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Create a Christmas wreath with a distinctive Texas flair

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Day of Remembrance

Deaths of transgendered commemorated in solemn ceremony outside City Hall

by ELLA TYLER

Two dozen transgender activists assembled on the City Hall steps Tuesday night for a candlelight memorial for the 18 gender variant people who died as a result of violence since last year's memorial.

Each participant carried a lit candle and read the name and description of one of the victims. After each name was read, the candle was snuffed out and a bell was tolled.

Two of the victims were from Texas.

Julia Aguilar Carrizales was strangled on July 21 in a South Houston home. Her body was dumped in Webster. The body also had numerous stab wounds. The alleged killer, Kelvin Antonio Navarro, has reportedly fled to Mexico.

Another victim was an unnamed intersexed infant, allegedly killed by his mother in Dallas on Dec. 8, 1999. The three-day-old baby died of blunt force trauma to the head, as well as strangulation. Investigators also found shards of glass in the baby's esophagus and small intestine.

The Day of Remembrance was set aside to memorialize those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. The



DALTON DEHART

A group including Houston City Councilwoman Annise Parker and community activists Phyllis Frye, Sarah DePalma, Vanessa Edwards Foster and Cristan Williams took part in a ceremony Tuesday honoring transgendered persons killed during the past year. The names of each victim were read aloud during the ceremony outside City Hall and then a candle was symbolically snuffed out for each victim.

event is held on Nov. 28 to honor Rita Hester, whose murder kicked off the "Remembering Our Dead" project.

Hester died in San Francisco in 1999. She was at home and was stabbed more than 20 times, suffering a cardiac arrest during the attack. Her death was officially ruled due to a heart attack.

Victims lived all over the world, mainly the United States and South America. The

list includes only deaths reported in the media.

Organizers assume that other deaths occurred that were never reported in the media. Similar events were held in other cities.

After the names were read, Phyllis Frye, Annise Parker, Sarah DePalma, Vanessa Edwards Foster and Cristan Williams made

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Abilene Scouts say gay ban is costly

Local chapter's fund-raising 'on target'

by GIP PLASTER

Boy Scouts executives in one Texas city admit that the controversy surrounding the organization's long-standing ban against gay men and boys is costing them money.

The Chisholm Trail Scout Council in the West Texas city of Abilene is \$20,000 behind for the year and is appealing to its supporters for help with the shortfall.

And officials have proof that at least part of the shortfall is due to the ban.

Still, the council's executive director said he does not think the policy should be

changed.

Letters mailed to parents of scouts and to donors who have not recently contributed highlight the ban on gay scoutmasters as

collected and the council's \$492,000 budget for the year.

A spokesperson for the Sam Houston Area Council of the Boy Scouts said the

It makes a lot of difference. Basically, it means spending our reserves to meet our operating goals for the year.

—John Clark, Chisholm Trail Scout Council executive director

part of the reason for the shortfall.

So far, 18 previous donors have cited the gay ban controversy as the reason for discontinuing their support of the council, executive director John Clark said.

Those 18 lost contributions make up \$3,800 of the \$20,000 gap between money

local chapter is "right on target for fund-raising."

"We haven't had any support pull out," said the spokesperson, who didn't wish to be identified by name. "In fact, we've had overwhelming support this year."

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Omega House gets make-over



SEA Shell volunteers replant flower beds at AIDS hospice

by ELLA TYLER

The garden at Omega House has just gotten a make-over, thanks to volunteers from Support, Equality and Awareness at Shell, the GLBT group of Shell Oil Company.

Omega House, 602 Branard, is a residential facility providing hospice care to terminal-phase AIDS patients.

The roses that formerly filled the garden there have been removed and replaced with a variety of smaller plants with an English-cottage style garden.

The garden is a series of small beds linked by wide pathways for wheelchair access. Each small bed now has a single specimen plant surrounded by flowering annuals and perennials. The redesign was planned by horticulturist Terry Gordon Smith, who coordinated the volunteers from the Garden and Yard society who maintain the garden.

"The hybrid tea roses grown in the garden required too much maintenance for a volunteer organization to perform," Smith said. "Even with a very attentive maintenance schedule, we often lose the battle to fungi, insects and extreme weather conditions. The bushes are not lush and green."

The garden renovation began on Oct. 28. Forty volunteers from SEA Shell dug up and potted the roses, added new soil mix to the beds and replaced the crushed granite on the paths.

Forty volunteers from SEA Shell dug up and potted roses, added new soil mix to the beds and replaced the crushed granite on the paths at Omega House Oct. 28. More volunteers continued the project on Nov. 25 replanting the beds with pansies, violas, lobelia and snap dragons.

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New product could replace condoms

Activists calling for development of microbicide products to prevent HIV infection; while a spermicide long thought to be effective against the virus may be harmful

by DAVID GOLDMAN

Since the earliest days of HIV/AIDS education, the condom has been both the greatest barrier to the virus and, ironically, the biggest stumbling block to preventing infection.

But activists say microbicides (mi-CRO-bi-cides), whether in the form of topical gels, pills or suppositories, could eliminate the need for latex to play a role in safer sex.

Condoms have stopped countless infections when properly used, but their limitations have led untold numbers of people to risk intercourse without them.

"The issue is not with the condom itself, it's with its use. Or maybe I should say it's non-use," said Polly Harrison, Ph.D., the director of the Alliance for Microbicide Development in Silver Spring, Md.

"We know from looking at lots and lots of studies about condom use all over the world that consistent condom use rates are very low."

The problems with condoms are myriad. Both partners may find them uncom-

fortable; the insertive partner may find it difficult to maintain an erection with a condom; and with many people the obvious use of a condom is loaded with issues regarding trust and fidelity.

That's why advocates like Harrison are pushing for the development of microbicides.

In the March issue of *Body Positive*, Anna Forbes, an AIDS and women's health policy consultant based in Ardmore, Pa., wrote, "For our purposes, a microbicide is any substance that substantially reduces the transmission of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, when applied to the vagina or rectum."

Forbes pointed out that a microbicide would put the power to prevent infection in the hands of the female (or receptive) partner.

"Unprotected sex with an HIV-positive man is by far the leading cause of HIV infection among women," Forbes wrote.

Still, Forbes noted that even if such a product were approved, its effectiveness "will never be fully as effective as preventing transmission of the virus [by] a physical barrier," like a condom.

"It is always safer to keep a virus or bacterium from getting into the body in the first place," she wrote, "than it is to try and disable it once it's there."

"In Africa, studies have found a double-standard for condom use," said Harrison. "Men are willing to use condoms with sex workers but don't expect to use them with their primary partner."

Another African custom demonstrates the need for a product women or receptive



The makers of Wet lubricant no longer offer an N-9 product; the makers of ID continue to do so.

male partners can use without their partner's knowledge or cooperation.

"We know from literature and field work that sex workers are often paid a premium for not requiring condom use," said Harrison. "For women who are at the economic edge, sacrificing that protection has to be weighed against the additional income, which they need desperately."

Nearly 90 percent of the more than 7,000 new HIV infections in the world each day are the result of heterosexual transmission, according to the CDC.

N-9 in doubt

In August, the CDC made an announcement that dramatically highlighted the

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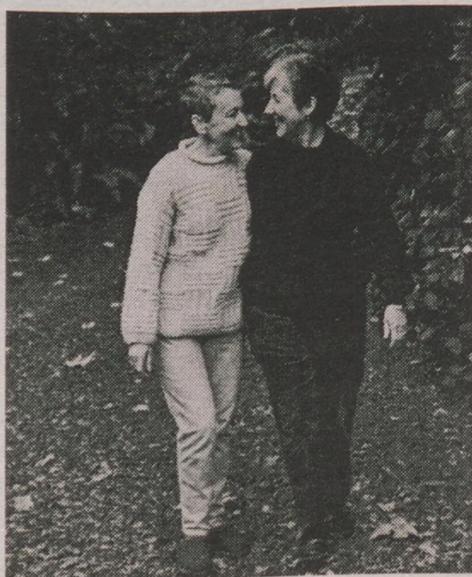
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around the nation

Bush, Gore consider Cabinet nominees who fought open gays in military



Former Georgia Senator Sam Nunn, who fought gays serving openly in the military, is reportedly under consideration to serve as Secretary of Defense in the presidential administrations of both Texas Gov. George W. Bush and Vice President Al Gore.

WASHINGTON—Two of the people reportedly under consideration for Cabinet appointments should Texas Gov. George W. Bush win the presidency have expressed their opposition to gays serving in the military. According to the New York Times, Bush plans to nominate Gen. Colin Powell, chairman of the military's Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1989-1993, to serve as his Secretary of State. Bush is also reportedly considering former Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) to serve as his Secretary of Defense. Both Powell and Nunn opposed President Clinton's efforts to allow gays to serve openly in the military in the 1993 debate that resulted in the current "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Powell, who began his tenure as chairman of the Joint Chiefs under President George Bush, spoke out against allowing open gays in the military. As chair of the Senate's Armed Services Committee, Nunn led Congressional opposition to the plan. Nunn has also been mentioned as a Cabinet possibility should Vice President Al Gore win, the Times reported. While Bush has said he supports DADT, Gore said he would like to see the policy overturned to allow gays to serve

openly, although he backed away from comments suggesting he would make the position a "litmus test" for appointments to the Joint Chiefs.

Ohio camp cancels retreat for people with AIDS after agreeing to host event

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)—A suburban Cincinnati camp abruptly canceled a retreat for people living with HIV and AIDS, costing the Ohio AIDS Coalition thousands of dollars. Woodland Lakes Christian Camp and Retreat Center had accepted a \$200 deposit and signed a contract to host an AIDS Coalition's Healing Weekend. Five weeks later, it canceled the contract. Kim Jackson, the coalition's executive director, said a camp official told her, "We don't support the homosexual agenda." The cancellation will cause the AIDS Coalition to lose about \$3,500 in federal money earmarked for the retreat. Benson Wolmar former executive director of the ACLU, said the camp probably broke no federal laws by canceling because there is no federal protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation.

California twins sue gay magazine over use of pictures on cover

SANTA ROSA, Calif.—Twins whose pictures showed up in a magazine marketed to youth have sued the magazine, the Santa Rosa Press Democrat reported. Nick and R. Batres, now 24, agreed to a photo shoot eight years ago after photographer Stev Underhill saw their high school yearbook photos and asked if they were interested modeling. But the twins said they were appalled when their photos showed up in Magazine under the headline "Young and Gay." "I felt pretty violated by the whole thing," said Nick Batres. "He's my brother; I can hug my brother. But when you put it in a magazine with all the other photos surrounding it, it doesn't look right." The suit names Underhill, XY Magazine and its publisher, Peter I. Cummings, as defendants. Underhill said the teens signed release forms before the pictures were taken.

Second Rhode Island troop defies national Scout ban on gays

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP)—A second Rhode Island Scout troop is defying the Boy Scouts of America over its ban on gay scout masters. Boy Scout Troop 28 sent a letter to Narragansett Council of Boy Scouts saying they will ignore the policy. The leaders of Troop 28 said the vow that Scouts make to keep themselves "morally straight" has nothing to do with sexual orientation. "The oath did not mean to ban homosexuals but to keep on being straight and narrow and do what is right," said Allen M. Dennison, an assistant scoutmaster. The troop joins Cub Scout Pack 88, which sent a similar letter two weeks ago. To date the Boy Scouts of America has not revoked the charter of a troop or council for ignoring the ban on gays.

Lawsuit challenging Vt. civil unions law appealed to state high court

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP)—Three groups of plaintiffs have asked Vermont's Supreme Court to force a Superior Court to hear their case about the unconstitutionality of that state's civil unions law. Among the 18 plaintiffs are taxpayers, who said they don't want to pay for the benefits the law would confer on gay couples; lawmakers who argue that passage of the law was tainted when it became the subject of a betting pool among House members; and town clerks, who charge that the law, by requiring them to issue civil unions, violates their religious beliefs. If the Vermont Supreme Court grants the petition, the Superior Court will have to hold a trial on the constitutionality of the civil unions law. Three times this year

Superior Courts have refused to hear the case. The law was passed last year.

—From staff and wire report



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'Day of Remembrance' honors murdered transgenders

> Continued from Page 1

brief speeches.

Parker said that the lack of official concern into many of these deaths, "seems like on last rejection, another failure."

"However," she said "No matter how incremental and how slow change seems to be, change comes. We have seen it."

DePalma said victims of violence related to gender identity do not report these crimes.

"People call me and tell me 'I've got to tell someone,' but you can never tell anyone else," she said.

DePalma said the silence about these crimes makes lobbying for protective legislation impossible.

"When we go to the legislature, they want numbers and I can't provide them," she said.

Williams spoke about the profound impact helping to organize the event made on her.

"It's a loss of innocence. As I was cataloging the victims, for the first time, I understood that there are people who would kill me, really kill me, because I chose to live truthfully."

After the speakers, Jackie Thorne led the group in singing "We Shall Overcome."

Jessica Redman gave the invocation and snuffed out the candles.

The other deaths commemorated this year are:

Alina Marie Barrigan, a 19-year-old

transgendered woman strangled to death in San Jose, Calif., Jan. 19.

Jill Seidel, who died in Honolulu, Hawaii on Feb. 3. Police claim this death was related to substance abuse but the autopsy report indicates that foul play may have played a role in her death.

Ihok (Hugo Yonathan) was from Indonesia, and was killed on Feb. 14 by more than a dozen stab wounds. He was also sodomized prior to the murder.

Vanesa-Lorena Ledesma was a transgender activist in Cordoba, Argentina who died in police custody on Feb. 16, allegedly of cardiac arrest. Autopsy reports showed indications of physical torture, including numerous broken bones and evidence of being beaten while handcuffed. She had no history of heart problems.

Christine Chappel, whose body was discovered washed up on the beach in Lowestoft, Suffolk, England on March 2. She had been weighted down with a length of chain, three circular weights and two padlocks before being thrown into a local river. Her estranged wife has been charged with hiring a man to kill her.

Michelle Lynne O'Hara committed suicide on March 14 in New York City, one week after being brutally beaten and raped. She was treated with indifference by the hospital staff and police because of her transgendered status, according to those close to her.

Stephanie Yazum lived on disability



Community activist Phyllis Frye, left, and Houston City Councilwoman Annise Parker participate in a ceremony Tuesday honoring transgendered persons killed during the past year. The 'Day of Remembrance' was set aside to memorialize those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. The event is held on Nov. 28 to honor Rita Hester, whose murder kicked off the "Remembering Our Dead" project.

insurance. Her throat was slashed on March 23 in her Schenectady, New York apartment. David A. Bronson has confessed to this killing.

Deja Johnson, a prostitute, was killed in April in Miami, Florida, allegedly by Jeffrey "Bowlegs" Flanders.

Tyra Henderson, a prostitute, was bludgeoned to death in Washington, D.C. on April 23. Her body was mutilated during the attack.

Carla Natasha Hunt, a Washington D.C. area prostitute, was killed in Suitland, Maryland, by a single gunshot wound to the head on May 15.

Astrid La Fontaine, a prostitute and transgender activist, was heavily involved in AIDS Prevention in Guatemala. She was shot to death on May 20.

Amanda Milan, a prostitute and aspiring fashion designer, died in New York City on June 18. Her throat was slashed by a man she confronted because he was harassing her friends. According to reports, several cab drivers parked along the street cheered and applauded as she bled to death. Duayne McCuller has been charged in her murder.

Beverly Lineth, a Nicaraguan native, was living in Guatemala City working as a prostitute. After she made a report to the police about three men confronting other girls on the street, the men allegedly returned, forced her into their car, and beat her to death on July 5.

Dayana (Jose Luis Nieves) was murdered by two men in her room in Carabobo, Nicaragua, July 29.

Keith E. Jackson, a transgendered prostitute, was found dead in a vacant lot in Miami, Florida on Aug. 27. The cause of death was a blunt force trauma.

Ana Melisa Cortez was a native of Guatemala, was found stabbed to death in her Nashville, Tenn. home on Oct. 13. She had been dead for more than a week.

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Donors pull support from Abilene Scouts

➤ Continued from Page 1

While Clark said he thinks the drought and other economic concerns contribute to the shortfall, he said he suspects that some of the remaining shortfall in Abilene is also due to the ban.

The deficiency has an impact, he said.

"It makes a lot of difference," Clark said. "Basically, it means spending our reserves to meet our operating goals for the year."

About a fifth of the council's funding comes from the United Way of Abilene, and those funds are in no danger, according to spokesman Ken Knox.

While United Ways in some cities have stopped supporting Boy Scouts because of the ban on gays, the Abilene group gave \$93,000 of the \$2.1 million it raised for 2000 to the Boy Scouts. Figures for 2001 have not been computed.

Each of the nation's 1,400 United Ways make their own decisions about who to fund and whether to affiliate with the United Way of America, which has a policy prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation.

United Way of Abilene is not considering pulling funds from Boy

Scouts, Knox said.

"I don't know of any discussion of it," he said.

The appeal letter aimed at making up the \$20,000 shortfall from individual and business contributors has met with a favorable response, according to Clark. While he said he is concerned that pressure from gay activists is also drying up corporate giving to scouting in some areas, he said he does not expect to see the impact worsen in Abilene.

"I think economic concerns in this area are bigger than any other entity. I don't think the issue of gay rights is going to hurt us anymore than it already has," Clark said.

Boy Scouts of America spokesman Gregg Shields did not return a call from the Houston Voice seeking information about other chapters that may have experienced similar downturns.

The 6.2 million-member BSA has been the subject of protests in recent years because of its refusal to allow gay scoutmasters or openly gay youth.

The protests heated up in June when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision that the organization can continue to keep gays from serving as troop leaders.

Scouting leaders say that being

gay is contrary to the group's oath requiring Scouts to be "morally straight." Some contend, however, that at the time the oath was written in 1910, "straight" did not have the same meaning it does today.

Other youth organizations have dramatically different policies.

The 2.7 million-member Girl Scouts of the USA is open to girls age 5 to 17, with no standard for sexual orientation.

Boys and Girls Clubs, with 3.3 million members nationwide, each set their own membership standards, but officials know of no club in the U.S. that discriminates based on gender, race or sexual orientation.

The Big Brothers-Big Sisters program has no official stance on what they call "affectional orientation." But chapters in a few cities have adopted policies banning gay "bigs"—or mentors. The Owensboro, Ky. chapter is the latest to establish such a policy.

Despite the shortfall in Abilene, Clark said he does not think the ban needs to be lifted.

"No, I really don't. I think it needs to stay as is. Somewhere, you have to stand for principle," he said.

"If we lose dollars, we lose dollars."

L.A. City Council cutting ties with Boy Scouts

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Los Angeles City Council on Tuesday moved to end its relationship with the Boy Scouts of America because the organization discriminates based on homosexuality.

The council directed all of the city's departments to review contracts with the Boy Scouts and ordered an audit of those contracts to ensure they comply with a nondiscrimination clause. The contract audits are due within 90 days.

Council members also want the Los Angeles Police Department to eliminate its Explorers program, a police cadet training program for young people that is affiliated with the Boy Scouts. Council members would like the police department to create its own cadet program within three months.

The U.S. Supreme Court recently ruled that the Boy Scouts can legally exclude gays. Councilwoman Jackie Goldberg supported severing the ties with the youth organization and noted that police departments in San Diego, Chicago and Tempe, Ariz., have taken similar action.

Goldberg was backed by Councilman Mike Feuer, who said the city doesn't work with organizations that discriminate.

"We don't have a choice, legally," he said. "Both the spirit and the content of existing city law is very clear. The city shouldn't participate in a discriminatory practice or policy."

Boy Scout officials have said the Explorer program is run through a subsidiary, Learning for Life, that does not have a policy of discrimination.

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VIEWPOINT

I'll pass on the hate, thank you!

by MARIA MINICUCCI

It's holiday time and living is uneasy—for many of us. For about two months every year, the mundane, everyday look and feel of things is transformed into magnificent.

Everywhere we look glitters and glows and everyone is also expected to glow. It is also common knowledge that "glowing" is not the common experience for everyone. In fact, for those same two months every year, many people are filled with dread and despair.

Of course, there are the fairly obvious reasons that exist that provoke such anti-holiday sentiments such as unattainable family, lover, work, financial expectations.

However, there may, in fact be yet another culprit preying upon the dampened spirits of many LGBT people.

Sexual outlaws are no strangers to the experience of being invalidated, ostracized, dismissed and trivialized. We identify homophobia as the number one enemy responsible for outlawing our lives.

We have also stood up to this enemy and stood by our convictions and passion for who we are. We are relentless in our refusal to accept such a diminished place in the world.

Instead, we have become quite adept at forging realities that do, in fact, resonant with our values, priorities and interests. We have been incredibly successful in creating "queer culture" and, believe it or not, culture plays an integral role in solidifying our identities and strengthens our frame of mind. Hence, "queer culture" sustains us mind, body, and soul.

Alas, the holidays remain the domain of heterosexist culture. The overall ambiance of the holiday season is overrun with images and messages of everything that is right and ideal. And, these all point to and uphold compulsory heterosexuality as the ideal.

We have yet to produce a "gay" Norman Rockwell series depicting scenes of queer comfort and joy. We still cannot purchase a "Happy Holidays to My Favorite Sexual Outlaw" card from the local Hallmark store. When the whole country takes on its holiday face, LGBT faces and realities remain lost in the scene.

And, no matter how "dysfunctional"

people are everyday, during the holidays, there is a distinct impression that every family is the perfect family, every gift is the perfect gift, and every gathering is perfect.

During the year, most LGBT people strive for a little better than survival and for the right to exist with dignity; goals to combat the senseless hatred aimed directly at us. The pressure for "perfect" is yet another blow of a different sort when "perfect" is restricted—LGBT's need not apply.

I dare say, that under this kind of pressure, fear of our own "imperfection" rises to the surface and we become more susceptible to that enemy we call homophobia.

Here is where I would like to suggest that we take on a bigger, more formidable, more real enemy of ours.

We can readily apply the force of hatred in reference to what is at the core of racism or sexism. And, yes, at the risk of redundancy, I am putting another "ism" at our table—homosexuality.

The literal and symbolic meaning of homophobia is an exaggerated fear of homosexuals and homosexuality. This is not an accurate enough or significant enough of a definition.

This is also not the worst of our enemies.

Fear is not at the core of the sexually righteous segment of society; contempt is.

Alas, the holidays remain the domain of heterosexist culture.

The overall ambiance of the holiday season is overrun with images and messages of everything that is right and ideal. And, these all point to and uphold compulsory heterosexuality as the ideal.

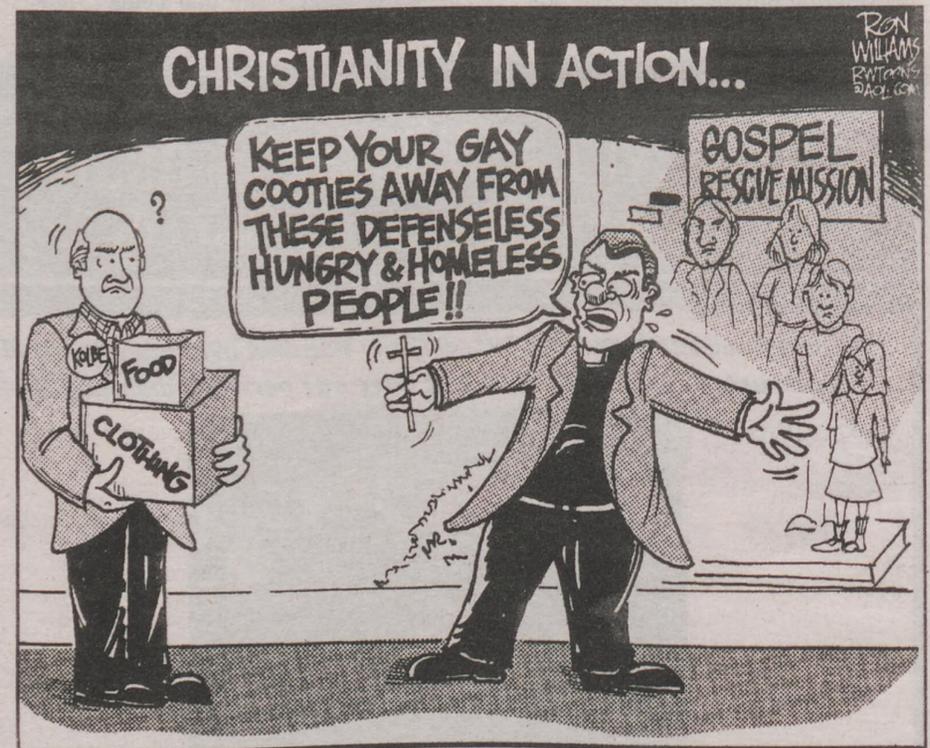
Fear is also not at the core of internalized homophobia; contempt for the self is.

It is quite likely then, that our language has gotten in the way of unmasking the real villains.

During the holidays and during the whole rest of the year, day in and day out, contempt for "queerfolk" is always in season. Contempt is far from "comfort and joy."

Contempt for who we are keeps our sights away from the enemy camp and locks us in a perpetual war zone.

'Tis the season, always, to look our enemy straight in the eye!



Parker notes Danburg was instrumental in project

EDITOR'S NOTE: In an article about the new bridges along the Southwest Freeway in the Nov. 24 edition of the *Houston Voice*, a headline incorrectly stated that Houston City Councilwoman Annise Parker spearheaded the project. While Parker was president of Neartown Association at the time this work was planned, she did not spearhead the project. The *Voice* regrets the error. The following is a letter from Parker addressing the bridge beautification project.

Dear Editor:

While many individuals and organizations participated and local civic clubs worked on this project, Debra (Danburg) was our voice to TxDOT. Without her clout, it would not have been possible.

Annise Parker



VIEWPOINT

Would you like gay, non-gay or first available?

by MICHAEL ALVEAR

As more and more cities put smoking bans in effect, the most famous question in the restaurant business is about to be extinguished: "Smoking or Non-Smoking?"

I have a modest proposal for its replacement: "Gay or Non-Gay?"

Imagine walking into a restaurant and asking to be seated in the Gay Section.

"Hmmm," the host would say. "We don't seem to have anything available right now. Would you like to sit in the Non-Gay Section? There's just a few straight people in there and none of them are giving their opinions about gay marriage, so there shouldn't be any toxic fumes to breathe in."

You decline. Those kinds of fumes linger and they're really hard to scrub off. So you wait. When the host is finally ready to seat your party, you follow him through the Non-Gay Section to reach Destination Fabulous.

You pick up odd smells as you go through the Non-Gay Section. Are they coming from the stale ideas hanging in the air? The musty beliefs clinging to the walls? Who knows? They're hell on the upholstery, by the looks of it.

Another way to tell you're in the Non-Gay area is that it's in the nice section of the restaurant. The Gay Sections are usu-

If restaurants built calculators into every table, gay diners splitting tabs would leave faster, freeing up the table for the next gay party-of-eight-but-we're-waiting-for-two-more-to-arrive.

ally in the transitional side of the restaurants, screaming for gentrification.

You can also tell by the conversations, where similar phrases have entirely different meanings. For example, the term "female to male" doesn't mean sex reassignment. It means the directional flow of the check when the waiter places it on the table.

The first thing you notice in the Gay Section is that every occupied table has an empty chair. It's for the waiters. They don't like being left out of the conversation. No biggie. Odds are the waiter will turn out to be your roommate anyway.

The productivity gains alone will make restaurants receptive to creating separate sections. Simply by adding a few inexpensive touches to the Gay Section they could significantly increase how often their tables turn over.

For example, they could install slide-out calculators under every table. Why? Because the average gay dinner bill is divided six ways, mathematically stumping even the waiters who once held promising, high-paying corporate jobs but abandoned them when the long hours cut into their bar time.

With calculators built into every table, gay diners would know exactly what they owed and leave faster, freeing up the table for the next gay party-of-eight-but-we're-waiting-for-two-more-to-arrive.

Calculator dividends would also accrue to gay diners. Face it. In group meals, everyone's convinced they paid more than their fair share. Most people I know get up from the table muttering "screwed again" under their breath. Except me, because I usually handle the bill.

The only problem with establishing Gay Sections in restaurants is the identity creep that would soon follow. Lesbians would want their own section, complaining that the first three letters in the word "Menu" were offensive.

This, of course, would ruin the restaurant's economies of scale, since they'd be forced to print different versions of their menus to satisfy the splintering subgroups.

"Womenu" anyone?

And of course, gay African Americans would want a separate section, too, because they don't like eating with the

condescending white homostocracy. And who could blame them? There's nothing worse than having a white guy at the next table try to catch your eye, wave you over and order an appetizer.

Of course, once bisexuals got into the act, restaurant managers would mutiny. What would be the point of creating separate Gay and Non-Gay areas if bisexuals constantly moved the furniture between sections?

Besides, no restaurant wants a large bisexual clientele. Especially the waiters. They have no patience for customers who can't decide what to eat.

The biggest problem in creating Gay Sections will be fulfilling the kinds of requests that could only come from a community like ours, which likes to divide itself into sub-atomic particles. Imagine the poor waitstaff getting peppered with questions like:

- "Do these napkins come in leather?"
- "Do you serve Gender In A Blender?"
- "Can you arrange the vegetable medley to resemble the rainbow flag?"

There are pluses and minuses to creating special gay sections in restaurants. Managers will have to weigh the additional revenue against the increased aggravation. I say go for it. That's what Tums and Tylenol were made for.

Michael Alvear lives with Zoey & Zack, his lesbian Labrador and girlie-boy Vizsla. He can be reached at mikealvear@aol.com

Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel



health news

HIV infection rates jump among gay men in Canada, ending good trend

TORONTO (AP)—New numbers on HIV infections in Canada point to a worrying trend away from safe sex in some segments of the gay community and a steep increase of infections among aboriginal people. The number of new infections among men who have sex with men jumped by 30 percent from 1996 to 1999, according to reports issued by Health Canada. The number of new infections among aboriginal people rose 91 percent. There was a drop during that period among injected drug users, with new cases declining by 27 percent. "But no sooner did we do that than gay men are starting to rebound again," said Chris Archibald, Health Canada's chief of HIV/AIDS epidemiology and surveillance. Before 1996, Health Canada reported a steady drop in the number of new cases of HIV among gay men, who accounted for more than 80 percent of new cases from 1981 to 1983, but less than a third of new cases in 1996.

Feds allow medical marijuana test as Supreme Court takes on case

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Supreme Court said Nov. 27 that it would decide whether marijuana can be distributed for medicinal uses to seriously ill patients, Reuters reported. The high court agreed to hear a U.S. Justice Department appeal of a ruling that would allow California marijuana clubs to resume service for patients who can prove that cannabis is a medical necessity. The court's decision to hear the case marked the latest development in a conflict between federal narcotics laws and a 1996 California voters' initiative known as Proposition 215. The California initiative allows seriously ill patients to grow and use marijuana for pain relief as long as they have a doctor's recommendation. Similar measures have been adopted in a number of other states.

In San Mateo, Calif., the federal Drug Enforcement Administration has approved a program that will allow a northern California county to give away government-grown marijuana to 60 AIDS patients to study the drug's potential health benefits, according to the Associated Press. The 12-week study could begin as early as January.

New Zealand suicide prevention 'helpcard' ignores gay teens

CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.—An information card designed by the office of New Zealand Youth Affairs about suicide prevention does not address gay teens, even though gay teens are at higher risk for suicide than straight teens. The launch of the Helpcard last week by New Zealand Youth Affairs Minister Laila Harre was accompanied by stinging criticism from gay activists, Christchurch Press reported. Rainbow Media Action spokesperson Nick Smith said research showed young gay men attempted suicide at four to six times the rate of heterosexual men, and evidence suggested that lesbians also had an elevated suicide rate. "More than a decade after homosexual law reform, New Zealand society still gives very few signals to our gay and lesbian youth that they are okay," Smith said. A spokesperson for Harre's office said they would study the issue in the future.

HIV, virus in chimps shared 'common ancestor' in 17th century, study says



Belgium Professor Anne-Mieke Vandamme was part of a research team that had traced an ancestor of the HIV virus to the 17th century.

BRUSSELS—Researchers have found evidence that a predecessor of HIV that has killed millions may have been around in humans as early as the 17th century, Reuters reported. Using new computerized dating methods based on genetic data, Belgian scientists claim to have tracked links back more than 300 years between HIV and a similar virus found in chimpanzees. "Using this method, the group found that HIV-1 group M and [an similar virus found in chimpanzees] shared a common ancestor about 300 years ago—around 1675," the Catholic University in Leuven, Belgium said in a statement. One of the scientists, Professor Anne-Mieke Vandamme, said the study confirmed that HIV-1 group M, the most common AIDS virus today, had begun to spread in humans before the 1920s and 1930s. The study challenges a controversial theory that holds HIV began to spread to humans via polio vaccination programs in Africa in the 1950s.

Researchers find 'housekeeping cell' that plays key role in AIDS virus

WASHINGTON (AP)—A protein that does housekeeping chores inside cells plays a key role in spreading the AIDS virus to other cells of the body, researchers report. In studies appearing in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, researchers say a group of proteins, called proteasomes, which identify and destroy old or unneeded proteins inside a cell, are used by HIV to assemble and spread new viral particles. Ulrich Schubert of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases said test tube studies show that blocking the action of the proteasome proteins can reduce the spread of HIV infection by about 98 percent. Schubert cautioned that the research was conducted only in test tubes and it is not known if the proteasome inhibitors would work against HIV in humans. The proteasome inhibitors will be tested in monkeys before any human tests are considered, tests that could take months, he said.

—From staff and wire reports

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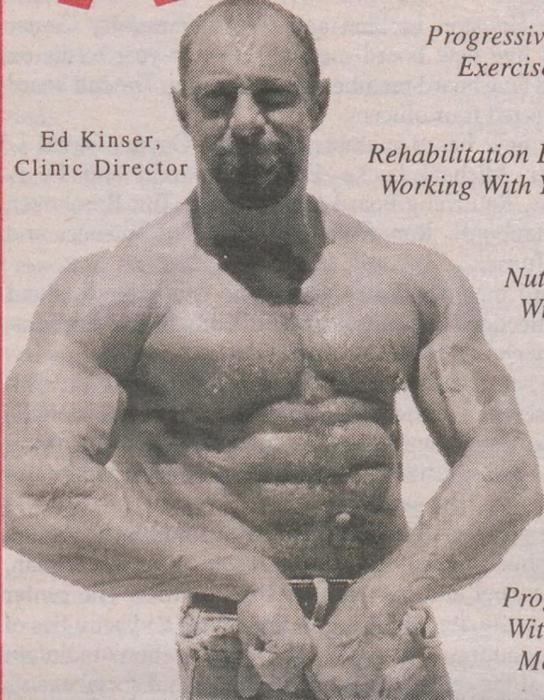
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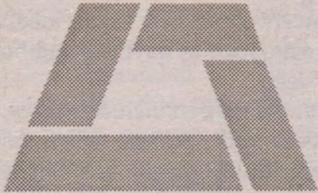
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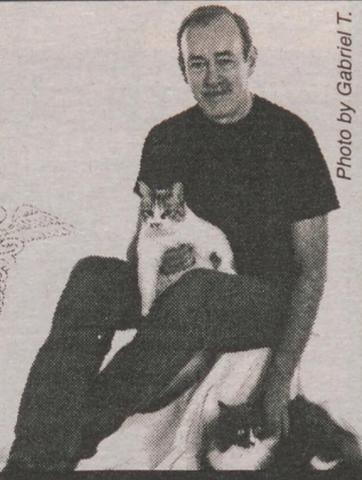


Photo by Gabriel T.

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SEA Shell assists Omega House

➤ Continued from Page 3

They transplanted some of the existing plants and planted some of the new plants donated by Thompson Hanson Nursery and Treesearch farms.

Then, on Nov. 25, eight more volunteers came to plant the bedding plants. The beds are now filled with the cheerful flowers of pansies, violas, lobelia and snap dragons. Perennials, such as daylilies and bulbine will bloom later in the year.

Bushes in the garden include athaea, dwarf Barbados cherry, cassia, and Chinese witch hazel. A weeping yaupon contributes bright red berries to the scene. Several of the roses have been kept.

"In the spring, the flowering annuals will be replaced with summer color," Smith said. "This will be a very attractive garden that will also reduce the amount of labor and chemicals necessary to keep the garden in good condition."

SEA Shell is a group formed to provide support for members and co-workers, promote equality for employees regardless of sexual orientation, and create awareness in management of issues and concerns affecting people in diverse workplaces inclusive of sexual orientation.

One of its goals is to work with management to ensure the rapid and effective implementation of domestic partner benefits. The group became involved with the Omega House project because it works with the community at large.

Smith said that the roses that were moved out of the garden are in pots at his office waiting to be sold.

"There are about 15 rose bushes available for \$10 each," he said.

Proceeds will be used for supplies to maintain the gar-



TERRY SULLIVAN

Volunteers from SEA Shell, a GLBT group of the Shell Oil Company, recently refurbished the garden at Omega House, a residential facility providing hospice care to terminal-phase AIDS patients.

den. For information about the plants or helping to maintain the garden, call Smith at 713-520-1066.

The Garden and Yard Society is a group of GLBT garden enthusiasts which meets in members' gardens on the second Friday of each month. Call Smith at the number above for more information about the group.

Community Center elects board, officers

The Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center elected five new board members to two-year terms on Nov. 28. Five board members are returning. The full board then elected four officers.

The new board members are Kay Dayus, David L. Groover, Michael Locke, Debbie Maurelli and D. L. Murphy. Returning board members are Tim Brookover, Don Hauboldt, Ron Helaire, Maria E. Minicucci and Bruce Turner.

Board member Sean Carter, who is eligible to stand for re-election, was out of town the day of the elections. He may choose to run at a later date.

The board elected Brookover the new community center president. He succeeds Minicucci, who remains on the board and will continue as program director. Murphy is the new vice-president. Locke will serve as treasurer and Dayus is the new secretary.

The Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center, established in 1996, is a central resource for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities. The center serves as the site for the regular meetings and activities of many community groups. Eight organizations maintain offices at the center. Space for meetings and social events is available for rent.

The center is located at 803 Hawthorne at Stanford two blocks east of Montrose. The center maintains regular drop-in hours: 6-9 p.m. Monday-Friday and noon-4 p.m. Saturday. The telephone number is 713-524-3818.

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N-9 may not protect against HIV, may increase infection

> Continued from Page 3

need for a microbicide alternative to condoms.

Dr. Helene D. Gayle, director of the National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention, declared that the spermicide nonoxynol-9 (N-9)—long thought to be a barrier to HIV—might actually increase infections.

The announcement cited the results of a four-year Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS study of nearly 1,000 HIV-negative female sex workers in Africa. All the women were asked to use condoms and a vaginal gel during intercourse. Half the women received a gel with N-9, while the other half received a placebo gel.

At the end of the trial, women using the N-9 gel had become HIV-infected at about a 50 percent higher rate than those using the placebo. And the more frequently the women used the N-9 gel without a condom, the higher was their risk of becoming infected.

The results of the study were first announced in July at the International AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa.

"Given that N-9 has now been proven ineffective against HIV transmission, the possibility of risk, with no benefit, indicates that N-9 should not be recommended as an effective means of HIV prevention," said the CDC's release. "This study suggests that the use of N-9 for HIV preven-

tion may be harmful."

This is a marked departure from the long-held belief that N-9 might in fact help prevent HIV infection by attacking the virus.

Harrison said that early on in the AIDS epidemic, N-9 was proposed as a possible way to fight HIV. N-9 is a biodegradable and a spermicide that was already known to fight chlamydia and gonorrhea, she said.

"We certainly saw killer effectiveness in vitro," said Harrison. "You lay a bunch of N-9 on HIV and it dies. It typically punches holes in the membrane. It's a killer." In addition to killing HIV in test tubes, N-9 also showed effectiveness in animal studies, she said.

"The problem with taking the next step is that you're looking at safety," Harrison said. The dearth of widespread human test results has increased the amount of attention paid to the Durban study.

But Harrison noted that the Food and Drug Administration has not yet taken a position on N-9. And she questioned whether the sex workers—who typically have rougher sex with many partners a day—are the ideal subjects from which to extrapolate results.

Harrison stopped short of criticizing the CDC's opinion but admitted that N-9 as an anti-HIV agent is probably a dead issue.

"It's not going to give us the efficacy that we need. But on the other hand, that doesn't tell us what to do about the N-9 products

that are already out there on the market," she said.

Harrison pointed out that the end of N-9's days as a perceived HIV-fighter makes even clearer the need for microbicide development, which her organization advocates. There are now some 60 microbicides under study, she said.

But running large-scale clinical trials will take \$10 million a year, while moving several products into human testing will cost \$50 million, a price tag large pharmaceutical companies may not be inclined to pay, she said.

A bill to fund microbicide research introduced in the last session of Congress made little progress, Harrison said, and will be reintroduced in the next session.

N-9 or not?

For many years, manufacturers of sexual lubricants have offered formulations including N-9. The CDC's announcement brought markedly different reactions from two of the best-known "lubes" targeting the gay community.

On Nov. 16, Southern California-based Trigg Laboratories announced it had "voluntarily and proactively" removed N-9 from its WET Original Formula Personal Lubricant Gel.

"Safety is the highest priority in the products we market, so while some competitors have only reduced the amount of N-9, we've chosen to eliminate it entirely,"

said Michael Trygstad, president and founder.

Trygstad said he took the decision not because N-9 was unsafe but rather "because the CDC said it was ineffective and because the public's perception of N-9 is going to change over time, based on all the media reports coming out against it.

"The reason we chose to add it when we came out with our product in 1989 was that the public demanded it," Trygstad said. "The companies that were making N-9 at the time highly promoted it throughout the gay community and elsewhere as an effective means to prevent HIV."

But the makers of ID Lube have taken a different path.

"We want to make sure we are putting out a safe product, but at the same time not take away the options of the customer," said Todd Carter, director of sales for ID's manufacturer, Westridge Labs of Irvine, Calif. "We realize that the consumers have to make up their own minds about what's right for them."

Carter said Westridge's ID Glide Plus with N-9 is "popular in pockets of the country" including Houston and the San Francisco area, but not in other parts of California.

"If there was a major risk of danger, the CDC would say this agent is a danger to the American people and needs to be recalled. That has not happened," Carter said.

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New gay television channel launches on Dish network

Dec. 22

by D.L. GROOVER

Once upon a time (three years ago), it was possible to receive gay radio programming 24/7, either through Triangle Radio Network or GayBC. Of course, that was Internet accessible, so when you shut down your computer, there went your gay radio.

But in a stunning way to kick off the new century, there's now gay television. A station whose programming is 24/7 gay. And it's coming Dec. 22.

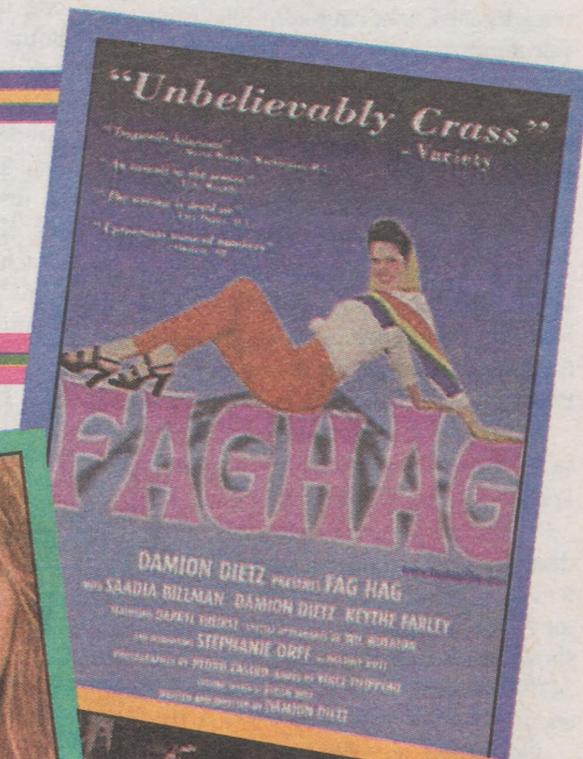
"It's an idea whose time has really come. It's exclusively gay, lesbian and transgender," boasts Dick Wiener, executive vice president of Gay Television Network.

If this comes off as planned, for the inauguration has already been set back from a November start date due to technical glitches in their uplink to fiber optic out of Wyoming, this puffed-up attitude at the Palm Springs, Calif. headquarters of GTN (Gay Television Network) will not be an empty promise.

This truly novel concept is available only through the Dish Network, the digital satellite subscriber system, as a Premium Channel choice. Sign up for their Basic Package, which includes 150 channels of TV and audio programming, and for an extra charge of \$19.95, you will receive GTN—and their Internet radio channel as a bonus. If you sign up now, you get the 18-inch satellite dish and installation free.

Our Canadian neighbor will

> Continued on Page 16



by D.L. GROOVER

When the two actors/friends Kathy Najimy and Mo Gaffney turned their improv routines into their two-woman feminist stage romp in 1989, THE KATHY & MO SHOW: PARALLEL LIVES, they had no idea what a cottage industry their little show would create.

You've come a long way, baby 'Kathy & Mo' well portrayed at Theater LaB

A hit in New York off-Broadway, winning Obie awards for both of them, HBO filmed their show, subsequently winning them Cable Ace Awards. It's now a staple of college drama departments and community theaters throughout the U.S., adding its substantial residuals to these busy actors' retirement funds.

Theater LaB Houston presented the show in 1994, and in a fitting end to its Fall 2000 season, has revived it in a warm and winning showcase, smoothly directed by Bill McDonald, for the current incarnations of Kathy and Mo, Michelle Britton and Leslie Maness.

In twelve sketches, wherein they play all characters, male and female, these two inventive performers give this somewhat dated material much-needed depth, making these unevenly written playlets a whole lot more charming than they are.

Just listen to the variety Britton gleans from Hank's drunken bubba mantra, "You look very, very pretty tonight," in the "Hank and Karen Sue" sequence, as he/she's continuously oblivious to Karen Sue's on-the-edge

unhappy daily life grind. Every time Britton repeats it, the line reading varies.

With just a twinge in shading or a wide-eyed glaze in her eyes, Britton breathes hidden life into this one-note country bar yokel.

Throughout the show, both actors perform such theatrical feats of prestidigitatation. With a flash of lightning and a choral passage from Orff's "Carmina Burana," we begin in Heaven where two creator-helper angels dole out the immutable roles and rules for the two lumps of clay newly formed, i.e., traits, sex, color, and who gets to give child-birth.

Women get pain and messy birth to dull the shine ("big head through a small portal"), and men, to compensate, get "as much ego" as possible. With that, they hope for the best, and the show's off and running.

As the actors don their wigs and props from off the back wall of the set, covered with the universal symbol for female and such book covers as "The Second Sex" and "The

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Dish network to launch gay channel Dec. 22

> Continued from Page 15

have its own digital gay TV network coming in September 2001, PrideVision. The license to broadcast was announced this week by the Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission, who awarded the \$20 million contract to the small independent Ontario company, which beat out Toronto's big daddy Q! Television, a subsidiary of PlanetOut.

A Peabody award-winning television producer, Wiener and his partner, Frank Olsen, started the Internet-based gay Triangle Radio Network four years ago and have been working ever since on getting their television idea off the ground, or into the sky, as it were.

"Finally it's coming to reality," Wiener says. "A lot of people want this to happen. We're very excited about it."

Filling up 24 hours of programming is a daunting challenge even for such heavy-hitters as CNN and the Weather Channel, so for the first six months, a limited amount of shows are scheduled for Gay-TV, and the 24/7 concept will only apply on the weekends.

Once their feet get dry, they will start self-producing shows. For now, they're relying on a lot of movies to fill the slots, raiding gay and lesbian and independent film festivals for their product, but the initial

lineup is fairly impressive.

"The programming in the beginning is five days a week, 12 hours a day," explains Wiener. "From Friday at one o'clock until one o'clock on Monday morning, it's 24 hours a day. We're filling it primarily with movies, some series, and some regional talk shows like 'Out and About' from Fort Lauderdale and 'Queer Nation' out of New Zealand."

Just a sampling from their initial schedule should make any gay couch potato clutch that clicker with pleasure. So far, the films include "Claire de Lune," "Pink Flamingos," "Red Rain," "Defying Gravity," "Latin Boys Go to Hell," "Twisted," "All the Rage," "It's In the Water," "A Boy Named Sue," "Caravaggio," and "Edward II."



Programs scheduled include a morning talk show, "Good Morning, Gay America;" "Gay Archives," a one-hour program which traces gay life in New York and Los Angeles in the hedonistic, early days of the '70s and '80s; "Gay Pride, Palm Springs;" music video shows; "Gay Across the Globe," an

hour special that documents international GLBT happenings; "Mardi Gras 2000," a documentary on the hot celebrations down under from Sydney, Australia; and religious services broadcast live from Fort Lauderdale's Sunshine Cathedral and Dallas' Cathedral of Hope.

A cooking show hosted by transvestite Betty Delicious is presently being filmed, as is a gay history show. Also planned is a Girl's Night, featuring lesbian-themed films, as well as a Boy's Night.

Other highlights in their distinctive programming will be "Gay Court," "Gay Bandstand," and gay fashion shows, pride celebrations, sports, and rodeos. In the wee hours, soft porn is tentatively scheduled, although Wiener is quick to point out that those exclusively hard-core sex films, while a continuing and lucrative staple of our community's video rental outlet, will not be stressed.

"This doesn't sound like a network schedule, does it?" asks Wiener rhetorically. "We want to get programming from all over the country." GTN is already in contact with the GLBT communities around the globe for diverse and locally produced content.

Through trade ads in the gay press, their subscriber base is projected at 10,000 during the first few months; it currently stands at about 2,000. Naturally, the Dish Network's

subscriber base of 5 million is a rich resource for signing up new viewers.

"We'll see where it goes from there," says Wiener. "I'd sign up right away," he adds with an executive's confidence.

While Wiener would not divulge any of the "large group of investors" behind GTN, the network, not exclusively gay run, is firmly in family hands with all major decisions and acquisitions under gay leadership.

"The structure is in the hands of gay men and women, because we kind of have a feel for what our community wants," he explained.

Roger Asquith, GTN's director of public relations and ebullient co-host of "Broadway and More," a music program on Triangle's Internet radio, has a history in gay publishing that stretches over two decades in Great Britain and the U.S., as do many others in the organization.

"I'm the sane one here," he said with a laugh, "everyone else is completely mad. We're getting a tremendous response. Dish is a pretty good deal. We'll even send you a free packet of popcorn."

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Bayou Calendar

World Aids Day Events

An installation by artist Mary Hawkins and an awards presentation that honors recipients for their leadership in HIV.

5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Center for AIDS, 1407 Hawthorne

The 10th annual "die in," a memorial to those who are gone, and a supportive celebration to give hope to those still with us.

8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Hemisfair Plaza

713-402-0269

Photographic exhibition by artists living with HIV/AIDS.

10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center,

803 Hawthorne

713-524-3818

Amor Fati

Men with HIV/AIDS come to terms with the reality of the disease through their art.

6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway (N. Main @ Naylor) 713-335-3445

Amigos Volunteers in Education and Services (AVES) celebrates the lives touched by HIV/AIDS with a candlelight vigil, procession, and musical celebration.

6 p.m.

Our Lady of Guadeloupe Church, 2405 Navigation
281-632-9974

The Association of Lesbian and Gay Pride Films, a French activist organization for AIDS/HIV, sponsored a filmmaking contest, financed by the government (something that won't happen here any time soon). Twelve short films make up this diversely entertaining compilation. It's a very French look at gay love, life, and sex.

Dec. 1 and 2, 7:30 p.m.; Dec. 3, 7 p.m.

Rice Media Center University Boulevard @ Stockton, entrance #8
713-348-4882

Gay Men's Chorus of Houston

It's quite amazing that the rich, masculine sound of our own Gay Men's Chorus has been heard here on the bayou for 22 years, so it's most appropriate that the opening concert for its new season be titled "It's a Wonderful Life." Using selections of holiday music from Hollywood's songbook ("Mame" through "Nightmare Before Christmas," among others), the varied and fun-filled program will have you rushing to be the first in your neighborhood to get that fir tree up and decorated.

Dec. 2, 8 p.m. Dec. 3, 3 p.m.

Resurrection MCC, 2025 W. 11th St.

713-521-SING

'Parallel Lives' at Theatre LaB

> Continued from Page 15

Feminine Mystique," they lead us on a well-trod path through contemporary feminist comedy.

First stirrings of the women's movement characterize the "Kris and Jeff" sketch, where horny macho Jeff (Maness) has his hands full when fluff-headed Kris (Britton) suddenly berates the waitress at Denny's for her rude treatment of the transvestites in the next booth. There's no reason to be mean to people just because "their parents must not have cared about them or given them money or anything," yells Kris inadvertently across the crowded restaurant.

Her unlikely Jane Fonda outburst, coming from her head of big blond curls, surprises herself, revealing the emerging consciousness of the new woman.

Some scenes fall as flat as a Dark Ages map of the world, particularly a silly Shakespearean parody with big plastic boobs and the routine "Period Piece," which answers the question, what would happen if men got periods? The answer's none too surprising nor funny, but mercifully short.

The get-back-to-nature, unshaved armpits "womyn" is neatly skewered in "Las Hermanas," wherein Madeline and Sylvia, two open-to-all-experiences Jewish matrons, affected by the nascent move-

ment, go back to college for the Women's Studies Extension Program.

Introduced to Women in Terrorism and Women and Their Body Temperatures, these ready-for-anything senior sisters navigate through the shoals of performance art with Holly and Molly's Big Sister Show, a ranting, frenzied femi-Nazi lampoon.

Within this cartoon though is a show-stopping monologue by Britton. As the elderly matron aunt in fur-collared car coat and cat-eye glasses, she relates her favorite nephew's coming out to her. Tenderly written and performed with wrenching truth, this simple plea for tolerance dazzles with its clear honesty.

"I had such dreams for you," she says wistfully to nephew Michael, who asks her not to hate him for being gay. "I could never hate you," she confirms with overwhelming maternal love, "Hell, I got used to the microwave oven."

Her new dream for him is that he be happy.

"It's the most important thing of all."

INFO

The Kathy & Mo Show: Parallel Lives

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Theater LaB Houston, 1706 Alamo

713-868-7516



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—Mark Goebel, Eclipse Magazine

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Eating Out

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Atmosphere prevails

Ambiance wins out over cuisine at Nino's

by KATHREEN LEE

If you have eaten out in Houston, and eaten well, you most likely have patronized one of the many restaurants owned by the Mandola family.

NINO'S, run by Vincent Mandola, sits nestled adjacent to two other Mandola establishments, Vincent's and Grappino's. Within this little Italy, you have a wine bar, a pizza/roisserie chicken restaurant, and Nino's, which proclaims a "Down-Home Italian" fare.

The dim interior tailored with dark mahogany furnishings, copper pots and pans, and a cornucopia of dried maize and pumpkins, creates a cozy dining room atmosphere. Furthermore, enlarged pictures of a family trip to Italy and mama's kitchen apron adorning the walls serve as relics to convey a home-cooked appeal to Nino's cuisine.

We started the evening with an order of Calamari Fritti (\$6.75) and Carpaccio (\$8), which is thinly sliced raw beef

the size of quarter pancakes commingled with arugula, mushrooms, capers and tomatoes flowered with olive oil and parmigiano. My dinner companions noted that the raw meat and vegetables tasted incredibly fresh.

The calamari on the other hand received mixed reviews, with some lauding the soft texture of the fried batter and the large slices of calamari and others complaining that the silky fried batter replaced the usual crispy texture with a nondescript mushy one.

This pattern of mixed reviews continued into our order of entrees. One friend who had the Penne alla Vodka (\$11.95), which is short tube pasta mixed with lump crab meat and drowned in a light tomato and vodka cream sauce, extolled the freshness of the ingredients and the rich flavor of the cream sauce but bemoaned the small portions of tomatoes and crab meat rendering the dish "boring."

Another friend who ordered the Fedilini Primavera (\$8.95), which is thin spaghetti tossed with zucchini, eggplant, asparagus, artichoke, crushed tomatoes, olive oil and basil, once again complimented the spryness of the vegetables, but commented that the dish was overly salty.

The Zuppa di Pesce (\$14.95) received a similar critique with complaints that

despite the savory blend of fish, mussels, shrimp and calamari in a tomato based soup, the overwhelmingly fishy and briny tinge of the mussels tainted the dish.

The Pollo alla Lombarda (\$14.95) is two pieces of sautéed chicken breast topped with artichoke hearts, sundried tomatoes, spinach and gorgonzola cheese. The incredibly tender and succulent meat easily peeled off, but the gorgonzola cheese—basically blue cheese—was nowhere to be found and the helping of tomatoes and artichoke hearts were rather sparse.

Having been to other Mandola-owned establishments, I chalk Nino's up to be more an anomaly in the usual string of wonderfully prepared restaurants. While we found the cuisine to be fair overall, one or two discordant aspects would prevent perfection.

What we most enjoyed about Nino's was the quiet and dignified ambiance of the establishment.

Compared to the festive atmosphere at Grappino's wine bar and the loud and boisterous chatter of Vincent's rotisserie, Nino's offers a much more subdued milieu.

Mainly patronized by soon-to-be retirees of the River Oaks community,

the ambiance is neither exciting nor romantic. Instead, the large damp windows facing out onto Dallas, the dark surroundings, and the humming of low murmurs effect a more ski-lodge-esque atmosphere.

If you're out with a group of friends who are not too discriminating about their diet and want to enjoy an elegant evening, then I would recommend Nino's as a prime choice.



NINO'S RESTAURANT
2817 West Dallas
713.522.5120

FOOD FILE

Food: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
Service: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
Value: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
Scene: 🍴🍴🍴🍴

☞ Opt for bread, water at home

☞☞ OK, if you really must

☞☞☞ Fine for most

☞☞☞☞ Worth the drive, so live a little

☞☞☞☞☞ As good as it gets

"quote/unquote"

compiled by REX WOCKNER



"I've never been ashamed of living with a woman. I've never hidden it. I've never been ashamed of being with a man, except I've only had one serious relationship with a man, and that's not in the present. I don't have a traditional viewpoint. And there's no way that I could get up and say I'm a lesbian. I've never felt like a lesbian. I've never lived like a lesbian. But I have no problem getting up and saying I live with a woman, I'm passionately, madly in love. Committed."

—Singer Sophie B. Hawkins to *Girlfriends* magazine, October issue.

"My father said it on numerous occasions. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. If we exclude and discriminate against any group of people it affects us all. And it's really that simple. The civil rights movement that I believe in thrives on unity and inclusion ... and so, absolutely, the gay rights movement fits very much into the concept and reflection of what the dream is."

—Yolanda King, daughter of Martin Luther King Jr., to the Michigan gay newspaper *Between The Lines*, Nov. 2.

"There's too much advertising in the world and too little time. Putting lesbian imagery in a mainstream publication is one way to break through and get noticed. It's also true that many straight men have a minor preoccupation with lesbians—that's hardly a new idea."

—Advertising Age Deputy Editor Bradley Johnson to the *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 16, in reference to recent ads by Dior, Dolce & Gabbana, John Hancock and Subaru.

"We [heterosexuals] can do it [have sex in public], and people just shake their fingers at us and tell us we're spirited. Is there any of us talking here that hasn't gone out and had sex in a place they're not supposed to? I know in my alpha-male world, and I get in situations like that [where gays proposition me], I don't call the police. This is just me personally. I would just laugh it off if I'm propositioned and I'm not gay, if I'm a hetero."



—Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura to KFAN radio Nov. 22 after his chief of staff, Steve Bosacker, pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor for allegedly propositioning a male police officer while nude in a steam room.

"When Showtime acquired the rights to remake the show, many people in Hollywood predicted the cable network would neuter it. In fact, other than adding two years to the kid's age—he was 15 in Britain—the American 'Queer As Folk' takes more risks than the British version: more sex, more graphic language. It's also richer. Showtime has spent more than \$1 million per episode."

—MSNBC review, Nov. 19.

"Because you're usually not really attracted to anybody you're working with, for the most part, kissing a girl is a lot better for a job. They definitely have better breath. They kiss like you want to be kissed... The guys always get fucked up and they want to stick their tongues down your throat! ... You know, I actually think it is kind of cool to have kissed so many girls... My poor husband—he probably thinks it's weird, but, oh well."

—Actress Mariel Hemingway to *Curve* magazine, December issue.

"It's OK for you to say anything you want. I just don't want to label myself, because I have never gotten my act together. It's just not accurate for me to label myself. I don't care what other people say; other people have said terrible things. You know Frank Sinatra called me a big dyke from the stage of Carnegie Hall?"



—Gossip columnist Liz Smith to *The Advocate*, Dec. 5.

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ON THE FRINGE: INTERIOR DESIGN

Christmas cactus

Create your own wreath from prickly pear pads

by ELLA TYLER

The idea for this wreath came from a friend who said she had seen a wreath made of prickly pear pads hanging on the gate of a ranch near San Antonio. She persuaded her boyfriend to bring us some prickly pear pads from his next visit to that area and we set out to make wreaths.

We spent two days, clad in heavy gloves and long-sleeved shirts, armed with needle-nose pliers, wire cutters and secateurs, trying to remove the thorns.

Prickly pears, in case you've never really known one, have long thorns that stab you and clusters of short thorns that work their way under your skin and resist removal. We were ready to abandon the idea, when she suggested we try Fiesta. Prickly pear pads, known as nopalitos, are a delicacy in Mexico.

There they were—thornless and ready to use—in the produce section. The next problem was making a wreath. The pads are heavy and thick, but after a lot of experimentation, we finally made a wreath that didn't fall apart as soon as it was hung.

The wreath base can be Styrofoam, dry florist's foam or straw, but it needs to be two inches thick. I wrap the base with paper twist ribbon because the sides of the wreath base aren't covered. It takes about 3 yards.

I attached the pads, overlapping each other slightly, using greening pins at each end. These are also called florist's pins; they are a squared off U shape.

For a 14" wreath, I used about 15 pads about the size of my hand or a little smaller. As you pick them out, chose ones that are similar in size and shape. Pick the flattest ones. I found all the other supplies I needed at Hobby Lobby.

Materials cost about \$7. This wreath is decorated with some Mexican tin ornaments I bought years ago, but a paper ribbon bow would work too. The wreath will stay fresh for weeks without wilting or shedding and after a month or so, it might even send out a shoot.

You can cook the leftover cactus pads. Cut them into small pieces and steam them or stir into scrambled eggs. They reputedly taste rather like green beans.

If you want a pine or cedar wreath, the best way to keep it fresh is to keep it away from direct sun and heat and mist it every day.

Unless you kill plants by looking at them, buy your Christmas plants now. Poinsettias are undoubtedly the most popular and readily available Christmas plant because the blooms stay for months—until St. Patrick's day if you take care of your plant.

The white, pink and bi-colored colored ones are harder to find, but are pretty and a

nice change. Once the bracts have begun to color, they will continue to color, without being kept in the dark.

Poinsettia stems snap very easily. Bring them home in sleeves, but remove the sleeve as soon as you can. They should be kept in bright light, away from excessive heat (like fireplaces or lamps) or drafts.

They may be put outside unless the temperature falls below 40 degrees. Keep poinsettias moist, but not wet, and do not let them stand in water.

Christmas Cactus is fabulous looking. They will bloom for 4 to 6 weeks with each flower lasting for about a week. Buy them just as buds begin to open, but keep them from getting too hot. They are likely to drop buds at temperatures above 75 degrees. These also need to be kept moist, not wet. Again, they are fragile, and like bright light and no drafts.

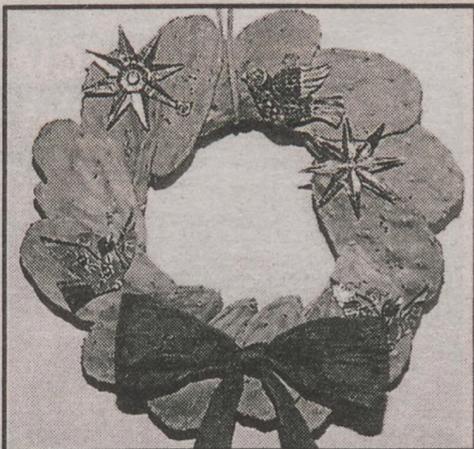
If you have a Christmas Cactus that hasn't flowered, it is undoubtedly because it has not had the proper combination of short days and cool temperatures.

Kalanchoes, which have umbrellas of tiny, brightly colored flowers are becoming a popular holiday plant because they are very long lasting and easy to take care of. They like very bright light, but can be allowed to dry out.

Amaryllis, with its five-inch flowers, is spectacular. It is also easy to grow, sometimes flowering without soil or water. A plant that has a small bud now will open by Christmas. The flowers keep for about 10 days. The flower stalk might need to be supported by a stake.

Cyclamens are another popular and pretty plant. Buy them with a few open flowers and lots of buds. Look into the plant, the buds are hidden inside. They like cool temperatures—not above 74 during the day and below 65 at night.

Do not give them direct light. They should be kept barely moist. They like high humidity but are very sensitive to over watering.



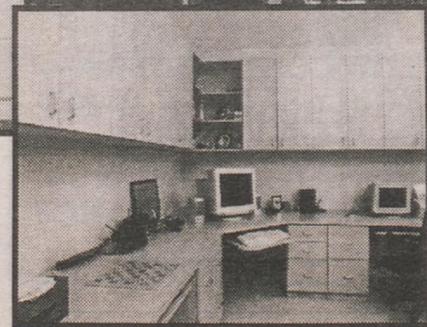
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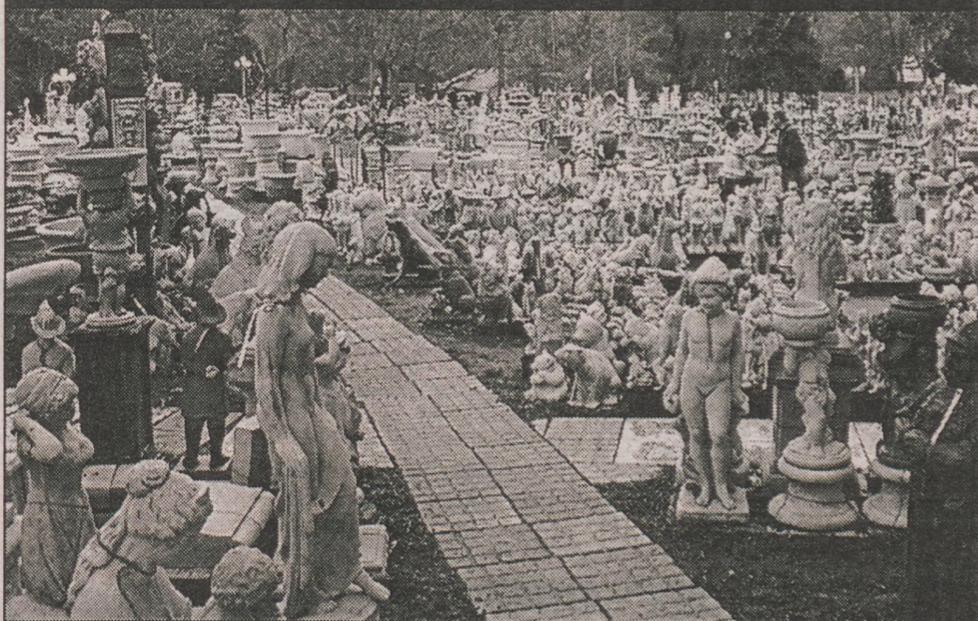
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community

saturday, december 2

After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM. 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. 713-526-5738.
Q-Patrol walks the streets 8:45 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.
Dignity mass. 7:30 p.m. for gay Catholics. 713-880-2872.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Rosary 8 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama.
713-528-6665.
Houston Chain Gang Bicycle Club. Call for ride locations. 713-863-1860.
Houston Wrestling Club. Practice. 1:30 p.m. 713-453-7406.
Rainbow Fishing Club. Meeting. 713-526-7070.
Houston Faerie Circle. Meeting. 2 p.m. 713-533-0150.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Southwest Center. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. 281-633-2555 & Conroe 936-441-1614.
Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours noon to 4 p.m. • Montrose Writer's Project. 3 to 4:30 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-528-3818.
"Season's Reading." Houston READ Commission. 713-297-6282.
Power Breathing. 2 p.m. 713-932-7224.
Houston Gay & Lesbian Health Professionals.. Holiday party. 713-523-4700.

sunday, december 3

Common Group (formerly New Hope Christian Center) Worship Service. 11 a.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals meets. 713-942-7002.
Rainbow Riders. A bicycle club for women. 713-869-1686.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Holy Rite Eucharist 1 7:45 a.m.; Holy Rite Eucharist II 8:55 a.m.; Education hour 10 a.m.; Choral Eucharist 11 a.m. 713-528-6665.
Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Church. Service. 6:30 p.m. 713-528-6756.
Resurrection MCC. Services. 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10 a.m. Youth Sunday School 11:15 a.m. Handbell Choir rehearsal 1:30 p.m. 713-861-9149.
Grace Lutheran Church. Sunday school for all ages 9 a.m. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-528-3269.
Community Gospel. Service at 11 a.m. & 7 p.m. Sunday School for children 10 a.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
Houston Mission Church. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-529-8225.
Covenant Church, Ecumenical, Liberal Baptist. Service 9:30 a.m. & education hour 11 a.m. 713-668-8830.
Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Services at 8:30 a.m. & 10:50 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 713-526-1017.
The Women's Group. Meeting & Discussion. 10:45 a.m. 713-529-8571.
Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 502 Church St. Service 10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.

First Congregational Church (Memorial). Service at 11 a.m. Christian Education. 11:30 p.m. 713-468-9543 or fcc-houston.org.
Unitarian Fellowship of Houston. Adult forum 10 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 713-686-5876.
Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation: Adult discussion 9:45 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.
First Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:30 & 11:30 a.m. Brunch available 10:30 a.m. 713-526-5200. church@firstuu.org.
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours 2 to 4 p.m. • Tree trimming party. 7 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
PFLAG-Houston. Holiday Party. 713-467-3524.

monday, december 4

Gay Fathers/Fathers First. Support group. 8 p.m. www.GayFathers-Houston.org or 281-505-1788.
Frost Eye Clinic. Free eye exams for people with HIV. 713-830-3000.
HIV testing. STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 1 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. 713-626-2837.
Kolbe Project. Eucharist 7:30 p.m. 713-861-1800.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 936-441-1614.
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
Lesbian & Gay Voices Radio Show. 8 to 10 p.m. KPFT 90.1. 713-529-1223.
AIDS Mastery. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
Grief & Divorce Support Groups. 7 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017, Ext. 208.
gayDAR. Wellness community. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-526-1017, Ext. 211.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours from 6 to 9 p.m. • Black Lesbian & Gay Coalition meeting. 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

tuesday, december 5

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Club Houston. 713-830-3000.
Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-524-0439.
Bering Support Network. Lunch Bunch Gang 11 a.m. 713-526-1017.
Gay Men's Process Group. 7 p.m. 3316 Mt. Vernon. 713-526-8390.
Men's Network. Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual men. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.

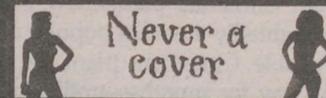


DRINK SPECIALS 8:00-10:00PM

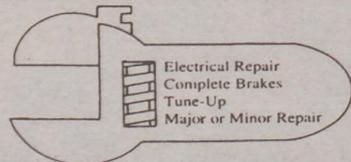
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calendar

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

Lambda Skating Club skates. 8 p.m. Tradewinds, Skating Rink. 713-410-7215.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Lesbian Island Association meeting. 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

Lesbian Health Initiative. Monthly meeting. 713-603-0023.

wednesday, december 6

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

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

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Mary's, Venture-N & E.J's. 713-830-3000.

BiNet Houston. 7:30 p.m. Social meeting. 713-467-4380

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

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

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

Out Skate Rollerskating Club. 8 to 10 p.m. 8075 Cook Road. 281-933-5818.

Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. 7 p.m. 713-880-0670.

Bible Study. Noon & 6:30 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal. 713-526-6665. Spiritual Uplift service. 7 p.m. Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Resurrection MCC. 713-861-9149.

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

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

Lesbian Literature Discussion Group. 7 p.m. 713-523-3037.

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

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

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Free HIV testing by the Montrose Clinic 6 to 9 p.m. • 713-524-3818.

Classic Chassis Car Club. Monthly dinner meeting. 713-797-8615.

thursday, december 7

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

Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. 7 p.m. 713-880-0670.

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

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

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

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

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

HIV Art Course Program. 1 to 4 p.m. Kermit Eisenhut. 713-524-9530.

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

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

HIV Testing. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.

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

Family to Family Adoption Services. Seminar. 6:30 p.m. 713-249-5941

ECHouston, Pro-Gay, Pro-Christian Bible Study & Fellowship. 800-310-6718 ext: Bible.

friday, december 8

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

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. Rich's. 713-830-3000.

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

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

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

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

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

Positive Art Workshop. 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Patrick Palmer. 713-526-1118.

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

Mishpachah Alizim Shabbat Services. 8 p.m. 713-748-7079.

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

Garden and Yard Society. Monthly meeting. 713-863-1066.

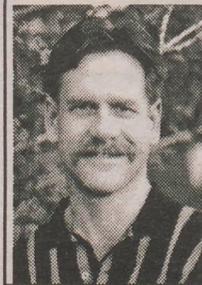
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TO PLACE AN AD:

IN PERSON: Bring completed order form with payment to Houston Voice offices (M-F, 9-5:30 pm) 500 Lovett, suite 200. **BY MAIL:** Mail completed order form with payment to Houston Voice Classifieds, 500 Lovett, Suite 200, Houston, TX., 77006. **BY PHONE:** Call in with completed order form to 713-529-8490. **BY FAX:** Fax completed order form and credit card information to Classifieds 713-529-9531. **BY E-MAIL:** feedback@houstonvoice.com
AD POLICY: Houston Voice reserves the right to edit, reclassify or reject ads not meeting Houston Voice standards. No refunds for early cancellation. Misprints: Houston Voice is not responsible for misprints appearing after first week. Check ads promptly.

Deadline for ad submission is: MONDAY at 12 NOON

1 PICK YOUR CATEGORY

FREE*: Call for guidelines
 ___ HIV Services & Education
 ___ Volunteers
 ___ Non-Profit Organizations
 *First 20 words

INDIVIDUAL RATE \$7:
 ___ Announcements
 ___ Auditions
 ___ Employment-Seeking
 ___ Pets-Free or Lost & Found
 ___ Roommates
 ___ Personal Websites

BUSINESS RATE \$15:
 ___ Auto Repair
 ___ Business Opportunities
 ___ Entertainment
 ___ Help Wanted
 ___ Help Wanted-Seeking
 ___ Home Improvement
 ___ Items For Sale
 ___ Licensed Massage
 ___ Moving Services
 ___ Professional Services
 ___ Real Estate For Rent
 ___ Real Estate For Sale

Call 713-529-8490
for other categories

2 WRITE YOUR AD
Please print clearly

CATEGORY: _____ # OF ISSUES: _____

Giant or Bold Headline - Not to exceed 14 characters and spaces

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

TEXT: _____

3 TOTAL YOUR COST
CALL FOR DIRECTORY AD RATES

INDIVIDUAL RATE ADS
Up to 20 words for \$7.00 per week. Additional words at 50¢ each per week.
 Up to 20 words: 7.00
 Additional words _____ x 50¢: _____
 Bold headline: 5.00 (per week) _____
Subtotal: _____ x _____ # of issues
Total: \$ _____

BUSINESS RATE ADS
Up to 20 words for \$15.00 per week.
 Additional words _____ x 75¢ per word (per week): _____
 Bold headline: 5.00 (per week) _____
Subtotal: _____ x _____ # of issues
Total: \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Check Enclosed _____ Charge to my AMEX MC VISA

Card # _____ Exp. ____/____

Signature _____

Occasions

Birthdays

The fabulous Jessica Van Shelton will be draggin' in a birthday Dec. 1.

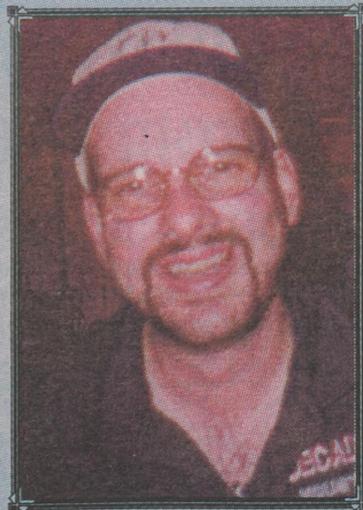
Wolf daddy Bruce Chambers has a howling good time on his Dec. 4 birthday.

Houston Area Bear Bill L. is looking for a big bear birthday hug on Dec. 4.

The Houston Voice welcomes your special occasions. Send e-mail to croberts@houstonvoice.com. Fax: 713-529-9531. Mail: Occasions, Houston Voice, 500 Lovett Blvd., Suite 200, Houston, Texas 77006. Please include a telephone number so occasions can be verified and considered for publication.



This giant hunk of cat is Starbuck, our pet of the week. He lives indoors and would love for you to adopt him. Call the Houston Humane Society at 713-434-5555 or e-mail pr@houstonhumane.org.



Memorial Service

A Celebration of Life for Jeff Cowin (5/11/62 to 11/15/00) will be at the reflection pool by Rothko Chapel, 1409 Sul Ross at Yupon, Sunday, Dec. 3 at 1 p.m. On Sunday, Dec. 17, at 5 p.m., the Sambvca Sisters present "Holiday Nuns in the Tropics," at Decades, 1205 Richmond. This show will be dedicated to Jeff. For any further information, call 713-521-2224.

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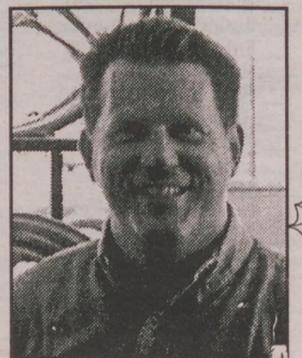


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YOUR WEEKLY HOROSCOPE



December 1 - 7

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Venus finishes up a stint in your career house on Dec. 7, so please, make that a day to live on in the hearts of your so-called superiors. You may feel like you're preparing for a wedding. Well, not yet, darling, but it certainly is an optimistic time in your love life. You (or a Virgo) may be wearing a white dress sooner than you think.



TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

It could be hard for you to figure out what a close companion wants from you. Is it love, sex or something dastardly? You may have too many choices as the Sun moves through your serious relationship house. It's time to decide. Pluto calls for caution, especially if the party in question is a too-perfect Cancer.



GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Things actually are what they seem during this physically exhausting but emotionally fulfilling cycle. Allow good fortune, Jupiter style (big and bawdy!), into your life. It's okay to say, "I was wrong." A Scorpio will be touched by your sensitivity. Someone close to you wants to take care of you.



CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

You may have to juggle a lot of responsibilities at work while the Sun and Pluto ignite fires in your day job. Venus in your house of love brings you romantic thrills but confusion, too. Be wary of a friend's overly passionate advice. He or she doth protest too much. Stick close to a Pisces.



LEO (JULY 24 - AUG. 23)

You can get what you need if you demand it loud and clear. It's the best time to come on full force. Err on the side of doing something artistic and beautiful. Add that touch of Leonine glamour to your relationship with a Sagittarius.



VIRGO (AUG. 24 - SEPT. 23)

The Sun is transiting the homiest sector of your chart, so focus that horny energy on a partner who screams "relationship material," not "whore!" Don't resist the urge to commit to something you believe in. An Aquarius will support you during your anxious times. Be brave!



LIBRA (SEPT. 24 - OCT. 23)

When Jupiter meets the moon in your house of adventure on Dec. 9, you may experience what the old ladies call "too much excitement." While the Sun and Pluto are transiting your idea-driven third house, you can follow your head, which will lead you to your heart (and a Taurus).



SCORPIO (OCT. 24 - NOV. 22)

Don't engage in fights with people you can't trust. Instead, take your ball and go home. You may have to hang tighter with someone from your past in order to remember how you used to behave—and how you used to suffer! A Leo will be waiting for you when you return.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 23 - DEC. 22)

As the full moon (on the 11th) in your house of relationships approaches, you could feel as if you are falling in love for the first, last and very best time. In a way you are, and it's beautiful. Make sure you take the right steps, not just the most expedient ones. A Libra is a prize worth working for.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 23 - JAN. 20)

You may have to fight hard for the things you want, but you'll get 'em. Someone on the work front needs to see your feisty side. Your responsible nature makes you sexy to quite a few people, so please don't blow it. An Aries wants to make you high using just his or her body and a few dreamy props.



AQUARIUS (JAN. 21 - FEB. 19)

You are in charge of a major project and need to love it just like you'd love a partner—well almost. Saturn is here to help you choose the right people to help you help yourself. Be emotionally smart for once, dear! An Aries can wait. In fact, s/he enjoys having the ecstasy prolonged.



PISCES (FEB. 20 - MARCH 20)

Jupiter (your lucky co-ruler) is encouraging you to do more meditation and take less action. Answers come to you when you are very, very still. You may finally be able to let go of "the one who got away." It was a blessing in disguise, babe. And so is a Scorpio who's in your life now.



Jill Dearman is the author of "Queer Astrology for Men" and "Queer Astrology for Women." For information on charts and consultations, call 212-841-0177 or e-mail QScopes@aol.com.

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