

FIGHTING FIRES AND BIGOTRY

NY fireman Gene Walsh visits Houston and talks about coming out on national television

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INSIDE



Houstonian Bruce Reeves said he was ousted from the Boy Scouts because he's gay. He and others are planning a protest against BSA Aug. 21.

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Birthday Bash raises more than \$7,000 for local charities.

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Straight actress Natasha Lyonne, star of 'But I'm A Cheerleader,' right, says she doesn't mind gay label.

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Cheney chosen as Bush's VP

Lesbian daughter 'not a campaign liability'

by PAIGE PARVIN

Since GOP presidential candidate George W. Bush named former Defense Secretary and Congressman Dick Cheney as his choice for vice president, Cheney's record on gay and civil rights issues has been dug up and given a thorough airing-out by gay political advocates. But the burning questions on everyone's mind seem to focus more on Cheney's daughter—an open lesbian, according to 1998 reports in a gay newspaper—than on Cheney himself.

Reports Tuesday highlighted Cheney's record on subjects from the ban on gays in the military to abortion rights, and response from gay rights groups has been mostly negative.

But it's Mary Cheney, his 31-year-old daughter, who is causing many gay activists to wonder how Bush's choice will affect his campaign and particularly his position on gay rights.

In 1998, the Washington Blade published a story about a boycott of Coors Brewing Company, under fire over the Coors family's



The family of Dick Cheney, from left, daughter Mary Cheney, daughter Elizabeth Cheney, and wife Lynne Cheney are seen in Washington in this file photo.

PHOTO: RON EDMONDS/AP

support of right-wing causes. In the story, writer Peter Freiberg interviewed Mary Cheney, then Coors's corporate relations manager for the gay and lesbian community. The

story identified Cheney as openly lesbian.

Another article published on BeverageBusiness.com also identified Cheney

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Road to recovery more challenging for gays

Finding gay-focused treatment can make achieving sobriety easier

by MARIA MINICUCCI and ELLA TYLER

In the first half of our two-part series on addiction in the gay and lesbian community, local and national experts contributed theories, statistics and research pertaining to the relationship between sexual identity and addictions.

The collection of this data from these various sources could not produce any solid evidence that the gay and lesbian population has a higher rate of addiction than the general population. It was, however, emphasized that how many of us experience addiction is not as relevant as the devastating and widespread effects of addiction.

And, that addiction is a problem worthy of attention, prevention, and treatment.

Recovery

What does a gay or lesbian person do if they

are concerned about their drinking or drugging?

"Find the nearest gay-oriented or gay-friendly AA, NA, or CA (Alcoholics, Narcotics, Cocaine Anonymous) meeting," says Keith Kohl, vice president of Alternatives, Inc., a small chain of treatment facilities for gay people with substance abuse problems.

"If someone doesn't know how to find one, we or people at Pride Institute (another gay-focused treatment program) can refer them.

"People who live in a large city like Houston are lucky because there are lots of resources, but in small towns, there may not be any."

In Houston, the Lambda Center on West Clay is home to nearly 50 meetings of AA and Al-anon every week. There are meetings at noon and throughout the evening, beginning at "happy hour" time. On Friday and Saturday evenings there is a meeting that begins at 11 p.m.

"The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking," says Daniel Brown, president of the Lambda Center, the nonprofit group that operates the building to provide a home for the AA groups. "We also want the center to be a safe haven for gay alcoholics and their

friends. People can drop by and have a cup of coffee and we have social events from time to time."

A gay NA meeting is held at Montrose Counseling Center. The center offers several programs that help people recover from substance abuse.

"We have an extensive eight-week outpatient program that meets five evenings a week and an aftercare program for anyone who has completed the eight-week program or who has 90 days of sobriety," says Julie Cunningham, a licensed chemical dependency counselor who works for the program.

"Once people are screened to determine which program is right for them, we can usually get them started that day," she said.

The Montrose Counseling Center's programs have a sliding fee scale. According to Cunningham, the "Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse funds these programs for people who are unable to pay."

She adds, "One of the issues we deal with in the screening process is whether someone needs

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PROTECT YOURSELF! See your doctor about vaccination today. For referral to a gay-friendly physician near you, call GLMA at 1-877-LGBTDOC or visit our Web site at www.glma.org/hepatitis

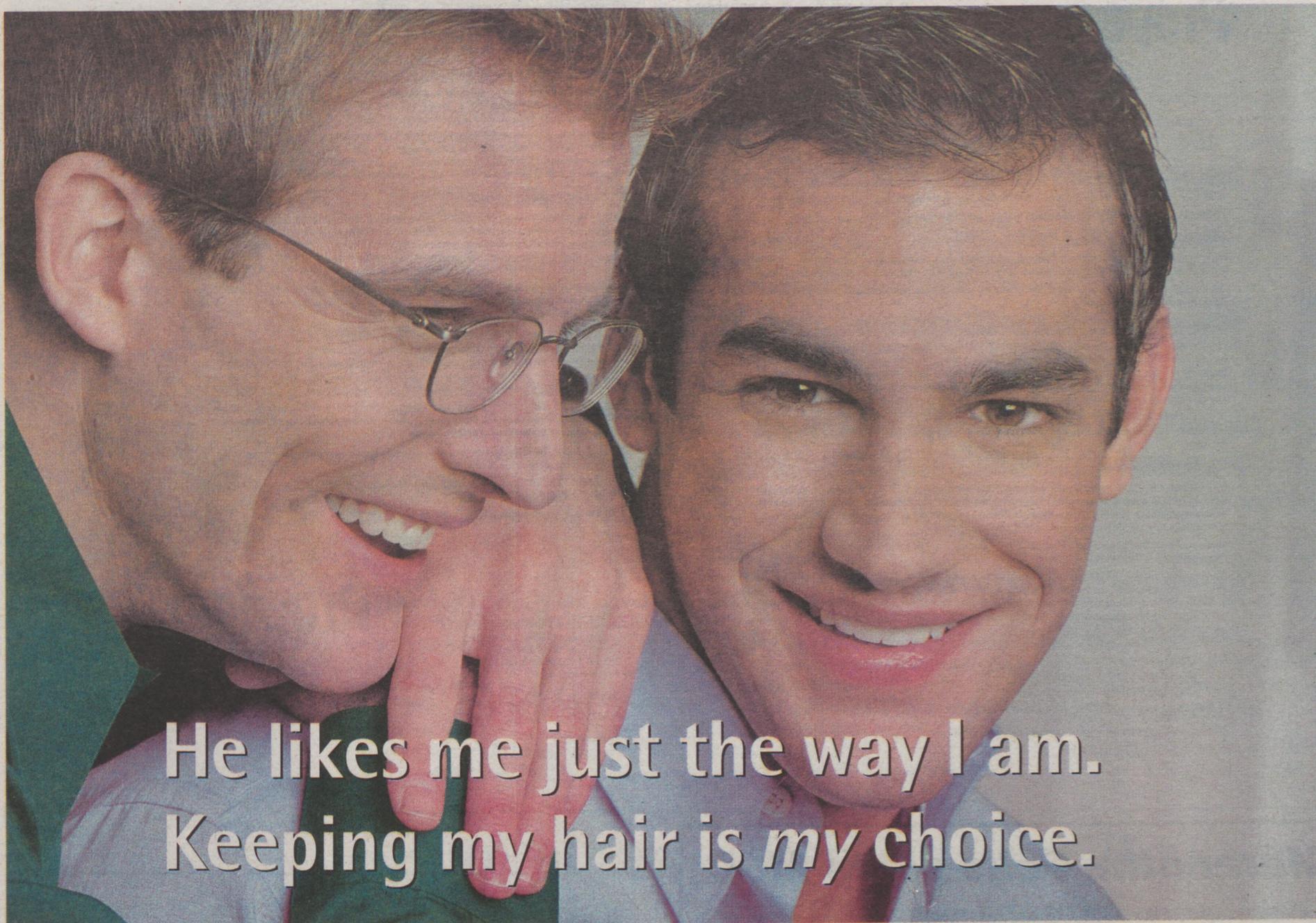
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PROPECIA is for men only. Women who are or may potentially be pregnant must not use PROPECIA because of the risk that the active ingredient may cause a specific kind of birth defect. (See accompanying Patient Product Information for details.) Likewise, they should avoid handling the tablets when they're crushed or broken. PROPECIA tablets are coated and will prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling.

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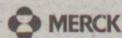
PROPECIA is available by prescription only, **so the best thing to do is talk to your doctor.**

Know the facts. Many men do, which is probably why over 30,000 prescriptions for PROPECIA are filled each week.**

Please read the next page for additional information about PROPECIA.

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Please read this leaflet before you start taking PROPECIA. Also, read the information included with PROPECIA each time you renew your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this leaflet does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss PROPECIA when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups.

What is PROPECIA used for?

PROPECIA is used for the treatment of male pattern hair loss on the vertex and the anterior mid-scalp area. PROPECIA is for use by **MEN ONLY** and should **NOT** be used by women or children.

What is male pattern hair loss?

Male pattern hair loss is a common condition in which men experience thinning of the hair on the scalp. Often, this results in a receding hairline and/or balding on the top of the head. These changes typically begin gradually in men in their 20s. Doctors believe male pattern hair loss is due to heredity and is dependent on hormonal effects. Doctors refer to this type of hair loss as androgenetic alopecia.

Results of clinical studies:

For 12 months, doctors studied over 1800 men aged 18 to 41 with mild to moderate amounts of ongoing hair loss. All men, whether receiving PROPECIA or placebo (a pill containing no medication) were given a medicated shampoo (Neutrogena T/Gel[®] Shampoo). Of these men, approximately 1200 with hair loss at the top of the head were studied for an additional 12 months. In general, men who took PROPECIA maintained or increased the number of visible scalp hairs and noticed improvement in their hair in the first year, with the effect maintained in the second year. Hair counts in men who did not take PROPECIA continued to decrease.

In one study, patients were questioned on the growth of body hair. PROPECIA did not appear to affect hair in places other than the scalp.

Will PROPECIA work for me?

For most men, PROPECIA increases the number of scalp hairs, helping to fill in thin or balding areas of the scalp. Men taking PROPECIA noted a slowing of hair loss during two years of use. Although results will vary, generally you will not be able to grow back all of the hair you have lost. There is not sufficient evidence that PROPECIA works in the treatment of receding hairline in the temporal area on both sides of the head.

Male pattern hair loss occurs gradually over time. On average, healthy hair grows only about half an inch each month. Therefore, it will take time to see any effect.

You may need to take PROPECIA daily for three months or more before you see a benefit from taking PROPECIA. PROPECIA can only work over the long term if you continue taking it. If the drug has not worked for you in twelve months, further treatment is unlikely to be of benefit. If you stop taking PROPECIA, you will likely lose the hair you have gained within 12 months of stopping treatment. You should discuss this with your doctor.

How should I take PROPECIA?

Follow your doctor's instructions.

- Take one tablet by mouth each day.
- You may take PROPECIA with or without food.
- If you forget to take PROPECIA, do **not** take an extra tablet. Just take the next tablet as usual.

PROPECIA will **not** work faster or better if you take it more than once a day.

Who should **NOT** take PROPECIA?

- PROPECIA is for the treatment of male pattern hair loss in **MEN ONLY** and should not be taken by women or children.
- Anyone allergic to any of the ingredients.

A warning about PROPECIA and pregnancy.

- Women who are or may potentially be pregnant:
 - must not use PROPECIA
 - should not handle crushed or broken tablets of PROPECIA.

If a woman who is pregnant with a male baby absorbs the active ingredient in PROPECIA, either by swallowing or through the skin, it may cause abnormalities of a male baby's sex organs. If a woman who is pregnant comes into contact with the active ingredient in PROPECIA, a doctor should be consulted. PROPECIA tablets are coated and will prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling, provided that the tablets are not broken or crushed.

What are the possible side effects of PROPECIA?

Like all prescription products, PROPECIA may cause side effects. In clinical studies, side effects from PROPECIA were uncommon and did not affect most men. A small number of men experienced certain sexual side effects. These men reported one or more of the following: less desire for sex; difficulty in achieving an erection; and, a decrease in the amount of semen. Each of these side effects occurred in less than 2% of men. These side effects went away in men who stopped taking PROPECIA. They also disappeared in most men who continued taking PROPECIA.

In general use, the following have been reported infrequently: allergic reactions including rash, itching, hives and swelling of the lips and face; problems with ejaculation; breast tenderness and enlargement; and testicular pain.

Tell your doctor promptly about these or any other unusual side effects.

- PROPECIA can affect a blood test called PSA (Prostate-Specific Antigen) for the screening of prostate cancer. If you have a PSA test done, you should tell your doctor that you are taking PROPECIA.

Storage and handling.

Keep PROPECIA in the original container and keep the container closed. Store it in a dry place at room temperature. PROPECIA tablets are coated and will prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling, provided that the tablets are not broken or crushed.

Do not give your PROPECIA tablets to anyone else. It has been prescribed only for you. Keep PROPECIA and all medications out of the reach of children.

THIS LEAFLET PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF INFORMATION ABOUT PROPECIA. IF AFTER READING THIS LEAFLET YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR ARE NOT SURE ABOUT ANYTHING, ASK YOUR DOCTOR.

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Houston PD arrests Brit in prostitution sting

Man associated with defender of English law banning promotion of homosexuality in schools

by GIP PLASTER

One of the closest associates of the man who led the fight against repealing Britain's law that prohibits the promotion of homosexuality in schools was arrested in Houston last month after he called for a male prostitute to come to his hotel room.

Now, the incident has reached the British press and news wire services, some of which are reporting the arrest as ironic and embarrassing since the man arrested had close ties with a vocal gay and lesbian opponent.

But one Houston activist said this is another case of American law trying to force "behavioral modification."

The arrest

William Barry Hinkley, 51, was arrested at Houston's Omni Hotel in uptown June 28 by an undercover policeman who was posing as a prostitute.

As a result of the arrest, Hinkley was suspended from his job of 14 years and then resigned.

Hinkley called an escort agency listed in the telephone directory and asked for an African-

American man to come to room for sex, according to Houston Police Department spokesman Alvin Wright.

Hinkley did not know that the number he called was operated by the police department.

"There are escort services that advertise in the phone directory, and some of those numbers ring directly to the Houston Police Department vice division," Wright said.

When the officer arrived and Hinkley began discussing payment for the sex, the officer made the arrest.

Hinkley was charged with the misdemeanor offense of prostitution. He was released on \$500 bail and ordered to appear for an Aug. 24 court date.

Wright said the police have acquired some of the escort numbers in phone directories after they have put companies out of business. Some numbers are also placed in the directories specifically for the purposes of catching those who call wanting sexual favors for money, he said.

The publicity surrounding Hinkley's arrest should serve as a warning, Wright said.

"If you pick up the phone and ask for an escort service for sexual purposes, beware that you may be talking to the Houston Police Department," he said. "If you call an escort service with the purpose of prostitution, you're going to get caught."

Arrests like Hinkley's are somewhat common, but most of those arrested are straight, Wright said.

"Most calls are heterosexual related," he said. "There is

not a target for anyone in the homosexual community. This is all about prostitution, which is illegal."

It really seems inappropriate for law enforcement officials to be going to these lengths and this extent to entrap the citizenry. They're entrapping people, and I don't think there's any other word for it.

— Clarence Bagby, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force board member

As evidence that these types of stings are neither new nor aimed at gays and lesbians, Wright pointed to the 1991 case of Los Angeles Lakers player James Worthy.

The player was in Houston for a game and called for two female prostitutes, but Houston police showed up instead and arrested him.

Sting or entrapment?

Longtime Houston gay and lesbian activist
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Group plans protest against Boy Scouts

Scouting For All to stage demonstration Aug. 21 at BSA's national headquarters in Irving, Houston BSA office

by KAY DAYUS

In response to the recent Supreme Court ruling allowing the Boy Scouts of America to set its own standard for membership and thus eliminate gays, a national organization, Scouting for All, has called for a national day of protest against the BSA, says Scott Cozza, president of SFA.

In a recent telephone interview with the Houston Voice, Cozza said the nationwide protest is set for Monday, Aug. 21, from 8 to 11 a.m.

Cozza says he, his son Scott, and a contingent from SFA headquarters in San Francisco will travel to Texas to peacefully demonstrate outside the BSA's national headquarters in Irving.

A protest will take place in Houston at the same time outside the Houston Area Council of BSA at 1911 Bagby, says Bruce Reeves, who, with Clarence Bagby, is spearheading Houston's protest. Reeves asks that people meet at 8 a.m. on the public right-of-way around the building.

"We don't expect it to change the world, but we want at least to raise awareness," said Reeves. "We need to send messages back to

Irving and see if they address them."

Cozza, a child psychologist and an assistant Scoutmaster, said, "So far, 23 different places are going to participate and we're hoping for 20 or so more."

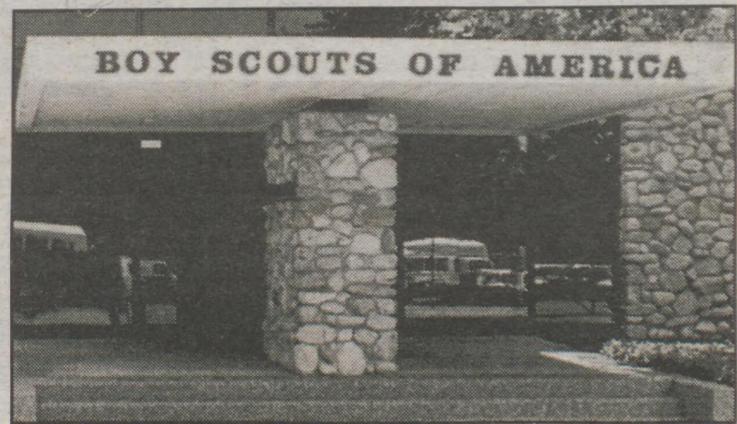
He says the protest is in response to the fact that over the past several years, BSA has expelled from scouting anyone who has been identified as a gay person.

Cozza says he was inspired by his son Steven to organize SFA

more than two years ago. Steven, a Boy Scout, was then 12-and-a-half and working on his merit badge. To get his badge, he had to pick a national issue to work on. Steven, who is now 15, chose to bring out the fact that the Boy Scouts discriminate against gays. Steven is not gay, nor is his father, but he wanted to correct what he believed was an injustice.

"Steven said that gays were getting discriminated against in scouting. He noticed the inconsistencies with scout law. He said 'they (the BSA) don't follow the code, because they discriminate against gays.'"

"Steven wrote a letter to the editor of a local newspaper and he received close to 300



The national organization, Scouting For All, will stage a protest in front of the Houston Boy Scouts of America building, 1911 Bagby, Aug. 21. The demonstration is part of a national effort to raise awareness about the recent Supreme Court ruling allowing BSA to ban gays from the organization.

letters and phone calls of support, and it snowballed into this (the SFA)," Cozza says. SFA is an active education and advocacy group whose motto is, "Committed to Scouting, Open to Diversity."

Steven, who spoke at the Millennium March in Washington last spring, did get his Eagle badge, says Cozza, despite being given a hard time by the BSA. "He went through hell." But, he adds with more than a touch of pride, "Steven is not your typical 12- or 15-year-old. I think he was born with some sort of wisdom. He's always trying to help other kids."

BSA not only gave Cozza a hard time, he
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Gay-friendly treatment eases recovery process

> Continued from Page 1

detoxification. If someone has been drinking heavily for a long time or has been taking drugs like Valium or Xanax, they might need medical help to withdraw, and we can refer them to a place for detox."

An additional component to the services provided by the Montrose Counseling Center is screening clients for the possibility of psychiatric problems.

"We have a separate program for people with dual diagnosis—like depression and substance abuse."

The combination of depression and substance abuse is not uncommon.

Ron Knobbe of Pride Institute, another treatment facility for gay and lesbians, says, "about 50 percent of the people in treatment for substance abuse came to us for treatment for depression. They have been using alcohol to medicate themselves."

Cunningham, Kohl, and Knobbe all agree on the need for gay-specific treatment.

"Clients who have been through residential treatment have told me horrible stories about trying to deal with homophobia from other patients that the staff didn't deal with," says Cunningham.

Kohl, a recovering alcoholic, said, "I wouldn't talk. I was afraid I'd be physically hurt or judged. I had to educate the straight staff about homosexuality."

The treatment programs all strongly suggest that clients attend Alcoholics Anonymous meet-

ings following treatment. "We recommend it," Kohl says, "but know that if you tell an alcoholic or addict that they must do something, their first inclination is to try to find some other way, so we introduce the idea gently. We tell people that AA is the foundation for all other recovery programs and that it has worked for more than 50 years."

Kohl adds, "Not everyone needs a gay AA group and many non-gay AA groups are accepting of gay members." Cunningham says, "We strongly suggest that people go to AA following treatment. It has the largest number of meetings, more than 1,000 per week in Houston, and is a place to find support and learn skills for life. If someone is opposed to AA, we give them other options, but, as far as I know none of the other programs have gay meetings."

Cunningham says "There is a pretty large gay recovering community here and AA makes it easy to find it. Most of my client have ended up going and liked it once they gave it a try."

Several people were quite willing to share their experience with addiction and recovery. One of these persons is a female, middle-aged, professional and who requested anonymity.

"L" says she began drinking at the age of 12. "It wasn't until I reached my early 30s that I started to view my drinking in a different way. I started to see that it was problematic. It was definitely interfering in my life.

"I had to go into work every day with a hangover. My friends had always been such an integral part of my life and I deliberately, over time isolated myself from them in order to drink. My

monthly bar bill was bigger than my mortgage payment. Finally, I realized that if I continued to drink, I would lose everything that mattered to me."

How did L. stop drinking? "Once I understood what was at stake, and that I did not want to suffer those particular consequences, I decided to do something about it. The only thing I knew about was AA so I went."

Does L. attribute her success at recovery to AA? According to L, "It was not AA, it was my commitment to stop drinking that led me to a profoundly healing experience. Immediately after that I knew that I was no longer an alcoholic."

Kelly L., who has been is transgendered for nearly 20 years and sober for five years, says, "AA works for me, and its worked for lots of different kinds of people for more than 60 years. Transgendered people have more strikes against them, too. It's a really simple program and if you do what's suggested, you'll stay sober."

She adds, "I think that if you're really alcoholic, abstinence is the best thing. I go to lots of meetings. I stick pretty close to the program, and



PHOTO BY: TERRY SULLIVAN

Dan DiDonato enjoys a cup of coffee with his assistant, Debra Duplant, at Lobos, one of the many locations in the city where gays can meet without the temptation of drugs and alcohol. DiDonato has been in recovery for 8-and-a-half years.

if things are going badly, I go to more meetings for a while."

Whatever recovery path the GLBT person may eventually decide to go down, most experts in this field agree with Kohl when he claims, "The recovering gay substance abuser must also deal with issues that the non-gay person does not have to deal with."

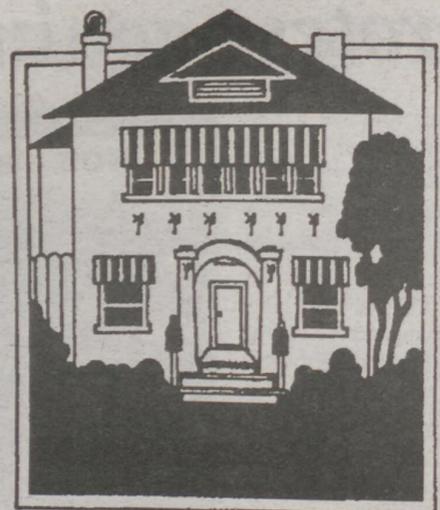
A commonly formed attitude among gays and an obstacle in the recovery process is "Why get sober if you're worthless?" says Kohl. He stands by his belief that "although it's harder for a gay person to get and stay sober, ... at the end they're more evolved. I think they then have a wonderful gift to offer the GLBT community."

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Socializing soberly

Informal survey yields variety of suggestions for meeting people while staying sober

by MARIA MINICUCCI and ELLA TYLER

An informal survey asking people to name place for gays to meet and social other than at bars yielded a variety of answers. Responses ranged from "I'd like to know some" to "intermission at the Alley." Here are the results with a few additions from the Pride Guide and the Voice's community calendar.

Lambda Center.

Coffee shops like Crossroads, Lobo, Deidrich's and Starbucks.

Gay Roller Skating (there also are gay groups for runners, bicyclists, tennis players, bowlers, fishermen/women and wrestlers as well as one called simply the Outdoor Group).

Three different sources suggested Home Depot. "I'm there for nails, not males," said one person rumored to hang out there.

Gay and Lesbian Parents group.

Political organizations like the Victory Fund, GLPC, Log Cabin Republicans or the campaign office of gay-friendly candidates.

Church. Yes, it's on every straight person's list as a place to meet nice people, but why should they have all the fun? Bering Memorial, MCCR, Maranatha and a number of other con-

gregations in the city welcome gay members.

Comets games. (better for meeting lesbians than gay men)

Work or school. Several large companies have gay employees groups, and there are gay groups at the University of Houston Main and Downtown Campuses and for Medical Center employees. At smaller companies, there's always someone willing to tell you who's "family." Find out what your coworkers do for fun and ask if you can join them.

Gay film festivals or the showings of camp classics. Keep an eye out for the listings at Greenway, the Angelika, the Museum of Fine Arts and the Rice Media Center.

Book signings. Gay authors appear at Crossroads and Lobo, and sometimes at Alabama Theater Bookstop and Murder by The Book. Keep an eye out for these events, consider joining a reading group or just cruise the shelves.

There is always something going on at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center. Or how about volunteering for with The Pride Committee, Q Patrol, the Gulf Coast Museum and Archives, the Switchboard or any number of other gay service organizations?

Do you sing, play a musical instrument or act? There's the Houston Pride Band, the Gay Men's Chorus and several theater groups that need you. If you're out of tune, volunteer to help some other way or be part of the audience.

Keep an eye out for groups that meet in restaurants rather than bars. Houston Area Bears, for example, often meets at restaurants. Even if some people are drinking, it's a more comfortable atmosphere for non-drinkers.

Cheney's gay daughter 'not a campaign liability'

> Continued from Page 1

as lesbian. Cheney defended Coors's positions in the article, saying Coors had "really listened to us and has made a lot of effort to change its image and change its reality in the gay and lesbian community."

According to the Drudge Report, an online journal, Bush has "embraced" Cheney's family, including Mary.

"Being gay or lesbian is not a liability in this campaign," Drudge quoted a "top Bush source" as saying.

In an interview with Larry King on CNN Monday night, journalist Bob Woodward referred to a "relative who is gay" as a factor in Cheney's decision not to run for president in 1996.

Overall, reports on Cheney's gay rights record aren't positive. "The choice of Secretary Cheney is in keeping with Governor Bush's strategy of staking out conservative positions and wrapping them in a moderate package," said Winnie Stachelberg, political director for the Human Rights Campaign, a gay political organization.

Cheney supported the ban on gays in the military, according to HRC, although he once called the policy an "old chestnut."

"I basically don't believe in discrimination, but I did conclude, as secretary of defense, that the ban on gays in uniform was appropriate,"

Cheney told Larry King in 1993.

In 1988, Cheney, then a Republican Congressman from Wyoming, voted against the Hate Crimes Statistics Act and against a major federal AIDS funding bill. His record on AIDS is consistently poor, according to HRC.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force released a similar reaction, asserting Cheney also opposed the federal Equal Rights Amendment and opposes reproductive choice.

But Log Cabin Republicans, a gay GOP organization, lauded Bush's choice. "Dick Cheney comes from the mainstream wing of the GOP," said Rich Tafel, the group's executive director. "Republicans from all walks of life should be pleased to know that Governor Bush has selected someone with such extensive knowledge of foreign affairs and the workings of Washington." As Secretary of Defense, Cheney supported Pete Williams, the department's chief spokesman, when he was outed as gay.

"I have operated on the basis over the years with respect to my personal staff that I don't ask them about their private lives," Cheney said in 1991. "As long as they perform their professional responsibilities in a responsible manner, their private lives are their business."

From staff and wire reports(right) as his choice for vice president. Credit: AP VIA CNN

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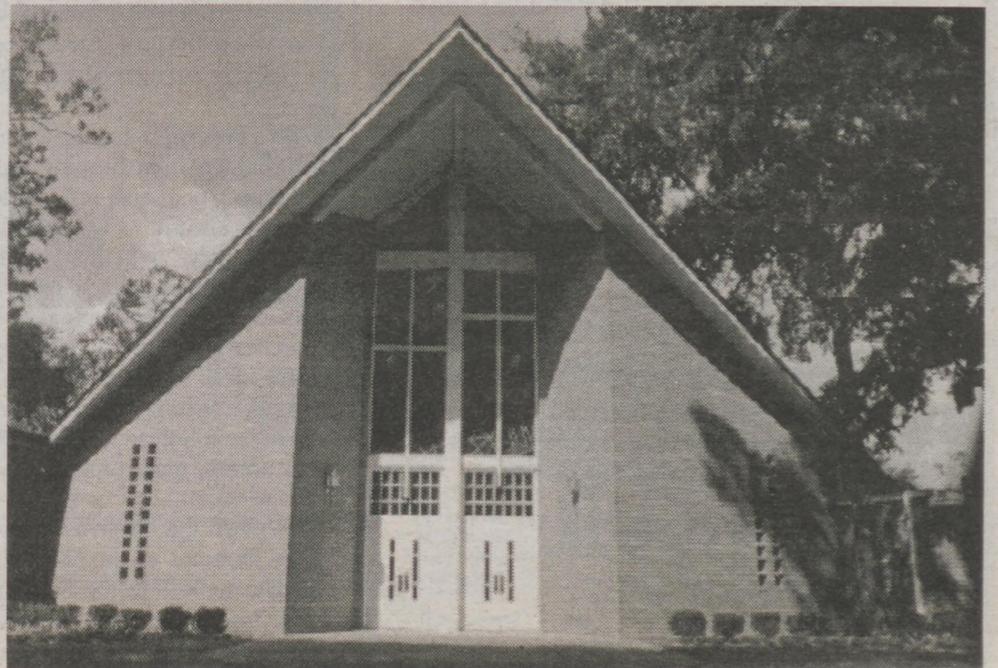
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SLOUCHING THROUGH SODOM

Advances in technology hotwire the closet door

by MICHAEL ALVEAR

Technology is carving into gay life as if it were marble, chiseling an exit path into America's closets.

Nowhere is this more apparent than the World Wide Web. Like civilization, "coming out" can now be split into two epochs: B.C. (Before Cyberspace) and A.C. (After Cyberspace).

Coming out B.C. meant taking huge emotional and physical risks. Remember your first gay club? How could you ever forget the walk from the car to the bar? Anxiety hath no fury like a closeted walk to the disco ball.

But coming out A.C. changes everything. The web doesn't just allow you to find someone to go to the bar with, it gives you the freedom to skip the bar altogether. The web is changing the status of gay bars as a rite of passage. What started out as a loaded symbol of sexuality is turning into an ordinary place to get loaded.

Unlike bars, sites like Planet Out and Gay.com aren't just about finding other gay people; they're about finding other gay people you have something in common with. Increasingly, these sites are becoming community centers where you

can have point-and-click introductions and bricks-and-mortar meetings.

Cyberspace gives us access to information we're too afraid to get in the real world. How many men reach for *Popular Mechanics* with their hands and *Houston*

a PBS station in another market.

Any technology that provides privacy is a technology that helps gay people come out. If you're a gay teen, having a cell phone means you get to talk to people your parents don't approve of. Like your boyfriend.

Any technology that provides privacy helps gays come out earlier. If you're a gay teen, having a cell phone means you get to talk to people your parents don't approve of. Like your boyfriend.

Voice with their eyes? For them, *HoVo* is too dangerous to pick up, let alone walk out with. What if a co-worker happened by? But there's nothing dangerous about www.houstonvoice.com.

Remember when Ellen's coming out episode was blacked out in Birmingham by the ABC affiliate? With today's satellite dishes you'd just tune to another city's ABC affiliate.

The same goes for the weekly gay show "In The Life." Many PBS affiliates won't broadcast it, fearful of the Revolting Right (or is it the Right Revolting? I always get the two confused). Just point the transponder to

Technology is helping redefine the gay community, its coming out process, even its dating and sexual practices. It's a catalyst for the closeted, a commissary for the community, and a harem for the horny.

It does all this by giving us the tools to flourish: Privacy and access. By loosening society's grip on information it prefers us not to have, technology is becoming a symbol for yet another unspeakable "F" word in the minds of social conservatives: Freedom.

Michael Alvear lives with his lesbian labrador Zoey and his girlie-boy vizsla Zac. He can be reached at mikealvear@aol.com.



VIEWPOINT

Presbyterians join chorus of Protestant fear

by JENNIFER VANASCO

Ministers bless animals. They bless ships going out to sea. They even bless football games.

Let's say that one more time: Ministers across the country have traditionally said prayers blessing a sporting event where the goal seems to be physical damage to members of the other team.

Yet a Presbyterian minister may soon be forbidden from blessing the loving relationship of a same-sex couple.

This is absurd.

Previously, whether a minister blessed the union of a same-sex couple was up to each individual presbytery (churches within a regional area). This wasn't ideal, but seemed a good compromise. Conservative presbyteries with few gay and lesbian members wouldn't bless unions; more progressive presbyteries would.

So when the Presbyterians followed in the footsteps of the Methodists and voted to write into the Book of Order that marriage was only between a man and a woman, they cast aside reason and responsibility. They effectively looked at a part of their congregation and decided that they didn't want us anymore.

Those Presbyterians who voted for the same-sex marriage ban (and the Methodists before them) don't see it that way, of course. Many may believe that gays will still feel welcome; after all, we can be ordained as long as we remain celibate.

But we wouldn't be gay if we didn't feel drawn to intimate relationships with people of the same sex. Though that draw doesn't define us individually, our romantic, committed relationships are a vital part of our lives. They deserve better than to be ruled away by a vote.

By denying us this recognition (when the church does not deny our love for our pets or for our boats or for our football games), they are denying us full membership within the community.

Gay men and lesbians volunteer in the church; we donate money; we support important social services that the church provides. Yet we are not able to take full advantage of the rituals and comforts of church life.

This makes me angry. It is not only morally wrong (how can a church proclaim "God is love" and then decide which kind of love is valid?), it is insulting.

It is as if the church divided us from the main congregation and labeled us with a special category of second-class

church membership. Perhaps we should be called Junior Associate members of the church and asked to sit in the back pews, since we are not entitled to its full benefits.

When an organization, especially one committed to love, starts making senseless decisions of this sort, there can be only one explanation: fear.

Those of us who attend regularly could make a decision instead to worship privately. But a church is more than just pomp and pageantry; it's more than feel good music and the greetings of neighbors. A church gathers us together in faithful community so that we can better serve the world.

All is not yet lost for those of us who are gay and lesbian Presbyterians. The presbyteries still need to ratify the ban. And my minister says that next year, the good guys will ride in with noses flaring.

But until we eliminate the fear at the core of these bad decisions—until we help our congregations understand that losing members doesn't equal death; ignoring justice equals death—all of us will continue to lose.

Jennifer Vanasco can be reached through this publication or send e-mail to vanasco@chicagofreepress.com



VIEWPOINT

New AIDS stats call for safer sex leadership

by MUBARAK DAHIR

There needs to be a new wave of vocal and public discussion from within the gay community on the difficult and ironically controversial task of promoting safer sex.

There can be no doubt that unprotected anal sex is on the rise in gay men these days. For years, the anecdotal evidence has been there in personal ads, bar talk and online chatting. We've even given it a nickname—"barebacking"—and eroticized and sexualized and glorified it.

But until now, there has been little direct scientific evidence that unsafe sex was fueling an increase in new HIV infections among gay men. In fact, those who expressed fears about the seemingly obvious threat have been labeled anti-sex gay Uncle Toms.

Sadly but not surprisingly, evidence is starting to come in that is very bad news for gay men: A new study in San Francisco shows that the increase in unprotected anal sex is indeed leading to an increased number of new HIV infections.

The San Francisco Department of Health is reporting that new HIV infections in gay men have nearly doubled in number from 500 in 1997 to 900 in 1999. Expressed as a percentage, the rate of new HIV infections in 1999 is nearly triple that of 1997.

More sensitive testing techniques now allow researchers to identify people infected in the past few months, compared, for example, to people who may have been infected years ago but just never had got an HIV test. Thus, re-searchers were able to track new infections and conclude that a recent increase in unsafe anal sex among gay men in San

Francisco is responsible for a jump in HIV cases.

The most recent study by the city's health department also showed that the number of gay men who reported always using a condom for anal sex fell to 54 percent in 1999 from 70 percent in 1994. The fraction of gay men having unprotected anal sex with more than one partner also increased to 43 percent in 1999 from 23 percent in 1994.

There are many reasons for the increase in unprotected anal sex among gay men. Some are familiar: The AIDS crisis has subsided thanks to new drugs. There's a sense of battle fatigue in keeping up a guard against the virus for nearly 20 years now, and a nonchalance by many younger gay men who do not have the memory of burying one friend after the other.

There are even those who will always be attracted to the risk and danger of tempting fate, even if—or maybe especially if—the stakes are life and death.

But as gay men, we need to consider this important discovery: The researchers found no significant increases in new HIV infections except among gay men. Not in women, not in IV drug users, not in any other category of people in San Francisco other than gay men.

I can't help but fear that the resurgence of

HIV in San Francisco's gay population is linked to some degree to a dangerous movement that mistakenly equates unsafe anal sex with a gay cultural and political identity.

I'm not talking about the "AIDS denialists," the people who dispute that HIV causes AIDS or that any kind of epidemic ever existed. Though they are disproportionately loud, these "AIDS denialists" have not yet established any significant influence.

In today's gay male culture, if you dare say that unprotected anal sex is irresponsible, you are labeled an anti-sex, self-loathing collusionist in cahoots with the oppressive heterosexual majority.

What I am talking about is much more frightening and dangerous for gay men, because it is not fringe thinking.

It is cloaked in a powerful but flawed ideology that misleads us into believing unprotected anal sex is about our gay sexual "rites" and "rights," that it is about self-identity as gay men, or that it is about asserting our cultural and political independence and strength.

Those who ascribe to this line of thinking assert that when we practice safer sex, we as a community of gay men are somehow being deprived of a basic "bond" of gayness—the sharing of sperm in the anal cavity.

An odd paranoia also permeates this ideology, preaching that safer sex allows straight society to neuter our gay cultural and political movement because they are succeeding in somehow making us "less gay." So having unprotected anal sex somehow becomes a

political and social act championed by unafraid renegades out to reclaim gayness.

The movement also villainizes anyone who dares to challenge its fallacy. Dare say that unprotected anal sex is irresponsible or dangerous or crazy, and you are labeled an anti-sex, sex panicked, self-loathing collusionist in cahoots with the oppressive heterosexual majority.

Indeed, many activists who buy that line are furiously working to undermine the results of the San Francisco study, as they have tried to refute all the other previous indicators.

But it is high time the rest of us stop being cowed and quieted by this intimidating and senseless mindset. If we speak up now, it won't be too late to reverse what is happening to gay men in San Francisco, and prevent the trend from sweeping across other major cities.

It's time we adopted the understanding that while HIV prevention is a health issue, it's also a political and social and cultural issue inexorably linked to being gay. We need to resurrect the political message that part of being gay is caring about ourselves collectively, that being gay includes the compassion to look out for each other in a way that others in heterosexual society will not.

We need to let each other know how much we care that all of us will be around in another 20 or 30 years, still contributing to the definition of what it means to be gay.

That's the political message that we need to rise up and once again give voice to when we think of unsafe anal sex and what it really means to the political, social and cultural landscape of being gay.

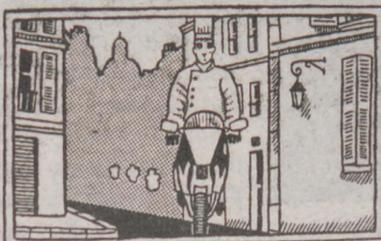
Mubarak Dahir can be reached at MubarakDah@aol.com.

The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Green...

...by Eric Orner

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Health News

Summit decries 'sensational' reports on jumps in HIV infections

BOULDER—Organizers of the Gay Men's Health Summit here questioned the "sensationalistic headlines" and the motives of recent reports about increases in HIV infection rates in cities like San Francisco, the *Denver Post* reported. Eric Rofes also criticized current methods of conveying AIDS prevention information to gay men, pointing out that they "were useful during the crisis," and may be useful in minority communities where the crisis remains. But he added the crisis is over for the gay community. "From 1983 to 1993, gay men experienced AIDS as a crisis. But I'm not sure you can experience it as a crisis for more than 10 years," said Rofes, a professor of education at Humboldt State University. Conference-goers also debated the merits of the first-ever inclusion of gays in a federal health program, the *Rocky Mountain News* reported. Clinton administration officials appeared at the summit to tout their "Healthy People 2010" plan, which for the first time since the program's inception in 1979 includes sexual orientation as a national health concern." said Richard Elovich, former HIV-prevention director at Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York. "I think it's very little and it's late," he said. "I'm not very hopeful about this buy-off of the gay community."

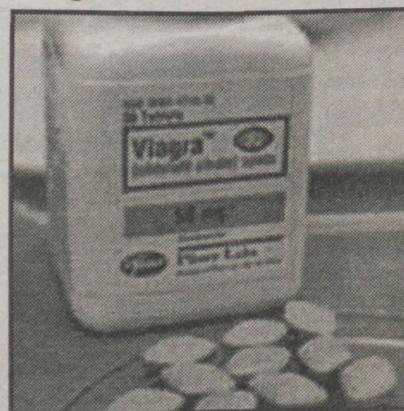
Gene splicing may offer hope for undermining AIDS virus attack

AUSTIN—University of Texas biologists announced a breakthrough in gene therapy that may lead scientists to single out and disrupt specific sections of DNA or add new sections to existing DNA, the *New York Times* reported. Their first use of the new technology was to disrupt both the AIDS virus and the section of the human gene that serves as the receptor and allows the virus access to human cells. The technique uses introns, sections of DNA that fill the gaps between working genes. If the tests continue to be successful, chief inventor Dr. Alan M. Lambowitz hopes to take T-cells from AIDS patients, disrupt the cells' receptor genes, and return them to the patient in hopes that the new cells will resist further attack from HIV. The research first appeared in the July 21 issue of *Science*.

Drug cocktail fails to slow AIDS progression in non-Hodgkins lymphoma

LONDON (AP)—While new medicines have dramatically reduced the chances of HIV patients developing AIDS, a new study indicates the percentage of patients defined as having AIDS due to contracting non-Hodgkins lymphoma has quadrupled since the drugs were introduced six years ago. Experts have known that the effectiveness of antiretroviral drugs varies depending on which opportunistic infection is involved. "This paper is probably the most compelling data to date to support [the] suspicion that the drugs are not as effective against non-Hodgkins lymphoma," Dr. Mark Jacobson said of the Danish study published in the *Lancet*. The study of 7,300 European HIV patients found that the combination therapy protected them from AIDS defining illnesses, even with very low T-cell counts. Dr. Jens Lundgren, a professor at the University of Copenhagen who led the study, said he found an overall drop in the progression from HIV to AIDS of more than 90 percent each year. But since 1994, the number of people progressing to AIDS with non-Hodgkins lymphoma has gone up from 4 percent to 16 percent.

Dangerous side effects keep Viagra competitor off the market



Viagra remains a dominant impotence drug with the recent pullout of Uprima, which federal officials warned had serious side effects.

Faced with serious safety questions, the maker of the experimental impotence drug Uprima has withdrawn its application for FDA approval, leaving the drug's fate in doubt, *USA Today* reported. Uprima manufacturer TAP Pharmaceuticals had hoped Uprima would become Viagra's first real competitor in the marketplace. But tests indicated that one in 30 men who took the drug either fainted or suffered severe low blood pressure. One man crashed his car, while another fell down a flight of stairs, cracking his skull, the newspaper reported. Several FDA advisors bluntly warned the federal agency that if the drug were ever sold, people would die from taking it. The decision to withdraw the application suggested that the company expected it would be rejected. "We knew they had questions," said Kim Modory, a company spokesperson.

EU panel approves three-in-one, easier-to-take AIDS pill

LONDON—A key European Union committee has recommended approval for Trizivir, Glaxo Wellcome's new triple combination treatment for HIV, Reuters reported. The opinion of the Committee for Proprietary Medicinal Products will now be considered by the European Commission for a final decision. Trizivir is the first HIV/AIDS treatment to combine three anti-retroviral therapies—Ziagen, Epivir and Retrovir. Glaxo received a similar "approvable letter" from the U.S. Food & Drug Administration on June 9. Glaxo has high hopes for Trizivir, which offers a simpler dosing regimen than other AIDS drugs.



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—From staff and wire reports

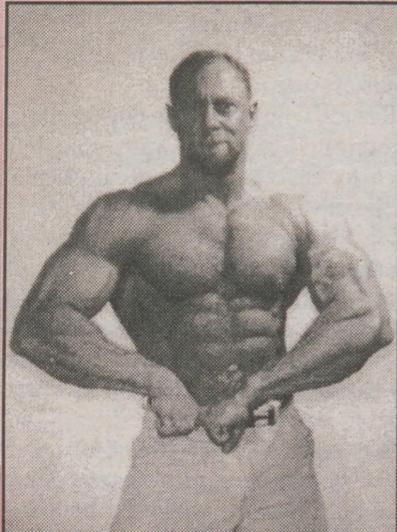


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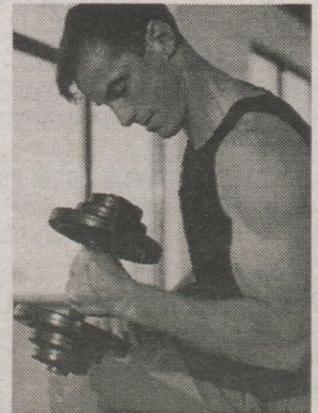


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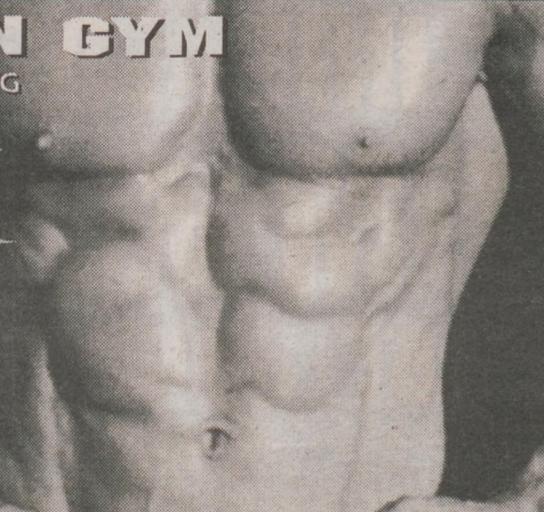
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Bagby: HPD sting amounts to entrapment

> Continued from Page 5

Clarence Bagby said stings like the one that caught Hinkley amount to entrapment and are a waste of officers' time.

Bagby, who is a board member of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, represents that group on a Houston Police Department advisory committee.

"We certainly think there are more important things that law enforcement folks can work on than on trying to entrap citizens," he said.

"It really seems inappropriate for law enforcement officials to be going to these lengths and this extent to entrap the citizenry," Bagby said. "They're entrapping people, and I don't think there's any other word for it."

Bagby said he is an "unapologetic liberal" and said law enforcement should stay out of people's private lives.

"Many of us feel like law enforcement is too consumed with these type of behavioral modification efforts," he said.

Hinkley's arrest would not have made news in both the U.S. and in the United Kingdom if not for his link to an anti-gay cause.

Hinkley was head of bus operations for Stagecoach Holdings Plc, a transportation company in Perth, Scotland.

Stagecoach's chairman, Brian Souter, is a member of the Church of the Nazarene which recently funded a campaign opposing the repeal of Section 28, the law that prevents local councils from promoting or encouraging homosexuality in the United Kingdom through publications,

campaigns or in schools.

The law first came into existence in 1988 under Margaret Thatcher. No local authority has been prosecuted for breaching the law, but it has been invoked more than 30 times to prevent projects from going forward, according to the British Broadcasting Corp.

The law has been repealed in Scotland, but repeal of the law in England is on hold.

Hinkley had worked in the transportation industry for more than 35 years.

Stagecoach may be in the process of negotiating a financial settlement with Hinkley, according to BBC News Online Scotland.

Hinkley, who is married and has three children, became a director and chairman of the company's United Kingdom bus division after working as a managing director in another of the company's operations, according to the BBC.

Company records indicate he was paid more than £250,000 last year, which amounts to approximately \$379,823 in U.S. dollars.

Hinkley resigned on Tuesday and is reported to still be in the United States.



Clarence Bagby

Houstonian ousted from Scouts for being gay

Bruce Reeves says BSA may not acknowledge it, but a large percentage of Scouts are gay

by KAY DAYUS

Bruce Reeves, local organizer of Scouting for All's protest against the Boy Scouts of America, has felt first hand the sting of rejection from the Boy Scouts of America.

Reeves, who joined the Boy Scouts as a youngster, says he was ultimately asked to leave after his sexual orientation became common knowledge.

He was a scout leader here in Houston before moving to Baton Rouge, La. in 1981. There, he continued his scouting as assistant scoutmaster, until he was ousted. "It became public knowledge that I was gay, and I was asked to leave," he said.

Reeves, an Eagle Scout as a kid, said, "Scouting was an important part of my life. I can't imagine where I'd be today without it." He added that it was one of the few places where he fit in.

He said that as a kid, belonging to the Boy Scouts was good for him. "I didn't

play team sports because I couldn't do well and the Boy Scouts gave me an opportunity where I could excel. There

> Continued on Page 13

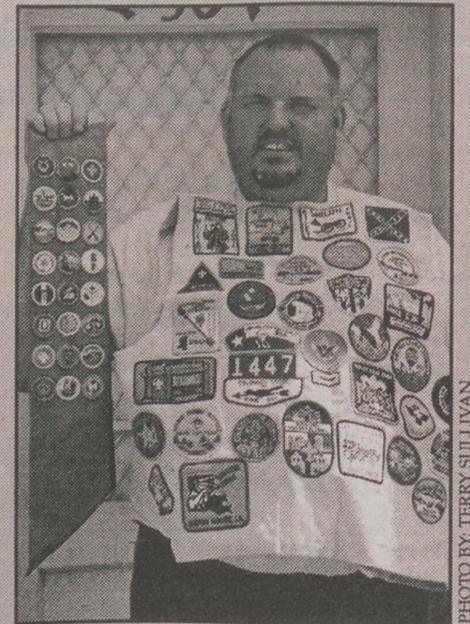


PHOTO BY: TERRY SULLIVAN

Bruce Reeves displays the many badges he earned during his years as a Boy Scout. Reeves was asked to leave BSA leadership positions both in Houston and Baton Rouge, La. when it was revealed that he is gay.

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Protest of BSA planned in Houston

> Continued from Page 5

was ultimately asked to leave. "They eventually kicked me out after I walked in the Gay Pride parade. After that, Scoutmasters and others didn't speak to me. And they didn't want the kids to associate with me after that," he says ruefully.

But that didn't stop Cozza. He joined another troop and continued with BSA and with the protest. "The message is more important than any of us," he says.

The recent Supreme Court ruling that has raised the ire of Cozza and his group, involved James Dale, who was an assistant scoutmaster in New Jersey. Dale took legal action against BSA after being ousted from the organization because he was gay. The New Jersey Supreme Court found for Dale, but BSA appealed the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In a 5 to 4 decision, the Supreme Court reversed New Jersey's decision and affirmed that the Boy Scouts of America is a private organization which may decide its own standards for membership regardless of public laws which prohibit discrimination against certain people, according to a statement by SFA.

"In effect, the Supreme Court has allowed BSA to discriminate," Cozza said.

Cozza said the Boy Scouts organization is in 153 countries and there is only one other country where they are "anti-gay." And, he says, that country is Saudi Arabia, where it is

part of a cultural belief.

According to a recent article in the Indianapolis Star, it wasn't until BSA was sued in 1991 that they began to assert that excluding gays was based on their oath's commandment to be "morally straight," and "clean."

In effect, the Supreme Court has allowed BSA to discriminate.

— Scott Cozza, Scouting For All president

However, the Scout's oath does not mention anything about banning gays from the organization. In the oath, morally straight behavior is defined as guiding one's life "with honesty, purity and justice," and to "respect and defend the rights of all people."

The official BSA website carries on its front page an article describing their pleasure with the Supreme Court's decision. It reads, "This decision allows us to continue our mission of providing character-building experiences for young people, which has been our purpose since our founding."

Furthermore, they state, "We believe an avowed homosexual is not a role model for the values espoused in the scout oath."

There has already been some backlash

from the ruling and likely there will be more. For instance, the Massachusetts Bay United Way is considering withdrawing its monetary support to the local BSA organization.

United Way officials there said the Boy Scout's anti-gay policy goes directly against their own, which requires that organizations they support to not discriminate against anyone for any reason.

Organizations receiving united way funding are required to sign a form stating they do not practice discrimination.

Cozza says he, Steven and Scouting for All will continue the fight against the BSA. He says that they will demonstrate in their Boy Scout uniforms and he urges others to do the same, even though BSA says uniforms can be worn only when performing scouting duties. He believes the uniforms will add to the impact.

In one of his speeches, Steven summed up the issue well, when he said, "Someday BSA will accept the diversity of the human family and end their practice of discrimination.... How can BSA who is supposed to represent the very best in our society, embrace the very worse?"

Gays find niche in Scouting

> Continued from Page 12

were a lot of different subjects to choose from. You could educate yourself."

Reeves said he is really hoping the BSA will change its mind about expelling gays because they are cutting out a "large part of the population by not allowing us to serve in those positions."

He believes there is a disproportionate number of gay kids in the Boy Scouts. "I don't think the Boy Scouts would acknowledge it, but I think there is a higher percentage of gays in the Boy Scouts than in the general population. They can fit in there; they can find a niche."

Scott Cozza, president of Scouting for All, agrees with Reeves. "There are thousands of gay Eagle Scouts; there are just lots of gays in the Boy Scouts."

Reeves thinks that instead of purging gays from the BSA, "They should teach kids that people are different and it's okay whether you're short or tall, fat or thin, or gay."

Would he be involved in the Boy Scouts today if he could? Yes, says Reeves. "It tears at me sometimes that I can't be involved anymore."

INFO
SCOUTING FOR ALL HOUSTON PROTEST
 713-227-5973
 e-mail: brucer Reeves@sister.com.
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 www.scoutingforall.org

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'Birthday Bash' gives gifts to four local charities

Fund-raising event generated more than \$7,000 for local charities

by ROBERT B. HENDERSON

What started out as a birthday party for Ron Foster and Michael Gonzales seven years ago has evolved into an invitational benefit for several community-oriented charities known as the "Birthday Bash."

"It originally started out just as a birthday celebration for myself and Michael Gonzales. The first year we invited a couple of hundred friends and we had it at my home in Montrose. We had a big 'blowout' party. People loved it and they showed up with gifts. We ended up with a room full of bottles of wine, flowers and gifts of all kinds," Foster said.

"So we re-thought the process. The second year, we said on the invitation, 'in lieu of birthday gifts would you please consider a donation in memory of our departed friends?' We chose a charity, the Bering Support Network. We invited more people and we had a bigger party. It just grew from there."

The invitational fund-raiser was held last weekend and generated more than \$7,000.

Michael Gonzales was a successful gay

businessman in Houston. He died in 1995. His surviving life partner, Foster, is one of the hosts of Birthday Bash.

After the second Birthday Bash, people began to approach Foster and Gonzales inquiring if they could participate as hosts in the next event. The host list began growing. This year the host list includes 19 people. Since the host list began to expand, the benefiting charity was chosen by vote of the hosts.

"This year, 2000, there were four different charities submitted for consideration. After a lot of discussion back and forth someone said, 'Why do we have to give everything we raise to one charity? Why don't we just divide it?' We decided to select all four charities," Foster said.

The charities benefiting from the 2000 Birthday Bash include AssistHers, a volunteer organization providing non-medical care such as emotional support, meal preparation, shopping, childcare and assistance as



The seventh annual "Birthday Bash," held last weekend, raised more than \$7,000 for four local organizations.

PHOTO BY: DALTON DEHART

well as hospital and home visits for women coping with life-threatening or debilitating illness.

PWA Holiday Charities as well as Bering Omega Satellite Dental Clinic also are beneficiaries of Birthday Bash. The Satellite Clinic is being established together with the Lamb Foundation and will be located in southwest Houston where much of the current HIV/AIDS population lives, according to Foster.

"The fourth charity this year is going to be SEARCH. They are a comprehensive homeless service provider. They respond to

the homeless with a lot of different items from food to clothing to 'you-name-it.' They do a lot of things," Foster said.

He said the invitation list is developed from a merged list of all the hosts. Foster said about 1,200 people have been invited to the 2000 Birthday Bash.

Although the event raises money for community charities, Foster said it remains a personal birthday celebration for each of the hosts. Guests are not invited with regard to their ability to make a large donation. Guest gifts vary from 50 cents to \$100 or more.

Through the ancillary function of charitable fundraising, Birthday Bash raised \$6,400 for others last year. They expect to do better this year. Most of the hosts birthdays are in July or August but the range is from February to October, Foster said.

Birthday Bash

The event generated \$7,035 and distributed the following contributions for the charities listed below:

AssistHers \$1,230
PWA Holiday Charities \$1,455
Bering Omega Satellite Dental Clinic \$3,150
SEARCH \$1,200

INFO

Community center staying busy throughout summer

'Your Queer Home in Houston' has sex seminars, art exhibits, movies and more

STAFF REPORT

Are you bored going to the same places? Do you want to enjoy yourself and be mindful of your budget? Do you want to meet some new and different people? Do you want to go somewhere "gay" and feel absolutely comfortable and "at home." Check out the Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center, or as it is fondly referred to, "Your Queer Home in Houston."

The house at 803 Hawthorne is filled with enough activity, fun, and opportunities to satisfy a multitude of gay and lesbian interests and needs. Here are some of the center's current activities:

WHAT LESBIANS DO has been an extremely popular monthly discussion group covering the many titillating and terrifying aspects of lesbian sex and sexuality. Deborah Bell and Maria Minicucci, community activists and casualties of the Sex Wars decided to encourage lesbian women to stop "licking our wounds" and enjoy loving and lusty each other unabashedly.

Thirty to 50 women gather monthly to

discuss, debate, get delirious over topics like fantasies, self pleasure, lust, just to name a few. The August topic will be "S/M: What Do You Know, What Do You Want to Know?" and will take place Aug. 3 at 7 p.m.

LESBIAN ISLAND ASSOCIATION is a social/support/activist group for women between the ages of 20-29. One of the organizers of the group says that she wanted to have a place to meet women her own age outside of a bar. They meet weekly to plan and do things that they enjoy—talking, camping, movies, and volunteering at the Community Center. For more information about LIA, call HLGCC at 713-524-3818.

THE WOMEN'S COMING OUT GROUP has been meeting weekly for almost a year. Debra Murphy, who refuses to claim the title of "experienced old dyke," does an impressive job of informing, supporting and engaging women with their coming out journey. The group is usually about 10-14 women in various stages of sexual evolution—from questioning to re-evaluating. Debra uses a "consciousness raising" format to encourage dialogue, sharing and self-acceptance. Women who have participated in this group attend outings to gay and lesbian events such as Pride, the Texas Lesbian Conference, group outings to Chances or Lobo, and dating.

The group meets every Tuesday (except if there is a Comets game) at 7 p.m.

THE MONTROSE WRITER'S GROUP has been a faithful gathering of committed writers in many stages of their creative process for almost two years. Blas Falconer facilitates this group, which meets every Saturday at 3 p.m. Falconer has some very exciting ideas he is eager to introduce to the group. This is an open and ongoing group for any aspiring gay or lesbian writer at any level.

LESBIAN FILM NIGHT is another popular and well-attended evening at the community center. Founder Jessica Wicks combines an evening of film entertainment and a pot luck dinner on the fourth. Friday of every month. Women arrive with food and conversation to share at 7 p.m. Movies begin at 8 p.m. This month, Friday, July 28., Wicks will be showing an old favorite—"Desert Hearts."

If you are at loose ends on a Friday night (and maybe only have loose change in your pocket), you can check out **FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT**. This is a very casual, informal, pop the popcorn and grab a coke, type of evening on the first Friday of the month. One movie or sometimes a double feature is shown. Most movie times begin at 6:30 p.m.

WRITE ON, WOMEN! is a relatively new group that started a couple of months ago. HGLCC volunteer Wicks and Minicucci, a board member, said they had one too many conversations about all of the

ways they put off writing. Both agreed that perhaps other women may be experiencing similar stalling tactics. So, if you are prone to procrastination, would like to share your writing woes and victories and desire support from other women trying to write, the group meets the second. Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m.

POETRY, PASSION AND POLITICS will be an opportunity to be inspired by two local poets—Angela Williamston and Simone Cunningham. The two will read from their books and offer an open mic on Sunday, Aug. 27 at 7:30 p.m.

If your creativity takes the form of painting, sculpture, photography, consider your own one-woman/one-man viewing of your work. The community center encourages local artists to share their work by displaying it at the center. Currently, the center is exhibiting "The Positive/Negative Photo Exhibit" inspired by the teaching of Patrick Palmer. The exhibit will be on display through September.

The center also is planning a community forum on **RACISM IN THE GLBT COMMUNITY** on Sept. 29 at 7 p.m.

INFO

HOUSTON LESBIAN AND GAY COMMUNITY CENTER
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HOUSTON VOICE • JULY 28, 2000

FIGHTING FIRES AND BIGOTRY

America's first openly gay firefighter, Gene Walsh, visits Houston

by D.L. GROOVER

The red horse-drawn steam fire engine with coal hopper and shiny metal water tank from 1892 gleams as if spit-polished.

As one enters former Houston Fire Station No. 7 on Milam, now the home of the Houston Fire Museum, this beauty of an antique is the first piece of equipment in sight, and it's a dazzler. Sunlight bounces off its red curves, its yellow decals, its brass fixtures.

When Gene Walsh spies this great old engine, he sparkles, too, for he's in his element—he's home.

Once a fireman, always a fireman. The feeling, the pride, never leaves. His brown eyes light up. Walsh seems able to smell forgotten smoke lingering in the firehouse. He's so pumped, he easily shimmy up the fireman pole and would've made it to the second floor had the opening not been blocked for the tourists' safety by Plexiglas.

Walsh may have retired in 1994, after a career-ending accident sent him crashing through the roof of a burning building, but he remains a fireman. He may not be rushing through the flames to save lives, but he continues to be a lifesaver through FireFLAG, the international organization he

helped found, which is a peer support group for gay and lesbian firefighters and EMS workers.

"I've gotten thousands of calls," Walsh says proudly. "Just people saying, I can't come out; I'm gay, I know I'm gay, but I can't come out in my firehouse; thank God, you're here. And that's all we want. We want to be the networking for gay firefighters.

Begun in 1990 by Walsh and two other co-workers, FireFLAG is the world's first support group for gay firemen. Walsh stresses that it's non-advocacy.

"It's peers talking to peers," he emphasizes. "We know what it is because we've been there. We've been so close to it."

As Walsh explains, being a fireman requires living on the edge. The stress is unbelievable. Like the police, firefighters never know if they're coming home at the end of their work day; to say nothing of the ultra-traditional nature of their profession—macho, sexist, and homophobic. Problem solving

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Gene Walsh, in Houston for a summer visit, became America's first openly gay firefighter in 1991 when he appeared on Joan Rivers' television show. Walsh is the founder of FireFLAG, a national organization that offers peer support for gay and lesbian firefighters and EMS workers.

PHOTO BY: TERRY SULLIVAN



Clea Duvall, left, co-stars with Natasha Lyonne in 'But I'm A Cheerleader,' opening today at the Angelika Theater and Landmark's Greenway 3 Theatre.

"But I'm not a lesbian..."

Straight star of 'But I'm A Cheerleader,' Lyonne, doesn't mind becoming a new gay icon

by EARL DITTMAN

Actress Natasha Lyonne's highly-memorable, scene-stealing performances in films such as the critically-acclaimed "The Slums Of Beverly Hills," the testosterone-driven box office hit "American Pie" and the balls-to-the-wall paean to '70s rock icon KISS, "Detroit Rock City," has made her an object of desire to millions of America's male teenage movie-going set.

But Lyonne's fan-base is quickly expanding to include more than just post-prepubescent, horny fellows. Thanks to starring roles as a gay woman in the edgy, new black comedy "But I'm A Cheerleader" and this past spring's airing of the second installment of HBO's dramatic, award-winning "If These Walls Could Talk" film series, Lyonne is becoming the lesbian community's most valuable player.

Although the 22-year-old confesses to being a heterosexual (her current beau is "Detroit Rock

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Walsh: Brave, heroic, trail blazing and gay too

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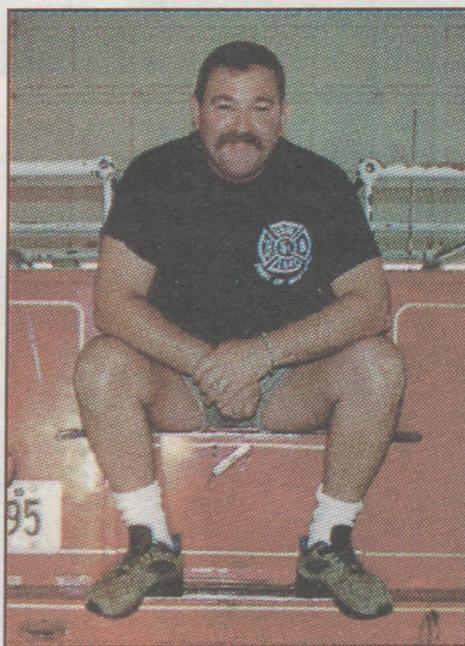
for most firefighters requires alcohol or drugs, which, more times than not, leads to domestic abuse of spouses or partners. Add to these volatile conditions the buried conflicts of being in the closet, and you've got spontaneous combustion.

"FireFLAG is really for us to talk. Fifty percent of the people I talk to, I don't know their real names. They'll call up, and my phone's available 24 hours, usually when they've got the 'truth serum' in them. And that was the other reason for starting FireFLAG. I saw that so many gay firefighters were turning toward spousal abuse, alcohol and substance abuse, all the way down to suicide. And that's a format for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

"That's why I went back to school to specialize so I can be a professional and help these people. It's talking about it, putting it out, and saying it isn't really that bad."

Walsh is the perfect archetype of a NYC fireman. He has the requisite mustache, a bull dog's physique, that unmistakable Brooklyn accent. His right biceps is tattooed with his beloved station house's logo—Manhattan Engine Co. 54, the Pride of Midtown, We Never Miss a Performance—and he still looks as if he could carry anybody down three flights of stairs to safety. He has a firefighter's gift of gab for telling stories and groan-inducing blue jokes, and an irrepressible sense of fun and life's enjoyment.

What makes Walsh unique, though, are the intriguing contradictions. Born in the Bay Ridge



Gene Walsh sits atop one of the trucks on display at the Houston Fire Museum. In town visiting his boyfriend, ballet choreographer Stanton Welch, Walsh is also spreading word of FireFLAG, the organization he founded for gay and lesbian firefighters and EMS workers.

section of Brooklyn, in the lengthy shadow of the Verrazano Bridge, he graduated from St. John's University in 1977 and taught seventh-grade math at parochial school in NYC, but didn't find that rewarding, or dangerous enough, so he decided to become a paramedic.

PHOTO BY: TERRY SULLIVAN

He holds a black belt in karate, but can easily tell you all the subtle pattern variations between Lismore and Lucerne Waterford crystal. He has written the "Fireman's Cookbook" and even taught disco dancing for a stint. He also "went straight for four years" when he was married in the early '80s, but had a boyfriend before that, and six months after the divorce, another one.

Among his many firsts, there is one that stands out like a beacon. It's also the one that caused the greatest stir. Walsh was the first firefighter to come out publicly. In his typically direct fashion, he did so with sirens blasting. He appeared on national television with four other uniformed gays on the Joan Rivers Show in July 1991. Called "Gays in Uniform," it was one of Rivers' most popular, positive hours, airing five times.

"I knew a lot of firefighters who I'd see at gay bars. All of a sudden I went on Joan Rivers, and I would go in a bar and you could feel the air as they're running out because it's 'gay through association.' I was no longer just a gay fireman, but now THE gay fireman.

"That changed a lot of people's tune. They said, 'Gene you can be as gay as you want, just don't talk about it. You're making us look bad.' That red wall of courage is being questioned now." Gene shakes his head, "But being closeted is a secret, and more damage is done to you by being in the closet.

"I had an agenda on my mind," Walsh says about the ground-breaking show. "I knew exactly what points I wanted to cover to make sure I got out the idea that being a gay firefighter meant

that you were a firefighter who just happens to be gay. There's no extra thing because you're gay, just as much if you're Italian or Irish. You could have everybody in your family as a firefighter, that doesn't matter. It's inside your heart.

Constantly on the go, Walsh is here in Houston for a few weeks on a well-deserved R&R visiting his new boyfriend, Stanton Welch, the Australian choreographer who's creating a world premiere at Houston Ballet for the opening season. They met in New York City at Fireman's Night at Ty's, a famous neighborhood gay bar on Christopher Street in Greenwich Village. Every second Tuesday of each month, Ty's hosts a down-home get-together that is elbow-to-elbow firemen and their admirers.

"I'm just a firefighter," he says. "Gay people don't convert people. My whole motto in life is: I respect you for your beliefs and I'm not going to change them, but don't act on them. I can change your behavior, but not your beliefs. Respect me as much as I respect you. But when you come to work, don't bring your beliefs with you."

INFO

FireFLAG/EMS

One Little West 12th Street
New York, NY 10014
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Photo: Tim Schulte

'Cheerleader' star 'honored' that lesbians take her seriously

➤ Continued from Page 19

City" co-star Edward Furlong), Lyonne admits she harbors no reservations about becoming a role model for lesbians of all ages.

"Both films are so important in what they have to say that I'm really honored that gay women will take me seriously and embrace me as a charter member or something," Lyonne admitted. "I never understood actresses who won't even consider doing lesbian parts because they thought it would have a negative effect on the roles they'd get in the future. That's so bogus. Playing a lesbian in these two films was not only great training for me as an actress, but it was really eye-opening—I learned so much about how the lesbian community is such a tight, loving and accepting group of people. I'm really happy I did the two movies."

Already a critical hit on the film festival circuit, the Jamie Babbit-directed "But I'm A Cheerleader" (which also stars Ru Paul Charles, Cathy Moriarty, Clea Duvall, Mike Stole, Eddie Cibrian, Melanie Lynskey and Kip Pardue) features Lyonne as "Megan Bloomfield," a typical suburban, high school cheerleader whose parents suspect is gay.

"Her parents really start to freak-out when they notice she has a Melissa Etheridge poster on her wall," Lyonne said with a laugh. "Even though my character keeps insisting she's not gay, they don't believe her. Even her friends start to have doubts, because her hands seem to keep slipping up

the other cheerleaders' skirts when they are doing lifts and splits."

In an effort to save her from the evils of homosexuality, a counselor (the out-of-drag Ru Paul) suggests to Megan's mom and dad that they send their daughter to True Directions, a "rehab camp" that'll exorcise the lesbian tendencies out of her for good.

"Ru Paul's character puts together this intervention with all her friends and family to convince her that going to this 'de-gayng camp' will save her from a life of shame," Lyonne explained. "They send her to this homosexual rehab facility, but she ends up having the last laugh. While she's there, she falls in love with another girl and discovers she's really gay."

Even though time didn't permit her the chance to visit one of the real-life facilities that True Directions was fashioned after, Lyonne says she knows of a few teenagers who have been to these places to be sexually de-programmed.

"It's so strange and ridicu-

Ru Paul, making a rare appearance out of drag, co-stars in 'Cheerleader' playing a counselor who helps send the film's lead character to gay 'rehab camp.'

lous that these places actually exist," she said. "It is such a bizarre concept that parents really send their kids to these places. It's mad, really, that's one of the reasons I wanted to make this film. It's a silly, funny comedy, but it also addresses some very serious issues at the same time. It's the kind of movie that gay kids and adults should take their parents to."

Even the worldly Ru Paul admits he's never had the pleasure of meeting anyone who has had their "gayness" totally erased from their persona.

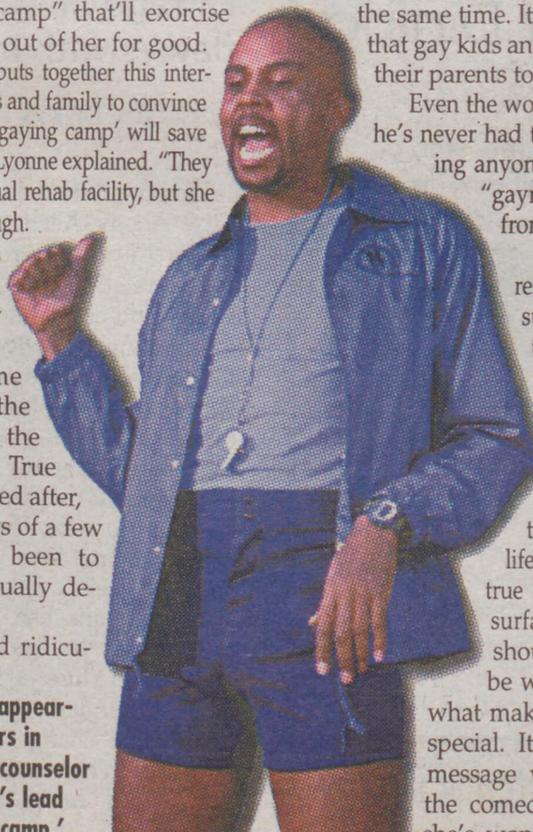
"I've never met a reformed gay, but I'm sure they are out there," the 36-year-old Ru Paul said, smiling. "Now I have met some people who wished they weren't gay and tried to live a 'straight life,' but eventually their true nature would always surface again. People shouldn't be afraid to be who they are. That's what makes 'Cheerleader' so special. It has an important message wrapped up in all the comedy. And Natasha... she's wonderful, she's a real

goddess of acting. She can play anything."

As witnessed when HBO initially premiered its second "If These Walls Could Talk" trilogy of stories, Lyonne doesn't have a problem convincing audiences she can play a gay woman. While the first "Walls," which included Cher, Sissy Spacek and Demi Moore in its cast, dealt with the subject of abortion over the course of several decades, the latest edition (which airs again on the cable channel next month) takes a heart-warming, and often heart-breaking look at the struggles and triumphs of lesbian women from the past to the present.

Lyonne has another film slated for release later this year, "Confessions Of A Trick Baby," and several more on the burner where she doesn't play a gay character—proof-positive that doing lesbian roles isn't always harmful to the health of one's career.

"You know, even if I became typecast, just playing lesbian roles the rest of my life, that would be okay," Lyonne said. "Just as long as they are good roles in films that mean something and teach us how to be better people, I'll do them."



INFO

'But I'm A Cheerleader' showtimes:

Angelika,
12:15 p.m., 2:20, 4:15, 6:10, 8:05 and 10
Greenway Theatre, 5 Greenway Plaza
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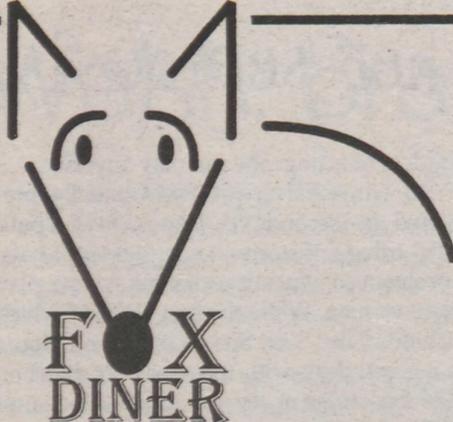
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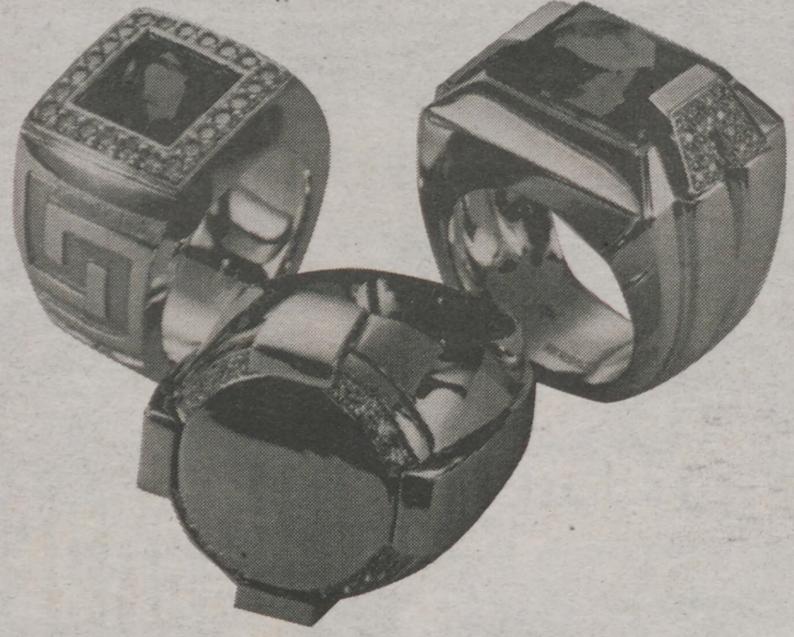
Hours

Mon-Thu	Lunch 11:00am until 2:00pm	Dinner 5:00pm until 10:00pm
Friday	Lunch 11:00am until 2:00pm	Dinner 5:00pm until 11:00pm
Saturday	Dinner 5:30pm until 11:00pm	
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RESTAURANT REVIEWS

Cultural melting pot

Farrago blends cuisines,
flavors with mixed results

by TRAYCE DISKIN

Boasting about his beloved New York City, Woody Allen once urged, "C'mon, where else can you order Thai food at four in the morning? Which is ridiculous, of course, because no one needs Thai food at four in the morning." Exactly, Woody and at four in the afternoon, Houston certainly holds its own when a diner can chow on any number of world cuisines—Vietnamese, Italian, Ethiopian, Japanese, Greek, Cuban and Thai.

FARRAGO, a sleek and funky neighborhood bistro near the quickly gentrifying blocks of midtown, attempts to bring all these together under one roof and, in many instances in one dish.

Such was the case with our Curried Mussels (\$10), which sounded like a worthwhile change. The broth of Thai coconut curry with fresh basil, cilantro and lime could have used a pinch more curry, since the coconut milk sweetness needed a kick of contrast. The criminally puny mussels didn't help things out, as it was nearly impossible to savor a bite for very long. While we were ready to break old habits given the right twist on a more typical mussels dish, we found ourselves longing for a garlic, wine and butter broth, or a solid marinara, or at least some lumpier meat!

The Spring Rolls (\$7) featured well-barbecued shrimp, although I found no evidence of the "Asian pesto," listed on the menu (how it's different from regular pesto remains a mystery). While the sauce was slightly watery, the peanut flavor was fresh and delightfully less vinegary than others we've tried.

Farrago offers five different gourmet "world cuisine" pizzas (i.e. Belgian sour dough crust), but we headed straight for the more compelling entrees. The Chicken Curry (\$8) will only attract the most serious curry lovers, although the dried cherries and mangos temper the flavors with a natural, candied sweetness. The overpowering spices even usurped the role of the chicken itself, which was tender, but fairly incidental.

The dried fruit was also a prize component of the Braised Lamb Shank (\$12). The dried cherries and white grapes brought out the sweetness of the carrots and mangoes and helped along the fat and gristle spoiling what would be a perfectly tender piece of meat. The overly cheesy Risotto and Shrimp (\$12) impressed with well-grilled shrimp and tasty flecks of broccoli.

The Grilled Salmon (\$13) was delicious, from the bed of sweet potato puree to the nectarine, mango and sun-dried tomato

salsa that topped the blackened fish. Unlike some of the other dishes, this combination transcended the problem of jarring juxtapositions, as all ingredients complimented each other in a kind of tropical harmony.

Perhaps in an attempt to be truly egalitarian to the cause of world food, the menu includes Fish and Chips (\$12). Think about it—if one cuisine is to be ostracized from Farrago's melting pots and salad bowls, British makes a pretty sound option. The cod was heavy and bland under a thick batter of what the menu called "tempura" but is pure oil and flour in any translation. Although we were hoping the accompanying vinegar chips would translate correctly as French fries, the fine, browned slices of potato were flat and crispy, but with their tart bite, became the most pleasing thing about this dish.

For dessert, we hoped to escape the trappings of forced combinations and simply indulge. The Flourless Chocolate Cake (\$7) was rich and sugary, but the Midtown Cobbler's (\$6) brick-hard crust yielded hardly any berries, even after an arduous 20 minutes of trying to saw through the dried granola. The Chambord Tres Leches (\$6) removed a bit of Latin when it added the French and featured a custard-like lump of vanilla cake in a shallow pool of milk.

Although the service was a bit slow, it was friendly and contributed to the reasons why I'm happy Farrago's here, with its cozy, yet hip yellow walls and intimate, yet communal setting. The idea of fusing global ingredients, styles and dishes is one with much promise in a city lucky enough to be populated with numerous cultures, backgrounds and traditions.

Let's hope Farrago keeps experimenting and learns the difference between a union that clashes and sits awkwardly on a plate and one that causes true delicious sparks.



FARRAGO

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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

FOOD FILE

What your neighbors are reading . . .

- 1 Not A Day Goes By
by E. Lynn Harris, \$19.95
- 2 Midnight in Savannah
by Darwin Porter, \$14.95
- 3 Me Talk Pretty One Day
by David Sedaris, \$22.95
- 4 The Married Man
by Edmund White, \$25
- 5 Homophobia
by Bryne Fone, \$32.50
- 6 Sleeping Bones
by Katherine Forrest, \$13
- 7 One Dead Drag Queen
by Mark Richard Zubro, \$22.95
- 8 21st Century Gay
by John Malone, \$21.95
- 9 Bridge Across the Ocean
by Randy Boyd, \$12.95
- 10 Tipping the Velvet
by Sarah Waters, \$13.95

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- 1 Not A Day Goes By
by E. Lynn Harris, \$19.95
- 2 Naked Men Too
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- 3 Slow Grind
by Austin Foxx, \$12.95
- 4 Pillow Talk 2
by Leslea Newman, ed., \$12.95
- 5 Sleeping Bones
by Katherine Forrest, \$13
- 6 Affinity
by Sarah Waters, \$24.95
- 7 Ravelstein
by Saul Bellow \$24.95
- 8 Me Talk Pretty One Day
by David Sedaris, \$22.95
- 9 Open Secret: Gay Hollywood 1928-2000
by David Ehrenstein, \$15
- 10 Trumpet
by Jackie Kay, \$13



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Out In Print

BOOK REVIEWS

Biographer to the famous chronicles a legend

'Jackie: Her Life in Pictures' offers an intimate peek at a liberal icon

by J.S. HALL

Although popular opinion will forever be divided on her (in)famous in-laws, Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis will always remain a beloved icon. She was America's equivalent to Diana, Princess of Wales. So it seems entirely appropriate that eminent biographer James Spada should tell Jackie's fabulous, tragedy-tinged life through 250 (mostly) candid photos he has collected here.

As the dust jacket notes, of these pictures, "165 have never been published, 58 have rarely been published (in newspaper or magazines but never in book form), and 28 are inescapable images that have been seared into the memories of everyone."

For those whose overwhelming image of Jackie includes the kerchief-covered bouffant, huge sunglasses and impeccable fashions, this book will be a revelation. Certainly there's page after page of her looking radiant — John F. Kennedy once grouched that more people turned out at a campaign event to see her than him — but a large amount of pictures show her in more average circumstances. Whether eating an ice cream cone or a mouthful of pasta, smooching with Aristotle Onassis, pedaling through Central Park or attending far too many funerals, she transcends the "just Jackie" icon and momentarily seems to be on the same plane of existence as the rest of us mere mortals.

No one is likely to call this the most comprehensive biography of Jackie, but it puts a unique spin on a (perhaps overly) familiar subject and imparts its fair share of information. Those unfamiliar with Jackie's life with JFK beyond the basics may be surprised to learn of their two stillborn children (one before Caroline, the other after John).

Jackie endured her husband's dalliances, and the stillbirth of their fourth child brought them closer than ever in the few months before his assassination on Nov. 23, 1963. Over 35 years later, the sight of the President's blood spattered on her stockings and raspberry wool ensemble remains a shocking, indelible image.

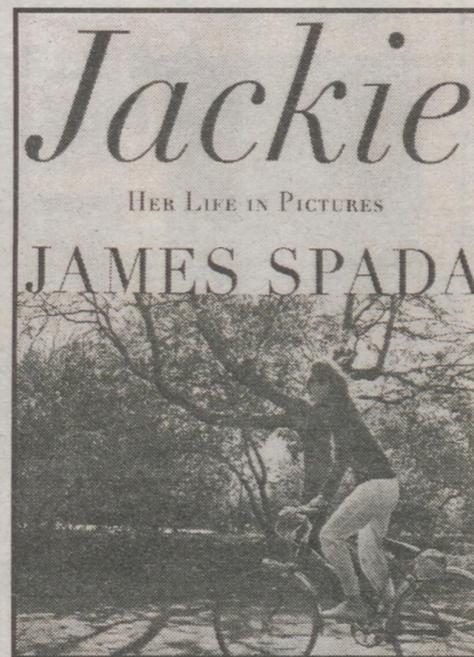
Between husbands, she dated some high-powered men (and briefly, actors like Marlon Brando and Warren Beatty), marrying Aristotle Onassis—the richest man in the world, who owned his own island—shortly after Bobby Kennedy's assassination. Jackie and Ari had met a few times over the years; after meeting her in 1955, Onassis had said, "There's something provocative about that lady. She's got a carnal soul." They would remain married until his death in 1975, but endured some very

rough periods, especially after the accidental death of Ari's only son.

During the '70s Jackie embraced the era's fashions wholeheartedly, began a relationship with Maurice Templesman that would last until her untimely death in 1994, and locked horns with persistent paparazzo Ron Galella, who repeatedly violated the injunction that barred him from coming within 25 feet of Jackie.

After Ari's death, she would work as a book editor (not that she needed to), oversee her children's lives (giving Madonna a frosty reception while she and JFK Jr. were briefly dating) and gradually assume the role of Kennedy matriarch following Rose Kennedy's decline.

JACKIE: A LIFE IN PICTURES verges on the worshipful; the closest it comes to mud-slinging are the facts about her flings with Brando and Beatty and the revelation of a two- to three-pack-a-day smoking habit. Those who never understood what all the fuss was about will likely remain unchanged, but Jackiephiles will adore this collection of rare and unpublished photos, particularly the earlier selections that show her less guarded side. Like her first husband, Jackie will endure.



INFO

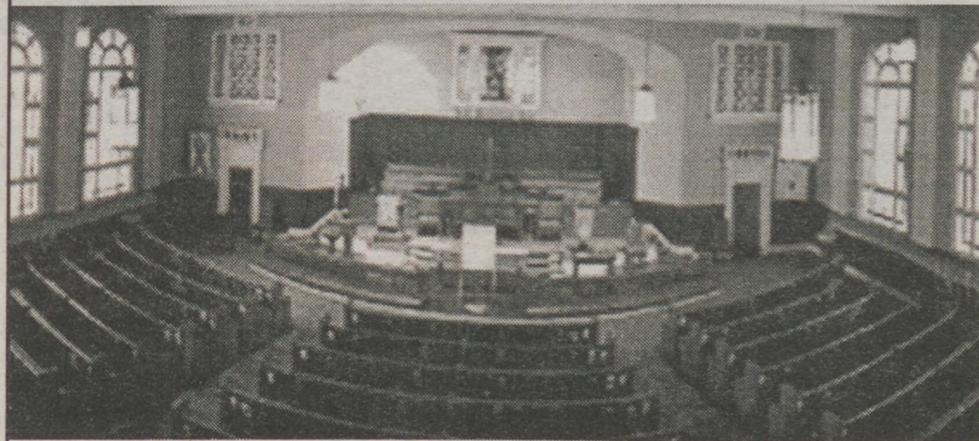
Jackie: Her Life in Pictures

By James Spada

St. Martin's Press, hardcover, 192 pages, \$29.95

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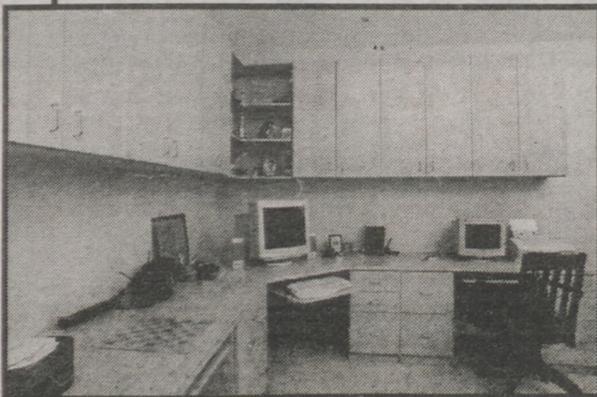
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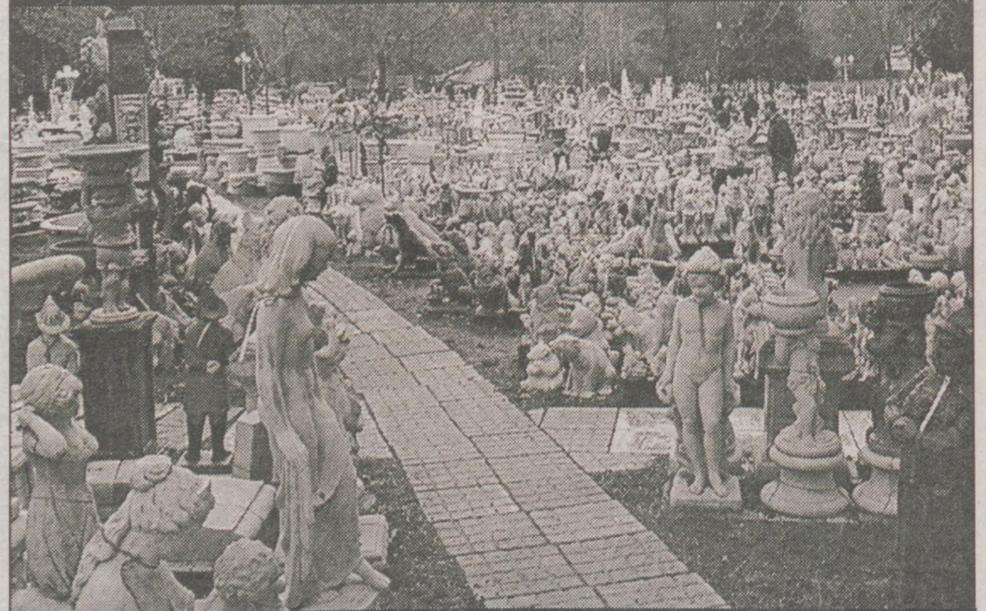


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homefront

Surviving summer

Knowing how and when to water will keep plants endure the heat

by ELLA TYLER

It's the time of the summer when serious gardeners whisper among themselves that it's time for a small tropical storm. Then, as though caught telling a very politically incorrect joke, one will say, "of course, not really," and another will say, wistfully, "of course not—but the rain would be nice."

We can't do anything about the weather, but there are things that we can do to make the drought less stressful on our gardens, ourselves and our water bills.

The first is to get rid of weeds. Weeds have a superior ability to locate water—it's in their job description. Every weed or emerging 'trash' tree in your garden is taking water from the plants you put there. Pull or dig them out by hand and try to get all the roots.

Water first, to make weeding easier. You could also use a herbicide such as Roundup, but read (and follow) the instructions on the label. It's easy to kill good plants.

In the alternative, let the weeds take over and call it a native plant garden.

If you choose to eliminate the weeds, next add mulch. Any bare ground should have a 2- to 3-inch layer of mulch. This keeps weeds from sprouting, helps retain soil moisture and keeps the ground cooler.

Mulch your potted plants, too. Plants in pots may need to be watered every day, but it helps to move them to afternoon shade and raise them an inch or two above a hot patio. Soil polymers are good for small pots and hanging baskets.

Your lawn will use less water if it is mowed to about three inches in height. The grass blades will shade the roots, slow the growth and deepen the roots.

The best way to tell if a plant needs to be watered is to look at it. Is the plant wilted in the morning? Then it needs water.

Many plants will be wilted in the evening. Grass that shows footprints when you walk on it, needs water. A pot that feels light, needs water. Stick a screwdriver in the soil. Is it dry two or three inches below the surface? Then the plant needs water.

Water shallow-rooted plants now. Deeper-root-

ed plants can wait. If a plant is well watered and still is wilted, don't water it more. Wilting is a symptom of several plant problems, including over-watering. These high temperatures are hard on plants and more watering doesn't make up for the high temperatures.

Watering is easier and more economical with the right equipment. This is an excellent reason to go shopping. Get a hose that is long enough to reach the far corners of the yard. I have a double-headed attachment for the faucet and connect my long hose to one side and a short one to the other. I use the short one for pots and filling the birdbath.

Get rid of lightweight sprinklers that won't stay put. My favorite sprinkler is a nifty one on a spike. It sends out a fan shaped spray, which is perfect for narrow areas beside sidewalks. I use black plastic soaker hoses in the beds because they waste the least amount of water.

It's best to water in the early morning or evening, when less water evaporates. Water long enough to get about an inch of water collect. Use a can in the path of the sprinkler to see how much water is getting on the ground.

I don't believe in doing anything to encourage plants to grow right now. Don't fertilize unless a plant is looking really pale, and don't prune. Always water well before you apply any fertilizer or chemicals to your garden.

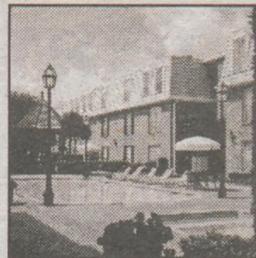
If it gets to the stage that water conservation measures are adopted, take care of your permanent plantings first. Your trees and shrubs are more important than your summer annuals. Give the grass enough water to keep it alive, but don't expect a yard of the month award.

Tyler is an active member of the Houston Rose Society, has 40 course hours in horticulture from Houston Community College and enjoys gardening at her Meyerland home.



PHOTO BY DALTON DEHART

To keep your garden healthy during the heat, it's best to water in the early morning or evening, when less water evaporates.

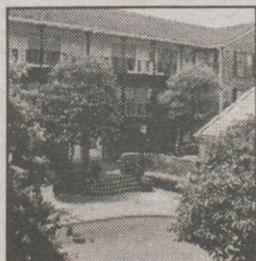


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community calendar

saturday, July 29

After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM. 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. 713-526-5738.
Q-Patrol walks the streets 8:45 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.
Dignity mass. 7:30 p.m. for gay Catholics. 713-880-2872.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Rosary 8 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama. 713-528-6665.
Houston Chain Gang Bicycle Club. Call for ride locations. 713-863-1860.
Houston Wrestling Club. Practice. 1:30 p.m. 713-453-7406.
Rainbow Fishing Club. Meeting. 713-526-7070.
Houston Faerie Circle. Meeting. 2 p.m. 713-533-0150.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Southwest Center. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. 281-633-2555 & Conroe 936-441-1614.
Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours noon to 4 p.m. • Montrose Writer's Project. 3 to 4:30 p.m. 713-528-3818.
Houston Outdoor Group. Social. 713-426-4869.
Names Project Monthly Fabric Sale. Bering House. 1 to 5 p.m. California & Waugh, behind Slick Willie's. 713-52Names.

First Congregational Church (Memorial). Service at 11 a.m. Christian Education. 11:30 p.m. 713-468-9543 or www.fcc-houston.org.
Unitarian Fellowship of Houston. Adult forum 10 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 713-686-5876.
Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation: Adult discussion 9:45 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
FrontRunners. Running Club. 9 a.m. 713-522-8021.
Names Project Monthly Fabric Sale. Bering House. 1 to 5 p.m. California & Waugh, behind Slick Willie's. 713-52Names.

monday, July 31

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. • Black Lesbian & Gay Coalition weekly meeting. 7 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
Stonewall Democrats. Meeting. 7 p.m. stonewallhouston@hotmail.com.

sunday, July 30

New Hope Christian Center Worship Service. 11 a.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (H.A.T.C.H.) meets. 713-942-7002.
Rainbow Riders. A bicycle club for women. 713-869-1686.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Holy Rite Eucharist I 7:45 a.m.; Holy Rite Eucharist II 8:55 a.m.; Education hour 10 a.m.; Choral Eucharist 11 a.m. 713-528-6665.
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 9:00 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 Baptist Church. 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.

tuesday, August 1

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. 281-495-8009.
Bering Support Network. Lunch Bunch Gang 11 a.m. 713-526-1017.

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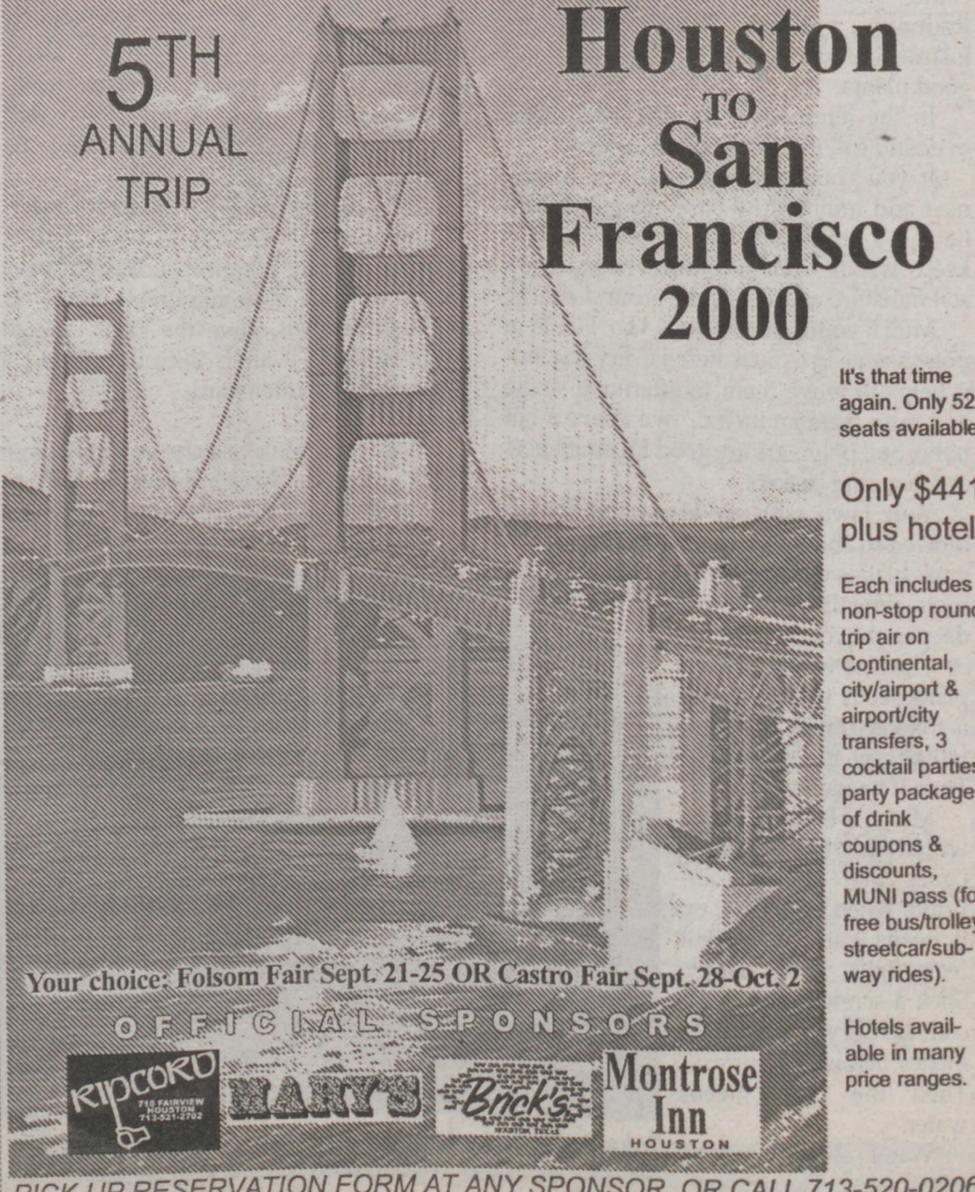
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Gay Men's Process Group. 7 p.m. 3316 Mt. Vernon. 713-526-8390.
Men's Network. Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual men. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.
Lambda Skating Club skates. 8 p.m. Tradewinds. Skating Rink. 713-410-7215.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Lesbian Coming Out Group. 7 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-528-3818.
Lesbian Health Initiative. Meeting. 7 p.m. 713-603-0023.
Houston erectile Dysfunction discussion group. 7 p.m. 713-527-9106.

wednesday, august 2

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. Social meeting. 713-467-4380
Women's Network. Montrose Counseling Center Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual women. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 936-441-1614.
Project: Caesar. Workshops. AFH. 3203 Wesleyan. 713-623-6796.
Out Skate Rollerskating Club. 8 to 10 p.m. 8075 Cook Road. 281-933-5818.
Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. 7 p.m. 713-880-0670.
Bible Study. Noon & 6:30 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal. 713-526-6665.
Spiritual Uplift service. 7 p.m. Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Resurrection MCC. 713-861-9149.
Freelance Art Classes by Kermit Eisenhut for HIV+ individuals. 1 to 4 p.m. Lunch provided. 713-523-9530.
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
Lesbian Literature Discussion Group. 7 p.m. 713-523-3037.
Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal. 1307 Yale. www.houston-prideband.org.
Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. Various Support Groups 7 p.m. 713-526-1017.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. Free HIV testing by the Montrose Clinic 6 to 9 p.m. 713-524-3818.
Classic Chassis Car Club. Meeting. 7 p.m. 713-797-8615.

thursday, august 3

Gay Men's Chorus of Houston. Open rehearsal. 7 p.m. 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. Toyz Disco. 713-830-3000.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.
FrontRunners. Running Club. 6:30 p.m. 713-522-8021.
HIV Art Course Program. 1 to 4 p.m. Patrick Palmer 713-526-1118.
Women's Clinic. Montrose Clinic. 713-830-3000.
Community Gospel. Service. 7:30 p.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
HIV Testing. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.
Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Alliance at the University of Houston. (GLOBAL) Meeting. 4 p.m. 713-743-7539.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Women's Sex Forum: "S/M: What Do You Know, What Do You Want To Know?" 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
EC Houston. ProGay/Prochristian Bible Study. 800-310-6718 X24253.
Gulf Coast Transgender Community. Meeting. 7 p.m. 713-780-4282.
Houston Area Bears Dine Out. 6:30 p.m. 713-867-9123.

friday, august 4

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. 9:00 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.
Mishpachat Alizim Shabbat Services. 8 p.m. 713-748-7079.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
Community Awareness for Transgender Support. Meeting. 6 p.m. 409-927-1705.

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

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Body Positive Wellness Center

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www.montrosesoftballleague.com

www.iblhouston.net

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Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center

is seeking volunteers to staff the facility in more extended hours. If organizations and individuals are interested, please contact Eva Luchak at 713.524.3818 to discuss how you can help.

RYAN WHITE

PLANNING COUNCIL is looking for volunteers to serve on the council. The primary responsibility of the council is to determine what services are most needed. Last year's Council received over \$17 million from the federal government for use in the greater Houston area. Your participation DOES make a difference. Contact Tori Williams at 713.572.3724 or email www.rwpc.org.

Occasions

Birthdays

Houston Area Bears Peter F. (7/29), Mark R. (7/30), and Rodney S. (8/1) celebrate their birthdays this week.

Classic Chassis Car Club members Paul S. (7/30) and Marshall B. (8/3) are driving home another year this week.

David Cummins, Terry Flood and Ron Dixon will be partying at the 611 Hyde Park Pub on July 30 for their birthdays.

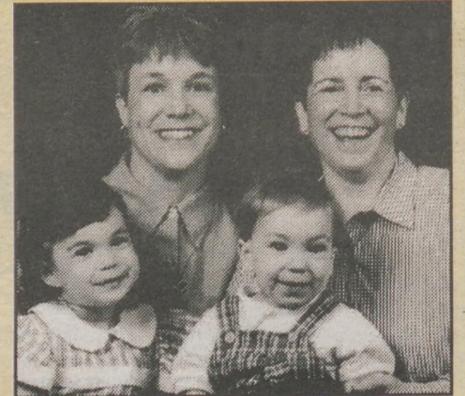
Jerry Morin will be singing his birthday song on Aug. 1.

Stan the Leatherman snaps his whip for his birthday on Aug. 2.

Vernon lifts his glass for his birthday on Aug. 3.

Photo pro J. Roe snaps a birthday picture on July 28.

Hunky and sexy Patric Caradori celebrates his birthday on July 30. "Hugs and Kisses...Baby" Love, Shane.



Two mommies Julie Lindenberg and Rev. Janet Parker praise God for their little angels Nate Parker and Hanna Jordon Lindenberg, who celebrates her third birthday on July 29.

The Houston Voice welcomes your special occasions. Send e-mail to croberts@houstonvoice.com. Fax: 713-529-9531. Mail: Occasions, Houston Voice, 500 Lovett Blvd., Suite 200, Houston, Texas 77006. Please include a telephone number so occasions can be verified and considered for publication.

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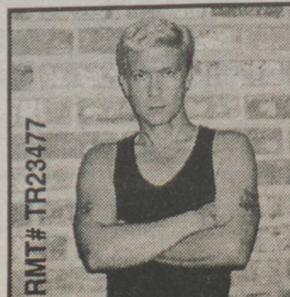
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YOUR WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

July 28 - August 3

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Uranus and Neptune retrograde in your friendship sector could make you feel as if your comrades are out of their minds. They are! But maybe it's time you joined them in the world of hysteria. Spontaneity and wildness should be your calling cards in early August. A Libra will surely be calling you asking for more, more, more.

TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

The moon moves into your house of love over the weekend of the 5th, which means that when you let go of your well-laid plans, you may actually get well laid. Why don't you start spending more passionate time with those closest to you? All you ever wanted is right there in your own backyard. A Virgo has been there all along.

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Mars moves into your money sector in early August, which means that if you push your bosses and contacts a bit, you may actually get more work and more dough out of them. New people in your life want to your charm to rub off on them, but be a little selective about who you rub up against, hottie. A Capricorn is definitely worth getting closer to.

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

Your life experience may be just what a potential employer wants you to write about or draw upon. Get confessional, but do it with some originality, please! Stop recycling your old material, darling, and reach for something new and unknown. A Gemini wants to probe you more deeply.

LEO (JULY 24 - AUG. 23)

Mars moves into your sign at the beginning of August, and suddenly you're hotter than July! If your hormones are raging, please release them! Use your charisma to embrace an old demon and turn it into something magical—and helpful! An Aries can teach you about alchemy, in life and in bed.

VIRGO (AUG. 24 - SEPT. 23)

Saturn finishes up a stint in your house of travel early August, so if you want to travel, either do it or make a plan to make it happen now! Your ability to see into the future is super strong now. If what you see scares you, that's even more reason to go for it. The old familiar ways of love have left you lonely and confused. A Cancer wants to start a new ritual with you.

LIBRA (SEPT. 24 - OCT. 23)

You can get what you want from a potential lover if you are willing to treat him or her with the respect you'd treat a friend. Be the one to say, "Something is not right in this relationship." You could turn an important relationship around if you've got the guts. A Scorpio longs to respect you more.

SCORPIO (OCT. 24 - NOV. 22)

Work around the clock for what you believe in, baby. This is not the time to take a wimpy approach to life or to your life's work. You could have a night of dreams with a Pisces if you are willing to open the door to happiness instead of storming into Angsville... again!

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 23 - DEC. 22)

If you would make a deeper effort to understand your own character, you could finally get what you want out of a tricky relationship. Mars moves into the most adventurous house in your chart in early August, so why not live large like you used to? You can blow a Taurus' mind with your lust for life.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 23 - JAN. 20)

You may have to decide whether you want to commit to the one you love or to love the one you're with. It's easy to judge other people harshly during this gritty, truth-telling time. But why not refrain from destroying friendships and instead seek out the truth within your own diary? By summer's end, you'll receive the love you want from an Aquarius.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 21 - FEB. 19)

Mars in your house of love is making you think of sex, sex and more sex, but some of that energy may have to be sublimated into your work. Oh, and by the way, instead of speaking to pals in clichés or meaningless metaphors, get really specific. A Leo wants all the details.

PISCES (FEB. 20 - MARCH 20)

Finish up all the monotonous tasks you've been avoiding all summer, dear. You've got an exciting love life to look forward to in late August. A change in your day job is imminent. The question is: What kind of work could you do every day that would make you really happy? A Libra will guide you in the right direction if you are humble enough to follow.

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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