A man with dark hair, wearing a black suit jacket, white shirt, and black tie, is shown from the chest up. He has a stressed expression, with his right hand pressed against his forehead. In the upper right corner, there is a blue speech bubble containing the text "houston voice".

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December 2006

A small decorative graphic of holly leaves and red berries is positioned to the left of the "Holiday Blues?" text.

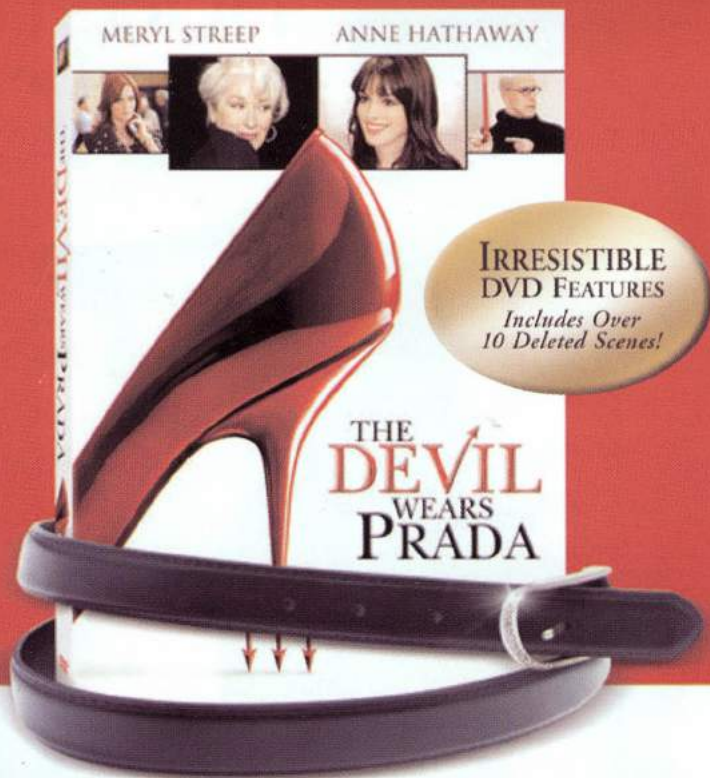
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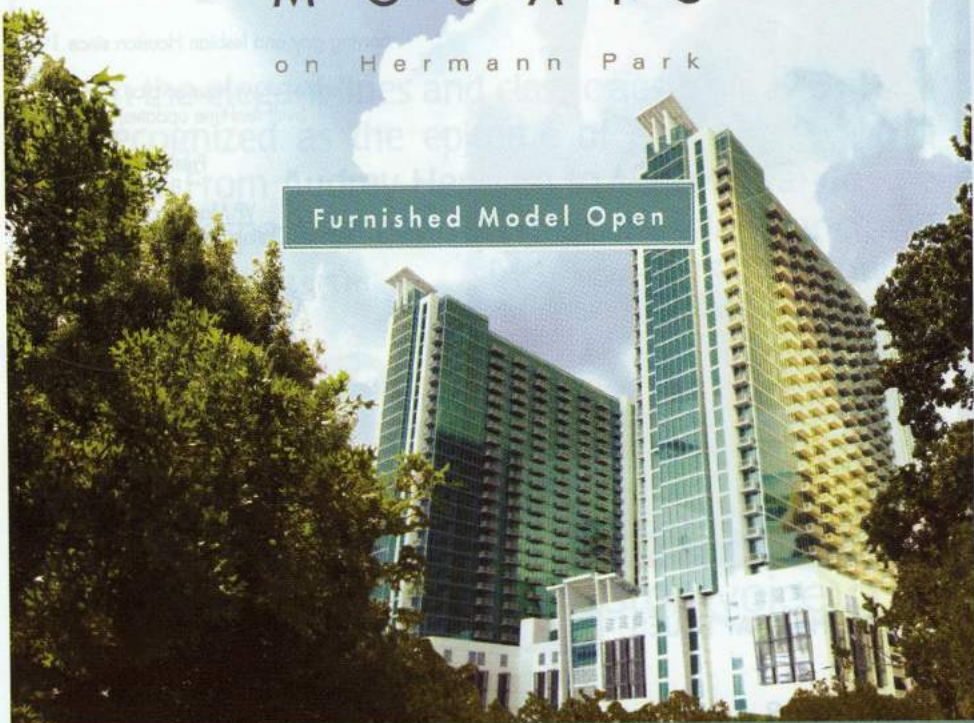
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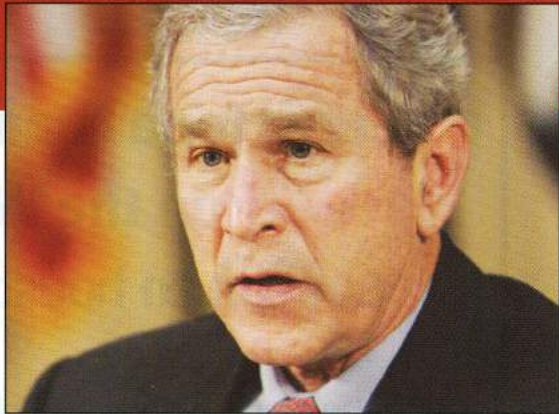
NEWS BRIEFS

National News

The White House announced on World AIDS Day that President Bush would issue an executive order allowing HIV-positive people to enter the U.S. on short-term tourist or business visas without having to seek special permission. Currently, HIV-positive travelers entering the U.S. are required to declare themselves infected with the virus.

The National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian and Gay Ministries (NACDLGM) has issued a statement expressing sadness at the approval of the USCCB document "Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination." NACDLGM leadership urges "individual bishops and the Bishops' Conference to reflect on Sacred Scripture, reflect on Church teaching and pastoral practice, study the social and physical sciences, listen to and ponder the lived experience of lesbian and gay persons and their families, and to develop a truly pastoral and prophetic document on the place of lesbian and gay Catholics in their Church."

Congressman Marty Meehan and the American Psychological Association and American Psychiatric Association sent letters to the Defense Department this week protesting a recently revised military instruction that now suggests that homosexuality is a defect. The instruction was re-issued in July, responding to pressure to remove homosexuality from the military classification of a mental illness.

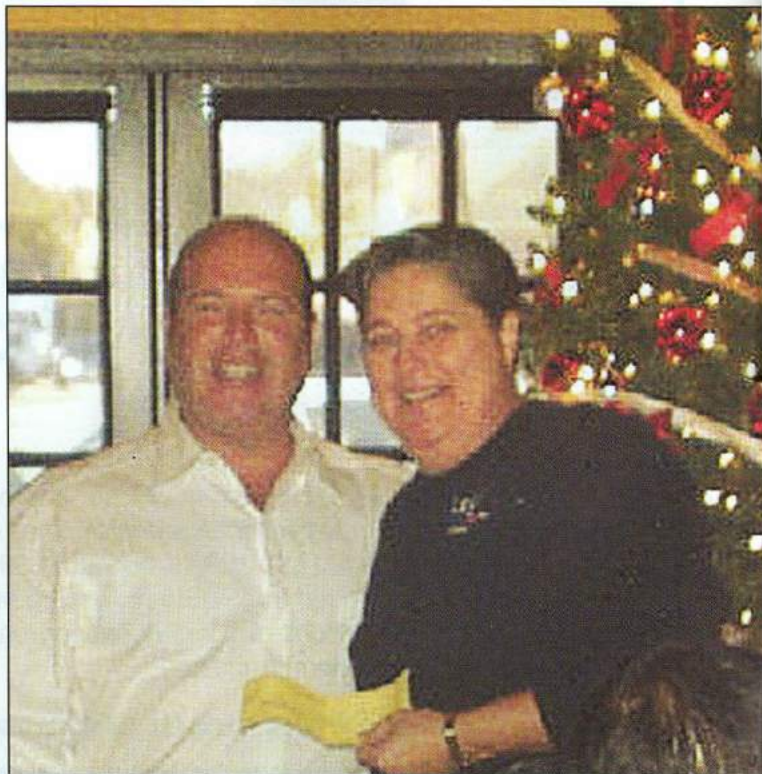


President Bush's AIDS initiative, announced in 2003, is the largest international health initiative dedicated to combating a single disease. (Photo by Pablo Martinez Monsivais/AP)

Local News

Charles Armstrong, President and CEO of Charles Armstrong Investments, Inc., the parent company of Meteor, JR's Bar and Grill, South Beach and Montrose Mining Company, announces end-of-the-year charitable donations to 12 non-profit 501 (c)(3) organizations in the spirit of the Twelve Days of Christmas for the fourth consecutive year.

Danny Kallen (left), Social Director of the Houston Tennis Club, presents a check for \$4,000 to **Sonna Alton** (right), representative from Legacy Community Health Services (formerly The Assistance Fund). In the past 10 years, the HTC has given approximately \$75,000 to beneficiaries such as The Assistance Fund, HATCH, VIBE and now, Legacy Community Health Services.



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LOCAL LIFE

Gay hero's body languished after death

After sodomy case win,
Tyron Garner died in poverty

By JOSHUA LYNSEN

MITCHELL KATINE STILL REMEMBERS THE TIME gays opened their wallets to help Tyron Garner.

It was 1998. Garner and another man, John Lawrence, had been arrested after Texas police looking for an armed intruder barged into Lawrence's apartment bedroom.

Garner and Lawrence were charged under the state's sodomy law.

Against all odds, they decided to challenge the statute.

"There were many people who wanted to be involved and contribute money toward the fight," said Katine, who was Garner's attorney in Texas.

Donations to the case, *Lawrence v. Texas*, poured in from across the nation. The money helped bring the case to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in 2003 that state sodomy laws were unconstitutional.

But three years after the \$750,000 case ended and gay activists declared the plaintiffs heroes, Garner died in poverty of complications from meningitis.

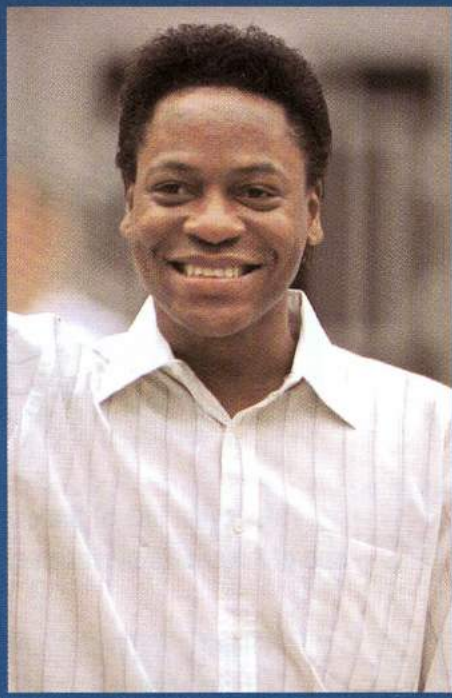
Family members wanted to give Garner a casket and grave, but could afford neither. In desperation, they turned to Garner's friends for help.

Katine, the Human Rights Campaign and Lambda Legal, which bankrolled Garner's legal battle, all sought donations to help the family. Few came.

Weeks after Garner died Sept. 11, little more than \$200 had been donated. The balance included \$100 Katine gave when he opened the memorial account.

"People sent in contributions, but they sent them in much smaller amounts than I imagined," he said. "People were sending \$10 contributions and \$20 contributions."

Katine said the response was so poor that Garner's family eventually abandoned their hopes. The body was surrendered to local officials Oct. 18 for cremation by the state — an unceremonious fate that most often befalls the indigent or forgotten.



Tyron Garner, who died in September, was lauded for his willingness to fight to overturn sodomy laws. He was charged with sodomy after police found him having consensual sex while they were looking for a prowler in 1998.

Garner's remains were given to his brother, Darrell. The memorial fund afforded him a metal urn.

"I think it's sad," said Katine, who's gay. "I'm not being critical of the gay community. I'm saddened by it. I'm just saddened by not having a better response from the community."

H. Alexander Robinson, executive director of the National Black Justice Coalition, whose organization is now working to memorialize Garner, agreed.

"It was really a tragic misstep on the part of all of us in the community," he said. "If we're going to hold people up as heroes, we should certainly treat them that way."

'Take care of our own'

Efforts to fund Garner's burial started at Lambda Legal, which sent an appeal to its Texas donors.

"It was a Texas case, so the thought would be that we could take care of our own," said Dennis Coleman, the regional director for Lambda Legal in Dallas.

But the limited appeal yielded limited results. One week after the appeal was made, the account balance was \$200. Katine said just a few donations trickled in after that.

"I didn't know what to do," he said. "So I

See **Local Life** *cont'd* on page 10

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Local Life from page 8

told the family, "I'm sorry. The response was not as great as I'd hoped it would be."

HRC spokesperson Luis Vizcaino said the organization tried to help Garner's family by announcing the memorial fund in the gay Houston magazine *OutSmart*, but the effort had little impact.

Coleman said he and others in his office donated additional funds, boosting the account total to about \$760. Even with those donations, though, the account couldn't fund a funeral.

Katine said Garner's family, under pressure by morgue workers to dispose of the body, turned Garner over to state officials for cremation Oct. 18.

"I think many people thought that we wouldn't have any problem raising ... whatever was needed," Katine said. "But I think everybody thought somebody else was going to do it."

Robinson said the National Black Justice Coalition, like most national gay groups, was unaware of the

family's need until it was too late to help.

"It's something for which we've taken responsibility," he said, "and done some self-examination about what we will do to honor his memory."

Robinson said the coalition is now considering how it can best remember Garner.

"We're thinking of something along the lines of scholarship programs," he said, "to focus on black gays and lesbians looking at going into the legal field."

Vizcaino said HRC, meanwhile, is planning to send \$1,000 to the Tyron Garner Fund at Preferred Bank in Houston. All money donated now goes to Garner's family.

Robinson said it's vital that gays across the country never again let their heroes go unsupported.

"Make sure that you support those people," he said. "Make sure you know what their needs are. Make sure you support their family, and that if ever a circumstance like this happens again, don't assume that everything is handled."

NEWS BRIEFS

Conservative Jews vote to approve ordination of gays

Conservative Jewish leaders voted Wednesday to approve the ordination of openly gay and lesbian rabbis and cantors during a meeting in New York City. The 25-member Committee on Jewish Laws and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly used a complex voting system, which requires only six votes to approve each item. Thus, conflicting policies can be approved. This enables individual seminaries and synagogues to make their own decisions about which approaches to follow. Keshet, an organization of Jewish Theological Seminary community members advocating full equality in the Conservative movement, organized a day and a half of educational presentations, prayer and dialogue to coincide with the Jewish Law Committee's meeting. Second-year rabbinical student and Keshet co-chair Sarah Freidson said her organization is excited by the decision and looks forward to working with the seminary to "ensure that any qualified Jew can become a rabbi or cantor."

U.S. promises 'streamlined' process for HIV-positive tourist visas

WASHINGTON — Restrictions that bar short-term HIV-positive visitors from entering the U.S. will be eased but not removed according to a White House announcement reported by aidsmap.com, an international AIDS information website. The change affects only people traveling on tourist and business visas that allow entry for up to 60 days and doesn't alter U.S. immigration policy. It's unclear if HIV-positive tourists will still be required to declare their HIV status to U.S. officials to benefit under the new policy. The news came on last week's World AIDS Day when a fact sheet from the White House announced the "categorical waiver."

Cipel says he doesn't believe McGreevey is gay

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — The man former New Jersey Gov. James McGreevey identified as his gay lover said last week he believes McGreevey is not gay. Appearing on "Larry King Live," Golan Cipel, an Israeli citizen hired by McGreevey first as a campaign aide and later as his homeland security adviser, said that McGreevey's 2004 resignation speech revelation that he is "a gay American" was "part of the spin." Through lawyers, Cipel had threatened to sue McGreevey for sexual harassment shortly before and after McGreevey's resignation. A lawsuit was never filed. "I think McGreevey had no choice. There was a sexual harassment lawsuit against him. And he didn't know what to do, and his advisers told him, 'come out first,' and he would be perceived as the victim" and thereby gain control of the story, Cipel said. While he said McGreevey did make sexual advances toward him on several occasions, Cipel said the former governor also frequently spoke about heterosexual encounters, including sex with prostitutes on trips to Germany and the Dominican Republic. "I believe that Jim McGreevey is bisexual," Cipel said. Cipel, 37, in his first extended national television interview since the publication in September of McGreevey's memoir, "The Confession," also urged the gay community "not to embrace McGreevey," saying the former governor committed sexual harassment against him and others. Cipel, who has repeatedly denied being gay, again insisted that McGreevey's often graphic portrayal of their relationship in the book is untrue.

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How to avoid a blue Christmas

Holiday season presents unique challenges for gays fighting depression

By **DEBORAH MONCRIEF BELL**

ELVIS SANG, "I'LL HAVE A BLUE, BLUE CHRISTMAS without you." And those words ring true for those who are not with the one they love during the holiday season.

But it is also true that you can have a blue Christmas even when you are partnered. If you are among those who get down this time of year, there are ways to make sure your holidays are as stress-free and happy as possible.

This time of the year puts a lot of stress on everyone as we prepare for family gatherings, holiday parties, shopping and other commitments. It is also a time of year when unpleasant, dismal weather can have a negative effect on your emotions and mood. Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, is a very real condition that can contribute to making what should be a peaceful and festive time an absolute misery for those with the condition.

"The holidays can be a difficult time for many people," says Betsy Schwartz, executive director of the Mental Health Association of Greater Houston.

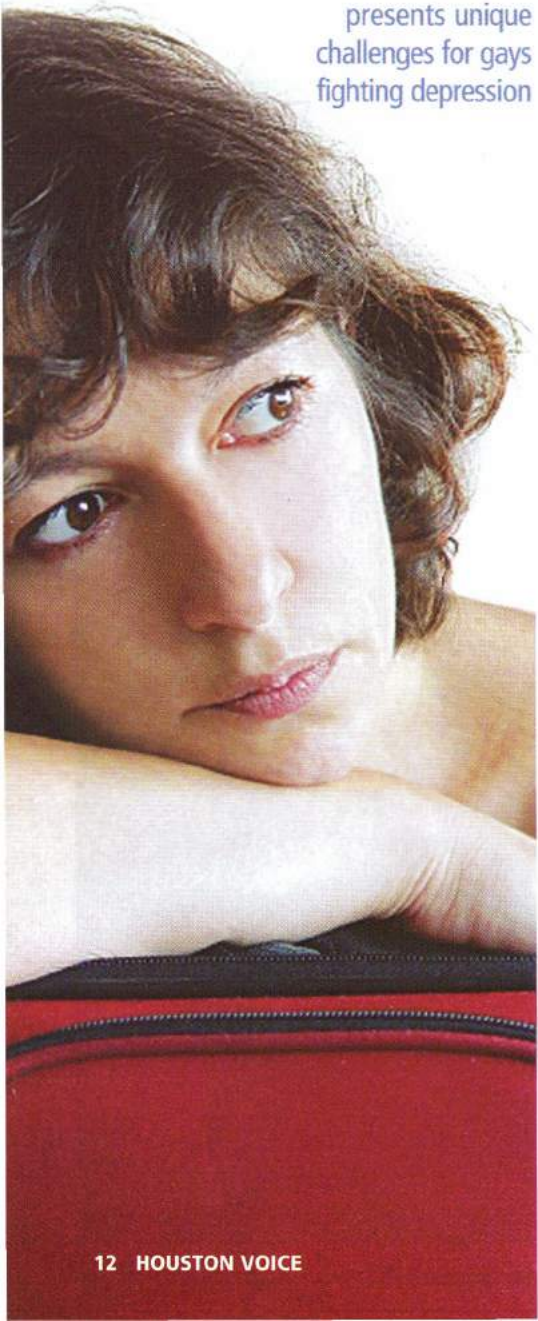
"We often have high expectations for a picturesque and perfect holiday, which can create added pressure and stress" says Schwartz. "Because the winter holidays are filled with family and religious sentiments and traditions, emotions that we often keep at bay tend to surface at this time. Fortunately, the holiday blues are temporary and seasonal in comparison to clinical depression which is longer lasting and may require medical attention."

But the holiday blues can cause someone who suffers from a major depressive disorder to have an episode. So anyone who is being treated for depression needs to take extra care so they can better enjoy the season.

Some of the factors of being gay bring yet another layer when it comes to the holiday experience. Some of us may have issues with our families that don't accept us, adding to feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Many of us struggle with religious issues, which are the primary focus of many celebrations. And some of that also may be the source of family unrest, especially for those who are not accepted by their loved ones. Additionally, there may be relationship strains that many in the non-GLBT community don't have to face. Often it depends on your level and your partner's level of being out. Coming out for the first time to your family may not be the best idea during this time. That conversation is best saved for another day.

See **Holiday Blues** cont'd on page 14



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Among the many issues to consider: Will your partner attend the office party with you? Will you or your partner's family welcome you together to its celebration. If that requires long distance travel, are you allowed the same accommodations as siblings, that is to say, is the family comfortable enough to treat your relationship the same way it treats the spouses of other family members? And what if you or your partner isn't welcome? Do you go your separate ways during the holidays? And what if you or your partner is not out at the office or with family members? Do you or your partner get left home alone? And when you are home alone, do you feel that if your partner really loved you, he or she would stay with you instead?

Some of these hurdles we may anticipate, but even if we don't, it may be worthwhile to think about them ahead of time and put together an action plan. If you have a partner, discuss the dynamics of your family situations and raise the issue with your family members to find out what their expectations are. Understand that the holidays are a delicate subject for others and be prepared for emotional responses, including your own. If you are haunted by ghosts of "Christmas Past" realize that some memories and traditions may no longer resonate with you if they bring up negative and self-destructive behavior and try to come up with your own alternative traditions with people who are positive.

If you're lonely, it's natural to want to isolate yourself when you're depressed. If you know that about yourself, find others around you who don't have holiday plans and organize a potluck or volunteer your time to an organization that helps the needy. Helping others is a great way to begin feeling better.

Other psychological factors such as the first holiday without loved ones can feel very lonely. Whether the separation is due to death, distance or divorce, the loss can cause sadness. Or, family conflicts can intensify and affect one's mood during holiday gatherings.

Schwartz recommends that you acknowledge your feelings.

"If you've recently lost someone close to you, realize that it is normal to feel sadness and grief — even at what is expected to be a happy time of the year," she says.

Money also a source of stress

Financial contributors to stress this time of year include the temptations of holiday travel, gifts, food and other treats, which can lead to overspending or to a sense of disappointment because of budget constraints. The expectation that you have to spend money that you do not have for gifts puts a lot of pressure on many people.

Physical factors, too, can create added stress and strain. Most people commit to numerous holiday gatherings in addition to spending large amounts of time shopping and cooking. Also, during the holi-

Mental Health Association of greater Houston

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days people are likely to eat and drink more than usual, which can result in seasonal weight gain. The dangers of overindulgence in alcohol may be the source of embarrassment at the annual office party or something as serious as being in an alcohol-related car accident. The number of such incidents is highest on Christmas Eve and New Year's Day.

The holidays can also create problems for those in treatment for alcoholism. Lambda AA or other support groups are available to those who feel they may be in danger of picking up a drink or need to be with other people who understand what they are going through. Sticking to healthy habits and avoiding excessive eating and drinking will serve you better.

How to cope

Find supportive companions. If you're feeling isolated, seek out community, religious or social services that can provide the support you need. Seek out friends to get out and see a movie together or one of your old favorites on DVD at home. Make it simple and order pizza.

Plan your expenditures and budget all potential holiday expenses. Look at your budget before purchasing gifts and consider gifts that money can't buy — handmade and sentimental items. Spend quality time with loved ones, whether with family or family of choice. Make a scrapbook together of pictures and stories from previous holidays. Don't spend time with people because you feel like you should, spend it with people who matter most to you and if you can't, at least make a phone call. Think about planning another time that might work better to get together. Go on a cruise with your partner or plan a family trip to some favored location instead of being at someone's home.

It is a good idea to plan ahead by developing your calendar. Designate specific days to shop, visit friends and cook. Plan only what you can reasonably accomplish.

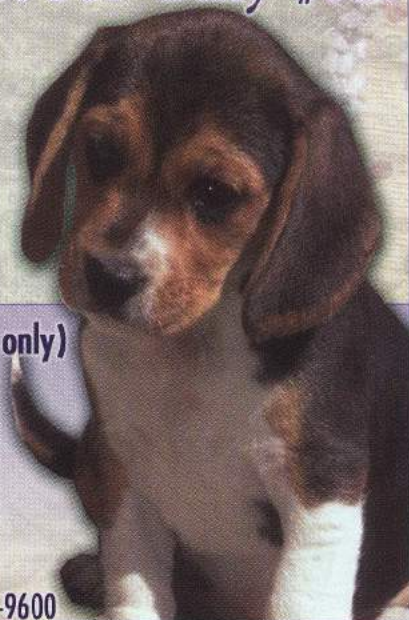
Enjoy the spirit of the season. It is important to set differences aside and work toward accepting others as they are. That way you can avoid falling into old patterns of behavior at family gatherings. No one can push your buttons unless you let them.

The Mental Health Association of Greater Houston and the Montrose Counseling Center contributed to this article. Many thanks to Leslie Gerber and Sally Huffer.

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DINING



A quirky good time

Lucio's offers an impressive menu, just don't forget to bring your own wine

By J.A. CHAPMAN

I LOVE THE WINE LIST AT LUCIO'S. IT ALWAYS has my favorite wines at the best prices.

That's because I bring my own, which is the whole idea at Lucio's BYOB & Grill.

Recently opened next to Gravitas on Taft, Lucio's offers a quirky mix of cuisines. There's a slight emphasis on Creole and Italian with a few throwback favorites to add a homey charm. Unlike other mid-priced bistros, Lucio's offers a good selection of quality seafood and some impressively innovative meat dishes. It's easy to eat very well on a budget.

Owner John Sjoberg is aiming for the mid-priced market with Lucio's. But he wants to offer an intimate dining experience with top quality food, where customers can linger over a bottle of wine. Or two. So far he's succeeding on all counts.

The starters are a mix of classic, creative and homey. The crab cakes (\$12) are the epitome of classic — golden on the outside, thick with moist crab inside, and served with a spicy cream sauce. For something a bit more innovative, try

the beef tenderloin tempura (\$9). It's surprisingly tender and beef works better deep-fried than one would guess. The bland peanut sauce needs some work, but the dish still works.

For a true throwback starter, don't miss the spinach artichoke dip (\$7). It's not the gooey mess of days past, though. This is an updated version — creamy, thick and decadent. Served with pita chips, there's plenty to share with a large group.

Bisque fans will be happy with the rich and creamy crawfish bisque (\$5). It's got a bit of fire, but not enough to overpower the hearty chunks of crawfish and smooth tomato base. The large bowl is almost enough for a meal.

If you like risotto, try the sautéed scallops with butternut squash and shrimp risotto (\$18). The creamy, robust risotto is filled with chunks of sweet butternut squash and shrimp. Three delicately sautéed scallops round out the dish. It's a creative mix of flavors and deceptively filling.

Pork fans need to run, not walk, to Lucio's and order the prosciutto-wrapped pork chop duxelle (\$19). They start with a top grade, thick cut chop and stuff it with goat cheese and chopped mushrooms, then wrap it in prosciutto.

See **Dining** *cont'd* on page 18

Dining from page 17

The result is a gloriously tender chop, with crispy prosciutto and a little surprise of tangy cheese and mushrooms in the middle. Served with garlic mashed potatoes and sautéed green beans, it's divine.

Save a little room for dessert (\$5). The selection is limited, but the execution is fine. The crème brûlée is impressively smooth, and the bread pudding is deceptively well made. Dense, rich and served with a bourbon cream sauce, it's a warm, comfy treat.

DINNER IS THE MAIN EVENT AT LUCIO'S, BUT here's a secret — the restaurant is also open for lunch. Not for much longer, though. Owner Sjoberg plans to phase out the lunch menu as of the first of the year to concentrate on the evening trade. But for now it's still possible to indulge in a few items that don't make the dinner menu, including a glorious shrimp po-boy (\$8). Gulf shrimp so fresh they're practically still swimming are battered, fried and served on a white sub roll. A dab of tartar sauce, fries on the side and it's a little slice of heaven.

Lucio's is a simple place. It has two rooms, a simple black, white and gray color scheme and some artwork for sale to liven things up. It's not

fancy, but it's a hidden gem. The food is outstanding, the service is friendly, efficient and attentive and the prices are moderate. It's little wonder that it has already built up a sizeable stable of regulars.

So pack up your favorite bottles and head to Lucio's. If you end up lingering over dinner, don't be surprised. That's the whole idea.

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Service: ●●●●●
Value: ●●●●●
Scene: ●●●●● 1/2

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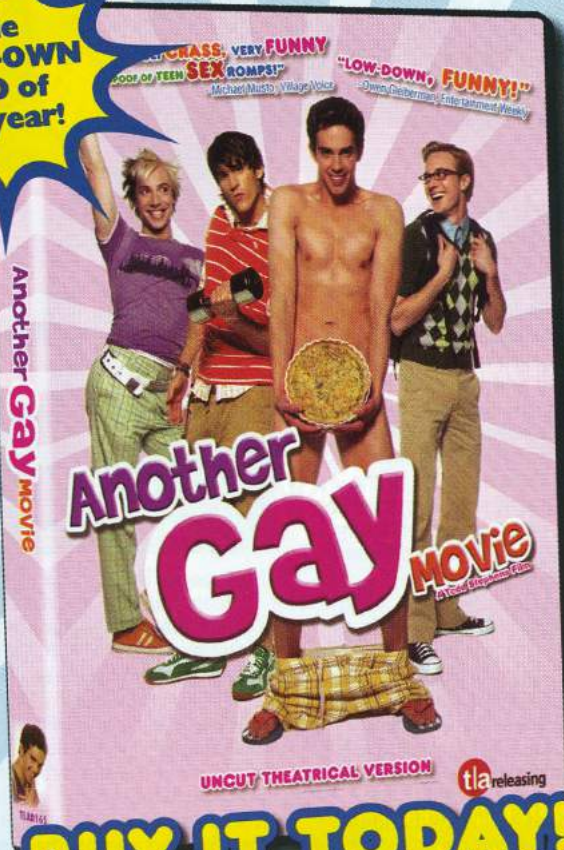
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FILM

A wilted 'Flower'

Zhang Yimou's new film falls short in the action department

By JASON SIERRA

ZHANG YIMOU FIRST WOWED AMERICAN audiences when he successfully Matrix-ed the beauty of a monochromatic landscape painting with his mythic epic, "Hero" (released 2004). His next major stateside release, "House of Flying Daggers," only boosted our faith in the incredible balance he had achieved between the drama of his storytelling and the aesthetic possibilities of the CGI'd martial arts scene.

So it is that, with China backing his latest film as its Oscar submission for best foreign film this year, Zhang prepares to release "Curse of the Golden Flower" to an eagerly awaiting American fan base. Unfortunately for Zhang lovers everywhere, this latest work goes a bit of a different route, even with all the same elements.

Zhang's "Curse of the Golden Flower," set to premiere in Houston at the Angelika Film Center on Dec. 22, does not run short on any of the qualities that made his first films into box office hits. That is, except one: restraint. The film, which opens with all the opulence of Sofia Coppola's "Marie Antoinette," makes one fatal mistake that Coppola successfully managed to avoid: Zhang brings plot to the table and a lot of it.

Curse tells the story of an ill-fated and ill-tempered royal family, the complexity of whose intrigue rivals any Shakespearean concoction of mishaps and falsities.

When the emperor (Chow Yun Fat) returns from battle with his second son (Jay Chou) on the eve of the Chong Yang Festival, a frosty empress (Gong Li) seems less than happy to see him.

We learn that she is his second wife, and he, a general who coerced his way into power with one son already at his side. This arrangement makes the crown prince (Liu Ye), son of the emperor's first wife, fair game for a long-term illicit love affair with his empress "mother."

But Crown Prince Wan has plans to end the affair. Attempting to shirk the crown, he requests permission to leave the palace in order to gain experience in the world beyond. Soon enough, however, the jealous and ailing queen bee learns of his true intentions to escape with



China has selected 'Curse of the Golden Flower' as its submission in this year's Oscar race for best foreign film.

the Imperial Doctor's daughter, Chan (Li Man).

Meanwhile the Imperial Doctor (Ni Dahong) is using Chan to enact a plan to off the empress on the emperor's behalf. Only here it is not enough simply to kill her, we're going to rob her of all mental faculty slowly over time.

When the Empress finally learns of her slow poisoning at the extended hands of her husband, the entire family's mental faculties are suddenly forfeited and an entire generation is at jeopardy. Sons betray their father, lovers their beloved and brothers each other. Why? Zhang will tell you later.

Unfortunately much of the plot involves these types of delayed revelations, making the first hour of the two-hour flick feel like one long exposition. Most of the film, in fact, is set-up for the final battle scenes: the unveiling of Zhang's strongest work, right? Martial arts combat scenes to the max! Unfortunately the action sequences in "Curse" do not come close to rivaling the majestic and simple beauty of Hero or even the intricately detailed grandeur of a "Lord of the Rings" battle for Middle Earth.

Instead, we are met with scythe-on-a-string ninjas who swing through canyons on ropes that never reach their end (a la Spiderman) and inexplicable and generally uninteresting soldiers in red

See **Film** cont'd on page 22

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Santa is confused.....

Brian's "Naughty" looks so much like his "Nice"!

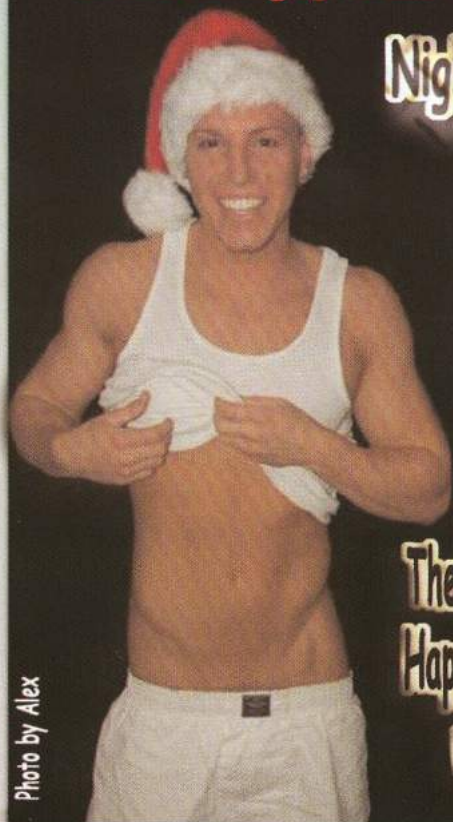


Photo by Alex

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\$1 Schnapps Sunday Night

**The Greatest Neighborhood
Happy Hour in The Heights
with Dean and Shane**

Film from page 20

who easily defeat their opponents from a distance with deadly accuracy and a bow and arrow.

What's lacking in all this is the hand-to-hand combat we came to a Zhang Yimou film to see, computer enhanced just the way we like it. Instead the CGI folks on this film only manage to pour out countless identical gold and silver soldiers, not much more detailed than I would expect from a video game, only to then depict a unilateral and distanced slaughter, again with bows and arrows.

Which brings me back to Marie Antoinette's heroine, costume designer Milena Canonero. If you loved the fall collection of 14th century women's accessories just wait until you see what the Tang dynasty has in store for you this winter.

Zhang's aesthetic in *Curse*, while not to be compared with the elegance of *Hero* or *House of Flying Daggers*, is nonetheless stunning. He hangs the film on a simple proverb, "Gold and Jade on the outside, rot and decay on the inside." And from this he derives the film's greatest consistency: gold, gold, gold!

Unfortunately family values aren't the only thing rotting underneath all that glitz. Superstars Chow and Gong give performances that don't help the soap opera-worthy plot twists. Chow and Ye, however, manage to reign in their emoting to a level that demands some

degree of sympathy for the troubled family, while Chen Ji, gives an outstanding performance as the wife of the Imperial Doctor.

Now, there's no doubt that "Curse of the Golden Flower" will rally more than a few Zhang enthusiasts who will enjoy its overdone aesthetic and a handful of unexpected and impossible sword and rope tricks in the two hand-to-hand scenes Zhang does grant us, but for the rest of us who are looking for the painterly Zhang, we'll have to dwell on the his older films for a little while longer.

Curse of the Golden Flower

Official Selection – AFI Film Festival
www.sonyclassics.com/curseofthegoldenflower

Genre: Art/Foreign/Drama/Romance

Opening Date: December 22

Running Time: 1 hour, 54 minutes

Rating: R

Cast: Chow Yun Fat, Gong Li, Jay Chou, Liu Ye, Chen Jin, Ni Dahong, Li Man, and Qin Junjie

Director: Zhang Yimou

Screenplay: Zhang Yimou, Wu Nan, and Bian Zhihong

Director of Photography: Zhao Xiaoding

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DECEMBER DATEBOOK

Compiled by Jason Sierra

Best Bet

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Sunday, Dec. 24, 9 a.m., 11 a.m. and 10 a.m. — Christmas Eve Services
Sunday, Dec. 31, 9 a.m., 11 a.m. and 7 a.m. — New Year's Eve Services



HOTDATES

This holiday season **St. Paul's Methodist Church** is offering an opportunity to share grief experiences and re-examine spirituality in the wake of loss. Living with Loss, a grief support group, will meet six Tuesday nights from 7 to 8:30 p.m., beginning Nov. 28 through Jan. 16 except for Dec. 26 and Jan. 2. For more information, contact Rev. Thompson at terryt@stpaulshouston.org.

A Very Colt Christmas: Get ready for fun, food, prizes and a wreath contest at The Colt 45's annual Christmas show and community awards to be held Sunday, Dec. 17 at 7 p.m. The festivities will be unfolding at the Colt 45's favorite hang out, The BRB, located at 2400 Brazos. All proceeds from the event will benefit Colt 45's AIDS TroubleFund. For more information, please visit www.colt45s.org

St. Paul's Methodist Church will be hosting a number of reflective and celebratory services during the holiday season. The church is within one block of both Museum District MetroRail stops, and free parking is available in two lots across Fannin Street from the church. For more information visit the church website at www.stpaulshouston.org
Sunday, Dec. 17, 4:30 p.m. - Children's Christmas Candlelight

worship service
Thursday, Dec. 21, 6 p.m. - St Paul's Chapel - Service of the Longest Night of the Year
Sunday, Dec. 24, 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. - Advent Lessons and Carols
Sunday, Dec. 24, 9 p.m. - Christmas Eve worship service
Monday, Dec. 25, 10:30 a.m. - Christmas Day worship service

Stages Repertory Theatre presents the regional premiere of Gregg Coffin's laugh-out-loud "perfect date" musical, **Five Course Love**. Follow five couples through five restaurants in this comedic performance featuring Houston favorite Thomas Prior. Friday, Dec. 8 through Sunday, Dec. 31. www.stagestheatre.com

Community Gospel Church is located just north of Montrose at 4305 Lillian Street. Information about this vibrant and welcoming community can be found on their website at www.communitygospel.org
Sunday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m. - Christmas XALT - Music and praise with desert to follow
Sunday, Dec. 24, 11 a.m. - Special candle light service
Sunday, Dec. 31, 9 p.m. to midnight - Watch, Night Service

Stages Repertory Theatre is collaborating with the Hobby Center to present the only production in Houston's downtown Theatre District created specifically for young audiences: the perennial holiday favorite "**The Toys Take Over Christmas**." Zilkha Hall will host public per-

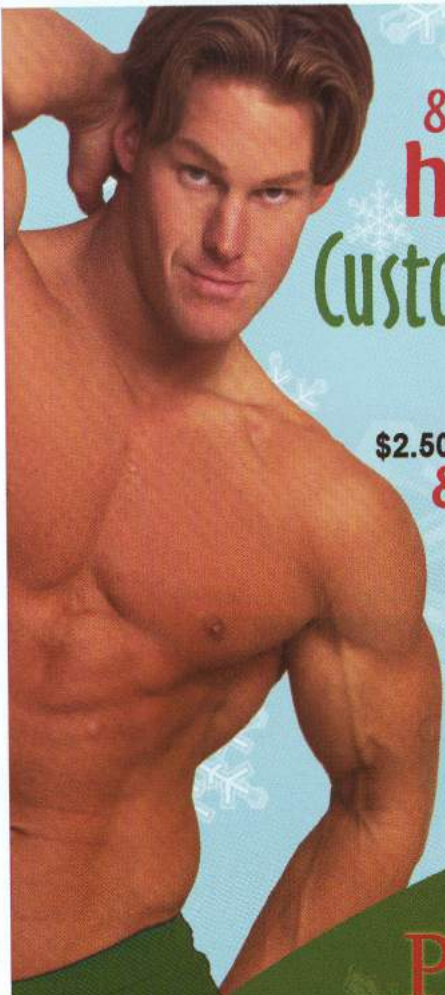
formances December 19-21 at 2 p.m., and Friday and Saturday, Dec. 22-23 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. www.thehobbycenter.org.

For 28 years the **City Wide Club** has hosted a Christmas Eve Dinner for the Houston Public in need. This year will be no different, the Christmas Eve Big Feast of Sharing will be hosted at the George R. Brown Convention Center on Sunday, Dec. 24, 2006. For volunteer information or to make reservations please call (713) 752-CLUB (2582) or visit www.citywideclub.com

The driving rhythms of India's industrial/club dance music are at the heart of Donald Byrd's "**Bhangra Fever**." For tickets or more information contact the Society for the Performing Arts at 713-227-4SPA or visit www.spa-houston.org. Performances at the Wortham Center's Cullen Theater Friday and Saturday, Jan. 12-13 at 8 p.m. as part of the I.W. Marks Dance Series.

Handel's Messiah, Conducted by Jane Glover, featuring Sari Gruber, Paula Rasmussen, Lawrence Brownlee, Derick Parker and the voices of the Houston Symphony Chorus under the direction of Charles Hausmann. Performances Friday and Saturday, Dec. 16 -17 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 18 at 2:30 p.m. www.houstonsymphony.org

For full coverage on these and more events, please visit us online at www.houstonvoice.com



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OBITUARIES



PATRICK ELLIS, 52 passed away on Saturday, November 25th, 2006 at his home in Houston, Texas of a stroke. Born August 6th, 1954 in Bordeaux, France to Charles and Eugene Ellis, Pat had lived in Houston for almost 30 years. Previous to Houston, he had lived in France, England, California, and Ohio. He is survived by his brother Michel A. Ellis of Dripping Springs, Texas and many close friends. Patrick worked for over 20 years as a buyer and a designer for Hallmark in Houston, Texas. Pat will be remembered lovingly and with joy. In lieu of flowers, please make a memorial donation to the Human Rights Campaign at HRC-Memorial Gifts, 1640 Rhode Island Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036.

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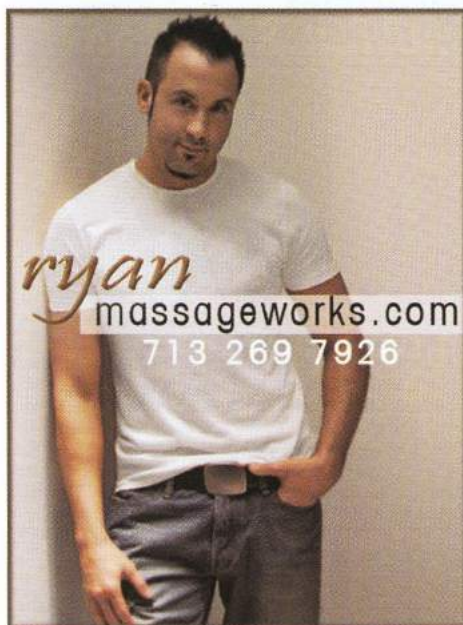
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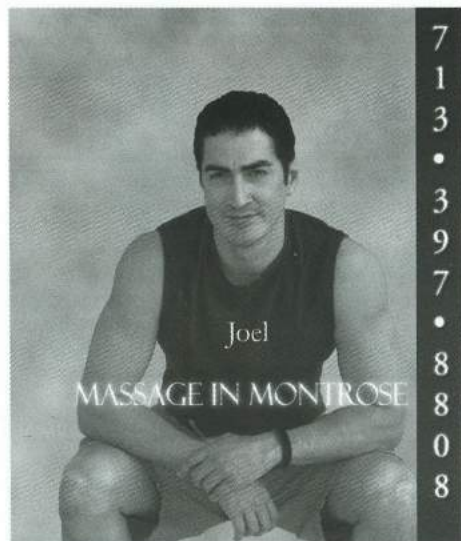
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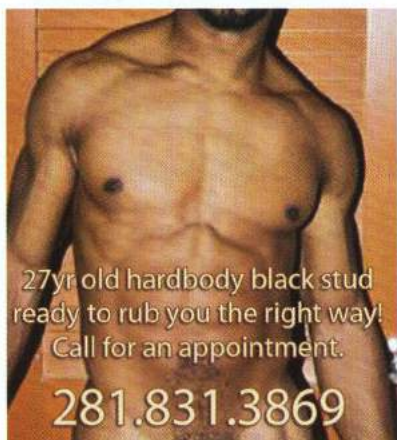


Joel
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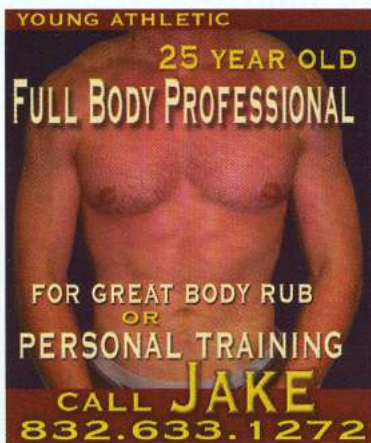
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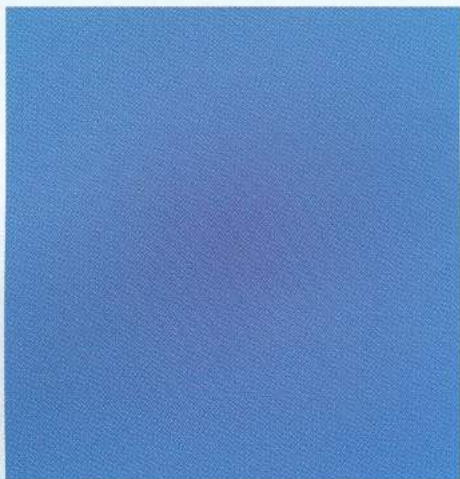
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