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City schools fail to protect gays

Report card urges action; local activists say shaky dialogue exists with schools

by MATTHEW A. HENNIE

Houston's school district is among the worst in the country in protecting gays and lesbians among its 202,000 students, according to a national report card issued Thursday.

The city's school district received an "F" from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, a grade lower than the national average, for its efforts in protecting gay and lesbian students and staff from

discrimination and harassment.

The report graded 42 of the nation's largest school districts in six areas, including whether school policies protect students and staff from discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation. If staff training includes gay and lesbian issues, if curriculum is inclusive and whether gay-straight alliances are allowed.

Houston joined San Antonio and 40 percent

of the school systems in reporting a "no" in all six areas; Dallas earned a "B," in part for its written policies protecting gay and lesbian students and staff and for the district's staff training, according to the report.

More than half of the 42 school districts received a failing grade; only Dade County, Fla., Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego received an "A."

The report showed little improvement from last year, when the national average See SCHOOL/ page 2A



Gay TV: The cast of "Will & Grace" — Sean Hayes, Eric McCormack, Debra Messing, Megan Mullally — contains two gay characters and is one of many fall shows to feature recurring gay and lesbian characters.

Saving Grace? NBC sitcom takes up where 'Ellen' left us

by EARL DITTMAN

Long before lesbian comedienne Ellen DeGeneres outed her television alter-ego on the sitcom "Ellen," the writing and producing team of Max Mutchnick and David Kohan were busy developing their own comedy series featuring a gay character as one of its leads. But when ABC canceled DeGeneres' groundbreaking show — allegedly due to poor ratings — many feared the veteran duo's NBC project would never see the light of day.

"A lot of people saw the cancellation of 'Ellen' as the networks basically saying, 'Middle America doesn't want to see shows about gay people — period,'" actress Anne

Heche, DeGeneres' spouse, explained. "Everybody, including Ellen, felt like it was the excuse they were looking for to keep gay characters in minor roles."

But according to Mutchnick and Kohan (whose shared writing credits include "Boston Common," "Hearts Afire," the Shelly Long vehicle "Good Advice" and the cable hit "Dream On"), the demise of "Ellen" had almost no negative effect on their project. So, when the fruit of their efforts, "Will & Grace," secured a spot on this year's primetime fall lineup, a collective sigh of relief could be heard from gays and lesbians.

See TV/ page 11A

Line-up offers gay characters

"Will & Grace" is only one of many fall television shows to feature regular and recurring gay, lesbian and bisexual characters, according to The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. Others include:
MONDAYS
"Will & Grace" — Lead character Will Truman (Eric McCormack) and

his good friend, Jack (Sean Hayes)
"Suddenly Susan" — Pete, the mailroom guy (Bill Stevenson) NBC
TUESDAYS
"Spin City" — Director of Minority Affairs Carter Heywood (Michael Boatman) ABC
"NYPD Blue" — Officer Abby

See LINE-UP/ page 9A

Making schools safe for all students

REPORT CARD

UNITED STATES	Grade D
DALLAS	F
HOUSTON	F
SAN ANTONIO	F

GRADES BASED ON THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA

- The district protects students from discrimination based on sexual orientation. YES NO
- The district protects staff from discrimination based on sexual orientation. YES NO
- The district protects students and staff from harassment based on sexual orientation. YES NO
- The district supports training for staff on issues facing LGBT youth. YES NO
- The district supports curriculum that is inclusive of the lives and contributions of LGBT people. YES NO
- Gay/Straight Alliances are recognized in a random sampling of the district's list of official clubs. YES NO



Jennings: Immediate action needed to protect gay, lesbian students

Weekend celebration set for church anniversary

by ROBERT B. HENDERSON

Praise and worship are at the top of the agenda as one of Houston's few churches that caters to gays and lesbians celebrates its sixth anniversary this weekend.

A weekend of celebration starts today for Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Community Church and continues through Sept. 13 and includes a prom and worship service by the Rev. Troy Perry, founder of the Universal

Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, according to Donna H. Roper, co-facilitator of the events with Bill Holden.

Events start today with a "Jamb to the Lamb" at 7 p.m., billed by organizers as a "praise and worship extravaganza."

"We want to start the weekend with praise to God and thanks for our church and for all that God has done in our church," Roper said.

"Jamb to the Lamb" will be

followed by special guests contributing to a pastor roast, Roper said. An informal reception will the two-hour event.

"We've been celebrating our anniversary each year and we've never quite had anything this big," Holden said.

On Sept. 12, the congregation will sponsor "Prom Night OUT!" The semi-formal event will be held at Suite 100 of the Hollywood Conference Center.

See CHURCH/ page 9A

INSIDE:

Protecting Gays
Mayor's executive order in new round of court wrangling.
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Celebrating Success
Two local groups plan gala events.
Page 5A



Eating Out
A big taste of Italy for a small amount of change.
Page 12A



Procrastination is the key to failure.

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If you have been "meaning to" register as an Exhibitor for Empower '98 pick up the phone and reserve your space now. Time is running out for you to participate in the largest and most successful trade show promoting businesses in Houston's diverse gay and lesbian community. As the fastest growing market resource, our community is being actively included in major corporate budgets, and through domestic partnership benefits and diversity groups. With an expected attendance of 5,000 visitors, including key decision-makers, buyers, and human resources personnel, your business, services and talents need to be seen by these people and equally importantly, by everyone in our community. We have a viable and substantial economic power, and a responsibility to use that power to promote and enhance our community and our quality of life.

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SCHOOL/ from page 1A

was a "D" and Houston schools received an "F."

"The results show a need for immediate and dramatic action to protect our students," said Kevin Jennings, executive director of the education network, the nation's largest organization addressing anti-gay bias in schools.

Gay and gay-friendly activists report an ongoing dialogue with Houston school district officials, but gay and lesbian students are still preyed upon in the area's public schools, said Kevin Davidson, president of the Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals.

Gay and gay-friendly activists report an ongoing dialogue with Houston school district officials, but gay and lesbian students are still preyed upon in the area's public schools, said Kevin Davidson, president of the Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals.

Volunteers with H.A.T.C.H. joined Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) recently to brief school counselors and explain how gay and lesbian students can be referred to the two groups, Davidson said. But students continue to report verbal and physical assaults from other their classmates based on sexual orientation, he said.

In 1997, a crowd of 250 attended "Healing the Hurt," a PFLAG workshop that introduced the group of mostly school counselors and administrators to issues important to gay and lesbian students, said Susan Upchurch, PFLAG co-president.

But teachers and other school staff members are still afraid to be open and could be fired for their sexual orientation because the school district lacks any policies to protect them, she said.

"It certainly is a long cry from the way it was five or 10 years ago," Upchurch said. "But if our teachers come out and say they are gay, they

can be fired. They are not protected at this point."

The rapport with school officials is improving, but recent talks aimed at adding sexual orientation to the school district's non-discrimination policies have stalled, Davidson said.

A spokesman said the Houston Independent School District protects all students from discrimination and harassment, but refused to say if sexual orientation is spelled out in any policy.

"(The report) on the face of it, seems to be wrong," said Terry Abbott, the school's systems press secretary. "We have policies in place that protect students from all sorts of discrimination."

But Abbott declined to comment on any efforts by the school district to protect gays and lesbians or better train teachers and counselors in their response to gay and lesbian students.

Compared to their heterosexual classmates, gay and lesbian students are more likely to experiment with drugs and alcohol, skip school, be threatened with a weapon on campus and attempt suicide, according to recent studies.

And a typical high school student hears anti-gay slurs as often as 26 times a day, though teachers intervene just three percent of the time, which leads to physical attacks on 19 percent of gay and lesbian students, according to the national report.

"(Houston schools) don't know how to go about addressing it or bringing it into their training or curriculum, like across the rest of the country. They really don't know there is a problem out there," Davidson said.

The annual report cards were prompted by a 1996 court decision that awarded \$900,000 in punitive damages to Wisconsin high school student Jamie Nabozny for his school's failure to protect him from harassment and physical harm.

Executive order on gays in hands of court

by MATTHEW A. HENNIE

The legal wrangling over Mayor Lee Brown's executive order protecting gay and lesbian city employees from discrimination continued this week before a three-judge panel of the 14th Court of Appeals.

At stake is a temporary injunction blocking enforcement of the order issued shortly after Brown signed the measure on Feb. 16. City Councilman Rob Todd and conservative businessman Richard Hotze filed suit days later, claiming Brown overstepped his authority under the city's charter.

On Wednesday, arguments before the appeals court focused on the temporary injunction and whether Todd has legal standing to pursue his challenge to the mayor's executive order, according to Senior Assistant City Attorney Judy Hatfield.

The merits of the case, scheduled for trial in November, were not before the court this week, she said.

Any decision by the judicial panel —



Brown: Order protecting gays mired in court

dismissing the temporary injunction, ruling against Todd's standing in the case or moving against the city — could result in additional appeals and delay the November trial.

It's unclear when the three-judge panel may render a decision, Hatfield said.

Brown signed an executive order to meet a campaign pledge made to gays and lesbians last fall. Todd has said he wants to protect the authority of the city council from mayoral circumvention, dismissing critics who accuse him of cloaking an anti-gay agenda in the legal action.

Hotze helped lead a 1985 vote that overwhelmingly repealed a measure to protect gays and lesbians from discrimination in city government.

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Annual galas attract 'who's who' of local, national activists

by JERRY D. PARRA

Gay activists will set aside their voter registration efforts and political fights, if only temporarily, to celebrate some of their successes in two upcoming gala events.

And it's also an effort by the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus and the local chapter of Log Cabin Republicans to court new members and increase visibility during dinners in the coming weeks.

To that effect, the caucus has snagged Mayor Lee Brown to address its 23rd Anniversary Caucus Awards Dinner on Sept. 19 at the Warwick Hotel.

"It's impressive that the mayor of America's fourth largest city is speaking at the caucus' annual gala," said Clarence Bagby, caucus president. "We're going to honor him for his support of equality for gays and lesbians."

The mayor is an honoree, but others will receive awards based on their contributions to the gay and lesbian community in the past year. Houston City Councilwoman Annise Parker, State Sen. Rodney Ellis, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee are also slated to appear.

"It's going to be quite a who's who of those in progressive politics in the greater Houston area," Bagby said.

The gala also features Kerry Lobel,

executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary as a grassroots civil rights organization.

"This year's gala will be one of our best ever," said Bill Clevenger, chairman of the dinner. "With the mayor and our extensive Silent Auction, it should offer something for everyone."

General attendance tickets are \$75; VIP tickets, which include the dinner and a special VIP reception, are \$85 per person. Table sponsorships are \$600. The VIP reception begins at 6:30 p.m. and the dinner at 8 p.m. in the La Fontaine Ballroom at the Warwick.

Meanwhile, members of the Houston chapter of Log Cabin Republicans are organizing their fourth annual Elegant Elephant gala which will take place Oct. 3 at the Briar Club.

Keynote speaker will be Republican Ward Connerly, a California Republican who authored that state's controversial Proposition 209 to eliminate affirmative action. Also a member of the California Board of Regents, Connerly recently forced a vote among regents to offer domestic partner benefits to university employees. He was honored during the Log Cabin Republicans National Convention in Dallas last month.

Connerly told the 200 convention attendees to fight to ensure equality and dignity.

"Never give up," he said. "Never, never, never think we will not prevail in our struggle to ensure all of us are treated with equality and dignity," he said.

Local comedian Vickie Shaw and musician Jerry Atwood are also on the agenda for the evening. A screening of a video entitled "On the Front Lines," depicting the protest by gay Republicans in Fort Worth in June will also be shown.

"Ward Connerly is a very dynamic

individual," said Ben Whittle, chairman of the Elegant Elephant. "We're very excited to have him here." Organizers hope for an entertaining event, Whittle said.

After a cocktail reception at 7 p.m., the dinner begins at 8 p.m. at the Briar Club. Tickets are \$50.

For more information, contact the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus at 713-474-5475, or Log Cabin Republicans at 713-592-9100.



Connerly: To headline gay Republican gala



Brown: Houston mayor to speak at Caucus event



Swing: To recount two decades as San Francisco bishop

Episcopal bishops to speak in Houston

Two noted Episcopal bishops and supporters of gays and lesbians will visit Houston this month during separate engagements.

Retired Bishop William F. Swing will discuss his 19 years as a Bishop in San Francisco during a Sept. 13 event by the Cathedral Center for Theological Studies, an ecumenical adult education group founded in 1997.

Swing pioneered ministering to the homeless at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco and serves on the board of the American Foundation for AIDS Research. He will deliver the first Walter Taylor Annual Lecture, designed to honor Taylor, who will retire as dean of the Christ Church Cathedral at year's end.

"The annual lecture is our way of honoring Walter for his years of inspiring leadership in our community and the tremendous support he has given to the center," said Rabbi Leonard Schoolman, the center's executive director.

Swing will speak at 7 p.m. at Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas Ave. Tickets are \$10. For more information, call 713-222-2412, ext. 624.

Bishop John S. Spong will discuss his new book "Why Christianity Must Change or Die" on Sept. 17 during an event by the Foundation for Contemporary Theology. Spong has called for a modern-day reformation of the Christian Church in his lectures in the U.S. and through his other literary works, such as "Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism."

Spong will speak at 7:30 p.m. at Emerson Unitarian Church, 1900 Bering Drive. Tickets are \$10. For more information, call 713-666-0051.

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Photo Credit: Jennifer Binder

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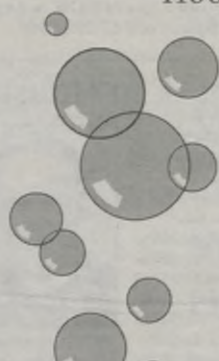
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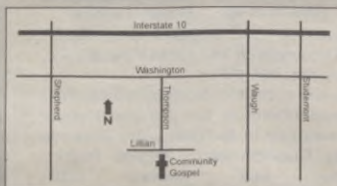
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Passionate friendship turned into lesbian love affair

This week in gay and lesbian history: 1948

by DAVID BIANCO

Who were Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead?

Margaret Mead is a name most students learn in school, and her most famous book, "Coming of Age in Samoa," is a classic anthropology text. Her mentor and lover, Ruth Benedict, however, is less well-known outside of anthropology circles, though she was as famous as Mead in her day.

Born in 1887 and educated at Vassar, Benedict (born Ruth Fulton) started out as an English major and continued to write poetry throughout her life. After an early career as a teacher in private girls' schools, she married and honored her husband's wish that she give up working outside the home. Feeling bored and unfulfilled within a short time, however, Benedict decided in 1918 to take graduate courses at the New School for Social Research in New York City.

At first, she studied education with John Dewey but soon switched to anthropology after an inspiring course with feminist Elsie Clews Parsons. Several of Benedict's professors recognized her potential and encouraged her to study at Columbia University with Franz Boas, regarded as the father of American anthropology.

In 1922, Benedict became Boas's teaching assistant for a class he taught at Barnard, the women's college at Columbia. In that class was a bright 21-year-old named Margaret Mead, a star undergraduate who was editor of the Barnard newspaper. Mead was also well-known on campus for her leftist politics and advocacy of free love.

Fourteen years apart in age, Benedict and Mead were also opposites in personality. Benedict, who was shy and easily depressed, was drawn to Mead's exuberance and optimism; Mead, on the other hand, liked Benedict's calm, quiet wit. The two women shared a radical world view, a love of poetry, a commitment to their careers, and a deep, mutual respect.

At first, their relationship was strictly one of mentor and student, with Benedict viewing Mead as a daughter-figure and counseling her on her career. Mead later remembered, "I continued to call her 'Mrs. Benedict' until I got my degree, and then, almost imperceptibly, our relationship became one of colleagues and close friends." While she was working on her doctorate, Mead spent long hours alone with Benedict, discussing ideas that excited them, or sharing favorite poems.

Within a few years, their passionate friendship, common among academic women at that time, blossomed into a lesbian love affair. During a trip together to the Grand Canyon in the summer of 1925, Benedict and Mead discovered that they preferred each other to the men in their lives. (They were both married, and each was having an affair with the same man, linguist Edward Sapir.) Benedict's poems suddenly reflected a concern about age differences between lovers, a preoccupation with the permanency of love, and an implied lesbianism. What could compete, one of her poems asked, "with sleep begotten of a woman's kiss?"

But Mead never believed in the permanence of sexual love in the way that Benedict did. Mead tended to fall in love

with more than one person at a time, disregarding the gender of her lovers. "I've never known the kind of union that made me want to exclude other people. ... I've never wanted to belong to another person, nor would I ever want anyone to belong to me," she reflected later in life.

Mead's dislike of sexual exclusivity was one reason she never lived with Benedict. But her own homophobia also got in the way. Mead worried about an openly lesbian relationship damaging her career. Many years later, Mead chastised her daughter,

'I've never known the kind of union that made me want to exclude other people. ... I've never wanted to belong to another person, nor would I ever want anyone to belong to me.'

—Margaret Mead

Mary Catherine Bateson, for a romance Bateson had with another woman. "She disconcerted me," Bateson wrote in the 1980s, "by turning ... to a discussion of what it would have meant to her professional life if I had been involved in a scandal."

Benedict, on the other hand, began a new life after her affair with Mead. She separated from her husband and found the permanence Mead couldn't give her in two subsequent lesbian relationships. The first, begun in the early 1930s, was with research chemist Natalie Raymond. After they separated in 1939, Benedict became involved with clinical psychologist Ruth Valentine, with whom she lived until her death.

Having found her identity, Benedict spent the rest of her professional life trying to justify homosexuality, hypothesizing in her work that society, not nature, created the categories of "normal" and "abnormal." The overarching theme of her masterpiece, "Patterns of Culture" (1934), was the struggle of the misfit individual against a repressive culture. Mead later wrote that her own exploration of "normality" in "Coming of Age in Samoa" (1926) was "a question Ruth Benedict had taught me to ask."

Until her death in 1948, Benedict remained friends and close colleagues with Mead. Soon after Benedict died, Mead began writing her mentor's biography, "An Anthropologist at Work," which took 10 years to complete and was published in 1959. Though Mead never acknowledged her own relationships with women, in 1974 she wrote a positive article in "Redbook" magazine, arguing that considered bisexuality to be "creative." The affair between Mead and Benedict became public knowledge when Mary Catherine Bateson disclosed it in her memoirs, published six years after her mother's death.

David Bianco is the author of "Modern Jewish History for Everyone." He can be reached care of this publication or at AriBianco@aol.com.

For further reading:

Bateson, Mary Catherine. "With a Daughter's Eye: A Memoir of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson" (William Morrow, 1984).

Caffrey, Margaret M. "Ruth Benedict: Stranger in the Land" (University of Texas Press, 1989).

Mead, Margaret. "An Anthropologist at Work" (Houghton Mifflin, 1959).

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CHURCH/ from page 1A

2700 Albany from 8 p.m. to midnight. A disc jockey will play a variety of music suited to the high school days for people of all ages, Roper said.

"We decided we wanted to open it up to the community. When I went to my first prom in high school, I went with a female. But I was not out of the closet and I would have much rather have gone with a man," Holden said. "I think this is an opportunity for all of us, who didn't get to go with the one we would've like to, it's an opportunity to with the one we would like to go with."

The prom will be strictly for entertainment, he said, and hopes it becomes an annual event. It will include a raffle of such things as trips, tickets and professional services. The cost of "Prom Night OUT!" is \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door. Proceeds from the event will be divided between the Maranatha Fellowship and the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

The observances of the church's sixth anniversary culminate on Sept.

13 with Perry, who will deliver a sermon during the 11 a.m. worship service. The worship will be followed by a fellowship luncheon.

With the support of Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection, Maranatha Fellowship started six years ago with 15 members. Current Sunday attendance is between 70 and 80, said the Rev. Janet Parker.

"We have been viewed by many people as a 'healing' church, a place of 'healing' for a lot of people from the wounds of the past," Parker said. "It is a place where they can gain self-worth and self-esteem and be able to integrate their sexuality and spirituality. This is a place where people can really receive that. It comes not from our intentional effort but as a by-product of the ministry we have done."

What: Sixth anniversary of Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Community Church, 3400 Montrose, Suite 600

When: Sept. 11 to 13

Contact: 713-528-6756

LINE-UP/ from page 1A

Sullivan (Paige Turco) ABC

"Mad About You" — Paul's (Paul Reiser) sister Debbie Buchman (Robin Bartlett) and her girlfriend Joan (Suzie Plakson), who is also Jamie's (Helen Hunt) gynecologist. NBC

WEDNESDAYS

"Chicago Hope" — Dr. Dennis Hancock (Vondie Curtis Hall) CBS

THURSDAYS

"Friends" — Ross' (David Schwimmer) ex-wife Carol Wylick (Jane Sibbett) and her spouse Susan Bunch (Jessica Hecht) NBC

"E.R." — Emergency room intern Dr. Maggie Doyle (Jorja Fox) NBC

"Linc" — Linc's (Steven Williams) sexually-questioning daughter, Rosalee (Tisha Campbell) Showtime

"Rude Awakenings" — Billie Frank's (Sherilyn

Fenn) Addictions Anonymous friend Jackie (Rain Pryor) Showtime

FRIDAYS

"Homicide: Life On The Street" — Detective Tim Bayliss (Kyle Secor) NBC

"Nash Bridges" — Nash's (Don Johnson) sister Stacey Bridges (Angela Dorhamann) and receptionist Pepe (Patrick Fischler) CBS

SATURDAYS

"Profiler" — VCTF Computer Specialist George Fraley (Peter Frenchette) NBC

SUNDAYS

"The Simpsons" — Mr. Burns' assistant Waylon Smithers (Harry Shearer) FOX

"Sex And The City" — Carrie's (Sarah Jessica Parker) good friend Stanford Blatch (Willy Garson) HBO

DAILY

"All My Children" — Kevin Sheffield (Ben Jorgensen) ABC



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TV/ from page 1A

"Many people were surprised we were picked up, but we never had any doubts about the future of Will & Grace," Mutchnick admitted. "From the very first day we pitched the idea, Warren Littlefield (NBC's head honcho) was behind it 100 percent. Like us, he thought the dynamic between a gay man and straight women was much more interesting than some of the relationships that are now on TV. He really liked the idea that we were charting new territory."

Definitely going where no sitcom has gone before, "Will & Grace" is the hilarious, and often touching look at two longtime friends — gay lawyer Will Truman and straight interior designer Grace Adler — who are looking for long-term sexual relationships, just not with each other.

If the pilot episode for "Will & Grace" is any accurate barometer, Will's sex life certainly isn't a factor that is openly dealt with. While it is made clear he is gay, little of his private life is discussed or displayed. On the other hand, in the first two minutes of the show, Grace is found in bed with her boyfriend having just finished making love. This obvious disparity has caused some gays and lesbians who initially showered Mutchnick and Kohan with kudos now openly chastise them for "sugar-coating" Will's sex life for primetime viewers. It's a criticism the openly-gay Mutchnick views as completely inaccurate.

"Will's pure — the character is who he is," Mutchnick stated. "I don't think we're hiding at this point. I mean, if you pay attention to the pilot, there's nothing that goes unsaid. We go for it. We're not hiding from anything, and I hope we continue to do

that in the scripts that come up.

The characters will touch. But can we expect Will to exchange kisses with another man?

"In the eight or nine episodes that we've written so far, that hasn't happened." Kohan answered honestly. "But it's possible. I mean, look, the goal is to be as honest with these characters as we possibly can be. If the situation arises or calls for it, then..."

The director of the pilot says its one issue among many the show will tackle in good time.

"Isn't this all about entertainment and not controversy?" James Burrows, the director of the pilot episode, asked rhetorically. "We will try to make the most entertaining show possible and deal with those kinds of issues in our own way. We're not here to proselytize at all. If we find an entertaining way to do a kiss, we will do that. We're not politicizing at all. Because a kiss between two men on television would be an issue."

Eric McCormack, the hunky, married actor who portrays Will, believes the whole "kissing controversy" surrounding "Will & Grace" has been blown completely out of proportion.

"It seems to me that it's a no-win situation," McCormack explained. "We don't have a kiss in the pilot, so, we're going to get some crap for that. But if we put a kiss in the first scene of the pilot, it would be considered controversial. And for everyone that went, 'Good for you,' somebody else would go, 'Oh, it's a stunt.' And this is not a stunt show."

The Canadian born McCormack, best known in the U.S. for his work in the television western series "Lonesome Dove: The Outlaw Years," finds striking similarities between his small-screen persona and himself.

"I think when I first read this script, what hit me immediately was that Will was me," he said. "I mean, sexual orientation aside, this guy was so much like me: he's a great host, he's relatively funny, he has great friends and he's a good friend to them. It was one of the few times I've read a script and thought, 'I think this is going to be mine.' And the issue — the gay issue — just wasn't a really big thing. I knew I could convincingly play a gay man."

So far, everyone McCormack has shown the pilot to has been more than pleased with the results.

"I've had nothing but positive response from everyone — from my parents on down to my most overtly gay friends," he said. "And I think a lot of that comes

from me liking Will as a person. He's a great guy who has it all together. I mean, gay characters are often shown struggling with the issue of being gay. Will is past that voyage of discovery. He's content with his sexuality and has come to a point where he can relax and enjoy a wonderful day-to-day relationship with his two best friends — Grace (Debra Messing), who is straight, and his gay pal, Jack (Sean Hayes)."

Unlike Will, who could easily "pass" as a typical heterosexual male, the character of Jack is closer to the general gay stereotype TV audiences have grown accustomed to. Hayes, who is currently starring in the big screen gay comedy "Billy's Hollywood Screen Kiss," admits he plays up the stereotype.

"I just have a good time with him," Hayes, who refuses to answer questions about his own personal life, explained. "He's wacky and pretentious, and when things are going bad, he's there to make them worse. So, there's really no brain surgery playing a role like Jack. I just kind of have a good time and try to keep him as real as possible. But I do draw a line when I think he gets too over the top. Hollywood has force-fed us too many bad gay stereotypes already. Everyone at 'Will & Grace' refuses to do that."

Hayes and co-star McCormack say the gay community should champion the fact that the show includes two well-defined gay characters.

"'Will & Grace' has the benefit of two characters here — not just one to carry the weight of all homosexuality on its back," McCormack said. "You have two guys: one, who perhaps is a little bit more traditional in the stereotypical vein, and one that is not. I think Middle America will now be able to see a whole fascinating variety within the gay culture."



Above: Eric McCormack
Right: Sean Hayes



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The original Collina's on Richmond (there are three locations) recently doubled its size, providing an excuse to revisit. Yes, it's located in a strip shopping center. Yes, even doubled, it still only has about 15 tables. Yes, those tables are covered with tacky, vinyl, red and white checked cloths. But yes, the food is still yummy. And the prices are unbelievably low.

One of the delights of the Richmond Avenue Collina's is the lack of a liquor license. What? No wine with my pasta? Just bring your own. The staff graciously uncorks your bottle and provides glasses for no fee. Somehow, this bringing in of wine in brown paper bags adds to the festiveness of the restaurant. The customers peer around to see what the next table is drinking, which sometimes results in a sharing of wines and a pleasant conviviality. It also makes for a much more economical dining experience. And non-drinkers needn't feel self-conscious.

The real joy of Collina's, what makes it so special, is that it serves delicious food at incredibly low prices. With the exception of the nightly specials, the food is basic Italian, rather

The Food File

Collina's Italian Cafe
3933 Richmond Ave.
713-621-8844

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

bands. This squid was cooked to perfection. Tender, delicate, rings floated in an equally delicate, lemony and delicious sauce. But none of the usual crust. Only squid lovers should apply.

After such fabulous appetizers, it is hard to know where to go on Collina's menu. But it is difficult to go wrong here. The pasta dishes are good. Knowing we couldn't taste everything, my dining partner and I asked for a bowl of the marinara sauce to dip our bread in. The bread is a thick, tasty focaccia. Though beautiful by itself, dipping it into the savory sauce yields a luscious combination.

Then sample the pizza. Collina's has a number of interesting combinations in 12" and 16" proportions

COLLINA'S ITALIAN CAFE

than nouvelle. The pasta dishes, served with bread and salad, are a steal at an average price of \$6.99.

One of the truly exceptional items on Collina's menu is the stuffed half artichoke appetizer. A jumbo artichoke is split vertically, stuffed and served bubbling hot. The first question is whether to dig into the stuffing with a fork or pull out a leaf. I opted to try a leaf and found that the artichoke had been baked perfectly. On to the stuffing and to my surprise — along with bread crumbs, Romano cheese and garlic — the artichoke had been stuffed with artichoke hearts. Several of them. Enter artichoke heaven. Not only was it a beautiful, though simple presentation, it was the best stuffed artichoke I have encountered in a long time. It was easily a light meal in itself and a value at \$3.99.

The portobello mushroom appetizer also pleased. Two large portobellos, marinated in Italian herbs and topped with provolone cheese, were grilled and served on a bed of sauteed fresh spinach, garnished with red bell pepper. The mushrooms were succulent and meaty. The spinach was wonderfully infused with garlic and certainly could stand alone. Also a potential light meal.

Another appetizer, the calamari, was served differently than in most restaurants. Rather than being breaded and fried, it was sauteed with red bell peppers, green onions, garlic, lemon and white wine. Squid is difficult to cook properly — one moment too long and it turns into rubber

but, unlike many restaurants, they offer the same combos as 6" "pizzetes." This time we decided to go the pizza direction and ordered a Z-Special pizzete. The Z-Pizza is Collina's "special" and arrives loaded with just about everything including Canadian bacon and olives. We asked for anchovies, also. They weren't not on the list of potential pizza ingredients, but our server didn't bat an eye. That is the way it is at Collina's.

I was concerned about how they would fit all those toppings on a 6-inch pizza, but they did. And Collina's well deserved reputation as a great pizza place was reaffirmed. The crust was wonderfully crisp on the bottom and yet had a chewy, delicious bread top. The toppings were of excellent quality. They managed to blend in the anchovy without overwhelming. And at \$4.99, the pizzete was a full meal.

This is a restaurant that takes itself seriously, cooks from scratch, uses the freshest ingredients, but gets no respect. While the scene may be lacking, the food is better than I have encountered in the some of the finer Italian restaurants in town. I have no qualms about recommending Collina's to anyone. And if you can't be bothered to drive to Greenway Plaza, they deliver within liberal boundaries. Their delivery map stretches east to Montrose and north to Memorial.

Collina's is located at 3835 Richmond Ave. with branches in Rice Village and the Memorial area. The restaurants are open for lunch and dinner every day except Sunday.

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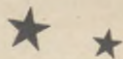
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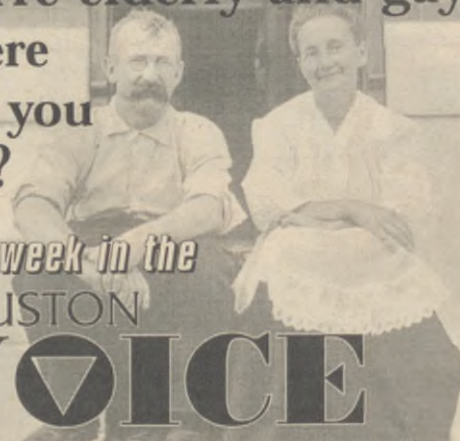


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CHURCH CALENDAR

Friday, September 11

- Communion and Prayer Service at 10:00 am; at the Kolbe Project. 713-522-8182.
- The Church of Good Life on the Internet; <http://www.syncretist.org/church.htm>.

Saturday, September 12

- The Church of Good Life on the Internet; <http://www.syncretist.org/church.htm>.

Sunday, September 13

- Church of the XII Apostles Anglican Rite Old Catholic Church: Holy Communion 10:30 am at 239 Westheimer. 713/665-7903.
- Holy Rite Eucharist I 8:00 am; Holy Rite Eucharist II 9:00 am; Choral Eucharist 11:00 am at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1805 W. Alabama. 713-528-6665.
- Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Church Service "Preaching the Gospel" at 11 am. 713-528-6756.
- MCCR Worship services 9:00 & 11:00 am 713-861-9149.
- Grace Lutheran Church Sunday school for all ages at 9:30 am Worship Service at 10:30 am 713-528-3269.
- First Unitarian Universalist Church Sunday Services at 9:30 am and 11:30 am 713-526-5200.
- Services at 5:30 pm Dignity Church 713-880-2872.
- Community Gospel Praise and Worship service at 11:00 am Sunday School for children. Evening Service at 7 pm. 4305 Lillian 713-880-9235. Catch them at www.communitygospel.org.
- Houston Mission Church Worship service at 10:30 am 713-529-8225.
- Covenant Baptist Church Worship service 1:30 pm and education hour at 3:00 pm. 713-668-8830.
- Bering Memorial United Methodist Church Worship service 10:50 am. Seekers class 9:15 am 713-526-1017.
- MCCR Handbell Choir Rehearsal at 7:00 pm 713-861-9149.
- Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County, 402 Church St. in Galveston. Sunday Services at 10:30 am weekly. 409-765-8330.
- The Church of Good Life on the Internet; <http://www.syncretist.org/church.htm>.

- Faith and Hope Fellowship Service at 11:00 am. 713-520-7847.

Monday, September 14

- Catholic Mass at 7:00 pm at the Kolbe Project. 713-861-1800

Tuesday, September 15

- MCCR: Empowerment for Living support group & pot luck dinner at 6:00 pm. Gloryland Ensemble at 6:00 pm. Orchestra rehearsal at 7:30 pm. 713-861-9149.
- Maranatha Fellowship MCC has groups that meet in each others home for a time of fellowship, sharing God's word, and prayer. Call for the location in your area 713-528-6756.
- The Church of Good Life on the Internet; <http://www.syncretist.org/church.htm>.
- Discussion Group "The Death Penalty" @7 pm. At the Kolbe Project. 713-861-1800.

Wednesday, September 16

- Holy Eucharist Rite II 12 Noon at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1805 W. Alabama. 713-528-6665.
- MCCR Bible Study 7:30 pm 713-861-9149.
- Worship Service 7:30 pm at Faith and Hope Fellowship 713-520-7847
- The Church of Good Life on the Internet; <http://www.syncretist.org/church.htm>.
- Maranatha Fellowship MCC has groups that meet in each others home for a time of fellowship, sharing God's word, and prayer. Call for the location in your area 713-528-6756.

Thursday, September 17

- Bible Study 7:00 pm at Faith and Hope Fellowship 713-520-7847.
- Choir Practice at Community Gospel 6:30 pm 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
- Choir Practice at 6:30 pm. Midweek Service at Community Gospel 7:30 pm 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
- The Church of Good Life on the Internet; <http://www.syncretist.org/church.htm>

If you want an event listed in this section, please call Carolyn Roberts at 713-529-8490 by 12 Noon Mondays.

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- Magnolia/Tomball
- Old Sixth Ward (Decatur Street)
- Deer Park/Pasadena/Pearland
- Heights/Montrose
- Bellaire/Beltway
- Galveston/Clear Lake/Beaumont

Some groups are open to specific individuals (female couples, male couples, the leather community, and Spanish speakers)

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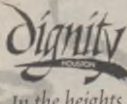
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Monday, September 14
Eucharist 7:30pm

Tuesday, September 15
Discussion Group • 7pm
"The Death Penalty"

Friday, September 18
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LOCATION:

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center

TELEPHONE: (713) 654-2190

CONTACT: Will R. Whitmer, M.Div., M.Ph.



Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, Inc.
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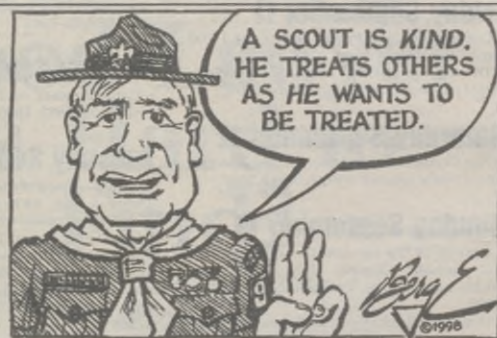
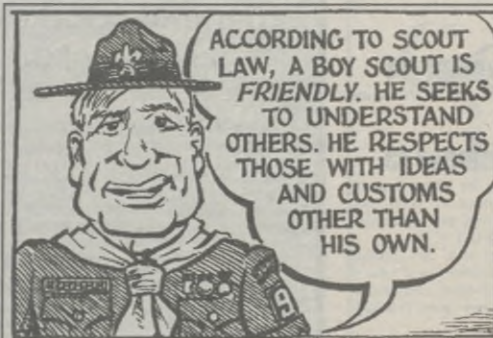
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**Monicagate***After Monica, should we stand by our man Bill?*

As the days go by since President Clinton's angry admission of an "inappropriate relationship" with intern Monica Lewinsky, many of his core supporters are dropping like flies.

Leading the way have been Democrats on the Hill, including Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.), who gave an impassioned speech last Friday from the Senate floor that called Clinton's conduct "immoral and harmful," deserving of public rebuke.

Calls for the President's impeachment or resignation, once limited to the Amen Corner of arch-conservative Rep. Bob Barr (R-Ga.) now extend to the middle of the room, and include a cross-section of pundits and politicians. And all this even before Ken Starr issues his report to Congress.

Standing by her man as always has been First Lady Hillary Clinton, but she has interesting company. Women's rights groups have taken harsh criticism for continuing to stick by a president whose policies are female-friendly, even when his behavior in the office is a little too female-friendly.

African-American civil rights leaders have also stood by the President — most notably Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.), who pledged his unending support just days after Clinton admitted his lie. "I've been with you from the beginning," Lewis told Clinton at an Aug. 29 forum. "And I will stand with you now till the end."

Gay rights leaders have been a lot quieter in their support of Bill Clinton, but none has made any move to jump ship. Some will say privately that gays should be the last to connect private sexual conduct with on-the-job performance.

Maybe so, but hasn't President Clinton's decidedly mixed record on gay civil rights made him particularly deserving of the fate he has selected for himself?

In 1993, he abandoned without so much as a whimper his campaign promise to allow gays to serve open-

ly in the military. The resulting "compromise," the infamous "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," inscribed as the official policy of the United States government that gay service members should lie about their sex lives for the good of the country.

That's exactly what the President did in January, when he lied under oath and to the American people about whether he had a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky. For the good of the country — in this case, his presidency — he lied about his private sex life.

Of course there are differences between the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and Clinton's "Chase the Skirt, Don't Tell," but none weighs in the President's favor. The military policy requires gay and lesbian soldiers and sailors to lie not only about their sex lives, but about a fundamental aspect of their identity. (Clinton wasn't lying about something so fundamental as his heterosexual orientation — just the unrestrained exercise of it.)

What's more, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is particularly evil because it tells gays to lie to protect unit cohesion from the discord that would be caused by the anti-gay prejudice of some heterosexual service members. That's not only wrong, it's unconstitutional. The Supreme Court long ago taught that, while the government cannot legislate prejudice away, neither can it grant prejudice the force of law.

To be sure, Clinton should not be singled out here for condemnation. The true, unsung hypocrites of Monicagate are the politicians in Congress who supported the official lies required under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and are now condemning the President for following their lead.

And a special place in hypocrisy hell should be reserved for Rep. Dan Burton (R-Ind.), who voted for "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," called Clinton a "scumbag" for, among other things, the Lewinsky scandal, and yet admitted last week that he fathered

a son as the result of an extramarital affair. To make matters worse, both Burton and his concubine worked for Indiana state government at the time.

But, you might ask, is Clinton really such a hypocrite? He followed his own lead and lied about his sex life. That's consistency, not hypocrisy. Whatever narrow moral ground Clinton might have claimed, he lost on Aug. 17.

In an angry speech on national television, Clinton came clean about his sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky and apologized for the lie. Up to that point, he was at least consistent — gay service members should lie about their sex lives, and so should I. Now he's a hypocrite — the architect of a policy that he himself found morally bankrupt when applied to his own life.

But, you might reasonably inquire, wasn't Clinton made to confess his lie by an out-of-control prosecutor on a witchhunt?

Maybe so, but that's where, having made his bed, it may well be time for Bill Clinton to tuck in the covers. It was bad enough for Clinton to betray his gay constituents by accepting "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," but since its adoption in 1993, his administration has done precious little to prevent year after year of documented abuse of the policy by wayward commanders engaged in coercive witchhunts of gay service members.

Last year alone, according to a report from the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, almost 1,000 gay service members were discharged — a 67 percent increase since "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was adopted. There was also a 27 percent increase in documented "command violations" in the way the policy was enforced.

There's little sympathy hear for a President who now finds himself subject to an unfair witchhunt for his private sexual conduct. To the contrary, a discharge seems in order.

The Test

Scare tactics don't help HIV prevention effort



by RANDY FAIR

One of the most frightening experiences for any gay man is taking an HIV test. Few events have such potential to irrevocably change your life. This is possibly why so many gay men resist ever having the test.

Every gay man should be tested, but after getting the test results every six months for the last 10 years, I can certainly see why many men choose to forego the experience.

I first got tested after a man I had been dating got sick and, soon after that, died. The first time was definitely the most difficult. Still, after 10 years and approximately 15 tests, it hasn't gotten much easier.

Part of the difficulty comes from factors outside anyone's control. The two-week waiting period has always been one of the hardest parts for me. For two weeks, I find that I have difficulty sleeping, and I replay sexual experiences in my mind.

On top of the wait period, there's the counseling you must go through to get the test. I have been tested at two places and the process is basically the same at both places.

The first time, I got tested at a local gay center, and I had no idea what to expect. The counselor started asking me about specific sexual practices, and I was caught completely off-guard. I had been raised in a culture where you didn't talk about sex. Now I had to reveal my sexual activities to a complete stranger. It was uncomfortable, to say the least.

I was also made uncomfortable by the counselor's attitude. I later found out from someone who worked at the center that this man thought it was his duty to scare gay men out of having sex at

all. According to my friend, the counselor believed that if everyone would stop having sex for a short while, the epidemic would kill itself off.

That was 10 years ago, and we didn't know as much as we do now about HIV. This man insisted that even mutual masturbation was unsafe because a cut on the hand or on the body could cause someone to become infected.

Even though I had read a good deal about AIDS, I was not prepared to challenge this man's asser-

I'd done that contradicted his statistics. He immediately began backtracking — he'd only meant that 65 percent of the cases that he has seen, not 65 percent of all cases.

Because I felt that every counselor I had talked with over the 10 years was judgmental about my sexual activities and was trying to frighten me, I promised myself I wouldn't never go back for another test. I didn't keep that promise because I decided that I owed it to myself and any future partners to find out about my status.

My most recent test was a pleasant surprise. My counselor was a man named Paul Singh. He was completely non-judgmental. He asked the same questions about sexual practices, but I did not perceive any condemnation on his part. He did go over the risk factors involved in unprotected oral sex, and we discussed it in a matter of fact manner. Instead of trying to scare me, he seemed concerned that I know the facts.

Many might believe it is the counselor's responsibility to frighten us about the dangers of contracting HIV, but I think anyone with any sense at all is already scared enough about that possibility. If we want people to be tested, we can't make the test any more horrifying than it already is.

Finally, after 10 years, I dealt with a counselor who made the experience bearable, and now, we all have to worry that the Centers for Disease Control wants to require that the government be provided a list of names of all those testing positive.

How can we encourage people to be tested if we make the test even more scary than it already is?

Randy Fair is an Atlanta school teacher and former chair of the Atlanta chapter of the Gay Lesbian and Straight Educators Network.

Too many HIV testing counselors feel it their duty to scare gay men away from having sex at all. One insisted that 65 percent of all new cases are caused by unprotected oral sex. When I later confronted him with research to the contrary, he backtracked.

tion. After all, I had been taught to respect authority figures, and this man was a trained counselor. I left the center terrified.

With each testing following that first one, I had a similar experience. The counselors, in my opinion, often tried to scare me away from sex. One insisted that 65 percent of all new cases are caused by unprotected oral sex.

When I went back to get my results, I had the same counselor. I confronted him with research

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Announcements

AUDITION NOTICE

The Little Room Downstairs Theatre
My Night with Reg, by Kevin Elyot
Auditions will be on September 13th., 7:30 p.m. at the theater, 2326 Bissonnet, between Greenbriar and Kirby. Performance dates will be November 6-21. Rehearsals will begin in late September. The director, Andrew Dawson, is looking for 6 men, ages 18-45. Auditions will be cold readings from the script. Please bring head shot and resume.

The Gay & Lesbian Switchboard of Houston will be conducting training for new phone staff volunteers on the following date: **October 2-4, 1998.** The GLSH is a non-profit, information and referral service, events and matters of interest to and about the Gay and Lesbian community in the Houston area. The Hate Crimes/Incidents Hotline is also maintained by the GLSH. To volunteer or for more information please call 713.529.3211 or leave message at 713.529.9615.

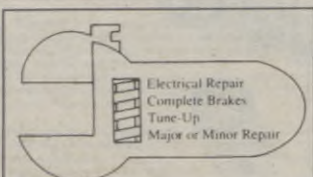
The PWA Coalition desperately needs the following items: Dishes, Silverware, Pots/Pans, Sheets, Towels, Dressers, Dinettes, Coffee Tables, Sofas, Love seats and Small Appliances. We are available for pick-ups. Call Wilson or Kerry at 713.522.5428. Thank you!

Rainbow Ranglers Dance Club
Rainbow Ranglers Dance Club is pleased to announce the start of intermediate country western dance lessons, every Thursday at 8:00 PM at the Brazos River Bottom Club, 2400 Brazos. The one-hour weekly class will feature pattern work in two step, waltz, shuffle, and swing, and will be taught by top country western dance professionals and competitors. No partners are required. Rainbow Ranglers continues to offer beginning country western dance every Thursday at 9:00 PM at the BRB. In addition, the Rainbow Ranglers Performing Dance Team is seeking new members. Auditions will be at 8:00 PM every Wednesday in September. Costs include costume, and share of coaching and choreography fees. Contact (for further information) 713.880.0670.

The Glassell School of Art "FREE ART CLASSES"

FREE Art Classes for those with HIV/AIDS are starting up again. Patrick Palmer, in his eighth year of offering art instruction is continuing with three projects this fall; ceramics (hand building), printmaking (greeting cards), and photography (35mm). Through the support of the Museum of Fine Art's educational branch, the Glassell School of Art, our Fall schedule is truly going to be exciting. We are offering classes where everything is free, we even provide lunch! We meet every Friday (1:00-4:00), from September 11th. through December 18th: at the Glassell School of Art, 5101 Montrose Blvd., in room 202. Classes are for all levels, especially beginners, but space is limited. For more information call 713.639.7500 or Patrick Palmer 713.526.1118.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR position for a Houston based private Foundation. Responsibilities include commercial and residential property management, coordination of grant process, supervision of a conference center, and general financial operations of the Foundation. Experience in property management and public relations within the Lesbian and Gay communities preferred, but all resumes accepted. For inquiries call 713.523.6902. Send

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Project CAESAR, the Gay Men's Health Initiative at AIDS Foundation Houston, is looking for a P/T Outreach Educator to help educate Houston's gay and bisexual community through street outreach, workshop facilitation and recruitment, etc. Bilingual a plus, and minorities are encouraged to apply. Experience in HIV/AIDS education preferred, but not necessary. TDH grant funded positions, up to 25 hours per week. Great job for a student! Fax or mail resumes to the following: Director of Education, AIDS Foundation Houston, Inc., 3202 Wesleyan Annex, Houston, TX 77027 or fax to: 713.623.4029 (No phone calls, please. AIDS Foundation Houston is an Equal Opportunity Employer.)

Help Wanted Bars & Clubs

CLUB HOUSTON is now hiring maintenance and all other positions. Apply in person, 2205 Fannin. Mon.-Fri. 10:00am-Noon. No phone calls, please.

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Houston's top gay nightclubs are now accepting applications for management trainees, bartenders, door and floor staff. Offering Houston's best benefits package, including group health insurance. JR's BAR & GRILL and THE MONTROSE MINING CO. are looking for honest, self-motivated and customer service oriented individuals who want to join a winning team. Apply Mon thru Fri between 1pm and 5pm at JR's, 808 Pacific. A recent photo is required. No phone calls please.

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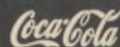
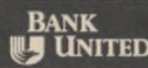
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Houston Chronicle



UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept. 16

New Heights Theatre opens its season with a revival of Mart Crowley's "The Boys in the Band," the first critically and commercially successful play in America to deal openly with issues critical to gays and lesbians. The work, initially performed off-Broadway in 1968, is a darkly comic tale of the lives of nine men, eight of them gay and one straight and homophobic, who gather to celebrate the birthday of one of their own. The Sept. 16 opening benefits Bering and Friends, an AIDS support group. New Heights Theatre, 339 W. 19th St. Tickets are \$15, 713-869-8927. Through Oct. 24.

Oct. 10

In the first of three sub-space shows curated by the Gay and Lesbian Committee of the DiverseWorks Artist Board, "full frontal, exhibited, hung" will attempt to bring a genre of queer art out of the closet. As gays and lesbians try to debunk the myth that sex is all we're about, the committee confronts the issue of keeping sex in the bedroom and lets the viewer decide whether to look. Artists include Houstonian Ray Ogar and Elizabeth Zhe of Austin. An opening reception is Oct. 9, DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway (off North Main at Naylor). Admission is free, 713-223-8346. Through Oct. 31.

Ongoing

Mae West's "Sex" continues at the Little Room Downstairs, part of the fourth season at the 50-seat venue. The 1926 production features local personality Kelly Lauren. Little Room Downstairs, 2326 Bissonnet (between Greenbriar and Kirby). Tickets are \$15, 713-523-0791. Through Sept. 26.

The account of controversial Black Panther leader, Huey Newton, ends on Sept. 13 with "A Huey P. Newton Story." The dramatic solo performance is by Roger Guenveur Smith and the work has garnered several awards. Smith is familiar to audiences for roles in television shows such as "New York Undercover" and "All My Children," and Spike Lee's "Get On The Bus." A panel discussion with some of the area's civil rights leaders follows each performance. DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway (off North Main at Naylor). Tickets are \$25, 713-520-0055.

The coming out comedy of Del Shores, "Sordid Lives," is a tale of small-town Texas life. The theme of unconditional love, acceptance and coming out, along with wicked comedy, struck a nerve with mainstream and gay audiences in Fort Worth and Los Angeles. Paradox Theatre, 3722 Washington Ave. Tickets are \$17, call 713-522-2204. Through Sept. 27.

Hoping for an emotional, rather than historical, reality, the Alley Theatre's Broadway-bound "Civil War" continues to provide a musical look at the war. The work includes the stories of the anonymous faces of the war, as well as significant players, such as a powerful speech by ex-slave and freedom fighter Frederick Douglas. The production opens on Broadway in April 1999. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. Tickets to \$46, 713-228-8421. Through Oct. 11.

"Ray Hill, The Prison Years," the story of the native Houstonian turned activist, talk show host and general rabble rouser, has changed venues. The play features Hill reminiscing about his prison life, the "system," being gay and his run-ins with city police. Performances are on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. Actors Workshop of Houston, 1009 Chartres. Tickets up to \$10, 713-236-1844.

OUT ON THE BAYOU



HOUSTON VOICE • SEPTEMBER 11, 1998

A GUIDE FOR YOUR LEISURE TIME

HAPPY EVER AFTER

The author of the classic coming-out story says in the sequel that he turned out just fine, thank you very much.



INTERVIEW: ANDREW TOBIAS

by CHRIS CRAIN

The Best Little Boy In The World has a confession to make.

It's been five years since Andrew Tobias, the best-selling financial author and creator of "Andrew Tobias' Managing Your Money" personal finance software, acknowledged publicly that he is "John Reid," author of the 1973 classic coming-out story, "The Best Little Boy in the World."

Now he's ready to spill all.

In a sequel just released by Random House, he fesses up to a number of other "inaccuracies" from that famous first book. It turns out he attended Harvard, not Yale. His first job was with the National Student Marketing Corp., not IBM. Hardly earth-shattering stuff. But to The Best Little Boy in the World

(TBLBITW), it's important to be honest. Sometimes, setting the record straight (so to speak) proved particularly amusing.

The "perverted dirty old man of 31," who in the first book sought out wrestling matches with hot male undergrads turns out to be none other than Barney Frank, one of two openly gay representatives in Congress.

Sometimes, his "corrections" border on the bizarre. The original book tells how, as a boy, he went to summer camp at Maine's Camp Wigwam (not Camp Winnepesaukee). That's not all. The first book left out that, when he went on a double-date with his camp counselor (and crush target), the young lady on the counselor's arm was none other than Rita Mae Brown, author of

the classic lesbian coming out story, "Rubyfruit Jungle," also released in 1973.

But writing under his real name, and about his real friends, lovers and family members, didn't necessarily provide Tobias the freedom to tell-all in a more truthful fashion. In a rare telephone interview from his summer home on Fire Island, Tobias talked about that irony between his two "gay books," and about how TBLBITW grew up and turned out just fine, thank you very much.

"It's true I'm not quite as candid as I was in the first book," said Tobias, 51, who chronicles the 25-year gap between books in the sequel, aptly titled "The Best Little Boy in the World

See HAPPY! page 7B

INSIDE:

Lesbian Blues
A frozen corpse leads to intrigue.
Page 2B



Best Little Gay Boy
Sequel picks up where 25-year-old work ended.
Page 6B



Inside the Nightlife
The latest gossip on all that's gay.
Page 8B



BOOK REVIEW

A frozen corpse leads to intrigue in lesbian thriller

"Blue" by Abigail Padgett; Mysterious Press, 324 pages, \$22.

by ELLA TYLER

Blue McCarron was either blessed or cursed when her godmother declared that the then 10-year-old was a new soul who should be encouraged to explore life without constraints in Abigail Padgett's "Blue."

Otherwise, when her lover abandoned her without warning two years ago, she might not have moved into a half-built abandoned motel at the edge of the Borrego Desert and abandoned her teaching career to earn big bucks.

Blue has a doctorate in social psychology and uses her research into primate behavior to explain all kinds of human behavior. The book about her research remains widely unread, but her ability to understand the shopping behavior of women has made her a successful consultant.

Blue's book does, however, bring her one client, who wants her to analyze his much older sister, 'Muffin' Crandall, who has confessed to an odd crime. The 61-year-old widow claims that the body found thawing in her late husband's game locker is an intruder who she hit over the head with a paperweight and killed some five years ago. She wrapped him in freezer paper and stored it in the public freezer where it remained until a power failure.

Blue interviews the woman and is convinced she is not telling the truth. The story omits elements that a social psychologist expects. When a forensic psychiatrist is called in, she agrees that the woman is lying and attempting to act mentally ill. Neither can explain why a woman would lie to stay in jail, especially when they learn she is terminally ill. She must be protecting someone, but who? All of Muffin's friends seem to be sweet little old ladies like her.

When Muffin is poisoned, the situation becomes even more confusing. The dead

man was a small-time hood — a delta male in social psychologist terms — and not a loss to anyone. Why would someone risk carrying out a murder in a women's prison to avenge him?

Then one of Muffin's good friends is murdered, too, and Blue appears to be in danger.

All of a sudden, Blue's lonely and uneventful life begins to change. She becomes interested in the psychiatrist, but she agrees to be a partner only in crime solving. She works for the prison system, so her help will be valuable, but an attractive older lesbian is now pursuing Blue. With possibilities for new relationships, Blue decides it is time to find out what really happened to her ex-lover. While she's at it, she decides to try to locate a girl who disappeared from the juvenile jail where Blue teaches. With the help of prison records and a computer hacker, Blue discovers tenuous but suggestive links between the older women, the ex and the girl.

Blue finally agrees to her friends' demands that she leave town for safety and agrees to her father's pleas that she attend her brother's wedding. He is in prison and they have been estranged. However, he explains the motive for Muffin's murder.

When Blue returns home, there is a dramatic climax in the desert.

This is a woman's book, a feminist fantasy. None of the characters, especially the older women, are what you would expect. At first, this is distracting, but each character, and each character trait, has its place in this tightly woven plot.



What your neighbors are reading ...

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 The Best Little Boy in the World Grows Up
by Andrew Tobias (Random House, \$23.95)</p> <p>2 Window Garden
by Janet McClellan (Naiad, \$11.95)</p> <p>3 Past Due
by Claire McNab (Naiad, \$11.95)</p> <p>4 The Same Embrace
by Michael Lowenthal (Dutton, \$23.95)</p> <p>5 The Brewer Twins: Double Take
by Paul West/Jason Losser (Universe, \$17.95)</p> <p>6 Plain and Normal
by James Wilcox (Little Brown, \$24)</p> <p>7 The Pleasure Principle
by Michael Bronski (St. Martin's, \$24.94)</p> <p>8 Why Christianity Must Change
by John Spong (Harper Collins, \$24)</p> <p>9 Arrow's Flight
by Mark Merlis (St. Martin's, \$24.95)</p> <p>10 Gay Metropolis
by Charles Kaiser (Harcourt Bruce, \$14)</p> | <p>1 The Best Little Boy in the World Grows Up
by Andrew Tobias (Random House, \$23.95)</p> <p>2 Husband Hunting Made Easy
by Patrick Price (St. Martin's, \$12.95)</p> <p>3 Bad Boys on Video
by Mickey Skee (Companion Press, \$12.95)</p> <p>4 Straight?
edited by Jack Hart (Alyson, \$11.95)</p> <p>5 Little Joe Superstar
by Michael Ferguson (Companion Press, \$18.95)</p> <p>6 Stephen Sondheim: A Life
by Meryle Secrest (Knopf, \$30)</p> <p>7 California Screaming
by Doug Guinan (Simon & Schuster, \$24)</p> <p>8 Are You Nuts?
by Mark Richard Zubro (St. Martin's, \$21.95)</p> <p>9 Desmond
by Ulysses Diets (Alyson, \$13.95)</p> <p>10 Life Outside
by Michael Signorile (Harper, \$15)</p> |
|---|--|

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713-522-5156

'Blue' author to visit Houston

Abigail Padgett, author of "Blue" will be at Murder by the Book, 2342 Bissonnet, on Sept. 18 at 5:30 p.m. to discuss and sign her book. Padgett now lives in San Diego, Calif., but lived in Houston from 1980 to 1982. She worked as director of the local American Civil Liberties Union and was active in feminist causes here.

"Blue" is Padgett's sixth published detective story, but her first featuring a

lesbian character. It draws on her interests in feminism, folklore and desert preservation. Her earlier books ("Child of Silence" "The Dollmaker's Daughter") form a popular and critically praised series featuring Bo Bradley, a manic depressive child protective services worker. Padgett has worked as a child care investigator and an advocate for mentally ill people.

—Ella Tyler



Padgett

Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel

Alison's on vacation. This is an archive episode of Dykes To Watch Out For.



GALAXY GAYZER

by JOSEPH MOLINA

Sept. 11 — 17



Aries (MARCH 21 — APRIL 20)

Planetary influences lighten up and Aries is given room to breathe. Relax take a break and advantageously use this week to rejuvenate and prepare for the future. If you play your homosexual cards right, universal forces indicate wealth, a secure home, and for some, continuing education. Falling into a structure you will realize the ways in which your fantasies can be made into a reality.



Taurus (APRIL 21 — MAY 20)

Mercury and Venus combine efforts in a partnership destined to put you into a contemplative mood. Cosmic influences make you aware of all the instability, stress and dissatisfactions surging through your life. As the transit of Saturn cycles through the sign of Taurus, you will begin to notice moods and circumstances such as these happening again and again. How you react to them and the motivation that you actively take advantage of will show you how well you are handling this planetary influence.



Gemini (MAY 21 — JUNE 21)

A crisis of identity will continue to occur in the life of Gemini. Finding your homosexual self and knowing what you desire is what the universe asks you over the course of this week. Choices will be presented to you that will cause a serious mood. The life you have been living produces a lull and a search begins for more depth, meaning and growth.



Cancer (JUNE 22 — JULY 23)

If at first life throws you a bad hand of cards, stop and consider the possibilities. If over the last few weeks you have encountered difficulties and setbacks, consider circumstances out of your control occurring to force you to create constructive changes. This week, emotional issues will rise to the surface and matters dealing with your security will take center stage in your mind. Emotional defeats could bring about some form of separation. From rocky waters you are on your way to solid ground. It is always darkest before the dawn even if only in your own homosexual mind.



Leo 4 (JULY 24 — AUG. 23)

As Mars continues to accent your assertive side, most of the heaviness and stress that you have felt lifts and the real you begins to shine. But you must be careful that you do not get involved with attitude queens and manipulators. You have a new beginning in your gay life and now you should do something with it. To sit and think negatively would only limit your life and hold you back from opportunities of love, a comfortable home and spiritual fulfillment.



Virgo (AUG. 24 — SEPT. 23)

Happy birthday Virgo. To prepare for the coming year, the universe encourages some personal evaluation. You will have conquest and victory in the coming year. As Venus and Mercury combine efforts, your state of mind is the key to mastering the next 12 months. A part of you is ending and a new homosexual you is coming out of the cocoon. Keep track of your spending, and rely on no one as you make your way through the next year.



Libra (SEPT. 24 — OCT. 23)

As the sun moves closer and closer to your birthday cycle, an emotional mood manifests as a wall in front of you. Sobering truths awaken you to cutting ties and setting free limiting relationships. Rushing into things will only bring about dissatisfaction and unwanted news. You would be better to take things one step at a time and give all things the appropriate amount of attention or you run the danger slowing your homosexual evolution.



Scorpio (OCT. 24 — NOV. 22)

So close to your birthday you should prepare by setting your life in order. Balance your checkbook, evaluate your routines and notice what has gotten out of harmony. Your body could begin reacting to the season change and you could begin noticing your allergies. As part of a positive week, I encourage reading, spending time under the sun, and getting in some healthy exercise.



Sagittarius (NOV. 23 — DEC. 22)

Mercury and Venus present opportunities to further your homosexual life and achieve your goals. Think about what it means to be alone and to work toward a sense of achievement. Downsizing your life, I see you releasing opposition and limiting attitudes. It should be easier to make decisions and set a focus into your life. It's all about you Sagittarius and your goals should be based from this attitude.



Capricorn (DEC. 23 — JAN. 20)

Astrologically, the universe puts you in a positive position. What you do want to achieve? What can you see yourself doing in the future? Opportunities will present themselves that could lead to the manifestations of your goals. Is it a new job that is before you or is it a successful trip? Universally you are in a space in which you should create, create and create. This week you will notice your life furthering and you moving closer to goals.



Aquarius (JAN. 21 — FEB. 19)

Mars' influence acts as a catapult to thrust you closer and closer towards homosexual your goals. This week you should notice major change flowing through your life. Movement in all the areas where movement has been desired or the weeding away of the desire will occur. New career opportunities could present themselves or simply new avenues to express yourself. Look for inspirations showing you a means to an end.



Pisces (FEB. 20 — MARCH 20)

As the sun continues to challenge you, look at how you are displaying a solid sense of responsibility and how you wish to draw changes into your homosexual life. Motivational influences encourage you to do some solid evaluation of your career and your life. You must set down the law for the future and create a solid routine and stick with it. Making the choice to do something with your time and energy could be the key to your success or failure. For the moment you are in an opportune space. What you do or do not do with it holds the guarantee for your future.

Joseph Molina, a practicing psychic for over 15 years, can be reached at 713-524-4411. Check out his web site at Astralwind.com or e-mail him at joemo@swbell.net.

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Houston Voice
Connections

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Friday, Sept. 11

- * Free HIV testing by the Montrose Clinic at E/J's 6-10 pm and at the Midtowne Spa 10 pm to 1 am. Inergy at 8:30 pm to midnight.
- * HATCH meets. 713-942-7002.
- * Houston Tennis Club meets at 7:30 pm. 713-864-8468
- * Aftercare Group Treatment at Montrose Counseling Center. 6pm. 713-529-0037.
- * Frost Eye Clinic: Free eye exams for HIV+ people. 713-830-3000
- * Lesbian Avengers meet at Toffee's, 1830 W. Alabama @ 7pm.
- * Q-Patrol Meets to walk the streets at 8:45 pm. 713-528-SAFE.
- * Kolbe Projects' Park Plaza Hospital Visitation. 713-861-1800.
- * Positive Art Workshop 1-4pm. Patrick Palmer at 713-526-1118.
- * Lesbian and Gay Voices on KPFT 7pm 713-526-5738.
- * Gulf Coast Transgender Community meets.

731-780-GCTC.

Saturday, Sept. 12

- * Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic at Brick's II 4 to 8 pm and the 611 Hyde Park Pub 8 pm to midnight. Toyz 8:30 pm to midnight.
- * AIDS Housing Coalition Houston: FYI 713-521-1613.
- * After Hours on KPFT 12am to 3am. 90.1 FM. 713-526-5738.
- * Q-Patrol meets to walk the streets at 8:45pm. 713-528-SAFE.
- * Visual Art Alliance meets at 10am. 281-583-8408.
- * Rainbow Fishing Club meets. 713-526-7070.
- * The Movie Club meets. 281-835-5312.

Sunday, Sept. 13

- * The Women's Group meets 10:45am. 713-529-8571.
- * HATCH meets. 713- 942-7002.
- * Houston Chain' Gang Bicycle Club meets. 713-802-0165
- * Rainbow Riders: A bicycle club for women.

713-869-1686.

- * FrontRunners meet at 9:00 am. 713-522-8021.
- * Lone Star Volleyball plays. 281-878-4629.
- * Houston Tennis Club meets at 10:30 am. 713-864-8468.

Monday, Sept. 14

- * Gay Fathers/Fathers First support group. 8pm. 713-861-6181.
- * Calendar/Computer workshop for Pride Week. 7pm. 713-529-1223.
- * Outpatient Group Treatment at Montrose Counseling Center. 6pm. 713-529-0037.
- * Men Survivors of Sexual Abuse Group at Montrose Counseling Center. 6:15pm. 713-529-0037.
- * Gay Men Survivors of Domestic Violence support group meets. 713-526-1017.
- * Bering Support Network-Grief and Divorce Groups meets at 7 pm. 713-526-1017.
- * Frost Eye Clinic: Free eye exams for HIV+ people. 713-830-3000.
- * AIDS Caregiver's Support Group meets at

6pm. 713-732-4300.

- * AVES sponsored free HIV testing from 1pm to 6:15 pm 713-626-2837.
- * Houston Area Women's Center's Volunteer training. 713-528-6798 X272.
- * Free Yoga Classes at 7 pm 713-965-9642.
- * Free HIV testing by the Montrose Clinic: Mary's 9 am to 1 pm; and Cousin's 8:30 pm to midnight.
- * Kolbe Project's Park Plaza Visitation; 713-861-1800.
- * AIDS Foundation Houston offers free creative writing class. 3:00 pm. 713-623-6796.
- * FrontRunners meets at 6:30 pm. 713-522-8021.
- * TV Montrose airs on Warner Cable Channel 54 at 8 pm. 713-523-6302

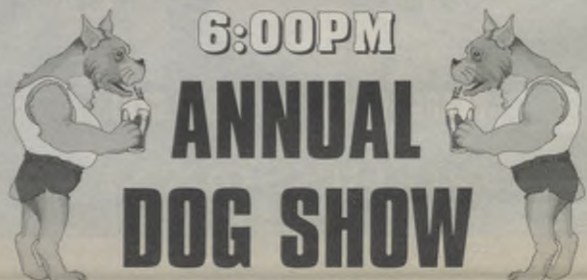
Tuesday, Sept. 15

- * Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous meets at 239 Westheimer. 7pm. 713-495-8009.
- * Gay Men HIV+ Psychotherapy at Montrose Counseling Center. 4:30pm. 713-529-0037.

Continued on page 5B

MARY'S

SUNDAY SEPT. 13

6:00PM

ANNUAL DOG SHOW

5:00PM

FLU SHOTS • \$5

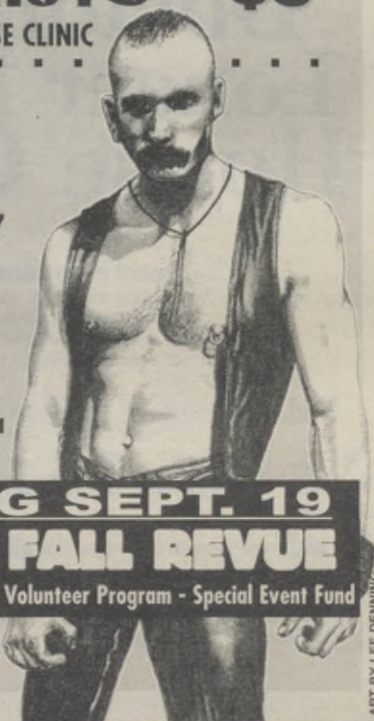
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"Lee Love Family Reunion"

benefiting Montrose Clinic Women's Program

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 16 • 9PM

Join in the fun with
SHIELA LENNON'S
 KARAOKE NIGHT



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Continued from page 4B

- * Youth-Rap at 6:30pm. 713-822-8511.
- * Aftercare Group Treatment at Montrose Counseling Center. 6pm. 713-529-0037
- * AIDS Alliance of the Bay Area meets at 7pm. 713-488-4492.
- * Empowerment for Living meets for pot luck. 713-861-9149.
- * PROTECT: an HIV negative support group meets at 7pm. 713-526-1017.
- * Free HIV testing by Montrose Clinic Club Body Center and Mela's 8pm to Midnight.
- * Women Survivors of Childhood Abuse at Montrose Counseling Center. 6:30pm. 713-529-0037.
- * Kolbe Projects' Parka Plaza Visitation; 713-861-1800.
- * Bering Support Network-Lunch, Bunch Gang meets at 11 am. 713-526-1017.
- * HIV + Support group for men over 50 meets at 7:30 pm. 713-527-9106.
- * Love, Lust, and Intimacy discussion group meets at 7 pm. 713-524-2374.
- * TV Montrose airs on Warner Cable Channel 54 at 8 pm. 713-523-6302.

Wednesday, Sept. 16

- * Free HIV testing by the Montrose Clinic; Mary's 4-8pm; Chances 6 to 10 pm, Nighthawks 10 pm to midnight and the Ripcord 10 pm to 1 am.
- * Frost Eye Clinic: Free eye exams to HIV+ people. 713-520-2000.
- * Houston Pride Band practices at Dignity Houston. 713-524-0218.
- * Houston Tennis Club meets at 7:30 pm. 713-864-8468.
- * GLOBAL (Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Alliance at the U of H) meets at 4:30pm. 713-791-1412.
- * Women's Network at Montrose Counseling Center. 7pm. 713-529-0037.
- * Ongoing Mixed Living in Process Group for men and women. 713-622-7250.
- * Aftercare Group Treatment at Montrose Counseling Center. 6pm. 713-529-0037.
- * HIV Survivor Support Group meets at 7pm. 713-782-4050.
- * Free Yoga classes at 7 pm. 713-965-9642.
- * Bering Spiritual Support Group meets at 6:45 pm. 713-526-1017.
- * Women's Clinic at the Montrose Clinic. 5 to 8pm. Call 713-830-3000.
- * INet of Houston meets at 7pm. 713-861-9149.

- * AVES offers free HIV testing from 1 to 6:15 pm. 713-626-2837.
- * Kolbe Project's Hospital Visitation; 713-861-1800.
- * Houston Harpies Ice Hockey Team recruits. 713-802-1248.
- * Rainbow Rangers at 8 pm at the BRB.
- * Lambda Rollerskating Club skates at 8 pm. 281-933-5818.
- * Thomas Street Health Center Council meets at 2 pm. 713-902-2231.
- * Healing and Happiness Through Wellness at 7 pm. 713-623-6796.
- * TV Montrose airs on Warner Cable Channel 54 at 8 pm. 713-523-6302

Thursday, Sept. 17

- * Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic at the BRB from 4 to 8 pm and GT's 8 pm to midnight.
- * Art Labs at The Art League at 1pm. 713-225-9411.
- * Gay Men's Chorus of Houston open rehearsal at 7pm. 713-521-7464.
- * Twentysomething meets at 7:30pm. 713-315-6786.
- * Ongoing gay men's Living in Process Groups. 713-622-7250.
- * HIV+ Men Psychotherapy at Montrose Counseling Center. 1:15pm. 713-529-0037.
- * Relapse Prevention at Montrose Counseling Center. 2pm. 713-529-0037.
- * Outpatient Group Treatment at Montrose Counseling Center. 6pm. 713-529-0037.
- * Aftercare Group Treatment at Montrose Counseling Center. 6pm. 713-529-0037.
- * Women's Therapy Group at Montrose Counseling Center. 5:30pm. 713-529-0037.
- * Meditation and Chanting Group meets at 7pm. 713-942-0923.
- * HIV Affected at CASA. 7pm. 713-796-2272.
- * HIV Survivor Support Group meets at 2929 Unity Drive. 7pm. 713-782-4050.
- * Center for the Healing of Racism. 7:30pm. 713-738-RACE.
- * FrontRunners run at 6:30 pm. 713-522-8021.
- * HIV Art Course Program; 1-4pm. Patrick Palmer at 713-526-1118.
- * HIV Prevention Community Planning Group meets at 9 am. 713-794-9251.
- * Women's Clinic opens at the Montrose Clinic 713-830-3000.
- * HIV Prevention Community Planning Group meets at 8:00 a.m. 713-794-9251.
- * Montrose Ice Picks skate at 8 pm. 713-629-1432.



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LEVI



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Sunday

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BOOK REVIEW

Growing up as 'the best little boy'

"The Best Little Boy in the World," by Andrew Tobias; Random House, 250 pages, \$15.95; and "The Best Little Boy in the World Grows Up," Random House, 268 pages, \$23.95.

by JERRY D. PARRA

Convinced that if heterosexuals could get a clear glimpse of gay life, they would realize it isn't shameful, Andrew Tobias, under the pseudonym John Reid, wrote "The Best Little Boy in the World" at age 26.

Some 25 years later, that work, along with its new sequel — "The Best Little Boy in the World Grows Up" — serve as an invaluable chronicle of American gay life in the past quarter century.

The first book, written in a time when AIDS was unheard of, when the majority of the public knew little about the daily workings of gay life, remains a compelling and undeniably candid autobiography of a man grappling with coming out.

"The Best Little Boy in the World" vividly captures the essence of homosexual childhood and adolescence. Sure, certain references to movies like "The Boys in the Band" and places like Max's Kansas City are dated, but the book still packs an emotional wallop. With incredible honesty, Tobias describes his New York and Ivy League backgrounds, ones full of silence and denial. He channels his sexual impulses into overachieving, first as a student and later as a professional.

"I wanted to open up; I just couldn't risk it. ... If I was going to be lonely,

then I was going to be the loneliest boy in the world. Tell one soul, and the shell is broken forever. No turning back," Tobias writes. For many years he remains determined to stay in the closet, to take the secret of his sexuality to his grave.

When he finally divulges his secret to a friend, the reader is swept up the rush of what it means to confront life honestly for the first time. "I told him because after 11 years of silence I could stand loneliness no longer, I could stand pretending no longer. ... I told him because I felt the best years of my life were slipping away."

Through his earliest affairs and his eventual entry into gay society in Manhattan, Boston, Fire Island and Provincetown, Tobias comes to realize there's nothing to be ashamed of and that the best way to make something useful out of his life is to live honestly and openly as a productive member of society.

Still, in 1972, Tobias wanted to protect his parents and those involved in his life and so he chose to write the book under the pen name John Reid. The book contains some naive statements like, "Now VD is more easily cured than the flu," and, "How could guys dance with other guys?" But, by his own admission, Tobias concedes, "I don't know that much about homosexuality."

"I am curious to know what I will be like in 20 or 30 years," he wonders toward the end of the first book. His new work shows us.

Much has changed, primarily the relinquishment of his pseudonym.

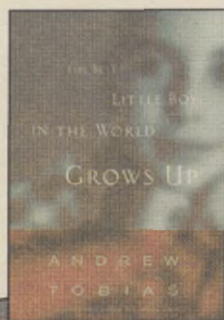
Tobias writes that in 1972, "to have used my real name would have required far more courage than I had." Now that there's no sense in keeping his identity secret, the narrative of the sequel has a greater sense of comfort and incorporates the use of many more real names and situations than the first book.

Also, Tobias didn't count on the first book being read and taken to heart by so many in the gay population. This new book addresses both the gay and straight audience and serves as a thank you note to those who have helped change the world and make it more accommodating for gays in the last 25 years.

The world has changed and Tobias with it.

The sequel carries him through the continuing process of coming out (in one instance to President Clinton and his wife), his search for a fulfilling love (he's now in a steady relationship with fashion designer Charles Nolan), and to developing his opinions on a variety of issues, both political and social.

Some of the most touching passages of "The Best Little Boy in the World Grows Up" are the ones that deal with how Tobias' loss of friends and ex-lovers to AIDS. "The details. You don't want to know the details of AIDS. ...



The pills and the sweats and the lesions and well, it gets worse and worse." There aren't those kinds of details, but Tobias does recount some hauntingly

beautiful memorial services.

As Tobias, a Harvard graduate, enters more important circles of influence, the name-dropping increases as do references to Barney Frank, the Clintons, Al Gore, David Geffen and a host of elite Harvard classmates. Not that these aren't entertaining, but most people

(gay or straight) won't be able to relate to discussing the Jackie Kennedy auction with Oprah Winfrey during the taping of her show.

Both books also have an accessible narrative style and, most importantly, a solid sense of humor. Tobias is never afraid to laugh at himself or to account for his shortcomings. "Listen: I'm not proud of how shallow I am ..." goes a typical refrain.

It's this kind of honesty and self-deprecation that make both "The Best Little Boy in the World" and "The Best Little Boy in the World Grows Up" books to be relished and recommended for many years to come.

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Kelly Lauren



Roxanne Lee Love



Lana Blake



Dyan Michaels

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3:30PM

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SAT	9/12	SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER at 11 pm.
SUN	9/13	\$1 Budweiser & Bud Light All Day and All Night.
MON	9/14	MALE STRIP CONTEST at 11 pm with Paivi.
TUE	9/15	Amateur/Talent Night 11 pm with Roxanne Lee Love.
WED	9/16	Burger night with Grandma. MALE STRIP CONTEST at 11 pm with Black Velvet.
THUR	9/17	Burger night with Grandma.

HAPPY/ from page 1B

Grows Up."
"I was very candid in the first one and basically candid in the second one, but especially as regards not so much me as other people, it's kinda tricky to keep your friends and not hurt people's feelings."

It's true that few "characters" in the sequel come off looking particularly bad, even the men who stole his first and second lovers. In fact, Tobias goes out of his way to rattle off the impressive resumes of each and every gay man who happens along his life path, a practice that one reviewer said "has the effect of irritating little bug bites along the way."

Is this flattery or lack of candor? Not so, says Tobias.

"Look, my nickname in the old Fire Island house we used to have ... was 'Polly Andy' — as in Pollyanna. ... I tended to say nice things about a lot of people. Part of my schtick when I'm introducing people at parties and such, I always give people this huge build up and they come to expect it," he said.

"When on occasion someone will call me on it, and say I'm a phony, I write back and say that I just have such terrific friends and by and large the people I know are really wonderful and extraordinary people. Most of the characters in the book, I didn't have to pull a lot of punches because by and large these are wonderful people."

Even more importantly, says Tobias, is the message transmitted to the impressionable reader.

"When there are young gay kids reading this, they need to know that you can be openly gay and be accepted by the President of the United

States," he says, and Tobias writes about just that. Long a participant in the fashionable Renaissance Weekends in South Carolina over New Years, he befriended candidate Bill Clinton and in 1992 came out to the President-Elect (and several hundred others) in a memorable speech to the

dying from AIDS, I felt almost an obligation to enjoy my good fortune and celebrate life, because they couldn't. I'm so fortunate, that, in the face of my good fortune, to be going around moping and unhappy and say 'Oh my life is terrible,' would be almost blasphemous."

*'Honestly?
Here's a book that says
you're successful,
you've got friends, you're happy,
and who wants to read about
that?'*

A-list participants.

To make matters even more challenging to readers accustomed to gay male memoirs that chronicle painful lives, crushing losses, and a bottomless pit of loneliness, Tobias has managed a remarkably successful professional career (he's written four best-selling books on business), a successful relationship (several, actually), and a sunny disposition, even in the face of the devastation wrought by AIDS.

"Part of it is my chemical make-up," allows Tobias, who recommends St. John's Wort as the Poor Man's Prozac for those not so lucky genetically. "Part of it is my huge good fortune to be healthy and alive."

"Maybe it's really a rationalization for not grieving as much as I should have, but when so many people were

In the book and in-person, Tobias exudes optimism and is unabashedly traditional in his approach to life.

"I don't have all the answers," he's quick to add in a characteristically self-deprecating manner. "I know for me — and my suspicion is that for many people — assimilating to a certain extent is likely to be their best strategy for happiness. Not for everybody. ..."

"I do think that, especially as you get older, most people are going to have happier lives if they have a circle of close friends and one special, longer-term relationship. ... The

notion of having a stable home life, one monogamous partner, and maybe even kids is a model that's pretty well time-tested, and there are some good reasons why it makes sense."

Ever trying to measure up to expectations, TBLBITW actually worries that his life over the last 25 years may be a little too happy to make for good reading.

"One of my straight friends read the book and said she didn't like it. Of course, I was crushed when I found out," he says. "When I finally drew her out, she said, 'Honestly? Here's a book that says you're successful, you've got friends, you're happy, and who wants to read about that?'"

At the very least, a few thousand BLBITWs, and Tobias is anxious to get reactions from all corners. He even includes an e-mail address (atobias@aol.com) on the book jacket to grease the wheels.

"The second book may not have been written out of the same kind of passion as the first, ... but this time, I just felt I wanted to say, 'Look how wonderful this turned out. I'm openly gay and yet where once I thought I couldn't possibly have a life, I'm having a wonderful life.'"



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Important Stuff

Woof. Woof. The annual Mary's Dog show is Sept. 13 starting at 6 p.m. The categories are: Nelliest, Butchist, Smallest, Heinz 57, Youngest, Best Trick., Best Costume, Most Outrageous, Best Duet, and best Non-dog. If you are a dog lover, this is a really fun event and helps raise money for the Pet Patrol. I'll be a judge this year, so I'll see you and your pooch on Sunday.

The new Mr. BriarPatch is Bunny O'Hare (A year without drag, I guess) and the new Miss BP is Rachel Montana. Over \$1,500 was raised to benefit Stone Soup.

The "Virgin's First Romantic Fling," starring all Virgins (Where are they going to find them?) will deflower the stage of the BriarPatch on Sept. 20 at 8 p.m. This benefits the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard. Also, mark your calendars for the BP Follies on Oct. 18.



Barbara Walker gets fondeled by who?

There is a ton of "Love" things going on at E/J's this Sunday. The Lee Loves are holding a BBQ at 3 p.m. followed by a show at 6 p.m. The talent finals are at 11 p.m.

Be at JR's on Sept. 11 to win tickets to see the 30th anniversary revival of "Boys in the Band" at the New Heights Theaters. Draws are hourly from 7 to 11 p.m.

Pacific Street is helping Glen and Roy on their Texas AIDS Ride.

Mention that you are a "Friend of Dorothy, Glen or Roy" and PS will donate a portion of your cover charge to their cause.

Attention! John and David at Timeless Taffeta are looking for sales help. I know it is a fun place to work. Stop in or call if you are looking for a fun place to work.



At Rich's.

Milestones

Get wells hugs to Don Woods.

Happy birthday to Orlin Culliver and Conrad Fertitta of the Classic Chassis Car Club. Happy birthday to Walter (I never want my name in the rodent droppings) of Mary's, Dwayne (the Canadian), Tony (I'm OK, Your OK) Carroll, Lee (formerly of the Houston Voice) Davis, Chester (the Niblett), and Marilla & Betsy (formerly of the Ranch).

Rodent Droppings

I have discovered Harvey's latest "gotta have" food - Nilla Wafer banana pudding. LW was walking through the bedroom with Harvey in tow. LW tossed Harvey on to the bed and he bee-lined direct to my bowl of Nanna pudding. He nearly knocked it out of my hands. Luckily I was almost done with it so he did not get to eat too much. Another fan of my (homemade form scratch) Nilla pudding is the cat, d'artagnon who, also attacked a bowl of the tasty pudding. Other than a pudding fest, both Harvey and Rascal got baths and manicures this weekend.

My usual disclaimer is in force. Lies, gossip, and just a bit of trash. No real news here. Jim Roberts (Nighthawks): And I quote: "I'd like to be his underwear."

Ken Claude (Too many to list): Do tell what happened at the infamous pool party this weekend.



Sil, love the earrings.

Joseph Molina (Dancing Fool): Hey, I saw you at Kroger, and at Kroger, and at Kroger.

Tom Sawyer: And I quote: "Gas me, shoot me, screw me to the chair...I don't care."

Ed (Nighthawks): Big Rick is starting to feel withdrawal symptoms.

Todd (BRB): If you are going to discreetly play with a man, you need to make sure you move away from the mirror.

Wayne G. (BriarPatch): I hear you have hung some really neat new Pop Art on the walls at the BP. I'm gonna have to come on

down and check them out.

Coleman (CCCC): I'm sorry to hear about your fender bender. And I also hear that "someone" is glad you don't dye your hair any longer or the pool would be jet black."

Vera (BRB): I hear that Jesus loves you, too.

Dr. Steven Bayes (Mr. Gulf Coast Drummer): I hear you were quite popular this past weekend, and several callers asked me to print this message to you: "Can we talk?"

Claudia (Hollywood Studios): When was the last time you drove for 88 miles just to drink Margaritas?

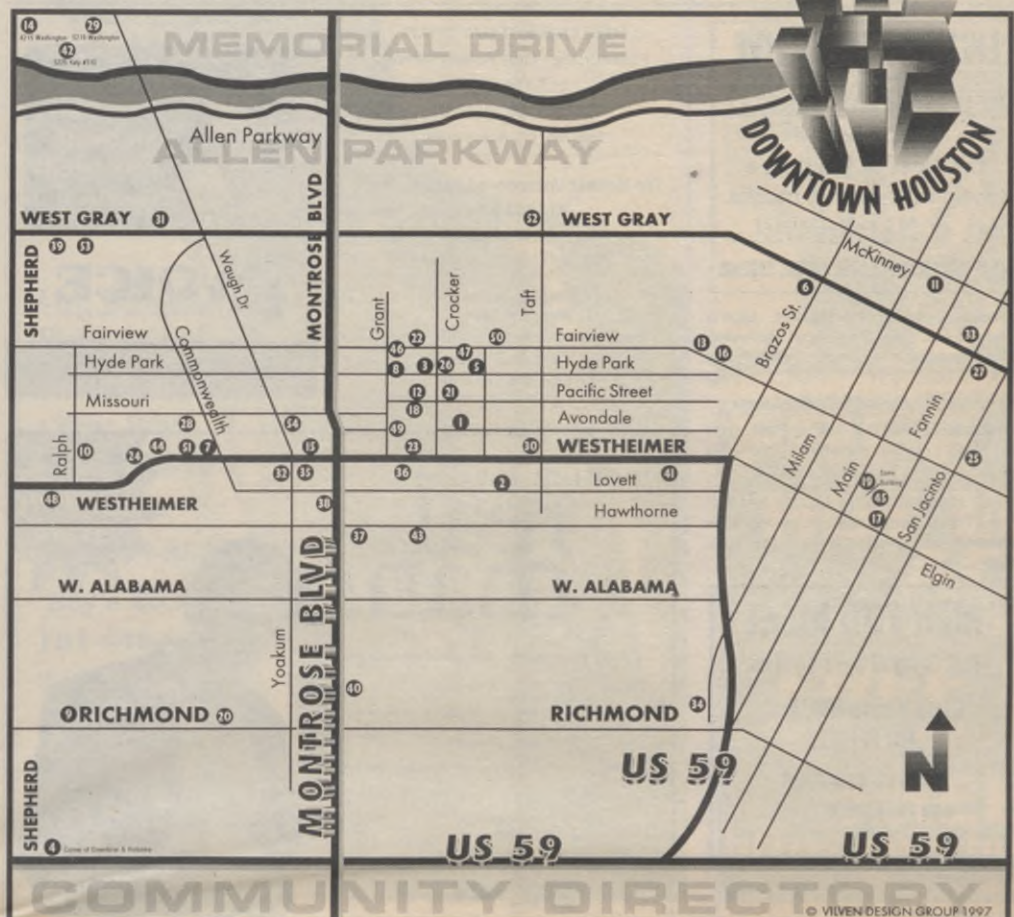
Keep sending in your Pet of the Week. And to the person that e-mailed me a cute kitty looking through the mini-blinds, I can't find the e-mail. Please resend.



Pet of the Week "Juno."
Owner: Leslie

Have a great week.

Cuerwelyn



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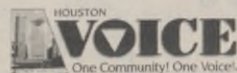
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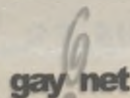


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