



Here come the brides
There's a worldwide gay wedding boom that's taking off to newly legal heights.
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SOLITARY MAN: McGreevey retreats into exile. Page 5



RYAN WHITE ACT: Concern over fund realignment. Page 6



Roberts criticized 'privacy rights' doctrine in article

New documents may hint at nominee's position on gay cases

By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

Documents released this week by the National Archives show that Judge John G. Roberts Jr., President Bush's nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court, expressed strong objections to the extent that the high court has recognized a citizen's fundamental right to privacy.

According to the Washington Post, the documents show that Roberts drafted an article for then Attorney General William French Smith in 1981, which revealed Roberts' skepticism of the Constitution's so-called "right to privacy" doctrine. The court has invoked this doctrine in a number of landmark cases, including the 2003 decision in *Lawrence vs. Texas*, which overturned state sodomy laws.

"[T]he broad range of rights which are now alleged to be 'fundamental' by litigants, with only the most tenuous connection to the constitution, bears ample witness to the dangers of this doctrine," Roberts wrote in the draft article, according to the Post.

Roberts added a quote to the draft from a dissenting opinion by former Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black in a 1965 decision, in which Black criticized the majority on the court for overturning a Connecticut law banning the use of contraceptives, the Post reported. The majority opinion overturning the law used "a loose, flexible, uncontrolled standard for holding laws unconstitutional," Roberts approvingly quoted Black as saying.

The newly emerging information on Roberts' judicial views is being analyzed by gay rights attorneys, who have expressed concern about Roberts' possible handling of a number of gay rights cases that could



'[T]he broad range of rights which are now alleged to be 'fundamental' by litigants, with only the most tenuous connection to the constitution, bears ample witness to the dangers of this doctrine,' John Roberts wrote in a draft article in 1981.

Please see SUPREME COURT on Page 7



Felicia Galloway-Hall is congratulated on her endorsement by attorney Phyllis Randolph Frye as another endorsed candidate, Peter Brown, looks on. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

GLBT Political Caucus issues endorsements

Caucus president says 2005 city election endorsements reflect the the diversity that exists in Houston

By BINNIE FISHER

If there is one thought that Maria Gonzales said she hopes comes out of the Aug. 3 meeting to issue endorsements for the Nov. 8 elections it is, "We endorsed the people of Houston."

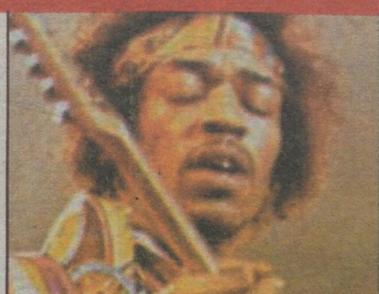
On Nov. 8, voters in Houston will cast ballots for mayor, controller, At-Large City Council positions as well as district coun-

Please see CAUCUS on Page 3



Local life
From helping gay youth to promoting gay films, Deb Murphy's life is full.
PAGE 8

dish
A new book claims the Army let rock legend Jimi Hendrix go because he said he was gay.
PAGE 18





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local news briefs

Kelly McCann, AIDS services advocate, is new CEO at AIDS Foundation Houston

The Board of Directors at AIDS Foundation Houston, Inc. (AFH) has appointed Kelly McCann as new Chief Executive Officer. Previously, she served as Vice President of Community Resources at AFH where she managed the Education and Volunteer Services departments. McCann, who has 20 years of experience in fields of HIV services, corrections and community mental health and was recently appointed an external consultant for the Surgeon General's Call to Action on Correctional Health Care. "AFH has a great mission and an impressive 23-year history of providing prevention education and AIDS-related services to the community," McCann said. In addition to her work with AFH, McCann is project director for Project Wall Talk, a peer health education program for offenders within the Texas Department of Corrections. Project Wall Talk is one of four federally funded Peer Education Training Sites in the nation and the only one that serves incarcerated populations. McCann holds a Bachelor of Science in psychology from Sam Houston State University. She has also completed graduate work in Clinical Psychology from Sam Houston State University and Counseling/Educational Psychology from Texas A & M University.



Kelly McCann is the new Chief Executive Officer at AIDS Foundation Houston.

Montrose Clinic has an open house for Community Health Center Week

The Montrose Clinic at 215 Westheimer will host an Open House from 10 a.m. to noon Aug. 9 to coincide with Community Health Center Week from Aug. 8-15. The clinic is one of nine Federally Qualified Health Centers in Houston and one of 23 clinics that provide services to the city's uninsured and underinsured population. "It's important for the clinic to ensure that its clients continue to receive quality health care even with the loss of insurance or disability status from living with HIV," said "Recognizing this need led to the clinic becoming a (Federally Qualified Health Care Center). Through this the clinic is able to access medications more cost effectively, which will lead to an in-house pharmacy coming later this fall."

Caucus gets a new name and a snazzy new logo



Maria Gonzales, president of the Houston GLBT Political Caucus (PAC) holds up the organization's new logo during the group's candidate endorsement meeting. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

by replacing "gay and lesbian" with GLBT to be more inclusive. At the group's Aug. 3 candidate endorsement meeting, a new logo was unveiled that reflects the name change. Scott A. Tevington of N.E.O. Graphic Design Services designed the new logo that incorporates the name of the caucus and red, white and blue stars with streamers on a black background.

Intervening in the Drama of Addiction is next at Montrose Counseling Center

An upcoming workshop at Montrose counseling Center is designed for anyone living with an addicted partner, spouse or relative. Bob Hergenroeder, Chemical Dependency Program Coordinator at the center, said he hopes the workshop will help anyone living with an addicted person determine how best to intervene. "It takes a village to support an addiction," he said, adding that the addicted person may choose to leave or be evicted from the village. If villagers intervene, then he said, they must be willing to recover along with the addicted person. "The person with the active addiction must accept responsibility and so must the villagers," he said. The workshop is planned on four consecutive Monday evenings Sept. 12 through Oct. 3 at 6:30 p.m. There is no charge for the sessions, but donations are accepted. The center is located at 701 Richmond St. 713-529-5511, www.montrosecounselingcenter.org.

Task Force is looking for gay families to appear in TV ads about marriage

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is seeking same-sex couples and their families to appear in statewide TV ads to begin running in September regarding the importance of marriage. For more information, call 713-743-8094.

Earlier in the year, the Houston GLBT Political Caucus (PAC) changed its name

From staff and wire reports

local news

Endorsements reflect stance

CAUCUS, continued from Page 1

cil seats. In endorsing candidates in each race, Gonzales said, the caucus has created an endorsement card that represents the face of Houston.

She pointed out that the endorsements cut across race lines.

For mayor, the group endorsed incumbent Bill White, who two years ago garnered more than 60 percent of the vote in his bid for a first term. Thus far, he has drawn no opponents in his bid for re-election.

Also running unopposed so far and also gaining the caucus endorsement is Houston City Controller Annise Parker. She also won by a better than 60 percent majority in her 2003 bid for office.

"They just appeal to a broad base," Gonzales said.

Parker, an out lesbian, served three terms on the City Council before running for controller.

Gonzales pointed out that with Parker, voters don't seem to be concerned about her sexual orientation.

"Annise is recognized for her talent and skills, for who she is and for the content of her character," she said.

Another out lesbian, Sue Lovell, is making her second run for council, this time seeking the At-Large, Position 2 seat. Gonzales said Lovell also seems to have broad-based appeal.

"We're pretty confident she's going to do well," Gonzales said. "A lot of people say she's run a very good campaign. She has the ability to talk one-on-one with people, to get out to civic organizations. It's a city-wide race. You just have to do everything you can."

She added, "She and Annise are representative of the kind of candidates we want out there."

Her opponents are Jay Aiyer and John Elford.

No fair-weather friends

The caucus has endorsed architect and urban designer Peter Brown for the At-Large, Position 1 seat. He received the endorsement in 2003 but did not get elected. Gonzales said Brown is among those candidates who have supported gays and lesbians on the issues that affect them.

"The people we endorse are not fair-



Houston City Controller Annise Parker (center) celebrated her endorsement with her partner Kathy Hubbard, and their daughters, Daniela and Marquitta. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

weather friends," she said.

In District B, the endorsement was handed to Felicia Galloway-Hall, who is running in the seat now occupied by her mother, Carol Mims Galloway. The elder Galloway is completing her third and final term on the council.

Gonzales said Galloway-Hall screened well with the caucus. "She's working very hard. There's still some learning to do, but I think she is going to be a good leader."

Her mother was the first African American woman elected to District B.

She will run in a field of five candidates that also includes Tommy Ruth Allen, Willie Hunter, Angel Bush and Jarvis Johnson.

Herman Litt is the endorsed candidate in the race for the District C seat. Although other candidates in the race sought the endorsement, Gonzales said, Litt stood out.

While council elections are touted as being non-partisan, Gonzales said the other District C Republicans screening for the endorsements were all Republicans.

"We're very pleased to get the opportunity to screen Republicans," she said. "They all did a good job. They take it seriously, and we take our process seriously."

The District C race also includes Mark Lee, Anne Clutterbuck, Brian Cweren, George Hittner, Ray Jones and Judy Siverson.

Incumbents Ada Edwards in District D, Adrian Garcia in District H and Carol Alvarado in District I all won caucus endorsements. All are running unopposed except for Alvarado, who will run against John Parras.

In addition to their track records on gay issues, Gonzales said all three were endorsed because they have exhibited solid leadership skills.

She said it is no accident that many of the endorsed candidates represent racial minorities.

"They understand minority status," she said. "African Americans recognize what it's like to be scapegoated and under attack. They understand what it's like to be used for political gain."

There are no national or state races on the ballot in November, but Gonzales pointed out that the caucus is urging voters to cast their ballots against a proposed constitutional amendment that would ban not only same-sex marriage but also civil unions.

i MORE INFO

Houston GLBT Political Caucus (PAC)

2005 Endorsements

Mayor - Bill White

Controller - Annise Parker

Houston City Council

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

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national news

Gay blogger released from 'ex-gay' camp

Tenn. teen criticizes gay activists, who say new posts reflect coercion

By ANDREW KEEGAN

A gay Tennessee teen who gained worldwide attention after detailing his fear of being sent to an "ex-gay" camp in an Internet posting said the entire situation has been blown out of proportion, according to his latest blog.

But some gay activists who oppose the camp said the posting shows signs of intimidation.

After coming out to his parents, Zach Stark, 16, was enrolled on June 6 at Refuge for a reported eight-week session at a cost of more than \$4,000. The Christian facility, a branch of Love In Action located near Memphis, Tenn., works to convert gay youth to heterosexual orientation. It receives adolescent referrals from Exodus, an organization devoted to helping gay adults become heterosexual.

Stark's June 3 blog about coming out to his parents and his uncertainty about the upcoming retreat included suicidal thoughts, which quickly garnered widespread attention.

But in his latest blog, posted Aug. 1, Stark states that he "is annoyed toward a

lot of things," including that Love In Action was misrepresented.

There is no mention of what transpired during the 56-day stay at Refuge by the youth from Bartlett, Tenn. Stark says that homosexuality is still a "factor" for him, but he won't let it "run my life." He also includes an apparent slap at gay activists who led a campaign against Love In Action.

"I refuse to deal with people who are only focused on their one-sided (biased) agendas," Stark writes. "It isn't fair to anyone."

Activists won't abandon protest

John Smid, Love In Action's executive director, declined to comment on Stark's postings, while gay groups said they would continue to question the ex-gay program's efforts.

Stark's original posting led Memphis residents to form the Queer Action Coalition, which began daily demonstrations at the Love In Action offices to raise awareness of the dangers of ex-gay therapy. According to one of the group's co-founders, Morgan Fox, the protests continued for two weeks, beginning the day Stark was admitted.

"At the height of the protest we had about 80 people outside the offices," Fox said.

Responding to the teen's latest blog, Fox said the group has great respect for Stark.

"We have always tried to protect his identity and his rights," he said, noting the group never divulged the teen's last name, which was obtained by media out-

lets. "But we've always said from the beginning that this is not all about Zach."

Since Stark's blog post, Queer Action Coalition has received numerous e-mails from former Love In Action clients disputing the organization's claim of reforming gays, Fox said.

"We responded in forming QAC because it was frightening to read about a kid having to deal with this," he said. "We absolutely will not judge Zach. What we will do is focus on the message that Love In Action promotes — a lot of people have been harmed by their claim to offer choice."

Wayne Besen, a gay author who studies the ex-gay movement and has followed Stark's plight, said he is certain that some type of coercion was exerted on the teen, given the wording of his latest blog.

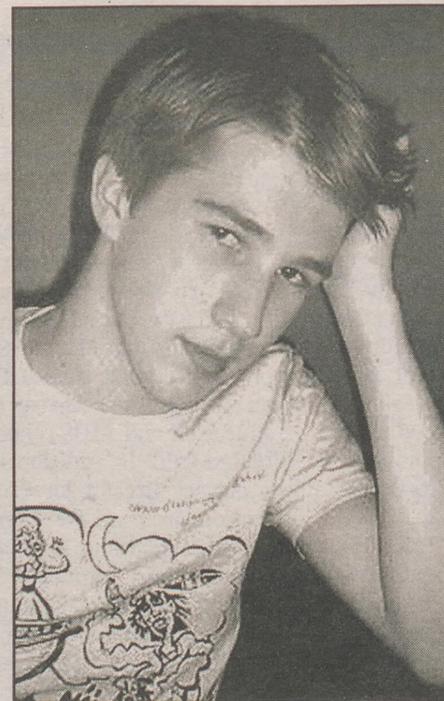
"It's disconcerting because the boy who blogged before entering the program has a different voice," said Besen, author of "Anything But Straight: Unmasking the Scandals and Lies Behind the Ex-Gay Myth."

"The boy who blogged after the program is no longer a free-spirited young man," he said.

Besen points to several words in the latest blog as proof of intimidation.

"[Zach] now uses right-wing buzz words like 'agendas' and how homosexuality is a 'factor' in his life," he said.

Besen recently posted on his Web site, www.waynebesen.com, a letter by a co-founder of Love In Action criticizing the conversion program.



Zach Stark, the 16-year-old gay blogger who sparked a controversy after writing about being sent to an 'ex-gay' facility by his parents, returned home after an eight-week program.

Former ex-gay John Evans, who co-founded Love In Action with Rev. Kent Philpott in 1973, sent the letter July 30 to Smid, the ministry's current director.

"In the past 30 years since leaving the 'ex-gay' ministry I have seen nothing but shattered lives, depression, and even suicide among those connected with the 'ex-gay' movement," Evans wrote.

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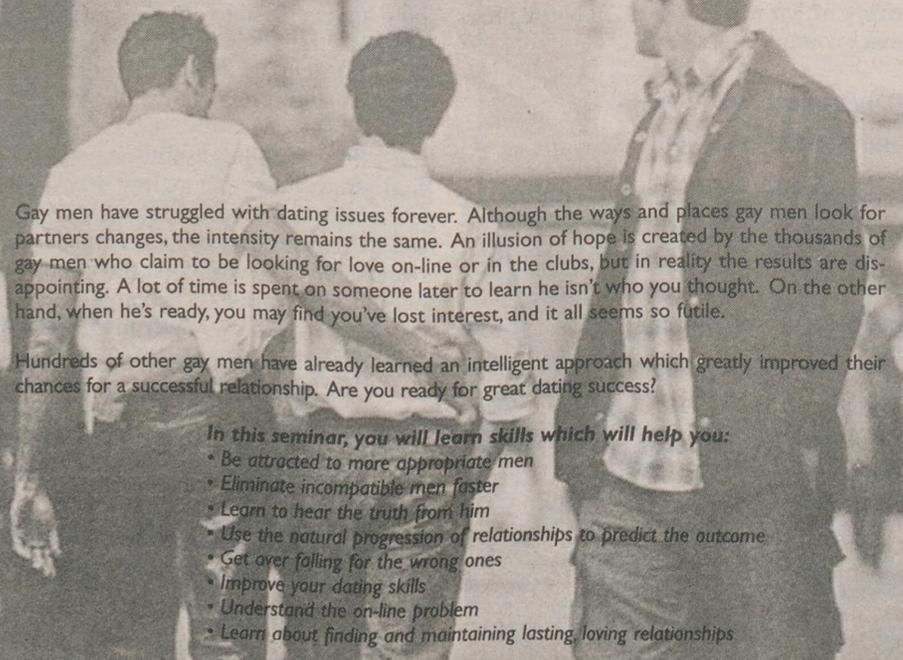
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national news briefs

Gay former N.J. governor lives in self-imposed exile

RAHWAY, N.J. (AP) — A year after his life imploded in scandal, James E. McGreevey lives in self-imposed exile, avoiding the limelight he spent a lifetime chasing and trying to figure out what his next act will be. Separated from the wife he betrayed, McGreevey lives modestly, in a one-bedroom apartment, one town away from his old stomping ground in Woodbridge. It's a long way from the stately governor's mansion at Drumthwacket — and a long time since Aug. 12, 2004, the day New Jersey's 51st governor came clean with a soul-baring confession. With wife Dina Matos McGreevey at his side, his mother and father standing behind him, McGreevey confessed to an extramarital affair with a man and announced his resignation in a nationally televised speech. "My truth is that I am a gay American," he said. Since then, McGreevey, 47, has disappeared from public view. He has not gotten involved in gay advocacy, as some thought he might after coming out so publicly. "It would not be a natural fit for Gov. McGreevey to all of a sudden become a gay activist," said Steven Goldstein, chair of Garden State Equality, a gay political group. "The problem for him is that gay marriage is front and center in the gay rights movement and he's never recanted his opposition to it."



One year after coming out, former N.J. Gov. James McGreevey is still trying to build a new life. (Photo by Brian Branch-Price/AP)

Court rules that Calif. country club discriminated against lesbian couple

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — California's highest court ruled Monday that country clubs must offer gay members who register as domestic partners the same discounts given to married ones — a decision that could apply to other businesses such as insurance companies and mortgage lenders. The decision by the California Supreme Court dealt with a policy at the Bernardo Heights Country Club in San Diego that allowed only the children, grandchildren and spouses of married members to golf for free. Birgit Koebke, 48, an avid golfer who pays about \$500 a month in membership fees, challenged the policy after being told that her longtime lesbian partner, Kendall French, could only play as a guest six times a year while paying up to \$70 per round. The court ruled that the policy constitutes "impermissible marital status discrimination."

Spokane mayor asks state's high court to block recall effort

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Mayor Jim West has asked the state Supreme Court to reject a recall effort seeking to remove him from office over a sex scandal. Lawyers for West argued last week that a Superior Court judge erred in allowing a recall proposal to go forward, and by rewriting the proposal after it was originally submitted by unemployed Spokane mother Shannon Sullivan, who is leading the recall effort. In producing the rewritten recall synopsis after a June 13 hearing on Sullivan's proposal, the lower court deprived West of the opportunity to challenge the rewrite, West's brief said. The lower court also erred in concluding a public official may be subject to a recall election for engaging in private online conversations and e-mails, the mayor's lawyers contended. The recall effort contends West, formerly a state Senate leader, misused his office and city equipment by offering City Hall jobs and perks to young men he was seeking to date through Web sites.

Top defense contractor offers trans protections

WALTHAM, Mass. — The world's largest missile maker, Raytheon Co., announced it is the first of the six top U.S. defense firms to offer equal opportunity employment protection to transgendered and transsexual workers, according to media reports. Adopted last week, the policy confirms equality in hiring, promotion and job assignment for people who have had sex-change operations or those who choose other forms of gender expression and identity. Hayward Bell, Raytheon's chief diversity officer, told media outlets. Existing company policy already included issues of sexual orientation. Out of its global work force of 80,000, Raytheon has at least 19 workers who will be covered under the new policy, Bell said. It becomes one of at least 72 companies in the Fortune 500 to specifically protect employees based on gender identity.

American Indian tribes face gay marriage debate

TULSA — Lesbian couple Kathy Reynolds and Dawn McKinley lived a quiet suburban life until Dawn was barred from Kathy's hospital room because she was not family, and the two now are at the center of an American Indian battle over gay marriage, the Washington Post reported. Reynolds, 28, and McKinley, 33, requested and received a marriage application from the Cherokee Nation, becoming the first gay couple to marry under Cherokee law. A hearing was set this week to determine whether the pair actually are married under Cherokee law and will be legally recognized as a married couple in conservative Oklahoma, the Post reported. According to tribal sovereignty statutes, Native American marriages must be recognized by states. Reynolds and McKinley said they did not set out to make history. "We just wanted recognition for our relationship," Reynolds told the Post.

From staff and wire reports

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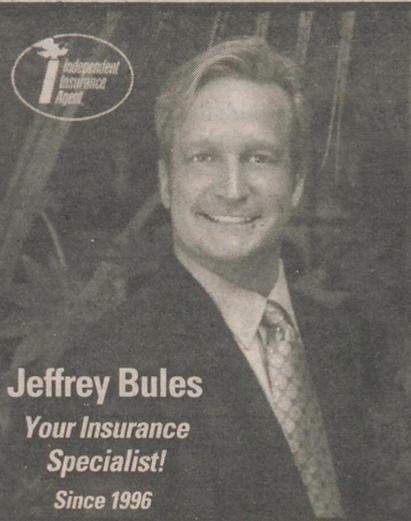
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national news

Ryan White proposal would shift funds to South

AIDS groups fear changes will lead to reduced services

By ELIZABETH WEILL-GREENBERG

A revised proposal for funding the Ryan White CARE Act may shift some resources from densely populated metropolitan areas to Southern states, sources familiar with the plan said.

Many Southern AIDS activists have pleaded for more federal funding, claiming they can't meet the basic medical needs for the growing numbers of people infected with HIV and AIDS.

One clinic in Alabama postpones putting patients on anti-retroviral medications because officials fear running out of the costly drugs and interrupting treatment, said Kathie Hyers, CEO of AIDS Alabama and co-chair of the Southern AIDS Coalition.

"We're delaying treatment because of a lack of drugs," said Hyers. "People are dying in the South because they can't get medications."

Hyers said she supports many of the White House proposals for redistributing Ryan White funds.

"My bottom line is the money should follow the epidemic," she said.

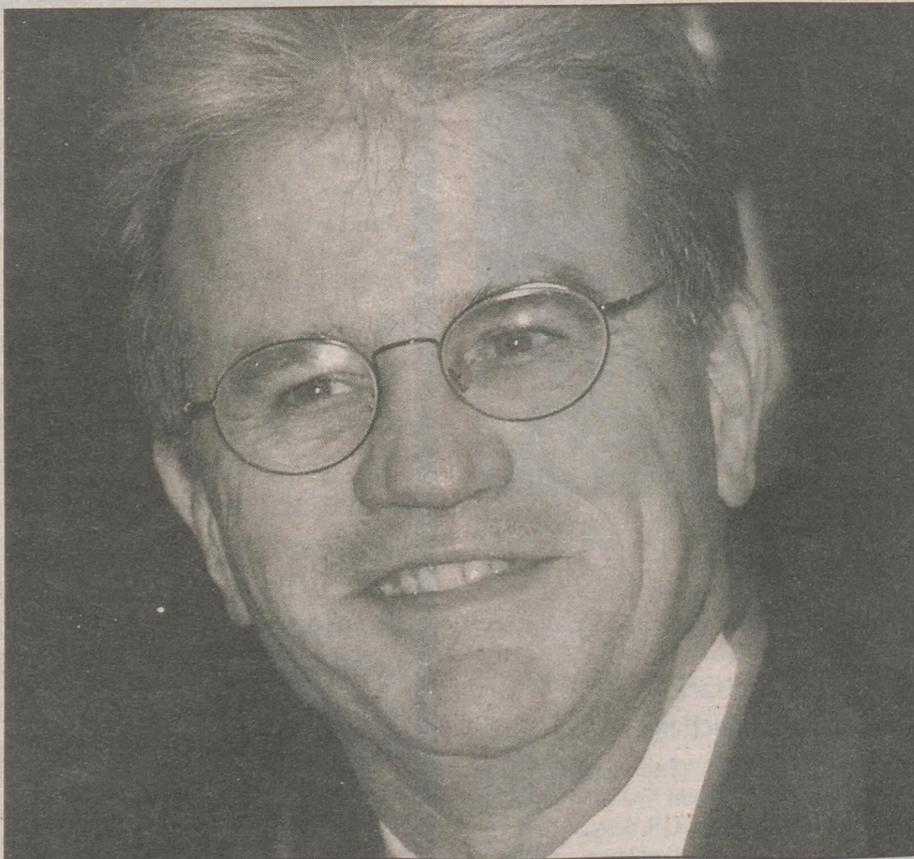
The Ryan White legislation funds primary care and support services for people living with HIV disease who have no other health care or the financial ability to pay for their care.

The White House proposes, among other initiatives, eliminating the "hold harmless provision" and so-called "double counting." In states with Eligible Metropolitan Areas (EMAs), people with AIDS are counted in the city count, and again for the state count. Both these provisions were intended to help the hardest hit areas create comprehensive systems of care and maintain funding without large fluctuations over the years.

The elimination of these provisions will potentially drain money from states with high incidence metropolitan areas, like California, New York, Illinois and Washington, D.C., and funnel it into areas of emerging need, including Southern states. Many advocates say that the hold harmless provision should be slowly reduced over the next five years.

The White House also advised that a national "set of core medical services" and a federal list of "core medications" for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) should be established. However, the proposal didn't specify which services or medications would be included or account for variables based on geographical differences, like varying needs for transportation and housing.

An AIDS activist who spoke on the condition of anonymity said that a group of AIDS activists met with Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) the day after the White House released its principles. The source did not



Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) is expected to be a leader in the reauthorization process for the Ryan White CARE Act, which is now in the hands of Congress.

say what was discussed, only that Coburn is expected to be a leader in the reauthorization process, which is now in the hands of Congress.

Coburn is a conservative former chair of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS. He was criticized by gay rights activists during last year's Senate campaign after warning in a speech that "lesbianism is so rampant in some of the schools in the southeast Oklahoma that they'll only let one girl go to the bathroom."

While Hyers supports the president's plan, she said that no matter what the funding formulas, more money is needed. Southern states recently learned that the presidential initiative, which granted extra funds to states with ADAP waiting lists, was being discontinued. Under this short-lived program, Alabama received \$4 million and was able to assist 400 people. The state ADAP program cannot absorb those numbers without additional funds, she said.

Hyers and advocates at AIDS Action, the HIV Medicine Association and the AIDS Institute applauded the White House's pledge to "serve the neediest first."

"We are pleased to see that [the administration] agreed with many of our own proposals by incorporating them into their principles," said Carl Schmid of the AIDS Institute in a statement.

But other organizations in urban centers said more money is needed. Despite 150,000 new AIDS cases, Ryan White has been flat-funded over the last five years, with only minor increases to the ADAP program, according to the National Association of People With AIDS (NAPWA).

Specific numbers were not included in

the new White House proposal; it makes no mention of asking Congress to authorize additional funds. There are no details of how much funding would go to emerging areas of need or how many dollars could be taken from urban centers if the principles were adopted.

Shifting needs?

Some advocates in urban centers said the White House proposal will only move gaps in care from one area of the country to another.

"You can't meet the disparity by just reshuffling the deck — by moving the disparity to the inner city," said David Munar, associate director of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago and a board member of NAPWA.

Chicago and nine surrounding counties — 5,000 square miles — are classified as an EMA. Eighty percent of Illinois' HIV and AIDS cases are in Chicago, Munar explained.

Title I of the Ryan White CARE Act provides Chicago and the neighboring areas with about \$23 million for AIDS-related community services. It receives an additional \$3.1 million in Title II funding, Munar said.

Title I funding represents dollars designated for EMAs; Title II funds are granted to each state and territory. If the proposal goes through, that area will lose \$3 million of its aid and the entire state would receive just 10 to 20 percent of its current grant, according to Munar.

This loss of funds will stretch a system that already can't match the need, Munar said.

"Our systems of care are just barely afloat," he said.

In Chicago, there are no openings for people with HIV who need substance abuse counseling — "those slots are gone," Munar added.

Like many metropolitan, gentrifying areas, Chicago lacks affordable housing, activists said. Throughout the entire EMA, there are only 30 long-term rental subsidies for people disabled by HIV and AIDS, Munar said. The Housing Choice Voucher program, formerly known as Section Eight, has at least an eight-year waiting list in Chicago and is not accepting new applicants, Munar said.

Illinois' strong public health safety net could actually hurt its funding, he pointed out. President Bush proposed a severity of need index to help determine funding. How the index will be calculated was not defined but Bush did say that one factor will be the availability of state and local resources. This could mean states that donate generously to their ADAP funds and have created strong public health safety nets, will, in effect, be punished and receive less federal funding.

"The least amount you invest in your people, the more CARE Act dollars you may get," Munar said, causing "states to race to the bottom."

EMAs in California, New York and Washington, D.C., stand to lose millions if the White House principles are adopted, some said. In California, where 90 percent of AIDS cases fall in nine EMAs, the state will lose \$20 million under Bush's plan, said Ernest Hopkins, director of federal affairs for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation.

D.C. could lose significant amounts of its Ryan White award as well, Hopkins warned.

"We're very supportive of the Bush administration's overall commitment to providing HIV and AIDS care," said Roberta Geidner-Antonetti, interim executive director of the Whitman-Walker Clinic, the leading AIDS service organization in D.C.

However, she added, the "lack of definition to principles leaves us without a clear understanding what the total impact might be."

"Any reduction in funding to D.C., Maryland or Northern Virginia could just have a devastating effect," Geidner-Antonetti said, pointing out that D.C. has an AIDS infection rate 10 to 12 times higher than other metropolitan areas. "Our fear is it will result in dismantling the existing care delivery system."

Many advocates were also concerned by Bush's proposal that 75 percent of Ryan White funds must be spent on "core medical services," which, were not defined.

Core medical services include, according to the Institute of Medicine, case management, substance abuse, mental health, prevention services and outpatient care, explained Munar.

But that list doesn't include the services currently funded by Ryan White, like transportation, housing, legal services, food assistance and child care, which help people to stay in care, he said.



medical report

Super-HIV not as scary as was first reported

NEW YORK, N.Y. — In February it was front-page news, now it looks like the New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene overreacted to reports of a virulent new strain of HIV. Connecticut physician Gary Blick announced that a patient of his is the source of the HIV strain that officials announced earlier this year. "However, we want to emphasize that our



patient is not rapidly progressing," Blick said at the Third International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Pathogenesis & Treatment in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In mid-February, Commissioner Thomas Frieden held a news conference to announce there was the possibility of a new strain of HIV that was resistant to the majority of drugs and progressed rapidly to AIDS. Called "three-class antiretroviral-resistant HIV," or 3-DCR HIV, this particularly virulent strain was discovered in an unnamed New York City man. In Blick's July 25 presentation, the doctor announced the strain of HIV in his patient and the New York resident were 99.5 percent identical. Don Bux, a research associate at the Center for Addiction & Substance Abuse at Columbia University, warned the case was not as atypical as the city claimed. "This is not the first time a drug resistant strain of HIV has been detected," Bux said. "It is also not the first time that an especially virulent form of HIV has been detected."

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AIDS epidemic only getting started, United Nations says

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (AP) — With a record 5 million new cases of HIV last year and major new outbreaks in Central Asia and China, the epidemic's impact is only now becoming fully apparent, a top United Nations official said last week. "It's still an emerging epidemic. Just now we're getting into the globalization phase," Dr. Peter Piot, executive director of the United Nations Program of HIV/AIDS, told the Associated Press. Piot said the disease was also undergoing "feminism," transforming itself from a disease that once largely affected gay males into a disease that has infected a roughly equal number of women and men around the world. In southern Africa, about 60 percent of those infected are female. And while UNAIDS estimates the amount of money devoted to fighting the disease has increased 35 fold since 1996 to about \$8 billion this year alone, there is little reason for optimism. Some 5,000 scientists, doctors, health professionals and public policy specialists from around the world documented only incremental progress in the fight against AIDS.

Thailand offers anti-retroviral drugs to all for almost no cost

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) — Thailand announced it will offer anti-retroviral drugs at almost no cost to the nation's 500,000 people with the AIDS virus. "We will be the first country in the world to give every person living with AIDS access to anti-retroviral drugs," said a statement from the Ministry of Public Health. The Thai-produced drugs — which slow the spread of HIV — will be added to a government health care initiative that provides basic care to all Thais for only 72 cents per hospital visit, including services, tests and medications.

San Francisco officials report large drop in HIV cases

SAN FRANCISCO — Three new studies suggest that the spread of HIV among this city's gay residents has significantly slowed, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. City health officials are contemplating scaling back their estimates of the number of new HIV infections each year. Since 2001, health leaders in the city have estimated that more than 1,000 residents are newly infected each year with the virus that causes AIDS. A federal study last month, however, found new infections among gay men in San Francisco are occurring at about half the rate on record from 2001, according to the Chronicle. "This one [CDC] study has been quite an eye opener for us," Dr. Willi McFarland, epidemiologist for the San Francisco Department of Public Health's Office of AIDS, told the newspaper. Prompted by the CDC figures, health officials analyzed other sets of data and found the same trend in two of them.

British study confirms drug cocktails reduce AIDS rates

LONDON — According to British researchers, cocktails of anti-AIDS drugs cut by 86 percent the rate of progression from HIV to full-blown AIDS compared to patients who receive no treatment, Reuters reported. In combination with at least three treatments from two drug classes, the effectiveness of highly active anti-retroviral therapy or HAART increases over time, the scientists said. But Dr. Jonathan Sterne of the University of Bristol in southwestern England, who headed the research team, said HAART therapy is not as beneficial for patients who may have been infected through intravenous drug use.

From staff and wire reports

national news

Documents may hint at stance

ROBERTS, continued from Page 1

come before the Supreme Court in the next several years.

If confirmed by the Senate in the fall, a gay-related military case would be one of the first cases Roberts is likely to consider as a new Supreme Court justice. The case, *Fair vs. Rumsfeld*, came to the high court when the Bush administration appealed a ruling last year by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals overturning the Solomon Amendment, a federal law calling for cutting off federal funds to universities that deny military recruiters access to campus facilities.

In the 1990s, a number of the nation's elite universities barred military recruiters from their campuses on grounds that their presence would violate university policies of shunning employers that engage in discrimination, including sexual orientation discrimination.

The universities cited the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy of prohibiting gays from serving in the military unless they conceal their sexual orientation as the reason for their bans on military recruiters.

The universities backed down from this practice following Congress' approval of the Solomon Amendment, out of fear that they would lose millions of dollars in federal funds. A consortium of universities challenged the constitutionality of the Solomon Amendment in a joint lawsuit in federal court. The Third Circuit's decision to overturn the law is considered an important victory for gay activists, who hope to eventually overturn the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy through litigation.

Challenges to "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" are among the next set of gay-related cases that could come before the Supreme Court in the near future. At least two lawsuits seeking to overturn the policy are pending, one filed by the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network in the First Circuit Court of Appeals and another by the national gay group Log Cabin Republicans in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The Ninth Circuit has already rejected a previous challenge to the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

If the appeals courts overturn the policy, the Bush administration is expected to file an immediate appeal to the Supreme Court.

Roberts to enforce 'settled law'

Some activists predict a challenge to one or more state laws banning gay marriage could also find its way to the Supreme Court's docket. A suit challenging the federal Defense of Marriage Act, which denies federal benefits to married same-sex couples, could also come before the high court, gay rights attorneys have said.

Roberts was in his 20s at the time he expressed his critical views on constitutional privacy rights. He was an assistant to French Smith in the early years of the Reagan administration.

Some legal observers have questioned



Newly released documents show that Supreme Court nominee John Roberts drafted an article for then Attorney General William French Smith — pictured here with Sandra Day O'Connor — in 1981, which revealed Roberts' skepticism of the Constitution's 'right to privacy' doctrine. (Photo by Dennis Cook/AP)

whether Roberts' views have since moderated, more than 20 years later. In recent years, in his role as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, Roberts has said he would respect and enforce "settled law," including the 1973 decision of *Roe vs. Wade*, which legalized abortion.

Legal experts point out that the court used *Roe* and other privacy rights cases as a foundation for the *Lawrence* decision in 2003. *Lawrence* is considered one of the most important decisions in favor of gay civil rights. Written by Justice Anthony Kennedy and approved by a 6-3 margin, it recognizes that gay people have a fundamental right to privacy that can't be denied by the government.

Gay rights attorneys have expressed concern that a decision by the high court to overturn *Roe* could lead to the eventual overturning of *Lawrence*.

Chai Feldblum, a Georgetown University Law School professor and gay rights attorney, said the emerging documents on Roberts' work in the Reagan administration, and the administration of President George H.W. Bush, shed light on a judicial philosophy he is likely to apply to issues expected to come before the court in the future.

"What we see from the memos he wrote is his vision that the privacy provision in the Constitution should be limited," said Feldblum. "He doesn't strike me as someone who will have an expansive vision on privacy rights."

"What is not clear is how this will play out in gay rights cases," Feldblum said. "If he is conservative in not wanting to upset the existing applecart, he may not want to overturn *Lawrence*. But how he would apply *Lawrence* to something else — that is an unknown."

Feldblum said the information that has emerged so far on Roberts' record and views should no longer be dismissed as "tea leaves" that can't be predictive of his current views.

"They represent his vision of the Constitution that I doubt would change over time," she said. "They are core beliefs. He clearly believes these privacy rights guarantees should be given a narrow scope."

Helping gay youth find self-esteem and empowerment

From helping gay youth to promoting gay films, Deb Murphy's life is full

By DAWN RORIE

Deb Murphy may be one of the first to lament that for gay youth, life is hard. During her time as a high school history and science teacher, she witnessed the experiences of her gay students firsthand.

Verbal and physical violence were a constant reality to any teen perceived as being gay.

Sex education and positive information regarding homosexuality were both lacking. Instead, most public schools featured abstinence-only sex education programs. If homosexuality was mentioned at all, Murphy says, it was only discussed in reference to the spread of disease.

Discrimination in the school systems was a factor "every day, all day," says Murphy. "Not just from the kids—from the faculty and staff, as well."

The experience helped Murphy realize two things. First, she had a passion for working with young people, and secondly, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth needed guidance, support, and somewhere to turn.

It was inevitable that Murphy would find H.A.T.C.H. Started in 1987, the non-profit organization provides a safe social environment, peer support and educational programs for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth between the ages of thirteen and twenty.

Confidential, drop-in meetings, supervised by screened and trained adult volunteers, allow youths to have fun, socialize, and take part in educational programs that focus on building self-esteem, empowerment, and providing important health information.

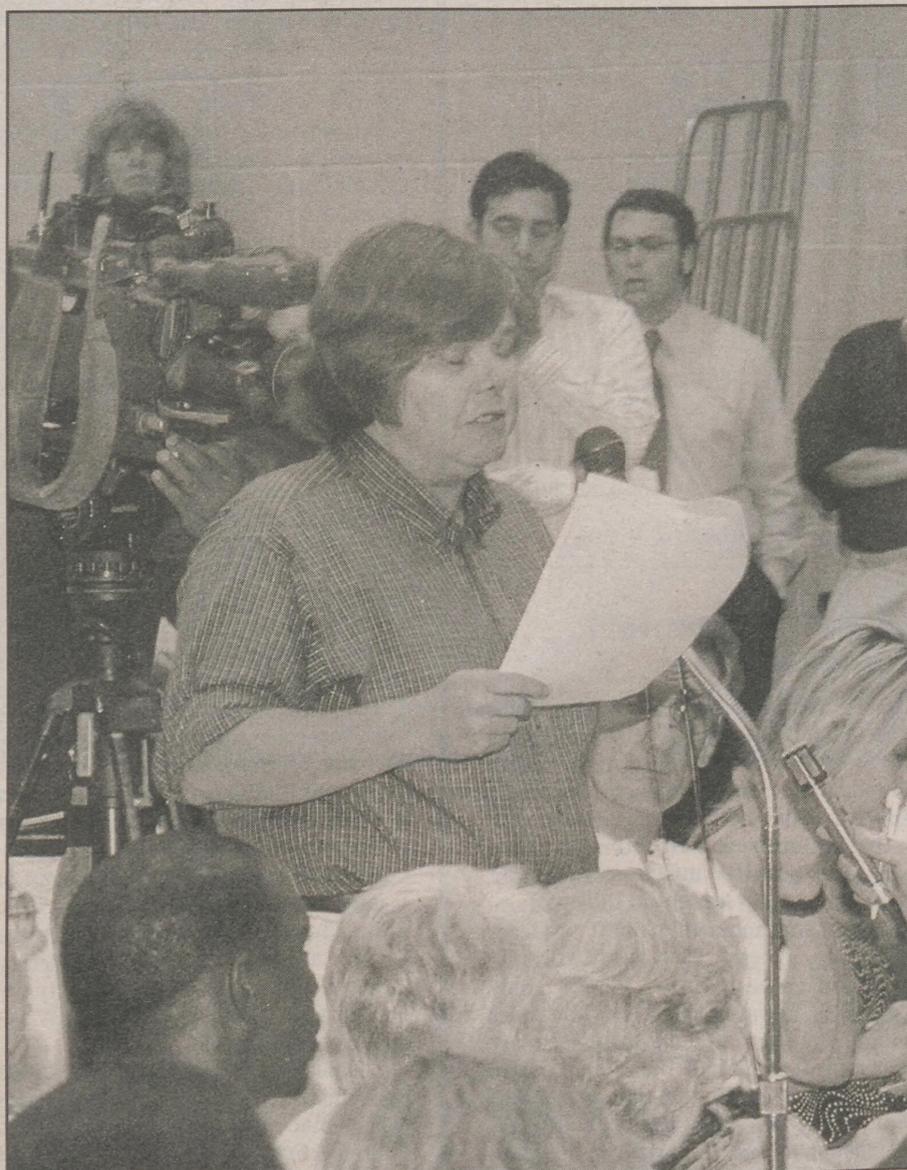
Program topics include information about safer sex, the dangers of drug use, and staying safe at school and when out and about in the community.

Murphy, who was doing freelance writing at the time, was asked to write an article on H.A.T.C.H. After researching the group, she was "entranced."

"I immediately asked the executive director for a job," Murphy remembers. "I was further impressed by the fact that the hiring committee had two youths on it. I said to myself, 'What a great idea!'"

MORE INFO

H.A.T.C.H.
713-529-3590
www.hatchyouth.org



Deb Murphy, Youth Services Worker for H.A.T.C.H., spoke about the plight of gay youth during a recent townhall meeting to discuss homeless teens in Montrose. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

The youth are empowered."

Shortly after Murphy became the Youth Services Worker for H.A.T.C.H., the organization became a project of the Montrose Counseling Center. Since then, Murphy says, "great things have happened." The number and variety of programs that H.A.T.C.H. provides has increased.

Among the new areas where H.A.T.C.H. has been able to focus is the public school system. Working with the nonprofit organization Communities in Schools, H.A.T.C.H. has been able to organize regular meetings at various area H.I.S.D. schools, during school time.

Another program, "Satellite H.A.T.C.H.," seeks to provide meetings to sexual minority youth in the outlying areas around Houston.

For youth who attend H.A.T.C.H. and inevitably age out of the program, the Youth Development Project provides opportunities with organizations such as the Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of

Commerce and the Human Rights Campaign. While the organizations get the benefit of the young people's energy and enthusiasm, the youth are mentored and taught valuable skills.

Success is well documented

The benefits of H.A.T.C.H. are numerous and well documented. According to Murphy, outcome measure surveys taken twice a year have yielded encouraging results. The longer youths continue to participate in H.A.T.C.H., the less likely they are to drop out of school, do drugs, or engage in unsafe sexual activity.

Murphy emphasizes that the purpose of H.A.T.C.H., in addition to education, is to provide an atmosphere in which sexual minority youth can relax and have a good time in a safe environment.

In addition to a social hour at the beginning of every meeting, H.A.T.C.H. schedules movie nights and builds a float each year for Houston's GLBT Pride Parade.

DEB MURPHY

Age: 50

Occupation: Youth services worker, Film Festival administrator; technical writer

Education: B.S. degree in chemistry from Florida Atlantic University; completed management program at Rice University

Pets: None

Hobbies: Restoration of historic home in Galveston ("It's just something I've always wanted to do.")

Relationship Status: Single

Thinking about this year's parade, Murphy pauses to praise H.A.T.C.H. adult volunteers. This year, members of the Dallas chapter of Youth First joined the H.A.T.C.H. youth to march in the Houston Pride Parade.

"Imagine shepherding one hundred excited kids down Westheimer," Murphy laughs. "We have such great volunteers—the best volunteers I've ever worked with. They are really amazing men and women."

In addition to her work with H.A.T.C.H., Murphy also serves as Youth Services Worker for the Methamphetamine Addiction Prevention Program (M.A.P.P.), a project of the Center for Success and Independence.

Murphy is concerned about the growing use of meth in the gay community. Although the drug used to be popular in rural areas and among various fringe groups, meth has become a widely used gay party drug.

"Methamphetamine should rightly be called gay crack. It reaps the same results as crack. Your whole life becomes the drug, and you don't have a life anymore. Meth is destroying a generation," she says.

Young outreach workers with M.A.P.P. spend time at Houston-area nightclubs, talking to other young people and passing out colorful pamphlets that discuss the dangers of the drug in honest, everyday language.

In the midst of a schedule already filled to the brim with H.A.T.C.H. and M.A.P.P., Murphy serves as Festival Administrator for the Houston Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. As with her other jobs, she insists that there is no "best part" of her job with the Film Festival.

"I enjoy the entire job. I love, love, love queer film," she says.

In her downtime, Murphy is passionate about restoring the 1900 storm-survivor house in which she resides in Galveston. She started on the project five years ago, and is doing the majority of the work herself.

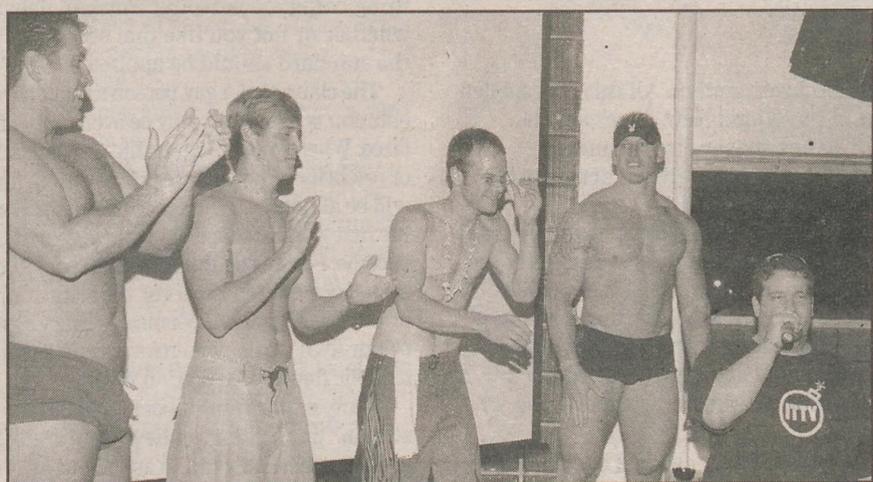
At work and at play, Murphy is happy. Her philosophy is simple: find what you love and do it. "If you like everything that you do, it doesn't seem like work," she says, smiling.

out in houston

(Photos by Dalton DeHart)



Members of Montrose Softball League's Wolves gathered recently at Guava Lamp for their sendoff to the softball World Series in San Diego.



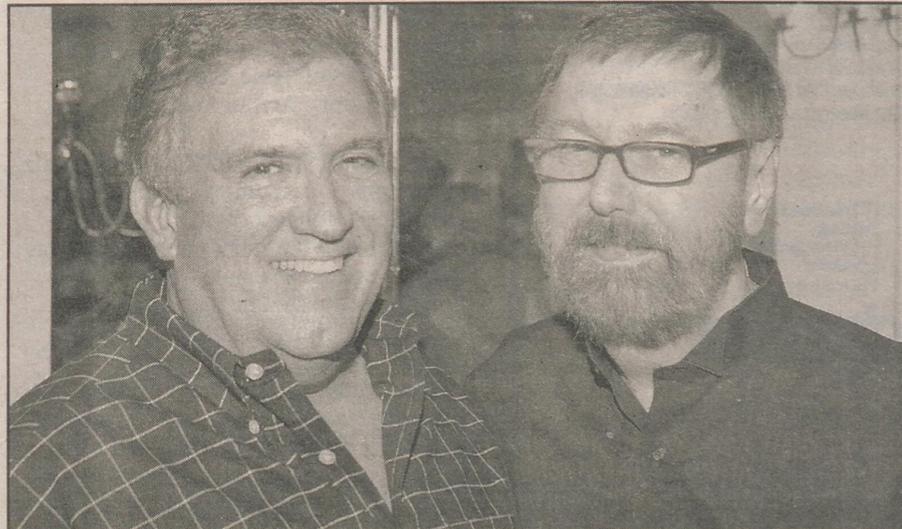
Boys showed their stuff at Rich's Beach, Boys and Balls evening recently.



Just before announcing his candidacy for Texas governor, Democrat Chris Bell (left) talked with (from left) Sharon and George Jacobs and Gerry Birbaum.



Gary Evans (left) and Sean Hawkins were among the participants in the recent Diana Foundation Summer Sizzler.



Richard Watson and Diana Foundation President Bob Briddick, at the Summer Sizzler.



Participants in the recent Denim Party at Brazos River Bottom came clad in, well, denim.

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Forum

HOUSTON VOICE

AUGUST 5, 2005

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editorial

Did the Miami New Times kill Arthur Teele?

The suicide of a former Miami public official has again sparked debate on the question of outing.

By MUBARAK DAHIR

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO know what dark thoughts filled the mind of former Miami Commissioner Arthur Teele as he walked into the lobby of the Miami Herald shortly after 6 p.m.

on Wednesday, July 27.

That's when the controversial former commissioner made national headlines by putting a semiautomatic pistol to the right side of his head, waiting for police to arrive, and pulling the trigger.

It was also the same day that the Miami New Times, a weekly alternative paper, published a detailed news report titled, "Tales of Teele: Sleaze Stories."

In that story, Arthur Teele was outed.

THE VOLUMINOUS ARTICLE DETAILED allegations of corruption, drug use and paying prostitutes for sex.

Included in the story were accounts, as given to police, of a male transvestite prostitute who said he had numerous encounters with Teele, in which Teele paid him for sex.

His accounts were sexually graphic, including details of times when he says he was anally penetrated by Teele, and when he says Teele was anally penetrated by him.

In no uncertain terms, the paper outed Teele as engaging in homosexual behavior.

OF COURSE, THE STORY ALSO recounted allegations of fraud and corruption. But these were nothing new to Teele.

Indeed, in the past year, he had been mired in both federal and state corruption charges. Teele's most serious legal problems stemmed from more than two dozen legal counts against him and an electrical contractor, in which Teele was charged with lying to get more than \$20 million in contracts at the Miami International Airport earmarked to go to minority businesses.

In fact, the former commissioner had been charged with criminal offenses three times in the past year, mostly around allegations of fraud and money laundering. In March, the beleaguered former politician was also convicted in state court of threatening a police officer in yet another cor-

ruption investigation. All this was spelled out in the Miami New Times article.

The newspaper also recounted episodes of alleged illegal drug use by Teele.

But the most salacious, headline-grabbing portion of the story was clearly the revelation of Teele's sexual escapades.

It seems hard to believe that it was a mere coincidence that Teele shot himself in the head the same day the newspaper's account of his same-sex romps hit the streets.

The whole ugly episode has once again sparked a national debate on the ethics of outing.

THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT a person's sexual orientation and sexual behavior is fair game for public reporting is a question with a long history of debate.

Most "mainstream" publications continue to refuse to report whether or not someone is gay or bisexual against a person's will. This rule is surprisingly adhered to, even when hypocrisy is the issue beyond sexual orientation.

For example, gay or lesbian politicians who themselves promote anti-gay agendas, or who work to defeat gay-supportive bills, are routinely given a free pass by the "mainstream" press. It is unfathomable that a politician who, for example, crusades against abortion rights would not be confronted by the media if a reporter found out the politician's wife or daughter secretly had an abortion.

In the modern world of ultra-scrutiny of public figures, particularly of politicians and celebrities, almost nothing seems out of bounds when it comes to divulging the juiciest details of a person's private life or past: Legal woes, emotional outbursts, sex scandals, drug use, financial problems, personality flaws, even medical conditions. In this day and age, reporters at "mainstream" publications don't shy away from digging into the most personal of facts.

Except when it comes to the gay thing.

In the mainstream media, there is still almost universal avoidance of tackling the gay and lesbian question.

PART OF THAT RESISTANCE MAY BE in the history of outing itself.

Traditionally, outing was used by anti-gay people as a means to ruin a gay person's life. The revelation that someone was homosexual was so horrible, it meant their demise.

Today, representatives of the "mainstream" media most frequently say they do not ask whether or not someone is gay because it is "personal." Another often-repeated line is that sexual orientation is "irrelevant."

Both excuses are malarkey.

In this day and age, where public figures rightly or wrongly are put under a microscope, it's difficult to imagine anything being too personal. You can debate whether or not you like that standard; but the standard should be applied evenly.

The claim that a gay person's sexual orientation is irrelevant may be even more of a farce. When examining the life of a politician or celebrity or newsmaker of any kind, there will be all kinds of influences on his or her life that work to shape who that person has become. For most gay and lesbian people, our sexual orientation is part of the critical core of our identity, and it permeates every aspect of our lives. To deny its relevance in shaping a public figure is, in fact, an insult.

Many editors and reporters at "mainstream" publications believe they are being pro-gay when they fail to ask about or investigate someone's sexual orientation. Many actually believe they are somehow helping to "protect" the person in question.

But this unparalleled refusal to inquire about whether or not a public figure is gay doesn't help gay and lesbian people. Indeed, it harms us tremendously.

And this is why: By refusing to simply ask whether or not someone is gay perpetuates the notion that answering affirmatively is the ultimate shame.

I DO NOT PRETEND TO KNOW WHAT possessed Arthur Teele to feel that a bullet in the head was preferable to people knowing he had sex with a man.

But I do know the Miami New Times isn't responsible for Teele's death. If anything, the conspiracy of silence in the "mainstream" media around sexual orientation is far more of a culprit when it comes to contributing to an atmosphere of shame and fear around sexual identity.

Of course, private citizens shouldn't be outed without good reason. When to come out remains a personal and private decision for each person to make in his or her own time.

But for people in the public eye, we can't have one set of rules for straight people, and another set for gay people.

There's no shame in asking if someone is gay. Indeed, it's a disgrace not to.

@ Mubarak Dahir is editor of the Express Gay News and can be reached at mdahir@express-gaynews.com



letters

On the marriage amendment front

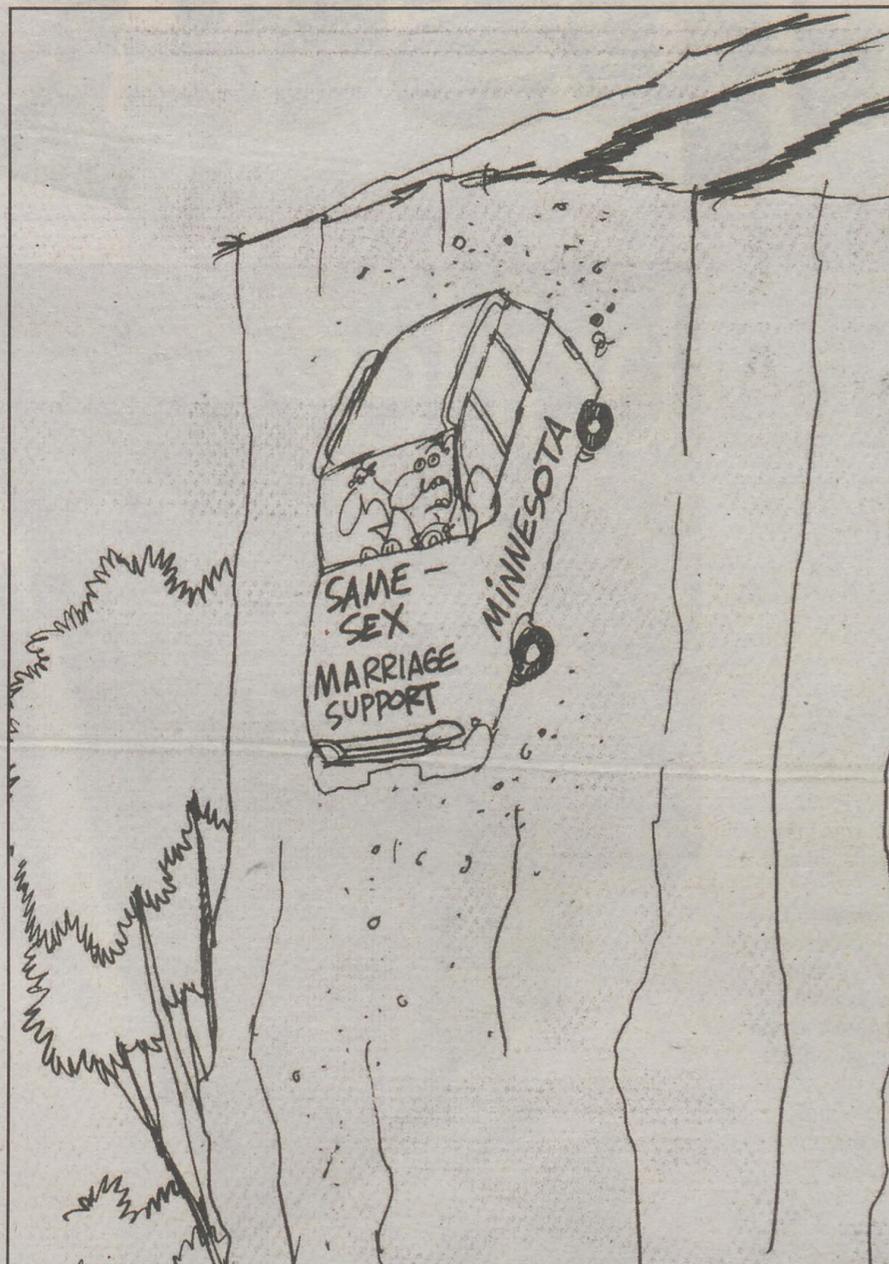
To the Editors,
 RE: "The Q" (July 29)
 The July 29, 2005 Houston Voice asked five individuals what they were willing to do to campaign for full equality in face of the marriage amendment in November. One said he would "petition and call state legislators." All that happened last spring; it's too late for that now. The amendment is on the ballot; it's up to the GLBT community and its allies to reach out to the voters.

So what can be done?
 PERSON TO PERSON contact is the most effective tool.
 Participate in HERA (Houston Equal Rights Alliance)'s voter identification projects: www.houstonera.org
 Check the www.NoNonsenseinNovember.com Web site for how you can be helpful.

Participate in the Houston GLBT Political Caucus, 713-521-1000, www.hglbt.org. Join their Community Work Day Saturday, August 13, "Learn About Opportunities to Fight the Upcoming Anti-Gay Constitutional Amendment."

Pass out, accompanied by a brief conversation, "Leave No Family Behind" cards, sponsored by PFLAG Houston. Check the PFLAG Web site for details such as what the fliers look like, how and where to get them, how to make them, and suggested conversations: www.pflag-houston.org

SUE NULL
 Advocacy Chair
 PFLAG
 Houston



Kudos to you for noting the larger and more critical issues at stake in my cousin, Jonathan Plummer's, nasty split from Terry McMillan.

It's very difficult to see two people I care about have their lives on display this way. However, I must say my loyalty

is with Jonathan. He has had a hell of a journey "out" from rural Jamaica to Hollywood.

I hope one day, when the dust settles, he will tell his own story. He is one of the most courageous and resilient people I know, and he has faced quite serious

repercussions for discovering who he is and coming out.

He is married to a masterful storyteller, and her allegations of fraud and embezzlement are just her doing what she does best.

MARK PLUMMER
 San Francisco

Freedom for gays and ex-gays alike

To the Editors:
 Re: "Lock up the 'ex-gays'" (editorial by Kevin Naff, June 24):

The only way to truly understand the experience of ex-gay individuals is through the broader lens of compassion and objectivity, which Kevin Naff seems to sorely lack.

Throughout human history, men and women have changed from one sexual orientation to another. The process of coming out as gay involves choice and change. Most, if not all, gay and lesbian individuals begin teen years or adulthood labeled by society as heterosexual. At some point they announce to friends and family that from now on, they want to be known as gay.

The choice to come out as gay is no different from the choice ex-gays make to walk away from the homosexual lifestyle. That is a choice they are free to make in a free country.

Naff obviously can't consider a worldview so at odds with his own, perhaps because it threatens his deeply ingrained sense of himself as being gay from birth; but ignoring an error doesn't make the error disappear.

Thank God we live in a country where gays are free to express their identity and to live that lifestyle in relative comfort and security. But by the same reasoning, ex-gays have the right to choose a different path, and no amount of idle threats of litigation or "lock-up" by radical gay hatemongers can take that right away.

CARL DAVID BIRMAN
 Harrison, N.Y.

Don't fall for Stella's story

To the Editors:
 Re "Losing her groove" (Dish, July 1):

THE Q
If you could have a one-night stand with any celebrity, who would you choose and why?



Barbra Streisand because she has always been my 'Funny Girl.'

DONNA JUNKER, 51
 Houston
 Administrative assistant



Sean Connery. Always wanted.

VASCO ROSANIA, 42
 Houston
 Looking



If I were a straight man, I would say Condoleezza Rice. There is just something hot about a woman with all that power. Because I'm gay, then Russell Crowe because I want to see first-hand if it's true...

SCOTT SCOGGINS, 36
 Houston
 Owner Crossover Gifts and realtor



Michael Meyers, the Halloween psycho, not the comedian. Why, you ask? I love a good scream in the bedroom.

JOSE LARA, 28
 Houston
 Human resources associate analyst



Tom Cruise. Hot, hot, hot!

GARY EVANS 63
 Houston
 Pharmacist

eclipse

GAY HOUSTON NIGHTLIFE, ARTS & CULTURE

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Boys toys
Rumblings about romance
on the 'Dukes' set says
the action is man-on-man.
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AUGUST 5, 2005

here come the

brides

GAY WEDDING BOOM TAKES OFF TO NEWLY LEGAL LOCALES

By DYANA BAGBY

W

HEN REBECCA AND JEN STAPEL-WAX exchanged wedding vows eight years ago, same-sex marriage was just beginning to pop up on the political and cultural radar screens.

The couple, both 35 and now with two young boys, traveled from their current home in Georgia to their home state of Massachusetts to be married in Jen's parent's backyard on June 29, 1997. That was eight years before that blue state became the only one in the union to recognize marriage equality.

Their wedding was not only a pronouncement of their love to each other, but also a statement to family and friends that their relationship deserves first-class status, the women say.

"We had 130 folks there and not all were supportive, even on the day of the wedding," acknowledges Rebecca, executive director of a gay Jewish resource and support center.

The couple's wedding ceremony was conducted as an interfaith service, but Jen, a pediatric psychologist, later converted to Judaism.

"But most important to us was having our immediate family," Rebecca says. "It was a turning point for us. We had been together already five years and felt like we were married already, but this solidified things. We showed the world we were committed to each other."

Four years later, on Dec. 21, 2001, the couple renewed their vows in Vermont after that state legalized civil unions. Today, gay couples can legally marry in Massachusetts, and the Stapel-Wax's said they plan to return one day soon to get a legal marriage certificate.

MORE THAN TWO YEARS AGO, GAY COUPLES IN the U.S. also started traveling to Canada to get married in provinces where it was legal. Same-sex marriage became legal throughout the country earlier this month.

On June 30, Spain approved marriage for gay couples and added itself to the Netherlands and Belgium as countries where gay unions are legal. The United Church of Christ sanctioned gay unions on July 4.

With the slow upturn in acceptance in spots around the globe, business is booming for people that plan weddings with gay couples in mind, and Americans appear



to top the list of interested customers.

"Ninety-five percent of our business is from the United States," says Taylore Darnel, co-owner of Belles & Balls Extraordinary Wedding & Events in Vancouver, British Columbia.

So far this year, Darnel helped plan 17 same-sex weddings, and her company averages two to three weddings a month, she said. People come from all over the U.S. to get married in Canada, and Darnel also planned weddings for gay couples from Australia, the United Kingdom and Malaysia.

Because of its close proximity, many gay couples travel to Canada for their legal marriage, but the benefits typically are not valid in the United States. Darnel says her clients often use their wedding certificate as a tool with progressive employers, for example, to gain domestic partner benefits.

Cindy Sproul, a lesbian and co-founder of the Asheville, N.C.-based Rainbow Wedding Network, pro-

duces gay and lesbian wedding expos throughout the nation. Sproul says it's increasingly common for gay couples to travel away from home to get married legally. Her business is planning to tap into the European market soon to take advantage of the steps being taken there.

But despite the lack of legality "the majority of weddings we see are staying in the U.S.," Sproul says. Her Web site registers about 40 gay couples a week and has helped plan nearly 5,000 weddings, including some in Canada, she says.

IN THE WEDDINGS SPROUL HELPED PLAN, MORE than \$7 million was spent with vendors advertising on her Web site. The overall U.S. wedding industry is worth about \$70 billion a year, and Forbes magazine estimated in 2004 that if same-sex marriages were legal-

Please see **MARRIAGE** on Page 19

FOOTBALLERS WIVES: The newest offering from the BBC is so trashy, so campy and so fabulous. Page 14

'THE PHOENIX': A 'cookie-baking Midwestern grandma' has written about a love affair between two men. Page 15

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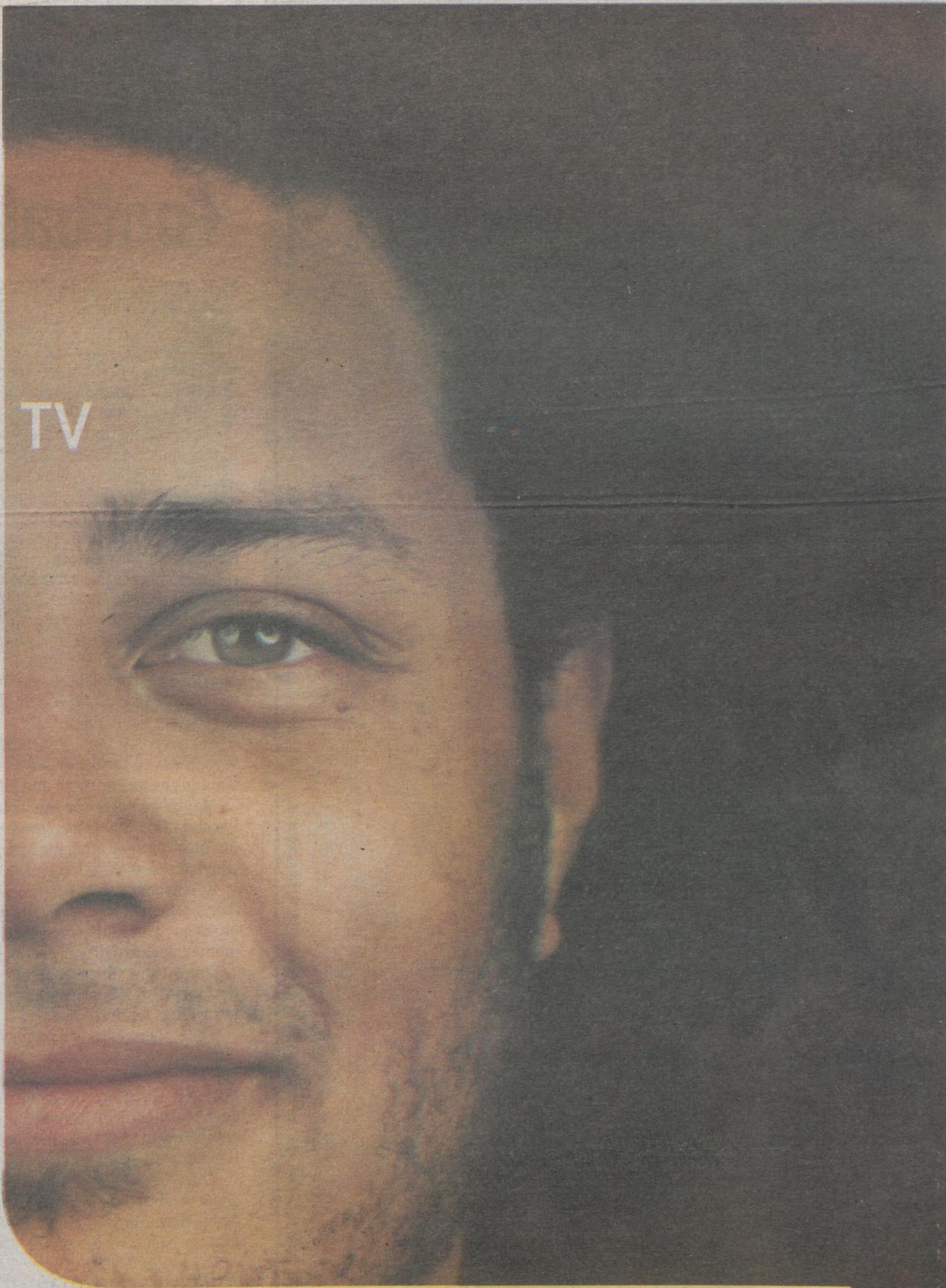


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television BRIAN MOYLAN



Leave it to the BBC to air 'Footballers Wive\$', a show so trashy, campy, fabulous and addictive it made the leap to America.

'Footballers' scores

EVIL TONYA TURNER MIGHT BE able to beat bitchy Alexis Carrington in a catfight.

For all of you who say, "There is no way that anyone could top Joan Collins' diva-licious antics on 'Dynasty,'" you haven't seen "Footballers Wive\$." It's in the midst of its first season, on Sunday nights at 9 p.m., on BBC America.

Tonya (Zöe Lucker) is a disgustingly rich, chain-smoking, coke-snorting, manipulative, crazy woman. Boy, is she fabulous.

Her relationship with philandering footballer (or, as we say here in the colonies, "soccer player") husband, Jason (Cristian Solimeno), is so astonishingly dysfunctional that it's a pleasure to watch.

Jason plays for the Earls Park Sparks, a fictional soccer team, along with kind Ian (Nathan Constance), sexy-but-naive Kyle (Gary Lucy), and Italian superstar Sal (Daniel Schutzmann).

We never see them in a match, rarely seem them on the field, but often see the team in the locker room and showers.

Maybe we never see them play because it's clear that the women are in charge. Ian has Donna (Katherine Monaghan), who frets over their long-lost son.

Kyle is married to Chardonnay (Susie Amy), a former topless model who is annoyed by her husband's meddling mother, Jackie (Gillian Taylforth).

And let's not forget Donna's slutty sister Marie (Micaiah Dring), who makes her rounds on the team.

Then, there is the amazing Tanya, who bludgeoned the team's owner in the first episode after he threatened to bench her husband. He's now in a coma and she's been waiting by his bedside, trying to devise a way to off him for good. She's like Lady Macbeth on crack.

There aren't any gay characters on the show yet, but look for lesbian sports agent Hazel Bailey (Alison Newman) to join the cast near the end of the season.

A HUGE HIT ON BRITAIN'S ITV, WHERE it just finished its fourth season, BBC America seems to have scheduled "Wive\$" to capitalize on the success of ABC's "Desperate Housewives," which airs on ABC in the same time slot.

While they're both prime-time soap operas, they couldn't be more different. "Housewives," from gay creator Marc Cherry, looks at the genre with a winking



It's all glamour and scandal for the 'Footballers Wive\$' — Jackie (Gillian Taylforth, seated), Chardonnay (Susie May) and evil Tanya (Zöe Lucker) — who lord over BBC America on Sunday nights. (Photo courtesy of Shed Productions)

eye, using a hefty amount of irony, slapstick and dark humor to make a light, but suspenseful, confection.

"Wive\$" has no intention of being subtle or silly. This is balls-to-the-wall nighttime drama. It mixes over-the-top characters in opulent clothes and mansions a la "Dynasty" and "Dallas" with the fast-paced, outlandish plots of "Melrose Place."

The stories are insane. You will find yourself saying, "Oh no, she didn't," at least once an episode.

Because of this signature outrageousness, "Wive\$" tends to be a little campy (one of the characters has an actual fairy tale wedding), but it never goes for laughs.

The Aug. 7 program marks the midway point of the first season's eight episodes. But because the plot moves so quickly, you can easily tune in late. For those who don't want to miss a second, however, the first season is already available on DVD.

BBC America plans to roll out the next season in October. Just don't go poking around the Internet, because it's easy to find synopses of plots for the programs that already aired in the UK.

When dealing with something as fun as "Footballers Wive\$" it would be terrible to ruin the surprises.

i MORE INFO

'Footballers Wive\$'
BBC America
Sundays at 8 p.m.

books KEN SAIN



Despite the prevalence of one-dimensional characters, 'The Phoenix,' a historical novel about two gay men, entertains and enthralls.

Victorian love affair

THE FIRST NOVEL BY RUTH SIMS, A self-proclaimed "cookie-baking mid-Western grandma," is a love story set in Victorian times, in England and the United States.

"The Phoenix" tells the story of famous actor Kit St. Denys and the love of his life, Nick Stuart. Despite the flaws you might expect from a first-time novelist, the book, published by the Writers' Collective in Cranston, R.I., is entertaining.

The story focuses on the two men's love affair, which is constantly placed on hold by events outside their control.

Kit St. Denys is a famous and very rich actor who was born a pauper named Jack Rourke. We meet him when he's 14 and trying to take care of his somewhat fragile twin brother Michael, despite an indifferent mother and an abusive father.

When Michael dies from abuse and neglect, and after an angry confrontation with his alcoholic father, Jack runs away and is eventually adopted by a rich, childless gay man named Xavier St. Denys. To escape from his past, Jack changes his name to Christopher "Kit" St. Denys. And with the advantages of wealth, changes his life's destiny.

WHILE ST. DENYS IS EVOLVING FROM pauper to prince, Nick Stuart is learning from his religious father how to be a country doctor; Nick never decided to become a doctor, like nearly everything else in his life, it was decided for him.

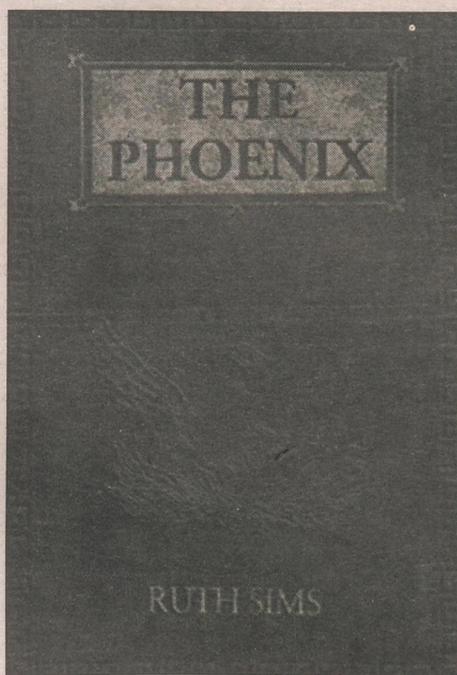
Still, Nick develops a passion for helping people and eventually decides to attend a university, over the objections of his father, to learn more.

Both men react differently to their homosexuality.

While Kit embraces it, chasing after every rough-looking man he can, Nick's strong religious views force him to run from that part of himself.

When the two lovers finally meet, it is after St. Denys has established himself as a star of the theater and Stuart has set up a clinic in a rough part of London to help those who likely can't pay him much.

For both men, this is about lust and love.



FROM THERE, MANY DETOURS IN THE story force the two men apart, including Nick moving to New York and marrying, trying to escape his love for Kit. Through all the drama, however, both men realize how much they need each other.

"The Phoenix" refers to a painting that St. Denys purchases and treasures, which signifies his rebirth, much like the fabled mythical creature.

Perhaps the book's greatest flaw is its one-dimensional characters. St. Denys' biological father, for example, is the pure embodiment of evil. He has no other shades.

All he lives for is booze, whoring around, and beating his wife and children. Many of the novel's other secondary characters are given similar treatment.

Another challenge is how Sims works in historical facts in the book that she obviously spent a great deal of time researching. Some of it seems like it's just thrown in for little reason other than to prove that this, indeed, is historical fiction. For example, at one point a couple of characters visit a new circus because they've heard so many wonderful things about Mr. Barnum and Mr. Bailey's show.

Nonetheless, Sims' research is also one of the book's strengths. She does a wonderful job recreating the New York theater scene at the turn of the century.

"The Phoenix" is an entertaining effort, and anyone interested in gay historical fiction, especially of the Victorian era, should enjoy it. There's action, drama, romance and a love between two souls that belong together.

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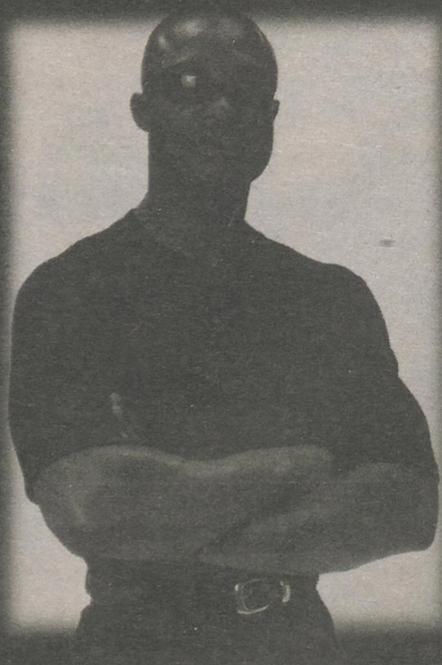
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i MORE INFO

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music BUCK C. COOKE

On R&B singer Vivian Green's latest album, self-love carries the day. She wrote and co-produced most of the songs on 'Vivian,' about failed romances.

Easy being Green

WATCH OUT DEBORAH COX BECAUSE Vivian Green is back with her second album, "Vivian." A natural evolution for the R&B singer, the CD is packed with strong vocals, compelling lyrics, and clear emotion flows through the tracks from start to finish.

The album focuses on relationships, even those that don't work out. Songs run the relationship gamut from hopeful ("Wish We Could Go Back") and confused ("Perfect Decision"), to confident ("All About Us"), aroused ("Sweet Thing"), nostalgic ("Sweet Memory [Beautifully Young]") and furious ("Mad").

Perhaps the best emotion the singer expresses is just plain fed up, from "Gotta Go Gotta Leave (Tired)," "Damn," "Selfish," to "Frustrated," "I Like It (But I Don't Need It)," and "Under My Skin."

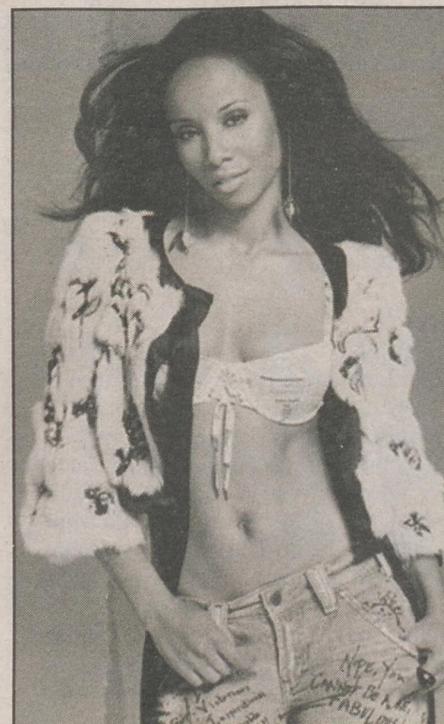
Somebody-done-somebody-wrong songs are always a natural draw, especially for gay fans when the artist is a beautiful, gifted songstress. The boys do love their divas.

But Green, who is scheduled to perform in D.C. at Constitution Hall on Aug. 6, along with Teena Marie, is not just a pretty face. She wrote the lyrics and melodies for all 12 tracks on "Vivian" and co-produced nine of them.

In "Gotta Go Gotta Leave (Tired)," Green laments: "Now I take the blame for trying to stay and work it out/Should've left before it got complicated, should've left when there was still some happiness/I take the blame for having faith in a relationship I thought made me complete/But the truth is I'm complete without it ... gotta let it go."

DUE IN LARGE PART TO GREEN'S LUSH vocals as well as the album's smooth production and crisp sound, "Vivian" manages to come off as romantic even though most of the songs are about relationships that already ran their course, often with disastrous results. This is definitely a CD to keep you warm on a rainy night, despite the nature of most of the subject matter.

Green does give in to an indulgence on "Outro (Family and Friends)." The track consists of messages from well-wishers on her second album and her new direction in life. It is endearing in parts, but the track quickly becomes grating as



Vivian Green's sophomore album is filled with 'somebody-done-somebody-wrong' songs and proves she is much more than a pretty face.

Green's sister gives her vapid encouragement for growing out her hair, her friend Christine insipidly over-uses the word "fabulous," and Kev, the token white man, makes it clear he is just a record company flack.

Green, who toured with Jill Scott as a backup singer, was featured in 2004's "De-Lovely" performing Billie Holiday's classic Cole Porter tune, "Love For Sale." But gay fans first noticed her when "Emotional Rollercoaster" received a dynamic remix by DJ Junior Vasquez.

The superstar remixer lends his wizardry again to "Gotta Go Gotta Leave (Tired)," which was released as a CD maxi-single with other remixes by Eddie Baez and Richard Morel. Those remixes for the lead single are already dance club staples, with lyrics of the summer anthem that must be sung at the top of your lungs with your hands in the air.

Green thanks Vasquez in the liner notes for "Vivian" and even performed with him at New York's Spirit just days before the album's recent release.

Ultimately, "Vivian" is a more mature and warm album than 2002's successful debut, "A Love Story," which went gold in 2003. The tracks sound less dated and should prove to have more staying power than the ones on the debut.

Green is growing into the promise she showed back then.

i MORE INFO

'Vivian'
Sony Urban Music/Columbia
July 2005
www.viviangreen.com

nitelife JOHNNY HOOKS



Time for the Uncommon Legacy Brunch, a party at Sippora Gallery, a new home for GLBT Night and a Vivian Green CD release party

Uncommon and artsy

AUGUST HAS ALWAYS BEEN HOTGG's cruelest month and this year is no exception. Lots of people out of town, who can blame them with this heat, right? Luckily we have found a few ideas to help raise your spirits and make you smile.

DJ CHRIS ALLEN DROPPED HOTGG A note to say there will be a release party for Vivian Green's smoking new album "Vivian" at Guava Lamp on Friday, Aug. 5. They'll be giving away copies of her album, samplers, posters, and post cards from 11 p.m. til 2 a.m. Guava is located at Waugh and D'amico near Allen Parkway. Read a review of her new CD on Page 16.

GET YOUR SOBE ON THIS WEEK! Friday, Aug. 5, SOBE presents the return of DJ Michael Tank from South Florida. On Saturday, Aug. 6 you can enter to win a free trip to Miami's South Beach for four days and three nights for you and a friend. Finally at Café Con Leche, Wednesday, Aug. 10 you can enter to win tickets to "Juntos en Conceirto" Alejandro Fernandez with Marc Anthony and Chayanne. www.southbeachthenightclub.com.

FEELING ARTSY? THEN CHECK OUT Sippora Gallery on Saturday, Aug. 6 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. when they present the artist reception for "Body Language." They'll give you a lesson on body language and maybe you'll get lucky! This show features Maia, Simone Woodage, Regina Sherman, Kermit Eisenhut, Thomas GH Dorsch, Lacey Crawford, Wolfgang Pfirrmann, Van McFarland, and Timothy W. Vanya. Sippora is located at 234 West Gray or call 713-520-1085 or log onto www.sippora.com.

SUNDAY PUT ON YOUR NICE LINEN suit and join Uncommon Legacy Houston for The 2005 Extra Mile Awards Brunch. This worthwhile event features a silent auction, brunch with bottomless Mimosas and live entertainment. Their special guest and Uncommon Woman Award Recipient is Chrissy Gephardt and the Extra Mile Award Honorees are Janie Lopez and Shirley Knight. Sunday, Aug. 7 at the Intercontinental Hotel, 2222 West Loop South from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. \$70 per person and seating is limited. Reservations will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis.

Purchase your tickets online at www.uncommonlegacyhouston.org.

HoVo on the go-go

IN THE WAKE OF THE MONTROSE Diner closing (someone please rescue those poor leftover plants!) board members of the GLBT Community Center have decided to move the monthly GLBT Night dinner, to Hollywood Vietnamese and Chinese at 2409 Grant in the Hollywood Center. The next GLBT Night at Hollywood is Tuesday, Aug. 9 at 6:30 p.m. The GLBT Community Center is located at 3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 207. Call them at 713-524-3818 or log onto www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org.

HE'S BACK! MR. MICHAEL DE Medici has one faboo party planned for you and yours. Thursday, Aug. 11 he and his de Medici and Castillo Worldwide PR have a "Deuce Bigalow" inspired event at the Edwards Marq*E theater complex on I-10. The pre-party begins at Café Adobe at 5:45 p.m. (remember kids, on I-10 at Silber, not Shepherd) featuring an open vodka bar and menu from UV Vodka! Then at 7:20 p.m., pop over en masse to see the film "Deuce Bigalow: European Gigolo." Afterwards the party continues at Drink! where there is a \$10 cover charge, but drinks are a mere 75 cents! De Medici is co-hosting this progressive party with his (adorable!) partner Martin Castillo and Lester H. Sorsby from Houston Black Tie Dinner in honor of Gary Teixeira of the Montrose Clinic. Thanks to Marian Coleman of House of Coleman for all her help! See www.dmcworldwide.com for info on this and the other bundle of upcoming de Medici and Castillo events.

YOUR MONEY REALLY DOES GO TO good causes when it comes to Rich's.

So far this year Rich's Houston was able to contribute to Pride Houston a total of \$4419.00 as a result of the events held at the club. Can't wait for their "CRUISE," a tribute to Leather, Levis and Uniform on Saturday Aug. 13! Yes sir, I will be there!

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

Boys will be toys

The 'Dukes' were more than friends, Michael Lucas burned at Fire Island and Jimi Hendrix asked and told



Johnny Knoxville (left) showed off more than his acting skills in his scenes with his 'Dukes of Hazzard' costar Seann William Scott. (Photo by Tammy Arroyo/AP)

There've been rumblings about an on-set romance between "The Dukes of Hazzard" costars **JOHNNY KNOXVILLE** and blonde beauty **JESSICA SIMPSON**, but it seems that the real action was man-on-man.

"Johnny Knoxville took advantage of me," dreamy **SEANN WILLIAM SCOTT**, who plays Bo to Knoxville's Luke Duke, told MTV News. "I'm trying to drive the car, trying to pull stunts, and he'd go, 'Hey, Seann, look over here,' And he pulls his balls out in front of me. Like, seriously. A lot. All the time. What are you supposed to do there?"

Well, Dish has some suggestions and she has been fantasizing about them.

And it seems these two rowdy boys weren't the only source of same-sex tension on the set. **BURT REYNOLDS**, who plays bad guy Boss Hogg, had some kind words for costar **WILLIE NELSON**, who plays the boys' Uncle Jesse.

"When I worked with Willie Nelson, who is just about the nicest man I've ever worked with in my life," Reynolds said on NBC's "The Tonight Show" last Thursday, "I thought, 'If I'd have been gay it would have saved me millions.'"

Reynolds recounted the financial bath he took after his failed marriage to actress **LONI ANDERSON** and a lawsuit by ex-girlfriend Pamela Seals.

On fire

It looks like pouty porn impresario **MICHAEL LUCAS** may be spending as much time in a courtroom as he does in the bedroom.

The self-aggrandizing director/star writes on his blog, www.lucasblog.com, that while filming "Fire Island Cruising 7," the latest in the popular series, a member of the Fire Island Pines Property



Michael Lucas

Owners' Association threatened to sue if any of the footage filmed in front of homes in the gay resort town made it into the video.

After the threat, Lucas said he is done filming there and this will be the last film in the series.

"My movies are the best promotion this tired-ass sandbox could ever hope for," Lucas, a Russian émigré and former lawyer, writes.

A letter from a member of the Property

Owners' Association that Lucas posted on his Web site offers a bitchy rebuttal.

"The Pines was popular and fabulous when you were still selling yourself on the streets of Moscow," it reads.

Me-ow!

Jimi's jam

Rock legend **JIMI HENDRIX** apparently was released from the Army because he convinced them he was gay, according to the Associated Press. Hendrix joined the armed forces to avoid going to jail after being caught in stolen cars several times in Seattle, his hometown.

In 1962, he was discharged for "homosexual tendencies." He used to tell people he was let go after an ankle injury sustained from a parachute jump. Not so, according to his medical records, which are published for the first time in Charles R. Cross' upcoming biography "Room Full of Mirrors."

The book says Hendrix made frequent visits to a psychiatrist at Fort Campbell, Ky, and told the doc there he was in love with one of his squad mates and couldn't stop masturbating.

There is no evidence that Hendrix, who had an insatiable appetite for women, ever had actual gay experiences.

The book comes out in September, to coincide with the anniversary of the musician's death in 1970 from a sleeping pill overdose.



Jimi Hendrix

@ Send comments, suggestions to Dish@houstonvoice.com

eclipse cover story

Getting marriage

MARRIAGE, continued from Page 13

ized in the U.S., another \$16.8 billion could be added annually to the industry.

"When we founded this company five years ago, our friends laughed. But all the controversy has increased awareness and couples are searching for resources," Sproul says. "And many ceremonies take place in cities where same-sex marriage is not legal. We enjoy going to cities where same-sex marriage is not legal, because the large turnout show [lawmakers] didn't stop anyone."

Bernadette Smith, a lesbian co-owner of It's About Time Weddings in Boston, said her company constantly gets inquiries from people across the country

looking to get married in Massachusetts. Many clients who seek a public profession of their love with a wedding are also conscious of the political statement they make, she says.

"Our rights are limited, and at this point, it's still a civil rights issue," Smith says. "A gay wedding is not just about logistics — it's also about being an advocate."

MORE INFO

www.rainbowweddingnetwork.com
www.itsabouttimeweddings.com
www.gaywedding.com

Expert wedding tips

- Inform loved ones well in advance of the event. Same-sex marriage is still a new concept, so even if family and friends are accepting of your relationship, it may take time for people to adjust and place it into the "marriage" category.

- Invite loved ones who are supportive; no need to suffer angst or sadness on your special day by disapproval or rejection.

- Plan the wedding well in advance, even as far out as two or three years.

- Define a budget, and stick with it. Simple weddings can happen for as little as \$500, or high-end affairs for \$200,000 and up. An average gay wedding is about \$15,000, according to the Rainbow Wedding Network. A good guideline: 50 percent for the reception; 10

percent for flowers; 10 percent for music; 10 percent for photography; 10 percent for clothing; 5 percent for invitations; and 5 percent for miscellaneous items.

- Buy a large briefcase for everything relating to the wedding, and make sure that it has your address and phone on it.

- Keep notebooks for your attendants with lists of tasks, dates for fittings, rehearsal times and other specifics.

- Have a date book in which both of you can list important details. Include steps to take and dates to view venues, sit for fittings or meet with caterers.

- Use vendors you know are gay-friendly. Wedding planners for gay unions usually offer screened vendors and know which photographers, caterers, florists and venues have gay-friendly policies.

- There are no traditions set for same-sex marriages, so make up your own. Create a ceremony that reflects your relationship, your culture and your history together. If appropriate, come up with a theme; some couples hold barbecues, clam bakes and even extended cocktail parties rather than sit-

down dinners or receptions.

- When writing vows, be sure to include words that reflect your personal history, including the ups and downs over the years. Keep a sense of humor as well.

- If you decide to marry in a church, synagogue or mosque, find out the institution's stance on same-sex marriage before approaching the leaders.

- It's not mandatory to have a wedding cake.

Cupcakes, dessert bars or other snacks are all fair game.

- When registering for gifts, consider asking guests to make donations to such organizations as Freedom to Marry that continue the fight for marriage equality.

- When traveling to Massachusetts, Canada, Belgium, the Netherlands or Spain where same-sex marriage is legal, be sure to understand the laws there. Some town clerks in Massachusetts enforce a 1913 law that prevents out-of-state residents from marrying, but others do not. Understand that benefits of marriage in other places do not necessarily transfer back to your home.

Sources: Rainbow Wedding Network, It's About Time Weddings, 'The Complete Guide to Gay and Lesbian Weddings' by K.C. David and www.gayweddings.com.



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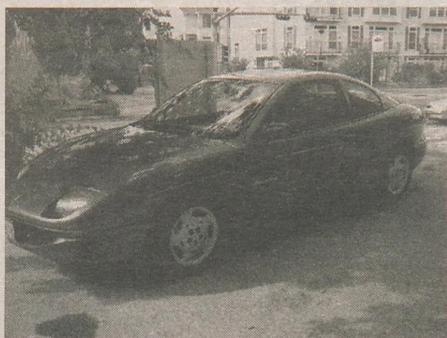
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bitch session



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THE MORE I READ BITCHES FROM lesbians, the more I realize they play the same head games with each other that gay men do.

TO THE GUY BITCHING ABOUT MEN wearing flip-flops: Have you never been to the beach? Tons of straight boys who are hot as hell are wearing them, and just as many hot gay guys wear them. It's a very hot look on a hot guy!

BITCH BOY RESPONDS: Reached for comment, Paris Hilton agrees, "They're hot!"

SHOULD I WEAR A KILT OR A SKIRT? I have been seen in my red plaid kilt in Stuttgart, my green plaid kilt in Barcelona, and in my Jean Paul Gauthier skirt in St. Tropez. Let's not skirt the issue. Your bitterness gets you nowhere.

ARE YOU SEXUALLY ATTRACTED TO everyone? No? Then why is it such a moral outrage that not everyone else is sexually attracted to you?

I HAVE TROUBLE SLEEPING AT NIGHT when I realized the men I've slept with have slept with all the other men I've slept with.

WE OUT OF SHAPE GEEZERS GET A lot more action in the gym steam room than you stuck up little twinks.

HOLLA BACK TO THE BITCH WHO HAD to deal with that tore up size queen. That's right! We don't want to be with your kind if it means tying on a 2x4 so we don't fall into that canyon of yours!

OK SO I'M FAT. NOW I HEAR THAT someone is interested in me but wants me to lose weight first. I like him, too, but if I'm not good enough for him the way I am, then he isn't good enough for me.

WHY DO GAY BARS KEEP HOSTING boxer shorts nights instead of briefs or bikini nights? Nobody but nerds, losers or fatties wears baggy boxers.

PLEASE STOP ASKING ME WHY I'M single. Most guys want the bad guy that they know is not even a fixer upper, and

since I pride myself on not having that M.O., I'm single.

OH HOW I WISH I COULD MEET A MAN that would appreciate me for my heart and not just my penis size.

TO THE BITCH WITH AN AXE TO grind about body spray: Maybe you need a good scrub down before you see the pro's of this product. It works for me.

TO THE LESBIAN COMPLAINING about butch dykes: I don't like men, I like butches; there's an important difference, and it's called a vagina! Who are queers to tell each other who to love or how to express gender? Viva la butches!

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH PIERCINGS? I don't care if they look cool. They are so unsanitary. What's wrong with just getting a tattoo?

I FINALLY HOST A HOUSEWARMING party and invite all my friends. How come only straight people show up? I sacrificed a lot coming out. My gay friends should be more supportive of each other.

I HATE IT WHEN PEOPLE SAY SIZE matters. I often find that's not the case. What really matters is your ability to please me instead of yourself.

IS THE PHRASE "BLH" ("BAD Lesbian Hair") acceptable in the gay community? My straight co-worker used that to describe how she clocked a lesbian at work.

WHEN OH WHEN WILL THERE BE A decent place for nice, attractive gay guys in their 30s and 40s to meet nice younger men without competing with old trolls?

SO NOW YOU CAN BECOME AN "ex-gay"? Not likely. Of course, I could call Michael Jackson to see how to become an "ex-black."

WHY AM I A MAGNET FOR GIRLS with issues? Yeah, I'm a butch. So? I am the most caring person you could meet. I may act blue-collar, but this is the same person who wrote a piece for full symphony for my ex after she dropped me.

I HAVE A CHRONIC DISEASE AND MY insurance company won't pay for a medication that will improve my standard of living. They say it's too expensive. So I told them they could save money by monitoring barebacking Web sites and denying payment to the irresponsible jerks trading HIV the same way kids trade baseball cards.

WHY DO STRAIGHT TROLLS ALWAYS think gay men are hitting on them? Please guys, don't flatter yourselves.

Editors' note: These are real butches, 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@expressgaynews.com

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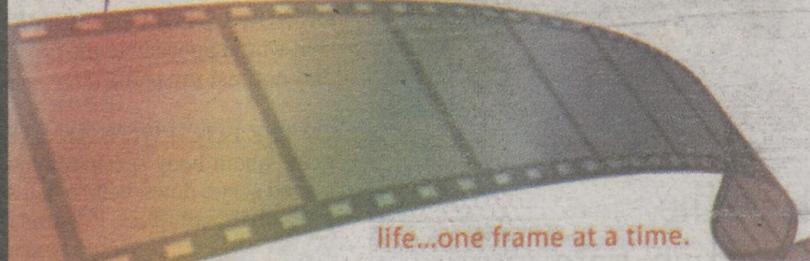


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UV Vodka and de Medici and Castillo event:
A Duece Bigalow-inspired event:
Pre-Party, Special Screening of the movie and After Party.

Thursday, August 11, 2005



Pre Party 5:45 to 7:20 p.m. at
Café Adobe at I-10 and Silber

Hosted by:

Michael C. de Medici DMC Worldwide	Lester H. Sorsby, Jr. Houston Black Tie Dinner	Martin C. Castillo DMC Worldwide
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In Honor of Gary Teixeira of the Montrose Clinic



Open vodka bar and menu provided by UV Vodka.
Special Screening provided by Columbia at 7:30 p.m.
at the Edwards Imax at I-10 and Silber.

After Party at **Drink Houston** at Marq*E Entertainment Center
sponsored by UV Vodka and DMC Worldwide
Drink Houston's Cover Charge \$10 - drinks .75¢

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