

The movie 'De-Lovely' reveals the gay side of composer Cole Porter.
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CENTERED: Things looking up for GLBT Community Center. **Page 3**



MORE BANS: Gay marriage to go on Montana ballot in the fall. **Page 4**



'GIRLIE MEN': Schwarzenegger challenged on comments. **Page 10**



House passes Marriage Protection Act

Bill would bar federal courts from ruling on constitutionality of DOMA

By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

One week after the Senate defeated a proposed constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage, the House of Representatives voted 233 to 194 on July 22 to pass a bill that would bar federal courts — including the U.S. Supreme Court — from deciding whether the Defense of Marriage Act is constitutional.

Gay civil rights attorneys said the bill, H.R. 3313, the Marriage Protection Act, appeared unconstitutional and would set a dangerous precedent by altering the balance between the legislative and judicial branches of government.

"The legislation seeks to forever slam shut the federal courthouse doors to gay and lesbian couples challenging an anti-gay federal marriage law," the American Civil Liberties Union said in a statement.

"Last week, the Senate rejected amending the Constitution, but today the House voted to violate it," said ACLU legislative counsel Christopher Anders.

In the vote on the Marriage Protection Act, 206 Republicans and 27 Democrats voted for the bill while 176 Democrats, 17 Republicans and one independent voted against it.

Four Texas Democrats were among those to vote with Republicans in favor of the measure: Chet Edwards, Max Sandlin, Charlie Stenholm and Jim Turner. All the GOP members of the Texas delegation voted in favor of the bill; Ron Paul, a Republican, was among eight members not to vote.

While disappointed in the outcome, gay activists were quick to point out that the 233 vote total in favor



of the bill fell significantly short of the 290 votes needed by the House to pass the proposed constitutional amendment banning gay marriage.

of the bill fell significantly short of the 290 votes needed by the House to pass the proposed constitutional amendment banning gay marriage.

"On the positive side, 194 members of Congress rejected this mean-spirited, divisive, disgusting and clearly unlawful bill," said Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force.

The House approval of the bill appears to confirm the view of its sponsors that, while many lawmakers are unwilling to back a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage, they have no qualms about supporting a bill that bans federal courts from forcing individual states to recognize gay marriages.

Gay civil rights leaders were expected to turn their

Please see **MARRIAGE** on Page 5



Vanessa Edwards-Foster of Houston is among five transgender delegates to the Democratic National Convention in Boston. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

Trans delegates to attend convention

Houston's Edwards-Foster among five reps going to Democrat confab

By BINNIE FISHER

The number of transgender delegates to the Democratic National Convention will increase dramatically over past years when the event convenes July 26 in Boston. In past years, transgender activists say, there has been no more than one trans-

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local life
Carol Wyatt is best known for 'Social Notes' and happy hour, now she's gone the Extra Mile.
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dish
Gossip columnists won't stop telling tales on material girl's tour.
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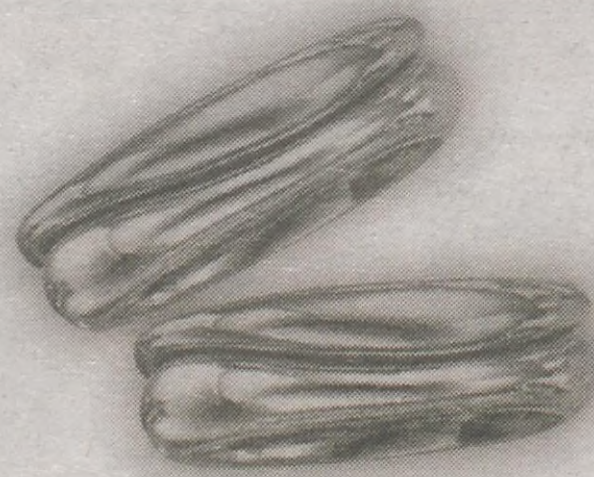


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houston news

Community Center hires first paid employee

New trans manager brings new direction

By BINNIE FISHER

The Houston GLBT Community Center scaled a hurdle recently when the board of directors hired the first-ever paid employee to oversee day-to-day operations of the facility.

Julie Harris, a transgendered woman with a degree from Texas A&M University, is the first paid employee in the history of the center.

Her official title is Community Resource Manager.

"We needed somebody who could think on their feet, and Julie can do that," said center president Robert "Shane" McShane.

McShane said the hiring of a permanent employee is a facet of the vision he saw for the center when he attended a conference for gay, lesbian and transgender activists in Miami a few months ago.

The conference, sponsored by the National Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Centers, offered a seminar that appealed to McShane, the recently elected president of the Houston Center.

The group was shuttled off to the Ft. Lauderdale Community Center, and it was there that McShane came to realize why the Houston center had struggled for years with issues ranging from identity to funding.

He learned that the strong and vibrant community centers in the country came of age in the 1980s along with the AIDS crisis. Most became umbrella organizations for entities struggling to deal with the disease.

"We didn't have that history with our center," he said.

Established in 1996, the Houston center had languished for years in an old house with smelly carpeting that had become a hangout for homeless youth.

Sometime before McShane became president in December, he said, the board had decided to move the center to its present facility at 3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 207.

That accomplished, McShane said, he realized after the seminar in Florida that the Houston center needed a stated purpose and an identity.

Since it would take years and probably a fair share of controversy to try and establish the center as an umbrella organization



Community Center president Shane McShane (right) said the hiring of Julie Harris to oversee daily operations is a milestone.

at this point, McShane said, it was decided that to assist community groups was a worthy purpose.

A resource, not an umbrella

"The vision I have for the center is that it is a resource for the community," he said.

As such, McShane said, the center will support the efforts of nonprofit organizations that serve gay, lesbian and transgender clients. In addition, the center will provide information regarding the services available in Houston.

The center's Internet site now offers a calendar of events for programs taking place there, but eventually, McShane said, he hopes the site can be a more comprehensive resource guide.

With the addition of Julie Harris, whose

position is being funded by a grant from the Hollyfield Foundation, McShane said, foot traffic into the facility has already increased.

Now that the center is open from noon to 9 p.m. weekdays, he said, "They're finding us big-time. I can't believe how many more people we're seeing."

In a given month, McShane said, the center hosts about 35 meetings that represent the involvement of 20 to 25 organizations. With meeting space for as many as 80 attendees, he said, the center is open to organizations that need it.

"We do ask for a nominal donation to help pay our expenses," he said. "If an organization is in need, then the space is given to them gratis, and we raise the money somewhere else. Our goal is to help the organizations so they can help the people they serve."

Eventually, McShane said, he hopes to provide services such as mail boxes and voice mail for organizations.

But the next vital step is to find support from among gay Houstonians. If 10 percent of the population is gay, McShane said, that means there are about 190,000 potential supporters in Houston.

"You've got to have your family support you," he said.

In the meantime, he said, he'll continue to work on identity. "Our problem is we're the best-kept secret in town."

MORE INFO

Houston GLBT Community Center

3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 207

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www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org



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national news

Mont. voters to consider marriage ban; N.C. measure fails

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — A proposal to amend the Montana Constitution to ban gay marriage will appear on the fall ballot after supporters collected more than 46,000 signatures, officials announced last week. It is the eighth state that plans to vote on a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage this fall. Montana law already prohibits same-sex marriages, but the



initiative would make the ban more difficult to overturn by embedding it in the constitution. Republican state Rep. Jeff Laszloffy proposed the amendment as president of the Montana Family Foundation. "It's too bad that we need to restate the obvious — that marriage is between a man and a woman — but if the obvious needs to be restated, I believe voters will do it by an overwhelming majority in November," he said. In North Carolina, an attempt to amend the state constitution to ban gay marriage failed. The legislature adjourned without action on an amendment proposal last weekend. "No constitution should be used to discriminate," Human Rights Campaign President Cheryl Jacques said in a release. "Every North Carolinian deserves to have the same rights and freedoms under their constitution." Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma and Utah are the other states voting on a gay marriage ban. Two additional states may vote on similar measures this fall. Activists in Michigan and Oregon have submitted more than enough signatures on petitions to force a vote, but those signatures are still being verified.

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Wash. judge denies GOP lawmakers' request to intervene on marriage

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — A Thurston County judge rejected a request by 22 Republican lawmakers to intervene in a case challenging the state law defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman. But Superior Court Judge Richard Hicks gave them permission last week to submit a short friend-of-the-court brief stating their position in the case, filed by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of gay couples. Hicks said allowing the seven state senators and 15 representatives to enter the case now as a party to the lawsuit would be disruptive. "That train has left the station," Hicks said of the case, filed in April and set for a Sept. 2 hearing. "This is not the Legislature seeking to intervene but certain legislators who may [subscribe] to a certain point of view," he said. "If I open this door, there will most certainly be others seeking to balance the table."

Spokane school board rejects materials on sexual orientation

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — The Spokane School Board declined to approve teaching materials related to gay people and homophobia after parents complained that they were inaccurate and constituted propaganda. A 25-minute videotape, "Being Gay: Coming Out in the 21st Century," and a four-page booklet to go with it called "Dealing with Homophobia," were recommended for use in ninth-grade health classes. After the five-member board's 2-2 vote last week, Superintendent Brian Benzel urged administrators to continue searching for educational materials to address sexual-orientation issues. The fifth board member was not at the meeting, and could break the deadlock at a subsequent session. A dozen people addressed the board, saying they were concerned and offended by the proposed classroom materials, which had been recommended by a committee of teachers and administrators, a 14-person citizens advisory committee and a group of principals.

Former high school student wins discrimination lawsuit

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — A former Perry High School student was awarded \$27,500 for a lawsuit claiming he was discriminated against based on his perceived sexual orientation. Tyler Rothmeyer, 18, filed the lawsuit in March against the Perry Community School District, the city of Perry and one of the city's police officers. The district was ordered to pay Rothmeyer \$20,000 and the police officer, who was the student resource officer at the high school at the time of the incident, was ordered to pay Rothmeyer \$7,500, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District ruled last week. Rothmeyer claimed he was wrongfully suspended from school and was falsely arrested when he defended himself against a fellow student who was threatening him with hate-based epithets. "Tyler Rothmeyer is not the first, and unfortunately will not be the last student to face anti-gay harassment," said Robert Montgomery, Rothmeyer's attorney.

Twenty same-sex couples refused Colo. marriage licenses

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — Twenty same-sex couples lined up at the El Paso County clerk's office to request a marriage license knowing they would be rejected in a protest July 16 aimed at eventually winning the right to marry. "We work. We pay our taxes. We vote," said Valerie Wheeler of Colorado Springs, one of those applying for a license. "We're hard-working Americans. We just want the opportunity to share our lives together as a married couple," added her partner, Elaine Diehl. The protest was in preparation for the weekend's Pridefest mass wedding ceremony in Acacia Park. Organizers said the ceremony was to be one of the first public actions promoting same-sex marriage after last week's defeat in the U.S. Senate of a proposed constitutional amendment banning gay marriages.

From staff and wire reports

news cover story

House votes to bar courts from overturning DOMA

MARRIAGE, continued from Page 1

attention to the Senate, with the hope of persuading a majority of senators to defeat the bill. President Bush was expected to sign the legislation if the Senate joins the House in passing it.

Wisconsin Congressman James Sensenbrenner, the Republican chair of the House Judiciary Committee, said the bill was needed to ensure that federal courts don't force states to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states. The measure was approved by the committee on July 14.

"Integral to the American constitutional system is each branch of government's responsibility to use its powers to prevent overreaching by the other branch," Sensenbrenner said.

But gay rights attorney Paul Smith, who successfully argued the Lawrence vs. Texas Supreme Court case, which overturned state sodomy laws, said the scope of the proposed law was unprecedented because it targets gay citizens as a single minority group.

"If you deny the Supreme Court the power to decide minority rights, you dramatically alter the balance of power between the court, which exists to protect constitutional rights, and the Congress, which addresses political issues," Smith said.

The House approval of the legislation came on the same day that an independent federal commission studying the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks released its final report, which criticized Congress and the Bush and Clinton administrations for not doing enough to prevent terrorist strikes on the United States.

"Congress today was sent an historic message to focus on terrorism and it focused on discrimination instead," said Cheryl Jacques, president of the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay political group.

"We will work to ensure that this measure is soundly rejected in the Senate," Jacques said.

Among those speaking out against the bill, during a two-hour debate on the House floor, were gay Reps. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) and Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.).

"It is a terrible mistake to strip one branch of government of the power to review laws," Baldwin said.

Gay Rep. Jim Kolbe (R-Ariz.), the only gay Republican member of Congress, voted against the bill, although he did not make remarks on the legislation on the House floor.

Federal DOMA unconstitutional?

The Defense of Marriage Act, known as DOMA, defines marriage under federal law as a union between a man and a woman and allows states to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states.

During the Senate debate last week over the FMA, supporters argued that a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage was needed

because federal courts and the U.S. Supreme Court would likely strike down DOMA.

FMA supporters, including Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colo.), the FMA's chief sponsor, said the Supreme Court would likely rule that DOMA violates the Constitution's full faith and credit clause, which requires states to honor contracts and other legal agreements issued in other states.

This week, gay activists expressed concern that members of the House and Senate who used this argument to justify their opposition to the FMA would feel constrained to vote for the Marriage Protection Act.

"The many senators who justified their vote because the nation already has a DOMA will have a hard time objecting to this legislation," said Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force.

Rep. John Hostetler (R-Ind.) introduced the Marriage Protection Act last year with little public notice or debate.

The bill states, "No court created by Act of Congress shall have any jurisdiction, and the Supreme Court shall have no appellate jurisdiction, to hear or determine any question pertaining to the interpretation of [DOMA]."

"This legislation protects the people's right to decide state marriage policy under DOMA, which Congress passed overwhelmingly and President Clinton signed into law," said Sensenbrenner, at the time the House Judiciary panel passed the bill on July 14.

Supporters of the measure cite Article III of the Constitution, which states, "The judicial power of the United States shall be vested in one Supreme Court, and in such inferior courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish." They interpret this clause to give Congress some authority to limit the jurisdiction of federal courts.

Unlike the FMA, the Marriage Protection Act would not bar states from legalizing same-sex marriage through the passage of legislation by their legislatures or through decisions by state courts.

But gay rights attorneys said the bill nevertheless would set a strong and harmful precedent by taking away the power of federal courts to decide whether gay Americans should be allowed to marry.

"I'm worried about it," said gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), before the July 22 vote. "The Democratic leadership is fighting it," Frank said. "It's come up so quickly. We don't know what will happen."

Chai Feldblum, a gay civil rights attorney and Georgetown University law professor, conducted a briefing on the bill on July 20 for more than 100 staffers to Democratic members of the House. Smith, the gay rights attorney who argued the Lawrence vs. Texas case, joined Feldblum in conducting the briefing.

"We told the staffers how critical this is," Feldblum said. "We said this would be a truly radical move by Congress that would challenge the separation of powers in the federal government."

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'Social Notes' and lesbian happy hour

Houston native Carol Wyatt found her niche and now she's being honored for it.

By BINNIE FISHER

It wasn't until Carol Wyatt found herself alone again after an eight-year relationship ended that she realized there was a need for women like herself to find a place to connect.

"You wake up one day, you're in your 40s, and you have to start all over again," she said.

She remembered that during the 1980s, there was a happy hour for lesbians on Wednesday night that drew a good crowd of professional women and was a good place to meet new friends.

"Everybody came directly from work, so we were all there in our business drag," she said.

Looking around, Wyatt couldn't find any organized lesbian gatherings that resembled the one she remembered from the past. She remarked to a friend, "We really need to get that happy hour thing going again."

The result of her efforts is a gathering of professional women on the first and third Wednesday of each month at Meteor that draws a vibrant crowd each time.

Wyatt said to get the event started, she used a 300-name list she has used for a giant Christmas party she throws at her house each year.

"I used that mailing list as a genesis," she said. "I started sending out e-mail notes."

Although the biweekly event is listed as a happy hour for professional women, Wyatt said, "I struggle with the word, 'professional.'" She said the event is open to lesbians who want to network with oth-

ers and to unwind with friends after work a couple of nights a month.

The list has grown to include more than 500 names, and she's always happy to add another name. As she began to hear of other events of interest to lesbians, Wyatt said, she included those in her happy-hour reminder e-mails. Thus, Carol Wyatt's "Social Notes" began.

Each week, Wyatt e-mails her notes on events of lesbian interest to those 500 names. She includes women's sporting events, concerts, theater, fund-raisers, museum exhibits and other happenings.

For her efforts to bring lesbians together, Wyatt is being honored on Sunday by Uncommon Legacy Houston with an Extra Mile Award.

Other honorees this year include CPA and gay adoption advocate Kathy Hubbard, Houston activist and early sodomy-law opponent Linda Morales, and Rev. Helen Havers, recently retired rector at St. Stephens Episcopal Church.

A rare native Houstonian

Wyatt said she is honored to be recognized for her efforts on behalf of lesbians, but when she started her endeavor, "I was driven by the fact that I wanted to meet women.

A lot of us were in the same boat, and I thought I could help some other people along the way. I found a niche where I could make a contribution."

Wyatt is a rarity in Houston these days. She's a native.

"I think there are about six of us left," she joked. She grew up in Southwest Houston, where her parents still live, and graduated from Westbury High School.

It wasn't until she was enrolled at the University of Houston that Wyatt came to grips with all those feelings she couldn't explain as a youth.

"I think I always knew I was different, but I didn't have a name to put to it until I was in college," she said.

In college, she found, "I kept falling in love with my sorority sisters."

Out of college, she found a job that brought her in contact with other lesbians on a daily basis; she managed the Wilderness Experience, a small chain of backpacker outfitter stores.

"I fitted a lot of lesbians in the 1970s with hiking boots," she joked.

Eventually, she graduated to software sales. In her current position, Wyatt is a



Native Houstonian Carol Wyatt is being honored with an Uncommon Legacy Foundation Extra Mile Award. She considers herself a double rarity: a native Houstonian and a long-time Tab drinker. (Photo by Dalton Dehart)

sales rep for software that is marketed to call centers.

"This kind of selling is very complex, and it's intellectually challenging," she said. "I think sales is a good career for women."

Wyatt's territory includes Texas and its contiguous states. Most of the traveling she does by car. She plugs in a book on tape and loads a cooler with her beverage of choice, Tab.

"I'm one of the few Tab drinkers left," she laughed. "Me and the big-haired ladies in River Oaks."

The book in her car's cassette player is almost always a mystery.

Wyatt remains single, and she said, "At this point, I don't feel like I have to date to fill time."

She's content to spend evenings now and then watching television with her Tibetan terriers, Nichols and Andy (named Arthur Andersen because he likes to shred paper).

Wyatt, who turns 50 in August, said her next goal in life will draw on her sales experience and her success at organizing events and keeping people informed.

"In my next life, I want to run a guest ranch for gays and lesbians in the Rockies," she said. "I've been researching and building contacts."

MORE INFO

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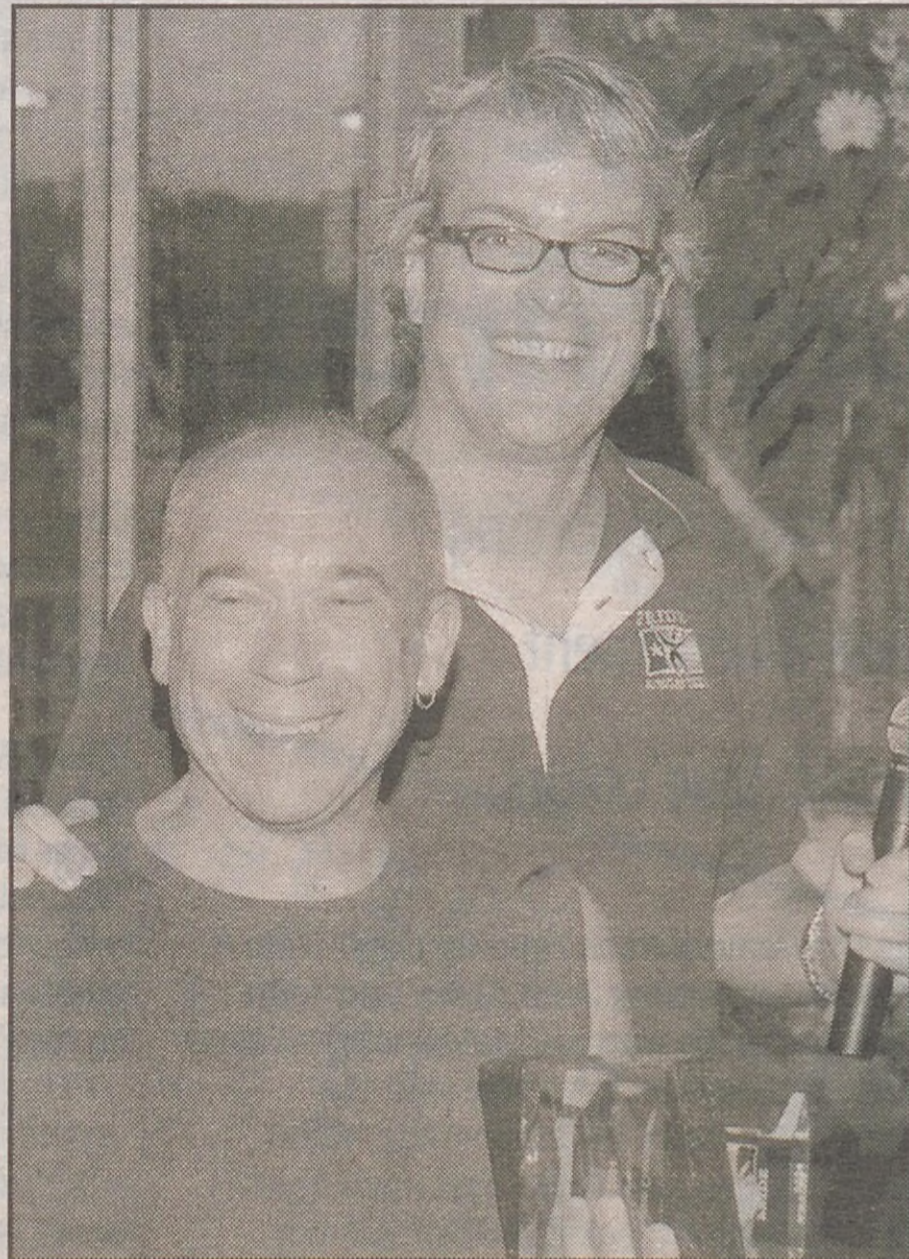
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Pride Committee President **Nick Brines** and committee coordinator **Jack Valinski** were on hand at a recent volunteer appreciation event. (Photos by Dalton Dehart)



Members of Pride Committee Houston kicked back recently and celebrated their achievements.



Pretty is as pretty does at a recent kick-off for Halloween Magic.



Western hats and boots were suitable attire at a recent fund-raiser for the Texas Gay Rodeo Association.

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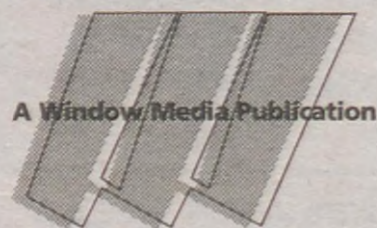
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editorial

GOP's marriage strategy backfired

Actually, we should thank President Bush for forcing a showdown on the federal marriage amendment and showing America the Republicans' true colors.

By MUBARAK DAHIR

EVERYONE KNEW GOING into the vote on the Federal Marriage Amendment that the proposition was a loser. From the standpoint of pure votes, anyway.

No one, not even the most rabid conservative Republican lawmakers, believed that the amendment had a snowball's chance in hell of passing.

Still, conventional wisdom said that the vote was going to be a political plus for the president. In the political establishment, it was seen as a bone the president could throw to the right-wingers of the Republican Party to bolster his conservative credentials with them.

In addition, the president and his Republican strategists figured it would put the Democratic challengers, Sens. John Kerry and John Edwards, in an uncomfortable position, as they would have to explain to voters why they opposed the amendment if, as they both say, they oppose marriage rights for gay and lesbian couples.

Finally, conventional wisdom figured Bush could also use the federal marriage amendment, and the fact that it failed, in the presidential campaign. No doubt Bush planned to point to the effort and tell voters that it was the Democrats' fault the thing never passed.

He would paint the Democrats and their presidential nominee as a bunch of lefty liberals who are out of step and out of sync with mainstream America.

At least, that was the conventional wisdom on the Federal Marriage Amendment as it approached time for a vote in the Senate.

THE PROBLEM WITH CONVENTIONAL wisdom, of course, is that it is so often wrong. And so was the case with the assumptions by the Republican taskmasters on the Federal Marriage Amendment.

Instead of making Bush look like a hero of "traditional American values," and paint-

ing the Democrats as ridiculous left-wing nut jobs, or putting John Kerry and John Edwards in the uncomfortable political spotlight, the move on marriage split the Republican Party, irritated many "mainstream" American voters and made Bush and his minions look a little silly, if not downright mean-spirited.

IF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT HAD ever made it to the floor of the Senate, it would have taken 67 votes to approve it and move it along the arduous process of becoming part of the Constitution.

But the pro-amendment forces couldn't even muster the necessary 60 votes they needed on a procedural issue to get the proposal to the floor. In fact, the final vote of 50 to 48 — not even a simple majority — was embarrassing to the Republicans and to the White House.

Indeed, the whole amendment issue made quite a few GOP Senators more than a little uncomfortable.

Six Republicans openly defied their party and helped block the measure. Political analysts say that number doesn't even begin to reflect the amount of division in the Republican Party, as many senators who are opposed to a constitutional amendment agreed to support their party's leaders on the initial procedural vote, knowing in advance it would fail.

Many Republican senators in close-call elections this fall reportedly resent the forced vote. They rightly reckon that the most conservative voters are also the strongest supporters of the Federal Marriage Amendment.

But swing voters — those highly coveted moderate Republicans and conservative Democrats — are the ones who would be more likely to be turned off by constitutional amendment.

THERE WAS EVEN A PUBLIC SPLIT IN the vice-presidential position on the subject. While Dick Cheney did the dutiful thing and publicly said he supported the president's position, news stations repeatedly ran footage of Cheney's comments

during the 2000 presidential campaign, where he said he thought everyone should be left alone to make whatever relationships they chose, and that at any rate the states, not the federal government, should regulate such personal matters.

And just days before the Senate took up the measure, Lynne Cheney strategically expressed to the press her sentiment that the federal government shouldn't be in the marriage-amendment business.

Of course, the well-known fact that the Cheneys have a lesbian daughter left little doubt in most people's minds where the vice-presidential family's heart was on the amendment.

MEANWHILE, IF YOU BELIEVE PUBLIC opinion polls and letters to editors and newspaper editorials all around the country, most "mainstream" Americans seem perturbed at best with the whole game-show like atmosphere surrounding the charade of the vote on the FMA.

This irritation at the staging of a vote on the amendment has little to do with whether or not a majority of Americans agree with such an amendment.

Many voters, it seems, are rightly aggravated that the president and the Senate would waste precious time and energy on an issue whose outcome is already preordained. Regardless of their opinions on the amendment or on their party affiliation, a lot of Americans simply saw right through the ploy as politicking at its worst.

Ask the average Joe what's on his mind during this election year, and I doubt many would place homosexual nuptials before the war in Iraq, or worries over such things as the economy and jobs and inflation and education and healthcare.

Finally, Bush's notion that forcing a vote on the FMA would put his Democratic opponents, John Kerry and John Edward — both senators — on the spot, failed miserably.

The two Johns were cleverly absent from the Senate that day, and the truth is, they didn't need to be there. They knew the amendment was going nowhere, and they also knew that being on the Hill that day was a no-win situation.

They deftly expressed their opposition to same-sex marriage and their opposition to the amendment to ban same-sex marriage, while avoiding both the avalanche of reporter's questions and TV news cameras.

As odd as it sounds, we should probably be glad that Bush and his advisers made the big mistake they did in focusing so much of a spotlight on such a losing proposition.

@ Mubarak Dahir is editor of the Express Gay News, a paper affiliated with this publication, and can be reached at mdahir@expressgaynews.com.



letters

Marriage backers run risk of not being re-elected

To the Editors:

I share Chris Crain's dismay ("Who will Stand for Marriage," editorial, July 16) at the indirect route taken by our supporters in speaking against the Federal Marriage Amendment proposal in the Senate.

I, too, wish these "supporters" could more directly speak up for the human right to equality and not avoid the issue by referring to the need to deal with more important things or to defer to DOMA.

I am not a politically savvy person, but the sad truth is that virtually all politicians who come out wholeheartedly for marriage equality will stand a strong chance of not being reelected. Poll after poll shows us that the general public is not yet ready to embrace same-sex marriage.

I have personally experienced this discomfort in the many conversations I have had in collecting over 1,500 signatures on petitions against the FMA sent to each of our Texas senators.

Take these petitions to a GLBT event, a P-FLAG meeting, a Unitarian Universalist Church, an ACLU reception, and you get 99-percent approval. Take them to the Democratic State Convention or to a Gray Panthers meeting and you get maybe 80 percent. Take them to Democratic primary exit polling and you get maybe 60 percent.

But take them to the general public outside these specialized groups, and it's quite a

different story: people listen with disbelief or bewilderment, asking "You want me to support WHAT?" Other people may listen to you politely, say they understand your personal need for your gay children to have the same rights as your straight children, say that they have gay friends, and then beg off.

They are often flustered and uncomfortable, especially if I suggest that their refusal to sign suggests that they support inequality. They turn their heads, their eyes roll, and they close their hearts and the conversation.

And try taking the petitions to my Republican precinct convention; there I was met first with stone-cold shocked silence and then immediate repudiation.

Bear in mind—these petitions were only in opposition to a constitutional amendment, not asking for same-sex civil marriage rights, considered to be a more "radical" stance.

So what do we want? Politicians who forthrightly stand for GLBT human rights and are then defeated by someone much worse than they or politicians who weasel around but who (reluctantly) will vote with us on our issues when the chips are down?

Yes, Chris, I agree that "the case for our freedom to marry is a strong one, and it's way past time we started making it." But until that case has time to filter down into the general public's psyche, we're going to have to deal with discouraging shows like we saw on C-SPAN2 this past week.

SUE NULL
Houston

HRC smart to avoid pushing marriage

To the Editors:

Re ("Who will stand up for marriage?" editorial by Chris Crain, July 16):

In February, when President Bush announced his support for the Federal Marriage Amendment, the Human Rights Campaign and allies had several months to defeat a proposal that, if ratified, would deny our community marriage rights for generations.

This was no small task. In reality, only a small handful of senators support marriage rights for same-sex couples. And despite the conventional wisdom, there were no assurances that this proposal could be defeated without compromise. As expected all along, the right wing launched an all-out advertising and lobbying blitz up until the very last moment.

Our approach to defeating the amendment focused on public opinion research that revealed messages that moved voters, and therefore members of Congress to oppose the amendment.

We want marriage equality. Unfortunately, that is not what was before the Congress. The choice before them was to do nothing, or to hurt us for a long time to come. In that context, pro-gay marriage messages didn't resonate.

The messages that worked best were ones that focused on protecting the

Constitution, fighting discrimination and urging Congress to focus on the issues that matter most to the American people. That's why we invested a significant amount of money in an advertising and lobbying campaign focused on those messages.

The Houston Voice's executive editor criticized our campaign for not being "gay" enough, whatever that means. In fact, when you play defense, you operate to change the playing field. The right wing attacked us on gay marriage, and we changed the terms of the debate to undercut them. That was the smart strategy.

The stunning victory last week proved we chose the right course.

It is clear the American people are not yet with us on marriage. Getting them there will take years of education, mostly friend to friend, coworker to coworker, and neighbor to neighbor work that many of us have been doing and have committed to doing far into the future.

I, for one, am tired of the ill-informed and juvenile perspective of Mr. Crain's editorials.

We are all working to change the world, but some of us are actually living in this one.

HILARY ROSEN
Washington

Editors' note: The letter writer heads up HRC's lobbying effort against the FMA and is the long-time partner of Elizabeth Birch, who resigned in January as HRC's executive director; Rosen refused to be interviewed on the record about the work on behalf of HRC.

viewpoint MATT FOREMAN



Even senators who opposed the FMA were discouraging, insulting, and denied us respect we are due.

Marriage 'allies' don't support us

THE DEFEAT LAST WEEK OF THE "Federal Marriage Amendment" in the U.S. Senate — even though long expected — is a welcome repudiation of President Bush's cynical attempt to bash gay people to appease and energize his far-right base.

We and our allies owe thanks to the Democratic minority in the Senate for fulfilling its year-old pledge to kill the amendment, to the six Republican senators who broke party ranks, and to the many gay and straight organizations who have worked so hard on this issue.

We can and must savor this moment.

At the same time, there are many clouds over the vote. While every vote against the amendment is welcome, the vote was far from a ringing endorsement of equal rights for gay couples.

In fact, the statements made by so many senators to explain their votes were

discouraging, frequently insulting, and denied many Americans the respect we are due. Some said the amendment was "unnecessary" because the repulsive "Defense of Marriage Act" already bans the recognition of same-sex marriage.

Others said that marriage has always been a "states rights issue" and should be left to the states to work out. Others said they objected to amending the U.S. Constitution to address any social issues.

Still others objected because they saw the amendment as divisive, or politically motivated, or an attempt to distract the nation and the Congress from other, more important matters.

OVER AND OVER AGAIN WE HEARD even our staunchest allies repeating ad nauseam the mantra: "I believe that marriage is between one man and one

woman" or the ever-popular, "While I do not support gay marriage."

Not a single senator stood up and said he or she was voting against the amendment because marriage is a fundamental right that same-sex couples should enjoy under the Constitution.

If the Senate actually reflected and articulated the views of the American public, at least one-third of them would have actually argued for marriage equality and the basic rights of all Americans.

Even though the FMA vote was technically procedural, six Republican senators crossed party lines to vote on our side. Sadly, the Democratic Party's nominees for president and vice president skipped the vote — though, thankfully, they said they would be present if there was a vote on the amendment itself.

Had Kerry and Edwards voted, a majority of the Senate — a much more powerful block of 52 members — would have voted against the amendment. This missed opportunity for bringing to bear the full weight of the Senate could have sent a strong message to the U.S. House and to more than a dozen states that will have state constitutional amendments on the ballot this November.

The message should have been that this year's election will not be won on our backs.

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT THE fight in Congress is far from over. The right wing will be sure to haunt senators for their vote-explaining statements not being anti-gay enough. And members of Congress may bow to the pressure from the right instead of

doing their jobs to represent all Americans.

The House is taking up a bill that seeks to strip federal courts of jurisdiction to hear challenges to the Defense of Marriage Act. The many senators who justified their vote because the nation already has DOMA will have a hard time objecting to this legislation.

Finally, all of this leads to the ugliest storm cloud on the horizon: the state constitutional amendments that will be on ballots this fall. While our focus has been on the stillborn federal amendment, conservatives have seized upon the dogma that "marriage is a state issue" espoused by so many and has already succeeded in putting constitutional amendments on the ballot in 11 states, with three or four more states likely to be added to the list.

This means that at least one in four Americans who cast their ballot this year will be voting on our place in society — or more accurately, on measures that would ensure our second-class status for generations to come.

It's no secret that our state and local organizations are at a huge disadvantage in terms of money, resources, and organizational infrastructure. They will now bear the brunt of the right's assault.

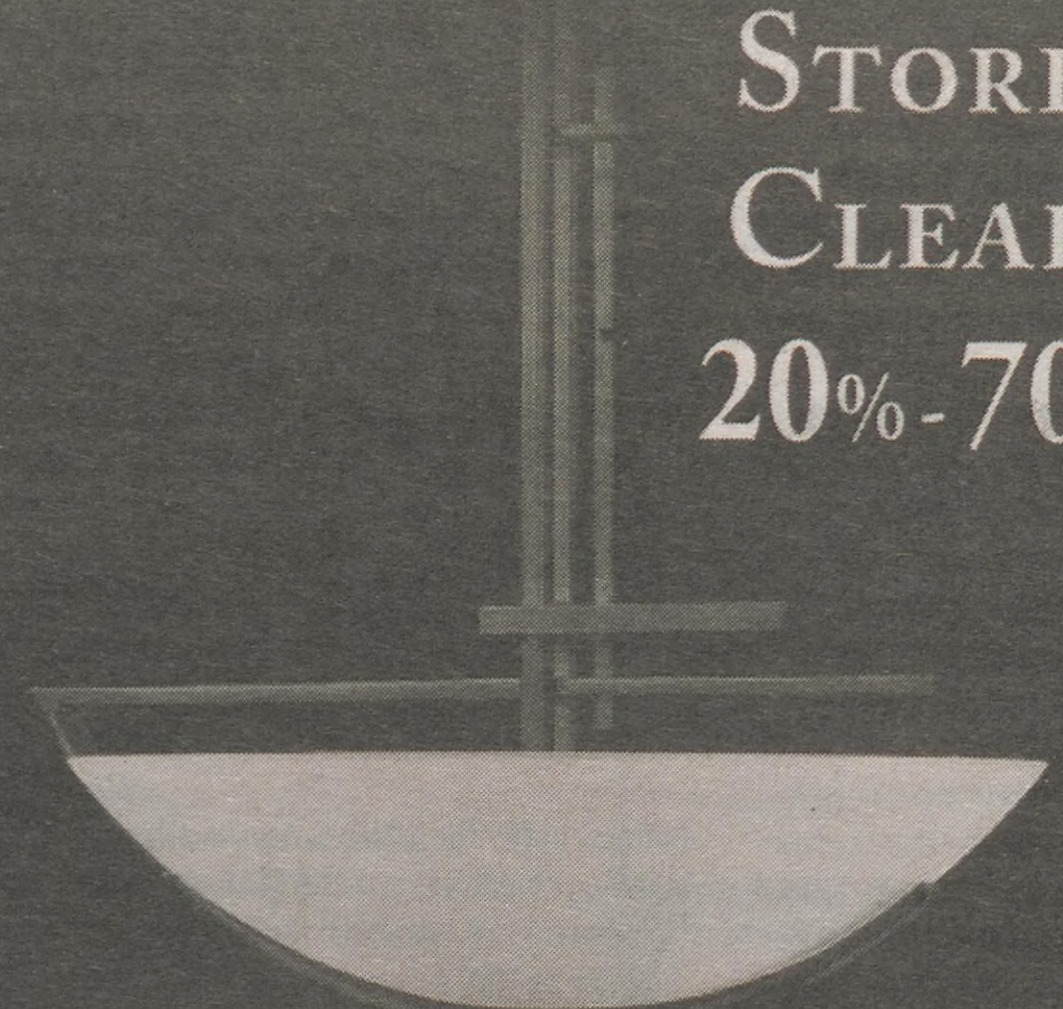
The FMA is DOA, but getting it to the morgue gave the anti-gay right the time it needed to run roughshod over us in more than a dozen states.

@ Matt Foreman is executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force and can be reached at mforeman@nglftf.org.

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on the record



"If they don't have the guts to come up here in front of you and say, 'I don't want to represent you, I want to represent those special interests, the unions, the trial lawyers—' if they don't have the guts, I call them girlie-men."

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R), reprising the famous "Saturday Night Live" parody to criticize Democratic lawmakers who haven't agreed to his budget proposals (Associated Press, July 19)

"It uses an image that is associated with gay men in an insulting way, and it was supposed to be an insult. That's very troubling that he would use such a homophobic way of trying to put down legislative leadership."

State Sen. Sheila Kuehl, one of the California Legislature's five-member Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Caucus, reacting to Schwarzenegger's comments (AP, July 19)

"And what's the deal with the 'five-member Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Caucus'? If it's got one lesbian, one gay, one bisexual and one transgender, that's only four members. If the fifth member belongs to one of the four groups, his group is oppressing the others!"

James Taranto, editor of *opinionjournal.com*, an adjunct to the *Wall Street Journal* page (Opinion Journal, July 19)

"I won't only be a vote, I'll be a voice on issues like this."

Former Bush Housing Secretary Mel Martinez, now a Republican candidate for the Senate from Florida, on his opposition to gay marriage; Martinez's finance director is gay, as is one of his leading consultants, a former head of the Florida Christian Coalition (Orlando Sentinel, July 14)

"I would not support a constitutional amendment at this time. I think the issue is being handled by the states. Right now, the sanctity of marriage is being preserved."

Pennsylvania Sen. Arlen Specter (R), on the Federal Marriage Amendment, despite the fact that Specter voted last week with Senate Republicans to bring the FMA up for a vote (AP, July 18)

"It will be the first time, except for prohibition, that bigotry has been added to the Constitution. ... And, supposedly, that is what we are fighting in Iraq: a religious extreme government that is not letting people live freely."

Rosie O'Donnell, criticizing Republican efforts to pass the Federal Marriage Amendment, in an interview after the inaugural cruise of her new R Family Vacations company, which targets gay families (News 4 Jax, Jacksonville, Fla., July 13)



"I'd say we can focus on terrorist attacks, but I believe this is a terrorist attack on the family, in a sense."

Rev. Rick Eastman of Church of the Nazarene in San Luis Obispo, Calif., on gay marriage; he apologized days later after protesters showed up outside his church on Sunday (San Luis Obispo Tribune, July 19)

"John Kerry and John Edwards have gotten so touchy-feely, now George Bush wants to ban 'gay campaigning.'"

"Late Late Show" host Craig Kilborn (Associated Press, July 16)

"Don't you love it when politicians talk about the sanctity of traditional marriage? You know what we should do, let their ex-wives talk, too!"

"Tonight Show" host Jay Leno (Associated Press, July 16)

"I have never met **Ian Thorpe**. I don't know if he is gay and, anyway, who cares? What we are commenting on is the speculation that surrounds him and the trashy interest in it."

Artist Natalie Starr, who helped crate a large outdoor mural in Melbourne called "Not Only But Also" with an arrow from the word "GAY" pointing to the head of the Olympic champion swimmer; Thorpe has threatened to sue for defamation (Melbourne Herald Sun, July 18)



Straight talk from



We want to make our position perfectly clear.

This election year, there's a lot of national debate on issues that are important to the GLBT community, including the Federal Marriage Amendment. And, as a political candidate, Pete Coors has expressed his personal position on this issue. Coors Brewing Company's position on this issue differs from Pete Coors'. Coors CEO Leo Kiely outlines the company's official position as follows:

"We do not support discrimination against the GLBT community—via legislation or otherwise."

Let's be clear. We don't support amending the Constitution.

That attitude is in keeping with our actions since 1978, when we adopted an inclusive nondiscrimination policy that recognized the rights of GLBT applicants and employees. We took another important step forward in 1988 and provided corporate support to important GLBT community groups. Today, we're proud to back the efforts of the HRC, GLAAD, GPAC and numerous AIDS organizations.

And we've continued our efforts to be not only a better corporate citizen, but a better place to work as well. More than 10 years ago, we created our Lesbian and Gay Employee Resource Council (LAGER) to provide an employee support network and regularly advise our senior management. We even made history in 1995, when Coors became the first major brewery in America to offer same-sex partner health benefits.

Many people have responded positively to these efforts. In 2001, we received the Colorado Human Rights Campaign Award. And we just received the highest score possible from the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index—100. So, while we're not perfect, we're clearly working hard to be a better company.

It's simple. At Coors, we believe supporting the rights of the GLBT community is good for our customers and our employees. And, above all, it's the right thing to do.

Thanks for listening.

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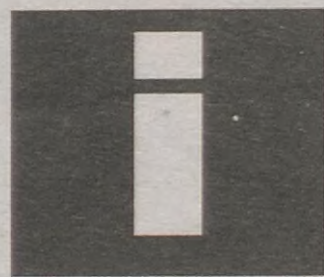
Globe behaving badly
Gay advice columnist,
Ms. Behavior, accuses
Globe of name theft
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JULY 23, 2004

Isn't it

New movie sets record straight about the life of gay songwriter Cole Porter

By BRIAN MOYLAN



IT'S EASY TO UNDERSTAND "Will & Grace." For the title characters of the NBC sitcom, they have an intimate bond even though Will is gay and Grace is a married straight woman. They share a house, they share a life, but they don't share a bed.

The same can be said of legendary songwriter Cole Porter and his wife Linda, subjects of the new MGM movie "De-Lovely," which opens on July 2.

But unlike Will and Grace, Cole and Linda Porter married each other, despite the songwriter's intimate encounters with men throughout the marriage.

Both a showcase for Porter's music from the '30s, '40s and '50s and a somewhat fictionalized biography of his life, "De-Lovely" uses Porter's relationship with his wife as the central theme in this story. But the film doesn't shy away from the composer's well-documented relationships with men.

Kevin Kline and Ashley Judd play the leading roles.

If Porter were alive today, it would be easy to describe him as gay, or he might self-identify this way. But in the early 20th century, it was much more difficult for someone of his fame and social standing to live openly as a gay man.

"[Porter] clearly had a strong affection for Linda, but it was not one that seemed to have been expressed sexually, and she lived with that because she was subject to sexual abuse in her first marriage," says Raymond-Jean Frontain, a professor of English at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway.

Frontain wrote the entry on Cole Porter for lgbtq.com, an online encyclopedia of gay culture.

Other experts on Porter agree that the nature of Cole and Linda Porter's relationship was complex.

"They were very good friends and loved each other dearly," says JX Bell, who runs the Cole Wide Web (www.coleporter.org) out of his home in San Francisco.

"I take it as a woman who was in an abusive relationship and a man who needed a beard," Bell says. "Both of them really liked the jet set, upper-crust high society and you couldn't be in that society and be effective unless you were married."

Porter's marriage to Linda, a wealthy divorcee, provided the couple with the social standing and affluence to which they were accustomed.

De-Lovely



Alanis Morissette kicks up her heels with a dancer in 'De-Lovely' while singing 'Let's Do It, Let's Fall In Love,' one of several Cole Porter songs recreated in the movie by today's musical superstars.

BORN IN 1891 TO A WEALTHY FAMILY IN PERU, IND., Porter began playing piano and violin at age 6. He attended Yale University in New Haven, Conn., where he was active with the glee club and wrote several full-scale musicals performed by students.

His grandfather, who funded Porter's education, did not approve of songwriting as a proper vocation, and urged Porter to attend Harvard Law School. After a few unsuccessful years there, he put on his first Broadway production, "See America First," in 1916. It was a major flop.

The next year, Porter set out for Paris and its active social scene. His first documented same-sex encounter was at one of the outrageous parties in vogue in the French capital at the time.

In 1919, he met Linda Thomas, an American expatriate. The two wed the same year.

In 1928, the couple returned to New York, where Porter wrote the songs for the musical "Paris," his first hit. Between 1929 and 1953, he would go on to write the songs for nine other Broadway productions, including "Anything Goes" and "Kiss Me, Kate."

In the early '30s, the Porters moved to Hollywood where he wrote songs for MGM musicals and worked on the film versions of his Broadway productions. The couple also separated when his relationships with men, which she

knew about before their marriage, became more flagrant.

"When he moved to Hollywood, he was not careful about the illusion of his heterosexuality," Bell says. "From what I gathered, that was a problem with Linda because it betrayed the illusion."

During his life, Porter had relationships with ballet designer Boris Kochko, architect Eddy Tauch (who inspired the song "Easy To Love"), dancer and choreographer Nelson Barclift (who inspired the song "Night and Day"), and actor Robert Bray, according to lgbtq.com and other sources.

In 1937, Porter broke both legs in a horse riding accident, and the injury plagued him for the rest of his life, causing chronic pain and frequent operations. Linda died in 1954 of emphysema.

Porter's right leg eventually was amputated, which sent him into a severe depression. He never wrote music again and became an alcoholic. He died in 1964 at age 73, after emergency surgery — his 34th related to the injury 27 years earlier.

"DE-LOVELY" ROMANTICIZES PORTER'S death with a neat narrative trope. As the movie opens, Porter

Please see **COLE PORTER** on Page 16

THE SECRET'S OUT: The inside, exclusive scoop on the club previously known as Rich's. Page 14

COLD BUT NEVER OLD: It's sweltering outside, just in time for National Ice Cream Month. Page 15

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nitelife JOHNNY HOOKS



The club formerly known as Rich's is changing formats, but word is, it will always be a hate-free zone.

An exclusive on Rich's

Hovo on the Go-Go is back! Each week we spotlight what's happening, hip and queer in Houston nightlife.

This week we have the exclusive on changes happening at **2401 SAN JACINTO**, the venue formerly known as **RICH'S**.

Last week a certain local Web-based magazine reported that the news of Rich's changing formats was premature, and that it would remain queer focused. HotGG can now report that **DJ SEAN CARNAHAN** and club legend **NEIL HELLER** have taken over operations at 2401 and formats will be changing.

Carnahan has been a fixture on the local scene for nearly 20 years and runs a popular Web site, **77002.COM** devoted to promoting the various Mega DJs he brings to town. The former "Nitefly" columnist for Paper City also travels extensively spinning at clubs (gay and straight) across the US.

Heller is best known for his infamous after hours **CLUB S.O.M.E.**, which ruled in Houston for most of the 1990s and was the scene of some of the most decadent drag after party's ever. How would I know? I was the man dancing in a baby-doll teddy on Christmas morning in 1995, accessorized with a velvet pillow topped with a doll chair. You had to be there, honey!

Heller then went on to open **HYPERIA** in East Downtown before the current buzz on the city's center.

Reached by phone, the two were excited about the new direction in which the space is going. Carnahan and Heller were also psyched that the queers of Houston were interested in what's happening at 2401. When reminded that half of Houston came out on that dance floor, they promised an all-inclusive atmosphere at the new space.

"We are a hate-free zone. The space is going to be open Friday and Saturday nights, with Sundays available for

events. People are going to be surprised with some of the talent, DJ or not, in this incredible space."

The name of the club is the hot button issue of the moment, as day-to-day operations, including some big construction projects rapidly move forward. Rumors include a new sound system developed by Heller called "Mother."

HotGG is well acquainted with the search and the Grand Dame of Houston Nightlife, **JOHN BEEMAN**, has been brought in to consult during the search for a name.

Beeman, of **PTL CLUB & POWER TOOLS** fame named Hyperia for Heller a few years back.

Stay tuned.

Eclipse legend returns

Speaking of DJ legends, former Eclipse writer **MARK GOEBEL** has the kids couch dancing at **METEOR** every Friday and Saturday night. Meteor continues to offer a true mix of gay men and lesbians in a copasetic environment.

Goebel (looking as yummy as he ever did) and his accomplice, **DJ**

DVORAK, provide just the right mix of dance and pop hits, and the videos are always the latest. Like the ever changing Martini collection, the scene is delicious. Drink specials abound, and the crowd is always just so Abercrombie & Fitch — before the retooling of course!

A JJ encore

It seems that Houston cannot get enough of **MS. JIMMY JAMES**.

After playing two weekends to SRO crowds at 1415 California, James is back for one final weekend, July 30 & 31. Don't miss this last opportunity to see James before her possible jump to Las Vegas. I hear that soon Sin City will be calling!

Another club change


Also it appears that the space on Westheimer near the curve that once housed **BLUE ZONE** and **RASCALS** is reopening as **BARTINI**.

No word on the new owners, but check back next week for more information here at HoVo on the Go-Go!

MORE INFO

MeteorHouston.com

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 If you have any club announcements or events email them, to jhooks@houstonvoice.com or call 713-529-8490. See you on the Go-Go!

dining J.A. CHAPMAN

Any number of ice cream shops in Houston offer up myriad flavors and ways to enjoy a new slant on a decadent and cool treat.

July is Ice Cream Month

JULY IS NATIONAL ICE CREAM MONTH, which makes this a great time to indulge with a scoop from some of the excellent ice cream shops around town.

Ben & Jerry's fans will be delighted with the new Scoop Shop on Kirby, located in the same building that used to house Dolce and Freddo. The Euro decor of the former gelato spot is long gone, replaced by a bright and cheery interior more in line with the happy nature of Ben and Jerry's.

The store is staffed with young, friendly, uniformed employees who are more than ready to give customers a sample. All the standard flavors are available by the scoop, as well as some more unusual ones not usually found in the supermarket aisle. The Dublin Mudslide — Irish cream liqueur ice cream with chocolate cookies and a coffee fudge swirl — is a treat, as is the Coconut Almond Chip. Scoops run from \$2.49 to \$4.79.

To go with your ice cream, try a chewy, decadent cookie (\$1.25) or some Fair Trade organic coffee. All sorts of Ben & Jerry's gear is available for purchase, from hats to T-shirts. And if you still haven't had enough ice cream, you can get a pre-packed pint to go.

Amy's Ice Creams out of Austin has been a favorite ice cream spot in the Shepherd Square area since 1993. Although it's part of a small Texas chain, it has a laid back, non-corporate feel. The employees behind the counter are friendly and entertaining, sporting goofy hats and tossing and catching ice cream scoops before serving them up.

Amy's has seven standard flavors, including the simple but excellent Sweet Cream. Other ice cream flavors are offered on a rotating or seasonal basis. Flavors range from the rather predictable Butter Pecan to the outlandish Shiner

Bock. Scoops are offered in three sizes (\$2.10-\$3.50). Toppings are crushed in to the ice cream on a white board. Or indulge yourself with some of Amy's rich, homemade hot fudge.

Fresh roasted coffee is available, as are T-shirts with entertaining slogans. You can even make your own silly four-shot black and white photos in the photo booth. Amy's is a great place for excellent ice cream in a fun atmosphere. To find it, just look for the two large cows on the roof.

FOR SOME OUTSTANDING ICE CREAM in a family owned and operated setting, you'll want to drive across town to Hank's Ice Cream Parlor near the Reliant Stadium. For nearly 20 years, Hank and Okemah Wiggins have been making and serving ice cream in this little shop in a nondescript strip mall. Sixteen flavors are available daily, with vanilla, chocolate, strawberry and butter pecan being standard.

The bright pink walls hold photos and posters of various Texas sports figures and celebrities, and the straightforward menu is handwritten on white boards behind the counter. The friendly Wiggins family will let you sample any flavor. Scoops run \$2.26/\$3.19 small/large. A sundae will set you back \$3.65.

Try the outstanding butter pecan, the most popular flavor, a rich buttery concoction bursting with crunchy in-house-roasted pecan halves or the smooth and creamy coffee. Whatever your favorite flavor, the friendly folks at Hank's will make you feel welcome.

A survey of ice cream in Houston must include the Chocolate Bar. Made on the premises, this ice cream is rich and decadent and comes in a myriad of chocolate flavors. Try the tangy Orange Sunrise or the Totally Nuts, packed with five different kinds of nuts and held together with a touch of chocolate ice cream. New this summer is Summer Mint, a refreshingly cool blast on a hot day.

The staff is friendly and helpful, even at the busiest times. They'll tell you what's in each flavor and let you sample whatever you want. Cups come in three sizes, running \$2.95-\$3.95, and you can take home a hand packed pint for \$6.95.

The Chocolate Bar offers chocolate in all sorts of guises, from gifts to bars to pizzas on one side of the shop, and cakes and other desserts on the other. But it's the ice cream that really wows. It's the perfect treat on a warm day, especially for a chocoholic.

A scoop of cold ice cream is the perfect antidote to the sweltering July heat in Houston. So celebrate National Ice Cream Month and treat yourself to a scoop of your favorite flavor.

MORE INFO

Ben & Jerry's Scoop Shop
5515 Kirby Drive
713-529-3800
www.benjerry.com/kirby


Amy's Ice Creams
3816 Farnham
713-526-2697
www.amysicecreams.com

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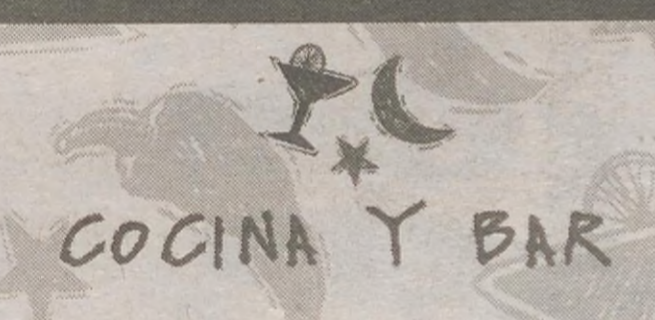
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eclipse

'De-Lovely' doesn't shun composer's gay relationships

COLE PORTER, continued from Page 33

(Kline) is playing the piano in his apartment when "Gabe" (Jonathan Pryce), a fictional character in the film, arrives to take Porter to the theater where a musical based on Porter's life is being staged.

The supporting characters for the musical, including Linda (Judd), appear onstage, and Porter's life plays out while Gabe and an elderly Porter stroll through them, sometimes with commentary.

At the end, Porter joins Linda onstage as the lights go down, symbolizing him joining the true love of his life in heaven. The scene is not nearly as grizzly as the real-life operating room where his life ended.

i COLE PORTER

Birth: Born in Peru, Ind., in 1891

Death: Died in 1964 at age 73

Education: Graduated from Yale University; dropped out of Harvard Law School

Relationship Status: Married American socialite and divorcee Linda Thomas in Paris in 1919

Interesting tidbits:

Porter lyrics are famous for double entendres and several, including 'Love for Sale,' were censored when originally performed.

Wrote the lyrics for 11 Broadway musicals. Gay favorites who have recorded songs by Porter include Judy Garland, Eartha Kitt, Barbra Streisand, Bette Midler and Elton John.

The messiness of Porter's relationship with Linda is also sanitized in the film. Porter was gay, but the movie offers viewers a male-female love story with homosexuality often portrayed as a perplexing problem that comes between them.

It's like a movie in which a man and a woman are in love, but his pesky gambling or alcohol problems threaten to tear them apart.

"I wanted every kind of love that was available," Porter says at one point during "De-Lovely." "I could never find that in the same person or the same sex."

Even the poster for the movie shows Kline and Judd embracing and the caption below reads "A love that would never die." It fails to mention that it seemingly was a non-sexual, platonic relationship.

In addition, the "undying love" between Porter and Linda never ignites on the screen, possibly in part due to the lack of chemistry between Kline and Judd. It's often hard to imagine Porter and Linda even as best friends, and certainly not lovers.

BUT THE MOVIE DOES CLEARLY depict Porter's same-sex encounters, which makes it a step above "Night & Day," the 1946 film in which Cary Grant portrayed Porter.

Stephen Macias, the entertainment media director for the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, is glad the



Kevin Kline captures the bitter-sweet essence of the life of gay composer Cole Porter.

record is going to be set straight, so to speak, in the latest film.

"With any historical film, it's important to accurately represent who that person was, because that is part of what made them special," he says. "When you erase parts of people's lives that conservative people aren't comfortable with, it's unfair to our community."

GLAAD often works with movie studios to ensure that gays are fairly and accurately portrayed, but it did not work with the team responsible for "De-Lovely."

"What historical pieces like this do is

i MORE INFO

Edwards Greenway Palace 24
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AMC Studio 30
2949 Dunvale
281-319-4AMC

document how far we've come," Macias says. "It clarifies the challenges we've had living in the closet and, I think in some ways, it points out a celebratory aspect of our lives — that we don't have to have those challenges anymore."

One of the movie's best assets is its all-star lineup of musicians. Diana Krall, though stoic on screen, does a great job with "Just One of Those Things" and "I Get a Kick Out of You." Vivian Green scores with a version of "Love for Sale" set in a gay bar, and Natalie Cole shines near the end of the film with "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye."

But Alanis Morissette misses with her version of "Let's Do It, Let's Fall In Love." Robbie Williams tromps all over "It's De-Lovely," and Sheryl Crow fails to deliver on her rendition of "Begin The Beguine."

On a more positive note, the sets and costumes in "De-Lovely" are delightful and easily evolve as decades pass in the film.

Stonewall Democrats of Houston



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For more information call: 713-527-8219



news cover story

Trans delegates hope to raise issues at convention

DEMOCRATS, continued from Page 1

gender delegate to the convention, but that will change in 2004.

Five delegates from among the ranks of transgender activists will participate in the convention, and among them will be Vanessa Edwards Foster of Houston.

"We are coming of age into the mainstream," she said.

Four of the delegates are current or former board members of the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC). Edwards-Foster is chair of that group. While transgender participation amounts to only about 0.11 percent of the more than 4,353 delegates and alternates from throughout the country, activists see their participation as a remarkable milestone and a major accomplishment. "A lot of it seems to be symbolic, but it gives us a chance to get our message out not only to Democrats, but to the country as a whole," Edwards-Foster said. The first publicized transgender delegate to attend a national convention was Jane Fee, a Minnesota delegate who attended the 2000 Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles. Karen Keren was the very first transgender delegate, attending the 1992 Republican National Convention in Houston. The press did not report on her attendance.

In addition to Edwards-Foster, the other delegates include, Kathy Padilla from Philadelphia, Penn., Barbra "Babs"

Casbar from New Jersey, Monica Helms from Atlanta, Geo. and Christina Ocasio from Austin, Tex.

Joining the delegation will be two national committee members: Melissa Sklarz from New York City, who will sit on the Rules Committee, and Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, who will serve on the LGBT Steering Committee. "This is a watershed event, openly transgender people being accepted as leaders in the largest and oldest political party in the country," said Kathy Padilla, a former charter board member of NTAC. "It's an affirmation of the value of a very disadvantaged people and will effect inclusion in proposed federal civil rights legislation."

Christina Ocasio, a board officer of the Travis County Stonewall Democrats in Austin, said, "It is important that we start to show our faces in politics and activism." She added "Transgendered people can be professionals with stable jobs, mortgage payments, car notes, paying taxes and children. In other words, normal in most aspects of life." One of the key issues that Ocasio hopes to ensure is "the ability to keep working and being a productive member of our great society."

Edwards-Foster said for the first time in history, the Democratic National Committee sought out overlooked minorities for convention participation. Four slots were set aside for transgender delegates.



Atlanta transgendered activist **Monica Helms** is scheduled as a delegate at the Democratic National Convention in Boston.

"I was going to run anyway, so I gave one of the four slots to Christina," she said. "I ran at large as a delegate."

Though a problem or two appeared to hamper her election at first, Edwards-Foster said she was elected and she is happy to be participating in the convention.

DNC Rules Committee member, Melissa Sklarz, said that the transgender community "ponders our place in an uncaring cultural environment that knows us only from tabloid news and television." She

MORE INFO

The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition (NTAC)
www.ntac.org

added that transgendered persons "wonder how many more deaths we will suffer until our needs are taken seriously. In spite of insurmountable obstacles, our numbers only grow larger, and we will not go away." Casbar, an NTAC board member, noted that being selected a delegate is an honor. She is overwhelmed by the "singular significance that I am part of the first transgender caucus of the Democratic Convention, ever!" She added,

"Our first goal is to be recognized as our own community by the Democratic National Committee. We must be our own advocates "Being recognized as an American Veteran is an additional honor and responsibility that I also carry with Pride."

At last, Edwards-Foster said, "We are part of the political process that every group in America takes part in. We are not simply a rare anomaly this year, we're taking a more proportionately representative part of the political process."

She added, "We're finally doing what other segments of American society have done before us."

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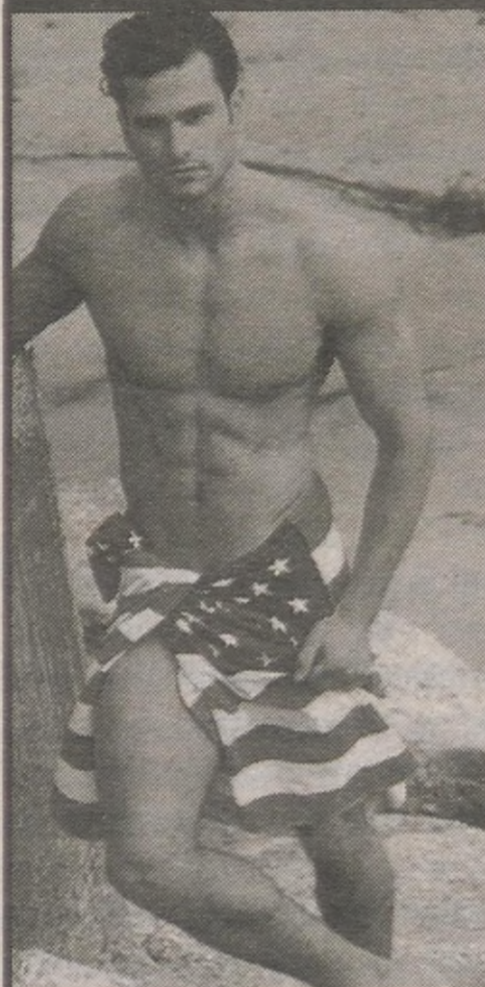
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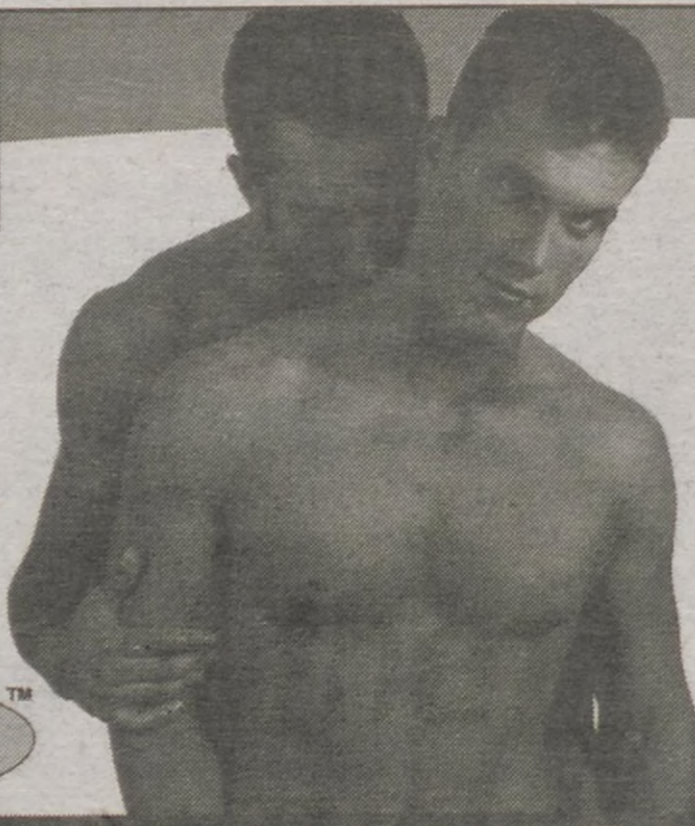
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dish

There's a Fine Line Between Telling the Truth and Talking Trash

Globe is ms-behaving

Advice maven's burning mad, stalker targets soccer star, and Madge makes dancers sweat

What's in a name? Well, if you're a successful gay advice columnist, your trademark is your name.

MS. BEHAVIOR, who writes a self-syndicated advice column for a number of gay newspapers, has filed a lawsuit against the BOSTON GLOBE to protect her name.

The columnist, whose actual name is MERYL COHN, filed the lawsuit in early July, claiming that the Globe's weekly column, titled "Miss Behave" and written by Millie Downing, could be confused with her 14-year-old column.

Lawyers for Cohn sent a cease-and-desist letter to Downing, the Globe, and the New York Times Co., which owns the Globe, but they refused to comply. The defendants said in a written response that there is no way the two columns could be confused because Ms. Behavior is "gay and risqué" and "Miss Behave" is "mainstream."

Dish's calls to the Globe were not returned.

Cohn has been writing her column since 1992, and it has been running in Boston's gay newspaper Bay Windows since its inception. In 1995, Houghton Mifflin published Cohn's book, "Do What I Say: Ms. Behavior's Guide to Gay and Lesbian Etiquette."

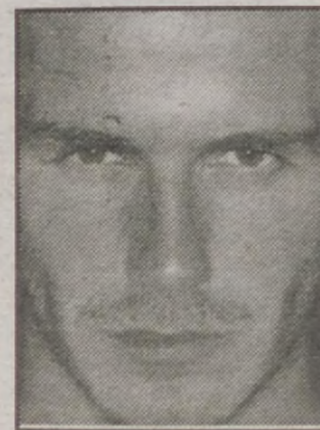
This June, amid the fight over equal marriage rights for gay couples, the Globe ran a feature story about Ms. Behavior on the cover of its arts section. The article described her as "the doyenne of gay and lesbian etiquette."

Now, if only the newspaper would listen to her advice on this thorny legal matter.

Dish promises to keep you posted.

Beckingham Palace

The wife of sexy soccer star and gay icon DAVID BECKHAM had a close call last week when a man with a crowbar and a can of gasoline was arrested trying to break into the couple's home and, presumably, set it on fire, the Associated Press reports.



David Beckham

The metrosexual Beckham was in Spain training at the time but his wife, Victoria (better known as POSH SPICE from the Spice Girls), and their two sons, Brooklyn and Romeo, were at home in England.

A spokesperson for Victoria said the couple's personal security guards caught the 38-year-old man and held him for police. He was arrested on suspicion of possessing an article intended to cause criminal damage



Gay advice columnist Ms. Behavior (Meryl Cohn) is suing the Boston Globe for stealing her name.

and also was suspected of drug possession.

The Sun newspaper reported that the man appeared angry at Beckham. The soccer star has always been a little bit flaming, but this is ridiculous.

Private dancers

It seems like New York Daily News gossip columnists Rush & Molloy are trying to stir up trouble on the "Reinvention Tour" of MADONNA — aka "The Artist Currently Known as Esther." (Dish, of course, reported the name change long before other snoops got wind of this development.)

Rush & Molloy quote "friends of the dancers," referring to Madge's backup dancers, saying they make "surprisingly" little — about \$1,000 a performance. That's compared to Madonna's \$2 million or so a performance. Perhaps if they were the Material Girl, they'd make the big bucks. Their salary is already double the \$500 a show pop dancers usually get.

They also complained that Madonna has been shutting off the air conditioning in areas where she performs to protect her voice. "Sometimes it's insanely hot," one of the dancers told the duo. "It's very hard to breathe, and they have oxygen in our dressing rooms."

Madonna's rep, Liz Rosenberg, says the dancers seem very happy and she hasn't heard otherwise.

Seth Stewart, the guy who tangoes with Madonna during the show, says, "She treats us like royalty. She even had us to her house for a cookout."

Dish wonders if they played Truth or Dare.



Madonna

@ Send comments, suggestions to
Dish@houstonvoice.com

books LAURA DOUGLAS-BROWN

Lesbian writer Sarah Waters weaves a complex tale of love and lies in 19th century England in 'Fingersmith.'

Tangled webs

IF CHARLES DICKENS AND Charlotte Brontë gave birth to a lesbian lovechild, her name would be Sarah Waters.

Contemporary fans of Dickens' and Brontë's Victorian fiction will relish Waters' three novels, and gay readers of all literary tastes will find themselves swept away in Waters' compelling plots and highly detailed, often sensual portraits of 19th century England.

"Fingersmith," Water's third historical novel, was released last year to widespread critical acclaim. Her earlier works — "Affinity" and "Tipping the Velvet" — continue to make bestseller lists at gay and lesbian bookstores.

The novels are not a trilogy, but read in sequence, they provide a fascinating portrait of often-unexplored aspects of Victorian society and an excellent opportunity to experience a young writer quickly becoming a literary star.

"TIPPING THE VELVET," WATERS' 1998 debut, won praise from the New York Times Book Review as the novel to "carry the banner" of lesbian fiction to "a wider readership."

In rich period detail and episodic style, Waters chronicles the adventures of oyster girl Nan Astley, who finds her life permanently changed when she attends a theater performance by Kitty Butler, a "masher," or male impersonator. Following Kitty to London, Nan finds heartbreak, poverty and plenty of sex in her journey to personal and political awakening.

Waters acknowledges she was inspired to write "Tipping the Velvet" while completing her Ph.D. dissertation on lesbian historical fiction. At times, her attention to detail weighs down her prose and detracts from her otherwise compelling storytelling.

The plot is kept lively by a healthy dose of eroticism — the novel's name, we learn late in the text, is period-slang for cunnilingus. But Nan still sometimes seems like little more than a vehicle for Waters to catalog her research into the available avenues for expressing same-sex attraction in the late 19th century.

RELEASED A YEAR LATER, WATER'S second novel, "Affinity," may have disappointed some readers expecting another bawdy romp through Victorian England.

Suffused with an omnipresent Gothic



In 'Fingersmith,' Sarah Waters creates an unlikely love story highlighting the criminal and sexual underworlds of Victorian England. (Photo courtesy www.sarahwaters.com)

sensuality, "Affinity" is chaste by comparison. But the novel shows Waters' maturation as a writer, correcting the meandering plot of "Tipping the Velvet" with a tightly woven tale that keeps the reader entirely absorbed in mystery.

Margaret Prior, an upperclass young woman who once attempted suicide, becomes a "Lady Visitor" for the female inmates at Millbank Prison. There she forms an unusually strong bond with spiritualist Selina Dawes, jailed for fraud and assault after a client is found bloodied and unconscious.

The result is a haunting piece of storytelling that leaves readers with as many questions as answers.

WATERS' GIFT FOR PLOT EVIDENCED in "Affinity" achieves its pinnacle in "Fingersmith," as the writer divides the novel into sections narrated by two very different protagonists: Sue Trinder, an orphan raised by a family of petty thieves, and Maud Lilly, another orphan raised by her scholarly, eccentric uncle.

Richard Rivers, or "Gentleman" as he is dubbed in the circle of thieves, enlists Sue to help him marry Maud and make off with her family fortune. By serving as Maud's maid, Sue is to gain her confidence and help steer her affection toward Gentleman, in return for a small share of the loot.

The forced intimacy of the arrangement sparks unexpected feelings in the lonely young women. But unbeknownst to either, they are enmeshed in a larger web of deception that encompasses all of the novel's characters.

Waters laces her text with clues to the novel's multiple plot twists, but readers — like Sue and Maud — will be shocked at every turn.

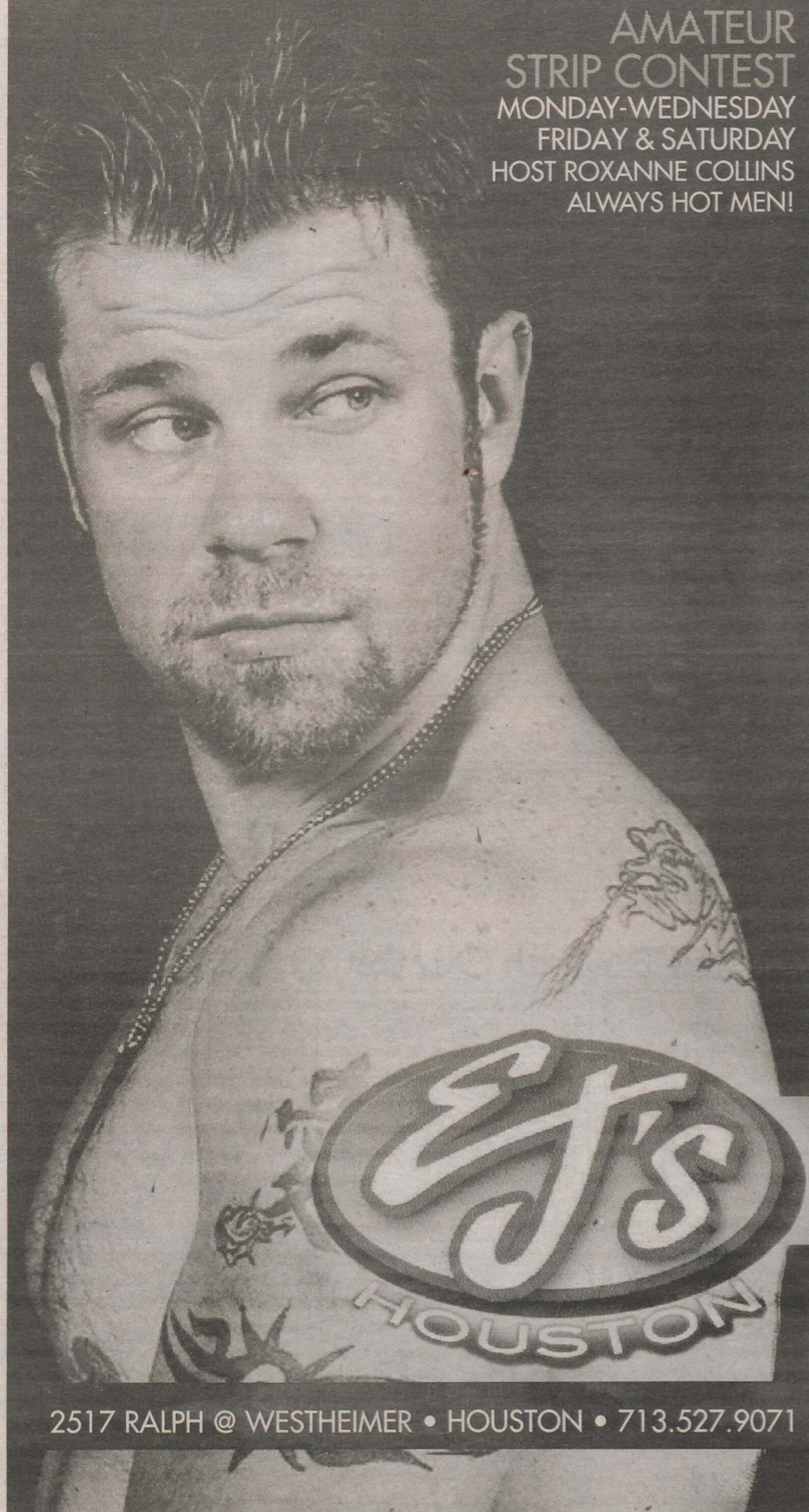
"Fingersmith" takes its title from a 19th century term for a thief or pickpocket. In her third novel, Waters proves a masterful fingersmith herself, deftly weaving a complicated plot filled with surprise and suspense that never surrenders historical accuracy or literary style.



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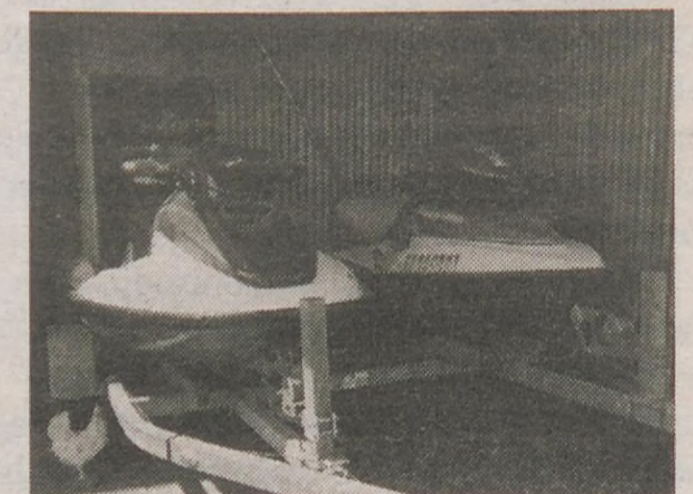
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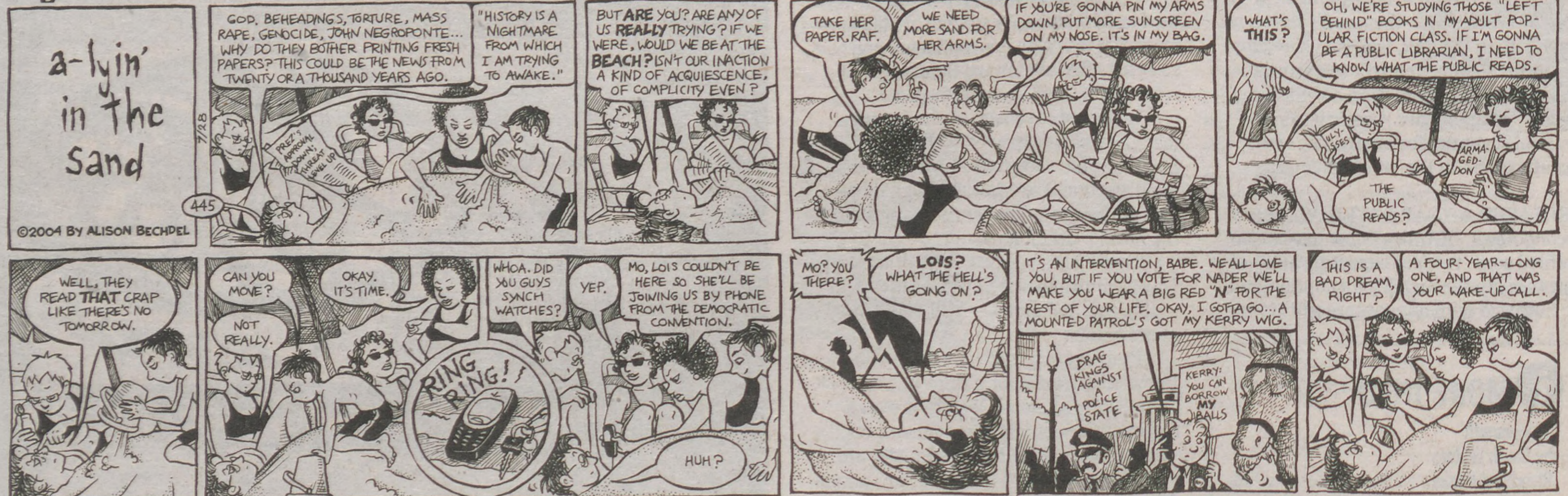


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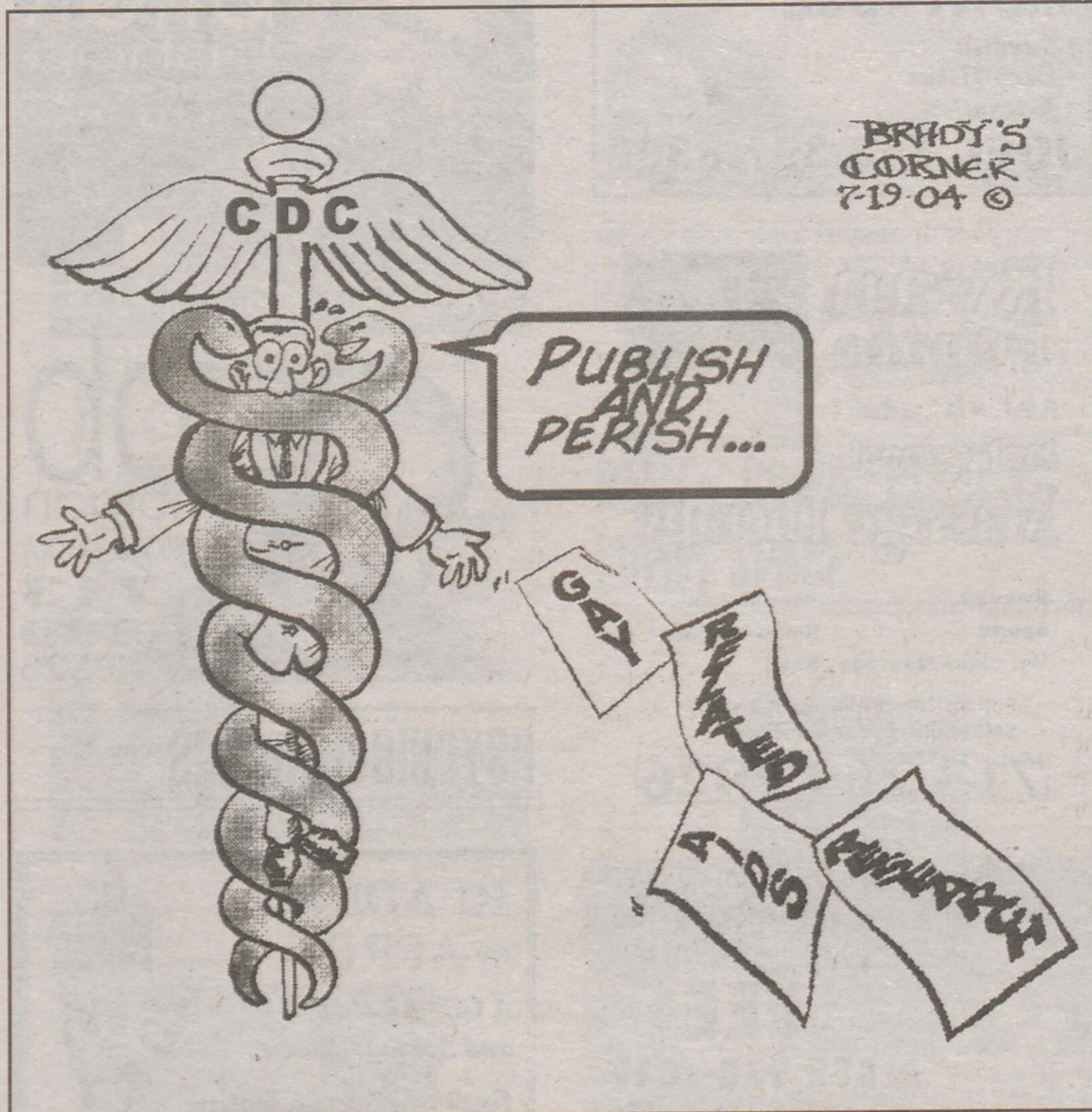
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HE CAN FORGET ABOUT A CAREER AS A MODEL, THEN. WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

I AM. WHO ARE YOU?

NICE JOB, LANCE... PICKING A HETERO-SUPREMACIST FOR ME TO WORK WITH.

LET ME MAKE SOME PHONE CALLS... WE'LL HAVE A NEW MODEL IN BY THIS AFTERNOON.

I'M MAX EDGINGTON. I DON'T WAIT AROUND FOR AD AGENCIES TO CLEAN UP THEIR MESSSES.

LANCE POWERS, I'M WITH THE AD AGENCY THAT SET UP THIS SHOOT.

WE DIDN'T PICK HIM... THE UNDERWEAR COMPANY DID.

YOU DON'T GET IT, LANCE.

YOU HAVE ME FOR ONE HOUR... AND THEN I WALK.

ONE HOUR?! BUT THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN--

ME?! BUT I--

HEY, WHAT ARE YOU...? HE'S GOT THE BODY.

THIS IS HIGHLY INAPPROPRIATE!

I KNOW. MY FAVORITE SORT OF A PHOTO SHOOT. "APPROPRIATE" IS SO BORING. DOESN'T USUALLY SELL UNDERWEAR, EITHER...

WAIT. THERE IS ONE POSSIBILITY. YOU CAN BE THE MODEL, LANCE.

AND HE'S GOT THE FACE.

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FOR ALL YOU QUEENS WHO don't know how to describe your body parts, here's a lesson: You are a male. You do not have "titties," you have nipples. If you go to a gym, you may even have pecs. Now you know.

RICE QUEENS UNITE! I'M NOT fat, just a little fluffy. Old? I prefer mature. Aggressive is never right, but a little spice in the rice is nice.

THANK YOU TO THE TWO gorgeous, tall, muscular guys I just saw walking down the street holding hands. I think that was the greatest sight I ever saw.

More please, more!
JUST BECAUSE I'M FAT doesn't mean I don't have feelings for you, skinny bitch. Love don't cost a thing!

TO THOSE WHO SAY THAT marriage and open relationships are incompatible: Who are you to define for everyone what marriage is or isn't? We already have Bush to do that.

WHY IN THE BLACK GAY scene is everyone so afraid to introduce themselves to someone new?

IT'S SO ANNOYING TO HEAR you say no one can tell you're

Gay people escape the conformity of the straight world only to find it's much worse in the gay world!

gay. You're only fooling yourself, so acknowledge the fact you're a flaming queen and move on.

FACE IT, ASIDE FROM RELIGIOUS reasons (which I support and have no qualms with), circumcision has had its day.

REPEAT AFTER ME: HIV IS A chronic illness, not a terminal disease. It's NOT a death sentence.

I HAVE NOTHING AGAINST uncircumcised gay men, but some of them need to pay more attention to their masculine freshness.

TO YOU GAY ORGANISTS AND choir members in anti-gay churches: Ain't no reason you need to stay. Get thee to a good, pro-gay church and quit wasting your life!

INSTEAD OF PROMOTING understanding, you idiots find it more entertaining to print racist statements, with no responsibility for gay youth reading about it.

Bitch Boy responds: Political correctness is so late 20th century. If you can't handle real talk that might offend, then turn the page.

T-SHIRTS NEVER LOOK GOOD on anyone. I think they're on their way out as a fashion statement. They are so pointless and grotesque.

"DOWN LOW" FOLKS, PLEASE get the courage to come out. Things will never change if you don't.

AS A PERSON WHO RECENTLY was diagnosed with HIV, I have plenty to deal with without reading what some HIV-negative people say about how I'm going to look in 10 years or how I'm going to die. Don't you dare put limits on my life. You could never know how hard it is to maintain a positive attitude in the face of something so scary.

TO ALL THOSE BITCHING about gay marriage: If gays

would develop a sense of maturity about relationships, then it probably wouldn't be such a big issue.

TO THE SELF-LOATHING, spark-plug shaped homosexual proudly wearing a "Bush-Cheney 2004" T-shirt at the gym: Seeing your smug display of ignorance encouraged me to go contribute \$500 on www.johnkerry.com. Keep up the good work and start doing some cardio.

WHY MUST EVERY GAY event have to always be hosted (i.e. ruined) by the proverbial mandatory drag queen for a host? I've never understood this.

WHEN I TELL YOU I AM HIV-positive and that I must be safe if we are to do anything sexually, listen to what the hell I am saying and don't listen with your dick. HIV can and will kill more people. I refuse to add to that body count.

TO BITCH BOY: JUST HAVE TO have the last word always, don't you? We'd do better just to dump the whole "Bitch Session" because we don't need more bitching!
Bitch Boy responds: I do NOT always have to have the last word!

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