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Down with the Kings
Performers of new
gay subculture make
a stop in Houston
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looses fight. Page 3



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might go back. Page 5



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A large group of opponents of Proposition 2 and supporters of gay City Council candidate Sue Lovell turned out for early voting at the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center.

Gay marriage ban goes to voters

Lesbian seeks seat on
Houston City Council

By ELLA TYLER

Houston voters will head to the polls Tuesday to decide the fate of an amendment banning same-sex marriages in the state and which candidates will fill City Council and a state representative position.

Early voting for Tuesday's election ends today at 7 p.m., and has been packed at the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center on West Gray, according to officials.

Emily Langdon of No Nonsense In November, a group which opposes Proposition 2, an amendment to the Texas Constitution banning same-sex mar-

riages, is happy about the high turnout at the center.

"To me that's good because that includes the folks from Montrose and Midtown," Langdon said.

Richard Schechter, a candidate for the Houston Community College Board of Trustees, also believes the high turnout at West Gray is positive for those opposed to Proposition 2.

"I was there Sunday handing out cards and it looks like well over half the voters there were gay, based on the bumper stickers and the number of same-sex couples I saw," Schechter said.

But according to David Beirne of the Harris County Clerk's office, the West Gray poll usually has the most early voters.

"The next highest number of early voters are at the Cypress Creek location at Barbara Bush Library in Spring, followed by Bayland Park in southwest

Nominee's writing mixed on gay issues

Pro-gay college paper surfaces, along with mixed rulings from Alito

By LOU CHIBBARO JR. and CHRIS CRAIN

WASHINGTON — News that Supreme Court nominee Samuel A. Alito helped write a paper supporting gay rights as a senior at Princeton University in 1971 provided a glimmer of hope for gay activists this week as information surfaced about his conservative rulings as a federal appeals court judge.

As part of a class paper called "The Boundaries of Privacy in American Society," Alito and 16 other Princeton students concluded that, "No private sexual act between consenting adults should be forbidden," and "current sodomy laws" should be changed.

"Discrimination against homosexuals in hiring should be forbidden," the paper also concluded.

But with 17 people listed as participating in the project it is unclear how strongly Alito believed in the conclusions of the report or how his views may have changed since then. Alito did, however, write the report's introduction.

President Bush named Alito, 55, on Oct. 31 as his nominee for the U.S. Supreme Court, drawing immediate criticism from Democratic senators and a coalition of civil rights and feminist groups, who predicted Alito would move the court far to the right.



President Bush nominated Judge Samuel A. Alito to the U.S. Supreme Court on Monday. (Photo by Rudy K. Lawidjaja)

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Actor George Takei from
'Star Trek' comes out
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i am ready.



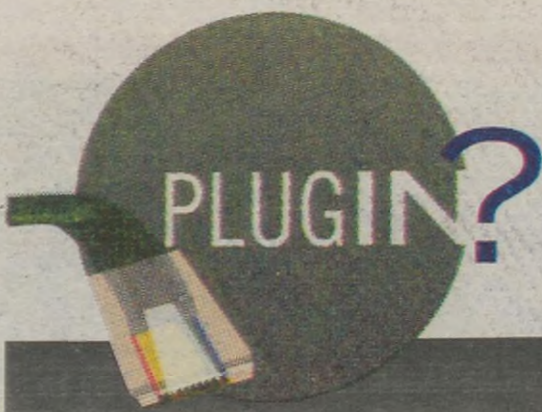
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local news

Proposition 2 would hurt gay Hispanics most

Texas home to three of top 10 cities with most Hispanic gay couples

By ERIC G. ERVIN

Proposition 2, an amendment to the Texas Constitution banning same-sex marriages, would disproportionately affect gay Hispanics, a national gay rights group said this week.

Officials with the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force released their findings based on the report "Hispanic and Latino Same-Sex Couple Households in the United States: A Report from the 2000 Census." The information was released Tuesday during a news conference in Houston.

With three of the top 10 metropolitan areas with the highest number of Hispanic same-sex households located in Texas, including San Antonio, Dallas-Fort Worth, and Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, and the vote on the amendment Nov. 8, officials said they felt compelled to release the information.

"Many of the 1,138 federal benefits and protections of marriage are designed to help families save money, purchase a



Jason Cianciotto, research director with the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, recently authored a study based on 2000 Census figures which shows that Hispanics will be most affected if Proposition 2 passes.

home and better provide for their children," Jason Cianciotto, author of the study and research director for the Task Force Policy Institute, said in a press release. "This study shows that Hispanic same-sex couple families would not only benefit from the ability to marry, but also are disproportionately harmed by anti-

same-sex marriage laws and constitutional amendments.

"For example, the inability to marry prevents individuals from sponsoring a non-citizen same-sex partner for immigration purposes, which disproportionately threatens the stability of Hispanic same-sex couple families, many with children."

The findings are from a report that analyzed data from the 2000 Census, the most recent year available from the government agency.

"This report underscores yet again the critical need for racial and economic justice in our nation," said Matt Foreman, task force executive director. "While all same-sex couple families face legal and economic discrimination, the study indicates it is much harder for Hispanic same-sex couples because they earn less, are raising more children, and must overcome much steeper immigration and language barriers."

Officials said based on the report, Hispanics are less likely than their white counterparts to be United States citizens and more likely to raise children on smaller incomes.

If passed, Proposition 2 would ban gay marriages and forbid state recognition of any legal status identical or similar to marriage. It's up for vote Nov. 8.

'We don't have those freedoms'

According to the report, Hispanic gay couples are raising children at more than three times the rate of white and black same-sex couples. It also states that white gay couples earn an average of \$65,000 a year, while Hispanics bring in less than \$40,000 annually.

The report states that about 51 percent of gay Hispanic couples are not United States citizens. For couples consisting of Hispanic and white men, 8 percent were not U.S. citizens.

Houston couple Sergio Sarmiento and Christopher Rigdon was one of many gay couples that participated in the study. The two educators have been together for six years. Rigdon is a native Houstonian and Sarmiento comes from Columbia.

The couple said that if gay marriages were legal in Texas, then they couple realize the benefits of straight couples in regards to insurance benefits and property distribution if one died.

"That is one of the reasons why Sergio came to America—to benefit from its freedoms," Rigdon said. "It's frustrating because we don't have those freedoms."

Sarmiento had to be sponsored by his employer to gain citizenship.

Methodists defrock lesbian minister

Council reinstates pastor who barred gay man from congregation

By ERIC ERVIN

Two days after hearing cases involving gay issues in the Methodist Church, the group's highest legal body handed down rulings that left a lesbian minister defrocked and a pastor, who denied church membership to a gay man, reinstated with back pay.

The Judicial Council reached its decision Saturday and released its verdict Monday on the church's Web site. Eight members of the nine-member council heard the cases last week in Houston and were expected to take at least a week to render a verdict. All rulings made by the council are final.

The council's 6-2 ruling ends Rev. Irene Elizabeth Stroud's fight to remain an ordained minister.

Stroud, who announced in April 2003 that she was a lesbian and in a committed relationship with partner Chris Paige, was charged with engaging in "practices declared by the United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings."

"It was very difficult news to absorb," a somber-sounding Stroud said in a telephone interview from Philadelphia. "The news came as a blow."

She characterized her case as discrimination solely based on her sexual orientation. Stroud said she had hoped that the church would make changes in policy as it did in the past for welcoming women and minorities.

"No one has ever questioned my effectiveness as a minister," Stroud said. "To me that makes it clear that the rules about homosexuality in the ministry are about something else, a perceived opinion."

Celibate gays only

Homosexuals must be celibate if they want to be ordained ministers in the Methodist Church, and although the church's Book of Discipline welcomes everyone, gays are sometimes asked to repent their lifestyles.

Thomas Hall, church counsel, told the Associate Press that Stroud "could be welcomed back with both arms. But she'd have to be celibate."

Throughout the case, church officials had asked Stroud if her relationship with Paige was sexual.

Hall said the council's decision provides some relief, but it's "not the end of this whole conversation."

"An issue like this takes so much energy on both sides, and takes the focus off a lot of the great things the church is doing," he said. "This gives us some space so we can hopefully channel our energies into the great things we're doing."

The church is the nation's third-largest

denomination.

Stroud, 35, said she will remain at Philadelphia's First United Methodist Church of Germantown as a lay staff member, but will take time off on maternity leave because she and Paige have been certified as foster parents.

Stroud began working at the Philadelphia church in 1999 as an associate pastor. She said she first revealed her sexual orientation while attending Bryn Mawr College, where she earned an undergraduate degree in 1991. In 1996, she earned a master's of divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York.

In December 2004, she was tried before a jury of 13 ordained church members. The jury voted 12-1 to convict Stroud and 7-6 to take away her credentials.

However, the church's Northeast Jurisdiction Committee on Appeals overturned the verdict, voting 8-1 to reinstate Stroud. The committee's ruling centered on two points concerning the Book of Discipline: The church's failure to define two terms — "status" and "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" — and the phrase "because homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching."

The church appealed the committee's ruling, setting up the Oct. 27 hearing at the Westchase campus of First United Methodist Church of Houston.

"The decision of the Northeast Jurisdiction Committee on Appeals is reversed and the verdict and penalty of the trial court in the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference is reinstated," the council's ruling states.



United Methodist Church Rev. Irene 'Beth' Stroud (right) speaks to the media, as her partner Chris Paige looks on. Stroud was defrocked by the church's highest court this week. (Photo by Carlos Antonio Rios/AP)

Two councilmembers, Susan T. Henry-Crowe and Beth Capen, said they regret the outcome of Stroud's case.

"The church continues to struggle with the issue of homosexuality," Crowe and Capen wrote in a brief of partial concurrence and dissent. "The church is clearly of many minds on this issue."

In two other decisions, the council's rulings establish that pastors have the discretion to grant or deny membership in the church.

In a 5-3 vote, Rev. Edward Johnson of South Hill United Methodist Church in South Hill, Va., was reinstated with back pay.

Johnson, 58, was suspended June 13 for one year after refusing to admit a gay man to his church. Johnson did not return a call seeking comment on the decisions.

MORE INFO
United Methodist Church
www.umc.org

news

Amendment opponents encouraged by early voting

VORTING, continued from Page 1

Houston," Beirne said. "I don't know of anything specifically bringing voters out at Cypress Creek, this is just typically a location that has lots of early voters."

A more optimistic sign for opponents of Proposition 2 is that Travis County, home to the city of Austin, is having a good turnout of voters. According to Beirne, Travis County has the second highest number of early voters even though it has the fifth highest number of registered voters.

In addition to Proposition 2, voters in Houston will go to the polls to elect council members and a replacement for a deceased state representative.

Houston City Council

City Controller Annise Parker, Houston's only openly gay elected official, is unopposed for re-election, as are City Council members Ada Edwards, Pam Holm and Ron Green.

One of the hottest races pits lesbian activist Sue Lovell against four other contenders for the City Council At-large Position 2 seat, vacated by term-limited Gordon Quan. Lovell, the only woman in the race, faces fellow Democrat Jay Aiyyer, a former aide to Mayor Lee Brown and Houston Community College board member; John Elford, James B. Neal and Poli Acosta, according to the Harris County Republican



The Houston GLBT Political Caucus PAC has endorsed council candidate Sue Lovell, left, and incumbent City Controller Annise Parker.

Party's Web site, are Republicans. Although the races are not partisan races, some candidates have known party affiliations.

In addition to her work on gay issues, which includes a term as president of the Gay Lesbian Political Caucus and co-founder of AIDS Foundation Houston, Lovell works for The Mills Corporation as director of a training and career assistance program. She previously worked for the State Comptroller's office in the Local Government Assistance Division.

Lovell, who sits on the Democratic



National Committee, has collected pages of endorsements in addition to her political caucus endorsement, including Harris County Young Democrats, State Reps. Garnet Coleman and Jessica Farrar; former congressman Ken Bentsen, and Katy Caldwell, Eleanor Tinsley and Frances "Sissy" Farenthold.

"I am not running for City Council to advance a political career," Lovell said. "I have no aspirations to higher office, except to coach a World Series Little League team."

Two other open seats have races with a

MORE INFO

Election Day

Tuesday, Nov. 8

Polls open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

On Election Day, voters must vote in the precinct where they are registered

Candidates endorsed by the Houston GLBT Political Caucus PAC:

Mayor: Bill White
 Controller: Annise Parker
 At-Large, Position 1: Peter Brown
 At-Large, Position 2: Sue Lovell
 District B: Felicia Galloway-Hall
 District C: Herman Litt
 District D: Ada Edwards
 District H: Adrian Garcia
 District I: Carol Alvarado

lot of candidates. In District C, which includes Meyerland, Westbury and Fondren Southwest, Democrats Mark Lee, Herman Litt and Ray Jones and Republicans Judy Siverson, George Hittner, Anne Clutterbuck and Brian Cweren are vying for the seat. The caucus has endorsed Litt. The seat was previously occupied by Councilman Marc Goldberg.

There are eight candidates running to replace Carol Galloway in District B, in northeast Houston. The caucus endorsement went to Felicia Galloway-Hall.

Alito split rulings on gay school harassment

SUPREME COURT, continued from Page 1

Gay rights attorneys warned that Alito's record since 1990 as a judge on the Philadelphia-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit shows that he would likely vote to scale back or possibly overturn key decisions that have advanced gay civil rights.

Gay rights attorneys and other legal experts said their concerns were based largely on information gleaned from Alito's opinions on abortion rights cases that did not directly touch on gay rights but indicated he holds "strict constructionist" views on privacy rights.

The constitutional concept of privacy rights was considered a key factor in the Supreme Court's 2003 decision of *Lawrence vs. Texas*, which overturned state sodomy laws, as well as the controversial abortion rights decision in *Roe vs. Wade*, in 1973.

Experts studying more than 800 written opinions involving Alito as an appeals court judge have so far found only two cases that involved gay-related issues, with Alito ruling in favor of gay rights in one and against in the other.

In 2000, Alito wrote an opinion striking down a gay-inclusive "anti-harassment" policy adopted by a school district in State College, Pa., which is home to Pennsylvania State University. A Christian conservative activist challenged the policy, saying it adversely affected his

school children, whom he said were compelled by their religion to criticize homosexuality as a sin.

In 2004, Alito issued an opinion reversing a federal judge's ruling from a lower court that required a student who had been severely bullied for being effeminate to attend a high school with the same students who had harassed him for years.

Both opinions were written on behalf of unanimous three-judge panels of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, based in Philadelphia. The split between the two school rulings by Alito — one striking down a broadly worded anti-harassment policy and the other protecting a student subjected to severe anti-gay harassment — suggest that while Alito is a conservative judge, he is not afraid to use the court's power to remedy a situation he views as unjust.

The anti-gay harassment policy that Alito struck down in 2000 banned harassment on the basis of "actual or perceived race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other personal characteristics." Harassment on the basis of sexual orientation extended to "negative name-calling and degrading behavior."

The policy was challenged by a member of a school board, whose two children attended schools there, who said their Christian faith would subject them to punishment under the policy.

A federal judge ruled against the lawsuit,



President Bush nominated Judge Samuel A. Alito to the U.S. Supreme Court on Monday. (Photo by Rudy K. Lawidjaja)

deciding that the school district's harassment policy went no further than federal laws against harassment, which is not protected free speech under the First Amendment.

A three-judge panel of the Third Circuit disagreed, and Alito wrote on their behalf that preventing discrimination in schools is a legitimate and compelling government interest, but the anti-

harassment policy was too broad, blocking even pure speech that happens to "offend" another student. Alito never touched on the plaintiffs' particular desire to discuss in school their religious teachings against homosexuality, but he did note that the policy specifically listed as harassment several types of speech that he considered "core" speech protected.

news

'Sex slave' may return to the prison he sued

Johnson's failed drug tests put him at risk

By ELIZABETH WEILL-GREENBERG

An arrest warrant was issued Wednesday for Roderick Keith Johnson, a former Texas gay inmate who claims he was bought and sold as a sex slave, after he failed to show up at a summons hearing, according to Mike Viesca, a spokesperson with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Law enforcement is searching for Johnson, he said.

Once Johnson is arrested, he will stay in the county jail while awaiting his parole revocation hearing, according to Viesca.

Johnson told the Blade in a telephone interview last week that if he has to return to prison, it would be like going into a jungle.

Officials said Johnson failed several drug tests, a violation of his parole, which

could result in drug treatment, continued supervision or having his parole revoked, according to his attorney, Jeff Monks of the ACLU National Prison Project.

According to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Johnson failed a drug test five times. When asked if Johnson would be placed in safekeeping if he is sent back to prison, Viesca said by e-mail: "It's up to the parole board to determine what kind of sanctions Johnson might face and, if so, for how long. Right now, it would be premature to discuss where Johnson might end up if he were sent back to the prison system."

Johnson claims he was sold from inmate to inmate as a sex slave and raped almost every day from September 2000 to April 2002 at the James V. Allred Prison Unit. He filed a federal lawsuit against six prison officials who he claims ignored his pleas for help and ridiculed him for being gay. Last month, a jury found all six prison officials not liable.

The TDCJ has maintained that Johnson is a liar and that officials did nothing wrong.

"[The] jury verdict dealt with one individual's allegations. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice recognizes that inmate sexual assault is a serious problem facing all correctional systems, and the agency remains committed to a zero tolerance policy," Brad Livingston, TDCJ's executive director said in a statement after the trial ended.



Roderick Keith Johnson has failed five drug tests since being released from prison, which is a violation of his parole. Another prison rape survivor said he too turned to drugs after his release to help ease the memory of the ordeal he experienced while in custody.

'Ridiculed,' not believed

But Johnson's attorney noted the prison transferred Johnson to safekeeping once the ACLU intervened. The TDCJ spokesperson did not respond to inquiries about why Johnson was transferred once the ACLU became involved.

"The fact that they made the transfer so quickly shows they knew exactly what the problem was," Monks said.

Johnson said that the officials' claims are baseless and illogical.

"Complaints are very rare," he said.

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MORE INFO

Stop Prisoner Rape
3325 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 340
Los Angeles, CA 90010
213-384-1400
www.spr.org



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news

AAA Club South won't treat partners as spouses

Gay couple launches protest after being denied associate membership

By DYANA BAGBY

Tom Payton of Athens has been a member of the AAA auto club since 1994. After he and his partner, Art Ordoqui, held their wedding in August on the campus of the University of Georgia, Payton wanted to include Ordoqui as an associate member on his AAA membership.

But the couple quickly learned that because their marriage is not recognized legally, AAA Club South does not consider them family. AAA Club South serves AAA members in Florida, Georgia, western Tennessee and Puerto Rico.

"Only spouses or dependent children up to the age of 21 (if in college to age 25) meet our criteria for associate membership," AAA Club South wrote to Payton in a letter dated Oct. 7. "This policy has been reviewed on several occasions over the years and we have determined that these are the appropriate guidelines for our membership discounts ...

"Your partner does not qualify as an

associate; however, we would gladly enroll him as a primary member," the letter said.

A primary AAA membership costs \$60 a year while an associate member can be added to the primary member's account for \$30 a year.

AAA Club South defines spouse as a legal term according to Georgia law, according to a company spokesperson.

"We are not in the position to bypass state law," said Greg Laskoski, spokesperson for AAA Club South.

A Georgia law passed in 1996 specifically defines marriage as only between a man and a woman, and refuses to recognize gay marriages performed in other states. Last November, voters overwhelmingly approved an amendment adding the definition to the state constitution.

"We've gotten complaints before and all of these are being taken into consideration. This policy is not intended to discriminate," Laskoski said.

Lagging behind?

Payton launched a Web site, www.stopaaasouth.com, to try to change the auto club's policies relating to gay families.

"This is a grassroots effort and I've been receiving some feedback from people upset with the policy. We'll see what happens," Payton said.

Other AAA clubs take different approaches. The AAA Club of Southern California does not limit associate members to just a "spouse" but also may include "another adult in your household."

Laskoski of AAA Club South said he was unfamiliar with the policies at other AAA clubs.

"The policy we have in effect is longstanding," he said. "It really speaks for itself. It does not allow for anything else



Art Ordoqui and Tom Payton (right) was turned down when he attempted to enroll his partner, Art Ordoqui, as an associate member on his AAA auto club plan.

but a spouse [as an associate member]."

Payton's AAA membership expires Nov. 1 and he said he has informed the company he will not renew it. Instead, he and Ordoqui signed up with the Auto Club.

"They have a policy specifically welcoming LGBT households for one member rate," Payton said.

The cards already arrived with both names listed as spouses, he said.

Payton said visitors to his Web site have also informed him of the Better World Club motor club that specifically welcomes domestic partners. According to its Web site, household memberships cover "up to four family members includ-

ing primary member, spouse or domestic partner, children of the individual member who are between the ages of 16-25, are a licensed driver and have the same principle residence as the individual member."

The GE Motor Club also allows primary members to add a second person — whether a spouse or domestic partner or roommate — at no extra charge, according to a spokesperson for GE Consumer Finance.

GE Consumer Finance owns GE Motor Club as well as BP Motor Club, AARP Motoring Plan and Signatures Nationwide Auto Club. All of the clubs offer the same two-for-one associate membership plan.

MORE INFO

AAA Club South
President Thomas E. O'Brien
1515 North Westshore Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33607
813-289-1467
www.aaasouth.com

Stop AAA Club South
www.stopaaasouth.com

Failed suit highlighted prison rape

PRISONER, continued from Page 5

"You have to sneak behind attackers' backs in order to report this to authorities. By the time you get to authorities, they may not believe what you say. There are so many barriers you have to go through. It's like climbing a mountain. There's also bias from prison officials [against gay inmates.]"

Johnson said he was ridiculed after he complained to officials.

"I wasn't believed. I was supposed to be a manipulator and trying to get close to lovers," he said.

Johnson said violence is a normal part of life for gay inmates at Allred. Gangs consider gay inmates women who don't have any rights, he said. Exacerbating the problem is that the guards acquiesce to the gangs, in part because those inmates help run the prison, he added.

If gangs are beating up on vulnerable inmates, they don't have to worry about the gangs attacking guards, Monks said.

While disappointed, Johnson said his suit went further than he expected, though it hit roadblocks from the start.

Monks said several jurors admitted that they thought homosexuality was a sin during jury selection.

"If we had kept off everyone [who believed that], I don't think we would have had a jury," he said.

Johnson said the verdict has exacerbated his severe depression. He has also suffered from a drug problem for years.

"My response to the verdict, I was stunned," he said. "I just felt like the world was over for me. ... Not only did those six officials not care, no one actually cared. Who do we reach out for?"

He continued: "When you've gone through a traumatic experience it's tough to live day to day. Most people would commit suicide."

While in prison, Johnson said he survived with "lots of prayer" and believing that, "My life was worth more than that."

Johnson has been trying to help other survivors of prison rape since his release. He's creating a project in Texas to help offenders who have been sexually assaulted reenter society once they're released.

T.J. Parsell, 45, a gay board member at Stop Prisoner Rape, said he wasn't surprised by Johnson's drug problems or depression. Parsell said he battled drug and alcohol addiction after he was released from a Michigan prison, where he said he was repeatedly raped.

When Parsell was 17, he robbed a Michigan photo-mat with a toy gun of \$50. He was sent to an adult prison for four and a half years.

"On my first day in general population, [inmates] spiked my drink and gang raped me," he said. "They flipped a coin to see

who would own me."

The inmate who owned him dictated his quality of life, he said.

Parsell never complained to guards. "Snitches are killed in prison," he said. "My goal was to get out alive."

While claiming the verdict in Johnson's case is disappointing, Parsell said he hopes the trial will show that officials can be held accountable in the courtroom, as well as in the local and national media, which covered the case extensively.

"It opens up the risk and vulnerability of the state and corrections officials when someone comes forward," he said. "If one comes forward it gives others the courage to do the same."

Johnson agrees that his suit has helped to put gay prisoners' rights in the newspapers and on gay rights groups' radar.

"Just like we're rallying around gay marriage," he said, "I think this is one of those things we have to throw into the struggle."

national news briefs

Alaska Supreme Court rejects ban on gay benefits

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Gay rights advocates claimed a major victory after the state Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional to deny benefits to same-sex partners of public employees. In overturning a lower court ruling, the state high court said last week that barring benefits for state and city employees' same-sex partners violates the Alaska constitution's equal protection clause. The ruling could influence courts in other states, said Michael Macleod-Ball, director of the Alaska American Civil Liberties Union. Alaska was one of the first states to pass a constitutional ban on gay marriage, in response to a ruling by the same court casting doubt on the exclusion of gay couples from marriage laws. Anchorage city attorney Fred Boness said city officials would not appeal the decision. But Republican Gov. Frank Murkowski said he was "outraged" by the ruling and directed the attorney general's office to determine the best way to overturn it, said his spokesperson, Becky Hultberg. The high court said the disputed benefit plans would stand until a remedy is reached in future court hearings.



Alaska Gov. Frank Murkowski, a Republican, said he is 'outraged' by last week's state Supreme Court ruling in favor of benefits for gay partners of public workers and will attempt to overturn the move. (Photo by Al Grillo/AP)

N.Y. court upholds ban on gay unions by mayor

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — A state appeals court unanimously upheld a ruling barring a village mayor from performing same-sex marriages, saying he acted beyond his authority when he presided over two dozen such ceremonies last year. A lawyer for Mayor Jason West promised to appeal to the state's highest court, the Court of Appeals. The ruling last week by a five-judge panel of the state Supreme Court's Appellate Division upheld a lower-court ruling preventing West and other New Paltz officials from performing marriage ceremonies for couples without licenses. A village board member sued after West presided over the same-sex marriages in February 2004. West, a Green Party member, has maintained he was upholding the gay couples' constitutional rights to equal protection — and thus his oath of office — by allowing them to wed. The higher court said West "clearly exceeded his role as mayor. West robed himself with judicial powers and declared the marriage laws of this state unconstitutional," Justice John Lahtinen wrote.

Gay candidate to run for Ark. lieutenant governor

LITTLE ROCK (AP) — An openly gay political consultant from Warren formally announced his Democratic candidacy for lieutenant governor last week. Drew Pritt, 30, said he favors gay rights and a woman's right to choose to have an abortion. "At all times we must protect and defend all civil liberties, for every person regardless of race, creed, sex, physical handicap and, yes, even sexual orientation, because that's who we are as a people, as a nation and most of all, that is who we are as Democrats," Pritt said in announcing his candidacy in the state Capitol rotunda. The lieutenant governor's primary responsibility is to preside over the state Senate. Three other Democrats and a trio of Republicans have announced they will run in the race to succeed Republican Lt. Gov. Win Rockefeller.

Wash. university under fire for allowing anti-gay speaker

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Gonzaga University, which has rejected recent attempts to bring a Planned Parenthood speaker and "The Vagina Monologues" to the school, is under fire for the campus appearance of a conservative who contends homosexuality is a matter of choice. The College Republicans brought in Dr. John Diggs for a lecture titled "The Medical Effects of Homo-Sex." Some students criticized the lecture in the student newspaper, the Bulletin, as anti-gay and promoting stereotypes. Diggs' appearance last week was intended to foster open debate and inquiry, said Daniel Brutocao, president of the Gonzaga chapter of College Republicans. The speaker focused on gay promiscuity and asserted that, "homosexuality is the result of a bad relationship with one's same-sex parent," said Rod Aminian, president of a student gay group.

Ohio groups allegedly hid money for campaigns against gay rights

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Two Cincinnati attorneys say several organizations that pushed for the state's ban on gay marriages hid more than \$2 million in campaign contributions. They said they would file a complaint with the Ohio Elections Commission. The complaint cites last year's campaign for a gay marriage ban and the battle in Cincinnati over repeal of an ordinance that prohibited passage of a gay rights law. Filing the complaint are former Cincinnati Mayor Bobbie Sterne and Gary Wright, chair of Equality Cincinnati, the successor to the group that led the successful repeal effort. Named in the complaint are Cincinnati-based Citizens for Community Values and its president; officers of Equal Rights, No Special Rights, and Focus on the Family, of Colorado Springs, Colo. The complaint claims that only \$13,000 of \$2.4 million spent by the groups was disclosed on required campaign finance reports.

From staff and wire reports

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religion news

Conservative Anglicans blast North American clerics

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — Conservative Anglican clerics from Africa, Asia and Latin America accused North American priests Monday of not doing enough to stop support for same-sex marriages and gay priests, which threatens to split the church. Some 120 priests and followers from the so-called Global South also pressed for an "Anglican Covenant" to provide clearer rules to govern the church. The increasingly powerful conservative bloc, representing a majority of the Anglican Communion's 77 million followers worldwide, criticized liberal priests in the U.S. and Canada for causing a crisis by supporting gay priests and allowing blessings for same-sex couples. The Global South criticized the Anglican Church in Canada and the U.S. Episcopal Church, as Anglican Communion members are called in America, for showing no sign of being "willing to turn back from their innovations," according to a document released by the conference Monday. So contentious was the topic of gay priests and same-sex unions that the leader of the Anglican Communion, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, traveled to Egypt to speak during the conference and call for unity within the church and to calm dissent led by powerful Nigerian Archbishop Peter Akinola.



Conservative Anglicans led by Nigerian Archbishop Peter Akinola are criticizing North Americans Anglicans for not doing enough on gay issues. (Photo by Richard Drew/AP)

Catholic colleges stage conference on gay issues

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — More than 40 Catholic colleges were represented on Saturday at a conference that was billed as the nation's first on how gays fit in at universities guided by a faith that says their sexual orientation is wrong. But rather than lamenting the Vatican's stand on homosexuality, the two-day "Out There" conference at Santa Clara University showed that plenty of gay-related scholarship and student activities are going on in Catholic higher education. "It's important and interesting to know there are Catholic universities that have offices and staff people specifically geared toward LGBT concerns," said co-organizer Linda Garber. "There are a lot of people out there who are teaching [LGBT] studies without a national professional organization, a newsletter or anything." The conference drew about 150 people, most of them faculty and administrators who deal with gay subjects or students.

Catholic university demotes dean critical of gay stance

SOUTH ORANGE, N.J. (AP) — A gay associate dean at Seton Hall University, a Roman Catholic institution, has been demoted after criticizing the church's position on homosexuality, according to published reports. A letter written by W. King Mott, 44, who has been an associate dean at the school for three years, was published Oct. 19 in the Star-Ledger of Newark. Mott, who is gay and lives with his partner, wrote that the Catholic Church is unfairly attacking gay men and making them scapegoats for the church's priest sex abuse scandal. The following day, the school's dean asked Mott to step down, saying he had confused his position with the university's by including his title in the letter, a university spokesperson told the Star-Ledger.

Duquesne student defiant after calling gays 'subhuman'

PITTSBURGH (AP) — A Duquesne University sophomore said he would risk being expelled for expressing his view that homosexuality is "subhuman" rather than write a 10-page essay the university has called for as punishment. Ryan Miner, 19, of Hagerstown, Md., was sanctioned by the university for posting his view on an online forum not related to the university. He opposed an effort by other students to form a Gay-Straight Alliance group, an issue being debated by the Catholic university. "I believe as a student that my First Amendment rights in the Constitution were subverted and attacked," said Miner, who is Catholic. After student complaints about Miner's posting, the office of judicial affairs found Miner guilty of violating the University Code, which prohibits harassment based on, among other factors, sexual orientation.

Ky. minister claims he was fired by state for opposing gay marriage ban

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — A Unitarian minister filed suit last week against the Kentucky Farm Bureau, claiming the agency fired him for speaking publicly against a state constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. Rev. Todd Eklof, a minister at Clifton Unitarian Church in Louisville, claims in the suit that the Farm Bureau dismissed him from his job as a video producer two months after he stood before his congregation and announced he would perform no marriages of any kind until gay marriage is legalized. A Farm Bureau spokesperson said Eklof was reassigned because his comments about gay marriage violated a policy against taking "a high profile position on a public issue."

From staff and wire reports

national news

Gay denomination installs new leader

MCC in trademark flap with anti-gay group

By KATHERINE VOLIN

Rev. Nancy L. Wilson was installed as the new leader of the predominantly gay Metropolitan Community Churches on Oct. 29, just in time to face a complaint brought by a conservative religious group.

Lawyers for Focus on the Family contacted Wilson on Oct. 28 to inform her that the title of MCC's new 10-year ministry initiative, Focus on the Human Family, infringed on the anti-gay group's trademarked name, Wilson said during the sermon at her installation ceremony.

"They think that people are going to be confused between MCC's Focus on the Human Family, and their work, Focus on the Family," Wilson, 55, said during the sermon before the crowd of nearly 1,200 at Washington's National Cathedral. "MCC's Focus on the Human Family is going to be reaching out to women and children and adults, gays and lesbians, transgenders and bisexuals ... [and] our seniors, our families with children that are often not considered to be real families by Focus on the Family. We don't think anyone will be confused."

MCC has changed the name of its initiative to "Unfinished World, Unfinished Calling." Wilson also mentioned that the Metropolitan Community Church of Boston, where she began her career with MCC as associate pastor in 1972, was holding a prayer vigil outside Love Won Out, an "ex-gay" conference held by Focus on the Family, on the same day she was installed.

Focus on the Family declined comment.

National Cathedral was a particularly significant place for MCC to install Wilson, church officials said, because Rev. Troy Perry, MCC's first leader, was barred from a ceremony there 30 years ago.

"We've come a long way since that day," Wilson said.

Rev. Susan Thistlethwaite, president of the Chicago Theological Seminary, said that Wilson's installation showed that MCC would continue on.

"It is testimony to the fact that the spirit of God simply will not be denied," Thistlethwaite said.

Thistlethwaite also announced that, in partnership with MCC and the United Church of Christ, Chicago Theological Seminary plans to open a lesbian and gay religious study center in January.

Although she grew up in the Methodist Church, Wilson's ambitions extended beyond what her religious background allowed for lesbians.

"I knew I wanted to be a minister since I



Rev. Nancy Wilson preaches during her installation as moderator of the predominately gay Metropolitan Community Church. Wilson has served with the church since 1972. (Photo by Rudy K. Lawidjaja)

was 13," Wilson told the Blade in September. "And I didn't want to be in the closet."

When she heard Larry Bernier, then pastor of MCC-Boston, on the radio during her third week of seminary school at Boston University School of Theology in 1972, she called him. He made her associate pastor while she was still in seminary. Wilson was elected a member of the church's board of elders in 1976, a post she has held since.

Wilson has been with her partner, Paula Schoenwether, for 28 years this month. The two were married in Massachusetts last year, and when they returned to their home in Florida, they sued the state for the right to marry there.

Woman leaders rare

Wilson is one of very few women to lead a Christian denomination in the United States. Growing up, Wilson said she had no female pastoral examples.

"The first woman in a clerical collar I saw was myself in a mirror," Wilson said. Despite her lack of role models, Wilson said that MCC is accommodating for female leaders.

"I think at MCC there's a lot of support for women leadership because we have a lot of women leadership," Wilson said. "I think in the GLBT movement, there are a lot of women heading organizations."

"We've changed our structure so that it will be more global and more equitable in many ways," Wilson said. "We now have leadership positions worldwide instead of just North America."

out in houston

(Photos by Dalton DeHart)



Steve Carbone, center, with The Assistance Fund receives a check for \$6,206 from a group of Misfits during their Locker Room Lockdown.



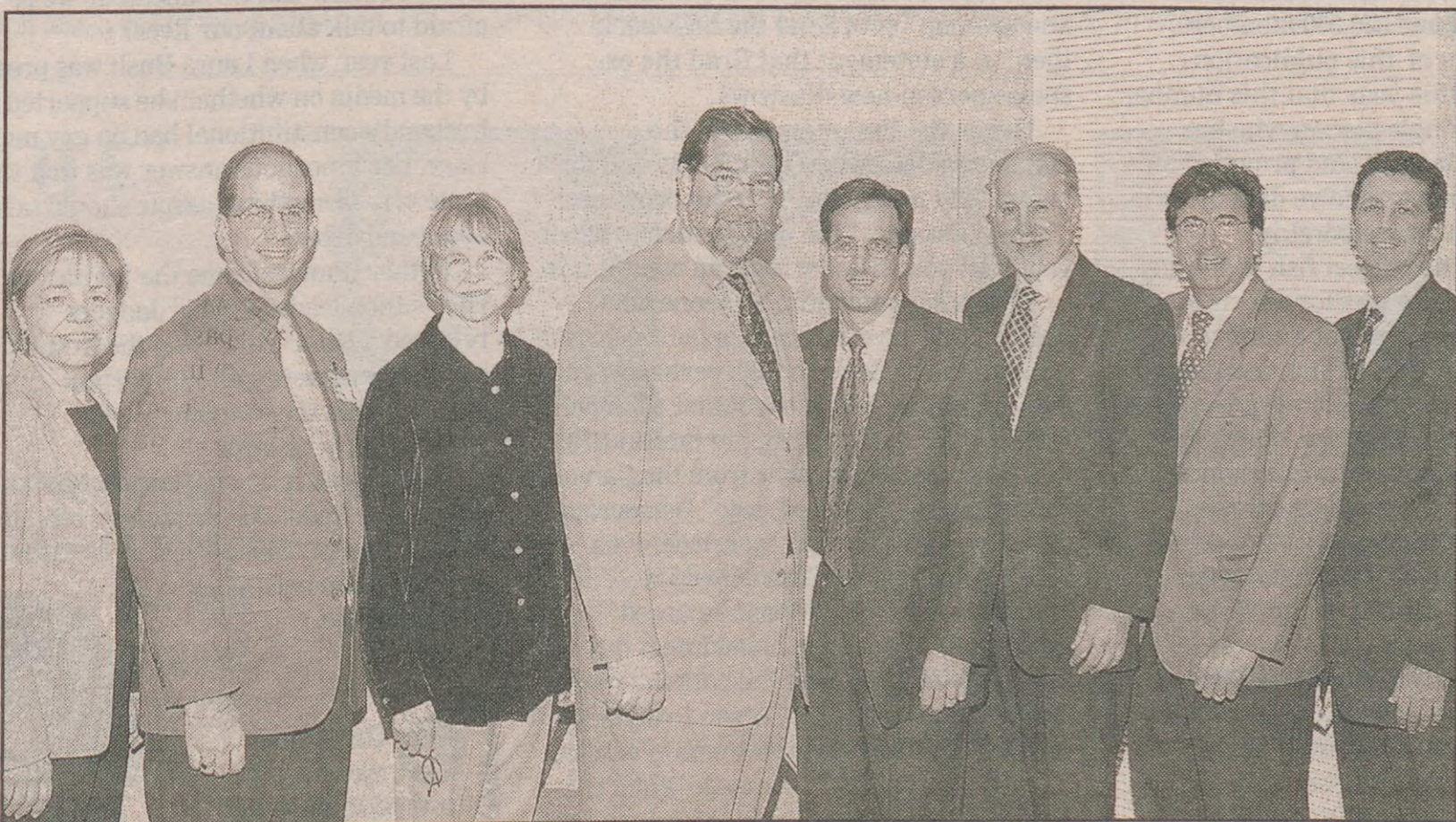
The Houston Chapter of the Log Cabin Republicans recently met for a fund-raiser to help raise money towards the campaign to defeat Proposition 2. Pictured are Dr. Dick Evans, Shari Goldsberry and President Jeff Dorrell.



Festival chairwoman Jay Poudrette, Shirley Knight and Sally Andrews enjoy the Houston Women's Festival, an event packed with entertainment.



"Isis" and "Anubis" were the two overall winners at Pacific Street's recently held Halloween Block Party.



Ministers recently came out to attend a forum at Congregation Beth Israel Church to show their opposition to Proposition 2.



Imaginations and creativity ran wild at the 4th Annual Bewitched Ball, a benefit that helps raise money for local AIDS charities.

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Photographers DALTON DEHART, KIMBERLY THOMPSON

Art Director JAMES NEAL

Webmaster ARAM VARTIAN

SALES & ADMINISTRATION

Sales Director

CARRIE FISHER

cfisher@window-media.com

Classified Sales / Office Administrator

JOHNNY HOOKS

jhooks@houstonvoice.com

National Advertising Representative

Rivendell Media • 212-242-6863



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Forum

HOUSTON VOICE

NOVEMBER 4, 2005

PAGE 10

editorial

Why we're not winning (faster)

The gay generals in the Culture War need to study the tactics of our opponents and put aside the timidity that has held back our cause.

By CHRIS CRAIN

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW why, more than 35 years since Stonewall, gay and lesbian Americans still lack basic federal civil rights protections, the answers are on both sides of the Culture War.

As effective as anti-gay conservatives are in having their way in Washington, gay rights activists are ineffective.

Just this past week, the right wing bludgeoned their closest friends in the White House and Congress, forcing the withdrawal of Harriet Miers. She was replaced by Samuel Alito, who has a record far more conservative than does Miers or Sandra Day O'Connor, the woman he would replace on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Why can't our side be more like theirs? Look no further than the Human Rights Campaign, the country's biggest gay rights group, with an annual budget of \$31 million and a staff of almost 150.

HRC claims some 650,000 members, although readers of this publication learned earlier this year that this number includes every single person who has ever donated at least \$1 and provided an address, minus a few who've died or written to cancel their membership.

Still, HRC is the biggest fish in the gay pond and has led the way for efforts to win federal gay rights laws. But a solid quarter century after HRC's founding, there's still no federal legislation to protect gay Americans in the workplace, housing or public accommodations, or to enhance punishment for anti-gay hate crimes.

This despite strong public support in the polls and — at various times over those 25 years — control of the White House and both houses of Congress in supposedly friendly Democratic hands. Instead, HRC has two black marks on its record: "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and the Defense of Marriage Act, both signed into law by Bill Clinton, an HRC endorsee.

For years under Elizabeth Birch, HRC focused far too much on growing the organi-

zation and not enough on its mission, including pumping millions of scarce gay activism dollars into purchasing and renovating a snazzy headquarters in Washington, D.C.

WHEN HRC DOES GET AROUND TO actual lobbying, it is far too timid: too timid in pressuring Democrats and moderate Republicans and too timid in making our case to the American public.

The same week when aggressive conservatives were stuffing the Supreme Court nominee of a conservative president, here's what we heard out of HRC.

The Blade reported last week that HRC had hired as its media relations director Brad Luna, the former spokesperson for a Democratic congressman who aggressively supported amending the U.S.

Constitution to ban gay marriage. When then-Congressman Brad Carson, Luna's boss, voted for the marriage ban, he even issued a press release bragging about it.

"As a life-long Southern Baptist, I firmly believe that marriage must remain a consecrated union between one man and one woman," said Brad the boss back then, in a statement that Brad the spokesperson now disavows.

"I was the first member of the Oklahoma delegation to publicly call for a ban on gay marriage," Carson crowed.

Brad Carson — the man to turn to when you want your bigotry, and you want it now.

That HRC would hire someone who helped craft the message of a politician like Carson was curious, though perhaps a good way to learn how best to counter such political cowardice. Except that in typical HRC fashion, Luna's take-away from the Carson campaign was that "red state" Democrats deserve a "pass" on gay marriage, even amending our Constitution to do it.

Luna told the Blade that he urged Carson not to back the amendment but knew instinctively that the political reality in Oklahoma required Carson to distance himself from gay rights to remain viable.

Will that be HRC's message when the marriage amendment comes back up for a vote? What about the more than 30 Democrats from conservative "red states"

who voted against the gay marriage ban? "Distancing himself from gay rights"? Carson would need a telescope to even see HRC's congressional scorecard, where he scored a whopping 11 out of 100, refusing to back employment protection, hate crime legislation or even broader federal support for HIV treatment.

With a lobbying strategy like that, who needs opponents? IF SEN. SAM BROWNBACK HAS HIS WAY, "red state" Democrats will be forced to vote again soon on a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. The Kansas Republican, with his eye on a White House run in '08, held hearings on the measure last week.

Notice how the aggressive lobbying of the right gave Brownback the courage to buck the political middle (for an unpopular constitutional amendment) in a way no Democrat with national aspirations ever does.

HRC helped recruit friendly witnesses to testify at the Senate marriage hearing but made the strategic decision not to publicize the hearing. The gay group's chief legislative strategist, Christopher Labonte, said afterward HRC had decided that public attention to the issue would work to the advantage of the amendment's supporters.

Does HRC really believe conservatives have the better argument on gay marriage? Can anyone imagine Concerned Women for America acting with such timidity?

In fact, HRC has tried for years to change the subject when presented the opportunity to talk about gay marriage. In state after state facing ballot measures banning gays from marrying, HRC's strategy has been to avoid discussing gay marriage itself and instead argue that constitutions shouldn't be amended to discriminate.

The resulting string of defeats — by remarkably similar margins, whatever the year or the state's political leanings — has still not convinced HRC to modify its strategy. The group's strategists will claim that the public needs to be educated first on the issue, but how can we educate if we're afraid to talk about our lives?

Last year, when Laura Bush was pressed by the media on whether she supported her husband's constitutional ban on gay marriage, her innocuous answer was that the issue was "something people should talk about and debate."

Rather than welcome the invitation, HRC's then-leader Cheryl Jacques released a letter criticizing the first lady, saying there were more important issues — like the economy! — for Americans to discuss.

If last week is any indication, HRC under new leader Joe Solmonese remains like the lion in "The Wizard of Oz," friendly enough but in need of some courage.

@ Chris Crain is executive editor for Window Media and can be reached at ccrain@window-media.com



viewpoint CRAIG WASHINGTON



I'm both overjoyed and pissed off at the media spectacle surrounding the coming out of the WNBA's top player.

Sheryl Swoopes' act of defiance

BY NOW, YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A WNBA fan or follow sports to know the name Sheryl Swoopes, the star forward with the Houston Comets who came out in the current issue of ESPN, The Magazine.

As the most prominent athlete to have ever come out while still in her prime, Swoopes set a historic precedent in a number of ways with her pronouncement.

She is also the first major black sports figure of either sex to speak openly about their homosexuality and the first black lesbian whose coming out has garnered this level of attention. As with any noble act of defiance, her declaration reveals far more about our society than it does her.

I find it hard to feel anything simple or pure about this story beyond my sheer admiration for this champion and her partner, Alisa Scott. As an angry black homosexual in America, I feel like I should be dancing in the streets and waving a Swoopes flag in every sports bar in the country.

BUT I HAVEN'T GOTTEN THERE YET AND don't know if I ever will. I've grown impatient with age and find it rather absurd that in 2005, this is even newsworthy, much less a cause for celebration. It's

a national embarrassment that it is and substantiates the banality of bigotry.

I'm both overjoyed and pissed off that this is such a big deal. I have not been quite so divided since Oscar night 2002, when Halle Berry and Denzel Washington took the high honors so long denied their predecessors and their peers.

Berry's tearful exuberance was counterbalanced by Washington's elegant nonchalance, but my own elation was diluted. I just couldn't ignore the deplorable history that made their victories so historic in the first place.

WNBA President Donna Oreander and Comets coach Van Chancellor publicly applauded Swoopes. While their support may be truly heartfelt, it is also in their financial interest to come out cheering for their unrivaled top draw.

Let's not forget this is the same WNBA that marketed Swoopes while pregnant and married to help "heterosexualize" its image. Now many heterosexuals are criticizing Swoopes for inappropriately sharing her "personal life."

Her ex-husband released a statement admonishing the public to remember their 8-year-old son will undoubtedly receive attention because of "his mother's pronouncement regarding her lifestyle." A friend told me that one popular black radio mogul questioned whether



Swoopes should still be considered an appropriate role model for young black girls.

IN ANOTHER TIME NOT SO LONG AGO, heterosexuals would have come for Swoopes en masse like the torch-bearing villagers in "Frankenstein." It may seem a sign of progress that many of today's homophobes mask their hostility by minimizing ("everybody knew, so why did she bother?") or exaggerating ("how many millions of young WNBA fans will turn gay this week?") the impact of gay celebrities coming out.

Bigots will try to appear "tolerant" in this way if only to forestall the terrifying realization that, as Cornell West suggests, underneath our dresses and our business suits, we are all funky creatures.

If heterosexuals are so concerned about the attention that Swoopes' son will receive, they have an opportunity to cultivate a society in which he will be affirmed as the for-

tunate child of a courageous, loving mother.

Those who challenge her legitimacy as a role model might reflect on the honesty and dignity she displays, which places her head and shoulders above countless narcissistic hetero male athletes who are worshipped despite their dirty drawers.

In the midst of the blitz, we may wonder if Swoopes' coming out will make a difference to a 14-year-old black lesbian in the ghetto who does not possess a multi-million dollar talent for which her "lifestyle" might be pardoned. I have faith that it will; that in some indirect and immeasurable way, it must.

"I wish as a society, as a world, that this wouldn't be an issue anymore," Swoopes told an interviewer. "Unfortunately, it is."

I couldn't have said it any better.

@ Craig Washington is an activist and writer who lives in Atlanta and can be contacted at www.craigwerks.com.

THE

Q

Are you a gay Astros fan? If so, how do you feel about the team making it to the World Series?



The Astros are my favorite team in any sport, and I wondered if my heart was going to survive the moment when they lost the World Series to the Chicago White Sox.

JOHN NECHMAN, 40
Houston
Attorney



I was so thrilled for the Astros, especially this team with those players. They deserved the National League Championship Series.

SALLY HUFFER, 40
Houston
Community Projects Specialist



Yes, I am a gay Astros fan. The Astros have always been my boys of summer and now they will forever be my boys of fall. I am so proud of them.

BARBARA ERVIN, 47
Houston
Resource development
coordinator



I feel terrific about the team making it to the World Series. With the election looming up, it is a break from the feelings of frustration.

LEE JERONIMO, over 21
Houston
Attorney



I have been an Astros fan my entire life. To have had a World Series in Texas is amazing and to have lived in Houston during the game made it the most amazing sporting event I ever seen.

GINA GILSTRAP, 35
Lubbock
Law clerk

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on the record

"This was one of the most misleading and dangerous shows I've ever seen on TV. Where is GLAAD when needed? Off luring big stars to their next self-congratulatory awards show and fawning over 'Will & Grace' and 'Queer Eye for the Straight Guy.' They should demand satisfaction from NBC!"

Lesbian gossip columnist Liz Smith on a recent episode of NBC's "Law & Order: SVU" about a "superstrain" of AIDS and the murders of gay men who have it (New York Post, Nov. 1)

"The 'Law & Order' franchise has long made gays and lesbians the victims or villains. In this episode, they managed to do both with a story based on an untruth about a HIV 'supervirus.'"

Damon Romine, entertainment media director of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, calling on GLAAD supporters to protest the "Law & Order" episode (www.GLAAD.org)



"If it's a choice between serving in the ordained ministry with my credentials intact, and serving as an 'out' lesbian person acknowledging the most important relationship in my life and not having those credentials, I'll take being out."

Irene "Beth" Stroud, after being defrocked by the United Methodist Church for announcing her lesbian relationship during a sermon (Washington Post, Nov. 1)



"I'm the black sheep in the family. My folks are conservative Republicans. I grew up in New Hampshire, a big Irish-Catholic family. My folks are pretty conservative. They go to mass every day. So, I don't know what was harder for them — finding out I was gay or I was a Democrat."

Sean Patrick Maloney, a former top aide to President Bill Clinton who is seeking the Democratic nomination for New York state attorney general (Associated Press, Oct. 30)

"The talk about the WNBA being full of lesbians is not true. There are as many straight women in the league as there are gay. What really irritates me is when people talk about football, baseball and the NBA, you don't hear all of this talk about the gay guys playing. But when you talk about the WNBA, then it becomes an issue."

WNBA most valuable player Sheryl Swoopes, in an interview acknowledging she's a lesbian and involved with a former WNBA coach (ESPN The Magazine, Oct. 26)

"Uh, Earth to Sheryl — it irritates the gay guys in football, baseball and the NBA a helluva lot more than you not to hear all of this talk about the gay guys playing. I and every other gay guy in sports live every day with the fact that it's OK to be a lesbian in sports but not a gay guy."

An anonymous Division I college sports administrator, who said he's gay but refused to be named because he fears for his job (ESPN.com, Oct. 30)

"I have absolutely nothing to do with it. I didn't ask them to come and do this, and they're doing it on their own — not with my approval."

Texas Rep. Warren Chisum, who is leading the effort to amend the Texas constitution to ban gay marriage, on an Austin rally by the Ku Klux Klan supporting the amendment (Houston Chronicle, Oct. 30)



"I am sure a Klan rally was one of the last things that Chisum wanted before Election Day. But when you play footsie with prejudice, you risk stepping into something disgusting."

Houston Chronicle columnist Clay Robison (Houston Chronicle, Oct. 30)

"The [Roman Catholic Church's] teaching against homosexuality is blasphemy. God created gay people, so who is anyone else to say you should not be gay?"

Singer Sinead O'Connor (U.K. Independent, Oct. 2)

eclipse

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Living color
Gay cartoon characters
tie the knot on show.
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NOVEMBER 4, 2005

KINGS of the stage

PERFORMERS OF 'NEWER SUBCULTURE'
HOPE TO CREATE A SCENE IN HOUSTON

By ELLA TYLER



Club Eve will have a full house of drag kings this weekend, as members of the Austin Dragsters, a collaboration of the city's three drag king troupes, make a stop in Houston to strut their stuff.

Emily Steinberg, know as Reggie Phillips while performing, produced the Houston show and promises "an action-packed, hour and a half show that will be sure to please even the most inexperienced of audience members."

The skits will include a drag interpretation of "Mrs. Robinson"; a 1970s glam-rock tribute called "The Whole Shebang"; an exploration of what it means to be a space cowboy in "Space Walk"; and a rendition of the music star Jonny McGovern, the "Gay Pimp," Steinberg says. A surprise ending number called "Banana Split" concludes the ending, she says.

Houstonian Jessica Mays and several other local performers will take the stage to perform "Hair" from the 1960s musical of the same name. This will be Mays' first public performance. She wrestled with finding the perfect name on stage.

"I've been trying out different drag names, but since I'm going to perform, I've had to settle on one, so I've chosen Pedro Asty—it's from the song in 'Hair' called 'Sodomy,'" Mays says. "I heard it and thought that sounds like a name with possibilities."

"We will definitely be the amateur act of the evening, but we wanted to show that you don't have to be a professional to be a drag king."

Houston drag king scene

Mays thinks the stars are properly aligned for the emergence of a local drag king scene in Houston like the one that has taken off in Austin.

"I think Saturday's show is going to really ignite something here," she says. "Austin has some really amazing and committed folks."

"They are very established, not just in Austin, but internationally. The talent and enthusiasm and commitment coming to Houston, even if only for a night, is going to ignite an amateur energy here that I hope will develop into something."

"The 8th Annual International Drag King Community Extravaganza will be in Austin next year, and that gives us something to work toward," Mays says.

Mays' excursion into drag king culture has been



Hunter Down, Buck Wilder, Trevor N. Deavor, Eaton Johnson, Junior, Caesar Now and Thom Phoolery prepare to perform in Winnipeg, Canada at a Drag King competition. (Photo by Shanti Carter)

abetted by trips to Austin. She became interested in the idea of drag kings after watching a film she saw at the Gay & Lesbian Film Festival several years ago.

"After that, I'd go to shows that the court put on and wondered where king culture was here. I had a friend in Austin who performed with Kings 'n Things, and I'd go to Austin to see shows and meet people," Mays says.

"The infrastructure and support to maintain an amateur night in Houston hasn't yet gotten off the ground, either due to poor publicity or lack of leadership," she says. "There were few shows in 2001, and

Please see **DRAG KINGS** on Page 19

i MORE INFO

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FLASH-ION SHOW: Nightlife events feature men who might appear to be naked. Page 14

GAY JUDGE: Edwin Cameron, gay HIV-positive judge releases new book. Page 17

nitelife JOHNNY HOOKS



Depeche Mode plays Toyota Center, men strut in flesh-colored underwear, and a new bar opens in the neighborhood.

Cool Houston nights

WELCOME BACK TO HOVO ON THE Go-Go, your only weekly column devoted to what's happening in and around Houston's gay and lesbian scene. It's simply gorgeous outside and this week is packed with events that will keep you jumping to and fro in those sweaters and leathers that have been packed away all year.

DJ CHRIS ALLEN HAS BEEN SENDING out e-vites for months about Monday's **Depeche Mode** show at **Toyota Center**. So Friday, Nov. 4, he's celebrating at **Guava Lamp** with a release party for their new album "Playing The Angel." Stop in for free albums, stickers, posters and samplers. One lucky attendee will win a free pair of tickets to the show. With tickets starting at \$50 that's reason for a black celebration! The tickets will be given away at 1 a.m., 570 Waugh Drive at D'Amico. 713-524-3359

"IT'S A FLASH-ION SHOW, NOT A fashion show!" That's from Sk'n designer

and founder **Earnest Diaz**. Diaz will host a show for his new line of flesh-toned undergarments, **Sk'n**, on Saturday, Nov. 5, at **Meteor**, 2306 Genesee starting at 6 p.m. The event will include a flash-ion (fashion) show featuring Sk'n U-men **Bryan Johnson**, **Jeremy Barker** and **Joseph Joel**.

Sk'n features four collections referred to as classic, Mediterranean, pipeline and lounge, and all are currently available online at www.earnestdiaz.com.

SUNDAY WILL CERTAINLY KEEP YOU on your toes with two big parties. Start off with the **Bayou City Boy's Club** annual **Gospel Brunch**.

This year's brunch will be held Sunday, Nov. 6, at the beautiful and historic **Rice Lofts** in downtown from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Tickets for this fabulous fete are \$50 and include a delicious buffet, bottomless mimosas and three blissful hours of unending southern gospel music. The best part? All proceeds from the event

will directly benefit local AIDS charities. Order tickets at www.bcbc.info.

THEN SUNDAY NIGHT, STOP INTO THE new Montrose hot spot, **The Flat**.

The Flat is **Ziggy Morrow's** new bar and lounge located at 1701 **Commonwealth**, on the curve near West Gray. There you'll witness **DJ Alexander East** making his second visit to Houston. East brings a truly unique spin to his sets: he sings while spinning! He's played various venues from Japan to San Francisco with his electro-dark house sound. His smooth vocals, sung over records, will ignite an evening full of infectious energy. For more information, visit www.barflat.com or call 713-521-FLAT.

AFTER YOU VOTE ON TUESDAY, NOV. 8, join the **Houston Equal Rights Alliance** and **No Nonsense in November**, along with many volunteers, who have worked to defeat Proposition 2, the proposed amendment to the Texas Constitution, at **Guava Lamp** starting at 7 p.m. Bring your friends and family and come celebrate while watching history being made as the election results roll in. There will be appearances by Houston City Controller **Annis Parker** and City Council candidate **Sue Lovell**.

DON'T PUT YOUR HALLOWEEN costume away yet. Wednesday, Nov. 9, **AIDS Foundation Houston** hosts a Masquerade Ball to benefit local HIV prevention programs. The foundation, in collaboration with the hardest working pub-

lic relations men in Houston, **Michael de Medici** and his dreamy partner **Martin Castillo** of **DMC Worldwide** and **UV Vodka**, invite you to a Masquerade Ball. Don your masks, slip on your jewels and embark on an adventure inspired by the film, "**The Legend of Zorro**." Attendees will enjoy dinner, dancing, complimentary UV Vodka and Phillips Union Cocktails, door prizes, a treasure hunt and tickets to "The Legend of Zorro."

All proceeds benefit the **AIDS Foundation Houston Community Partnerships in Prevention Program**. The ball kicks off at 7 p.m. at the swank **InterContinental Houston** hotel, 2222 West Loop South. Tickets are \$75 per individual or \$125 per couple. For more information, contact Lydia Murray at 713-623-6796, ext 278 or visit www.dmcworldwide.com.

SAVE THE DATE! BIG TIME QUEER alert. **They'll be talking about this one for years to come, people.** **Andy Bell** from **Erasure** will be spinning a DJ set with **Wes Wallace** at **Numbers**, 300 Westheimer on Saturday, Nov. 12! Doors open at 8 p.m. and tickets are only \$10 in advance. For more information, visit www.numbersnightclub.com or 713-526-6551.

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

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TOYS FOR MEN

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theater RICH ARENSCHIELDT



Second offering from Houston Grand Opera provides light reprieve to first play's Russian doom, gloom.

Sunny, funny 'Figaro'

AS THE ANTIDOTE TO THE BORSCHT of the play "Boris Godunov," the second work in Houston Grand Opera's winter repertory, Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro," provides a welcome reprieve to Russian doom and gloom.

Instead, we are given opera filled with lightness and humor.

The best marriage here is made by Mozart's music and the witty drama that serves it. The late 18th century work is interesting in that it was an operatic sequel.

Previous to "Figaro" Neapolitan composer Giovanni Paisiello composed "The Barber of Seville" based on the Beaumachais play. This opera was such a success that Mozart jumped at the chance to set the playwright's subsequent work, "Figaro," to music with the help of librettist Lorenzo da Ponte.

Mozart and da Ponte collaborated on three of the most famous works in the repertoire, "Don Giovanni," "Cosi fan tutti," and "Figaro"—the "da Ponte trilogy."

In "Barber," the Beaumachais literary set up, a lecherous count Almaviva enlisted Figaro's help in prying Rosine (now his wife) from the clutches of her then betrothed-to-be, the elderly Dr. Bartolo.

Now in "Figaro," the fickle count has grown bored of his wife setting his sights on Figaro's betrothed-to-be, Susanna. Another entanglement: Figaro is employed by the count and Susanna is maid to the countess... oh, one more: all of their bedrooms are adjacent to one another.

One more ingredient makes this scenario even more delightful. A ubiquitous household page, the aptly named Cherubino, inhabits the opera as a scampy libido that sings. He ardently declares his love for the countess and, to the count's dismay, pops up at every inopportune moment. This his/hers role is a "pants" part in which a female sings the role of a young man, who in this opera is sometimes disguised as a woman.

The clashes in "Figaro" are obvious. Servants pitted against their masters, the powerful versus the powerless, draconian feudal law versus enlightenment. Mozart takes full musical advantage of every circuitous situation.

THE PRODUCTION, SEEN WITH



Figaro (Oren Gradus, top) torments the young page Cherubino (Zheng Cao, bottom).

regularity by Houston audiences since the old Jones Hall days, was created by Swedish director Goran Jarvefelt and designer Carl Oberle. The set is supposed to resemble Stockholm's Drottningholm Court Theater, used during Mozart's lifetime. It's a lovely production that doesn't interfere with the action.

Musically this "United Nations" cast presents a solid rendition and a few surprises.

THE DELIGHT OF THE EVENING WAS naturalized American mezzo-soprano Zheng Cao.

Last seen here in 2000 and 2004, "Figaro" enables us to see and hear a great deal from this talented singer. Cao and her limber companions give us action that makes this production one of the most amusing in recent history. Director Harry Silverstein stages Mozart operas worldwide and his intricate comprehension of the composer is apparent.

The surprise here is, even though you've seen the gag before and you know it's about to happen, Silverstein and this cast can still make you chuckle. Fortunately, he is working with actors who can respond to what the story and its director demand. How these singers jump about and still manage to produce such beautiful noise is a testament to fitness training.

This production of "Figaro" has plenty of spark; solid music, a traditional production and an excellent cast.

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television BRIAN MOYLAN



Comedian and talk show host Adam Carolla is all over the tube these days, but some of his jokes about gays are better than others.

Adam and Steve

TALK SHOW HOST AND COMEDIAN Adam Carolla always seemed like one of those guys who, despite his chest-beating, beer-guzzling, girls-on-trampolines-watching machismo from defunct Comedy Central show "The Man Show," would be OK hanging out with gay people.

Carolla seems like the type of guy who is so comfortable in his orientation that he wouldn't think twice about watching a football game with a gay friend.

On a recent episode of his caustically unfunny Comedy Central talk show "Too Late with Adam Carolla" he joked to comedian Lisa Lampanelli that he would love to be gay so that he could drive a two-seater, not have kids and spend all of that fabled disposable income.

While he's still married to a woman in real life, the character he voices on Comedy Central's hit animated show "Drawn Together," Spanky Ham, got a chance to go gay-for-pay in the episode that premiered on Oct. 26.

On the show, which fuses the conventions of both reality television and cartoons to comedic effect, the macho Spanky got "gay married" (as they called it) to the show's resident homosexual, Xandir (voiced by Jack Plotnick), because he needed to get free health insurance.

Other adult cartoons like Fox's "The Simpsons" and Comedy Central's "South Park" have examined the hot button issue of gay marriage, both fairly and humorously, and "Drawn Together" did the same.

While showing how inane and unfounded conservative opposition to gay marriage is, the show also had Carolla's Spanky learn to accept such unions, if only for his own selfish reasons.

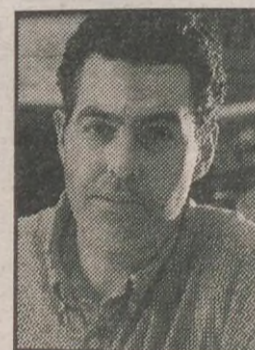
WHAT ISN'T SO FUNNY IS THE WAY THAT Carolla uses his "assistant," Matt Haber, who is a fixture on TLC's "The Adam Carolla Project" and has made appearances on "Too Late." It's not surprising that Carolla has gay friends, but it's unfortunate that he treats Haber as a flaming



The marriage of male cartoon characters Xandir (left) and Spanky Ham (right) was one in a string of adult cartoons using gay material in a positive manner. (Photo courtesy of Comedy Central)

foil, a role that Haber too easily accepts.

On an episode of "Too Late" two weeks ago, Carolla did a segment with Haber in a costume shop looking for Halloween costumes for himself and guest Dr. Drew Pinsky, Carolla's cohort from the syndicated radio sex advice show "Loveline."



Adam Carolla

While talking to the duo, Haber camped it up so Carolla and Pinsky could take eager pot shots at just how gay Haber acts. There's nothing wrong with being effeminate, but Haber allows himself to fall into the trap of accentuating and exaggerating his mannerisms to get a cheap laugh from straight guys in a lame attempt to be accepted.

This is especially evident on "Project," where Haber prances around construction sites trying to fit in with the rough and tumble crowd.

Haber needs to stop playing the gay class clown. And Carolla needs to take a lesson from Spanky and accept gay men as a part of his team, not as court jesters or stereotypical props.



Matt Haber

i MORE INFO

'Too Late with Adam Carolla'
Comedy Central
Monday-Thursday at midnight

'Drawn Together'
Comedy Central
Wednesdays at 10:30 p.m.

'The Adam Carolla Project'
TLC
Tuesdays at 10 p.m.

books KATHERINE VOLIN



In his new book 'Witness to AIDS,' gay South African Edwin Cameron addresses how the disease affects his life and his country.

'Witness' takes the stand

EDWIN CAMERON, A GAY SOUTH African high court judge with AIDS, is the only public official in South Africa to be open about his HIV positive status. Now he's written a book, "Witness to AIDS," about his experience with the disease.

Part memoir and part social commentary, Cameron's book details how he has battled AIDS, how the South African government and pharmaceutical companies have approached the disease and how his work as a judge inevitably intertwined with the global pandemic.

Cameron, 52, was diagnosed as HIV positive in December of 1986 and finally decided to come out publicly in 1999, after a South African woman declared her HIV-positive status and paid the ultimate price.

"She came out with her status on a Zulu-language radio station on the first of December 1998, and was killed three weeks later — just before Christmas," Cameron says. The woman, Gugu Dlamini, was stoned and stabbed to death by her neighbors.

"It just struck me as so terribly poignant that this unemployed, very poor woman living undefended in a township with no job, no income, no protections, so different from me in almost any way, had taken the risk and paid a terrible penalty for it," he says.

An estimated 6 million of South Africa's 44 million citizens are infected with HIV. Within the adult population, the HIV rate is 21 percent. According to the CIA World Factbook.

Motivated by what he felt was his responsibility as a former human rights lawyer and then judge who dealt frequently with HIV-related cases, Cameron publicly declared that he had AIDS in 1999. His hopes for other public officials to announce their status were dashed when Thabo Mbeki, who had just succeeded Nelson Mandela as president of South Africa, refused to acknowledge that HIV is the only cause of AIDS.

In 1999 and 2000, Mbeki's response to South Africa's AIDS crisis was to suggest that poverty played a bigger role in the AIDS epidemic than HIV does — a belief he promoted in speeches at an AIDS conference and in front of the South African Parliament, as well as in a letter to then-U.S. president Bill Clinton. Mbeki has not changed his position.

CAMERON SAYS THAT THE SILENCE surrounding AIDS and his own country's stifled



Gay judge Edwin Cameron relays his personal and professional battles with the AIDS crisis in South Africa in his book 'Witness to AIDS.' (Photo by Katherine Volin)

response to the disease are part of what motivated him to write "Witness to AIDS." The drug regimen prescribed to Cameron not only provided physical relief from AIDS complications, but also psychological respite.

"I don't feel defiled or contaminated or polluted, all those terrible things that we people with HIV actually inside ourselves all too often still feel," Cameron says. "Getting well on the medication changed that so profoundly for me, and that's what gave me the strength to speak out."

Cameron decided that he must work to make anti-retroviral drugs more readily available. At \$600 per month, paying for drugs consumed one-third of Cameron's disposable income when he began taking them following his 1997 AIDS diagnosis.

"The drugs I started taking in 1997 were inconceivably expensive, unimaginably expensive," Cameron says. "But very soon, within two years, they came down a huge amount in price. They've continued to come down — they're still coming down."

The sinking cost of anti-retroviral drugs in South Africa is due to the work of activists, Cameron says.

"The activists have shamed the drug corporations into lowering their prices," Cameron says, also noting that the activists have shamed the South African government into working to make drugs more affordable.

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dish

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

Life in out-er space

Mr. Sulu comes out, Siegfried & Roy fight and a not-so-blind item intrigues



After years in the closet and countless 'Star Trek' conventions, George Takei, Mr. Sulu himself, finally came out. (Photo by AP/Damian Dovarganes)

Everyone knew that sci-fi nerds aren't always that successful with the ladies, but who knew that's because they're gay?

Actor **GEORGE TAKEI**, better known as Mr. Sulu on the original "Star Trek" series and six subsequent movies, came out in the newest edition of *Frontiers*, a Los Angeles gay magazine.

"It's not really coming out, which suggests opening a door and stepping through. It's more like a long, long walk through what began as a narrow corridor that starts to widen," he says.

He tells the paper that he has been out to his family and involved with gay organizations — like the L.A. FrontRunners, a gay running group where he met his partner, Brad — for years, but had never come out in the media until now.

And this isn't his first time on a new frontier: Takei lived in a Japanese-American internment camp during World War II when the U.S. government put those of Japanese descent in guarded facilities supposedly for national security reasons. Ever since then, he has fought for the civil rights of Japanese-Americans, and worked as chair of the board of directors for the Japanese American National Museum.

Dish is glad that gay Trekkies and other sci-fi fans finally have a role model of their own. Dish salutes you, Mr. Sulu.

Cat scratch fever

It would seem that **SIEGFRIED FISCHBACHER**, half of the famous Siegfried & Roy tiger-taming team, has been watching too much **BETTE DAVIS** and **JOAN CRAWFORD**, specifically "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane."

According to Court TV, an ex-bodyguard for the couple is suing Fischbacher over his treatment of **ROY HORN** who is still recovering from a tiger mauling in 2003.

The ex-employee, Louis Mydlach, is seeking at least \$10,000 for emotional distress and wrongful discharge. Mydlach claims he was forced to quit last winter after refusing to give Horn more pain pills.

The suit states, "Siegfried was a tyrant and had loud, explosive outbursts at the plaintiff and at Roy. [Fischbacher] forced Roy to take medication, even when Roy begged not to be medicated."



Siegfried & Roy



Nate Berkus

Not so blind

Earlier this week, the New York Post's venerable Page Six gossip column ran a host of blind items. "What swishy pop star who won't admit he's gay is dating a well-known interior designer? The decorator is recovering from his previous boyfriend's tragic death, while the pop star is equally despondent about his ailing career."

Of course, **OPRAH WINFREY's** favorite decorator **NATE BERKUS** lost his partner, photographer Fernando Bengoechea, late last year in the Asian tsunami.

As for the closeted pop star, Dish doesn't really know. She's just saying that **RICKY MARTIN's** career isn't what it used to be, he recently appeared on Oprah — on the same episode as Berkus — and, well, he's always been a little bit swishy.

Woop Woo, Woo Hoo Hoo; Woop Woo, Woo Hoo Hoo,
Woop Woo, Woo Hoo Hoo; Woop Woo, Woo Hoo Hoo

People do Stupid Things!

"Eloy always looked for love in all the wrong places. What he got was mood-swings, acne at 53 and shrinking testicles. Eloy is still looking in all the wrong places (he is a man after all, he can't help himself) but, now he wears protection."

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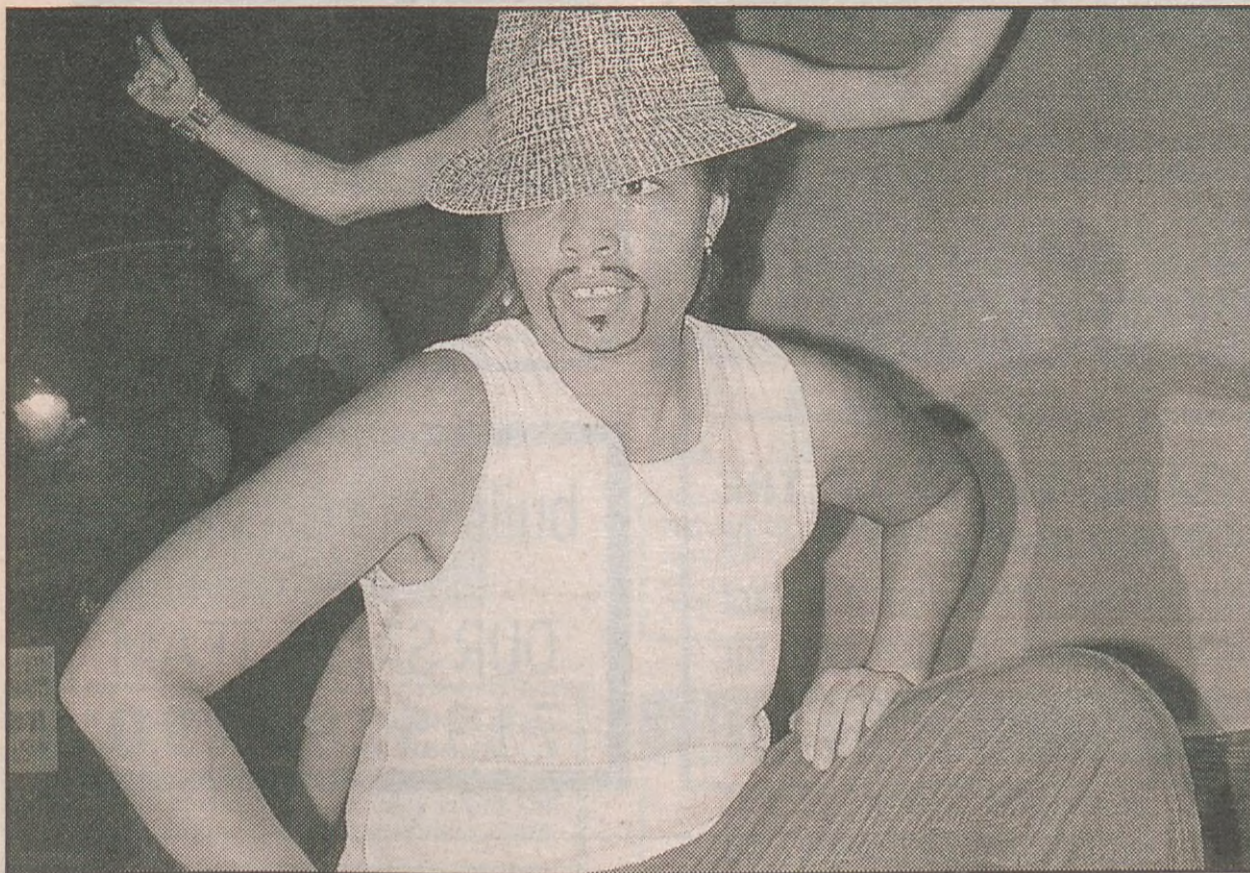
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eclipse



Drag King performer **D.D. Cummings** (front) performs 'Truth or Dare' at a Kings 'N Things show at Elysium, a club in Austin, earlier this month.

Drag kings challenge views on gender

DRAG KINGS, continued from Page 13

more recently there have been women hanging out doing karaoke. A student at Rice who was studying gender preference did a drag show on the Rice campus last year that was wildly successful."

Mays believes the reason Austin has such a lively drag king community and Houston doesn't is because Houston's gay scene is more focused on politics and Austin's on entertainment.

Allison Stelly, who uses the stage name Cherry Poppins, says drag king culture thrives in unexpected places, pointing out that the first International Drag King Community Extravaganza was in Columbus, Ohio.

"There is not much of a king community in New York or San Francisco, but there are good-sized ones in Washington and Chicago," Stelly says. "Austin is overflowing with performance artists of all kinds and their people love us."

Kings and queens

Mays, who has seen more drag queen shows than drag king performances, says there are several differences between the two.

"Drag king performances are more troupe based, with several performers on stage at once," she says. "They're like skits set to music. Queen shows are very visual, but king shows are very theatrical."

"Drag kings usually perform in ensembles and are non-competitive. Drag queen events are more like pageants, however, we are obsessed with musicals and we like a lot of glitter," Stelly says. "We represent a variety of gender expressions, for example, I perform as a 'femme queen.' We're also not competitive. It's

not like pageants where someone wins."

Stelly, Steinberg and Mays were part of a group of 13 performers from Texas who went to a competition in Winnipeg last month. Steely drove with a group from Austin.

"They told me I couldn't bring more than three pairs of shoes, but a lot of the drag kings are very fastidious about their clothes and they brought more than I did, but I can honestly say that we all spent 27 hours in a van together and did not bicker once," she says.

Steinberg says the Austin kings got good exposure in Winnipeg. Kings 'N Things was one of 20 international troupes featured in the showcase.

The performance at Club Eve is a benefit for IDKE8, which will be a four-day event in Austin next October.

"About 15 people from the three Austin troupes, Kings N Things, Wunder Bois, and Austin Gender Conspiracy, plus a few other independent drag artists will fill the stage," Steinberg says. "Skits will be predominantly campy and sexy, unlike many of our past performances that have been message-based.

"We're very excited to be coming to Houston. We're bringing the event to people who have never seen drag kings, and it's always fun to bring it to a new and fresh audience. If Saturday goes well, we just may be back in Houston in the spring for another show."

Steinberg says performing as a drag king may be a newer subculture, but it's still as historically important and valid as the rise of drag queens. She said drag kings challenge society to question the idea that gender is somehow biological by dissecting the different ways the illusions of masculinity and femininity are produced.

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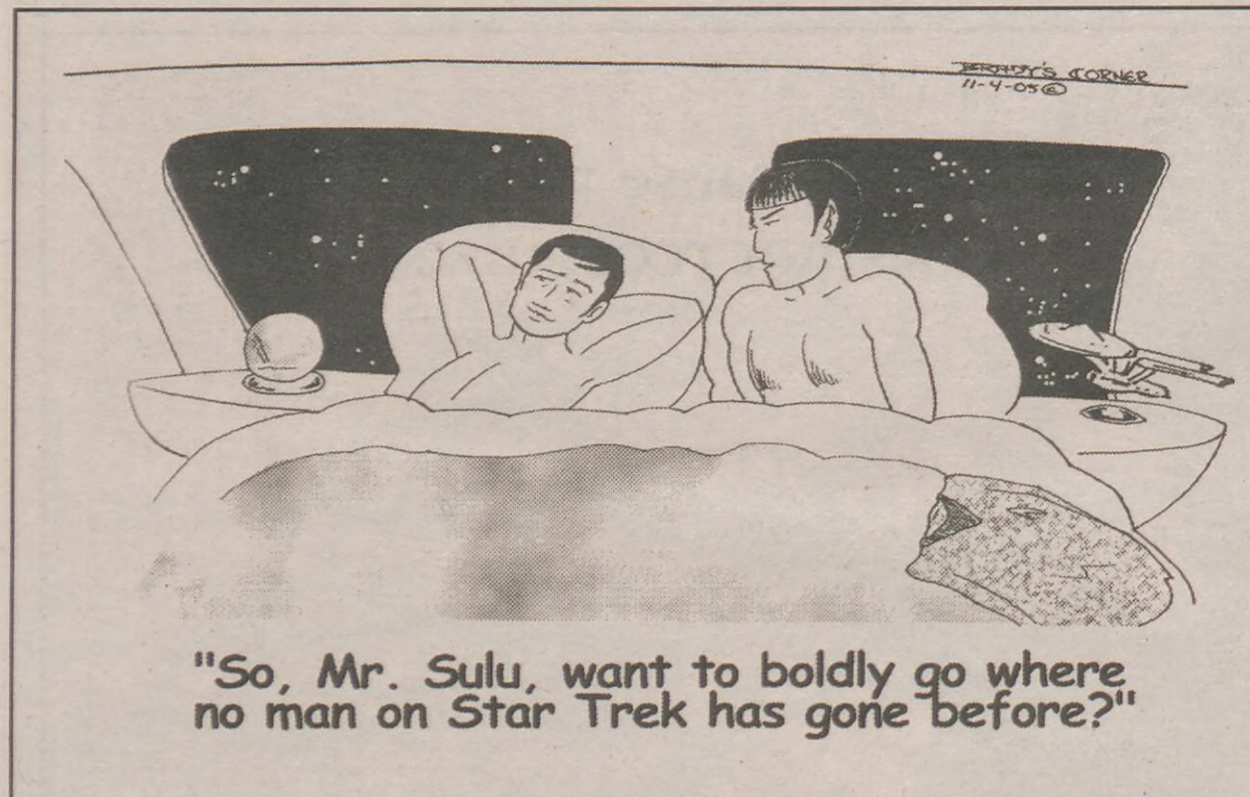
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LEGAL SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IN CANADA! Want to know how to marry in Toronto? Email me and I will provide free information on how my husband and I did it! **Scott Groves- Window Media** sgroves@davidatlanta.com **THIS AD IS PROVIDED AS A PUBLIC SERVICE OF WINDOW-MEDIA LLC.**

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SR. PUBLIC HEALTH INVESTIGATOR The City of Houston Health and Human Services Department is in search of an Sr. Public Health Investigator, PN 106526. Will perform disease intervention activities relating to the control of communicable disease among residents of the city. Will assist in the training of other personnel involved in disease intervention activities relating to the Communicable Disease Program.

Will conduct confidential interviews and assessments of clients diagnosed with a communicable disease; perform field activities with clients and motivate them to seek appropriate treatment and follow-up.

Qualified candidate must have a Bachelor's degree in Social Science, Physical Science, Public Health, or a closely related field and one year of experience in the public health field. Preference will be given to applicants with prior public health and/or HIV prevention experience.

Submit resume or download application from www.cityofhouston.gov or call Maria Gomez at (713) 558-2471.

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Summit House Houston
(New Age for Gay Men and their Friends)
will host a talk circle to react to the election Wednesday, November 9.
Details at www.SumHou.com

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Chelsea Boy

Job: P.R. Assistant
Wants to be: Lizzie Grubman

Kenneth Cole
Faux-hawk
D&G
Gucci
Pet Accessory: Jack Russell Terrier
Living Space: \$3,000 a month, 8' x 8', 6th floor walk-up studio apt. (and it's a find!)
Transportation: Taxis
Body hair: Fashionably trimmed
His type: Latin thug tops
Favorite book: Anything by David Sedaris

Prada

SoBe Boy

Job: Personal trainer/escort
Wants to be: Kept

AWWK! LEAVE \$200 ON THE DRESSER!

Pet Accessory: Cockatoo
Meaningless Tribal Tatts
Versace
Puma
A & F
Living Space: Art Deco apartment with lots of mirrors
Transportation: BMW convertible
Body hair: Naturally smooth - just pubes and pits
His type: Anyone who can pay for it
Favorite book: Books?

WeHo Boy

Job: Waiter
Wants to be: Reality T.V. Star

Streaked hair
Pet Accessory: Chihuahua named "Hilton"
Polo (with collar always turned up)
Diesel
Living Space: Currently house-sitting in the Hills.
Transportation: Second hand SUV
Body hair: Totally shaved (last seen in junior high)
His type: Producer, or anyone who makes over 3 mil a year
Favorite book: In Style Magazine

Castro Boy

Job: Starbucks/S&M Porn extra
Wants to be: Published Poet

Vintage T
Sets off metal detectors whenever he travels
4 yr old laptop
501 Levis
Pet Accessory: Bruce
Living Space: Shares a Victorian house with lesbian roommate
Transportation: Bicycle (environmentally friendly)
Body hair: Hairy and proud of it
His type: Pig Boy Bottoms
Favorite book: Anything by Michael Moore

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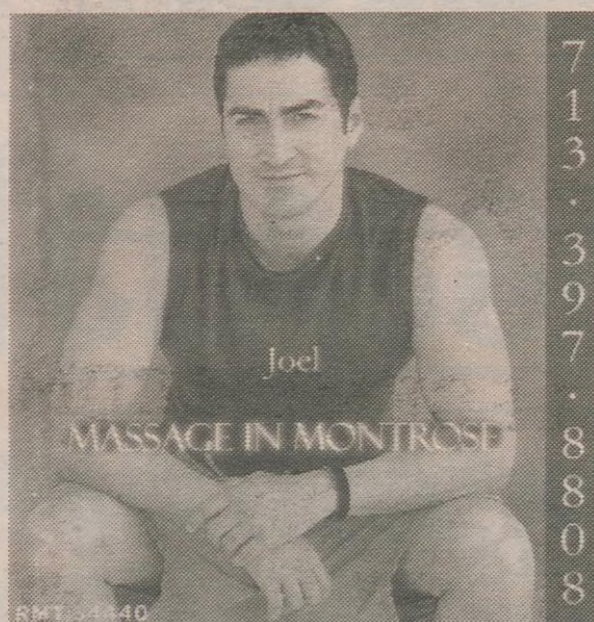
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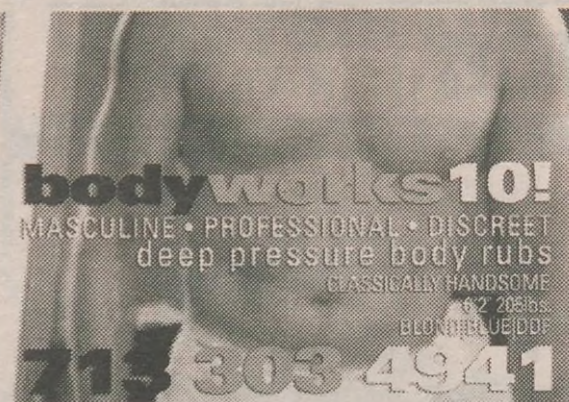


TEXAS HOSPITALITY!

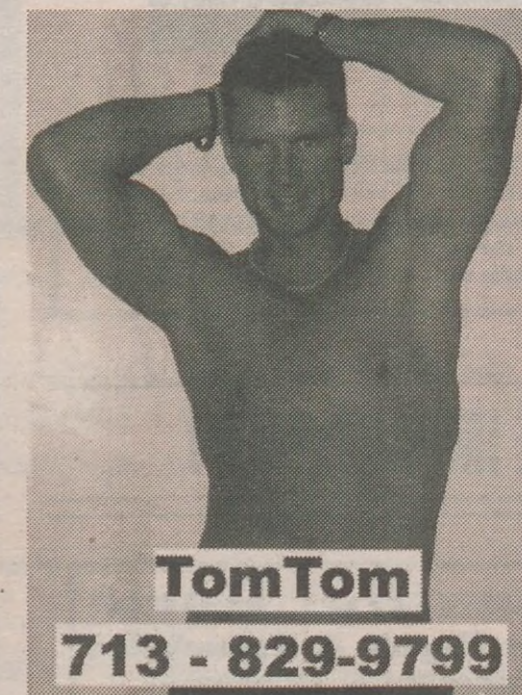
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In person: Bring completed order form with payment to the Houston Voice offices (M-F, 9-5 pm) 500 Lovett Blvd, Suite 200, Houston.

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bitch session



Why does every ugly straight girl I meet think I want her just because I am cordial? I mean it's not like they are Angelina, for goddess sake.

ALL THE TALK ABOUT TOPS AND bottoms implies folks actually screw. Yeah, right. Most gays in 2005 are too pansy-waisted to do that anymore. They're satisfied with much less than we older gents were.

WHEN YOU'RE ON A DATE, STOP blabbing about the one who got away. Do you honestly think your date enjoys feeling like the romantic equivalent of a safety school?

I WISH LESBIANS WOULD STOP TRYING to force their way into my life. I'm gay. If I liked girls, I'd be straight!

WHY DO SO MANY LAZY POZ QUEENS sit home all day and collect disability checks. Do you think it's right to pay silly bottoms who take charged loads up their bum?

I REALLY LIKED YOUR LOOKS AND personality, and I really thought we "meshed" well. But I had to drop you when you lied about your age.

TO YOU CRISIS QUEENS BEGGING FOR more negative attention: When will you ever complain about something that people care about?

IF YOU'RE GOING TO GO OUT LOOKING like you're 16, would you please also realize that you haven't been 16 for decades?

TO ALL THE STRAIGHT GUYS STILL wearing baggy pants: Please get with the times, and start wearing tight-fitting jeans again.

WHY DO SO MANY SHALLOW QUEENS try to use a one-night stand to recreate their last date with someone else?

PLEASE TRY TO SMILE, EVEN THOUGH you masturbate several times a day.

WHEN ARE Y'ALL GOING TO REALIZE that mall fashions can't compete with Italian creations. Open your wallet and buy something decent.

IT'S TIME TO BRING BACK PUBLIC stoning. As the first victim, I nominate the jerk who infected me years ago and whom I forgave. Now that I am sick, he is too busy to give me the time of day, but not too busy to keep infecting everyone around him.

YES, I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU WHEN we first met and you had the six pack. And in the time it took you to gain that 15 pounds, I came to love you even more. But if you ever lose those bright, gorgeous eyes, I'm outta here.

I HATE THAT MY MOTHER IS A controlling selfish bitch. I don't even like her, but she brainwashed me from a young age into thinking she deserves everything.

I HATE THAT OUR SEXUAL ACTIVITIES are considered a fetish. Why can't straight people admit that we're just as normal as they are?

I'M SO TRIED OF HOOKING UP WITH guys online who describe themselves as "fit," only to find out they're hogs. So back up to a wall and if your belly sticks our farther than your nipples, you are fat!

IT'S SAD ENOUGH THAT YOU HAVE TO post a picture of yourself online that you took yourself. But if you're going to use the bathroom mirror, at least try cleaning the bathroom first.

HASN'T ANYONE REALIZED THAT while we bitch about sex, drugs and fashion, rich conservatives are fighting to make sure we remain second-class citizens?

ABERCROMBIE ONLY FITS SHORT people. Besides, they lost their prestige appeal in the '80s.

IF I WANTED TO, I COULD GO TO MY conservative, Republican family and get my trust fund back, and marry some lesbian to conform.

GAY MEN SHOULD LEARN MARTIAL arts, carry weapons and learn to use them instead of always running away like chickens when faced with homophobic slurs. It's because so many gay people are known to flee that the bastards attack us in the first place!

AS A POZ-SINCE-1985 GUY, I'M WAY with the poz-since-1986 guy who works long hours and is fed up with poz guys who are on disability and don't do anything to help others, but are healthy enough to workout and party.

TO THE BALDING LITTLE BITCH WHO badmouths his friends in his blog: Don't look so surprised when someone strikes back.

Editors' note: These are real bitches, sent in by real readers, about gay life's little annoyances, and the big ones, too. Got a bitch? Call 1-800-858-8088 or e-mail: bitch@houstonvoice.com

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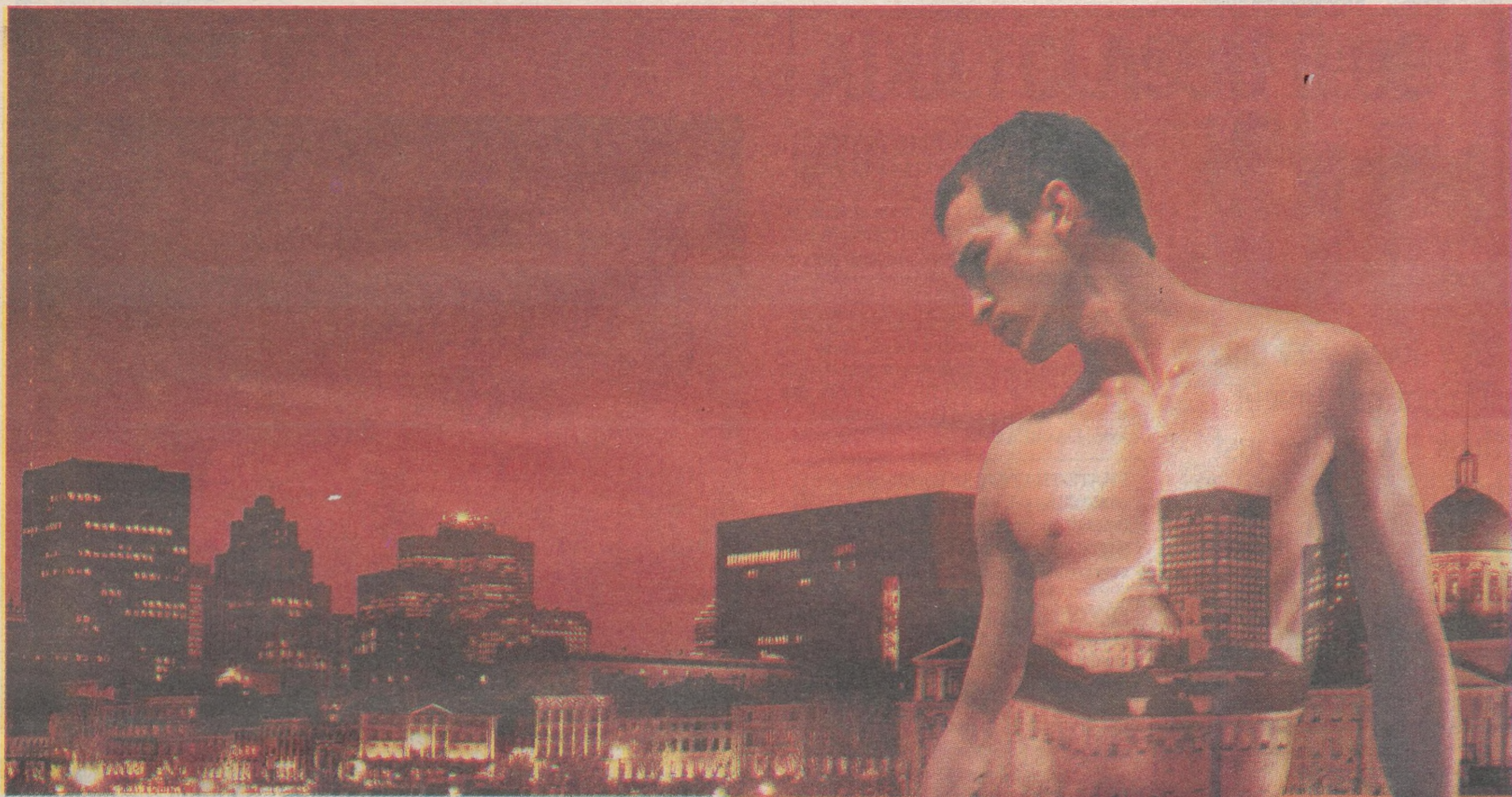
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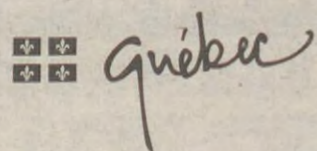
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