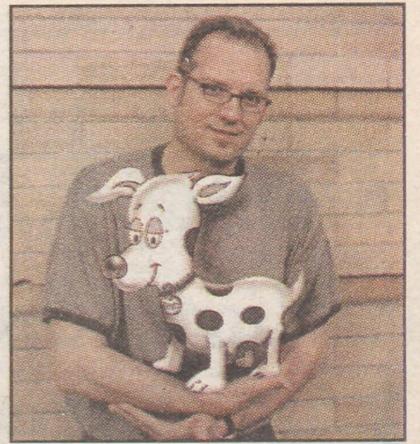


Hitting the 'Spot'

A new book for children from gay author Todd Tuttle teaches tolerance, though some conservatives are targeting the literature over its gay-friendly outlook.

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The tragic events that unfolded Tuesday rippled across the country, prompting gays to reschedule events in Houston. The day posed questions and challenges, ones gays have faced before.

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Dianne Hardy-Garcia, executive director of the Lesbian & Gay Rights Project of Texas, says the state's new gay-inclusive hate crimes law is a good start, but more legislation may be needed.

Page 5



Writer Moises Kaufman's 'The Laramie Project' comes to Unhinged Productions early next year as the production company celebrates its upcoming season on Sunday. Check our calendar of events.

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Gay co-pilot killed in Pentagon attack; gay man possible hero in PA crash



DAVID LOPEZ/AP

Hijackers onboard American Airlines Flight 77 took the controls of the plane away from a flight crew that included David Charlebois, a Washington, D.C., resident and the plane's co-pilot, and then crashed the plane into the Pentagon. Meanwhile, another gay man, Mark Bingham (inset), was on United Airlines Flight 93 and with an athletic background that includes a national rugby championship, may have helped wrestle control of that flight from the terrorists, saving many lives.

Gay rugby player on Newark flight may have helped battle for control of United plane downed near Pittsburgh

by LOU CHIBBARO JR.
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WASHINGTON—An openly gay pilot who held the position of first officer onboard American Airlines Flight 77 was among the crew and passengers who lost their lives Tuesday when terrorists hijacked the Boeing 757 jetliner and crashed it into the Pentagon.

Also among the terrorists' victims this week was gay public relations executive and rugby enthusiast Mark Bingham of San Francisco, who contacted his mother by cell phone minutes before the United Airlines jet he was taking from Newark, N.J., to San Francisco crashed in the countryside in western Pennsylvania.

The death of Bingham and American Airlines co-pilot David Charlebois, a resident of Washington, D.C.'s popular gay Dupont Circle neighborhood and a member of the National Gay Pilots Association, was one of many instances in which gays shared, firsthand, the nation's horror and grief following the terrorist attack on Sept. 11, that led to the destruction of New York City's World Trade Center and extensive damage to the Pentagon.

> Continued on Page 8

Gays brace for ballot measure

Houston city officials okay petition for anti-gay measure to go before voters in November

by MATTHEW A. HENNIE

Efforts to put an anti-gay referendum before Houston voters in November jumped a major hurdle this week, signaling that the fight over the measure is heating up.

Gay rights activists are pushing to raise \$1 million to defeat the proposal from David Wilson, founder of the conservative Houstonians For Family Values, who wants to block the city from offering benefits including health insurance to the domestic partners of gay employees.

On Monday, City Secretary Anna Russell certified some 21,028 signatures on petitions gathered by Wilson's group; 20,000 were needed to qualify the proposal for the Nov. 6 ballot.

"We are very pleased that the signatures are verified," Wilson said. "We are building coalitions and

> Continued on Page 3



A handful of volunteers worked the phones Monday at the headquarters of Progressive Voters in Action, a group campaigning to defeat an anti-gay ballot measure.

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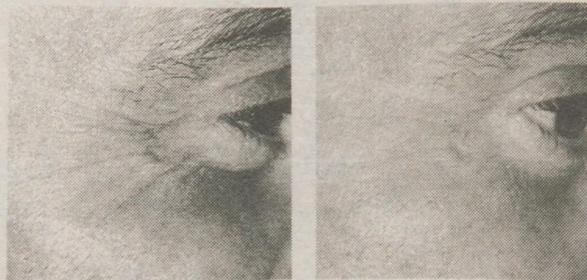
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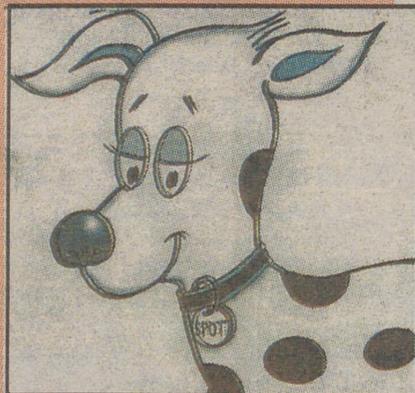
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Houston Voice
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Houston churches open doors in aftermath

Gays attend prayer vigils as terrorist attacks alter schedules

by KAY DAYUS

Although Houstonians are geographically far removed from the tragic events that unfolded this week in Washington and New York, ripples from the events touched gays in the Bayou City.

What unfolded in Houston included special church services, blood drives and a long list of events that were rescheduled in light of the terrorist attacks.

Some 150 people attended a hastily-called prayer vigil in the aftermath of the incidents Tuesday at the Metropolitan Community Church, according to Senior Pastor Dwayne Johnson.

"A prayer vigil was set up for people to pray, cry and light candles. We'll have this at least through the end of the week and longer if needed," he said.

Falwell blames gay for attacks Page 8

Various shaped candles were set up in the sanctuary representing the four crashed airliners, the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon—all targets during the devastating events earlier this week.

The impact was felt in Houston, Johnson said. A member of the congregation has a mother who lives in Manhattan. And, he added, "She has not heard from her mother yet."

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church is holding daily prayers from 12:30 to 1 p.m. to remember the victims of the attack, said Pastor Stacey Pever.

Sunday services will focus on "how to respond as Christians in the midst of violence and the constant presence of God in our midst," she said.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church had about 60 people attend prayers on Tuesday. They came "to pray for the country and the victims," said Parish

Administrator Dan Delaney.

The Houston Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce was scheduled to hold its regular monthly meeting Tuesday—featuring openly gay City Council member Annise Parker—but postponed the meeting because of the disaster.

The Lesbian & Gay Community Center has also rescheduled its pool party benefit until Sept. 22.

INFO

Metropolitan Community Church

713-861-9149

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church

713-526-1013

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

713-528-6665

Fight over ballot heats up

> Continued from Page 1
building a grassroots campaign to get out the vote in November."

The City Council still must approve the language of the question to appear on the ballot.

Both sides in the battle over the measure agree that it will go before voters in November. The fight is already taking a tactical, grassroots approach that will involve hundreds of volunteers and possibly staggering amounts of fundraising.

"We are operating on the assumption that it will make it to the ballot," said lesbian City Council member Annise Parker, who is helping lead opposition to Wilson's measure. "We have had a wonderful volunteer response for months already, but we can use as many bodies as we can get."

Parker and Grant Martin, a gay political consultant who co-founded People for a Fair Houston to combat the referendum, have alleged that volunteers for Wilson canvassed

gay-friendly areas of Houston wearing shirts with gay symbols to convince voters they were signing a petition for a gay rights measure.

"I have no faith that Dave Wilson did this legally," Martin said. "It may have been, but we won't know until we undertake our review."

Starting with a 12-hour shift Saturday, Martin's group and volunteers for the Progressive Voters in Action will comb through the petitions to check signatures against voter registration cards, Martin said.

Wilson said the allegation of fraud on the petitions is an attempt by gay activists to divert attention from the question he wants on the November ballot.

"It is just frivolous. It is totally unfounded and frivolous," Wilson said.

He said he would fire any volunteers who coerced voters to sign his petitions and pledged to remove those names from his list.

Both sides are gearing up for an intense campaign over the measure.

Martin hopes to raise \$1 million to fund a multi-pronged effort to defeat the measure, hoping to get at least \$250,000 for gays in the city. The city's business community, gay-friendly voters and national gay groups will also be asked to contribute, he said.

Already, two national gay organizations—the Human Rights Campaign and the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force—have committed to sending staffers to aid People for a Fair Houston.

Wilson said support continues to build for the measure, but he did not specify how he planned to fund his effort.

"I would love to raise as much as I could and I'm not sure how much that is," he said. "We are getting a lot of support. People are pretty adamant on this issue. The issue has grown on its own and will run itself."

To raise interest among gays, Progressive Voters in Action is coordinating daily phone



Alex Morua, executive director of Progressive Voters in Action, said the group hopes to raise awareness among gays about an anti-gay ballot measure.

banks and weekly canvassing efforts to talk with voters about defeating the measure, said Alex Morua, executive director and co-founder of the group.

A 50-person block walk is set for Sept. 29 in Fort Bend, he said.

"There are still large numbers of people that don't know about this initiative," Morua said. "This is anecdotal, but we've found that people don't know about it. We just need to continue to put the word out."

The ballot measure from Wilson's Houstonians For Family Values came in the wake of a July vote by the City Council, approving an anti-bias ordinance that outlaws discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, race, religion, age, gender or disability for the city's 23,000 employees.

Earlier this year, Mayor Lee Brown proposed offering benefits to same-sex city employees, but at the urging of gay civil rights activists withdrew the proposal and instead pursued the non-discrimination ordinance.

INFO

People for a Fair Houston

P.O. Box 667307
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713-523-1762
www.fairhouston.org

Progressive Voters in Action

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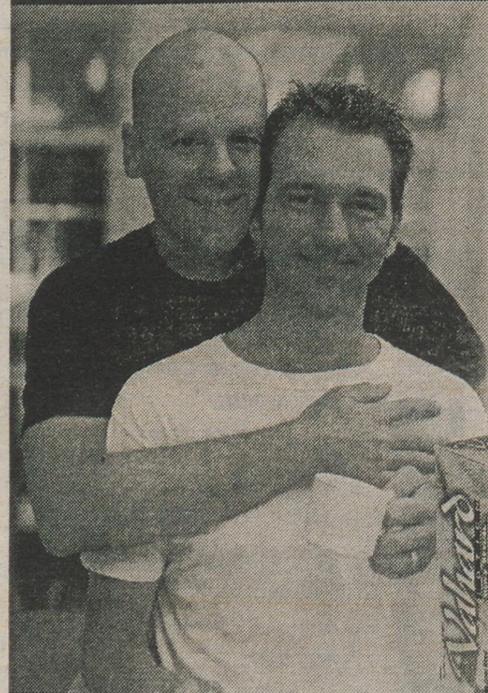
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A&M probes allegations that frat booted gay member

COLLEGE STATION, Texas—A pledge of social fraternity Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE) at Texas A&M University was removed from the organization last Saturday, only hours after he had accepted its "bid" because other fraternity members learned that he is gay, the student said, according to the *Battalion*, the campus newspaper. An investigation has been launched by the school. Clay Cunningham was invited to become an associate member of the fraternity Saturday. At that time, Cunningham said, he was asked his sexual orientation and about his membership in a campus gay group and told to turn in his pledge jersey and leave the fraternity. "I told [the fraternity] that I was gay, and he said that if I was a member of TKE, that it would ruin their organization," Cunningham said. Thomas Danner, president of TKE, said Cunningham was asked to turn in his jersey because of dishonesty. "TKE does not discriminate based on sex, race, religion or sexual orientation," Danner added. A&M student rules mandate that organizations may not discriminate against members on the basis of sexual orientation.

Panelist says TX's new hate crime law won't curb attacks



Dianne Hardy Garcia, executive director of the Lesbian & Gay Rights Project of Texas, said the state's new hate crime law is a start, but may not be enough.

DALLAS (AP)—While new legislation will strengthen penalties against hate crimes, the law alone won't curb attacks on blacks, gays and other targeted groups, a newspaper editor said Sept. 7. Prevention education and study of motivating factors also must be included, Dennis Vercher, editor of the *Dallas Voice*, a newspaper focusing on gay issues, told a panel during the National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association convention. "We need to examine the psychology of how they get to this point," he said. Gay rights activist Dianne Hardy-Garcia agreed that more must be done, but said the James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act, passed this year by the Texas Legislature, is a beginning. "This is a tremendous start for Texas," she said. The bill strengthens penalties for crimes motivated by the victim's race, religion, color, sex, disability, sexual preference, age or national origin.

TX gay gift shop raided for alleged obscenity

FORT WORTH, Texas—The owner of Woody's Warehouse, a gay gift shop, says he believes his business has been targeted by city police for unfair enforcement of a state obscenity law banning materials that violate "contemporary community standards," the Fort Worth Star Telegram reported. "It seems like selective enforcement to me," said Christopher Hightower, owner of the store. "I think it may have been an attack on our community." Fort Worth police took about 500 videos from the store last week. Hightower was arrested and charged with a Class A misdemeanor, which could lead to a \$4,000 fine and a year in jail. Police said a city official tipped off police to the allegedly obscene material after visiting the store for a routine inspection. Hightower has reopened the store, but removed all material that could be deemed sexually explicit.

NC commission bans nudity at lake popular with gays

JORDAN LAKE, N.C.—The N.C. Wildlife Commission voted unanimously to adopt a new rule banning nudity on the agency's game lands, in response to complaints about gay men sun-bathing naked near a Jordan Lake beach just north of the Indian Creek Wildlife Observation Site, the Raleigh News & Observer reported. "Our position is that we feel certain no matter what the penalty is, there will still be people who continue [to go] out there," said Commission Chair John Pechmann. "With this, they'll just be spending more time in the courtroom with their clothes on." Pridenet.com, a gay Web site, had listed the beach as a popular place for nude sunbathing. Commission members said they were prompted to action by complaints of men swimming naked. But law enforcement officers said their hands were tied because North Carolina had no law banning nude sunbathing. The new regulation, a misdemeanor that applies to both men and women, took effect Aug. 31.

FL lawmaker pushes bill to ensure student safety

ORLANDO, Fla.—Florida state Rep. Ken Gottlieb (D-Miramar) visited Orlando Sept. 7 to push for the "Dignity for All Students Act," a proposal to add ban harassment and discrimination in school based on sexual orientation as well as race, gender, religion and disability, the Orlando Sentinel reported. The bill was announced in conjunction with a weekend summit on school safety sponsored by two gay groups. The legislation would require schools to develop plans for dealing with harassment, create sensitivity training for teachers and students, and have the state Department of Education collect reports on harassment incidents. Proponents said the measure is a response to remarks made during the last legislative session by Republican Allen Trovillion, who told gay constituents who visited his office that homosexuality caused God to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.

—From staff and wire reports



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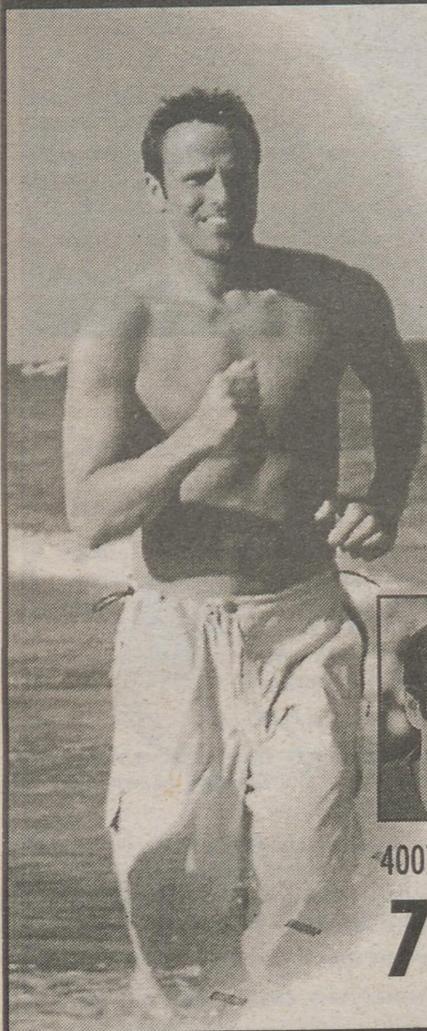
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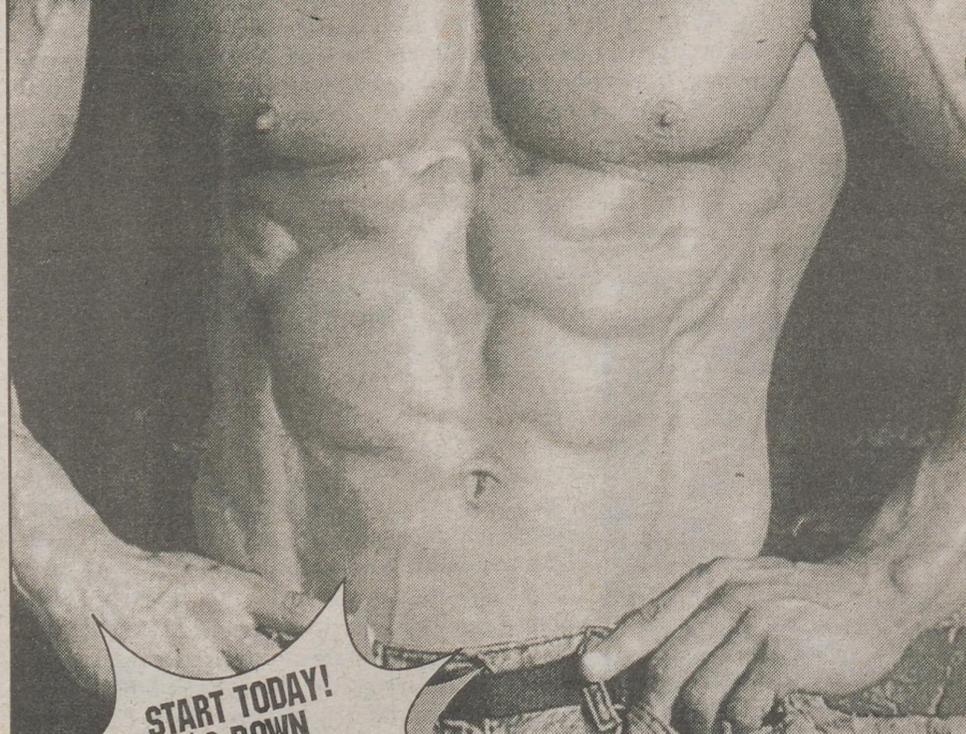
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MN attorney general will not appeal sodomy ruling

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—The Minnesota Attorney General's Office will not appeal a district judge's ruling that every adult in Minnesota is covered under her recent decision that the state's sodomy law was unconstitutional. The deadline to appeal was Aug. 31. "Because of the non-appeal, it's over," said Chuck Samuelson, executive director of the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union, which helped start the lawsuit challenging the state's sodomy law. Hennepin County District Judge Delila Pierce ruled in May that the state's ban on oral sex and other intimacy between consenting adults violated privacy rights under the Minnesota Constitution. Critics say Attorney General Mike Hatch was failing to do his public duty by not appealing. In July, Pierce certified her ruling as a class action so there would be no doubt that it applied throughout the state. Alan Gilbert, chief deputy attorney general, said they consulted with Gov. Jesse Ventura's office and decided an appeal would be "lacking in merit."



The decision of a Minnesota judge throwing out the state's sodomy law was not appealed by Attorney General Michael Hatch, which means the law is dead.

Trans woman sues United after being ordered from plane

CHICAGO—A British transgendered woman is suing United Airlines, claiming she was ordered to get off an airplane and change into men's clothing before re-boarding, the *Chicago Sun-Times* reported. Sarah West was on a flight from Omaha, Neb., to Chicago, where she was scheduled to take a connecting flight home to London. When West showed United staff her British passport, identifying her as a man, United employees told her to get off the plane and change into men's clothing, according to the lawsuit filed last week in Cook County Circuit Court. West was informed she would not be able to fly until she looked more like her passport photo, the suit stated, according to the *Times*. West says she showed United staff a letter from her doctor explaining that she was transitioning and undergoing "male to female transsexualism." "United's record on diversity speaks for itself," Andy Plews, a spokesperson for United told the *Times*. The lawsuit seeks more than \$50,000 in damages.

Gay group's Adopt-A-Highway signs missing in SD

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP)—Parts of two Adopt-A-Highway signs that were recently erected along Highway 38 for the Sioux Empire Gay & Lesbian Coalition are missing. The two signs crediting the coalition for sponsoring that portion of the highway were removed from the posts they were mounted to. Department of Transportation officials have ordered new signs to replace them. Bob Mercer, a spokesperson for Gov. Bill Janklow, said he doesn't know why the signs were removed. The signs would cost about \$75 to \$150 to replace, Mercer said. Barb Himmel-Roberts, president of the Sioux Empire Gay & Lesbian Coalition, said the group would pick up trash along the highway with or without the sign. After being approved for the program, the DOT turned down the coalition's request for a sign because the group is involved in advocacy. Janklow decided last month to give the group a sign, but then said all Adopt-a-Highway signs would be taken down at the end of the year.

Two colleges offer financial aid for gay students

BOSTON—Two colleges have recently developed scholarships aimed at helping gay students who are struggling financially. Bridgewater State College in Boston designed a scholarship that helps gay students whose families refuse to financially support them, the Associated Press reported. About \$8,200 has been donated so far. The college is aiming for \$10,000 and hopes the first awards will be given next year. The Frank-Tremblay Safe Colleges Scholarship is named for lesbian folksinger Lucie Blue Tremblay, who has raised money for the scholarship, and U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), who is openly gay and represents the Bridgewater area. Meanwhile, gay alumni of the University of Puget Sound raised \$25,000 to endow a scholarship for lesbian, gay male, bisexual and transgendered students, according to the *Tacoma News Tribune*.

CO university nixes domestic partner benefits

BOULDER, Colo. (AP)—The University of Colorado Board of Regents last week rejected a proposal to offer health benefits to same-sex partners of university employees. The proposal died on a 4-4 tie vote, with Board Chair Maureen Edigar abstaining. Edigar said she was not convinced that CU's failure to provide the benefits was keeping some good faculty candidates away. "I want to be clear that I do not agree with those who lobbied me to vote no based on a moral judgment of these employees' lifestyles," she said in a written statement after the vote. Regent Tom Lucero got help from the Christian Coalition of Colorado in lobbying against the proposal. In a letter seeking donations, Lucero cited a threat from "the extreme homosexual-agenda leaders." The proposal's sponsor, Regent Bob Sievers, said he wanted to ensure that all employees were treated the same way, and noted that other public institutions and private companies have such policies.

—From staff and wire reports



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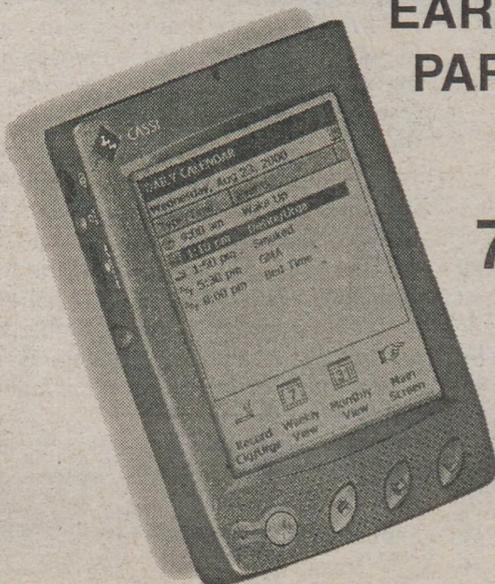
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Mother comforted by gay son's possible heroics

➤ Continued from Page 1

The story of Bingham's possible heroics became the subject of national television and newspaper reports this week when his mother, Alice Hoglan, a United Airlines flight attendant, told of how Bingham called her on his cell phone to say his plane had been hijacked.

Hoglan said her son's reputation for fighting for civic justice, along with a past episode where he fought off muggers, leads her to believe that he took steps on the United flight to prevent the terrorists from taking the hijacked plane to its intended target. U.S. government officials have speculated that the terrorists planned to crash the plane into the presidential retreat in Camp David, Md., or possibly into the U.S. Capitol Building.

"The fact that he was so close to the action, it is likely that he was able to get at these guys," she told the Associated Press. "It gives me a great deal of comfort to know my son may have been able to avert the killing of many, many innocent people.

Another passenger on the flight, Thomas Burnett, of San Ramon, Calif., called his wife and said that he and two other passengers had decided to try and wrest control of the plane from the terrorists, the *San Francisco Chronicle* has reported.

"I know we're all going to die—there's three of us who are going to do something about it," Burnett told his wife, according to the paper.

Bingham was sitting at the rear of the first class cabin, but it was unclear where Burnett was sitting and whether Bingham was one of the other two men mentioned in his brief call. Hoglan said she believed the call from her son came 10-15 minutes before the plane crashed near Pittsburgh.

The San Francisco gay sports organization Outsports reports on its Web site that Bingham, 31, was a member of a local gay rugby team and planned to organize a rugby team for next year's Gay Games in Sidney,

Australia. Outsports called Bingham "a warm, friendly, smart, handsome man who welcomed people into his life. ... He was a member of our community."

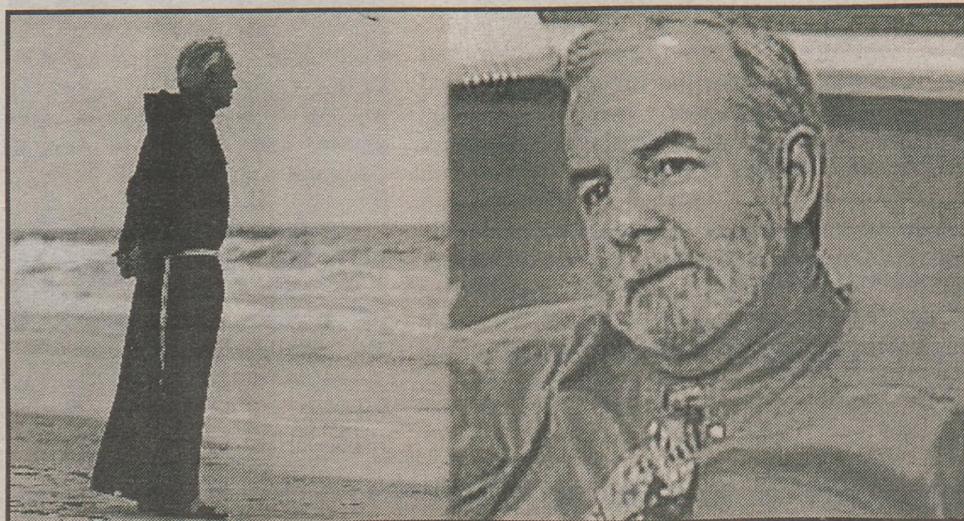
Meanwhile, American Airlines flight attendant Robert Todd, who is gay, said he was shocked on Tuesday when he learned that Flight 77 was the jet that the terrorist hijackers had plunged into the side of the Pentagon. Todd said he worked on that flight numerous times while Charlebois served in the cockpit as first officer.

Todd said he also worked frequently on that flight with pilot Charles Burlingame and each of the four flight attendants who perished on Tuesday. Flight 77 originates at Washington's Dulles International Airport and travels on weekdays to Los Angeles.

"I lost a whole crew of my co-workers and friends," Todd told the *Houston Voice*, struggling to contain his emotions. He said he is grappling with the loss, in part, by volunteering to work with American Airlines' Care Team, a group of counselors, grief experts and trained volunteers that assists relatives of passengers who are lost in airline crashes. Todd said the team also offers its services to employees faced with the loss of co-workers and friends.

American Airlines officials said late Wednesday that they were not ready to release official company biographies on the flight crews lost in the crash of Flight 77, at the site of the Pentagon, and of Flight 11, the first of two jets to slam into one of the two World Trade Center towers in New York.

Todd said Charlebois, who was in his early 40s, had been flying for American Airlines for about 10 years. According to Todd, Charlebois was trained and certified to serve as first officer, or co-pilot, on U.S. domestic flights for Boeing 757s, which carry about 178 passengers, and Boeing 767s, which carry about 207 passengers.



Among the victims: Father Mychal Judge, the chaplain of the New York Fire Department who is reportedly gay, is presumed killed by falling debris from the World Trade Center collapse; David Angell, co-executive producer of 'Frasier' and a longtime supporter of gay causes, was aboard American Airlines Flight 11, the first plane to crash into the World Trade Center.

He said first officers typically serve as second in command and usually fly the planes to which they are assigned on the return trip during "two-leg" flights to various cities.

"He was one of the most liked pilots I know," said Todd, who noted that American Airlines officials and virtually all flight crews and pilots who worked with Charlebois knew he was gay.

"While the entire country has been deeply affected by today's events, it is our sad duty to report that this tragedy has struck [the National Gay Pilots Association] directly," the NGPA's board of directors said in a statement to its members released Sept. 11. "NGPA member David Charlebois, based in Washington, D.C., was the first officer on one of the American Airlines 767 [jets] lost in today's attack.

"His smile brightened a number of NGPA events and the news of his loss car-

ries with it a great grief for all of those who knew him, both on the ground and in the air," the NGPA statement said.

Eric Little, owner of the Washington gay bar JR's, called Charlebois "a wonderful friend and neighbor." Little said Charlebois was a frequent patron at JR's and appeared to be well-liked by everyone who knew him.

Charlebois partner of 14 years could not be reached by presstime.

Among the other gay people known dead as a result of the terrorist attack is Rev. Mychal Judge, the New York Fire Department's Catholic chaplain. New York gay journalist Andy Humm said Judge was open about being gay among gay men and lesbians in the city.

"He was a decent, wonderful human being," said Humm. "When gays were kept out of the St. Patrick's Parade, he gave me

➤ Continued on Page 9

Falwell blames gays, liberals for terrorist attacks

Anti-gay advocate makes remarks on '700 Club' broadcast; Robertson nods approval

by LOU CHIBBARO JR.

WASHINGTON—Rev. Jerry Falwell said gays, feminists, "pagans," and a host of liberal advocacy groups have made "God mad" and must share the blame for the terrorist attacks this week that took the lives of thousands of Americans at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Falwell made his remarks Thursday while appearing on the religious television program "The 700 Club," hosted by Rev.

Pat Robertson. Falwell and Robertson are strong opponents of gay civil rights.

"I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way—all of them who have tried to secularize American—I point the finger in their face and say, 'You helped this happen,'" Falwell said on the program, which was broadcast nationally.

"Well, I totally concur," Robertson told Falwell, "and the problem is we have adopted their agenda at the highest levels of our government."

The comments by Falwell and Robertson came at a time when gay activists have joined leading Republicans and Democrats in calling

for national unity and full, bipartisan support for President Bush's planned response to the terrorist attacks.

"The terrible tragedy that has befallen our nation, and indeed the entire global community, is the sad byproduct of fanaticism," said Lorri L. Jean, executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force.

"It has its roots in the same fanaticism that enables people like Jerry Falwell to preach hate against those who do not think, live, or love in the exact same way he does," Jean said.

In separate statements released this week, the national gay groups Log Cabin Republicans and National Stonewall Democrats condemned the terrorist attacks and declared their support for Bush's efforts to respond to the incidents.

"Gay and lesbian Americans across

the nation are united today," said Log Cabin executive director Rich Tafel. "In the face of defending our nation together, all differences fall away, and all other issues pale in comparison."

"This week's tragedy truly asks all of us to come together as a people to bury our dead, to comfort and heal all families and to rebuild this strong nation," the National Stonewall Democrats said in a statement. "Stonewall Democrats join in solidarity with all Americans in placing our loyal support behind our national government and our president."

The group added, "Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered Americans also have paid with their lives and their honor, and we join in saluting their sacrifices and those of every American who suffered these terrible, senseless events.

Gay chaplain, 'Frasier' exec among attack victims

➤ Continued from Page 14

an interview on the street telling me how terrible it was for us to be discriminated against and for the church to be doing it. I saw him at many demonstrations for gay and AIDS causes, showing up in his Franciscan monk's cassock. And he was equally beloved by the Fire Department, there at every major fire tragedy in the city lending moral support to firefighters."

David Angell, 54, of Pasadena, Calif., executive producer of the NBC TV show "Frasier," was aboard American Airlines Flight 11, the first plane to crash into the World Trade Center.

Angell, who was heterosexual, joined in the protests against "Dr. Laura" Schlessinger and wrote the episode of "Cheers" in which Sam's old friend comes out to him and the gang fears Cheers is going to become a gay bar.

Also killed in the plane crash at the Pentagon was Berry Berenson, an acclaimed fashion photographer, actress, and former wife of actor Anthony Perkins (of "Psycho" fame) who was known for her advocacy work in support of gay civil rights and AIDS related causes. After their divorce, Perkins publicly acknowledged he was gay and died later from AIDS-related complications.

Trying to make sense

Like their straight counterparts, gay Americans huddled by their televisions, struggled to reach loved ones through overloaded telephone lines, and pondered the meaning and the magnitude of the stunning developments. Gay New Yorkers and gay Washingtonians, according to activists, also seemed willing to take the first step in putting aside differences with those who have opposed them politically in an effort to work together to address the common enemy of terrorism.

"This kind of nightmare does more than anything to highlight that we are all one community, not many different communities," said Jay Fisette, the openly gay chair of the board that governs Arlington County, Va., and has jurisdiction over much of the emergency medical and fire fighting agencies that rushed to the Pentagon on Tuesday.

"What this shows is we all have much more in common," he said.

With large gay populations in both the New York and Washington areas, activists said the sharing of grief was clearly one of the things gays had in common with their fellow residents. At press time late yesterday, the number of gays who lost their lives in the collapse of the World Trade Center towers and nearby buildings in New York could not be determined. But activists there said they fear the numbers could swell to enormous proportions.

In the aftermath of the collapse of the World Trade Center towers in New York, gay activists joined their fellow New Yorkers in assessing the terrorist attack on the United States that many have compared to the Japanese air raid attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

"We'll never be okay again," said New York gay journalist and commentator Andy Humm, in an e-mail message sent out on the

day of the incident. "Sure to have lost friends. Monstrous. Don't know what to do. Don't know where to go."

Veteran New York gay and AIDS activist Bill Dobbs said he bicycled to a location near City Hall, where he saw the streets littered with debris from the World Trade Center collapse. He said he picked up a letter addressed to a company on the 99th floor of one of the trade center towers.

"Trade Towers are a part of my daily life; seeing them and the Empire State Building is quintessence of Manhattan for me," Dobbs said. "Now giant clouds of gray smoke obscure where they would be."

Peter Staley, a long-time member of ACT UP New York City and AIDS treatment activist, told of a conversation with a friend who was at work inside the first of the two World Trade Center towers to explode into flames after being hit by the jetliner.

Staley said his friend escaped physical harm. "I asked him how he was, and he said he was 'physically okay,' but then started to cry, and said he couldn't talk about it—it hurt too much. The sound of his voice shattered me," Staley said. "This city will never be the same."

Lorri L. Jean, executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force and a former official with the Federal Emergency

Management Agency who supervised earthquake relief efforts in San Francisco in the 1980s, said emotional fallout from calamities like this week's terrorist attacks often affect more people than physical injuries.

Jean said that while disaster relief workers must devote their initial attention to the physically injured, the biggest problem in the long run is often those suffering emotional wounds.

"I've found that gay people are disproportionately affected because they often don't have a traditional family to provide emotional support," Jean said.

Rex Wockner and Associated Press contributed to this report.

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EDITORIAL

Gay community's experience can help now

by CHRIS CRAIN

Another day of infamy. Another Pearl Harbor. That's how the terrorist attack this week on the United States is being compared in the early hours after the tragedy.

The scope is so horrible, the loss of life on our own soil so unparalleled, that for many Americans, the initial response has been shock and, in some cases, paralysis.

They struggle for some sort of explanation; they cast about for the proper way to respond; they're unsure what to do with their rising anger, their need for vengeance. They look to the government for protection, but they question seriously whether they will ever feel safe and secure again.

For many Americans, especially those not old enough to remember the massive casualties of ground wars, this experience is truly without comparison.

But we've been there, haven't we?

A number of authors, especially Eric Rofes from San Francisco, have written eloquently about how the gay community, and gay men in particular, responded to the overwhelming loss of life from the AIDS epidemic in much the same way as communities ravaged by war.

Passing through stages of shock, grief and response, gays and our friends came together to create a community that would comfort our own, lobby for an adequate response to the invisible enemy at hand, and help us navigate the risks of what seems like an entirely new world.

In the aftermath of Sept. 11, the rest of America can learn from our painful experience, and already the gay communities in New York and Washington are leading by example, responding to the challenge with the same energy and generosity that we showed for our own when others would not.

There is, of course, a bitter irony to our efforts. Gay men who have turned out to donate blood have been turned away, shown the door by an outdated policy that treats our blood as if it were impervious to testing and gay sex as somehow uniquely dangerous.

In Washington, the terrorists struck at the Pentagon, which for many gays has been a powerful symbol of discrimination and exclusion, ever since the military establishment joined forces with the conservatives of both parties to turn back President Clinton's effort to integrate our armed forces.

But this week, even more than most, we are Americans—and humans—above all other affiliations. Like the partisans on Capitol Hill, we will put aside what divides us, and focus our energies on what unifies us, as we each do what we can to help and support the victims and their families.

But we know that many Americans, especially those geographically removed from the terrorists' battlefield, will feel powerless to do much that is constructive and will instead give into their anger, and their thirst for vengeance.



For many Americans, Sept. 11 poses questions and challenges that are truly without comparison. But we've been there, haven't we?

Easy scapegoats

Our experience with AIDS offers us another relevant lesson here: about getting the facts first, and about not scapegoating the easy targets. Our country has an unfortunate history of acting before thinking, and blaming whomever is most convenient.

Initial reports have suggested that Islamic terrorists are responsible for the Sept. 11 attack, casting suspicion on anyone who looks Arab or Muslim, or who has an Arabic-sounding name.

Within hours, Fox News inexplicably chose to interview Jerry Falwell about how America should respond, and the good reverend was only too happy to oblige with hateful rhetoric about "these people" and their brutality. It won't not surprise you to learn that he wasn't just talking about Osama bin Laden and his team of terrorists, either.

Many gays may find it especially hard to defend the faith of Islam and its followers. Islamic countries led the fight to exclude gay groups from the U.N. Conference on HIV/AIDS in June, and even to strike any mention of gay men as a population uniquely damaged and in need of education about prevention.

Islamic countries are also among the worst in their treatment of gays. In some, including Afghanistan, men accused of homosexuality are sometimes placed in front of rock walls, which are then collapsed on top of them, almost always resulting in their death.

But Islam is also a faith with a historical commitment to addressing injustice. Much like Christianity and Judaism, the religion of Mohammed can be used to justify good as well as evil and should not be judged by its most extreme adherents.

A risky new world

In New York and in Washington, and in airports around the country, the most profound long-term effect of Sept. 11 may be our loss of security. It may be true that other forms of transportation, especially the automobile, remain far more dangerous statistically, but that is cold comfort as we sit onboard planes, wondering what it must have been like for those who died aboard the four jetliners hijacked this week.

Our experience with AIDS, believe it or

not, has something to offer here as well. For more than 20 years now, our lives have been forever changed by the new risk posed by HIV and AIDS. During that time, public health officials and AIDS activists have debated how far they should go with urging prevention strategies.

With both terrorism and AIDS, one response to the risk is abstinence. If you don't have sex, or you don't fly, then you can eliminate the risk. But that's a clear overreaction and sacrifices too much of our way of life.

Instead, we will learn to navigate the risks of air travel in much the same way we have learned to weigh the risks of our sexual involvements. The more information we can be given, the smarter our choices can be. Then it remains with each of us to act responsibly based upon what we know.

And as with the debate over safer sex, those in authority undoubtedly will resist the dissemination of relevant information, not trusting us to absorb it and act responsibly. That strategy is shortsighted on both counts.

We all know that modern life comes with risks, and as we successfully reduce the risks faced by previous generations, some new risks take their place. We have a right to weigh for ourselves the costs and the benefits of a particular course of conduct, and those in authority have an obligation to make our choices informed ones.

As we all learn what life holds in store after Sept. 11, we should remember perhaps the most important lesson we have been taught by AIDS. Those of us who survive owe it to those who did not to live what is left of our lives to the fullest, giving what we can to others.

Just as gay men have refused to allow even the scourge of AIDS to poison our relationships and our beloved sense of community, we must not allow the terrorists the satisfaction of knowing that they have disrupted something so fundamental as our confidence in ourselves and the principles upon which this country was founded.

Chris Crain is executive editor of the *Houston Voice* and can be reached at ccrain@window-media.com.



VIEWPOINT

A hetero wedding makes sense, even in French

by MUBARAK DAHIR

I couldn't understand exactly what my friends Caroline and Frederic were saying as they exchanged vows in a monumental stone church hundreds of years old, idyllically situated in a small village in southern France.

But as I sat on one of the hard wood benches in mid August and bore witnesses to their union, I understood the gravity of the vows they had written themselves and then proclaimed to one another.

As they made their commitments to each other in French, I knew it didn't matter that I couldn't understand every word. What mattered was that I was sitting there, sharing what was the most important day of their lives, and lending my support to their future together as a couple.

I was surprised at myself for being so emotional over a wedding, the kind of event that usually evokes nothing but ambivalence from me. Maybe I didn't feel my usual animus about weddings because this one was taking place in a country where same-sex couples can get some form of recognition from the government, even if it isn't quite equal marriage yet.

Or maybe it was because the ceremony was in French, and I didn't understand what was being said. In a weird way, that freed me from having to concentrate on the formalities of all the spoken words, the vows, the religious mumbo jumbo (which always alienates me), and all the other pomp and circumstance of such an event.

Instead, I was free to just sit there and soak up the atmosphere. It certainly gave me plenty of time to think about what was happening and why it was important enough for my lover and me to travel thousands of miles to be there.

Whatever it was that sparked my emotional nerve, I was in fact stirred, and I couldn't help looking at my lover of five years sitting next to me, and sending him a silent sig-

I was surprised I got so emotional over a wedding, the kind of event that usually evokes nothing but ambivalence from me. Maybe it was because the ceremony was in French, and I didn't understand what was being said.

nal of affection through a hand squeeze.

While I have always supported the fight for marriage for gay couples, I have to admit I've never been overly sentimental about it. I've always seen marriage, that historically heterosexual institution, as so fraught with flaws that I often wondered why we would fight so hard for entry into such a bad arrangement. And mostly, I've looked upon the battle for equal marriage rights as a political struggle aimed at securing the laundry list of financial and legal benefits that come with a little piece of paper from the government that say two people are joined together.

I once had an ex-boyfriend who loved weddings. At his brother's engagement party, a group of us were sitting around listening to wedding plans and cooing over the gifts that had been opened that day. When his brother's in-laws expressed surprise at the level of interest he showed in the wedding details—he was asking about everything from the dress to the flowers—my then-boyfriend not-so-jokingly proclaimed he was "born to be a bride!"

I know many gay men and lesbians who share that sentiment. (Though more gay men than lesbians would probably express it just that way.) Yet I could never really get myself terribly excited about the prospect of walking down the aisle.

I guess I always looked at my relationship as a private thing, something between me and my lover. I never felt a piece of paper from the government particularly meant a lot, and in some ways, I still don't. That piece of paper can't validate our rela-

tionship—only we can.

The meaning I do find in government recognition, though important, is somewhat sterile—it's all about things like legal rights and tax breaks and so on. Nothing particularly romantic or moving.

I guess I'd always seen marriage as made up of those two parts: the highly private and personal, which involved the gooey love stuff, and the antiseptically legal, that involved government paperwork and the dry details of contract intricacies.

But at Caroline and Frederic's wedding, for the first time I felt another dimension: the important element of public sup-

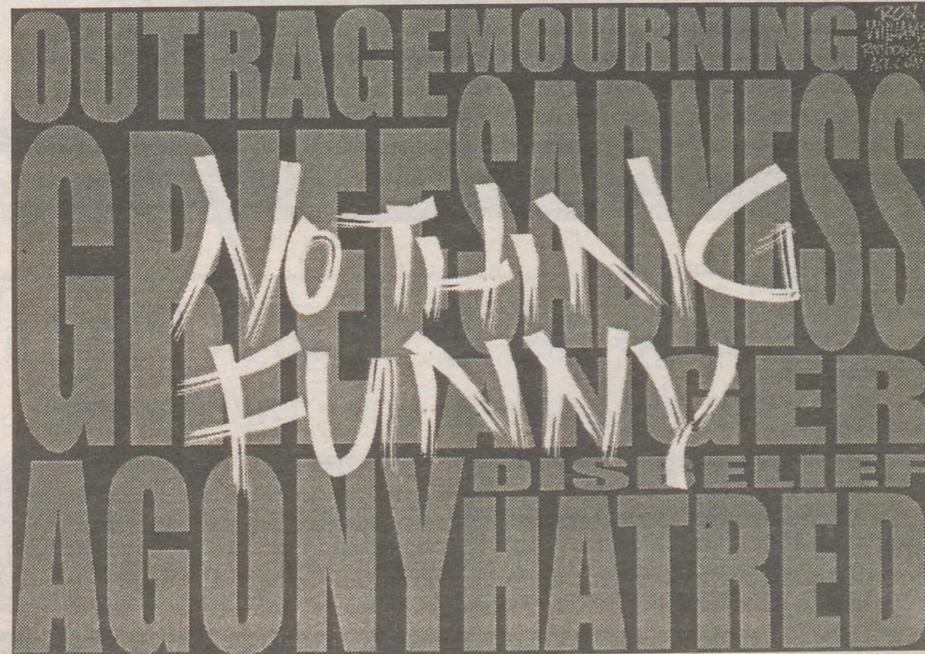
port. Pretty obvious, I know, and intellectually, I've always known it was there, but somehow I never really believed in it. It always seemed a little hokey, a little too sentimental, like something dreamed up in a Hallmark card.

But as I sat in a strange church in a foreign land, listening to a ceremony in a language I didn't understand, this new piece of understanding seemed to suddenly fall in place for me. I realized, as gushy as it might sound, I really was there to show Caroline and Frederic personal support, and to be part of their happiness.

The experience has given me more resolve to watch closely how the marriage battle develops in different states (including the current court battle over marriage in Massachusetts) and to argue with some real passion for this basic human freedom.

My boyfriend better be careful. I might even do something crazy like propose.

Mubarak Dahir lives in Astoria, N.Y., and can be reached at MubarakDah@aol.com.



The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Green

by eric orner

<p><i>Husband Material</i></p>	<p>Poor Doug. It's his fate to be exactly the kind of guy other guys want to marry.</p>	<p>They don't just want to hang with him. They don't just want to sleep with him. They want to grow old with him. They want him in their photo albums dancing with their moms at family weddings.</p>	<p>Doug's not sure where exactly this quality of his is located. If he knew, he'd have it cut off.</p>
<p>Because Doug has never wanted to couple up. Oh sure, he likes having a boyfriend. But he also likes having his own place.</p>	<p>He likes the idea of traveling alone. He likes drinking milk from the bottle.</p>	<p>SO CHECK OUT THESE FABRIC SAMPLE BOOKS. WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER 6 MONTHS. I'M THINKING WE SHOULD RE-UPHOLSTER.</p>	<p>AGONY HATRED</p>



Photography by Lorenza Gomez

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Out on the Bayou

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HOUSTON VOICE • SEPTEMBER 14, 2001

The right 'Spot'

A new children's book seeks to teach gay tolerance but avoid censorship

by ERIN O'BRIANT

"Spot" couldn't be cuter. But he has a bull's-eye painted on his backside.

The new children's book tells the story of a little dog named Spot who lives in a town named Barksville. The problem with Barksville, unfortunately for the pup, is that everyone there hates dogs without spots.

But poor Spot's markings disappear as he grows older. He tries to pretend he is just like everyone else, but eventually his friends discover his secret and run him out of Barksville.

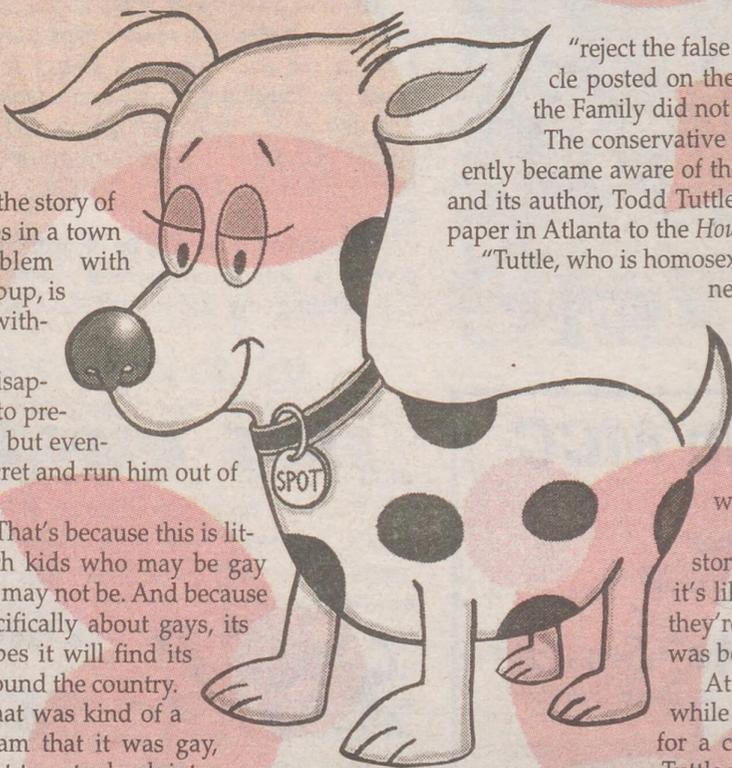
Sound familiar, gay readers? That's because this is literature with a purpose—to reach kids who may be gay and teach tolerance to those who may not be. And because it never mentions anything specifically about gays, its author, Todd Tuttle, says he hopes it will find its way into schools and libraries around the country.

"I wanted to create a story that was kind of a universal story that didn't scream that it was gay, because a lot of times if you want to get a book into the hands of kids around the country—if it's gay-specific—sometimes there's a lot of censorship," the Florida native explains.

That's because Tuttle and his partner, Marc Adams, have taken on a delicate mission: They've started a program called Heartstrong that reaches out to students at religious institutions. During their extensive travels—they've logged 170,000 car miles in less than four years—they're often asked to speak at churches that include a special part of the service for children.

Focus on the Family, one of the most powerful religious right organizations in the country, is now taking aim.

Earlier this month, the conservative family organization called for parents to teach their children to



"reject the false tolerance Spot teaches," according to an article posted on the religious organization's Web site. Focus on the Family did not respond to interview requests.

The conservative group, headed by Dr. James Dobson, apparently became aware of the book following a feature story on the book and its author, Todd Tuttle, late last month in *Southern Voice*, the sister paper in Atlanta to the *Houston Voice*.

"Tuttle, who is homosexual, told a gay publication the camouflage is necessary 'if you want to get a book into the hands of kids around the country,'" according to the Focus on the Family Web site.

During their visits to schools, Adams gave the main address, Tuttle would prepare a story for the kids. But instead of reading someone else's story, he decided, he would create his own.

"I [wanted to] come up with an original story to give the message, the parable, of what it's like for a gay person to grow up and feel like they're different," he says. "And that's how Spot was born."

At first, he prepared drawings that he used while reading the story aloud. Many parents asked for a copy of the story to take home, though, so Tuttle put the words and his adorable drawings into book form.

Now his goal, he says, is to get "Spot" into every library and school in the country.

Tuttle and his partner are no stranger to activism through literature. Adams' book "The Preacher's Son," which was a Lambda Literary Award finalist in 1996, is the reason the two created their outreach program to gay students.

The book tells Adams' life story. Like Tuttle, he grew up in a fundamentalist Baptist home. Adams' father was a Baptist minister; he and Adams' mother used their religion to justify the emotional and physical abuse of their children.

The book follows Adams from childhood through his years of torment as a college student at



'Spot'—a character created by gay author Todd Tuttle (left, with partner Marc Adams)—is designed to teach children gay tolerance and is coming under fire from some conservative religious groups.

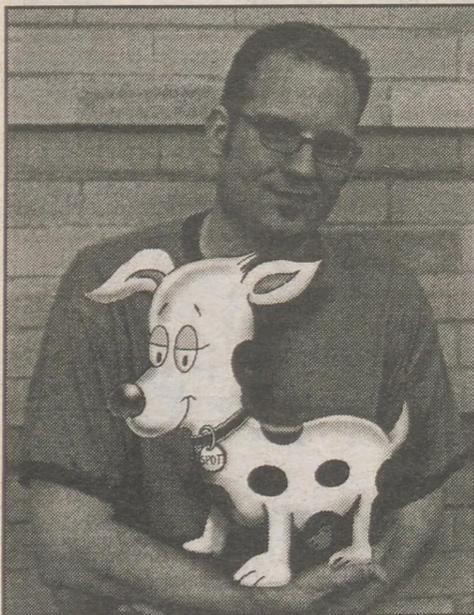
> Continued on Page 14

Conservatives say 'Spot' recruits for gays

> Continued from Page 13

Rev. Jerry Falwell's Liberty University struggling with his feelings for Tuttle. Obviously, the story has a happy ending: He and Tuttle have been partners for 12 years and they both live as out, proud gay men.

After the book came out, Adams says,



Todd Tuttle, the openly gay author of a new children's book with a universal theme of acceptance, has been targeted by Focus on the Family for using a cartoon dog to recruit children into homosexuality.

past and present gay students at religious schools began contacting him.

"After a few months of hearing from so many people who were in that situation who were looking for the same hope I was looking for [then], Todd and I decided we needed to do something about this," Adams explains. "We decided we actually had a responsibility to do it."

That decision changed their lives. During a move from Los Angeles, where they had pursued careers in advertising and printing, to Seattle, the two decided to start Heartstrong.

"We'd saved enough to put a down payment on a house and when we moved from L.A. to Seattle and started Heartstrong we decided the most important thing we could do was to take that money and put it towards starting this organization," Adams says.

They quit their jobs and used the money to begin their Heartstrong activism full-time.

Adams isn't exaggerating when he talks about saving lives. The plight of gay students at right-wing religious schools is a painful one, he and Tuttle say. Suicide is not infrequent. And most of the students don't have a choice about whether or not to attend a religious school.

"Your parents decide where you're going to go to school," Tuttle says. "And [the stu-

dents] are also told at a lot of these schools that they can find change if they draw close to God. You think [being gay is] a spiritual issue—it's not something you are, it's something you're afflicted with."

Tuttle and Adams both say students at such institutions are regularly forced to reveal the identities of other students they believe may be gay and are coerced into ex-gay programs, where "treatments" can include electroshock therapy.

Tuttle says he thinks their program is "one of the most extensive outreaches in the history of the gay movement."

The two aren't necessarily invited to the schools they visit. But they go anyway.

"We go on campuses of schools... [and] we leave materials around—gay-positive tracts," notes Tuttle. "We also go into religious bookstores and leave them around. We're very pro-active, not reactive, which is something we're proud of."

The two travel extensively in the South, though they don't have any trips planned here in the near future. Working in the South isn't all that different from anywhere else, they say, but Adams points out that people here seem to have more respect for religious schools than in other parts of the country.

"Sometimes there will be parents of gay people [at our meetings] and they'll say, 'I'm sending my kid to religious school

because it's prestigious in our town, I never thought about what they might be taught about gay people or themselves,'" he explains.

For Tuttle and Adams, the future holds more outreach through words. Adams is working on a book about a gay teenager in Ohio who killed himself rather than face the anti-gay abuse and violence in his high school.

In the meantime, Tuttle will continue to send his little dog Spot into schools, libraries, churches and homes to teach children that the world is bigger than Barksville.

'Spot' by Todd Tuttle

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INFO

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Montrose Clinic will present this seminar on Thursday, October 4, 2001 from 7 - 9 PM at the Museum of Health and Medical Sciences, 1515 Herman Dr at La Branch, next to Park Plaza Hospital.

Call the Montrose Clinic Special Events Line at 713-830-3006 to make your reservation.

appts.

SEPT. 7-13

friday, sept. 14

Forget film blockbusters that just go bust, digital effects, empty theatrics, or 8th-grade gross-out humor, we're in Eric Rohmer territory, that special land of cinema where ideas and characters sometimes double up, in "My Night at Maud's." Jean-Louis Trintignant, obsessed with the philosophy of Pascal, seeks as his ideal lover a blond and a Catholic. When the dark-haired heathen Françoise Fabian platonically shares his bed, his Gallic perceptions turn upside down. There's much clever and witty banter and a sumptuous scene photographed in luxurious black and white. If you aren't aware of this Frenchman's intelligent and comic movies, this is one of his best. 7 p.m. **Museum of Fine Arts, 1001 Bissonnet. 713-639-7531**

sunday, sept. 16

Unhinged Productions, which in seasons past has impressed with Hugh Whitmore's adult, intelligent drama about gay British mathematical genius Alan Turing in "Breaking the Code," and Edwin Sanchez' steamroller of Hispanic assimilation in his "Unmerciful Good Fortune," is throwing a theatrical wingding to celebrate their upcoming season. In January, the edgy company brings to town Moises Kaufman's portrait of the Matthew Shepard killing, "The Laramie Project." While showing off their impressive dramatic wares, the people responsible for some of Houston's most intriguing fare offer free



Writer Moises Kaufman's 'The Laramie Project' gained critical acclaim for bringing to stage a portrait of the brutal slaying of Matthew Shepard in 1998. The production arrives in Houston early next year.

brunch with mimosas and entertainment. **Noon to 3 p.m. Meteor, 2306 Genesee. 713-524-8707**

tuesday, sept. 18

Tracy Letts' smudged black comedy from 1993—"Killer Joe"—arrives from prestigious productions in Chicago, London, and Edinburgh's Fringe Festival, where it garnered a top award. The trailer trash Smith family has a problem: Son Chris shows up at 3 a.m. having lost his precious stash of cocaine to his mother Adele who's stolen it. He wants her dead, and convinces Dad, sister Dottie, and stepmom Sharla to go along with his whacked out plotting. When they enlist the help of loopy part-time paid assassin Killer Joe, he demands dear sister as collateral. The laughs come fast in this Sam Shepard-inspired American comedy of dysfunction. Thru Oct. 20. **Theater LaB Houston, 1706 Alamo. 713-868-7516**

thursday, sept. 20

The classical ballet "Swan Lake" is the dance equivalent to a play by Shakespeare: perfect, haunting, emotionally satisfying. It is one of the great works of art. Houston Ballet principal Mireille Hassenboehler, whose sumptuous Black Swan brought down the house last season at the Woodlands and was a tantalizing preview of her full characterization, assays the demanding lead role. Making his debut as her swain is David Makhateli. Thru Sept. 30. **Houston Ballet, Wortham Theater Center, 500 Texas. 713-227-ARTS**

friday, sept. 28

Callie, a native New Yorker and radio traffic reporter, befriends newcomer Sara, who's moved here to teach 3rd grade in "Stop Kiss." Although seemingly heterosexual, they're drawn to each other. But their first kiss is observed with drastic consequences for both. Diana Son's contemporary drama, using flashbacks and flash forwards, examines how we view our gay selves and each other. The Houston stop marks the play's Southwest premiere. Thursdays-Saturdays at 8 p.m. Thru Oct. 28. \$15. **Unhinged Productions, 3304 LaBranch. 713-524-8707**

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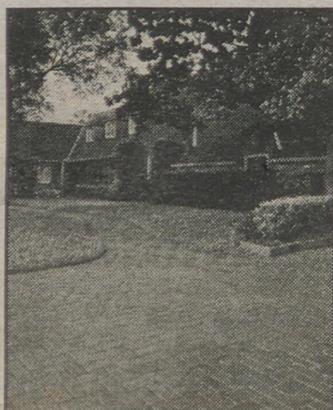
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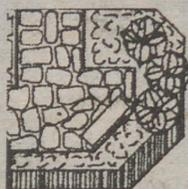
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BOOK REVIEWS

A gay 'Reformation'

A writer's new collection of meditation offers seasonal devotions for gay Christians

by JACQUELINE DEAN

Writer Chris Glaser is a gay Christian in a time when many still see that description as an oxymoron. Glaser concedes "I find it harder to talk about being a gay Christian in the gay community than to talk about being Christian and gay in the Christian community." But the author of **REFORMATION OF THE HEART: SEASONAL MEDITATIONS BY A GAY CHRISTIAN** is doing just that.

The church has made itself an enemy to gay men and lesbians, admits the author, many gays have felt forced to choose between their faith and their sexuality. Glaser says he has reconciled this conflict within himself by viewing his "sexuality as a gift from God that draws me into a loving relationship with another person." The gender of that person, he adds, is inconsequential.

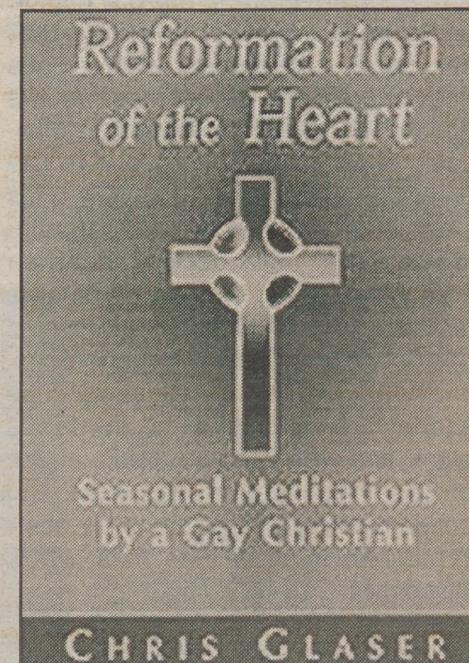
Yet Glaser, who has written several books about the struggles of gay Christians, has put forth a daily meditation guide that comforts, encourages and challenges gays to a "Reformation of the Heart."

When asked why he chose to write this book, Glaser reflects upon the negativity and opposition many gays face in daily life. He notes the bombardment many experience from the pulpit and the media. "We need to find ways we can heal ourselves, restore ourselves, restore our souls," he says. Glaser finds personal meditation an excellent way to do so.

In the introduction to the third section of the book, Glaser equates the battle to reshape society to the art of pottery. He recalls a lesson taught him by a ceramics artist. The shape of a vessel's inside will determine the shape of the vessel's outside.

"If we are going to reform society, we have to reform our souls," Glaser says. "We need to allow everything that happens to us to shape our souls. Even bad things have something to teach us about how we shape our souls and ourselves."

"Reformation of the Heart: Seasonal Meditations by a Gay Christian" contains daily installments of scripture and Glaser's musings about the subjects inspired by the scripture. The book is organized around the Christian church calendar and stretches from the beginning of Advent (four



For gay Christians, Chris Glaser's new book 'Reformation of the Heart' offers an uplifting look at faith.

Sundays before Christmas) through Lent (better known in some circles as the lean days after Mardi Gras) to Easter.

Each meditation begins with a scripture selection and continues with a brief essay by Glaser that is meant to be motivational, inspiring, healing or amusing. The comparison of King David and Bathsheba to former President Clinton is notable: "The much-admired King David had his own White House intern," Glaser writes.

Perhaps most surprising in this devotional is the streak of feminism the author has infused into it.

Many of the passages bring to light the role of women in Biblical times and point out the inequities they experienced, from the afore mentioned passage on Bathsheba to the inclusion of a reflection on I Timothy 2:12-14. This passage is the one used for centuries to justify a lowered status for women—you know, the good old, "suffer a woman not..." passage. Glaser takes on these attitudes on as well as negative attitudes towards gays and pronounces them wrong.

In explaining why he chose such a controversial passage as I Timothy, Glaser points out that he could hardly be a credible commentator if he didn't address the problems with the Bible. "People think that with the scriptures they have to agree with everything. We view the sacred text in the light of our own understanding," he says. Glaser insists he won't let the Bible off the hook. "You have to give the reader permission to question scripture," he explains.

Though he makes some interesting philosophical points, for non-Christians there may be little point to reading the book. For gay Christians this small, seasonal daily devotional will uplift and renew. And God knows we can use all the uplifting we can get.

'Reformation of the Heart: Seasonal Meditations by a Gay Christian'

by Chris Glaser
Westminster John Knox Press,
297 pages
\$14.95

INFO

Eating Out

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Bistro busts on experience

New spot in Montrose is ripe with atmosphere, but falls short on food quality

by KATHREEN LEE

Ever wonder why so many restaurants sport the term "bistro" in their name? There's Bistro Vino, Boulevard Bistro and now, there's BISTRO PROVENCE, a French establishment with three spots in Houston.

Often the word "bistro" is mistakenly assumed to have French derivations and usually associate the term with reminiscences of small European sidewalk cafes. Actually, the word "bistro" heralds Russian roots, and the story goes that the contemporary association of "bistro" with restaurants stems back from World War II.

When Russian soldiers fought in France with the other allied forces, they would frequent local restaurants during their brief breaks. Because the soldiers had to return promptly to their posts, the Russians would urge the restaurants to hurry by saying "bistro," a Russian word meaning "quickly."

To attract Russian soldiers to their businesses, restaurants would hang signs outside that read "bistro." Hence, the correlation.

Bistro Provence is the newest bistro in Montrose. With billowy white curtains, dark wood frames and beams criss-crossing the building's structure, and basic Tudor decor, the restaurant resembles a quaint German alehouse, where you might expect a fraulein in a green oompah skirt and long braided pigtails to serve up a pound of ale to her merry patrons.

The atmosphere of old European quaintness might make you believe you've stepped into one of the culturally themed restaurants in Epcot's World Village. In addition, all the waiters speak with an affected French accent, adding to the Disney/fantasy atmosphere. Despite these attempts at authenticity, the true test of its French muster would be in its cuisine.

The menu offers the expected from a typical French establishment—heavy, buttery and rich. For instance, the hors d'oeuvres feature dry sausage and butter, anchovy spreads, garlic and goat cheese toasts, and various pates.

If you're in the mood for light foods, then Bistro Provence is not for you. Of all the choices, ranging from Poussin Grille Grilled Cornish Hen, \$11.95) to Andouillette (Lyon Style Tripe Sausage, \$12.95), there are no vegetarian options and only one fish choice, Pave de Samon Grille (Grilled Atlantic Salmon, \$14).

Escargot au Beurre d'Herbes (\$6.50), a dish typical of French cuisine and a dish one might expect a French restaurant to prepare well, was disappointing. The snails, which are stuffed with garlic and parsley butter, were saturated in a marinade that was incredibly salty and consequently drowned out any other flavors and seasoning.

The same was true of the Moules Farcies

FOOD FILE



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(\$6.50), mussels stuffed with garlic and parsley butter. While the meat of the mussels was large and supple, the exceedingly salty marinade negated any of the garlic and parsley seasoning. In addition, the mussels were cold, which gave each mussel a dank and clammy—no pun intended—taste.

The only menu item available that a loose vegetarian might be able to eat, the Atlantic Salmon, was overcooked and tasted parched. The salmon flakes crumbled instead of peeling off in luscious or sizable chunks and lacked any discernible flavoring.

You cannot try French cuisine without sampling the rabbit stew. Civet de Lapin (Sauce Poivrade, \$16.50) offered one of the most incredibly tender meats, which was well saturated in the stew.

While the rabbit tasted like chicken, the savory and succulent texture of the meat absorbed the tangy roasted pepper stew and each moist bite oozed marinade. Removing the meat from the numerous bones was inconvenient and cumbersome, but each bite made it worthwhile.

Bistro Provence boasts an extensive wine list. But wines offered by the glass are not listed, and our faux-French waiter could not distinguish between a Pinot Grigio and Chardonnay.

While the intentions might be there on the part of the restaurant to offer its patrons an authentic French experience, Bistro Provence falls short on its endeavor.

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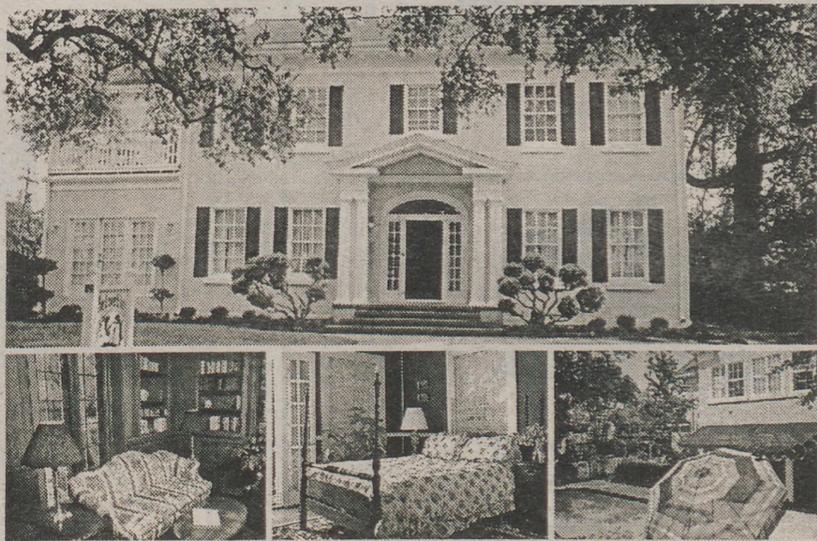


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community calendar

saturday, sept. 15

After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM. 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. 713-526-5738.

Patrol walks the streets 8:45 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.

Dignity mass. 7:30 p.m. for gay Catholics. 713-880-2872.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Rosary 8 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama. 713-528-6665.

Houston Chain Gang Bicycle Club. Call for ride locations. 713-863-1860.

Gay & Lesbian Breakfast Club. 9:30 a.m. 281-437-0636.

Houston Wrestling Club. Practice. 1:30 p.m. 713-453-7406.

Gulf Coast Archive and Museum. Open Noon to 6 p.m. 713-227-5973.

Rainbow Fishing Club. Meeting. 713-526-7070. 713-880-9235.

Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours noon to 4 p.m.; Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition; Queer Poetry Coffeehouse. 7 p.m.; Some Transgressors are Guys. 7 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 3-524-3818.

Asians and Friends. Dining Out. 713-626-6300.

sunday, sept. 16

Rainbow Riders. A bicycle club for women. 713-869-1686.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Holy Rite Eucharist I 7:45 a.m.; Holy Rite Eucharist II 8:55 a.m.; Education hour 10 a.m.; Choral Eucharist 11 a.m. 713-528-6665.

Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Church. Service. 6:30 p.m. 713-528-6756.

Resurrection MCC. Services. 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10 a.m. Youth Sunday School 11:15 a.m. Handbell Choir rehearsal 1:30 p.m. 713-861-9149.

Grace Lutheran Church. Sunday school for all ages 9 a.m. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-528-3269.

Community Gospel. Service at 11 a.m. & 7 p.m. Sunday School for children 10 a.m. 713-880-9235 www.communitygospel.org.

Houston Mission Church. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-529-8225.

Covenant Church, Ecumenical, Liberal Baptist. Service 9:30 a.m. & education hour 11 a.m. 713-668-8830.

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Services at 8:30 a.m. & 10:50 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 713-526-1017.

The Women's Group. Meeting & Discussion. 10:45 a.m. 713-529-8571.

Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 502 Church St. Service 10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.

First Congregational Church (Memorial). Service at 10 a.m. Christian Education. 11:30 p.m. 713-468-9543 or fcc-houston.org.

Unitarian Fellowship of Houston. Adult forum 10 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 713-686-5876.

Gay Catholics of St. Anne's-Houston. 5 p.m. worship service. Dinner and social. alexcam@wt.net. 713-623-0930

Bureau Unitarian Universalist Congregation: Adult discussion 9:45 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.

First Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:30 & 11:30 a.m. Brunch available 10:30 a.m. Panel Discussion. 1:30 p.m. 713-526-5200. church@firstuu.org.

Anarchist Black Cross Federation/Anarchist Reading Group. 1 p.m. www.houstonabc.org. 713-595-2103

Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. to noon. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com

Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center. Drop in Hours 2-5 p.m.; Queer Informal Play Reading. 2 p.m.; Lesbians Over Fifty. 2 p.m.; Pot Luck Dinner. 6 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

Family to Family Adoptions Workshop. 1 p.m. 713-249-5941.

Black Tie Fundraiser. 713-523-9611.

monday, sept. 17

Gay Fathers/Fathers First. Support group. 8 p.m. www.GayFathers-Houston.org or 281-505-1788.

Frost Eye Clinic. Free eye exams for people with HIV. 713-830-3000.

HIV testing. STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 1 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. 713-626-2837.

Kolbe Project. Eucharist 7:30 p.m. 713-861-1800.

Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 936-441-1614.

Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.

Lesbian & Gay Voices Radio Show. 8 to 10 p.m. KPFT 90.1. 713-529-1223.

AIDS Mastery. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.

Grief & Divorce Support Groups. 7 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017, Ext. 208.

gayDAR. Wellness Community. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-526-1017, Ext. 211.

Gay Men's Chorus of Houston. Open rehearsal; 7 p.m. 713-521-7464.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours from 6 to 9 p.m.; Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

tuesday, sept. 18

For Mature Audiences Only. Support group. 7 p.m. Bering Memorial UMC. 713-526-1017.

HTGA Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-520-0439.

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Club Houston. 713-830-3000.

Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-524-0439.

Bering Support Network. Lunch Bunch Gang 11 a.m. 713-526-1017.

Gay Men's Process Group. 7 p.m. 3316 Mt. Vernon. 713-526-8390.

Men's Network. Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual men. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.

Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.

Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. @ hour free dance workshops. No partner needed. Beginner. 2 Step, Waltz, Shuffle & Swing Drop in anytime. 8:30 p.m. 713-528-9192.

CPR Classes. 3 p.m. 713-607-7700.

Bi-Net Houston. Men's Social. 7 p.m. 713-467-4380.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. Gay & Lesbian Switchboard Houston Training Class 6 to 10 p.m.; Lesbian Coming Out Group. 7 p.m.; 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

wednesday, sept. 19

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. 2015 Thomas Street 713-793-4026.

Women's Network. Montrose Counseling Center Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual women. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.

Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 936-441-1614.

Project: Caesar. Workshops. AFH. 3203 Wesleyan. 713-623-6796.

Bible Study. Noon & 6:30 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal. 713-526-6665.

Spiritual Uplift service. 7 p.m. Bible Study 7:30

p.m. Resurrection MCC. 713-861-9149.

Freelance Art Classes by Kermit Eisenhut for HIV+ individuals. 1 to 4 p.m. Lunch provided. 713-523-9530.

Houston Tennis Club. 7:30 -9 p.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com Lesbian Literature Discussion Group. 7 p.m. 713-523-3037.

Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal. 1307 Yale. 713-527-0931. www.houstonprideband.org.

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. Various Support Groups 7 p.m. 713-526-1017.

Blessed Sacrament Church. Workshop Series for Christian Faith and Ecumenical Old Catholicism. 713-476-9776.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m.; Free HIV testing and counseling 6-9 p.m.; Houston Committee for People's Radio. 6:30 p.m.; Bi-Net Houston. 7:30 p.m. 713-524-3818.

thursday, sept. 20

Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. 2 hours free Line Dance instruction. No partner required. Drop in anytime. Brazos River Bottom. 8:30 p.m. 713-528-9192.

Hep C Recovery. Support Group. 6:30 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017, Ext. 211.

STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Toyz Disco. 713-830-3000.

Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.

Lambda Skating Club skates. 8 p.m. Tradewinds. Skating Rink. www.lambdaroll.org. 713-410-7215.

FrontRunners. Running Club. 6:30 p.m. 713-522-8021.

HIV Art Therapy Program. 1 to 4 p.m. Kermit Eisenhut. 713-523-9530.

Women's Clinic. Montrose Clinic. 713-830-3000.

Community Gospel. Service. 7:30 p.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.

Gay Houston. New social group for all ages. 7 p.m. 713-526-9318.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community. Drop in hours 6 to 9 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

friday, sept. 21

Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (H.A.T.C.H.) Meeting. 713-942-7002.

Frost Eye Clinic. Free eye exams for people with HIV. 713-830-3000.

Q-Patrol walks the streets. 9 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.

Kolbe Project. Morning Prayer. 10 a.m. 713-861-1800.

Houston Tennis Club. Houston Tennis Club. 7:30 -9 p.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com

Lesbian and Gay Voices. KPFT 90.1 FM. 7 p.m. 713-526-5738.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Lesbian Film Night. 6 to 9 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

To list an event, call Carolyn Roberts at 713-529-8490, fax 713-529-9531, or e-mail editor@houstonvoice.com. Deadline is Friday at 5 p.m.

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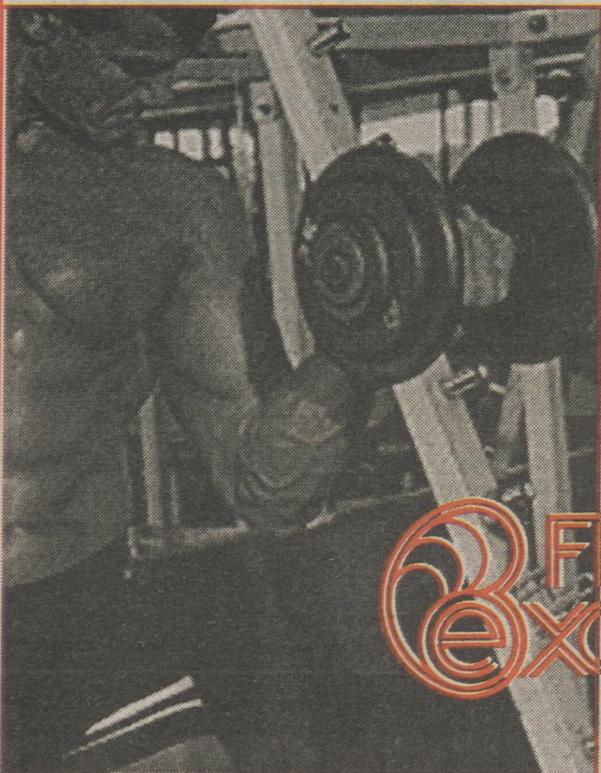
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Occasions

Birthdays

Houston Area Bears Tom B. (Sept. 15) and Alton H. (Sept. 17) claw their way out of the birthday cave this week.

Creative and classy Rob (of Vilven's Design) designs a perfect birthday for himself on Sept. 17.

Tall and handsome Orlin sneaks in a birthday on Sept. 15.

A 'Classic Chassis' himself Conrad F. motors in a birthday on Sept. 19.

Asians and Friends member Noel B. chairs his birthday on Sept. 16.

The "Ham from Hell" a.k.a. David from Conroe celebrates his 21st birthday for the 22nd time on Sept. 20.

Pet of the Week



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My Stars!

by JILL DEARMAN



YOUR WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

Sept. 14-20



ARIES (March 21 - April 20)

Little things mean a lot during those Virgo-influenced cycle, so pay attention to details, especially at work. In love you need to give more if you want to "feel" more. Why must you keep a Leo an arm's length?



TAURUS (April 21 - May 20)

Venus finishes up a stint in your home sector during the week of Sept. 17. Use this to spruce up your surroundings, buy clothes that are sensuous to the touch, and make up with your wacky family. Forgiveness is the word of the week. An Aries can teach you how to master it.



GEMINI (May 21 - June 21)

With Saturn moving forward in your sign, you'd better give up obsessing about the romantic mysteries in your life (for awhile) and concentrate instead on someone right in front of you who's up-front and honest. A Pisces, methinks.



CANCER (June 22 - July 22)

No sense crying over spilled milk, or wishing for a job that you weren't offered. The Universe (and Jupiter in particular) is telling you to make your own way in this world. Be your own boss. A Virgo is sure to help you set up a strong foundation from which you can rule the world!



LEO (July 23 - Aug. 22)

Uranus and Neptune retrograde in your love sector could be making you edgy and constantly awaiting the sound of the other shoe dropping. Do something to relax yourself. Then make a vow to only accept the affections of people you can really trust. A Gemini should be at the top of your list.



VIRGO (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)

Try and protect yourself from negative influences, especially at work. Keep your nose clean, kid, and your ink as pure and unsmudged as a squid's. An Aquarius can teach you a few lessons about keeping your integrity in a corrupt world.



LIBRA (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22)

You're only being so tough on the people around you because you hold such a high standard yourself. But it's getting annoying. Give others the autonomy they need, and you'll get double the courtesy, respect, and results that you want in return. A Scorpio doesn't take orders from anybody.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21)

Sure, you can learn a lot about the world by reading, writing, and talking. But mid-September is also a time of action. Not aggressive action, but an active move that shows everyone your intentions. Come out of the shadows, Scorpio. A Pisces wants to see you more clearly.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)

Pluto in your sign is far from through with you, so please Sag, move beyond the superficial, into the realm of deep introspection. At least learn how to spell the word. A Libra wants to know the real you. Don't you, too, doll?



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)

How many temptations can you pass on? Well, plenty more are coming, and so long as they won't hurt your health or damage your ego too badly, give one or two a whirl. Aren't you sick of being so cautious? A Taurus wants to see you take some risks. Make the first move.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)

Pluto in your house of friends is teaching you about tolerance. Not just the theoretical kind, but the kind you practice every day. If a Capricorn pal drives you nuts, ask yourself why. What button is being pushed, honey?



PISCES (Feb. 19 - March 20)

It's hard for you to understand a lover's motivation during mid-September. Don't even try. Do what you do best. Give unconditional compassion. A Taurus just wants to be sure he or she can trust you.

Jill Dearman is the author of the best-selling "Queer Astrology for Men" and "Queer Astrology for Women" (both from St. Martin's Griffin). For information on charts and consultations, call 212-841-0177 or e-mail QScopes@aol.com.

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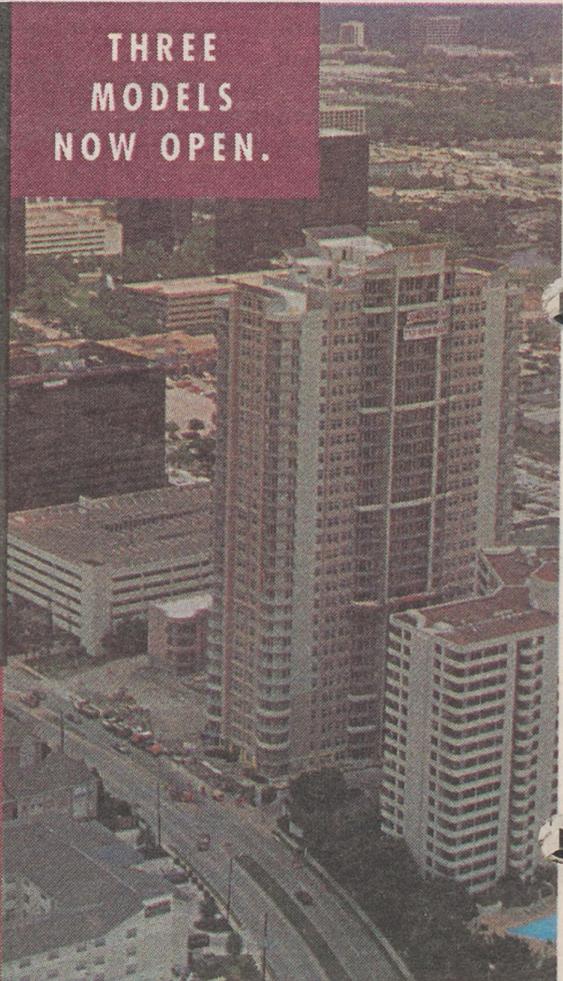
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