal Guys.

tato puree, sautéed spinach, onions, and bacon.

An afternoon spent in the Museum of African-American Culture, which chronicles the lives and experiences of prominent people of color in Houston, will remind you of the significant contributions these residents have made to our culinary scene. Pay homage by visiting Houston's This Is It Soul Food Restaurant where, since 1959, hungry patrons have gobbled up bountiful plates of ham hocks, oxtails, smothered pork chops, macaroni and cheese, and (in this author's humble opinion), the best candied yams in town. Alternately, prepare for your museum visit with some hearty morning fare at The Breakfast Klub. The long lines on weekends testify to the enduring popularity of this Midtown joint, with its Southern breakfast classics like wings and waffles, catfish and grits, and biscuits and gravy.

Dads who are young at heart (or have kids) will get a kick out of the series of permanent and short-term interactive displays at the Children's Museum of Houston. At *Explore Yalálag—A Mountain Village in México!* that runs through November 6, you'll gain insight into the customs and rituals of life in a small town in Oaxaca. Learning about Yalálag's cooking practices is sure to whet the family's appetite for some Mex-Mex food. For authentic Oaxacan specialties, go to Hugo's for, well, just about everything, but especially the crispy don't-knock-'em-'til-you-try-'em *chapulines*, pan-sautéed grasshoppers accompanied by

tortillas, guacamole, and salsa. Diners less enthused about insects should try the signature Oaxacan dishes at Arnoldo Richards' Pico's, such as the sweet-savory *mancha mantales*, pork and chicken braised in a peanut and chile ancho mole with plantains, sweet potatoes, apples, and pineapple, and the *pato en dos moles*, a succulent breast of duck and its hind-quarters bathed in mole de ciruela, an earthy sauce made with ancho peppers and prunes.

If Dad has a pleasantly dark sense of humor, take him to the Museum of Funeral History for a thorough education on the history and methodology associated with mourning, funerals, and corpse preparation. Then continue to engage with "preserved meats" (get it?) by sampling the elegant *salumi* offering at newcomer Enoteca Rossa. Papas who love pizza absolutely must try the chef's signature pizza stuffed with ricotta and crowned with a softball-size piece of burrata.

Finally, the highly active but underappreciated Russian Cultural Center is home to classes, screenings, and rotating exhibits that will delight even dads who aren't serious Russophiles. Follow up with a shopping trip to The Russian General Store to pick up caviar, smoked mackerel, and *pelmeni* (Russian dumplings) for a socialist-style picnic.

Joanna O'Leary is a freelance food and travel writer based in Houston. Her exploits are chronicled on brideyoleary.com.

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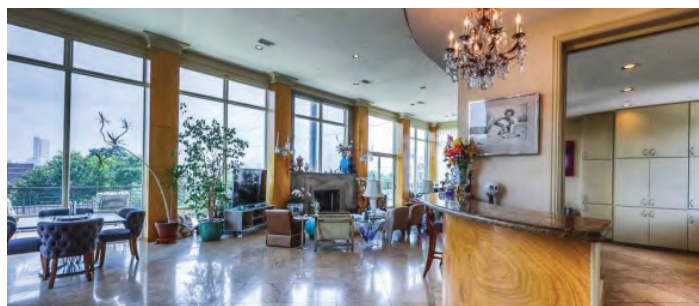
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‘The Divine Sister’ Mister

Randall Jobe hasn’t kicked his drag habit.

By **Donalevan Maines**

Photo by Dalton DeHart

Fans love that out actor Randall Jobe can’t kick the habit of performing a repertoire of popular drag portrayals ranging from Marlene Dietrich to “Mama Nina” Laurenzo. The late Houston restaurateur even signed a tortilla for him!

In *The Divine Sister*, Jobe has a sister mister in Joel Sander, another out Houston pro who stars as Mother Superior, a role the show’s author, Charles Busch, originated off-Broadway in 2010.

Mother Superior, indomitable leader of crumbling St. Veronica’s Convent in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has since been played by a man in drag, but Celebration Theatre camps up the comedy by casting Jobe as a German nun, Sister Maria Walburga. (Or is she? The plot thickens.)

“I’m in!” says Jobe.

“If you have one nun in drag,” he tells me, “you might as well have two.”

Ach du lieber! (Oh, heavens!)

Jobe was born to Mexican-Indian parents in Paducah, a tiny town in the Texas Panhandle, where he was quickly adopted by Fonda and Wayne Jobe. His father’s family were Jews who had added an *e* to their last name when they converted to Christianity; their long-suffering Old Testament name of *Job* became *Jobe*.

“I have been involved in theater of some sort or another as long as I can remember—over five decades. That sounds better than 50 years,” says Jobe.

He debuted as a performer in 1967 as a workhouse orphan in a community theater production of *Oliver!* (“I learned everybody’s songs and would go home singing all of them,” he recalls).

Following his family’s move to Brazosport, Jobe made his way to *très gay* Houston where he met his first lover, and they moved in together. “He was from Sealy, and I moved to Houston from Clute,” says Jobe. “That is when my parents called me on the carpet and asked me if I was gay. I said, ‘I think so.’ They threw



Sister Maria Walburga (Randall Jobe, l) and Mother Superior (Joel Sander) are not always this angelic-looking in Charles Busch’s *The Divine Sister*, playing through July 3 at Classical Theatre.

Pray for These Sisters

everything they could at me, including the Bible. Actually, I feel like a late bloomer. Everybody knew I was gay before I did. I was very outgoing and showed every tendency for being gay. I sewed little dresses for my little sister’s Barbie dolls.”

Years passed before Jobe’s parents fully accepted his truth.

“A friend of mine contracted HIV and then AIDS in the mid-’80s when it was just coming to light,” explains Jobe, whose parents watched as he cared for his dying friend. “I saw a change in them, especially my father. From that point on, it was, for the most part, a smooth transition.”

Beginning in 1975, Jobe performed in musicals for Theatre Under the Stars (TUTS), “generally buried in the chorus,” he says. “My first show was *Fiddler on the Roof* in Miller Outdoor Theatre, in June, all bundled up as if it was wintertime, before there was air-conditioning on stage. It was pretty horrific, but I didn’t care. I thought it was big time!”

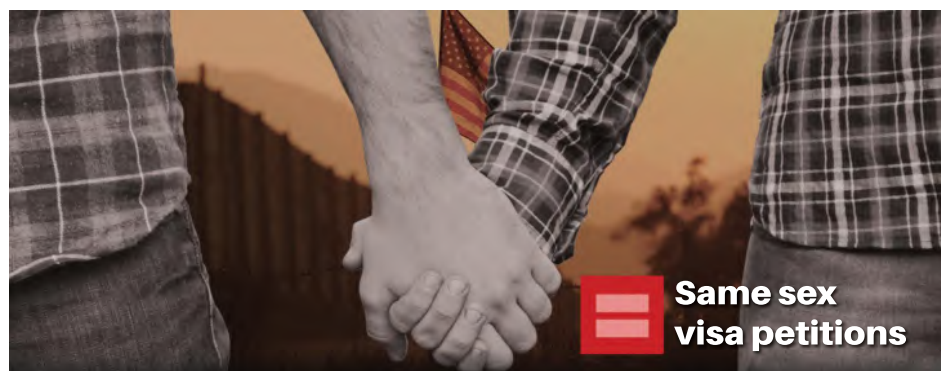
In the early 1980s, Jobe gained fame as a comic at Risky Business, a cabaret that shared space at 2700 Albany St. in Montrose with the

muscular Officer’s Club (formerly the Farmhouse disco). Its performers “managed the box office, did marketing, did lyric rewrites, and here and there we would write original songs; they were full of innuendo,” he says. “Everything was thrown at us to do, out of necessity. I feel like all of it served me later,” including his long stint as an emcee and promotions director for Charles Armstrong Investments.

“The [Risky Business] audiences were a great mix of gay people and straight people,” adds Jobe, who has also worked as a bartender at gay watering holes. “You would have a table of eight young men next to a table of straights; by the end of the night, they were great pals.”

Jobe remembers some of his fellow performers panicking when his parents arrived for a show on a night that he was to portray a foul-mouthed Marlene Dietrich. “They said, ‘What are you going to do?’ I said, ‘I’m going to do Marlene.’ It was kind of vulgar, but she ended up being one of my father’s favorites.”

His parents are deceased, but both of Jobe’s sisters plan to cheer him on as Sister Walburga in *The Divine Sister*, in which he does double duty by scrubbing the convent’s courtyard as →



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THE DIVINE SISTER MISTER

continued from previous page

an old Scottish charwoman, Mrs. MacDuffie. The roles mark his return to Gay Pride Month shows. (For *Arrivederci Papa!*, he rode atop a Pride parade float while "powdering" the crowd with flour from an oversized sponge.)

Jobe has also voiced Audrey II, the menacing plant in *Little Shop of Horrors*, donned drag as Sylvia St. Croix in *Ruthless* at Strand Street Theatre in Galveston, and portrayed Pseudolus in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, Buzz in *Love! Valour! Compassion!*, and Harold (twice, 10 years apart) in *The Boys in the Band*, among other roles. In *Judy at the Stonewall Inn*, he played a drag queen who impersonated Liza Minnelli's famous mother.

The Divine Sister's out director, Ron Jones, says, "We hope the LGBT audience will support the show not just because the leading lady is a man in drag, but because it is campy fun that we sometimes like as a diversion."

The play also features out gay fave Brad Gortz (watch for his character's "giant schlong"); Elizabeth Marshall Black as wrestling coach Sister Acacius; veteran Michelle Britton as Mrs. Levinson, a Jewess whom Mother Superior hits up for money; and newcomer Skyler Sinclair as Agnes, a postulant.

"Busch [the play's author] has ransacked most every nun movie ever made," says Jobe. "It's outrageous, irreverent, and laugh-out-loud funny."

The show references such films as *Doubt*, *Sister Act*, *Agnes of God*, *The Trouble with Angels*, *The Singing Nun*, *The Song of Bernadette*, *The Bells of St. Mary's*, *The Da Vinci Code*, and *The Sound of Music*. (For example, how do you solve a problem like Agnes? Among the visions she sees is "the holy face of St. Clare in the urine stain of a boy's underpants." She stares, transfixed.)

A *Variety* critic wrote, "Call it old-fashioned with its sweet, silly earnestness, but in a crass and sullen world, this kind of comedy is not only entirely refreshing, it's necessary!"

Nevertheless, insists Jobe, "*The Divine Sister* is for adults only!"

Nein? You don't believe him?

Well, in stealing a classic scene from *The Sound of Music*, when Mother Superior gently asks Sister Mary Acacius, "My dear, what is it you can't face?," stage directions require that her "affected accent makes it sound like she said, 'What is it, you cunt-face?'"

Yep, this twisted *Sister* isn't for kiddos.

What: *The Divine Sister*

When: Through July 3

Where: Classical Theatre Company, 4617 Montrose Blvd. @ 59 (in Chelsea Market)

Tickets: celebrationtheatrehouston.com

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



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Broadway Chatter

Gregory Purish talks Tony Awards, Broadway, AIDS, and more.

By Donalevan Maines

Twist his arm and out Broadway-baby Gregory Purish might spill some tea on Lin-Manuel Miranda, whose mammoth musical *Hamilton* set a record with 16 nominations going into the June 12 Tony Awards on CBS-TV.

Pour him another Macallan 25 for bawdy anecdotes about Patti LuPone, Hugh Jackman, and the late Elaine Stritch, or get an earful on how last year's Oscar-winning *Birdman* or (*The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance*) nails the current misguided Broadway mindset of trying to lure audiences with movie stars in stage roles.

Purish won't be present at this month's kudofest in Radio City Music Hall, as he's left his longtime post managing the bars at 18 Shubert theaters on Broadway to become camp boss on an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico.

That's fine by him, as Purish, who at age 46 now calls League City home, hated attending the Tony Awards in person. "It's a nightmare," says the Jersey Shore native, who also played a heroic but unheralded role in what he calls "the second wave" of the AIDS crisis in New York City.

At the Tonys, he explains, "You arrive at 1 p.m. and sit through boring speeches that seem like they will never end. The musical numbers—the fun part—doesn't start until 8 o'clock [New York time], and by the end of the night, you're starving, you're dying of thirst, and you're about to piss in your pants because for three hours you couldn't get out of your seat."

Purish grew up attending some of the 20th century's biggest stage hits, including *Cats*, whose seven Tony Awards in 1983 included Best Featured Actress in a Musical for Fort Worth's Betty Buckley.

Some other highlights for the young fan were up-close views of Polly Holliday and Jean Stapleton in the female version of Neil

Simon's 1965 Tony winner, *The Odd Couple*; TV's *Barney Miller*, handsome Hal Linden, in Herb Gardner's *I'm Not Rappaport* (three Tony Awards including Best Play in 1986); and James Earl Jones and Maureen Stapleton in Alfred Uhry's *Driving Miss Daisy*.

When Purish was 18, he moved to the Big Apple in 1988 with the intention of going to college, but instead he went directly to work for Redden's Funeral Home at 325 West 14th Street. "They were the first funeral home in the city to take AIDS bodies," explains Purish. "I felt it was a noble profession and we were doing the right thing," he says. "We were there for people at their darkest time, when nobody was going to help them, money wasn't going to help them, only you were going to help them with this predicament."

Pioneering AIDS activists from Gay Men's Health Crisis, including playwright Larry Kramer, "were in Redden's every day," says Purish. "I had the pleasure of knowing these warriors. It was pure happenstance that I got to

be involved. I didn't know about Redden's; at the end of the interview, they said, 'One more thing, putting our cards on the table, we take AIDS bodies, let us know if that's a problem.'"

In 1985, Kramer penned *The Normal Heart* about that devastating period in gay history. Its Broadway bow in 2011 won three Tony Awards, including Best Revival of a Play. "His account was completely accurate," says Purish, who remembers picking up corpses from once-flourishing apartment buildings that fell dark during the epidemic. "I was burying people younger than me, hustlers who were 16 and 17. Seeing what I saw, I think, is what kept me alive and HIV-free."

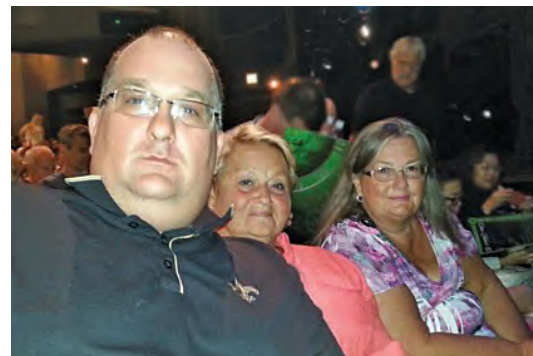
In 1992, Purish moved to San Francisco, where, he says, he worked for the funeral home that helped bury the late Randy Shilts, author of the 1987 best-selling book *And the Band Played On: Politics, People and the AIDS Epidemic* (as well as *The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk* and *Conduct Unbecoming: Gays and Lesbians in the U.S. Military from Vietnam to the Persian Gulf*).

In 1994, Purish returned to Manhattan and a steady diet of Broadway and off-Broadway shows, but he mourned what might have been if AIDS hadn't taken top talents such as director/choreographer Michael Bennett (A

Chorus Line). "It struck me how we lost a whole generation that would have done magnificent work," says Purish. "Their deaths changed Broadway forever. Our 'collective theatrical palette' became less sophisticated. The bar was lowered drastically, and everyone that was left did not know any better, and we ended up with what we have now. I believe those that we lost in the '80s are looking down from heaven and clutching their pearls at what they see being produced on Broadway now and saying that we are all f--king crazy! Crazy for producing it, crazy for starring in it, and crazy for buying tickets to it. When they look down from the heavens and see who and what is nominated, that is when we begin to see tornadoes, hurricanes, and flash flooding!"

Today's Broadway musical was salvaged, says Purish, by the success of Jonathan Larson's *Rent* and Lin-Manuel Miranda's *In the Heights*. "Suddenly, everybody realized that a musical could be set in modern times and make money," he explains. "Now, Lin-Manuel Miranda comes back to Broadway with *Hamilton*, not set in modern times but definitely with a modern score."

Purish hopes the next step forward on The Great White Way will be to champion new dramas. "The current formula for success on Broadway is 'revival with a movie star,'" he explains. "If you look at the list of nominees, it is probably 50 percent revivals. Some shows need to go away! Why are we seeing them every five or six years? There is no excuse. I really hope that the Nederlands, the Shuberts, and Jujamcyn begin to wake up and start putting some money behind the abundant talent that is out there. There are so many young, gifted writers →



Behind the Scenes

Broadway expert Gregory Purish (l) with his mom, Karen (r), and Patricia Dunfee.



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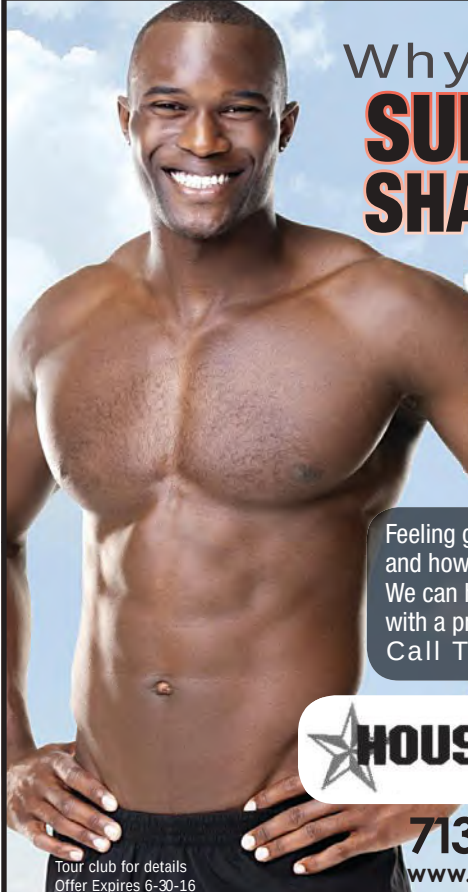
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BROADWAY CHATTER

continued from previous page

that can't get a play even 'workshopped.'"

Among young actors on Broadway, Purish's favorite is Nina Arianda, who followed her first Tony nomination in the 2011 revival of Garson Kanin's *Born Yesterday* with a win in 2012 for Best Actress in a Play in *Venus in Fur* by David Ives.

The 2012 ceremony was especially notable for Purish because his friend, former *One Life to Live* actress and LGBT rights/AIDS advocate Judith Light, won Best Featured Actress in a Play as Silda Grauman in Jon Robin Baitz's *Other Desert Cities*. She returned in 2013 to win the same category as Faye in Richard Greenberg's *The Assembled Parties*.

Purish surely endeared himself to Light when he told her that his boyfriend called her the best in the business at crying on cue. When his boyfriend, who was a fan of Light's Emmy Award-winning turn as Karen Wolek on *OLTL*, met her backstage, Purish says, Light took them into her dressing room, shut the door, and commenced squalling like a mashed cat. Then, becoming suddenly composed, he says Light "blew her nose, wiped away the tears, and said, 'I still got it, right?'"

Donalevan Maines is a regular contributor to OUTSMART magazine.

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Let Your Geek Flag Fly

Comicpalooza returns June 17–19 to George R. Brown Convention Center.

By Bradley Donalson

After a record-breaking year in 2015, Comicpalooza will attempt to top itself again this year with what it does best: a smorgasbord of pop-culture and sci-fi/fantasy/horror actors, writers, and artists spanning comics, anime, film, TV, and even a few former boy-banders. The 2016 three-day event (coming a little later in the year, due to Houston's busy convention schedule) arrives in the middle of Pride month—and what better way to show off your pride than with a week-end blowout for 40,000 of your closest friends, all dressed up as their favorite pop-culture characters?

Robert Raney, a volunteer who assists Comicpalooza's hospitality director and has worked at the conventions for over 10 years, spoke with OUTSMART about his experience with conventions. "For me," Raney says, "going to cons is a way to get out and meet new and interesting people." From the guests to the convention attendees, there is always something to keep him occupied and having fun. In his words, "Jeremy Renner [Marvel Cinematic Universe's Hawkeye] was quite a hoot." As far as being open and out at conventions, Raney assures us that conventions are something aspirational. "That topic doesn't really come up in any kind of negative sense, and it's really more relaxed."

Headlining this year's event are Kate Beckinsale (*Underworld*, *Pearl Harbor*), professional wrestler Ric Flair, and a prolific writer for both DC and Marvel Comics, John Ostrander. One of the biggest events at this year's Comicpalooza will be Sigourney Weaver (*Ghostbusters*, *Prayers for Bobby*) joining up with the rest of the cast of *Aliens*, which will be celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Weaver, who will only be able to appear on Saturday, June 18, will be joined by costars Bill Paxton, Jenette Goldstein, Paul Reiser, Mark Rolston, Lance Henriksen, Michael Biehn,



and Carrie Henn for autographs and photo ops in the first American reunion of this type for *Aliens*. Packages for Kate Beckinsale and the *Aliens* cast photo ops and autographs are available in limited quantity at the Comicpalooza website.

This year's attendees will also be able to meet some of their favorite stars, such as Eliza Dushku (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Bring It On*), Houston native Sean Patrick Flanery (*Boondock Saints*, *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*), Norman Reedus (*The Walking Dead*), as well as Walter Koenig, the original Pavel Chekov of the *Star Trek* franchise. Writers in attendance will include Houstonians Cassandra Rose Clarke and John Shade, as well as Missy Jane, Mat Johnson, Mercedes Lackey, and many more. Also, for those of us who were swept up in the boy-band craze of the '90s, some familiar faces will be in attendance—Erik-Michael Estrada of O-Town, Chris Kirkpatrick of *NSYNC, AJ McLean of the Backstreet Boys, and Jeff Timmons of 98 Degrees. These boys

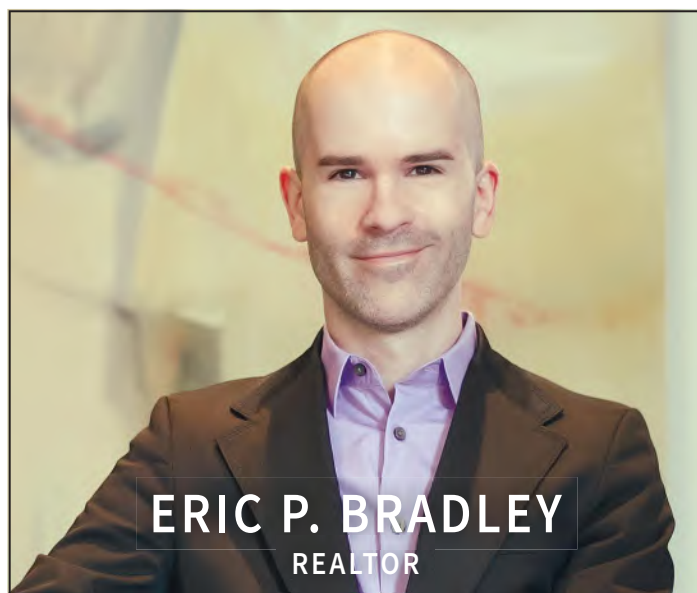
recently put aside their old musical rivalries to star in *Dead 7*, a new post-apocalyptic zombie Western written by Nick Carter (Backstreet Boys) and airing on SyFy.

Another event at Comicpalooza this year, according to Raney, will be a "crossplay" drag show. Many people are familiar with the idea of cosplaying, which involves dressing up as a favorite character from anime or movies, either subtly or with elaborate and sometimes costly costumes. "Crossplay" is exactly the same thing, only the person wearing the costume and the character being portrayed don't have matching genders. "It will host drag queens and drag kings, and we'll end up having two winners, one for each category," Raney claims. The event will also begin taking part in the annual Pride parade, and Raney hopes that it will begin branching out into charity work and other efforts to support the LGBT community. Raney also hopes that the convention will one day be playing host to author Neil Gaiman (*Sandman*, *Neverwhere*) or even →



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What better way to show off your pride than dressing up as your favorite pop-culture character? Comicpalooza, which hits Houston's George R. Brown Convention Center on June 17–19, draws in more than 40,000 comic and pop-culture enthusiasts from around the world.



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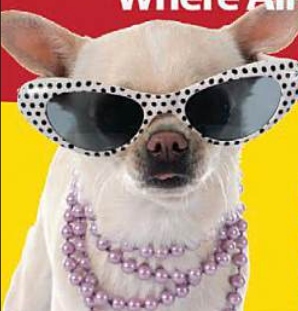
continued from page 127

the ogle-worthy Dominic Purcell. Until then, we can content ourselves with this year's plethora of guests and hundreds of hours of entertainment.

For those who have never been to a Comicpalooza before, and who might be intimidated by its claim to being Texas' "largest pop-culture and comic event," or for those who would rather have a more focused experience on a specific type of con, Raney suggests looking into other types of conventions in and around Houston and Texas at large. "There are a lot of different cons you can go to," claims Raney, "and they each have their own shtick." His previous work with Aggiecon was much more low-key and locally focused than bigger cons like Comicpalooza. Other cons in Houston that may be worth a peek include Space City Comic Con or Delta H Con. Themed cons in Texas include Rice University's OwlCon, TheGameCon in Galveston, and PAX South in San Antonio, which focus on gaming of all different kinds, as opposed to the more general cons. And of course, there's Austin's HavenCon, Texas' first LGBT-themed "geek and gaming" convention.

For more information, visit Comicpalooza's website at comicpalooza.com.

Bradley Donalson is a frequent contributor to OUTSMART magazine.



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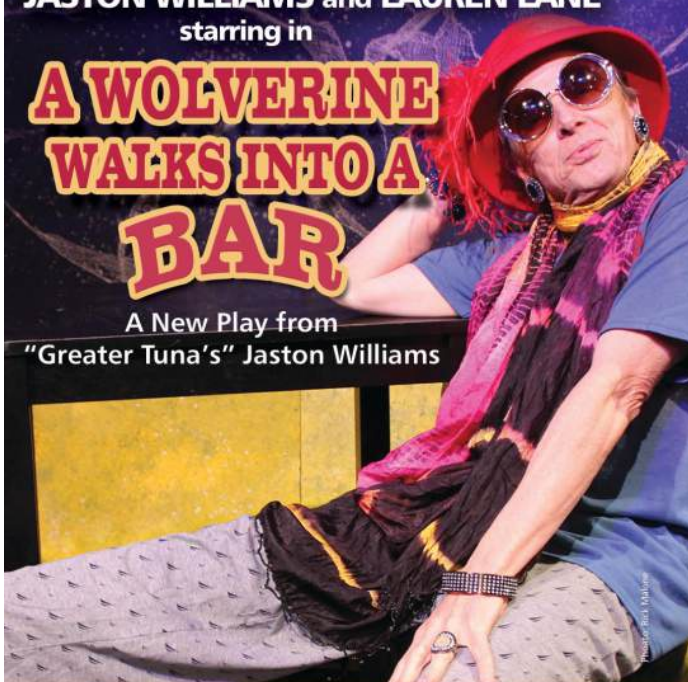


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It's Raining Men

John Kwiatkowski and Matt McDougall slide into the wedding of their dreams.



Fate Would Have It

Matt McDougall (r) first met John Kwiatkowski in 2002 on the dance floor of Rich's. The two were married following the Supreme Court's marriage equality ruling in 2015.

By Henry V. Thiel

Photos by Thomas & Penelope Photography

Matt and John met at Rich's in 2002 by chance—with the help of two friends who each unwittingly played matchmaker.

In Matt's corner was a college friend who convinced Matt to drive all the way from College Station to Houston just so he could visit a gay bar for the very first time—a rite of passage for all young gay men. "He wanted to take me to my first gay bar, so I wouldn't have to be nervous my first time alone," confides Matt, "and so I could have somebody slip me a drink, since I was just 19 years old."

John's social calendar that evening was already booked with a movie night at his place with a group of friends. They all bailed. There was a friend in from out of town, however, to rescue John from moping at home and swapping the proposed movie for another showing of *Beaches*. Despite weather to match the evening's almost cruel theme, John's friend managed to drag him out in the drizzly night and into Rich's.

John's night soon spun a 180—on the dance floor, appropriately enough. That's where he met Matt, who was fated to never have a better gay-bar experience from then on. Before either of them realized, it was 2 a.m., and the four of them ended up at House of Pies. John offered his couch for them to crash.

"We spent the next three years driving back and forth between Houston and College Station until Matt graduated from A&M in

"After being together for seven years, calling each other 'boyfriends' didn't feel quite right. We were married in every way but on paper."

2005, and moved to Houston," remembers John.

"When we started discussing buying a house together," John explains, "we talked about getting married. We decided that we didn't want to fly to another state where marriage was legal, or get married without our

family and friends."

"And we also didn't want to have a wedding here in Texas that would have just been symbolic," adds Matt. "After being together for seven years, calling each other 'boyfriends' didn't feel quite right to either of us. We were married in every way but on paper."

There was that hint of frustration in the telling, that small burn many in the LGBT community have experienced. "So we went and picked out rings, and made a commitment to each other."

In the summer of 2015, Matt was glued to *scotusblog.com*, waiting for the *Obergefell* court decision to be announced. After hearing the news, he grabbed John's ring that John had left on the kitchen counter after washing the dishes, and raced downstairs to tearfully pop the question.

John's response: "Wait, what's the Supreme Court's decision?"

"Um, I kinda need an answer to my question" was Matt's reply. →

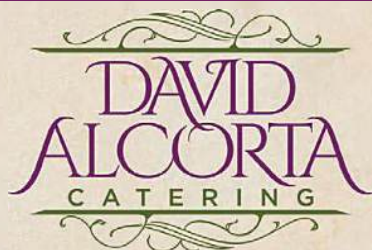


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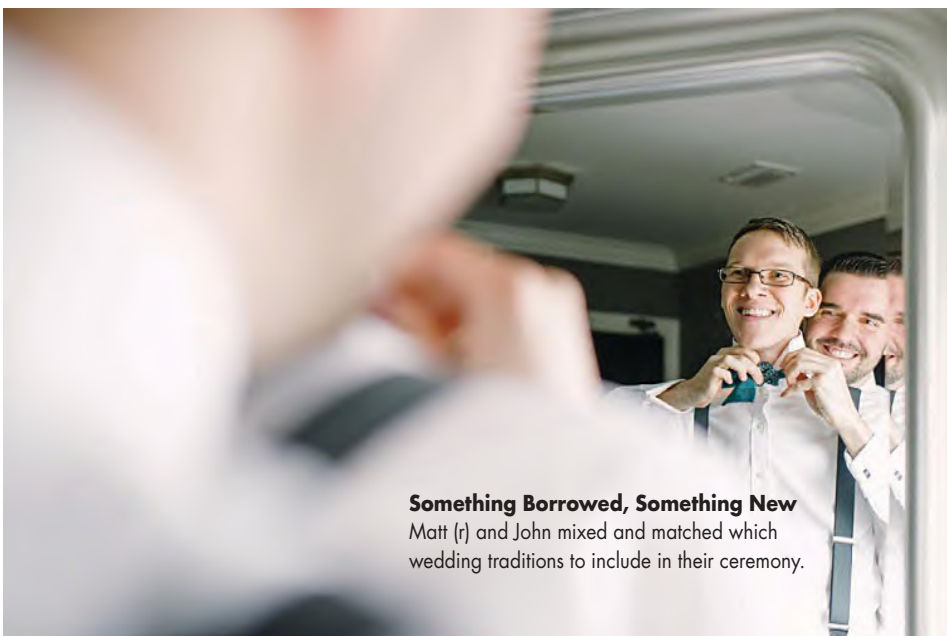
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Something Borrowed, Something New

Matt (r) and John mixed and matched which wedding traditions to include in their ceremony.

WEDDING GUIDE

continued from previous page

"A month before our wedding, we took our rings to the jeweler to have them engraved with our wedding date and initials," says John, looking at his left hand. "Not having them on for a month after wearing them for six years was really tough. We both felt like a piece of us

was missing, and we were thrilled to get them back at the ceremony."

They chose to have their ceremony and reception in a stunning old firehouse called Station 3. They saw pictures of the venue online, and as soon as they saw the exposed brick and windows in person, they knew it was where they wanted to get married.

continued on page 136



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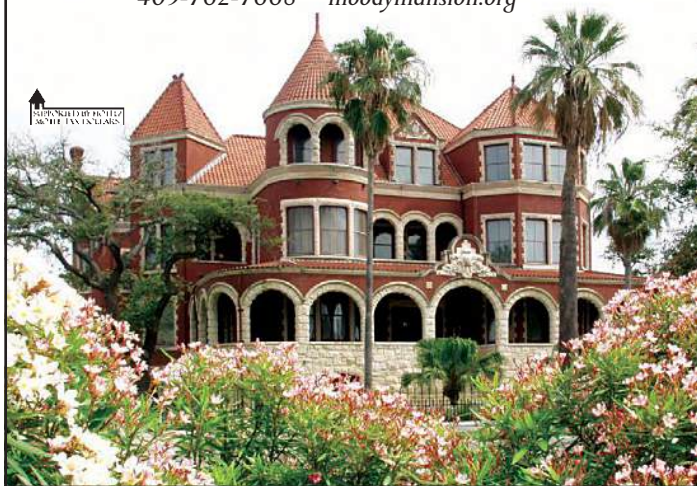
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WEDDING GUIDE

continued from page 134

“And c’mon,” says Matt with a mischievous grin, “two gay guys sliding down a pole—it’s the perfect entrance for a gay wedding.”

Matt found their photographer at a bridal show. “Thomas and Penelope had never shot a GLBT wedding before,” admits Matt. “They did a lot of research into poses and shots to make sure they did the wedding and engagement session justice. We are pretty stoked with the results.”

Café Natalie catered the reception. During dinner, a server approached the happy couple and asked to take their picture. “He told us that as a 57-year-old gay man who grew up thinking that he would never see a time when GLBT individuals would have the right to marry, he was just beside himself with happiness for us,” smiles John. “He confessed that he had specifically asked to work our event, so he could witness history in the making.”

“Since we really wanted the ceremony to reflect who we are, we picked and chose which wedding traditions we wanted to use. My dad wore the same shoes he wore to his own wedding . . . and to both of my brothers’ weddings,” Matt laughs. “And one of our dearest and oldest friends performed the ceremony.”

John mentions choosing Walt Disney World—the same place that winning Super Bowl quarterbacks choose—for their honeymoon.

“We couldn’t get away for a long trip, so Walt Disney World was the perfect escape for us,” says John.

Then Matt playfully corrects his husband: “We’ll *officially* honeymoon in Italy this summer.”

Photographers’ website:
thomasandpenelope.com.

Henry V. Thiel is a principal with The Epicurean Publicist. He loves the nightlife.

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Where, Oh Where, to Tie the Knot?

Choosing the perfect venue for your special day.

By Henry V. Thiel



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Chateau Polonez, located in northwest Houston, provides the perfect space for couples looking to have a unique wedding.



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If you've literally been dreaming of sailing off into the sunset, South Shore Harbour Resort and Conference Center may be your port of call. Located right on the water at South Shore Harbour Marina in League City, Harbour Resort is the perfect place to dock your honeymoon yacht. "South Shore Harbour is completing a multi-million-dollar renovation of its guest rooms, as well as building a new Lighthouse Bar & Bistro, the Oasis tropical pool that has its own swim-up bar, spectacular two-story suites overlooking the water, and a new event space designed especially for wedding ceremonies and receptions, just in time for your summertime wedding," says Roy Green, the resort's general manager.

South Shore Harbour is a full-service hotel with a newly refurbished fitness center and spa, conveniently located near golf courses, dinner- and party-boat cruises, and attractions like the Kemah Boardwalk, NASA, Galveston cruise ships, water sports, and shopping.

Such on-site amenities allow for some fantastically relaxing packages that keep the romance of the occasion front and center. Popular packages include "Bubbles and Brunch" and the "Overnight Romantic Stay," both of which include luxurious spa treatments for the newlyweds. →



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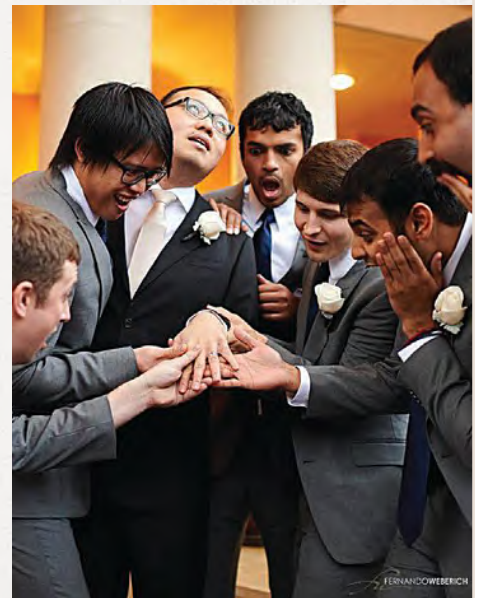


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WEDDING GUIDE

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If the beach is not your thing, head to Chateau Polonez, a wooded European dream-come-true in northwest Houston. Created by a family team consisting of Ania Gurtowski and her daughters, Basia and Kasia, Chateau Polonez has a strict policy about never hosting more than one wedding in a day. "You deserve a day just for you," explains co-owner Basia Gurtowski, who also promises to pamper you like no other. I wouldn't doubt her for a second.

"Our weddings are as unique as the couple getting married," Basia adds. "Each groom or bride will have their own changing suite complete with private bathrooms in which to prepare for the wedding. We include complimentary drinks and hors d'oeuvres, as well as a complimentary photo session during business hours, and much more."

La Torretta Lake Resort & Spa, located on beautiful Lake Conroe, is your ideal setting for a wedding incorporating the coziness of a cottage located a few steps from the beach, all the while nestled close to lush woodlands. "We are a destination wedding venue that is right in your back yard," says Martin Valdez, La Torretta's marketing manager. "The resort is welcoming to any couple that wishes to celebrate love." Amenities are available for both you and your guests—golf, flotation tubs, a fitness center with circuit and weight areas, racquetball, Pilates, as well as spin and yoga studios. Their couples' retreat package includes a champagne-and-strawberries amenity, breakfast for two, and a late checkout. All-inclusive packages, including custom cake and floral arrangements and custom linens, are also available.

For a tropical-island wedding, there is Galveston's own San Luis Resort, Spa & Conference Center. Michelle Beckwith, area director of catering, says, "The San Luis is a unique destination for its stunning beachfront views of the Gulf, first-class personalized customer service, and outstanding overnight accommodations. Guests may choose to have their wedding in the outdoor gazebo, on the pool hill overlooking the Gulf, in the expansive Grand Ballroom outfitted with crystal chandeliers, [or in one of our] other intimate settings."

Her favorite wedding location at the San Luis is the Wedding Gazebo, located on the Promenade Lawn overlooking the Gulf. "It provides the perfect beach setting for a wedding with scenic Gulf views. We have several ballrooms and private banquet rooms that can accommodate parties from 20 to 1,200 guests."

You can also create your own history at the historical Lyceum in Galveston, which was founded in 1850 as Texas' oldest German Lutheran church. Each of its original floor-to-ceiling stained-glass windows are still in place. The Lyceum still sits on the church's grounds adjacent to the present-day →

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WEDDING GUIDE

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sanctuary, separated only by a beautifully landscaped wrought-iron gated courtyard.

You can have your ceremony in their garden gazebo, or inside the Lyceum, which is accented with an elegant yet relaxed Victorian ambience that is perfect for a ceremony and reception. Your caterer will be grateful for the ease of the service kitchen, and your guests will appreciate the free parking. The former choir loft is ideal for vocalists, photographers, and videographers. A beautifully decorated Bridal/Grooms Suite is available, and you can arrange for access to the venue for bridal portraits or engagement pictures prior to the wedding.

If you are a true-blue Texan, consider the Texas Ballroom at the Houston Marriott North Hotel. According to social catering sales manager Heather Seely, the 7,000-square-foot ballroom features a contemporary regional décor with a muted palette that will complement any theme. “We believe that love has no limits,” says Seely, “and that there is no room for inequality. We believe that every guest, whoever they are, wherever they go, should feel comfortable and welcome the moment they walk through our doors.

“You chose a partner to marry based on trust and compatibility, and your wedding venue should be no different,” she says. “That is why from the first meeting we get to know our clients and what their wedding vision is. We discuss how to best partner with them on their special day so they can express themselves, celebrate with their loved ones, and have incredible memories that last a lifetime.

“To show our commitment to the LGBTQ community,” adds Seely, “for weddings of 50 guests or more, we offer discounts on catering menus, complimentary ceremony space, an upgrade on all bar liquors, a complimentary

hotel room the night of the event, and Double Marriott Rewards Points.”

Galveston’s Moody Mansion is available for romantic and picturesque weddings by the seashore. Its 19th-century Victorian formal ballroom is perfect for brides and grooms who want to make a statement with their reception.

Moody Mansion was once the home of one of the wealthiest families in the nation, and has been faithfully restored to its original grandeur. It was built in 1895, and the Moody family purchased the home and moved in shortly after the 1900 hurricane.

“Have your wedding portrait made while standing on the hand-carved stairway landing next to a beautiful stained-glass window,” suggests Viola Moore, visitor services manager at Moody Mansion, “and have your ceremony in the lovely gardens. Your guests will enjoy the historic setting, and easy access to free parking.”

JB La Hacienda is picture perfect for those who dream of a wedding that’s off the beaten path. Located just minutes outside of Northwest Houston in Tomball, this unique, private estate offers two separate venues that are cozily tucked away among gardens, lakes, and pines, away from the noise and distractions of busy roads.

“Celebrate your special union with family and friends at JB La Hacienda,” says the venue’s owner, Blanca Ruvalcaba. “Our event professionals will produce an event from start to finish that fits your unique style and budget. Our team will guide you through every step, allowing you to focus on what’s important—the celebration of two becoming one.”

So, where will you tie the knot?

Henry V. Thiel is a principal with The Epicurean Publicist. He hopes to tie the knot in the near future. Hint, hint, Mr. Boyfriend!

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Relatable
Sara Quin (l, with her twin sister, Tegan): what's she writing about?

▲ Sara Quin

(*Out*, June/July/2016, Steven J. Horowitz)

I don't have to think very hard about relating to a song about a straight man. I don't understand why the world can't relate to a song written by a queer woman. I'm writing about the same shit everyone is writing about. I just happen to be a girl who identifies as queer.

► Chi Chi DeVayne

(*The New York Times*,
5/15/16, Jenna Wortham)

On the penultimate episode of this season's *RuPaul's Drag Race*, the last four contestants gathered backstage. As they sat in the "untuck" lounge, they made lighthearted small talk. The conversation turned, suddenly, to activism. Chi Chi DeVayne, a sweet Louisiana queen with a thick, country-fried accent, praised Bob the Drag Queen on her work in support of marriage equality. "I wish that I had the guts to stand up for gay rights," she said wistfully. Bob smiled and replied, "Go do it, you



Activist?
Chi Chi DeVayne (seen here from *RuPaul's Drag Race*): what can't she do in Louisiana?

can start anytime." Ms. DeVayne shook her head firmly. "You can't do it in Shreveport," she replied. "They'll blow your head off."

Samantha Bee

(Full Frontal with Samantha Bee, 5/9/16, TBS)

Re: HB2, the bathroom law.

Boycotts are a powerful tool, but you know what's an even more powerful tool? Not electing a bunch of transphobic numnuts who are going to wreck the economy to catch a nonexistent predator. ... Remember that stupid bathroom law? Well, guess what it cost. [Cut to video of a news anchor saying, "If the state goes ahead and carries out the law, it could lose roughly \$2 billion in federal funds for its public schools and universities."] Great, now your daughter who couldn't afford college will feel safe in bathrooms—while she's scrubbing them for minimum wage.



The Bathroom Law

Samantha Bee (seen here in her TBS show *Full Frontal with Samantha Bee*): what does HB2 have to do with numnuts?

16 Years Ago

John Waters

(Us Weekly, 8/21/00)

On what his campaign slogan would be if he ran for president: FREE HAIRDOS FOR THE POOR.



Ellen DeGeneres

(The Ellen DeGeneres Show, 5/16)

As you know, I have a clothing line, and I have a shoe line . . . and all that time in the closet really paid off.



Wearables

Ellen DeGeneres (seen here on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*): what exactly was she doing while in the closet?



Billy Eichner

(The New Yorker, 5/23/16, Sarah Larson)

When Eichner was a junior [in college], his parents came to see him in a musical. At dinner, his mother asked him if he was dating anyone—"boy, girl, whatever." He wasn't, and said so. On the car ride back to school, he told his parents he was gay. They were accepting and largely unfazed. "Not to stereotype anyone, but I was, like, 'Did you really not know? You took me to see Streisand at Madison Square Garden,'" he said.



Billy & Babs

Billy Eichner (seen here on his truTV show *Billy on the Street*): could he possibly be gay?

TEGAN AND SARAH: VICTOR WARRIOR/REXUS; WATERS: DAVID J. PHILLIPS/GETTY IMAGES; BEE: ERIC RAY/DAVIDSON/REXUS; DEGENERES: DOUGLAS GORDON/REXUS; EICHNER: YUTU



'Packed in a Trunk'

The lost art of Edith Lake Wilkinson.

Henry Gamble's Birthday Party



This religious LGBT coming-of-age movie unfolds over the course of one eventful day in the life of 17-year-old preacher's kid

Henry (Cole Doman), who must navigate his faith, secrets, and sexuality within his family and religious community. On the day of Henry's big party, his mom, Kat (Elizabeth Laidlaw), his father, Pastor Bob (Pat Healy), and 19-year-old sister, Autumn (Nina Ganet), each prepare for the party while also grappling with their own secrets and desires. Then the guests begin to arrive, including the closeted young Logan (Daniel Kyri), who has eyes for Henry. As day turns to night, the partygoers carefully navigate the religious strictures and sexual secrets held within the community, as well as their own longings (despite themselves and their faith) for earthly love. Wolfe Video (wolfevideo.com). —Troy Carrington



Mysterious
In 1924, the lesbian artist was committed to an asylum and never heard from again.

On the second season of Amazon's *Transparent*, the youngest daughter of the Pfefferman clan, Ali, embarks on a quest to discover the familial origins of her "inherited trauma," the physical and psychological tremors that seem to consume every relative she has. As the season progresses to an epic culmination, we learn that Maura, Ali's trans parent, may not be the first branch of her family tree to diverge. Maura's *tanta* Gittel identified as a woman and thrived in Weimar Berlin, but when the family fled Nazi persecution, she was left behind to a bleak fate. The season ends with three generations of Pfefferman women standing in silence, bound by blood-deep similarities that even they cannot fully understand.

As we head toward an age in which coming out becomes easier, should our next step in the journey of self-identification be to find our spiritual forbears, our queer ancestors, and come out in their place? Everyone has a great uncle who is said to be a little different, or a cousin that nobody in the family likes to talk about. With the rise of

pop genealogy, LGBTQ individuals have a chance to find the origins of difference in their bloodlines, and hopefully vindicate ancestors who were forever silenced.

In *Packed in a Trunk: The Lost Art of Edith Lake Wilkinson*, writer/director Jane Anderson (who recently penned the HBO adaptation of Elizabeth Strout's *Olive Kitteredge*) tries to close a lifelong obsession with her great-aunt Edith, a lesbian artist who was mysteriously committed to an asylum in 1924 and never heard from again. Edith's vast collection of painted works were stashed away and shared among family members, but she never gained any public glory as a painter.

During their two years of filming, the chipper Anderson and her spouse, Tess, seek to consolidate Edith's works, learn about her decades-long romance with her companion, Fanny, and uncover why such a prolific artist was locked away. They peek around attics in West Virginia, tearfully remember Edith's life with relatives in California, and visit galleries in New York. Some of the film's most pivotal

realizations come in Provincetown, Rhode Island, where Anderson learns that not only did her great-aunt find blissful sanctuary in the perennial gay oasis, but that she actually played a pivotal role in the city's art movement.

In more harrowing scenes, Anderson visits the facility where her aunt was cruelly condemned to die in demented loneliness; and during a chilling encounter with a medium, both Edith and Fanny make themselves known. In its best moments, *Packed in a Trunk* delivers satisfying resolution to a life lost in the annals of homophobia and female oppression, and shows that with every piece of Wilkinson that is discovered, Anderson attains a fuller, more complete sense of self.

Unfortunately, the writer/director makes for a pushy subject who often narrates her feelings in the moment, as if she's worried that her viewers won't be smart enough to beat her to the cathartic punch. The movie clicks a duel narrative of two women finding each other through time, but Anderson and director Michelle Boyaner throw the balance off far too often, forcing some interactions to feel contrived. The hokey, Lilith Fair-like soundtrack doesn't help keep the tone serious.

As the film comes to a close and Anderson earns triumphant restitution for her great-aunt Edith, she tearfully says, "This kind of stuff doesn't happen to people." But in all likelihood, it could. There's no limit to how far back our gay genealogy goes, and in vindicating our formerly shamed ancestors, we fill in the gaps of our own identities. We've already come out to the world once: how hard can it be to do it a second time?

David Goldberg is a frequent contributor to *OUTSMART* magazine.



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Dreadful Delights

Penny Dreadful and the fearless Eva Green.

In the first season of Showtime's high-taste monster mash *Penny Dreadful*, Dorian Gray (Reeve Carney), immortal and disarming as ever, speaks about the difference with the series' witchy protagonist, Vanessa Ives (Eva Green). When Dorian praises the glory of uniqueness, Vanessa has to object: "To be alien, to be disenfranchised from those around you: is that not a dreadful curse?" Without batting an eye, he strikes back: "To be different, to be powerful: is that not a divine gift?"

Created by *Skyfall* screenwriter John Logan, who is gay, *Penny Dreadful* mixes up everyone's favorite Victorian horror characters (Frankenstein and his creations, the Wolfman, and many more) so that they can fight evil and, occasionally, get it on with one another. But beyond the yummy splattering of blood and fabulously lavish costumes, *Penny Dreadful* is a mesmerizing, frustrating meditation on living with difference, deviance, and queerness.

No matter who steps into the role of big bad—the vampiric beast of season one, last year's satanic sorceress Madame Kali (Helen McCrory), or this season's smoking-hot Dracula (Christian Camargo)—they always want the same thing: Vanessa Ives. Chosen to be Lucifer's bride and possessing an unknown power that could trigger the End of Days, Vanessa must reconcile with her dark side and affirm her individuality, even to the most seductive of evil mates. Devout to her Catholic God, yet intrinsically bound to Satan, she constantly vacillates between abnegation and indulgence, restraint and rapture.

Season one saw Ives through séances, exorcisms, and asylums; last year, she faced off against the devil in her dummy doll form (just go with it); and this season she initiates therapy with a stern doctor (Patti LuPone) while attempting to avoid Dracula's advances. Thanks to fearless Eva Green, Vanessa's battles with her inner oblivion are so dangerous that you fear she'll rip



JONATHAN HESSON/SHOWTIME

Not Normal

Vanessa Ives (Eva Green, foreground) faces her demons with the aid of Dr. Seward (Patti LuPone) in Showtime's *Penny Dreadful*, which airs Sundays at 9 p.m. (CST).

out of her skin and crawl through the screen: she scratches sanatorium walls, effortlessly bellows demonic languages, and prays to her God with bone-deep resolve. That Green's only accolade for her hair-raising performance is a *Fangoria* Chainsaw Award puts the Emmys—and the entire industry—to shame.

Vanessa's gifts threaten to burn her alive from within, but they also make her the most valuable woman alive. (Who else has Dracula and the devil fighting over her like teenage boys?) But even when her immortal suitors literally offer her the world, or even the bliss of a normal life, Vanessa won't compromise her identity or her agency; she may be cursed, but she'd rather die as herself than try to pass as normal.

Ives isn't the only one dealing with her difference: season three finds Josh Hartnett's strapping Ethan Chandler—who moonlights as the Wolfman—on the run in the Wild West, unable to accept his inner savagery, while Billie Piper's recently liberated Bride of Frankenstein plans to raise an army of victimized women to bring an end to the world of men, and Dr. Jekyll (Shazad Latif) attempts to bury the "alien, ugly things" that fester within him by using potions and injections. That'll end well.

All metaphors aside, is *Penny Dreadful* actually gay? Judging by the Wolfman-Dorian Gray make-out session in season one, or the blood-drenched three-way in season three, this is

definitely not your library's standard gothic horror story. Though they operate as an adoptive family, the freaks and beasts of Victorian London have no issue when it comes to hooking up, and no hang-ups when it comes to the gender of their mate.

Last season, Dorian Gray became enamored with a trans courtesan named Angelique (Jonny Beauchamp). Though the writers made a nice effort to depict the real-life horror that trans women faced in the 19th century (and today), it felt like material for another show. In a world of closeted ghouls and monsters, what purpose does a mortal cipher serve?

Every season builds up to an apocalyptic showdown, which leads to a reckoning of existential angst for the main cast. Can Vanessa and her pals reconcile with the difference that saves them, defines them, and may inevitably destroy them? *Penny Dreadful* powerfully affirms that embracing yourself is a life-long process. Apparently, coming out as a wolfman, witch, or outsider is just the beginning. No matter their destinies, the *Dreadful* players will continue to tread through the dualities of their own existences: good and evil, normal and extraordinary, victim and monster, forever in transition, never fixed, and never boring.

David Goldberg is a regular contributor to *OUTSMART* magazine.

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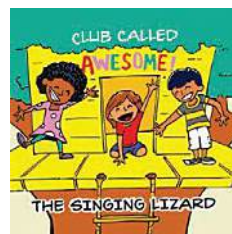
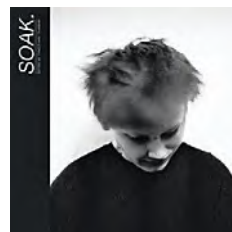
After 33 years and 50 million album sales, the ever-versatile Cyndi Lauper—one of only 20 people to

earn Emmy, Grammy, and Tony awards—puts her signature spin on a dozen classic country songs from the '40s, '50s, and '60s on her new album. Wanda Jackson's "Funnel of Love" is the first of a dozen tunes made famous by artists ranging from Ray Price and Patsy Cline to Marty Robbins and Dolly Parton. Cyndi Lauper and country music? Not a combo that immediately comes to mind. But on *Detour*, the unpredictable siren proves once again that her magnificent voice can bring to life any genre of music. Rhino Entertainment (rhino.com). —**Suzie Lynde**
EDITOR'S NOTE: The very gay-friendly Cyndi Lauper brings her *Detour* Tour to Houston on September 11 at Revention Music Center (reventionmusic.center-houston.com).

After more than a dozen years, **Terri Binion** returns with the gut-wrenching *The Day After the Night Before* (terribinionmusic.com), an album of loss and survival. In the opening track "Long Way Back," Binion sings, "It's a long way back to feeling good/it's a long way back to feeling better." Judging by what she's been through, she knows what she's singing about. The album's 11 songs, which return her to "that shining shoreline," were created in the aftermath of the death of her wife (and the ensuing legal battle), as well as the loss of both of her parents. Binion gives Mary Gauthier a run for her money when it comes to serious subject matter, but she's never maudlin or overly sentimental. Grief-stricken songs such as "Burden Song," "Tiny Little Land Mines," "Walking in Circles," "These Days," "Green Velvet Coat," and "My Satellite" succeed by being both personal and universal.

When **SOAK** (aka Bridie Monds-Watson), a queer, Irish singer/songwriter at the end of her teen years, sings "A teenage heart/is an unguided dart/We're trying hard/to make something of what we are" on "B A Nobody," she knows what she's talking about. Her debut album *Before We Forgot How to Dream* (Rough Trade) wears its Tegan and Sara influences on its tattoo sleeve. That's not a bad point of reference, especially since SOAK takes that inspiration and runs with it on songs such as "Blud" and "Garden." However, SOAK has her own unique voice, like Courtney Barnett, and drenches listeners with it on "Sea Creatures," "Hailstones Don't Hurt," "Shuvels," and the instrumental interludes such as "A Dream to Fly" and "If Everyone Is Someone—No One Is Everyone."

Released in late 2015, *Sprained Ankle* (6131 Records) is the stunning and timeless debut by out singer/songwriter **Julien Baker**. Sparse and exquisite, the nine songs are an exciting



introduction to Baker as a solo artist (she also continues to play in the band Forrister). Haunting and hypnotic songs such as the title cut, "Blacktop," "Something," and "Vessels" pierce your skin and become a part of your very being. Baker also knows exactly when to vary the sonic presentation, as she does on the

soaring "Brittle Boned" and "Rejoice," as well as the breathtaking piano-and-vocal closer "Go Home."

To call lesbian singer/songwriter **Tret Fure** a women's-music legend and pioneer isn't an exaggeration. Her professional and creative affiliation with the legendary Olivia Records label and her own outstanding catalog of recordings have earned Fure a well-deserved place among artists such as Meg Cristian, Holly Near, Cris Williamson (an ex of Fure's), and others. On the vivid *Rembrandt Afternoons* (Tomboy Girl), Fure augments her trademark folk sound (heard on "The Fishermen of Bristol Bay," "Now I Know," "How We Dare," and "Worry Stone") with the choir-driven anthem "Freedom," the Cajun-spiced "Tender," the country accent of "Riverbank," and the comfy pop of "Slipper Mood."

We have Mark "Uptown Funk" Ronson, of all people, to thank for the renewed interest in funk. If there's any musical justice, lesbian drummer Nikki Glaspie and her band **The Nth Power** will also get some much-deserved attention via its new album, *Abundance* (thenthpowermusic.com). Applying less-than-subtle religious imagery to most of the songs, The Nth Power is at its most persuasive when it keeps the energy level high, as it does on songs such as the fierce and fresh "Right Now," as well as "Waiting," "Only Love," and the instrumental "Altar Call."

When prolific queer singer/songwriter **Rachael Sage** sings "Heaven (Is a Grocery Store Clerk)," the opening track on her new "ballet-pop" album *Choreographic* (MPress), we can't help but believe her. She's that certain of it. Singing about the "French doors" of her fearfulness on "French Doors," Sage continues to grow in new and interesting ways. The fascinating rhythms of "Try Try Try" and "I Don't Believe It," as well as the commercial-power pop of "Learn to Let You Go" and "It Would Be Enough," are good examples. If you didn't know better,

you might think the breakup song "Clear Today" was a vintage Elton John tune, while the strings on "Five Alarms" increase the heat of the song. The mournful "7 Angels," also featuring a string section, includes lyrics sung in English and Hebrew. Sage's reverent cover of Carole King's "So Far Away" can be found as a bonus track on the iTunes version of *Choreographic*.

For a long time, making cool music for kids (and by extension the parents who often have to listen to it while, say, stuck in a car in traffic) has been the province of straight artists such as Barenaked Ladies, They Might Be Giants, Ralph's World (Ralph Covert), Farmer Jason (Jason Ringenberg), and Dan Zanes, to name a few. In recent years, queer acts such as Django Jones (featuring ex-members of Girlyman) and Laura Doherty have proven that not only can LGBT folks start their own families, but they can also make family-friendly music, too. Add "electro-kindie" artist **The Singing Lizard** (aka Liz DeRoche) to the list, too. **Club Called Awesome** (Alpha-beat), The Singing Lizard's delightful third album, brings the beats to the party. Feel free to dance and sing along to "Peace Sign," "Beat Bot the Robot," "Chugga Chugga," "Growing Up," and "Celebrate." The "who you are is wonderful" message of the album's centerpiece "Be Yourself" is one to which queer folks of all ages can relate.

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



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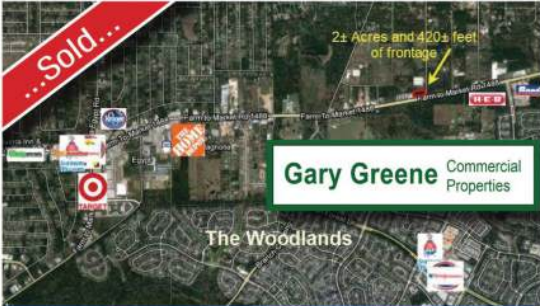
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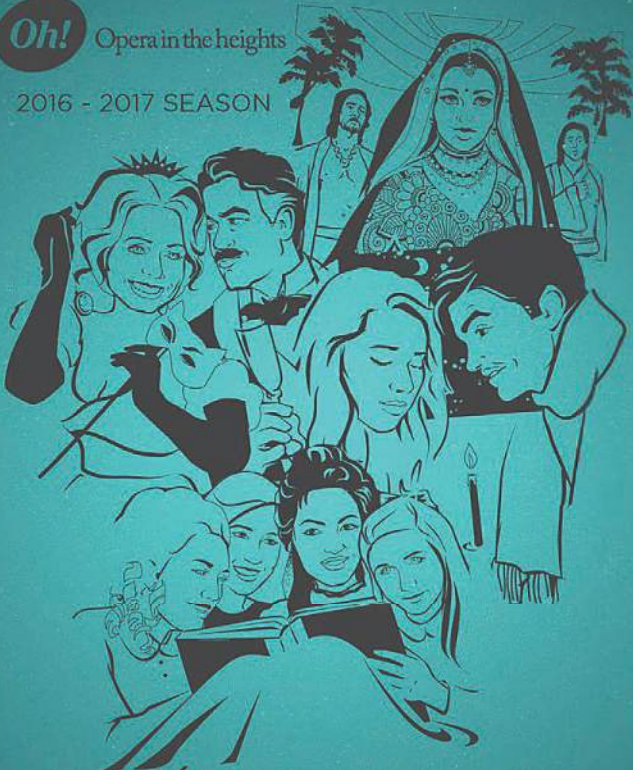
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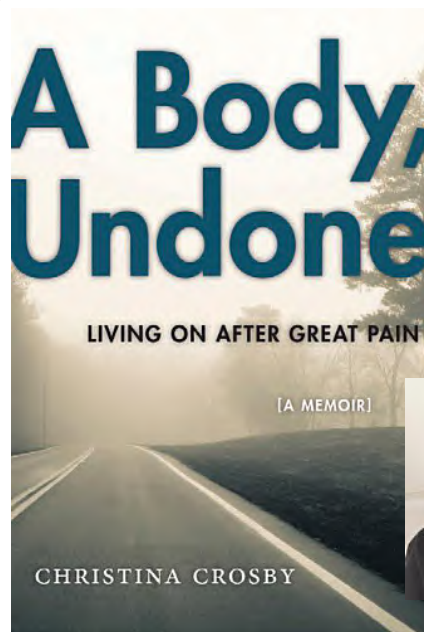


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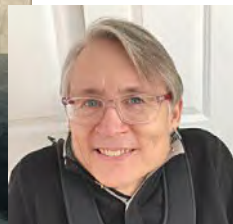


'A Body, Undone'

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A Body, Undone
by Christina Crosby
2016, NYU Press
(nyupress.org)
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Christina Crosby

Boy Erased Garrard Conley



The son of a Baptist pastor, Garrard Conley was outed to his parents at 19, and was faced with an ultimatum: go to "ex-gay" therapy and be "cured" or risk losing his family, friends, and church community. He

went. A compelling story of perseverance and humanity, *Boy Erased* digs deep into a life lived in shadow, the story of a survivor and not of the establishment (which have largely been the voices heard speaking out about ex-gay therapy). Riverhead Books (penguin.com). —Troy Carrington

If I Was Your Girl Meredith Russo



Amanda Hardy is the new girl in town. There's a reason why she transferred schools for her senior year, and why she's determined not to get close to anyone. But then she meets Grant Everett. She wants to share

everything about herself, but she's terrified that once she tells Grant the truth, she won't be able to see past it. Because the secret that Amanda's been keeping? It's that she used to be Andrew. The story was partially inspired by the author's experiences as a trans woman. Flatiron Books (usmacmillan.com). —Suzie Lynde

Touch your ear. Go ahead. Reach up there and give it a tug. Either ear, it doesn't matter, just grab and pull. The point is that when you want to tug your ear, scratch an itch, chew your nails, or wiggle your toes, you *can*, without much effort. And once you've read *A Body, Undone* by Christina Crosby, you'll appreciate that ability even more.

For most of her first 50 years on earth, Christina Crosby was strong, confident, and determined. She played hard, excelled at sports, was passionate about her professorship at Wesleyan University, and was planning life with her partner, Janet.

And then everything changed: nearly a month after her 50th birthday, Crosby's speedy, custom-fit bicycle caught a branch in its front wheel and stopped abruptly, bucking her off to the pavement. She took the full brunt of the accident on her chin, which broke her neck. Weeks later, she woke up in ICU, a quadriplegic.

When she was growing up in a small Pennsylvania town, Crosby and her older brother were raised to know that neither was better than the other. Because Jeff was a year older, Crosby says she often fantasized that they were twins; indeed, they tussled and competed as though they were.

But then, as a relatively young man, Jeff was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and was eventually wheelchair-bound. Her old dreams and the irony of the situation didn't escape Crosby's notice.

With the help of her lover, assorted friends, and paid caregivers, Crosby began to learn to live differently. She could no longer ride a bike or motorcycle, walk, take the stairs, or use a pen or bathroom by herself. Getting showered took two extra people and 10 steps. Her sex life adapted, but her bowels did not. And though it's been

more than a decade since the accident, Crosby admits that she still has fears: she's afraid of grief, of making peace with her situation. Afraid that there will come a time when she will no longer want to live.

On many levels, *A Body, Undone* is a surprise. Readers will almost immediately notice that author Christina Crosby is matter-of-factly blunt. Just as you'll learn that modesty is nearly impossible when relying on caregiver help for the most basic bodily functions, you'll also learn that—at least for Crosby—that easy attitude extends to sharing her reality. That's not at all a bad thing; it's just a surprise, especially when it comes to bathrooms, bedrooms, and profanity.

The second, most welcome surprise is that there's a good amount of warmth in this book, despite its sometimes-wince-inducing subject matter. It's filled with friends and family, and memories of them, which seems a nice distraction from the shocking details of Crosby's accident and its aftermath.

This is a powerful book that asks its readers to think about many things. It's not an easy read, but it's not one you'll easily be able to tear yourself away from, either. *A Body, Undone* won't just touch your heart—it'll tug at your mind, too.

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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On May 5, Affinity eBook Press released *It's in Her Kiss*, a book of several lesbian romance short stories centered around various annual holidays. The book kicks off with tales of New Year's Day by authors Erin O'Reilly and Alane Hotchkin. Spend Australian Day with author Erica Lawson. Join Ali Spooner for St. Patrick's Day, and Lacey Schmidt to celebrate St. Patrick's through Bastille Day. Fly away with Jen Silver as she brings the Beltane party to us. Enjoy Halloween with Annette Mori and Charlene Neil. And last but certainly not least, we have Christmas with authors TJ and Annette Mori. *It's in Her Kiss* is available as an e-book from affinityebooks.com or Amazon for \$5.99. All proceeds will be donated to The Montrose Center to support their mission of empowering the LGBT community and their families.

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Founded by Casa Maestri in the Mexican town of Tequila, Jalisco, Identity Tequila is showing its LGBT pride in a big way. "Every single person is different, whether it's your skin color, race, gender, or sexual orientation, we are all unique in our own way," the company says. "This is our Identity. In particular, we support the LGBT community by putting recognizable rainbow colors in the makeup of a fingerprint on our bottles." Identity Tequila, produced at the most-awarded tequila distillery in Mexico, is made from 100 percent Blue Weber agaves from both the Highland and Lowland regions. For more information, visit identitytequila.com.

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A MURDER IN MONTROSE

continued from page 105

long view, examining how the event changed the character of Houston over two decades from several perspectives: political, victims' rights, and community activism.

Since February, Houston Public Media's Ernie Manouse, producer of the documentary, has conducted in-depth interviews with such people as Queer Nation co-founder David Fowler, former mayor Annise Parker and her wife, Kathy Hubbard, longtime community activists Ray Hill and Jack Valinski, former Queer Nation member Gloria Rubac, and state representative Garnet Coleman, who worked to pass hate-crimes legislation covering LGBT people in the 1990s.

"I wanted to explore the question of [whether or not the murder of Paul Broussard was] Houston's Stonewall," Manouse observes.

A quarter-century later, Broussard's murder still evokes strong feelings.

"I'm amazed by how many people don't want to partake of this project—how many people want to let sleeping dogs lie. I'm surprised by how polarizing this case still is," says Manouse. "I've encountered people who said, 'If you talk to this person, I won't be in your documentary.' We had one person who said, 'You shouldn't be doing this documentary; it will only re-open old wounds.'"

"There seem to be two schools of thought on this case," continues Manouse. "One camp views what happened to Paul Broussard as a hate crime. Another camp views it as an instance of out-of-control, drunk kids who committed manslaughter."

"I believe that [the community's response to the murder of Paul Broussard] influenced the 1991 mayoral election," Manouse says. "[Former Houston mayor] Bob Lanier paid very close attention to victims' rights. Victims' rights changed with the appointment of Andy Kahan by Bob Lanier to be a victims' right advocate in City Hall. It changed law enforcement and the way that they looked at the gay community. 1991 was the year that Annise Parker first ran for public office."

"I think the perception of gay people was altered by the public at large, because you had a rally that included straight people," Manouse says. "It paved the way for the start of understanding and acceptance of the gay community by the heterosexual community."

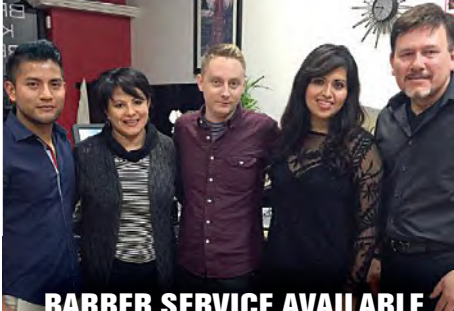
"When I started this documentary, I didn't want to rip the scab off the wound, and leave it. That's why we wanted to do a live town hall. We wanted to use it as an educational tool. We want to use this to help the community move forward," Manouse concludes. "Paul Broussard should not have died in vain."

Andrew Edmonson won the Award of Special Merit from the Texas Chapter of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association.



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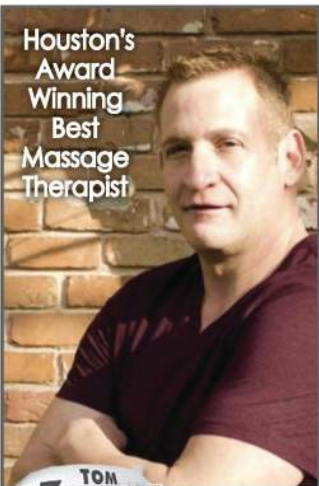
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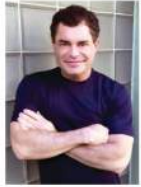
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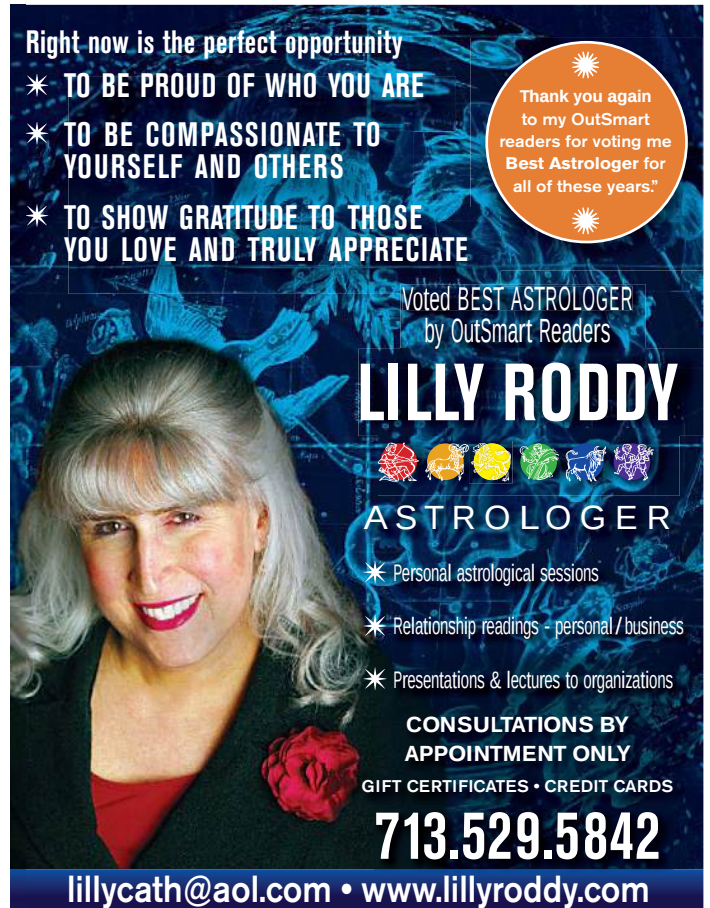
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BAR & CLUB GUIDE

Houston

13 ENTERTAINMENT

This comfortable club located in the Heights is a convenient alternate to inner-Montrose haunts. Patrons journey past the comfy seating and romantic lighting to find a spacious patio where they sometimes fire up the barbecue grill. 1537 N. Shepherd • 713.426.1313.

BAYOU CITY BAR & GRILL

This always-fun party bar opens daily (7am-2am Mon.-Sat., 11am-2am Sun.), serving fantastic food (11am-9pm) daily. Fifty-cent wing specials on Tuesday and Thursday pack the house. "Let Us Entertain You" with our Sunday drag performances. Party promotions nightly. Crawfish served every Sunday 11am-9pm. 2409 Grant St. • 713.522.2867 • 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 • club-2020houston.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 nightspot that also offers karaoke on Tuesdays and Thursdays and extended happy-hour prices throughout the week. 2312 Crocker • 713.529.3355.

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. Sports Saturdays and Sundays start at 3pm with dart and pool tournaments. 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.

HOUSTON EAGLE

Part of the Eagle worldwide family, originating in 1970, this neighborhood watering spot is the place to cruise and dance. Featuring DJs on the weekends and the birthplace of the hit remix team Dirty Disco. Multiple patios and always a party. Featuring a 29-degree pour and 12 beers on tap. The inside leather shop is open the same hours as the bar. M-F 4 pm-2am, Sat. & Sun. noon-2am. 611 Hyde Park Blvd. • houstoneagle.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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Behind the Bar

WHO: Justin Wilson

WHERE: Rumors Beach Bar
3102 Seawall Blvd.

WHAT'S UP: Galveston's newest and only gay bar on the seawall. Open 7 days from noon to 2 a.m. Daily drink specials, DJs, drag shows Fridays and Saturdays, and a T-Dance on Sundays. Rumor has it...

MINISTRY

One of Houston's largest dance venues and the original birthplace of Eagle! Open 10pm-10am, Thurs.-Sat., Ministry is located in one of the most iconic venues in the city—the only underground space with two patios overlooking the newly redesigned Bayou trails, below the historic Magnolia Ballroom. Thursdays are Hip Hop, Fridays (Electro House), & Saturdays (Dubstep, Trap, and House). @MinistryHouston • ministryhouston.com • 709 Franklin St.

MONTROSE MINING COMPANY

Studly male dancers bump and grind every night at this leather/denim spot, offering Montrose's lowest vodka drinks with Trash Disco Sundays. The two-tier back patio bar provides a perch for viewing the Pacific Street scenery. 805 Pacific St. • themine houston.com • 713.529.7488.

NEON BOOTS DANCEHALL & SALOON

Houston's only LGBT country dancehall is located in the historic Esquire Ballroom and opens Wednesday-Sunday. The new outside patio and stage are open. Wednesday features Steak Night and Bingo. Free dance classes on Thursdays and Karaoke. Saturday night the dance floor fills with the best C&W... check their website for all specials, events and times. 11410 Hempstead Hwy • neonbootsclub.com • 713.677.0828.

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.

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.SOBE.

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.

Beaumont

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The place to hang for food, fun, and booze in a newly renovated pub, in good weather or bad. Open every night from 7pm-2am. 650 Orleans • 409.835.4243.

Bryan/College Station

HALO VIDEO BAR

The only LGBT dance club in Bryan/College station, this sleek spot is open Thurs.-Sat. Smack in the middle of Aggieland, "our venue is always packed with the hotties," the owners promise. 121 North Main • 979.823.6174 • halobcs.com.

Galveston

23RD ST. STATION

A new face on the Island bar scene is here. The bar features a neighborhood-bar feel with octane. Drink specials daily and the weekend is filled with pulsing music, hot dancers, drag shows, and a Sunday Tea Dance. 1706 23rd St. • 409.621.1808.

ROBERT'S LAFITTE

A neighborhood bar, the Island institution attracts a colorful crowd of regulars and travelers. The private patio includes a swimming pool. On Sat. and Sun. nights, the Ladies of Lafitte show takes the stage. 2501 Avenue Q (at 25th) • 409.765.9092.

THIRD COAST DOWNTOWN BAR

The newest and largest dance club in Galveston features the best shows on the island Friday and Saturday nights hosted by KiKi Dion Van Wales. Sunday Fun Day features Drag Bingo, followed by The Chat—an hour of humor and topical discussions. Then there's the Texas Hold 'Em tournament, and finish the night with karaoke hosted by Taylor L. Much more Monday through Thursday. Doors open at 4 p.m. Mon.-Sat., and at 3 p.m. Sun. 4216 Postoffice St. • 409/765-6911.

Spring

RANCH HILL SALOON

With its two pool tables, 52-inch plasma televisions, and large dance floor, this popular northside spot also offers DJs Thursday-Saturday. 247041 I-45N Suite 103 • 281.298.9035 • ranchhill.com.

THE ROOM BAR AND LOUNGE

One of only two LGBT hangouts in North Houston/Spring, this bar and video lounge has a laidback atmosphere where everyone is welcome and everyone is friendly to each other. The Room Bar and Lounge offers something for everyone, including daily drink specials, karaoke, free pool, drag shows, and live DJs several nights a week. 4915 FM 2920 • roombarspring.com • 281.907.6866. ■



A Stressful June?

Stability returns in October.

June could be a stressful month, especially with the New Moon on the 4th and the Full Moon on the 19th. Mars, planet of action and initiation, remains retrograde until mid July, so you may want to wait until then to start any big new projects. • The sun enters the sign of Cancer on June 20 at 5:34 p.m., the Summer Solstice. On the 17th, Saturn and Neptune are square to each other, or sit at right angles in the sky. This is the second of three squares that these two planets make to each other. The last one is on September 10. From an astrological point of view, this is the cause of the low oil prices. We should see some relief and stability returning to oil prices in July, but real growth and stability won't actually begin until the beginning of October.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). Communication has improved this month. You are getting more organized, but there is a bit of sluggishness that still pulls at you. This will clear up in July. Keep to your to-do list and you will get a lot done. At the end of the month, you are focusing on home and family. This is a good time to feather your nest. You are establishing new traditions within your own family. Career and work opportunities continue to open up for you if you are interested in changing.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). The Bulls and Cows are going to feel much better—definitely more organized and focused on making some plans for the future. This is a good time to look at financial investments. Your partnerships need some attention this month. Take a short trip out of town, or just do something spontaneous. Otherwise, you may be offered the cold shoulder this month. Toward the end of the month, your daily path should get easier and smoother. Make sure you take some time to get away from it all.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). Now that your ruler, Mercury, is direct, you are back on track, making plans for the future, considering your career directions, and possibly looking at commitment in a relationship. The beginning of this month will be filled with decisions, especially after the 4th with the New Moon in Gemini. Follow what your heart tells

you, develop a good plan to make it happen, and trust your choices. Development of your personal resources is stimulated at the end of the month, so be ready to put your strategy into play at that time.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). The Crabs are in a rest-and-retreat mode this month. You have a lot on your plate and you will want to reexamine your commitment level. Improving your boundaries will help your psychic and emotional health. Continue your exercise and health programs, as they are starting to make a difference. Your career needs something to help stimulate you. A new project or hobby would be especially good for you. Toward the end of the month, you are beginning to climb out of those crab shells!

LEO (July 23–August 22). Your friends are playing a big role in your life this month. You took some time in May to rethink your career goals and directions, and now you are acting on those plans. Your friends and community organizations can be a big resource for you. This is a good time to take on a leadership position at work or in a professional organization. This month is good for doing any kind of work or improvement around your home. Near the end of the month, you are ready for a retreat. It's a good time to step back and just enjoy being in the moment.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). Your career and future goals are in the spotlight this month. You have to balance that with your relationship, your home and family time, and time for yourself. The beginning of the month, with the New Moon and the Full Moon on the 20th, could be especially impactful. This can be a time when you are asked to take on a leadership position. You could also be considering starting your own business. You are in a very dynamic time. At the end of the month, look to connecting with friends and enjoying yourself more.

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). Opening your mind to new ideas and making practical use of them is the theme for you this month. This can be a good month for continuing your education or attending classes to learn more about your hobby. But make sure that you take some time for yourself at the beginning of the month and around the 20th. In the latter part of the month, you are back on track and focusing on your career and security goals. You will feel more in control.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). This month, the energies are brewing inside of you, just waiting for you to take action on them. The time to act on these will be in July. You are more direct and to the point than usual. Your emotions are more visible for others to see. This can help to make you more marketable if you are looking

for a job or expanding your own business. You are a little too conscious about money, and that could be introducing some unnecessary fear. By the end of the month, you feel more in the flow. You are continuing to act on improving your financial picture.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). The energies in the sky are fairly erratic for you on the June 4 New Moon and the June 20 Full Moon. There are a lot of work and career opportunities that are really more satisfying than what you have done in the past. You are being very cautious about your choices and decisions because you just don't want to make a mistake. You had good momentum until about the end of March, and then things slowed down. Your energy and drive will pick back up, especially by mid July. Pay attention to the details. There is a lot going on!

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). This month, you are taking care of all the small jobs that have stacked up. You are organizing your workplace as well as your coworkers. Get back on your workout program by the end of the month. In the midst of this busy month, you will certainly need some time for yourself. You could do that through travel, taking a class online, or working in your garden. Toward the end of the month, personal relationships take the spotlight. This is a good time for you and that special someone to renew your bonds.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). You are in a creative and playful mood this month, and your career energies are also activated. You will have more courage and drive to follow through on the things that are important to you. You will be more expressive and direct with others at work. This can be a good time for you to take more of a leadership role. You are also in a money-saving mode. This continues through the end of the year, but it's especially strong now. As we get closer to the end of the month, you are back into your health and work routines as your focus shifts to that!

PISCES (February 19–March 20). This is an especially busy time for you. You may feel that you are pulled in several different directions, and are not sure which one is the right one to focus on. You are particularly sensitive this month, and that is only intensified by the New Moon on the 4th and the Full Moon on the 20th. You can easily feel overwhelmed. You will want to take some time to yourself to make sure you remain centered. Remember, you are the most important person in your life. If your well runs dry, you cannot help others.

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OUT IN HOUSTON



On April 28, AIDS Foundation Houston held its annual Dining Out For Life fundraiser at various locations around Houston. Pictured are **Jessica Rossman, Michael Pearce**, and their team.



Splash 2016 was held on May 4–6. Pictured are **Rhys Caraway, Jacobi Hunter, Bethsheba Johnson, Jason Black, Damon Jacobs**, and **Mike Webb**.



The ActOUT performance of *The Christians* was held on May 5 at the Alley Theatre. Pictured are **Brandon Weinbrenner, Tina Berry, Shelley Finley, Glynda McGinnis, Jeff Henningsen, Jim Benton**, and **Lauren Pelletier**.



The Kentucky Derby Kick Off for Mint Julep was held on May 7 at Neon Boots Dancehall & Saloon. Pictured are **Tim Martinez, Ginger Grant**, and **Domenic Cusano**.



The Harris County Democratic Party held its brown bag lunch featuring **Francisco Sanchez** from the Office of Emergency Management on May 11 at the HCDP headquarters. Pictured are **Lane Lewis, Dominique Davis, Sanchez, Gayle Fallon, Jason Dawkins**, and **Lenora Sorola-Pohlman**.



On May 11, the Houston Stonewall Young Democrats held their spring social at the Rosemont Social Club. Pictured are members of HSYD, political candidates, and guests.



The OUT at the Ensemble performance of *Plenty of Time* was held on May 13 at the Ensemble Theatre. Pictured are **Charlotte Roberts, Hameedah Makers, Graham Maio, Natasha "TJ" James, James Shevin Foster**, and **Robert Ross**.



The Harris County Democratic Party held its Living Legends brunch on May 14 at the Crowne Plaza River Oaks Hotel. Pictured are (back row) **Luis Lopez, Howard Jefferson, Debra Danburg, Ron Waters, Lane Lewis**, (front row) **Hannah Chow, Ceole Speight, Janie Reyes**, and **Sheila Jackson Lee**.



The Lazarus House held its 2016 fiesta on May 14 at CWA Union Hall. Pictured are Lazarus House staff and supporters.



On May 19, comedian **Vickie Shaw** held her 60th Birthday Bash at South Shore Harbour Resort. Pictured are **Karen Williams, Kate Clinton, Shaw, Roxanna Ward, Lisa Koch, Suede**, and **Jennie McNulty**.



On May 22, the Bunnies on the Bayou presented checks to their 2016 beneficiaries at Guava Lamp. Pictured are members of the Bunnies and representatives from this year's beneficiaries.



Pride Houston held round three of its annual Pride Superstar singing competition on May 25 at Meteor. Pictured are the Pride Superstar contestants.

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