



INSIDE



State Rep. Garnet Coleman (D-Houston) is among the few lawmakers who side with gays on issues such as DOMA.
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A new report criticizes AIDS Action, which represents AIDS groups across the nation and currently is led by Executive Director Marsha Martin.
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It would take something as big as Houston's annual Art Car Parade to get columnist Johnny Hooks to do drag.
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Texas AIDS funding falls short

Proposals in House, Senate both millions of dollars below requests from health officials

By PENNY WEAVER

AUSTIN — AIDS activists remained on the edge of their seats this week as state lawmakers prepared to finalize funding for the Texas HIV Medication Program.

But it already is clear that the funding the Texas Legislature allots will fall short of health care needs.

"Quite simply, there's not enough money with the way they've set the priorities in this state," said Randall Ellis, executive director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas. "That's not to say that they couldn't re-set the priorities."

Carolyn A. Parker, Ph.D., executive director of the Texas AIDS Network, issued an action alert early this week, reminding activists that the Legislature's



State Rep. Talmadge Heflin (R-Houston) (right), chair of the House appropriations committee, and Sen. Teel Bivens (R-Amarillo), chair of the Senate finance committee, are co-chairs of the Legislature's conference committee that will recommend funding for the state's battle against HIV/AIDS.

budget conference committee is now considering final recommendations.

This includes finding a middle ground between the two proposals for HIV/AIDS

funding that were passed by the state House and Senate.

In the House, members considered requests for increased funding and allocated an additional \$30 million for the state's HIV medication program. In the Senate, an additional \$23 million was approved.

The conference committee now must recommend either of those two amounts to be approved by the entire Legislature, although that panel cannot recommend more than the highest amount already approved by either the House or Senate, Parker noted.

But both allocations fall short for AIDS funding. The Texas Department of Health requested nearly a \$50 million increase to fully fund the state HIV medication program.

The committee did meet this week, Ellis noted, but it is not clear how soon the panel may consider funding for HIV. Health and political leaders hope gay Texans will speak out in favor of the highest possible funding for the medication program.

Please see AIDS FUNDING on Page 4

Airline industry a leader in approach toward gays

Pro-gay policies found in 9 of 10 major carriers, including Houston-based Continental

By JENNIFER J. SMITH

At a time when more and more companies and government agencies are adopting non-discrimination policies inclusive of sexual orientation and offering domestic partner benefits, the nation's airlines have come a long way in implementing gay-friendly policies, according to an informal Houston Voice survey.

Among the 10 airlines included in the survey — American, America West, the Houston-based Continental, Delta, JetBlue, Hooters Air,



An informal survey shows airline policies tend to be inclusive to gays. (Photo illustration by John Nail)

Northwest, Southwest, United and US Air — all but Hooters have gay-inclusive anti-bias policies and offer domestic partner benefits.

When the Human Rights Campaign released its first-ever Corporate Equality Index last August — ranking major compa-

nies on whether they offered non-discrimination statements, domestic partner benefits, and support for gay causes — eight major U.S. airlines were included.

Just one — American — scored a perfect 100, putting it among only 12 of the 319 companies ranked that received a perfect score.

American, with its \$17.3 billion in revenue and 93,000 employees, became the nation's largest carrier two years ago when it acquired TWA. The company received a score of 100 from HRC for including sexual orientation and gender identity in its non-discrimination policy, offering domestic partner benefits, including sexual orientation in its diversity training, having a gay employee group, and providing philanthropic donations and marketing efforts to gays.

"American is certainly the high standard

Please see AIRLINE on Page 6



TURNING VISION INTO VACCINES

HIV Vaccine Awareness Day, May 18th

Sunday, May 18th is HIV Vaccine Awareness Day. Wear your red AIDS ribbon upside down to form a "V" for vaccines, as a sign that you share the vision for a vaccine to prevent HIV infection.

Thousands of researchers and volunteers are working together to make this vision a reality for everyone. Today is the day to thank them — and everyone who shares this vision.

Experts believe that vaccines to prevent HIV infection are the best hope to stop HIV from spreading. While we don't have a vaccine yet, several promising HIV vaccines are in the testing phase — and many more are being researched. Progress is being made everyday.

On Sunday, May 18th, wear your red AIDS ribbon upside down, and share the vision for an HIV preventive vaccine.

To learn more about HIV preventive vaccines, visit www.aidsinfo.nih.gov or call 1-800-HIV-0440 for a free brochure.

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local news

Gay activists recoup from DOMA loss

Political leaders praise allies, keep close watch on deadline for bills to leave committee

By PENNY WEAVER

AUSTIN — Gay political leaders remain poised for action even as they recover from the passage of the anti-gay Texas Defense of Marriage Act.

Randall Ellis, executive director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, said LGRL encourages gay Texans to thank legislators who opposed Senate Bill 7, the so-called Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which prevents the state from recognizing same-sex marriages or civil unions.

In the Senate, the measure passed last week on a vote of 22-9; those voting against the proposal were Gonzalo Barrientos (D-Austin), Rodney Ellis (D-Houston), Mario Gallegos Jr. (D-Galena Park), Juan Hinojosa (D-McAllen), Eliot Shapleigh (D-El Paso), Leticia Van de Putte (D-San Antonio), Royce West (D-Dallas), John Whitmire (D-Houston), and Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo).

In the House, the vote was 118-13 to approve DOMA. Representatives voting against the measure were Roberto Alonzo (D-Dallas), Kevin Bailey (D-Houston), Lon Burnam (D-Fort Worth), Garnet Coleman (D-Houston), Yvonne Davis (D-Dallas), Jessica Farrar (D-Houston), Terri Hodge (D-Dallas), Glenn Lewis (D-Fort Worth), Joe Moreno (D-Jacinto City), Elliott Naishtat (D-Austin), Richard Noriega (D-Houston), Eddie Rodriguez (D-Austin) and Mike Villarreal (D-San Antonio).

Coleman, Farrar and Villarreal each have filed pro-gay measures before the House this session. In January, Farrar filed the first pro-gay bill to be proposed before the current session of the Texas Legislature.

Farrar's House Bill 574 would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Farrar's District 148 includes the heavily gay Houston Heights and Near Northside neighborhoods north and northwest of downtown Houston.

"This is an extremely important issue," Farrar said as she introduced the bill. "Employment discrimination strikes at a fundamental American value: the right of each individual to do his or her job and contribute to society."

"Gay, lesbian and transgender people face pervasive discrimination across the state of Texas," she added.

No federal law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. According to the LGRL, it is legal to fire someone based on their sexual orientation in 37 states, including Texas. In 48 states, it is legal to do so based on gender identity.

Farrar's bill would extend employment discrimination protection currently provided based on race, religion, gender, national origin, age and disability to sexual orientation and gender identity.

A similar bill was proposed and backed during the last legislative session by gay-

friendly lawmakers such as Debra Danburg, Glen Maxey and Harryette Ehrhardt. Since those sponsors are no longer representatives at the state Capitol, Farrar said she will lead the way on this issue.

In mid-February, Coleman signed on as a joint author to Farrar's bill. The measure was referred to the Business & Industry Committee.

Also that month, Coleman filed a bill that would protect Texas students from discrimination based on characteristics including race, religion and sexual orientation. The proposal, H.B. 862, is titled "The Dignity for All Students Act."

"Every Texas student has a right to a public education," Coleman said in a press release. "When students are discriminated against in school and the school does nothing about it, we are failing them in a very fundamental way."

"When we say, 'Leave no child behind,' we do not footnote that statement with 'unless they are gay, lesbian or transgender,'" he added. "The Dignity for All Students Act will help set a tone in Texas that no type of discrimination will be tolerated in this state."

H.B. 862 was referred to the Public Education Committee on Feb. 18. Farrar signed on as a joint author to the Dignity for All Students Act.

Later in February, Villarreal filed H.B. 1136, which would ban discrimination in housing and employment based on sexual orientation.

The measure defines sexual orientation as "having a preference for heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality; having a history of such a preference; or being identified as having such a preference."

It also states: "This Act may not be construed to mean that this state condones homosexuality, bisexuality, or any equivalent lifestyle."

If passed, the legislation would prohibit employers from firing, refusing to hire, or otherwise discriminating against anyone based on sexual orientation.

The bill also would make it illegal to refuse to sell or rent property based on sexual orientation. The sexual orientation legislation proposal also lays out rules for hotel and motel operators, realtors, labor unions, employment agencies and advertising publishers.

The bill allows for a grievance process and civil penalties of \$10,000-\$50,000.

H.B. 1136 was referred to the State Affairs Committee.

Pro-gay bills stalled

Ellis said this week that lawmakers have been busy with a major ethics bill and redistricting. Gay activists are disappointed that Coleman's nondiscrimination measure has not been acted upon.

"One thing that we are really upset about is that the Dignity for All Students Act did not get a hearing," Ellis said. "Last session it was really exciting to see it pass off the House floor."

"[Texas lawmakers apparently] really don't have an interest in seeing those kinds of policies that protect students," he added. "[That is] a disappointment. That was the



State Rep. Garnet Coleman (D-Houston), Rep. Jessica Farrar (D-Houston) and Rep. Mike Villarreal (D-San Antonio) all voted against the Texas Defense of Marriage Act, and all have sponsored pro-gay bills during the current Texas Legislature's session.

bill that showed the most potential.

"This session it's just been stalled. While they found time to make social statements with the Defense of Marriage Act and give hearings to the foster care bill, it's clear what the priorities of the leadership is," Ellis said.

Monday, May 12, is the deadline for bills to make it out of committee. If a bill is not voted out of committee by that time, then it theoretically is dead for this legislative session.

But Ellis said LGRL will continue to keep a close eye on both pro-gay and anti-gay measures before Texas lawmakers.

"There's always the possibility" that anti-gay measures might be attached to other bills," Ellis said. "There have been rumors floating around of some of these right-wing legislators wanting to throw an amendment on there. We don't know when that could come."

While lawmakers are working on other issues, anti-gay measures may go nowhere, but gay leaders won't let their guard down.

"All this stuff that's happening — redistricting and ethics and all that — blocks the way for that to happen, but it also makes people start to get more and more desperate [and] look for more creative ways [to pass anti-gay proposals]," Ellis said.

New tool to fight for gays

Also this week, LGRL announced it has launched a new Web site to allow the group to better communicate with supporters.

"This launch has been a long time coming," Ellis said. "This site is designed to enable LGBT Texans and our allies to quickly and easily find information on a vast array of topics. Primarily, we wanted to make it easier than ever for people to get involved in the legislative process and the fight for equality in our state."

"More and more, we are going to be integrating this site into all of our efforts," Ellis added. "We envision supporters logging on every day, just to find out what's going on with LGRL and in state government in general."

"People can use this site to monitor LGBT news, LGRL's events, volunteer and fund-raising opportunities, and even our educational efforts," he said.

MORE INFO

Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas
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NEW CAMPAIGN: Longtime lesbian activist Sue Lovell officially has begun her quest to win a seat on the Houston City Council. Page 5.



HATE CRIMES BILL: Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) was one of three lawmakers who introduced the latest version of a federal hate crimes law last week. Page 10.



ACTION: Congressman Barney Frank (D-Mass.) is among legislators pushing for Egypt to halt its crackdown on gay activity. Page 10.

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local news

Activists: Gay Texans must mobilize again

AIDS FUNDING, continued from Page 1

"Through recent advocacy efforts on the part of HIV-positive consumers, it is clear that, as this decision is made by legislators in Austin, lawmakers have had an opportunity to 'put a face' on the ADAP issue," said Rich Arenschioldt, director of education and outreach at the Center for AIDS in Houston. "While the Center for AIDS remains perplexed at decisions to limit access to life-saving anti-HIV medication to any medically indigent Texans, we hope that continued pressure from activists and HIV-positive constituents will sway the opinions of those wielding economic and political power.

"The fallout from current decisions that limit availability to medications has tremendous epidemiological, medical, social and economic future consequences," he added.

Parker urged activists to contact all members of the conference committee.

"The more response that committee members receive, the more they will recognize the community's concern about this issue," she said.

"There's actually more money put in on the House side than on the Senate. That's what we need to come out, is the House version of it," Ellis said. "We had a lot of excitement at the beginning of the session. This is the time that we need to re-activate. We got our point across before and we need to rally our troops [again] and make sure we keep the good version."

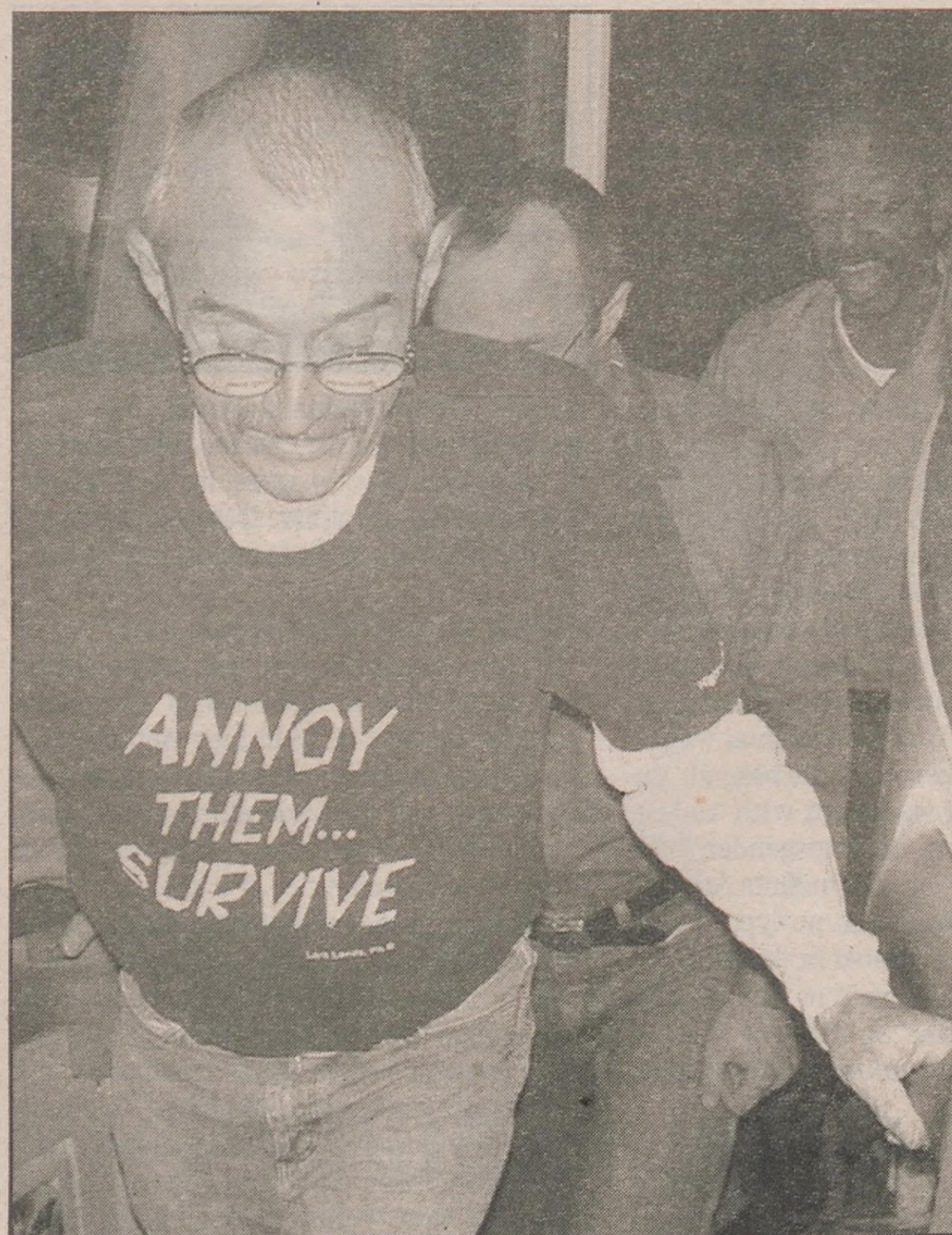
In February, the state board of health decided to nix a plan that would reduce income levels of those who qualify to get state money for HIV medicine. The proposal would have made only the poorest of the poor eligible and trimmed back the cost of the program.

Officials proposed the plan in anticipation of state and federal budget shortfalls.

But hundreds of Texans — including dozens of gay Houstonians — spoke out against the proposal, and the board tabled the plan, effectively killing it.

"Overwhelmingly, folks have said this isn't the way to fix this problem," said Dr. Sharilyn Stanley, associate commissioner for disease control and prevention.

Instead, the health department will



Gay activists in Houston helped mobilize opposition to proposed HIV/AIDS medication program cuts earlier this year. Health and political leaders said this week that activism must continue as the Legislature finalizes HIV program funding. Tracy Wilson (right), community coordinator of AIDS Coalition of Texas Now! (ACT Now!) Houston, is among gay activists who have closely watched the state's funding of its HIV/AIDS medication program. (Photos by Penny Weaver)



look for other ways to save money and will work to keep the HIV medicine program going, Stanley said. Officials also are closely watching the Legislature's actions.

The Texas Department of Health has a \$41.5 million deficit in the program, Stanley said. She cautioned earlier this year that in the coming months there "very likely might be a temporary halt to the enrollment of new clients."

Gay activists in Houston helped mobilize opposition to the proposed program cuts. On Jan. 16, two busloads of AIDS activists from the Houston area headed to Austin to attend public hearings by state board of health officials considering the potential cuts.

Tracy Wilson, community coordinator of AIDS Coalition of Texas Now! (ACT Now!) Houston, was among those who

made the trek to Austin and helped lead opposition to the possible changes.

"I think it's important that the board of health see the faces ... of people who are going to be affected by this," Wilson said at the time.

The Texas HIV Medication Program (THMP) is the primary source of HIV medications for thousands of HIV-positive patients, many of them gay men. The state's nearly \$60 million AIDS drugs program faces a \$3 million shortfall for this fiscal year, which ends in August. The shortfall is \$30 million more over the next two fiscal years, according to Dr. Celine Hanson, bureau chief of HIV and STD Prevention.

The proposal for more strict income cutoffs was approved unanimously at the state health department's Oct. 18 board meeting, before the measure went to the state board. The situation was not a surprise to most activists or health officials.

"We began telling people about the funding situation back in April [of 2002]," health department spokesman Doug McBride said. "We met with a number of groups to explain the projected budget situation."

Even if the U.S. Congress and the Texas Legislature do not trim AIDS program funding, there will be less money to assist HIV/AIDS patients as more people are enrolled in the program and medication costs continue to rise.

AIDS activists have said they want health officials to wait and see what federal and state funding is allotted by lawmakers before cutting back the number of HIV/AIDS patients who are eligible for assistance.

MORE INFO

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Texas Legislature
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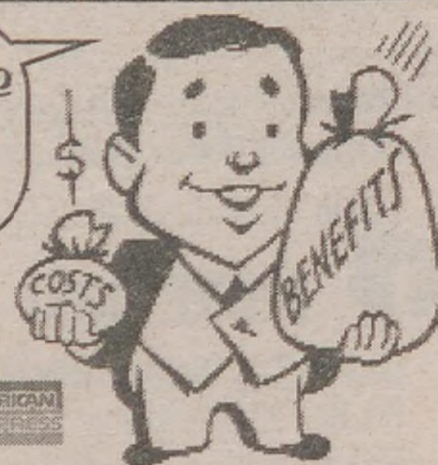
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around houston

Progressive Dinner benefits AssistHers, Uncommon Legacy

The 2003 Progressive Dinner set for next week will benefit the non-profit AssistHers and An Uncommon Legacy Foundation. For the evening, participants meet and park their vehicles at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, 2025 W. 11th St. From there, they board buses to travel to different homes for cocktails, soup and salad, and an entrée. At the end of the evening, everyone gathers at one place for dessert and coffee before returning to their vehicles. An after-dinner party will be hosted by Boca Chica, 2100 Waugh, and feature DJ Theresa Flores. Dinner hosts are Barbara Baldaro and Donece Knudsen; Alex Martinez and David Arpin; Glen Dickson; Frank Billingsley and Kevin Gilliard; Sherri Oldham, Lauri Laufman, Melody Page and Laurel Keith; Tony Carroll and Bruce Smith; and Gregg Farris. Uncommon Legacy is a non-profit organization "dedicated to enhancing the visibility, strength and vitality" of lesbians, according to its Web site. Formed in 1996, AssistHers offers support and care to lesbians with serious illnesses such as cancer, HIV/AIDS and multiple sclerosis.

i MORE INFO

2003 Progressive Dinner
6 p.m. Saturday, May 17 • Tickets: \$75
713-521-4628

AssistHers
P.O. Box 541095 • Houston, TX 77254
www.assisthers.org

An Uncommon Legacy Foundation
4310 Verdome Lane • Houston, TX 77092
www.uncommonlegacy.com

Lovell begins campaign for city council post

Longtime Houston political and lesbian activist Sue Lovell has kicked off her campaign for the at-large Position 4 slot on the Houston City Council. Lovell held an event to open the campaign on Tuesday, April 29. "Houston is a great city with great opportunity. I'm running for city council to keep



Longtime Houston activist Sue Lovell has kicked off her campaign for Houston City Council, Position 4.

it that way," Lovell said. The director of the Mills Corporation's Mills Access to Training & Career Help (MATCH) Program, Lovell also is a single mother and a Neartown Little League coach. She moved to Houston from Fresno, Calif., in 1970. She has worked with the Mills Corp. since 1999 and helped to create a welfare-to-work program that has become a model nationwide, according to a press release from her campaign. She worked for many years on HIV/AIDS and gay issues and in Democratic Party politics, where she serves in Billy Carr's former seat on the Democratic National Committee. She helped start AIDS Foundation Houston in the early 1980s, and served on its board for 12 years. Lovell is a member of the Texan Human Rights Foundation, among other groups. Her list of supporters includes Janine Brunjes, former liaison to gay Houstonians for Mayor Lee Brown; longtime transgender activist Phyllis Frye; accountant Kathy Hubbard, life partner of Annise Parker, the first lesbian Houston City Council member, who now is running for city controller; gay political consultant and activist Grant Martin; and Coy Tow, executive director of the Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce.

i MORE INFO

Sue Lovell Campaign • P.O. Box 667307
Houston, TX 77266 • 713-523-1762

Musicians needed for Pride band

The Houston Pride Band welcomes gay musicians to join the group, which has offered tunes for Houstonians for 25 years. Openings include those for brass, woodwind and percussion. Both skilled and out-of-practice musicians are welcome. The band performs in concerts, marches in parades and offers tunes at events throughout the city. Houston Pride Band rehearses each Wednesday from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Dignity Church, 1307 Yale. The group's next event is Concert in the Park on June 8, and following that, the Pride parade on June 29. For more information, log on to www.houstonprideband.org, e-mail the group at info@houstonprideband.org, or call 713-862-9491, ext. 2.

obituary

Edward R. Moya Jr., 41, stylist

Edward R. "Eddie" Moya Jr., 41, of Houston died on Saturday, April 26, 2003.

Born in Victoria, Texas, on March 25, 1962, Moya was a longtime resident of Houston. He worked for Christiane Salon and was a stylist to many celebrities, including former First Lady Barbara Bush. He was known for his interest in fashion, design and billiards. Moya traveled often to places such as Europe, South America and throughout the United States.

Friends recall Moya's kind and loving nature, his quick wit and ability to listen.

"Edward was the most precious person in the world and he was always there to make someone happy and was always happy himself," said Michael Dalla, Moya's life partner. "He was the love of my life. He was there whenever anyone called."

Survivors include Dalla; several family members in Victoria; special friends Mira Ginsburg and Mickey Farris; and a number of other friends.



From staff reports

Join us at Resurrection MCC for one of our weekly services:

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Spanish Worship Service/Noche Espiritual,
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national news

Survey shows airlines fly gay-friendly skies

AIRLINE, continued from Page 1

among the airline industry right now," said Kim Mills, education director for HRC. "They helped lead the effort to get domestic partner benefits for gay employees, and they continue to build on that history."

Southwest ranked at the bottom of the airline pack with a 43 out of 100, according to HRC. The company does not include gender identity in its non-discrimination policy — something no other airline besides American does. Southwest also does not have a gay employee group, include sexual orientation in diversity training, or contribute to gay charitable efforts.

Other airlines fall largely in the middle, between American's score of 100 and Southwest's 43. Hooters, which consistently ignore gay issues according to the survey, and JetBlue were not included in the HRC report.

"[Hooters Air] is too small to offer those kinds of benefits," said Mark Peterson, the company's chief operating officer.

Hooters and Northwest were the only two companies out of 10 that declined to respond to the Voice survey.

"As a result of the layoffs we announced on March 21, ... we are quite short staffed in many departments, including human resources," said Mary Stanik, a Northwest spokesperson. "In order to better do the work they must, they pretty much don't do any surveys for anyone."

Turbulence gives way

Rankings on gay issues are important, activists concede, but how the industry overall became so gay-inclusive is even more critical.

In 1997, San Francisco passed an equal benefits ordinance, which required the roughly 6,000 companies doing business with the city to offer the same benefits to employees' unmarried partners as they provide to spouses. That measure, and the ensuing years-long legal battle, pushed the airline industry to become more gay-friendly, activists said.

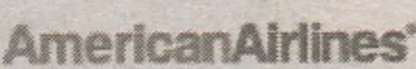

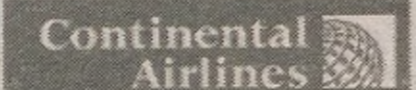
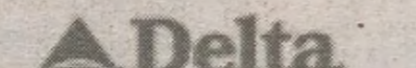





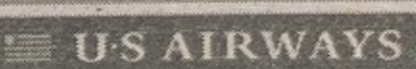
During an October 1998 hearing, Brendan Dolan, attorney for the Airline Transport Association, the industry group that brought the legal action, said the ordinance conflicts with federal law and illegally attempted to regulate interstate commerce.

Among the laws it violated, he said, was the Employees' Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, which forbids state and local regulation of most employee benefits; and the Airline Deregulation Act of 1978, which forbids state and local regulation of airline prices, routes and services.

The airlines, through its trade group, also objected to a municipal government "mandate."

City attorneys countered that local governments should be allowed use of public property — including San Francisco International Airport — on a company's promise not to discriminate.

The airline industry and gay activists both claimed victory after an April 10, 1999, federal court decision that said San Francisco couldn't force airlines to abide by the health insurance provisions of its ordinance, but the city could still demand

	HRC Corporate Equality Index score	Sexual orientation in non-discrimination policy?	Gender identity in non-discrimination policy?	Domestic partner benefits?	Gay employees group?	Diversity training includes gays?	Sponsors or donates to gay groups?
 American Airlines*	100	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
 AMERICA WEST AIRLINES*	Not Rated	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
 Continental Airlines	57	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
 Delta	71	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
 HOOTERS AIR	Not Rated	No Answer	No Answer	No Answer	No Answer	No Answer	No Answer
 jetBlue AIRWAYS*	Not Rated	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
 NORTHWEST AIRLINES	71	Yes*	No*	Yes*	Yes*	No*	Yes*
 southwest.com*	43	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
 UNITED	86	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
 U.S. AIRWAYS	86	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Indicates information supplied by HRC after company declined to answer Houston Voice survey

that hundreds of other businesses do.

The Airline Transport Association declined an interview through spokesperson Diana Cronin.

But just months after the federal court decision, United — then the country's largest airline — made history by becoming the first major carrier to offer domestic partner benefits to its employees. A week later, American did the same.

Continental, US Airways and Northwest later offered similar benefits. In October 2000, Delta became one of the last major airlines to offer the benefits.

Jennifer Pizer, an attorney for the Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund and co-author of a brief in the San Francisco case, said the legal action forced the airlines into offering DP benefits.

"The airlines fought very hard against providing DP benefits for five years, through two appeals to the federal court of appeals," she said. "Once ordered by the court to do so, they finally began providing benefits."

San Francisco's equal benefits ordinance went on to serve as a model for others around the nation, including measures in Los Angeles, Oakland, Berkeley and San Mateo County in California, as well as Seattle.

Financial troubles a threat?

A weakened economy and the threat of terrorism since Sept. 11, 2001, have left most of the major airlines in financial difficulty, with some either filing for bankruptcy or teetering on the edge of financial insolvency.

In the struggle to stem the flow of mounting losses, airlines are forcing large pay and benefit concessions from employees, as well as thinning their ranks. Gay activists are concerned that could portend lessened attention to gay issues, or even the reduction of gay-inclusive benefits.

Whether the airline industry can maintain the current level of domestic partner benefits given continued financial hardship remains to be seen, according to Mike Nichols, executive director of the National Gay Pilots Association, a gay advocacy and social networking group.

"But no one has decreased any of their benefits, and that's a pretty good indication that they're on board with being supportive," Nichols said.

Marketing goes gay

Even with gay-inclusive benefit programs and policies, homophobia still exists in the workplace, according to Nichols. Some of the group's 1,000 members still report incidents of on-the-job harassment, he said.

Recently, "ex-gay" literature from Focus on the Family was placed in the mailboxes of gay employees, Nichols said.

"A worst case scenario still exists, something like a homophobic airline captain having problems with a gay first officer during flight, which could create safety of flight issues," he said.

But progress is still being made in other areas.

Two years ago, American broke another

barrier when it became the first airline to unfurl gay-specific banner ads online and print ads in gay magazines. With images of gay men and lesbians paired with ever-edgier language, American, Delta and other carriers have created advertising packages to coordinate with sponsorships of Pride events across the country.

JetBlue is also considering gay-themed ads for gay publications to coincide with Pride events next month, Edmondson-Jones said.

HRC's Mills said the industry has "grown leaps and bounds" from a decade ago in its approach to gay fliers.

The airline industry is an example of attracting employees through a gay-friendly workplace as well as retaining existing ones, according to gay airline employees.

Tim Kincaid, the gay manager of corporate communications at American Airlines, said the climate for gays in the airline industry is "almost ideal."

Kincaid, a member of American's gay employee group, points to Rainbow TeAam, a sales team "100 percent dedicated to marketing to the gay community as well as being sure that AA is supporting organizations in the communities we serve."

Reginald Waters, a gay flight attendant for Delta, "couldn't imagine working anywhere else," he said.

"I get to fly my partner with me free everywhere, and it dramatically increases our quality of life together," he said.

Waters has brought his partner to "every corporate social function," and "never thought twice about it," he said.

around the nation

Supreme Court justice expects more gay cases

WASHINGTON (AP) — Legal cases involving the rights and treatment of gay people are on the increase, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor said May 1, suggesting a major new focus for the nation's courts. Asked to predict what issue might define the work of the Supreme Court in the 21st century, O'Connor said cases "relating to how homosexuals are treated legally" are one possibility. "We see a lot of these," O'Connor said. She did not specifically mention a major gay rights case now before the high court, a challenge to the Texas sodomy law banning sex acts between same-sex partners that are legal for heterosexuals. The court is expected to decide the case, *Lawrence v. Texas*, sometime this summer. O'Connor spoke and answered questions as part of a month-long educational series televised by C-SPAN.



U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor last week predicted that gay issues could define the work of the court in years to come. (Photo by AP)

Bush signs legislation that targets party promoters

WASHINGTON — President Bush on April 30 signed into law an anti-drug measure that party promoters said could subject them to criminal prosecution for drug offenses committed by their customers, according to the Washington Post. "It is important to remember that this legislation punishes business owners and event producers and sponsors for the actions of event attendees, despite their efforts to discourage or prevent illegal drug use," Mark Lee, a gay event promoter, has said. The legislation, formerly known as the RAVE Act and later renamed the Illicit Drug Anti-Proliferation Act, authorizes federal prosecution of organizers or promoters of one-time events, such as circuit parties or rave events, in which alleged drug use or distribution occurs. It sailed through Congress with little public notice after it was attached to the popular Child Abduction Prevention Act, which establishes a national, federally funded alert system to help rescue abducted children. The resulting law is a "comprehensive effort to protect our children," Attorney General John D. Ashcroft said at the signing.

Baseball player apologizes for uproar, not gay remark

DENVER (AP) — Colorado Rockies pitcher Todd Jones apologized to the organization and his teammates April 30 for his recent anti-gay remarks, but he didn't back off what he said. "I think my only mistake was that I made my views public," Jones said. The professional athlete told the Denver Post on April 27 that he would not want to have a gay teammate. "I wouldn't want a gay guy being around me," Jones said. "It's got nothing to do with me being scared. That's the problem: All these people say he's got all these rights. Yeah, he's got rights or whatever, but he shouldn't walk around proud. It's like he's rubbing it in our face. 'See me, Hear me roar.' We're not trying to be close-minded, but then again, why be confrontational when you don't really have to be?" The Rockies criticized Jones' remarks April 29, saying they were "unfortunate." Meanwhile, on May 1, closing pitcher John Rocker — who made headlines in 1999 for anti-gay remarks when he played for the Atlanta Braves — moved closer to a major league

comeback. The Tampa Bay Devil Rays assigned the left-hander to Double-A Orlando; he signed a minor league contract on April 10 and spent the last three weeks in extended spring training.

L.A. City Council approves controversial AIDS memorial

LOS ANGELES — The City Council approved a planned AIDS memorial in Lincoln Park in northeast Los Angeles on April 22, despite protests from some neighbors, the Los Angeles Times reported. The proposal by The Wall/Las Memorias already won approval from the Recreation & Parks Commission. It would create a 9,000 square foot memorial with eight panels — six with art and two with names of people who have died of AIDS. The mostly publicly funded memorial would also feature benches, a rose garden and a path. While environmentalists have opposed the plan because it would be created from existing parkland, fliers distributed last month claimed that an organization of "Latino gay men has been covertly trying to make a monument to themselves." City Council members described their decision to approve the memorial over objections as "courageous." AIDS "won't go away. It is what it is," Council member Nate Holden said.

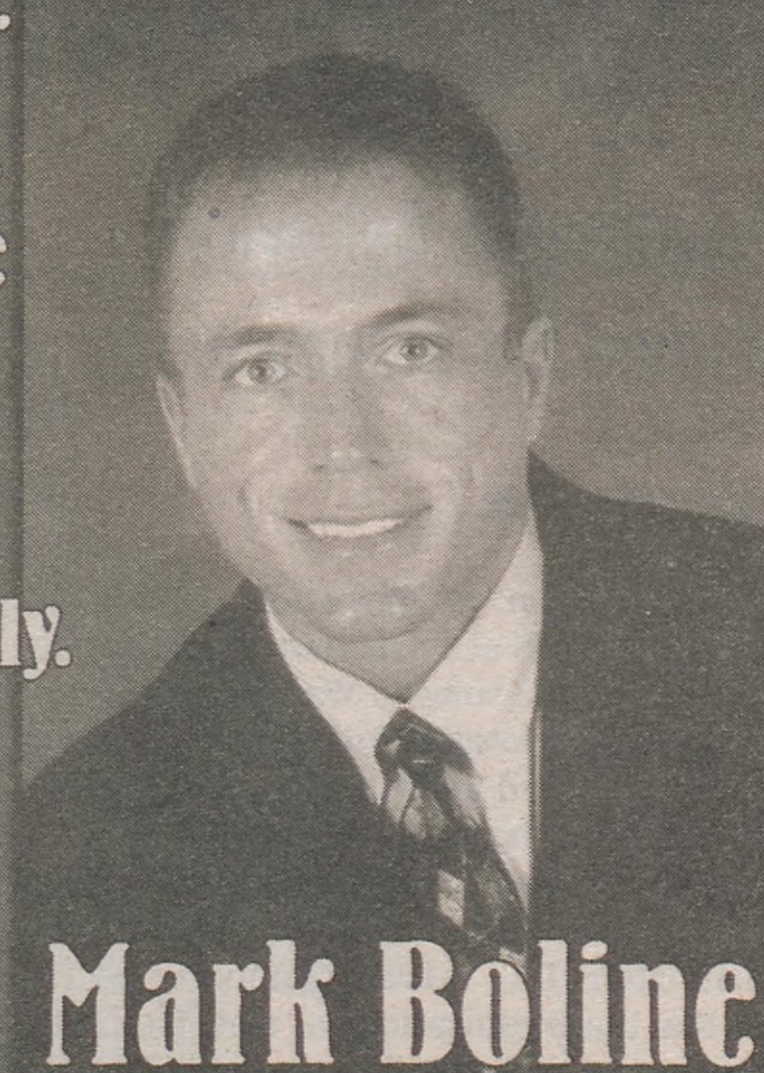
Neb. gay marriage ban challenged in court

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska's unique constitutional ban on same-sex marriages, adopted in 2000 after approval by 70 percent of the voters, was challenged April 30 by a federal lawsuit that says the measure violates the rights of gay couples. "Popularity doesn't make right," said Tim Butz, executive director of ACLU Nebraska. "Sometimes you have to tell government when it's overstepping its bounds." A spokesperson for Gov. Mike Johanns said the state will "aggressively defend this lawsuit." Some 34 states have so-called Defense of Marriage laws, but Nebraska is the only state whose constitution bans state and local governments from recognizing same-sex partners in any way, including offering domestic partner benefits or making health decisions for each other, according to the ACLU.

From staff and wire reports

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Monday • May 19
Eucharist 7:30pm

Friday • May 23
Morning Prayer 10am
Movie Night 7pm
"Catch Me If You Can"

national news

AIDS Action leadership role 'vanished': report

'Adversarial behavior' blamed for money woes

By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

AIDS Action, a 16-year-old advocacy group that AIDS activists have long viewed as their national voice in Washington, faces a "rapidly deteriorating financial condition" and has alienated many other AIDS organizations, according to an internal review prepared for the group's board of directors.

"Interviews with individuals within the Washington, D.C. AIDS community indicate that the organization has marginalized its presence and effectiveness within that community as a result of its adversarial and uncooperative behavior," states a six-page report describing the findings of the review. The report is dated April 19, 2003.

"AIDS Action's presence and visibility in Washington within the AIDS community is either nonexistent or minimal," the report states, "and its previous leadership role as the voice of that community has vanished."

The report, a copy of which was obtained by the Houston Voice, was written by Dennis J. Barbour, a Washington, D.C. attorney and organizational development consultant who specializes in assisting non-profit groups involved in public health issues.

Barbour states in the report that the board chairs of AIDS Action's two component entities — the AIDS Action Council and the AIDS Action Foundation — hired him to conduct the review and make recommendations on how to resolve the organization's "serious management and financial issues."

Ronald Johnson, who serves as deputy director of the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York City, released a written statement calling Barbour's report "unsolicited" and "unauthorized," saying the report reflected Barbour's personal opinions.

"While Mr. Barbour distributed the report to the AIDS Action Foundation board and to the AIDS Action Council board, the report was not considered or discussed by either board," Johnson said in his statement. "The AIDS Action Council board has no further comment on this unsolicited report."

However, two others familiar with the report confirmed the board did request a review.

"The report was requested," said David Wexler, the AIDS Action Foundation board chair. "It was authorized. I authorized it. And whether the report was requested or not has nothing to do with what it says."

The second source who confirmed that the report was authorized asked to remain anonymous.

Wexler admitted his group did not address the report at its last meeting, as Johnson asserts.

"It will be considered," he said. "We would be derelict in our duty if we did not



Most of the problems at AIDS Action identified in an internal report came under the tenure of current Executive Director Marsha Martin.

consider it. That doesn't mean we will agree with it. But no one is ignoring it."

Leadership turnover, turmoil

Leaders of the nation's local and regional AIDS advocacy groups created AIDS Action in 1987 to serve as the groups' national representative in Washington. During its first decade, AIDS Action worked closely with members of Congress and officials with federal departments and agencies to help develop programs to combat the AIDS epidemic.

But during the past three years, the group has had a succession of executive directors that have come and gone, creating an atmosphere of instability that led to a rapid staff turnover.

In February 2002 the board hired the group's current executive director, Marsha Martin, who had worked in the Clinton administration in several posts, including a position as a top aid to former Secretary of Health & Human Services Donna Shalala.

Although Barbour's report doesn't mention Martin by name, it states that AIDS Action's financial health and its relations with other AIDS groups deteriorated significantly in the past year, during Martin's tenure.

Martin declined to comment on the report, saying it is a matter before the organization's board of directors.

In a February interview, Martin acknowledged that AIDS Action had suffered from a rapid staff changeover associated with a succession of executive directors beginning in the late 1990s. Martin said she and the group's board put in place a one-year "rebuilding" plan to stabilize the organization and resume its activist role.

Barbour declined to comment on the contents of his report, saying it was intended to remain an internal document. He said he was dismayed that someone leaked the report to the media.

"AIDS Action has historically played a key leadership role by promoting consensus among communities affected by HIV/AIDS

and the organizations that represent them," he said in a statement. "Considering the current political and economic realities, the need for strong leadership has never been greater. The HIV public policy community continues to look to AIDS Action to provide it. At its core, AIDS Action remains a vitally important institution for all who are impacted by HIV/AIDS."

According to Barbour's report, AIDS Action's income has declined steadily during the past three to four years. He said the decline in income was largely due to the group's deteriorating relations with its member groups, which have provided the bulk of AIDS Action's income through annual membership dues.

In 2002, Barbour said in his report, AIDS Action's expenses exceeded its income by between \$700,000 and \$800,000, causing the group to deplete a longstanding reserve fund. Based on budget information provided by the management, Barbour said, the organization is headed for an accumulated deficit of \$150,000 by Aug. 31, "even if optimistic revenue projections are met."

He said the group's two component units, AIDS Action Council and the AIDS Action Foundation, are headed for a still greater deficit by the end of the year.

"As of April 15, spending continues at a projected level of over \$1.4 million per year, with no cutbacks in expenses apparently planned," Barbour's report states. "At current levels of spending and reasonably anticipated levels of revenue, the organizations will end the year with a combined deficit of over \$400,000."

The board for the two entities approved a budget of \$1.4 million for AIDS Action in January, but the board revised the budget downward to \$1.2 million in March, Barbour said.

AIDS groups abandon NORA

Barbour issued his report three weeks after seven prominent AIDS and public health groups startled activists by dropping out of the National Organizations Responding to AIDS coalition. AIDS Action created the coalition, known as NORA, in 1987 and has served as its official "convener" since that time. The coalition consists of health, labor, religious, professional and advocacy groups working on AIDS-related public policy and legislative issues.

The seven groups that withdrew from the coalition had served as its executive committee and had been doing most of the coalition's work, a source familiar with NORA said.

In a March 27 letter, leaders of the seven groups informed NORA's 175 member organizations that they withdrew from the coalition because they had irreconcilable differences with AIDS Action over how NORA should be operated and managed. At issue was AIDS Action's refusal to consider the groups' proposal to expand the membership of NORA to regional rather than just national organizations working on AIDS

issues and to end AIDS Action's role as the coalition's sole convener or titular head.

Among the groups that withdrew as NORA executive committee members were the National Minority AIDS Council, which represents local groups providing AIDS-related services to African-American, Latino, and Asian populations; the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay political group, which also lobbies Congress on AIDS issues; and the National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors, a highly influential group that heads AIDS or public health offices in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Officials with the groups declined to comment on their action other than to point to their letter as their explanation for withdrawing from NORA.

Martin disputes any suggestion by the groups that dropped out of NORA that AIDS Action has been uncooperative or unresponsive to the NORA membership or the executive committee. She noted that the full NORA membership voted in 1995 to have AIDS Action continue as the NORA convening organization. Any change in this role, she said, would have to come from the member groups, which totaled 124 as of last year.

"We're just one of nine groups on the NORA executive committee," Martin said. "The executive committee and the member groups make the decisions."

AIDS Action responded to the action by the seven groups by replacing them with a newly appointed interim executive committee and pledging to continue to serve as NORA's convener.

"NORA exists and will continue to play an active role in Washington, D.C.-based AIDS policy," Martin said.


The officials who signed the letter were Caya Lewis, co-chair of the National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association; Mark Del Monte of the AIDS Alliance for Children Youth & Families; Matthew McClain of the CAEAR Coalition, which lobbies Congress for social services funds for people with AIDS; John Vezina of HRC; Javier Salazar of the National Minority AIDS Council; Laura Hanen of the National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors; and Michele Sumilas of the Global Health Council.

The National Association for People with AIDS has also withdrawn from the NORA Coalition, according to NAPWA executive director Terije Anderson. Although NAPWA was not a member of the NORA executive committee, it has played a key role in the coalition for the past 10 years.

Lou Chibbaro Jr. can be reached at lchibbaro@washblade.com.

i MORE INFO

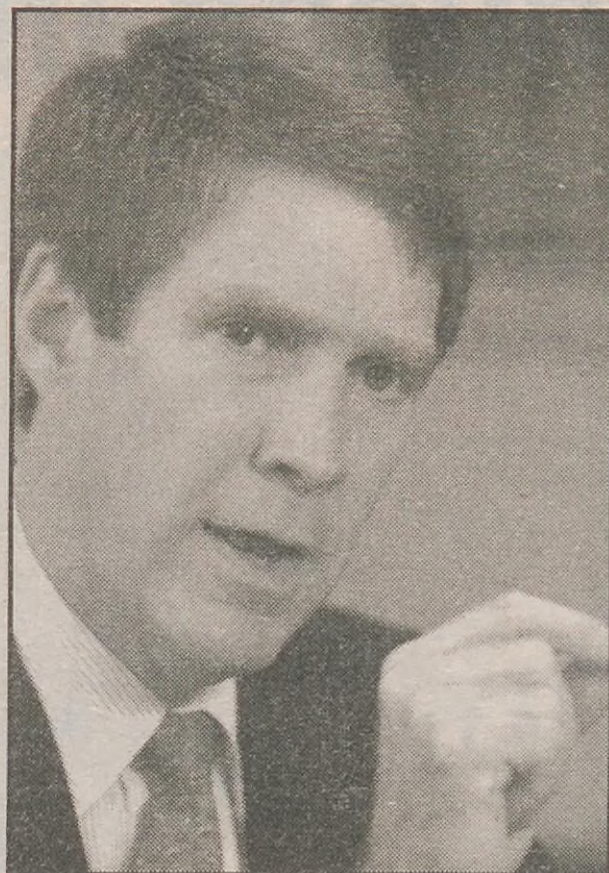
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medical report

House passes \$15 billion global AIDS legislation

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. House of Representatives passed a \$15 billion bill May 1 that would more than double U.S. contributions to the worldwide fight against AIDS. Supporters, led by President George W. Bush, said the money could bring relief to millions of people with AIDS and prevent the deadly disease from infecting millions more. The House passed the legislation by a 375-41 vote after lawmakers approved an amendment assuring that one-third of the money for AIDS prevention would go to sexual abstinence programs. The president's conservative allies insisted that abstinence get a prominent role in the AIDS effort. The five-year spending plan is aimed specifically at sub-Saharan Africa, home to 30 million of the world's 42 million persons with AIDS, and the Caribbean. The U.S. this year is spending about \$1.2 billion on international AIDS efforts. "So much of what we do is really unimportant and trivial, but not today," said Rep. Henry Hyde, chairman of the House International Relations Committee. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist pledged to act quickly on a Senate bill and try to get legislation to the president by the end of the month.



Senate Majority Leader **Bill Frist** pledged to move quickly for action on a \$15 billion bill to fight AIDS globally after the House approved the measure last week. (Photo by AP)

Eliminating separation of HIV-positive inmates would save funds, study says

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — A new study found that Alabama's cash-strapped, overcrowded prison system could save up to \$400,000 per year if it quit separating inmates with HIV and AIDS from other prisoners. If infected inmates had access to education and community-based work and restitution programs like other inmates, about 56 inmates more per year would become eligible for programs outside the prison, easing overcrowding and saving money, the study found. "It costs a lot less to have somebody in these community programs," said Rachel Maddow, an expert on prisons and AIDS who headed the study. The Alabama Prison Project and the ACLU's National Prison Project released "Excluding Alabama State Prisoners with HIV/AIDS from Community-Based Programs" this week. Prisons spokesman Brian Corbett said the study warrants review, but it doesn't address the potential costs of diverting the inmates from prisons into various programs. When Mississippi dropped its policy in 2001, Alabama was the only state left requiring segregation of HIV and AIDS prisoners from other inmates.

San Fran officials concerned about rise in crystal meth use

SAN FRANCISCO — Bay Area health officials are concerned that the mantra of HIV prevention — safe sex — is being muted by a raucous party scene, cheap crystal methamphetamine and reckless sex, according to the San Francisco Chronicle. Up to 40 percent of gay men in the city have tried crystal meth, a powerful form of what's often referred to as speed, health experts estimate. The state's top AIDS and HIV prevention officials, during a meeting about crystal meth in Sacramento last month, said gay men in the state who use speed are

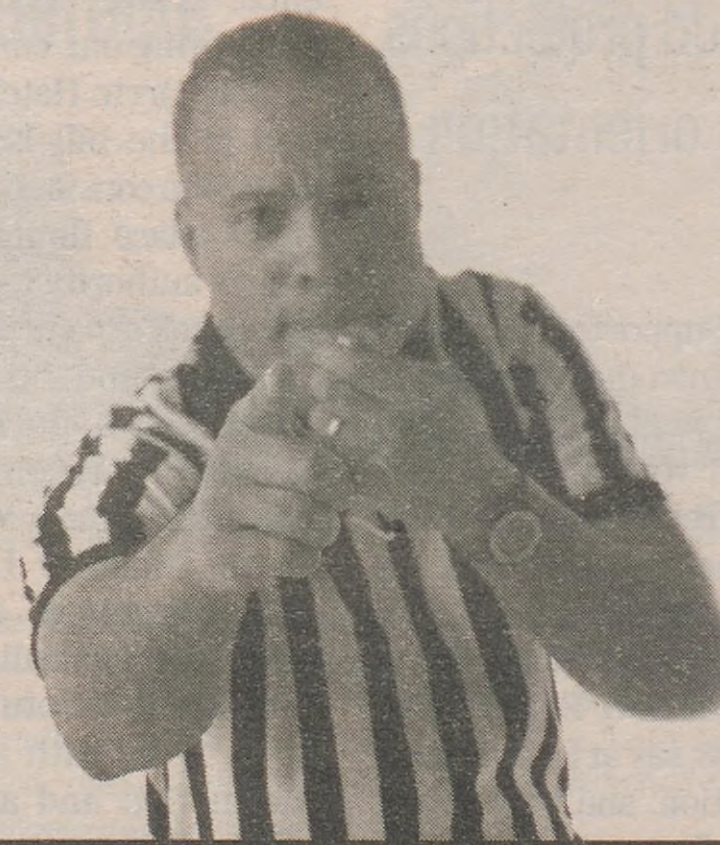
twice as likely to be HIV-positive than gays who don't use it. "We have all sorts of levels of evidence," said Dr. Jeffrey Klausner, director of sexually transmitted disease prevention and control for the San Francisco Department of Public Health. "It's all pointing in the same direction: The crystal meth epidemic is playing an important role in increasing sexual risk behaviors, and that is leading to new HIV and STD infections." Crystal meth is the most commonly used drug in the gay party scene, after cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana. The powdery, substance that can be swallowed, injected, snorted or smoked, is known by many names — "crissy," "tina," "tweak," and "crank." On Wednesday, city officials and gay activists were scheduled to hold a televised hearing to discuss crystal meth use among gays.

Maker of urine-based HIV tests receives boost from Magic Johnson

ALAMEDA, Calif. (AP) — Earvin "Magic" Johnson, the former Los Angeles Lakers' star, hopes his high-profile AIDS activism can help turnaround a struggling manufacturer of HIV tests. Last week, Johnson joined the board of Calypte Biomedical Corp., which makes urine-based tests. "When I first heard of a test for the AIDS virus that uses urine samples, I was amazed and wondered why more people didn't know about it," Johnson said. "I believe that the fear of a blood test is one of the biggest reasons why more people don't get tested." Johnson, who announced he was HIV-positive in 1991, helped the Lakers win five championships. Alameda-based Calypte could use some of Johnson's business magic. It lost \$6.4 million during the first three months of the year and its stock trades for about 3 cents a share.

From staff and wire reports

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national news

Hate crimes bill introduced in U.S. Senate

Identical to 2002 measure, proposal would add protections based on sexual orientation

By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

WASHINGTON — Supporters of a federal hate crimes law reintroduced the same measure last week that went down to defeat in a Senate procedural vote in June 2002. However, they failed to reach a compromise with Republican opponents that could have ensured passage in the Senate.

Republican and Democratic supporters of the bill, S. 966, the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act of 2003, say at least 60 senators support the legislation, and they expect the measure to come up for a vote during this session of Congress.

The bill would authorize the federal government to prosecute hate crimes based on a victim's sexual orientation, gender and disability. In addition to a person's race, religion and ethnicity.

Sens. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), Gordon Smith (R-Ore.) and Arlen Specter (R-Penn.) introduced the latest version of the bill on May 1, with 46 Senate co-sponsors.

"No member of society, no one, deserves to be the victim of a violent crime committed because of their race, religion,

their sexual orientation, or for any other reason," Kennedy said at a news conference. "Hate crimes are a violation of everything our country stands for."

Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) led the opposition to the bill last year, saying Kennedy refused to consider changes he suggested that would place limits on the federal government's authority to supercede state and local prosecutors in enforcing the bill's provisions.

Hatch and other Senate Republicans introduced a flurry of amendments that Kennedy characterized as a thinly disguised filibuster aimed at killing the bill. Then Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) introduced a procedural motion to limit debate and allow a vote on the bill itself.

Daschle's cloture motion lost by a vote of 54 to 43, with all Democrats voting for the motion and all but four Republicans voting against it.

The bill's defeat last year came after the Senate passed a similar version of the bill on two prior occasions in the form of amendments to other bills, once in 1999 and a second time 2000. Some political observers viewed last year's defeat as a possible sign that the bill was losing support.

Since last year's vote, Republicans won control of the Senate in the November 2002 elections, changing it to a more conservative body.

Stephanie Cutter, a spokesperson for Kennedy, said members of Kennedy's and



"No member of society, no one, deserves to be the victim of a violent crime committed because of their race, religion, their sexual orientation, or for any other reason," Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) said at a news conference.

Hatch's staffs began discussion last year on a possible compromise version of the bill, but the two sides were unable to come to an agreement.

She said Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) has yet to respond to a

request by the bill's supporters that he allow the measure to come up for a vote.

A spokesperson for Frist did not respond by press time.

Last year, Rich Tafel, then executive director of the gay GOP group Log Cabin Republicans, accused Democrats of spurning a compromise with Hatch as part of an election year strategy to blame Republicans for the bill's defeat.

Democrats, including gay Democratic leaders, last year disputed Tafel's claim. They noted that Hatch introduced at least two amendments that would have gutted the bill, raising questions about his sincerity.

One of his amendments called for eliminating the entire bill and replacing it with a call to commission a study to determine whether federal prosecution of hate crimes was needed. Another called for allowing federal prosecution of anti-gay hate crimes only in instances where states ask for federal intervention.

After last year's Senate vote, Hatch said he favors a federal hate crimes bill that addresses anti-gay hate crimes.

MORE INFO

Sen. Orrin Hatch
104 Hart Office Building
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202-224-5251

Congressman pressures Egypt about gays

Rep. Frank, Amnesty protest gay crackdowns

By KEVIN SPENCE

NEW YORK — Congressman Barney Frank (D-Mass.) is ratcheting up the pressure on Egypt, the second-highest foreign recipient of U.S. aid, to cease its crackdown of gay activity. Frank, along with openly gay Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) and Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.), the highest-ranking member of the International Relations Commission, sent a letter to Congress on May 2 asking to "withhold any support for a U.S.-Egypt Free Trade Agreement."

Frank and other Americans are disturbed by the round-up, conviction and re-conviction of allegedly gay Egyptian men.

"All three members wrote to every member of the House of Representatives urging them to uphold any support for a U.S.-Egypt Free Trade Agreement, until the government of Egypt stops its brutal systematic persecution of gay men," said Daniel McGlinchey, a spokesperson for Frank's office. "This is our effort to actively oppose these kinds of negotiations until they stop their mistreatment of gay men."

Michael Heflin, the director of Amnesty International USA's OUTFront Program, is supporting the legislators' efforts. "Our government is providing a lot of support," he said. "We have potential leverage to pressure Egypt."

Phone calls to the Egyptian Consulate and the Mission to the U.N. requesting a response to the letter were not returned.

According to Heflin, the lack of specific laws gives Egyptian officials wide leeway to interpret the law as they see fit. "All of the men who have been arrested over the last year were accused of 'habitual debauchery,'" said Heflin. "Egypt is one of the few countries in the Middle East that does not explicitly criminalize homosexuality, but instead, they use the charge of 'habitual debauchery' as a way of convicting gay men."

Faisal Alam, founder and director of AL-Fatiha, an American gay Muslim organization, also supports Frank. "Our tax dollars, indirectly and directly, fund the oppression of gay men that we haven't taken the human rights abuses into account as we deal with the Egyptian government," Alam said. "Our own government has virtually done nothing and not spoken out publicly to the highest levels of the Egyptian government."

Alam complained that the persecution has been occurring for years. He said the reason no high-level U.S. official has spoken

out about the abuses is because Egypt is viewed as an ally in the war on terrorism.

"There are many, many countries, including Egypt, where their campaigns have increased to root out, to arrest, and to torture the gay community," said Alam. "Under the guise of 'war on terrorism' it's easy to get away with heinous acts. No one will hold them accountable, especially the United States."

Alam said the continued assault on the local gay community is especially tragic because it is being mandated from the highest levels of the Egyptians government. Ironically, gay Egyptians seeking asylum here are often caught in discriminatory immigration laws.

"They're finding they're not wanted here as well, given the new INS crackdown" on gay immigrants, Alam noted. "It's ironic. They've fled the countries oppressing them, and they're coming to a country not wanting them."

In May 2001, 52 men — called the "Egyptian 52" — were arrested on a Nile barge. The men were allegedly being beaten with sticks, subjected to anal cavity searches and humiliation, and made forced confessions. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission have been monitoring the cases.

Even the U.S. State Department's own Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and

Labor has documented Egyptian attorneys' complaints about torture and forced confessions. Defendants in other cases involving homosexuality have claimed that they were tortured in order to extract confessions to the charge of "debauchery." All of these outcries coincide with the U.S. Administration's refusal to endorse a resolution on sexual orientation at the U.N. Commission for Human Rights last month.

A coalition of human-rights groups is planning a series of rallies worldwide this weekend to confront Egyptian diplomats. Both AIUSA's OUTFront program and AL-Fatiha will be hold a rally at 12:30 p.m. at the Egyptian Consulate at 1110 Second Ave.

In Washington, D.C., the protestors will meet on May 10 at the Dupont Italian Kitchen for a teach-in. Events will culminate in a petition gathering and delivery to the Egyptian Embassy. "I would encourage the LGBT community in the U.S. to contact the Egyptian Embassy," Heflin said. "The U.S. government is not playing a leadership role in protecting LGBT rights."

MORE INFO

AL-Fatiha Foundation
202-223-3738 • www.al-fatiha.org

Amnesty International USA
212-633-4268 • www.amnestyusa.org/outfront



international news

Court in third Canadian province supports gay marriage

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — A British Columbia appeals court ruled May 1 that Canada's ban on gay marriage is discriminatory and told the government to change the law. The ruling, which overturned a lower court decision that marriage should be restricted to heterosexuals, was the latest court challenge to the federal ban. Courts in two other provinces — Quebec and Ontario — also have ruled in favor of same-sex marriage rights. John Manley, Canada's deputy prime minister, said last week he favors legislation to legalize gay marriage. Manley, who is also the Finance Minister and a candidate for the Liberal leadership, told the National Post he favors same-sex marriages just one day after Paul Martin, the leadership front-runner, took no firm position on the issue. Sheila Copps, the third candidate in the race to succeed Jean Chrétien as prime minister, has also said she favors gay marriages. "I think the issue here is if people make a life commitment then it is a matter for them to decide and the state should treat that kind of commitment the same regardless of who it is, or whether they are same sex or different sex or whatever," Manley said.



John Manley, Canada's deputy prime minister, said he recently he supports same-sex marriages, a stand similar to another candidate in the race to succeed Jean Chrétien as prime minister. (Photo by AP)

Malaysian newspaper editor convicted of sedition

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — The editor of an opposition newspaper was fined but escaped a jail sentence May 2 after being convicted of sedition for an article criticizing Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. Zulkifli Sulong, editor of Harakah, the official newspaper of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic party, was fined \$1,315 for publishing an article three years ago that accused Mohamad of orchestrating a conspiracy against his ousted deputy Anwar Ibrahim. Malaysia's sedition laws allow for a maximum sentence of three years in jail. The charges stemmed from a late 1999 article written by then deputy president of the opposition National Justice Party, Chandra Muzaffar. Mohamad sacked Anwar as deputy prime minister in 1998, accusing him of being an immoral homosexual unfit for public office. Anwar was charged with corruption and sodomy — a crime in mostly Muslim Malaysia — and eventually sentenced to prison terms totaling 15 years. Anwar claims the charges against him were concocted to prevent him challenging his former mentor Mohamad.

Puerto Rican government appeals high court ruling

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Government officials filed a motion for a reconsideration of the Puerto Rico Supreme Court ruling to exclude same-sex couples from benefiting from the a domestic violence law. In a 20-page document, the General Advocate's Office objected to the analysis made by the court regarding the law. "The court use of legislative intention as a tool to interpret this case is mistaken," according to the court filing. Government officials added that if lawmakers intended to exclude people from the law it would have explicitly said so. Government officials said the law should all victims of domestic violence, regardless of sexual orientation.

Gays in U.K. lobby against law exemption for church

LONDON — Gay Christians lobbied the government last weekend against attempts by the Church of England to gain exemptions from planned anti-discrimination employment regulations, the Guardian reported. They accuse church leaders of sabotaging legislation aimed at outlawing discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. The row is an early challenge for Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who has already fallen foul of some evangelicals for supporting some gay issues. "Churches and other faith-based organizations must not find themselves in a position where the law of the land is preventing them from conscientiously applying their own sincerely held doctrines and beliefs on moral issues," according to a statement from the Church's executive council.

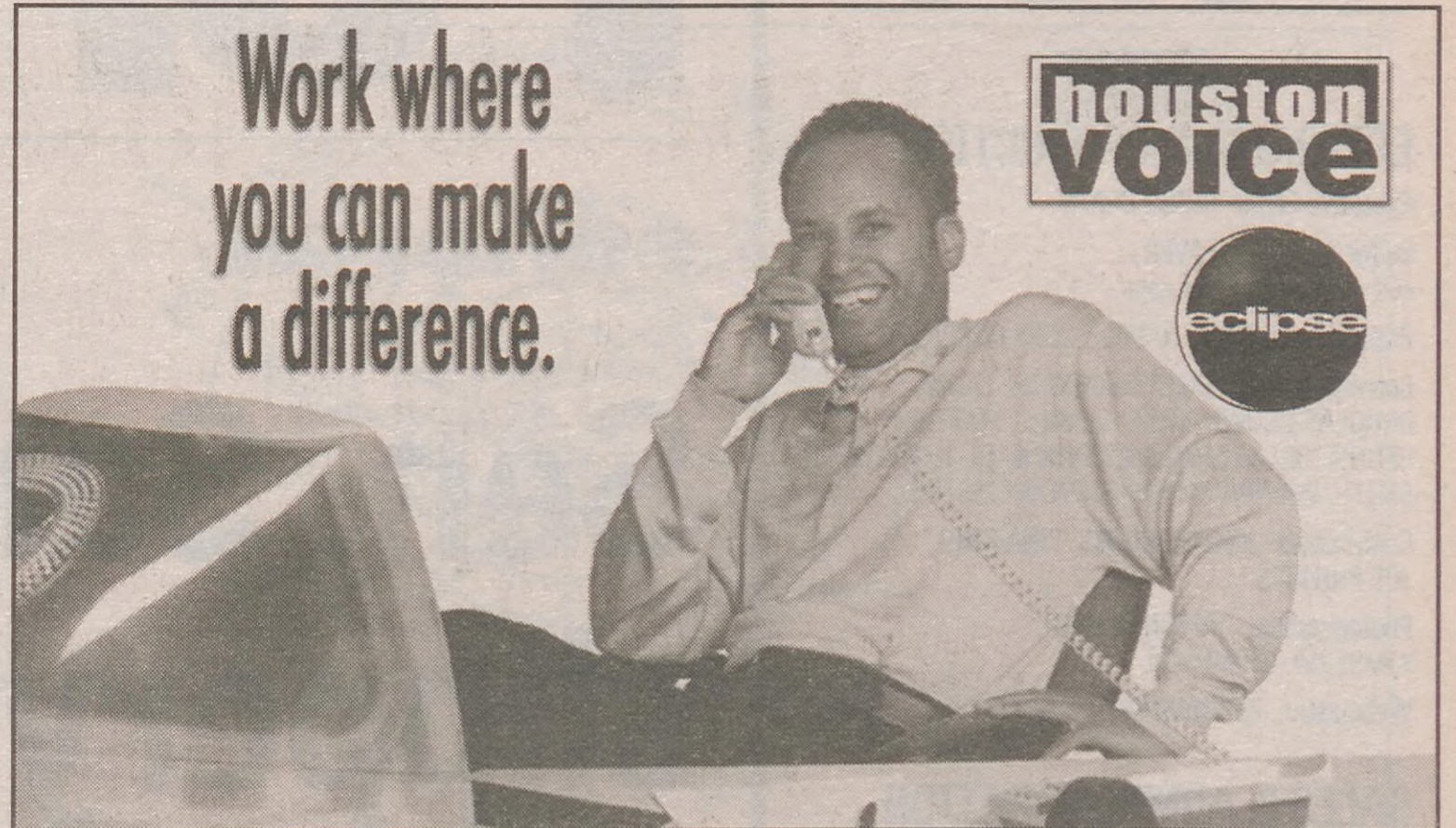
Election of trans candidate in Japan shows signs of change

TOKYO — Aya Kamikawa's election to public office is a further sign that Japanese society is slowly opening its mind, the Sydney Morning Herald reported. In her fight for the rights of transsexuals in Japan, Aya Kamikawa organized petitions and knocked on plenty of politicians' doors. It was a frustrating experience for Kamikawa — a biological male — in a country where conformity and uniformity are often regarded as virtues. This week she became the first transsexual in Japan elected to public office, when she won a place on the local assembly for Setagaya, one of Tokyo's biggest local government areas. "Japan is a society where you can easily live a 'typical' lifestyle," said Kamikawa, 35. "But Japanese don't respect our real choice, our real personalities." Her victory may be an indication that old Japan is changing, and becoming more inclusive, she said.

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Forum

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editorial

Sen. Santorum's slippery slope

If gays have a right to make private sexual choices, we're on a slippery slope to Sodom according to Sen. Santorum, whose real agenda is far more sinister.

By CHRIS CRAIN

IF YOU BUY INTO THE DIRE warnings of that modern-day prophet Rick Santorum, recognizing a constitutional right for gays to make our own private sexual choices will unleash on America the Beautiful a parade of horrors of biblical proportions.

Referring to the case before the Supreme Court challenging the Texas law criminalizing "homosexual conduct," the Pennsylvania Republican who is the third-ranking GOP leader in the Senate, predicted a slippery slope straight to Sodom.

"If the Supreme Court says that you have the right to consensual sex within your home," posited the senator, in his now famous Associated Press interview, "then you have the right to bigamy, you have the right to polygamy, you have the right to incest, you have the right to adultery. You have the right to anything."

By the time he was finished, Santorum was warning that this ominous "right to anything" would even include "man on child" and "man on dog" — illustrations so extreme they freaked out the AP reporter and more than a few of the rest of us.

For those hoping that the news cycle on this particular verbal dustup would follow a trajectory of the sort that unseated former Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.), the recent news is not promising. Though the White House waited several days to see which way the political winds were blowing, the president praised Santorum and called him "inclusive." Sen. Bill Frist, the Tennessee Republican who inherited Lott's leadership post, also announced 100-percent confidence in the Pennsylvania senator.

But if our activists do their jobs well, there are still some important points to be made before Santorum's 15 minutes are up.

Unfortunately, a number of gay rights groups (including the Human Rights Campaign) and leading Democrats (including presidential contenders Dick Gephardt and Howard Dean) have chosen instead to

adopt the language of victimization, whining that Santorum's remarks are "hurtful," "insensitive" and "offensive." There may come a day when the consensus surrounding our issues is such that we can use political correctness to shame our opponents into silence, but we aren't there yet.

In the meantime, we're not going to win over the moderate middle by acting wounded. What we need is an aggressive, forceful response that translates for Americans the slippery slope they really should fear: Santorum's.

SEVERAL OF OUR ADVOCATES HAVE rightly pointed out that Senator Santorum and his ilk are apparently the only ones who can't see how recognizing the right of gays to make their own private sexual choices does not by any leap of logic require our courts to recognize a right to every other form of sexual expression, including incest, "man on child," "man on dog" or polygamy. For one thing, no gay rights group or other organized lobby has even suggested that "the right to privacy" — at issue in the Texas sodomy case — be extended in any of these extreme ways.

U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) has pointed out that in the quarter century during which the supreme courts of 10 different states, including Santorum's Pennsylvania, have struck down sodomy laws, none has extended that ruling to the extent warned of by Santorum.

In fact, Santorum's slippery slope to Sodom is a fairly desperate ploy. There are some pretty obvious distinctions between incest, polygamy and bestiality, all of which harm others, and private consensual gay sex among two unrelated adults, which harms no one. That's the distinction Justice David Souter made during the oral argument in the Texas sodomy case. Even Justice Antonin Scalia, archenemy to gay rights, seemed to understand that the right at issue in the Texas case was more limited than Santorum suggests.

BUT WE OUGHT TO ALSO BE ON the offensive, pointing out that the *real* slippery slope here isn't the one to Sodom. It's the slippery slope to Santorum's world.

Because it's not just consensual sex between homosexuals that Santorum thinks ought to be cause for jail time. He would just as well see the police busting unmarried heterosexuals engaging in private, consensual sex.

Santorum is stressing his opposition to a constitutional right to engage in any form of consensual sex. And if you think criminal laws against heterosexual sex are as fanciful as a constitutional right to "man on dog" sex, then you're wrong. Not only do nine states have laws that criminalize heterosexual (and homosexual) sodomy, a number of states have laws against adultery, and even fornication (any type of sex outside of marriage).

He would also roll back the constitutional right to abortion, and even the constitutional right to purchase condoms.

In the same AP interview, Senator Santorum attacked the 1966 case of *Griswold vs. Connecticut*, which struck down a Connecticut law against selling condoms. In his worldview, the right to incest and polygamy doesn't begin with the Texas sodomy case; it began almost 40 years ago when the Supreme Court invalidated the Connecticut condom law.

IF THAT'S NOT ENOUGH TO WAKE UP moderate Americans to just how extreme these social conservatives are, then nothing will. Santorum is an orthodox Catholic, and his views on homosexuality (love the sin, hate the sinner), fornication (only marital sex is permissible), abortion (murder) and condoms (only procreative sex is permissible) are the mirror image of his own religious views.

He has proudly proclaimed that public officials are duty bound to fall back on their own religious faith in deciding public policy.

That's where our advocates really need to drive home the point. Santorum, and the fundamentalist Protestants who are his fellow travelers on the political right, envision an American government that operates in a fashion strikingly similar to the Islamic authority that Shiite Iraqis are clamoring for in that country. Only the religion has been changed; not the underlying lack of separation between church (or mosque) and state.

If, as President Bush has said, our purpose in the Middle East is not to fight Islam, but an oppressive form of government that enslaves people by enshrining the laws of one particular religious sect, then we most certainly must reject the slippery slope to Santorum and his Shiite vision for America.

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



viewpoint RICHARD J. ROSENDALL



It's not enough to win over the Democrats. The coercive approach of Santorum & Co. violates the principle of small government.

Taking it to conservatives

ON APRIL 19, THE DAY BEFORE THE notorious AP interview with Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) appeared, the Salt Lake Tribune ran an AP story featuring Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) talking about polygamy.

At a town meeting Hatch attended in southern Utah, the director of an anti-polygamy group said that teenage girls in nearby Hildale were forced into plural marriages, and he asked Hatch how children could be raped and nothing was done about it.

Hatch replied that of course children should not be raped, but said, "I wouldn't throw accusations around unless you know they're true." He went on, "I'm not here to justify polygamy. All I can say is, I know people in Hildale who are polygamists who are very fine people."

As the Church Lady would say, "Isn't that special?"

His disavowal notwithstanding, Hatch sounded more concerned about the reputation of polygamists than about the plight of child brides.

My point is not to call the senator soft on child rape, but to observe that politicians are influenced not just by religious beliefs (the elders of Hatch's Mormon faith renounced polygamy more than a century ago), but by calculations about voters. Hatch has a lot of polygamists for constituents.

WITH THE INITIAL OUTRAGE AND jokes on Santorum having run their course (Jay Leno, noting that the senator has a problem with gay sex, said, "Maybe he's just

not doing it right"), those of us who wish to defend our privacy rights need to make political calculations of our own.

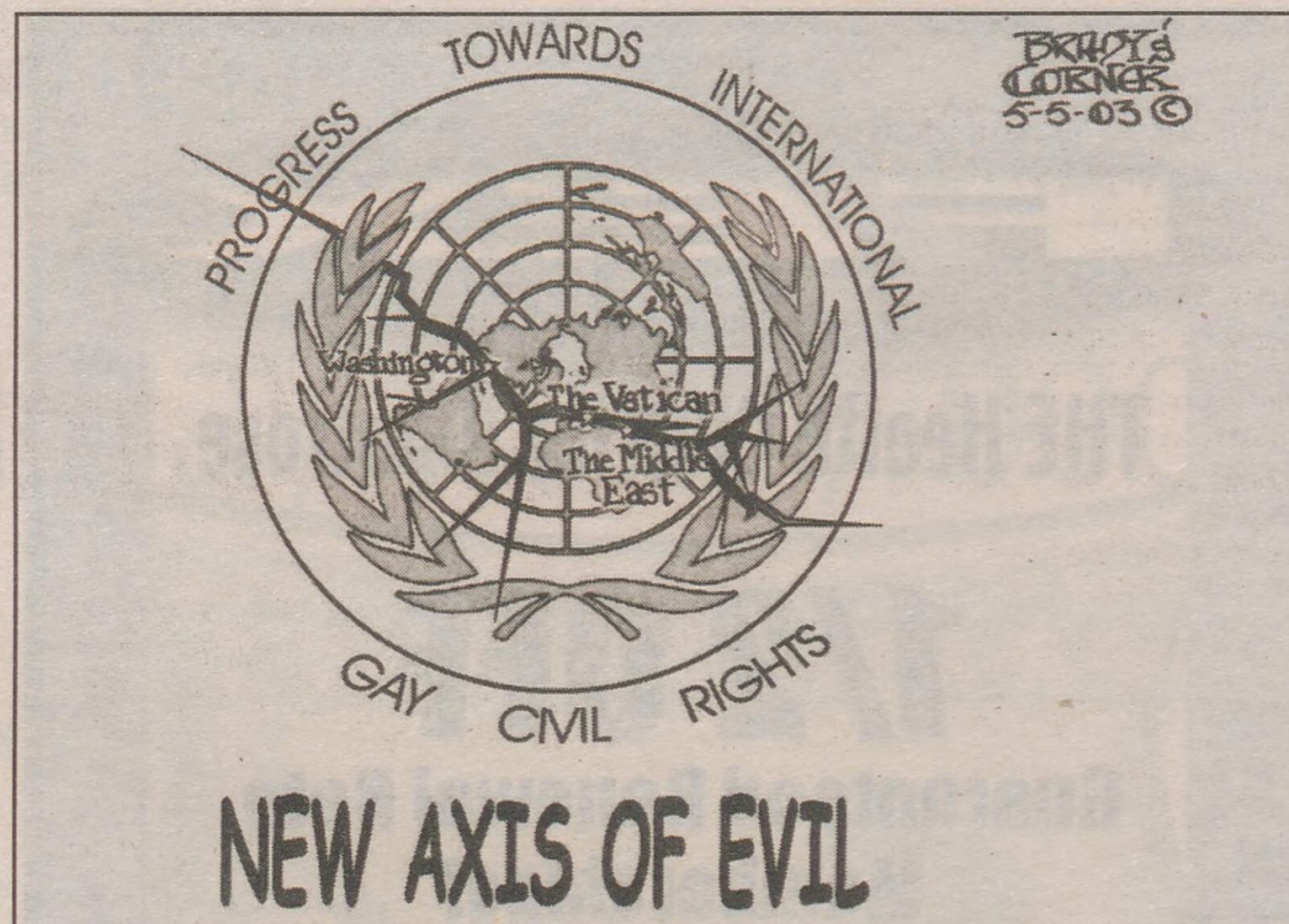
A few weeks before the 1993 gay march on Washington, U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) warned that gay cultural advances do not automatically translate into success at the ballot box. Referring to the upcoming march, he said that having a big party on the Mall is fine, but it would be more effective for gays to spend the price of first-class postage to mail letters to their senators and representatives.

Santorum's "love the sinner, hate the sin" stance — he has nothing against us, he just thinks we should be arrested if we act on our feelings — has been hard for Republicans to distance themselves from because that party has a large, well-motivated constituency that agrees with him.

As Andrew Sullivan observes, "It's not that far from saying that you have nothing against Jews, as long as they go to church each Sunday. (Which was, of course, the Catholic position for a very long time.)"

When Sen. Trent Lott (R-Miss.) lamented the 1948 loss of Strom Thurmond's racist presidential campaign, and when Rep. Jim Moran (D-Va.) blamed Jews for the war in Iraq, both men lost their respective leadership positions out of respect for black and Jewish citizens.

Gays have made great strides politically, but we are well short of the goal of making homophobia political poison. In the last election, candidates from both major parties used



anti-gay tactics against their opponents.

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) and White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer have publicly defended Santorum, not for their stated reasons but because scapegoating gays is still largely accepted in the GOP. Alas, moderate Republicans like Sens. Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) and Lincoln Chafee (R-R.I.), who repudiated Santorum's remarks, are rare outside New England.

Republican leaders may be out of step with the moderate voters they need to win elections, but this must be proven on Election Day.

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT TO MY FELLOW Democrats, who in general have been much more welcoming to gays, the answer is not simply partisan. Persuading and motivating voters is easier when you appeal to, rather than attack, their own values.

Santorum's coercive worldview violates conservative principles of smaller government. Crusading to impose his religious beliefs on others is distracting and spiritual-

ly corrupting. A governing majority for gay rights can best be achieved by making the conservative case for respecting gay families and not just the liberal one.

Democrats can try advancing gay equality by embracing traditional values like "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" and respecting rather than scorning Middle America. Republicans, including my friends in Log Cabin who are fighting for the soul of their party, need to convince more candidates and local party organizations that catering to fanatics on the far right will cost them more votes in the long run than it will gain them.


In Pennsylvania as elsewhere, this means working locally and statewide to promote winning alternatives to the likes of Rick Santorum. The other side is working, too.

@ Richard J. Rosendall is a past president of the Gay & Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, D.C. He can be reached at rosendall@starpower.net.

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On April 30, 2003 DOMA, the so-called Defense of Marriage Act, was passed by the Texas House of Representatives. This law will deny committed gay and lesbian couples scores of rights available to even the least committed of heterosexual couples, such as: inheritance rights, protection of jointly held property, and the right to visit a life partner in the hospital or make medical decisions on his/her behalf. This shameful attack against us, our children and our families continues unabated, with three anti-gay bills currently pending in the Texas Legislature. We need to make sure these bills don't become law. To find out how you can help, visit us online at www.lgri.org or call us at 512-474-5475.



DEMANDING EQUAL RIGHTS IN TEXAS

on the record

"I look around and I see kind, accepting faces — granted most of those faces don't move above the eyebrows, but they seem to have kind and accepting potential. ... I think it's time to share something about myself, something that I've needed to share with you for awhile now but wasn't quite prepared to do so in the past. I needed time, I needed to feel safe, I needed it to come from me and no one else. ... I can't imagine a better place to say this. So, ladies and gentleman, members of the media, colleagues and friends: I'm ... being selfish again!"

Sean Hayes, teasing those in attendance at the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation Media Awards in Los Angeles into thinking he would officially come out; Hayes has declined to talk about his sexual orientation (April 26)



"As a judge, it's not good to say the first thing that comes to mind, which is: 'Good for her.' I said, 'Why do you feel compelled to tell me that? That is not a defense to domestic violence.' I think he was trying to dirty her up in my mind."

Cook County Judge Nancy Katz, who is a lesbian, talking about an occasion when a lawyer representing a husband charged with beating his wife tried to use homophobia to gain an advantage, not knowing the judge's sexual orientation (Chicago Sun-Times, April 28)



"And I mean, isn't it worth it? I mean, what sort of a price do you pay, not only in your relationship, but just in your mind, in your own heart, you know, living like this?"

CNN anchor Anderson Cooper, who has talked about his sexual orientation at public gay functions but never acknowledged it on air; interviewing "Brian," whose boyfriend is in the U.S. military and fought overseas (CNN, April 26)

"Well, it — to answer your question, is it worth it? Yes, it is because I love my partner very much. And he loves what he does. And I'm very proud that he serves his country. And I do in a small sense. But there's a lot of difficulty with it. There's a lot of inequities."

"Brian," answering Anderson Cooper's question about whether the closeted relationship with his boyfriend, who serves in the U.S. military, is "worth it" (CNN, April 26)

"Nobody's gonna respect us if we have a gay homosexual boss sitting down discussing La Cosa Nostra business. ... It shocked me. ... He couldn't be acting that way — he was a leader of men."

Anthony Capo, former member of the DeCavalcante mob turned government informant, testifying in Manhattan federal court about why he shot and killed boss John "Johnny Boy" D'Amato in 1992 (New York Post, May 1)

"MOBSTER SLEEPS WITH THE SWISHES"

The headline on the New York Post story about testimony on the 1992 shooting death of mob boss D'Amato, who was reportedly killed when members learned he had gone to sex clubs with his wife and exchanged partners with her, often having sex with men (New York Post, May 1)

"Anybody who is a fan of mine does not wanna know a dumbass question like, is there any homo activities."

Pop star Justin Timberlake, reacting to a question from Chicago DJ Java Joel about whether he ever had any "gay experiences" with the other members of the boy band 'N Sync (KISS-FM, April 29)





OUT ON THE TOWN: There's only one reason Johnny Hooks might do drag: the annual Houston Art Car Parade. **Page 17.**

THEATER: This is the last weekend for Houstonians to catch Alley Theatre's memorable 'Trip to Bountiful.' **Page 19.**



Out on the Bayou

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MAY 9, 2003
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Taking a risk on gay family book

The growing market for books about children with gay parents is attracting some authors and publishers

By BRIAN MOYLAN

THE GAY BABY BOOM IS still chugging along. And this surge in children born to or adopted by lesbians and gay men continues to create various challenges across the country.

One dilemma many gay parents face is finding something to read at bedtime to their children that doesn't ignore their family's uniqueness. While there's a huge market for children's books out there, ones that highlight gay issues or that include different types of families can still be difficult to find.

Just ask Lesléa Newman, the lesbian author who wrote "Heather Has Two Mommies," the grandmother of all children's books for gay families. Newman and a friend self-published "Heather" in 1989.

"I was walking down the street here in Lesbianville — North Hampton, Mass. — and ran into a friend of mine who had recently had a baby," says Newman, who has no children. "She told me that there weren't any children's books for kids in lesbian families, and that someone should write one. I decided that someone would be me."

In 1990, Alyson Publishing, which produces books by, for, and about gay people bought the publishing rights to "Heather" and released it around the same time the Los Angeles-based company published "Daddy's Roommate." The latter book, written by Michael Willhoite, was similar to "Heather," and depicted life in a gay male household.

Not everyone was happy about the release of these two books. There were a number of legal battles and debates in state legislatures over "Heather." Opponents argued that school and public libraries should not display such books because they presented homosexuality in a favorable light. They wanted the books banned or shelved so that library patrons had to ask for it by title to check it out.

"All through the '90s, 'Heather' was one of the most disputed books in the country," says Newman, who has had 11 books for children published.

CATHERINE THREADGILL, A CHILDREN'S librarian in Charleston County, S.C., who specializes in multiculturalism in children's literature, recently had to

replace "Heather" and "Daddy's Roommate" because the library's copies vanished.

"When they go missing, it's my opinion that it's one means of censorship that people engage in," she says. "There are a million different ways to censor a book, starting with checking it out and never bringing it back."

Threadgill, who just finished her tenure on the board for the 2002 Caldecott Award Committee (it's similar to a Pulitzer Prize panel but for children's books), said that at the Charleston County Public Library where she works "Heather" is not on display in the children's fiction section. It's kept in the library's social issues section. This is not an ideal situation, but a concession Threadgill is willing to make.

"I'd rather that than people having to ask the librarian for the book," she says. "That impinges on your need to read freely."

While it's vital to have such books readily available at libraries, Newman says it's equally important for children in gay and lesbian families to be able to see their lives reflected in books. She learned early, and from direct experience, how important it is for children to have books that reflect their reality.

"It was my experience as a Jew in the '50s," she says. "I never saw myself in a picture book. I never had a picture book about Chanukah or Passover."

"I saw little blonde kids sitting on Santa Claus' lap and looking for Easter eggs," she says. "I got the message that my family was different, and that translated to 'not as good' as all those other families."

And like their adult counterparts, children learn from books. Today, there are books about gay and lesbian families to help children as well as books for children with parents in jail, addicted to drugs, and with Alzheimer's disease to help them learn to live with difficult situations they might face.

Threadgill says some adults believe children should be sheltered from such hard-hitting issues.

"It's heavy stuff, and everyone is not really thrilled with that," she says. "No one can say that we shouldn't have books like these, because there are children closer than you think going through these things."



Lesbian author Lesléa Newman wrote 'Heather Has Two Mommies,' the grandmother of all children's books for gay families, in 1989. She has recently written a new book called 'Felicia's Favorite Story.'

IN THE PUBLISHING ARENA, THE gay audience is still a niche market and the market for books for children with gay parents seems relatively small. While large publishing houses might not be able to make a lot of money of selling such books, a small, independent publisher in suburban Philadelphia is embracing this market.

Two Lives Publishing, founded by business partners Sally Lindsay and Bobbie Combs, deals exclusively with books for gay families. The former life partners have extensive experience working in the publishing industry, and both maintain full-time jobs while trying to launch Two Lives.

While Two Lives Publishing offers a number of children's books, they also produce books about parenting, adoption, and other topics specific to the families they are trying to reach. The company published Newman's latest book, "Felicia's Favorite Story," about a lesbian couple who tells their daughter the story of her adoption.

"When we were together we talked about starting a family ourselves, and being in the book business we knew there wasn't anything for that type of family, and more GLBT families were starting," Lindsay says. "We felt the time was really good, and we had lots of contacts in the industry."

Combs wrote the first two books Two Lives published. They were standard children books about topics such as counting and learning the alphabet — but they also include children with gay parents.

"We don't try to hide what they depict, but we don't do message books either," Lindsay says. "They're not about hitting people over the head. We want to give books of high quality to kids with families they recognize and feel comfortable in, and that their friends in straight families will want too."

Two Lives also published "The Harvey Milk Story," the first picture book about an openly gay man. The book is intended for children ages 8 to 12. In 1977, Milk became the first openly gay person elected to the Board of Supervisors (like a city council) in San Francisco. He and the city's mayor, George Moscone, were fatally shot in 1978 by former Supervisor Danny White. White, who was paroled after six years in prison, later killed himself.

All of the Two Lives books can be found in gay and lesbian bookstores, general bookstores, in libraries, and online at Amazon.com and the company's own site, www.twolives.com.

"It's still virtually impossible to publish a book about LGBT families," Newman says. "Once in a blue moon, a publisher will do it. I'm so glad that Two Lives is here and doing what they're doing. And I hope more publishers will take the risk."

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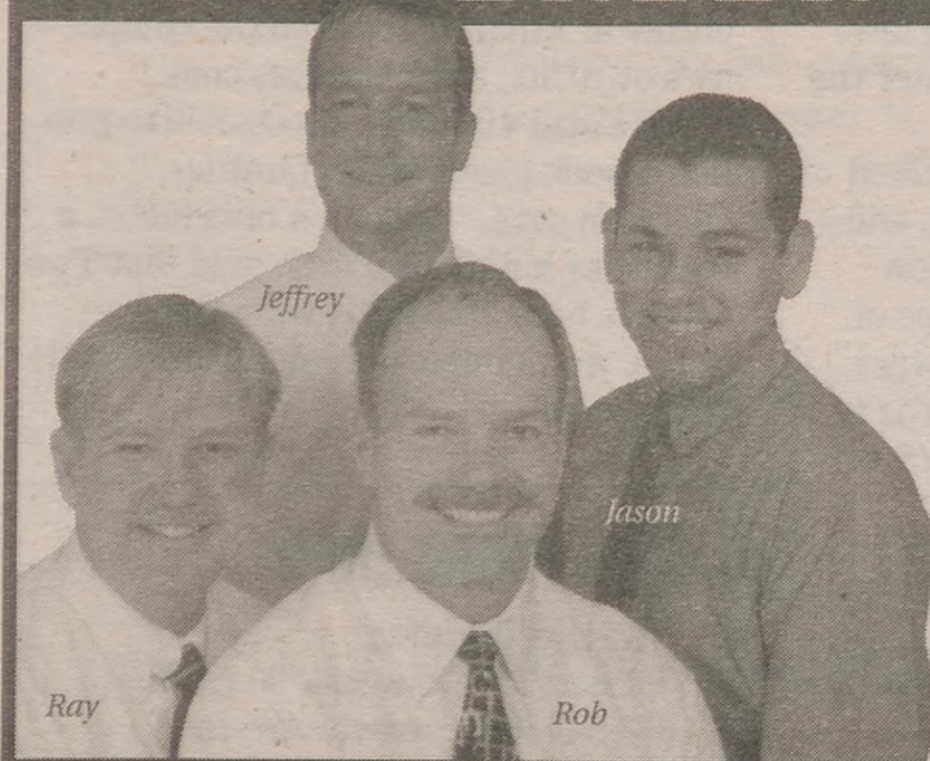
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Color your world

LIKE A PEACOCK STRUTTING ITS STUFF, color matters.

Back when Model Ts were rolling off assembly lines, Henry Ford supposedly said consumers could choose from any color — as long as it was black. Almost a century later, vehicles come in every shade of the rainbow — even “rainbow” itself, in some cases, which is perfect for those who *really* want to make a statement.

Color is so important that 40 percent of all car buyers would switch brands just to get the color they want. Factor in the “gay gene” (style, grace, good taste, wit, charm — oh, we could go on), and that number likely soars for gays.

Want to make sure you don't end up with a tint that is yesterday's hue? Then here's how to pick the right palette — in the grand color scheme of things.

Silver

For the past few years, silver has been tops. Almost 25 percent of all vehicles are now silver.

Similar to gold, which ranked below black, white, red, blue, and green, silver connotes wealth and power. Or so say the color experts. Our theory: It is the predominant hair color before the Grecian Formula sets in of many boomers.

Some experts also note that silver is the easiest color to fix after an accident. Of course, other experts say silver, gray, beige, bronze, champagne and other nondescript-colored cars get in more accidents because they're hard to see — especially on cloudy days.

To avoid fender benders, some drivers of neutral-colored cars turn their lights on at all times. Our solution: mandatory Lasik surgery during license renewals.

Black and white

Next in popularity are black and white, two conservative yet classic colors. That means they are better at standing the test of time — unlike Sansa-belt slacks and Milli Vanilli.

Black means “hidden, anonymous, mysterious.” Black cars also connote power, which may explain why they are popular in urban areas.

White cars are better at deflecting heat in sweltering climes, which in summer is enough reason on its own to buy one.

Red and blue

Flamboyant. Look at me. Ms./Mr. Personality. Many drivers note they get more speeding tickets in red cars, though that certainly wasn't the case in our silver test vehicle last month.

Red and blue can be harder to match after an accident. And as with Prince during his “artist-formerly-known-as-Prince” phase, sometimes it's easy to grow weary of red, orange, purple or other faddish flavors.

Green

WE THOUGHT THIS WAS JUST A PLEASANT,



Toyota Solara

politically correct color. But the experts say green can mean excessive generosity and sympathy.

Or it can mean extreme possessiveness and jealousy (the green-eyed monster). In relationships, green-car owners supposedly will be either supportive or needy.

Isn't that the way with most relationships, anyway? Maybe the color experts just need to get a life.

Yellow and orange

Not as popular as the top 10 car colors (silver, black, white, red, blue, green, gold, gray, beige, or bronze), yellow and orange are surging into showrooms. More flamboyant than red and blue, these colors sometimes are offered as eye-candy when introducing a new vehicle.

But flamboyant colors can be dropped from a product line-up the second year — as with Acura's tangerine TL, Pontiac's citrus-green Aztek, and Honda's burnt-orange Element.

Yellow, which exudes optimism, seems to have more staying power in these uncertain times, and that may explain why almost every automaker has a yellow vehicle in its lineup.

Purple

Aside from Mary Kay Pink, isn't *this* supposed to be our true color? Purple and lavender are considered fun, passionate, risqué and reinvigorating for relationships.

Perhaps this time, the experts got it right.

Metallic

Liberace knew a good thing when he saw it. Sparkles sell.

Metals help automakers offer numerous variations on traditional colors. Mazda — with its limited number of 6 vehicles — offers 43 different metallic colors, including 9 silvers/grays, 8 reds/burgundies, 6 blues, 5 blacks, 5 greens, 4 yellows, 3 whites, 3 silvers, 2 bronzes and 1 orange.

Best of all are “vibrant” metallics. When mixed with two or more colors, such metallics give off different hues depending on lighting, time of day or how close you are to the vehicle.

The new “Adrenaline Red Pearl” Dodge Avenger concept car, for example, appears bright orange, red or burnt yellow at different angles.

But my favorite is the “Mystic Clearcoat Metallic” on Ford Mustangs. It radiates every color of the rainbow — all with just a cock of the head.

out on the town JOHNNY HOOKS



Art Car Parade is
'free for all' in more
ways than one

Come one, come all

I LOVE HOUSTON THIS TIME OF YEAR — a blustery late spring just before the real heat of the summertime stings. Perfect time to get Out on the Town, perfect weather for a parade (insert Music Man joke here).

So what do I spy with my gay little eye this week? I'm so glad you asked, dear readers, for this weekend brings my favorite annual event: that quintessentially Houston extravaganza, the 16th Annual Art Car Parade! For the last several years the parade became a victim of its own success, becoming swallowed whole by the International Festival, which charges an admission for entry, thereby excluding some parade watchers from the nice-ities such as port-a-potties and funnel cakes.

This year, the fine folks at the Orange Show Foundation have emancipated the parade and proudly boast: "Free for All!" as the parade theme. The parade, the largest convergence of Art Cars in the entire world, is now an entire weekend's worth of activities fit for all!

I've only done drag twice (no really), and the second occasion was for the Art Car Parade in 1993. I rode in the back of a Volkswagen Bus reimagined as the Roadkill Café, a working '50s-style diner, complete with stuffed animal roadkill dragging behind us. It was a magical experience and from then on I have volunteered or helped the parade in some way or another.

This year I am volunteering for the VIPit Party, being held on the grounds of the Heritage Society. For \$100 you can experience the parade in a whole new way! Lavish lawn bars stocked full with mimosas, St. Arnolds and Budweiser, gift bags, wacky commemorative photos, sumptuous treats provided by Whole Foods Market, and all with the knowledge you helped make the parade happen! My best girlfriend Lisa Benitez and my best girlfriend Graham Gemeots are co-chairing this year's party and tickets are still available at 713-926-6368.

If that's too steep for your budget, the parade is "Free for All," remember? New this year is the addition of the also annual Buffalo Bayou Partnership's "Anything that Floats" competition, held on, appropriately enough, Buffalo Bayou. Ingeniously merged with the Art Car Parade Awards Ceremony that takes place right after the parade in Eleanor Tinsley Park, the water parade will now float by the festivities taking place on the banks! Look for me at the awards ceremony; I'm sharing master of ceremonies duties with Jo Harvey Allen! But I won't be in drag.

A rundown of this weekend's Art Car events follows:

May 9: the Main Street Drag, a procession of art cars that takes the parade to children and others who would otherwise be unable to experience its frenzy. Begins at 9:30 p.m. at the Children's Museum of Houston.

May 10: Parade begins at 1 p.m. at Allen Parkway and Taft, but take my advice and go



Drag, anyone?
Only for
something as
important as
the Art Car
Parade.

early to check out all the entries lined up on Allen Parkway I like to park closer to Taft and walk all the way up to Heritage Plaza.

The VIPit Party begins at 11:30 a.m. and runs until 2:30. The After Party begins immediately after the parade.

The ATF Water Parade begins at 2:30 at the boat ramp at Tinsley Park. The Awards Ceremony begins at 5 p.m. on the big stage!

THIS NEXT EVENT IS A NEW ONE TO ME, but nonetheless worthwhile. When I sent out an e-mail to some friends about this, several people thought it was an Internet hoax. Not true. Tomorrow is May 10, when letter carriers across the nation will be a massive human catalyst for citizens who want to help Stamp Out Hunger by participating in the 11th annual NALC National Food Drive. The National Association of Letter Carriers asks that you leave non-perishable food by your mailboxes (before you head out to the parade!).

SEEK OUT: Each column I will present for your consideration the hippest, most provocative and interesting finds in my media world:

WEB: This is a terrific site that will appeal to just about everyone, especially the animal lovers among us. Theanimalrescuesite.com allows each visitor to click to donate food for displaced animals, and has links to sites for hungry children, the rainforest, and breast cancer, even planting trees. I visit daily and have my whole family addicted! It's one addiction worth having.

FILM: Well "X Men 2: United" has struck box office gold (until Neo and Trinity arrive!), and its message of tolerance should endear it to our community. Out actor Alan Cummings is wonderful as Nightcrawler, but I must say I'm more excited about the reports that he has inked a TV deal to develop and star in a "gay version of Hart to Hart" called "Mr. and Mr. Nash" and produced by Steve Martin! Stay tuned indeed!

Do you have an event that is right for Out on the Town? Drop me a line via editor@houstonvoice.com.

I'll see you Out on the Town, Houston.

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'Bountiful' riddled with parallels
between gay life and the tale of
an elderly woman longing for home

'Trip' worthy for all

AS I ENTERED THE LOBBY OF THE ALLEY Theatre, the excitement in the air was palpable. This was the opening night of the Alley Theatre's 50th anniversary production of "The Trip to Bountiful" by Texas playwright Horton Foote, co-produced with Hartford Stage.

The wine was flowing, the lobby a-buzz with lively conversation, the jewelry of choice — pearls, both real and faux — and evening wear of black and taupe predominated. The diversity of the theater-going crowd was refreshing: all generations, including a handful of teens and pre-teens, a variety of ethnicities and not only the black-tie crowd but the occasional artsy, tongue-pierced bohemian as well. I always speculate as to who is gay, but I've learned not to assume anything. For me, the ambience and people-watching are a most enjoyable part of the theater experience.

The experience continued as the house lights dimmed, but by no means ended when they came back up again after the final act. Plays that can illicit emotion from an audience, even if it is anger at having wasted two hours of one's life, are plentiful. Plays that provoke ideas and cause one to think are less numerous. Plays that move one's emotions and stir one's intellect are rare; Foote's "Trip to Bountiful" is one of those rare finds.

It sets in motion the interaction between one's heart and mind for days and weeks to come. As any well-crafted work of art, it presents to its audience those universal themes which transcend time, culture, age, gender and sexual orientation.

There is a scene where Carrie Watts is reminiscing about a boy she once loved in her hometown of Bountiful, Texas; their fathers despised one another, so her father made her write a letter to her boyfriend, ending their relationship. The boy never knew of Carrie's true feelings for him; he grew bitter and proposed to another girl while drunk. Carrie said she knew that he had always loved her, and her alone.

The presence of "what might have been" hangs silently in the air. Unfortunately, this is a memory all too familiar to many gays and lesbians. Many can remember a time when they were forced to end a same-sex relationship upon its discovery by a parent. Even years later, many can probably still recall such scenes in haunting detail, feel the heart-rending emotions as though they are current and can't help thinking about what might have been had things played out differently.

"The Trip to Bountiful" is permeated with these universal themes, which strike a chord with and are easily applicable to the GLBT community.

In yet another scene, Carrie Watts has the epiphany that she is becoming the forgetful, sickly, crazy old lady that her daughter-in-law Jessie imagines her to be. Far too frequently have we heard about similar self-revelations, perhaps even our own, from those in our community. How many of us remember growing



Dee Maaske plays main character Carrie Watts in the captivating 'The Trip to Bountiful,' which ends its run this weekend at the Alley Theatre. (Photo by T. Charles Erickson)

up feeling like we were crazy, or that we were sick, or that something was wrong with us because this was what we were told by our parents, a teacher, a pastor, or some other significant person in our lives? Then there comes the day that every person realizes they do not have to accept someone else's concept of who they are, but can live out of their own truth.

We can all identify with the pain of remembering, the pain of forgetting, regret, life as a journey, being suffocated, the need for closure and finding that closure.

These are a few of the eternal truths which playwright and Wharton, Texas, native Foote delivers in "The Trip to Bountiful". Dee Maaske, an 11-year stage veteran, is featured as Carrie Watts in her Alley Theatre/Hartford Stage debut, having first appeared in this role at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 2001.

From the moment the first spotlight appears on Maaske/Watts methodically rocking while humming a well-known hymn tune, the audience is drawn into this elder woman's spiritual and physical journey home. Maaske delivers a convincing and passionate performance.

Hallie Foote, Horton Foote's daughter and preeminent interpreter of his work, appears as Jessie Mae, Carrie's daughter-in-law. Foote's expert performance has the audience cheering Carrie on as she plans her escape, and feeling pity for Jessie's husband Ludie Watts, wondering how he can stand to hear that whining, nails-across-the-chalkboard voice one more time. Foote plays this part with humor and is worth going to see.

Devon Abner is Ludie Watts, Carrie's son, who has his own share of remembrances of their hometown of Bountiful. He has the audience listening not only to what he says, but to what he has left unsaid. I kept waiting for the moment he would unload with all of the unspoken secrets in his heart.

Jeff Cowie's scenic design was evocative and minimalist. It carried us into the time and place, but did not overshadow the actors and their craft.

The Alley Theatre's production of "The Trip to Bountiful" will not disappoint and should resonate with all of those in the GLBT community.

i MORE INFO

'The Trip to Bountiful'

Through May 10 • Tickets: \$35-\$50

Alley Theatre • 615 Texas Ave.

713-228-8421 • www.alleytheatre.org

community calendar

SATURDAY, MAY 10

Houston Buyers Club. Free BIA (Bioelectrical Impedance Analysis) the first two Saturdays of the month. Hours: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Houston Buyers Club, 3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 604. 713-520-5288. http://www.houstonbuyersclub.com/bia_testing.html

Men's Gathering of Houston. Dialogue meeting, 6:30-9:30 p.m. "Losing a Friend to HIV/AIDS: Learning to Grow From the Grief - Help Me To Understand." First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston, 5200 Fannin. Church phone: 713-526-5200. Men's Gathering of Houston: 713-528-4461.

EVERY SATURDAY

All-Spanish Worship Service/Noche Espiritual. 6 p.m. Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, 2026 W. 11th. 713-303-3409 or 713-861-9149.

After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM. 1-4 a.m.

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

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 11 p.m.-2 a.m. at Viviana's. 713-830-3000.

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

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

Lambda Center. Alcoholics Anonymous. 11:30 a.m. Eye Opener Group, 8 p.m. Saturday Night Live, 9:30 p.m. Willing Ones Group. 1201 W. Clay. 713-521-1243 or 713-528-9772. www.lambdahouston.org.

Q-Patrol. Volunteers walk the streets to help prevent hate crimes. 9:30 p.m. Convene at community center. 713-528-SAFE. E-mail: qpatrolinc@aol.com

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

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in, noon-5 p.m. • Texas Association for Transsexual Support (TATS), 3 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

SUNDAY, MAY 11
EVERY SUNDAY

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

Center for Spiritual Living. Services at 11 a.m., for children at 10:50 a.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808. The center also has commitment ceremonies, metaphysical bookstore and classes.

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

Community of Kindred Spirits in Beaumont. Worship at 6 p.m. 1575 Spindletop Ave., Beaumont, Texas. 409-813-2055. E-mail: ckrev3@netzero.net

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

Emerson Unitarian Church. Adult education, 10 a.m. Service, 11 a.m. Lunch at noon. www.emersonhou.org.

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

First Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:30 & 11:30 a.m. Brunch at 10:30 a.m. 713-526-5200. www.firstuu.org.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 9 p.m.-midnight at Club Inergy. 713-830-3000.

Gay Bowling Leagues. 7 p.m. Palace Lanes, 4191 Bellaire Blvd. 713-861-1187.

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

GLOBAL. Gay Lesbian Or Bisexual Alliance. University of Houston GLBT student group meeting. 2 p.m. at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.uh.edu/~global. E-mail: global@bayou.uh.edu.

Grace Assembly Church. Gay/gay-affirming congregation. 11 a.m. service. 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leol@easttexas.net.

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

H.A.T.C.H. Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals meets 6-9 p.m. For meeting information, call 713-529-3590. www.hatchyouth.org.

Houston Roughnecks Rugby Club. Practice from 4-6 p.m. For more information, log on to www.roughnecksrugby.org.

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

Lambda Center. Alcoholics Anonymous. 9:30 a.m. Came to Believe Group. 1201 W. Clay. 713-521-1243 or 713-528-9772. www.lambdahouston.org.

Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Church. 10 a.m. service. 3333 Fannin, Suite 106. 713-528-6756.

Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:45 & 11:15 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 281-298-2780.

Resurrection MCC. Services, 9 and 11 a.m. Children and Youth Sunday School, 10 a.m. Children's service, 11 a.m. 713-861-9149.

St. Patrick's Reformed Catholic Mission. Sunday Mass at noon. Holy Unions available. Group meets at the Hair Express, 3310 Delaware, Beaumont, Texas 77703. 409-781-8152. E-mail: bwatson1@gt.rr.com.

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

Sunday Brunch. For HIV-positive men. 11 a.m. Riva's, 1117 Missouri St. Paul, 713-880-0690. e-mail: PoznBuff@aol.com.

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

Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Adult discussion, 9 a.m. Service, 11:15 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.

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

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

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in, 2-6 p.m. • GLBT Community Church with Rev. Melissa Wood: Bible study, 10-10:45 a.m., worship 11 a.m. www.geocities.com/glbtc • Lesbians Over Age Fifty (LOAF), 2 p.m. • S.I.S.T.E.R.S. (Sharing Inner Strength, Encouragement & Realistic Support). Support group for African-American Lesbians. 3:30 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

MONDAY, MAY 12
EVERY MONDAY

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

Free HIV Testing. Houston Area Community Services. 9 a.m.-noon at Joseph-Hines Clinic, 1710 West 25th St. 713-526-0555, ext. 231, 227 or 226.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m.-midnight. Keys West. 713-830-3000.

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

Gay Bowling Leagues. Women's league. 6:45 p.m. Dynamic Lanes, 6121 Tarnef Drive. 713-861-1187.

Gay Fathers/Fathers First. Support group. 8-9:30 p.m. Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Tom, 713-726-8736. www.geocities.com/gaydadshouston/

Grace Assembly Church. Gay/gay-affirming congregation. 7 p.m. aerobics class. 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leol@easttexas.net.

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

Houston Roughnecks Rugby Club. Practice from 6:30-8:30 p.m. For more information, log on to www.roughnecksrugby.org.

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

Lambda Center. Alcoholics Anonymous. 8 p.m. Beginners' Group. 1201 W. Clay. 713-521-1243 or 713-528-9772. www.lambdahouston.org.

Montrose Clinic. Offers weekly peer support groups for gay and bisexual men with HIV. Spanish speaking group meets, 6:30 p.m. 215 Westheimer. 713-830-3050. Grupo de Apoyo para Latinos gay y bisexuales VIH positivos. Lunes 6:30. Para mas informacion llama al 713-830-3025.

Queer Voices Radio Show. 8-10 p.m. KPFT 90.1.

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • Human Rights Campaign Political Action Committee, 7 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

TUESDAY, MAY 13

Houston Gay & Lesbian Parents. Board meeting, 6 p.m. Support group meeting, 7 p.m. Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold. www.hglp.org.

Living with HIV. This daytime support group is for Spanish-speaking persons. Meets the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. 11:30 a.m. Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond. 713-529-0037.

EVERY TUESDAY

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

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

Free HIV Testing. Houston Area Community Services. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Joseph-Hines Clinic, 1710 West 25th St. 713-526-0555, ext. 231, 227 or 226.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m.-midnight at Club Houston. Also 4-8 p.m. at 611 Club, 611 Hyde Park. 713-830-3000.

Gay youth. New program for young gay males, ages 18-29. 7 p.m. 614 Avondale. 713-533-9786.

GLBT Pentecostals. Bible study, prayer, 7 p.m. in the Heights. For info: 936-931-3761; e-mail: www.Wgb1947@cs.com.

Houston Women's Rugby Team. No experience necessary. Practice, 6:30-8:30. Westland YMCA. Kay, 713-208-1529.

Introduction to Buddhism. All welcome at 634 W. Temple in the Heights. 7 p.m. Carlton, 713-862-8129.

Rainbow Ranglers. Free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. No partner needed. Beginner 2 Step, Waltz, Shuffle & Swing. 8:30 p.m. 713-528-9192.

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • Lesbian Coming Out Group, 7 p.m. • Pride Committee of Houston general meeting, 7 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14
EVERY WEDNESDAY

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.; SOM Discussion & Exploration, 7 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

Crystal Meth Anonymous (CMA). 8:15 p.m. meeting. Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond Ave., Room 15.

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Support Network Pot Luck Dinner, 6:30 p.m. Various support groups, 7 p.m. 713-526-1017.

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

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 4-8 p.m. at Mary's; 9 p.m.-midnight at Ripcord; 10 p.m.-1 a.m. at EJ's; 10 p.m.-1 a.m. at Midtowne Spa. 713-830-3000.

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 2015 Thomas St. OraSure method. Call for appointment. Sharon, 713-873-4157.

Gay Bowling Leagues. 6:30 p.m. Palace Lanes, 4191 Bellaire Blvd. 713-861-1187.

Grace Assembly Church. Gay/gay-affirming congregation. 7 p.m. aerobics class. 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leol@easttexas.net.

Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal, 7-9 p.m. 1307 Yale. 713-528-4379.

Houston Roughnecks Rugby Club. Practice from 6:30-8:30 p.m. For more information, log on to www.roughnecksrugby.org.

Houston Tennis Club. 7:00-9 p.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com

Spiritual Uplift service. 7 p.m. Resurrection MCC. 713-861-9149.

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in, 2-9 p.m. • Free HIV testing, counseling, 6-9 p.m. • Houston Pride Band rehearsal, 7:30 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

THURSDAY, MAY 15
EVERY THURSDAY

BiNet Houston. Group for bisexuals; everyone welcome. 7:30 p.m. Hobbit Café, 2240 Portsmouth. www.flash.net/~bihouse. 713-467-4380.

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

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

Free HIV Testing. Houston Area Community Services. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Joseph-Hines Clinic, 1710 West 25th St. Also 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Gallery Medical Clinic, 5900 North Freeway, and Club Toyz from 9 p.m.-midnight. 713-526-0555, ext. 231, 227 or 226.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 4-8 p.m. at The Outpost; 8 p.m.-midnight at Brazos River Bottom and Cousins; 10 p.m.-1 a.m. at Toyz Disco. 713-830-3000.

Free HIV Testing. 7-9 p.m. at All Star News, 3415 Katy Freeway. Health clinic with free testing for HIV and syphilis. 713-869-7878.

FrontRunners. Running club. 6:30 p.m. 713-522-8021. Web site: <http://homeswbell.net/larathon/houfchtm>. E-mail: larathon@swbell.net.

Gay Bowling Leagues. Luci Duos. 9 p.m. Dynamic Lanes, 6121 Tarnef Drive. 713-861-1187.

GLOBAL. Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual Alliance at the University of Houston-Central Campus. Weekly meeting, 6 p.m. e-mail: nguyen0023@hotmail.com.

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

Houston Women's Rugby Team. No experience necessary. Practice, 6:30-8:30. Westland YMCA. Kay, 713-208-1529.

Lake Livingston GLBT Support Group. 7 p.m. dinner and discussion. Grace Assembly Church, 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leol@easttexas.net.

Lambda Skating Club. 8 p.m. Tradewinds Skating Rink. www.neosoft.com/~lrsc. 713-523-9620.

Montrose Clinic. Offers weekly peer support groups for gay and bisexual men with HIV. English speaking group meets, 6:30 p.m. 215 Westheimer 713-830-3050.

Rainbow Ranglers. Free C&W dance lessons. No partner required. Brazos River Bottom. 8:30 p.m. 713-528-9192.

Recovery From Food Addiction (RFA). Meeting for 12-step program open to all. Noon-1 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1805 W. Alabama St. RFA: 713-673-2848. www.geocities.com/rfa77235/. E-mail: rfa.worldservice@aol.com.

Spanish Charla Conversation Group. Café Agora, 7 p.m. E-mail: charlahouston@msn.com. 713-416-7203.

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

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop in 2-9 p.m. • Center board of directors meeting, 7 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

FRIDAY, MAY 16

Houston Outdoor Group. Glassell School of Arts spring student artwork sale. For more information, call Bill and Larry, 713-529-8101. HOGLINE: 713-KAMP-OUT.

EVERY FRIDAY

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 10 p.m.-2 a.m. at The Meatrack; 10 p.m.-1 a.m. at EJ's and at Midtowne Spa. 713-830-3000.

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 2015 Thomas St. OraSure method. Call for appointment. Sharon, 713-873-4157.

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

Grace Assembly Church. Gay/gay-affirming congregation. 7 p.m. aerobics class. 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leol@easttexas.net.

H.A.T.C.H. Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals meets 7-10 p.m. For meeting information, call 713-529-3590. www.hatchyouth.org.

Houston Tennis Club. 7:00-9 p.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com

Kolbe Project. Morning prayer, 10 a.m. 713-861-1800.

Mishpachah Alizim. GLBT Jewish congregation. Sabbath services at 8 p.m. on the second Friday of each month at Baby Barnabys, 602 Fairview. Monthly study groups with Congregation Beth Israel, 5600 North Braeswood. Mishpachah Alizim, P.O. Box 980136, Houston, TX 77098. 866-841-9139, ext. 1834.

Q-Patrol. Volunteers walk the streets to help prevent hate crimes. 9:30 p.m. Convene at community center. 713-528-SAFE. E-mail: qpatrolinc@aol.com

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

VOLUNTEER/SELF-HELP

ECHOS. This non-profit ministry of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany is dedicated to helping people access health and social service systems. Free medical services include HIV, STD and hepatitis testing. Call for dates and times of services. 9610 S. Gessner. 713-270-0369. E-mail: echos-houston@swbell.net.

Gay & Lesbian Switchboard Houston. Volunteers offer a friendly ear to callers in need of information, nonjudgmental support and anonymous counseling to the GLBT community. 713-529-3211. www.gayswitchboardhouston.org.

HoP-ON. Anyone can join this non-profit moderated e-mail announcement list that helps facilitate advocacy work and organizing efforts for gay Houstonians. Quantity of postings is strictly limited. Postings include press releases and action alerts from national, state and local gay and allied organizations. For info or to join, access www.groups.yahoo.com/group/HoP-ON/.

Houston GLBT Community Center. Volunteers perform a variety of critical tasks which include staffing the information desk during drop-in hours; helping with center programming and events; working on community outreach efforts, fund-raising and publicity. Card players, writers and artists in particular are needed. 713-524-3818.

Peer Listening Line. Youth only. Staffed by GLBT youth for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth. 5-10 p.m. Monday-Friday. 800-399-PEER.

Pride Committee of Houston. Volunteers sought for Pride 2003 preparations. This is the 25th Pride celebration. www.pridehouston.org. E-mail: volunteers@pridehouston.org. 713-529-6979.

appts

a weekly guide to arts & entertainment activities for gay Houstonians

SPECIAL SATURDAY, MAY 10

Houston photographer David Lewis has opened a new photo studio and plans an open house and art sale. Mark Goebel will serve as guest DJ. Parking: \$4. 8 p.m. to midnight. David Lewis Images, 3400 Montrose, Suite

Q Puzzle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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"Simply Simon"

Across

- Jazz great Hersch
- "In & Out" producer Rudin
- Hard six and hard eight, in Vegas
- Become exhausted, with "out"
- Bert's longtime companion
- Ginsberg's "In Back of the ____"
- Pansy supporter
- Lee Rose's spoons
- His grandmother had a Woody
- Simon Callow film based on an E.M. Forster novel
- Verlaine's soul
- Little black bk. listings
- Many readers of XY magazine
- Snowbell's voice Lane
- Sweaty guys get pinned to them
- Pre-Epstein Beatle Sutcliffe
- Abominable Snowman
- Family magazine
- Meas. for Craig Claiborne
- Simon Rex's blue-movie stage name
- Martin to Niles
- Oral performances
- Mapa of "Some of My Best Friends"
- Col. Cammermeyer's onetime address
- Bruce Davison played with his in "Willard"

- "Good Night, Paul" poet Robert
- Fire starter for Robin Williams?
- Chicken part
- Org. that will get you a map to Aspen
- Film in which Greg Kinnear plays Simon
- "____ never happen!"
- More up to it
- Jack McFarland's idol
- Strip under the futon
- "Swell!"
- Pre-kiss insert
- Manhandle, with "with"
- ____ Grease (lube brand)
- Irish tongue

Down

- 3-pointers to Kopay
- Brown on a book cover
- Rupert of "The Next Best Thing"
- Barney Frank, in brief
- Talk by Jane Spahr
- Bodies of sailors
- R.E.M.'s "The ____ Love"
- Pinball Wizard foul
- Former "Entertainment Tonight" host John
- 1994 Aussie flick "Only the ____"
- Most like Craven movies
- Song and dance, to Josephine Baker
- Comes less quickly
- "Put ____ Happy Face"
- Where Richard Halliburton was lost
- "Ask ____ Girl" (1959 Shirley Maclaine film)
- Stone butch's towel word
- High places with flat tops
- They crawl all over your mound
- Pink angle front
- Speed at which you come
- Keep an ____ the ground
- Cross-dresser's padding site
- Part of NGLTF (abbr.)
- Marcel Duchamp's school
- Peter or Paul, but not Mary
- Billy of "One Life to Live"
- Type of bar or daddy
- Rubbers
- Stonewall Jackson's land (abbr.)
- Etiquette writer Steven
- One that gets laid
- Nuts partners
- "Of course I ____ people..." (Quentin Crisp)
- Shakespeare's Hamlet, e.g.
- His brother laid him in his grave
- Big piece of meat
- "____ homo!"
- 1 from Ogunquit to Boston

Answers on Page 20

reasons? WHY?



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—Mary Ann McBee
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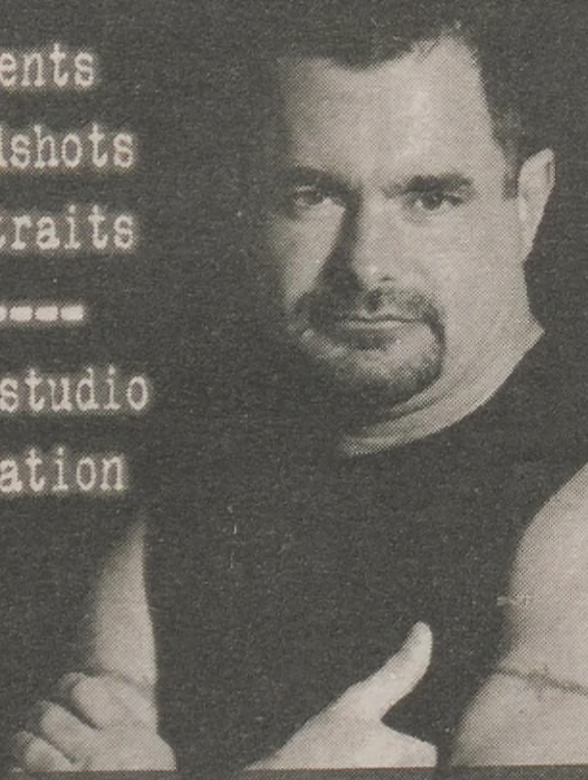


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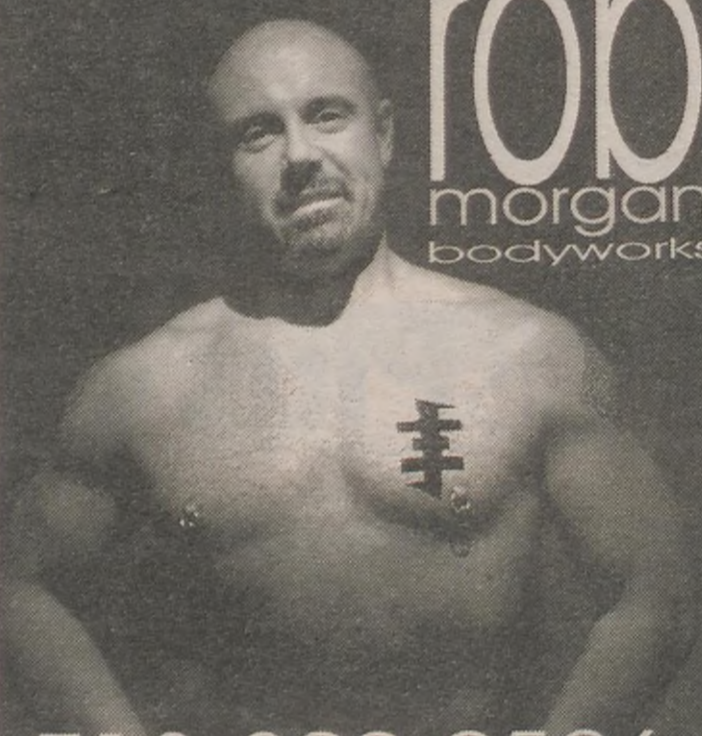
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My Stars!

May 9 - 15



ARIES (March 21 to April 20)

Neptune is in your house of friends, so keep an eye on your pals. It's actually their hands you should watch, as they might be grabbing your butt during this "no boundaries" time. But it's another Aries who could morph into your lover. Take a chance on your career by putting out the word that you're ready for something bigger and better. Anything is possible.



TAURUS (April 21 to May 20)

The past informs the future during this time of year, so look back on your old diaries, darling. Venus, your ruler, joins the Sun in your house of love, on May 16. Do something generous for a cutie you dig. Another crazy Aquarius could enter your life to shake it in most unexpected ways.



GEMINI (May 21 to June 21)

You have rare insight into the intimate associates in your life, doll. Use that high-powered perception for good not evil! Your relationships are about to go through some major changes. Commitment is the word of the week. Can you handle it? You and a Scorpio are especially in sync, but it's up to you to put your feelings on the table slowly and carefully.



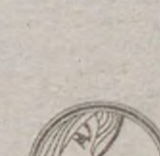
CANCER (June 22 to July 22)

Saturn is getting ready to move into your sign, so enjoy these last few weeks of low-pressure life. Your career is going to need your absolute focus very soon. A new love of the Capricorn persuasion is bound to make you feel born again, baby.



LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22)

Venus moves into your career house this week and brings you a touch of extra acumen in the business world. You are the star of the week, at least to an impressionable Cancer who's, like, totally crushed out on you! Ohmygod! With Neptune still passing through the love sector of your chart, it's time for you to experience some risky changes.



VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22)

The full moon falls in your very social third house on May 15. Throw an impromptu party or gather friends for a mischief-filled outing. You may be the one finally to out a Scorpio as a whore! No scandal sticks to you this week, so hold your hysterics. Even with Mercury retrograde, everything is fine, darling.



LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22)

There's no need to feel panicky, sweetie. With Venus on your side you can complete a pet project and bring it to fabulous fruition ... in due time! While you're planning your victory speech, take a moment to thank a Virgo for being there for you. You're able to change one problem with your life during mid-May. Choose carefully. Hint: your day job needs a tweak.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21)

Cut your ties with a person who continually mistreats you. You have the ability to communicate now, darling, and you should get out there and preach your ideas to both the converted and the intellectually challenged. A Pisces has been worshiping you for months. Let this adoring disciple kneel before you in the temple of your bedroom.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21)

No need to be a perfectionist darling (it's not your style anyway). If you behave with integrity toward the one you love, all good things will follow. Avoid the urge to get shady with a Gemini. Work on the relationships that matter in your life. Mercury retrograde brings unexpected pop-in visits from an odd assortment of old friends. Keep a bottle of champagne on ice all week long.



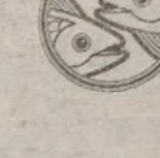
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19)

This is your time to be on top, Capricorn, whether you're in bed with a Taurus or making business deals with major players. Confidence gets you very, very far, so don't let 'em see you sweat. Instead, be generous. When you do favors for the right people, payback is sweet. Make a date, and don't take no for an answer.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18)

Several planets will be tripping through your house of home and family this week. For once you can't just focus on the outer world and your career. That's why your personal life seems like reality, and your work life seem so surreal. Keep a journal and write down your bizarre impressions. You'll come back to your notes in a few weeks, and it will all seem clear. Oh, and do have sex with a Virgo. You'll be glad you did.



PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20)

Uranus wants you to concentrate on appreciating the soulful things in life. Prioritize the top three people in your heart. Don't take any of these stalwart loved ones for granted. Especially a Taurus. A huge change in your life is on the horizon, but it won't be a surprise, baby. This is what you've been working towards.

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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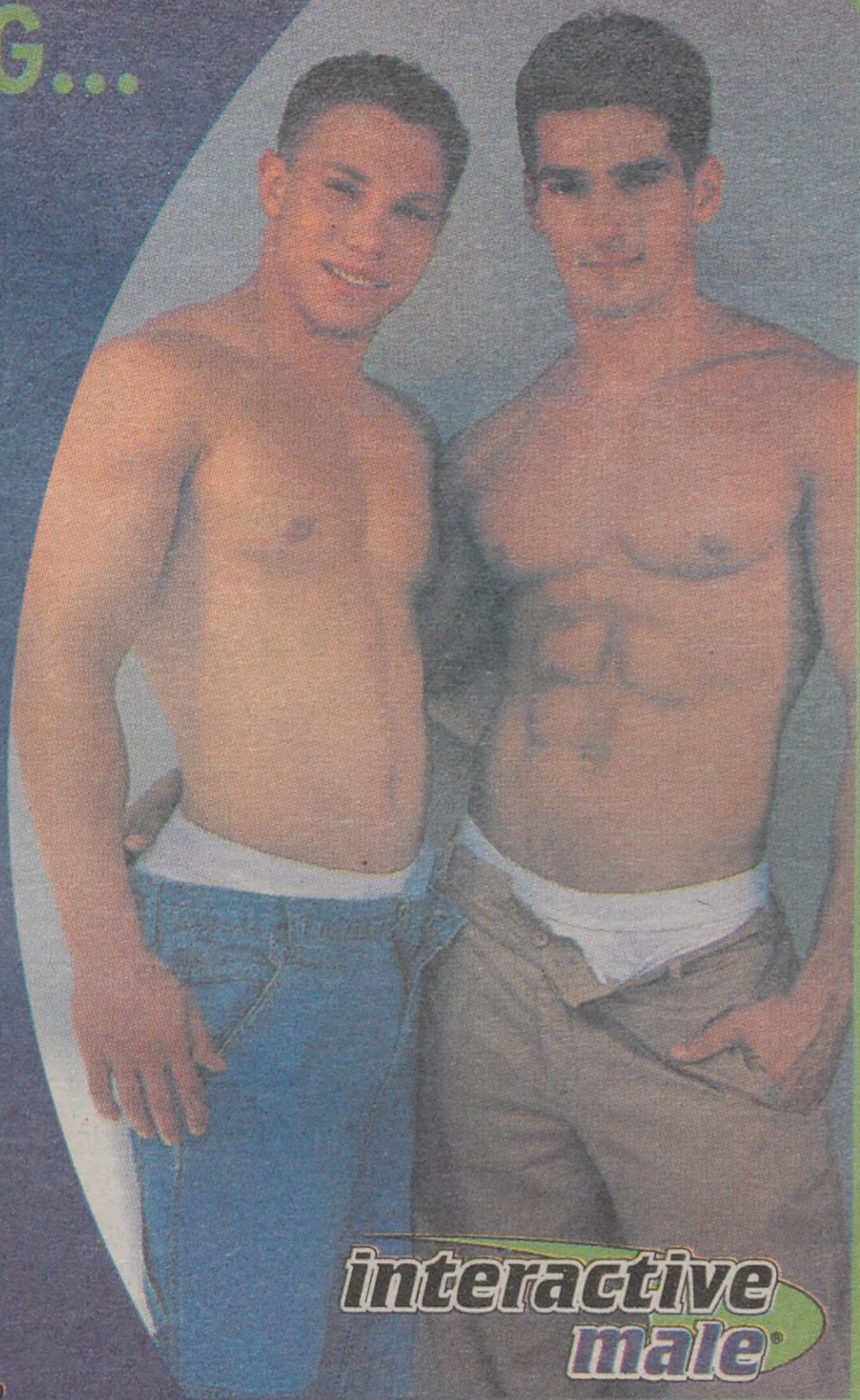
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