



On the road again
Gay and lesbian truckers find that life on the road is more accepting than most would think
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AUGUST 12, 2005

TAKING A STAND: Church sign says it all. Page 3



STRATEGIC MOVE: Two HIV agencies merge. Page 3



GAY SOLDIERS: Online. outings prompt action. Page 6



Roberts' record mixed on gay rights

Work on Romer, comment on Boy Scouts offer some hints

By EARTHA JANE MELZER

Groups across the political spectrum scrambled last week to make sense of reports that Supreme Court Justice nominee John G. Roberts Jr. had assisted gay rights lawyers on Romer vs. Evans, a landmark case in which the Supreme Court overturned an anti-gay Colorado amendment.

While in private practice at the Washington, D.C., firm of Hogan & Hartson, Roberts advised gay rights lawyers on oral argument strategy for the Romer case and played the role of a conservative, Scalia-like justice during a practice session with the lawyers.

In a Los Angeles Times report, lawyer Jean Dubofsky credited Roberts with significantly helping her preparation to argue the Supreme Court should overturn the Colorado amendment, which banned state and local civil rights protections for gays. The court ultimately accepted her position, ruling 6-3 that the amendment violated the Constitution's "equal protection clause."

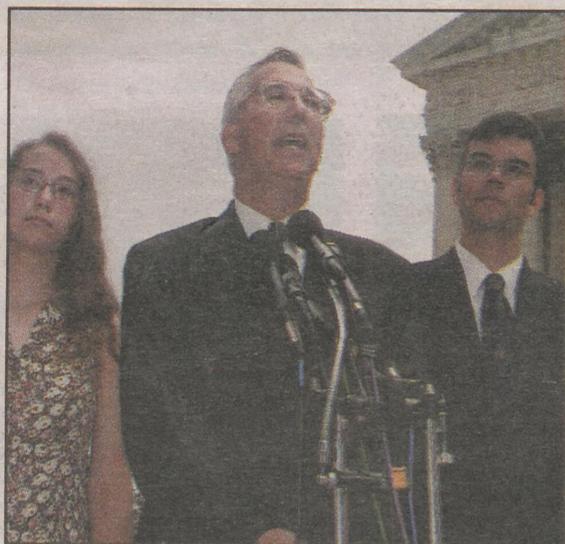
Roberts did not mention his work on the Romer case in his 67-page response to the Senate Judiciary Committee questionnaire, even in response to questions asking for examples of his "pro bono," or free legal work.

Suzanne Goldberg, who worked on the Romer case for Lambda Legal, resisted reading too much into Roberts' assistance.

"I do not think that Judge Roberts' help has great significance as an indicator on his views on gay rights or civil rights more generally," Goldberg said. "I think that at large firms, it is fairly typical that lawyers will assist their colleagues on a variety of cases and that assistance does not necessarily convey support for the positions taken in the case."

Goldberg did allow that if Roberts was vehemently opposed to the equality position in the Romer case, he might not have assisted in the case.

"I think that the holding in Romer applied a very



Eugene Delgaudio, president of a self-described anti-gay rights organization, held a news conference on the Supreme Court steps calling on President Bush to withdraw John Roberts' nomination because of the role he played in a 1996 gay rights case. (Photo by Rudy K. Lawidjaja)

basic longstanding principle of constitutional law to gay people: The government can't make law based on hostility against a group of people. That was hardly a radical proposition."

More accepting generation

Arthur Leonard, New York University law professor and editor of Lesbian/Gay Law Notes, said that news of Roberts' participation in the Romer case reinforces the view that although his politics are conservative on hotly-contested political issues, he is, after all, a member of a generation that came of age when gay liberation was starting to sweep even elite law school campuses.

Roberts is part of a culture that is reasonably comfortable with gay people and leans toward a libertarian view of gay issues, Leonard said, though it's not clear whether this perspective would cause Roberts to strike down the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, rule the Defense of Marriage Act

Please see **ROBERTS** on Page 6



Tamarie Cooper (center) and a troupe of actors performs the final installment of the 10-year saga, 'Tamalalia' through Sept. 3 at the Axiom.

'Tamalalia' times ten

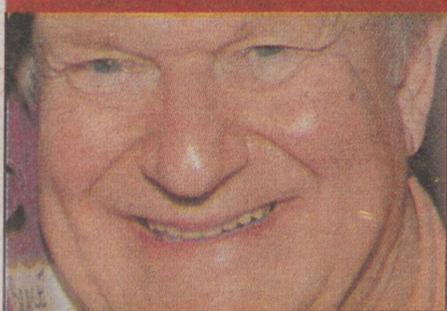
The life of Tamarie Cooper, told over ten years, is now coming into the home stretch

By JOHNNY HOOKS

THE LIFE OF TAMARIE COOPER IS AN OPEN BOOK. OR perhaps the phrase "all the worlds a stage" is a better fit. Cooper is currently performing the 10th and final version of her hit autobiographical show "Tamalalia" at The Axiom.

Over the past ten summers, Cooper has conceptualized, written, directed, choreographed as well as sewn clothes, painted

Please see **TAMALIA** on Page 18



Local life
Tony Carroll says gays may not realize that politics breeds new stress
PAGE 8

dish
Lesbian rocker Melissa Etheridge says she's now cancer free and coming out with a new CD
PAGE 17



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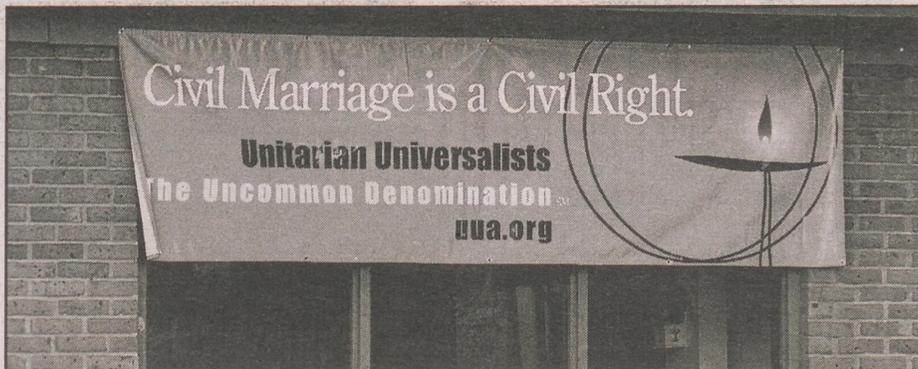


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local news briefs



A banner outside the First Unitarian Universalist Church supports same-sex marriage. (Photo by Jim Null)

Banner outside church touts civil marriage as a civil right

A bright blue banner recently hung outside the First Unitarian Universalist Church proclaims, "Civil marriage is a civil right." Tom Cowen, facilities administrator at the church, said the slogan came from the Unitarian association when civil rights activists in the state of Massachusetts began their campaign for same-sex marriage. When the association learned that voters in Texas would be asked in November to cast ballots for or against a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage and civil unions, banners were sent to churches throughout the state. Sunday services at the church, 5200 Fannin at Southmore, are at 9:30 and 11 a.m.

Campaign coordinators named for effort to fight marriage amendment

Kathryn Chace McNeil and Emily Langdon have been named Houston Area Regional Campaign Coordinators in the effort to defeat a proposed constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage and civil unions in Texas. The measure goes before voters in November. McNeil, who has a master's degree in public administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, has more than 20 years managing political advocacy, fundraising and communications campaigns. Langdon, a graduate of the University of Houston, is a founding member of the Houston Equal Rights Alliance (HERA) and most recently worked on the Howard Dean campaign. "Kathryn and Emily are uniquely qualified to get out the vote and encourage Houstonians to join other fair-minded Texans and vote against the Constitutional Amendment," said Glen Maxey, state campaign director. The campaign to fight the marriage amendment has been officially dubbed No. Nonsense in November. The Web site is www.nononsenseinnovember.com.

Comedienne Kathy Griffin has been chosen to headline Black Tie Dinner

Kathy Griffin is the featured performer this year at the Houston Black Tie Dinner Nov. 12 at the Inter-Continental Hotel, 2222 West Loop South. Griffin's no-holds-barred humor will be complimented by music from Rotel and the Red Hot Tomatoes. Beneficiaries this year include AIDS Foundation Houston, AssistHers, Uncommon Legacy Houston, Montrose Counseling Center, Casa De Esperanza and Bering Omega Community Services. Individual tickets are \$175 and can be



Comedienne Kathy Griffin will headline the Black Dinner Nov. 12 at the Intercontinental Hotel.

purchased at 800-494-8497 or www.houstonblacktiedinner.org.

HATCH Youth are raising money For a trip to the Dallas Pride Parade

After marching in the Houston Pride Parade, HATCH youth are raising money so they can walk down Cedar Springs Road in the Dallas Pride Parade. Carwashes will be conducted August 20 and Sept. 3 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the parking lot next to Mary's Lounge at 1022 Westheimer. For more information, contact Deb Murphy, HATCH youth services worker, at 713-529-3590.

From staff and wire reports

regional news

Montrose Clinic merges with the Assistance Fund

The merger will create a mega agency with more services and a budget of \$10 million

By BINNIE FISHER

The Montrose Clinic and The Assistance Fund, two non-profit agencies that serve persons with HIV/AIDS, will merge later this year to create a new organization with an annual budget of \$10 million.

The boards of the two agencies approved the merger July 27. The legal documents to complete the merger should be signed by October 3. The new organization will have a new name and a new logo.

Under the agreement, Ken Malone, executive director of the Assistance Fund, will become chief operating officer of the new organization.

Katy Caldwell, executive director of the clinic, will head the new entity, likely as chief executive officer, Malone said.

"We've been pursuing talks for almost a year now," Malone said. "This will allow us to serve people we could not have served before."

He said what is happening with Montrose Clinic and the Assistance Fund is a sign of the times.

"Federal funding is becoming more and more uncertain," he said. "I think more organizations are going to have to come together."

More people served

As the Assistance Fund, Malone said his agency could work only with people with HIV and AIDS. Because the Montrose Clinic is a federally qualified health center, he said, more people with other chronic diseases could be served.

"This has the earmarking of something big," he said.

In the coming weeks, Malone said, a name for the new entity will be determined along with a new logo that "reflects the forward vision and the expanded role" of the new entity.

Under the agreement, he said, no employees of either agency will be downsized. Both organizations will stay in their current locations until a suitable facility can be found to house the new agency.

Montrose Clinic provides preventive and primary health care to underserved communities. The patient load is about 15,000 people per year.

The Assistance Fund helps people with HIV/AIDS maintain the continuity of their medical care by providing assistance with health insurance costs and medications. The Fund serves



Ken Malone, executive director of the Assistance Fund, will become chief operating officer in the agency that is created by the merger of his organization and the Montrose Clinic. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

more than 3,000 annually. About 1,000 people receive services from both organizations.

"The vision and strategic planning exhibited by the two agencies' boards will ensure that our community's health will come first, regardless of economic cycles or changing federal policies," said Marianne Huerter, who chairs the clinic board.

Assistance Fund Board Chair Mike Ryan added, "Ensuring continuous, quality medical care for those who are affected or infected by HIV/AIDS is our highest priority. Combining The Assistance Fund and the Montrose Clinic will provide the best opportunity to secure the future for existing programs and offer potential to increase services to those in need."

Dr. Shannon Schrader of the Schrader Clinic who also serves as medical director for research at the clinic, said the merger will ultimately mean better care for clients of both organizations.

"In the short term, current clients will be served more efficiently. The blending of these organizations' complimentary services will mean more Houstonians will be able to receive better service, faster, which is the best result you can ask for in the non-profit community," he said.

Don Gill, who has raised money for Houston organizations, including the Montrose Clinic, added, "As a community, our donated dollars will go further to meet client needs more efficiently. The way I see it, two strong agencies are coming together to create a stronger, more effective agency designed to meet the long term needs of our community."

Montrose Clinic was formed in 1981 and now has 70 fulltime employees and a budget of \$5.3 million. The Assistance Fund began in 1988 and employs 12 people who oversee a \$4.6 million budget.

national news

Gay groups offer Internet guide to protect soldiers

Military discharging servicemembers because of online profiles

By ELIZABETH WEILL-GREENBERG

In light of several online outings, the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, Gay.com/PlanetOut.com and Connexion.org have created an Internet guide for gay and lesbian servicemembers.

So far in 2005, the SLDN has worked on 10 online outing cases, which have made up 25 percent of its total work. Generally, someone who knows the servicemember will show an online profile, or chat room and IM conversation to the commanding officers, explained Steve Ralls, director of communications for SLDN.

In two of the cases they worked on, someone else created a fake profile and then showed it to the commanding officer, he said. As far as SLDN knows the Pentagon is not monitoring chat rooms or dating sites, he said.

"DADT is a very effective weapon of vengeance," he said. "It's an easy way to have someone who you have a grudge against discharged."

Many gay and lesbian servicemembers

don't realize that what they do online could violate the DADT rule, Ralls said. An online profile, for instance, is a violation of the "don't tell" provision. SLDN issued several precautions servicemembers can take, such as:

DO use a pseudonym or screen name to avoid disclosing your identity.

DO indicate your geographic location by the name of your town or zip code, not by the name of your base.

DO use a personal e-mail address to register and receive mail; do not use a military e-mail address.

DO NOT access Gay.com through a military computer at any time.

DO NOT indicate your branch of the armed services in your personal profile, screen name (example: SDnavyGuy78), in chat rooms or other online forums.

DO NOT provide information or descriptions that may reveal your identity, including public photographs that display your face or a unique tattoo.

Iraq veteran discharged

In July, Jeff Howe, 32, was honorably discharged while on his second tour of duty in Iraq after his command found his online profile. Howe's command began investigating him after he posted photos on his blog of an American vehicle that was destroyed by an enemy rocket.

Howe, who is gay, signed up for the Army after Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. After

his first tour of duty in Iraq he learned that his tour was getting extended under the stop-loss provision and, instead of getting out in November 2004, he would have to stay in until April 2006.

His discharge, he said, is "bitter sweet is one word." Shortly after he went through the emotional turmoil of going back to Iraq, he learned that he was being discharged.

"I'm still processing the sudden shift," Howe said. "I kind of wish I was still over there. I was close to everyone in my unit. They're still stuck over there getting shot at every day."

Howe's situation is far more the exception than the rule, according to Ralls. Often soldiers are not discharged if they're stationed in a war zone, he said.

"The number of people able to get out by coming out is dropping drastically," said J.E. McNeil, executive director for the Center on Conscience and War and the GI Rights Hotline. "They have got to keep their warm bodies."

The GI Rights Hotline fields calls from soldiers who are trying to get out of the military. Before Sept. 11, her office received about one call every six months from servicemembers who wanted to come out and get out of the military. Now, they get about one call a week like that. Often commanding officers will look the other way if the soldier has a valuable skill, she said.

As far back as the Vietnam and the Korean Wars, discharges for being gay



Jeff Howe was discharged from the Army after his commanding officers found his online profile in which he identified as gay. Howe said he was close to the other men in his unit who are still serving in Iraq. (Photo courtesy of Jeff Howe)

have decreased during war-time, said Ralls. Since the Sept. 11 attacks, there has been a 40 percent drop in gay and lesbian discharges, he said.

"It seems to imply that commanders are far less likely to discharge servicemembers during a time of war," he said. "Servicemembers in deployed units are far less likely to face discharge than a servicemember in a unit who is stationed here at home."

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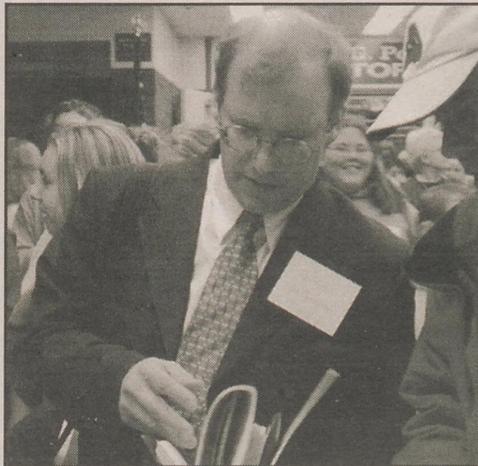


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national news briefs

Group opposes public funds for 2006 Gay Games

CHICAGO — A conservative Christian organization wants the Illinois Bureau of Tourism to refuse public funds for the 2006 Gay Games, the Chicago Tribune reported. Chicago is scheduled to host Gay Games VII, a quadrennial sporting event set for July in the city. The Illinois Family Institute of Glen Ellyn wants the state tourism department to refuse a grant request from organizers of the games. "We're opposed to the use of taxpayer dollars to promote an event that celebrates homosexuality," Peter LaBarbera, executive director of the institute, told the Tribune. "The idea of using sport to promote homosexuality is wrong." Chicago Games Inc., organizer of the event, applied this summer for money from the tourism department to help promote the eight-day games. "This is a tourism project like any other tourism event," Tracy Baim, publisher of Windy City Times and a board member of Chicago Games Inc., told the Tribune. More than 10,000 participants and nearly 100,000 spectators are expected to spend up to \$80 million in the Chicago area for the games. Illinois tourism officials said the grant request is under review, with an answer expected within two weeks.



Peter LaBarbera, executive director of the conservative Illinois Family Institute, said the group opposes the use of state tourism funds to promote the 2006 Gay Games in Chicago because 'the idea of using sport to promote homosexuality is wrong.' (File photo)

New petition against same-sex marriage filed

TAHLEQUAH, Okla. (AP) — A new petition has been filed in a Cherokee Nation court challenging the marriage of a same-sex couple less than one week after a tribal court dismissed a lawsuit that held up the lesbian couple's union. Kathy Reynolds and Dawn McKinley enjoyed a short-lived victory after a lawsuit filed by a private citizen, challenging their marriage, was dismissed last Wednesday by the tribe's Judicial Appeals Tribunal. The tribe's highest court ruled that Todd Hembree, who filed the suit, did not have standing in the case and could not adequately prove he would be harmed by the couple's marriage. On Friday, a group of tribal councilors filed a petition challenging the couple's marriage license on the same grounds. One of the councilors who filed the lawsuit, Linda O'Leary, claimed that necessity brought about the petition.

Utah mayor, councilwoman seek benefits for employees' partners

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Mayor Rocky Anderson and City Councilwoman Jill Remington Love are separately exploring ways to offer insurance and other benefits to employees' domestic partners other significant others — such as siblings and parents — with whom they live. "I've always been in favor of equal benefits for employees, regardless of sexual orientation," Anderson said last week. He said he would sign an executive order launching the benefits if city attorneys determine the it does not require City Council approval. Love didn't know Anderson was interested in the idea until last week. "I've wondered why the mayor hasn't been working on it," she said. Love was quoted in a copyright story in the Salt Lake City Tribune. She doesn't want the debate to be just about gay rights. She says it's about fairness "to our employees." "Good employers across the country are expanding their benefits," Love said.

Social Security privatization will hurt gays, study says

WASHINGTON — Gay people are more likely to rely on Social Security for retirement income, making them more vulnerable to any cuts in benefits that might occur if the system is privatized, according to a report released Tuesday by the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute. "It's a raw deal for all Americans, in particular for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered Americans," author Mandy Hu said in a telephone conference today. The study, dubbed "Selling Us Short," says gay Americans should be especially wary of President Bush's plan to allow workers to invest a portion of their Social Security taxes in private stock accounts. Details of Bush's plan remain "sketchy" and "befuddled," Hu said, but it would ultimately result in reduced benefits for all but the lowest-income workers. Such a drop in Social Security benefits could prove especially devastating to gay men and lesbians who have fewer other avenues for support in retirement, the study concludes.

FBI seizes computer in search of Spokane mayor's home

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — A personal computer and related records were seized in an FBI search of embattled Mayor James E. West's home as part of a federal investigation into public corruption allegations, a newspaper reports. West, who is fighting allegations that he used his office to offer City Hall jobs to young men he met in a gay online chat room, was present with an attorney when FBI agents searched his West Spokane home July 27, the Spokesman-Review reported last week.

From staff and wire reports

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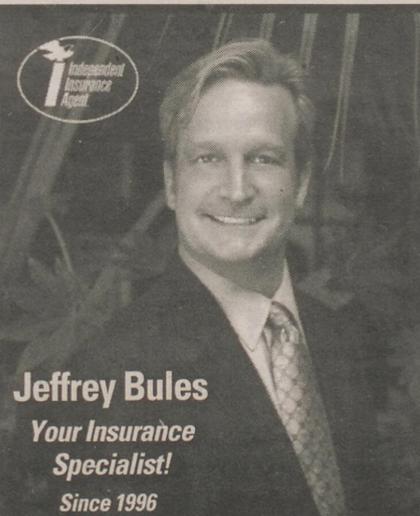
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national news

Roberts spoke approvingly of Scouts decision

ROBERTS, continued from Page 1

unconstitutional or find constitutional flaws in state laws that stigmatize gay people.

"I think it is possible that a political conservative such as Roberts [could] have deemed it worth his time to help prepare the argument in Romer because the concept of [Colorado's] Amendment 2 was offensive to him on general grounds," Leonard said.

"There is certainly a difference between striking down laws that impose second-class citizenship on a class of people and supporting more affirmative rights for such people, and I don't necessarily think a judge's position on one necessarily predicts his position on the other," he said.

Leonard said that Roberts' work on Romer is comforting because it indicates that the nominee is not reflexively anti-gay and probably holds views on gay issues somewhere in between Justice Anthony Kennedy, who authored the majority opinions in Romer and Lawrence vs. Evans, the court's other landmark gay rights case, and Chief Justice William Rehnquist, who dissented in both cases.

Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, a social conservative group, said via e-mail that his first response to news of Roberts involvement in the Romer case was that Roberts had been "aiding and abetting" gay activists.

Perkins said he later decided that helping argue cases is a typical part of serving in a large private practice law firm, and he cautioned FRC members not to jump to conclusions about Roberts' positions on gay issues.

Perkins said that the FRC approach will be to trust that Bush has made an appropriate nomination but verify Roberts' views through involvement in the confirmation process.

On Aug. 14, FRC plans to hold "Justice Sunday II," a televised event at Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville. Promotional materials for the event lists Dr. James Dobson and House Majority Leader Tom Delay (R-Tex.) among the political and religious figures scheduled to participate.

"Our first 'Justice Sunday' simulcast ...



Both liberal and conservative groups were unsure what to make of news that Judge John Roberts (left) worked pro bono on behalf of gay people on a key gay rights case. (Photo by AP)

helped free several of President Bush's stalled appeals court nominees for the liberals' filibuster. The stakes are even higher now," Perkins said.

"Justice Sunday II" aims to educate millions of Americans about how to counter the "judicial activism" which they say has led to gay rights and abortion rights.

One voice against Roberts from right

At least one social conservative group has decided that Roberts' work on the Romer case should exclude him from the Supreme Court.

Eugene Delgaudio, president of the Virginia-based Public Advocate of the U.S. Inc., a 25-year-old, pro-family and anti-gay rights organization, called on President Bush

to withdraw his nomination of Roberts.

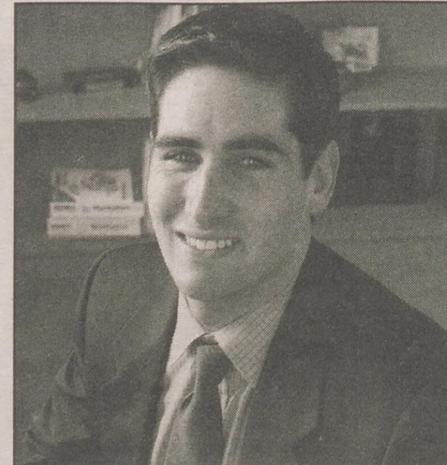
In a news conference on the Supreme Court steps, Delgaudio said that Roberts' help in the Romer case constituted active support in an act of judicial activism: the overturning of a "pro-family" Colorado law that was passed overwhelmingly by the people of Colorado.

Delgaudio stressed that Roberts' work on this case was completely voluntary.

"His actions not only cast doubt on his support for the American family, but also raise the possibility that Roberts will join the activist wing of the Supreme Court," Delgaudio said.

Roberts backs Boy Scouts

In a 2000 television interview, Roberts characterized as an important First Amendment victory the Supreme Court decision in Dale vs. Boy Scouts of



James Dale, who was kicked out of the Boy Scouts because he is gay, filed the lawsuit that eventually went to the Supreme Court in 2000. Judge John Roberts Jr., who President Bush has nominated for the Supreme Court, indicated at the time in a television interview that he agreed with the court's decision allowing a private group that receives taxpayer support to discriminate against gay men and lesbians. (Photo by Stuart Ramson/AP)

America, in which it was held that Scouts could prohibit gay leaders and members.

Roberts said he agreed with the ruling that people ought to be able to form groups and exclude those who don't have the same values, Lara Schwartz, senior counsel for the Human Rights Campaign said.

"The question that arises out of the Dale case is, how far does this go? Do employers have the right to exclude people they say disagree with their values?" asked Schwartz.

Schwartz said that Roberts' work on Romer does not indicate whether he agreed with the dissenters who argued that the case was about people trying to protect their right not to associate with people they don't want to.

Roberts' comments on Dale raise the question, Schwartz said, "Is Roberts one of those people, as all of his supporters are, that disputes the very idea that opposition to gay rights is discrimination?"

"We know excluding gay people from any part of life is discrimination. But out there on the right wing, they are trying to claim that it is not."

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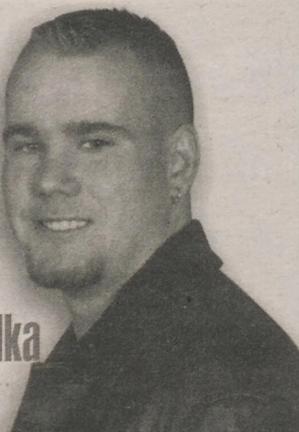
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national news

Conference to focus on 'comprehensive care'

Organizers want to explore mix of drug, unsafe sex, HIV

By BO SHELL

A two-day conference later this month in Salt Lake City is expected to draw about 900 healthcare workers, law enforcement officials and researchers to explore the growing epidemic of methamphetamine use and its impact on HIV and hepatitis.

Planning for the First National Conference on Methamphetamine, HIV & Hepatitis, set for Aug. 19-20, began as a way to respond to a belief that increased meth use will lead to higher HIV and hepatitis rates, according to Luciano Colonna, executive director of the Harm Reduction Project, which is playing host to the conference.

"We were alarmed by the health risks asso-

ciated with the spread of methamphetamine," Colonna said. "But we were also very concerned at the lack of infrastructure in rural areas of the U.S. when it came to dealing with issues like HIV and hepatitis, and also just the basic fiscal toll and care toll that outbreaks for methamphetamine use could have on communities."

By gathering together groups that address meth use, Colonna said he hopes to create a better understanding of the "continuum of care" that includes treatment, prevention, harm reduction and law enforcement.

Dangerous mix

Several of the conference's presentations discuss meth's impact on gay men, including sessions on meth use and sexual risk for men who have sex with men, meth dependence and treatment among gay men and a "Tweaking Tips for Party Boys" discussion by Michael Siever, director of the Stonewall Project at the University of California, San Francisco.

Recent studies show that 15 percent to 17 percent of gay men used meth in the last three months and as many as 20 percent have used in the last year, according to Gordon Mansergh, a senior behavioral scientist at the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention who plan to take part in the conference.

Mansergh also said research drew links between men who have sex with men,

meth use and unprotected sex.

"What we see in over a dozen studies is that meth users exhibit greater rates of unprotected anal sex than non meth users," he said.

Mansergh added that in a study of MSM meth users in Southern California, the No. 1 reason for using meth was to increase sexual experience.

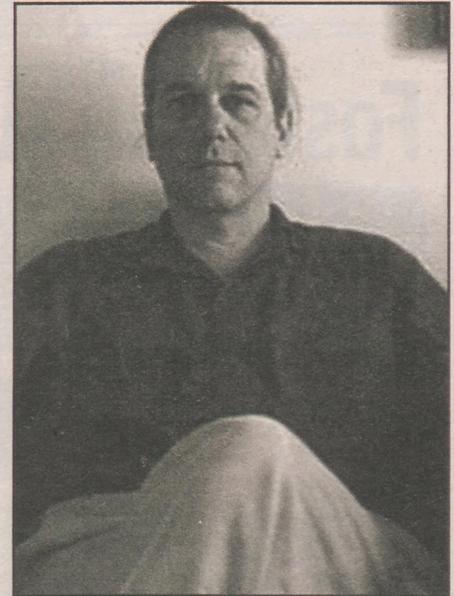
Michael Shernoff, a professor at the Columbia University School of Social Work who is scheduled to present at the conference, is author of the upcoming book "Without Condoms: Unprotected Sex, Gay Men and Barebacking."

"A lot of men who might not initially be bottoming, I've heard this from dozens of men, that crystal makes people instant bottoms," Shernoff said. "It increases anal sensitivity. It puts them in a position where they can be at risk to getting the virus."

Shernoff said when gay men mix sex, meth and erectile dysfunction drugs like Viagra, the combination can be dangerous.

"We have research that says a lot of people who use crystal who used to suffer from crystal dick are using Viagra or one of its sister drugs and are no longer having erectile problems. People who were not able to get it up can get it up and are doing things under crystal that lead to high risk behavior," he said.

Shernoff said current safer sex messages that promote condom use in each sexual encounter are no longer effective. Harm



Luciano Colonna, executive director of the Harm Reduction Project, said the organization's upcoming conference plans to explore ways to reduce the risk of HIV transmission during meth use.

reduction techniques, such as strategic positioning or making sure the HIV-positive sexual partner bottoms, may be a better message for preventing HIV infections, he said. Likewise, Colonna said current anti-meth campaigns aren't effective and that harm reduction is a more reasonable path toward change.

"Meth equals death, I don't think is a good campaign. I don't think it's going to stop someone from using meth," Colonna said. "For a lot of people, meth use is a rite of passage and it really does increase sexual pleasure."

i MORE INFO

First National Conference on Methamphetamine, HIV & Hepatitis
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Fostering successful gay and lesbian relationships

Psychotherapist Tony Carroll looks at how the current climate of hate causes stress for gays

By BINNIE FISHER

A psychotherapist by profession, Tony Carroll has no trouble recognizing the indicators of stress in those who come to him for help. That's why he's puzzled that he failed to recognize it in his own life.

Although he had lost weight after consulting a dietitian Carroll says, he suddenly began to gain weight. "Then I got this weird bald spot on my head."

The weight gain continued, and more bald spots appeared. During a professional meeting with other psychotherapists, Carroll says, he mentioned his predicament.

Their diagnosis? Stress.

"Of all the people you'd expect to recognize the effects of stress, it should be me," he says.

He hadn't realized, but he was beginning to feel the physical effects of something that he is seeing more and more in his patients. The stress, he says, is caused by the current political backlash toward gays and lesbians.

"Something is happening with the gay and lesbian community as it becomes so much the focus of the political manipulation of the right wing," he says. "We're becoming political scapegoats."

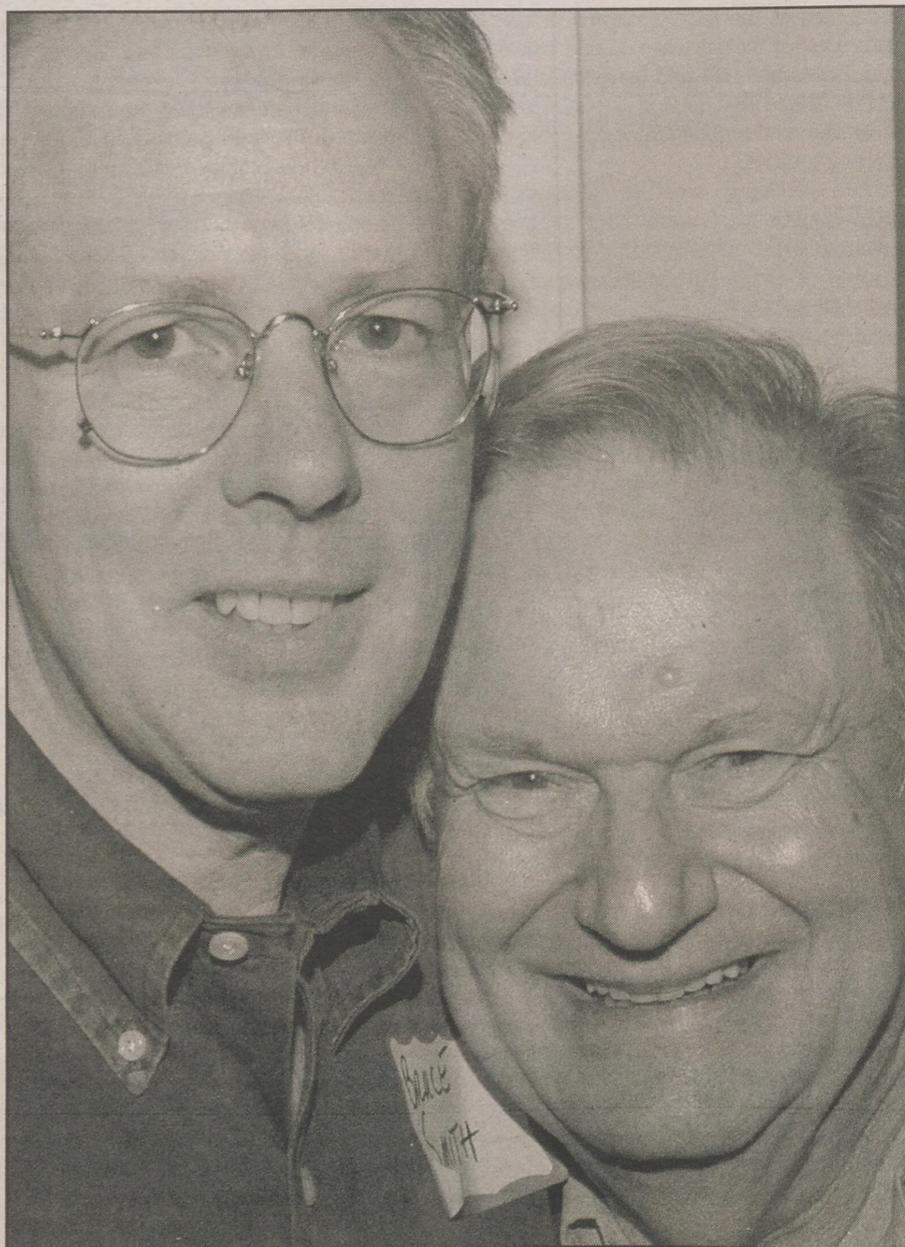
Although gays and lesbians have never enjoyed overall acceptance, Carroll says, "We've never been part of a political process to demonize us."

Stress, he says, manifests itself when people feel helpless to do anything to improve their situation in life.

"There's no venue for us to respond," he says. "We're absolutely trapped in this barrage of those awful, awful attacks. There's this pervasive sense all around us that we're not safe."

Some people, he says, may even be feeling a sense of loss. After a positive U.S. Supreme Court decision overturned the Texas sodomy law, there was a sense of empowerment.

Then, the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts issued its landmark rul-



Psychotherapist **Tony Carroll** (right) and his partner, dentist **Bruce Smith**, have been together for 10 years. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

ing seemingly paving the way for same-sex marriage in that state.

The backlash to those advancements turned the tables as President George Bush called for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution banning gay marriage. A number of states rushed to tack anti-gay marriage amendments onto their constitutions.

Texans will vote in November on a proposed amendment that would not only ban same-sex marriage but would also prohibit civil unions.

"This is generating a huge amount of stress," Carroll says.

He suggests that just as he didn't recognize that the current state of politics was wreaking havoc in his own life, most people may not realize how they are being affected.

Such stress affects not only a person's health and well-being, but also their relationships.

That's where Carroll believes he may

be able to help. He's beginning a series of seminars aimed at helping gays and lesbians achieve what they want. The first of the series scheduled August 13 and 14 is aimed at helping gay men achieve dating success with appropriate partners. Other seminars are planned in the fall.

Gay organizational stress

Carroll said he finds more and more that stress is a major concern among those he counsels. Not only that, but he finds that the stress currently emanating from the political situation is affecting gays and lesbians at an organizational level.

"If you look at families where the parents are really mean, the kids can't strike back, so they fight with each other," he says.

Carroll suggests that infighting among gay organizations is directly related to the stress that has been created nationwide by politicians who use equal rights for gays as a wedge issue.

TONY CARROLL

Birthplace: Murfreesboro, Ark. (pop. 1,100)

Age: 64 (on Sept. 11)

Occupation: Psychotherapist

Home: Houston

Relationship status: Partnered with

Bruce Smith

Kids/Pets: None

The trick, he says, is to learn to deal with it appropriately and not let it affect health, work and relationships.

Though most don't realize it, psychotherapy is Carroll's second career. "I was a musician for the first 40 years of my life."

Carroll is a native of Murfreesboro, Ark., a town of 1,100 people located about 40 miles from where Bill Clinton grew up. He says he always knew he was different, but didn't have a label for it until he was in college.

He was assigned to be the accompanist for both a mezzo-soprano and a tenor. He and the mezzo might have gotten married had it not been for her revelation that she believed he was not in love with her but with the tenor instead.

Carroll and the tenor ended up in a relationship that lasted eight years.

At 40, he went back to school to become a licensed clinical social worker. "When I was in grad school, I knew I wanted to work with the gay and lesbian community," he says. "I knew the relationship issue was very important."

For the past 10 years, Carroll has been partnered with Bruce Smith, a Houston dentist. Smith was among the founders of the Bering Omega Dental Clinic, and Carroll says, he has been an asset to his own psychotherapy practice.

Whenever he conducts seminars and group sessions that touch on the subject of relationships, Carroll says, Smith weighs in.

"When we were first together, he happened to walk through one of my group sessions in passing," Carroll said. Smith stayed a while, and participants in the group began to ask questions.

"People found it incredibly helpful to talk to both people in a couple," he said.

Smith and Carroll met a decade ago at a meeting of Log Cabin Republicans. "That was when we still had hope that we could stop some of the madness. We completely gave up during the Clinton impeachment hearings. The only thing they (the Republicans) were concerned about was destroying him and gaining power."

Over the last decade, Carroll says, he and Smith have proven that relationships need not be difficult. That's something they hope they can impart in their upcoming series of seminars.

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(Photos by Dalton DeHart)



Sue Lovell (right) a candidate for At-Large, Place 2 on the Houston City Council, got a chance to discuss campaign strategy with Chrissy Gephardt at a recent Victory Fund event.



Attorney Jolanda Jones and Chrissy Gephardt had much to talk about during a Victory fund event honoring Gephardt and San Antonio City Council member Elena Guajardo.



San Antonio City Council Member Elena Guajardo (right) and her partner, Martha Oestreich traveled to Houston for a Victory Fund event and the Uncommon Legacy Brunch.



Among those who turned out for a recent Victory Fund event to honor Chrissy Gephardt (right) were (from left) City Council candidate Sue Lovell, Houston City Controller Annise Parker, Victory Fund board member Janine Brunjes, and April Ayers, who hosted the party.



Uncommon Legacy Brunch co-chairs Sydnee White (left) and Tamara Ishee (right) presented the Uncommon Woman award to Chrissy Gephardt, daughter of U.S. Rep. Dick Gephardt.



Shirley Knight (right), pictured with Sally Andrews, was one of the award recipients at the Uncommon Legacy Brunch.



Janie Lopez was presented an 'Extra Mile' award at the Uncommon Legacy Brunch.



Rev. Carolyn Mobley (center) talked with Chrissy Gephardt (left) and partner, Amy Loder (right) at the Uncommon Legacy Brunch.



Entertainment at the Uncommon Legacy Brunch was provided by the Gay Men's Chorus Houston, pictured with Chrissy Gephardt (left) and Janine Brunjes.

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Forum

HOUSTON VOICE

AUGUST 12, 2005

PAGE 10

editorial

Montreal and Chicago could learn from Dutch

There's blame to go around on the split that created the **Gay Games** and **OutGames**, but maybe the **EuroGames** can show a new path.

By **CRIS CRAIN**

W

ITH ALL THE RECENT attention on the competition for athlete recruitment between next year's two big gay sports festivals, you might have missed a smaller event from which the big

boys could learn a few things.

The EuroGames, held last month in Utrecht, a picturesque city in the center of the Netherlands, was just a short train ride from Amsterdam. The EuroGames are an independent, multi-sport championship for lesbian and gay athletes from all over the continent, held every year the Gay Games, of more global scope, aren't scheduled.

The all-volunteer organization that in just over a year pulled together the 2005 EuroGames in Utrecht showed remarkable enthusiasm despite soaring temperatures and the inevitable logistical snags.

The event, staged June 16-19, featured more than 3,000 athletes from 44 countries, including some from outside Europe, competing in nine different sports, including track and field, swimming, soccer and same-sex ballroom dancing.

Recruiting representatives were present in Utrecht from both of the worldwide gay sports events scheduled for next year: the Gay Games in Chicago and the OutGames in Montreal.

FOR THOSE UNAWARE OF THE CONTROVERSY that resulted in these two competing events, Montreal initially won the bid for the 2006 Gay Games after treating the Gay Games selection committee to a lavish display during the city's annual DiversCité Gay Pride festival in 2001.

After Sept. 11, Montreal backers even played upon fears of terrorist attacks to steer the Games away from the U.S. cities that were also bidding, including Chicago, Atlanta and Los Angeles.

But after Montreal was named the host city, negotiations between the Federation of Gay Games and Canadian organizers broke down over money issues. Instead of compromising, the two sides parted ways and

the FGG awarded the 2006 bid to Chicago. Since then, Montreal organizers reorganized their event under the name OutGames, and it's scheduled just two weeks apart from the Gay Games in Chicago.

To make matters worse for the thousands of gay athletes worldwide caught in the middle, Montreal organizers created a new organization, the Gay & Lesbian International Sports Association, aimed at perpetuating the schism.

GLISA has announced plans to hold competing gay sports events in the future as well, albeit on different years than the Gay Games. The next OutGames is scheduled for 2009, one year before the quadrennial Gay Games, and GLISA now claims that groups from Berlin, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo have expressed interest in bidding to host the OutGames.

THERE'S PLENTY OF FAULT TO GO around in the Gay Games/OutGames split. As much as the athletes, volunteers and visitors at past Gay Games enjoyed their experience, FGG organizers have an embarrassing history of overseeing financially strapped Games that stifled vendors and sponsors alike.

At times, supportive governments have been forced to step in at the last minute to bail out financially bankrupt Gay Games operations.

The rift with Montreal springs from that difficult past, as FGG organizers pleaded with the Quebecois to reduce their budget expectations from more grandiose expectations. Still, the FGG showed far too much bravado imposing their view of proper financial planning that was justified, given their own shoddy history in that area.

The Montreal organizers, on the other hand, bought into the Gay Games selection process and should have negotiated and compromised in better faith. The 2006 Games were never their event, and having aggressively (some would use less kind words) beaten out the competition for the 2006 bid, the Montreal organizers had two legitimate choices: accept the FGG budget limitations or cancel their event.

Their decision to walk away from the Gay Games and put on a competing event

was a betrayal to the Gay Games athletes, volunteers and supporters, and it also betrayed motivations steeped more in money and ego than the spirit of unified sporting competition embodied in the Gay Games ideal.

The unilateral actions of the Montreal organizers are the type you'd expect from ugly Americans; only Americans would never get away with it.

The contrast between Montreal's OutGames and the EuroGames in Utrecht couldn't be starker. To be sure, the Dutch organizers were bursting with pride for their city and their event, but it had next to nothing to do with dollars and tourism and everything to do with the good graces of a well-intentioned host.

The spirit of unified competition and the creation of new friendships permeated the event, even as recruiters from Montreal and Chicago sought to poach athletes wherever possible for their ventures next year.

It's probably too late to save next year's gay sporting championships. They will undoubtedly be remembered like the Olympics of Moscow and Los Angeles, when small-minded governments let politics interfere with sport. The Montreal and Chicago games deserve the asterisks that will always accompany their accomplishments. Hopefully clearer minds will prevail before 2009 and 2010 roll around.

If GLISA organizers are truly committed to the idyllic rhetoric of their founding documents, then they would reorganize into something akin to the EuroGames, and create a North American or Pan Am gay sporting competition, to be held two years before and after the regularly scheduled Gay Games.

@ Chris Crain is executive editor of the *Houston Voice* and can be reached at ccrain@houstonvoice.com.



letters

Transgender woman returning to Houston and seeking resources and employment

To the Editors,

I have recently found the HoustonVoice.com. The publication is good, but I don't see much directly including the TG/TS community.

I am a Texan by birth who grew up in Houston, as well as a pre-op transsexual and have been living in Colorado for the last nine years, and I am currently pursuing my move back to the Houston area. I have become out of touch with the transsexual community in Houston and was wondering if anyone could help me out rediscovering my community (i.e. local hang outs for meeting people, a good area to seek residence, etc.)

I appreciate the individuals who take the time to read and respond to this. I am also looking for employment with a LGBT-supportive atmosphere if anyone can help with that.

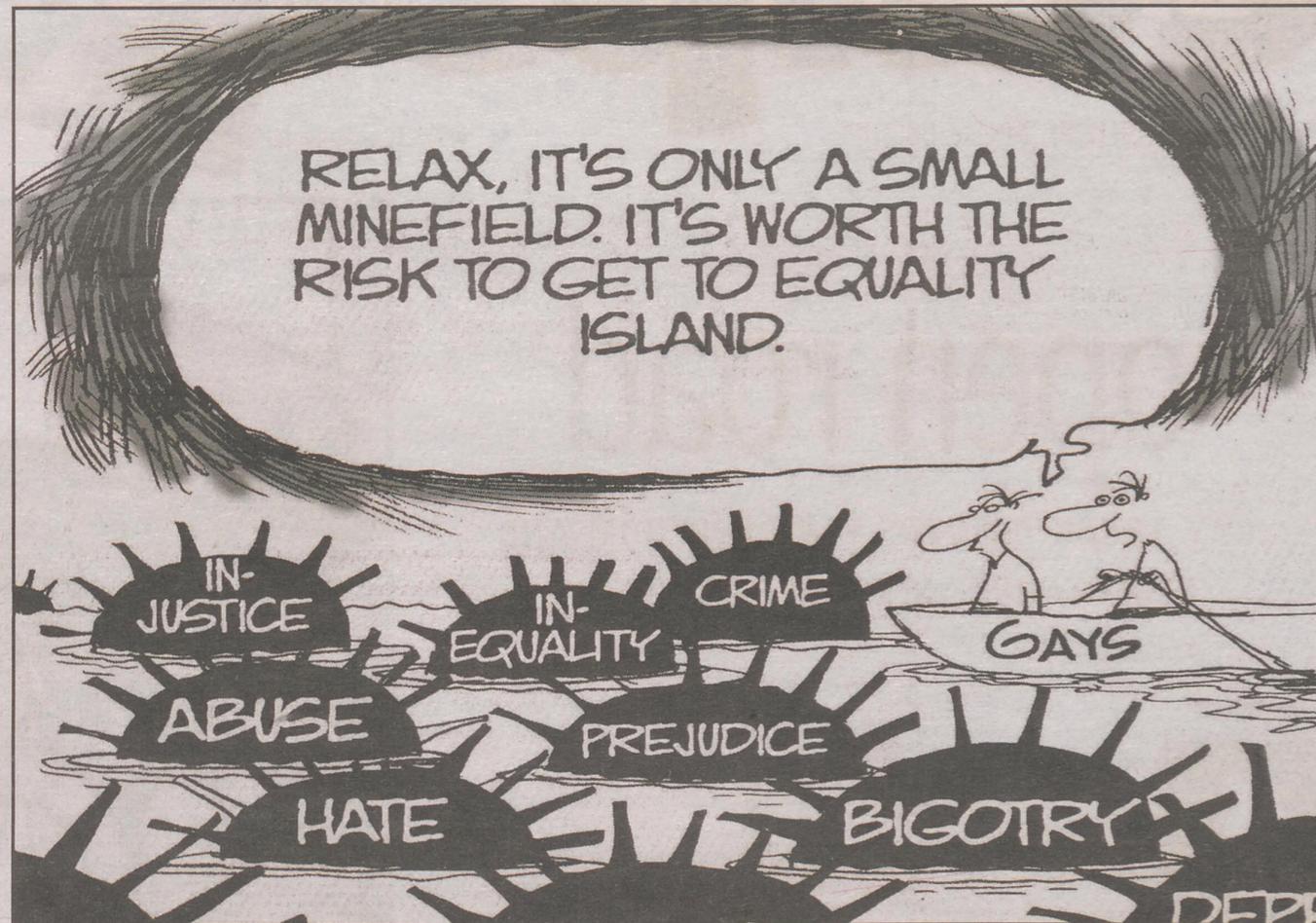
MEREDITH
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Gay marriage may teach gays some 'family values'

To the Editors:

Chris Crain's July 29 editorial ("Ask Roberts one big question") gives a sobering view of how Justice John Roberts may view the Fourteenth Amendment, which often justifies upholding individuals' fundamental rights from majoritarian intrusion, especially on "moral" grounds.

I want to ask exactly what the majority considers "immoral" about my incli-



nations and private behavioral choices.

Beyond the obvious religious foundation of many intrusive moral values, the feedback I get from some people is that by avoiding heterosexual marriage with children and all the infrastructure for caretaking that family formation provides, I am shirking family responsibility.

I seem aloof and unemotional around issues of biological kinship, satisfied with what looks to others like a world filled with fantasy.

Gay marriage and gay adoption, if allowed, could go a long way in encouraging the sharing of family responsibility and in promoting personal goals that take into consideration the needs of others and that welcome dependents.

Others are concerned not just that I compete with them in the same economic space without sharing their burdens. They feel that my life expresses narcissistic values that demean them. This is particularly the case with people who

have a large psychological and emotional investment in procreation, marriage and parenting.

Recent family eldercare issues have forced me to deal with the family responsibility that others take for granted lifelong. Forced socialization with filial responsibility, whether chosen or not, may eventually become the underbelly of the gay marriage debate.

BILL BOUSHKA
Arlington, Va.

THE

Q

Iran recently executed two teenagers, reportedly for being gay. What can the international community do to prevent such atrocities?



The international community should publicize these crimes and make sure that it is communicated to Iran that executions will not be tolerated. Communication followed by action through government entities working with the Iranian government.

TAMMI WALLACE, 36
Houston
Business consultant



Certainly this would warrant a strong condemnation from the United Nations. Sadly, we have plenty to clean up in our own backyard as well.

TIREY COUNTS, 39
Houston
Real estate broker



On Dec. 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This declaration guarantees the rights of all people and encompasses a broad spectrum of economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights. The international community can and should review and embrace this beautiful proclamation of human dignity. www.hrusa.org.

KATHY HUBBARD, Over 21
Houston
Tax consultant



It should be part of international policy, such as monitored by the United Nations, to prohibit the needless killing of individuals based on sexual orientation.

CHRISTINA GOMEZ, 25
Houston
Psychotherapist



The international community should voice opposition to this atrocity and all human rights violations. The GLBT community in the United States needs to continue fighting for our rights or our country could soon become as barbaric as countries like Iran.

SCOTT SIMPSON, 50
Houston
Accountant



Good neighbors
A gay couple won the grand prize on a never aired TV reality show
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GAY HOUSTON NIGHTLIFE, ARTS & CULTURE

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AUGUST 12, 2005

on the open road

GAY TRUCK DRIVERS FIND FREEDOM AND
ACCEPTANCE IN RUGGED INDUSTRY

By RYAN LEE



FOR CAROL WATKINS, LIFE IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT OF AN 18-wheel truck opened up roads and worlds she never thought she would experience.

"It's like I'm on a paid vacation sometimes," says Watkins, who recently returned to her hometown of Chapel Hill, Tenn., after delivering a haul to Canada.

"I've seen parts of the country that I would've never been able to afford to visit if I wasn't on the road," she says.

Watkins, who first started driving trucks in 1971 and returned in 1999 after raising two children, previously worked on the shipping-and-receiving side of the trucking industry.

But she says nothing beats the freedom of the open road.

There are numerous professional perks for gay truck drivers who race up and down America's highways each day and see every part of the country while potentially making more than \$1,000 per week.

FOR SOME GAY MALE TRUCK DRIVERS IN PARTICULAR, THE PROFESSION also provides a nationwide network of anonymous sex and the admiration of "trucker chasers" — men who cruise highway rest stops and Internet trucking groups looking to fulfill their "trucker stud" fantasies.

But life in the fast lane can be tough, according to several gay truckers who say that they and their colleagues regularly struggle with loneliness and poor health.

"It's a hard living; it's a really hard living," says Scott Langley, a driver who retired after 11 years as part of a road team with his partner, Tim Page.

"You're away from home for weeks at a time, you don't have a social life and you find yourself alone when you're a single driver," Langley says. "But sometimes it makes it even harder when it's a team and you're with that person for long periods of time.

"When somebody first goes out on the road, within the first week they know whether they're cut out for it," says Langley, who along with Page owns two trucks driven by two gay male teams.

Timothy Anderson started trucking in Alaska during his early 20s. He was drawn to the profession by the freedom and independence it provided.

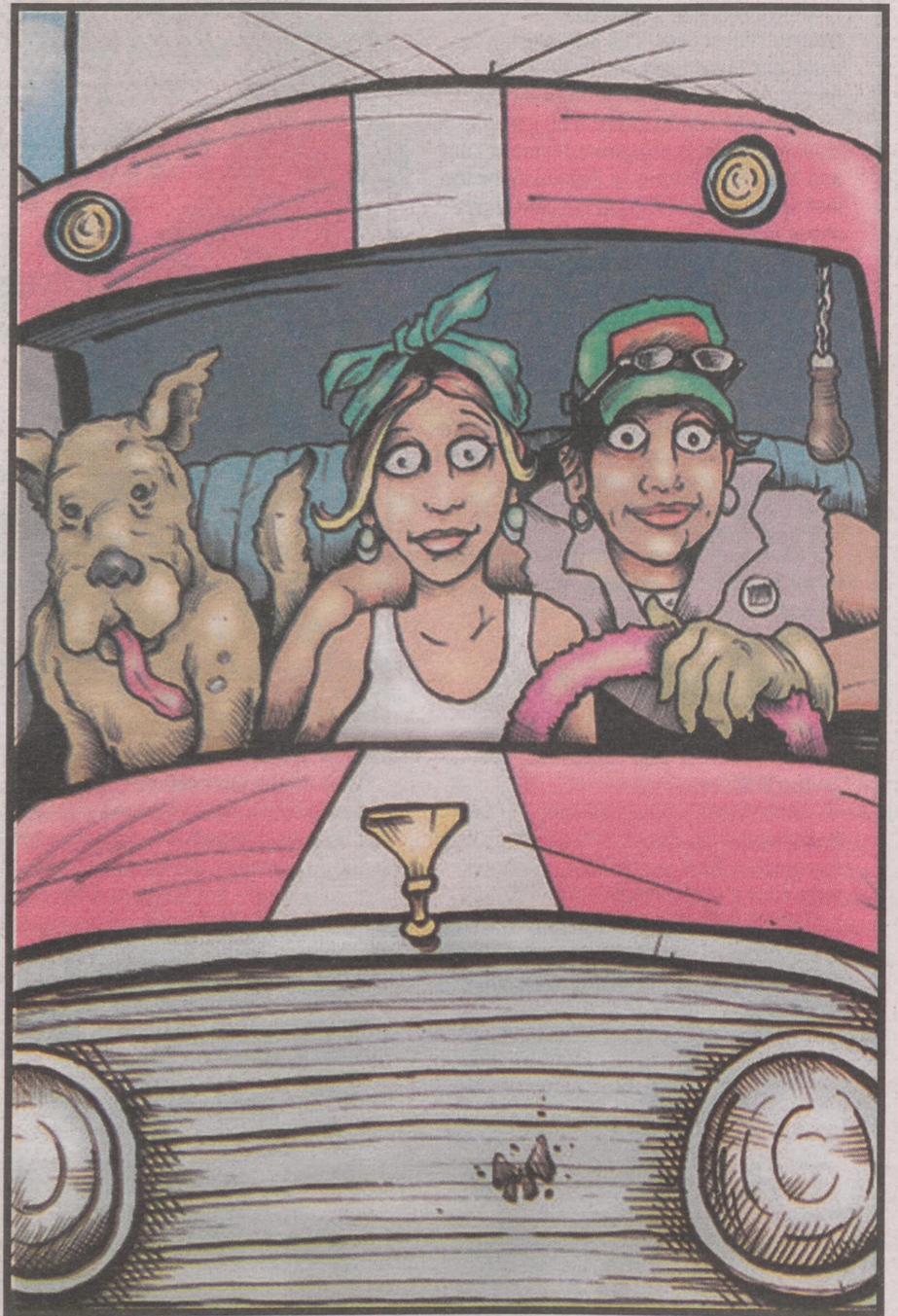
"I could never figure out where I wanted to live on the West Coast, and trucking allowed me to avoid making that decision by waking up someplace different every day," says Anderson, president of the Gay Trucker's Association, www.gaytrucker-sassn.org.

Some two decades later, Anderson says that his independence came at a cost.

"Your friend's lives keep going while you're on the road, and I became very much isolated within the trucking culture to the point where all of my friends were truck drivers," Anderson says.

Truck drivers were among the earliest and most loyal fans of the Derek & Romaine Show on Sirius Satellite Radio's gay channel, Out Q, teaching host Romaine Patterson about the varied interests and exploits of gay and lesbian truckers.

"I think the hardest thing gay and lesbian truckers face is that being in a truck for



Either as solo drivers or as a team, gay and lesbian truck drivers are crisscrossing the United States and carving out a unique subculture. Gay male truckers say it can be a candy store for cruising as well as a hard living.

such long periods is very hard on any type of relationship," Patterson says. "There are definitely the truckers who enjoy the 'pickle park' with the best of them, but the calls that really stand out in my mind are from the ones who are really having a hard time meeting other truckers and friends while out on the road."

IN ADDITION TO REGULAR BOUTS OF LONELINESS, GAY AND LESBIAN TRUCK drivers also have to deal with being stereotyped, Anderson says.

"I'm not sure who gets the worst rap — whether it's the typical dyke image lesbian drivers usually get, or the trucker stud image that a lot of gay porn seems to enforce, and that's not necessarily accurate either," he says.

But the popular image of gay truck drivers searching for — and finding — anonymous sexual partners along their routes accurately describes Langley and Page's experience.

"Every rest area we went to, we were being cruised by

Please see **GAY TRUCKERS** on Page 19

QUEER EMOTION: The final QAF was a bit like the death of a great aunt whom you saw only on holidays. **PAGE 14**

OPEN FOR DINNER: Rustika adds dinner to its repertoire of heavenly pastries and decadent cakes. **PAGE 15**

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television BRIAN MOYLAN



Even for those who stopped watching a long time ago, the final episode of 'Queer As Folk' was a tear-jerking pleasure.

Queerly emotional

YES, I WAS A BIG "QUEER AS FOLK" hater. For years, every time the popular Showtime gay drama started up another season, released another DVD or dropped a new CD compilation I would grunt and roll my eyes.

"Not that tired old thing, again," I would say to myself (and sometimes out loud).

After the second season, I stopped watching entirely. As far as I was concerned, it could continue on with its outlandish plots, cartoon-like characters, mediocre acting and preachy premises without me as a witness.

Last Sunday, however, when the final "QAF" episode of the show's fifth and final season aired, I tuned in for the first time in three years and found myself surprisingly moved.

ALL OF THE STORYLINES WRAPPED up fairly neatly.

Melanie (Michelle Clunie) and Lindsay (Thea Gill), who recently reconciled after a messy breakup over a sexual indiscretion, moved with their two children to Canada, where they could legally get married and raise them in a much more gay-friendly environment.

Michael (Hal Sparks) and Ben (Robert Gant), who bought a house in the suburbs during the show's final season, adopted the sometimes-troubled Hunter (Harris Allen), much to Debbie's (Sharon Gless) delight.

Ted (Scott Lowell) and Emmett (Peter Paige) found opportunities for love (maybe) with two hotties from their pasts. Ted acknowledged that he would be just fine with or without a man, though he spent the better part of the final season worrying about his looks and looking for love in all the wrong places.

As for Brian (Gale Harold) and Justin (Randy Harrison), they called off their wedding so Justin could pursue an art career in New York. Brian, a changed man, stayed behind, possibly to resurrect the bombed-out Babylon.

And in the final scene, a remembrance of the series' early episodes as a trail-blazing sexpot, the whole gang could be seen partying at the club.

I was sobbing.

It was a bit like the death of a great aunt. Here's this family member that you're not especially close to and only see on holidays and special occasions. She was a bit feeble and annoying at times, but once she's gone, you remember just how much she meant to you.

Even if you didn't watch "QAF" it was always there: at Pride, advertised in gay magazines, touring a version of Babylon to cities around the country. You couldn't



Brian (Gale Harold, left) and Michael (Hal Sparks) shared a final dance at Babylon on the final episode of Showtime's 'Queer As Folk.' (Photo courtesy of Showtime)

get rid of it.

That's part of what was good about it. Even though it had a huge straight following, it was the first show that was entirely ours. What is Pride going to be like without a "QAF" actor or two?

That visibility is a credit to its executive producers, Ron Cowan and Daniel Lipman, and its actors, three of whom are openly gay — Gant (Ben), Harrison (Justin) and Paige (Emmett). All of them were always willing to talk to the gay press, attend gay events and fund-raisers, and even campaign for political causes during the last presidential election.

"I think in retrospect it was groundbreaking in comparison to anything that has been done on TV before with gay content," says Stephen Tropiano, author of "The Primetime Closet" and an authority on the history of gay television. "They delivered what they promised: a sexually explicit show. There really isn't anything to take its place, at this time."

Today, with three gay television networks (Here!, Logo and Q Television) and counting, there will be plenty more shows with gay and lesbian themes. Plenty of them (I hope) will include some hot sex scenes and be involved in community work.

But "Queer As Folk" was first. It was brave, bold and pioneering. For that, we should be proud.

dining J.A. CHAPMAN

Rustika Café and Bakery is now dishing up dinner fare along with the delicious pastries and decadent cakes for which it is known

Comfort food with a kick

RUSTIKA CAFÉ AND BAKERY HAS been serving up delicious pastries, breakfasts and lunches for a couple of years. Now, dinner has been added to the repertoire.

With the opening of the giant Lakewood Church, restaurants in the Greenway Plaza and West University area are expanding their menus and extending their hours to meet increased demand. Rustika Café is now open later and has added a few items to the menu for the dinner crowd.

Rustika Café is a friendly and welcoming place. Charming murals cover the walls, including one of a window with a view. Light wood tables, and a terracotta accent wall lend a warm, comfy feel.

Two large display cases show off the plethora of baked goodies, from inventive cookies to mouthwateringly rich cakes. Or try one of the many varieties of empanadas. It's hard to go wrong with any pastry at Rustika.

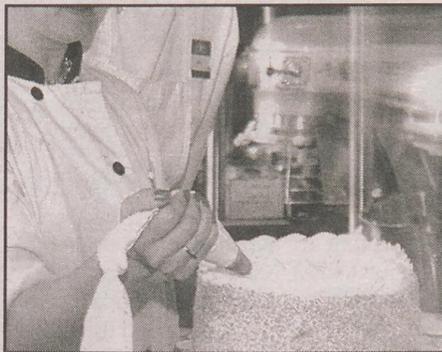
The menus hang over the counter, or pick up one of the photocopied to-go menus, which contain a few additional items. Daily specials are advertised on a chalkboard.

At lunchtime, the half sandwich, salad and soup combo (\$8.75) is a good place to start. The robust tortilla soup had a sturdy tomato base, and came topped with crispy tortilla strips.

For my sandwich I chose the chicken salad, a tangy combo of white meat, mango mayonnaise and celery. Piled high on thick slices of homemade wheat bread, it's more than enough for a meal. The mixed green salad on the side came topped with almond slices and mandarin orange, and a spicy vinegar dressing added punch. Add a few freshly fried chips and some homemade salsa and you have more than enough for a meal. It even comes with a cookie – your choice from the tantalizing array in the case.

The empanadas (\$2.99 each) make a good snack or meal. The chicken empanada is a little like chicken pot pie in a half moon shape – corn, peas and carrots fill out the mixture in the light and flaky pastry. Or try the slightly sweet pumpkin empanada – one bite and you'll feel like it's Thanksgiving.

The "new" items on the menu are open-faced sandwich melts. The turkey and sundried tomato (\$7.25) is huge, and comes with the delicious salad. The sundried tomatoes were replaced with thin tomato slices, and instead of the grilled turkey breast promised on the menu, it was sliced sandwich meat. Despite these missteps, it was still tasty.



THE DINNER OPERATION STILL HAS a few kinks to work out. There's a new dinner menu, but only one copy of it was available when we visited, and it was already in use. Eventually another copy was rustled up, but it did add a bit of confusion.

At \$13.95 the shrimp tacos seemed a little expensive. Three tacos filled out the main course, along with chips and salsa and a cool, chunky guacamole. The shrimp were perfectly done, and, as per usual, it was more than enough food. It comes with the usual salad or soup choice and this time I tried the potato soup, which is creamy and decadent and almost a meal by itself.

Don't miss breakfast at Rustika. The migas Mexicana (\$7.95) are a magical blend of onions, tomatoes, jalapenos and tortilla strips all scrambled with eggs. These migas are truly some of the best I've had.

Or try the pancakes (\$6.75), a thick, doughy variety. For a real treat, order them with dulce de leche, for a rich caramel indulgence.

Whatever you do, be sure to leave room for dessert. From a simple cinnamon piglet cookie to a massive slab of chocolate fudge cake, there's something for everyone.

If you're looking for a simple, pleasant spot with dependably good Latin fusion food and fabulous desserts, this is the place. It's comfort food with a kick.



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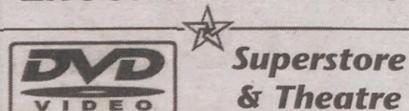
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Ann Margaret's in Lake Charles, they're cruising at Rich's, the latest fashions on view in Midtown and Dixie Carter and Hal Holbrook Act OUT

'Act OUT' in H-Town

WELCOME BACK TO HoVO ON THE Go-Go. This week we'll show you several upcoming events that are simply must see! So get out your day planner and a pen and save the date!

FIRST THOUGH A FEW FABULOUS events that are happening this weekend and next week. **Saturday, August 13, Keys West and Copa Productions** presents "The Faces Contest." Sign up by 6:00 p.m. and expect the competition to be hot and fierce. You did know every **Sunday** from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. those darlings, Stella and Joe grill yummy burgers and links on the deck. Yes honey! All monies raised benefit E.R.S.I.C.S.S. Keys West is at **817 West Dallas** at Arthur. Give them a shout at 713-571-7870.

ALSO ON SATURDAY, RICH'S presents **Cruise!** A Night of

Leather, Levis & Uniform (Yes sir!) with the Men of Manwatch from New Orleans. Come cruise at Houston's biggest leather dance night only at the legendary Rich's. While there enjoy \$2.50 Domestic and Imports.

Music by **Big Boy DJ Eric Willems** of Chain Drive, Phoenix & Southern Decadence New Orleans fame. Also see the uber hot **Jay Armstrong** from Titan Video Productions dancing all night! 21 and up only for this decadent evening please. www.rich-houston.com or call 713-759-9606.

FA-FA-FA FASHION! JOIN FASHION Group International, Inc. of Houston and the Downtown Alliance Emerging Leaders for an evening of high-speed fashion and rock n' roll! Preview the works of Houston's hottest new esigners including **Brigget Beatty, Alex Chapman, Kia Gardner, Ruby Marquez, Michelle Ngo** and **Silvio Ortega**. Millennia Models will strut down the runway to the edgy sounds of local band **Friends of the Enemy**. Other highlights will include a silent auction featuring faboo fashion packages and a chance to win round trip airline tickets. Proceeds benefit Houston Downtown Alliance Emerging Leaders Young Professionals Group and Fashion Group International, Inc. of Houston. The event takes place on **Thursday, August 18** from **7 to 9 p.m. at Advantage BMW Midtown**, 2101 San Jacinto at Gray. Cocktails provided by Absolut Vodka with appetizers by Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar and Massa's Restaurant. Tickets are \$25.00 in advance or \$30.00 at door and are available online at www.downtownhouston.org or by calling 713-658-8938. Valet parking \$5. Enter from San Jacinto at Webster.

HoVo on the go-go

PAD AND PEN READY? OK LET'S see what coming up soon!

FIRST, IT LOOKS LIKE A TRIP EAST to **L'Auberge du Lac**, the new mega casino in Lake Charles will definitely be in order. Why? The one and only **Miss Ann Margret** is coming! HotGG loves Miss Margret and she hasn't been in this neck of the woods in a long while. Margret plays the Event Center on **Thursday, August 25** and **Friday, August 26** only!

Tickets are a mere \$30 for stadium seating and \$50 for floor seating.

To get your tickets now for a sure to be sold out show, call 1-866-355-7711

WHILE HERE AT HOME ANOTHER OF HotGG's fave actress is coming! The **Alley Theatre's "Act OUT"**, a subscription series for gay and lesbian theatre fans, heads into its second season with a variety of events and productions that will once again have Houston's GLBT community talking. Act OUT attendees enjoy fabulous pre-show events where they can meet Alley artists, mingle with fellow audience members, and enjoy music, cocktails and appetizers from Houston's finest restaurants. Then, the party keeps going with a production from the Tony Award-winning Alley Theatre.

GATHERING THE FIRST THURSDAY after each Hubbard Stage opening, Act OUT's first evening features Ken Ludwig's World Premiere comedy "**Be My Baby**" on Thursday, October 6, featuring **Hal Halbrook** and **Dixie Carter**, TV's Julia Sugarbaker from **Designing Women!** Too bad her TV sis Delta Burke isn't coming too. Act OUT subscriptions begin at \$136 per person and can be purchased online at www.alleytheatre.org, or by calling 713-228-8421 and mentioning Act OUT. Individuals are also invited to attend Act OUT events with the purchase of a single ticket.

@ If you have any club announcements or events, email them to jhooks@houstonvoice.com or call 713-529-8490. See you on the Go-Go!

dish There's a Fine Line Between Telling the Truth and Talking Trash

Where the heart is

Gay couple wins a reality home, Melissa Etheridge is on the mend, and D.C. welcomes a guest star.

That sage poet **ROBERT FROST** once wrote that "good fences make good neighbors" and, apparently, so do gay couples. At least that was the decision on ABC's never-aired reality show "Welcome to the Neighborhood."

The network pulled the show just days before it's July 10 premiere due to complaints that it was racially insensitive and may even violate fair housing laws.

The premise was to let three white, conservative, Christian families choose the family that gets to move into a vacant \$400,000 luxury home in an affluent suburb of Austin, Texas. The families competing for the house were African-American, Latino, Korean-American, Wiccan, tattoo-covered and gay.

The Chicago Tribune reported that the gay couple, Steve and John Wright, who have an adopted son, won the house.

Howard Witt, who wrote the Tribune article and lives in the neighborhood where the show was filmed, saw all six episodes at a special screening for area residents. He says that in the final episode, the choice comes down to the Wrights and the African-American family. The judges chose the Wrights because their current dwelling was more well kept, Witt said.

While the show was meant to teach tolerance and show how the judging families eventually accepted the families that were not like their own, not everyone on the cul-de-sac got the message. Witt said in his article that after the Wrights moved in, the people who own the house behind them put their property up for sale, saying they didn't want to live near a gay couple.

Welcome to the neighborhood, indeed.

Coming back strong

Lesbian rock star **MELISSA ETHERIDGE** announced last week that she is cancer-free.

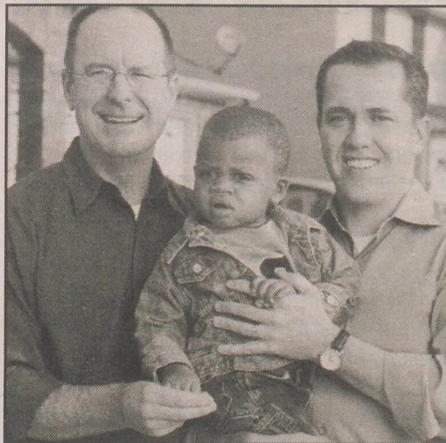
"I stand before you a totally healthy person," Etheridge told the entertainment news show "Extra."

Etheridge, 44, announced last October that she had breast cancer and subsequently underwent surgery and chemotherapy to fight the disease.

She performed with no hair at the Grammy Awards ceremony in February, and now sports a short, cropped haircut.



Melissa Etheridge



Gay couple **Steve and John Wright**, standing with their son, won a \$400,000 house on ABC's never-aired reality show 'Welcome to the Neighborhood.' (Photo courtesy of ABC)

Etheridge told "Extra" that her partner, actor **TAMMY LYNN MICHAELS**, helped her throughout the ordeal. "At the end of the whole thing, when it was over, I came home to a bouquet that said, 'In sickness and in health,'" she said. "And the love and support of someone like that is worth all the money in the world."

Etheridge also said she and Michaels are planning to have a child together. The singer has two children with former partner **JULIE CYPHER**, thanks to a donation from rocker **DAVID CROSBY**.

The women plan to use another sperm source this time, Etheridge said.

Etheridge is slated to release a greatest hits album titled "The Road Less Traveled" in October. The new disc will include the version of **JANIS JOPLIN**'s "Piece of My Heart" that Etheridge sang at the Grammy's and a cover of **TOM PETTY**'s "Refugee."

Kidman comes to town

D.C. is better known for its politicians and lobbyists than for its actors, musicians and celebrities. However, we'll be getting a noted luminary this fall when **NICOLE KIDMAN** comes to town to film the sci-fi thriller "Invasion," according to a news release from Warner Bros.

In the movie, an update of "Invasion of the Body Snatchers," Kidman plays a local psychiatrist who must protect her son while surviving the invasion.

Dish would like to invite the very single Kidman out for drinks at one of our city's finer gay establishments. She can assure Kidman that none of the queens will hit on her, though they might ask her for some secondhand Chanel gowns.



Nicole Kidman

@ Send comments, suggestions to Dish@houstonvoice.com

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local cover story

'Tamalalia' is no garden-variety memoir for the stage

TAMALIA, continued from Page 1

scenery, and been involved in every other aspect of the musical extravaganzas that tell the various parts of her life. She has been helped by the hilarious and talented troupe of actors, dancers and bohemians with whom she surrounds herself.

There's nothing garden-variety about "Tamalalia." The first one was staged *al fresco* at the Orange Show Theater, where Cooper cooked the entire audience spaghetti at the end of the show.

The second was on a school bus that gave a tour Cooper lead of memorable places in her life. Audience members were driven from one performance site to the next. She recalls, "We wanted to extend, but it was the end of June and the traffic made us miss cues and everyone was just sweating!"

The show then moved to Stages for four "Tamalalia" productions that ranged in theme from a cocktail party with furniture from Coopers real-life living room, a campout where she finds the ranger man of her life, to an homage to screwball comedies that featured gangsters, showgirls and keystone cops.

Now Cooper and her troupe have incorporated her favorite pieces as well as audience favorites for "Tamalalia 10" —The Greatest Hits Show.

Cooper was born in Chicago, September 9, 1970 on a kitchen table to hippy parents with the song "Let It Be" playing. She has a younger brother named Cortlandt, 18, who she says is a "complete Victorian dandy. The canes, the three-piece suits, everything. He'd probably be mad because he'd say he was Edwardian."

After moving around "40 or so times" over the years, she reluctantly came to Houston from Austin. She enrolled in High School for the Performing and Visual Arts where she met many of the people who would not only help the "Tamalalia" series come to life but who would also become life-long friends.

The Houston Voice spoke with Cooper about going out on top in "Tamalalia 10."

HOUSTON VOICE: YOU HAVE SUCH a wonderful gay sensibility Ms. Cooper.

Tamarie Cooper: (Laughs) I have always said I am a gay man trapped on a woman's body! I have friend who always says if he were a woman he'd be me, so maybe it balances.

Voice: Is that because of the way you were brought up?

Cooper: I was born into this very liberal, hippy, open environment. I was never



Actress Tamarie Cooper decided a decade ago that her life story would make a good stage production, and she now completing the tenth installment of it.

exposed to the thought that being gay or lesbian is wrong or different. Growing up, my mother's best friend was a lesbian with a long-term partner and I would go and stay with them in the summer. I knew they were a couple and shared a bed. It was like comparing a red head to a blond. So your point is?

Voice: And attending H.S.P.V.A. probably shielded you even more than most young people.

Cooper: Well, that's true and also not really true. Yeah, I hung around with the drama people, even though I was a dance major. Being gay, or realizing you were gay was common.

Voice: A lot of talented people have come from H.S.P.V.A. Anyone famous that was in your class?

Cooper: Probably the most recognizable person who was there when I was there was Renee O'Connor who played Xena's sidekick/partner Gabrielle.

Voice: Let's talk about how "Tamalalia" the experience began.

Cooper: I was at Cecil's Pub with some longtime friends from HSPVA. I had been doing some choreography at University of Houston and someone said "Why don't you create a show about you."

Voice: And that became "Tamalalia 1?"

Cooper: Yes. A well-choreographed, quirky fashion show with a spaghetti dinner at the end.

Voice: So here you are 10 summers later. Why stop now?

Cooper: I thought about going to an even dozen, but really the time just seemed right. I had told so many stories about my life I was ready to wrap it up in a nice package and go out on top, as they say. Plus I have a number of Infernal Bridegroom Productions coming up.

Voice: How about tackling a stage version of the film, "Grey Gardens?" I can see you as Little Edie Beale!

Cooper: Oh my God! That is my favorite movie! I'd love to, and I have the brochures for it too. But the material is so good, why not just show the film? It would be amazing to take on the role of a (quoting from the film) "staunch character."

i MORE INFO

'Tamalalia 10'
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eclipse cover story

Trucking can be a welcoming industry, road warriors say

GAY TRUCKERS, continued from Page 12

some guy, or were cruising somebody ourselves," Langley says. "The cruising is quite active and probably more active now than it's ever been. ... It's not talked about, and people don't even like bringing it up."

But Langley says the reluctance to talk about cruising among gay truck drivers is belied by the popularity of his and Page's Web site, www.gaytruckers.com, and their magazine, Gay Truckers Classifieds.

The couple started their magazine in the mid-1990s and operated it for the first three months as a general interest magazine for all truckers. Then a gay truck driver asked to take out a classified ad with hopes of finding a supportive team driver, Langley says.

Since then, the magazine evolved into strictly a classified outlet for gay truckers and "truck chasers," with close to 2,000 subscribers and about 5,000 copies of each monthly issue being sold. Launched in 2004, the gaytruckers.com Web site boasts more than 44,000 registered users, Langley says.

"Obviously guys are out there doing things, otherwise we wouldn't have all of the readers and members that we do," says Langley, who outed Mississippi and Louisiana as the states with the most active rest areas for cruising truckers.

Anderson agrees that there is some action out on the road, but said promiscuous drivers are a minority.

"You can't deny there is some cowboy-ing going on out there — to do that would be disingenuous — but I don't think it's the standard for most drivers," Anderson says. "So many drivers are tired of being put on a sexual pedestal. It reflects on us in some pretty bad ways."

But cruising among gay truck drivers is just a given part of the industry, Watkins says.

"Folks mention it; they know about what goes on between the gay guys, but it doesn't seem like it's causing any great, rampant anger or backlash among the truck drivers," she says.

DESPITE ITS RUGGED FAÇADE, THE trucking industry is actually a relatively progressive arena with marginal levels of sexism and homophobia, gay truckers say.

"I worked in factories for years before I got into trucking, and I saw lots of discrimination there, but out on the road I've had a really good time," Watkins says. "I've had no qualms whatsoever with pay scales being [discriminatory] — every company I've worked for never cared if you were male or female, black or brown, gay or straight."

The 5-foot-2-inch Watkins says men in the trucking industry sometimes underestimated her abilities, but that too is lessening as more women enter the field.

Gay and lesbian truck drivers tend to demand respect from their peers because of the grueling nature of truck work, Anderson says.

"There's a lot less homophobia in trucking than in a lot of other industries because the job is just so tough that you instantly gain respect from someone, even if they're straight or conservative, just because you're out there," Anderson says.

Langley, who pretended to be Page's cousin when the two of them first started out as a team, has seen some gay drivers and teams frozen out of work by some companies, but he agreed that sexual orientation is a non-issue for most employers.

"If you go in there as a bunch of flaming queens dressed in daisy dukes, you're not going to get any work," he says. "If you go in there with an attitude of 'I'm here to help you, you help me, and if my personal interests are a problem for you, then I don't need to be here,' then you're not going to get much flak."

Patterson, from the Derek and Romaine show, says she relishes the chance to expose gay trucking issues to the heterosexual truck drivers who listen to the show.

"Our truckers have really taught us a lot about how you can really change people just by hanging out and having a good time," Patterson says.

Many of the leading trucking companies are "standouts" when it comes to protecting gay and lesbian workers.

In May, Green Bay, Wis.-based trucking company Schneider National rolled out a marketing campaign to recruit same-sex couples as big rig driving teams. The company also includes sexual orientation in its employment diversity statement.

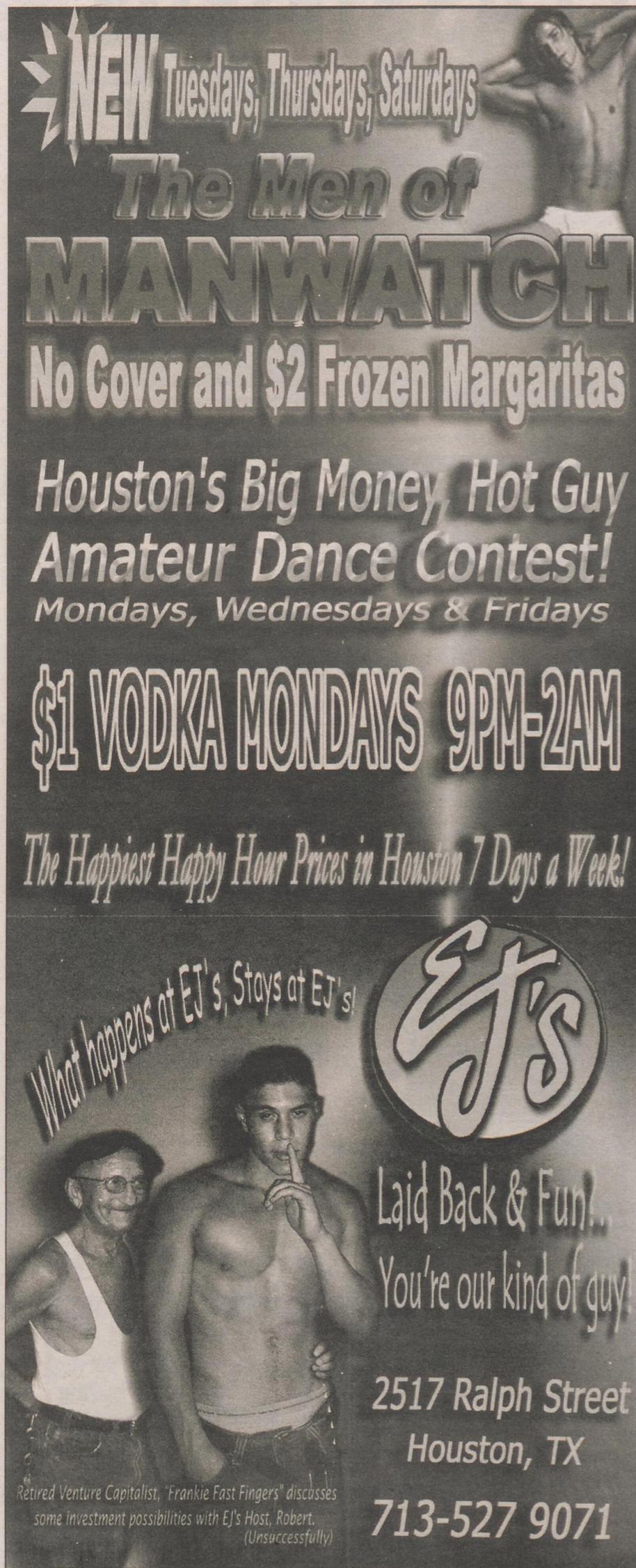
A sampling of other freight companies shows that most include sexual orientation in employee anti-bias policies, but none use recruiting efforts aimed at gay couples, according to the Human Rights Campaign. The companies sampled include Fed-Ex Freight, Pacer Global Logistics and Ryder.

DESPITE ITS PROGRESSIVE leanings, the trucking industry still needs to be prodded into fully addressing all of the issues of importance to gay drivers, Anderson says.

"One of the things our industry has never really dealt with is that we have numerous members of the trucking industry who are HIV-positive," Anderson says. "It would help if their managers had some understanding of the challenges those drivers are facing, and that's one of the primary roles of [the Gay Truckers' Association]."

But Langley says gay truckers organizing into a political force within the industry is unnecessary.

"There's not a huge need for it because as long as you're professional about what you do, being gay is not an issue," he says.



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LEGAL SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IN CANADA! Want to know how to marry in Toronto? Email me and I will provide free information on how my husband and I did it! **Scott Groves- Window Media** sgroves@davidatlanta.com **THIS AD IS PROVIDED AS A PUBLIC SERVICE OF WINDOW-MEDIA LLC.**

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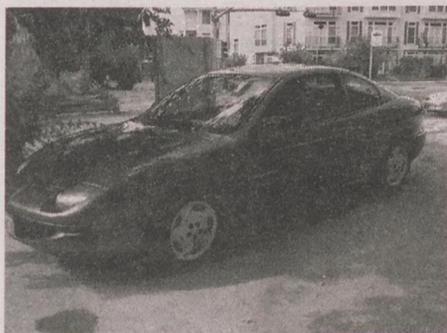
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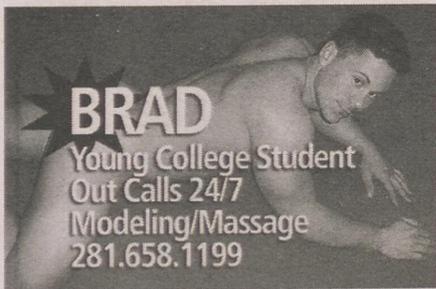
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Ad policy: Houston Voice reserves the right to edit, reclassify or reject ads not meeting Houston Voice standards. No refunds for early cancellation. Misprints: Houston Voice is not responsible for misprints appearing after first week. Check ads promptly.

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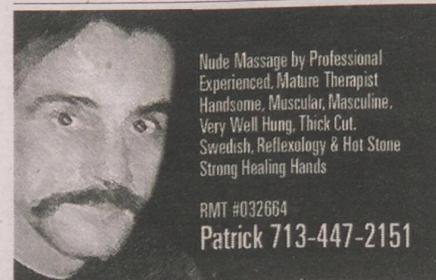
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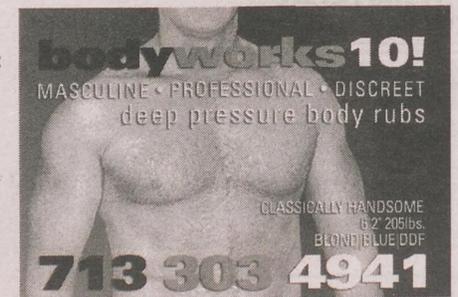


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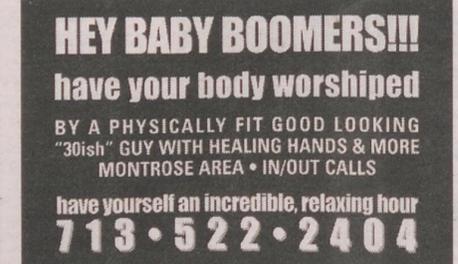
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bitch session



Don't you hate it when a BDSM partner keeps saying, "Did I hurt you?" It's supposed to hurt!

WHY DOES EVERYONE SEEM TO RAG about how gay people are self-hating? Everyone, gay or hetero, has something about themselves they hate. Sexuality is just one item of what seems to be an endless list.

AS YOU GET OLDER, IT SUDDENLY dawns on you that dancing endlessly throughout the night every week seems quite meaningless and then you lose your desire for it. Or is it that the music they play at the dance bars just sucks?

SO YOU'LL PUT CONVICTED FELONS and drug dealers on your Friendster list but not somebody who was nice enough to give you pity sex. Maybe you did me a favor after all.

TO ALL THE QUEENS WHO ORDER "to go" food at restaurants: Leave a tip. What do you think, the food magically just appeared there?

I'M SICK OF FEELING INVISIBLE AT queer events because of my race. Everywhere I see white gay men talking to or scoping out other white gay men. The only time someone notices me is if they're looking for some "chocolate."

NO I DON'T FEEL SILLY ABOUT TRYING to think up submissions for "Bitch Session." Bitching is an enjoyable pastime for some of us, like reading the comics or the sports section might be for someone else. It's a great way to release stress! Now don't you feel dumb for asking?

WE SHOULD BRING THE CODPIECE back into style for men's pants. It's so damn sexy to see that bulge out! It makes my nipples hard just thinking about it!

WHY ARE SO MANY GAY GUYS buying kilts? Just where the heck other than a gay event or perhaps a Scottish Pride festival do you think you can walk around in America wearing that shit without getting stares of scorn?

"A FLAT BONEY ASS"? STOP MAKING excuses for your fat ass and exercise.

I DEAL WITH HETEROSEXUALS THE

best way I can. I call all the guys who date women butch lesbians and all the women who date men queens. Otherwise, I'll just get nauseated every time I see a heterosexual couple making out.

IF YOU FEEL AWKWARD WHEN A guy makes eye contact with you, then maybe you need to stop denying that you're gay. After all, why are you reading a gay publication?

WHY ARE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS such a big deal in the U.S.? Because there are too many racist, ignorant buffoons who believe if you're not a heterosexual, Caucasian Christian, then you're not an American.

WHY AREN'T WE HOLDING HANDS IN public? Because in most places we'd be beaten to death. And we're all worried about marriage?

THE POINT OF A DILDO IS NOT THE color but what it's used for. What do you do with it?

AM I THE ONLY LESBIAN ON THE plan-et who doesn't see a shrink?

WHY DOESN'T MY GIRLFRIEND understand that her being more than a decade older than me means that she'll never meet my parents?

TO THE PERSON WHO BITCHED about the use of the term "drug/disease free" in personal ads: If you were so conscious of your health to begin with, you wouldn't be poz.

SORRY BUT I REALLY DON'T SEE THE difference between the pope condemning me for being gay and another gay person condemning me for how I act or dress.

DON'T YOU LOVE OVERLY GROOMED men who have perfectly manicured nails, complete with sparkly clear polish (a personal turn-on) but then wear sandals with their raggedy, dirty toenails hanging out! Get a damn pedicure!

I HAVE SEEN MEN OF VARIOUS AGES, dressed in jeans or slacks, or even a suit wearing high-heeled shoes, obviously women's. Now what is up with that? Don't tell me it's just about being taller!

WHY IS IT THAT I SECRETLY THINK my best friend of 10 years, who isn't my type, is supposed to be my lifelong lover?

I HAVE BEEN SEEING YOU OUT FOR five years, and you still think something is going to happen between us.

IF YOU HAVE TO KEEP TELLING US that you don't care what we think, then guess what — you do.

Editors' note: These are real bitches, sent in by real readers, about gay life's little annoyances, and the big ones, too. Got a bitch? Call 1-800-858-8088 or e-mail: bitch@expressgaynews.com

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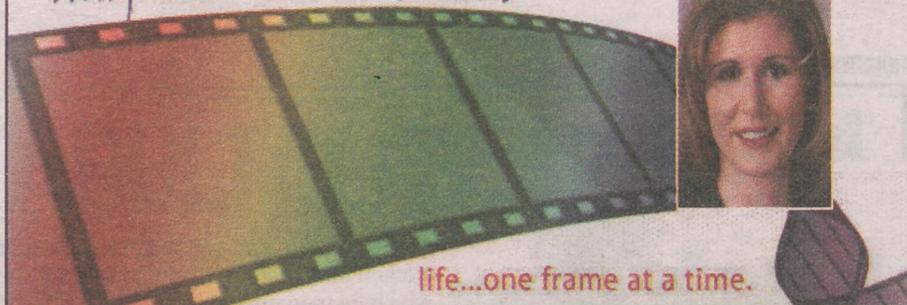
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