

houston VOICE

The diva returns

Gay icon Cher and her farewell tour stop in Houston this month, but just why do we deify certain entertainment legends?
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NOVEMBER 8, 2002

INSIDE



Rice University Coach Ken Hatfield apologizes for anti-gay remarks that drew flak from several groups.

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Gay leaders must respond immediately to a rise in syphilis cases among gay men, according to Centers for Disease Control official Ron Valdiserri.

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Mimi (Ana Maria Martinez) and Rodolfo (Roberto Aronica) express their love in the delightful Houston Grand Opera version of 'LaBoheme.'

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Pro-gay Danburg ousted by Wong

Gays lose 'powerful voice,' and most other potential allies fall short of earning TX offices

By PENNY WEAVER

Democrats are still reeling from the Republican sweep at the polls this week, and gay Texans have lost at least one strong advocate from the state legislature.

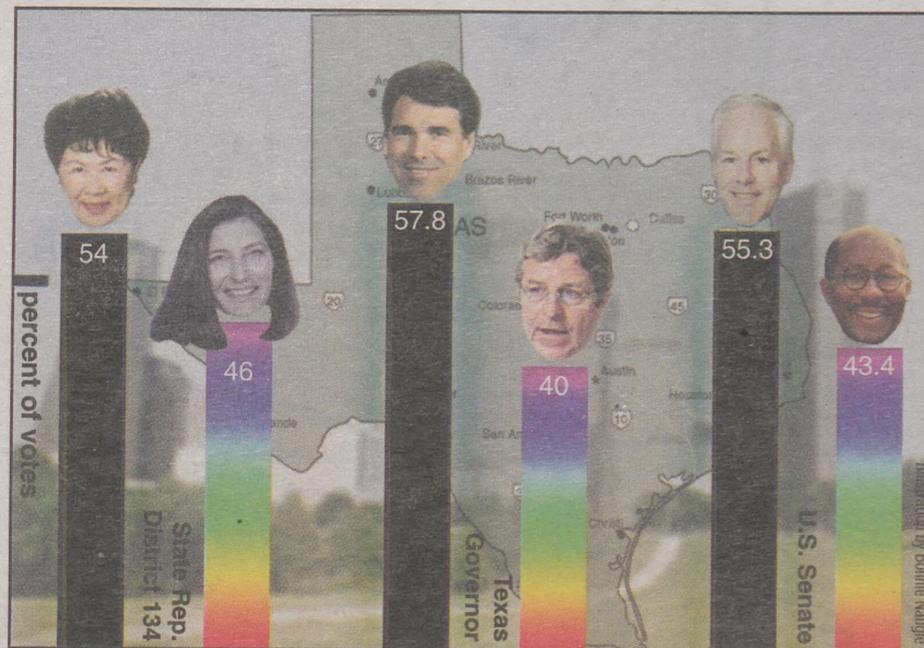
Tuesday's election brought mostly GOP victories, and many gay political activists in Houston say that equates to bad news for the future of gay rights in Texas.

"The people that have been fighting for us are gone," said gay political consultant Grant Martin. He lamented the wins of Republicans.

"These guys are mean and evil and they've got a blank check in Washington and they've got a blank check in Austin and it just scares me to death," Martin added. "That's the way I feel."

Longtime lawmaker Debra Danburg, a

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Gay Texans lost a major ally in the state legislature this week as Democrat Debra Danburg lost the Nov. 5 election to Republican Martha Wong. Danburg earned 46 percent of the vote, while Wong won with 54 percent. In other state races, candidates perceived as gay-friendly lost to their opponents. For governor, incumbent Republican Rick Perry defeated Democrat Tony Sanchez by 57.8 percent to 40 percent. For U.S. Senate, to replace retiring conservative Phil Gramm, Republican John Cornyn defeated gay-friendly Democrat Ron Kirk by 55.3 percent to 43.4 percent.

GOP wins control of U.S. Senate

Democrats: Election results are bad news for pro-gay measures

By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

The Republican takeover of the U.S. Senate and the election of more Republicans to the House of Representatives will jeopardize efforts to pass pro-gay legislation in Congress and could make it easier for President Bush to appoint conservative judges that are hostile to gay rights, gay Democrats said this week.

Officials with the Log Cabin Republicans, a national gay GOP group, disputed the assessment, but agreed with gay Democrats that the Republican gains in the Nov. 5 national elections were due to sweeping national and international

issues that had nothing to do with gays or pending gay rights legislation.

While clashing over the impact the GOP electoral victory will have on gay rights, gay Democratic and gay Republican leaders also expressed agreement on two other aspects of the election. The defeat of three out of four anti-gay ballot measures and the election of at least 34 openly gay candidates throughout the country, show that support for gay equality continues to grow.

The Republican takeover of the Senate came from victories in at least three pivotal races. Here in Georgia, Rep. Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.), who opposes gay rights legislation, defeated incumbent Sen. Max Cleland (D-Ga.), a strong supporter on gay issues.

In Missouri, Sen. Jean Carnahan (D-Mo.), a gay rights supporter, lost to Republican challenger Jim Talent. And in Minnesota, former Vice President Water Mondale, another longtime sup-



In the powerful Senate Judiciary Committee, Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), a strong gay rights ally, is expected to be replaced as chair by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), who opposes gay-inclusive hate crimes legislation and a bill to ban anti-gay job bias. (Photos by AP)

porter on gay issues, lost to Republican Norm Coleman, whose views on gay rights and AIDS issues have not been as strong as Mondale's. Mondale entered

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local news

Rice coach's comments anger gays

Hatfield apologizes after fallout from story in Chronicle of Higher Education

By PENNY WEAVER

Houston's Rice University football coach Ken Hatfield has apologized for remarks attributed to him saying that he might consider removing a gay player from the team.

Hatfield's comments, printed in the Nov. 1 issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education, angered student groups and prompted a meeting with the school president.

In a Chronicle story about gay athletes titled "The Loneliest Athletes" by Jennifer Jacobson, Hatfield asserts homosexuality clearly conflicts with his religious beliefs.

Discussing the sentiments of coaches and athletes about gays, the article states:

"Among the members of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, which has a large following, is Rice University's football coach, Ken Hatfield, who says homosexuality clearly conflicts with his religious beliefs. 'I believe in the Bible,' he declares.

"He has been a member of the fellowship since 1965. Its 'sexual purity' policy states: 'God desires His children to lead pure lives of holiness. The Bible is clear in teaching of sexual sin, including sex outside of marriage and homosexual acts. Neither heterosexual acts outside of marriage nor any homosexual act constitute an

alternative lifestyle acceptable to God.

"A collegiate coach for 36 years, Mr. Hatfield has never had a player come out to him.

"If a player did go public about being homosexual, the coach would be concerned both about the effect on the team and what the parents of other athletes would think, he says. He would ask the player, 'What happened? What changed since we recruited you? When did this come about?'"

"After all, people make a choice about homosexuality, Mr. Hatfield says, just as they make choices about drinking, about going to church. 'I've never seen any scientific study say there's a homosexual gene.'

"He says that while he would not necessarily kick a player off the team for being gay, he probably would think hard about it."

Hatfield said the article never directly quoted him saying that he would take a player off a team for being gay, and that he was trying to convey he wasn't sure how he would deal with such a situation because he's never been through it.

"I'm not going to do anything derogatory toward Rice University and its policies, period," Hatfield told the Houston Chronicle last week.

The Chronicle for Higher Education, a newspaper for college administrators and faculty members, stands behind its story.

After the article came out, Rice President Malcolm Gillis met with Hatfield, who is active in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"I made very clear that Rice and I, personally, are committed to our nondiscrimination policy and that all university employees would carry out that policy fully," Gillis told the Houston Chronicle

in an e-mail response to questions.

Hatfield sent an apology letter that appeared on The Chronicle of Higher Education's Web site. Gillis also sent a letter, claiming Hatfield's stance is contrary to Rice's policy on nondiscrimination.

The Rice Student Association is calling on Hatfield to print an apology in the school's student newspaper.

On Monday, the student association approved a resolution regarding the issue, stating: "Hatfield's statements are unacceptable because they conflict with Rice's policy of nondiscrimination; his statements evidence and intensify an emotionally harmful environment of discrimination for students, especially athletes; his statements misrepresent Rice University."

The resolution requested that the coach apologize to the student body and also requested "an evaluation by the university of practices in the athletics department that may discriminate against homosexual athletes or foster an environment of intolerance."

The students also stated: "discrimination towards anyone because of sexual orientation is as unacceptable as any other form of discrimination, and ... the university has a responsibility to enforce the nondiscrimination policy as such. We support an atmosphere of acceptance for all members of the Rice community."

PRIDE, the school's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender student group, found Hatfield's comments troublesome.

"As someone representing the university, I feel it's his job, especially as a coach, to make his athletes feel safe and supported,"



Rice University coach Ken Hatfield has apologized for remarks he made to The Chronicle of Higher Education about gay athletes.

said Uri McMillan, president of Pride.

The Rice faculty at its regularly scheduled meeting Tuesday unanimously passed a resolution "repudiating any statements that might seem to imply that the University discriminates and reaffirming the university's policy of nondiscrimination."

Hatfield, the fifth-winningest active coach in Division I-A college football, is in his ninth season at Rice. He was previously head coach at the Air Force Academy, Arkansas and Clemson.

Steven C Nebel, external vice president for Rice's PRIDE, said the incident highlights a need for review of the university's non-discrimination policy.

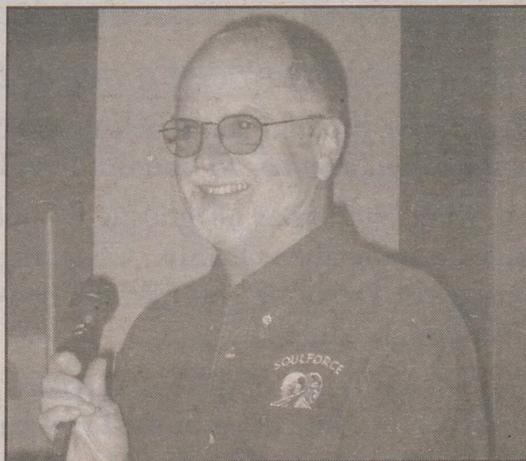
"It is important at this juncture to examine just how the 'non-discrimination' policy ought to serve the whole of the Rice community," Nebel said in a PRIDE press release. "The personal beliefs of every member in the Rice community — 'queer,' 'leftist,' 'right-wing Christian' or otherwise — should be and are guaranteed protected status. In no instance, however, may any individual's belief occasion actions which limit another's right to his/her own belief system and expression thereof."

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

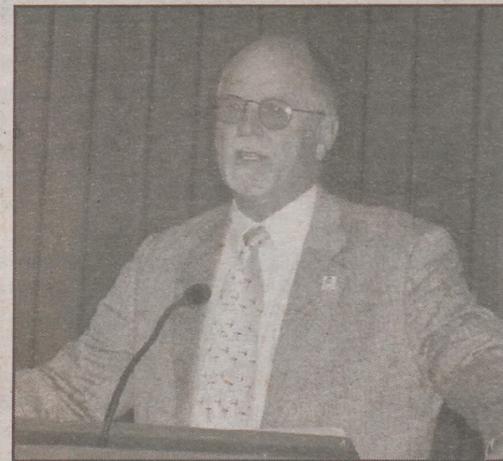
Rev. Mel White brings Soulforce to Houston



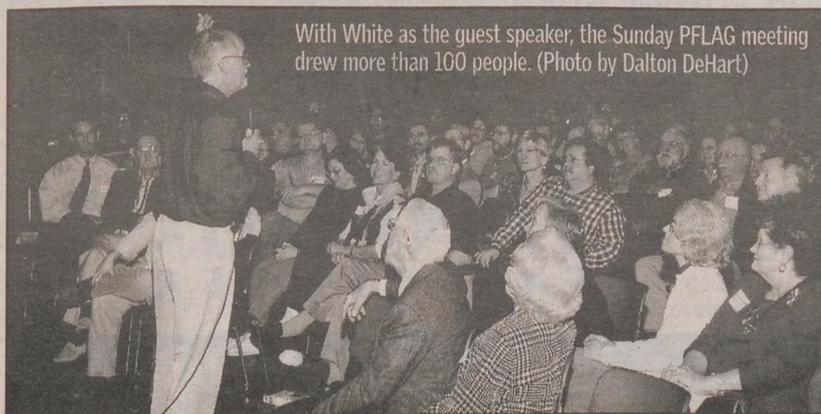
White spoke at a PFLAG meeting on Sunday, Nov. 3. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)



White is well known for trading barbs with anti-gay televangelist Rev. Jerry Falwell. (Photo by James Null)



White gave a number of sermons at different Houston churches while in the Bayou City. He also lectured at a dinner for members of the Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce. (Photo by James Null)



With White as the guest speaker, the Sunday PFLAG meeting drew more than 100 people. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

Rev. Mel White, co-founder and executive director of Soulforce, a group committed to teaching and applying the principles of nonviolence promoted by Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. on behalf of sexual minorities, made several stops while in Houston last week. Hundreds of people turned out to see the dynamic gay rights activist.



As part of his Houston stop, White signed copies of his autobiography, 'Stranger at the Gate.' (Photo by James Null)

local news

Gay-friendly Bell wins legislative seat

OUSTED, continued from Page 1

gay-friendly Democrat, was ousted from political office Tuesday by opponent Martha Wong, a Republican. In the newly redrawn District 134 legislative seat, Wong won with 54 percent of the vote, topping Danburg's 46 percent.

"We've lost a powerful voice," said Kenneth Jones, president of the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus, which endorsed Danburg.

But gay Republicans say now is an opportunity to work within their party to improve representation for gay Texans.

"Gay organizations which vest all their effort into the anemic Texas Democrat Party are missing opportunities to move the issue of equality for gays and lesbians forward," said Steve Labinski, president of the Austin chapter of Log Cabin Republicans, a group for gay GOP supporters. "Exclusively working with the Democratic Party will not advance equal rights one inch."

"Now, we have Republicans completely running all levels of the Texas Legislature, and that means that we need to — rather than act hysterical about it — work with people who are there."

Danburg a strong ally

Former Houston City Council member Wong earned victory over Danburg in a

district redrawn by Republicans after Census 2000 numbers required redistricting throughout the state. Danburg's district, formerly strongly Democratic, suddenly was largely made up of GOP voters, and the representative said early in the election process that it would be a tough race for her.

Neither Danburg nor Wong could be reached for comment by press time this week.

But gay political leaders in Houston pointed directly to redistricting as the reason for Danburg's defeat.

"We lost Debra Danburg and people like her because they were specifically targeted by the Republican redistricting board," said Clarence Bagby, a gay political observer who has been active for several years in the HGLPC, National Gay & Lesbian Task Force and the Human Rights Campaign.

Bagby explained that during redistricting, Texas Democrats at the federal level hired attorneys as counsel to help protect their districts. Since many at the state level did not do so, the GOP was able to change once heavily Democratic districts into Republican strongholds, he said.

"Unfortunately, the state House Democratic members did not hire their own legal counsel in the redistricting battle, as the federal Democrats did," Bagby

noted. "That is a central reason why these House districts ended up being changed to the extent that they were."

Danburg is known for supporting pro-gay efforts such as hate crimes legislation. Prior to the election, Wong expressed willingness to represent gay voters as well as any other constituents. But some gay activists were concerned about support for Wong among conservatives, including notoriously anti-gay former Houston Mayor Louis Welch.

In addition, as part of a long questionnaire during primary election competition, Wong's campaign answered "Yes" when asked, "Is homosexuality a sin against God?"

Late this week, the HGLPC's Jones said that even if Wong is not as anti-gay as some fear, she cannot be the friend to gay Texans that Danburg proved to be.

"The main thing that Debra did for us is she made sure that anti-gay adoption bills never even reached the floor of the House to be voted on," Jones said. "It's going to come to the floor now. As a freshman lawmaker, even if Wong wanted to, I don't think she could stop it."

"I have my serious doubts if she's willing to stop it, even if she had the ability," he added. "She doesn't have the ability — freshmen lawmakers don't have that ability."

Top state races go to GOP

Texas candidates who at least appeared gay friendly were defeated at the polls Tuesday.

For governor, Republican incumbent Gov. Rick Perry defeated Democratic challenger Tony Sanchez with 57.8 percent of the vote. Sanchez earned 40 percent of the vote.

For lieutenant governor, Republican David Dewhurst bested Democrat John Sharp, 51 to 46 percent.

Another race closely watched by gay Texans was for the U.S. Senate seat vacated by anti-gay conservative Phil Gramm, who is retiring. Republican John Cornyn, former Texas Attorney General, earned 55.3 percent of the vote to defeat Democrat Ron Kirk, former Dallas mayor. Kirk is known for his gay-friendly stances while he served as mayor of that city.

"The 'Dream Ticket' of Tony Sanchez, Ron Kirk and John Sharp proved to go nowhere," the Log Cabin's Labinski said. "Rick Perry captured more of the Hispanic vote than Gov. Bush did in 1998."

"Republican candidates are reaching out to minorities, and they are reaching out to gays and lesbians," he added. "Perry signed the Hate Crimes Bill and, unlike his Democrat opponent, he did not gay-bait."

Please see OUSTED, on Page 5

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local news

Gay lawyer loses bid to replace Democratic judge

OUSTED, continued from Page 4

The accusation of gay baiting by the Sanchez campaign triggered a rift between statewide gay political groups earlier this year. Log Cabin Republicans of Texas criticized the HGLPC and the Austin Gay/Lesbian Political Caucus after both groups endorsed Sanchez.

"According to news reports, Sanchez was responsible for spreading rumors that Henry Cuellar is gay. Is this acceptable behavior in 2002 for any politician?" said Lorri Dennis, president of the Texas LCR, said in February. "We do not want to tell any group how to run their business. However, why can a candidate who plays upon homophobia fears to succeed receive caucus endorsements?"

In spring 2001, Sanchez sent a letter of apology to Cuellar, Texas Secretary of State, in relation to the incident to which Dennis referred. Private investigators hired by Sanchez's lawyer, who was looking into the origin of a reportedly threatening letter, told Cuellar's friends and family he is gay.

That prompted Sanchez's letter of apology, but he stopped short of apologizing to Cuellar for alleging that the secretary of state wrote the threatening letter to Sanchez, the Voice reported in April 2001.

Cuellar responded by saying that Sanchez needed to also apologize to Cuellar's family and publicly admit that he did suspect Cuellar of writing the letter.

Gay Republican loses contest

One high-profile race for gay Houstonians was that between incumbent Judge David Patronella, a Democrat, and Republican challenger Alex Wathen, who is openly gay. The two vied for the Justice of the Peace post in Precinct 1, Place 2, and Patronella won with nearly 70 percent of the vote.

The race garnered attention last month when conservative political activist Dave Wilson urged his fellow Republicans not to vote a straight ballot in order to withhold their vote from a gay GOP candidate — Wathen.

Wilson is well known for his conservative group, Houstonians For Family Values, which led support of the anti-gay City Prop. 2 last fall. That measure, narrowly approved by voters, denies domestic partner benefits to City of Houston employees.

Wilson sent automated phone calls to voters to encourage them to avoid voting a straight Republican ballot. Since that slate of candidates included Wathen, Wilson wanted voters to be sure they don't cast their ballot for that candidate.

"I feel like, whether you like it or not, there is a state law that prohibits sodomy in the state of Texas, and having a judge who professes to have a lifestyle that violates state law — whether it's pedophilia, stealing, [or sodomy] — is wrong," Wilson told the Voice.



In a race that stirred controversy among Republicans and gays, incumbent Judge David Patronella (left) won easily over gay Republican challenger Alex Wathen.

Wathen's candidacy also has caused rifts among gay political leaders. Many support Patronella, touting his qualifications and friendliness to gay voters, while others back Wathen as a natural candidate for gay voters because of his own sexual orientation.

Wathen compared gay political consultant Martin to Wilson, since Martin supported Patronella's re-election and Wilson opposed Wathen's election. Martin and Wilson, in fact, worked on opposite sides of the City Prop. 2 battle last fall, directly opposing each other in the political arena.

This week, Wathen said the flak over Wilson's tactics did not affect the Justice of the Peace race.

"It appears as if Democratic turnout was a deciding factor," he said. "It appears that Dave Wilson's efforts had no effect whatsoever."

"I was outspent by Patronella many times over," Wathen added, saying of his defeat: "It's what happens a lot of times when you run against powerful incumbents."

Martin said Thursday that he was not surprised by the outcome of the Patronella-Wathen race.

"That was completely predictable," he said. "That precinct is a Democratic precinct. You would have needed a very strong Republican candidate to unseat a popular incumbent. Apart from all the controversy surrounding Alex, that would have been an uphill climb for any Republican candidate."

Pro-gay Bell earns victory

In one potential bright spot for gay Texans, a frequent ally won a seat in the U.S. Congress.

Democrat Chris Bell, former Houston City Council member, defeated Republican opponent Tom Reiser by 55 to 42 percent in District 25, which covers much of Houston and Harris County.

Although Reiser had said he believes in equal and fair treatment for all people, Bell has a strong pro-gay record. He supported the city's anti-bias bill, approved last year, which prohibits discrimination based on factors including sexual orien-



Former Houston City Council member Chris Bell (left) won the District 25 seat in the U.S. Congress over opponent Republican Tom Reiser. Bell is well known to gay Houstonians as an ally, but Reiser also had said he supports equal rights for all people.

tation. He also opposed City Prop. 2, which prevents the City of Houston from offering health insurance and other benefits to same-sex domestic partners of city employees.

"Chris Bell's obviously a victory for us," Martin said. "It's notable that his chief of staff is an openly gay man."

What gay Texans do now

Gay Democrats obviously are dismayed by Tuesday's election outcome. Martin, who has worked on campaigns including the Sanchez governor primary effort, said he was "completely surprised" by the GOP's overwhelming victory.

"I had no sense of this Republican tide," he said. "I am personally devastated."

"It's a big setback for our community," Martin added. "I don't know what they're going to do in Washington, but we know what they're going to do [in Texas]."

According to Martin, members of the GOP already are highlighting their top priorities, and those include legislation specifically opposing gay marriage in Texas.

The HGLPC's Jones expects that not only will pro-gay legislation not appear in the state legislature, but that anti-gay measures will appear.

"The legislature in Austin is now controlled by the Republicans and I doubt that there will be any bills passed that are friendly to gays," he said. "I also think there's a good probability of an anti-gay or lesbian adoption bill being passed."

The most conservative members of the GOP may gain a stronger presence in Texas politics, Jones said.

"I think it's going to be a challenge for Republicans without having the rightwing take over their agenda," he said. "If the Republicans can succeed in holding the rightwing agenda off, I certainly wish them the best on this budget crisis, because it's a mess."

Jones expects that when budget cuts are needed, areas including AIDS services and sex education will be hit hard.

"I highly predict those cuts are coming," he said.

But gay Republicans said now is the per-

fect time for gay Texans to work with the GOP.

"Log Cabin talks to Republicans about reaching out to the gay and lesbian voters," said Labinski. "Republicans in Texas want to reach out to untraditional voters."

"Log Cabin's job is to do that for gay and lesbian voters, and that's what we've done," he added.

Wathen said he has no plans to run for political office again at this time, but he does want to be active in the effort to get the GOP to listen to gays.

"I'm going to keep working within the Republican party and with Log Cabin to ensure that inclusion wins," said Wathen, who is president of Houston's Log Cabin chapter. "A lot of work still remains to be done."

Martin, who also clashed with Wathen on the latter's judgeship candidacy, does not agree that Republicans will work with gays.

"That party is firmly controlled, at least in the state of Texas, by anti-choice, anti-gay fundamentalist religious right extremists," Martin said. "I think that gay people that want to work with them instead of replace them...I think that the chance of their being effective is slim to none."

"I respect people's political choices, and I actually think it's better for them to be involved than not involved, but I just think they're misguided," he said.

Now is the time for gays — particularly gay Democrats — to regroup, the political activists said.

"The lesson for Democrats...is that Democrats have now tried to be Republicans and we all failed," Martin said.

"This election yet again highlights how important it is for the Houston gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender and community to re-evaluate and restructure our approach to public advocacy," Bagby said. "I think the central message of this election is that we as a community have to come together and re-involve ourselves in groups lie the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus and offer our ideas and strategies for how to operate in this political environment."

"We have to sit down and reorganize and figure out how we affect change and how we involve ourselves totally in the political arena and not just in the segments that are friendly or the segments where we're invited to participate," Bagby added.

Jones noted that voter participation obviously was a key in this election sweep for the GOP.

"I think the Republican turnout was phenomenal," he said.

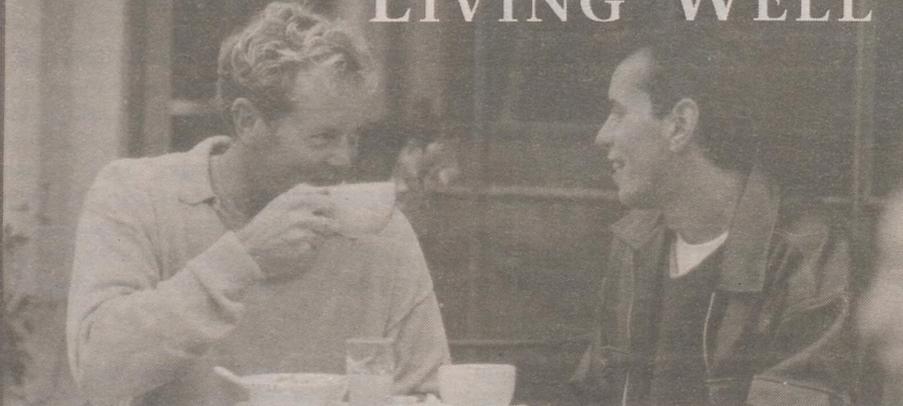
Two years ago, Jones added, Democratic judicial candidates, for example, lost to GOP opponents by about 2 percent. This week, many lost by about 4 percent, even though most campaigned more in this election.

"They worked hard this time. They kissed so many babies their lips were numb," Jones said. "It was turnout, turnout, turnout, turnout. Republican turnout was very good, and that's what killed us."

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around houston

Groups co-host encore of gay history forum as fund-raiser

The Stonewall Law Association of Greater Houston, Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center and Gulf Coast Archives & Museum of LGBT History present "GLBT History, Houston's First Decade: 1975-1985" this week. Presenters Ray Hill, Phyllis Randolph Frye and Aaron Coleman will lead the discussion. The \$10 suggested donation at the door benefits the community center and GCAM. According to organizers, no one will be turned away because of inability to pay. Those who wish to attend can pay at the door or via PayPal at www.gcam.org. Light refreshments will be served. On June 25, SLAGH hosted a program for commemoration day during Pride Week of the same title as Monday's event. Many people, including the speakers, have asked for a repeat performance. Judy Reeves at GCAM, Tim Brookover at the community center, and Jerry Simoneaux of SLAGH are working together to co-host that event as a benefit show for the center and museum. "The drive behind the show is to educate the community — especially those too young to remember — about our history," Simoneaux noted. "Education is a cornerstone of the Stonewall Law Association of Greater Houston." Matt McIntosh of OutBC.com has agreed to sponsor the event. John Nechman at SOGII (Sexual Orientation & Gender Identification Section of the State Bar of Texas) also will be a co-sponsor, as is PFLAG of Houston. Other potential sponsors are being sought.

i MORE INFO

"GLBT History, Houston's First Decade: 1975-1985"
7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 11
Cost: \$10 suggested donation
Theatre Suburbia • 1410 West 43rd St.
www.gcam.org

Happy hour benefits non-profit group for ill pet owners

Leaders with Houston's PAWS (Pets Are Wonderful Support) will host a happy hour next Thursday that includes music, food, a silent auction and door prizes. The cost to attend is \$10 per person, with proceeds benefiting PAWS Houston, a non-profit organization that serves the needs of low-income pet owners who are living with a terminal illness or limited abilities. PAWS Houston offers comprehensive services designed to enable clients to keep their animal companions. Services include an animal food bank, subsidized veterinary care, volunteer pet care, grooming, and foster care when necessary.

i MORE INFO

Happy Hour PAWS benefit
5:30-8:30 p.m. • Thursday, Nov. 14 • Cost: \$10
Wild West • 6011 Richmond Ave.
For more information, call PAWS Houston
281-443-3360

Montrose Counseling Center sponsors new HIV support group

"Living Well with HIV" is the focus of a new afternoon support group forming at Montrose Counseling Center, according to a press release from the organization. The group is open to men who identify as gay, bisexual or transgender. Sessions begin on Nov. 18 and will be held every Monday afternoon for 12 weeks from 1:15 to 2:45 p.m. each session. Topics and issues will be determined by the needs of those who attend, according to MCC officials. Participants are asked to commit to the full 12 weeks and will be required to fill out an intake form if they are not already MCC clients. The center provides services primarily to gay individu-

i MORE INFO

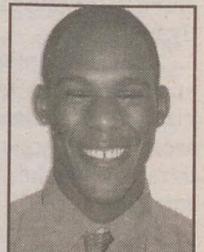
Living Well with HIV support group
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als in areas including mental health, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse prevention and treatment and health education and risk reduction.

Alford joins Houston Voice staff

Houstonian Steven Ewing Alford has joined the staff at the Houston Voice as an administrative assistant.

In this new position, Alford is responsible for a number of office management duties, sales support and customer service.



Steven Ewing Alford

The youngest of five children, Alford was born and raised near St. Louis, Mo., until his family moved to Atlanta when he was 13. He attended North Atlanta High School for the Visual & Performing Arts. He studied in the International Studies program with emphasis on the French language. This interest led him to become an exchange student who lived in Toulouse, France, during his junior year. He continues to visit France each year.

In addition to his administrative duties for the Voice, Alford writes stories, reviews theater and takes photos for the newspaper.

"Everyone has been extremely giving and patient with me, and the Voice has given this unknown and relatively inexperienced kid an opportunity to learn about writing and publishing," Alford said. "I am extremely grateful to be a part of the team."

Penny Weaver, editor of the Houston Voice, said Alford's contributions to the publication already make him a valuable asset.

"Steven helps us improve our customer service and polish our entire operation," Weaver said. "His organizational skills, conscientiousness and personable attitude make him a great addition for the Voice."

Alford is a writer, poet and music lover who counts among his favorite singers Whitney Houston, Enya, Judy Garland and John Lennon. He also is a Martha Stewart fan and admits to being "addicted" to CNN.

As he continues his college studies, Alford cites strong interests in becoming a novelist, as well as someday working in foreign relations.

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national news

Continued rise in syphilis cases seen among gay men

Implications for HIV infections spark strategy of 'aggressive' messages to gay men

By MIKE FLEMING

ATLANTA — A rise in syphilis cases among gay and bisexual men in a few large cities that surfaced last year has now spread into urban and rural areas nationwide, according to federal health officials.

The trend has sparked prevention efforts aimed at sexually active gay men, despite a focus by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention on abstinence as the main defense against sexually transmitted diseases, according to Ron Valdiserri, deputy director of the CDC's Program for HIV, STD & TB Prevention.

"The overall syphilis rate in the United States rose by two percent between 2000 and 2001," Valdiserri said last week in a conference call with media outlets. "The syphilis rate among men in the United States rose by 15 percent [in the same time period]."

Some 20 U.S. counties and one city — Baltimore — account for more than half of the syphilis cases reported. That includes Houston's Harris County with 103 cases last year at a rate of three cases per 100,000 population.

The increase came as somewhat of a surprise after the CDC vowed in 1998 to "eliminate" syphilis in the U.S. But that hope is not lost, even in light of the new information, Valdiserri said.

"Eighty percent of U.S. counties did not report a single case of primary or secondary syphilis," he said.

The uptick in reported cases also causes concern that it portends a rise in HIV because gay and bisexual men are increasingly practicing unsafe sex. The first symptoms of syphilis, which can be cured with antibiotics, are genital sores, which can also help transmit HIV, a disease that has no current cure.

The problem is compounded because strategies to reach gays have presented a roadblock to health workers over the last five years, Valdiserri said.

"We now face many new and complex prevention challenges among men who have sex with men," he said. "Those include HIV being viewed as a less serious disease in light of improved treatments, miscalculations or lack of understanding of risk for HIV transmission and difficulty reaching gay and bisexual men of color with effective prevention messages."

The CDC is looking to "aggressive" tactics, including studies to identify causes of the outbreak, dispatches of rapid response teams to aid local health departments and tailored outreach efforts, Valdiserri said.



A rise in syphilis cases among gay men creates a need for immediate response from gay leaders, said Ron Valdiserri, deputy director of the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention's Program for HIV, STD and TB Prevention.

"For gay and bisexual men, this means greater education about the role of STDs in HIV transmission, integrated HIV and STD testing and educational services as well as placement of STD and HIV information in bars, clubs and other places where men gather," Valdiserri said.

An "abstinence only" approach to STD prevention — advocated by President Bush and CDC director Dr. Julie Gerberding —

isn't all-inclusive and the CDC realizes that abstinence messages aren't the way to reach gays, Valdiserri said.

"Those kinds of interventions are targeted primarily to school-age children," he said. "We're talking primarily about people who are out of school and young adults."

Messages to gays will "certainly" include reducing the number of sexual partners and "consistent and correct use of condoms," Valdiserri said.

Some of the findings of the CDC studies in relation to the rise in syphilis reveal "the need for a much more concentrated and comprehensive community response," Valdiserri said.

The criticism comes as gay leaders say they are hitting a wall in methods to reach gay men with prevention messages as the HIV era drags on.

"Our challenge is to underscore the connection between HIV and syphilis and renew the commitment from [gay groups] brought in the early years of the HIV epidemic," Valdiserri said.

Whatever the solution to nipping the syphilis outbreaks, immediate action from all sides working together is necessary, said Cornelius Baker, executive director of Whitman-Walker Clinic in Washington, D.C.

"We are staring down a national health crisis," Baker said. "We can't wait for studies or validation to do something."

Republicans gain control

GOPS WINS, continued from Page 1

the race as a replacement for pro-gay Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.), who died in a plane crash three weeks ago.

But while the defeat of Cleland, Mondale, and Carnahan eliminates three gay-supportive voices in the Senate, the immediate effect of their losses is that a Republican-controlled Senate will replace all Democratic committee chairs with Republicans, some of whom have conservative, anti-gay records.

The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions, currently chaired by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), is expected to be handed over to Sen. Judd Gregg (R-N.H.), a conservative who opposes gay rights. The committee has jurisdiction over AIDS related issues as well as the gay rights bill known as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, or ENDA.

The Senate Judiciary Committee, currently chaired by Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), a strong supporter on gay issues, is expected to be chaired by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah). Hatch opposes ENDA and the version of a hate crimes bill with protections for gays backed by Kennedy.

In the House, Republicans increased their majority by at least three seats. The current Republican leadership in

the House, which has blocked ENDA and the hate crimes bill from reaching the House floor for a vote, is expected to remain in place.

HRC, which endorsed both Democratic and Republican congressional candidates, nevertheless noted that conservative GOP leaders in the House and Senate blocked pro-gay legislation and argued that a Democratic-controlled Congress was the best way to advance such legislation.

"We wake up today in a very challenging environment," HRC Political Director Winnie Stachelberg said Wednesday.

But Rich Tafel, executive director of the Log Cabin Republicans, argued that although the Democrats controlled the Senate for 17 months, they did not bring up for a vote gay activists' most cherished piece of legislation, ENDA.

Gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) countered that Senate Republicans vowed to block ENDA through a filibuster, just as they used a filibuster to kill a Senate hate crimes bill earlier this year.

"So why take up the time if it couldn't pass?" Frank said.

Lorri L. Jean, executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, called the election a "disaster in terms of advancing gay rights legislation on the national level."

Voters turn back three of four anti-gay ballot measures

Gay marriage ban overwhelmingly becomes law in Nev.

By CHRISTOPHER SEELY

While Election Day was a bitter pill to swallow for gay Democrats, gay activists claimed victory in four of five ballot measures before voters this week.

In three of the votes considered wins for gays by national gay rights groups, the measures asked voters to decide whether to uphold existing anti-discrimination statutes that include sexual orientation or gender identity.

Voters in Tacoma, Wash., were asked to remove sexual orientation and gender identity from a city statute approved by the City Council last April. But voters upheld the existing statute, according to election officials. The measure was turned back by a vote of 17,414 to 12,506.

The victory in Westbrook, Maine was not as strong. Voters there were asked to repeal existing protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation.

By a slim margin of two percentage points, supporters of the anti-discrimination ordinance defeated those who opposed it. The vote was 3,316 to 3,126.

In Ypsilanti, Mich., voters rejected an amendment to the city charter that would remove sexual orientation from the current non-discrimination ordinance and prevent gays from being considered a protected class in future city measures.

The vote against the measure was 3,080 to 1,739, according to unofficial results from election officials.

A referendum in Sarasota, Fla., that adds an anti-discrimination amendment to the city charter passed with a wide margin, 73 percent to 27 percent, according to results posted on the HRC Web site.

For gay activists, the defeat came in Nevada, where a statewide constitutional ban on gay marriages was approved in a 67 percent to 33 percent vote. The constitutional ban needed to be ratified by voters in two consecutive elections to become effective. The first came in 2000.

Despite the Election Day losses for gay Democrats, a "national bipartisan consensus" in the fight over the ballot measures was encouraging, according to Seth Kilbourn, national field director for HRC.

"We have to remain optimistic that even in an election that clearly trended conservative, gay and lesbian equality emerged victorious almost everywhere," Kilbourn said in a prepared statement.



around the nation

Neb. Supreme Court hears appeal in Teena case

LINCOLN, Neb. — The state's highest court heard arguments Tuesday in JoAnn Brandon's fight to hold law enforcement officials responsible for the death of her child, transgendered murder victim Brandon Teena, according to the Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund. Teena, who was born female but lived as a male, was murdered in 1993, just days after Teena reported to Richardson County Sheriff Charles Laux that he had been raped by John Lotter and Thomas Nissen. Both were later convicted of murder. According to Lambda, Laux was abusive to Teena during an interview, "notified the rapists of the complaint" and "forbade a deputy from arresting the two rapists." Last year, the Nebraska Supreme Court ruled that Laux's actions were "extreme and outrageous" and ordered a lower court to reassess its ruling granting little damages to Teena's mother. But the lower court then awarded only \$5,000 to JoAnn Brandon for her emotional distress and only \$7,000 for Brandon Teena's distress before death. A higher damage award would send a message to law enforcement that transgender victims cannot be devalued, Lambda attorneys said.



The mother of Brandon Teena is asking the Nebraska Supreme Court to again intervene in the lawsuit she has filed over the 1993 death of her transgendered son. (Photo by AP)

Ky. students walk out over gay group meeting on campus

CANNONSBURG, Ky. — More than one-third of Boyd County High School's students missed a day of school on Monday to protest a decision to let a gay-rights student group meet on campus, Superintendent Bill Capehart said, according to the Associated Press. A ministers' group is planning a protest of the alliance Sunday. The school's teacher-parent council voted last week to allow the group to meet, after twice rejecting the group's application. Before the last vote, student organizers contacted the ACLU, which said the council was violating the federal Equal Access Act by denying the alliance permission to meet at the school. "I just don't think it's a good idea for parents to let their children stay home from school," said Jenny Reese, mother of Lena Reese, a 15-year-old sophomore who is a member of the alliance. "It doesn't set a good example for tolerance."

Toys 'R' Us ordered to pay fees for trans plaintiffs

NEW YORK — A judge has ordered Toys "R" Us to pay nearly \$200,000 in attorneys' fees for three transsexuals who claimed they were harassed by workers while shopping at a Brooklyn store, according to the Associated Press. A jury in June found that the plaintiffs were harassed but awarded them only \$1 each. Donna McGrath, Tanya Jinks and Tara Lopez had each sought \$300,000 in damages. Now U.S. District Judge Charles Sifton has ordered the store to pay \$193,551 in fees to "encourage the bringing of meritorious civil rights claims which might otherwise be abandoned because of financial imperatives surrounding the hiring of competent counsel," the judge wrote. An attorney for Toy "R" Us said the retailer would appeal. The transgendered women alleged that during two shopping excursions at a Toys "R" Us store in December 2000 employees called them names and menaced them with baseball bats.

Wall Street worker alleges firm fired her for being gay

NEW YORK — Jeanine Presa, a former senior vice president at ABP Investments, has filed a federal discrimination lawsuit against the Wall Street firm, claiming she was fired for being a lesbian, the New York Post reported. Presa said her boss questioned her repeatedly about her personal life. Shortly after acknowledging during a lunch conversation with the man, who allegedly flirted with her, that she lives with a woman, Presa said she was called in and fired without being told why. "I want my job back. I couldn't believe it. My boss terminated me because I was gay," Presa told the Post. Bruce Hood, ABP's lawyer, said Presa was fired for cause and not over her sexual orientation.

Court rulings in Del., Wash. recognize lesbian couples

DOVER, Del. — Recent rulings in Delaware and Washington show courts recognizing gay couples, even when the relationships have ended, according to the Associated Press. The Oct. 30 ruling by Family Court Commissioner John Carrow makes Delaware one of a handful of states where gay people have been ordered to pay child support to their estranged partners. Earlier this year, Carrow set a state precedent by ruling, in effect, that a boy has two mothers. The biological mother, referred to in court by the pseudonym Karen Chambers, became pregnant through in-vitro fertilization. She sought mandatory child support for the boy after her estranged partner was awarded permanent visitation rights two years ago but ordered to pay \$501 in support monthly. In Washington, Yakima County Superior Court Judge Heather Van Nuys ruled that two women ending a 10-year relationship must divide their assets equally. That decision amounts to a divorce, although the state does not recognize gay marriage. Van Nuys said the relationship between Julia Robertson and Linda Gormley was "sufficiently marriage-like to provide equitable relief."

From staff and wire reports

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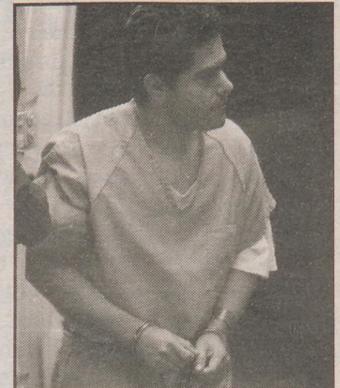
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'Missing' gay accountant accused of fraud appears in N.C. court

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — A gay accountant who faces 15 charges of bank fraud was unaware that he was under criminal investigation when he disappeared 18 months ago, his lawyer told the Associated Press. Andrew Reyes made an initial appearance in U.S. District Court Oct. 30 after his return from California, where he was arrested Oct. 3 while entering the country from Mexico. Reyes, a former county Democratic chair, is accused of diverting \$3.6 million from an accounting client to himself between 1998 and 2000. He could face up to eight years in prison if convicted. Reyes' lawyer, James Wyatt, said he would enter a plea of not guilty. When Reyes left town in May 2001, he was suffering from "very severe, catastrophic personal problems and was on the verge of a nervous breakdown," Wyatt said. About the time the money began disappearing, Reyes became a major donor to the local Democratic party. State GOP officials have called on Democratic candidates who received donations from Reyes to return the money.



Andrew Reyes, a gay accountant and Democratic party luminary in North Carolina, appeared in court last week on charges that he defrauded clients. (Photo by Chuck Burton/AP)

November 10 •

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Prosecutors prepare for possible 'trans panic' defense in Calif. case

FREMONT, Calif. — As city officials in Newark, Calif. rejected claims that they remained silent in a local transgender killing, an attorney filed a plea delay Oct. 31 for one of the defendants, according to the Oakland Tribune. Michael Magidson, 22, Jaron Nabors, 19, and Jose Merel, 22, are charged with murder with a hate crime enhancement in the killing of Eddie "Gwen" Araujo, who was slain Oct. 3. The killing came allegedly after the defendants learned she was a biological male. Nabors pleaded innocent last week, and Merel and Magidson were expected to enter pleas this week. After the killing, activists criticized the Newark City Council for inaction and silence, but council members said they wanted to avoid the national attention the slaying has drawn. Council members held a special meeting before local television cameras to denounce the killing, according to the Tri-Valley Herald. "Hate and intolerance have again collided to take another young person's life," said Council member Al Nagy. "I'll never understand that." Prosecutors are preparing for a defense that may raise a "transgender panic" motive for the killing.

Calif. man arrested in anti-gay home invasion

ADELANTO, Calif. — A 31-year-old man stands accused of bursting into his neighbor's home Oct. 18 and beating him in the face for being gay, according to the Victorville Daily Press. Deputies arrested Robert Jesus Alvarran on suspicion of violating a person's civil rights, assault and burglary after the victim, a 46-year-old man whose name was not released, came forward, Det. James Hoffman said. The case is being investigated as a hate crime, which can add three years to any prison sentence. The victim stayed with a friend after the attack, but when he came home Oct. 29 and discovered his house was ransacked, he reported the incident. "He was ready to sell his house," Hoffman said. "That's how terrified he was." Alvarran was booked with bail set at \$50,000.

Protest held on Ohio campus after anti-gay e-mail sent

OXFORD, Ohio — Hundreds of students, faculty and residents rallied Oct. 29 at Miami University to protest a derogatory anonymous e-mail sent to a campus gay group, according to the Associated Press. Twelve members of the campus organization Spectrum received an e-mail Oct. 20 saying its members "weaken the moral foundation of this country." It went on to suggest that they "should go find (themselves) a ceiling rafter and a sturdy piece of rope. You know the rest." Because the e-mail did not suggest that the writer intended to harm the recipients, university officials concluded that it could not be investigated as a crime. The administration denounced the message, calling it despicable. "We want to show how strong our support is and make it known that these acts of homophobia ... are an attack on all of us," Ross Meyer, a member of Spectrum, told the crowd at the rally.

Slain gay sailor's mother urges Navy panel to keep killer behind bars

WASHINGTON — Dorothy Hajdys-Holman, the mother of a slain sailor targeted because he was gay, appeared Oct. 30 before the Naval Parole Board, which is considering granting parole for son Allen Schindler's killer, GayToday.com reported. Terry Helvey was convicted in the 1992 beating death of Schindler, a case which spurred a national dialogue on gays in the military and was a catalyst for then-presidential candidate Bill Clinton's promise to lift the ban on gay service members. Holman, along with the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, collected more than 75,000 petition signatures, which were presented to the Parole Board, urging the Navy to not release Helvey. "For the past 10 years, I have worked with SLDN to make sure Allen's killer is kept behind bars," Holman has said. A decision is expected from the parole board in December.

From staff and wire reports



medical report

Health officials investigate safe-sex event with porn actor

ST. LOUIS — City health officials are investigating allegations made by two former employees of an anti-AIDS agency that federal money was used to hire a gay-porn movie actor who stripped and engaged in sexual contact with guests at a "safer sex" event, according to the Associated Press. The director of the city's health department, Dr. Hugh Stallworth, told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch that the allegations are "quite serious," but that he could not discuss them further. Bruce Hopson, a lawyer for Blacks Assisting Blacks Against AIDS, called the allegations false. Hopson said BABAA paid an actor \$500 to speak at a gathering held in July at the private home of the group's executive director. The actor "did not strip for anybody and nobody touched him," but did appear wearing only a towel and boots, Hopson said. "That doesn't mean he stripped. I'm not here to defend all of the actions, but we did not pay somebody to strip at a party," Hopson added. The actor was paid from a \$96,000 grant issued by the federal Centers for Disease Control & Prevention to fight syphilis.



Hugh Stallworth, director of the St. Louis city health department, said his agency is investigating allegations that a safe sex event for gay men featured a porn star. (Photo courtesy Southern California Public Health Association)

Herpes infections could rise without intervention, study says

NEW YORK — By the year 2025, if no preventive steps are taken, as many as 40 percent of men and 50 percent of women aged 15 to 39 in the U.S. could be infected with genital herpes. That is nearly double the current rate, according to a mathematical model developed by public health experts, reported Reuters Health. The herpes simplex virus type-1 commonly causes fever blisters on the mouth or face, and is typically known as oral herpes, while HSV type-2 affects the genitals. In an effort to stem the spread of HSV-2, a variety of public health interventions are currently being formulated, according to the report from Dr. David N. Fisman of McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada and his colleagues. These include screening with blood tests to identify people who are infected but don't have symptoms, along with programs to increase condom usage.

NIH chief looks for areas of promising new research

WASHINGTON — Five months into his tenure as chief of the National Institutes of Health, Elias Zerhouni has begun to settle into the job and to speak out about his scientific and political priorities, according to the Washington Post. The NIH, an institution poised to enjoy its fifth consecutive year of major budget increases, includes the Office of AIDS Research, which manages the scientific, budgetary, legislative and policy elements of the agency's AIDS research program. Zerhouni spoke informally with NIH veterans to see if there are areas of promising research that are falling through the agency's bureaucratic cracks. "I'm looking for areas that are not being addressed or that are bigger than any one institute," he said. Zerhouni said he is comfortable with the increased centralization of power at the NIH within the office of the secretary of Health & Human Services, a trend initiated by Secretary Tommy G. Thompson under the motto "One department, one voice." That push has troubled some NIH researchers, as well as employees at other HHS agencies, like the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

Bias a health issue for gays, Australian group says

SYDNEY — Prejudice can affect the health of gay men and lesbians, the Australian Medical Association said in a statement issued last week at the Amnesty International Global Human Rights Conference, according to Reuters Health. "There is still unacceptable injustice, prejudice, inequalities under the law, and serious health consequences as a result of homophobia," Federal AMA President Dr. Kerry Phelps said. Phelps pointed out that because gays experience discrimination, they are less likely than heterosexuals to seek health care. Doctors also need to be aware of specific health issues affecting transsexuals, she said. The major issues center around a reluctance to disclose sexual behaviors or sexual relationships, Phelps said. "Gay men and lesbians are less likely to undertake health screening of a variety of different sorts, particularly leading to a higher incidence of cancer and heart disease," she said.

Gates Foundation gives \$6.5 million grant for HIV research

SEATTLE — The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has awarded two grants totaling \$9.5 million toward research and development to fight the spread of tuberculosis and HIV, according to the Associated Press. The first grant, totaling \$6.5 million over three years, was given to Family Health International for studies across several nations to test a drug for reducing the risk of infection from HIV among sexually active adults regularly exposed to the virus. The drug, tenofovir DF, marketed as VireadR, is already used for treating those infected with HIV. The foundation also announced a \$3 million grant to the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine to develop strategies that help find, treat and control tuberculosis in communities with high rates of tuberculosis and HIV infections.

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Issue 1150

Forum

HOUSTON VOICE

NOVEMBER 8, 2002

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viewpoint

Midterms weren't so terminal

Suffering from a midterm election hangover? Are you a depressed gay Democrat? **Fear not, dear activist.** Our cause is not lost.

The real gay movement isn't inside the GOP-controlled Beltway.

By CHRIS CRAIN



LOOM, DESPAIR AND agony on me. Deep, dark depression, excessive misery.

If you're not a fan of country music or hail from the Deep South, you may not recognize the classic "Hee Haw" song of

woe, but if you've spent any time around gay political junkies since Tuesday's midterm elections, then you've heard a similar doomsday rendition.

Larry Pellegrini, a longtime gay rights activist, put it most memorably: "It's Jackass: The Election," he said. "God only knows what they were thinking, but they'll be sorry."

It's been violin solos like that around the country since early Wednesday, when we learned that the Republicans had retaken control of the Senate and added several seats to their majority in the House. Even though the overall GOP pick up was only around five seats, you wouldn't know it from the long faces on gay activists.

There are a few important reasons for this reaction, and they're telling about where the gay rights movement is headed in the next several years.

FIRST AND FOREMOST, OUR ACTIVISTS and national organizations are too enamored of the national Democratic Party.

The reality is that the odds were slim to none that employment non-discrimination and hate crimes legislation would have been enacted had the Democrats retained control of the Senate for the last two years of Bush's (first) term. For all their pro-gay rhetoric, Democrats didn't manage to even put ENDA up for a vote during their recent Senate reign.

Lest we forget, the last time the Democrats controlled both houses of Congress and the White House — 1993-94 — our movement was rewarded with the Defense of Marriage Act and "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

This isn't to suggest that the restoration of Trent Lott as Senate Majority

Leader is a good thing for gay rights, but Democrats have more than enough votes in the Senate to filibuster when it matters, especially on the inevitable right-wing Bush/Ashcroft judicial nominations that represent our clearest present danger.

Even the Log Cabin Republicans aren't claiming that a GOP majority in the Senate is good news, but consider who's leaving and who is arriving. The terrible twosome from the Carolinas — Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) and Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) — are gone, albeit replaced by two more Republicans — Elizabeth Dole (N.C.) and Lindsay Graham (S.C.). But this twosome is comparatively much more moderate and shows no signs of aggressively attacking any signs of gay life.

In fact, it was the Democrat in Graham's race who gay-baited, smearing Graham for accepting the endorsement of former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

It was also the national Democrats, in the form of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, who paid for an ad in Montana that appealed to anti-gay prejudice.

THE MYOPIA ISN'T JUST ABOUT Democrats, either. There is too much focus on Congress and Beltway politics.

Opponents of the Millennium March on Washington, especially the previous leadership at the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, made a powerful case several years ago that the real "action" in our movement is outside the Beltway. Their opposition to MMOW may have been misguided, but they were on point then about our movement's new center of gravity. Two years and two elections later, the fulcrum hasn't shifted.

The real advances are coming in state houses, in places like Vermont, Hawaii, California and (hopefully soon) New York. Even more progress is being made at the local level, in cities like Sarasota, Fla., where voters approved an anti-discrimination amendment to the city charter on Tuesday. A day later, Chicago witnessed the passage of a transgender rights measure.

The good news for Democrats here is

that they retook the gubernatorial mansions in a number of important large and medium-sized states, including in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Michigan and Tennessee.

The Human Rights Campaign — which used to focus exclusively on lobbying Congress but which has since broadened its scope — has taken steps to recognize the growing importance of state and local politics. This year, HRC even moved (somewhat quietly) into a select number of gubernatorial elections, including the important wins in Pennsylvania and Michigan.

The approach makes sense, but the first-time effort seemed a bit haphazard. For example, HRC chose to invest precious gay rights dollars in places like Maryland, which already has a statewide gay rights law, and where the HRC-backed candidate — Kathleen Kennedy-Townsend — was on record in opposition to some of the more important advances that could still be made there. (And she lost.)

In other important states, like Georgia and Texas, which lack even basic gay civil rights laws, HRC stayed away, and the gay-friendly Democrats were defeated.

THE NATIONAL GAY POLITICAL groups still deserve our support and have plenty to do, of course. Their success will be determined by their ability to adapt to the reality, post-Tuesday.

With the Republicans in control in Congress and the White House, HRC will be hampered by its longtime association with the Democratic Party, and realistically can do only so much to make inroads with gay-friendly Republicans. Their time would be better spent where they have the most influence, with the Democrats, lobbying the party to take a more forceful and visible stand in favor of basic gay rights.

The Democrats' poor performance in the midterm elections was in part because the party's national leaders failed to generate excitement among core supporters, including gays, by distinguishing themselves from the Republicans on the central issues of the day.

The national Democrats need to find their voice on gay rights and a number of other important issues, and HRC should use its influence to push the party in that direction.

For Log Cabin Republicans, who should now be at their most influential, the time has come to turn around. Instead of devoting their visibility and their efforts as apologists for the GOP within the gay community, LCR needs to rediscover its mission of achieving greater tolerance and support within the Republican Party.

Does Log Cabin exist primarily to lobby on behalf of the GOP, or on behalf of gays? The next few months should go a long way toward answering that question.

@ Chris Crain is executive editor of Houston Voice and can be reached at ccrain@window-media.com.



Letters

Parker: Politicians should acknowledge their sexual orientation when relevant

To the Editor:

Several Log Cabin Republicans have alleged recently in print that I don't officially acknowledge my sexual orientation and, specifically, that it doesn't appear on my Web page. I didn't respond the first time because it was raised in the context of a local Justice of the Peace race, and I did not want to make it an election issue.

But an untruth repeated more than once takes on a life of its own.

From my first council campaign in 1991 to my first successful council campaign in 1997, I have listed the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus — spelled out — in my campaign literature. I considered that a point of honor. It was part of my resume. In later elections, of course, I ran on my record as a council member.

From my first day in office — and on every inaugural day — I introduce Kathy Hubbard as my life partner at the beginning of the televised council meeting. The emcee also introduces Kathy as my life partner as she walks across the stage during the televised inaugural ceremony that morning. Several times a year, when the discussion

concerns the GLBT community (i.e., non-discrimination ordinance, domestic partner benefits), I openly acknowledge my sexual orientation at the council table.

My city council Web page has always proudly referred to Kathy Hubbard as my life partner. It also lists my presidency of the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus (spelled out in alphabetical order) among my past activities. Please see: www.ci.houston.tx.us/citygovt/council/1/

I am proud of who I am, and I have never hidden my sexual orientation. But, like most people and GLBT elected officials, I acknowledge it when appropriate.

I believe GLBT candidates have a responsibility to acknowledge the truth of their lives. I also believe that anyone who has accepted a leadership position in a GLBT organization should be willing to publicly acknowledge that — particularly if it is part of their political experience.

Annis D. Parker
Houston City Council
At-Large 1

Gay voices not loud enough as AIDS funding gets slashed

To the Editor:

Where are the voices of the community? Over the past month, there have been major threats to the health services available to the gay community. These threats have been met with nothing more than a booming silence from a community that once roared with the voice of pride.

With the purposed cuts in funding for the state's AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), more than 4,000 people living with HIV/AIDS stand to lose access to vital medications. On a local level, gay men may lose the right to free HIV tests since "prioritizing" has placed testing for men who have



sex with men on the bottom of the list.

We have had to fight every step of the way since the beginning of the epidemic for our right to health care and access to the medications to fight this disease. Many of the heroes of the early days who risked social stigma, being ostracized, and sometimes arrest are now gone — they have died from the disease they fought both within their bodies and within their community. Now, more than a decade later, it is up to us to take up the fight for our rights. We all need to voice our concerns to the very officials making decisions that directly affect our lives and our health. Thinking that someone else will fight the fight for us is not the answer. If we do not stand up for our rights, who will?

Many gay men have no health insurance and rely on community agencies such as the Montrose Clinic to access free HIV test-

ing or low cost health care services. If these services are lost, the alternative may be paying out-of-pocket to see a private physician just to get an HIV test.

And what about the cost of HIV medications? How many people can really afford \$8,000-12,000 a month, every month, for the drugs they rely on to keep them healthy?

Now is the time to make your voice heard in the offices of the city, county, and state health agencies. In this time of shifting funding and a conservative administration, the complacency that has settled over the gay community must end.

We must all become watchdogs of our rights and raise our voices to keep those rights.

Michael Venator, RN
Houston

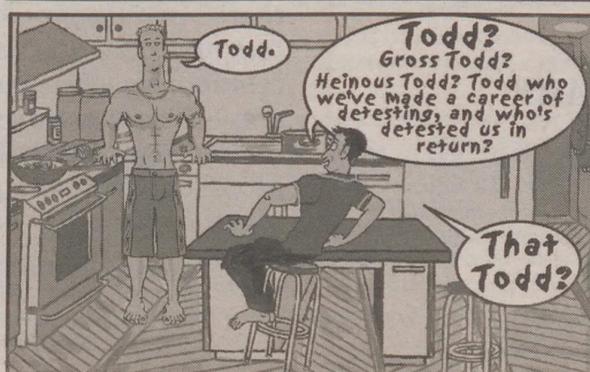
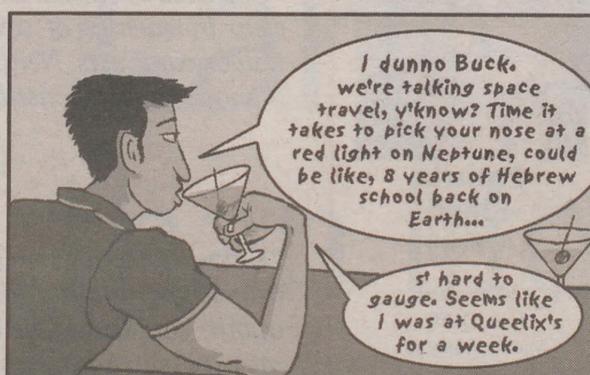
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Send the editor your letters (400 words maximum) or op-ed submissions (800 words maximum). Include a name and phone number for verification.

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The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of ETHAN GREEN

by Eric Orner



on the record

"[Rudy Giuliani is] an ultra-liberal. His wife kicked him out and he moved in with two gay men and a Shih Tzu. Is that South Carolina values? I don't think so."

Alex Sanders, Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate in South Carolina, during a debate with his GOP opponent, U.S. Rep. Lindsey Graham, who received campaign support from former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who moved in with a gay Manhattan couple after separating from his wife. Graham later won the seat handily. (New York Post, Oct. 29)



"If a Republican did that, it would have been major news ... that Republicans are small-minded, petty, they're prejudicial."

Giuliani, reacting to the swipe taken at him by Sanders (ABC's "This Week," Nov. 3)

"Mr. Sanders' pronouncement that it violates South Carolina values to accept an offer of hospitality from a gay couple is a bigoted comment that reflects poorly on Mr. Sanders. Apparently, I have a higher opinion of South Carolina values than Mr. Sanders does."

Gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), reacting to comments by Sanders

"To have a famous member of the family both helps and hurts. There are a lot of things I do that tend to get lost in her celebrity status. The media finds it a lot more interesting than I do."



Daniel O'Donnell, 41, brother of lesbian celebrity Rosie O'Donnell, about the effect of their relationship on his successful bid to become the first openly gay lawmaker in the New York state Assembly (Associated Press, Oct. 6)

"What happened? What changed since we recruited you? When did this come about?"

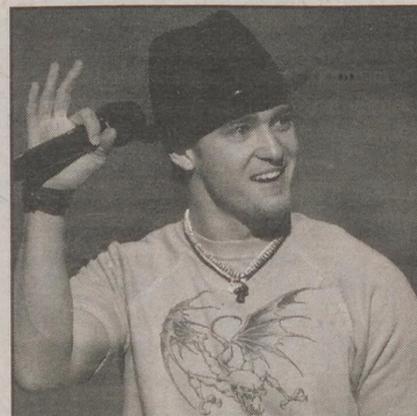
Ken Hatfield, head football coach at Rice University in Houston, on what he would say to a player who came out to him. In 36 years of coaching, he said, no player has done so to date (Chronicle of Higher Education, Nov. 1)

"God desires His children to lead pure lives of holiness. The Bible is clear in teaching of sexual sin, including sex outside of marriage and homosexual acts. Neither heterosexual acts outside of marriage nor any homosexual act constitute an alternative lifestyle acceptable to God."

Fellowship of Christian Athletes' policy on "sexual purity" (Chronicle of Higher Education, Nov. 1)

"Um — honestly I've never really, uh, I've never really — something that I've thought a lot about. ... Something that I will say, you know, about, you know, the whole community is ... that I appreciate is that ... and the people that I've met that are, I mean, it's so non-discriminating where music goes that it's — it's all — sometimes it's almost inspiring that there's people out there who just like music because they like music."

Pop singer Justin Timberlake, asked about whether gay fans will enjoy the N-Sync lead singer's new solo project, "Justified" (HX.com, Nov. 5)



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THEATER: Houston Grand Opera's version of 'La Boheme' a delight on stage. **Page 18.**

SPORTS: Houston Tennis Club hosts nearly 200 players for a tournament here this weekend. **Page 20.**



HOUSTON VOICE
NOVEMBER 8, 2002
PAGE 15

Out on the Bayou



Celebrities who have inspired gay worship include classic stars like **Judy Garland**, current divas like **Cher** and out gay men like **Elton John**. But some still disagree on what elevates a star to icon status. Decide for yourself when Cher comes to Houston's Compaq Center Nov. 17. (Photo illustration by John Nail)

As gay Houston prepares for Cher, just what makes a gay icon?

By **MIKE FLEMING**

i-con (i' kôn') n.

1. An important and enduring symbol.
2. An object of uncritical devotion.
3. One who is the object of great attention and devotion; an idol.

POP CULTURE OBSERVERS HAVE BEEN tossing around the word for years, assigning status beyond mere "superstar" to everyone from Michael Jackson to Magic Johnson, for lasting and extraordinary contributions in their fields.

And gay pundits are on board.

The phrase "gay icon" may bring to mind the undeniable status of Judy Garland, Madonna, James

'Larger than life'

Dean, Bette Davis, Rock Hudson, Barbra Streisand, Bette Midler and the indestructible Cher, whose "final tour" hits Houston's Compaq Center next week.

"Cher is perhaps the most enigmatic of gay icons," says Eric Braun, author of "Frightening the Horses: The Rise and Rise of Gay Cinema," which includes a chapter devoted to gay icons. "The Oscar-winning actress with a multifaceted persona, exemplifying in her songs and costumes out, cut almost to the bone, well publicized cosmetic surgery, is maybe a current icon for most people with her 'anything goes' attitude."

Cain Williamson, a gay Cher fan who "wouldn't miss" the diva's "farewell tour," agrees that icon status is all in the attitude.

"The deal with Cher is that she doesn't take any shit," Williamson says. "She seems to know herself and genuinely like herself, and she feels no need to make apologies for who she is or the way she lives her life."

That attitude naturally appeals to gay men, he says.

"Many of us don't truly like ourselves the way Cher seems to," Williamson says. "We admire things in other people that we would like ourselves to be. She has the balls to openly live her life in a way that does not necessarily jive with traditionally accepted social standards and succeed while doing so. She lives life on her own terms, something gay men don't always find easy or even possible."

Jack Kinley, another gay fan, says that Cher's music "resonates with our culture because it is that of a triumphant outsider."

"She has been a gypsy, a tramp, a thief and even a half breed," Kinley says. "She has risen above the strange love/hate relationship typical of the American public and seems unaffected and even empowered by every backlash she's endured."

Please see **ICONS** on **Page 16**

out on the bayou

The difficulty in defining a 'gay icon'

ICONS, continued from Page 15

"She carries with her a refusal to be shamed or quieted by others' disapproval," he adds. "For a culture that is taught to be submissive and ashamed, Cher is a natural candidate for icon status."

Love her or hate her, Cher's status as a gay icon is undeniable. Her revealing Bob Mackie costumes are legendary, her acting credits include Oscar-worthy performances and her musical repertoire encompasses female roles from unapologetic rock maven to disco diva.

With nearly 40 years in the public eye — from the number one hit of 1965 "I Got You Babe" with husband Sonny, to the currently popular "Living Proof" CD — the singer, actress and high-fashion model meets several of the main gay-icon criteria that author Braun calls "larger than life."

BUT WHAT PROPELS CELEBRITIES from simply famous to "gay icon?"

Creating a public persona that has triumphed from early tragedy as well as an inherent vulnerability appeals to gays, Braun says. He cites Judy Garland, Marilyn Monroe and Doris Day as examples.

Kinley agrees.

"There are two central qualifications for gay icon status," Kinley says. "A sense of triumph for someone whom the system would generally oppress (i.e. women,

blacks and gays) ... [and] that person's refusal to be anything less than 100 percent genuine at any cost."

And while Cher and Judy Garland may be undeniable gay icons, finding consensus on others may prove more difficult.

"Elton John is now the accepted icon for the establishment — knighted by the Queen," Braun says.

But Williamson disagrees.

"I don't think that Elton is the kind of person that most of the current generation of gay men would be devoted to," he says. "He has not constantly remade himself into something new and different the way Cher has or Madonna has."

And other stars may be either arguable or still on their way to achieving a lasting niche with gays. Margaret Cho, Britney Spears, Sandra Bernhard, Nathan Lane, Dolly Parton and even Greg Louganis and Rosie O'Donnell could qualify, according to some.

Ultimately, celebrities ensure longevity with gay audiences by having gay appeal and being unafraid to be face down critics, Kinley says.

"These people have remained true to themselves and succeeded in spite of mainstream beliefs," he says.

AND SPEAKING OF O'DONNELL, WHO came out in March on national television, gay male icons seem to differ from lesbian ones. Icons for lesbian fans are almost

exclusively lesbians; those for gay men cover the spectrum of gender.

Martina Navratilova, Ellen DeGeneres, Melissa Etheridge, the Indigo Girls and kd lang all have strong lesbian followings and a long established "lesbian icon" status.

In the book "The lesbian Idol: Martina, kd and the Consumption of Lesbian Masculinity," Louise Allen examines lesbian iconography through an analysis of lesbian recognition, identification and desire.

"The star-fan relationship challenges the heterosexual notion of sex as determining gender, because the function of the masculine woman is a powerful signifier of lesbian identity," Allen says.

"Martina and kd embody an ongoing and lived-out lesbian identity that makes representation of them in the mainstream media an unprecedented phenomenon which undercuts the primacy of heterosexual gender relations."

But for both gay men and lesbians, entertainers seem to dominate the gay icon status.

"What does it say about us as a group of people that we choose Cher and Madonna and Dolly and Britney as icons but ignore people like E. Lynn Harris and [gay Ga. state Rep.] Karla Drenner?" Williamson asks. "It seems we pick people who are popular entertainers as icons and ignore people who make significant con-

tributions in other arenas."

Author Braun says that celebs who are "colorful" make the grade.

"Entertainment celebrities attract the focus of gay people because they are colorful, which most 'respectable high-profile celebrities' are not," Braun says.

Kinley says that entertainers speak to larger truths that remain poignant outside the context of their achievements in time and history.

"To an extent, I would recognize that Greg Louganis is a gay icon — his history, popularity and courage were definitely instrumental in my acceptance of myself — but his legacy has somewhat failed to endure," Kinley says. "He has been somewhat forgotten despite contributions of heroic proportions. Our culture's obsession with what's new or the next best thing [could be what] contributes to an icon's longevity, thus propelling them into the ranks of the memorable."

MORE INFO

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HGO's year begins
with a pleasing and
original 'La Boheme'

A classic done well

IN A MASTERFUL MARKETING MOVE, Houston Grand Opera's "year of the diva" hits all of the right notes with a solidly performed rendition of the Puccini classic, "La Boheme."

Though many of the works by this Italian composer are famous, "La Boheme" needs no introduction at all. By some accounts, the work has been performed more than any other opera, something many of us don't seem to mind. A friend of mine who was a regular patron of the Paris Opera once said, "It's not brain surgery: Operas that people enjoy will be performed because they are good. There's a reason why you've never heard of so many other operas — they're dreadful."

"La Boheme" is kind of like pizza or sex: even when it's less than stellar, it's still enjoyable. If it's enjoyable, it's fabulous.

This story, based on a work by Henri Murger, details the life of an impoverished quartet of friends who stumble through love and death in 120 minutes. This poet, painter, musician and philosopher form the foundation for a highly romantic mini saga.

Puccini is well known for his "verismo" operas — the definition is simple: Rather than dealing with the adventures of randy nobility and their meaningless conquests, Puccini prefers to give us a musical peek at the gritty, more common aspects of life. It's like 19th century reality television. Many have raided Puccini's formula. Remember the famous Barry Manilow disco refrain, "Music and passion were always in fashion at the Copa... they fell in love." Who knew the phrase came from "Boheme"?

Puccini gives us the story on a (slightly tarnished) silver platter. You know everything that is going happen as soon as the curtain rises. As soon as lovers Mimi and Rodolfo meet, she gives out a little cough — she says it's nothing, but we know she'll be hacking up her left lung by the last act. We know that she will die after singing for 20 minutes. We know this and still we unabashedly sniffle and tear as her chums sell their possessions to comfort their ailing friend. How can a guy who sings farewell to a ratty old coat make us cry? We realize the sacrifice entailed therein and it moves us.

HGO has wisely not strayed too far off the beaten path in this production. Some opera companies feel that the only way they can make this classic "interesting" is to set it in a 23rd century bordello in Bangladesh. Fortunately, HGO's World War I-era setting doesn't distract — it enhances. There is true dichotomy in "Boheme." One aspect represents a "devil-may-care" attitude of youth, while the other brings us poverty that results in an untimely death.

The production represents "La vie de boheme" as an island surrounded by a grimy sea. Set designer Allen Moyer has



Mimi (Ana Maria Martinez) and Rodolfo (Roberto Aronica) express their love in Houston Grand Opera's well-done 'LaBoheme.' (Photo by George Hixson)

given us a wonderful venue for this story. The brightly painted loft amidst the dreary surroundings provides only limited protection for our main characters. The "box within a box" concept allows us to focus on the action and prevents the cast from wandering all over hell and half of Georgia.

The socioeconomic canyon between the "haves" and the "have-nots" is wonderfully illustrated in the café scene where the poor linger in front of those dining in style. There is rampant subtlety in this production that might be missed on a first viewing. Small gestures denote a thoughtfully detailed approach from imaginative director James Robinson. He specializes in fresh interpretations of old operatic war horses, and this "Boheme" is no exception. Even in the midst of tragedy there are clever touches of humorous camaraderie.

The singers in this production (many of them younger than expected) are aptly cast. While not the biggest set of voices ever assembled, this group has a visible and vocal synergy that benefits the production. In casting Boheme, HGO seems to have paid particular attention to not only how these singers sound together, but how they look as well. HGO's Mimi in this production, Ana Maria Martinez, not only possesses a lovely voice, but also looked really, really infirmed just before she bought the operatic farm.

Roberto Aronica's lyric tenor provided an unforced accompaniment to her Mimi. HGO studio alum Oren Gradus as Colline combines a rich, focused sound with wonderful stage presence.

The HGO orchestra under the baton of conductor Sebastian Lang-Lessing offered a lush version of Puccini's difficult orchestral score — their rendering was so filled with enthusiasm that it often overwhelmed those they accompanied. The HGO Chorus produces a wonderful sound but their diction is sometimes difficult to decipher, even from a mere eight rows away.

This "Boheme" is solid and at times inventive. Even if you've seen it before, it may move you still.

ON STAGE

'La Boheme'

Houston Grand Opera • Through Nov. 16

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dining TRAYCE DISKIN

Restaurant's menu selection excels, but its quality of food preparation is inconsistent

Mi Luna hits, misses

THE PARTNERS WHO RUN MI LUNA Tapas Restaurant & Bar in Rice Village know a thing or two about running a successful business.

Their downtown Italian, Middle Eastern, and French ventures, respectively Mia Bella, Zana, and the excellent and elegant Papillon, continue to draw theatergoers and downtowners alike. But has Mi Luna kept up with the newer downtown tapas restaurants, as well as with its popular sister establishments? While the answer isn't a resounding "yes," Mi Luna still provides an exciting and extensive tapas menu in an upbeat, stylish setting.

The soft yellow lighting accents the rustic golden and rose stucco arches above the booths, and the dark cherry wood furniture and bar counter lend a stateliness to the roomy bar area. Although murals of flamenco dancers and toreadors could easily come off as hokey, they manage to subtly blend into the décor.

On Thursday nights, Mi Luna transforms itself into a blaringly loud Latin night club, replete with a powerful Flamenco and Spanish rock band, enticing drink specials, and hoards of decked out (mostly straight) young professionals more interesting in soaking up the scene than chowing down on tapas and sangria.

Luckily, my friend and I arrived early enough one evening to enjoy a quiet and leisurely dinner in true tapas style. Unlike some other restaurants that claim to serve tapas, Mi Luna actually offers small enough dishes to equally proportioned prices. Roughly, the menu divides into Cold Tapas, Hot Tapas, and Paellas, with a few entrée-sized dishes offered as well.

Although I would have gladly started with a glass of the watery but dizzyingly fruity sangria, our waiter never stopped to take our drink order. The fresh Italian bread and the deliciously pungent garlic-infused olive oil arrived quickly, but we waited nearly 20 minutes for our server to reappear. So we had plenty of time to weigh our many options while we nibbled on the bread and watched a group of servers (ours among them) linger in the foyer, oblivious to the two hungry patrons in the nearly empty restaurant.

SERVERS AT MI LUNA DO MAKE A point of announcing that there are no appetizers or main courses — all dishes arrive when they're ready. Somehow this pacing always seems more enjoyable and serendipitous, as it allows diners to savor each dish separately rather than focus on the progression of the meal. However, we were glad when our salad-like Plato de Salmon Ahumado (\$7.95) came first, with its paper-thin slices of fresh manchego cheese and sweet walnut sherry vinaigrette resting on a bed of smoked salmon, pears, and tomatoes.

Only the tomatoes, off-color and a tad mushy, kept this dish from being a near perfect way to start the meal. The salmon was tender and so lightly seasoned with

dill and pepper that even the marinade didn't mask its own fresh, unsalty flavor.

The Olivas Alinenadas (\$3.95) featured green, black, and kalamata-like olives drenched in a marinade of herbs, roasted garlic, and lemon. Although the olives were piquant and flavorful, they quickly became bloated and spotted in the excessive pool of oil.

Just as we were lamenting the soggy ruin of the olives, one of my favorite dishes in all of Houston arrived — Pulpo con Patatas (\$5.95). The octopus in this dish comes in thick, steaming white and purple chunks, and, although it is lightly sautéed, it has the deep hearty flavor of meat that's been lovingly roasted over an open fire. The roasted red peppers, garlic, onion, and olive oil coat the meat and cubed potatoes evenly and provide a gentle but even kick that allows the ingredients to mingle without overpowering one another.

Although many other dishes, such as our Seafood Paella (\$12.95), certainly arrive well-heated, there's something exquisite about the piping hot temperature of the Pulpo that enhances its rich aroma and flavors. The Paella, sadly, wasn't as successful in achieving a similar harmony of textures and tastes. The saffron rice was moist and we loved the plump and abundant green peas that contributed a bit of color. However, the seafood was rubbery on all counts. This couldn't be the same family of octopi that graced our previous dish, we reasoned. The shrimp was mealy and the squid rings were too squishy and possibly overcooked. The only redeeming factor was the soft monkfish, which pleasantly soaked up the tomato juice and traces of the saffron seasoning.

We admired the stewed, caramelized texture of the Berejenas a la Plancha con Ajo (\$3.95), as well its the zesty cumin accent, but the dish was so overly salted that it made it nearly unpalatable.

Even if it is sometimes a game of hit or miss, the sheer abundance and variety of dishes at Mi Luna should still be a drawing point for those who crave tapas, but want to avoid the inconvenience of downtown. It may not be utterly perfect in its execution, but it has the concept down, and atmosphere to pull it off — at least for now.

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sports LEE DAVIS

Houston Tennis Club welcomes players
 from across the globe for tournament

Texas hosts tennis

HOUTEX 22

The Houston Tennis Club proudly announces its tournament, HOUTEX22. With more than 160 contestants from all over the country, including two from Japan, this tournament serves the international flair.

Join the contestants at the Lee Le Clair Tennis Center on Gessner (south of 59 South) Nov. 9-11. Spectators are welcomed and encouraged to root on their favorite player. For more information, please see the Houston Tennis Club Web site at www.houstontennisclub.org.

Bat boys needed!

Michael's Outpost is looking for a few good men: no experience necessary, just a desire to have fun. The Outpost is forming a "D" Division softball team for participation in the Montrose Softball League (MSL) Spring League.

MSL's "D" Division exists for persons interested in learning the fundamentals of softball, or, for those who have some softball experience, to hone those skills for upward advancement in the league.

The first meeting of the team will be held in November, with its first fund-raiser in December. Perks for this season's team will include the chance for members to earn a free trip to Washington, D.C., next August for the Gay Softball World Series. For information on the team, pick up an application and team info sheet at the bar, 1419 Richmond, or call 713-520-8446 and speak to Jamie.

Scrummy?

Gay rugby in Houston has a new Web site. For information on this opportunity for our community, go to www.roughnecksrugby.org.

Player beware — rugby is a physical sport and injuries do occur. Broken noses, bumps on the head, and more are all an unavoidable part of the game. On the plus side, remember the occasional win, the fun of grabbing a crotch (by mistake of course), the camaraderie and trust in your fellow ruggers.

No rugby experience is necessary; men of all shapes and sizes are welcome.

Bump, set, spike

The Lone Star Volleyball Association (LSVA) recently released its standings for the fall division. In the Recreational Division, Diego's Team leads the way with a record of 23-3, followed by Buck's team at 14-10, Alex's Team at 10-12, Desi's Team at 7-15 and Greg's Team at 4-18.

The Competitive Division has tightened up as Perez's People stands at 12-8, The Slayers approach with a 10-10 record and Ritter's Critters come in at 8-12. The Power Division still has Texas Exes in the lead at 14-6, Scrubbs at 12-8, Chaos comes in with an 11-9 record, Assault with 10-10, followed by Handful at 5-13 and Aerial Attach at 4-14.

Anyone interested in playing volleyball and meeting new friends is welcome to stop by the Jarabek Center on the University of

St. Thomas campus at 3800 Mount Vernon Blvd. from 4:30 to 7 p.m. on Sundays. First-time players and visitors can participate for free, so go out and join the fun!

Also check out the Web site at www.lsva.org, or call 713-717-LSVA.

Aussie style

Our readers are looking for persons planning to attend the Gay Games in Sydney, Australia. Because of privacy constraints, the organizers of the games are unable to submit a list of registrants.

Contact Tim Martinez via e-mail at timmyhou@aol.com.

Skating season

Looking for great fun and an opportunity to skate like Tai and Randy, Dorothy Hammill, Rudy? Whoever your skating idol is, join the Lambda Roller Skating club while getting great cardio stimulation. They can be found at <http://www.neosoft.com/lrsc> or via e-mail at lrsc@neosoft.com.

Kick a ball

The Montrose Soccer Club of Houston is open to men and women who have experience playing soccer. For more information, send an e-mail to MontroseSC@soccer.com or go to <http://www.geocities.com/MontroseSoccer>.

Are you being served?

The Houston Tennis Club meets on Wednesday and Friday evenings from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Or meet the club on Sundays from 9 a.m. until noon. For more information, contact the Houston Tennis Club at 713-692-2701 or log on to houstontennisclub@aol.com.

Power play

Don't forget there are many opportunities out there for all levels of bowling fun. Contact Tom O'Dell at 713-861-1187 or 713-220-5700, extension 331, for information on the Inner Loop Alternatives (four-person mixed teams) at palace lanes on Sundays at 7 p.m. Tom's also in the know for the leagues on Monday at 9 p.m., Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. and Thursday at 9 p.m.

Call Pat at 281-437-6218 for information on the Monday Night Women's League. Bowling begins at 6:45 p.m. at the Dynamic Lanes, 6121 Tarneff. Go roll a few.

Backfield in motion

The Houston Women's Flag Football League begins a new season. For more information, call 713-981-6753.

Showers

As can be expected with any outdoor activity in Houston in the fall, the Montrose Softball League announced games were again postponed that were scheduled for Nov. 3. The Board of Directors will meet to decide on the conclusion of the season.

Log on to www.montrosesoftball-league.com for their decision.

community calendar

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9

Gulf Coast Transgender Committee. Meeting. 713-780-4282.

EVERY SATURDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10

EVERY SUNDAY

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

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

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

Community of Kindred Spirits in Beaumont. Worship at 6 p.m. 1575 Spindletop Ave., Beaumont, Texas. 409-813-2055. E-mail: cksrev3@netzero.net

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11

EVERY MONDAY

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

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

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

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

Gay Fathers/Fathers First. Support group. 8-9:30 p.m. Grace Lutheran Church. Tom, 713-726-8736.

www.geocities.com/gaydadshouston/

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

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

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

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

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

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12

Classic Chassis Car Club. Houston group's monthly board meeting, 7 p.m. 713-797-8615. www.classicchassisclub.org.

Integrity/Houston. Meeting and potluck supper featuring discussion of what it means to be transgendered. 7 p.m. Aubry House, 6265 S. Main St.

Pride Committee of Houston. Monthly meeting at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne. 713-529-6979. www.pridehouston.org.

EVERY TUESDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lambda Skating Club. 8 p.m. Tradewinds. Skating Rink. www.lambdaroll.org. 713-410-7215.

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

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

Recovery From Food Addiction (RFA). Meeting for 12-step program open to all. Noon-1 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1805 W. Alabama St. RFA: 713-673-2848.

www.geocities.com/rfa77235/. E-mail: rfaeworldservice@aol.com.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mishpachot Alizim. GLBT Jewish congregation. Sabbath services at 8 p.m. on the second Friday of each month at Baby Barnabys, 602 Fairview. Monthly study groups with Congregation Beth Israel, 5600 North Braeswood. Mishpachot Alizim, P.O. Box 980136, Houston, TX 77098. 866-841-9139, ext. 1834.

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

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

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appts

a weekly guide to arts & entertainment activities for gay Houstonians

SPECIAL SUNDAY, NOV. 10

Mr. Prime Choice Benefit is planned in memory of the late Creath Robinson, Mr. Prime Choice 2001-2002. The event raises funds for the Gulf Coast Archives & Museum and the non-profit Colt 45s. 8 p.m. at the Ripcord, 715 Fairview. For more information, contact Robert Harwood at 713-571-7870 (Monday-Friday, 3-9 p.m.).

UPCOMING

The Rainbow Fishing Club plan a day of fishing and boardwalk exploring in Kemah on Saturday, Nov. 16. The Iron Maiden will depart Galveston Bay at 10 a.m. and return at 2 p.m. Reservations must be made by Nov. 10. Cost: \$50 per person. Call Scott at 832-971-4900.

SUNDAY, NOV. 17

Cher's "Living Proof Farewell Tour" comes to Houston with guest Cyndi Lauper. Tickets: \$59.75 and up. 7:30 p.m. Compaq Center, 10 E. Greenway Plaza. 713-843-3995. www.compaqcenter.com

FILM SATURDAY, NOV. 9

"Moonlight Tariff" features 30-year-old photographer Cora, who, after a string of failed romances, falls head over heels for her gynecologist. He fails to call after their first amorous encounter, and Cora becomes a comedic wreck. 7 p.m. Tickets: \$6. Rice Cinema, Rice University Campus, Entrance No. 8, University Boulevard and Stockton Drive. 713-348-4853. www.ruf.rice.edu/~cinema.

THIS WEEKEND

"Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars," directed by D.A. Pennebaker, stars David Bowie as his gender-bending alter ego. 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 8, and Saturday, Nov. 9. Tickets: \$6. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Caroline Wiess Law Building, corner of Main Street and Bissonnet/Binz. 713-6

Back By Popular Demand! as first seen during Pride Week

"GLBT History, Houston's First Decade: 1975-1985"



Ray Hill

A history program with
presenters Ray Hill,
Phyllis Randolph Frye and
Aaron Coleman

7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 11, at

Theatre Suburbia

1410 West 43rd Street at Oak Forest just
outside the 610 Loop, near Ella Boulevard

*A Benefit for Houston Lesbian & Gay Community
Center and Gulf Coast Archive & Museum of GLBT
History (GCAM).*

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WRITER LOOKING FOR STORIES of local heroes/people who have made a difference to another individual, their city or their community. Contact Paul Dunn; 3030 McKinney Ave.; Dallas, TX, 75204 or contact me via e-mail: PD200@aol.com

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Q Puzzle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15				16			
17					18				19			
			20		21				22			
23	24	25			26			27				
28				29			30					
31					32	33				34	35	36
37					38				39	40		
41					42				43			
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	47	48					49	50		51		
52					53				54			
55					56				57	58	59	60
61					62				63			
64					65				66			

"Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit"

Across

- "Queen Christina" star
- "Dorian" novelist Will
- Trick
- The Indigo Girls' "Back Together ____"
- "Firebird" composer Stravinsky
- "Phantom" scar source
- Beat it with your hand
- Human Rights Campaign fund-raiser, e.g.
- What Siegfried and Roy do together
- "Out Magazine" editor who dated a baseball player
- Stick held between the legs
- Symbol of Tammy Baldwin's party
- AIDS organization "Broadway ____"
- Tool used on the can
- Quilt subject
- Benjamin Britten's British companion
- Aspen's hrs.
- Kyle's mom on "South Park", e.g.
- Supposedly well-endowed Onassis
- Shed ____ (rust the Tin Man?)
- Toto outburst
- With 53-Across, queer Cubari movie from 1993
- Curve and others
- Langston Hughes' home for many years
- Polley of "Exotica"

- Benjamin Hoff's "The ____ of Pooh"
- Pink shade
- See 43-Across
- He cruised for 40 days straight
- HRC's equal sign
- With "fours," doggy-style
- DiFranco's "Talk ____ Now"
- Straight ____ arrow
- Janis Joplin's "Me and Bobby ____"
- Suffix with drag
- Daniel Harris' "The ____ and Fall of Gay Culture"
- Davis of "The Virgin Queen"

Down

- Gift of Rosie O'Donnell
- "Fourscore and seven years ____"
- Hustled
- Like k.d. lang's gal of song
- ____ about (roughly)
- Cherry Jones flick of 2002
- "Great balls of fire!"
- Marlene Dietrich role in "Blue Angel"
- Irish Bacon
- Divine director John
- Start of Caesar's boast
- Transportation for Liberace and Elton
- Adam and Steve's locale?

- He shot off at O.K. Corral
- "When I was a ____"
- Poisonous flower of "The Wizard of Oz"
- Type of queen
- Split from between the sheets
- It may come before long
- "Aida" solo
- Enjoys Rubicon restaurant
- Abbr. on a Provincetown Ferry ticket
- Tennessee Williams' lover Frank
- Looks straight in the eye, say
- "I'm all ears"
- Org. for Evan Wolfson's peers
- Playwright McNally
- George Chauncey, for one
- "Stop!" to a stud
- He handles shafts and quivers
- Sound of the New York Spirit cheerleaders
- You might stick it where it doesn't belong
- There is nothing like this in "South Pacific"
- Frat party wear
- "You'll Never Walk ____"
- Queen's "subjects"
- Start of a Mozart title
- Lara Croft raids it
- FBI guy
- Do-over for Martina
- Jason of "Chasing Amy"

Answers on Page 25

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Answers to Q puzzle on page 24

E	T	L	B	E	S	R	I	S	R	E	R	S	T	E	R
E	E	G	C	M	N	A	S	A	V	A	M	E	T	O	M
L	L	V	A	N	O	O	G	O	L	H	V	A	N	O	N
			E	A	T	E	L	A	O	C	O	H	C	H	A
E	S	O	R	O	V	A	O	T	A	H	A	R	A	R	S
M	E	L	E	H	A	R	S	A	R	C	S	A	R	C	S
Y	R	R	E	B	W	A	V	A	T	R	S	T	R	A	P
R	A	T	E	A	R	I	A	R	I	D	E	P	R	U	D
T	M	D	T	S	A	R	S	P	E	A	R	P	E	T	E
			S	A	I	D	S	R	E	N	E	R	O	P	E
			S	C	A	R	E	S	A	S	S	O	G	O	
N	O	N	E	M	L	N	A	N	D	A	N	B	R	E	
E	M	A	T	A	V	A	L	G	A	L	G	O	N	G	O
A	C	I	D	A	C	I	D	I	G	O	R	A	I	N	A
E	L	I	W	I	L	E	S	E	L	F	S	O	B	A	R

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 Roommates
 Personal Web sites
- BUSINESS RATE \$18:**
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 Help Wanted-Seeking
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 Licensed Massage
 Moving Services
 Professional Services
 Real Estate For Rent
 Real Estate For Sale
- Call 1-877-966-3342, ext. 15 for other categories

2 WRITE YOUR AD
Please print clearly

CATEGORY: _____ **# OF ISSUES:** _____

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

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

TEXT: _____

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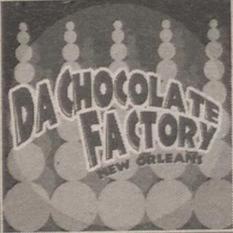
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astrology JILL DEARMAN



My Stars!

November 8 — 14



ARIES (March 21 to April 20)

Venus retrograde in your house of serious partnerships makes this an intense time for love. You shouldn't be so fooled by superficial charm. Look beneath the surface. Another Aries' actions speak louder than words.



TAURUS (April 21 to May 20)

Mars in your sixth house of health and body could inspire you to get more sporty, you spicy Taurus. You have a lot of energy that could be better spent. Perhaps it's triathlon time (or, at least, time to sweat indoors with a Libra).



GEMINI (May 21 to June 21)

Uranus and Neptune in your house of travel could inspire you to get out of town not just for a week or two, but permanently! Ask yourself what you are searching for, on the deepest level. A Pisces won't let you go it alone.



CANCER (June 22 to July 22)

It's an intense time to be you, darling. The theatrical part of your nature is in high gear, which means that you won't be ignored! Potential lovers better sit up and take notice, or you may rip their heads off with one quick diva-esque put-down. A Scorpio knows how to play a scene with you. It's all about chemistry.



LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22)

Better to lay low while your love life is in flux and not push the envelope. Several planets are transiting your home sector and making it more advisable for you to be cautious rather than contrary. A Pisces is nice to you when you play nice back.



VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22)

Life really lightens up this week as the Sun, Mercury, and Venus all to give you the rockin' social life you desire. Don't fight with possessive friends. Tell them you'll call them back and then buy some time! A surprisingly free-spirited Capricorn is the one who gives you the most joy.



LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22)

You need to push your own limits during this cycle, especially when it comes to monetary matters. Several planets in your house of finances are giving you the green light to pursue extra income. Get out of your own way! Or, at least, get out of bed and get dressed, you lazy thing! A Virgo will undress you later.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21)

This is a beautiful time for you, Scorpio, because you're able to see how important your contributions to the world are. Take advantage of the fact that so many planets are in your sign, and push your ideas into the psyches of powerful people. A Leo is a great ally.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21)

This is not the time to change the outer aspects of your life, Sag. While the Sun transits your mystical 12th house, tap in to your psyche instead. Meditation helps oodles. Cosmic sex with an Aries won't hurt either.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19)

This is a good time for you to hook up with groups and organizations that share your point of view. You need smart colleagues and avid allies around you. A Scorpio will fight the good fight by your side.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18)

Mars in your gadabout ninth house may make you hard to pin down in love and at work. Good! You need to be free, darling. Possessive people are the bane of your existence, so avoid 'em at all costs. A Capricorn may not see eye to eye with you, but you two can communicate thigh to thigh.



PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20)

The more you learn the more you can teach, and the more you teach the more you feel connected to your truest self this week. It's all about sharing knowledge now, darling, so don't be stingy with that original mind of yours. Caucus with a Gemini.

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

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