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Lesbian activist, HLGCC board member, Houston Voice contributing writer, Maria Minicucci dies.

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Love, Janis companion CD offers music and insight through the letters sent home by the '60s rock icon.

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When it comes to watering indoor plants, less is more and if you're careful, your poinsettia can bloom all year.

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Legislation protects, prohibits gays



Sen. Rodney Ellis, D-Houston, center, speaks after Texas Gov. Rick Perry, right, signed into law the James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act during a ceremony on Friday, May 11 in Austin. Byrd, a black man, was killed when he was dragged behind a pickup truck by three white men in Jasper, Texas, in 1998. Rep. Senfronia Thompson, D-Houston, is on left.

Hate crimes bill becomes law, Senate passes Defense of Marriage Act

FROM STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Gay Texans are getting mixed signals from the state legislature this session.

While Gov. Rick Perry has long questioned whether Texas needs a tougher law cracking down on hate crimes committed against minorities, homosexuals and others, he signed into law the James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act last Friday.

This came hot on the heels of Thursday's vote by the House to approve a bill designed to protect schoolchildren or their parents from discrimination because of race, religion, sexual preference or other factors.

Then on Tuesday, the Texas Senate passed the so-called Defense of Marriage Act, which would prohibit Texas from recognizing marriages or unions between people of the same gender.

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Can gays go straight?

Debate over reparative therapy heats up

by MIKE FLEMING

Two conflicting studies. Three scientists. Some 403 people. It didn't take much to reignite the national debate over reparative therapy and whether gays can go straight last week during the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association here.

Two contradicting studies on the possibility of changing sexual orientation—one suggested it can be done, and one said it is harmful to try—were unveiled during a symposium May 9 sponsored by the Association of Gay & Lesbian Psychiatrists, a sub-group of the APA.

Dr. Robert Spitzer of Columbia University concluded that some "highly motivated" individuals can change from gay to straight.

Gay doctors Ariel Shidlo and Michael Schroeder, in the same symposium, presented a study that said the vast majority of gay men and lesbians who attempted to change orientation were harmed by those efforts.

Both studies have to yet to undergo a tough peer-review process before they are published. Critics on both sides of the debate have pointed out that the research did not use random samples and that

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A study released last week by Dr. Robert Spitzer said gays can go straight, but the research was quickly criticized, as was a second study that said reparative therapy is harmful to gay men and lesbians who try to change their sexual orientation.



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Community activist, *Voice* contributor, Maria Minicucci dies

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center to establish memorial fund in honor of past president, board member

by ELLA TYLER

Maria Minicucci, PhD, past president of the Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center, died suddenly on Tuesday morning at her mother's home in Buffalo, New York, where she had gone for a visit. She was 50. She is survived by her spouse, Deb Murphy, by her mother and numerous friends.

Minicucci was a regular contributor to the *Houston Voice*. She operated the Center for Creativity, Knowledge and Change, and taught psychology at the Houston Community College campus in Stafford. Minicucci was a member of the board of the Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center and was serving a second term as the program director. She co-led a monthly workshop, "What Lesbians Do," at the center and was a co-chair of the 2001 Houston Gay & Lesbian Film Festival.

"Maria's death is a great loss to me personally and to the community. We will miss her more than we ever realize right now," Tim Brookover, current community center president, said. "When Maria became president of the center, it was in serious trouble, but she put it on a solid footing. Maria was a genius at coming up with programs that would bring people in and get them working together."

Jessica Wicks, who hosted the center's Lesbian Film Night for several years, fondly remembers one of her first



Maria Minicucci (left), pictured with longtime spouse Deb Murphy, died Tuesday while visiting her mother in Buffalo, N.Y. Minicucci was past president and a current board member of the Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center and a contributing writer for the *Houston Voice*.

encounters with Minicucci.

"When I discussed my plan of having a Lesbian Film Night at the center, Maria, who I had just met, immediately responded 'What a great idea,' and it became a done deal."

When Jessica married Robin Wicks, in Texas's first legal lesbian marriage ceremony, Minicucci was her matron of honor.

"I will never forget going with Maria to get my wedding dress, and how we laughed and giggled as she shared this precious moment with me," Wicks says.

Minicucci was a popular teacher, according to Dr. Donald Green, chair of the Psychology Department at Houston Community College, Southwest.

"She did an excellent job. I was impressed by the quality of her work and students

found her refreshing in the classroom."

Minicucci came to Houston in 1996 after spending many years in Toronto, Canada, where she was active in the feminist movement. She had been the administrative and program director of the Women's Center in Toronto.

She was born and raised in Buffalo, New York. She obtained a doctorate in psychology from Royokan University in Los Angeles and a Masters in Psychology and Women's Studies from Goddard College in Vermont.

As a regular writer for the *Houston Voice*, Minicucci often wrote thought-provoking columns encouraging readers to become more active in the gay community.

"Maria made an immeasurable contribution to the paper, not only through her writ-

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Home Depot changes course

After storm of controversy, store popular with gays adds sexual orientation to its employment non-discrimination policies

by ERIC ERICKSON

ATLANTA—Many gay men and lesbians offered praise this week for Home Depot's surprise announcement that it has added sexual orientation to its non-discrimination policy.

But at least one gay activist downplayed the company's move.

"I think Home Depot stepped in it. [Now] they've stepped out of it. They've wiped their shoes off," said Harry Knox, executive director of Georgia Equality, the statewide gay political group.

"That's all they really deserve credit for is having cleaned up their shoes," he added.

The amendment to Home Depot's policies, announced late Friday and put into effect immediately, was one that a shareholder group originally proposed, but the company strongly rejected.

In its 2001 proxy detailing business to be conducted at its annual meeting May 30 in Atlanta, Home Depot included a stockholder proposal to amend the firm's equal employment opportunity policy. That amendment would have explicitly prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Company officials flatly rejected the proposal and recommended that

> Continued on Page 17



Often referred to as 'Homo Depot' for its popularity among gays, Atlanta-based home improvement giant Home Depot announced last week that it will add sexual orientation to its employment non-discrimination policies.



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R.E.M.'s Stipe comes out after long ambiguity over sexual orientation



Michael Stipe, the Athens, Ga., resident and 41-year-old lead singer for R.E.M., outed himself as a 'queer artist' in an interview this week, ending years of ambiguity.

NEW YORK—After years of lingering ambiguity about his sexual orientation, R.E.M. frontman Michael Stipe has come out as a "queer artist" in this week's issue of *Time*. The 41-year-old singer, part of the 20-year-old band that is pushing its new album "Reveal," told the magazine that he's been "in a relationship with an amazing man" for about three years. He won't identify his partner, but said the man is not a celebrity. Stipe, who splits his time between homes in Athens, Ga., Los Angeles and New York, has avoided questions about his sexual orientation in the past. "I was being made to be a coward about it, rather than someone who felt like it really was a very private thing," he told the magazine. Stipe now readily describes himself as a "queer artist." In the early '90s, Stipe had to contend with false rumors that he had contracted AIDS, according to the *New York Post*. He denied the gossip and reluctantly revealed that he did not think of himself as straight, gay or bisexual. And he added at the time that he had engaged in relationships with both men and women. Still, various gay-advocacy groups routinely slammed the rock great for waffling on the issue.

Private elementary school in NY drops Mother's Day over gay objections

NEW YORK—A Manhattan private school informed parents that Mother's Day and Father's Day would not be celebrated this year in an effort to protect the feelings of children raised by same-sex couples, according to the *New York Post*. "I am writing this letter to inform you... we will not be celebrating Mother's Day and Father's Day. We are a school with many different family makeups, and we need to recognize the emotional well-being of all the children in our school," Cindi Samson, director of Rodeph Shalom Day School's lower elementary division, said in a letter to parents. Tuition to Rodeph Shalom, affiliated with a Reform Jewish synagogue, ranges from \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year. The newspaper reported that an unidentified gay man, who had adopted a child with his male partner, had boasted that he had persuaded administrators to remove Mother's Day from the school's holiday list.

KS court ruling on trans marriage could carry broad legal ramifications

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP)—A Kansas Court of Appeals ruled May 11 that a marriage between a man and another man, who later became a woman through gender reassignment surgery, may be valid under Kansas law. A 1996 Kansas statute banned same-sex marriages, but doesn't address transgendered people. District Judge Gunnar Sundby had ruled that J'Noel Gardiner remained a man, despite the surgery, and is not entitled to half of Marshall Gardiner's \$2.5 million estate. The Court of Appeals overturned Sundby's opinion that chromosomes "are all that matter," and said that such a stance would force it to confront situations in conflict with "such a rigid framework of thought." The decision sent the case back to district court. The Kansas result differs from a Texas court decision that the U.S. Supreme Court let stand last year, which said that it was up to the legislature to legalize transgendered marriages. "This case will be hugely influential all over the country. This case is going to be pointed to as a turning point in state courts," said Shannon Minter, with the National Center for Lesbian Rights in San Francisco.

CA judge grants custody of boy to gay couple after visitation settled

LARSON JUSTICE CENTER, Calif.—A gay couple whose son was taken by the father of one of the men have been named the legal guardians of the boy they've raised since infancy, the *Palm Springs Desert Sun* reported. Judge Randall White signed the order after hearing that a family mediator had helped arrange an agreement between the couple and the boy's grandparents that allows 10-year-old Miguel to remain with his uncle, Paul Washington Jr., and Washington's partner, Tim Forrester. The boy's grandparents and mother will have supervised visitation rights. Miguel, the son abandoned by Washington's brother and raised by the gay couple, became the center of a court battle in October when Paul Washington Sr., left the area with the boy and filed for custody.

Former city official in CA admits to harassment of lesbian publishers

HOLLISTER, Calif.—A former city council member has admitted to being the anonymous author of a series of Web site attacks on the lesbian couple that runs Hollister's weekly newspaper, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported. Joe Felice's Web site attacked Pinnacle Publisher Tracie Cone and Editor Anna Marie dos Remedios, who bought the weekly in 1999. The Web pages were anti-gay, linked Cone's name to pornography sites and accused her of molesting children. In a five-paragraph apology, Felice said the site "contained false and hurtful statements" that were "crude and offensive." He also paid damages of \$48,000. Cone and dos Remedios, who sued Yahoo and Pacific Bell to find out who owned the Web sites, said they were pleased to have the controversy behind them.

—From staff and wire reports



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police beat

VA man pleads guilty to killing one, injuring six in gay bar shooting

ROANOKE, Va. (AP)—A Virginia man who told police he was angry over being teased about his last name pleaded guilty to murder for shooting up a Roanoke gay bar, killing one gay man and wounding six other patrons in the September attack. Ronald Edward Gay, 55, agreed to plead guilty to first-degree murder and six counts of malicious wounding. He faces a maximum of four life terms plus 60 years in prison for the shooting at Backstreet Café. Gay told police he was upset that his last name made him the victim of jokes, and was humiliated that three of his sons had legally changed their names. "I was driven insane to do what I had to do," Gay said in court May 10. If sentenced to prison, he will be eligible for geriatric parole once he turns 65. "What would have been enough would be to allow us to shoot him the way he shot us," said Kathy Caldwell, who was shot in the left hand during his rampage.



Ronald Gay pleaded guilty to murder for killing one and injuring six when he shot up a gay bar in Virginia last September.

D.C. police probe possible link between drag ring, slain youth worker

WASHINGTON—A fraud ring that used stolen credit cards to finance a life of drag is being investigated in connection with the killing of a D.C. youth home counselor, the *Washington Post* reported. Police sources said that Zebedee Hawkins, 33, who was killed April 25, had been a member of the ring, which calls itself the House of Khan. He left the group and became a federal informant last year. Law enforcement sources said the House of Khan was formed in the 1980s, in the mold of drag houses featured in the movie "Paris Is Burning." Postal inspectors began looking into the group two years ago and are focusing on a four-year period in which House members are suspected of netting \$300,000. Hawkins, who had discussed the scam on a local TV station, was shot April 25 as he arrived at work.

WI man gets 25-year sentence in stabbing death of AIDS activist

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP)—The 1997 stabbing death of an AIDS activist has resulted in a life prison term for one of two men accused of taking part in the murder. Daniel R. Chipman, 31, was sentenced May 8 on a charge of being party to the murder of Jeff Wahlen, 45, a gay youth outreach worker. Chipman received a sentence of 25 years before becoming eligible for parole because Chipman and Paul Foss "picked a certain type of people and preyed on them," the judge said. Foss, 27, also pleaded no contest and will be sentenced June 18. Wahlen was found stabbed more than 50 times at a Green Bay Motel 6 in June 1997. Police said Wahlen met the two men outside an adult bookstore and went with them to drink beer at the motel, where Foss stabbed Wahlen and Chipman hit him with a beer bottle. Chipman was arrested last June after Foss, who was in prison for an unrelated armed robbery, told authorities about the killing.

FL jailer pleads to a misdemeanor charge in rape of trans inmate

MIAMI (AP)—An immigration jail guard accused of twice raping a transgendered inmate pleaded guilty May 9 to misdemeanor counts of sexual contact with a detainee in his custody. Lemar Smith, 33, who faced felony rape charges before pleading, could face a maximum of two years in custody and \$200,000 in fines. Smith was charged with raping the inmate, a detainee from the Mexican state of Veracruz who was taking female hormones but had not undergone gender reassignment surgery. After the second incident, the victim said Immigration & Naturalization Service officials gave her the choice of going to a mental institution or a Miami-Dade County jail, so she signed an order agreeing to return to Mexico. The reports of this case and others prompted the INS to transfer all women out of the Krome detention center. "I think the message is pretty clear. These officers just aren't going to be seriously taken to task for the terrible crimes that they've committed," said Cheryl Little, executive director of the Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center.

Man pleads guilty in slaying of pastor at CA gay church as trial opens

SACRAMENTO (AP)—One of the three men accused in the October 1999 death of a Sacramento minister pleaded guilty minutes before his trial started last week. Adam Leroy Wilson, 21, could be sentenced to 15 years in prison for his role in the burglary, robbery and murder of Edward R. Sherriff, a 68-year-old associate pastor at a Metropolitan Community Church here. The trial of Wilson's co-defendant, Tio Dinero Sessoms, 20, began May 9. A third suspect, Frederick Oneal Clark, faces trial in September. Clark is accused of stabbing Sherriff and recruiting the other two suspects to help rob the pastor's house. Known as "Reverend Ed," Sherriff comforted AIDS patients and was known for ministering to the city's poor.

—From staff and wire reports



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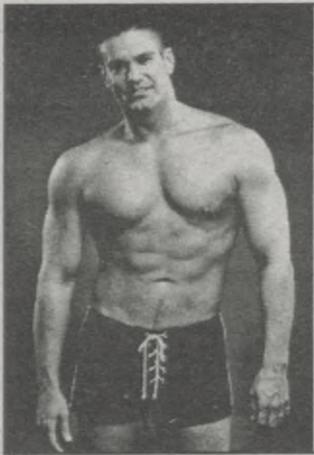
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CALENDAR

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Saturday • May 19 Day of Prayer • 9am–3pm	Monday • May 28 Office Closed
Monday • May 21 Eucharist 7:30pm	Friday • June 1 Morning Prayer 10am

health news

U.S. high court rejects medical uses for marijuana in unanimous ruling

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Supreme Court handed medical marijuana users a defeat on Monday, ruling that a U.S. law classifying the drug as illegal has no exception for ill patients. The unanimous decision disappointed many people with AIDS, cancer, multiple sclerosis and other illnesses, who have said that the drug helped in combating the effects of their diseases and drug treatments. "In the case of the Controlled Substances Act, the statute reflects a determination that marijuana has no medical benefits worthy of an exception [outside the confines of a government-approved research project]," Justice Clarence Thomas wrote. The federal government triggered the case in 1998, seeking an injunction against the Oakland Cannabis Buyers Cooperative and five other marijuana distributors. All but the Oakland group eventually closed. Voters in eight states have approved ballot initiatives, now invalid, allowing the use of medical marijuana.

AIDS activists decry Bush commitment of \$200 million as 'paltry'

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush, flanked by Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, announced last week that the U.S. would contribute \$200 million to a global fund to combat AIDS, Reuters reported. "We must all show leadership and all share responsibility," Bush said. Annan hopes to create a war chest of up to \$10 billion to fight AIDS worldwide, with the money coming both from wealthier countries and from private contributions. "To defeat this epidemic that haunts humanity, and to give hope to the millions infected with the virus, we need a response that matches the challenge," Annan said. Last month, former President Bill Clinton told a U.N. health conference in Nigeria that he thought the U.S. could easily afford to contribute as much as \$1.75 billion. AIDS activists criticized Bush's \$200 million contribution, the first into the fund, as paltry, with Oxfam suggesting the figure "leaves off a zero."



President Bush outlined the U.S. contribution of \$200 million to a new global fund to fight HIV and other chronic diseases. Beside Bush Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan.

Gays abused as kids more likely to do risky sex as adults, survey says

SAN FRANCISCO—Researchers have found that gay and bisexual men who were abused as children are more likely to engage in unsafe sex as adults, according to a study by researchers at the University of California, San Francisco's Center for AIDS Prevention. The telephone study surveyed men who have sex with men in San Francisco, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Of that number, nearly 21 percent admitted that they experienced childhood sexual abuse, and of that number, one quarter were HIV-positive. Some 14 percent of those who were not abused were infected with HIV. Men who were sexually abused also reported higher rates of sex under the influence of alcohol and drugs, more one-night stands, and more intimate partner violence. "These findings clearly indicate that there is a need to consider childhood sexual abuse in developing and delivering HIV prevention interventions," said study author Dr. Jay Paul.

Syphilis rate up among gay men in NYC, may indicate similar HIV jump

NEW YORK—Syphilis infections in Manhattan are running twice as high for the first three months of 2001 as they ran for the last three months of 2000, the *New York Post* reported. Susan Blank, assistant health commissioner, said there have been 57 cases reported during the first three months of 2001, compared to 26 during the same period last year. "The 2001 increases are mainly among men who have sex with men, especially those living in the borough of Manhattan," Blank said. Syphilis cases had been on a downward trend from 1988 to 1998, when cases dropped from 5,000 to just 82. The presence of syphilis enhances the transmissibility of HIV, and the new figures could be a harbinger of an increase in HIV transmissions, officials said.

IL continues trial of HIV tracking system; OR to start in October

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP)—The Illinois Department of Public Health announced it will extend through 2003 its trial of using identifier codes, rather than names, to track HIV cases in the state. In 1999, the department decided to try for two years a code system in place of a plan that required the names of people infected with HIV to be reported to local officials. "Initial results have indicated there is a need for improvement, but a longer study will make clear whether or not this system will provide the quality of data necessary to direct community prevention and treatment programs," said Dr. John R. Lumpkin, public health director. Meanwhile, Oregon will become the 37th state to track HIV infections by name, starting in October. Under the policy, the Oregon Health Division would be given the name of someone who tests positive for HIV and would have 90 days to follow up with the patient's doctor to ensure proper care and support. Then, the patient's name would be converted into a numerical code. Anonymous testing would continue as an option at public health clinics.

—From staff and wire reports



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Obituaries

Richard J. Sarno Jr.

On Sunday, May 13, 2001, Richard J. Sarno Jr. went home to be with the Lord.

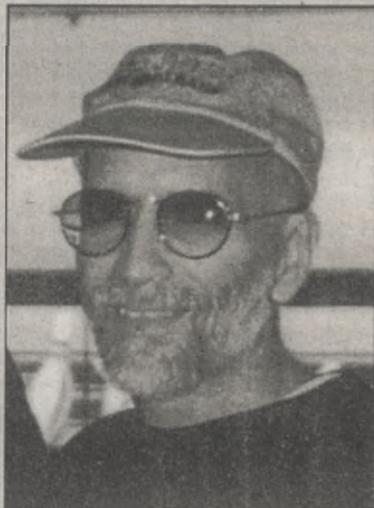
Richard was born in Virginia and had lived in Houston for 20 years. During that time, Richard worked as church secretary for 10 years with Resurrection M.C.C.

Richard's love for music was reflected by his singing with the Resurrection M.C.C. choir, Gay Men's Chorus, Gloryland Singers and as choir director for Community Gospel Choir.

Richard also enjoyed bowling and was on the Inner Loop Alternative Team #23, Creamy Fillings.

Richard is survived by his partner of 17 1/2 years, Clint J. Young; mother, Ruth Sarno; father, Richard J. Sarno Sr.; sister, Rudi Jenkins and Rickye Heffner; three nieces and two nephews.

A memorial service will be held at Resurrection M.C.C. Saturday, May 26 at 11 a.m. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Resurrection M.C.C. Building Fund.



Michael Roy Boudreaux



Michael Roy Boudreaux, age 38, passed away Sunday, May 13, 2001 after a lengthy illness. Born in Port Neches, Texas. He graduated from Port Neches-Groves High School, attended Southwest Texas State University and served in the United States Navy. Michael was a favorite bartender at the Montrose Mining Company for 8 years.

Michael is survived by his parents, William and Jean Boudreaux of Port Neches, his sister Gina Dodson of Austin, brothers, William Jr. of Chesapeake, Va., and Tony of Port Neches.

A private ceremony was held in Port Neches May 15, 2001.

In lieu of flowers the family has asked that donations in Michael's name be made to T.A.N. Hospice, 2544 Broadway, Beaumont, Texas 77702. T.A.N. Hospice's phone number is 409-832-8338.

Luther Jenkins

There will be a Celebration of Life for the late Luther Jenkins at Mary's, 1022 Westheimer, on Sunday, May 20, at 4 p.m. Luther was a member of the Sundance Cattle Company and the Men's Gay Chorus of Houston.

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212-242-6863

A WindowMedia Publication

Publisher- Window Media LLC

President- William Waybourn

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GUEST VIEWPOINT

House of cards results in minority PWA's getting dealt a losing hand

by J.T. LYNCH

Providing services for people living with AIDS is tough. Funding is becoming more difficult to obtain, the needs of clients in care are more extensive and providers struggle with how to manage, train and retain employees who face an increasingly challenging client population.

Current epidemiological information shows rapidly increasing rates of HIV infection within communities of color. This proves that current prevention messages aren't being comprehended by many and are virtually nonexistent among monolingual Hispanic clients.

What is Houston's response to this? Recent pivotal events regarding two minority HIV service providers provide proof that Houston's HIV positive men and women of color seeking medical care are in trouble.

First in this pair of crippling events—a few months ago Donald R. Watkins Foundation, one of largest local African-American HIV/AIDS service providers failed to submit their Ryan White funding application on time. Their stupidity causes them to lose the chance at \$1,000,000 in funding for primary medical care for African-Americans. As a result, their Conroe Medical Clinic closes and the many of their other services are curtailed.

Secondly, the city's longtime and largest Hispanic agency, Amigos Volunteers in Education and Services, virtually closes amidst finger pointing and accusations regarding mismanagement, funding deficits and self dealing among its board of directors and agency management. Recent press reports articulate disgruntled employees, "he-said-she-said" squabbling between past and present executive directors and 500 medically indigent clients who now have nowhere to turn for their care.

Within a matter of months, two of the largest minority medical care providers in this city are essentially off the map. Events such as these reinforce the unattractive stereotypical myth that minority service providers cannot manage the tasks assigned to them and that funders are biased against minority agencies for the same reason.

This view is further perpetuated by the fact that some local community-based organizations refuse to apply for Ryan White funds because they perceive the review process by which agencies are chosen to be fundamentally racist.

In the Donald R. Watkins situation, the Harris County Purchasing Department clearly denotes due dates for funding applications. The most junior non-profit employee knows that death, taxes and deadlines for proposals are carved in

stone. With weeks to prepare the necessary documents, why was everything left until the eleventh hour?

Just as embarrassing was the subsequent "egg-on-your-face-sour-grapes" publicity and political posturing that followed as Donald R. Watkins tried to lamely justify their actions and apply pressure to bend the rules to accommodate their unprofessionalism.

AVES was victim to a much more insidious death. Nonprofit agencies typically have a board of directors responsible for general oversight and strategy, an executive director who reports to the board and implements that strategy and employees that provide services consistent with the agency's vision and stated mission.

Board involvement in day-to-day operation is usually minimal, except in cases where changes occur in agency leadership. When longtime director of AVES, Angela Mora, resigned the board should have immediately assumed management responsibilities while conducting a search for new leadership.

Within a matter of months,
two of the largest minority
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the map.

What apparently happened is that Francisco Sanchez, president of the board assumed the executive directorship and the \$75,000 annual salary. Did it occur to anyone that individuals who agree to serve on a non-profit board do so without remuneration? Even if Sanchez resigned from the board to accept the top job, how appropriate was that action, especially in light of the fact that he continued to operate his political consulting business?

These decisions made by the board of directors enabled Sanchez to be a part-time employee collecting a full-time salary. One can only assume that there was no one else in the country willing to take such a low-paying position.

Where was board of director oversight during this tenuous period? Reportedly there was a \$400,000 deficit at the time of Mora's departure. Where was the guy with the abacus? Where were the famous checks and balances we learned about in junior high civics classes? Why were the written concerns of employees [some with excellent professional reputations] ignored by Sanchez and others?

Rumors and innuendo about financial issues at AVES had been circulating for months. Many well-connected board members must have known or at least

suspected the gravity of the situation. What was their response? According to published reports, the majority of them abandoned ship at time when they were needed most.

Community leaders seemed happy to have their name on an agency letterhead until they actually had to work to keep it there. With the available talent on the board, they could have managed AVES and kept it afloat until a real executive director was found.

Additionally funders should have suspected that there were problems. Incorrect filings regarding the use of federal funds are serious. If, as reported, financial information was incomplete, shouldn't funding administrators have had a clue?

As a result of their bureaucratic ineptitude, monies previously given to AVES will now have to be redistributed via the time consuming and cumbersome disbursement system mandated by the Ryan White Planning Council and Harris County Health Department.

When and if funds are reallocated to a new provider, who will that be? Will it be an agency with eight years of experience in the Hispanic community?

HIV-related medical care in the Latino community is one of the most complicated in the industry. In addition to the obvious linguistic and literacy issues, clinics and physicians must deal with religious prejudices towards birth control, sexual subjugation of women, distrust of western medicine in favor of traditional remedies, a general unwillingness to ask for services and care outside of the nuclear family and the whole conundrum surrounding immigration issues. Will the new agency have the necessary cultural sensitivity to deal with pregnant Hispanic women, arguably the most disempowered group of infected individuals?

This situation can be salvaged; AVES can be resuscitated. A team approach is best in this instance. Major funders should provide an external audit group to assess the current financial situation. Contracts with employees, vendors and medical providers must be renegotiated in good faith. Programs should be reinstated by someone with proven skills in ASO/CBO management and implementation.

Most importantly, clients should be contacted by whatever means possible. If this does not happen, in all likelihood many of those who received medical care from AVES will opt not to receive treatment from any provider. They will enter medical at some point in the future when they are too ill to do otherwise and when their treatment options will be much more limited.

J.T. Lynch is a freelance Houston writer who may be reached through this publication.

VIEWPOINT Letter to the editor

Q-Patrol is still around and still needs your help

Dear Editor,

Volunteerism has always been the backbone of our community, and now as we end National Volunteer Week I once again plead for help from the community. I know that there is not a single organization in our community that doesn't need help, but I am putting forward this urgent call to arms.

Q-Patrol, Inc. has been a factor in the neighborhood for almost 10 years, but it is entirely feasible that we will not be here to see our anniversary in July. Last year, we made an urgent plea for volunteers in the *Houston Voice* and the *Houston*

Chronicle that call was barely answered.

Now, Q-Patrol needs three things from the community.

First, PEOPLE. We need to increase the number of members on the streets on Saturday nights; we need to restart our Friday night patrols; and we would like to be able to put a group on the street during special events in the community. One shift a month is all we ask, about three hours.

We are not looking for ex-Green Berets or martial art's grand masters, only people over the age of 18 who have a desire to help others. We will train you to recognize the trouble areas of the neighborhood and suspicious vehicles and people. We accept everyone who is willing to help out your fellow citizen.

Second, MONEY. Our group has three expenses: rent at the Community Center, voice mail, and the radio system. The first two are manageable, but the third is a tremendous bill that doesn't change with lack of radio use.

Right now, we have enough funds to get us through June 2001. Any amount is appreciated and is tax deductible (we are a 501c3 organization). Look for our fundraising tables along Pacific Street in the upcoming weeks or contact us by phone or mail. In the past when we have mentioned that we were in trouble, somehow something has come through. We need that miracle from you now.

Third, ACKNOWLEDGMENT. We would like to know from the community if we are still needed. Two years ago when Q-Patrol marched in the Pride Parade as its own group, I heard bystanders yelling that they were glad to see us. Some, though, had thought we had disbanded. Let us know if you think we still need to be around, and give us some suggestions how to survive.

We can use a good portion of all three of these things, but we need them quickly.

I know some people are saying, "We've heard all this before." Yes, you have, but if we don't increase membership and funding, Q-Patrol will not survive. We don't want that to happen, but it's a reality lurking on the horizon. Please, Houston, step up to the plate and help us help you.

Q-Patrol Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation dedicated to the protection from and education of hate crimes based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Q-Patrol, Inc. operates a Citizen's on Patrol program in the Montrose area on Friday and Saturday

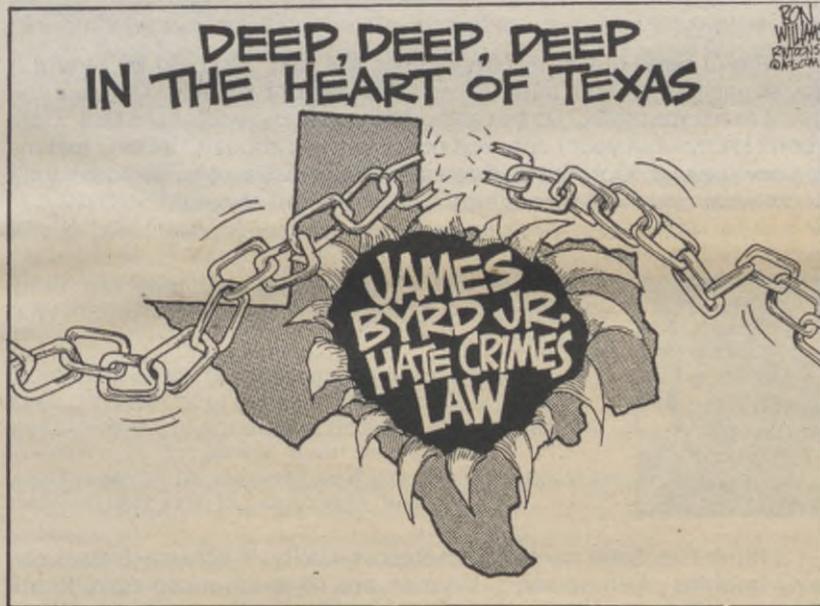
nights.

No special skills or abilities are necessary, only a desire to help other people. Q-Patrol, Inc. is affiliated with the Houston Police Department's Citizens on Patrol program.

If you want to join us or just get more information, please call 713-528-SAFE (7233) or e-mail us at qpatrolinc@aol.com or qp_callouts@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,

Chris Arasin
Chairman, Q-Patrol, Inc.





Let us know what you think!

Send the editor your letters (400 words maximum) or op-ed submissions (800 words maximum). Include a name and phone number for verification.

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Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel



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"Got the annual smooch with a guy. It's not the most fun thing in the world, but I agreed to play this role, and [Producer] Greg Berlanti does want to take it that far. ... [Once a year is] as far as I'm going to take it. I don't think teenagers need to see two guys kissing on a weekly basis."

—Actor Kerr Smith (right), whose recurring gay character on "Dawson's Creek" kissed another guy on the May 2 episode, to *Entertainment Weekly*



"Sometimes [a gay sex scene is] real comfortable and sometimes it's not. It depends on the day. With Randy [Harrison, who plays frequent sex partner Justin], it's really easy because we work well together and we're good friends. But sometimes, when it's with a stranger, like a day player, you get guys who aren't very comfortable with the subject matter, regardless of whether we have our clothes on or not. And then it becomes tough."

—Actor Gale Harold, Brian on Showtime's "Queer As Folk," to the *New York Blade News*, April 27

"When I came out to my stepmother, she said, 'Ooh, do be careful if you're going to tell your aunt.' When I told my aunt, she said, 'Ooh, are you going to tell your sister? Do be careful.' When I told my sister, she said, 'Ooh, I don't know what your nephew is going to think about it.' When I told my nephew, he said, 'Ooh, I'm glad you didn't tell me years ago because I don't know what my school friends would have thought about it.'"

—British actor Sir Ian McKellen to the *Philadelphia Daily News*, April 30

"People will always gossip and they can think what they like. Surely what matters is that the children are loved."

—Former tennis pro Hana Mandlikova (left), winner of four Grand Slam tournament titles, to *Tennis Week*, about her plans to soon give birth to twins she conceived naturally with a male friend. Mandlikova, 39, a native of Czechoslovakia, lives with Liz Resseguie, an American fitness trainer and her partner of more than two years



"I think I've done my bit for heterosexuality. If other actresses can play lesbians, then so can I. Women are so much more considerate than men. They're a lot more sensual and better lovers all round."

—Joan Collins to Britain's *Daily Record*, May 2

"It may seem that gay characters are extremely mainstream, but they're not as fully developed as their straight counterparts. Overwhelmingly, gay characters are present in sitcoms. Generally, networks think the American public can take homosexuality when it's tempered with humor. They don't show them experiencing a large emotional range."

—GLAAD's Scott Seomin to the *Philadelphia Daily News*, April 30

"While [Tom] Cruise thoroughly respects others' rights to follow their own sexual preference, he is not a homosexual and had no relationship of any kind with Kyle Bradford and does not even know him."

—From a \$100 million lawsuit filed May 2 by Tom Cruise against porn actor Chad Slater (Kyle Bradford) who, the suit alleges, told the French publication *Acustar* he's having a sexual affair with Cruise. Slater/Bradford denies speaking to the magazine.

"I kind of like [Eminem's song] 'Stan.' I liked it that Elton [John] did it with him at that Grammys thing, because he was suspected to be homophobic. So I guess that put that down. Which is good because it is only showbiz. It's good to remember that, otherwise you start thinking, 'What the fuck's happening in the world, man?'"

—Paul McCartney (right) to the music magazine *Mojo Collections*, as reported by *Gay.com* UK May 2



around the world

Egyptian police arrest dozens in busts of sex party, gay wedding

CAIRO (AP)—Some 55 people—mostly teenagers—were detained last week in connection with sex parties on a boat in the Nile, Egyptian prosecutors said. Investigators arrested the teens during one of the twice-weekly parties, where they painted their faces and had gay and group sex, the officials said on condition of anonymity. The revelers have been detained since their May 11 arrest at a party on a restaurant boat anchored in the Nile off Cairo's upscale island of Zamalek. Undercover security officers and the driver of a horse-drawn tourist carriage said they witnessed a mass arrest at the boat, but the boat's public relations director denied that any arrests took place. Two days earlier, also on the Nile, police rounded up 60 men who were attending a gay wedding, charging them with "deviant sexual acts," Egyptian court sources told Reuters. They said five foreigners detained during the party had been freed, while prosecutors continued to question other revelers on possible charges of "violating the teachings of religion and propagating depraved ideas and moral depravity." The charges carry a maximum jail sentence of five years.

Brazilian lawmakers pressured to reject same-sex unions law

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP)—The Brazilian Congress was expected to vote Wednesday on legislation that would make that country the first in Latin America to legally recognize same-sex unions. The bill, originally drafted in 1995 by Marta Suplicy—a member of Congress who is now mayor of Sao Paulo—would extend benefits such as social security and health plans to same-sex partners and allow them to transfer property rights. If passed by the lower house, it would then need approval of the Senate and President Fernando Henrique Cardoso. The bill is opposed by both the Roman Catholic clergy and an increasingly powerful lobby of evangelical Christians. "Sexuality is ordained for conjugal love between a man and a woman that is between spouses," Catholic Bishop Filippo Santoro said in a letter urging lawmakers to reject the bill. Luiz Mott, president of Gay Group Bahia, who calls Brazil "the undisputed world champion in gay murders," is not optimistic about the bill's chances, though "this time there seems to be more mobilization on our part than previously and less mobilization by our enemies."

Gay case in Puerto Rico test for progressive domestic violence law

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—A Puerto Rican judge has ordered that the commonwealth's domestic violence law be applied to a man who violated an order to stay away from his boyfriend, the *Orlando Sentinel* reported. The case of Leandro Antonio Ruiz, 18, who allegedly hit Juan J. del Valle, 29, on the arm and chest, is the island's first case of same-sex domestic violence to go to courts since 1999. Ruiz's attorney tried to use the Puerto Rican sodomy law to keep testimony about the couple's relationship out of court, and pointed out that del Valle would implicate himself in a crime if he admitted to a relationship with Ruiz. But Superior Court Judge Elisa Figueroa Baez agreed with prosecutors that the domestic-violence law is a special statute that supersedes the criminal code, and gave del Valle immunity from sodomy prosecution so he could testify about the abuse.

Dutch prime minister warns Muslim leaders against anti-gay slurs

AMSTERDAM—Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok called recent anti-gay comments made by Muslim clerics "very serious and extraordinarily hurtful," Reuters reported. Kok said members of the Dutch cabinet would meet with Muslim imams, or prayer leaders, to inform them that anti-gay comments were not proper in his country. Kok's comments were in response to statements from Rotterdam imam Khalil el-Moumni, who said homosexuality was a sickness that could destroy society. El-Moumni's comments sparked an outcry among gay groups, which urged the prime minister to take action against the "absurd and intolerant remarks." One imam told a Dutch newspaper that homosexuality was "shameless, improper, scandalous and intolerable," while another was reported as saying medical treatment was the only solution. The public prosecutor in Rotterdam is investigating to see whether the prayer leaders could be prosecuted for discrimination or defamation.



AP

Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok has asked members of his government to meet with Muslim prayer leaders, who recently called homosexuality 'a sickness.'

Australian state to consider adding gays to domestic violence law

BRISBANE—Under proposed reforms to domestic violence laws in the Australian state of Queensland, same-sex couples and children would be able to request domestic violence protection orders in the courts, the *Age* reported. Queensland Families Minister Judy Spence said the reforms would ensure people in family and domestic relationships were protected from violence. "Domestic violence is not confined to married couples," said Spence, who proposed to extend protection to people abused by their relatives and in informal care and intimate personal relationships. She said youths also needed education on identifying the danger signs of potentially abusive relationships. "It is not only important to have mutual respect in a relationship but respect for ourselves," she said. It will likely be several months before the changes are voted on.

—From staff and wire reports



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Celebration of Minicucci's life planned for May 27 at HLGCC

➤ Continued from Page 2

ing, but by offering great story ideas and helping other writers flesh out story topics," Voice editor, Wendy Mohon, said. "Though I'll certainly miss Maria from a professional standpoint, I'll also greatly miss the wonderful friendship she offered to me and everyone at the paper.

"And while Maria was always very serious-minded about activism and her role in the community, what I'll always remember is her surprisingly dry wit and the way she loved to dance," Mohon added.

There will be celebration of life on Sunday, May 27, at 4 p.m. at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne.

"It will be informal, just an opportunity for people to share their memories of Maria," said Brookover. "We will have food, and since Maria loved to dance and loved disco music, we will have disco. Dancing will be encouraged."

Brookover said that Murphy has requested that people who wish to send flowers or make contributions in Minicucci's memory make contributions to the Community Center.

Brookover said that the Community Center Board of Directors intends to establish the Maria Minicucci Memorial Fund.

"Deb and the board will decide on the most worthwhile and appropriate use for the fund in continuing the invaluable work Maria did at the



center," he said.

Flowers may be delivered between 6 and 9 p.m. on weekdays, or noon-4 p.m. on Saturday, when a volunteer is on duty.

INFO

Maria Minicucci Memorial Fund

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center,
P.O. Box 2304
Houston, Texas 77252-2304

Home Depot can do more for gay employees, activist says

➤ Continued from Page 1

shareholders vote against it.

When the move was made public in media reports late last month, it ignited a firestorm of controversy among gay customers and employees of the nation's largest home improvement chain.

"We really heard from a number of our associates, particularly our long-time associates, who said, 'We know the company doesn't discriminate,'" said Suzanne Apple, vice president of community affairs and social responsibility for Home Depot. "We have a respect-for-all-people policy and we have a culture of inclusion. [They said] it's important to us as associates of the company that we be explicit.

"And so we said, 'Well, you know, you're right. We should be explicit because we don't discriminate,'" she added.

Knox also credited company employees with helping to spur the new policy.

"I think Home Depot employees deserve a tremendous amount of credit because they have advocated very effectively for themselves and have also maximized their relationships with gay customers," he said.

But Knox was less than impressed with the move by Home Depot. Georgia Equality has been involved in ongoing discussions with the home improvement giant to encourage the company to offer domestic partner benefits.

Last June, Georgia Equality targeted Home Depot as one of 10 companies in the state that they want to see offer the benefits to employees. Coca-Cola, Delta Airlines, Bell South and the parent company of Atlanta Gas Light were the first four to respond by adding DP benefits to company policy.

Knox said he thought Home Depot would be

No. 5. That hasn't happened. The other companies include UPS, Wachovia Bank, Shaw Industries (now acquired by Berkshire-Hathaway), Georgia Pacific and Gulfstream Aerospace.

"Where they are now is exactly where they were with us three weeks before this controversy started over their stockholders' questions," Knox said. "They claim to not discriminate against their LGBT employees and yet they don't offer equal pay for equal work in the form of domestic partner benefits."

Apple said the company sees the two issues, employment discrimination and domestic partner benefits, as two separate topics.

"We're looking at our own benefits and the implication of [providing DP benefits]," Apple said. "It affects all categories of eligible dependents, not just domestic partners."

Still, Knox said he hopes people do not celebrate the latest gay-friendly news from Home Depot so long that they forget what the company has not done. He wants employees and customers to keep pressure on Home Depot to offer domestic partner benefits.

"All they have done is what ought to be a basic minimum in any company," Knox said. "All they have done is to say something that they said already, which was, 'We don't discriminate.'"

"There's no growth in this from the company standpoint."

INFO

Home Depot

2455 Paces Ferry Rd. NW
Atlanta, GA 30339
770-433-8211
www.homedepot.com

In her own words...

While Maria Minicucci wrote news and features stories for the Houston Voice, she is most remembered for her opinion columns. The following are excerpts from some of the opinion pieces Minicucci has written for the Voice about her favorite topic, activism.

Take time out to say thanks to those who give back

I am amazed at how many of us, regardless of our differences or how quickly we may want to climb that professional ladder, find the time and inclination to volunteer.

Those efforts produce amazing results. We fix things that are broken, in the broadest sense of the meaning. We create new things. We carry out the meaning of caring for others and our environment. We accomplish all that in the name of volunteerism; a name that generally underestimates the depth and value of its purpose.

Our society places such value on status, privilege, wealth and winning as rewards for hard work. Volunteerism, without a doubt, falls into the category of hard work, but without those rewards sanctioned by society.

There are certainly rewards that come with volunteering—strength of character, satisfaction of spirit and a much more savory sense of the world. So, all of you "volunteers" out there, who at times, become skeptical or doubtful or feel under appreciated, take the rewards you deserve. They are Priceless.

Ladies need not apply

Not all too many years ago, in living rooms, church basements and parks, women were gathering and talking and talking and talking. From those conversations across the country, something magnificent occurred—the Women's Movement.

It moved many of us, and it seemed, could move the rest of society. Yes, our purpose was power; our goal, revolution. We carried out this work for change with fervor and with passion, as if our lives depended on it. Our rage against too many injustices and too many atrocities against too many people propelled us to mobilize and create places to heal, to create, to work and to play.

I remember the exhilaration felt in working alongside thousands of other women to turn the world upside down and inside out.

But our enthusiasm began to wane, our confidence began to erode, replaced by fear and doubt... A once radical and raucous momentum has turned into a mere "ladylike" lull. We have taken up "niceness" as a mass movement and in doing so have betrayed feminist politics.

Our work remains formidable, our devotion remains fierce. But it is quite foolhardy to expect ladies to do women's work.

Nothing is wrong with being 'on the outside'

I freely and with pride admit that I am a woman in love. I have, for 25 years, been completely captivated, enthralled and ecstatic with my heart's desire. There never has been nor ever will be a worthy rival to influence my life choice.

This Great Love in my life is—My Lesbianism.

As we celebrate Gay Pride 2000, many "queer revelers" will fill the streets hoping that anyone who is dubious, will be convinced that being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered is okay, acceptable even.

Alas, my jubilation over Gay Pride and all that it represents has, over the years, diminished. My enthusiasm for my lesbianism has remained solidly intact. But, I have become increasingly disconcerted over our strident efforts to assimilate so thoroughly with the status quo.

As sexual outlaws, we are relegated to the fringes of society; we are on the outside looking in. At first glance, a logical strategy may be to maneuver to the more prominent position of front and center.

Let us take another look from the fringes: let us consider the possibility that there may be advantages to being on the outside. What possible advantages could there be?

We have much more 'space' to recreate thoughts, values, mind sets, ways of being that reflect a gentler, kinder civilization. Living around the edge leaves us more unencumbered by psychic debris; the stuff that is detrimental to persons and the planet.

Some queers, consciously or not, have taken up their place on the fringes with relish. Those audacious queers may, in fact, prove to be a boost to our soaring spirits and 'soulful' sensibilities rather than an embarrassment to the 'Family.'

This year, consider taking Pride a step further; embrace the privilege of being among society's sexual outlaws. We live extraordinary lives. We love in extraordinary ways. Aren't we worth staying on the outside of ordinary?

Hate crimes bill becomes law, Senate passes DOMA

➤ Continued from Page 1

Hate crimes bill becomes law

Designating "new classes of citizens" in a hate crime bill could be unwise and possibly divisive, the governor has said.

Perry raised those concerns again Friday even as he signed into law the James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act, named for a black man who was dragged to death in 1998 in East Texas.

"I just don't know how it's going to affect us in the future," Perry said. But he said he made the decision to sign the bill "in the quietness of my own heart."

The bill was the subject of emotional legislative debate for years. It won final approval from lawmakers May 10.

The governor said he wanted to unite the state. Four Democratic legislators and the parents of James Byrd Jr. joined Perry as he signed the bill.

Perry said he knew some Texans would disagree with his decision.

"I would ask them to try to do what I have done, tried to walk in another person's shoes," said Perry, a Republican who was noncommittal on the legislation until Friday.

Texas already had a hate-crimes law that increases penalties if a crime is proven to be "motivated by bias or prejudice," but it does not list specific categories of people who would be protected. Some prosecutors have said it is too vague to enforce.

Two years ago, a bill that would strengthen the hate crimes law passed the House but died in the Senate when critics complained it created unnecessary distinc-



Texas Gov. Rick Perry, right, prepares to sign into law the James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act during a ceremony on Friday, May 11 in Austin. Byrd, a black man, was killed when he was dragged behind a pickup truck by three white men in Jasper in 1998. In background at left are Byrd's parents, Stella and James Byrd. Rep. Senfronia Thompson, D-Houston, is at top right.

tions for homosexuals.

Then-Gov. George W. Bush refused to support the measure, saying all crimes are hate crimes. When Bush ran for president, Democrats criticized him for that stance.

The James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act strengthens penalties for crimes motivated by the victim's race, religion, color, sex, disability, sexual preference, age or national origin.

Sen. Rodney Ellis, a Houston Democrat who fought for the legislation, said he has visited the site of Byrd's death in Jasper. He praised the small town for the way it has responded to the crime.

"To be honest with you, I've never been a big fan of small Southern towns, but this tragedy, James Byrd Jr.'s death, brought out the best in that little town in terms of people

coming together after a tragedy," Ellis said.

Stella Byrd called the signing of the bill the best Mother's Day gift she has received.

"If it can stop someone, or stop some mother, from having the same pain I've had, it was well worth the work," she said, tears in her eyes.

Rep. Senfronia Thompson, a Houston Democrat and bill sponsor, praised Perry for having the courage to sign the legislation. She said several lawmakers had "battle scars" from years of fighting for the law.

Dianne Hardy-Garcia, executive director of the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, also praised Perry. She said he may endure political heat from opponents of the law.

"Today is a historic day for gay and lesbian Texans," she said on Friday. "This is the first time we've been protected by Texas law."

School non-discrimination bill progresses

The school non-discrimination measure by Rep. Harryette Ehrhardt, D-Dallas, passed 78-62 on May 10 after a heated debate over language in the bill. In order to become law, it must pass a final House vote and make it through the Senate.

The measure also would cover ethnicity, gender, gender identity, disability and national origin.

Rep. Rick Green, R-Dripping Springs, offered an amendment that would have removed the categories.

"Do you believe it's okay for a teacher in a public school in this state to discriminate against a child if he perceives that child to be homosexual?" Rep. Glen Maxey asked Green. Maxey, D-Austin, is openly gay.

"I do not believe it's okay to discriminate against anyone for any reason, but I do not believe it's right to put special classes and special rights to particular groups that don't apply to everyone," said Green.

Green withdrew his amendment.

There is no state law that protects from such specific discrimination, said Ehrhardt. The bill does not set up specific punishments for violations.

Similar legislation filed by Ehrhardt last session died in committee.

DOMA approved by Senate

The Texas Senate passed the so-called Defense of Marriage Act Tuesday—a bill which would prohibit Texas from recognizing marriages or unions between people of the same gender.

The Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas denounced the measure as unnecessary and homophobic.

Currently, Texas law already prohibits same-gender marriage. Vermont is the only state in the union to allow same-gender civil unions, and no other state has recognized those unions.

"We will fight this bill all the way," said Hardy-Garcia. "This measure is, quite simply, redundant. It is nothing more than a malicious attempt to single out a group of Texans—a group already denied equal recognition of their relationships. We will continue our efforts to make sure the legislators hear our voices on this issue."

The bill, SB 488, must pass the House of Representatives before becoming law.

Monday, May 28, is the last day of this legislative session.

Studies not meant as weapons in political battles, APA says

➤ Continued from Page 1

participants were recruited through groups that had a stake in the outcome of the research.

"It is just poor science," said Dr. Ron Winchell, a member of the APA and a faculty member at Columbia, where he once served under Spitzer.

"You need to know people's motives for telling you their results in a self-selected study group," Winchell said.

Understanding the methods

Spitzer's study was based on 45-minute telephone surveys of 200 former gay men and lesbians who said they switched to lasting heterosexuality.

Some 55 percent achieved "good heterosexual functioning," which for this study meant physically satisfying sex at least monthly with their heterosexual partners, and never or rarely fantasizing about the same sex during intercourse or masturbation.

Many of the subjects for Spitzer's study were referred by "ex-gay" groups.

Shidlo and Schroeder interviewed 202 subjects several times over a five-year span

from 1995 to 2000 for a study sponsored by the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, a national grassroots gay civil rights group.

Some 178 of the Shidlo-Schroeder participants reported no change, and an overwhelming majority felt harmed by conversion attempts, reporting increased feelings of depression, anxiety, failure and shame.

Some of those even reported feeling suicidal, and 16 more participants became celibate as a result of trying to change, according to the study.

Shidlo and Schroeder acknowledged that six participants, or 3 percent, reported a successful and satisfying change.

Spitzer under fire

Word of Spitzer's presentation drew immediate fire from fellow psychiatrists, analysts, gay rights groups and the APA, which distanced itself from the methodology and findings of the study in a press release before the symposium.

Winchell said he doubted the science behind the study.

"[Spitzer] was the first to teach me hard-nosed methodology, which he is blatantly ignoring in this study," Winchell said.

Spitzer relied on a non-random survey

and many participants were recommended from groups like Exodus International and the National Association of Reparative Therapy for Homosexuals, groups that try to "cure" gays of their homosexuality.

Most of the remaining participants in both studies answered newspaper ads to become subjects. Scientists criticized those samples as "self-selected," and therefore tainted, Winchell said.

At the symposium last week, psychiatrists also criticized the studies, and said they lacked testable scientific method, had no control group and no physiological testing of sexual attraction.

Critics also charged that Spitzer's study assumed from the beginning that heterosexuality is the only acceptable outcome.

"In this group, there is likely an internalized homophobia, and in many cases, the 'ex-gay' movement is these people's whole social structure and value system," Winchell said. "The threat of removing that support is a huge pressure to report success."

Forcing oneself to change homosexual behavior is not surprising, but to permanently change orientation is a different matter, Winchell said.

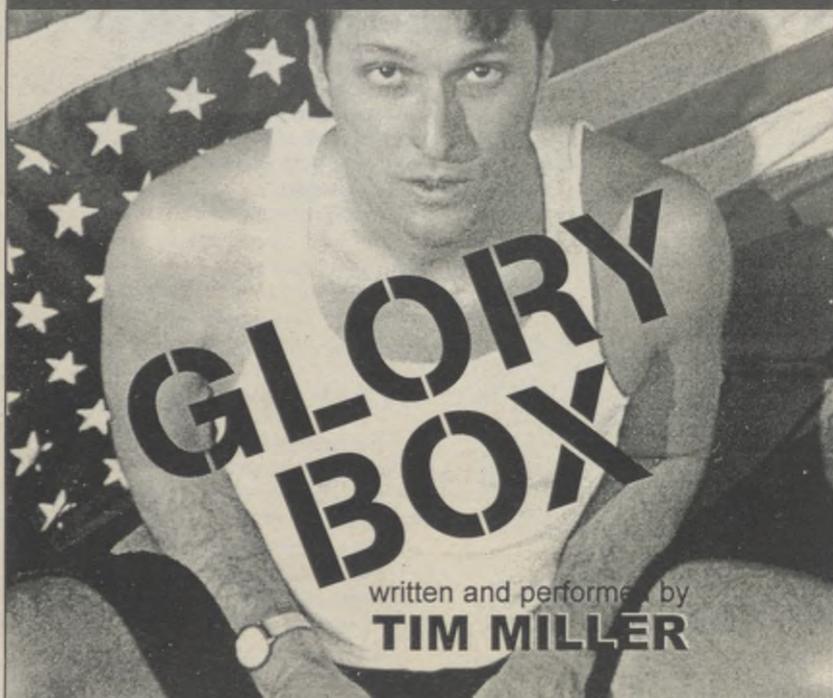
Window Media completes acquisition Transaction creates largest gay and lesbian newspaper group

WASHINGTON—Window Media LLC announced Thursday that it has completed the acquisition of the *Washington Blade* and *New York Blade News*, making it the largest gay and lesbian newspaper group.

Founded in 1969, the *Washington Blade* is the nation's most respected and longest continuously published gay newspaper. In October 1997, the paper's publisher launched the *New York Blade News*, the city's only weekly publication providing comprehensive coverage of issues of interest to metropolitan New York's gay and lesbian community.

Window Media publishes the *Houston Voice* and Atlanta-based *Southern Voice* with editions covering Georgia, the Mid-South, and New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. Its other publications include the *Eclipse*, a nightlife guide for Texas, Atlanta and New Orleans; and *SOVO* magazine, a quarterly publication covering fashion, entertainment and human-interest topics.

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Out on the Bayou

A guide for your leisure time

HOUSTON VOICE • MAY 18, 2001

There is nothing like a dame... ...especially one named Edna

by D.L. GROOVER

Dame Edna Everage is awash in contradictions. She is unquestionably the most famous entertainer in the world (just ask her); she is also a humble, caring housewife from Melbourne, Australia.

She sports the latest couturier gowns from the House of Kenneth (her wayward gay son); yet has the fashion sense of Helen Keller. A devoted, grief-stricken, well-worn wife; she is the epitome of the merriest of widows. Politically incorrect, always saying the unsayable, one of her favorite hobbies is posing for photographs with war orphans.

She has narrated and recorded Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf" and Madonna's "Like a Virgin." She is a generous splash of Liberace with a pint of aged-in-the-cask Sophie Tucker. She is, in no particular order, a humanitarian, a chanteuse, a week's worth of laundry, an ace performer, a dominatrix with hands dipped in Nivea, a master of improv and retorts, a comedic virtuoso, her own parade.

She is also a he.

Under the rhinestone-encrusted frocks, the sequined cat-eye glasses that Elton John would kill for, those glamorous gams only rivaled by Juliet Prowse's, the bouffant crown of hair the fabled color of wisteria, and the sharp tongue used only because "I care, I really do," is an honorary doctorate degree from Griffith University in Australia; the prestigious Ackerley Prize for biography for "My Gorgeous Life;" the Order of Australia; a 1st prize from the San Francisco International Film Festival for "The Dame Edna Experience;" Tony, Drama Desk, Theatre World, and, newly announced, Theatre Guild awards for "The Royal Tour;" as well as the Sir Peter Ustinov Endowment in 1977 for Life Work as an Entertainer.

> Continued on Page 17



Drag queen extraordinaire, Dame Edna will help Houston kick off Pride month celebrations with her June 5-10 appearances at Jones Hall.

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Homefront

Happy plants

Less is more when it comes to watering indoor plants

by ELLA TYLER

Last December, I wrote that a poinsettia that is well cared for might have blooms until Saint Patrick's Day. I was wrong. At the rate it is going, the one that sits on the table in the Voice's conference room will have flowers until the Fourth of July. The bracts will be a bit faded and the foliage will be a little pale, but it is basically a happy plant.

And why shouldn't it be? The room has windows that face South and West, so the room gets plenty of natural light; Carolyn waters it when it needs it; and it spends much of its life at 70 degrees.

The only plant that hasn't lived happily in that room is one that was right next to the South-facing window and got sunburned. It got big brown marks on it.

So, what can you grow if you don't have the perfect environment or you aren't green-thumbed like Carolyn? Take a cue from the plants that are used in public installations, like shopping centers and office buildings.

Plants that are often used in these settings include Chinese evergreens, also called agnomen, grape ivy, different varieties of dieffenbachia and Dracaena, philodendron and sansevieria, also called mother-in-law tongue. They are very adaptable to a variety of light conditions and are not sensitive about much.

In the store where I work, the plant care service was discontinued in February, so I've been tending the plants until my manager decides what to do next. She told me that the plant-care technician visited only once a month, which seemed incredible to me. However, I've been watering at 30-day intervals, and most of the plants are surviving.

Most of them are in 10-inch or larger pots. The smaller pots are clustered together in plastic-lined baskets, thereby reducing evaporation.

I know that more plants are killed by over watering than by under watering, but until I tried watering on this schedule, I had no idea that plants could go this long without water.

Of course, they live in "plant heaven" too. Not much natural light, but the fluorescent lights are on 15 hours a day and the temperature is fairly constant. Many of the plants live on top of the bookcases, away from customers.

When I was studying horticulture, for a class project I tended plants for the livestock show—"plant hell." Many of the same plants were used, but someone visited every day to water and replace plants that cows had nibbled. However, most of the plants were the same as in any other commercial installation.



Though most poinsettias only last a few months past Christmas, the well-cared for plant in the sunny *Houston Voice* conference room (left) is still blooming. If your office or home doesn't offer ideal sunlight or if your thumb is less-than green, consider a hardy plant like the a nephthytis (right).

It is not a good idea to water your plants by rote, at least until you are very familiar with them. Look at the plant and the soil before you water. Nearly all house plants prefer not to be watered until the soil is dry, but not so dry that the soil pulls away from the pot or the plant is wilting.

Water until the water runs through the pot and be sure the entire root ball is wet. After 15 minutes, remove any water standing in the saucer. A turkey baster works fine. Plants with wet feet get root rot. At home, I try to let the water sit overnight to let it get to room temperature and let the chlorine evaporate, but when I'm trying to water lots of plants I don't have time.

A few yellow leaves are normal, but yellow leaf tips often indicate over watering. Brown tips are often a problem with lack of humidity. One of my plants had brown tips on one side, and I finally figured out that it was too close to the bread machine, and the hot draft.

Heat can kill an indoor plant. Don't leave them in the car, and, if on vacation, don't let the house get too hot. The Texas Association of Nurserymen convention is held in August at the George R. Brown, and the temperature gets pretty high at night when the AC is shut off.

The convention floor is lined with bins of bagged ice, and before people leave for the day, they pack ice around their plants. I assume this reduces the temperature enough for plant health. This is also a much tidier way to water.

Many of your indoor plants can spend the summer outside, and the ones that have high light needs might be the healthier for it. However, I've sunburned more than a few plants by putting them in places that were shaded when I put the plant here, but not later in the day. Plants that are outside will need to be watered more often.

I fertilize indoor plants very lightly, with an 8-8-8 water soluble fertilizer about once a month. I use it at half strength, since my goal is to keep plants healthy, but not make them grow. Sometimes I wash them off.

I read a lot of books about plants and am still surprised by how much the care instructions for the same plant vary from book to book.

If your plant is healthy, don't worry about what the book says. If it's not, try a little more light, less water and a bit of fertilizer.

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Dame Edna makes proud Houston appearance June 5-10

> Continued from Page 15

"I didn't know he was terribly well-endowed," said Dame Edna with cheeky charm. "Peter had this award named after him, I think, and I was given it by some 'Canadians.' That's all I know about it.

"I've gotten so many honors. The latest one is rather exciting. Apparently, the Theater Guild, whoever they are, started a new award for the best show touring America, and I've won it and it's just been



Edna's alter ego, Mr. Humphries

I'm very hands on, I'm in your face, and I'm in Houston!

announced. It's hot news. Mr. Humphries gets best actor for some reason, and he's not even in the show. He makes far too much money for what he does."

The reserved (and never to be seen back stage at the same time as Dame Edna) Mr. Humphries is her alter ego, bete noire, creator, lead writer and harried manager, who's been on the stage since his university days in Melbourne. A character actor from the music hall school of buskers and pearly kings, he's a consummate performer who's played in Beckett's "Waiting for Godot," Lionel Bart's "Oliver," to satiric revues like Spike Mulligan's "The Bed Sitting Room," and numerous films such as "The Howling," "Immortal Beloved," and "Spice World."

Prior to giving birth to numerous idiosyncratic characters, though, while a member of the Melbourne Theatre Company in 1955, he introduced the character of Mrs. Everage, a doughty hausfrau from Moonee Ponds. The rest is history. She grew like kudzu.

After her appearance in "Just a Show" in London and subsequent BBC variety show, "Barry Humphries Scandals," it's no surprise that Monty Python was born. The irreverence, the cross-dressing, the screw-loose comedy shtick that are hallmarks of

that zany troupe were first to be found in this miraculous dame.

"It was a very slow evolution," she explained. "I began as a housewife, and consider myself still a housewife. It's just that a beautiful transformation has come over me..." There's a pause. "...particularly since the death of my husband. Oh, I miss him, I miss him every day, but the relief that he's not around is incredible."

Norm, of the faulty internal plumbing, was Dame Edna's constant companion for years, and the father of Kenny (former Qantas steward and president of the Yvonne de Carlo fanclub, as well as the Dame's dress designer du jour), Valmai (estranged lesbian daughter living with a retired Czech tennis pro and raising pit bulls in Flushing, NY; and Brucie, who lives quietly in Melbourne, as far away from mummy as possible.

"Did you know my husband invented chip technology for the prostate?," she asks rhetorically, and then tears off on a high-speed monologue about her favorite subject. "When the prostate problem occurred, our family doctor didn't even know where the prostate was located. That's why I have formed this organization, Friends of the Prostate, to educate people. And I want to launch a Houston

chapter of FOP, because I feel the home of the space program could also be the home of the prostate.

"However, Australian scientists developed the equivalent of the iron lung, the iron prostate. This was a machine that did the prostate's work, and Norm was hooked up to it. The trouble is, the machine was the size of a suburban house, and I had to buy the property next to it. The noise kept the whole street awake, and was not practical. Only due to my efforts—and my success enabled me to pay for these things—was this machine miniaturized. So by the time Norm passed away, we had the prostate licked.

"So I'd love to talk to people in Houston about my new ideas, and I welcome the people of Houston to Australia next year for my own event, the World Prostate Olympics. It's mostly water sports."

When asked what accounts for her ageless glamour, the gracious mega-star quickly but humbly replied, "Sven."

Sven, her "big Swedish masseuse" is part of her small but very select entourage. "Sven is working on my neck as I'm talking to you," she purred. "I think I am the acceptable face of glamour. I'm not a classical beauty."

Certainly not a classical, or even baroque beauty, is another of Dame Edna's coterie, Madge Allsop, the great one's gal Friday,

> Continued on Page 18

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'Friends of Kenny' should enjoy humor of Australia's favorite merry widow

> Continued from Page 17

assistant, and luggage carrier, who appears in the filmed introduction to her employer's show giving a sign language translation. Dame Edna has a love/hate relationship with her former bridesmaid, whom she once described as older than the original cast of Star Trek.

"You won't be seeing Madge in person," Dame Edna said with obvious relief. "She stays in the hotel cleaning. I've supported this woman, this New Zealand minx, for many, many years, and I have to make her work for it, otherwise, she just takes, takes, takes.

"Did you know that Madge invented bungee jumping? Well, we were visiting New Zealand because she always said she wanted to be buried there. So I was trying to buy a little plot for her. We were actually grave shopping. With any luck, I thought, I'd be able to leave her there. Of course like a lot of people, she's indestructible.

"We were in a part that's very unstable—volcanically—and we were standing on a little bridge and for some reason or another she fell off, but her surgical hose caught on a nail, and she could have dropped into some molten matter, but she 'sprang' back up and the Maori guide said, Bun-Gee Bun-Gee. That's the Maori word for pantyhose. Not only was her life saved, but simultaneously she invented the sport. I hope that cleared things up."

And then she whispered, "I haven't told that to anyone but YOU."

Another exclusive is that Dame Edna's "Royal Tour" is on a mission to capture America, and she'll succeed wildly if NY, San Francisco, Seattle, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Detroit with all their full houses are any indication.

"One of the things that has been giving me huge joy is the reception I'm getting in your homeland. It took America a long time to get the point of me, and now they can't get enough. They're lapping me up. The fact that I am probably one of the most adored people in the world is a sign of America's coming of age: a vision of your maturity and sophistication. And I think Houston is ready for me at last.

"Will Houston like me, do you think? Just between you and me, they tell me Houston needs a bit of a push. I hope I can manage it," she said with false modesty. "What's the famous line:

Houston, we have a problem. Edna says, Houston, we have NO problem."

When this absolutely fabulous woman is on stage at Jones Hall, throwing her trademark gladioli ("Snap frozen from my own garden") or ending the show with

her infamous "Gladioli Chorus" ("Stick up your gladiolas and thrust, thrust, thrust"), accompanied by her wicked barbs at the meek and unsuspecting (telling a theater latecomer, "I came here from Australia and I got here on time"), calling everybody "possum," ("It's a term of endearment my mother used to use, but when I got to America, I found possums here are more or less RATS"), and making us all sing her gay-friendly "Friends of Kenny" theme song ("Any friend of Kenny's is a friend of mine"), there truly ARE no other problems in life.

Dame Edna brews theater magic with the effortless ease of a master alchemist. We become children, laughing so hard for so long we ache. It's the best time in the theater we've ever spent.

"I'm very hands on, I'm in your face, and I'm in Houston!"

Calling all Friends of Kenny, or anyone with or without a prostate: Count down, possums, it's going to be blast off in Space City and Dame Edna is at the controls!



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Bayou Calendar

Transgender Festival 2.0

Gender variant talent gets their time to shine over the weekend. First up is "12 Minutes MAX!" on Friday. This is a hugely popular event, always worthwhile and thought-provoking. Everybody gets 12 minutes allotted to strut their stuff. With the gals as guys, or guys as dolls, look for TG stand-up comedian Jami Ward, poet Troy Ham, performance artist Kimberly Burnham, and Dallas' Janell DuBois to take you out of your comfy little space and into theirs. Saturday, author Judith Halberstam of "Female Masculinity" and "The Drag King Book" narrates a slide show on identity. And you thought she'd show travel pictures? Following the noted professor, will be Mo B. Dick, the man, the myth, the motion. He is NYC's drag king of the hill, and he's just as likely to pull it out and prove it to you. Should be quite a show.

May 18, 8 p.m. ("12 Minutes MAX!") May 19, 8 p.m. (Halberstam and Mo B. Dick)
DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway (N. Main @ Naylor)
713-223-8346

Mr. Bundy

"This is yucky," says Cassidy, the little girl in Jane Martin's drama, and you well might believe her. Mr. Bundy, her very nice next door neighbor and baby sitter, has been exposed by

a busybody religious couple as a former child molester. What to do, especially now that Robert and Catherine are attempting to shore up their shaky marriage after Robert's adulterous affair? Who gets to cast the first stone? Quite a few get bonked on the head in this passionately dramatic look into privacy, forgiveness, guilt, hate, and sex, of course.

May 18 - June 23
Actors Theatre of Houston, 2506 South Blvd.
713-529-6606.

Deathtrap

Ira Levin has written some of the chilliest thrillers: "A Kiss Before Dying," "The Stepford Wives," "The Boys From Brazil," and his classic "Rosemary's Baby." Here, he gives the chills a few laughs, as he sends up the genre while reveling in it. Burned-out playwright Sydney likes his student's play so much, he's willing to do just about anything to get his name on it. There are more twists and turns than a grande prix, dead people turn up alive, straight people go gay. A hugely popular stage and screen success (remember Superman, Christopher Reeve, kissing Michael Caine in the movie?). Let's see how they handle that here.

May 18 - June 23
The Company Onstage, 536 Westbury Square
713-726-1219

Hedwig and the Angry Inch



John Cameron Mitchell wrote, directed and stars in 'Hedwig and the Angry Inch,' one of the films featured at this year's gay film fest.

May 19, 7:30 p.m. May 24, 9 p.m.
Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 1001 Bissonnet
713-639-7540

Paragraph 175

Oscar-winning documentarians Jeffrey Freidman and Rob Epstein ("The Celluloid Closet," "The Life and Times of Harvey Milk," "Common Threads") illuminate the fatal consequences implied in paragraph 175 of the German Penal

Code: "An unnatural sex act committed between persons of the male sex or by humans with animals is punishable by imprisonment; the loss of civil rights may also be imposed." Narrated by gay icon Rupert Everett, the persecution yet ultimate survival of 10 gay men from the Nazi horrors is laid out, as well as is their incredible determination, hope, and struggle to tell their amazing stories for the younger generation. Absolutely, a must see.

May 19, 7:30 p.m. May 20, 7 p.m.
MFAH, 1001
Bissonnet 713-639-7540

The Devil's Disciple

For George Bernard Shaw's only work set in America, he gave his 1897 social comedy a rough-hewn masculine charm, much like what people on the Continent thought of us. We're in New Hampshire during the American Revolution. Prodigal son Dick Dudgeon, the town's roguish reprobate, visiting the Parson's wife, is mistaken for the minister by the British who want to make an example of the man of the cloth. Sentenced to be hanged, the young man finds morality, the minister courage, and the stuffy British get made fun of. Delightful Shaw badinage, as only the Great Curmudgeon could do.

May 23 - June 17
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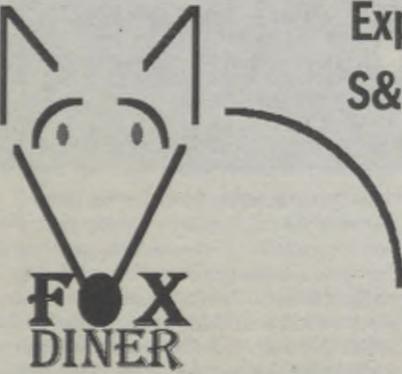
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Eating Out

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Tasteful gluttony

Todai offers rare combo of variety and quality in its all-you-can-eat buffet

by KATHREEN LEE

Gluttony, excess, intemperance—these are the words I associate with all-you-can-eat buffets. These are places where the patrons do not dine for the mere necessity of nutrition or survival or for the simple pleasure of savoring a flavor, but rather where they go to gorge themselves for the sake of getting the biggest bang for the buck or for the sake of distending the smooth muscles of their stomach just that much further to make room for the cheesecake.

Most buffet restaurants in Houston, whether it be the Golden Corral or China Buffet, offer the same small and hackneyed rotation of deep-fried fare topped with the all-consuming sauce. If it's not fried chicken with barbecue sauce then it's fried chicken with sweet and sour sauce.

Houston diners now no longer have to settle for the same greasy stock and have a new option with the opening of **TODAI**, a Japanese seafood buffet which presents its signature 160-foot buffet counter offering a vast array of foods.

With 40 different kinds of sushi, 48 diverse varieties of salads and starters, 56 distinctive hot entrees, and 48 assorted desserts, Todai offers even the pickiest of eaters a panoply of choices.

With 40 different kinds of sushi, 48 diverse varieties of salads and starters, 56 distinctive hot entrees, and 48 assorted desserts, Todai offers even the pickiest of eaters a panoply of choices.

The expansive seafood selection includes fried blue crab, jumbo shrimp with lobster sauce, crab omelet, whole snow crabs and lobsters, raw oysters, green mussels, and a school of diverse fish including halibut, mahi mahi, Chilean sea bass, snapper, swordfish, and salmon.

The preparation varies from fried, boiled, grilled, raw, steamed, or sautéed, and many dishes are served with a range of conglomerate ingredients such as the shrimp ball with vegetables (dim-sum style), seafood quiche, or one of my favorites, the dynamite, which is a spicy steamed scallop wrapped in bacon and

FOOD FILE



Marq*E Entertainment
7620 Katy Freeway #300
713.682.0009

Food:

Service:

Value:

Scene:

- Opt for bread, water at home
- OK, if you really must
- Fine for most
- Worth the drive, so live a little
- As good as it gets

served on top of an oyster half shell.

Even for those non-seafood lovers, your choices abound with items such as Bulgogi (a Korean BBQ), chicken cabbage roll, sweet and sour pork, chicken wings, rib-eyes, spare ribs, potato pizza, egg plant with garlic sauce, vegetable tempuras, and an array of salads including asparagus salad, artichoke and cucumber salad, Caesar salad, potato salad, mushroom salad, and spinach salad.

Hungry yet?

While all the items above might not be available at every meal, you should be able to find your niche within the sprawling buffet counter. There is no ordering a la carte and so every meal is a buffet.

Lunch is \$12.95 Monday through Thursday and \$14.95 Friday through Sunday and on holidays. Dinner is \$22.95 Monday through Thursday, and \$24.95 Friday through Sunday and on holidays.

The buffet rates for children are based on their projected consumption amount, i.e. their height. Children under 5 feet are 50 percent the usual price for adults. Children under 4 feet pay \$5.95 for lunch and \$6.95 for dinner. Children under 3 feet pay \$4.95 for lunch and dinner. Children under 2-and-a-half feet eat for free.

For those vertically challenged adults, such as myself, who hover around the 5 feet range, these rates, unfortunately only apply to children.

Located within the large Marq*E Entertainment complex where children and their families can enjoy a number of activities, Todai's is the next stop after you've worked up a gastronomic appetite.

With large colorful models of tropical fish hanging from the rafters, live crawfish, lobsters, and fish swimming in large tanks, and a yellow plush mascot evoking images of familiar Sanrio characters like Hello Kitty and Kero Kero Keroppi, Todai offers the perfect family buffet get away for all gluttons ready to meet their match.



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out in music

by ERIN O'BRIANT



A piece of her heart

A CD combo of Janis Joplin's letters home and best music is fascinating, but harbors a few mosquitoes

Whether or not you're a fan of dramatic re-enactments, if you're a fan of JANIS JOPLIN, you want to hear LOVE, JANIS. The CD is a companion to the off-Broadway musical by the same title that opened last month.

The compilation intersperses some of the '60s rock star's best music with tracks of an actor reading letters the star wrote to her family from 1965 until her death five years later.

Listening to the CD is comparable to lying on a sunny Mexican beach being bitten repeatedly by mosquitoes. You love being at the beach and you're excited to be there. But some parts of the experience are so irritating you almost have to pack up your floral print tote bag and head back to the hotel.

Or, in my case, stop the CD and take a few deep breaths before listening to the rest of the overly dramatic readings, delivered by Catherine Curtin.

If you summon your patience, though, and get past Curtin's tendency to squeeze oceans of innuendo out of a phrase like, "Oh, guess what," there's a lot to enjoy in Joplin's letters home to her family.

We never doubted Joplin was smart and funny, did we? Actually, I had never thought about it. Of course there had to be more to her than the hippie life and hard living, but I had no idea what it might be. Her articulate, loving, witty and sometimes puppy-enthusiastic letters home to "Mother and Dad" reveal a side to Joplin that casual fans like me might easily have missed.

The first letter on the CD, written at the beginning of Joplin's career in 1965, begins, "With a great deal of trepidation, I bring the news: I'm in San Francisco." The letters chart Joplin's rise to stardom, often in a "don't worry about me" tone that many listeners will remember using in letters home to their own parents.

Like most other daughters, Joplin doesn't tell the folks back home about her numerous affairs with men and women, her drug use



The compilation CD 'Love, Janis' provides irrefutable proof that Janis Joplin could use 'stoic' in a sentence, but listeners will hope she didn't sound that melodramatic in real life.

or her tough persona in the letters. But she does show a sense of humor and perspective that plenty of stars lack.

"Right now, my position is ambivalent," she wrote in 1965, the day she began rehearsal with the band Big Brother & the Holding Company. "I'm not at all sold on the idea of becoming a poor man's Cher."

A couple of years later, after gushing to her family about the reviews she and her band received for the album "Cheap Thrills," she promised, "I'll try and write again when I'm not so enamored with myself."

The last letter on the CD, written just a month before her death of a heroin overdose in October 1970, reveals Joplin's usually unspoken fears. Telling her parents about a boyfriend, she wrote, "He really did love me and he was so good to me, Mommy, and he wants to come back and marry me. I thought I would die without someone besides fans asking me, but he meant it. And who knows, I may get tired of the music biz someday."

Janis Joplin's sister, Laura Joplin, conceived the idea for the stage show and companion CD. After she and brother Michael Joplin re-read their sister's letters home, they got interested in using them to create a biography about her. "The letters may have yellowed with age," Laura Joplin writes, "but the words written on them were sharp, expressive and honest."

INFO

'Love, Janis: The Songs, the Letters, the Soul of Janis Joplin'

Janis Joplin
Sony/Columbia Records
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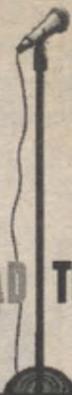
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community

saturday, may 19

After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM. 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. 713-526-5738.
Q-Patrol walks the streets 8:45 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.
Dignity mass. 7:30 p.m. for gay Catholics. 713-880-2872.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Rosary 8 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama. 713-528-6665.
Houston Chain Gang Bicycle Club. Call for ride locations. 713-863-1860.
Gay & Lesbian Breakfast Club. 9:30 a.m. 281-437-0636.
Houston Wrestling Club. Practice. 1:30 p.m. 713-453-7406.
Rainbow Fishing Club. Meeting. 713-526-7070/713-880-9235.
Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours noon to 4 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
Houston Area Bears Social. Mary's. 9 p.m. 713-867-9123.
Asians & Friends. Pot Luck party.
www.AsiansAndFriendsHouston.com. 713-626-6300.

sunday may 20

Rainbow Riders. A bicycle club for women. 713-869-1686.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Holy Rite Eucharist I 7:45 a.m.; Holy Rite Eucharist II 8:55 a.m.; Education hour 10 a.m.; Choral Eucharist 11 a.m. 713-528-6665.
Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Church. Service. 6:30 p.m. 713-528-6756.
Resurrection MCC. Services. 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10 a.m. Youth Sunday School 11:15 a.m. Handbell Choir rehearsal 1:30 p.m. 713-861-9149.
Grace Lutheran Church. Sunday school for all ages 9 a.m. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-528-3269.
Community Gospel. Service at 11 a.m. & 7 p.m. Sunday School for children 10 a.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
Houston Mission Church. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-529-8225.
Covenant Church, Ecumenical, Liberal Baptist. Service 9:30 a.m. & education hour 11 a.m. 713-668-8830.
Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Services at 8:30 a.m. & 10:50 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 713-526-1017.
The Women's Group. Meeting & Discussion. 10:45 a.m. 713-529-8571.
Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 502 Church St. Service 10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.
First Congregational Church (Memorial). Service at 10 a.m. Christian Education. 11:30 p.m. 713-468-9543 or fcc-houston.org.
Unitarian Fellowship of Houston. Adult forum 10 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 713-686-5876.
Gay Catholics of St. Anne's-Houston. 5 p.m. worship service. Dinner and social. alexcam@wt.net. 713-623-0930

Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation: Adult discussion 9:45 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.
First Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:30 & 11:30 a.m. Brunch available 10:30 a.m. Panel Discussion: Bisexuality. 1:30 p.m. 713-526-5200. church@firstuu.org.
Anarchist Black Cross Federation/Anarchist Reading Group. 1 p.m. www.houstonabc.org. 713-595-2103
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours 2 to 4 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition. • Dinner at the Center. 6 P.M. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
Garden Party. "The Honeybee Show." 8:30 p.m. Fundraiser at the Briar Patch. 713-463-6705.
PFLAG-Woodlands. Support group. 713-867-9020.

monday, may 21

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

tuesday, may 22

For Mature Audiences Only. Support group. 7 p.m. Bering Memorial UMC. 713-526-1017.
HTGA Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-520-0439.
Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Club Houston. 713-830-3000.
Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-524-0439.
Bering Support Network. Lunch Bunch Gang 11 a.m. 713-526-1017.

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calendar

Gay Men's Process Group. 7 p.m. 3316 Mt. Vernon. 713-526-8390.
Men's Network. Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual men. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.
CPR Classes. 3 p.m. 713-607-7700.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Lesbian Coming Out Group • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
Gay Men's Health. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
Bi-Net Houston. Men's mixer. 713-467-4380.

wednesday, may 23

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. 2015 Thomas Street 713-793-4026.
STD Exams & treatment. HIV Testing. Free. AVES. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.
Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Mary's, Venture-N & E's. 713-830-3000.
BiNet Houston. 7:30 p.m. Women's Social. 713-467-4380
Women's Network. Montrose Counseling Center Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual women. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 936-441-1614.
Project: Caesar. Workshops. AFH. 3203 Wesleyan. 713-623-6796.
Out Skate Rollerskating Club. 8 to 10 p.m. 8075 Cook Road. 281-933-5818.
Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. 7 p.m. 713-880-0670.
Bible Study. Noon & 6:30 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal. 713-526-6665.
Spiritual Uplift service. 7 p.m. Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Resurrection MCC. 713-861-9149.
Freelance Art Classes by Kermit Eisenhut for HIV+ individuals. 1 to 4 p.m. Lunch provided. 713-523-9530.
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
Lesbian Literature Discussion Group. 7 p.m. 713-523-3037.
Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal. 1307 Yale. 713-527-0931. www.houstonprideband.org.
Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. Various Support Groups 7 p.m. 713-526-1017.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition • Free HIV testing by the Montrose Clinic 6 to 9 p.m. • 713-524-3818.
Houston Area Bears. Newsletter mailout. Pot Pie. 713-528-4350.
Center for AIDS. Women's mixer. 713-527-8210.

thursday, may 24

Gay Men's Chorus of Houston. Open rehearsal. 7 p.m. 4807 San Felipe. 713-521-7464.
Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. 7 p.m. 713-880-0670.
Hep C Recovery. Support Group. 6:30 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017, Ext. 211.
STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.
Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Toy Disco. 713-830-3000.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.
Lambda Skating Club skates. 8 p.m. Tradewinds. Skating Rink. www.lambdaroll.org. 713-410-7215.
FrontRunners. Running Club. 6:30 p.m. 713-522-8021.
HIV Art Therapy Program. 1 to 4 p.m. Kermit Eisenhut. 713-523-9530.
Women's Clinic. Montrose Clinic. 713-830-3000.
Community Gospel. Service. 7:30 p.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
HIV Testing. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition 6:30 p.m. • 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

friday, may 25

Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (H.A.T.C.H.) Meeting. 713-942-7002.
Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. Rich's. 713-830-3000.
STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.
Frost Eye Clinic. Free eye exams for people with HIV. 713-830-3000.
Q-Patrol walks the streets. 9 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.
Kolbe Project. Morning Prayer. 10 a.m. 713-861-1800.
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
Positive Art Workshop. 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Patrick Palmer. 713-526-1118.
Lesbian and Gay Voices. KPFT 90.1 FM. 7 p.m. 713-526-5738.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition. • Lesbian Film Night 6-9 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. • 713-524-3818.
"Golden Girl" Weekend • Classic Chassis Car Club. 713-797-8615.
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May 27th "Blest be the tie that binds" Rev. Janet Parker

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

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Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Check Enclosed _____ Charge to my AMEX MC VISA

Card # _____ Exp. ____/____/____

Signature _____

Occasions

Birthdays

Belated birthday hugs to real estate tycoon Bob Ryan.

Classic Chassis Car Club members Steven H. (5/20) and Byron B. (5/21) turn the birthday odometer over this week.

Anthony C. (5/29) and Rommel Q. (5/22) of Asians and Friends are adding another year this week.

John (Bubbles) Dye pranced right by his birthday last week on May 15.

JR's poplar bartender Reed toasts in a birthday on May 20.

Houston Area Bear growls in a birthday on May 20.

Tall, blonde and handsome Thomas Nitsche of the Kolbe Project has a birthday on May 23.

Rainbo de Clown laughs on his May 25 birthday.

Former *Houston Voice*er and avid golfer Terry Murphy tees one up for his May 25 birthday.

Anniversaries

The *Houston Voice*'s own Carolyn (Cuervolyn) and Jeff (Laser Wizard) Roberts celebrated their sixth anniversary on May 13.

LOST & FOUND!



Bean went on a little adventure May 16-17. He just had a summer cut and evidently wanted to show it off to all his doggie pals. He decided to ditch his daddy Davis and go for a walk on his own for about 24 hours, but happily, Bean is back at home, safe and sound.



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My Stars!

by JILL DEARMAN



YOUR WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

May 18 - 24



ARIES (MARCH 21—APRIL 20)

With the Sun firmly moving through your social sector as of May 21, you might as well leap without looking into a new way of life. See new people and places. Money and prestige are not as important as your basic sense of well-being. Consult with a Virgo and take tips on what not to do with your life.



TAURUS (APRIL 21—MAY 20)

The Sun moves into the financial sector of your chart on May 21, so please take care of needling money matters before they drive you nuts. It's okay to moonlight if your extra job leads you to some long-term success and chill time. A Gemini is full of hot leads and other hot stuff for you.



GEMINI (MAY 21—JUNE 21)

Be open to all sorts of sexual opportunities as the Sun shines on you beginning May 21. This is a mysterious time for you, Gemini. You will have to sacrifice several stupid things you're attached to in order to go for the big prize. Do it! An Aquarius will give you the necessary push in the right direction.



CANCER (JUNE 22—JULY 22)

It's time to give up an illusion about an old lover and realize that there's nothing you could've done to make this person stay. If you can take a one-step-at-a-time approach to your work life, you will do extremely well in late May. A Capricorn thinks you're hot, but doesn't dig your hot air.



LEO (JULY 23—AUG. 22)

You may have to take a "wait and see" approach to a strange love connection while Neptune is retrograde in your opposite sign. Step away from a creative project that has only left you frustrated and begin work on something new that you totally believe in. A Pisces has a magical effect on your body—and your body of work.



VIRGO (AUG. 23—SEPT. 22)

You need to make an important decision during the week of May 21. And the decision is: Make a decision—about anything! Force yourself to hop off the fence and take a stand. If you've been tentative about your feelings for a Capricorn, now is the time to be bold.



LIBRA (SEPT. 23—OCT. 22)

Vanity works in your favor as Venus transits your opposite sign. It's time for you to believe in your own sex appeal. You are the master of your own destiny, especially if you try to expand your business to include places (and/or colleagues) beyond your own borders. A Taurus wants to speak in tongues with you.



SCORPIO (OCT. 23—NOV. 21)

Instead of worrying about all the tiny things you can't control, focus on what you do have power over. Make a serious commitment to the one you love. If you keep hemming and hawing, you may lose your chance. A Virgo can only wait so long.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22—DEC. 21)

Your buddies are completely lucky for you and completely rooting for you during this emotionally vivid cycle. You can start a new business venture, but don't try to get it finished until Mars goes out of retrograde (June 19). You and a Cancer make a fabulous team, so put your heads (or other body parts) together.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 22—JAN. 19)

When it comes to romance, this is definitely a "love the one you're with" cycle, sweetie. Give up on a fantasy about an old lover who has moved on without you. Concentrate on the hot (but real) choice in front of you. If you're looking at a Libra, all the better.



AQUARIUS (JAN. 20—FEB. 18)

You need to build a little nest egg for a project you desperately believe in. So avoid lending money to leeches! You are about to cross a major finish line, so don't give in to panic at the eleventh hour.



PISCES (FEB. 19—MARCH 20)

A vacation may be just what you need during late May, especially if it's by yourself or with someone you are completely comfortable with. You may have too many romantic possibilities to choose from soon. Go after the one (an Aries?) who makes your knees weak.

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

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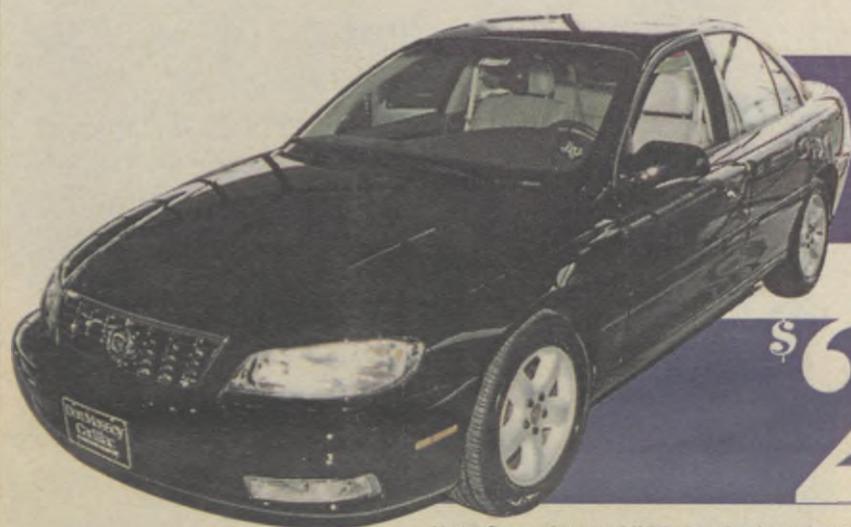
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