

WORLD AIDS DAY PREVIEW
Michael Lee's Memorial Garden
Pg.36

INTERVIEW WITH KIM PETRAS
Pop Star Brings Tour to Space City
Pg.38

NOV. '23

HOUSTON'S LGBTQ MAGAZINE

OutSmart

OUR
30th
YEAR

➡
**STRENGTH
IN SISTERHOOD**
(clockwise, left to right)
B'Yancha Foxx,
Mikayla Poche,
Christen "Coco" Valentine,
Taylor Rose Mabrie,
Joelle Espeut, and
Sasha "Barbie" Moore

TRANSGENDER
AWARENESS WEEK

TRANSCENDENT VOICES

TRANSGENDER ALLYSHIP COLLECTIVE
Creating a new narrative for Black trans Houstonians Pg.26



HoustonBallet

THE NUTCRACKER

PRESENTED BY

HOUSTON

Methodist®

LEADING MEDICINE



Sponsored by OutSmart

FRIDAY, DEC. 8
7:30 PM

Join us for **Out at the Ballet** night at
The Nutcracker
on December 8 at 7:30 PM.

Use promo code
OUTBALLET to save 25% off
orchestra-level seats along with a
complimentary drink voucher and
access to a reserved area before the
show and during intermission.
All are welcome.



NOV. 24 - DEC. 27

HOUSTONBALLET.ORG | 713.227.2787

BAKER BOTTS

BANK OF AMERICA

ConocoPhillips

H-E-B



MAA

CULTURAL
AFFAIRS



United Card
EVENTS

**THEATRE
UNDER
THE STARS**
23/24 SEASON

RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S
Cinderella

PROUDLY PRODUCED BY THEATRE UNDER THE STARS

DECEMBER 5 – 24

COME ONE, COME ALL!

GET TICKETS AT [TUTS.COM](https://tuts.com)

SHOW SPONSORS **ENBRIDGE**

 THE BROWN
FOUNDATION, INC.

THE WORTHAM FOUNDATION, INC.



FUNDED IN PART BY
THE CITY OF HOUSTON
THROUGH
HOUSTON ARTS ALLIANCE



HOMewood
SUITES
HOUSTON DOWNTOWN



Texas
Commission
on the Arts
Investing in a Creative Texas



26



43



38



36

26 THE POWER OF SUPPORT

Transgender Allyship Collective creates a model for increasing allyship in Houston

36 GARDEN OF MEMORIES

Local architect Michael Lee's AIDS Memorial Garden has been four decades in the making

43 AN EVENING WITH RITA MORENO

The legendary performer heads to Houston for a Miller Outdoor Theatre fundraising gala



46 SANDRA BERNHARD STANDS WITH TEXAS

Her gutsy 3-stop tour will confront right-wing politics head-on

32 MAN ON A MISSION

George Zemanek leads the support group Transmasculine Alliance Houston

38 KIM PETRAS' WORLD TOUR HITS HOUSTON

The Grammy-winning trans artist speaks with OutSmart ahead of her November 14 appearance at 713 Music Hall

66 WIGGING OUT

Tanya Hyde turns dull into delicious with her spicy dry wit





HOUSTON HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

HOUSTONHEALTH.ORG

I am
LIFE™



I take
PrEP daily

I am here. I exist. I matter.

One Test Beats a Guess...

Get tested for HIV. Know Your Status.
Take Control of Your Health.

houstonIamLife.com

NOVEMBER 2023

DEPARTMENTS

NEWS & COMMENT

18 COMMUNITY

New Faces of Pride Houston announces its June 2024 downtown festival plans

23 MONEY SMART

Annuities deserve a second look as part of a retirement portfolio

40 ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Kenn McLaughlin closes out his tenure at Stages Houston with a production of *Switzerland*;

Chloe Knox, Miss Gay Texas America 2023, leads a glamorous yet regular life in Houston (pg. 49)

OUT & ABOUT

12 CALENDAR

17 SCENE OUT

56 OUT THERE

60 WEDDING GUIDE

63 BAR/CLUB GUIDE

64 SIGN OUT



ON the COVER

TRANSCENDENT VOICES

Transgender Allyship Collective: Creating a new narrative for Black trans Houstonians
Photography by Alex Rosa @thealexandrosara for OutSmart magazine

PLAN WISELY. YOU WON'T GET A DO-OVER.

A successful retirement in the future can often depend on having a solid plan now. If your money isn't working as hard as you are, it may be time to act—there are no do-overs in retirement planning. Now is the time to consider developing a strategy that can help you work toward your financial goals. I specialize in providing comprehensive, financial guidance with the goal of maximizing every remaining moment of the retirement countdown.

Call today to learn more
or to schedule a consultation.



MIDTOWN FINANCIAL GROUP, LLC.

Grace S. Yung, CFP®
CEO & Founder | Wealth Advisor
3355 W. Alabama St., Ste. 180
Houston, TX 77098
713-355-9833 Direct
1-855-464-3869 Toll Free
grace.yung@lpl.com
www.midtownfng.com



BEST FINANCIAL PLANNER



Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, a Registered Investment Advisor, Member FINRA / SIPC.

Residential & Commercial Repair



(346) 253-4444

INTHELOOPPLUMBING@GMAIL.COM

WWW.INTHELOOPPLUMBING.COM

@intheloopplumbing



VOTED FINALIST
BEST PLUMBERS

NMP-42756

WORLD AIDS DAY 2023

At South Beach

December 1, 2023

6 PM - 8 PM

810 Pacific St. | HTX | 77006

FREE ADMISSION

21+ ONLY

WITH PERFORMANCES BY:

KOFI



TOMMIE ROSS



FEAT. GUEST SPEAKERS | LITE BITES
DRINKS | GIVEAWAYS
AND MORE!



RSVP REQUIRED

Scan the QR code or visit

LegacyCommunityHealth.org/WAD



BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



WELLNESSBAR



HOUSTON HEALTH
DEPARTMENT



Whatever happens in our community, we're here, ready to serve.

Providing Level I trauma care at Ben Taub Hospital for people experiencing the worst day of their lives.

Reaching out to families struggling to find or afford healthy food.

Offering the gold standard in nursing at our Magnet®-recognized Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital.

Treating everyone with respect, compassion and gratitude for giving us the opportunity to care for them, work with them, know them.

You may not know our name. And that's okay.

YOU'LL KNOW US BY THE WORK WE DO.

HARRISHEALTH

WE LIVE THIS

L.O.A.F. - LESBIANS OVER AGE FIFTY

Lesbians Over Age Fifty have a good time! LOAF provides opportunities to socialize several times throughout the month. Activities range from:

- Guest speakers
- Theater
- Museums
- Restaurants
- Hikes
- Axe throwing
- Pickle ball
- And much more!

We try to have something for everyone. Come get involved and make new friends or reacquaint with old ones. Community is good for the soul.

www.lesbiansoverage50.org • loafhouston@gmail.com

NOW PUBLISHING IN OUR 30TH YEAR!

OutSmart

Houston's LGBTQ Magazine

Publisher/Editor-in-Chief Greg Jeu

Creative Director Alex Rosa

Copy Editors Howard Maple, Janice Stensrude

Contributing Writers

Olivia Flores Alvarez, Rich Arenschieldt, Bill Arning, Susan Bankston, Connor Behrens, Jenny Block, Sam Byrd, David Clarke, Dick Dace, Blase DiStefano, Andrew Edmonson, Ste7en Foster, Alys Garcia Carrera, Martin Giron, Lillian Hoang, DL Groover, Marene Gustin, Kim Hogstrom, James Hurst, Lisa Keen, Ryan M. Leach, Zachary McKenzie, David Odyssey, Joanna O'Leary, Lilly Roddy, Terri Schlichenmeyer, Gregg Shapiro, Janice Stensrude, Sheryl Taylor, Terrance Turner, Grace S. Yung

Photographers/Illustrators

Edgardo Aguilar, John-Paul Arreaga, Victor Contreras, Dalton DeHart, Yvonne Feece, Frank Hernandez, Ashkan Roayae, Alex Rosa

Operations Manager Michael Gurnas

Sales and Marketing Dept.

Local Advertising Reps 713.520.7237
Tom Fricke, Chris Lew, Gene Mikulenska

National Advertising Representative

Rivendell Media - 212.242.6863

OutSmart Media Company

Publishers of OutSmart Magazine
3406 Audubon Place • Houston, TX 77006
713.520.7237 • 713.522.3275 Fax

Subscriptions: \$42/12 Issues, \$78/24 Issues

E-mail: editor@outsmartmagazine.com

Website: OutSmartMagazine.com

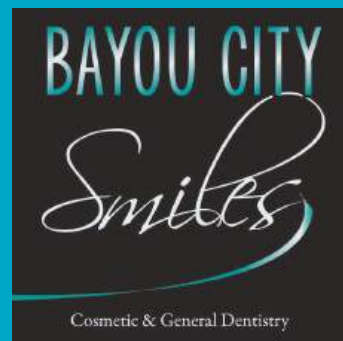
OUTSMART is published monthly. Estimated readership in Houston and surrounding areas is 60,000. OutSmart Media Company is not responsible for claims and practices of advertisers. The opinions and views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the staff or management of OutSMART. Inclusion in OutSMART does not imply sexual orientation. ©2023 by OutSmart Media Company. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without permission of the publisher is strictly prohibited. Unsolicited material is accepted. No manuscript returned without SASE.

Financial support provided by
 **OutSmart Foundation for Community Media**

Support local LGBTQ independent media.
Make a tax-deductible donation at
outsmartmagazine.com/outsmart-foundation

UNCOMPROMISING EXCELLENCE IN DENTISTRY

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY AND MAKING
HOUSTON SMILE SINCE 2009!



Dr. Ruby Charania

Dr. Marcus de Guzman

Gayest and Greatest '23
Voted Best Male Dentist

Dr. Cynthia Corral

Gayest and Greatest '23
Voted Best Female Dentist

Dr. Robert Hines

FREE Whitening- for Life!

Veneers, Implants, Esthetic Fillings & Smile Makeover | In House Financing
Your Dentist is Certified in Oral Conscious Sedation | Most Insurance Accepted



Favorite Dental
Hygienist
CHRISZELDA,
KATE and TU

OUR SECOND LOCATION AT MONTROSE COLLECTIVE IS NOW OPEN!

BAYOU CITY SMILES
Cosmetic & General Dentistry
713.518.1411

Arts District @ Sawyer Yards
2313 Edwards St., Ste. 150
Houston, TX 77007

Montrose Collective
888 Westheimer Rd. Ste., 212
Houston, TX 77006

BAYOUCITYSMILES.COM



This month's *OutSmart* issue highlights Transgender Awareness Week (beginning November 13) and the International Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20. We're proud to shine a light on the outstanding leaders and organizations that serve Houston's thriving trans community.

Our cover story introduces the Transgender Allyship Collective, a coalition of Black transgender women who are creating a new narrative for themselves and the community allies they partner with. *OutSmart* columnist Ian L. Haddock contributed the profiles on six members of the Collective, and Alex Rosa, our creative director, produced the cover photo shoot.

We also spotlight transgender leader George Zemanek, the co-founder of Transmasculine Alliance Houston. His group started as an informal social club for trans men and evolved into an important support organization.

Grammy Award winner Kim Petras brings her *Feed the Beast* World Tour to Houston on November 14, and *OutSmart*'s Zach McKenzie caught up with the trans artist for an interview. Petras's collaborative 2022 single "Unholy" with Sam Smith made her the first openly transgender solo artist to have a #1 single in the United States.

On the local performing-arts scene, Kenn McLaughlin, who is retiring from his artistic director post at Stages Houston, shares memories of his work with Stages' dedicated cast and crew. We also say farewell to Miller Outdoor Theatre's managing director Cissy Segall Davis, who is retiring after nearly 15 years of service. And don't miss the interview with legendary performer Rita Moreno, a lifelong LGBTQ community ally who is heading to Houston this month.

We also feature out performer Sandra Bernhard, who brings her Stand With Texas show to

Houston on December 4. "I love the people of Texas," she says, "so when I see a government that is crushing their spirit, I want to step up."

Looking ahead to World AIDS Day on December 1, writer David Brasher visits with local architect Michael Lee, whose Texas AIDS Memorial Garden has survived numerous challenges as one of the nation's oldest AIDS memorial projects.

We'd also like to thank everyone who attended our 26th Gayest & Greatest Awards celebration sponsored by Bayou City Smiles, Legacy Community Health, and Premier Wireless at South Beach Houston. Dalton DeHart's photos on page 56 highlight a few of the 500 guests who attended this inaugural fundraising event for the OutSmart Foundation for Community Media, which raises newsroom funding to keep LGBTQ media alive in Houston.

Finally, we want to acknowledge the New Media Ventures

organization for naming *OutSmart* as one of 14 local media outlets in six states to receive their "Voices for Democracy" grant. New Media Ventures is a community of more than 250 angel investors and aligned donors who work to drive social change through media, elections and civic engagement, advocacy, and organizing. Carlissia N. Graham, New Media Ventures' president, notes that "given the declining trust in traditional news outlets and national brands, we believe that investing in trusted media and messengers—not just nationally, but also at the local level—is essential to protecting and expanding our democracy."



Greg Jeu
Publisher



H O U S T O N ' S
NEW FACES of PRIDE

**JOIN HOUSTON'S
RAINBOW
RENAISSANCE**

Building a Stronger,
More Inclusive
Community



newfacesofpride.org

HEALTH CARE REIMAGINED

Exceptional Care Team

Free Rapid HIV, Hep C, and Syphilis Testing

Daily Oral or Long-Acting Injectable HIV Prevention & Treatment Options

Same- and Next-Day Appointments Available



James Carroll, MD



Maggie White, FNP

**WALK IN OR CALL
(713) 814-3730
TO SCHEDULE**



**THANK YOU
OUTSMART READERS!**

Best Men's Health Clinic

Best Women's Health Clinic

Best Female Nurse Practitioner – Maggie White, FNP



Scan to Learn About
All of Legacy's HIV
Testing, Prevention,
and Treatment
Services



WellnessBarByLegacy.org
120 Westheimer Road, Ste F
Houston, TX 77006

QUEER THINGS to DO

For a weekly roundup of LGBTQ happenings, visit **OutSmart-Magazine.com**

STAGE

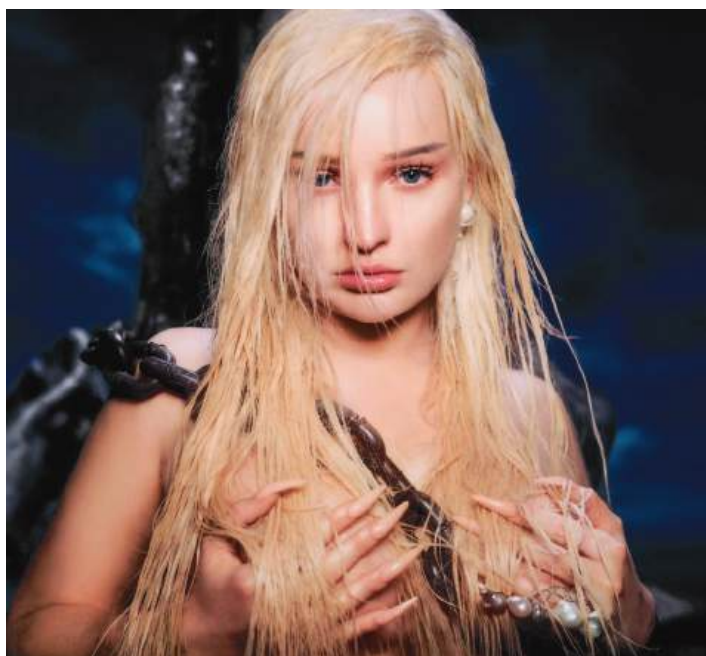
November 24–December 27

THE NUTCRACKER

Houston Ballet continues its beloved holiday tradition with another Stanton Welch rendition of *The Nutcracker*. Journey through the glittering Land of Snow to the Kingdom of Sweets with Clara, Drosselmeyer, and the Prince as he reunites with the Sugar Plum Fairy. Visions of sugar plums will be dancing in everyone's heads as hundreds of characters, elaborate sets, and a stunning attention to detail light up the Wortham Theater's main stage.



Be sure to join Out at the Ballet on December 8 for discounted orchestra-level seats and a complimentary drink voucher at the private reception. Use promo code **OUTBALLET**. tinyurl.com/2rw4yktb



STAGE

November 14

KIM PETRAS 'FEED THE BEAST' WORLD TOUR

German-born, Los Angeles-based pop superstar Kim Petras brings her Feed the Beast tour to 713 Music Hall. tinyurl.com/4bc926xa



HOUSTON'S NEW FACES of PRIDE

COMMUNITY

November 9

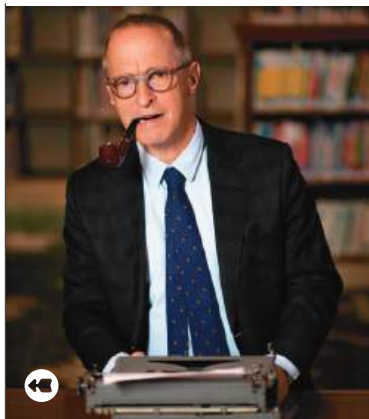
NEW FACES OF PRIDE

New Faces of Pride celebrates Houston's LGBTQ community. Everyone interested in getting involved in this new organization is encouraged to attend. tinyurl.com/2c56jktp

STAGE**November 3****DAVID SEDARIS**

David Sedaris, one of America's preeminent humorists, comes to Jones Hall for an evening of laughter and a post-show book signing.

tinyurl.com/yu6bh75p

**ART****November 10****TEARS OF A REVOLUTION**

This poetry reading focuses on the fight against oppressive systems—gentrification, mass incarceration, poverty, and LGBTQ discrimination.

tinyurl.com/2s4z84d7

COMMUNITY**November 12****LGBTQ JIU JITSU**

Third Ward Jiu Jitsu offers a free LGBTQ self-defense course, with optional donations encouraged.

tinyurl.com/mvjxsu8f

**STAGE****November 15****DOJA CAT - THE SCARLET TOUR**

Hip-hop superstar Doja Cat brings her Scarlet Tour to the Toyota Center. Opening acts are Ice Spice and DoeChii.

tinyurl.com/2fh6jf85

STAGE**November 17-December 30****A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

The Alley Theatre presents Dickens' Christmas classic. Three of the performances offer a simultaneous Spanish translation.

tinyurl.com/3hXu6j5j

COMMUNITY**November 23-26****FRIENDSGIVING**

Celebrate Thanksgiving at Grizzly Pines Gay Campground with a community potluck.

tinyurl.com/bdh9pzra

COMMUNITY**November 21****TRANS T-GIVING**

The Montrose Center's annual Transgender Thanksgiving Party kicks off their holiday event lineup.

tinyurl.com/bdfkmces

COMMUNITY**November 23****KATY TURKEY TROT**

BakerRipley's Turkey Trot might be canceled this year, but the Katy YMCA's annual Thanksgiving Run has events for the whole family.

tinyurl.com/3uu4e3vy

COMMUNITY**November 19****TRANS EMPOWERMENT AWARDS**

The Mahogany Project presents the Trans Empowerment and Alliance Party and Awards Brunch to salute the lives of Houston trailblazers. Get your tickets online.

tinyurl.com/35h9yy4j

ART**November 18****ZINE FEST HOUSTON**

Zine Fest Houston returns to The Orange Show for Visionary Art. In addition to nearly 200 zine vendors, there will once again be a variety of unique programming including workshops, talks, and more.

tinyurl.com/24vh44wh

STAGE**November 16****THE BALD AND THE BEAUTIFUL-LIVE PODCAST**

Trixie and Katya sweep into 713 Music Hall for a live recording of their podcast *The Bald and the Beautiful*.

tinyurl.com/4b4ae3n8

**COMMUNITY****November 25****WOODLANDS FUN RUN**

Strap on your running shoes, roller skates, or dust off your pogo stick and join The Woodlands Pride at North Shore Park for their inaugural 6K Fun Run.

tinyurl.com/4w2vr3b6

STAGE**November 25****BARBIE DRAG-QUEEN PARTY**

Come on, Barbie, your party hasn't ended yet! Attend this Barbie drag performance and celebrate all things pink. Tickets available online.

tinyurl.com/mr2zasuk



QUEER THINGS to DO
SAVE the DATES

STAGE

December 1

**JANET JACKSON AND
AHF PRESENT WORLD AIDS DAY**

Grammy winner and Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee Janet Jackson will be headlining AHF's World AIDS Day concert at NRG Arena. Actor and activist Blair Underwood will be this year's recipient of AHF's Lifetime Achievement Award.

tinyurl.com/3bt7j2rk

COMMUNITY

December 2

HOLIDAY BASKET EXTRAVAGANZA

Support the Montrose Center's holiday community services by joining them for their Holiday Basket Extravaganza.

tinyurl.com/53fcu65a

STAGE

December 3

**SANDYLAND PRESENTS STAND WITH
TEXAS STARRING SANDRA BERNHARD**

Performer, actress, and compelling storyteller Sandra Bernhard is taking a stand with Texas and bringing her Sandyland Presents: "Stand With Texas" community gathering to the Heights Theater. tinyurl.com/26anpbs3

STAGE

December 5-24

CINDERELLA

Theatre Under the Stars presents Rodgers and Hammerstein's classic *Cinderella*, with an Out@TUTS performance on December 14. tinyurl.com/ycxxcm2z

STAGE

December 9

HOUSTON PRIDE BAND

OutSmart's Gayest & Greatest "Best Community Performing Arts Organization" winner presents their holiday concert at MATCH. Tickets online. tinyurl.com/46m4rxjp

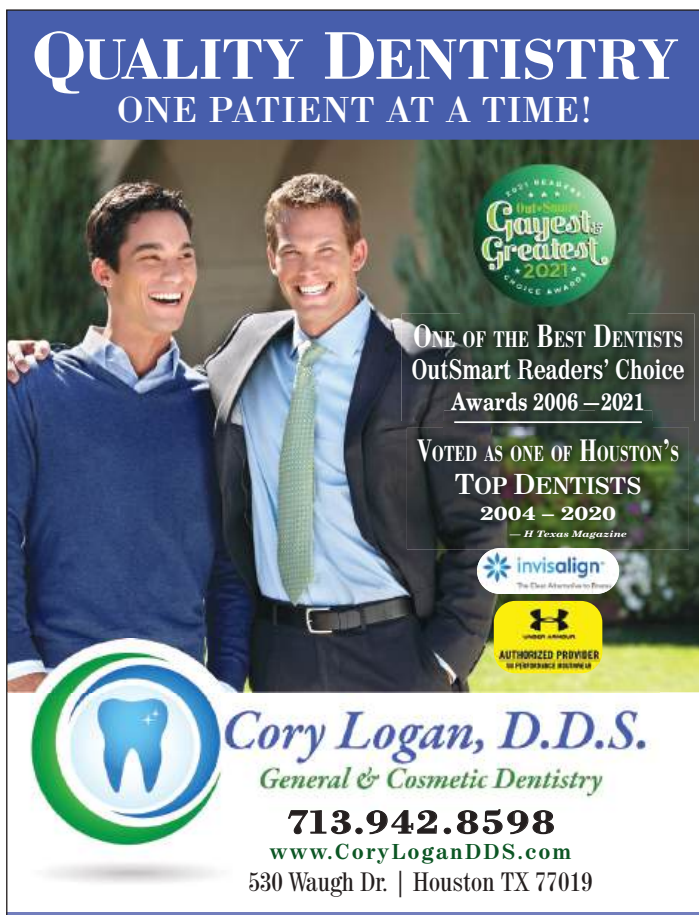
STAGE

February 2-March 3

CINDERELLA

If you missed the classic princess tale at TUTS and want to relive the timeless story, Houston Ballet presents Stanton Welch's rendition of *Cinderella* that has been described as "more tomboy than princess" and "Tim Burton meets Cirque Du Soleil."

tinyurl.com/mt7y92ts



“I WILL SURVIVE” —DIVA LEGENDS

NOV. 24, 25 & 26 • JONES HALL



Perfect for a
Friendsgiving
fun night out!

LUCAS WALDIN, CONDUCTOR
LAKISHA JONES, VOCALIST
NOVA PAYTON, VOCALIST

“Go on now go, walk out the door...” Join the Houston Symphony and two powerhouse singers for a sensational salute to the Queens of disco, R&B, and pop, from **Gloria Gaynor**, **Diana Ross**, and **Tina Turner** to **Alicia Keys**, **Lady Gaga**, and **Beyoncé**.

FREE AFTER-PARTY

in Jones Hall following the Sat, Nov. 25
performance: dance the night away as
you sip specialty cocktails, mingle with
Symphony musicians, and more!

SCAN FOR
MORE INFO!



HOUSTON  SYMPHONY

THE EYE GALLERY

HAPPY
THANKSGIVING
HOUSTON



BLACK FRIDAY SALE / NOVEMBER 24 - 25 / SEE STORE FOR DETAILS

IEYGALLERYHOUSTON.COM

1806 WESTHEIMER RD - RIVER OAKS

1700 POST OAK BLVD - POST OAK (NEXT TO WHOLE FOODS)

713.523.1279

713.622.7470



COOLER in the SUMMER • WARMER in the WINTER
LIVE in GALVESTON

NEAR
by the
BEACH!

CLOSE to
HOUSTON

HISTORIC
HOMES



5807 Avenue S ½, Galveston, Texas \$374,500



Circa 1909 Raised cottage with full quarters below. Upstairs main house has beautiful original unpainted woodwork, with paneled doors, wood floors, wainscoting and picture rails. Double French doors lead from the front hallway in the living room, dining area and full kitchen. Double pocket doors separate the two bedrooms. Full bath upstairs has a walk-in jacuzzi. Downstairs is a full two bedroom apartment, completely tile floored, with large living room and open full kitchen. Separate electrical meters! Fully fenced yard also has a two car garage and two additional parking spaces in the back with alley access. Rent the downstairs to pay the bills!



David Bowers, Realtor®

Better
Homes
and Gardens
REAL ESTATE
GARY
GREENE

409/763-2800

David@DavidBowers.com

Sally B. Wallace Preservation Award
for Green Revival (solar panels
on my 1899 Victorian home)

Thank you for voting me Best Realtor® in Galveston -OutSmart Readers' Choice 2013-15

Lucky 13-Month Certificate Account Special*



Apply to Open Your Account Today

Continue to Make Your
Money Work Even Harder

13
MONTH
TERM **5.30%** APY**

- Available October 2, 2023
- Consumer or Business Share, IRA, or Jumbo Certificate Accounts

*Must be eligible for HFCU membership and open a share savings account with a \$5 minimum deposit in order become a member and obtain any product or service. New members can apply online at <https://houstonfcu.symapp.jhahosted.com>. New and existing members can apply by visiting any of our convenient locations. Call us at 281-243-0500 for more information. Terms and conditions may apply.



**APY = Annual Percentage Yield. The 5.30% APY is for a 13-month term for deposits in the amount of \$500.00 to \$99,999.99 for Regular Share Certificates or \$100,000.00 or more for IRA or Jumbo Share Certificates. The Rate is effective as of October 2, 2023. Rates are subject to change without notice and the offer may be withdrawn at any time. The APYs are fixed for the term assuming the account balance remains above the minimum for the full term. Upon maturity, unless otherwise directed, the certificate will rollover to a 12 month term at the current rate at the time of maturity. Fees and other conditions could reduce earnings. A penalty may be imposed for early withdrawals. Limited Time Offer. Terms and conditions may apply.

HFCU Houston Federal
Credit Union



Federally Insured by NCUA

SCENE OUT

Photos by
DALTON DEHART AND CREW



On September 30, 2023, Houston Pride Band presented *Ignite* at MATCH. Drag King Hugh Stone leads Artistic Director Deborah Hirsch off stage with a segment of the Pride Band behind them



Montrose Leather Pride was held at Geroage Country Sports Bar and Ripcord on October 1, 2023. Pictured are members and supporters.



ActOUT at the Alley Theatre for *American Mariachi* was held on October 5, 2023. Pictured are **Andres Ponce, Odett Torres, Cody Campbell, Lauren Pelletier, Bryant Johnson-Wood, Tina Berry, and Gary Wood.**



On October 6, 2023, Out for Good benefiting the Montrose Center was held at the Ballroom at Bayou Place. Pictured are **Eddie Robinson, Katy Caldwell, Ann Robison, and Tara Kelly.**



Columbus, Texas, Pride held its 3rd Annual Pride Celebration at The Magnificent Schneider Hall on October 7, 2023. Pictured are **Todd Hovis, Betty Hovis, Garrett Pettit, Daniel Dye, and Joe Palasota.**



On October 8, 2023, The Walk for Mental Health Houston Brunch was held at the home of Trina & Jack Stanfield. Pictured are **Trina Stanfield, Jack Stanfield and C Patrick McIlvain.**



On October 12, 2023, OUT in Tech Houston had its Hispanic Heritage Month mixer at Avant Garden. Pictured are attendees.



Katy Pride was celebrated at First Christian Church on October 14, 2023. Pictured are **Amanda M. Rose, and Rev. Heather Tolleson.**



On October 14, 2023, Pride Chorus Houston presented its *Y'all Means All!* concert at Unity of Houston. Pictured is a segment of the chorus.



Classic Chassis Car Club Houston hosted the 35th Anniversary Grand Invitational at South Shore Harbor Resort on October 21, 2023. Pictured are **Don Graff, Heath LaCoss, Corey Kemendo, Glenn Granger, Marvin Kelley, and Matt Batchelor.**



AIDS Healthcare Foundation presented its HalloQueens Fashion Show & Purchase for a Purpose at OUT of the Closet Houston. Pictured are **Moud Mohammed, Aruna Rajmohan, Cierra Scott, Lila DeBois, Taylor Allen, Nakia Lee-Williams, Eddie Rosas, Rhonda Grant, Cory Brown, Jocelin Rivera Hernandez, and Ashley Barnes.**



Space City Pride FC presented *Cleats & Queens* Drag Show at KiKi Houston on October 27, 2023. Pictured are members of the club.



Houston's New Faces of Pride members

PHOTO BY TASHA GOREL

Pride Gets a New Look

Houston's New Faces of Pride announces June festival plans.

By RYAN M. LEACH

There is a new Pride organization in town. Houston's New Faces of Pride has emerged in the wake of the ongoing dysfunction among local Pride organizers. Bryan Cotton is the president and founder of this new endeavor, and he hopes that with the support of an experienced board of directors and the community at large, Houston Pride events will once again be an attractive destination for people all over the region.

"We are building a completely new Pride organization that is not only diverse and transparent, but one that will remove the tarnished reputation that hovers over our city under

previous leadership. We will turn Houston into a destination Pride city and deliver year-round celebrations that support LGBTQ+ businesses and nonprofits," says Cotton.

New Faces of Pride has already taken the lead on next year's June Pride Month celebrations. It has secured an exclusive permit with the City to hold a downtown Pride celebration on June 22, 2024. The festivities will be centered around the Wortham Theater's Fish Plaza, and Cotton believes it will be the grandest Pride festival to date.

"The event marks a highly anticipated comeback, featuring a lineup of familiar faces from Houston's small-business community and enthusiastic sponsors already supporting

[the festival]," says Cotton.

Over the last three years, Cotton has voiced many of the concerns that he had heard from the community related to Houston's Pride celebrations. This is why he created New Faces of Pride. The continued decline of Pride activities and questions surrounding its leadership (including what he perceives as questionable funds distribution) is just one of the reasons he and his board finally said "Enough is enough."

However, some in the community have allegedly tried to undermine the new organization, according to Cotton. "It is no surprise that old, iniquitous organizations and affiliated individuals are not happy

about New Faces of Pride. They can continue to report our Facebook page, file vague trademarks, send threatening messages, and put out false information about us and our [nonprofit] status, but we will not be deterred from doing the right thing for our community," he says.

The goals of Houston's New Faces of Pride are numerous. Cotton promises they will make sure that their vendors, volunteers, and sponsors are treated with respect. They won't require board members, or any of the honorees, to pay a give/get in cash. They will be transparent with their finances and make their IRS Form 990 available to the public.

**"WE WILL TURN HOUSTON
INTO A DESTINATION
PRIDE CITY AND
DELIVER YEAR-ROUND
CELEBRATIONS THAT
SUPPORT LGBTQ+
BUSINESSES AND
NONPROFITS."**

**—Bryan Cotton, president and founder
of Houston's New Faces of Pride**

They will post the names of their board of directors and advisory board members on their website. They will have a pleasant working relationship with the Houston Police Department. They will not alienate the bars in the community, and will work together for a common goal. And they will not be asking sponsoring bars for their door cover charges or a portion of their sales.

New Faces of Pride's inaugural slate of officers, in addition to Cotton, are: Felicia Flores Wild, vice president; Jill Maxwell, board secretary; Donald Simms III, treasurer; and Tim Stokes, parliamentarian. The organization's splash page, which is still under development, can be viewed at newfacesofpride.org, where visitors can find links to social media and information on how to volunteer.

 *Cotton and his board invite the community to join them for their kickoff on November 9 at 6:00 p.m. at Rich's Houston. Those who can't make the event but still want to get involved can email contact@newfacesofpride.org.*

Considering a move...

Spain, Portugal, Mexico, Thailand or anywhere international?

I can help you sell your property in Houston and can work with Sotheby's International Realty agents anywhere in the world, for purchases or rentals, to ensure a seamless transition to your new home.

**I'm a top 1% Realtor with
over 160 million dollars in
transactions and fluent in
Spanish, French and Italian.**



Steve Markham

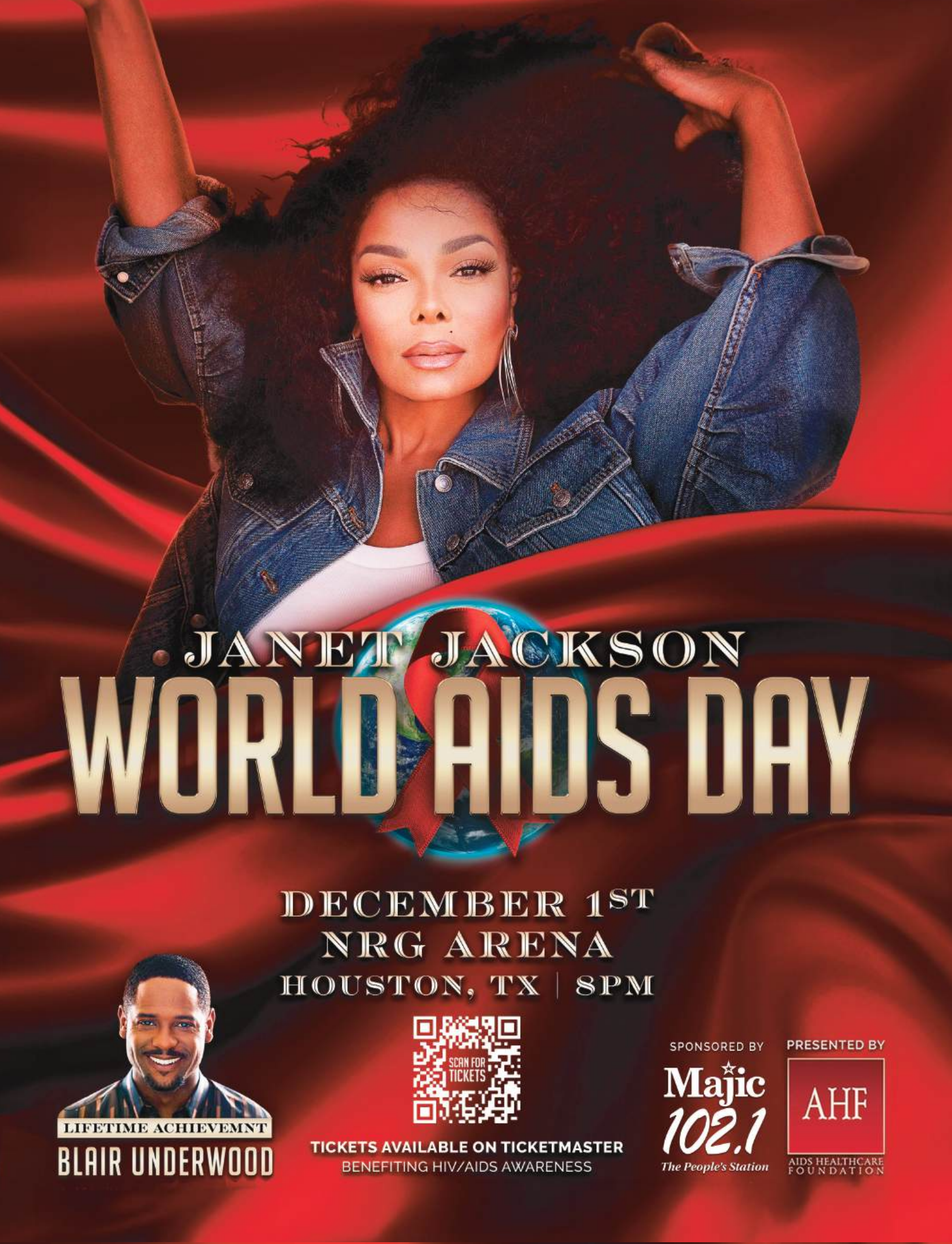
REALTOR-ASSOCIATE®

713.823.4729

STEVE.MARKHAM@SOTHEBYS.REALTY

**Martha
Turner**

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY



JANET JACKSON WORLD AIDS DAY

DECEMBER 1ST
NRG ARENA
HOUSTON, TX | 8PM



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT
BLAIR UNDERWOOD



TICKETS AVAILABLE ON TICKETMASTER
BENEFITING HIV/AIDS AWARENESS

SPONSORED BY

Majic
102.1
The People's Station

PRESENTED BY



It's Not Over

Janet Jackson, AIDS Healthcare Foundation,
and the Fight to End an Enduring Epidemic.



In today's fast-paced world of "breaking news" updates that scream for our attention and ping us on our TVs, phones, and watches 24/7, it can

be difficult to hold space for an epidemic that has fallen out of the headlines. But HIV continues to spread around the world, and 39 million people are living with HIV, including almost 30,000 in Houston alone. The southern U.S. states disproportionately are affected by new and increasing cases of HIV and AIDS year after year.

That's why AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), the largest provider of HIV/AIDS healthcare in the world, is teaming up with global icon Janet Jackson to raise awareness and funds for this vital cause.

Jackson will electrify the NRG Arena stage at AHF's World AIDS Day concert in Houston on December 1, 2023, amplifying the theme, "It's Not Over." World AIDS Day not only serves as a poignant annual day of remembrance for those we have lost to HIV/AIDS but also gives us a chance to celebrate those living with HIV/AIDS and reinforce that the fight against HIV/AIDS is ongoing. Adding to the glamour of the evening, Emmy, Grammy, and Golden Globe winning choreographer, director, and producer Debbie Allen will speak at the event, and AHF will present its Lifetime Achievement Award to Emmy Award winning actor and activist Blair Underwood.

Janet Jackson: Music with Meaning

Janet Jackson not only is a global superstar

but also a five-time GRAMMY® Award-winner and a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame® inductee. Jackson's December 1 performance for World AIDS Day comes on the heels of her North American Together Again tour, the highest grossing tour ever in her career. The tour derives its name from Jackson's 1997 hit song "Together Again" – the artist's personal tribute to a friend lost to AIDS as well as AIDS victims and their families worldwide.

Blair Underwood's Lifetime of Advocacy

AHF also will honor Blair Underwood with its Lifetime Achievement Award at the event. Beyond his Emmy Award-winning performances, Underwood has championed HIV and AIDS advocacy for more than 30 years. As a co-founder of Artists for a New South Africa, he highlighted the devastating impact of HIV and AIDS on African families. Deepening his commitment, he collaborated with AHF to address regions across the country with alarmingly high HIV rates. His enduring activism makes him a fitting recipient of this prestigious award.

AHF: Front and Center in the Fight

As we approach World AIDS Day 2023, AHF is on the cusp of a significant milestone: providing care for two million lives worldwide. AHF's commitment to global and domestic care never has wavered in its more than 35 years of service. The foundation continually has tailored its approach to fit the unique needs of U.S. communities, particularly in areas like Houston.

One thing that sets AHF apart in the relentless battle against HIV/AIDS is its

deep-rooted belief in engaging authentically with communities. With seven locations in Houston alone, AHF provides high-quality healthcare services, specialty pharmacies, free HIV and STD testing, compassionate community outreach groups, and more. For those who recently have been diagnosed, the journey can seem daunting. AHF's core model of care recognizes this challenge and ensures no one is left isolated. Right from the outset, linkage-to-care counselors are at people's sides, offering indispensable one-on-one guidance and support while ensuring new clients get into care and stay in care.

In addition, AHF's commitment is not confined by geographical constraints. Mobile Testing Units (MTUs) ensure care reaches even the most remote or underserved areas. And understanding the sensitive nature of HIV testing, AHF's Out of the Closet Thrift Stores serve as safe places for the LGBTQ+ community while offering discreet HIV testing facilities. For AHF, the mantra is clear: everyone deserves access to high-quality healthcare regardless of the ability to pay.

Together, Let's Make A Difference

While AHF continues the fight against HIV and AIDS every day, the foundation needs your help. Every ticket sold to AHF's World AIDS Day concert starring the one-and-only Janet Jackson benefits HIV/AIDS awareness and supports AHF in its unwavering mission to provide medicine and advocacy regardless of ability to pay. Tickets are selling quickly. Visit [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com) and search for "AHF Presents World AIDS Day 2023 Featuring Janet Jackson."

SKIN Renaissance LASER CENTER



PERSONALIZED | COMPREHENSIVE | DOCTOR SUPERVISED

OCTAVIO
BARRIOS, MD

LUCIA MANGLE,
MPAS, PA-C

Botox • Restylane
Radiesse • Sculptra



Before

After

Dermal fillers can take years off, even decades; giving a natural, pleasant, and well-rested look. Dr. Barrios added volume to patient's upper & lower cheeks and chin to reverse the signs of aging.

- NON-SURGICAL
- IMMEDIATE LASTING RESULTS
- AFFORDABLE
- Wrinkles • Rosacea • Facial Sagging
- Face Acne (active & scars)
- Face & Leg Veins • Laser Hair Removal

- Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) Treatments for ED
- PDO Facial Thread Lifts



VOTED ONE OF THE BEST
Dr. Octavio Barrios
Best Physician 2005-2023
Skin Renaissance
Best Skin Care Center 2005-2023

Call for your FREE Consultation
713.942.SKIN (7546)

517 West Gray St. • Between Montrose and Taft

FLOOR COVERINGS *international* PRIDEFULLY FLOORED!



2050 North Loop West #120
Houston, TX 77018
(832) 280-6646



LUXURY VINYL HARDWOOD CARPET
STAIR RUNNER GYM FLOORS SHOWERS TILE LAMINATE

“MY WHY IS *Ms.*”



OUR WHY IS *you.*
LoneStar.edu/HoustonNorth



LONE STAR COLLEGE
HOUSTON
NORTH

By GRACE YUNG, CFP



Not Your Grandfather's Annuity

A second look at the much-maligned retirement investment.



For years, annuities have had a bad reputation—and rightly so. Annuities of the past had long surrender periods, offered little more than tax-deferral

and standard death benefits as options, and were just not implemented properly.

Today, these strategies have evolved. There are many applications where, if used appropriately, these investment vehicles may make sense as part of an overall financial plan.

Supplemental Income

“Annuity” simply means a fixed sum of money paid to someone yearly, typically for life. Think of pension payments from the past, back when employers commonly offered this benefit to retired employees. That is an annuity payment. Annuities can be purchased as a personal investment, separate from having to work for a corporation. As a matter of fact, very few companies still offer pensions. This is one reason annuities should be getting a second look as the Baby Boomer generation continues to head into retirement.

Today, annuities have many different options or features—called riders—that can be added to the base contracts. For example, Guaranteed Withdrawal Benefit riders

typically offer guaranteed income for life, either to cover a single life or joint lives, without having to annuitize a contract (meaning to give up the entire contract value in exchange for a fixed payment for life). There are different versions of these riders, depending on the issuing insurance company, but the gist of it is that this strategy allows one to plan on a predictable, guaranteed cash flow in retirement. Many times, this supplemental income—in addition to a retiree’s Social Security and/or pension income, if any—creates a meaningful guaranteed base of income. This annuity income can be used to meet a portion of one’s overall living expenses, or fixed expenses such as life insurance premiums, or mortgage payments. Having this tool allows one to increase their “income stability ratio”—the portion of their overall income stream that is guaranteed, no matter what happens.

Annuities as an Alternative

Other features include riders such as a Long-term Care rider. Unfortunately, not everyone qualifies for or has long-term care coverage. There are many reasons for this—health status may be an issue, or the cost of long-term care insurance may also be a barrier. There are some annuities today that offer riders that will allow one to access more income, without negatively affecting their guarantee. The thought behind that is so there will be additional funds

to help with long-term care expenses. Actual long-term care insurance is usually a better solution, but for those who cannot obtain it, this may be an alternative to consider. The downside, of course, is that the earnings portion of the income is taxed as ordinary income, whereas benefits from a long-term care policy are tax-free.

Along those same lines, for those who cannot qualify for life insurance, annuities typically offer a standard death benefit. For example, if one invests \$100,000 into an annuity and the value dropped below the initial investment amount (due to market volatility) and the account owner passed away, the beneficiary will receive at least \$100,000. Today, there are annuities that offer “enhanced” death benefits, such as roll-ups or step-ups in death benefit values, that are over and above the initial investment. There are many variations to the different kinds of enhancements, but some individuals will use annuities for death-benefit solutions if regular life insurance is not an option. The earnings portion of the proceeds from this strategy would be taxed as ordinary income, whereas proceeds from a life insurance policy are tax-free. This is one way to use this strategy—as an alternative if obtaining life insurance is not an option.

There Is No Free Lunch

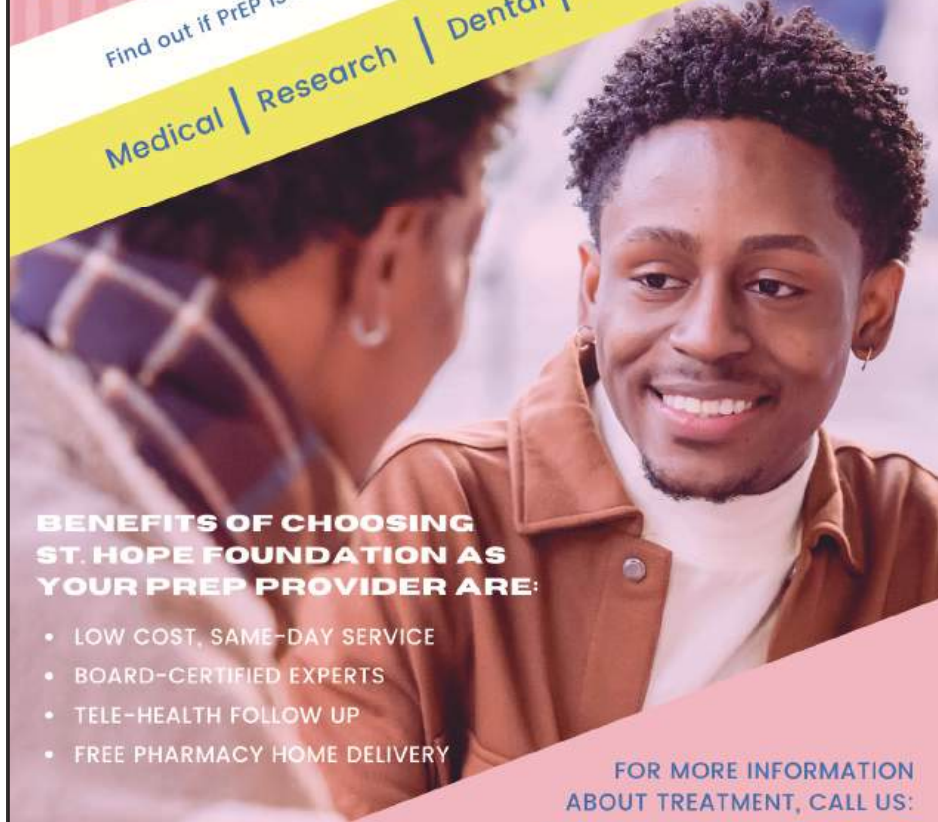
Annuity strategies can be cost-efficient, but →



GET PREPARED!

Find out if PrEP is right for you by scheduling your appointment today!

Medical | Research | Dental | Pharmacy | Vision



BENEFITS OF CHOOSING ST. HOPE FOUNDATION AS YOUR PREP PROVIDER ARE:

- LOW COST, SAME-DAY SERVICE
- BOARD-CERTIFIED EXPERTS
- TELE-HEALTH FOLLOW UP
- FREE PHARMACY HOME DELIVERY

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT TREATMENT, CALL US:
281-779-8705
www.offeringhope.org

they can also be costly. It really depends on how the strategies are designed to meet your needs. In general, the average annuity solution is more expensive than a regular investment portfolio because of the guarantees and other features it provides. Depending on what one is trying to accomplish, one may find the cost of annuities to be reasonable. For example, predictability and protection may be something that one finds to be invaluable.

It is a good idea to seek professional advice on your specific circumstances, as annuity strategies are complex and may not be right for everyone. They are, however, yet another tool in the financial toolbox, and there can be a place for some of these strategies within a financial plan. Work with your financial-planning professional to see if it makes sense for you, and if it can add value to your financial plan.

Grace S. Yung, CFP®, is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER practitioner with experience in helping LGBTQ individuals, domestic partners, and families plan and manage their finances since 1994. She is the managing director at Midtown Financial Group, LLC, in Houston. Member FINRA/SIPC. For more information, visit: www.midtownfg.com

Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, a Registered Investment Advisor. Member FINRA/SIPC.

Content in this material is for general information only and not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual. Please consult a qualified professional regarding your specific situation. The economic forecasts set forth in this material may not develop as predicted and there can be no guarantee that strategies promoted will be successful. All investing involves risk including loss of principal. No strategy assures success or protects against loss.

Annuities are suitable for long-term investing, such as retirement investing. Gains from tax-deferred investments are taxable as ordinary income upon withdrawal. Guarantees are based on the claims paying ability of the issuing company. Withdrawals made prior to age 59½ are subject to a 10% IRS penalty tax and surrender charges may apply. Variable annuities are subject to market risk and may lose value.

CHAPULTEPEC LUPITA

MEXICAN RESTAURANT & BAR

WHERE EVERYONE IS BEAUTIFUL

Home Of The Best Margaritas in Houston!

813 Richmond Ave
Houston, TX 77006
713-522-2365



OPEN 24 HOURS



LAST CHANCE!! LIQUIDATION

OF

I W Marks Jewelers

CLOSING!

PAST & ERA
ANTIQUE COLLECTION

CLOSED!

Queen of Heirs

CLOSED!

GEMS BY
CHAO
FINE JEW

CLOSED!

UP TO

80%
OFF**

SALE

NEW, VINTAGE, ANTIQUE & DESIGNER JEWELRY! ROLEX*, CARTIER*, TIFFANY*, SUZANNE KALAN,
FRANCK MULLER, VAN CLEEF*, BULGARI*, PATEK PHILIPPE*, DAVID YURMAN*, CHOPARD*,
KIMBERLY MACDONALD, AUDEMARS PIGUET*, ROBERTO COIN*, DAVID WEBB* & MORE

HOSTED AT: IW MARKS | 3841 BELLAIRE BLVD | HTX 77025 | M-SAT 10-6 | SUN 12-5

PRESENTED BY: **TENENBAUM**
JEWELERS



*Only available in pre-owned. Not an authorized retailer.

**Not valid with any other offers or previous purchases;
valid only at Liquidation Event at 3841 Bellaire Blvd.





The POWER of SUPPORT

TRANSGENDER ALLYSHIP COLLECTIVE CREATES A NARRATIVE FOR INCREASING ALLYSHIP IN HOUSTON.

By IAN L. HADDOCK
Photos by ALEX ROSA

Transgender Awareness Week, celebrated this year November 13–19, is a week-long commemoration devoted to uplifting and remembering the lives of transgender people, leading up to Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20. Because transgender people have a much shorter life expectancy, we find that our memories are often stories of despair arising from a hostile societal climate and political warfare against the bodies of transgender people.

One coalition of Black transgender women is creating a new narrative for themselves and the people with whom they interact. Though this program was originally developed with community organizers and organizations, it has been transformed through the lens of the people who have lived through their own transition and have their own perspectives on what change can look like for themselves. They range from activists to performers and everything in between, with a common bond of being Black transgender women.

Transgender Allyship Collective (TAC) is a program led by Joelle Espeut, the program director at The Normal Anomaly Initiative. Espeut has been instrumental in creating courageous, braver spaces for Black transgender women since she landed in Houston from Los Angeles six years ago. In this capacity, she has helped create a day celebrated in Houston

on November 14: Transgender Allyship Day. The day is centered around finding collective, proactive, and communal ways to uplift the identities of those silenced and overlooked in mainstream queer agendas. Through this, ten women have become a part of a coalition that is based on sisterhood and develops training for people interested in being better allies to this community.

From this emerged a group of nontraditional activists who are a part of this coalition of Black transgender women seeking to change the narratives and create allyship for their community in Houston and beyond. Their insights into the process of creating a supportive world starts with their stories of power that highlight the beauty of being Black and transgender in Houston.

As we celebrate Transgender Awareness Week, stories like these show us how incredibly life-changing allyship and support can be for persons who live at the margins. These stories of resilience and sisterhood promise that, through allyship, everyone can become their own success story. The sisterhood of the Transgender Allyship Collective—though it was created to advocate for Black transgender women's well-being—has created narrative-shifting components internally that are rarely found within such groups in the South. TAC's emerging activists who have transitioned in Houston have found, in multiple ways, what all Houstonians know to be true: Houston is a city of possibilities—for all of society. →



Transgender Allyship Collective members (clockwise, left to right): Mikayla Poche, Christen “Coco” Valentine, B’Yancha Foxx, Taylor Rose Mabrie, Sasha “Barbie” Moore, and Joelle Espeut.

Joelle Espeut



Joelle Espeut is the brainchild of this coalition endeavor. Having the experience of living in multiple cities as she grew more into herself, she came to Houston in hopes that she could find more like-minded people, especially a community of transgender women. “Black trans-ness is a spectrum, and representation is often singular and mostly rooted in trauma, struggle, death, and despair. I knew that we were more than that. We are the person passing you on the street, your co-worker, your sister, and not just something referred to when you are centering body parts, picking us apart or sexualizing us.” With this, she journeyed into advocacy work that is rooted in connection and community while centering joy.

Joelle knows all too well what it is like not just to find allyship in the greater society, but to also find allyship among people who identify just like her. Her friend Kaliyah, also a Black trans woman, helped her find her womanhood while she was still living in Los Angeles. Her friendship made the transition seem effortless and without the burden of perfection. “She didn’t force me to look like anyone or anything. I had the power to be the woman I desired without the fear of being shunned. She made it safe for me to experiment.”

This is a part of what Joelle is now doing for women in Houston: encouraging her sisters to engage in their whole selves, to think expansively even in challenging spaces, and to not let trauma be the only way they communicate. “Allyship is not just outside of your identities; allyship can be centering communities you are a part of, too,” she says.



“ALLYSHIP IS NOT JUST OUTSIDE OF YOUR IDENTITIES; ALLYSHIP CAN BE CENTERING COMMUNITIES YOU ARE A PART OF, TOO.” —Joelle Espeut



Taylor Rose Mabrie



Taylor Mabrie never wanted to be anyone other than Taylor—even though she was introduced to the community as her entertainment persona, Chloe Ross. As early as 8 years old, Taylor can remember taking her mom’s outfits, stockings, and shoes to create fashion shows in her room. Yet, it wasn’t until the COVID-19 shutdown that she began her transition.

“I became depressed,” she recalls, “and was having conversations with my chosen mother, Tommie Ross, about feelings that I knew were always there. She gave me the knowledge to feel comfortable moving forward with who I always was.”

Taylor began to secretly transition, taking months before she presented as her whole self. Her biggest ally throughout her life was her dad, and his understanding was the catalyst to finding comfort in showing the world who she was. Since then, transitioning has been overwhelmingly positive, and she spends her time educating and informing people about this newfound liberation. Though there are still a lot of obstacles transgender people are facing, Taylor is resolute in contributing her story to the fabric of the world, and emphasizing that transitioning doesn’t change you, it just empowers your authenticity. “Trans people don’t want special treatment,” she says. “We want to be treated as humans. Respect doesn’t require agreement.”

THE EYE GALLERY

HAPPY THANKSGIVING HOUSTON



BLACK FRIDAY SALE / NOVEMBER 24 - 25 / SEE STORE FOR DETAILS

EYEGALLERYHOUSTON.COM

1806 WESTHEIMER RD - RIVER OAKS

1700 POST OAK BLVD - POST OAK (NEXT TO WHOLE FOODS)



713.523.1279

713.622.7470



Christen "Coco" Valentine



"We are here and we are not going nowhere," declares Christen "Coco" Valentine. Coco is a vibrant Black trans woman who has called Houston home since moving from Detroit ten years ago.

Houston represents a brighter future for her as she expands the freelance makeup artistry she has done since she was young, adding creative direction for music videos and professional nonprofit work to her résumé in the process. Living a more stable life is the reality that she has always fought for. "Society is not this big idea; it is where we all live. I don't get a discount for being trans, so there is no need to treat us as less than any other human being." The society in which Coco transitioned helped to shape her love for beauty. Some of her first allies who brought her into the sisterhood were her clientele of mostly exotic dancers and performers.

Coco still uses her connection to beauty and video production in hopes of changing the narratives of her community. Before her video *Pose*, there were few powerful Black transgender actors on the screen. She believes that seeing people on the screen who look like you, and who you can identify with, not only gives you a possibility model, but it can change the way people view Black trans women. "We need more writers, directors, and producers to put us more in the lights of the camera, telling our diverse stories," she says. "This is one of the main ways we can be more accepted."

"VISIBILITY IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE WE NEED TO BE SEEN AND HEARD FOR OUR TRANS SIBLINGS." —B'Yancha Foxx

B'Yancha Foxx



Some stories don't start with beauty, but most stories—with the right support—can end up beautiful. B'Yancha Foxx has been sober from methamphetamines for four years. She was introduced to the drug while doing sex work. Some studies show that about 67 percent of trans people engage in sex work because of lower education status, homelessness, and perceived social support. By leaving the sex-work industry and getting into recovery, she has found the strength and courage to become a recovery-support peer specialist who focuses on the transgender population.

Activism only recently became a goal for her, as her focus had been just helping people who were in her former situation with the services needed to empower them to make the best decisions for themselves. She remembers the people who were visible before she had the courage to follow their example. "Visibility is important because we need to be seen and heard for our trans siblings," says B'Yancha. Though she doesn't consider herself on the front lines yet, she is actively working with her sisters to find that confidence. "With the support of the girls," she says, "I am finding myself growing into my goals and surpassing them."





Sasha “Barbie” Moore



Sasha Moore has been active in the Houston community and has been showing up unapologetically herself for over a decade. Her beauty and tenacity have garnered a following that listens to her and regards her as an expert connector. Notably, she appears regularly on the Isaiah Factor Uncensored television program, giving updates about pop-culture topics. Her story of allyship started with finding the beauty within by building a community of supporters as she endeavored to show up in power, confidence, and glamor in all the spaces in which she interacts.

Sasha found herself in this TAC group through wanting more spaces to understand and embrace the journey of being a Black transwoman. These community connections have allowed her to have a deepened understanding of the multiple intersecting identities and experiences across the transgender spectrum. Through this, she has become an advocate of allyship that displays connection and collaboration.

“WE KNOW WE CAN HELP OTHERS SEE THAT WE ARE JUST LIKE THEM: HUMAN.” — Mikayla Poche

Mikayla Poche



Mikayla Poche’s mother is one of her biggest supporters, and having her as an ally has made her transition quite effortless. Her mother supported her move from Baton Rouge to Houston in search of a better life.

“Houston has shown me so much love and support,”

Mikayla says. “I came here with very little, and now I have jobs, my own car, and an apartment.” Though 34 percent of Black transgender people are said to make under \$10,000 a year, Mikayla—like many of the women of TAC—has found that having a great support system is one of the most important catalysts to a better life for this consistently marginalized group.

To her, activism and allyship go hand in hand: it is about support, being comfortable listening to stories that are not like yours, and speaking up for those who have been silenced. Sometimes, it is as simple as supporting one’s decision to be more of themselves—much like her mother. The support and sisterhood of TAC has helped her to realize that love and compassion have to start from the inside first. “Being a part of this is eye-opening—to see us as Black trans people listening, supporting, and uplifting each other,” says Mikayla. “Because we truly see it for ourselves, we know we can help others see that we are just like them: human.”



For more info about Transgender Allyship Collective (TAC), visit www.normalanomaly.org/transgender-allyship-collective.

Man on a Mission

George Zemanek leads the support group Transmasculine Alliance Houston.

By ZACH MCKENZIE

Connecting with others through a unique experience is vital for those seeking support, guidance, and friendship. The Transmasculine Alliance Houston (TMAH) is providing a safe space specifically for people who are assigned female at birth, but do not identify as female. George Zemanek, who works as a special education teacher and occupational therapist, is the group's president. As a trans man, Zemanek is on a mission to foster an environment for good conversation, community building, and gender-affirming financial support.

"I knew I was going to transition from female to male, but I put it off until after I graduated college in 2003," says Zemanek. "In 1999, I joined a co-ed group made up of trans men and predominantly trans women. It was me and three other trans guys, and the meeting topics all were about issues specific to trans women that had nothing to do with us."

Zemanek says that it was a fellow group member who decided to form a group specifically for trans men. "The group was called STAG, which stood for Some Transgenders Are Guys," he explains. At the height of STAG, active membership was roughly 40 men in total. "We had monthly meetings, outings, and socials. When we had a party, it would be a huge group of trans guys. Around 2014, the group was renamed Be Free."

Ultimately, the group experienced some attrition, prompting Zemanek to pivot in an effort to continue offering the group's life-affirming services. "It was really important to me that this group continue. No matter if it was just five guys or ten at our monthly meeting, we

"I MADE SURE WE KEPT MEETING WHEN THE PANDEMIC HIT. WE WENT VIRTUAL, BECAUSE TRANS PEOPLE NEED COMMUNITY. WE NEED EACH OTHER."

—George Zemanek

were going to keep having these meetings," he recalls. "In 2018, I ran into Kennedy Loftin at the Montrose Center. We went to college together and he knew me pre-transition. It was a fun reunion, and he offered to let the group start meeting at the Montrose Center. That's when the group really started to grow again, because we had a central location to have our meetings."

When the COVID-19 pandemic threatened the survival of support groups like Be Free, Zemanek pivoted to virtual meetings, which he credits for preserving the group. "I made sure we kept meeting when the pandemic hit. We went virtual, because trans people need community, we need each other," he says. "It was really important to me that this group survive and be accessible and available to the people in our community. Our virtual meetings would sometimes



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALEX ROSA



The Transmasculine Alliance Houston members hanging out in Galveston.

have upwards of 15 to 20 people.”

As COVID restrictions lifted, Zemanek considered the direction the group would go moving forward. “A guy named Nexus had moved to Houston from Chicago, where he was involved in Transmasculine Alliance Chicago. We decided that it was time to rebrand Be Free to the Transmasculine Alliance Houston.” Zemanek credits the Chicago chapter for offering support and resources while his group got off the ground. “Today, members meet, free of charge, on the first Thursday of the month from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in Room 111 at the

Montrose Center.

“We follow the traditional model of a support group,” Zemanek explains, “with a facilitator and a topic that is about our experience as transmasculine individuals.” Discussion points include masculine presentation, intimate physical intimacy with a partner, and more. “We might have a meeting on dating and disclosing that you’re a transgender person to a potential partner,” Zemanek says. “We choose sensitive subjects that, especially in a co-ed group with trans women, might not be comfortable to discuss.”

Quarterly presentations on STIs, self-

defense, reproductive health, and other topics round out the calendar for TMAH, along with social events that are open to members, their friends, and family. “TMAH provides a safe environment for people to be open about very sensitive issues that we deal with regarding sexuality, reproductive issues, and how we interact with our families,” Zemanek says. “Those can be very sensitive topics that can’t be adequately discussed in other circles. When you’re with a group of people that knows what you’re going through, you can support each other, because you know what that person’s going through because you’ve been there.”

The group has big plans for the near future, expanding to become their own nonprofit entity and providing even more life-saving services to their growing family. “Currently we are starting the process to become an independent nonprofit organization. We want to be able to provide funding for people who want to get top surgery, and we have to have our nonprofit status in order to do so,” Zemanek explains. “This step will ensure that we will be able to provide top surgery financial assistance, continue to meet regularly, have workshops, and build upon what we’re already doing now.”



For more information about how to get involved, visit transmasculinehouston.com.

AARP
Houston



**VOTERS
50+**

*Our Voices
Decide*

Know the when, where, and how. Then vote.

Voting gives you the power to decide what our future will look like. AARP Houston is here to empower you. We have gathered the most up-to-date local election information to make sure you are in the know and that the voices of voters 50-plus are heard on November 7. To get information on how to register to vote, where to vote in person, what the rules are for absentee or early voting are, and all the key voting deadlines head to aarp.org/Houston.

**Vote. It’s our right.
Vota. Es nuestro derecho.**



Paid for by AARP

facebook.com/AARPTexas | @AARPTX

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR BIKTARVY®

This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY® and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and your treatment.

(bik-TAR-vee)

MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:

- ▶ **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** Your healthcare provider will test you for HBV. If you have both HIV-1 and HBV, your HBV may suddenly get worse if you stop taking BIKTARVY. Do not stop taking BIKTARVY without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months, and may give you HBV medicine.

ABOUT BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults and children who weigh at least 55 pounds. It can either be used in people who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before, or people who are replacing their current HIV-1 medicines and whose healthcare provider determines they meet certain requirements.

BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS. HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS.

Do NOT take BIKTARVY if you also take a medicine that contains:

- ▶ dofetilide
- ▶ rifampin
- ▶ any other medicines to treat HIV-1

BEFORE TAKING BIKTARVY

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- ▶ Have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- ▶ Have any other health problems.
- ▶ Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if BIKTARVY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

- ▶ Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- ▶ BIKTARVY and other medicines may affect each other. Ask your healthcare provider and pharmacist about medicines that interact with BIKTARVY, and ask if it is safe to take BIKTARVY with all your other medicines.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:

- ▶ Those in the “Most Important Information About BIKTARVY” section.
- ▶ **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that may have been hidden in your body. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys. If you develop new or worse kidney problems, they may tell you to stop taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- ▶ **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- ▶ **The most common side effects of BIKTARVY** in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (6%), and headache (5%).

These are not all the possible side effects of BIKTARVY. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking BIKTARVY.

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

Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with BIKTARVY.

HOW TO TAKE BIKTARVY

Take BIKTARVY 1 time each day with or without food.

GET MORE INFORMATION

- ▶ This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more.
- ▶ Go to BIKTARVY.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5.
- ▶ If you need help paying for your medicine, visit BIKTARVY.com for program information.



BIKTARVY, the BIKTARVY Logo, GILEAD, the GILEAD Logo, and KEEP BEING YOU are trademarks of Gilead Sciences, Inc., or its related companies. © 2023 Gilead Sciences, Inc. All rights reserved. US-BVYC-0250 04/23



BIKTARVY®

bictegravir 50mg/emtricitabine 200mg/
tenofovir alafenamide 25mg tablets

**#1 PRESCRIBED
HIV TREATMENT***

*Source: IQVIA NPA Weekly, 04/19/2019 through 01/20/2023.

ELIAS

SWITCHED TO BIKTARVY



Listen to **REAL STORIES**
being told by **REAL VOICES**.

No matter where life takes you,

KEEP BEING YOU.

Because HIV doesn't change who you are.

BIKTARVY® is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in certain adults. **BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.**

Ask your healthcare provider if BIKTARVY is right for you.

Person featured takes BIKTARVY and is compensated by Gilead.

Please see Important Facts about BIKTARVY, including important warnings, on the previous page and at [BIKTARVY.com](https://www.biktarvy.com).



PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEX ROSA FOR OUTSMART

Garden of Memories

Local architect **Michael Lee's** AIDS Memorial Garden has been four decades in the making.

By **DAVID BRASHER**

December 1 is World AIDS Day, an international observance dedicated to the memory of the millions of AIDS victims worldwide, to raise awareness of AIDS, and to remind everyone that the fight is ongoing. There are concerts and quilts and ribbons and political speeches, all meant to bring awareness to the disease. And here in Houston, the Texas AIDS Memorial Garden is a piece of history that has stood the test of time to help honor those we have lost.

The Texas AIDS Memorial Garden was not started by the State of Texas, the City of Houston, or even an activist group. It was started in 1986 by Houston architect Michael Lee and his partner, Chuck. Lee, now 70, was not given a directive or any money to start the

garden. Instead, he did it to honor the memory of dozens of lost friends and acquaintances. “It was started because of the painful memories of talented gay men and friends dying of AIDS. Being the only survivor of all of my friends from my 20s and 30s, there was also an undertone of guilt. The construction of the garden was both personal therapy and a recognition of lost friends.”

Situated along the Third Ward’s historic Columbia Tap Trail, the garden is not conspicuous. Cyclists and pedestrians pass through it, not realizing they are treading on a piece of history. In fact, the Texas AIDS Memorial Garden is one of the oldest AIDS monuments in the US—even older than the San Francisco AIDS Memorial Grove. But if you pay attention, you will notice the lilies, irises, and a variety of native trees planted by Lee. You may even no-

tice a plaque on the ground with the words “1986 Texas Memorial – AIDS Victims,” a stark reminder of those who have been lost to the disease.

Creating the garden was not easy. The area was not maintained, and people regularly littered there. “At first, the task looked daunting; we removed truckloads of debris and trash,” says Lee. It took hours and hours of Lee’s time to get the garden to a good place. And once the garden started coming together, there was another issue. Some officials called the garden an “encroachment.” Harris County commissioners, City Council, and Houston METRO showed no interest in the garden, and the Union Pacific Railroad had stopped maintaining the property.

Lee had to deal with more red tape than



Scenes from the Texas AIDS Memorial Garden along the Columbia Tap Trail in Houston's Third Ward

he could handle. He even had to see the area destroyed by people as high up as a former mayor. “Trees and plants that could have been moved were bulldozed. I could only save a few plants.” Some of those plants had been there for years. Lee still mourns the loss of two 40-year-old bald cypress trees in the garden that were cut down by Center-Point. Each time the garden was threatened, it felt like the AIDS victims Lee was working so hard to memorialize were buried and forgotten again.

But Lee also notes a few hopeful developments. One of his proudest moments was seeing *OutSmart* publicize the dedication of the space by the Garden and Yard Society (GAYS) in 2004. He’s also happy to see how many people have stepped up to help. Together, he has worked with volunteer groups like Friends of Columbia Tap to preserve the garden. Ed Pettitt, a graduate research assistant and founder of Friends of Columbia Tap, says, “My goal, and the goal of Friends of Columbia Tap, is to make sure that we get this garden officially recognized and integrated into the trail.” Ed works tirelessly to help make that happen. He has even partnered with City Council member for District D, Carolyn Evans-Shabazz, who Pettitt says is trying to get the Department

“THE CITY OF HOUSTON NEEDS TO STEP UP AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY. FORTY YEARS IS A LONG TIME TO WAIT.”

—Memorial Garden creator Michael Lee

of Public Works, the mayor, and the Parks Department on the same page. The Department of Public Works owns the former railroad right-of-way, while the Parks Department helps manage the trail’s green spaces. Neither department has officially recognized the space yet, but they are making progress with the Department of Public Works to potentially grandfather the garden in as an official site. “We see this as a historic resource and an ecological resource that the City should be proud of and celebrate,” says Pettitt. “We want to make sure everyone appreciates this, because it is not just a Houston treasure but a national treasure.”

Something that Lee and Pettitt both hope to see in the future is an area in the garden with the names of AIDS victims memorial-

ized in bricks that will form a circular plaza. Planning for the plaza is ongoing as part of a trail-wide Columbia Tap Action Plan facilitated by the University of Houston Community Design Resource Center. With a little work, the trail and the garden could become a Houston destination.

Lee hopes the garden will continue to flourish as he gets older and unable to maintain the site as much as he wants. More than anything, Lee just wants to see the garden he has worked so hard on become a place of respect for AIDS victims. He hopes that people will come to the garden, reflect on their memories, and appreciate the beauty of nature. “I am 70 years old and do not have the energy to restore the garden by myself. I can only pray that the City will formally recognize the AIDS Memorial Garden and ensure that the names plaza will be constructed. The garden was started nearly 40 years ago. The City of Houston needs to step up and take responsibility for their past neglect. Forty years is a long time to wait. The names of AIDS victims should be memorialized.”

➡ For information on the Texas AIDS Memorial Garden, and to submit names for the memorial plaza, visit linktr.ee/aidsmemorialgarden. Donations can be sent to Friends of Columbia Tap at friendsofcolumbiatap.com.

Beauty and the Beast

Kim Petras brings her *Feed The Beast* World Tour to Houston.

By ZACH MCKENZIE | Photos by SANTIAGO FELIPE for GETTY IMAGES



Kim Petras has had one hell of a year! The trans artist made history with her Grammy Award win for Best Pop Duo/Group Performance with Sam Smith for “Unholy,” graced the cover of the popular *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue, and recently released her debut studio album *Feed The Beast*. The international pop sensation is heading to Texas and bringing her larger-than-life live show to Houston at 713 Music Hall on November 14 as part of her *Feed The Beast* World Tour.

Petras took time out of her busy tour schedule to give *OutSmart* readers a glimpse into her world and what to expect when her tour lands in the Bayou City:

OSM: The images you’ve posted from the *Feed The Beast* World Tour have looked so stunning, complete with medieval set pieces and outfits equipped with armor. What was your process when determining

the setlist, theme, and design of this tour?

Kim Petras: The tour is loosely based on the story of Dante’s *Inferno*. The show is kind of my manifesto as an artist and a performer, so the setlist includes music from the start of my career right through until now. It’s split into five sections that speak to me as an artist, which is why I wanted to release my album *Problematic* as a surprise. It’s definitely the most ambitious show I’ve done yet, and I’ve had so much fun putting it together!

The album is said to have been inspired by Eurodance hits that you grew up listening to. Is it particularly exciting that you are exposing audiences around the world to this genre of music?

Definitely! It’s really special to be able to share something that meant so much to me growing up. I loved listening to pop and Eurodance growing up, so I’m hoping that those listening to my music and coming to my shows experience it in the same way I did.

This is a no-skip album and features some deep lyricism against upbeat pop beats in a lot of cases. How do you describe the feeling of seeing your fans resonate with your music and lyrics so passionately, specifically while on tour?

It’s the most amazing experience in the world to have a crowd sing the lyrics you wrote back to you. It’s so special, especially for songs that mean a lot to me. I teared up singing “Minute” in Brooklyn a few nights ago because the crowd was singing with me. It really means everything!

Your impact on the music and pop culture landscape has been history-making, and you’ve done it all as an out trans artist. Although your impact as a performer is undeniably due to pure talent and relatable authenticity, how has being openly trans impacted your

career in ways that cisgender artists perhaps haven't experienced?

It's complicated. I've had to work harder to make sure I'm recognized for my music. It's why I chose to start as an independent artist on my own label. I always wanted my music to speak for itself as I had already spent so much of my life with people only being interested in my identity. I'm proud of who I am, and I always try to remember those that came before me and paved the way for me, but it's not all I am. I'm an artist and a songwriter, and there are so many other talented trans people out there and we're all individuals. There's so much that makes up who we are.

You recently introduced us to Hans. Can you tell me a little about him and what role he plays in the tour?

He's a Bi, Dom Top. He's a Libra... I'm kidding. I don't want to give too much away, but Hans makes an appearance during the

show and I kind of dedicate a song to him. I had so much fun creating him, but I wish I could have kept the silicone body suit for Halloween!

Houston is lucky to have so many incredible artists stop here while on tour. Is there anything you're particularly looking forward to experiencing while you're here?

I'm most excited about seeing my fans. I haven't toured in Houston since 2019 when I was there for The Clarity Tour, and so much has happened since then. I can't wait to give my Houston fans a show that's even bigger and better than before!

What is your message to your LGBTQ Houston fans who view you as a role model and beacon of hope while living in Texas—a state that is not always the most uplifting of the LGBTQ community?

With everything going on, it felt important to come to Texas and create a safe space—even if it's for only one night—where people could

be completely themselves. It's so important to be proud of who you are and to not let anyone tell you that you can't be who you want to be. I wouldn't be here if I believed the people who told me that being myself would stop me from achieving my goals. And if I can do it, you can too!

After a summer of artists embracing the theme of career "eras" while on tour, I'm curious what this moment in your career represents for you right now.

It's definitely a moment of growth for me. The past year has been life changing and I'm so thankful to the fans for making it happen. I'm so happy being on tour and seeing everyone. I can't wait to go to Europe next year, and there are so many more exciting things to come.

WHAT: Kim Petras' *Feed The Beast* World Tour

WHEN: November 14

WHERE: 713 Music Hall

Info: posthtx.com/music

"THE SHOW IS KIND OF MY MANIFESTO AS AN ARTIST AND A PERFORMER."

—Kim Petras





COURTESY

A New Stage of Life

Kenn McLaughlin closes out his tenure at Stages Houston with *Switzerland*.

By ZACH MCKENZIE

Seated in a corner on the third row in an intimate theater at Stages Houston, artistic director Kenn McLaughlin smiles from ear to ear as he watches Kelley Peters sing her rendition of a song by the titular character in *Always...Patsy Cline*.

Peters sings directly to McLaughlin, who directed the beloved musical, blowing a kiss before the song ends. Throughout the performance, McLaughlin gazes adoringly toward the stage, laughs along with the crowd, and claps after each number. The steadfast leader, who recently announced his retirement, explains that the power of art is what will lead him into the next chapter of his life.

Having directed more than 30 productions at Stages over the course of his storied career, McLaughlin finds himself celebrating the success of his latest work, *Switzerland*, which is on The Gordy stage until November 12.

"Sally [Edmundson] was in the very first production I ever directed and she was on the search committee that hired me," he explains of the play's female lead. "She's been a part of my whole journey at Stages, and to be at a space where she and I, as artists, are still making new discoveries reminds me that this has been an incredible journey."

His current staged production may be McLaughlin's final public love letter as artistic director, but it's the memories made behind the scenes that he will take with him beyond his time at Stages. He recalls the time he noticed a transgender lighting designer at work during a rehearsal. "I just became so aware of her craft as she created this beautiful light cue for the opening of the show," he says, "and I became aware of just how incredible it's been to be a part of this story, to use whatever I could to impact it and to be on this team of artists who are always reaching."

Although *Switzerland* holds a symbolically special place in his heart, given it's the final show he will helm as artistic director, McLaughlin explains that choosing a favorite production that he's directed throughout his time at Stages is impossible. "The standouts in my heart are the ones where I challenged myself artistically and where I was able to push myself past where I thought we should be as an organization," he says. *Auntie Mame* and *Mack and Mabel* are among the shows he looks back on fondly, while *Road Show*, with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and a book by John Weidman, was a particularly interesting experience. "I really believed in that show that has been slaughtered by the critics. This

is a brilliant piece of literature with a gay love story at the center of it," he says. "I was able to really explore who I was artistically through *Road Show*."

Soon, McLaughlin's retirement will be official, and he and his partner of more than three decades will move to Ireland. As moving day nears, the creative leader is beginning to reflect on his time in Bayou City. "Houston is a city of possibility. It really has always felt that way to me. What's interesting for me to think about, at this point in my career, is that Houston is a theater town that is only just beginning to realize its potential," he asserts. "I think it's aspirational and joyful. I love the queer community in Houston. It's a really joyful community and I've always felt very welcomed and supported by it."

The city of Houston may have his undying affection, but Stages has McLaughlin's heart. "I am a much better human being for having worked with the people at Stages," he says. "There is a sense of artistic daring that sits inside of all of us here. We care deeply about what it is that we do and about making something that has challenged us creatively. To think about how to do that for our community, with the resources that we

have, perfectly frames up the level of desire and artistic creative passion at Stages that has really opened up my mind.”

Reflecting on how far Stages has come since its early days, having survived a number of natural disasters, a pandemic, and various other challenges, McLaughlin credits the grit of his team and the creativity they brought to Stages through some tough times. “We [as a society] set up these measures of success with spectacle and money, and all these things aren’t necessarily connecting us, changing our hearts, or transforming our lives. Stages has always been the kind of organization that has had to operate in that space, certainly for a long period of time. That has allowed me to be more creative than I ever dreamed I needed to be and push those limits.”

Hoping to have left a legacy of kindness behind, McLaughlin looks forward to stepping back and letting a new generation of leadership take the reins and lead Stages into the future. “These people will be part of my life forever. This is my family. But it’s somebody else’s turn and it’s time for me to take a different space in the larger circle we’ve all created together,” he says. “There’s never a perfect time to do anything. You just

have to trust.”

As for his team and the future patrons of Stages, McLaughlin shares his excitement about what’s to come for the organization, encouraging everyone to embrace the unknown. “This set of circumstances that I have in front of me right now is new and unfamiliar and scary. But I ask myself, ‘Where’s its beauty? Where’s the potential? Where’s the opportunity?’ That’s my wish for a creative space in general. It’s a creative, living thing, and it

should grow,” he says. McLaughlin pauses before saying, “So, what is the next chapter for this theater? What is the next part of the story? That’s really exciting to think about. It’s really exciting to turn to new pages and they’re blank. Anybody can write in them.”

What: *Switzerland*

When: Thru November 12

Where: Stages, 800 Rosine St.

Info: stageshouston.com



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MELISSA TAYLOR

Sally Edmundson and Ian James star in *Switzerland*.

SEEING CLIENTS IN-PERSON OR THROUGH HIPAA COMPLIANT CONFERENCING SESSIONS

**Denis “Woodja”
Flanigan, Ph. D.**
Licensed psychologist

Psychotherapy, Career Counseling
denisflanigan@houston-psychologist.com

Specializing in individuals,
couples, & family relational
issues to regain your
direction, sense of meaning,
and your happiness.

Voted
**BEST MALE MENTAL
HEALTH THERAPIST**
2011 - 2022 OutSmart Readers' Choice Awards



HELPING YOU REACH YOUR FULL POTENTIAL!

2211 Norfolk St., Suite 206, Houston, TX 77098 | 713-589-9804

www.Houston-Psychologist.com




THERE IS SNOW TIME LIKE THE HOLIDAYS!



dessertgallery.com
T: 713.522.9999

 @dessertgallerybakery
 @dessertgallery

Galveston ISLAND



1513 20th Street
1/1 644sf \$285,000

JUST LISTED



2217 Avenue N
3/1/1 1,848sf \$399,500

JUST LISTED



2521 Avenue L
1/1 504sf \$350,000

FULL LOT



319 Barracuda Avenue
3/2/2 2,472sf \$529,500

JUST LISTED



21 Cozumel Circle
4/2/2 1,918sf \$375,000

JUST LISTED



EXPERT PLUMBING SERVICES FOR YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS

Metro Plumbing is Here to Help!



VETERAN OWNED
RMP 42046



BEST PLUMBING COMPANY

RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL PLUMBING & BACKFLOW

CALL US TODAY!
346.955.4939
Metroplumbing.us



Victor Lopez

Rocky Hollub

Harris County is Ground Zero for **DWI DEATHS.**

We want you to get home and be able to celebrate with your loved ones this season.



Don't become a statistic. DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE.

OFFICE OF DISTRICT ATTORNEY
HARRIS COUNTY, TX



KIM OGG

HARRISCOUNTYDA.COM

An Evening with Rita Moreno

The legendary performer heads to Houston for a Miller Outdoor Theatre fundraising gala.

By SAM BYRD



At 91 years old, Rita Moreno is just as captivating as she was when she first joined the illustrious and select group of EGOT performers—those who

have won Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony awards. Moreno also earned a Peabody award, which places her among the most rarefied few PEGOT winners.

Supporters of Miller Outdoor Theatre can see Moreno up-front, in the center, and down-to-earth accessible as the special guest at the nonprofit theater's annual fundraising gala this month.

Moreno will appear on November 16 at River Oaks Country Club for a conversation with Houston's favorite interviewer, Ernie Manouse. She will share some of her life experiences while also raising money for one of Houston's most iconic performance venues.

"It ends up being extremely funny because I tell great stories," Moreno says. "What I'm hoping that the audience will get from it is that here's this 91-year-old person who's still going pretty strong and is filled with happiness and positive things. I hope they can understand that it's entirely possible to age and still enjoy life. It depends on how you decide to view your life, and I have made a choice to be one of the happiest people."

For Moreno, the decision to support Miller Outdoor Theatre was a no-brainer. Funds raised from the gala will contribute to the current \$12.5 capital campaign underway to provide renovations and improvements that will greet future Miller visitors, providing the next generation of theatergoers with a modern and state-of-the-art theater experience.

Since 1923, Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park has been one of Houston's most beloved cultural treasures, a gathering place for the community and the site of thousands of memorable free performances. This is the largest "always free" program of its kind in the country. The outdoor venue for the performing arts, set on over 7 acres, has provided Houstonians and visitors with the opportunity to enjoy professional entertainment from a diverse array of genres including music, dance, theater, and film. Performances are always



family-friendly, and guests can sit in the covered seating area or on the grassy hillside.

"I think what's wonderful about the arts is that it makes every bit of use of the imagination," Moreno emphasizes. "Imagination is something that can be very joyous. It can be dark and sad, too, but mostly it's just joyous."

That's something that makes Houston's theater atop the Hill one of the city's best spots to visit. It provides a venue for performing-arts groups to explore the complexity of human emotions and experience—all at a price that can't be beat. So who better to help raise funds for the venue than one of the nation's most versatile stars?

Adept at portraying all types of characters—anything from a Latina living the American dream in *West Side Story* to Googie Gomez in the 1975 Terrence McNally musical and cult classic *The Ritz*—Moreno always knew

how to entertain. It's something that came naturally to her.

"I was one of those little girls who loved to dance to music. I used to dance for Grandpa. He would put on a record, and I would wiggle my tushy and dance around the room in Puerto Rico," she remembers. "It was obvious that performing was what I was going to do in life. I loved it. I loved the attention. I still love the attention, and any performer who lies about that is full of bullshit."

Never were truer words spoken, and this star has the chops to back up her claim. Moreno is a true Hollywood and Broadway legend whose 80-year career began with her Broadway debut at age 13. She dazzled on Broadway and London's West End, appeared in more than 40 feature films, and starred in countless television shows. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President George W. Bush and the National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama.

Moreno has also been a lifelong ally to the LGBTQ community, even if she didn't recognize it when she was young.

"I had a gay friend when I was 12 years old. I just didn't know he was gay at the time. We were the best girlfriends in the world," she recalls. "We just had the best time, and it never occurred to me that anything was different about him. It was perfect."

From *West Side Story*'s Anita to the tell-it-like-it-is special guest for Miller Outdoor Theatre's upcoming gala, the truth-telling Moreno will always captivate her audiences. It's what she was born to do.



To secure a table or ticket for the gala, contact Emily Gordon at gala@milleroutdoortheatre.com. Follow Miller Outdoor Theatre's future plans and their capital campaign at milleroutdoortheatre.com/improving-the-audience-experience-at-miller-outdoor-theatre.

WHAT: An Evening with Rita Moreno

WHEN: November 16

WHERE: River Oaks Country Club

Info: email gala@milleroutdoortheatre.com

FOUNTAINS & STATUARY



Finalist
BEST
GARDENING/
NURSERY
SUPPLY



ASK ABOUT
Metal Carports
Gazebos & Yard
Buildings

OPEN 7 DAYS

- Disappearing Fountains
- Glazed Urns
- Fountains
- Birdbaths
- Decorative Precast Rock Waterfalls
- Fiberglass Garden Ponds
- Bowls
- Tables & Benches
- Pumps & Tubing
- Planters
- Pedestals
- Flower Pots
- Fountain Tops
- Religious Statues
- Concrete Animals, Fish, Birds & Reptiles
- Talavera Style Mexican Pottery
- Various Sized Stepping Stones

713.957.3672

Just Outside the 610 Loop in Houston!
11804 Hempstead Rd., Houston, TX 77092
fountainsandstatuary@yahoo.com

www.FountainsAndStatuary.com



GONZALEZ OLIVIERI LLC
IMMIGRATION LAW FIRM, HOUSTON, TEXAS

SERVING THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

- Same Sex Visa Petitions
- Residency
- Naturalization
- Immigration Courts
- Circuit Courts Representation
- U.S. Supreme Court Representation
- And Now Accidents with Attorney Carlos Leon!

- RAED GONZALEZ, JD LL.M.

**Best
Immigration
Attorney**



GonzalezOlivieriLLC.com
EvitaLaDeportacion.com

(713) 481-3040

9920 Gulf Freeway, Suite 100,
Houston, TX. 77034



Voted one of the **Best Female Eye Doctor**
Outsmart Readers' Choice Awards 2023



**DR. JULIET
FARMER**
THERAPEUTIC
OPTOMETRIST

Boutique
EYE CARE

1806 A. Westheimer Rd.
Houston, TX 77098
713.528.2010

Schedule online at
BOUTIQUEEYECARE.COM



Happy
**THANKS-
GIVING!**
We Are Family -
Some Families
are just
a little more
FABULOUS!



deborah lawson

Attorney at Law p.l.l.c.

THANKS FOR VOTING FOR ME...

P.O. Box 940082
Houston, TX 77094

713.478.2618
deborah@lawsonlegal.net



Best Family
Attorney
Best Probate
Attorney

Live your legacy. In real time. No apologies. No regrets.

Curtain Call

Miller Outdoor Theatre's Cissy Segall Davis announces her retirement.

By SAM BYRD



One of Houston's hardest-working women is about to take her final bow. While she usually tries to remain behind the scenes, her presence has been a vital part of the Houston arts scene for decades. Cissy Segall Davis, the one-woman ringmaster of the city's cherished Miller Outdoor Theatre, is lowering the curtain on her life of service and retiring this year.

"I've been doing this for so long that it's hard to wrap my brain around the idea that on January 1 this will no longer be my job. It's bittersweet. I have loved, loved, loved being able to do this work," Davis says. "My relationship with Miller is long. Miller has been part of my life for so many years, and growing the programming and organization in really remarkable ways has been such a gift for me. I've loved every minute of it."

Helming the City of Houston's gift to the public has not been easy work, but she's made it look effortless throughout the years, and she wants to make sure that "The Hill" in Hermann Park is left in good hands for the next generation.

"It's important for me to pass the torch and work closely with the next managing director to set them up for success," she remarks. "When I hand it off, I want to know that I'm handing it off to someone who's going to care about it as much as I do."

Miller Outdoor Theatre has been part of Houston's DNA for almost a century, and so many people have fond memories of summer evenings on The Hill. It's part of what makes Houston unique.

Segall Davis became managing director of the Miller Theatre Advisory Board in December 2008. It seems this role might have been written in the stars, as she jokes about her birth announcement being a pink theater ticket. While her parents might not have known the career path their daughter would embark on, Davis did indeed make her mark on the stage.

As a Senior Fellow of the American

Leadership Forum, Davis serves on the board of Texans for the Arts and was named by *Houston Woman* magazine as one of Houston's 50 Most Influential Women of 2012. In 2022, Theatre Under The Stars honored her with the Shirley Stein Outstanding Champion in the Arts and Education Award. She has served on the boards of other nonprofit organizations such as the Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Texas Institute for Arts in Education, and Congregation Beth Israel.

For nearly 15 years, she has managed Miller's day-to-day operations, overseeing a grants program for Houston's performing-arts and community organizations and presenting an annual season of more than 120 culturally diverse performances, all presented free of charge to the public. Under her guidance, the free programming has grown into the largest of its kind in the US.



"This really was a dream come true for me," says Davis, who has been involved in the arts since 1972. "Miller Outdoor Theatre has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember—first as a camp counselor gleefully leading kids up and down the famous Miller Hill singing 'The hills are alive with the sound of music,' then professionally during my 20 years with Theatre Under The Stars, then later as a client when I ran my own PR firm, and now as Miller's managing director," she explains.

Davis recalls many incredible performances over the years, but none more cherished than when she secured Tommy Tune to perform. "He is an incredible performer and storyteller, a former Houstonian, and a 10-time Tony winner," she notes. "To be able to bring him to Miller to share his phenomenal talent with everyone, regardless of their ability to pay, filled my heart with joy. And he did not disappoint!"

The always-wise leader knows that a part of her heart will forever remain with Miller.

"It is not easy to walk away from a job that has been career-defining, and one that I have absolutely loved and that has provided me the opportunity to follow my passion every day. But knowing when to exit is part of show business. It's time to pass the torch and offer someone else the chance to bring a new perspective and make an impact on this program," she says. "Miller Outdoor Theatre is one of Houston's best amenities. It is beloved and treasured. It has been an honor to work for so many years with the Miller Theatre Advisory Board, our staff, the many performing-arts and cultural organizations that perform here, and the remarkable Miller crew."

Davis plans to continue working on a part-time basis with Miller Theatre's capital campaign. "The projects will make such a difference to our audiences, and I really want to see the campaign and projects through to completion," Davis adds.

It will be another feather in her cap as Houstonians thank her for the fond memories made possible by her lifetime of service to the community.



Sandra Bernhard Stands with Texas

Her gutsy 3-stop tour will confront vital issues and right-wing politics head-on.

By SAM BYRD | Photo by BRIAN ZIEGLER

Sandra Bernhard is making a stand. Unabashed and unafraid, the performer, actress, and compelling storyteller has been an unrelenting part of the public lexicon for a lifetime. Now, she's taking her intestinal fortitude on a Texas tour with Sandyland

Presents: "Stand With Texas." The brunette bombshell with a wise mouth to match her larger-than-life personality will take the stage at The Heights Theater on December 4.

Houston has not let this gem of a truth teller go unnoticed. Be it on-screen with *American Horror Story* or *POSE*, on the radio with *Sandyland* on Sirius XM's Radio Andy Channel 102, or on stages across the globe, Bernhard has been one of the most exhilarating performers for the past five decades.

Now, she's ready to share, educate, and invigorate residents of the great state of Texas on some important issues. To do that,

Bernhard is joining forces with local organizations, politicians, drag artists, musicians, and other surprise guests to raise awareness on student education, LGBTQ, and abortion rights in an effort to create change.

Noise for Now is also participating with Bernhard for this tour. That national initiative enables artists and entertainers to connect with and financially support grassroots organizations that work in the field of reproductive justice, including abortion access. And the Resource Center is one of the nation's largest organizations providing a range of programs and services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, and other community members, and offers critical assistance to people living with HIV and AIDS and their families.

"Texas is one of those bellwether states where so much is going on. I'm a huge follower of everything Texas," Bernhard says of the Lone Star state. "There are a lot of people in Texas who are so brilliant and doing great work, so I'll be shining a little light on them as well as highlighting a few different issues."

The entertainer's three stops in Texas will be nothing short of a barn burner. While in Austin, she'll address women's reproductive rights and abortion. Her booking in Dallas will tackle LGBTQ issues. In Houston, she'll handle the hot potato of K-12 education.

"I love Texas. I love the culture, the food, the music, and the people. So when I see a government that is crushing their spirit, I want to step up," she adds. "Sandyland is my little world where everyone is welcomed and included, so I thought, why not come to Texas and give some love to my LGBTQ+ community? Why not fight for the abortion and healthcare rights of my sisters? Why not lend my voice to the educators who want to give students the vastest experience they can in the classroom?"

Along the way, Bernhard will add opening acts to her one-woman show to bring

**"I LOVE TEXAS. I LOVE
THE CULTURE, THE FOOD,
THE MUSIC, AND THE
PEOPLE. SO WHEN I SEE
A GOVERNMENT THAT IS
CRUSHING THEIR SPIRIT,
I WANT TO STEP UP.**

—Sandra Bernhard

together the people who care and want to make Texas an inclusive, progressive place to live.

"After my show, people will walk away with the thought of 'Why can't everybody be able to do what they need to do to survive in our society and our culture, whether it is related to race, gender, sexuality, or religion?'" she says.

Never one to back down from a challenge, Bernhard keeps her finger constantly on the pulse of what animates the country's collective consciousness—both socially and from a government's perspective, and even in a hyper-focused manner. She is surprisingly aware of local Texas politics.

"The next time Beto O'Rourke runs for something, get him elected. Make sure Jasmine Crockett stays in office. Keep electing

brilliant young women of color and Latino women," she offers. "Flip the switch. Be engaged in politics in any way you possibly can."

Bernhard also has her finger on the proverbial trigger when it comes to another hot topic.

"The one thing we're not addressing in this tour is gun control, the change in consciousness about guns, and gun violence," she notes. "The level of discourse and anger and how things can turn violent so quickly—where does that stem from? And how do we educate our children to find a different way of communicating and dealing with frustration and fear?"

The comedienne-turned-activist also detailed that her Texas tour is partially geared to spark community involvement.

"We can maybe change the minds of the people and work toward the goal of turning a state like Texas blue so that we don't have to fight these mindsets," she summarizes. "Once you've established a certain consciousness amongst political leaders, I think it makes it a lot easier for everybody to live their day-to-day lives."

▶ Sandra Bernhard performs at 8 p.m. on December 4 at the Heights Theater, 339 W. 19th. For tickets or information, visit sandraberhard.com. \$59–\$150.

WESTSIDE KIA

Price. Service. Selection.

FIND IT ALL AT WESTSIDE KIA!

Shop our great selection of new Kia SUV, Crossover, Sedan, Hybrid & Electric models in stock with more arriving daily!



WestsideKia.com | 23005 Katy Freeway, Katy 281-819-0530

PLAN WISELY. YOU WON'T GET A DO-OVER.

A successful retirement in the future can often depend on having a solid plan now. If your money isn't working as hard as you are, it may be time to act—there are no do-overs in retirement planning. Now is the time to consider developing a strategy that can help you work toward your financial goals. I specialize in providing comprehensive, objective financial guidance with the goal of maximizing every remaining moment of the retirement countdown.

Call today to learn more or to schedule a consultation.



Rick Dickson, CFP®, MBA
Galene Financial
520 Post Oak Blvd Ste 780
Houston, TX 77027
(713) 489-4322 Office
(713) 489-3679 Fax
rdickson@galenefinancial.com
www.galenefinancial.com

GALENE
FINANCIAL



Voted Best
Financial
Planner/Advisor

Securities and advisory services offered through LIT Financial Member FINRA/SIPC

COVERAGE TO LIVE THE LIFE YOU WANT



Voted
the BEST Male
Insurance Agent



- Automobile insurance
- Business or Commercial
- Call to see if you can save

Lane Lewis

Your Local Agent
2200 North Loop W Ste 136
Houston, TX 77018
LLewis@FarmersAgent.com

Call 713.688.8669 today!
For Home, Auto, Life and Business.



Restrictions apply. Discounts may vary. Not available in all states. See your agent for details. Insurance is underwritten by Farmers Insurance Exchange and other affiliated insurance companies. Visit farmers.com for a complete listing of companies. Not all insurers are authorized to provide insurance in all states. Coverage is not available in all states.



OCTAVIO BARRIOS, MD LUCIA MANGLE, MPAS, PA-C

RENAISSANCE FAMILY CLINIC

ADULT PRIMARY CARE

MOST INSURANCES ACCEPTED!

517 West Gray St. • 713.942.7546

www.doctorbarrios.com

By appointment!

Same day available
for acute illness



Ask us about PrEP Today!

- HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis
- Doxy-PEP
- ADHD Treatment
- Testosterone Hormone Replacement Therapy

Best Physician Finalist Octavio Barrios, 2013-2023

Pet Emergencies Happen...



f /VERGI247
i /VERGI247



**That's Why You Can
Always Count On Us!**

- Certified Doctors and Staff
- Advanced Training in Emergency Medicine
- Critical and Urgent Care
- State-of-the-Art Equipment
- On-Site Surgical Center
- In-House Lab & Pharmacy
- Board Certified in Internal Medicine



**24 HOUR EMERGENCY &
CRITICAL CARE HOSPITAL**
WE SAVE LIVES!

Call the VERGI Pet Emergency Hotline at (713) 932-9589
Veterinary Emergency Room Group on I-10 @ Campbell Road

8921 Katy Freeway • Houston, Texas 77024

For helpful tips & other emergency information visit www.VERGI247.com



THEN & NOW

Hard Knox Life

The glamorous, and regular, life of **Chloe Knox**.

By **SAM BYRD**

Photo by **SEFERINO GARCIA**

Contrary to the old saying, “the fourth time’s the charm” for Chloe Knox (né David Sarty). That’s how many times it took her to win Miss Gay Texas. The stunning lip-syncer and gorgeous beauty is the latest Houston drag artist to bring the crown home to Houston. While she has captivated *OutSmart* audiences for years, she is an ingenue who has paved her own path to success.

Knox was first featured in this magazine as Wiggling Out’s premiere interview, and she described the good, the bad, and the in-between that goes into being a performer. Since then, she’s taken the pageant world by storm.

“Susan Lucci was definitely my moniker for a little bit during my first couple of years competing in pageants,” she says, referencing how she came *this* close to winning the pageant, only to see someone else usurp the title. The statuesque blonde secured podium finishes but barely missed out on the gold finish—at least for the first couple of tries.

But as another old saying goes, if at first you don’t succeed, try and try again. Knox took that adage to heart, and she resiliently returned to the pageant system, each time with a more polished package and a competitive spirit.

“It was really cathartic each time I competed, because that was what I needed. I proved to myself that my top two or top three placements were not a fluke. I was able to go in and repeat my results instead of sliding back,” she explains.

Coming close but not winning the cigar did not deter the female illusionist, although it did sidetrack her for a moment. She took a self-administered break from drag, which allowed her the time to collect her thoughts and come



Chloe Knox, Miss Gay Texas America 2023

back even stronger.

“I took a break, and then I came back for my fourth attempt at Miss Gay Texas. I had unfinished business,” she comments. We’re glad she did.

“I’m very grateful that I was able to deliver my best. The math was on my side going into finals, because that’s really what it comes down to. You can put out your best, and then it’s up to the judges,” she adds.



The result? A clear-minded Chloe and a Texas-sized crown atop her head. And she still has not yet reached the age of 30. Just imagine what the future has in store for this boisterous beauty with the world at her well-heeled feet.

So what does Miss Gay Texas do in her downtime? It turns out, she is just a normal person like the rest of us.

“I live my day-to-day life in my messy apartment with my cat and go to work at my office job. It’s just doing normal things like getting groceries, and I think that’s what most people’s experience is,” she says. “Then, if I want to do something fun and exciting, I drive up to the RV park where my parents are staying, spend the night, and hang out with them. I watch *South Park* with my brother and then take a nap on the couch. I do very mundane things, but those are the things that are really fun and that I really enjoy.”

You heard it here first, folks. When she’s not busy advocating for world peace, Miss Gay Texas naps on a couch in an RV park, which is probably the most relatable comment to ever cross a pageant winner’s lips.



Keep up with *Chloe Knox* on Instagram @chloeeeknox.



**A Trusted Name
Backed By
Unrivalled
Experience**



RICHARD RAY
AT DOUGLAS ELLIMAN
REAL ESTATE

Richard Ray, MCNE
Top Producer
M 713.416.3931
O 281.652.5588
richard.ray@elliman.com

DouglasElliman
REAL ESTATE
elliman.com

2800 KIRBY DRIVE, SUITE A-206, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77098. 281.652.5588. ©2023 DOUGLAS ELLIMAN REAL ESTATE. EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY. 

Matt Trietsch
COUNSELING & PSYCHOTHERAPY

**in person & online
counseling for adults**

- trauma, shame, spirituality
- depression, anxiety, grief/loss
- career, relationships
- life transitions, coming out




 512.591.8510
5900 Memorial Dr., # 218
Houston, TX 77007
supervised by Jeanene Smith, LPC-S, LMFT-S

matt-trietsch.com

**Love Yourself
Know Your Status**



Free HIV/STI testing and PrEP services available.

aihouston.org

ALLIES
in hope

**Introducing
Positive Living Houston!**

Are you part of the LGBTQ+ community,
age 50+ and living with HIV?



At Positive Living Houston, we're not
just about surviving, we're about thriving!

+SOCIALIZE: Build lifelong friendships, share
experiences with a community that truly understands.

+EDUCATE: Discover resources with health and
wellness information for you.

+NAVIGATE: With friends guiding each other, every
step becomes a little easier.

Join us and embrace
a brighter, positive tomorrow.

positivelivinghouston.org
positivelivinghouston@gmail.com



A Rainbow on the Prairie

R. Lee Ingalls shares his next installment of the Ingalls family chronicles.

By DAVID CLARKE

Before Alison Arngrim became a gay icon for her portrayal of Nellie Oleson on TV's *Little House on the Prairie* series, ranked the number one female villain in TV history by *Vanity Fair*, a rainbow beamed its way across the Ingalls family.

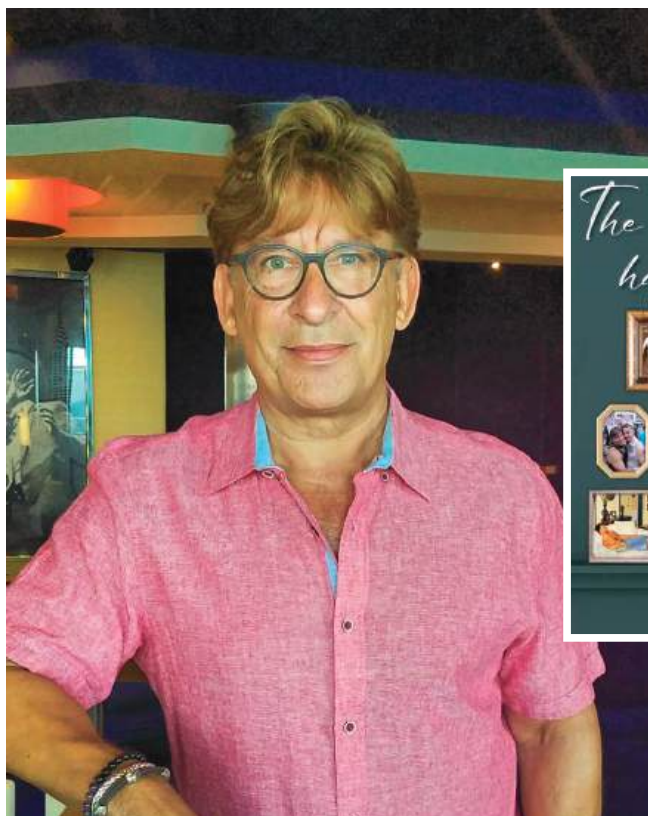
Author R. Lee Ingalls is continuing in the footsteps of his great-grandfather's cousin, Laura Ingalls Wilder. He recently released his second book, *The Prairie Has a Rainbow*, where he draws upon his personal memories of growing up to be an average American gay man who was born in the mid-1950s and was an adult during the AIDS crisis of the 1980s.

"I always felt, all my life, that at some point someone in our family would write additional stories about our family," says Ingalls. "Once I got into my forties and nobody was doing that, I thought, 'Okay, so it might have to be me.'"

His readers may be surprised to discover that his book about his parents' lives wasn't where his writing journey began. "My first thought was to write my own story," he admits. "As I began writing my story, I realized I should really write my parents' book first, which is how I got to that."

Fans of the writing of Laura Ingalls Wilder will find a similar storytelling style in *The Prairie Has a Rainbow*. "It takes an average American experience and shares the details of the impact of national and international events on a normal family," explains Ingalls. Yet, the big difference is that we get this installment of the Ingalls family chronicles through the lens of growing up gay during a time when it was exceptionally hard to be gay.

As audiences read *The Prairie Has a Rainbow*, they will encounter watershed moments that hold historical significance for the author and his experiences. "In my generation, there was no social media, there was no internet, and parents and adults did absolutely control what was put in front of us and what we could see and know about. So I was 19 before I realized that the gay community existed. In the book I talk about how I found that to be," says Ingalls. "Then, absolutely, you can't be a man of my generation and not talk about AIDS. I talk about my three long-term boyfriends (two of whom tested positive during our relationships) and the impact that AIDS had on our relationships. When one partner is positive and one is



Author R. Lee Ingalls, whose great-grandfather's cousin wrote the *Little House on the Prairie* book series.

not, it definitely shakes the foundations of your relationship."

The Prairie Has a Rainbow also includes Ingalls' memorable experience at the 1998 Gay Games in Amsterdam. "I competed in the two dance genres and took first place in both," he says. "While getting ready for the Gay Games, we did not have any exposure to any other competitors. We had no idea what our competition looked like at all. Then to get over there and take two gold medals was just overwhelming."

The narratives within the *Little House on the Prairie* novels and their adaptations for film, TV, and the stage are often recognized as being decidedly conservative, which could seem to complicate adding a gay narrative to this well-known family catalog. "Some of the foundations of Laura's books were honesty, integrity, and doing the right thing when given the opportunity to do that. Adding the gay element does not change any of that," says Ingalls. "I wanted to illustrate that in my book. It's still honesty, integrity, and doing the right thing

that are at the forefront of what our family is all about. It doesn't matter if you're gay or not."

In today's current political climate, though, many queer coming-of-age narratives are being hastily removed from libraries across the country. "I think that will impact my book—simply because it has a gay theme, despite nothing in it being explicit," Ingalls admits. "Intimacy should be part of everybody's story, and I think that I share mine in a respectful manner for all audiences. But at the same time, I let people know that those relationships do exist, so I know that I'm going to experience that. I look forward to having the conversations with those people that would try to debate that issue with me."

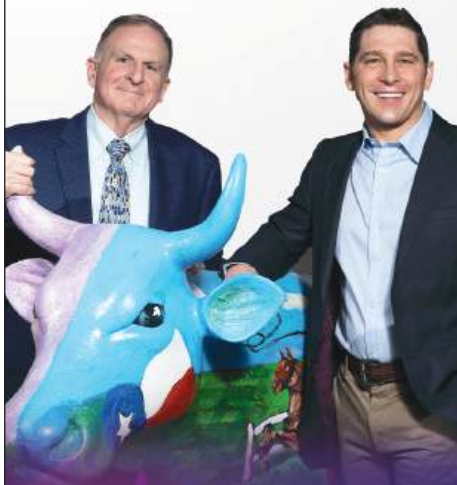
➡ R. Lee Ingalls' *The Prairie Has a Rainbow* is available on Amazon and other outlets. Follow R. Lee Ingalls on Instagram at both @ThePrairieHasARainbow and @IngallsOnThePrairie. For more information, visit ingallsontheprairie.com.

PREDICTABLE

PASSIVE INCOME

... AND THAT'S NO BULL.

- SECURED BY REAL ESTATE
- HISTORICAL RETURNS OF 10.47% PER YEAR
- \$300K+ CURRENTLY BEING PAID OUT EACH MONTH



JACK BERGER
VP OF INVESTOR
RELATIONS

DOUG SMITH
FOUNDER
AND CEO



Hawthorne Capital

REQUEST A FREE PHONE CONSULTATION AT:
HAWTHORNECAPITAL.COM



NOT AN OFFER FOR THE SALE OF SECURITIES. SECURITIES ARE ONLY OFFERED AND SOLD PURSUANT TO APPLICABLE SECURITIES LAWS. HISTORICAL PERFORMANCE IS NOT INDICATIVE OF FUTURE RESULTS. INVESTMENT INVOLVES THE RISK OF LOSS.

finding a
home for
every/one.



**DEBBIE
LEVINE**

Top Producer 2002-2022

713.870.4645

Debbie.Levine@sir.com



Martha
Turner

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

SCHWARTZ IMMIGRATION LAW PLLC

EXPERIENCE MATTERS!

Ana Maria Schwartz She/Her/Hers
Attorney at Law
Schwartz Immigration Law, PLLC



Principal Office:
2417 Dunlavy St.
Houston, TX 77006
(713) 337-5270

Austin Office:
106 E. 6th St., Suite 900-123
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 322-5270



**Best Female
Immigration Attorney**



Max Adrian's fiber-art installation RIPSTOP, at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft through January.

Searching for Queer Utopia

Max Adrian's new exhibit is a hopeful search for the future.

By OLIVIA FLORES ALVAREZ | Photo by KATY ANDERSON

Swiss fiber artist Max Adrian explores the ideas of queer identity and utopia in his solo exhibit RIPSTOP, currently on display at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (HCCC).

We spoke with Sarah Darro, curator and exhibitions director for HCCC, who worked with Adrian for more than a year mounting the show. She told us she was first attracted to the out artist because of his intricate, impeccable creations.

"I was attracted primarily by the rigorous craftsmanship and conceptual nature of the work. The work is so smart," she says. "It's about the constant state of becoming that's

involved in queer identity formation, how we're constantly evolving, becoming ourselves, and always trying things on."

RIPSTOP is a mid-career survey showing about a decade of work. Much of it is based on Adrian's examination of José Esteban Muñoz's book *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*.

"This is a body of work about Max's vision about what queer utopia could look like, so I think it is important that he's bringing his own experience and identity to it," says Darro. "The premise is that utopias are always on the horizon; you're never quite there yet. There's a perpetual forward motion, always moving toward something."

Adrian, who uses the pronouns he and they, has a background in soft-sculptural, quilting, puppetry, drag, and fetish wear. While much of his work is overtly related to queer identity, it also explores other topics including climate change and performance.

"I don't think this work needs to be presented in a specific framework about queerness," Darro says. "At the same time, I think it brings a lot to the table when you include that. When we're showing work about identity, it's a really dynamic collaboration between a curator and an artist. I don't think that the curator and the artist need to share the same background or preferences. My having a different background than the →



2023 READERS' Choice Smart
GAYEST GREATEST
WINNER
CHOICE AWARD
BEST REALTOR

Helping everyone find their place in the world.

713-253-8609
 @DavidSellsHouston.RE
 david@bayoucitypropertygroup.com

DAVID BATAGOWER
BROKER ASSOCIATE
COMPASS

THE
DRIP BAR
 HOUSTON HEIGHTS

An IV Vitamin Drip Experience

COMING SOON



2505 W. 11th Street
 Suite 400
 Houston, TX 77008
 (713) 575-2504

Feed your Cells. Fuel your Life.



Texas Renaissance Festival

October 7th through November 26th
 Saturdays, Sundays, and Thanksgiving Friday

TexRenFest.com



Scan the QR Code for More Information and to Purchase Tickets.

Your Adventure Awaits

artist can sometimes bring out something interesting in a show. My being a good listener and asking the right questions is what helps to make a good show. Especially when we're working on a solo exhibition, we work in a collaborative way and we don't both have to have the same starting point."

The exhibit includes several inflatable sculptures and patchwork quilt-like textiles. When visitors step into the gallery, motion sensors trigger airflow that fills the sculptures, causing them to grow and move.

"They inflate in front of the visitor and perform for them," Darro says. "They stay on for a while and then they eventually wilt and fall."

The sculptures seemingly engage with the viewer, interacting with them. "As soon as you walk in, you're also on the stage. *You're* performing, too. It's really spectacular."

Adrian also includes several fiber creations, some of which evoke the AIDS Memorial Quilt.

"There's one quilt in the exhibition that's made of pieces of underwear, hot pants, and donation elements from former lovers, and it's called 'Specimens of a Queer Quilt.' I think those kinds of intimate de-



COURTESY OF MAX ADRIAN

Swiss artist Max Adrian

tails are important for his work and telling his story and his experience."

Adrian and Darro very purposefully worked on the exhibit's layout. "It's important to consider how you want people to feel when they walk in. The first thing that happens when you walk into the show is that five 8-foot creatures perk up and move. That was a very

intentional move. I think something really beautiful and interesting can happen. RIPSTOP, the title, was also really intentional. It's like a double command, almost like a director telling you 'Rip. Stop. Action. Cut.' Max and I have been talking about what we hope people get out of this work," Darro says. "Everybody brings a different experience and perception to the show, of course. As a curator, I want people to engage with the art. I want people to stop and do a close look and have an experience that is different from the rest of their day, where they are constantly scrolling and being busy thinking about what's next. The show [will hopefully] make people stop and think deeper or move slower, maybe. All of these works are incredibly alluring and they draw you in. We want you to be drawn in and inspired. We want to think about how you are performing identity every day, and how you are contributing to a more equitable, safer, more utopian space that we share. It's a really hopeful show."

WHAT: Max Adrian: RIPSTOP

WHERE: Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main St.

WHEN: Through January 6, 2024

INFO: For info, call 713-529-4848 or visit crafthouston.org.

Tom Schwenk
Owner & Broker
713-857-2309

©2023 Coldwell Banker. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker and the Coldwell Banker logos are trademarks of Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. The Coldwell Banker® System is comprised of company owned offices which are owned by a subsidiary of Realty Brokerage Group LLC and franchised offices which are independently owned and operated. The Coldwell Banker System fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act.

OUT▼THERE

Photos by DALTON DEHART & CREW





OUTSMART'S 26TH ANNUAL GAYEST & GREATEST READERS' CHOICE AWARDS OCTOBER 18, 2023

Nearly 500 guests gathered at South Beach Houston for the 2023 Gayest & Greatest Readers' Choice Awards celebration, presented by Bayou City Smiles, Legacy Community Health, and Premier Wireless. Partygoers were treated to delicious gourmet bites from Kindred Kitchen and Dessert Gallery, with signature cocktails created by mixologist Chad Pigg. There were performances throughout the evening by Queen Persephone and Chloe Crawford Ross, and comedian Keisha Hunt had the audience in stitches with her comedy. Each year, OutSmart readers get the chance to vote for their favorites in a wide range of categories. This year, nearly 100,000 votes were cast for Houston's most prominent community leaders and entertainers, health and beauty providers, and restaurants and nightlife spots, among many others.



Thank you!
It's my honor
to serve our
community.

SERVICES AVAILABLE
SPORTS & DEEP TISSUE
THERAPEUTIC SWEDISH
MOBILITY PROGRAMS AND
PAIN MANAGEMENT

CONTACT
JOHN AARON
MESSAGE & WELLNESS
832-649-8422

or book online at
bit.ly/JAOMassage
LMT #033508
JOHNAARONONLINE.COM

**VOTED
BEST MALE
MESSAGE THERAPIST
AND BEST MALE
PERSONAL TRAINER!**

**OutSmart
MAGAZINE
GAYEST
GREATEST
WINNER**



Get assistance applying for SNAP

Houston Food Bank lends our support to the LGBTQ+ community for SNAP and other social service benefits

Get Started Today!

houston foodbank | houstonfoodbank.org/snapsupport



BOOKKEEPING & BEYOND LLC

YOUR BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SUPPORT TEAM

BKBY is a team of experienced bookkeepers. We provide full-charge bookkeeping services to small businesses, sole-proprietors, and individuals. Our combined years of experience and genuine desire to be of service, makes our team the perfect fit for small businesses that are seeking an outsourced solution for their bookkeeping needs.



"BKBY is so much more than a bookkeeping service."
—Deborah B.

"BKBY has handled all of our financial management for over five years."
—Dr. Penchas

"BKBY went above and beyond... as I have never seen a company do for a customer."
—The BL Family

"BKBY has saved me from an accounting nightmare!"
—Whitney K.

"BKBY provides top notch services."
—Will P.

"BKBY keeps everything running smoothly."
—Hollie M.

CALL TODAY! 832-234-2542 | info@bkby.org | www.bkby.org | 99 Detering St., Ste 106, Houston, TX 77007

OUT▼THERE

Photos by DALTON DEHART & CREW



KATY PRIDE CELEBRATION AT FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OCTOBER 14, 2023

First Christian Church Katy hosted the inaugural Katy Pride Festival, a family-friendly event with bounce houses, face painting, games, and music for kids. Adding to the festivities, there was a pumpkin patch, food and drinks for sale, and an array of events including a chalk art contest and fashion show.

WEDDING GUIDE



Travis J. Miller (l) and Steven W. Coats

Love Beyond Skepticism

**Steven W. Coats and Travis J. Miller's
unconventional path to a lasting union**

By **JENNY BLOCK**

Photos by **ANTHONY GORDON**



Steven W. Coats was not too keen about signing up for yet another dating app. “I had been single and tried several dating apps to great disappointment.

A former partner nudged me for six months to try Hinge, but I was skeptical,” Steven says. But he decided to give it a go just the same.

“To my surprise, I met Travis within about two weeks of being on the app. Looking back,

I have to eat my words of cynicism that all dating apps were just fronts for superficial nonsense,” he says. It was August 26, 2020, when the two began talking, and it wasn’t long before they knew it was love.

Travis J. Miller says that, aside from realizing that their core values were aligned, he also knew he had finally found someone who accepted him for who he is. But that wasn’t all. “We both have the same passion for rescuing

dogs, and both wanted to have a dog rescue in our future,” he adds.

Though glad that gay marriage was finally legal, Steven had doubts that a relationship with that level of commitment was in his future. “I did not think I would meet a person with whom I wanted the full transparency, property rights, and other privileges that come with legal marriage. But Travis was that person,” Steven says.

The night that truly sealed the deal was when Steven was grilling steaks for friends, lost track time of time, and ruined them.

“I was so disappointed in myself and upset that I couldn’t offer my guests a delicious meal. I remember making eye contact with Travis. He looked at me and stretched his arms toward me with an invitation that seemed to say, ‘Come to me. It’s okay. I love you anyway.’”

Travis explains that it was Steven who proposed to him. “We had a pool party and cookout gathering at our house for my 36th birthday. Everyone was gathered outside



he played an arrangement of Tina Turner's "Simply the Best" that was shown on Schitt's Creek. He used that song as a call to gather everyone around. Steven got down on one knee and gave a touching proposal to me and to all who witnessed, dripping wet in our bathing suits."

Since they share a dream to own a dog rescue, the two made a special request of their wedding guests. "We asked that, if guests were so inclined to bring a wedding gift, they bring a monetary donation. We had such a good response that we were able to use those gifts as the down payment on the land that we purchased in December 2022 where we will build our new home and onsite dog rescue," Steven says.

Travis, 37, from Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, is a graduate of SUNY Onondaga Community College and is a physical therapist assistant at Empower Me Wellness, a rehabilitation and assisted living facility in Atascocita.

Steven, 52, holds a BA in psychology and an MA in clinical psychology from Midwestern State University, as well as a PhD in school psychology with specialization in neuropsychological evaluation from Texas Woman's University. He is a licensed psychologist in Texas practicing forensic psychology in criminal law for the Competency and Sanity Evaluation Unit serving the Harris County Criminal Courts in Houston. Steven is from Vernon, Texas.

The two were wed on September 24, 2023, at Hidden Pines near Lake Houston with Reverend Michael Knowlton officiating. The couple, of course, wanted an LG-

BTQ-friendly venue. "The wedding consultant said that they have booked other weddings for our community, but this was her first and she was so excited. She even reassured us by pointing out on printed materials as well as on their website that they are an equal opportunity business and don't discriminate," Travis says.

For both Steven and Travis, one of the best moments of the wedding was the "laying on of hands." "The idea is that the faith community makes an outward, visible show of support for a newly ordained pastor by gathering around him/her, placing their hands as a group on the person's head/shoulders/arms/back, and offering a prayer of blessing," says Steven, who grew up with the tradition.

In a less traditional but also favorite moment during the vows, "I broke out in song

singing, 'I Wanna Dance with Somebody,' from the late Whitney Houston. Everyone in attendance, without being cued, joined in unison as we sang a brief part of the chorus," Steven says.

It was very important to both of them that the wedding be a ministry of love for everyone there. "We organized the wedding around the theme of 'Choose Love.' So it was important that we showed love to our guests and that they felt a part of the ceremony and celebration," Steven explains.

The guests were an impressive reflection of the couple's love and respect for all people, with guests ranging in age from adolescence to 80s; Christians of all types, including conservative, liberal, Protestant, and Catholic, as well as Muslim, atheist, agnostic, white, black, Hispanic, Asian, blue collar, white collar, redneck, and metrosexual friends and family.

It was a day of love and diversity and connection for two men who knew right away they had found their happily ever after. "Steven is a very empathic person who is able to feel how someone could be feeling and is a very emotionally expressive person," Travis says. "He also loves dogs, and without that, we would not have made it past the first lunch date."

"Travis is so gentle. I call him my 'sweet man.' I also tease him that I rank second to our seven dogs, but I'm still glad to wear the wedding ring," Steven says. "He's also keenly in tune with my feelings; I can't hide if I'm feeling sad or stewing about something. Best of all, I feel like I can just be myself with him."

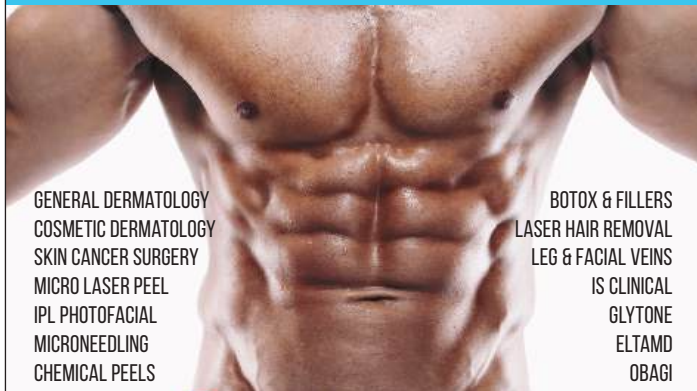
WANT TO TELL YOUR STORY? 
Email us at letters@outsartmagazine.com



HEIGHTS DERMATOLOGY & AESTHETIC CENTER

COME IN FOR A **FREE** COSMETIC CONSULTATION!

**NOW OFFERING: SUPERFICIAL RADIATION THERAPY (SRT) FOR THE
NON-SURGICAL TREATMENT OF NON-MELANOMA SKIN CANCERS.**



GENERAL DERMATOLOGY
COSMETIC DERMATOLOGY
SKIN CANCER SURGERY
MICRO LASER PEEL
IPL PHOTOFACIAL
MICRONEEDLING
CHEMICAL PEELS

BOTOX & FILLERS
LASER HAIR REMOVAL
LEG & FACIAL VEINS
IS CLINICAL
GLYTONE
ELTAMD
OBAGI

Dr. Alpesh Desai
Dr. Tejas Desai

BOARD CERTIFIED
DERMATOLOGISTS



2120 Ashland St.
Houston, TX 77008
713.864.2659

HEIGHTSSKIN.COM

THE CLUB HOUSTON'S
BLACK FRIDAY
LOCKER PASS SPECIAL 9 for 7
Pre-pay for 7 & Get 2 **FREE!**
Nov 23rd, 24th & 25th

GOOD • CLEAN • FUN

OPEN 24/7

DAILY SPECIALS

Mon-Fri | \$13 LOCKERS (8 a.m- 3:45 p.m)
Tuesday | 1/2 off ROOMS (4 p.m- 11:45 p.m)
Wednesday | 1/2 off LOCKERS (4 p.m- 11:45 p.m)
Friday | 1/2 off ROOMS (4 p.m- 7:45 p.m)
HAPPY HOUR

| Always open | Steam | Sauna | Whirlpool | Lockers | Huge Outdoor pool & patio |
| Private dressing rooms | Guest Memberships Available | 18+ ONLY |

THE CLUB HOUSTON
A PRIVATE MEN'S CLUB GOOD. CLEAN. FUN.
2205 Fannin Street, Houston, TX. 77002 • (713) 659-4998 • Theclubs.com

ALWAYS OPEN. FOR YOUR PLEASURE!

SQUIRT.org

LOOKING FOR NOW?
Look No Further.

Join the action at **www.squirt.org** today.



OutSmart's Bar Guide is now on your phone! Scan here to check out our directory of LGBTQ bars and clubs in and around Houston, including your favorites in Galveston, Huntsville, Spring, and College Station. Whether you're a local or a visitor, we've got you covered with this updated guide to the best LGBTQ-friendly spaces.



HOUSTON'S ULTIMATE HOUSE PARTY
HAPPY HOUR UNTIL 11PM
South Beach
OPEN WEDNESDAY THRU SUNDAY
21+ COMPLIMENTARY ADMISSION UNTIL 10PM
810 PACIFIC ST. HOUSTON, TX 77006
SOBEHOUSTON

\$2.75 WELL VODKA ALL DAY & NIGHT
808 PACIFIC ST. HOUSTON, TX 77006
JR's Bar & Grill
SUNDAY FUNDAY PATIO PARTY
HAPPY HOUR UNTIL 10 PM
5pm-10pm
JOE ROSS
PRICES MAY VARY ON HOLIDAYS, SPECIAL EVENTS, AND HOLIDAY WEEKENDS
JR5BARANDGRILL WWW.JR5BARANDGRILL.COM

There's always something going on at **TONY'S CORNER POCKET!**

Houston's Hottest **Male Amateur Strip Contest** Headquarters!

817 W. Dallas
713.571.7870

TONY'S CORNER POCKET

Gayest & Greatest Winner

Voted the Best Place to Watch Male Dancers
Tues. and Thurs. - Sunday Nights

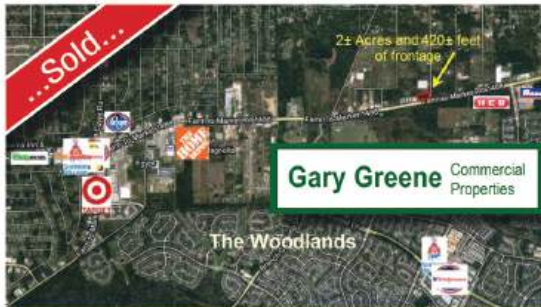
Nightly Specials - Call for Details
Cold Beverages & Hot Guys!

RICH'S HOUSTON

ReBar evolved into Rich's Houston, a vibe restaurant, lounge & boutique day / night life experience.

Buying, Selling and Investments

Available for all your Commercial and Residential Real Estate Needs



Lynette Lew • 713.582.2202

Residential and Commercial Realtor
Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Gary Greene
Gary Greene Commercial Properties

Lynette@LynetteLew.com | www.LynetteLew.com

Right now is the perfect opportunity

- ★ TO BE PROUD OF WHO YOU ARE
- ★ TO BE COMPASSIONATE TO YOURSELF AND OTHERS
- ★ TO SHOW GRATITUDE TO THOSE YOU LOVE AND TRULY APPRECIATE

Thank you again to my OutSmart readers for voting me Best Astrologer for all of these years."

Voted BEST ASTROLOGER by OutSmart Readers

LILLY RODDY

ASTROLOGER

- ★ Personal astrological sessions
- ★ Relationship readings - personal / business
- ★ Presentations & lectures to organizations

CONSULTATIONS BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

GIFT CERTIFICATES • CREDIT CARDS

713.529.5842

Lillicath@aol.com • www.LillyRoddyShow.com

Harnessing the Intensity

Scorpio's emotional alertness sets the tone for a month of cosmic surges.



ADRIAN HERNANDEZ



November is an active month with a lot of positive energy in the first weeks. The Sun begins the month in Scorpio, and we are emotionally alert and ready to respond to our intuition. At this time of year, energies begin to build as we near the New Year. The New Moon on the 13th energizes us to

make better use of the resources around us. We are looking at trust in relationships, as well. The Full Moon on the 27th opens us up to new people and new situations to explore and enjoy. The Thanksgiving holidays may not be as cheery as we would like. Keep your expectations very realistic.

The Sun enters Sagittarius on the 22nd. Mercury also starts the month in Scorpio but soon enters Sagittarius on the 10th. Mars continues through Scorpio and also enters Sagittarius on the 24th. Jupiter remains in Taurus, Saturn in Pisces, Uranus in Taurus, Neptune in Pisces, and Pluto in Scorpio.

Good days this month are November 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 15, 17, 18, 20, and 21. Difficult days are November 10, 11, 13, 16, 23–27, and 30.

ARIES (Mar. 21–Apr. 19)

You are interested in deeper levels of commitment and connection in your relationships. You may be looking for signs of reassurance that your feelings are justified. You are also more suspicious of people's actions. Your impulse buying is also stronger this month. Toward the end of the month, your attitude seems to lighten. You are really getting into the holiday spirit, wanting to have more fun and take a break from your usual schedule. This is a good time for international business, travel, and marketing yourself via social media. You may want a smaller gathering for the holidays so there is less to deal with.

TAURUS (Apr. 20–May 20)

Relationships are still the big topic as the month begins. The October 28th Eclipse triggered a desire to take your relationship to the next level and resolve issues so you can move forward. Bonding on a mental, physical, and emotional level adds layers of trust and conviction. However, if your partnership is not doing well, these same energies can upend it by rooting out the truth. Your career shifts and reevaluations continue, only getting stronger as we get closer to the New Year. The changes going on at work have to do with shifts in management power, and you may choose to look for greener pastures. You are looking for something different and fun for Thanksgiving.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21)

This month you are paying attention to routines and details. People at work may be grumpier than usual, and you could easily get caught up in that. You will also be paying more attention to your health, exercise routines, and eating habits. Career energies are very strong this month and will continue to get stronger through the New Year. You are looking to take on more responsibility

and work your way up the ladder. You may want to do something on your own. This is a great month to get that started, as spring brings a lot of opportunity. In the latter part of the month, your attention shifts to relationships. This will be your time to strengthen bonds in all your partnerships.

CANCER (June 22–July 22)

Your Moon Kids are in a creative and playful time as the month begins. This is a great month to engage in your hobbies or even take them to the next level. If you have children, you will want to spend more time with them, as they help remind you what having fun really means! You also want to connect and renew your social groups and your friends. They can really bring some light, hope, and support into your life. In the latter part of the month, you are more aware of your routines or lack of them. You will be more stimulated to pay attention to your health regimen. Your coworkers can seem crankier than usual, so be cautious about being drawn into their drama. You may be minimizing your holidays this year. You are beginning to question your career direction, and that gets stronger through 2024.

LEO (July 23–Aug. 22)

Home and family are being highlighted this month. You want to spend more time at home or in places you feel more comfortable. This can also be a time for relocating, doing some remodeling, and shifts in family power dynamics. Some of this was triggered by the October 28 Eclipse. This same energy has been impacting your career over the last year, and now the universe turns up the intensity. You are looking for a career that allows more creative expression, and not a helicopter boss. For some, this can also be a time of enjoying a better balance between work and home life. At the end of the month, you are ready for fun and relaxation.

VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sept. 22)

You are more clear and direct in your communications this month. You are also getting your life more organized. This is a great time to improve your health and eating habits, as you are ready for a change. You have been paying more attention to your boundaries, and others may see this as you being less flexible and more irritable. You are looking at setting new long-term goals for your partnership. In the latter part of the month, home and family take the spotlight. You may be undecided about what you are going to do for the holidays, but family tradition may not seem as appealing to you as it once was. The latter part of the month is good for making your nest more comfortable..

LIBRA (Sept. 23–Oct. 23)

Relationships continue to be very important as the month begins. This month, you are looking for emotional trust and your partner being more open about their intentions. Your physical needs may be stronger, and you won't be waiting for your partner to take the lead. This area remains active, as the Eclipse cycle is active in Libra/Aries through the end of the year. Value and self-worth are also very important this month. You may be seeking a raise or looking elsewhere for work. In the latter part of the month, you are more direct in your communications, and you need to watch to make sure you don't overload your schedule. You are looking to keep your holidays simple. Home life is slowly getting more stable.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24–Nov. 21)

Happy birthday to you! This is your personal annual cycle of evaluating the past year and setting new objectives for the coming year. You are more direct

and real, and moving faster than usual. Although you don't give up on things easily, this month your temper is really tested. Personal relationships can be edgy and need some TLC. You want to know that your partner really cares. This is a good time to meet someone new or to take your partnership to the next level. This is also a good time for business partnerships. It will be easy to see if you are both on the same page. There continues to be big shifts in your family. You may be considering moving or doing some personal downsizing. The holidays should flow along for you fairly easily, but you are wanting to keep things more simple. In the latter part of the month, you are interested in investments and increasing your income.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov.22-Dec.21)

You are in more of a rest and retreat mode as the month begins. This is a much better time for paying attention to your health and how your work contributes to your sense of inner security. You may be updating your office systems and working more from home. You are also interested in your spiritual development in the first half of the month. In the latter part of the month, you leave your spiritual retreat and come back to the village. There is plenty of activity—you are doing some personal downsizing and making better use of your time. You have little patience for people who are childish or can't figure

out a way to solve their problems. The holidays are important for you this month because they represent a shift from the past to the present. Traditions will be important for you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Your public life, work life, and social life are all very active this month. This started at the October 28 Eclipse. In your career, you are looking for something that is engaging and not just task-oriented. What matters for you is the relationships with your clients. With the Eclipse cycle occurring in your home and work life this year, you are rethinking your life in both these areas. This is a good time to get involved in community activities and to take on a leadership role. You have a lot of chutzpa and don't mind saying what you think. As we move into the latter part of the month, you are ready for a break. This is how you normally respond to the Thanksgiving holiday. Make sure you have a clear exit plan, and only stay as long as you want!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Life is changing for you Aquarians as Pluto, the planet of transformation and release, travels through Aquarius for the next 21 years. For now, she is impacting the people born in the earliest days of the sign. These folks are looking at a total overhaul of their lives, relationships, career, children, and personal goals and expressions. For the rest of you Aquarians, Pluto will

eventually make her way to you! This month, career and long-term security is important for all Aquarians. You want to take a leadership role, start your own business or, if you are older, look toward doing something you enjoy instead of being good at rolling the rock uphill every day. There can also be huge shifts with your family. You want to keep your holiday simple this year. You are not willing to be around people you don't care for. Start clearing out the closets and storerooms. You will need the freedom!

PISCES (Feb. 19-Mar. 20)

Saturn—planet of structure, career, personal discipline, and aging—is moving through your sign for the next couple of years. This will motivate you to rethink your career path or your personal goals. You are not as open and flexible as you have been. In the latter part of the month, your career energies are very active. You will want to take the lead, or you may be searching for something that really fits you. You are also reviewing relationships and setting new goals and plans. You want your partner to participate more as you look for a greater sense of trust and commonalities. The holidays will be low-key for you. You will be very selective about the people you spend your time with. This will extend past the holidays and well into next year.

➔ For more info, visit lillyroddyshow.com.

FRED HAAS TOYOTA WORLD

20400 I-45 N.
SPRING, TX 77373
FREDHAASSTOYOTA.COM

VOTED BEST IMPORT AUTO DEALERSHIP

2023 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS
OutSmart
GAYEST & GREATEST
WINNER

HOUSTON'S #1 TOYOTA DEALER

19 YEARS IN A ROW*

CLAIM BASED ON TOTAL RETAIL SALES VOLUME PER GST 2003-2022 FOR FRED HAAS TOYOTA WORLD.

FAST, FRIENDLY, Easy

THANK YOU FOR VOTING US AS OUTSMART'S

BEST IMPORT DEALERSHIP
3 YEARS IN A ROW

BEST AUTO DEALERSHIP

JUST MINUTES FROM DOWNTOWN!
832.764.8913

FRED HAAS FAMILY PLAN

BASED ON OUTSMART PUBLICATION'S VOTERS: BEST AUTO DEALERSHIP (2019) AND BEST IMPORT AUTO DEALERSHIP (2020-2022)

Nothing to Hyde

Tanya Hyde turns dull into delicious with her humor

By SAM BYRD | Photo by ALEX ROSA



Tanya Hyde is an open book. She lets it all hang out with no pretense. She's the personification of "zero Fs to give." All she needs is an outfit and a touch of makeup, and she lets her dry wit take over from there. She is proof that there is "nothing to Hyde" when you're having fun. Find out more about what makes this bar fly tick.

Pronouns?

Any/All. I'm something for everyone.

Inner Avatar?

A '70s crime fighter... ranging from Charlie's Angels to Electra Woman.

Hometown?

Born and reared in San Antonio, but I've lived anywhere from Hawaii to South Carolina.

Drag birthday?

November 2. I tell everyone I was born after a great Halloween party.

What interested you in drag?

It was almost a dare. Someone said, "Oh, I can just see you doing drag."

Describe Tanya Hyde's persona.

A '70s TV variety show.

Any titles or pageants?

No, but I do have a Tony's Corner Pocket Heroes plaque on my wall that I'm very proud of.

What's on your bucket list?

I've done everything I want to do. Now, I'm just open to whatever the Lord has in store.

Most memorable moment as a performer?

An audience member was in a seminary school and had asked for "a sign." I had just performed "Ageless (Medley)" by Amy Grant, and that person thanked me.

Most embarrassing moment on stage?

When you perform comedy, there are very few embarrassing moments.

Ultimate goal as a performer?

To keep being entertaining.

Let us know about your drag family.



Follow Tanya on X @tanyahyde19
and on Instagram @tanyahyde39

I have two illegitimate kids: Duckie DuJour and Ivanna Cupcake Hyde.

Guilty pleasure?

Hustlers, if we're being honest. Pizza is a close second.

Tell us about your aesthetic.

Hmm, you tell me, then we'll both know.

What's your must-have clothing accessory/prop?

I love my camel toe panties. They complete every outfit.

What was your dream job as a child?

Not to work. But if I did have to, it would be for the Townsend Agency.

Favorite bad word?

Lana Blake, Lol. I don't really have a favorite.

What do you want the world to know about the LGBTQ community?

We are not the enemy.

Have you ever had a defining moment in your life?

I was bullied in the first grade. I knew I had to knock that kid out to stop it there.

What are your passions in life?

Cooking. I'm a bit of a ghetto gourmet. Also singing. I'm horrible but I like it.

Who are your favorite artists to perform?

Lynda Carter, Cheryl Ladd, George Michael, Boy George, and Devin.

Which candy or dessert would best describe you, and why?

Toss-up between "Sock it to me" cake, tart turnover, and an upside down pound cake. Why? They're my positions in bed.

If you could pick one celebrity (living or dead) to perform with you, who would it be, and why?

Diane Jackson. She gave me a chance, and I'd like to thank her.

Where can fans see you perform?

I'm a Barcode exclusive. I'm there Monday through Wednesday nights.



**Getting tested for HIV is
quick, easy, and FREE.**

Find a location near you OR request an at-home test kit at
LegacyCommunityHealth.org/GetTested.

Plus, learn which HIV prevention and treatment options work for you.

"I LOVED MY DENTIST SO MUCH, I MARRIED HIM!"



Voted Best
Dentists!

—
**JACQUELYN
CLEMMER**
Favorite
Female Dental
Hygienist



MONTROSE DDS

GENERAL & COSMETIC DENTISTRY

620 West Alabama | Houston, TX 77006
713.529.4364 | MONTROSEDDS.COM



SAMUEL A.
CARRELL, DDS



AUSTIN T.
FAULK, DDS

