

MAUPIN TO VISIT ISLE

Author Armistead Maupin will read from his new novel 'The Night Listener' in Galveston Oct. 13

Page 21



Ex-gay leader loses post over gay bar visit

Paulk removed as Exodus North America board chairman

by JOEL LAWSON

WASHINGTON, DC—John Paulk, the ex-gay leader recently confronted in a Washington, D.C. gay bar, has been removed as board chair of Exodus North America, the nation's most prominent ex-gay organization.

Exodus says John Paulk lied to them about not knowing he was entering a gay bar. Exodus officials said Paulk lied when he said he did not know he was entering a gay bar.

"We believe that John's actions—to spend time socializing in a gay bar, and then to mislead both the public and Exodus leaders—merit some form of disciplinary action," said Bob Davies, North American Director of Exodus International, in a state-

> Continued on Page 10



Exodus says John Paulk lied to them about not knowing he was entering a gay bar. Last month, Paulk was photographed by Human Rights Campaign activists inside Mr. P's, a gay bar in Washington, D.C. Paulk appeared on the cover of *Newsweek* with his wife, Anne, in 1998.

INSIDE



Special pull-out section devoted to Empower 2000 Pages 17-20



Texas Supreme Court mulls legality of case involving Brown's executive order on nondiscrimination

Page 5



Community members tout benefits of coming out

Page 7

Trans teen kicked out of Covenant House

Organization claims youth refused to take physical, teen says she was forced to dress as a male

by KAY Y. DAYUS

In February of this year, Jeff Loftin checked into Covenant House Houston and was allowed to stay. He left in March.

Last month, Loftin checked into Covenant House as Chanel Dita, and she was ousted in no uncertain terms, even though she had nowhere to stay. And Covenant House knew it, says Dita.

Dita is a 19-year-old homeless transgender. She was thrown out of her home in Pasadena, after she told her mother she was transsexual.

When Dita checked into Covenant House on Sept. 16 as a female, she says she was told she could not dress as a woman. She was also told she must submit to a physical within 48 hours of admission. The physical exam is standard practice.

A telephone call to Ronda Robinson, executive director of Covenant House, confirmed this much. But Robinson insisted that Dita was asked to leave Covenant House only because she had not complied with the physical exam requirement.

However, Dita believes she was discriminated against and asked to leave because she's a transgender. She said she was constantly asked if her breasts were real.

"They said if my breasts weren't real, I would have to take them off and dress like a man," says Dita.

For all intents and purposes, Dita looks and acts like a young woman. It would be difficult to imagine her dressed in men's clothing.

"I told them I didn't want to take a physical there and they told me I could see a private physician." Dita said she would go to the Montrose Clinic for the examination. "I felt more comfortable going there because they are used to seeing gays and lesbians," says Dita in her quiet, precise voice.

She says she was given forms for the physical and she planned to go to the Montrose Clinic. "But," says Dita, "she

> Continued on Page 11



Chanel Dita, 19, says Covenant House Houston officials knew she had no place to stay when she was kicked out of the shelter. The organization says Dita refused to submit to the required physical exam. The male-to-female transgendered teen claims officials wanted her to dress as a male.

PHOTO BY: TERRY SULLIVAN



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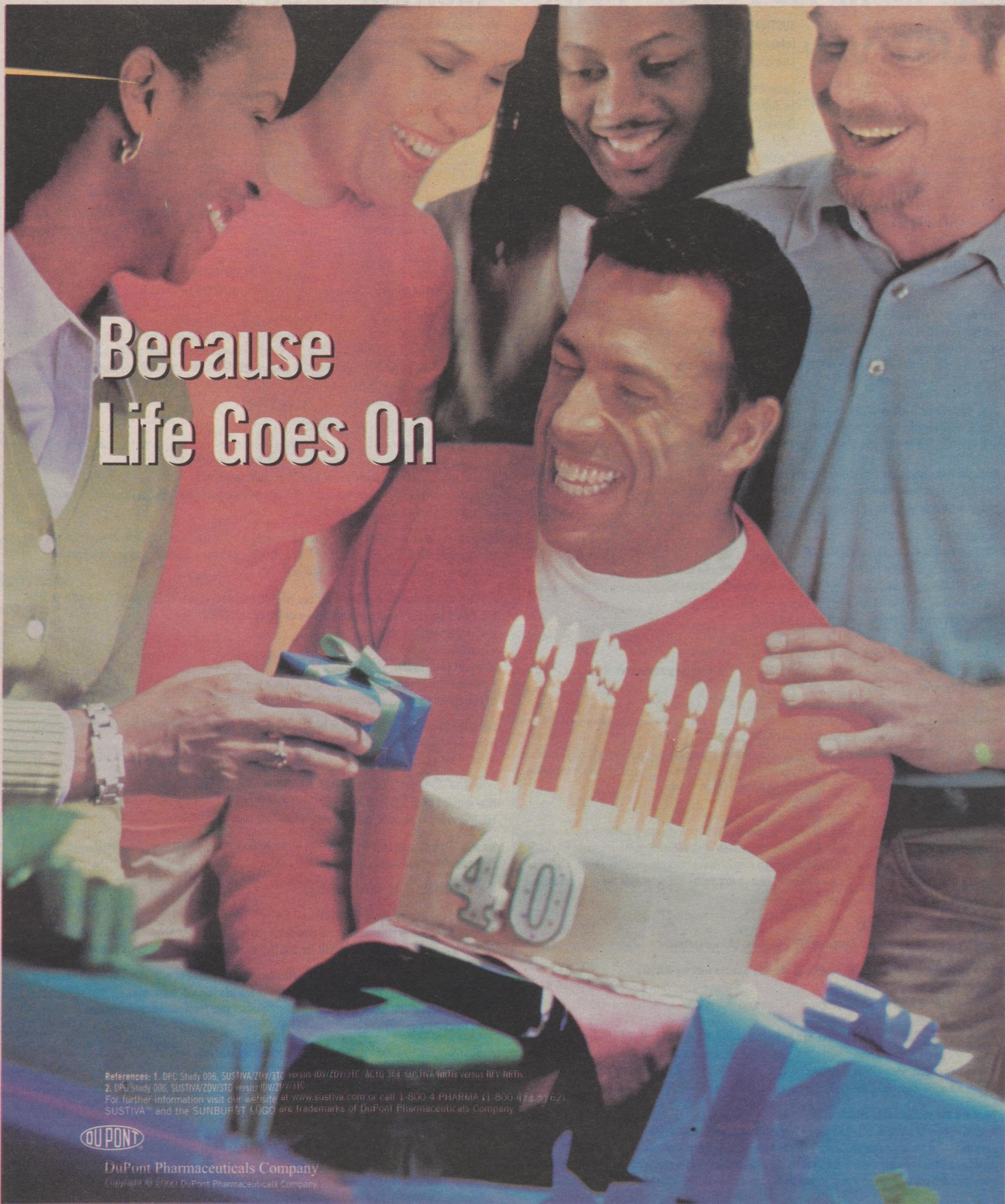
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Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting SUSTIVA. They tend to go away after you have taken the medicine for a few weeks. A small number of patients have had severe depression, strange thoughts, or angry behavior. If you have these symptoms, you should contact your doctor immediately to discuss your therapy. There have been a few reports of suicide, but SUSTIVA has not been established as the cause. Mild to moderate rash is a common side effect of SUSTIVA. Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA because birth defects have been seen in animals given SUSTIVA. SUSTIVA should not be taken by patients who are also taking any of the following: Hismanal® (astemizole), Propulsid® (cisapride), Versed® (midazolam), Halcion® (triazolam), or ergot derivatives as there is the potential for serious and/or life-threatening side effects.* See Patient Information about SUSTIVA on the following pages.

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References: 1. DFC Study 006, SUSTIVA/ZDV/3TC versus IDV/ZDV/3TC, ACTG 364, SUSTIVA/NRTIs versus NFV/NRTIs.
2. DFC Study 000, SUSTIVA/ZDV/3TC versus IDV/ZDV/3TC.
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What is SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is a medicine used to help treat HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). SUSTIVA is a type of HIV drug called a "non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor" (NNRTI).

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SUSTIVA works by lowering the amount of HIV in the blood (called "viral load"). SUSTIVA must be taken with other anti-HIV medicines. When taken with other anti-HIV medicines, SUSTIVA has been shown to reduce viral load and increase the number of CD4 cells (a type of immune cell in blood). SUSTIVA may not have these effects in every patient.

Does SUSTIVA cure HIV or AIDS?

SUSTIVA is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking SUSTIVA may still develop other infections associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important that you remain under the care of your doctor.

Does SUSTIVA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

SUSTIVA has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others. Continue to practice safe sex, and do not use or share dirty needles.

How should I take SUSTIVA?

- The dose of SUSTIVA for adults is 600 mg (three 200 mg capsules, taken together) once a day by mouth. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower (see **Can children take SUSTIVA?**).
- Take SUSTIVA at the same time each day. You should take SUSTIVA at bedtime during the first few weeks or if you have side effects, such as dizziness or trouble concentrating (see **What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?**).
- Swallow SUSTIVA with water, juice, milk, or soda. You may take SUSTIVA with or without meals; however, SUSTIVA should not be taken with a high fat meal.
- Do not miss a dose of SUSTIVA. If you forget to take SUSTIVA, take the missed dose right away. If you do miss a dose, do not double the next dose. Carry on with your regular dosing schedule. If you need help in planning the best times to take your medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- Take the exact amount of SUSTIVA your doctor prescribes. Never change the dose on your own. Do not stop this medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop.
- When your SUSTIVA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to SUSTIVA and become harder to treat.

Can children take SUSTIVA?

Yes, children who are able to swallow capsules can take SUSTIVA. Rash may be a serious problem in some children. Tell your child's doctor right away if you notice rash or any other side effects while your child is taking SUSTIVA. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower than the dose for adults. Capsules containing lower doses of SUSTIVA are available. Your child's doctor will determine the right dose based on your child's weight.

Who should not take SUSTIVA?

Do not take SUSTIVA if you are allergic to SUSTIVA or any of its ingredients.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor right away if you:

- Are pregnant or want to become pregnant
- Are breast-feeding
- Have problems with your liver, or have had Hepatitis
- Start or change any medicine
- Have side effects while taking SUSTIVA
- Have a history of mental illness, substance or alcohol abuse

What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?

A small number of patients have had severe depression, strange thoughts, or angry behavior. Some patients have had thoughts of suicide and a few patients have actually committed suicide. These problems tend to occur more often in patients with a history of mental illness. You should contact your doctor immediately if you think you are having these symptoms, so your doctor can decide whether you should continue to take SUSTIVA.

Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting treatment with SUSTIVA. These feelings may be less noticeable if you take SUSTIVA at bedtime. They also tend to go away after you've taken the medicine for a few weeks. If you have these side effects, such as dizziness, it does not mean that you will also have severe depression, strange thoughts or angry behavior. Tell your doctor promptly if any of these side effects continue or if they bother you. There is the possibility that these symptoms may be more severe if SUSTIVA is used with alcohol or mood altering (street) drugs. You should avoid driving or operating machinery if you are having these side effects.

One of the most common side effects is rash. These rashes usually go away without any change in treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. If you develop a rash, call your doctor promptly.

Other common side effects include tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, and diarrhea. However, this is not a complete list of side effects reported with SUSTIVA when taken with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss a more complete list of side effects with you.

Please contact your doctor immediately before stopping SUSTIVA because of side effects. Tell your doctor or other healthcare provider if you notice any side effects while taking SUSTIVA.

What about birth control, pregnancy, or breast-feeding?

Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA. Birth defects have been seen in animals treated with SUSTIVA. It is not known whether this could happen in humans. You should use a condom or diaphragm in addition to other methods of birth control while taking SUSTIVA. Inform your doctor immediately if you are pregnant. If you want to become pregnant, talk to your doctor. Do not take SUSTIVA if you are breast-feeding. Talk to your doctor if you are breast-feeding your baby.

Can I take other medicines with SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Your doctor may change your medicines or change their doses. For this reason, it is very important to:

- Let all your doctors and pharmacists know that you take SUSTIVA.
- Tell your doctors and pharmacists about all medicines you take. This includes those you buy over-the-counter and herbal or natural remedies.

Bring all your medicines when you see a doctor, or make a list of their names, how much you take, and how often you take them. This will give your doctor a complete picture of the medicines you use. Then he or she can decide the best approach for your situation.

The following medicines may cause serious and life-threatening side effects when taken with SUSTIVA. You should not take any of these medicines while taking SUSTIVA**:

- Hismanal® (astemizole)
- Propulsid® (cisapride)
- Versed® (midazolam)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Ergot medications (for example, Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

The following medicines may need to be changed or have their dose changed when taken with SUSTIVA**:

- Crixivan® (indinavir)
- Fortovase® (saquinavir)
- Biaxin® (clarithromycin)

How should I keep SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is available as 50 mg, 100 mg, and 200 mg capsules.

Keep SUSTIVA at room temperature (77°F) in the bottle given to you by your pharmacist.

The temperature can range from 59°-86°F.

Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children.

How can I learn more about SUSTIVA?

Talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider if you have questions about either SUSTIVA or HIV. For additional information you can visit the SUSTIVA website at <http://www.sustiva.com>.

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

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INSIDE

NEWS

National News 6
 Health News 21
 Quote/unquote 27
 Empower 2000 17-20

VOICES & ECHOES

Crain: Silence on AIDS = death 8
 Vanasco: Out all over again 9
 'Dykes to Watch Out For' 9

OUT ON THE BAYOU

Armistead Maupin visits Galveston 21
 Bayou Calendar 22
 Eating Out: PJ's 23
 On Stage: Snakebit 25
 Out IN Music 26
 Power Tools 29
 Community Calendar 30-31
 Occasions 34
 My Stars! 35
 CLASSIFIEDS 32-33

Issue 1041



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State Supreme Court reviews exec order case



Mayor Lee Brown

Arguments heard regarding lawsuit over mayor's nondiscrimination policy

by GIP PLASTER

The Texas Supreme Court heard arguments Monday afternoon in the case that will eventually determine if Mayor Lee P. Brown's executive order banning sexual orientation discrimination in city government is legal.

At issue before the court was whether either the city councilman or the citizen, activist who sued to stop the order, has legal standing to do so—that is, whether either had the right to sue on the issue.

Days after the executive order was issued in 1998, businessman Richard Hotze and City Councilman Rob Todd sued the mayor and the city to try to stop the order from taking effect.

The order was illegal, they claimed, because a 1985 referendum that would have put similar protections in place failed to pass. That meant, they asserted, that the people of the city had already spoken on the issue.

Later in 1998, District Judge Patrick Mizell stopped the order until the case could be decided and said that Hotze had no right to sue.

> Continued on Page 12

Election will determine more than presidency

Local political activists concerned over key local, state races

by ELLA TYLER

With a month to go before the election, community activists are beginning the effort to convince members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community to vote.

"It won't be easy," says Clarence Bagby, a member of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force board and co-chair of the Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus' Political Action Committee.

"Voter's aren't motivated. Who's at the top of the ticket pulls turnout up or down."

Political consultant Grant Martin explains, "There is so much media attention about the importance of the Electoral College that people who expect Bush to take Texas don't think their vote will make a difference. I read a Molly Ivens column a while back that said it is okay to vote for Nader if you live in Texas.

"I always remind people that it is the legislature that has power over the issues that matter in our daily lives—like gay adoption, gay marriage, HIV funding, choice, hate crimes and our votes are important in these 'down-ballot' races," Martin said. "I don't think people realize how many of these races are contested."

Martin cites Democrat Ken Yarbrough's race for reelection as State Representative as



Clarence Bagby, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

one in which every vote is important.

"Ken won by fewer than 200 votes last election, and that is why Progressive Voters In Action (a group Martin helped found) is targeting that district. Our phone banking has identified 940 progressive voters in the district, which is more than our goal, and we need every one of them to go vote."

Bagby says the first campaign of incumbent State Rep. Rick Noriega, whose district includes the East End, is an example of a race in which the GLBT vote made the critical difference.

"Noriega credits us with helping him win his first primary. There were only 4,000

votes among all the candidates and our mailing list had 1,600 names on it," Bagby said.

Bagby has high hopes for the campaign of Don Sepolio, a Democrat who is running against incumbent State Rep. Robert Talton.

"Talton was the co-sponsor of a bill prohibiting gay foster parents," Bagby explains.

"It would a symbolic victory to beat him, and even though a lot of the district is in Pasadena, we have voters there. If labor votes against him, there's a chance."

Another race for state representative that interests Bagby is the race between Mike Skadden and incumbent Republican Kyle Janek, in the inside-the-loop district that includes West University.

"Janek gets a lot of credibility in the legislature because he's the only MD there, and he sounds reasonable when he's talking to voters at home, but his voting record puts him at the extreme right," Bagby says. "However, we have voters there and Skadden is a creditable candidate."

"We have voter's there," is a familiar refrain in any conversation with Bagby, and he says that wherever there is a GLBT voter in the county, there are at least a few candidates worth voting for.

"There are even Democrats running in

> Continued on Page 13

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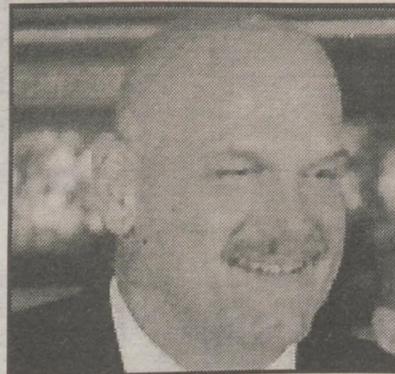
around the nation

Feds file rare lawsuit over claims that Mo. store fired employee with HIV

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—In a rare action, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has filed a lawsuit claiming a Kansas City grocery store unlawfully fired an employee because he was HIV-positive. The suit charges that Marsh's Sun Fresh fired Timothy Ray Williams, a dishwasher for two weeks, violating the Americans With Disabilities Act. Out of nearly 126,000 cases filed under the ADA between 1992 and 1999, the EEOC has taken direct action in fewer than 400 of them, agency statistics show. "Employers generally and the community at large have to realize that people with HIV can properly do all sorts of work without doing harm to anyone, and that includes food service," said EEOC regional attorney Robert G. Johnson. The lawsuit seeks an injunction barring Marsh's Sun Fresh from discriminating on the basis of disability, back pay, punitive damages and court costs.

Ventura signs off on plan for Minn. domestic partner benefits

ST. PAUL (AP)—Minnesota's Independent Party Gov. Jesse Ventura announced that he will ask state lawmakers to offer benefits to same-sex domestic partners. Ventura, who cast the move both as a business decision and as a fairness issue, said state government needs to be more responsive to attract employees in a worker-hungry market. Republican Rep. Jim Rhodes, chairman of the House Governmental Operations & Veteran Affairs Committee, said he is willing to hold hearings on the proposal if Republicans remain in the majority after November's elections. "I definitely will keep an open mind because we're talking about employees—I don't break people into different segments," said Rhodes. The benefits, if approved, would not be extended to heterosexual domestic partners. Minneapolis' 1993 attempt to implement a domestic partner benefits plan was struck down after a court ruled that the ordinance violated state public policy "favoring marriage of heterosexual couples."



Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura will ask state lawmakers to approve domestic partner benefits for gay couples as a 'business and fairness' issue.

Charges against suspect in university murder dropped

WASHINGTON (AP)—Prosecutors dropped a murder charge against a Galludet College freshman, one day after he was arrested for the slaying of a fellow student. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia said it did not have enough evidence to pursue the case against Thomas Minch, 18, of Greenland, N.H.

Minch was arrested and charged with second-degree murder late Tuesday in the death of Eric Franklin Plunkett, 19, of Burnsville, Minn. Plunkett was found in his dormitory room last Thursday night, after students reported to school officials that no one had seen him for at least a day. Plunkett was secretary of the Lambda Society, a gay and lesbian organization of about 20 students. Police and Fernandes said they had no evidence that the killing was a hate crime.

Texas judge dismisses most counts in case concerning gay foster parents

DALLAS (AP)—A Texas judge has dismissed four counts in the five-count case of a social worker who sued the Texas Department of Protective & Regulatory Services because she said she was demoted for taking a foster child from a lesbian couple's home. Rebecca Bledsoe, a Child Protective Services supervisor, wants to return to her position after being demoted to a case worker position two years ago. Judge Bill Rhea dismissed charges that Bledsoe's free speech and equal protection rights were violated, but left intact a whistleblower charge, said ACLU spokesperson Eric Ferrero. In August 1997, after learning the then-3-month-old boy had been placed with a Dallas lesbian couple, Bledsoe ordered the child's emergency removal, reasoning that "homosexual conduct is against the law in Texas." Bledsoe says she was sanctioned for violating procedures in abruptly removing the child from his home. The plight of the social worker gained the attention of conservative lawmakers, who twice attempted to ban gays in the state from becoming foster parents or adopting children.

Army denies \$1.8 million claim over slaying of soldier at Ky. base

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Army has denied a \$1.8 million wrongful death claim filed against it by the mother of slain Army Pfc. Barry Winchell. "There is no legal basis to support payment of the claim," Col. John H. Belser, chief of the Army's Tort Claims Division, wrote in a letter to Adam Pachter, attorney for Winchell's mother, Patricia Kutteles. Kutteles says an anti-gay atmosphere in the Army led to her son's 1999 murder at Fort Campbell, Ky. "I'm very upset and very disappointed and also angry that they don't care enough about his death to even consider the merits of the claim," Kutteles said. The Army's letter says that her claim would not be successful because a Supreme Court ruling has limited the kinds of claims that civilians can bring against the military. "We consider it to be a procedural dodge to avoid the real issues in this case," said Pachter, who added that he will appeal the decision.



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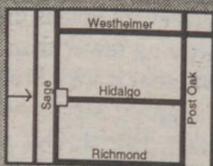
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Community members speak out on coming out

National Coming Out Day is Oct. 11

by MARIA E. MINICUCCI

A rather obscure, yet significant holiday for LGBT communities around the country is National Coming Out Day on Oct. 11.

A message from Candace Gingrich, manager for the National Coming Out Project, reminds us that, "this year's celebration precedes a very important election. In election year 2000, ensuring the visibility of gay Americans and our allies ...is critical."

Gingrich is adamant about the fact that, "...significant progress has been made over the past decade and the decisions we make in November will determine whether we continue to progress or return to the anti-gay politics of the '80s."

Locally, the most visible and prominent declaration of Coming Out Day is Empower 2000, the third annual gathering and celebration of LGBT lives. Although other major celebrations are not organized locally for Oct. 11, many LGBT organizations do the very important work of encouraging people to come out throughout the year.

Kevin Davidson, president of Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (H.A.T.C.H.) has been and continues to be dedicated to the mission of this organization.

Davidson is aware of the suicide rate among adolescents and teens, particularly teens grasping for their sexual identity. He freely claims, "we work to facilitate the comfort and safety of teens to accept and develop their sexuality."

"Coming out is beneficial in so many ways; it increases self-esteem, self-confidence and self-acceptance. Essentially, they feel empowered and hopefully, self-destructive behavior and/or suicidal tendencies will not be an option."

Davidson notes that coming out at an early age offers unique challenges.

"It is easy for adults to preach coming out to teens. Gay adults are speaking from a place of having a network of support. Teens do not necessarily have that cushion to rely on. It is especially problematic since school systems in this day and age refuse to acknowledge the reality of homosexuality and teachers and administrators within the system are not coming out."

Jim Null, a long time member of PFLAG and staunch supporter of LGBT organizations says while coming out can be difficult, it's a risk that's worth taking.

"Yes, there are some negative consequences to coming out—like job security or family acceptance. However, it is still important for people to come out. It is important for the straight community to know how many gay people there actually are and the bottom line is that we are all people."

"Coming out in greater numbers can only lead to greater acceptance of homosexuality. And, there is safety in numbers, so more people coming out also will mean more comfort and more safety."

Debra Murphy has been facilitating a coming out group for women for more than a year at the Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center. Murphy is eager to convey the importance of coming out from her experience.

"Coming out is an ongoing process and women come to this group at every stage of their own process and leave with a sense of well being and empowerment. They also take their newfound confidence and contribute to the well being of our LGBT communities."



Murphy's coming out group has spawned another organization, the Lesbian Island Association, a group of women in their 20s who decided to form a social/political/support group.

Barbara Janek, a regular participant in the coming out group says that coming out for her "has been a very freeing experience."

"Yes, coming out has been very beneficial in my life. Now, I actually have a social life, whereas before I tended to isolate myself."

Has the coming out group been a positive experience for Barbara?

"Absolutely, knowing that I can come here every week and hear other women's stories and experiences helps me. Plus, I can express feeling and thoughts that you can't usually discuss with most people."

Sean Carter, executive director of Body Positive, says coming out is an important step for people who are HIV positive or who have AIDS.

"One of the major methods of treating HIV/AIDS is reducing stressors in your life. Coming out and living your life based on who you are naturally removes an entire area of stress and also allows you to feel a peace of mind/heart/spirit that is not there when you are living such a major untruth."

Carter, who is also the president of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, says coming out is also important from a political perspective.

"Large numbers of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered persons work avidly for a better society in so many ways. The more of us who come out and the more visibility we have, the more likely it is that we will receive the credit we deserve for our efforts."

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EDITORIAL

Silence on AIDS still = death

by CHRIS CRAIN

Silence = Death!
That was the rally-

ing cry of the ACT UP protestors who galvanized national attention to the AIDS epidemic back in a time when the President of the United States refused even to utter the disease's name.

Today, politicians from both parties pay lip service to AIDS research and HIV prevention, and AIDS service organizations can boast large budgets and extensive service programs.

Success in treating those already infected with HIV has lessened the "crisis mode" that gripped the country, and especially the gay community, in the 1980s and early 90s.

But as the epidemic moves into new populations, infecting gay youth and people of color at an alarmingly high rate, the institutions with access to those at risk have been struck dumb yet again.

To be sure, some people in power are talking.

Just this week, Surgeon General David Satcher held a press conference to emphasize that homophobia blocks frank prevention efforts from reaching young people, especially minorities.

"They cannot come forward and admit they are gay, much less be tested," Satcher said Tuesday at the U.S. Conference on AIDS, held in Atlanta. "The stigma surrounding homosexuality and HIV prevents people from getting tested."

Sandra Thurman, the Atlanta native who President Clinton tapped as director of the Office of National AIDS Policy, came back home this week to release depressing new statistics indicating that young people, including young gay men, are being infected with HIV at a rate of two per hour.

Thurman also called for more direct prevention efforts aimed at youth.

"This report reminds us that behavior change is still the key to preventing HIV," she said. "We must be willing to insist that young people know the facts about HIV and have the tools to protect themselves."

So if the Surgeon General and the president's AIDS Czar agree that sex education needs to move beyond "abstinence only" and deal directly with safer sex, homosexuality and gay youth, then why isn't it happening?

There is almost a Kafka-esque quality to the national AIDS debate today, as those with access to the most power argue for changes in policy that never happen.

At the local level, many AIDS service organizations have grown increasingly dependent on corporate giving, muting their once-strong voices calling for more aggressive and direct prevention efforts. Corporate donors abhor "controversy," and the boards of many of the larger AIDS service organizations are packed with members who prefer middle-of-the-road politics to dramatic calls for change.

These AIDS groups aren't even spending much money to do broad-scale, direct prevention themselves. This newspaper, and

other publications like it, reach tens of thousands of young gays every week, and yet only a handful of AIDS organizations in the South and nationally make any effort to urge prevention and testing through eye-catching ads.

Instead, these private agencies host prevention programs that successfully educate only a tiny percentage of those at risk. We will never prevent the spread of HIV 30 people at a time.

We're dealing with a generation that doesn't remember Ronald Reagan, much less the devastating AIDS body count that piled up during his administration. Mass-media education should be aimed at those who are too young to have been so inundated with the rules of safer sex that they remember the risk in the heat of the moment.

Another powerful institution that has remained dangerously silent in the face of a newly virulent AIDS epidemic is the black church. New statistics confirm a trend in the making for years: African Americans, who make up 12 percent of the population, account for more than 50 percent of the estimated 40,000 new HIV infections in the last year.

Dr. Helene Gayle, the African-American head of the AIDS task force at the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, has laid a good deal of the blame for this increase on the homophobia that tells young black men struggling with their sexuality that they must have (unprotected) sex with women to prove their manhood.

The black church has often played a pivotal role rallying the African-American community to respond to threats like poverty and Jim Crow. But only recently have black church leaders found their voice on the incursion of HIV and AIDS into their community, and their pews, but homophobia is not a word that crosses their lips.

Most black church leaders talk about AIDS as if infection occurs by immaculate conception, not by African American men who have sex with other men, whether or not they self-identify as gay.

To their credit, very few black religious

leaders outside the Nation of Islam actively condemn homosexuality or exclude gay parishioners. On the other hand, silence = death holds as true for African-American churches that ignore their black gay brothers as it does for white politicians who oppose sex education in schools.

Where have all the activists gone? Many of those not locked in a 'flat Earth' debate about whether HIV causes AIDS have been co-opted by corporate donations.

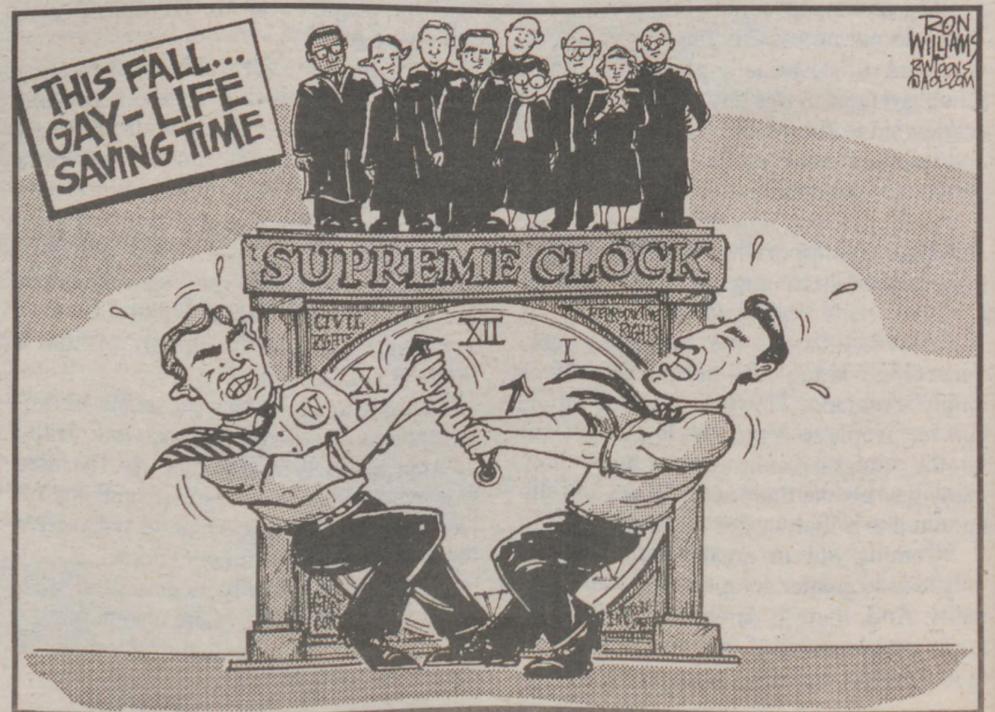
Most AIDS specialists—it's getting harder and harder to call them activists anymore—treat these religious leaders with kid gloves, unwilling to call them on their homophobia and the toll it carries with it. Thus far at least, this campaign of loving the black church into effectively dealing with homophobia as a root cause of HIV infection is not bearing significant fruit.

So where are all the AIDS activists—the kind who called to task these powerful institutions and their inadequate response to the changing face of AIDS?

Some are engaged in an irrelevant "flat Earth" debate about whether HIV causes AIDS, too trapped in their anti-establishment anger to tackle the real battle for effective AIDS prevention.

And others, those not yet co-opted by the strings that come with five and six-figure corporate donations—continue to sit this one out.

In the meantime, we are treated to the bizarre spectacle of watching our nation's most powerful health policy officials talk as if they're on the outside, unable to bring safer sex education into the schools and needle exchange programs into the streets.





VIEWPOINT

Coming out isn't a one-time-only event

by J. VANASCO

"I just don't want it to seem queer," says the consultant, pointing at an image in the brochure.

"Right," says my colleague, "and that one just seems too gay."

Neither one, of course, are actually referring to homosexuality. They mean strange—or really, they mean wrong. This picture, they are saying, doesn't fit here. It's out of place.

Here I am myself out of place, in a position I thought I'd never be in again—working in a conservative office at a conservative university.

The consultant, actually a cool, artsy type herself, says "queer" a few more times. Each time I catch my breath. It is a little like a slap.

At "too gay", another colleague, a friend who knows I am a lesbian, catches my eye than quickly looks away. It is clear she is following my lead—I don't say anything and neither does she.

I can't concentrate. I'm thinking about whether I'm being too sensitive. Using "gay" to mean strange is clearly a slur; gay's other meaning is happy, not "out of place." I know I will talk with my colleague afterwards.

"Queer," on the other hand, does mean unconventional, strange, deviating from the normal. Yes, it is also a derogatory (or prideful, depending on who's

using it) word for gays and lesbians, but since she's not referring to a homo-specific thing, shouldn't I just let it go?

As my friend said later, "she was using it in the original sense, I thought."

When I do research later, I find out something interesting: "queer" has meant "homosexual" since the 1920s in the U.S. and possibly since the eighteenth century in Europe. It is not a new meaning of the word at all. But there are still the attendant worries.

The consultant seems like she would be fine with my sexual orientation, but what if she isn't? We will be working closely together for at least the next year—what if I damage our relationship by bringing this up?

Oh well, I decide.

If it's making me uncomfortable I need to say something, because otherwise our relationship is already damaged. This is the kind of choice we all face, every day. We may have been out for five years, for 10, for 45 and yet we still find ourselves needing to perpetually come out to new people in new situations.

In an ideal world, we'd only need to come out in positive circumstances. When telling someone we like about our impending union, for example, or when talking to the nice woman on the bus about our children.

But all too often we need to come out because someone says something that

puts our back up. Something that demeans us. Something that makes us feel a little more endangered and a little less safe.

For me, it was the use of the word "queer" to mean something that is strange. Queer is so identified with the gay and lesbian community at this point that it is no longer possible to casually use it to mean "odd," just as it is no longer possible to use "gay" as simply meaning happy.

In either case, there are undertones of homosexuality, whether intentional or not.

Using "queer" casually in a negative context just reinforces society's view of gays and lesbians as odd, strange and out of place. Sometimes, we let peer pressure or internal pressure force us into believing that we are too sensitive.

That a word someone is using or a joke someone is telling must be all right if no one else notices. We don't want to seem like we're on the fringes. We don't want to acknowledge that we might not belong.

That's why National Coming Out Day, Oct. 11, is so important. We don't need to come out to everyone we meet on that day—or anyone at all.

But we do need to take the time to reflect about when we have let ourselves and our community down by not acknowledging we are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered.

When have we laughed uneasily at bigoted jokes? When have we let ourselves be uncomfortable because we don't want to cause others discomfort? When have we let our fears prevent us from feeling our strength and courage?

When have we underestimated straight people, assuming they won't be sympathetic if we point out to them that they have hurt us? The meeting is ending, and I have a split second to decide what to do.

I pull the consultant aside. My heart is pounding.

"It makes me uncomfortable when you use queer in a negative context," I tell her. "I'm a lesbian. I know you don't mean it that way, but it feels like a slur."

She is horrified. "Oh, I'm so sorry," she says twice. "I'm glad you felt comfortable telling me."

She does not say, "Some of my best friends are gay." She does not say, "Well, I just meant queer-strange." She handles it, in fact, exactly right. I feel new and whole.

It is never easy to come out. But when we do, even in small ways, we make people think, and think again.

National Coming Out Day is a reminder, but it is more than that—it is an imperative.

Contact Jennifer Vanasco at vanasco@chicagofreepress.com

Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel

Exodus says Paulk lied about visit to gay bar

> Continued from Page 1
ment released Tuesday.

The controversy over Paulk erupted on the night of Sept. 19, when the ex-gay leader was confronted and photographed by activists with the Human Rights Campaign, a gay rights group, while patronizing Mr. P's, a gay bar in the heavily gay DuPont Circle neighborhood of Washington, D.C.

According to Exodus officials, Paulk's claim of ignorance regarding the nature of the bar was untrue. Trying to explain the visit as a coincidence, Paulk told the *Voice* at the time that he "did not know Mr. P's was a gay bar" and was only searching for a bathroom.

Davies said Paulk will now enter a "probationary status." He will retain a board position with Exodus, but will be stripped of voting rights and will not be allowed to attend board meetings.

Retaining even that board position, according to Davies, will require a review every three months, as well as a list of undisclosed requirements.

"These criteria are not being made public," Davies said. "They will ensure that John is given appropriate accountability and support as he moves through a period of restoration."

In taking the action, Davies stood by one of Paulk's other primary claims, that he was not seeking an intimate encounter.

"I personally, based on my years of experience with John, do not believe he was in that bar looking for sex with another man," Davies told the *Voice*.

We believe that John's actions—to spend time socializing in a gay bar, and then to mislead both the public and Exodus leaders—merit some form of disciplinary action.

—Bob Davies,
Exodus International,
North America director

Darryl Herschaft, one of two activists who confronted Paulk inside the gay bar, told the *Voice* he observed Paulk inside Mr. P's for "at least 40 minutes" during which time the ex-gay leader socialized with a number of men, including "speaking intimately with one man."

In a separate letter explaining the disciplinary action to Exodus board members, Davies said Paulk "is willing to seek godly counsel in

analyzing what brought him to this point... He is also willing to submit himself to appropriate accountability to ensure that he does not succumb to similar behavior in the future."

Davies also said in his letter to the board that he hoped "the coming months will be a time of helpful introspection as Exodus leaders examine their own vulnerabilities to temptation."

In addition to serving as chair of Exodus, Paulk is "manager of homosexuality and gender issues" at Focus on the Family, a conservative ministry based in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Tom Minnery, that group's vice president of public policy, told the *Colorado Springs Gazette* that Paulk used "extraordinarily bad judgment." He did not say whether any disciplinary action had been taken, but confirmed that Paulk still holds his position.

Paulk found national fame when *Newsweek* featured him and his wife Anne, an ex-lesbian, in a 1998 cover feature on ex-



John Paulk was photographed by activists from the Human Rights Campaign who recognized the ex-gay group leader at a gay bar in Washington, D.C. last month.

gays. Paulk is the author of "Not Afraid to Change: The Remarkable Story of How One Man Overcame Homosexuality." The Paulks were also featured in a "60 Minutes" report on the ex-gay movement.

Paulk isn't the first Exodus member whose actions raised questions about the validity of the group's message. Exodus was just three years old when, in 1979, two of its founders—Gary Cooper and Michael Bussee—left their wives for each other. The men remained together until Cooper died of AIDS several years ago.

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Teen says Covenant House knew she had nowhere to go when ejected

> Continued from Page 1

(Robinson) told me it was too late to get my physical done and that I had to leave."

Robinson knew she had nowhere to go, Dita says.

Referring to Dita as "he," Robinson said, "There was no documentation of a complete physical. That's all we require. He wasn't in compliance."

Robinson added that "he wanted to wear a dress."

Dita says she was consistently referred to as "he" when she was at Covenant House and throughout Robinson's Voice interview, she referred to Dita as "he."

Robinson said Dita was told that it was a sensitive issue that needed to be addressed, referring to the transgender issue. Robinson said Dita was told "he needed to be patient and give us an opportunity to address his needs."

In the meantime, however, Robinson said Dita was told she could not wear a dress. "He was still feminine looking and we allowed it," she added.

The big problem for Dita is that she has progressed in her transition from male to female and considers herself a female. She felt pretty much the same in February, but is no longer willing to dress as a man.

"There is no doubt in my mind that I'm a woman," said Dita.

The Voice contacted Covenant House's

corporate administration in New York and spoke with Denise Shaw, assistant director of the Nine-Line. Shaw said she was somewhat familiar with the incident and that they were looking into what actually happened.

Shaw said that it was her understanding that Dita did not show up for a medical assessment. She confirmed that it is the policy of Covenant House nationwide to accept anyone regardless of sexual orientation, and that includes the transgendered.

According to Shaw, even though Houston's Covenant House has no separate accommodations for the transgendered, they should still admit a transgender person and that no client should be ejected unless they have somewhere else to go.

Dita insists that Robinson and other Covenant House staff knew she had nowhere else to go when they asked her to leave on Sept. 27. And indeed she didn't.

However, Dita got lucky after her dismissal from Covenant House. She found Brenda Thomas, founder of Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous.

Thomas, along with several members of that group, rallied to help Dita find somewhere to stay. They are also helping Dita navigate through the red tape to get some help from the system.

Thomas is championing Dita and has made calls to Covenant House in Houston and New York and has spoken with State

Rep. Debra Danburg and Houston City Councilwoman, Annise Parker.

Thomas said that in one of her calls to Covenant House Houston about Dita, she spoke with a staff member who wished to remain anonymous.

"She told me that she was glad this issue was getting some attention and that the issue had been a problem for some time," said Thomas.

Thomas said, and Covenant House's Robinson confirmed this, that another transgender sought refuge at Covenant House "not too long ago." That person was a female-to-male transgender. According to Thomas, this person had a manner that was "completely masculine." However, he was made to wear a dress.

Thomas said that the policies of Covenant House Houston should be closely examined to see if that they correctly address gay, lesbians and the transgendered.

As for Dita, she is staying temporarily with a straight person who has opened up her home and heart to Dita.

Dita said she wants to get her GED and eventually go to college to get a law degree.

"I want to be a lawyer to help other transgenders in trouble," says Dita.

And the other thing she most wants? To have totally completed her transformation to a woman by the time she's 30, so there will be no mistake in the future.



TERRY SULLIVAN PHOTO

Chanel Dita was asked to leave Covenant House Houston last month. She claims officials there knew she had no place to stay when she was kicked out of the shelter. Since being ejected, Dita has found friendship and assistance among Houston's transgender community. She has found temporarily shelter with a straight individual in Houston and has joined a local transgender support group.

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Ruling on exec order case expected within three to six months

➤ Continued from Page 5

In 1999, the 14th Court of Appeals affirmed the district judge's rulings.

Now, the lawsuit is on hold pending a decision on whether either of the men have the right to sue.

Both sides claim the oral arguments before Texas' highest court went well.

"The questions from the court seemed that the court may be skeptical of Hotze's claim for standing based on the referendum," said city attorney Judy Hatfield, who argued for the city before the court.

The case was heard in Houston while the Texas Supreme Court was visiting the South Texas College of Law.

"The court questioned [Hotze's and Todd's lawyer] Allen Parker closely about whether Todd has a claim at this time because he had not asked the mayor to put an item on the agenda so the council could vote on the matter of the sexual orientation nondiscrimination ordinance," she said.

Hatfield, who said the hearings went well overall, said she was reluctant to talk further about them since the case is still pending.

A ruling from the court could come within three to six months.

Parker, who argued the case before the

court on behalf of Hotze and Todd, was less reluctant to speak about the hearing, however.

"I thought it went well for Mr. Hotze and Mr. Todd," he said.

Parker is president of the Texas Justice Foundation, a group that purports to provide free legal council for landmark cases involving limited government, free markets, private property and parental rights.

"The issue was if the mayor of Houston exceeds his authority, who has standing to sue?" he said.

Parker argued that Hotze has standing because he was a leading voice in opposition to the sexual orientation nondiscrimination ordinance when it failed to pass the 1985 referendum.

The law requires that a person have a "particularized injury" to be able to get standing, Parker said, and Hotze was injured when the mayor's executive order effectively went against his work that led to the failure of the referendum.

"The city attorney conceded that if the mayor had [issued the executive order] six months after the referendum, Mr. Hotze would have had standing," Parker said. "It had been 13 years, but to me, the amount of time has no impact."

The court questioned [Hotze's and Todd's lawyer] Allen Parker closely about whether Todd has a claim at this time because he had not asked the mayor to put an item on the agenda so the council could vote on the matter of the sexual orientation nondiscrimination ordinance.

—Judy Hatfield,
city attorney

Parker said the city's charter states that if a citizen referendum passes, it cannot be undone except by the people of the city in another referendum. But it is unclear if that applies in this circumstance since the mayor's order goes in opposition to a referendum that did not pass. And that referen-

dum was held 13 years before the order.

The Texas Supreme Court agreed in late August to hear the standing issues.

At that time, openly lesbian City Councilwoman Annise Parker said she was glad the case was finally progressing.

"It's about damn time," she said. "If Mr. Todd and Mr. Hotze are telling the truth and really trying to establish the limits of the mayor's power and not taking a backhanded swipe at gay city employees, the issue needs to be decided."

Hotze and Todd claim the suit revolved around an illegal order by the mayor and should not be considered a case about gay rights.

Parker said she would like the council to take action on the issue so that a permanent nondiscrimination policy could be enacted that would not expire when the mayor leaves office.

In 1979, Mayor Jim McConn signed an executive order similar to Brown's, but it expired when he left office. Mayor Kathy Whitmire, who succeeded McConn, did not renew the order.

Parker said city administrators have asked her to refrain from presenting the issue to the council until the pending case is settled.

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Political activist fighting voter apathy in GLBT community

> Continued from Page 5

the two highly Republican Congressional districts on the West Side of the county," he said. "I doubt they have a chance, and I think of them as doing the Lord's work, but think how satisfying it would be to vote against Tom Delay."

Democrat Jo Ann Matrangola is running against Delay, and Bagby said "I don't know her stand on gay issues, but she must be better than Delay."

Democrat Jeff Sell, the candidate for the seat formerly held by Bill Archer, has been endorsed by GLPC. Two Republicans sought and received the GLPC-PAC endorsement, Bagby said. They are Daniel Yela, a candidate for Constable, Precinct 2, and John

Buchanan, an incumbent Harris County School Trustee.

Martin is worried that a huge Republican turnout "will be devastating to 'down-ballot' races. These people don't vote regularly and don't keep up, so they vote a straight Republican ticket.

"I think all Democrats are worried," he said.

Bagby is concerned about Congressman Ken Bentsen's re-election.

"He is a solid vote on gay issues, though not a leader, and his district is almost split

evenly between Democrats and Republicans.

Republican Marian Coleman is worried enough about Democrat State Rep. Debra Danburg's re-election campaign to volunteer in the campaign.

"Debra always worries, but this year, it's rational. I'm calling my list of Republican primary voters to be sure they know to vote for her, and I'm getting positive response," Coleman says.

"Our challenge is to bust apathy at the other end," Martin says. "All politics is local, and what these candidates need to do is find their supporters and get them to go vote."

Sue Schechter, chair of the Harris County Democratic Party, says the current batch of Democratic candidates can make an impact in the GLBT community.

"We have some local candidates who can make a real difference. To vote for the Republican candidate for District Attorney is to vote for more of the same. The District Attorney voted to appeal the sodomy ruling, and the racial problems in that office are never ending. Jim Dougherty, the Democrat, would make a huge difference in the office. He's fair, and is for balance and equal justice."

Schechter isn't predicting a landslide for George W. Bush in the presidential race.

"I don't believe it at all," she says. "Based on the response we're getting and the people who are calling in, I think we have a chance to win Harris County and maybe the state. The response is much more positive than it was in 1996."

I am concerned that if the Democrats lose the Texas House, redistricting will cost us any gains we have made for at least 10 years.
—Grant Martin, political consultant

Schechter says she's even hearing from Republicans who won't be voting for Bush.

"They don't think he's qualified to be president. Yes, it's O.K. for him to be governor in a weak governor state, but they don't want him to be president.

"If we run a competitive Gore-Leiberman campaign, and we are, Bush isn't going to have coattails."

The attacks on Bush's record as governor are not hurting the local Gore campaign, Schechter says.

"Exposing Bush's record is overdue, and it's not new. The Chronicle has been doing editorials about these issues for several years."

One candidate who Martin and Bagby both support strongly in their individual capacities, is Eric Andell, the lone Democrat on both of the Courts of Appeals for the multi-county district that includes Harris County.

Andell, who routinely receives the highest rankings in Bar Association polls, must carry Harris County to win, Schechter says.

Martin says that the stakes in this election are higher than most GLBT voters know.

"Speaking personally, and not as a representative of Progressive Voters, I am concerned that if the Democrats lose the Texas House, redistricting will cost us any gains we have made for at least 10 years," he said.

Martin explains that this legislature will draw the boundaries for the Texas House and Senate and for the Texas Congressional delegation.

"Many gay-friendly legislators and members of Congress could have their districts redrawn to be unwinnable," Martin warns.



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health news

AIDS kept in check despite stopping drug treatment, small study shows

A small number of patients stopped taking their AIDS drug cocktails and still managed to keep the virus under control, researchers concluded in one of the first studies to suggest that people with HIV may not have to be on medication for the rest of their lives. The study involved eight people, all of whom began taking medication within six months of infection, before the virus had severely damaged the immune system, and had taken the drugs for between one and three years. The study's volunteers were closely monitored and checked twice a week. Five of the eight remain off the drugs, one for 11 months. Two patients chose to resume the regimen even though their viral levels remained relatively low. A third resumed the drugs because of a sharp viral load increase. The findings offer hope that the immune system can be primed to battle the virus alone. "At least in a select group of patients, one can turn the tables so that the immune system has the upper hand rather than the virus having the upper hand over the immune system," said Dr. Bruce Walker, a co-author of the study that was published in the journal *Nature*.

Gays in Britain divided over prospect of 'motherless' babies for men

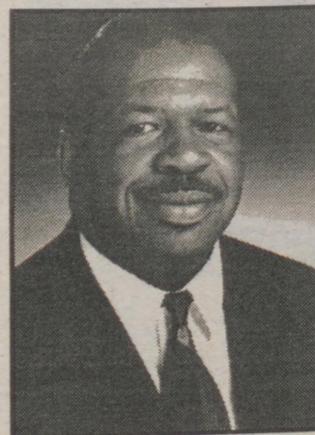
LONDON—The announcement last week that cloning techniques might make it possible for two men to provide all the genetic material needed to create a baby has elicited different reactions from British gay groups and the government, the *Independent* reported. The prospect was raised by Dr. Calum MacKellar, an Edinburgh University researcher, who said gay couples could in theory create children together using the genetic technique used to produce Dolly the sheep. "This news seems like an answer to the prayers of gay couples who want to have children," said a spokesman for the gay group Outrage! But a Stonewall spokesperson said the development would be unlikely to appeal to most gay men who, if they wanted children, had adoption, fostering or sperm donation as options open to them. "We would be surprised if gay men wanted to have children with no reference to a woman," the spokesperson said.

'More could be done' to stem complacency in war on AIDS, report says

WASHINGTON (AP)—A slowing of the AIDS epidemic has led to complacency, according to a new report that calls on the government to focus on prevention efforts and tracking infections. The report stressed the need for increased prevention programs and was critical of federal spending of \$250 million to promote abstinence "without any evidence that this approach is effective." Instead, the report said, comprehensive sex education and condom availability "have been shown to reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases without promoting sexual activity." It also called for a lifting of legal barriers to programs that supply clean needles to drug addicts, as HIV is often spread by needle reuse, and argued the need for a system to identify new HIV infections. Dr. Helene Gayle of the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, for which the report was prepared, described the report as "very useful and comprehensive," pointing out that it states "unequivocally that prevention works... but there is more that could and should be done."

Md. school receives \$7.3 million federal grant to improve AIDS research

BALTIMORE (AP)—The Johns Hopkins Center for AIDS Research will receive more than \$7.3 million in federal money over five years from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. The money will be used for programs that will study disease development, latent HIV infection, immune restoration and prevention, and to improve research facilities and communication systems used by researchers. "Science has helped people with AIDS live longer with the disease, but we are morally responsible for the quality of their lives," said Congressman Elijah E. Cummings, who helped Hopkins secure the grant. "We think the higher priorities are AIDS in the developing world and to prevent transmissions," said Dr. John G. Bartlett, a director of the center. "Everybody wants a cure, but it is not a realistic goal for the near future."



'We are morally responsible' for people with AIDS, says Congressman Elijah Cummings, who helped secure a \$7.3 million AIDS grant for Johns Hopkins.

Delay, not shortage, in flu vaccines expected this year, health officials say

ATLANTA—The Center for Disease Control announced that flu vaccines are not in short supply this year, but availability will be moderately delayed, CNN reported. The Food & Drug Administration said there will be approximately 75.3 million doses available in three stages between now and the end of the year. Last year, 80 to 85 million doses were produced, but only 74 million doses were used, the CDC reported. The CDC is recommending health care workers and high-risk individuals, including people with AIDS, receive the first vaccinations. Public health facilities were asked to delay their mass vaccination campaigns until November or December, as more vaccinations become available. Flu is a major cause of illness and death in the U.S. and leads on average to approximately 20,000 deaths and 110,000 hospitalizations each year, according to the CDC.



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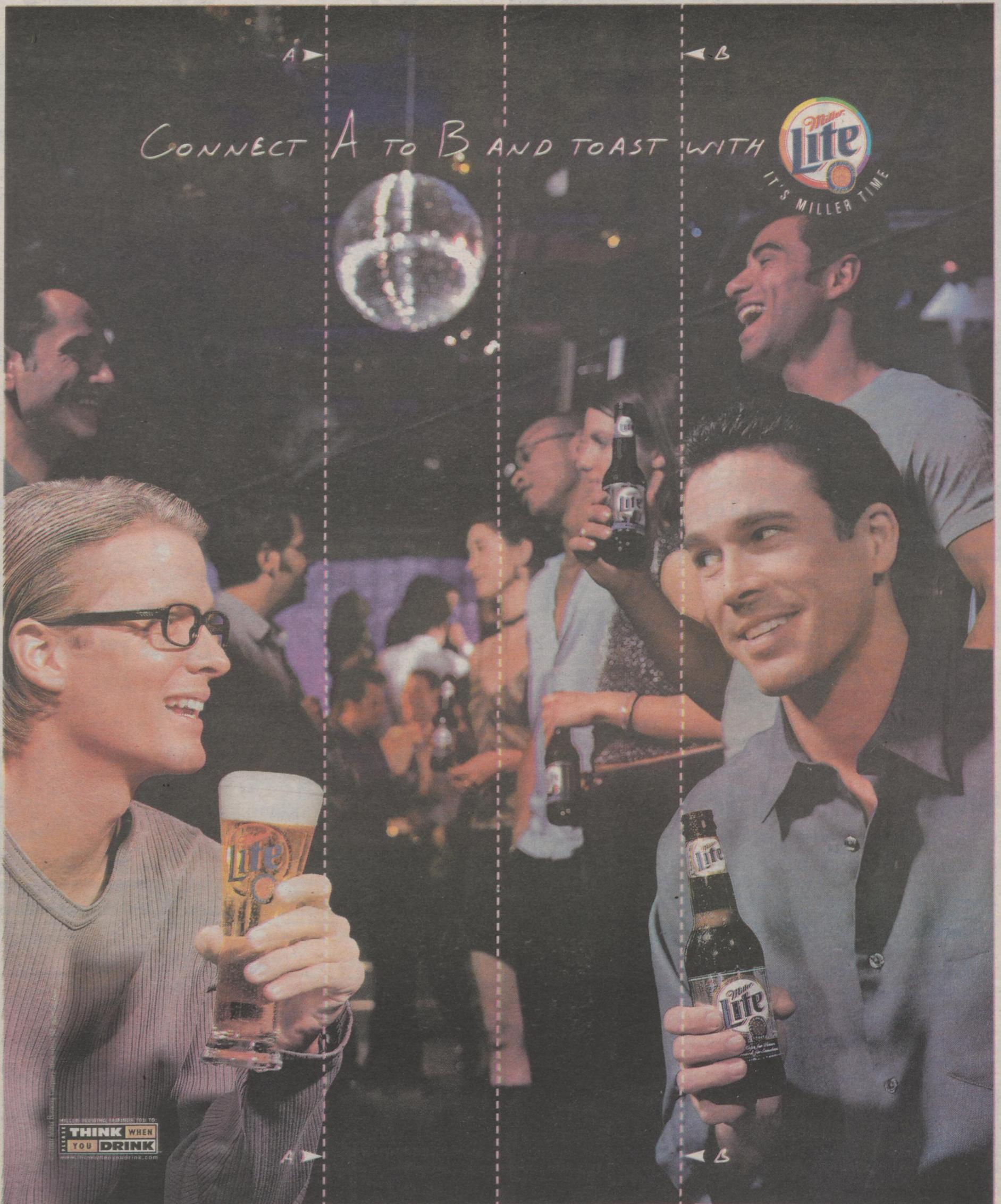
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EMPOWER

The Community
Event of the
2 Millennium



PHOTO BY: DALTON DEHART

Numerous booths and displays, plus a classic car show will be part of Empower 2000 Sunday at the George R. Brown Convention Center. On Saturday, LGBT community leaders from Texas and surrounding states will meet for the Regional Roundtable, a brainstorming session.

Regional Roundtable—bigger is better

'Meeting of the minds' of LGBT community members set for Saturday

by MARIA E. MINICUCCI

Numerous groups and organizations that comprise our vital and thriving LGBT community are preparing for and anticipating the third annual Empower event this Sunday, Oct. 8 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

Empower has traditionally and deliberately been organized just prior to National Coming Out Day on Oct. 11 to symbolize the connection between personal and political empowerment and coming out.

Coy Tow, an active member of the Greater Houston Gay And Lesbian Chamber Of Commerce has been a co-producer of Empower.

This year, Tow decided that the LGBT

communities were ready to expand and connect with LGBT organizations throughout the country. Tow's vision is to move toward a National Empower event for the purpose of unity, empowerment, sharing and exchanging resources.

A step toward implementing this vision is the Regional Roundtable which will be held on Saturday, Oct. 7, also at the George R. Brown Convention Center. Houston LGBT groups and organizations, as well as numerous other groups and organizations from Dallas, San Antonio, Austin, Louisiana and elsewhere as well have been summoned to participate in this day of brainstorming, strategizing and sharing.

"I experienced an event of this nature in New York City," Tow explained. "A few individuals were trying to get the community there to think and act in a more efficient and cooperative manner in regard to ongoing event planning and community development."

In Tow's opinion about that first gath-

ering, "the numbers that showed up there were not as important as the quality of committed leadership from various areas of the region."

For him, the goal was clear: "To provide an opportunity to begin discussions and goal setting around possible collaboration and cooperation on a regional level."

"In Houston and surrounding states, we produce incredible results in all aspects of community life," Tow said. The problem, as he sees it, is "often we produce results that could be greatly enhanced by combining our efforts, resources and ideas with other organizations, groups, or individuals."

"Funding sources for community building, health care and sponsorships are looking for cooperative efforts that maximize community synergy and increase a return on their investment."

Tow's lengthy and tireless community work has lead him to a number of observations and insights about Houston's

LGBT communities.

"I have witnessed Houston rising as a regional leader and feel that many of our events, programs and organizations have the potential to greatly assist the entire region in coming together."

Tow is looking forward to this gathering since, he claims, "we will learn many great things from the surrounding cities and states and in the process demonstrate to the rest of the country the power of cohesion, cooperation and collaboration in all aspects of community life."

Tow, representing the Greater Houston Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce and The Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center as a co-host of this event. The roundtable has been totally underwritten by the Matthews Foundation.

INFO **Regional Roundtable**
Saturday, Oct. 7, 12-4 p.m.
George R. Brown Convention Center

Empower 2000 entertainers



KATRICE

Whisper the words "soul music" and the sounds of the South come rushing to your ears. And now in the burgeoning millennium, Memphis, Tennessee offers a new siren to the list of soulful divas—

Katrice. Her debut release, *Anytime*, introduces music lovers to a fully developed artist prepared to take on the world. Katrice fares far and above just another pretty voice, composing music and lyrics to her new era R&B sound, and presenting an equal tempered mirror of the real world emotions and situations. Where so many indie soul records miss the mark in one way or another—production, songwriting, packaging—Katrice is a winner on all counts. The release of her major league debut, *Anytime*, is poised to make her the next funky diva from Memphis.



SEAN D. CARTER

Sean spends the majority of his time performing for various charity events. Although he studies opera performance at Louisiana State University, Sean prefers singing county and western. Sean won the title of Mr. Gay Texas All-American in 1998. Sean is the current Executive Director of Body Positive Wellness Clinic and manages to stay very active in the gay and lesbian community. He is the Stone Soup Chairman of the Colt 45's, President of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, member of the Imperial Court of Houston, Social Chairman of the Executive and Professional Association of Houston, and the Fabulous Boys Network. Sean is also a graduate of the Greater Houston Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce's Leading and Learning Series.

KRISTI RAE

Kristi Rae was born and raised in Texas. She studied music in a formal atmosphere that she found to be contrived so decided to make her own way. Kristi took up the guitar at 20 and taught herself how to play. Bored with the radio, she quickly began creating melodies and words of her own. Kristi's life experiences as a young woman soon manifested themselves through her music and as she grew, so did her style. Her determination not to pigeonhole herself into any particular genre is sensed in the atmosphere she creates with each of her songs. Kristi has performed on air at KPFT, and with Ron Burton at local venues such as Diverse Works, Borders, Mary Jane's, and others.



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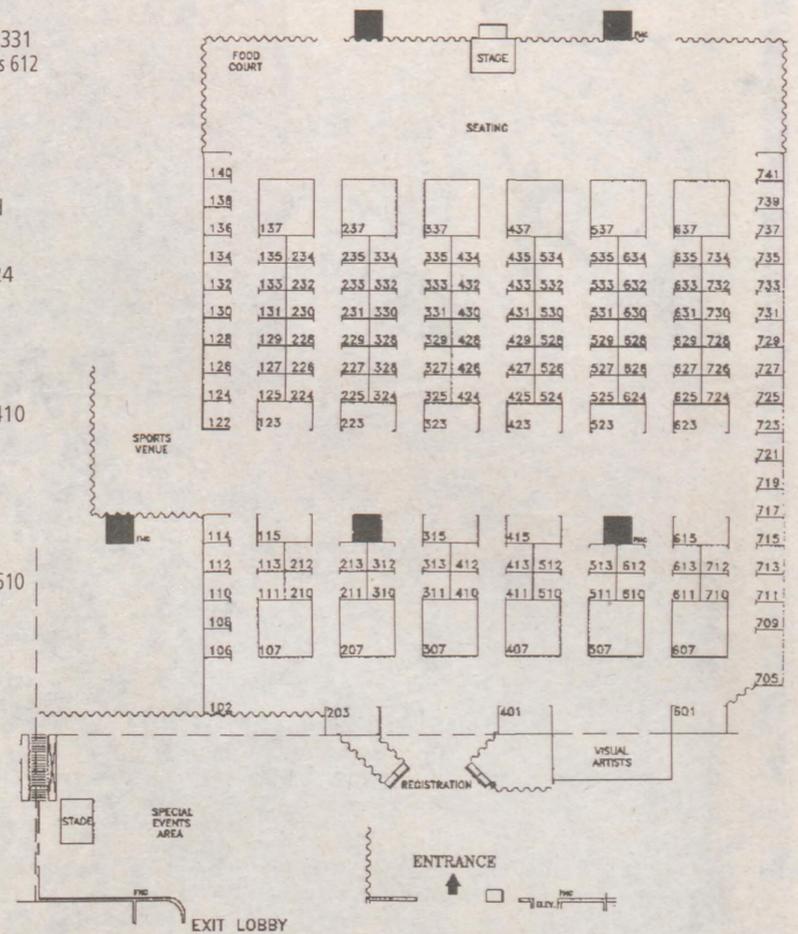
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 "THE CHAMBER" - The Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce 107
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 A Christmas Songfest 140
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 Community Gospel Church 312
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 Creative Memories 310
 Diagnostic Eye Center 223
 Edward Jones Investments - Randy Hendrick 535
 Edward Jones Investments - Juan Valdivieso 135
 Kermit Eisenhut - Artist C
 EPAH - Executive Professional Association of Houston 611
 Equiva Services 507
 Family Estate Planning 313
 Father's First/Gay Fathers of Houston 533
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 Gay & Lesbian Yellow Pages 237

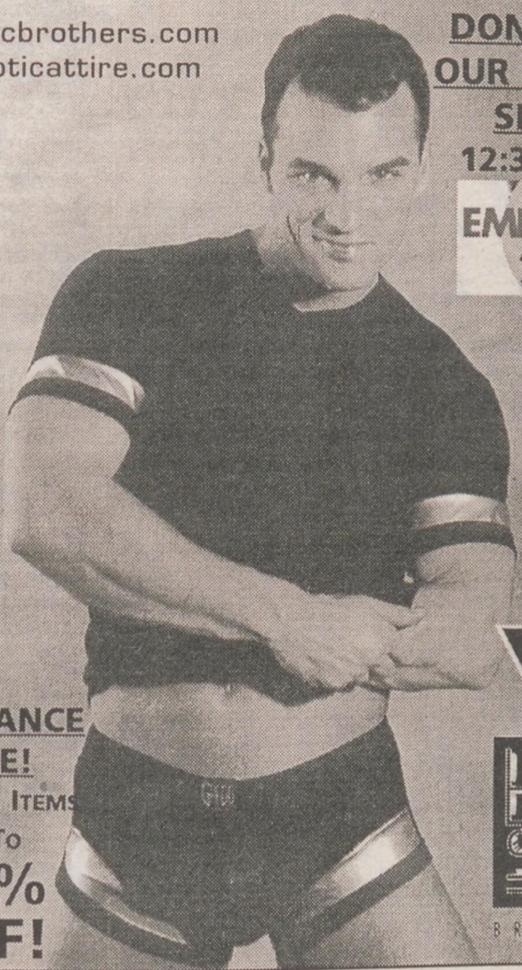
The Grand 1894 Opera House 234
 Green/White Advisors 423
 Gulf Coast Archives & Museum 717
 Halloween Magic 329
 HATCH (Houston Area Teenage Coalition of Homosexuals) 210
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 House of Coleman 437
 Houston Aeros Hockey Team 124
 Houston Black Tie Gala 211
 Houston Buyers Club 433
 Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center 625
 Houston Montrose Athletic Association 114
 Houston Voice 337
 Hubbard Financial Services, Inc. 224
 Image Cleaners 326
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 J. Roe Photography 138
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 Progressive Voters in Action/Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund 601
 Resurrection MCC 525-531
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 SCS Communications 108
 Shell Oil Company 207
 Silver Leaf Resorts, Inc. (Database Research) 401
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 SNAP - Spay Neuter Assistance Program 610
 Steven's House 427
 Stonewall Democrats 632
 Suzanne Anderson Properties 719
 Tara's Healing Tools 428
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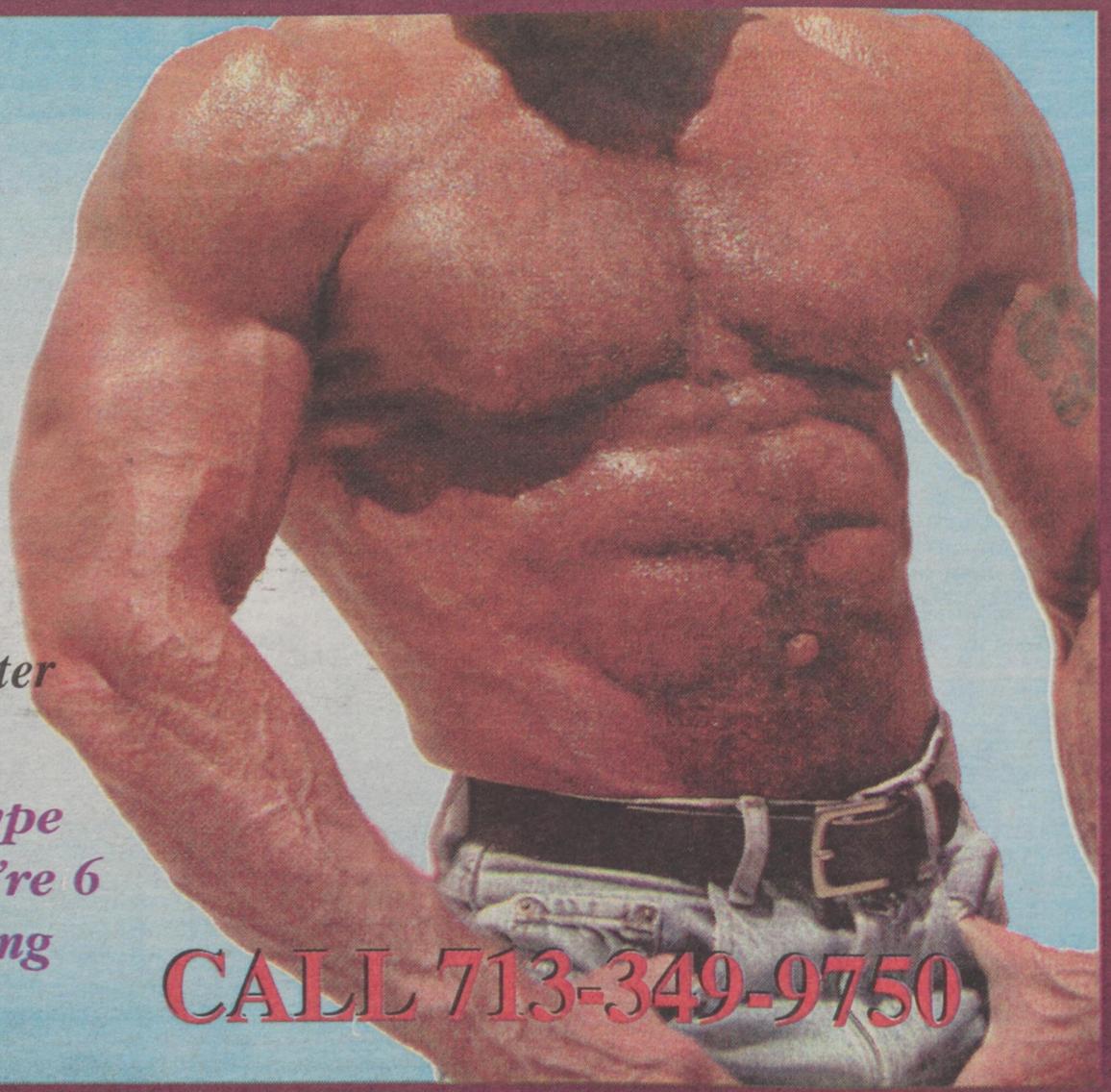
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Out on the Bayou

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HOUSTON VOICE • OCTOBER 6, 2000

Maupin bids farewell to 'City' tales, visits Galveston

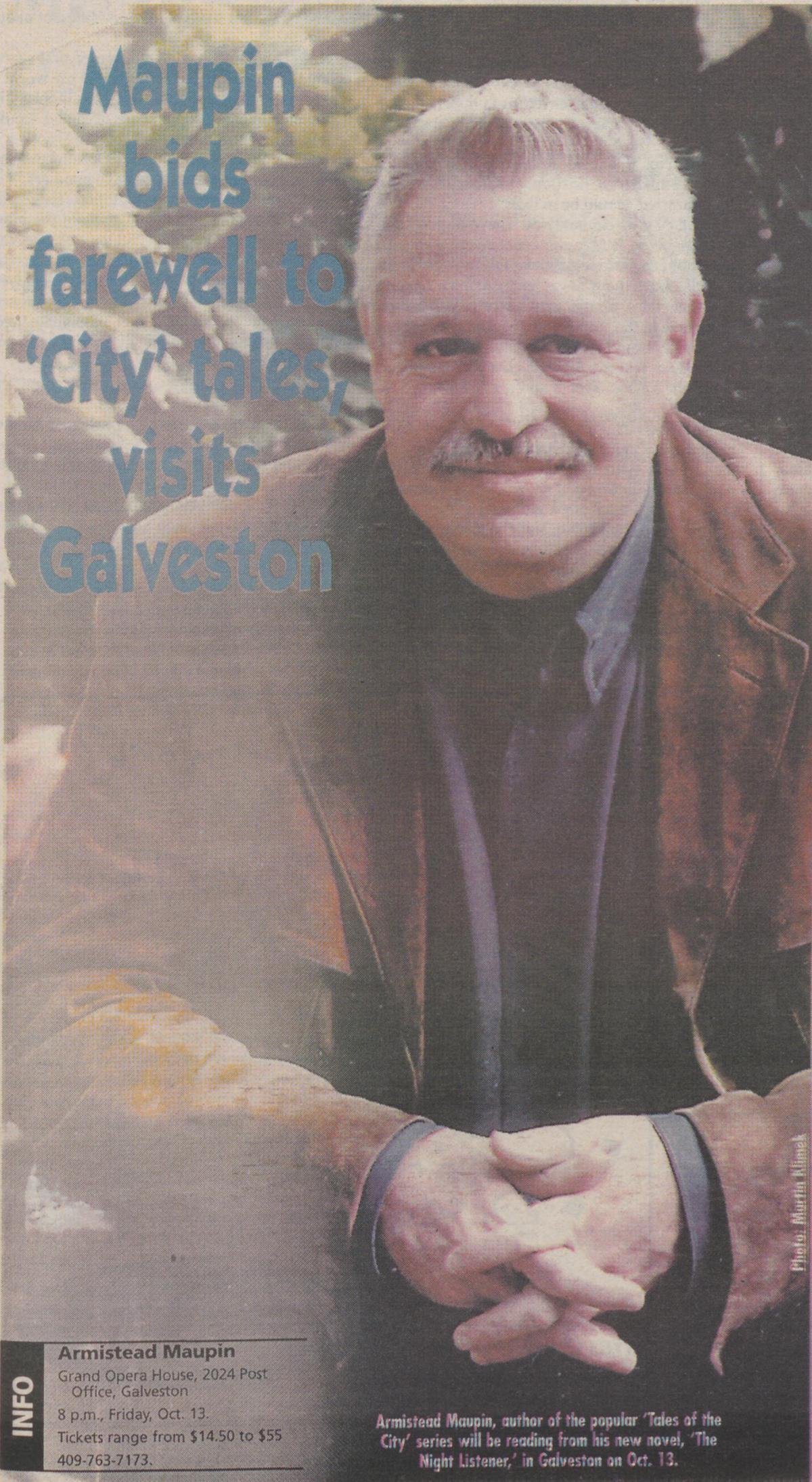


Photo: Martin Kline

Author to read from new novel 'The Night Listener'

by ELLA TYLER

THE NIGHT LISTENER, Armistead Maupin's first book in eight years, is far more serious and literary than his well-known and well-loved "Tales of the City" series. It, however, mirrors our times—though darkly—as well as Tales of the City mirrored the free-spirited '70s and '80s.

Earlier this week, Maupin took a few moments to speak with the Houston Voice by phone just as he prepared to leave San Francisco for a six-week, 19-city tour to promote his newest book, "The Night Listener."

The tour includes three stops in Texas: Austin, on Oct. 11 in Dallas, Oct. 12 in Austin and at the Grand Opera House in Galveston on Friday, Oct. 13.

Maupin is easy to listen and talk to, with a voice that doesn't reveal his Southern origins, except, perhaps, by its very pleasantness.

Houston Voice: What will you be doing in Galveston?

Armistead Maupin: I will read a self-contained section of "The Night Listener" and then take questions from the audience. The audience chat is always fun.

HoVo: What do you want to say about "The Night Listener?"

AM: What I tried to do with "Night Listener" is to write a thriller of the heart, to delve deeply into its mysteries. The Hitchcock film "Vertigo" is my favorite work of art—it's about someone who is lost in love and obsession who is forced to examine life.

HOVO: Sort of like when the fantasy fails?

AM: Yes, when all certainty is lost, feelings finally come to the fore. It was very hard to write, because it drew in part, and I emphasize "in part" from my breakup with Terry Anderson.

HOVO: Do friends ever tell you "Don't put this in a book.?"

AM: As personal as Night Listener is, I've tried not to violate confidences. I warn people that I manipulate facts to my own ends—to get at the truth of the heart. There's no real story. It's the truth of the readers life, not of my own life.

More people want to know who the characters are. The characters who are most like Terry and me are DeDe and D'orothea in "Significant Others."

It's the one that drew gay women into the stable. They loved the descriptions of the women's music festival cult. In "Maybe the Moon" the character is a Jewish, heterosexual female dwarf, so she's the perfect disguise for me. I can say all kinds of things.

I wonder if people came up to Charles Dickens and asked, "But who is the real Mr. Macawber?" My goal is to create characters that will survive beyond our lifetimes, mine at least.

HOVO: "Night Listener" first came out as an Internet Radio Serial. How did that do?

AM: It is the first novel to be serialized in audio form and it went well. People were responding like they did to the radio serials in '40s and '50s and were upset when they couldn't stream the next one. It's been good promotion for the novel.

HOVO: What do you think of the Internet?

AM: I came late to it, but I love it. It's like a tribal campfire, I'm sorry it took me so long to come to. We come to these things in our own time. I'm sorry it took me so long to come out.

HOVO: You seem attached to the serial form.

AM: Oh, I am. Wilke Collins used to say, "Make 'em cry, make 'em laugh, make 'em wait. It reminds me of how much fun it was to read when I was 8.

> Continued on Page 22

INFO

Armistead Maupin

Grand Opera House, 2024 Post Office, Galveston

8 p.m., Friday, Oct. 13.

Tickets range from \$14.50 to \$55

409-763-7173.

Armistead Maupin, author of the popular 'Tales of the City' series will be reading from his new novel, 'The Night Listener,' in Galveston on Oct. 13.

Bayou Calendar

DragonShadow

Two partners, two Houston artists, one show. John Duncan and Jim Jennings, together for more than 20 years, and both long-term AIDS survivors, exhibit their photography, watercolors, drawings and bronze sculpture under their collective name DragonShadow. Nature and erotica are given their expressive treatment. Picture perfect.

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Oct. 8
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'Tales of the City' character in Maupin's new novel

> Continued from Page 21

HOVO: What did you read?

AM: The Hardy Boys. That is one place I depart from Franklin Dixon. Of course there were about 15 people writing them. And Carolyn Keene (Nancy Drew) too.

HOVO: Will you ever return to the characters of 28 Barbary Lane from your "Tales of the City" series?

AM: No. If I were absolutely desperate for money, I might do Christmas at Barbary Lane, but the characters would be in their '40s and '50s and have an 80-year-old landlady. They wouldn't still be living there. People want to reinvent their own past, but I can't do it for them. I can't even do for myself. But, they have just finished filming "Further Tales of the City," which will be on Showtime in the spring and "Night Listener" has a character from Tales of the City.

HOVO: Yes, it's Anna, DeDe and D'orthea's child. She's a bookkeeper and is so grown up and serious...

AM: She's 23. When I was in Montreal working on the filming of "Further Tales," I became fast friends with the Asian child who played Anna at age 5. She is a very serious, grown-up child. She has thick black glasses that they wanted to lose, but I said "No, No! The glasses are perfect." It was interesting to work with the character as a grown-up and as a child. Sort of eerie to see her as two different roles.

HOVO: Are you from the South?

AM: Yes, it's one thing I share with Gabriel Noone.

HOVO: What do you think is different about the South?

AM: The South has a tradition of oral storytelling that is unequaled anywhere in the world. I was raised in that tradition, and even though I'm telling stories that people never dreamed would be told, I'm continuing it.

HOVO: When I interviewed Dorothy Allison she said, "For one thing, they have manners."

AM: And she's from the South too. That's one thing I like about the South. I ridicule the more primitive political positions, but have always valued the courtesy and kindness of the people themselves. When I was in Montreal, I enjoyed the French Canadian. They have the same reverence for etiquette, but are a sexy, passionate, free-wheeling people. You could say they are "Horny and Corny."

HOVO: What do you miss most about the South?

AM: The beaches. There's a particular kind of warm southern night that you can smell the gardenias and run into the water without feeling the cold. It was so much a part of my childhood, I return there in memory. I should just rent a house on one of the sea isles.

HOVO: Or at least ride the Galveston ferry.

AM: I love the fog and cool weather of San Francisco, but miss the pleasant release of warm weather.

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Eating Out

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Meat & potatoes place

PJ's Sports Bar does steak night right

by KATHREEN LEE

Even though I associate sports bars with fratty boys and other boorish pockets of society, I agreed to review PJ's Sports Bar at the persistent insistence of a friend who is a weekly regular at the establishment. Considering that my friend is neither boorish nor fratty, I was rather curious to see what about the place lured him.

PJ's was not overrun with the college baseball-cap-donned frat boys that I had envisioned, but with men. Yes, real men. These are the "salt of the earth" manly men who like their beers cold and bounteous, their steaks thick and rare, and their women just there.

Out in the patio at a table to our right, race car drivers or pit crew mechanics, no doubt from the recent Texaco Havoline Grand Prix, were wolfing down their dinners and washing it down with pitchers of beer with a couple of stiletto-heel-clad buxom trophy girls wedged in between them.

At their departure, a couple of other men with forearms the girth of Sequoias shouted out to them, "Thank you, girls!" and "God bless you, girls!" At that, the owner, who happens to be named PJ, walked over to our table, excused himself for being "tacky" and said to the two hooting men, "You don't have to bless them. God already has." Insert hearty beer-belly-bobbing laughter here.

While I was there, I walked through the billowing smoky haze of the main bar room on the first floor on my way to the restroom upstairs. The miasma was so thick that the flickering lights from the television set above the bar featuring Thursday night's football game sent a ghostly blue pall throughout the bar.

In that brief transitory moment as I traversed through the mist, my clothes managed to absorb enough cigarette odor to prompt my drycleaner the following day to ask me whether or not I was a chain smoker.

It was not until our food was served that I really understood my friend's inexplicable attraction to PJ's. Every Thursday evening from 5:30 to 10 o'clock, PJ's offers get dinner for two which includes two steaks, two baked potatoes, a bowl of salad, and a pitcher of beer for \$20. And the steaks are not the minuscule sissy steaks found overpriced in classier establishments, but thick juicy hunks of meat that any truck driver would call a filling meal.

On those Thursday Steak Nites at PJ's Sports Bar, PJ sets up a number of charcoal grills on the patio overlooking West Gray and grills up dozens of steaks to the customers' liking.

My request for well-done steaks resulted in two monster slices of meat splashed with a garlic pepper Canadian seasoning and cooked to perfection. PJ not only managed to

cook the meat through without leaving any red, but he also managed to preserve all the natural juices and keep the meat tender and succulent.

I have yet to see any other restaurant or

My request for well-done steaks resulted in two monster slices of meat splashed with a garlic pepper Canadian seasoning and cooked to perfection. PJ not only managed to cook the meat through without leaving any red, but he also managed to preserve all the natural juices and keep the meat tender and succulent.

sports bar handle a well-done steak with such finesse. The trimmings for the huge Idaho baked potato served with your meal—sour cream, cheese, bacon bits—are served up in a Tupperware carry-tray which travels from picnic table to picnic table.

What sets PJ's apart from any other Sports Bar is simply that it serves food. What sets PJ's apart from any other restaurant is that it actually serves great food, at great prices, without the pretense and frills.

It's a meat and potatoes place, literally, where you pay for the real substance and not the superfluties. PJ's caters to the hungry and down-to-earth crowd who like their good eatin' cheap and in large quantities.

If you go looking for PJ's on Thursday night, look for the stream of charcoal smoke wafting out from a patio.



FOOD FILE

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On Stage

THEATER REVIEW

Secrets at the table

by D.L. GROOVER

Stasis: Impaired motion, quiescence, stagnation.

In David Marshall Grant's appealing comedy/drama, *SNAKEBIT*, all four characters have hit that all-too-common road block of life—the forked road. It is time for choices; time to decide which path to take. It's time for reassessment, for the past to come screaming back into the present. It's time to do something, to grow up again.

Michael (Chris Jimmerson) is moving out of his Los Angeles bungalow to a less-expensive apartment in Glendale because he's been fired from his job as a social worker. He took too much interest in his young client and bucked the system.

His caring and sympathy for the abused little girl went over the line of his job description and he's now out. He has also just lost his boyfriend to someone much younger. "I can't move. I can't sleep," he tells us right at the beginning.

While this personal trauma unfolds, another takes shape. Michael's best friends, Jonathon and Jennifer (Jim Lawrence and Laura Chapman) are visiting while Jonathon attempts to spark his Hollywood acting career and Jennifer desperately tries to spark their failing marriage.

Jonathon's all bluster and so self-absorbed that he doesn't see the extent of the cracks in the façade around him. Jennifer, wracked with guilt and anxiety over leaving their sickly child back home in New York, doesn't realize how suffocating she has become.

More pressures occur when the overly protective Jennifer concludes that her daughter probably has AIDS, brought about by the fleeting affair Jennifer had with Michael three months before her marriage to Jonathon.

For her peace of mind, they must get tested, without Jonathon knowing about it. "I never tell him anything," she confesses, "why should I tell him this?" Everyone is disconnected, yet bound tightly together by their past.

And then, when the trio is nicely bubbling in its own stew, who should bound in with all burners blazing but Michael's former lover's new boyfriend, Gary (Dwight Clark). His presence turns up the heat.

Under pretext of renting the apartment, he's really there to scope out the competition. He's like a new map for them. Once he connects to Michael, new routes open up for all.

Written by actor David Marshall Grant, nominated for a Tony for his performance in the original production of "Angels in America," this first play of his has wit and insight, humor and poignancy, sympathy for all characters, and meaty roles for the actors.

The reversals that he sets up are surprising and apt, and the camaraderie of the three old friends see-saws with equal amounts of love and hate between them, just like in real life.

Chris Jimmerson has a lanky diffidence as Michael. He looks like a former dancer, which is what Michael's character had been in NYC. His quiet pools of reserve work to his advantage as the play progresses and his inertia breaks to the surface, finally freeing him.

As Jennifer, Laura Chapman supplies all the deep-seated angst and frustration of someone who's "run out of forgiveness" for her husband, yet can still whisper loving advice to him and correctly button up his shirt after the emotional climax of the play.

Although there are a few too many director's touches that impede the rhythm and flow of certain scenes (does everyone have to check out his butt in a handheld mirror?), "Snakebit" moves with the grace of a sidewinder thanks to the sure, heartfelt writing and tight-knit ensemble acting.

INFO

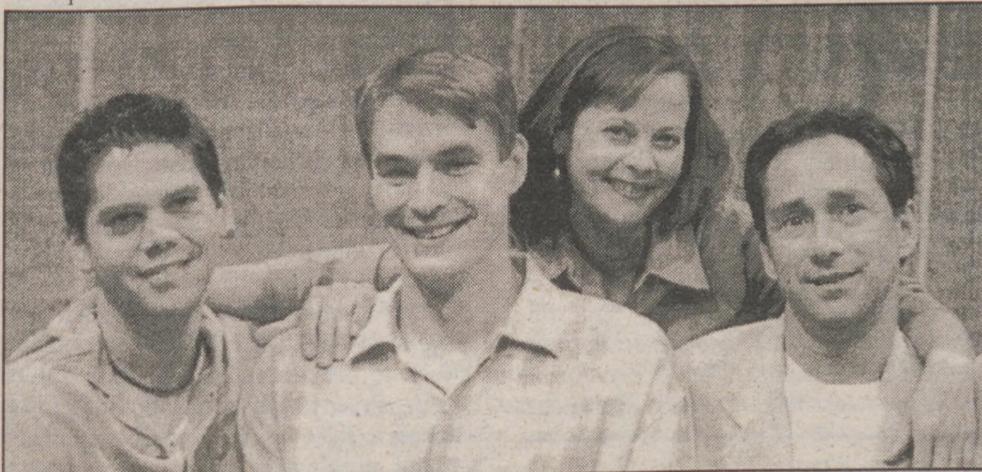
Snakebit

by David Marshall Grant

Through this weekend Ashland St.

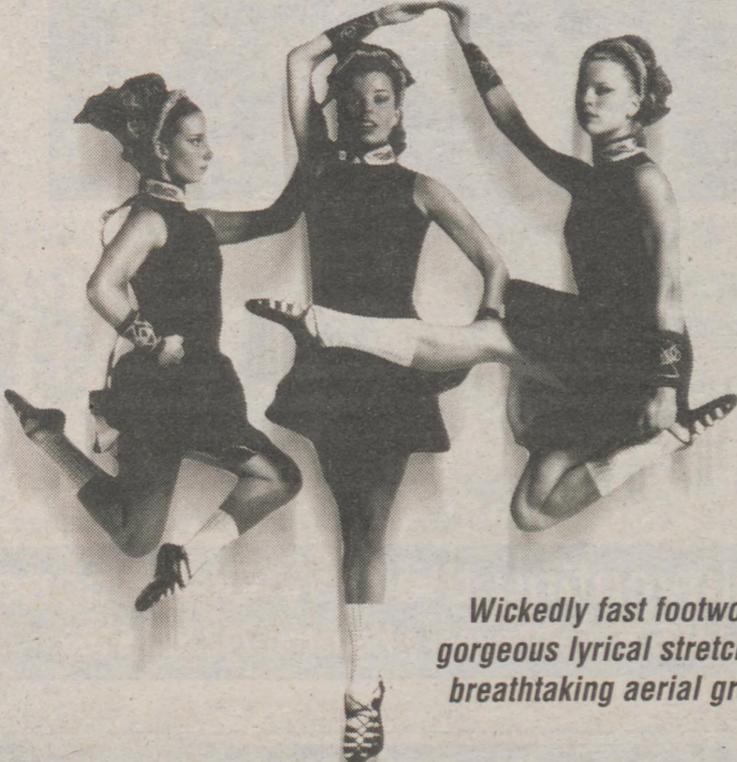
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Dwight Clark, Chris Jimmerson, Laura Chapman and Jim Lawrence grapple with life's choices in 'Snakebit,' playing through Oct. 7 at Ashland Street Theatre.


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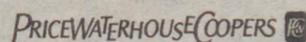
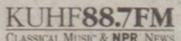
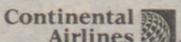
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out in music

by MARGARET COBLE

For love of good pop

Stephin Fields is as witty and wry as ever with his latest multi-artist effort



Magnetic Fields main man Stephan Merritt's side project The 6ths are back with their latest release.

It's an obvious, oft-spoken statement about one of the music industry's most compelling, openly gay, alternative-pop composers, but one that bears repeating: Stephan Merritt is nothing if not prolific.

Last year's three-disc opus "69 Love Songs," produced under one of his many aliases, the Magnetic Fields, earned him universal critical praise and the title "the Cole Porter of his generation," not to mention top spots on all of the major music publications' end-of-year polls.

A year later, he's returned with another full album's worth of ingenious new material by his side project THE 6THS, which showcases his exquisite songwriting and production talents via the vocal stylings of an odd assortment of guest singers.

HYACINTHS AND THISTLES (Merge Records), The 6ths' sophomore effort, is again built upon the basic premise that Merritt, as accomplished as he is as a multi-instrumentalist, singer, songwriter and producer, prefers to hear other people sing his songs.

The 6th's 1995 debut, "Wasp's Nest," exposed Merritt's fascination with indie pop-rock, featuring dense guitar-based arrangements and vocal contributions by members of such bands of-the-moment as Superchunck, Sebadoh and Yo La Tengo.

This time around, the focus seems to be more on elegant songcraft, scant sometimes unorthodox instrumentation, and the distinct voices of Merritt's guests, again an eclectic array of underground players that range from Miho Hatori of the quirky group Cibo Matto to New Wave relic Gary Numan and blues-folk legend Odetta.

Experimental Scottish folksinger Momus opens the album with the stark, emotionally vulnerable zither-backed composition "As You Turn To Go," setting the tone for the remainder of "Hyacinths and Thistles" whisper-soft, introspective selections that are as offbeat as they are off-Broadway.

Some cuts, like the opener, rely on a single acoustic instrument for accompaniment: tender piano backs Bob Mould (Husker Du, Sugar) on "He Didn't"; acoustic guitar accompanies Katharine Whalen (Squirrel Nut Zippers) on "You You You You You"; accordion fittingly fills in "Home," featuring Odetta; and a tinkling toy piano accompanies retro folkie Melanie on "I've Got New York."

Other tracks rely on equally sparse elec-

tronic soundscapes, generally befitting the vocalist's own musical background.

Hence, electro-pop pioneer Gary Numan gets a pulsating synthetic rhythm and some shimmering sound effects on "The Sailor In Love With The Sea." Soft Cell veteran Marc Almond gets an understated digital bassline and copious tropical sound effects on "Volcana."

Lily Banquette, known for her work with the bands Christmas and Combustible Edison, receives a fanciful New Age synthesized groove that seemingly never ends on the 28-minute album closer "Oahu."

Lyrical, you'd be hard pressed to find a finer writer than Merritt, who so effortlessly churns out such poignant tear-jerkers.

"As You Turn To Go" and "Give Me Back My Dreams," two melancholy odes to unrequited love, are particularly striking alongside such tongue-twisting frivolity as "Volcana" ("The luau, like, wow!" is my favorite line.)

Though the majority of "Hyacinths and Thistles" brief musical vignettes deal with heartache and love lost, a few stray outside the lines.

Whalen's sing-song rendition of "You You You You You" treads giggly lovestruck schoolgirl territory ("I can't wait to go to sleep and dream again/cause every dream I dream's a dream of dreamy little you"), while Merritt's droll sense of humor shines on ditties like "The Dead Only Quickly," expertly delivered by Divine Comedy's Neil Hannon ("It would be swell to see some folks burn in Hell/but when they go/it's just as pleasant to know/that the dead only quickly decay").

Overall, "Hyacinths and Thistles" holds appeal for anyone who loves a good pop song injected with cynicism and wry humor. He could just as easily be making a mint writing Broadway musicals, but instead he chooses to toil away in the rock-pop underground, pushing the boundaries of alternative music and basking in the momentary glow of critical praise afforded him when he releases such superb songcraft.

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INFO **The 6ths**
 'Hyacinths and Thistles'
 Merge Records

"quote/unquote"

compiled by REX WOCKNER and staff reports



"Jane Wagner. Ha ha!"

—Lily Tomlin (far left) when asked by the *Seattle Gay News*, "What turns you on?" in the Sept. 1 issue. Wagner (near left) writes for Tomlin and others; the two women have been linked romantically for years.

"It's true that by its essence metal [music] has always had this super-macho, hetero, male-oriented environment, just like sports. So, we are everywhere, as we say."

—Musician Rob Halford, formerly of the heavy-metal band Judas Priest, to the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, Sept. 7

"At last official count, nearly 500 gay and lesbian couples had been united in civil unions this summer in Vermont. There were flowers, champagne, brides and brides, grooms and grooms. The sky did not fall. The earth did not split in two. Happy families and happy friends watched happy people pledge their love. Big deal. Ho-hum. Yawn."

—Columnist Anna Quindlen, *Newsweek*, Sept. 11

"At this current moment I'm a mess. I'm in the middle of a thing. He and I've been dating for five months now. I get into these relationships, and I learn that [the guys I date] have all these qualities that I should have avoided in the first place, and then it ends very quickly."

—Actor Danny Pintauro (right), of "Who's the Boss?" fame, to the *Advocate*, Sept. 26



"I favor legal protections for civic [sic] unions and I think that the rights that are afforded an American who gets married to someone from another country should be afforded under a legally protected civic [sic] union in the same way."

—Vice President Al Gore, responding to a question on an MTV forum about extending immigration rights to same-sex couples

"My view on this is equal rights, equal responsibilities for gay and lesbian people. That would cover all issues."

—Ralph Nader, the Green Party presidential nominee, asked by Tim Russert on the Oct. 1 "Meet the Press" to comment on civil unions and immigration rights



"I think civic [sic] unions are absurd. They passed these up in Vermont where homosexual couples or homosexual liaisons have been put on the same level as traditional marriage. ... Tim, this country, if it accepts the idea that homosexual liaisons are the same as traditional marriage, which is a God-ordained building block of society, this country is on the road to hell in a hand basket."

—Pat Buchanan (left), the Reform Party presidential nominee, when asked by NBC's Tim Russert Oct. 1 to comment on civil unions for same-sex couples

"I've never had a Boy George Day before. I don't know what it means you can get away with. I won't be taking advantage of it and running through Pittsburgh in high heels or anything like that."

—Boy George, reacting to news that the Pittsburgh, Pa., city council unanimously proclaimed Oct. 1 as "Boy George Day," in the Sept. 29 *Pittsburgh Gazette*

"Why wouldn't a gay man win on 'Survivor'? We have survived mental institutions and penal institutions and, for centuries, science telling us we were sick and religion telling us we were sinful. We survived the isolation of being 'in the closet' and many of us, our parents rejection. We have survived being called sissy and faggot and dyke and we will survive much longer than Laura Schlessinger's television show. So, would roughing it on an island be too much for us? I think not."

—Activist Robin Tyler of StopDrLaura.com

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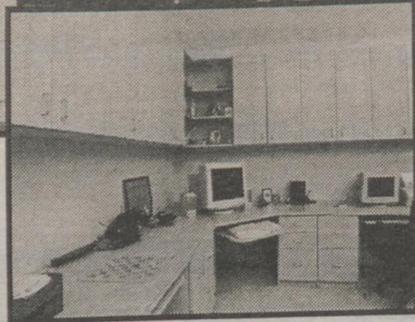
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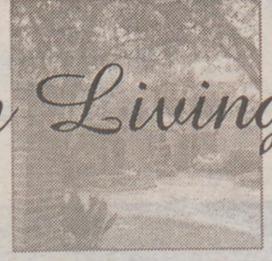


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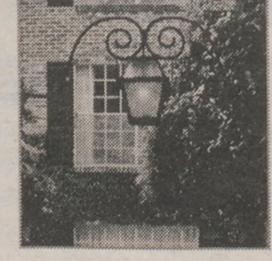


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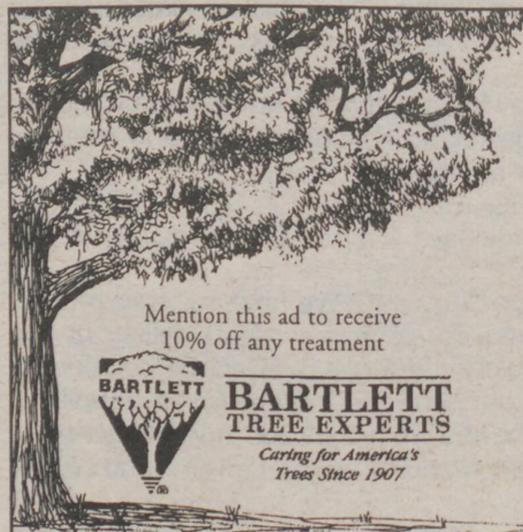


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by DARLENE DRURY

Chain link is cheapest, but better looking options are available

A well-planned and properly constructed fence can do many things—keep children and pets out of the path of danger, shield our view of something we would rather not see, keep the nosy neighbors from seeing something they shouldn't, or it can beautify.

The type of fence you choose depends on many factors. Utility, beauty and cost are three issues that readily come to mind. The intended use of the fence will most likely be the driving force behind the other concerns. Whether it is safety, beauty or privacy, the following may assist you in the decision.

One of the most flexible fencing materials is chain link. This material, made of inter-linked galvanized wire fabric and metal posts, can be installed on almost any site and will remain functional for a long time, some last up to 50 years.

Short of some calamity, chain link fencing retains its usefulness long after other fences have failed. It is strong material, but easily mended. Components for this fence can be found at all home improvement stores and are interchangeable regardless of the manufacturer or original installer.

The metal posts are partially driven into the ground and surrounded by a collar of concrete for added stability. Larger diameter posts are used at corners, gate openings and at certain distances for strength. After

the posts are securely set, the top rails are attached using post caps.

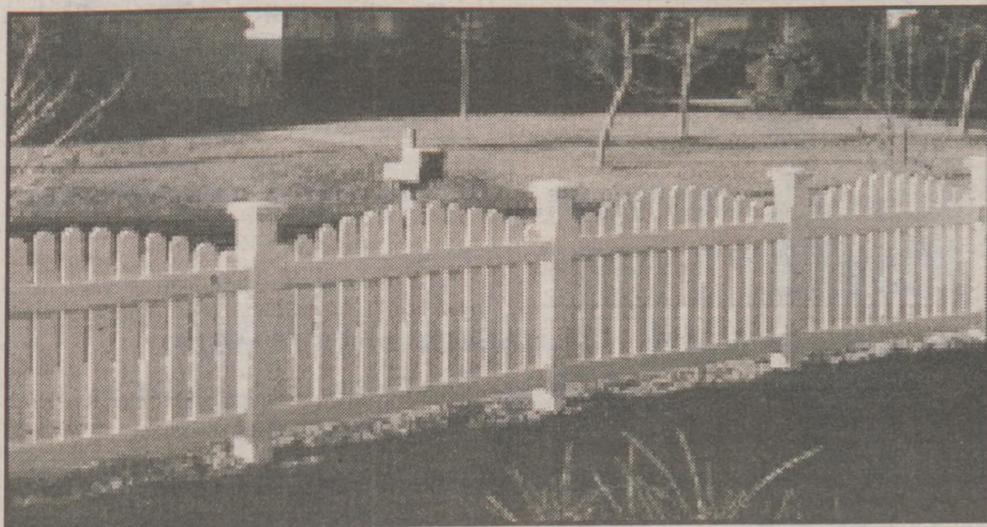
The fence "fabric" is attached to the rail with aluminum wires bent into loops and the fabric is stretched taut before being secured to the end posts. The fabric can be increased or decreased in length by "weaving" or removing one "thread" from top to bottom, adding to the strength of the fence.

Gates are installed at the appointed sites and the outdoor space is secure. While this may not be the most attractive choice, it is cost effective. Other types of wire fencing are available, and wooden or metal posts can be used primarily in agricultural settings where they are most useful.

Wooden fences may be just as useful and are generally much more beautiful than any type of wire fencing. They are also considerably more expensive and last for shorter periods of time. Both materials and labor cost more and wooden fences are much more difficult to install.

The posts are set in holes dug to a depth of no less than 1/4 the length of the post. The posts must be set in firm earth, gravel or concrete. A bed of gravel should be placed in the bottom of each post hole to prevent premature decay of the bottom of the post. The posts should be set at a specific distance apart and should be plumb, or absolutely vertical, to insure fence strength.

Rails are applied between each post and infill is applied to the rails. The infill is what we see as the fence. The gaps between the infill material can allow or restrict visibility and creates the security to keep pets in and unwanted visitors out.



While chain link fences are most practical, wooden fences can be just as effective—and more beautiful—in closing in an open yard.

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saturday, october 7

After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM. 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. 713-526-5738.
Q-Patrol walks the streets 8:45 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.
Dignity mass. 7:30 p.m. for gay Catholics. 713-880-2872.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Rosary 8 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama.
713-528-6665.
Houston Chain Gang Bicycle Club. Call for ride locations. 713-863-1860.
Houston Wrestling Club. Practice. 1:30 p.m. 713-453-7406.
Rainbow Fishing Club. Meeting. 713-526-7070.
Houston Faerie Circle. Meeting. 2 p.m. 713-533-0150.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Southwest Center. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. 281-633-2555 & Conroe 936-441-1614.
Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours noon to 4 p.m. • Montrose Writer's Project. 3 to 4:30 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-528-3818.
Houston Outdoor Group. Breakfast. 832-251-6063.

sunday, october 8

Common Group (formerly New Hope Christian Center) Worship Service. 11 a.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals meets. 713-942-7002.
Rainbow Riders. A bicycle club for women. 713-869-1686.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Holy Rite Eucharist I 7:45 a.m.; Holy Rite Eucharist II 8:55 a.m.; Education hour 10 a.m.; Choral Eucharist 11 a.m. 713-528-6665.
Marantha Fellowship Metropolitan Church. Service. 6:30 p.m. 713-528-6756.
Resurrection MCC. Services. 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10 a.m. Youth Sunday School 11:15 a.m. Handbell Choir rehearsal 1:30 p.m. 713-861-9149.
Grace Lutheran Church. Sunday school for all ages 9 a.m. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-528-3269.
Community Gospel. Service at 11 a.m. & 7 p.m. Sunday School for children 10 a.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
Houston Mission Church. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-529-8225.
Covenant Church, Ecumenical, Liberal Baptist. Service 9:30 a.m. & education hour 11 a.m. 713-668-8830.
Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Services at 8:30 a.m. & 10:50 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 713-526-1017.
The Women's Group. Meeting & Discussion. 10:45 a.m. 713-529-8571.
Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 502 Church St. Service 10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.
First Congregational Church (Memorial). Service at 11 a.m. Christian Education. 11:30 p.m. 713-468-9543 or fcc-houston.org.
Unitarian Fellowship of Houston. Adult forum 10 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 713-686-5876.

Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation: Adult discussion 9:45 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.
First Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:30 & 11:30 a.m. Brunch available 10:30 a.m. 713-526-5200. church@firstuu.org.
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours 2 to 4 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
FLAG-Houston. Monthly meeting. 2 p.m. 713-867-9020.

monday, october 9

Gay Fathers/Fathers First. Support group. 8 p.m. www.GayFathers-Houston.org or 281-505-1788.
Frost Eye Clinic. Free eye exams for people with HIV. 713-830-3000.
HIV testing. STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVE5. 1 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. 713-626-2837.
Kolbe Project. Eucharist 7:30 p.m. 713-861-1800.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 936-441-1614.
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
Lesbian & Gay Voices Radio Show. 8 to 10 p.m. KPFT 90.1. 713-529-1223.
AIDS Mastery. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
Grief & Divorce Support Groups. 7 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017, Ext. 208.
gayDAR. Wellness community. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-526-1017, Ext. 211.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours from 6 to 9 p.m. • Black Lesbian & Gay Coalition meeting. 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

tuesday, october 10

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Club Houston. 713-830-3000.
Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-524-0439.
Bering Support Network. Lunch Bunch Gang 11 a.m. 713-526-1017.
Gay Men's Process Group. 7 p.m. 3316 Mt. Vernon. 713-526-8390.
Men's Network. Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual men. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.

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CALENDAR

Friday • Oct 6 Morning Prayer 10am	Friday • Oct 13 Morning Prayer 10am Movie Night 7pm "Elizabeth"
Sunday • Oct 8 See Ya at Empower 11am - 7pm	Saturday • Oct 14 Kolbe Breakfast 9:30pm
Monday • Oct 9 Eucharist 7:30pm	Monday • Oct 16 Healing Mass 7:30pm
	Friday • Oct 20 Morning Prayer 10am



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calendar

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

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

Houston Gay & Lesbian Parents. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-284-4939.

wednesday, october 11

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

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

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Mary's, Ripcord & Midtowne Spa. 713-830-3000.

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

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

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

Project: Caesar. Workshops. AFH. 3203 Wesleyan. 713-623-6796. Out Skate Rollerskating Club. 8 to 10 p.m. 8075 Cook Road. 281-933-5818.

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

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

Spiritual Uplift service. 7 p.m. Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Resurrection MCC. 713-861-9149.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Houston Area Bears. Dine Out/meeting. 6:30 p.m. 713-867-9123.

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

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

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

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

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

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

HIV Art Course Program. 1 to 4 p.m. Patrick Palmer 713-526-1118.

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

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

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

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

Lesbian & Gay Immigration Rights Task Force. Monthly meeting. 8 p.m. lgirtf-houston@egroups.com. 713-426-3128.

friday, october 13

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

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

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

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

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

Kolbe Project. Morning Prayer. 10 a.m. Movie Night. 7 p.m. 713-861-1800.

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

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

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

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

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. UNITY PARTY featuring Somkin' Hair Day. 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

Garden and Yard Society (GAYS). Monthly meeting. 7 p.m. 713-661-6378.

thursday, october 12

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

To list an event, call Carolyn Roberts at 713-529-8490, fax at 713-529-9531, or e-mail editor@houstonvoice.com. Deadline is Friday at 5 p.m.



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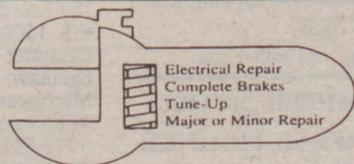


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Announcements

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Youth Empowerment Advocates of Houston, an outreach center for homeless youth, is seeking the following donations: Clothing • Hygiene supplies • Towels • Books • Videos • Backpacks • Call Brian Jones 713.523.9324

Houston Women's Festival • Saturday, Oct. 28 at Garden in the Heights • Music • Art • Marketplace • Community • See www.hwfestival.org • Or call 713.861.3316

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Occasions

Birthdays

Teacher and tequila lover Louie toasts in a birthday on Oct. 6.

Robert D. will celebrate his birthday on Oct. 6.

Houston Voice's own advertising sales magnate Tom Robbins sizes up a birthday on Oct. 7.

I bet you'll find birthday gal Narine bellied up to the bar at Brick's for her birthday on Oct. 9.

On Oct. 13, Ray Hill will celebrate his 60th birthday. To honor this event, the Center for Creativity and Change will host a celebration of Ray's life up to this point. Join him at the Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne on Oct. 21, 2000. For more information, call 713-524-3818.

A round of 'Happy Birthday to You' for Gay Men's Chorus member Michael Stewart. His song, next verse, starts on Oct. 11.

Anniversary

Local celebrities Don and Dog Lips Doug toast in yet another year together, and the Wolf Pack goes WOOOOOOF.



PHOTO BY TERRY SULLIVAN

The Kolby Project, 1030 Heights, offered a pet blessing Oct. 1. Fr. Lou Brusatti, along with Franciscan Monk, Brother Bob Hozie blessed dozens of animals in the name of St. Francis.

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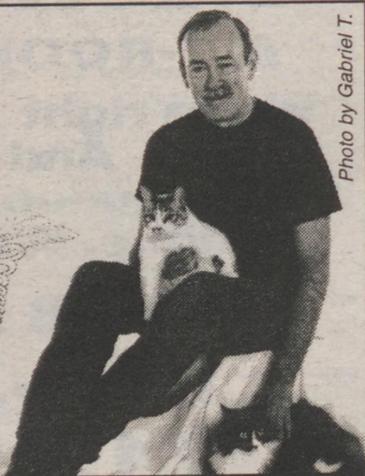


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YOUR WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

October 5 - 12



ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

The full moon on Oct. 13 falls in your sign and could give you the feeling of independence that you need. You've been feeling a little weak lately and your strength may return. You could feel confused about what your loved ones and your colleagues want from you. A Pisces helps you to strike the right balance.

TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

If you are feeling desperate to change your life, chill. Take some baby steps while the Sun is transiting your sixth house. Hang with a Libra and calm down. You can achieve great success in an artistic project, if you are willing to put everything on the line, including your substantial sex appeal.

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

People around you want you to take more risks in your career, but right now you are wise to try to do one thing at a time and do it well. For once, you have the focus you need! If you are feeling disappointed in love, pick yourself up and try again, even if it's with the same person. If said person is a Scorpio, you have many more chances.

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

Sex and creativity are completely linked for you right now. Explore them both, even if you feel like you are going into unknown terrain. There's a feeling of excitement and danger surrounding you now. Are you the only one who doesn't sense it? Another Cancer is drawn to you without knowing why.

LEO (JULY 24 - AUG. 23)

You need to make a major life decision; deal in specifics about it, and the sooner the better. You have all the things you need, but what about your desires? You may have to move slowly in your family relationships. Deal in small doses and accept the kindness of people you know who may seem like strangers, especially an Aries.

VIRGO (AUG. 24 - SEPT. 23)

Jump into a work challenge with fists flying. The people you do business with will respond passionately to you when you butch up! Be direct and make your expectations clear. A Leo responds well to direction.

LIBRA (SEPT. 24 - OCT. 23)

The Oct. 13 full moon in your house of love could make you feel as if a door is about to open up, and it is! But it may be hard to see what's on the other side for a little while longer. Take advantage of a situation—and a Gemini. As long as no one gets hurt, what's the harm, honey?

SCORPIO (OCT. 24 - NOV. 22)

Start visualizing the way you want your future to be, sweetie. Soon your birthday season will arrive and you can start the work of creating it. Deep feelings of angst could be triggered in your love life, sweetie. Rather than go on a Scorpionic destructathon, try looking at your feelings. A Sag is oddly comforting.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 23 - DEC. 22)

You like me? I like you, too! This could be the theme of one of your encounters with a good friend in mid-October. Platonic love turns kinda kinky as the Sun transits your house of friends. Something you longed for years ago and have perhaps forgotten about could come to you, at long last. A Libra is part of the puzzle.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 23 - JAN. 20)

Your ego, good looks, and charm are all related to your business success right now, doll. So spruce up and pitch like you've never pitched before. You can achieve a lot in your work-life if you bring a finished product to the table. A Cancer wants to switch roles with you.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 21 - FEB. 19)

Dreams can come true if you get back in touch with the idealist within you. You've been selling yourself short by being such a realist lately. Do you know what you want the world to be in years to come? Do you know that you will play a major role? A Capricorn wants you to be a hero again.

PISCES (FEB. 20 - MARCH 20)

Let things go along in a normal way and pay attention to the details. It's not the big picture that counts right now—it's the little one. You may have to do two jobs at one time before you can settle into the life you want. Keep all your balls in the air and hang on. A Gemini can help you to see things up close and personal.

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

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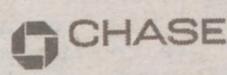
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