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JANUARY 10, 2003

Counting 'The Hours'

Gay author Michael Cunningham talks about his three-pronged story — now a movie — revolving around Virginia Woolf's 'Mrs. Dalloway.'

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INSIDE



Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center readies for a move and other changes.

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Lobo owner Larry Lingle said the local store remains intact even though he is closing his New York business, the Oscar Wilde Bookshop.

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A comfortable atmosphere and mostly successful servings of food will keep patrons coming back to Dharma Cafe.

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AIDS activists to protest changes

Gay Houstonians plan to attend public hearings to voice concerns over cuts in HIV medication program

By PENNY WEAVER

Busloads of Houston AIDS activists head for Austin this week as Texas Board of Health officials ready a final decision on potential cuts to the Texas HIV Medication Program.

The proposals would withdraw AIDS medication funding from thousands of Texans, including many gays.

"This is the last time there will be a chance for the board to hear our voices," said Tracy Wilson, community coordinator of AIDS Coalition of Texas Now! (ACT Now!) Houston. "We will have buses going to the hearing. We will provide free transportation to get people to this very important meeting

so our voices can be heard."

The board holds public hearings on the proposed changes from 9 a.m. to noon on Thursday, Jan. 16, at the Moreton Building, Room M-739, at the Texas Department of Health headquarters, 11—West 49th St., in Austin.

The Texas HIV Medication Program (THMP) is the primary source for HIV medications for thousands of HIV-positive Texans, a large percentage of whom are gay men. The department of health has projected a budget shortfall for the program of \$7 million in the state fiscal year 2003, which began Sept. 1.

TDH officials have proposed changes to cut costs in the program in response to the anticipated budget crunch. The department wants to reduce financial eligibility criterion down from 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines to 140 percent.

Wilson is a Houston AIDS activist and also is HIV positive. He serves on the

Please see AIDS ACTIVISTS, on Page 5



HIV/AIDS activist and patient Tracy Wilson is among a number of gay Texans who plan to attend this week's Texas Board of Health public hearings in Austin. At that session, board members will hear public comments concerning proposed cuts in the Texas HIV Medication Program.

Anti-gay violence mars New Year's celebrations

Activists say three high-profile incidents highlight ongoing problem

By JENNIFER J. SMITH

Three bias-motivated attacks against gays and transgendered people, including one in the South, marred New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

But the shooting of a gay man in normally tolerant South Beach, Fla., the suspected arson of a transgendered woman's apartment in rural Kentucky and the robbery and assault of a gay man in upstate New York are not surprising, said Matt Foreman, executive director of Empire

State Pride Agenda in New York.

"Let me see a New Year's, or any other day of the year for that matter, that doesn't have violence against our community, and then I'll be surprised," Foreman said.

Statistics bear out that perception, according to David Smith, communications director for the Washington-based Human Rights Campaign.

"In 2001, 1,663 more hate crime incidents were reported than in 2000," Smith said. "Hate crimes based on sexual orientation were the fourth highest category, behind hate incidents based on race, ethnic and national origin and religion."

On Dec. 29, in the small village of Haverstraw, N.Y., residents Pedro Zayas Jr. and Luis Pagan allegedly kicked in the front door of an unidentified gay man, stole \$900 and repeatedly punched

him in the face, head and upper body while calling him "faggot," according to police reports.

Police charged the pair with burglary, assault, criminal mischief and a hate crime, according to John Reilly, Rockland, N.Y., police chief.

"This is very unusual for us," Reilly said. "I've been here 23 years and have never seen anything like it, and hopefully won't ever again."

The suspects are well known to local police, Reilly said. Lewis had 105 arrests since 1980, most accumulated for assault and fighting. Pagan had 27 arrests in the same time, most under charges of "quality of life offenses" like open alcohol containers, Reilly said.

Local police charged the two with hate

Please see VIOLENCE, on Page 4

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around houston

New owners of Mary's plan grand re-opening

On Sunday, gay Houstonians celebrate the continued tradition at Mary's... Naturally, the oldest gay bar in the state, as former owners "pass the torch" to new operators of the club. Jamie Carmen, director of operations for Michael's Outpost and Mary's, said a number of people will assist in coordinating the show for that afternoon. In December, Michael Gaitz, owner of the Outpost, purchased Mary's from longtime owners Cliff Owen and Gaye Yancey. The club closed for a short time just before the sale, but re-opened as Gaitz and his staff vowed to continue the Mary's tradition. The public is invited to the show, and local entertainers are welcome to offer their talents to the event.

FOR INFO

Grand re-opening
3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 12
Mary's... Naturally
1022 Westheimer
713-527-9669

Supporters host campaign event for former Vermont governor

A kick-off event for former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean's presidential campaign is set for next week in Houston. Supporters of the "Dean for America" campaign will host special guests and also offer a question-and-answer session with Dean via call-in at the fund-raiser. Donations between \$100 and \$250 will be accepted at the door with a maximum donor option of up to \$2,000 via check and Visa or Mastercard, according to event organizers. For more information, e-mail Deanforamerica2004@yahoo.com, or call Matt Jensen at 202-276-0963. Dean has waded into campaigning for the Democratic nomination for president in 2004 after serving as governor of Vermont, where he signed into law the nation's first civil unions measure two years ago.

FOR INFO

Campaign kick-off event for Howard Dean
7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 17
At the home of Marc Sofia
2323 Branard St.
Houston, TX 77098

Speaker helps chamber members get the New Year off to a good start

The Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce hosts its monthly meeting this week with special guest Dr. Rosana Searce this week. Social hour and musical entertainment begin at 6 p.m., with dinner at 7 p.m. Cost for members is \$22, and cost for non-members or guests is \$25, according to chamber Executive Director Coy Tow. Searce has been involved in the field of psychology for 25 years. She has worked with individuals, families, businesses, and corporations. Her specialties are in the areas of communication, conflict-resolution, relationship-saving techniques, changing bad habits (overeating, drinking, smoking), parenting seminars, and developing healthy alternative lifestyles, according to Tow. Her presentation to Chamber members includes the topics: Realistic goal-setting and the steps to make them become reality; increase personal motivation; learn

FOR INFO

6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 14
Greater Houston GLBT Chamber meeting
The Chamber
P.O. Box 66129 • Houston, TX 77266
713-523-7576 • www.hglcc.org

to keep promises; healthy communication skills; sane solutions for insane business problems; and four life-savers to reduce stress and to enjoy every day.

Bunnies on the Bayou seeks community groups as beneficiaries

The non-profit Bunnies on the Bayou is planning its annual Easter party and fund-raiser. The group started out 24 years ago as a small gathering of friends sharing good music, cocktails, and conversation on Easter afternoon, and has evolved into a benefit attracting thousands, according to leaders of the organization. Invited guests are asked to make a generous contribution to benefit numerous community organizations. As expenses of the event are completely underwritten in advance by hosts and sponsors, 100 percent of donations received at the party are distributed directly to Houston-based 501(c)(3) community organizations. Bunnies on the Bayou, Inc. seeks deserving organizations to benefit from the 2003 event, scheduled for April 20. Leaders of the group invite Houston-area 501(c)(3) organizations to apply for funding. To be considered as a beneficiary of the event, Bunnies on the Bayou requires details of the proposed project or activity that the funding would support, including the specific dollar amount requested, a copy of the organization's IRS determination letter recognizing 501(c)(3) status, along with current financial statements (Profit/Loss Statement, Balance Sheet) and a summary of the organization's purpose or mission statement. Brochures, press clippings and other types of information also will be helpful in the evaluation process. The deadline for receipt of the information listed above is Friday, Feb. 14. Bunnies on the Bayou members will make selections and notify all candidates by mid March. All selected beneficiaries will be required to provide a brief follow-up report six months after receipt of funding summarizing the expenditures made with the monies received. Proposals should be sent to: Bunnies on the Bayou, Inc., P.O. Box 66832, Houston, TX 77266, Attn: Charities Committee. For more information, contact Greg Moye at 713-214-4092 (daytime) or 713-629-4993 (evenings).

PENNY WEAVER

FOR INFO

Beneficiaries sought
Deadline to apply: Feb. 14
Bunnies on the Bayou, Inc.
P.O. Box 66832, Houston, TX 77266
Attn: Charities Committee

local news

Community center leaders plan improvements

Facility will re-locate in less than a month and has a new Web site to serve gay Houstonians

By PENNY WEAVER

Leaders of the Houston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center have announced the facility will relocate by Feb. 1 as it spruces up its services.

Formerly known as the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, the recently dubbed Houston GLBT Community Center adds to its new name and inclusive mission with the move and a new Web site.

Center President Tim Brookover said the facility will move on Feb. 1 to 3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 207. Established in 1996, the center moved operations into the two-story house at 803 Hawthorne Ave. in early 1998.

"We're thrilled about our new two-year interim location, especially the 140-plus seat meeting room," Brookover said in a press release. "We're also pleased with the more professional setting that will be much more conducive to the work of the center."



The Houston GLBT Community Center will soon move from its location in this house at 803 Hawthorne to a suite in the building at 3400 Montrose Blvd.

The Montrose Boulevard location is bright and airy with wonderful windows along the entire northern wall of our suite."

Part of the improvements at the center is an expanded presence on the Internet, Brookover noted.

"Our new Web site, www.houstonglbt-center.org, includes a community calendar as well as information on center programs and an online donation system," he said.

According to Brookover, the large meeting room at the center's old location on Hawthorne Avenue seats 90 people. Completely handi-

capped accessible, the new location also will include a large conference room along with offices for the center's non-profit tenants.

In keeping with its mission statement, the organization last fall changed its name from Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, according to Brookover.

That mission statement is: "The Houston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center provides a home for the birth, nurture and celebration of our organizations, institutions and culture; cares for our individuals and groups in need; educates the public and our community; and empowers our individuals and groups to achieve their fullest potential."

"The Tenant Program, although important, is just a small part of the work of the community center," Brookover said. "Offering low-cost meeting and office space are really important programs that augment the other programs of the center."

The facility regularly hosts events including poetry and movie nights, as well as numerous other activities.

Center tenants include the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus, the Houston Chapter of Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG), the Black GLBT

Coalition of Houston, Q Patrol and the Texas Human Rights Foundation.

"Over the past few months, we have been very fortunate to benefit from the hard work of our board development committee, chaired by longtime center advisory board member Clarence Burton Bagby," Brookover said. "The committee's charge includes adding members to the center's board, as well as proposing a restructuring of the center's work."

Other board development committee members include Mike Bodin, Sara Fernandez, Don Hauboldt, John Heinzerling, Ken Jones, Robert Shane McShane, Blake Weisser and Hillary Woest. Ex-officio committee members include Brookover and Houston City Council member Annise D. Parker.

The center board plans an ambitious capital campaign in the coming months that will allow the facility to move into a permanent location in the next two to three years, Brookover noted.

MORE INFO

Drop-in hours: 2-9 p.m. Monday-Friday
Noon-5 p.m. Saturday • 2-6 p.m. Sunday
Houston GLBT Community Center
803 Hawthorne Ave. • 713-524-3818
www.houstonglbtcenter.org

Nation's oldest gay bookstore to close its doors

Houston owner of New York's Oscar Wilde Bookshop said closure will not affect local store

By PENNY WEAVER

The Houston owner of the nation's oldest gay bookstore said the closing of that New York business does not indicate the demise of the only gay bookstore left in this city.

Houstonian Larry Lingle owns the Oscar Wilde Bookshop, the oldest gay and lesbian bookstore in the country, and he announced this week that it will close by the end of the month.

The store opened in Greenwich Village in 1967 with several dozen books on its shelves. It expanded as the gay rights movement in New York gained momentum, and soon became the inspiration for other bookstores devoted to a gay and lesbian clientele.

Lingle, who purchased the store six years ago, said it was difficult to maintain a gay bookstore in New York because of the behemoth book chains that offer a wider selection.

"I have lost a quarter of a million dollars over the last six years. And I just can't take it anymore," he said.

Lingle also owns Lobo, the only gay bookstore remaining in Houston after this summer's closing of Crossroads Market Bookstore & Cafe. But he said the closing of Oscar Wilde is not likely to have much affect on Lobo.

"If anything, certainly not adversely," Lingle said of any influence the New York closing might have locally. "Lobo's been sup-

porting the New York store for six years."

Across the country, bookstores, like many other businesses that cater to gay clientele and are gay-owned and -operated, are struggling in a weak economy.

"[Business] was down noticeably in November and December," Lingle said of Lobo. "We certainly did not have a good Christmas."

"I think there's definitely a trend. Historically, it's hard to see a trend when you're in the middle of it," Lingle added. "I've received calls from several of my fellow bookstore owners across the country. The big change they're all seeing is that these so-called gay areas, [like Montrose, are] less gay. It's happening across the country. A lot of gay business has been booted out for higher-paying tenants."

A lack of profit sealed the fate of the New York store.

"The bottom line was that it just lost money consistently. I really felt we made a pretty good effort," Lingle said.

Lobo, which offers books and other merchandise, plus a coffee shop, on Montrose Boulevard, remains open for business despite a weak holiday sales season.

"We're running pretty close to the margin right now," Lingle said. "I don't make any claims for the future."

Gay men and lesbians seem to have changed their thinking when they make purchases, as mainstream businesses such as bookstores have been more inclusive of them, Lingle believes.

"I really don't think there is as much a sense of buying from gay businesses as there once was, but I've always believed that a gay business is not entitled to the business. You

have to earn it. It's typical retail," he said. "Consumers don't really seem to be that aware of the differences between a small business and what we have to deal with as opposed to a chain. We don't have the buying power."

Lingle also said the Internet has become a more popular place to purchase items like books, cutting into business for Lobo and other stores.

"I think the Internet is going to increasingly be a source...particularly for gay consumers," he said. "That's bound to have an effect. I think there's a lot of trends going on. I don't think we fully understand them."

Crossroads Market Bookstore & Cafe, which had been a haven for gays for a decade in Montrose, closed its doors permanently in late July. Owner Joe Rumanni cited decreasing profits as the reason for the closure.

But according to Rumanni, the Crossroads store in Dallas, the original location in operation for more than a dozen years, will not close and, in fact, is profitable.

Lingle agreed that Dallas has advantages that Houston does not have for gay business owners.

"My biggest regret is that Houston does not have the kind of gay business district that Dallas has," Lingle said. "It creates a great atmosphere where anybody, gay and lesbian, can...do whatever they want. We don't have that in Houston."

Crossroads originally opened on Alabama Street in Houston, and had operated from its Westheimer Road storefront for seven years. The location was in the heart of heavily gay Montrose, near other gay businesses such as Mary's...Naturally and Chances.

Last month, Mary's closed briefly

before being purchased by new owners and re-opened just days later. Former owners of the club cited declining revenues as part of the reason for the struggle.

"We've noticed a definite drop in business," said former co-owner Cliff Owen.

Although Crossroads and Lobo offered many of the same products and a similar atmosphere, business at Lobo has benefited little from Crossroads' closing, Lingle said immediately after the Westheimer shop closed.

"The only significant difference I've seen since Crossroads has closed or is closing is an increase in traffic in our coffee shop," he said.

At that time, six months ago, Lingle noted that the Oscar Wilde Bookshop was struggling financially.

In 1970, the Oscar Wilde Bookshop's original owner, Craig Rodwell, helped organize a march to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. The shop is one of only two gay bookstores remaining in New York. Creative Visions, also in Greenwich Village, is the other.

"It's sad that the New York community is unwilling or unable to support a gay and lesbian bookstore," Deacon Maccubbin, the owner of the Lambda Rising bookshop in Washington, D.C., told the New York Times.

"If New York can't support two small gay bookstores, I think there's really a problem," Lingle said.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

MORE INFO

Lobo Bookstore
3939-S Montrose Blvd.
713-522-5156

national news

Suspects charged with hate crimes in gay, trans attacks

VIOLENCE, continued from Page 1

crimes, a first in rural New York state. But District Attorney Michael Bongiorno's dedication to pursuing the bias charges remains unclear, and the matter will likely be left to a grand jury, his office said.

"Right now, they're both charged with hate crimes, and it's pending before a grand jury," said Karen Riley, supervising assistant district attorney.

New York passed its sexual orientation-inclusive hate crimes statute at the end of 2000 and has prosecuted six cases of anti-gay bias in New York City to date, according to Foreman, but the Haverstraw case marks the first rural use of the law.

The assault charge carries a maximum penalty of one year in county jail, but the possible hate crime charges would increase the sentence to four years in state prison, Foreman said.

South Beach's anti-gay brutality

In the most brutal New Year's incident, a gay man was shot outside of a nightclub in South Beach, Fla., after being mistaken for a woman by two straight men, according to a police spokesperson.

Miami Beach police arrested Adrian Miller, a New Jersey resident, and Billy Ledan, a Miami resident, on charges of attempted murder and a hate crime,



officials said.

The incident was the most vicious bias attack in Florida in the past five years, said Howard Simon, executive director of the Florida ACLU.

While walking to his car, Miami resi-

dent Earnest Robinson, who was dressed as a man that night but told police he does occasionally dress in drag, was approached by two men, according to police.

"They thought I was something I wasn't," Robinson told the Miami Herald. "I said, 'Leave me alone. I'm a man.' His friend was laughing at him and he got offended, and he shot me. I fell to the ground and that's all I remember."

The scenario in Florida is becoming more common nationally, said Jeff Montgomery, director of Michigan-based Triangle Foundation, a gay activist organization.

"We're seeing more and more of these types of cases," Montgomery said. "These New Year's cases are similar to the Morehouse [College in Atlanta] case recently, and others, where straight men are so insecure that they are unable to comprehend being on the objectified side of the world, and they can't handle it and resort to some level of violence."

The shooter, who police believe to be Miller, called Robinson a "faggot" during the attack, according to police reports.

Local police charged the two with hate crime violations, but the local district attorney has not decided whether to pursue the charges, according to Ed Griffith, spokesperson for the state attorney's office.

"They're already facing 15 years for the attempted murder, and you go with the heavier, more solid charge," Griffith said. "We don't use prosecutions to send messages."

Robinson was released from Jackson Memorial Hospital Jan. 3, according to Griffith.

Sandra Norton, director of the Gay & Lesbian Community Center of South Florida, called the attack "the consequences of the unrelenting and self-right-

eous preachings of hatred to which we are subjected."

The shooting shocked residents of the renowned gay-friendly burg of South Beach, said Nadine Smith, executive director of Equality Florida, a statewide gay advocacy group.

"It's a reminder that it's impossible to carve out a safe zone among the homophobic and transphobic attitudes in our country," she said.

Miami Beach, which includes South Beach, became the first city in Florida to protect gays in housing, employment and accommodations in 1992, according to Smith.

Ky. sees transgender attack

Less than 24 hours after the Florida incident, the apartment of transgendered Owensboro, Ky., resident Charlie Glenn was targeted by a possible anti-gay arsonist, according to Doug Ester, an Owensboro police officer.

"That's definitely something we're looking at, and that's what the victim believes," Ester said.

Glenn is undergoing hormone therapy to become a woman and identified as transsexual to police. She was home alone at 11:30 p.m. New Year's Day when she heard glass break in another room. Upon investigation, the room was engulfed in flames, according to police reports.

The investigation continues, and no arrests have been made. But the police department "fully expects" to file hate crime charges in the case, Ester said.

The case would be the first application of the hate crime statute in Davies County, he said.

Kentucky's hate crime law "bumps up the classification" of felonies to the next higher level — from Class B to Class A, for example. The Glenn case could "easily get a 20-year to life sentence," Ester said.

The two rural attacks are indicative of a coming trend in 2003, according to representatives of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs.

"A lot of the reports we're getting this year are from places where a couple of things seem to be true," said Clarence Patton, executive director of NCAVP. "There is no kind of community system in place to deal with violence, and they're happening in places where we believe there will be ongoing problems like small towns and rural areas because we know that visibility in our community opens gays up to violence."

Transgendered people are especially vulnerable to this violence, according to Vanessa Edwards Foster, chair of the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition.

"The perpetrator feels their sexuality is questioned by the thought that they might be attracted to someone of the same gender and they lash out in violence," Foster said. "This happens more often to male to female transgenders than any other segment of the American population."

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local news

Budget shortfall means trimmed AIDS funding

AIDS ACTIVISTS, continued from Page 1

Ryan White Planning Council, Thomas Street Clinic Advisory Council, Houston AIDS Advocacy Team and is an HIV prevention educator. Wilson said the federal poverty level is a yearly income of \$8,860 for an individual.

Under current criteria, patients who apply for THMP funds can have an income of up to 200 percent, or two times, the poverty level to qualify for assistance. That adds up to an income of \$17,720. Also under the current rules, patients can deduct the yearly retail costs of their drugs from that income, called a "spend down" measure. That results in the adjusted gross income that is used to determine if a person can receive state assistance.

But with the proposed changes, 140 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines is \$12,404, and there would be no "spend down," Wilson explained. So thousands of HIV/AIDS patients — whose drug costs can range from \$1,000 to \$3,000 per month — would be ineligible for state funds.

Based only on funding remaining the same, the state expects a \$37 million budget shortfall for the AIDS medication program over the next few years. So even if the U.S. Congress and the Texas Legislature do not trim AIDS program funding, there will be less money to assist HIV/AIDS patients.

In 2001, the Texas program served 11,138 people with a total cost of \$51 million. In the 2003 fiscal year, which began in September and ends next summer, officials expect to serve 10,311 people at a cost of \$62 million. More than 215 new clients are joining the program's rolls each month, Wilson noted.

By law, THMP must balance its budget or face elimination of the entire program, activists note.

On Oct. 18, TDH officials received the language that includes the proposed changes from its Bureau for HIV & STD Prevention. The measures were posted to the Texas Register on Nov. 1, and then were open for public comment through Nov. 30. This week's meeting is the final opportunity for public comments on the proposals.

Another part of the state's proposed program changes would cut the drug formulary, or the list of medications approved for funding. If new AIDS

medications become available, the financial eligibility of patients would have to be revamped again to find the money to expand the formulary, Wilson explained.

THMP spends \$6 million a month on HIV medications — or \$200,000 per day — for Texans.

AIDS activists want health officials to wait and see what federal and state funding is allotted by lawmakers before cutting back the number of HIV/AIDS patients who are eligible for assistance.

If the new income restrictions are put into place, more than 1,000 Houstonians would lose their assistance for AIDS medications. That prospect has activists calling for action, and an important part of that is showing state decision-makers the faces of people with AIDS, according to Wilson.

The Houston chapter of ACT Now! continues to organize and will monitor the state program and other issues. Wilson said the group plans several community events, including a Capitol Day in

Austin in mid-March.

"We hope these upcoming events will increase our visibility in the community and that we will continue to evolve to be a leader for HIV/AIDS advocacy in the Houston area," Wilson said.

If the state board of health approves the new eligibility requirements, they would be implemented for new THMP clients in 30 days. Current clients would have six months to re-apply or find other sources to help buy the medicine they need.



Big hair ahead. 25th Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras • March 1, 2003

Mardi Gras Package from \$1699 • Includes 5 nights accommodation in Sydney, roundtrip air on Qantas from Los Angeles plus The Mardi Gras Party Ticket, Sydney City Tour and Sydney Harbor Gay Cruise. Australia is a great gay and lesbian destination any time. For our affordable year round vacations, visit www.Gay.Australia.com or call toll-free 877-273-5990.

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i MORE INFO

9 a.m. to noon Thursday, Jan. 16
Public hearing on HIV medication
program changes
Texas Board of Health
Moreton Building, Room M-739
Texas Department of Health headquarters
1100 West 49th St.
Austin, TX
www.tdh.state.tx.us

national news

Clonaid claims to make babies for gays

Group markets services to gays, also plans to clone people with HIV

By LAURA DOUGLAS-BROWN

Just days after tantalizing the media with claims of the world's first cloned baby, leaders of Clonaid — a company affiliated with a religious sect that believes aliens created human life — announced Jan. 4 the birth of a second clone, this time to a Dutch lesbian couple.

A gay couple from Las Vegas will also begin the cloning process this month, with that baby's expected birth before the end of the year, according to Clonaid, which has marketed its services to gays since at least 2000.

But the company says the couples all wish to remain anonymous, and it has yet to produce any proof of the purported cloned births.

Clonaid CEO Brigitte Boisselier initially said that genetic tests on the first cloned baby, reportedly born Dec. 26 to an American woman with an infertile husband, would be available within a week of that birth. But on Tuesday, Boisselier said that the child's parents won't allow the tests unless they get a guarantee that the baby girl will not be taken from them.

The lesbian mothers of the second baby also haven't decided to allow the tests, Clonaid officials told Houston Voice this week.

"We are currently discussing this with the parents," said Thomas Kaenzig, vice president of Clonaid and priest of the Raelian Movement, which believes extraterrestrials made humans through cloning.

"The parents are very concerned about the baby's safety and their own safety," Kaenzig said. "Therefore, we recommended them not to do any interviews at this moment."

Kaenzig also refused to say how the lesbian mothers purportedly gave birth to their cloned child — whether one woman gave birth to her own clone, or whether she carried the clone of her partner — although Boisselier previously said the child is the birth mother's clone.

That lack of details and proof has left both mainstream scientists and even cloning supporters skeptical of Clonaid's claims.

"Their claims are too good to be true," said Randolph Wicker, founder of the Clone Rights United Front, described as the world's first human cloning activist group. "They are frauds who are playing a very clever PR game, and all they are really doing is promoting the Raelian religion."

That sentiment, in turn, has gay rights groups worried about the possible impact of having gay families involved with an organization increasingly viewed

as dishonest at best, extreme and unethical at worst.

"I wasn't sure whether to cringe or applaud when they made their claim that they had done this for a lesbian couple," said Lorrie L. Jean, executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force.

"On the one hand, I believe that getting discussion out there about gay and lesbian parenting is important," she said. "On the other ... all we need is to be associated with this group that the whole world thinks is nuts."

Possible backlash over the cloning claims means gay groups must work even harder to make sure mainstream America gets an accurate view of gay families, according to David Smith, communications director and senior strategist for the Human Rights Campaign.

"Human cloning is highly emotional, little understood and vehemently opposed by an overwhelming majority of Americans," he said. "It is why we will work hard to focus public attention on the inequities in the law that gay families face and the injustice of the misguided efforts of some to ban gay people from adopting children."

Cloning a gay issue?

While banning human cloning is expected to be a hot topic in the 108th Congress, which opened Tuesday, HRC has not taken an official position on the issue, which Smith said "appears to still be science fiction."

"The claims from this bizarre group do not seem to be substantiated," he said.

Lobbying Congress is a major role of the Washington-based group, but "HRC will not weigh in on efforts to ban human cloning unless there is an attempt to ban stem cell or other medical research that could pave the way to breakthroughs in cures for cancers and other diseases," Smith said.

Several states — including California, Louisiana, Michigan and Rhode Island — have already passed cloning bans. But NGLTF, which focuses on local and state level issues, also hasn't taken a position.

"It's not even on the radar screen," Jean said.

The Gay & Lesbian Medical Association doesn't have an official position on human cloning either, according to Ken Haller, president of the group.

But both the Raelians and Wicker argue that gays have more to gain from cloning than most heterosexuals.

"Human cloning is the only way for gay couples to have children entirely of their own genetic offspring," said Kaenzig, the Raelian priest and Clonaid vice president.

Wicker, who is frequently interviewed by national media outlets on the subject of cloning and was dubbed by Time Magazine as "the face of cloning fervor in the U.S.," is also gay.

"Why should it be necessary for an



Clonaid CEO Brigitte Boisselier held a press conference Dec. 27 to announce the birth of the world's first cloned baby. Eight days later, the company claimed that a second cloned child was born to a lesbian couple. (Photo by Hillery Smith Garrison/AP)

infertile couple, since that is what a lesbian or gay couple is, to go out and involve the genes of a stranger when it possible to have a child related to no one but you?" he asked.

If one woman was cloned and another woman carried the child, cloning would also allow a lesbian mother "to give birth to her partner's later-born twin," Wicker said.

Cloning — accomplished by removing the DNA-containing nucleus from a donor egg and replacing it with a cell from the person being cloned — would offer gays and others the chance to have a child without outside influence.

There is also the potential that a more advanced procedure related to cloning could one day allow gay couples to have children genetically related to both partners.

Two years ago, Dr. Calum MacKellar of the University of Edinburgh suggested that it would be "theoretically possible" to replace the nucleus of an egg cell with a sperm cell — which, like the egg cell, would contain only half of the genetic material necessary to make a human. Next, the "male egg" could be fertilized with sperm.

The resulting embryo would still need to be implanted in a surrogate mother for gestation, but it would have two genetic fathers. And in a similar process, the genetic material from one woman's egg could be inserted into another woman's egg to create an offspring with two genetic mothers.

'Enjoy life, enjoy sex'

The Raelians hit on the theoretical possibility of creating a child with two genetic fathers when they began marketing cloning to gay men more than two years ago.

In October 2000, Rael, the spiritual leader of the group, held a press conference in San Francisco to explain how cloning "will allow gay couples to have a child who can inherit the genetic traits of

one or both parents such as is possible with heterosexual couples."

Yet according to Wicker, who has denounced Clonaid's Internet advertisements for human cloning at a cost of \$200,000 as "fraud" targeted at gays, the process would be more difficult than the Raelians let on.

In basic cloning theory, the embryo would get a complete set of genetic material from the person being cloned, because a cell with the complete DNA — say a skin cell or, like in the case of Dolly the sheep, a breast cell — would be inserted in place of the egg's nucleus to begin the process.

But in standard reproduction, the egg and sperm cells each provide half the genetic material. The male and female halves are like two sides of a zipper that join to create a complete set of DNA, and successful development requires "imprinting" that can only come from the egg's female DNA.

That means trying to unite the created "male" egg with male sperm would be "like trying to close a zipper with two left sides," Wicker said.

But while Wicker fears fraud and gay rights groups fear the impact on gay families from being invoked in Clonaid's claims, officials with the cloning company said their outreach to gays comes from the gay-inclusive teachings of the Raelian religion.

"We encourage people to fully express their sexuality whether they are homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual," Kaenzig said.

"Enjoy life, enjoy sex" is one of our key sayings, and we encourage people to do this without any feeling of guiltiness," he said.

Some gay rights opponents argue that gay people should not be allowed to even adopt children for fear that they would "raise them to be gay," but the Raelians are not concerned about whether cloned children of gay people would grow up to be gay themselves, Kaenzig said.

"If it is in the genes and the clone baby expresses his/her genes by being himself/herself, then the clone will most likely also be gay," he said. "Unfortunately, due to the fact that homosexuality is still perceived as being something 'abnormal' in some religious zealots' minds, the child, when it is growing up, might not express himself fully."

"We are sure that tomorrow's world will be a more tolerant and open world, and it will become easier for people to express themselves, to express their genes," Kaenzig said.

In Clonaid's press release announcing the birth of the first human clone, the group also said that its scientists "are now working on the next generation of clone babies which will include for the first time clones of people carrying the HIV virus."

"Thanks to human cloning, people with AIDS will be able to have children of their own genetic offspring without taking the risk of passing on the disease to their children," Clonaid claimed.

national news

Gays should be in draft, 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' author says

Talk of reinstating draft
renews debate about gays
in military

By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

The issue of gays in the military returned to the limelight last week when a sociology professor who first proposed the Pentagon's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy said he favors allowing gays to serve openly in the military if Congress reinstates the draft.

Charles Moskos, a Northwestern University professor and recognized expert on military personnel matters, said a universal system of compulsory military service is the fairest means of maintaining the nation's armed services.

The "higher virtue" of a military draft outweighs concerns about the privacy rights of straight soldiers that remain a central argument from opponents of gay military personnel, he said.

"If an open gay said, 'I want to go into the Army,' it would be his prerogative," Moskos said, in a Dec. 31 e-mail exchange with researchers at the Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military. The center is a research arm of the University of California at Santa Barbara.

When President Bill Clinton first proposed lifting the military ban on gays in



Military personnel expert Charles Moskos, considered the 'inventor' of the military's 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy, says he favors allowing gays to serve openly in the services if a military draft is reinstated.

1993, critics said allowing gays to serve openly would destroy morale and "unit cohesion" among the troops. Military officials said that openly gay military members would present insurmountable problems within the military's close living quarters, including sleeping quarters and communal showers.

"Of course, there would be problems with that, there would be hassles, but they probably could be overcome," Moskos said in his remarks to the Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military.

He told the researchers that instituting a draft would require ending all forms of the gay ban.

"You can't use a gay ban with a draft, because that would make it too easy for people to get out," he said, according to a statement released by the center.

Moskos' call for including open gays in a military draft came as U.S. Reps. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) and John Conyers (D-Mich.) said they plan to introduce legislation calling for the reinstatement of the draft. The U.S. military draft ended in 1973 near the end of the Vietnam War.

Neither the Bush administration nor Republican and Democratic leaders of Congress indicated any interest in reinstating a draft. A military draft bill introduced in 2001 by Reps. Nick Smith (R-Mich.) and Curt Weldon (R-Penn.) died in committee, with little or no support from their GOP colleagues.

But whether the latest reinstatement effort succeeds or not, Moskos' comments will boost efforts to lift the ban on gays in the military, said Steve Ralls, spokesperson for the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, which assists gay military personnel.

"Moskos' most important comment is that the military can overcome the privacy concerns raised by straight service members in a draft," Ralls said. "If the military can get around the problems associated with gay service members in a draft, why can't they get around them in the current situation?"

Longtime gay activist Frank Kameny, a World War II combat veteran, agrees with that assessment.

"As a practical matter, it will be utterly impossible to reinstate the draft with the gay ban in place because anyone who wishes not to be drafted will simply 'tell' that he is gay and be excluded," Kameny said. "The whole draft will implode before it ever gets started."

Kameny said that while most draft-age men would not use homosexuality as a means for evading military service as recently as the Vietnam War era, the social climate is far different now.

"It is a completely different world," he said. "The culture has changed. Now, people will be completely willing to identify themselves as gay."

MORE INFO

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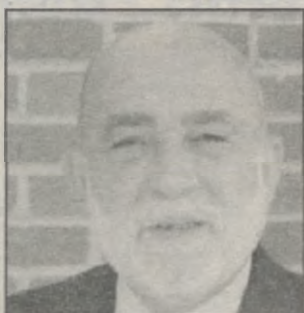
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Gay liaison appointment sparks controversy in R.I.



Newport, R.I., Mayor Richard C. Sardella has come under fire from some City Council members for appointing a liaison between his office and gay residents.

NEWPORT, R.I. — Some members of the Newport City Council object to Mayor Richard C. Sardella's decision to appoint a volunteer liaison between his office and a gay organization, the Providence Journal reported. On Jan. 2, Council member Kathryn E. Leonard requested a legal opinion on whether the liaison would need council approval, something Sardella said he does not. He said he asked a new local group, Gay & Lesbian Association of Newport County, Etc., to designate a liaison to his office after some GLANCE members accused the city of being insensitive when it turned down a liquor license for a proposed gay bar. "Though Newport is an absolutely wonderful place that I love with all of my heart, it's not a terribly tolerant or gay friendly city," said Colleen Hopkins, who took the post.

Gay club in conservative Utah city fights license revocation

SALT LAKE CITY — Club Blue, a gay private club, goes to court next week to appeal the state Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control's decision to revoke its alcohol license, the Salt Lake Tribune reported. DABC revoked the club's license and handed owner Mike Webb a \$9,000 fine after a private party in October where a bartender allegedly worked naked and attendees engaged in sexual activity. Webb claimed the club is being targeted because of patrons' "lifestyle." Salt Lake City police attended a private party at the club after being tipped off. The club's lawyer said the state should not regulate what goes on at a private party. "I don't have any problem with them [DABC] regulating public decency at a private club during normal business hours," Marlin Criddle said. "I have a problem with them trying to extend that to when the club is being used privately."

Fourth Ill. city passes gay rights ordinance

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — The Springfield City Council approved a gay rights ordinance Jan. 7 over the objections of some religious leaders who said it would lead to "moral and social confusion," according to the Associated Press. The ordinance, protecting gays from discrimination in housing, employment and credit, passed 8-1 with one abstention. Springfield joins a growing list of Illinois cities extending gay rights. Tom Selinger, who abstained from the vote, said he expects the Legislature to enact the same protections statewide. At a Jan. 6 committee hearing, Rev. Samuel Hale, Jr. read a letter of protest from the president of the Springfield Ministerial Alliance, the Rev. Silas Johnson. "To include [gays] would legally obligate the entire populace of Springfield to accept and endorse a mindset and lifestyle that brings moral and social confusion," Johnson wrote. Ordinance supporter Libby King of Springfield disagreed. "We're not asking anyone to say, 'Hey, you're right,' because homosexuality is not right for everybody," she said. "But what we are asking is that we're not punished for it by anybody who has an important say in our lives."

Ind. officials want gay marriage lawsuit dismissed

INDIANAPOLIS — Two lesbian couples and a gay male couple filed a lawsuit claiming the state of Indiana's ban on same-sex marriage is unconstitutional, the Indianapolis Star reported. But in a Jan. 3 brief, the state attorney general asked Marion Superior Court Judge S.K. Reid to dismiss the case. The state has an interest to promote heterosexual marriage and families as "sound political ordering," according to Thomas M. Fisher, special counsel for the state. But plaintiffs in the lawsuit, filed by the Indianapolis Civil Liberties Union, contend the gay marriage ban violates the state constitution's promise to treat all citizens equally. If the court does not allow same-sex marriage, the plaintiffs want a separate legal status for gay couples, such as the civil unions created in Vermont.

Fight for gay marriage heats up in Calif., Mass.

BOSTON — The Massachusetts state legislature is poised to confront the issue of civil unions for the first time. Several lawmakers have proposed bills, similar to a law passed in Vermont, that grant gay couples virtually all the rights of marriage that are granted by state law, according to the Associated Press. "It's time, maybe overtime," said Rep. Alice Wolf (D-Cambridge). Also proposed this year is a bill legalizing gay marriage, which would give same-sex couples all the benefits granted under federal law. Some advocates don't believe the bills have a chance of passing. But activists in California are more optimistic about the chances of gaining legal recognition for gay couples in that state after a decision to stop asking for civil unions and instead expand the state's existing domestic partnership law to include all of the rights of marriage. Assemblywoman Jackie Goldberg (D-Los Angeles), a lesbian, is expected to introduce the legislation this month, according to the Bay Area Reporter.

From staff and wire reports



medical report

International AIDS fight receives high-profile attention in U.S.

WASHINGTON — The State Department is seeking sizable budget increases to fight the global AIDS epidemic, further evidence that Secretary of State Colin Powell has given high priority to the struggle against the disease, according to the Associated Press. The battle against AIDS overseas, along with combating terrorism, have helped shape Powell's budget request to the White House budget office for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1. President Bush will submit his budget for fiscal 2004 to Congress early next month. "We can and must use our voices to convince others of the urgency and gravity of this global problem," Powell told a group of foreign ambassadors last month. Dr. Paul Zeitz, executive director of the Global AIDS Alliance, said he is encouraged but also said \$2.5 billion in new funds, a threefold increase over current spending, is essential to finance prevention, treatment and other programs. The increased attention to international AIDS by the Bush administration comes as celebrities like U2 singer Bono and talk show host Oprah Winfrey took high-profile tours through South Africa to call attention to the disease. Winfrey spent much of December there visiting AIDS orphanages and distributing \$7 million in donations from her charitable foundation.



Television personality Oprah Winfrey spent much of last month touring AIDS-ravaged South Africa, visiting AIDS orphanages and dispensing funds from her charitable foundation. She is the latest celebrity to launch a high-profile tour to call attention to the disease's global impact. (Photos by AP)

San Fran Web site helps feed gay drug market, police say

SAN FRANCISCO — A dramatic increase in party drugs for sale in gay personal ads on a popular online service has authorities alarmed, according to the San Francisco Examiner. Dealers targeting the city's gay drug scene, as well as those soliciting drugs such as ecstasy and speed, including crystal methamphetamine, are increasingly turning to Craigslist.com, San Francisco's popular online listings service. "This is a major reason for concern, and it is something we're going to be devoting resources to come the new year," said Capt. Tim Hettrich, head of the police department's vice unit. Dealers use code words to disguise the true nature of their offerings. For example, "Tina" stands for crystal meth and other forms of speed while "420" means marijuana and "Vitamin E" refers to ecstasy, sources told the newspaper. "It's all over Craigslist," said Skip Spear, associate director of San Francisco's New Leaf, a mental health and drug treatment center for gays. "We're concerned about it."

Research on gay teens paints incomplete picture, experts say

NEW YORK — The growing battery of studies that show gay teens are subject to prejudice and at high risk for suicide attempts and other risky behavior is incomplete, experts told the New York Times. The research led some school districts to adopt anti-gay harassment policies. "The research is delivering what I call 'the suffering suicide script,' which essentially tells them, 'Hey, look how horrible it is to be gay,'" said Dr. Savin-Williams, an expert on adolescent sexual identity issues. He said a major drawback of much of the research is that the studies include only those willing to identify themselves as gay or at least acknowledge same-sex attraction. That sample, Savin-Williams told the newspaper, is significantly smaller than the total number who will

eventually turn out to be gay, overlooking many teens who may be adjusting well but prefer to keep their sexual orientations private, even on anonymous surveys.

Steep budget increases may slow at federal health agency

WASHINGTON — The National Institutes of Health, which enjoyed huge budget increases in recent years, would get only a small funding boost under the Bush administration budget being prepared for next year, according to the Wall Street Journal. The agency — which includes the Office of AIDS Research that manages the scientific, budgetary, legislative and policy elements of the agency's AIDS research program — will see an increase of less than 1 percent and perhaps as little as 0.3 percent, a drop from the more than 15 percent increase the federal budget provided in its current fiscal year to bring its budget to about \$27 billion, sources said. "Something that small would be of concern to us because it's effectively a cut; it doesn't keep up with inflation," said Kevin Wilson, director of public policy at the American Society for Cell Biology.

Federal health officials fast-track trial AIDS vaccines from VaxGen

BRISBANE, Calif. — The Food & Drug Administration fast-tracked the HIV/AIDS vaccine candidates of VaxGen, giving a boost to the company's AIDSVAX B/B and AIDSVAX B/E, the only preventive AIDS vaccine candidates to advance to Phase III clinical trials, according to the Associated Press. VaxGen expects to report primary results from the trials later this year. AIDSVAX, made through recombinant DNA technology, contains recombinant proteins identical to those on the surface of HIV. The proteins induce the immune system to make antibodies.

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international news

Spanish politician comes out in mayor's race

MADRID — A Spanish politician running for mayor of Madrid under the environmentalist Greens Party recently told a gay-oriented magazine that he's gay, according to Agence France Presse. Jose Maria Mendiluce, who is also a member of the European Parliament, came out in the January issue of Zero magazine. Mendiluce, 51, told readers that he concealed his sexual orientation out of "cowardice," and added that publicly coming out could have cost him his career in politics. "The gay community can count on me to defend our rights together," he said. Political pundits said Mendiluce is an underdog in the May election. Mendiluce would join Bertrand Delanoe in Paris and Klaus Wowereit in Berlin as openly gay European mayors if he wins.



Jose Maria Mendiluce, an underdog in the mayor's race in Madrid, would join two other openly gay mayors in Europe if he wins the May election. (Photo by Cesar Rangel/AP)

Canadians evenly split on same-sex marriage, poll shows

TORONTO, Ontario — Canadians are almost evenly split on legalizing gay marriage and allowing gays to adopt, according to a new national poll, Gay.com reported. The survey, taken for Maclean's Magazine and Canwest Global Communications, showed 49 percent of the respondents approve of giving gays the right to marry, while 46 opposed the idea. On the question of adoption: 48 percent said they supported allowing gay couples to adopt, while 46 percent said they were opposed. "I think it also shows that we've changed our attitudes toward what 'a family' is," pollster David Plaxton said. The highest support for gay marriage was in Quebec, which has the country's most inclusive civil union law. The poll was conducted by Strategic Counsel, a Toronto-based polling firm.

Anti-gay charity under fire in U.K. for role in adoption fight

LONDON — An anti-gay charity could have its tax-exempt status removed after launching a campaign to stop same-sex couples adopting children with money raised through its charitable position, the Guardian reported. The Christian Institute, an evangelical think-tank, produced thousands of anti-gay adoption cards stating: "In the event of my death, I do not want my children to be adopted by homosexuals." They were published last spring when the House of Lords was debating whether to amend the Adoption & Children Bill to allow unmarried and gay couples to adopt children, a move designed to help find homes for the 60,000 children in local authority care. Lords approved the measure last month. The cards, a key element in the Institute's protest, are now to be investigated by the Charities Commission, the charity watchdog for England and Wales. George Broadhead, who made the complaint on behalf of the Gay & Lesbian Humanists Association, said his group objects to the institute using money raised through its tax-exempt charitable status to promote "plain, straightforward bigotry."

Russian gays still suffer, despite sexual revolution

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia — When Communism collapsed a decade ago and Russia cast off its Soviet conservatism, the ensuing sexual revolution generated looser public mores and a boom in the sex industry. But Russian gays say traditional gender roles and homophobia are still deeply ingrained in the post-Soviet mind-set, Reuters reported. The Soviet ban on homosexuality may have been lifted, but gays say they still face bias in modern-day Russia. "I don't feel there has been any progress in Russia in the past 10 years in terms of tolerance toward sexual minorities," said Ignat Fialkovsky, president of St. Petersburg's Association HS-Gay-Straight Alliance. "I would consider myself lucky to see some progress even in the second half of my life." In the Soviet Union, male homosexuality was punishable by up to five years in prison. Lesbians ran the risk of being sent to psychiatric institutions as late as May 1993, when President Boris Yeltsin repealed Article 121 of the Criminal Code.

Scottish gay festival suffers final blow

GLASGOW, Scotland — Pride Scotland, which started in 1995, was put into voluntary liquidation late last month, the Glasgow Herald reported. The group owes creditors about \$96,000. The festival, which alternated between Glasgow and Edinburgh, was set up to highlight the nation's gay residents. At its peak, it attracted 20,000 marchers to Edinburgh in 1999. However the 2002 festival, which cost about \$136,700 to stage and was backed by \$32,100 in grants from Glasgow City Council, suffered from infighting, bad weather and a switch from free to ticketed events. Although the festival needed to sell only 6,000 tickets to survive, it failed to attract half that number. Alister Blades, organizer of Pride Scotland, said the "rot set in" in the spring of 2002 when Pride's chair quit, criticizing staff members in her resignation letter. Blades said the disagreement fueled speculation the event would be cancelled, and it failed to regain its momentum.

From staff and wire reports

police beat

Execution date set for convicted killer in Texas gay-bashing

TYLER, Texas — A man convicted in the bias killing of a gay man will be put to death by lethal injection at 6 p.m. on Feb. 6, according to 365Gay.com. At trial, the court heard that Henry Dunn, 28, and two other men kidnapped Nicholas West in 1993, forced him into a pickup, drove to a remote gravel pit and shot him nine times. The men picked West, a 23-year-old Tyler medical records clerk, solely because he was gay, according to testimony. Donald Aldrich was convicted and is also on death row. David McMillan, the third man implicated in the crime, is serving a life sentence for aggravated kidnapping and robbery. The killing led to protests across the state with demands for hate crime legislation. West's family did not attend the court hearing but has indicated they plan to attend Dunn's execution.



Henry Dunn, one of three men convicted in the bias killing of gay man Nicholas West, is scheduled for a Feb. 6 execution in Texas. (Photo courtesy Texas Department of Corrections)

Calif. judge arrested following row with domestic partner

LOS ANGELES — A county judge was arrested Dec. 21 on suspicion of drunk driving and could face additional charges after allegedly brandishing a pistol during an argument with her domestic partner, according to the Los Angeles Times. Superior Court Judge Diana R. Hall was arrested after sheriff's deputies received an emergency call from her partner of four years, Deidra Dykeman, officials said. A sheriff's department spokesperson said field tests show Hall's blood-alcohol content at .18, more than twice California's legal limit of .08. After being held for four hours, Hall was released to her attorney. Drunk driving charges will likely stick, and an investigation will determine if other charges are filed, said Assistant District Attorney Christie Stanley. Santa Barbara attorney William Gamble, who is representing Hall, said Friday that Hall is distraught over the situation, prepared to plead guilty to drunk driving and would contest additional charges.

Conn. state trooper suspended over harassment allegations

HARTFORD, Conn. — State police Lt. Wayne Rioux was suspended without pay for 30 days Dec. 31 after an investigation found he sexually harassed subordinates, according to the Hartford Courant. Rioux, 49, denies the accusations and plans to fight the charges. "When the facts are presented through the appeals process, I am confident I will be exonerated," he said. Internal Affairs reported "a preponderance of evidence" that Rioux "created a sexually offensive environment." In addition to accusations that he made sexually suggestive comments, Rioux reportedly told an officer to read aloud a newspaper article about two men having sex. The Gay Officers Action League of New England said that the suspension was not a harsh enough punishment. "I would have thought a demotion would have been more appropriate," said Det. Michael Carney, vice president of the league. The investigation prompted the department to provide diversity training to supervisors, but Rioux avoided the training, Carney said.

Fla. man pleads innocent to sex charges with young convicted killer

PENSACOLA, Fla. — A family friend of two brothers convicted of bludgeoning their father to death pleaded innocent to kidnapping and sexual battery against the younger boy, according to the Associated Press. Trial is set for Feb. 10 against Ricky Chavis, who was also charged in Terry King's murder but was later acquitted in a case that has drawn national attention. Alex King, now 13, and his 14-year-old brother, Derek, are expected to testify. The King brothers pleaded guilty in November to third-degree murder after a judge threw out their second-degree murder convictions. Both boys are now in juvenile facilities serving multi-year sentences. Derek admitted he fatally beat King with an aluminum baseball bat Nov. 26, 2001, and Alex said he urged him to do it. Chavis also remains charged with being an accessory after the fact to murder and evidence tampering in King's killing. That trial is scheduled to start Feb. 24. If convicted on all counts still pending, he could face life in prison.

Canadian man charged in gay chat line assaults

OTTAWA, Canada — A man who allegedly assaulted and robbed men he solicited through a gay telephone dating service was arrested Dec. 24, according to the Ottawa Citizen. Investigators said Lawrence Pigeon, 37, met at least seven victims through the phone service, then demanded money after their sexual encounters. Pigeon faces 11 counts of robbery, nine counts of being unlawfully in a dwelling, three counts of forcible entry, two counts of forcible confinement, one count of assault causing bodily harm, one count of mischief, one count of extortion, one count of possession of a dangerous weapon and one count of breaking and entering. In some cases, the victims were beaten, and Pigeon returned to the several victims' homes to demand more money, police said. Pigeon remained in custody pending a possible court appearance this week.

From staff and wire reports

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Issue 1159

Forum

editorial

Bush has mandate to let gays serve

Bush has the respect and support to do what Clinton promised but failed to deliver: letting gays serve openly in the military. With an Iraqi War imminent, now is the time to take action.

By KEVIN C. NAFF

PRESIDENT BUSH'S STUNNING mandate in the November Congressional elections, coupled with the nation's urgent need for talented, dedicated Americans

to fight the war on terrorism present the Republican White House with a unique opportunity: to succeed where Bill Clinton failed and finally end the ban on gays serving openly in the military.

Clinton shamelessly courted gay votes and dollars, only to renege on his campaign promise to end the ban as his first presidential act. Clinton lacked a mandate, as well as the respect of the armed forces, and he knew that gay voters would follow him like lemmings no matter what he did, and so, the ban remains.

President Bush, on the other hand, won both the respect of the military and the country for his post-9/11 performance and has a clear mandate following the November midterm elections. It's time for him to use his political gains to deliver on his campaign promise of "compassionate conservatism."

What could be more compassionate than ending a discriminatory policy? Besides, enforcing legal bans on an entire class of people flies in the face of the true conservative ideal of less and limited government.

The unfortunate alliance between Republicans who consider themselves "conservative" and religious extremists like Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell has corrupted the historical definition of the term. The GOP will never gain widespread acceptance and support from minority voters so long as the party remains beholden to religious fundamentalists.

In reality, Bush's campaign slogan "compassionate conservatism" is redundant. A true conservative does not take issue with private sexual behavior or orientation and certainly does not advo-

cate for government interference in private matters. Bush cannot stay true to conservatism or to his campaign promises while maintaining the ban on gays in the military.

PRACTICAL POLITICS ALSO ARGUE for the president and Congress to kill "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Imagine the political ramifications if a Republican administration delivered gay Americans such a huge victory.

Scores of gay voters would have to reconsider their allegiances overnight. And the political risk to Bush is negligible. The most extreme right-wingers who would vote against him for ending the ban would never vote for a Democrat anyway.

Bush still enjoys sky-high approval ratings (a 63 percent positive rating according to a Jan. 7 Zogby poll) and his party now controls both houses of Congress. Bush has even shown a willingness to stand up to conservative members of his own party, as demonstrated by his rebuke of Sen. Trent Lott's recent racist comments glorifying segregation. He may be the best chance we have of ending the ban.

Last week brought news that Charles Moskos, the original author of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," said he now favors allowing gays to serve openly if Congress reinstates the draft. Moskos' reasoning has less to do with equality and more to do with practical fears of the draft system falling apart as thousands of heterosexuals claim to be gay to avoid service. But that's still a remarkable turnaround for a man who many blame for contributing to the travesty of ousting gays from service.

History would also be on Bush's side if he opted to end the ban. Although opponents of lifting the ban claim that the military ought not be used for social experimentation, the reality is that the military has frequently found itself in a leadership role in the fight for equal rights.

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The historic Civil Rights Act, which granted equal voting rights for minorities and banned segregation, didn't pass Congress until 1964. But the military was at least 20 years ahead of Congress. In 1941, the War Department formed an all-black squadron of the U.S. Army Air Corps and in 1948 the armed forces were desegregated.

Despite ongoing struggles for full equality, the military was often ahead of the times on matters of women's rights, too. While women didn't get the right to vote until 1920, an estimated 6,000 women worked as nurses in the Union army by 1865. The Navy enlisted women in 1917 and more than 11,000 women served in the Navy in World War I. There were roughly 280,000 women enlisted in the armed forces by the end of World War II.

Sixty years later, America again finds itself in a global conflict. And again, President Bush would be well advised to read his military history. The military has a long tradition of suspending restrictions on gays serving their country in wartime.

Ousted gay servicemen and women were re-inducted into the armed forces during World War II. Gay discharges also plummeted during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. In 1966, the Navy discharged 1,708 sailors for being gay; by 1970, near the height of the Vietnam War, that number dropped to 461 sailors.

Strong precedents exist for relaxing the ban when the nation is at war and the current war on terrorism (and impending war in Iraq) should be no exception. The recent discharge of nine Arabic linguists under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" points to a dangerous and disturbing aberration in that tradition.

By allowing such injustices to pass unchallenged, Bush mocks the importance of the war, telling the world that national security and fighting the al-Qaeda network take a back seat to enforcing an archaic and discriminatory policy.

Our allies in the terror war have already ended their own bans on gay service. American soldiers are serving alongside allies from Great Britain, Israel, Australia, Canada and 19 other nations whose military leaders understand that homosexuality is not an impediment to unit cohesion.

Bush should follow suit and use his immense political capital to end the ban on gays in the military. There are historical precedents for such a move. There are political dividends to be earned. And it's the compassionate thing for a conservative to do.

@ Kevin C. Naff is news editor of the Washington Blade, sister publication to this newspaper, and can be reached at knaff@washblade.com



viewpoint MICHAEL ALVEAR



Taboo topics like race, gender and sexual orientation must be faced on the activist's road to equality

What we don't talk about

IN 1971, IN AN "IT SEEMED LIKE A good idea at the time" moment, I went to a Ku Klux Klan rally with the KPFT news group. I was hanging out at the station when they were leaving and when one of them asked me if I wanted to go, I said sure.

So off we went, two guys with tape recorders, one other person, whose gender I don't remember, and me. The rally was at a field on the way to Tomball.

As soon as we arrived, we acquired an escort: four men wearing uniforms that looked sort of like Texas Ranger uniforms with black boots. They followed about 10 paces behind us, and when we stopped, so did they, waiting at parade rest until we began walking again. Klan members had set bombs that blew up the KPFT transformer two or three times by then, so I felt oddly safer with this escort.

Almost everyone else there, including many of the children, had on white robes. I think some, or perhaps most, of the men wore hoods, but I don't remember hoods on the women.

This was a big deal rally. There were several hundred people, maybe more. The Imperial Wizard, whoever he was, spoke, and then there was a cross burning. I remember the cross as being much taller than any of us.

THE EXPERIENCE WAS SURREAL, NOT because of the robes, the hoods, and the burning cross, but because after a while it began to seem like a completely normal outing. I was chatting with one of our guards about whether he had been a Marine (he had a Marine non-smile) and he said yes, and I asked him why he had joined the Klan and he said the John Birch Society was too liberal for him.

As we left, one of our group picked up a wonderful looking coconut cake at the bake sale, and was getting ready to buy it when I shrieked, "You can't do that!"

A friend who went to school in Beaumont in the late '60s said she and her sorority sisters used to go watch the KKK from a hill near the Lamar University campus. Her boyfriend protested, saying that the FBI was taking names. And they might have been.

One gay male friend of mine was a member of the Klan in his north Louisiana town in the late '50s. "They told me it would help me get ahead in the fire department, sort of like being in the Elks," he said. He gave up his membership, he said, because his mother told him, "No son of mine is going to belong to anything where he can't show his face." This man now lives, very happily, in a racially mixed neighborhood.



WE DON'T SEE MUCH FROM THE KLAN anymore, but sometimes something happens to remind me. And I know, as a white person, that my relationship with Klan could be one of curiosity, rather than fear. The worst they had done to me was blow up a radio transmitter.

Martha McNeil Hamilton, a writer with the Washington Post, has co-written a book, with co-worker Warren Brown, called "Black and White and Red All Over." Brown is black; Hamilton is white. Brown had kidney failure as a result of untreated hypertension. When the kidney his wife gave him failed, Martha donated hers. That event was, Martha relates, seen differently by blacks and whites.

So the book is about their experiences growing up in the segregated South and about how they became co-workers and friends. Martha said they wrote it to show that affirmative action works.

Martha grew up in Park Place. I have known various of her family members ever since her late brother Malcolm McNeil, a Houston political activist, and I

met in 1968 as UT Young Democrats.

This column was originally slated to be about things we don't talk about, like sex. I'm not quite ready to do that, but there's plenty of other things we don't talk about: gender, race, fear, violence, for example. And it hurts our causes when we don't.

The political and legislative fights that are approaching about issues like gay foster parenting and gay adoption aren't going to be resolved without honest discussion about what these people are afraid of. And the issues about workplace protection aren't going to be resolved by talking about protecting white male bankers. Talk about blue-collar lesbian mothers.

The two questions any activist needs to be willing to ask and truly listen to the answer are "What are you afraid of?" and "What has it been like for you?"

@ Ella Tyler is a freelance writer for Houston Voice and a longtime political activist in Houston. She may be reached via editor@houstonvoice.com.

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on the record



"It's a good thing I'm not his daughter then; maybe it's too bad I'm not."

Tennis star Martina Navratilova, who is gay, reacting to news that Damir Dokic, the father of tennis phenom Jelena Dokic, said he would kill himself if he discovered his daughter is a lesbian (FoxSports.com, Dec. 30)

"My version of falling in love is borderline psychotic. Should be avoided at all costs. Get obsessed. Can't fall in love and function at the same time. All-consuming. Tunnel vision. Euphoric."

Irish comedian and U.K. talk show host Graham Norton (Irish Examiner, Dec. 22)

"If these are all of gay men, there must have been an epidemic of homosexuality. Of course they weren't all of gay men."

John Ibson, professor at California State University, Fullerton, on "Picturing Men," a book of "non-gay" photographs about the "lost world" of male intimacy (Orange County Register, Dec. 29)

"The Trent Lott experience of the last several weeks is a reminder that the Republican Party can take two paths as it heads to the next presidential cycle: It can campaign on issues that unite America or on issues that divide it."

Patrick Guerriero, newly installed executive director of the Log Cabin Republicans, a gay GOP group (Boston Globe, Dec. 26)

"Do you remember Popeye in the comics? He used to say, 'I am what I am.' That's the way I feel about it. I have never once tested the atmosphere with a wet finger to see how I should vote."

Anti-gay Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), who retired on Jan. 6, after three decades in Congress (Associated Press, Dec. 24)



"The more 'normal' aspect of gay life does not get covered. Most Americans have a rather distorted view of who their homosexual fellow citizens are."

"Nightline" host Ted Koppel, on being honored with an award at the Feb. 22 black-tie dinner in Los Angeles benefiting the Human Rights Campaign, a Washington-based gay political group (CNN, Jan. 7)

"Batman and Robin? Not this again. Yes, they routinely shun the advances of Catwoman and Batgirl. And yes, we're talking about a muscular grown man and a limber teenage boy who aren't related to each other and who enjoy spending all their time together. Is that so wrong?"



Superman, in a memo to Lois Lane, reacting to the controversy surrounding the coming out of Rawhide Kid, a Marvel comics character, as imagined by writer Chip Kidd (New York Times, Dec. 28)

"On my hall of 14, I knew nine men that were gay. In my class of 27, seven of them were gay — and those were just people I knew in my company who I had close contact with."

Rob Hicks, a 28-year-old Korean language student at the U.S. Army's Defense Language Institute, who was discharged for being gay, along with six other DLI students (Santa Fe New Mexican, Dec. 30)

HOMEFRONT: Clip out a few home décor likes and start changes for the New Year with a homemade poster. **Page 20.**

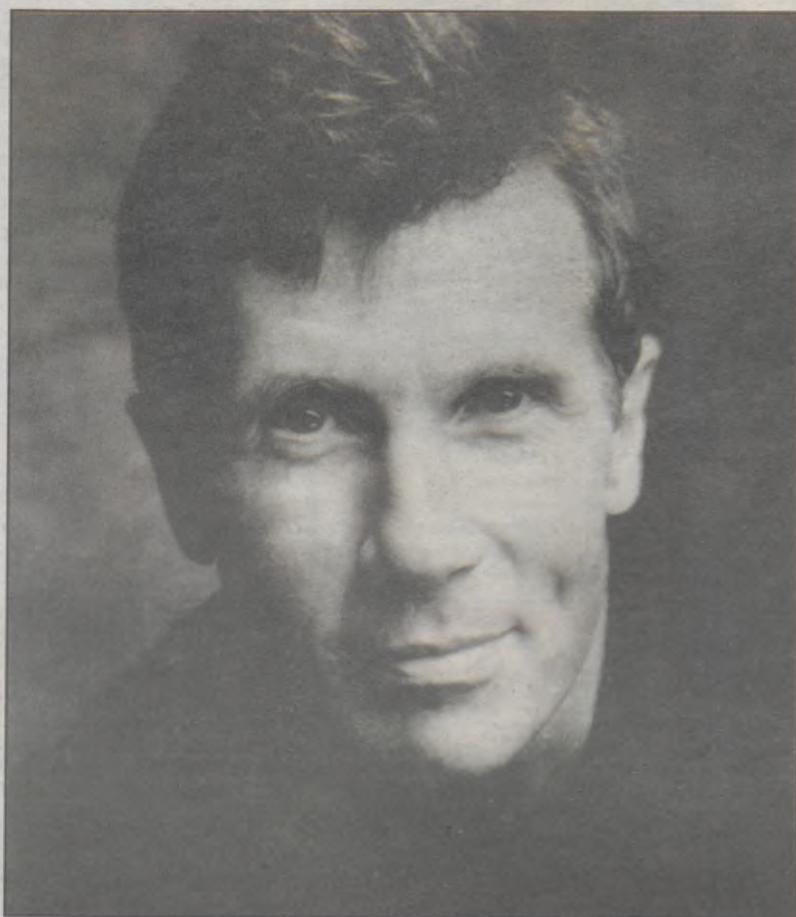
DINING: Dharma Café serves up unique dishes amidst a comfortable, welcoming atmosphere near downtown. **Page 19.**



Out on the Bayou

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Virginia Woolf remade



Pulitzer Prize-winning author Michael Cunningham talks about 'The Hours' going from print to the big screen

By KATHI WOLFE

WHEN MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM WAS A TEENAGER in a suburb of Los Angeles, he was into rock and roll. Books weren't part of his world.

Cunningham had no idea then that not only would he become an author, but that one day a big-time Hollywood movie would be based on one of his award-winning novels.

Last month, Cunningham attended the New York and Los Angeles premieres of the star-studded film "The Hours," based on his Pulitzer Prize-winning novel of the same name. Directed by Stephen Daldry and starring Nicole Kidman, Meryl Streep and Julianne Moore, the film opens locally on Jan. 17.

'The Hours' review, Page 17

"The Hours" is three linked stories, each of which takes place during a day in the life of a woman. One, set in a London suburb in 1923, shows real-life author Virginia Woolf (Nicole Kidman), with her husband Leonard, as she begins work on "Mrs. Dalloway."

Laura Brown (Julianne Moore) is a wife and mother in Los Angeles in 1951, who seeks refuge from her depression by reading "Mrs. Dalloway."

In present day New York, Clarissa Vaughan (Meryl Streep), an editor who lives with her partner Sally, is a modern day Mrs. Dalloway. She is giving a party for her friend Richard, a poet dying of AIDS.

"The Hours" made several best movie lists last year when it had a limited opening, receiving seven Golden Globe award nominations.

CUNNINGHAM DIDN'T THINK MUCH OF LITERATURE WHEN HE was growing up; he first read "Mrs. Dalloway" when he was 15.

"I was a kid on a skateboard, too young to know what Virginia Woolf was about," he says.

But Cunningham loved the musicality and beauty of Woolf's writing.

"I suddenly understood how much a book could be," he says. "I felt that Virginia Woolf did with language what Jimmy Hendrix did with his guitar."

Cunningham learned what it was like to be entranced by a book. Loving a book is like falling in love: "Who knows why we love this writer and not that writer?" Cunningham says. Reading "Mrs. Dalloway" changed "my stupid life."

Cunningham received a bachelor's degree in English literature from Stanford University.

"I like California. It's where I'm from. But I never thought of it as a place to write books. I moved east," says Cunningham, who received a master's degree in fine arts from the University of Iowa.

In addition to "The Hours," Cunningham wrote "A Home at the



Virginia Woolf, played by Nicole Kidman in 'The Hours,' would be happy to know that her work is 'still alive to the world,' says author Michael Cunningham, whose novel was the basis for the movie. (Photo courtesy Paramount Pictures)

Please see **HOURS** on Page 16

out on the bayou

Movie would please even Woolf, gay author says

HOURS, continued from Page 15

End of the World" (1990) and "Flesh & Blood" (1995). He received the Pen/Faulkner Award and the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for fiction for "The Hours."

Cunningham and his partner of 15 years now live in New York. The author also teaches at Brooklyn College, and the two spend their summers in Provincetown, Mass.

The accolades that his work receives belong to his partner as well as to himself, Cunningham says.

"Kenny is the first reader of all my stuff," he says. "I don't think I could write without him."

Originally, Cunningham thought "The Hours" would be a gay male version of "Mrs. Dalloway," he says.

"It was going to be about a gay Chelsea boy who was going to give a party. Like Mrs. Dalloway," Cunningham adds.

London in the 1920s and white, gay male society in New York have some similarities, he says.

"They're both about class and status," Cunningham says. "About giving the best parties."

As Cunningham began writing "The Hours," it felt like too small of a conceit, like a stunt to him, he says.

"It seemed too little an idea to write

a whole book about," he says. "Very gradually, it developed into a novel about women."

BUT HOW WOULD VIRGINIA WOOLF feel about "The Hours" — the novel and the movie?

She was a stern critic, Cunningham says.

"I don't flatter myself, but I think she would have approved of the spirit of the book and of the movie," he guesses.

Woolf would be happy to know that she is still so interesting to people, "so entirely alive to the world,"

Cunningham says.

Woolf, who died in 1941, was a feminist and essayist as well as an innovative 20th century novelist. Her half-brother abused her when she was growing up, and she suffered from depression. At one point in her life, Woolf had a relationship with English writer Vita Sackville-West.

"The thing that happens with people who love Virginia Woolf is that each of us wants to hang our own stories onto her," Cunningham says.

Woolf wasn't really able to have sex, he adds.

"She was like Henry James," Cunningham asserts. "If he'd have had sexuality, he would have been gay."

But to think of Woolf as being only bi-



Julianne Moore plays a 1950s housewife who seeks refuge in Virginia Woolf's 'Mrs. Dalloway' in 'The Hours.' (Photo courtesy Paramount Pictures)

polar, or as a lesbian or incest survivor — to look at her in only one way — is to "reduce her," Cunningham says.

For himself, the author is thrilled with the new movie. Every "queer" scene is just presented as "a given," he says.

"There's every indication that nobody's talking about it as a gay or lesbian movie, but as a human movie," Cunningham says, adding that this is a

first for a big Hollywood film.

The author has been open about his sexual orientation throughout his writing career.

"I don't want [being gay] to be treated as if it didn't matter," he says. "[But] I feel I'm part of a movement toward bigger books that are about different kinds of people."

He is gratified that both gay and straight readers enjoy his books.

"I didn't lose my gay male readers with 'The Hours,' even though no dick is sucked [in the book]," Cunningham says.

Since his work has gotten so much buzz, he's learned to say "no."

"You get asked to go to Rome, Paris, Barcelona. If you do all these fabulous things, you won't write a word," he says.

But Cunningham is not complaining. He concedes that his is a privileged life.

His next project — three novellas — will feature legendary gay writer Walt Whitman.

"One will be a horror story, one will be thriller and one will be sci-fi," Cunningham says.



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film STEVE WARREN



Three women in very different eras explore their sexuality through Virginia Woolf's 'Mrs. Dalloway,' including the author herself.

As time goes by

"THE HOURS" BOASTS AN embarrassment of riches. The end result isn't embarrassing, but it may be too rich for some viewers' blood.

Take the acting, please. Several scenes resemble cage matches as some of the best in the business compete strategically. Julianne Moore shifts into subtle mode while Toni Collette chews the scenery. Miranda Richardson drops back as Nicole Kidman runs for a touchdown.

And when Meryl Streep says, "I seem to be in some strange sort of mood. I seem to be unraveling," Jeff Daniels lets her unravel.

Nobody unravels like Streep.

Streep and Ed Harris are more evenly matched in some of the film's best scenes. Stephen Dillane is well paired with Kidman, as is John C. Reilly with Moore. Gay director Stephen Daldry rehearsed his actors enough to know what he was getting and get what he wanted.

DAVID HARE'S SCRIPT IS SO CLEVER that a second viewing is required to grasp all its intricacies. It's adapted from gay author Michael Cunningham's novel, the story of women from three different eras who are affected by Virginia Woolf's book "Mrs. Dalloway," including the author herself, played by Kidman.

Visual and thematic links connect the stories, even though most of the characters never move between them.

Readers of "Mrs. Dalloway" and those familiar with Woolf's life will find bonus points of commonality.

Several suicides are threatened in the body of the film, but we are reminded at the outset that Woolf's didn't occur until 1941, 18 years after the day she began writing "Mrs. Dalloway."

"A woman's whole life in a single day" is her plan for the novel, which Cunningham and Hare honor by presenting the lives of three women, each in a single day.

AS WOOLF WRITES THE FIRST LINE in England in 1923, Laura Brown (Moore) is reading it in Los Angeles in 1951 and Clarissa Vaughan (Streep) is living it in New York in 2001 as she prepares for a party.

The party celebrates a lifetime achievement award won by poet Richard Brown (Harris), who was her lover before they both realized they preferred their own gender.

Laura is planning a more modest party for her husband's (Reilly) birthday with only their young son in attendance. She feels trapped in her outwardly perfect life.



Meryl Streep, Julianne Moore and Nicole Kidman, plus a heart-wrenching lesbian story line, make 'The Hours' heady, but worth watching. (Photo courtesy Paramount Pictures)

Woolf's husband Leonard (Dillane) lives with her in a London suburb on the recommendation of her doctor, who thinks the pace of the city would endanger her mental health.

THREE PAIRS OF WOMEN LOCK LIPS in this movie. The least passionate kiss is between a lesbian couple who has been together 10 years. Mrs. Dalloway had passionately kissed a girlfriend before she married Richard Dalloway, but she made the only socially acceptable choice of the day by foregoing her lesbian inclinations.

Whether that was based on Woolf's experience or not, Virginia plants a good one on her sister before she leaves; and Laura's kisses to console Kitty turn suddenly serious, perhaps explaining her dissatisfaction with her marriage.

With so much great acting, the performers who underplay are to be treasured. Harris, Kidman and Moore head that short list. Kidman's makeup is great and renders her unrecognizable. But in an early scene where she lights a cigarette, one fears for a moment that her prosthetic proboscis will go up in flames.

If nothing else, "The Hours" should make you glad to live in the 21st century, when people have more choices.

MORE INFO

'The Hours'

■■■■ out of ■■■■

Queer Quotient: The director and the author of the source novel are gay. It can be viewed as a story of women of two bygone eras who repressed their gay leanings and one modern woman who doesn't.

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Detroit's auto extravaganza promises showrooms full of hot new vehicles, each in their own exciting way.

Tops in their class

IF SANTA DIDN'T DROP A NEW Porsche down your chimney last month, fear not. This year, consumers are blessed with perhaps the widest selection of new vehicles ever.

Sedans, coupes, convertibles, SUVs, luxo-mobiles and "crossovers" — which blend features of different types of vehicles — each offer more hot choices for 2003 than you'll find on an RSVP cruise.

What segment to consider? Which vehicle to buy? Our top picks for 2003 will help narrow the selection.

SEDAN: 2003 Honda Accord

A hot Accord? Sounds like an oxymoron, considering Honda's penchant for reliable yet yawn-inducing sedans.

But this Accord does inch closer to Euro sportiness. There are more curves inside and out, with improved emissions and better handling, horsepower, safety and seating.

Of course, it's still not a "date magnet." Look at BMW or VW for that. But Accord is hot because of its price: a 4-door, 4-cylinder manual is only \$16,000. That's \$5,000 to \$15,000 less than comparable Euro sedans.

COUPE: 2003 Infiniti G35 sport coupe

It's slightly shorter than the boffo G35 sedan introduced earlier last year. But the G35 sport coupe — also a rear-wheel drive — has edgier styling, a stiffer ride and more power (275 horsepower vs. 260 in the sedan).

Choose from a 5-speed automatic or 6-speed manual. Stability control (a must with this much testosterone) is standard. Options: 17- or 18-inch wheels, navigation system, heated seats and sunroof.

The G35 four-door was the first to go toe-to-toe with European sedans on performance, engineering and handling. This \$32,000 "G-spot" coupe goes one better.

CONVERTIBLE: 2003 BMW Z4 convertible

With so many automakers trying to be more European, what's left for a



Infiniti G35 Coupe



BMW Z4

European carmaker to do? Build on perfection, as with BMW's Z4.

The love-it-or-hate-it styling is a sharp departure from the 7-year-old Z3. But the \$40,000 Z4 is also larger than its predecessor in every dimension, including interior space, engine size and cargo room.

The brushed-aluminum dash is just as well, dashing as the exterior. The inside is surprisingly quiet for a ragtop, except for what amounts to a subwoofer that pumps engine growl into the cabin.

Dare we say it sounds like there's a tiger in the tank.

CROSSOVER VEHICLE: 2003 Chrysler Pacifica

On sale this March, the \$30,000 Chrysler Pacifica is a mutt, combining the best of a sedan, an SUV and a minivan.

As on most SUVs, there's all-wheel drive and high-seating positions. Sedan-like bucket seats are in the first and second rows, with a minivan-esque third row that folds flat into the floor.

Chrysler cannibalized the competent V-6, 250-horsepower engine from its 300 M sedan and put it here. Rear suspension is from Mercedes' superb E-class.

For many automakers, this new breed of crossover cars is all about blending vehicle types and components — in effect, making old dogs do new tricks.

Volvo XC90



SPORT UTILITY VEHICLE: 2003 Volvo XC90

Volvo was one of the last automakers to join the SUV party. But the XC90 is well worth the wait, even displacing BMW's award-winning X5 as best in class.

This winner has the most sedan-like ride of any SUV, coupled with renowned Volvo safety. Wide doors and a low floor allow easy access, with acres of rear-seat legroom.

Everything is user-friendly, including massive cargo room for beach parties or mountain treks. More important are myriad unseen elements, such as skid control, antilock braking, a rollover-prevention system and side-curtain air bags for all seven seats (a first).

We especially like the \$43,000 price tag, which is thousands less than the comparably equipped Range Rover or Lexus.

LUXURY VEHICLE: 2003 Maybach

With much fanfare, the Maybach arrived on U.S. shores aboard the Queen Elizabeth II. And for good reason: it is perhaps the finest luxury liner of a sedan every built.

With 543 horsepower, the twin-turbo V-12 is faster than a Porsche. Everything — ride, steering, braking, leather/wood interior, pillow-like headrests — is breathtaking. For \$300,000-plus, it better be.

There are two models: the "regular" 57 and the more expensive and 20-foot-long 62. The 62 offers a champagne refrigerator and twin flute holders, a glass-panel roof that can be set from opaque to clear (though outsiders can never see in), flat-screen monitors in the front seatbacks and wireless surround-sound headsets.

The back seats recline into comfy sci-fi barcaloungers and the large backdoors can be shut only by pressing a switch in the ceiling — or with the help of that handsome chauffeur.

dining J.A. CHAPMAN

Restaurant's relaxed atmosphere and mostly successful dishes entice Houstonians downtown

Café offers comfort

THE MINUTE I OPENED THE DOOR TO the Dharma Café, I felt right at home. The inviting loft-like space, the warm wooden tables, the eclectic selection of art on the walls and the pleasing row of full fruit bowls in the cooler all blended together to create an atmosphere of comfortable tranquility. Settling into my table, I could feel myself starting to relax.

Tucked into the end of the old Erie Iron Works building in the arty Warehouse District, just north of downtown, the Dharma Café is a small place. There's seating for just 28 inside and three additional tables outside on the porch. The small size lends an air of familiarity and friendliness to the whole place. And indeed, the waiters are helpful and chatty and the white-haired owner and chef, John Gurney, frequently comes out to greet his guests.

My first visit was at lunch, which according to my waiter, tends to be the Dharma Café's busiest time. Given its proximity to downtown, that's no surprise. On this pleasant post-holiday afternoon, the restaurant was nearly full with a mixture of downtown workers, artsy types from the neighborhood and those enjoying the last bit of their vacation time.

They start you off with a plate of delightfully herby focaccia, topped with grated Parmesan and chopped parsley, with a few red grapes on the side. The focaccia is good, but unfortunately it's served in a pool of olive oil and balsamic vinegar, which makes the bottom layer of bread soggy.

The menu is familiar, with salads, sandwiches, wraps, and a smattering of entrees. The soup of the day (cup \$2/bowl \$4) is Southwest chicken noodle and black bean, which the waiter warns is spicy. He's right, but it's also delicious. Loaded with chunks of chicken, tomatoes, corn, black beans and substantial homemade pasta, in a rich, slightly sweet, cumin-flavored broth with little bursts of fresh cilantro, the generous cup is almost a meal in itself.

I follow the soup with the Thai chicken wrap (\$6). Chunks of chicken breast, red cabbage, rice, and fresh coconut with a Thai peanut sauce are wrapped in a huge, soft sun-dried tomato tortilla. It's an excellent combination of flavors and I polish off the whole thing.

I hardly have room left, but when the waiter offers homemade peppermint gelato with chocolate chips (\$2) for dessert, I can't resist. I love peppermint ice cream, and this version with its smooth peppermint cream punctuated with crisp bits of candy cane and chocolate chips is excellent. The waiter informs me that the gelato flavors rotate, depending on what they have on hand.

AT DINNER, THE LIGHTS ARE DIMMED, but the relaxed aura remains. After a comedy of errors with the wine (our first two selections were no longer available), my friend and I split the Crab Rangoon appetizer (\$7) - crab and cream cheese in a deep-fried wonton. It's simple but delicious and the accompanying sweet ginger dipping sauce adds zip.



My friend chooses the outstanding blueberry chicken breast (\$15). A chicken breast filled with blueberries, almonds and ricotta cheese comes drizzled in a smoky-sweet blueberry brandy glaze and accompanied by deep fried crispy green beans and roasted new potatoes. I keep stealing bites and marveling at the complexity of flavors.

My entree from the specials board of coconut crusted salmon with bacon linguine finished with Sezechuan sauce (\$16) unfortunately disappoints. The linguine is tough, as if it's been sitting under a heat lamp for far too long, and the salmon is barely seared. I can see how the dish was supposed to work, however. The light sweetness of the crunchy coconut complements the salmon and the smokiness of the Sezechuan sauce sets off the whole dish nicely. If the pasta was fresh, this dish would be excellent. I have to think that this particular serving is an aberration, since everything else has been superb, and it's obvious that a large party that arrived rather suddenly has swamped the tiny kitchen.

We finish with cheesecake with fresh blueberries and a slice of carrot cake (\$3 each). Both are good, and the cheesecake passes my test of being rich and creamy without being too heavy or dense.

So how did the Dharma Café get its name? Gurney defines dharma as the spiritual work that you do in your life to return to yourself, your center. His dharma is to be of service to others by cooking for them. And the Dharma Café's mission is to create "food for life."

As you're sitting in the Dharma Café, you can almost imagine you're in Boulder or San Francisco. Soak up the hip atmosphere. Relax a little, and enjoy the good food. You're among friends. Namaste, Dharma Café.



Dharma Café

1302 Nance
Houston, TX 77002
713-222-6996
www.dharmacafehouston.com

Food: 10/10/10/10
Service: 10/10/10/10
Value: 10/10/10/10
Scene: 10/10/10/10

♥ = Stay home and eat cereal
10/10/10 = Well, if you really must
10/10/10 = Fine for all but the finicky
10/10/10/10 = Worth more than a 20-minute drive
10/10/10/10/10 = As good as you'll find in this city



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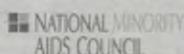
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homefront ELLA TYLER



Make a poster to preview changes and additions to your home decor for 2003

Map out the New Year

I GAVE UP ON NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS when I looked at several old sets and realized they were all depressingly repetitive. Lose weight, quit smoking, get more exercise, stop eating out, save money, be a better housekeeper. Talk about beating yourself up for the New Year. I did quit smoking two years ago, but don't think it had much to do with my resolution list.

Instead, I've adopted a New Year's ritual of making a magnet map for myself. It's an '80s thing — a visual affirmation list. The short version is that you create a poster of your ideal life. The '80s idea was that you draw these things to your life, which I don't particularly believe, but what I do believe is that we all can use some help identifying just what it is that we want.

I also burn a candle from Fiesta. I have several, but my "pas, salud, dinero, suceso, buena suerte (y mas)" one is a favorite for New Year's Eve.

The idea of a magnet map is especially useful when it comes to our physical surroundings. Whatever you want is probably out there, if you know what it is and where to shop for it. This is something more sophisticated than cutting pages out of a magazine and taking them to a decorator to decipher, but less complicated than floor plans, schematics and fabric samples.

Begin with poster board, a variety of reasonably current shelter magazines (not all H & G and Nest), colored pens (I have a set of 36), scissors and tape. The first part is to go through your magazines quickly and tear out anything that has any appeal. You don't want to think very much about this part. After that, look at your choices with a little more discernment. When you've decided that this thing, whatever it is, feels like it belongs in your life, tape it up. Everything doesn't have to go together. Nothing has to be practical, tasteful, or useful.

Write anything that comes to mind — serene, airy, cozy, more storage, for example. I was a little surprised to find myself using the turquoise, purple and pink pens a lot. I obviously want more color somewhere in my life.

Now you have it. What do you do?

MY MAPS ALWAYS HAVE FLOWERS, and I've decided that having them outside is not enough. I'm really enjoying my Christmas flowering plants, and bought a bunch of roses for New Year's Eve, so I'm going to make a deliberate effort to have fresh flowers in the house this year. I might even try having a cutting garden, but that's a different column.

I'm going to make the kitchen more

accessible for my mother. This is one of the items that would have been on a resolution list, too. She's having problems with heavy pots on lower shelves, and I think I'll put them on the shelves we used to use as the pantry.

I would not have written "improve lighting" on a resolution list, but I kept tearing out pictures of fancy lamps, which is a clue. One year, all kinds of kitchen gadgets attracted me. I realized that I didn't have a decent potholder, so how was I supposed to enjoy cooking for myself at home? I spent that New Year's Day at K-Mart, buying kitchen basics.

I have no idea why some things are on my poster. I fell in love with a dark brown leather sofa, so it's there, and maybe I'll have one eventually.

I have no idea why some things are on my poster. I fell in love with a dark brown leather sofa, so it's there, and maybe I'll have one eventually. Some of the reason to do this exercise is to end some of the confusion when you shop for home furnishings. Earlier this year, I considered buying some flannel sheets that had a star map on them. I dithered for a while, then decided I really did not want to sleep on navy blue sheets. Then I dithered about the penguin ones. If I'd thought about it, I have never had anything that resembled these sheets on my maps. So I've made up a rule. If there is nothing in bright green on your poster, you don't need to look at the bright green sofa twice.

ONE OF THE MAGAZINES I WAS working my way through suggested making a list of annoyances and working at getting rid of these. That sounds like a worthy project, too. The writer of this article managed to come up with nearly 100, which should keep her busy for all of 2003. I think she's wrapped a little too tightly, but I'm sure she'll feel better soon.

Seriously, if you have this many annoyances, you don't need to be making a magnet map — you need to be doing things. Worry about what you do want later.

Our home is the one area of our lives where we can come closer to having things our way than any other area of our lives. Try this exercise and see what it is that you really want. Then you can make plans to get it.

community calendar

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11

AssistHers. Meeting. 713-521-4628.

Houston Buyers Club. Free BIA (Bioelectrical Impedance Analysis) the first two Saturdays of the month. Hours: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Houston Buyers Club, 3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 604. 713-520-5288. http://www.houstonbuyersclub.com/bia_testing.html

Houston Outdoor Group. January potluck dinner, 6 p.m. Bill and Thomas, 713-526-6963.

EVERY SATURDAY

All-Spanish Worship Service/Noche Espiritual 6 p.m. Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, 2026 W. 11th. 713-303-3409 or 713-861-9149.

After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM. 1-4 a.m.

Dignity mass. 7:30 p.m. for gay Catholics. 713-880-2872.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 11 p.m.-2 a.m. at Viviana's. 713-830-3000.

Gay & Lesbian Breakfast Club. 9:30 a.m. 281-437-0636.

Houston Wrestling Club. Practice. 1:30 p.m. 713-453-7406.

Q-Patrol. Volunteers walk the streets to help prevent hate crimes. 9:30 p.m. Convene at community center. 713-528-SAFE. E-mail: qpatrolinc@aol.com

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Rosary 8 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama. 713-528-6665.

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in, noon-5 p.m. • TATS meeting, 4 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. www.hlgcc.org.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12

SISTERS of Houston. Support group for African-American lesbians. Meeting. 3:30 p.m. Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne. Voice mail: 713-695-8089.

EVERY SUNDAY

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Services at 8:30 & 10:50 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 713-526-1017.

Center for Spiritual Living. Services at 11 a.m. for children at 10:50 a.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808. The center also has commitment ceremonies, metaphysical bookstore and classes.

Community Gospel. Service at 11 a.m. & 7 p.m. Sunday School for children 10 a.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.

Community of Kindred Spirits in Beaumont. Worship at 6 p.m. 1575 Spindletop Ave., Beaumont, Texas. 409-813-2055. E-mail: ckrev3@netzero.net

Covenant Church, Ecumenical, Liberal Baptist. Service 9:30 a.m. & education hour 11 a.m. 713-668-8830.

Emerson Unitarian Church. Adult education, 10 a.m. Service, 11 a.m. Lunch at noon. www.emersonhou.org.

First Congregational Church (Memorial). Service at 10 a.m. Christian Education, 11:30 a.m. 713-468-9543 or fcc-houston.org.

First Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:30 & 11:30 a.m. Brunch at 10:30 a.m. 713-526-5200. church@firstuu.org.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 9 p.m.-midnight at Club Inergy. 713-830-3000.

Gay Catholics of St. Anne's-Houston. 5 p.m. worship service. Dinner and social. alexcam@wt.net. 713-623-0930.

GLOBAL. Gay Lesbian or Bisexual Alliance. University of Houston GLBT student group meeting. 2 p.m. at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. www.uh.edu/~global. E-mail: global@bayouuh.edu.

Grace Lutheran Church. Sunday school for all ages 9 a.m. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-528-3269.

Houston Roughnecks Rugby Club. Practice from 4-6 p.m. For more information, log on to www.roughnecksrugby.org.

Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m.-noon. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com

Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Church. 10 a.m. service. 3333 Fannin, Suite 106. 713-528-6756.

Resurrection MCC. Services, 9 and 11 a.m. Children and Youth Sunday School, 10 a.m. Children's service, 11 a.m. 713-861-9149.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Holy Eucharist, Rite I, 7:45 a.m.; Holy Eucharist, Rite II, 8:55 a.m.; Education hour, 10 a.m.; Choral Eucharist, 11 a.m. 713-528-6665.

Sunday Brunch. For HIV-positive men. 11 a.m. Riva's, 1117 Missouri St. Paul, 713-880-0690. e-mail: PoznBuff@aol.com.

The Women's Group. Meeting and discussion. 10:45 a.m. 713-529-8571.

Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Adult discussion, 9 a.m. Service, 11:15 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.

Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 502 Church St. Service, 10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.

Unitarian Fellowship of Houston. Adult forum, 10 a.m. Service, 11 a.m. 713-686-5876.

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in, 2-6 p.m. • GLBT Community Church with Rev. Melissa Wood: Bible study, 10-10:45 a.m., worship 11 a.m. www.geocities.com/glbtc • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. www.hlgcc.org.

MONDAY, JANUARY 13

EVERY MONDAY

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

Free HIV Testing. Houston Area Community Services. 9 a.m.-noon at Joseph-Hines Clinic, 1710 West 25th St. 713-526-0555, ext. 231, 227 or 226.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m.-midnight. Keys West. 713-830-3000.

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

Gay Fathers/Fathers First. Support group. 8-9:30 p.m. Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Tom, 713-726-8736. www.geocities.com/gaydadshouston/

Grief & Divorce Support Groups. 7 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017, ext. 208.

Kolbe Project. Eucharist 7:30 p.m. 713-861-1800.

Montrose Clinic. Offers weekly peer support groups for gay and bisexual men with HIV. Spanish speaking group meets, 6:30 p.m. 215 Westheimer. 713-830-3050. Grupo de Apoyo para Latinos gay y bisexuales VIH positivos. Lunes 6:30. Para mas informacion llama al 713-830-3025.

Queer Voices Radio Show. 8-10 p.m. KPFT 90.1

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. www.hlgcc.org.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 14

Lesbians United in Coalition. Meeting. 6:30 p.m. at the home of Arden Eversmeyer, 1034 W. 17th St. Purpose of LUC is to bring lesbian/lesbian-supportive groups together on a quarterly basis to increase communication, share ideas and get to know each other. For general information, call AssistHers at 713-521-4628.

EVERY TUESDAY

Bering Support Network. Lunch Bunch Gang, 11 a.m. 713-526-1017.

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

Free HIV Testing. Houston Area Community Services. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Joseph-Hines Clinic, 1710 West 25th St. 713-526-0555, ext. 231, 227 or 226.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m.-midnight at Club Houston. Also 4-8 p.m. at 611 Club, 611 Hyde Park. 713-830-3000.

Gay youth. New program for young gay males, ages 18-29. 7 p.m. 614 Avondale. 713-533-9786.

Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous. Support group. 7 p.m. Houston Women's Rugby Team. No experience necessary.

Practice, 6:30-8:30. Westland YMCA. Kay, 713-208-1529.

Introduction to Buddhism. All welcome at 634 W. Temple in the Heights. 7 p.m. Carlton. 713-862-8129.

Rainbow Ranglers. Free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. No partner needed. Beginner 2 Step, Waltz, Shuffle & Swing. 8:30 p.m. 713-528-9192.

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • Lesbian Coming Out Group, 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. www.hlgcc.org.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15

EVERY WEDNESDAY

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.; SOM Discussion & Exploration, 7 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Support Network Pot Luck Dinner, 6:30 p.m. Various support groups, 7 p.m. 713-526-1017.

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

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 4-8 p.m. at Mary's; 9 p.m.-midnight at Ripcord; 10 p.m.-1 a.m. at EJs; 10 p.m.-1 a.m. at Midtowne Spa. 713-830-3000.

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 2015 Thomas St. OraSure method. Call for appointment. Sharon, 713-873-4157.

Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal, 7-9 p.m. 1307 Yale. 713-528-4379.

Houston Roughnecks Rugby Club. Practice from 6-8 p.m. For more information, log on to www.roughnecksrugby.org.

Houston Tennis Club. 7:00-9 p.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com

Spiritual Uplift service. 7 p.m. Resurrection MCC. 713-861-9149.

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in, 2-9 p.m. • Houston Black Lesbian, Gay, Transgender Coalition office hours 10 a.m.-noon • Free HIV testing, counseling, 6-9 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. www.hlgcc.org.

Free HIV Testing. Houston Area Community Services. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Joseph-Hines Clinic, 1710 West 25th St. Also 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Gallery Medical Clinic, 5900 North Freeway, and Club Toyz from 9 p.m.-midnight. 713-526-0555, ext. 231, 227 or 226.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 4-8 p.m. at The Outpost; 8 p.m.-midnight at Brazos River Bottom and Cousins; 10 p.m.-1 a.m. at Toyz Disco. 713-830-3000.

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

Web site: <http://home.swbell.net/larathon/houfr.htm>. E-mail: larathon@swbell.net.

GLOBAL. Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual Alliance at the University of Houston-Central Campus. Weekly meeting. 6 p.m. e-mail: nguyen0023@hotmail.com.

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

Houston Women's Rugby Team. No experience necessary. Practice, 6:30-8:30. Westland YMCA. Kay, 713-208-1529.

Lambda Skating Club. 8 p.m. Tradewinds Skating Rink. www.neosoft.com/~lsc. 713-523-9620.

Montrose Clinic. Offers weekly peer support groups for gay and bisexual men with HIV. English speaking group meets, 6:30 p.m. 215 Westheimer. 713-830-3050.

Rainbow Ranglers. Free C&W dance lessons. No partner required. Brazos River Bottom. 8:30 p.m. 713-528-9192.

Recovery From Food Addiction (RFA). Meeting for 12-step program open to all. Noon-1 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1805 W. Alabama St. RFA: 713-673-2848. www.geocities.com/rfa77235/. E-mail: rfa7worldservice@aol.com.

Spanish Chula Conversation Group. Café Agora, 7 p.m. E-mail: charlahouston@msn.com. 713-416-7203.

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

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • Houston Black Lesbian, Gay, Transgender Coalition office hours 10 a.m.-noon • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. www.hlgcc.org.

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Kolbe Project. Eucharist 7:30 p.m. 713-861-1800.

Montrose Clinic. Offers weekly peer support groups for gay and bisexual men with HIV. Spanish speaking group meets, 6:30 p.m. 215 Westheimer. 713-830-3050.

Queer Voices Radio Show. 8-10 p.m. KPFT 90.1

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. www.hlgcc.org.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 17

EVERY FRIDAY

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 10 p.m.-2 a.m. at The Meatrix; 10 p.m.-1 a.m. at EJs and at Midtowne Spa. 713-830-3000.

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 2015 Thomas St. OraSure method. Call for appointment. Sharon, 713-873-4157.

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

Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (H.A.T.C.H.) Meeting. 7-10 p.m. 713-942-7002.

Houston Tennis Club. 7:00-9 p.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com

Kolbe Project. Morning prayer, 10 a.m. 713-861-1800.

Mishpachah Alizim. GLBT Jewish congregation. Sabbath services at 8 p.m. on the second Friday of each month at Baby Barnabys, 602 Fairview. Monthly study groups with Congregation Beth Israel, 5600 North Braeswood.

Mishpachah Alizim, P.O. Box 980136, Houston, TX 77098. 866-841-9139, ext. 1834.

Q-Patrol. Volunteers walk the streets to help prevent hate crimes. 9:30 p.m. Convene at community center. 713-528-SAFE. E-mail: qpatrolinc@aol.com

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. www.hlgcc.org.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 4-8 p.m. at Mary's; 9 p.m.-midnight at Ripcord; 10 p.m.-1 a.m. at EJs; 10 p.m.-1 a.m. at Midtowne Spa. 713-830-3000.

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 2015 Thomas St. OraSure method. Call for appointment. Sharon, 713-873-4157.

Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal, 7-9 p.m. 1307 Yale. 713-528-4379.

Houston Roughnecks Rugby Club. Practice from 6-8 p.m. For more information, log on to www.roughnecksrugby.org.

Houston Tennis Club. 7:00-9 p.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com

Spiritual Uplift service. 7 p.m. Resurrection MCC. 713-861-9149.

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in, 2-9 p.m. • Houston Black Lesbian, Gay, Transgender Coalition office hours 10 a.m.-noon • Free HIV testing, counseling, 6-9 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. www.hlgcc.org.

Free HIV Testing. Houston Area Community Services. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Joseph-Hines Clinic, 1710 West 25th St. Also 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Gallery Medical Clinic, 5900 North Freeway, and Club Toyz from 9 p.m.-midnight. 713-526-0555, ext. 231, 227 or 226.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 4-8 p.m. at The Outpost; 8 p.m.-midnight at Brazos River Bottom and Cousins; 10 p.m.-1 a.m. at Toyz Disco. 713-830-3000.

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

Web site: <http://home.swbell.net/larathon/houfr.htm>. E-mail: larathon@swbell.net.

GLOBAL. Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual Alliance at the University of Houston-Central Campus. Weekly meeting. 6 p.m. e-mail: nguyen0023@hotmail.com.

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

Houston Women's Rugby Team. No experience necessary. Practice, 6:30-8:30. Westland YMCA. Kay, 713-208-1529.

Lambda Skating Club. 8 p.m. Tradewinds Skating Rink. www.neosoft.com/~lsc. 713-523-9620.

Montrose Clinic. Offers weekly peer support groups for gay and bisexual men with HIV. English speaking group meets, 6:30 p.m. 215 Westheimer. 713-830-3050.

Rainbow Ranglers. Free C&W dance lessons. No partner required. Brazos River Bottom. 8:30 p.m. 713-528-9192.

Recovery From Food Addiction (RFA). Meeting for 12-step program open to all. Noon-1 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1805 W. Alabama St. RFA: 713-673-2848. www.geocities.com/rfa77235/. E-mail: rfa7worldservice@aol.com.

Spanish Chula Conversation Group. Café Agora, 7 p.m. E-mail: charlahouston@msn.com. 713-416-7203.

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

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • Houston Black Lesbian, Gay, Transgender Coalition office hours 10 a.m.-noon • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. www.hlgcc.org.

Free HIV Testing. Houston Area Community Services. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Joseph-Hines Clinic, 1710 West 25th St. Also 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Gallery Medical Clinic, 5900 North Freeway, and Club Toyz from 9 p.m.-midnight. 713-526-0555, ext. 231, 227 or 226.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 4-8 p.m. at The Outpost; 8 p.m.-midnight at Brazos River Bottom and Cousins; 10 p.m.-1 a.m. at Toyz Disco. 713-830-3000.

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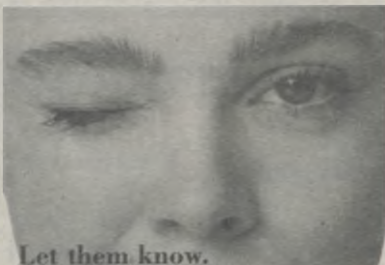
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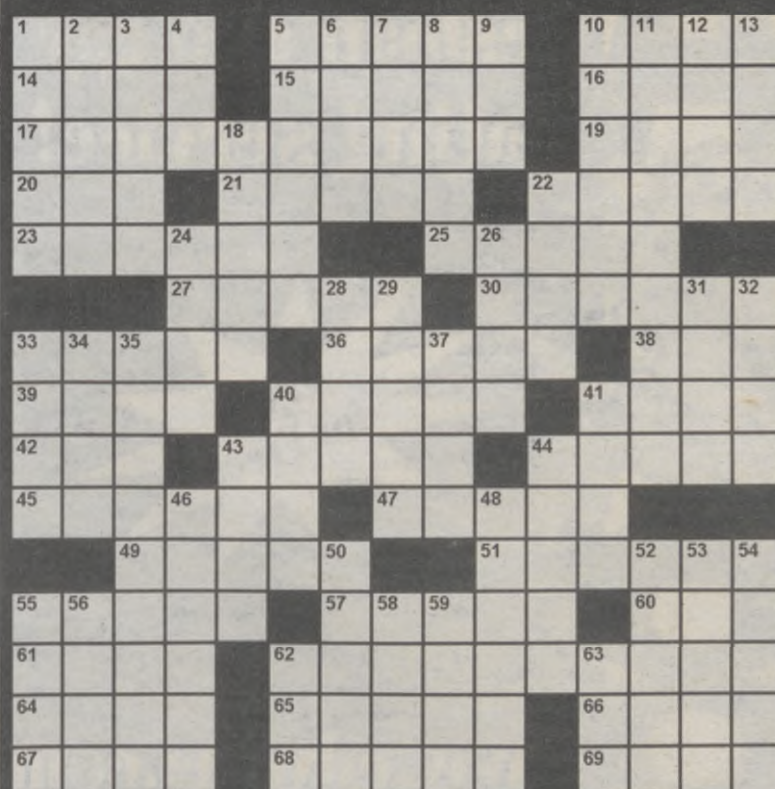
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Q Puzzle



"Birds of a Feather"

Across

1. Whitman who sampled Peter Doyle
5. Needed some BenGay
10. The Tool ____ (Palm Springs' leather bar)
14. It's for skin care
15. Animal part in "The Emperor's New Groove"
16. In need of some rays at Laguna Beach
17. Director of "Stonewall"
19. Shirley MacLaine's la Douce role
20. Genetic stuff
21. End of a Stein quote
22. Halliwell's partner
23. Caesar's milieu
25. Elizabeth Moberly's "Homosexuality: A New Christian ____"
27. Reinaldo Arenas' Peter
30. South Station to Penn Station link
33. George of "Robot Monsters"
36. How Dick Button responds to a challenge?
38. Home st. of Tallulah Bankhead
39. Former lovers
40. Openly gay mayor of Wilton Manors, Florida
41. Alice's insect tour guide in Wonderland
42. "I Could Have Danced ____ Night"
43. Obstacle to gay pride
44. "My Fair Lady" composer
45. Stephen Spender novel, with "The"

Down

47. James Baldwin work
49. Drag queen Joey
51. Donahoe of "L.A. Law"'s lesbian kiss
55. Type of Boy Scout badge
57. "Flesh" in an Almodovar movie title
60. Cont. of Ibiza and Mykonos
61. Art Deco design name
62. Star of "The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me"
64. Early AIDS play
65. Craftier than the Family Stone leader?
66. Shaft output
67. Baseball heartthrob Bucky
68. Electrical pioneer Nikola
69. Gas brand in the land of Maggie Cassella
13. "Giant" James
18. Madonna's "Sooner or ____"
22. Followers of lions and tigers and bears
24. They're not homo sapiens
26. Hudson and Day pillow activity
28. First name among lesbian writers
29. Beginning of a carol about orgasm?
31. "And I hope I'll be ____ some day..." ("Schoolhouse Rock" lyric)
32. Feminist funny lady Clinton
33. Straight, at the bar
34. Trucker's shaft
35. Co-founder of Daughters of Bilitis
37. Incenses
40. Home field of a '69 miracle
41. "Naked Maja" painter
43. Long, narrow opening
44. Unable to walk like a man
46. Malcolm Boyd, for example
48. "Cancer in Two Voices" co-author Butler
50. Sequence for Bernstein
52. Holly and more
53. They come under kings
54. Joe Cocker's "You ____ Beautiful"
55. Margaret who studied mankind and loved women
56. Irish tongue
58. Nero's bird
59. Cambodian money
62. P-town summer hrs.
63. Pseudonymous lesbian opponent of Wade

Answers at right

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Answers to this week's Q puzzle

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E	U	R	E	N	E	C	A	R	N	E	R	M
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				A	S	S	E	S	E	L	P	E
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D	S	H	E	D	A	C	H	A	T	L	T	W

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My Stars!

January 10 — 16



ARIES (March 21 to April 20)

This is a good week for you to start carrying out your New Year's resolutions, darling. Enough distractions! Make a schedule and stick to it, even if you fear that you'll be bored to death. A Gemini will entertain you *after* your work is done.



TAURUS (April 21 to May 20)

This is a fun-loving time of year for you. While everyone else is dealing with post-holiday blues, you have a well-earned sense of optimism. Things are looking up, darling, and you know it. A Virgo helps you to turn a corner in your personal life.



GEMINI (May 21 to June 21)

Mercury retrograde may cause you some stress during this busy cycle, so be sure to try extra hard to manage your time well. Work needs to be double- and triple-checked. You're able to talk a Leo into your arms. Keep using your mouth.



CANCER (June 22 to July 22)

You may not understand why your love life is so confusing now, but when the full moon in your sign hits on Jan. 18, you should trust what your heart tells you. The logical approach hasn't done much good for you. A Sag wants you to drop your defenses (and your pants).



LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22)

This is a difficult time for you to make decisions about money. Get more information. There are resources you're not taking advantage of, sweetie. A Scorpio wants to take advantage of you, repeatedly.



VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22)

It's a good time to pursue a writing project that you put aside months ago, while the Sun meets your ruler Mercury in your house of creativity. You may have to go through several more drafts while Mercury is retrograde, but the end result will be golden.



LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22)

Develop one of your skills this week and really practice, darling. Your talents as an artist and a diplomat complement each other. What you're lacking is discipline and structure. Push yourself ... or a Capricorn will.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21)

The Sun finishes up a stint in your house of communication this week and brings you brilliant ideas that you should develop into concrete successes in the real world. Following through on your ideas will be a challenge. A Cancer will teach you discipline, with a smile.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21)

Mars begins a stint through your sign and gives you physical energy to burn. You're able to seduce anyone with your wily ways, but you may want to be a little more diplomatic than usual in your dealings with an Aquarius. Friendship counts more than raw lust (believe it or not!).



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19)

The full moon in your house of love on Jan. 18 could send your heart racing as two hotties vie for your affection. Enjoy the thrills, but wait till February before you make any major decisions. An Aquarius is in no rush.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18)

It may be time to start planning your birthday celebration(s). You deserve the best in life, darling, but you may have to give most of it to yourself. A Taurus, however, is planning a sexual surprise just for you.



PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20)

Mars moves into your career house in mid-January and brings new attention to your talents as a businessperson (and you thought you didn't have any!). A Taurus wants to trade you sex for ... well, sex. Make sure you get a nice bang for your buck — or several.

Jill Dearman is the author of the best-selling "Queer Astrology for Men" and "Queer Astrology for Women" (both from St. Martin's Griffin). For information on charts and consultations, call 212-841-0177 or e-mail QScopes@aol.com.

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