

INSIDE



Police are looking for a suspect and an activist is looking for the gay community's help in solving the murder of Juan Manuel Miyar-Laris. The 38-year-old gay man was found stabbed to death in his Galleria-area apartment early Saturday morning.

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Ashland Street Theatre closes its doors and cancels production of 'Blue Boys,' starring Ryan Idol. Meanwhile, Theatre New West is still in operation, but the restaurant housing the theater—Sonoma—is shut down while the building's owner explores options for the structure.

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Can't get away for a proper vacation? Take a day trip instead to Galveston, Brenham or many other nearby towns that offer the charm of a mini-getaway.

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Non-discrimination ordinance passes



With Houston Mayor Lee P. Brown looking on, City Councilwoman Annise Parker speaks following Wednesday's vote approving a non-discrimination ordinance that will protect gay city workers.

Houston City Council approves measure to protect gay municipal employees in 10-4 vote

by KAY Y. DAYUS

With a resounding 10-4 vote, Houston City Council last Wednesday passed the anti-discrimination ordinance that outlaws discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, race, religion, age, gender or disability for the city of Houston's 23,000 employees.

Initially, Councilman Orlando Sanchez proposed an amendment to water down the ordinance by eliminating all protected classes and replacing them with a generic prohibition against discrimination. That proposal was defeated 9-5.

In a word, openly gay Councilwoman Annise Parker said she was "thrilled," by the overwhelming strength of the vote. "I have mixed emotions that in 2001 we are still debating whether gays, lesbians and the transgendered have fewer rights or the same rights as everyone else."

Parker said she had counted on eight votes in favor of the ordinance, but was happy to see that council members Carroll Robinson and Bert Keller also voted "yes" on the issue.

In praise of the ordinance, Mayor Lee P. Brown said at a press conference following the vote, "it's the right thing to do."

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Faith-based bill splits gay House members

GOP's Kolbe joined Republicans in defeating effort to halt anti-gay language, while Frank wanted House to 'fix' problem

by LOU CHIBBARO JR.

WASHINGTON—Openly gay U.S. Rep. Jim Kolbe (R-Ariz.) joined all but four of his House Republican colleagues last week in voting against an effort to remove anti-gay language from the faith-based initiatives bill.

The language, part of a piece of legislation passed by the House on July 19, would allow religious charities to refuse to hire gay workers. It could affect gays wanting to work with charities that operate federally funded soup kitchens, AIDS treatment facilities, and other programs aimed at helping the poor.

The motion, introduced by Rep. John

Conyers (D-Mich.), lost in a 234-195 vote. Democrats voted for the motion by a margin of 190-17, with three Democrats not voting. Republicans voted 217-4 against the motion, with one Republican not voting.

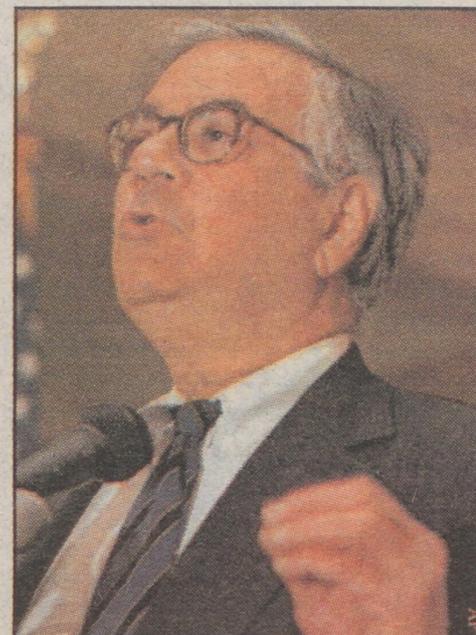
The House then voted 233-198 to pass HR 7, the faith-based initiatives bill proposed by President Bush, which contains the anti-gay language.

Texas Representatives from the Houston area were split on the vote by party lines. Democrats Sheila Jackson Lee, Ken Bentsen and Gene Green voted against the measure, while Republicans John Abney Culberson, Kevin Brady and Tom DeLay favored the bill.

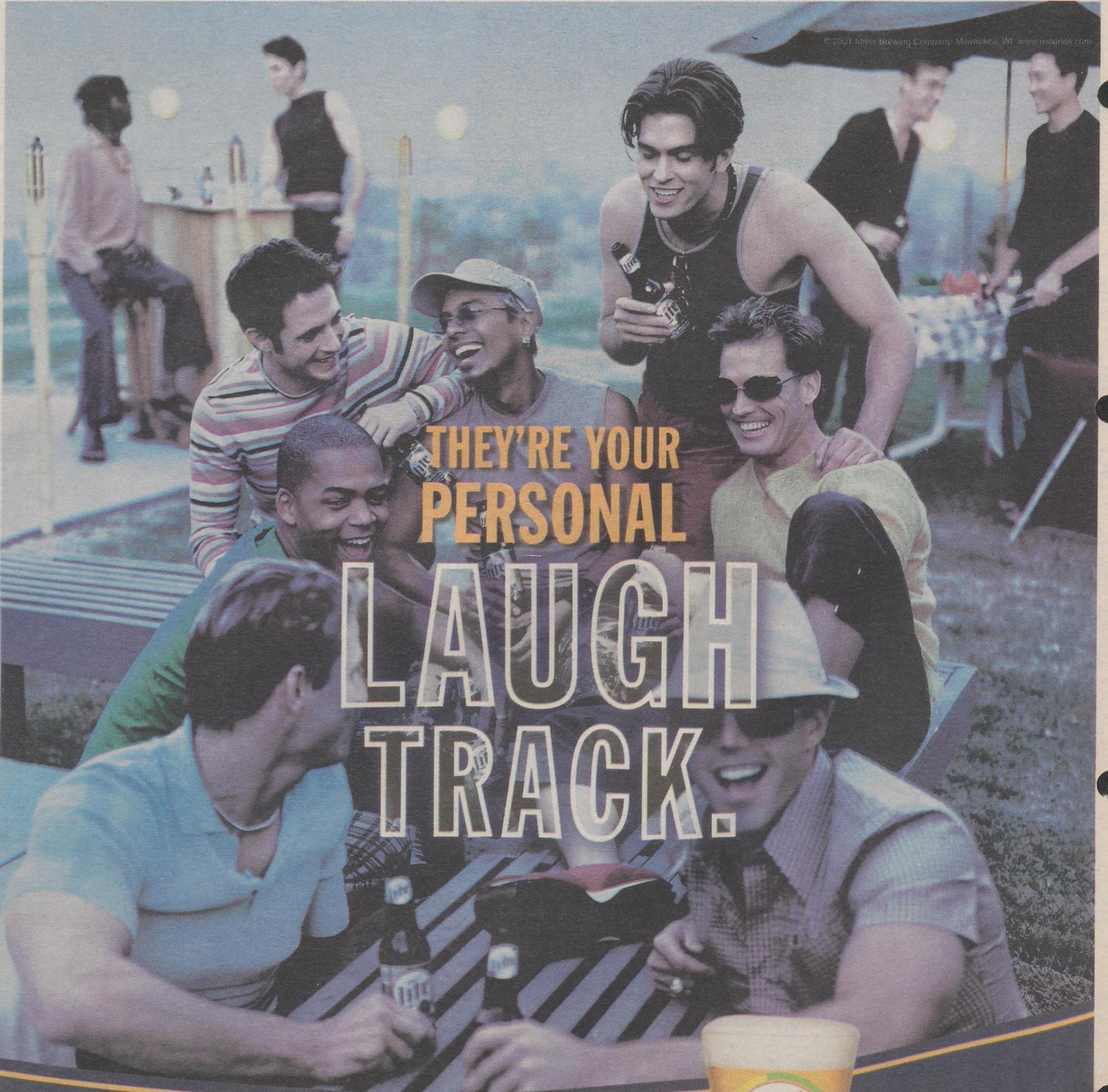
Overall, 12 Republicans from Texas voted for the legislation and only Rep. Ron Paul of Surfside dissented. Sixteen Democrats from Texas voted against the bill with only one favorable vote cast by Rep. Ralph M. Hall of Rockwall.

In a statement released Monday, Kolbe acknowledged that the faith-based initiatives bill approved by the House would "pre-empt" state and local gay civil rights

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Openly gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) called last week's failed effort to strip anti-gay language from the faith-based initiatives bill one of the most important recent gay civil rights votes in the House.

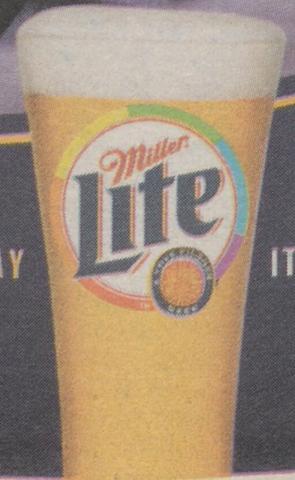


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Gay man stabbed to death in Galleria area



Juan Manuel Miyar-Laris, an openly gay man, was found stabbed to death in his Galleria-area apartment on July 21. Crime Stoppers is offering a \$25,000 reward for clues in the case. Police believe Miyar-Laris may have known his killer.

Crime Stoppers offering reward, gay activist rallying for community's help to find murderer

by WENDY K. MOHON

As police search for a suspect in the brutal murder of a Houston gay man, a longtime activist is trying to incite the gay community to help find the killer.

Juan Manuel Miyar-Laris, 38, was stabbed to death in the early-morning hours of July 21. He had been socializing with friends in the Montrose gay bar district and was reportedly heading home sometime around 2 a.m., according to police.

Around 4:30 a.m., firefighters found Miyar-Laris's body in the living room of his apartment in the 1900 block of Post Oak Park in the Galleria area while responding to a neighbor's call reporting a fire in the apartment. Investigators theorize he collapsed while trying to flee the apartment.

"Based on the physical evidence on the body, he was terrified the last few moments of his life," said Sgt. Waymon Allen. "He was attempting to fight for his life and to get away."

A large kitchen knife recovered at the scene of the crime is believed to be the murder weapon, police said.

There was no sign of forced entry and nothing was missing from the apartment, so police believe Miyar-Laris knew his killer and the crime was not a robbery. Neighbors reported noises coming from the apartment, then heard a fire alarm sound.

Longtime gay activist Ray Hill, who organized rallies in the wake of the gay-bashing death of Paul Broussard in 1991, said whether or not Miyar-Laris's murder is a hate crime, he hopes Houston's gay community will step forward to help police find the murder.

"At this point, it's way too soon to call it gay bashing," Hill said. "That doesn't matter though. A gay person is dead and that warrants the time and energy of the gay community to work on solving this."

Police believe Miyar-Laris's 2001 Ford Expedition was taken by the suspect to flee the scene. The vehicle was found hours after the murder in the 700 block of Lawrence in the Heights area. It had been set on fire, but crime scene specialists found several fingerprints on the vehicle.

"They attempted to set fire to the truck and that didn't work any better than the

> Continued on Page 13

Redistricting plan divides gay neighborhoods

New boundaries pull gay-friendly legislators from Montrose

by ELLA TYLER

The Republican-controlled Texas Legislative Redistricting Board met Wednesday and adopted boundaries for Texas House and Senate districts designed to secure substantial Republican majorities in both chambers. The boundaries are to become effective for the elections in 2002.

Later in the day, a lawsuit was filed saying that the new lines dilute minority voting strength and could not stand.

The new lines leave many gay-friendly legislators homeless. Democrats Debra Danburg and Scott Hochberg now reside in the same district as conservative Republican Kyle Janek. The new district is supposedly more than 60 percent Republican.

Danburg reports that Glenn Maxey of Austin, the state's only openly gay legislator, has been "paired" with two of his liberal colleagues, Elliot Naishtat and Ann Kitchen.

"Hayette Ehrhardt, from Dallas, who is very gay-friendly, has lost a lot of her base," Danburg said. "They split the gay community up to silence its voice."

Danburg has represented Montrose and the Heights for 20 years. Her current district has been parceled out into four districts, she says. "The part east of Montrose Boulevard will go into Garnet Coleman's district and Jessica Farrar will get most of the Heights.

"The Gulfton area will be a new district without an incumbent. They also divided the Jewish neighborhoods Scott represents into three districts," she added.



Rice area, West University, and parts of Bellaire and the Braeswood area.

"I'm not applying for retirement yet. I'll see what the courts do," Danburg said, adding she did not rule out a race in the new district. "When Scott and I looked at the numbers, we found out that Paul Hobby got more than 52 percent of the vote in the

district, which encouraged me because Paul and I attract the same voters.

"I grew up in River Oaks and the district includes the part of the Jewish community where my relatives live," she said. "Besides, people kept saying my current district was getting more Republican, but I won my last election by my biggest margin ever."

The Legislative Redistricting Board consists of five state officials: the Lt. Governor,

They split the gay community up to silence its voice.

—Rep. Debra Danburg, D-Houston

The new district Danburg lives in includes the western part of Montrose, River Oaks, the

House Speaker, Attorney General, Comptroller and Land Commissioner.

House Speaker Pete Laney is the only Democrat. Districts for the Texas House and Senate and U.S. House are generally drawn by the legislature but the Republican-dominated Senate refused to pass the plan approved by the Democratic-controlled House.

Gov. Rick Perry, a Republican, refused to call a special session of the legislature for redistricting, so the Board took over. A suit over Congressional redistricting was already pending.

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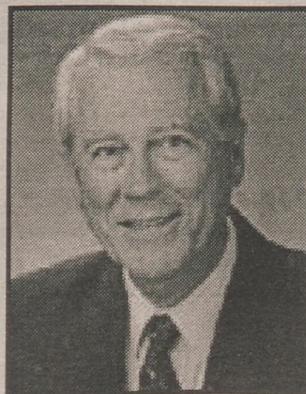
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Kentucky Baptist Homes wins lawsuit in firing of lesbian

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP)—A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit filed on behalf of a lesbian who was fired by the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children because of her sexual orientation. The ACLU filed the lawsuit in April 2000 on behalf of Alicia Pedreira, a social worker fired from the state-funded home Oct. 23, 1998. The decision to fire her came after officials at Baptist Homes saw a photograph of Pedreira and her partner taken at the Kentucky State Fair. Baptist Homes has a policy that prohibits the hiring of gay employees. The lawsuit said that policy amounts to religious discrimination. "While Baptist Homes seeks to employ only persons who adhere to a behavioral code consistent with its religious mission, the absence of religious requirements leaves their focus on behavior, not religion," U.S. District Judge Charles Simpson III wrote in his decision, issued Monday. "This is an action brought under statutes that protect the religious freedom of individuals in the workplace. However, there are no facts alleged which support this contention." The ACLU said it may appeal; Baptist Home officials said they were relieved by the judge's decision.

Boy Scouts, gay civil rights group reach accord in Miami-Dade



Anchorage, Alaska Mayor George Wuerch removed a Gay Pride exhibit from the city's public library June 5 after he said it was disruptive.

MIAMI—A South Florida branch of the Boy Scouts of America has agreed to give up its \$125,000 in public funding, stop recruiting at public schools, and develop a training program to help its leaders deal more sensitively with gay youth as part of an agreement with a gay civil rights group made last week, the Miami Herald reported. The agreement, one of the first of its kind nationally, came after a yearlong talks between the South Florida Council of Boy Scouts, Safeguarding American Values for Everyone (SAVE) Dade and United Way of Miami-Dade. "We don't need any more people in the community that want to fight with us, so I think there's certainly an advantage there," Jeff Hermann, an executive for the South Florida Council, told the Associated Press. Without making any concession to the national policy of excluding gays, the local Boy Scouts chapter said it will work with gay organizations to educate Scout leaders on ways to deal more sensitively with members who identify themselves as gay, the South Florida Sun-Sentinel reported.

Gay Pride exhibit back up in Anchorage library

ANCHORAGE, Alaska—A Gay Pride exhibit that was taken down by the city's mayor was returned July 12 to the Z.J. Loussac Public Library, as ordered by a federal judge, and the city also agreed to pay \$10,000 of the exhibitors' attorney's fees, the Anchorage Daily News reported. The Alaska Civil Liberties Union sued the city in June on behalf of organizers of the exhibit after Anchorage Mayor George Wuerch removed the exhibit, saying it was promotional, disruptive, and was interactive, since elevators in the exhibit appeared as closets that library patrons walked into and came out of. The suit said the city violated freedom of speech. U.S. District Judge James Singleton said exhibitors had showed a likelihood of success of their claims and the city should pay their attorney's fees, the judge added. The order is a preliminary injunction that lasts until Oct. 15 or until a trial can be held.

Indiana college will stage controversial play 'Corpus Christi'

FORT WAYNE, Ind. (AP)—A federal judge ruled last Friday that a state university can stage performances of a controversial play that portrays Jesus Christ as a hard-drinking gay man. A group of local residents and state lawmakers had filed a lawsuit seeking to prohibit Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne from staging Terrence McNally's *Corpus Christi* at a university theater. They argued that taxpayer money should not be used to help subsidize the production because it attacks religion. In denying a preliminary injunction, Judge William C. Lee ruled the plaintiffs had not demonstrated how the production would violate the establishment clause of the U.S. Constitution requiring separation of church and state. Lee ruled the campus was not taking a position on religion by staging the play. He said the campus has allowed the theater in question to be used as a public forum in the past and that it was not involved in the selection of the play. The play is scheduled to open Aug. 10.

Denver ponders adding transgender to city's bias policy

DENVER (AP)—City officials want to broaden Denver's anti-discrimination law to include transgender people. Should the proposal be approved, transgendered residents would be able to sue if the city cannot resolve discrimination complaints. The new proposal would round out the anti-discrimination law, giving Denver the most complete protection in Colorado, said Philip Hernandez, the executive director of the Denver Human Rights & Community Relations Agency. The city's existing ordinance protects citizens from discrimination in housing, employment, and other areas on the basis of race, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation. People who believe they have been victims of discrimination can file a complaint, which the city will try to settle with mediation. The City Council will hold a public hearing on the matter Aug. 23.

—From staff and wire reports

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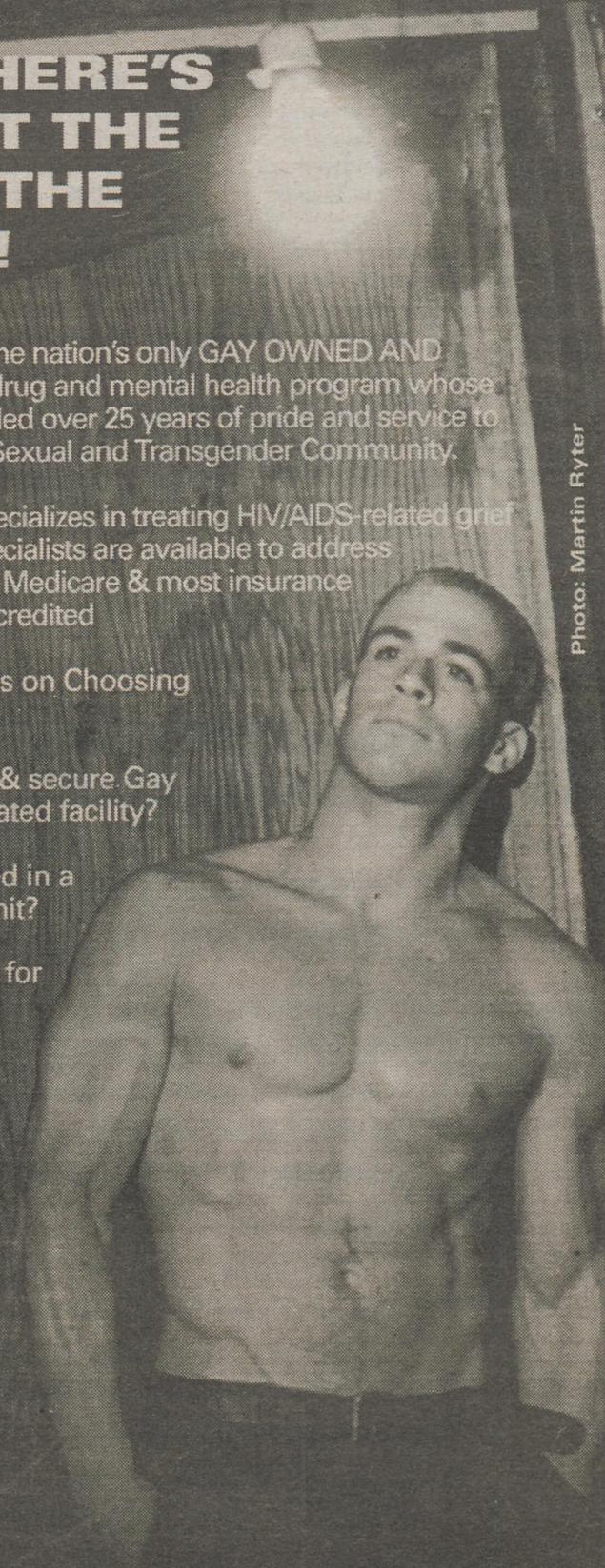


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Shooter at Virginia gay bar gets four life terms

Judge sentences Ronald Gay for shooting in Roanoke bar last September that killed one, injured three

by RHONDA SMITH

ROANOKE, Va.—A judge on Monday sentenced the 55-year-old Vietnam veteran charged with fatally shooting one man and injuring six others in a gay bar in Roanoke, Va., last September to four life prison sentences.

A Virginia law will make Ronald E. Gay eligible for parole at age 65. But Dan Caldwell, the commonwealth attorney for the city of Roanoke and the prosecutor for the case, said he does not believe the killer will ever be set free.

"In my opinion, it would be highly unlikely that Mr. Gay will ever be paroled given what he did," Caldwell said.

Last Sept. 22, Gay walked into the Backstreet Café, a small gay bar in Roanoke, ordered a beer and then fired repeatedly into the Friday-night crowd.

Bar patron Danny Overstreet, a 43-year-old telephone operator, died from a chest wound. Linda Conyers, Iris Page Webb, Kathy Caldwell, John Collins, Susan Smith and Joel Tucker were wounded, but survived.

Gay told police he was upset because of jokes people made over the years about his last name. He also said he was angry that three of his sons had chosen to change their surname.

The Associated Press reported this week that Gay also told authorities he had become obsessed with fulfilling "four mis-

sions." They were: "To stop corruption, to stop communism, to bring all Vietnam vets 'out of the mountains,' and to make all gay people move to San Francisco, which he thought would stop the spread of AIDS."

Circuit Judge Clifford Weckstein sentenced Gay on July 23 to life in prison for the first-degree murder of Overstreet. Gay also received life sentences for maliciously wounding Conyers, Webb and Caldwell.

Sam Garrison, an openly gay lawyer in Roanoke, said "justice was done."

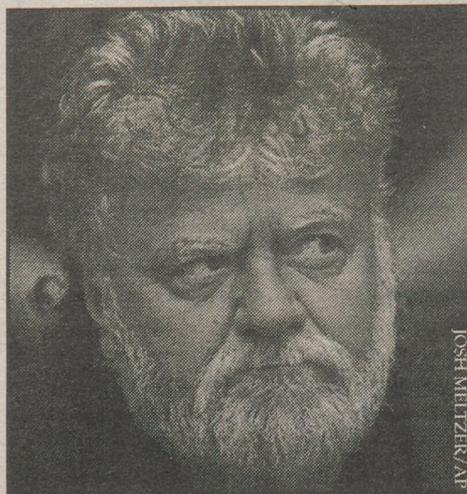
"He got a very severe sentence and I certainly can't say I think that it was too light, in view of the evidence," he said. "If I were still the commonwealth's attorney and had handled this case, there's nothing I would have done differently."

In May, Gay pleaded guilty to one murder charge, three aggravated malicious wounding charges, and three malicious wounding charges. Caldwell said the prosecution dropped associated violence charges related to the other seven charges in exchange for Gay's guilty plea.

Before being sentenced this week, Gay told Weckstein it would take months to explain the shooting.

"I have a lot of things running through my head," he said.

Defense attorney Roger Dalton said Gay



heard voices telling him to kill gay people. Gay also previously described himself in a letter to the Roanoke Times as a "Christian soldier working for my Lord."

The AP reported that Veterans Affairs doctors diagnosed Gay with post-traumatic stress disorder. The AP also reported Gay was divorced six times and became an alcoholic and drug abuser.

As far back as 1986, Gay expressed thoughts of violence toward gay people, according to court testimony, and believed they were trying to destroy society with AIDS.

"When you examined the facts of the case, it was clear [the shooting] was not an irresistible impulse because Mr. Gay got a gun, asked for directions [to a gay bar], and articu-

lated his intent to kill people," Caldwell said.

The AP reported that Dalton, Gay's lawyer, argued: "Is this an evil person, or is this a sick person?"

Rev. Catherine Houchins, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church of the Blue Ridge in Roanoke, a city with about 95,000 residents, said she was relieved that the case is over.

"I think it offers a chance for the community to now move on—but not forget by any means," she said. "And I think this sentence is such that it will keep Mr. Gay off the street for the rest of his life."

Caldwell said that within the next 60 to 90 days Gay most likely would be transferred from the Roanoke city jail to a penal facility reserved for older prisoners.

Like Houchins, Garrison said it would take some time before Roanoke, a city that sits at the foot of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, fully recovers from the shooting.

"For everybody in the open, active gay community, our sense of security is probably permanently diminished," he said. "On the other hand, the shooting made a lot of straight people understand better than they ever did that there's a real problem there in terms of how some people's attitudes can lead to violence."

Garrison also noted that, with approval from the mayor and Roanoke City Council, the city manager quietly amended Roanoke's city personnel policies in December to prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation.

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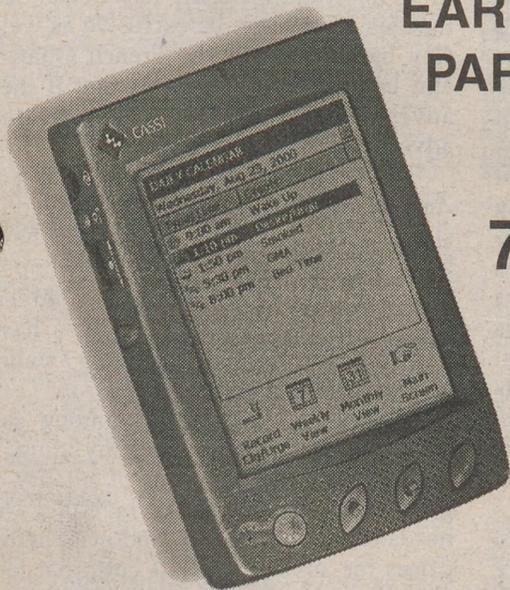
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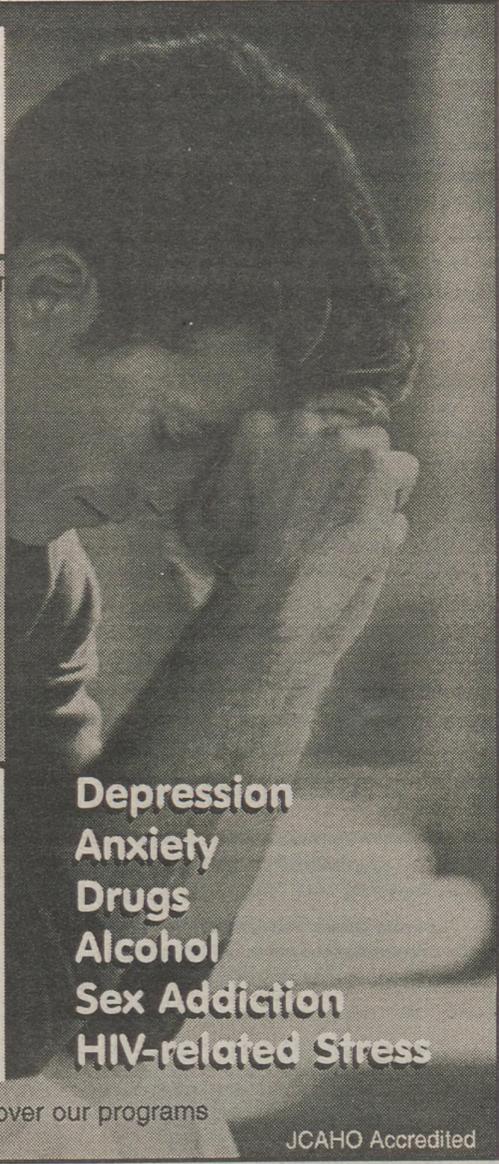
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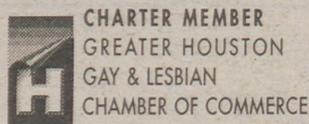
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EDITORIAL

Pride gets Ambush-ed in New Orleans

by CHRIS CRAIN

Every gay community has its cliques and its rivalries, and the community in New Orleans is no exception. But once a year, at gay communities across the country, the annual Pride festivities are an opportunity to celebrate what unites us, not what divides us.

That's what makes the decision by Pride organizers in New Orleans to award an exclusive gay media sponsorship to one of the city's three gay publications so difficult to understand.

The goal of a media sponsorship is to get out the word about New Orleans Pride to the largest possible number of people. But the New Orleans Alliance of Pride, which organizes the festival, turned down flat an offer from this publication's sister paper *Southern Voice* and our *Eclipse* magazine, to run free advertisements about the event.

Instead, organizers awarded an "exclusive media sponsorship" to *Ambush*, a biweekly gay tabloid that is distributed in New Orleans, along the Gulf Coast, and in Austin. *Ambush*, which is owned and operated by Rip and Marsha Naquin-Delain, also manages a number of gay-themed Web sites.

It's not the first time New Orleans Pride organizers have cut an exclusive deal with *Ambush*. One year after the parent company of this newspaper purchased New Orleans' *Impact News* and *Eclipse*, Pride organizers said they would accept a sponsorship bid from the two publications.

But the late Sonny Cleveland, who had been running the festival, was also an employee of *Ambush* at the time and warned *Impact* and *Eclipse* that Rip Naquin-Delain would insist on exclusivity for *Ambush* or the publication would not participate at all as a sponsor.

Whether pressured by his boss or by *Ambush*'s strong-arm tactics, Cleveland and other Pride organizers that year awarded an exclusive sponsorship to *Ambush*, a cozy deal that passed up dozens of free advertisements that would have reached gays in Atlanta, across the South, and throughout Texas.

It is difficult to know whether "the fix is in" again this year in New Orleans, but circumstances suggest a similar deal got cut behind closed doors, and against the clear best interest of New Orleans' gay community.

Alliance of Pride Co-Chair Crystal Little told representatives of *Southern Voice* and *Eclipse* as late as June 21 that the committee had not yet met to consider sponsorship proposals. But the issue of *Ambush* already on the streets that week announced the publication had been awarded an exclusive media sponsorship.

If this year's *Ambush* sponsorship was again the result of Naquin-Delain's strong-arm demand of exclusivity or nothing, then shame on him for making

such a threat, and shame on Pride organizers for caving into it. *Southern Voice* and *Eclipse* have never and would never demand that a media sponsorship be exclusive, especially for a gay community event, and especially for Pride.

Is this any way to show Pride in New Orleans?

The New Orleans Pride Festival has never approached the popularity of the city's other gay mega-events like Mardi Gras, Southern Decadence and Halloween, even among locals. Since Cleveland's untimely death last year, organizers have struggled to put on a successful event. If ever there was a time for Pride organizers to accept multiple media sponsorships and get the word out to the largest audience possible, it's now.

Instead, Little has pointed out that other Pride sponsors, like Miller Brewing Co., demand their sponsorships be exclusive of their competitors. That tells us more about Miller Brewing's motivations than it does about whether exclusivity is good for New Orleans Pride. And at least Miller is putting up cold, hard cash for its exclusivity. Media sponsors like *Ambush* and *Southern Voice* are turning over free advertising space, which is not the same thing as making a monetary donation.

Not surprisingly, Naquin-Delain refused to talk to a *Southern Voice*

Decadence and other New Orleans community events. And when a drag queen columnist for *Eclipse* named Clara Voyant took tongue-in-cheek pot shots at Southern Decadence a few years back, *Ambush* helped organize a campaign to dump the magazine into the streets. That's the kind of intolerant behavior we expect from the religious right, not from one another.

And it doesn't stop there. Ever since former *Impact* Publisher Kyle Scafide had the temerity to launch *Eclipse* magazine in 1996, Naquin-Delain has demanded that his advertisers be exclusive as well. Gay bar owners in the French Quarter and beyond have been told that if they advertise in *Eclipse*, they will be refused advertising space in *Ambush*.

This isn't about the financial health of *Ambush*, either. Even bars that pledged to stay faithful as *Ambush* advertisers have been warned they would be dropped from the publication if they also advertised in *Eclipse*. A few larger bars have defied Naquin-Delain, but many smaller bars can't afford to incur his wrath.

Rivalry and competition among gay publications is usually a healthy thing; it encourages a higher level of quality, a greater commitment to meeting the needs of the community, and even better prices for advertisers. But cutthroat tac-

With strong-arm tactics that would make the Mafia blush, *Ambush* magazine takes the 'unity' out of 'community.'

reporter about the sponsorship deal, but *Ambush* has claimed in print that its sponsorship package is worth thousands more than that offered by *Southern Voice* and *Eclipse*. But all but about 7 percent of that purported "value" is from blinking banners offered by *Ambush* on some 35 gay-themed Web sites.

Ambush has long exaggerated the audience for those sites, which are not even listed on any legitimate Internet tracking system, and has no doubt offered little proof that anyone else is paying the rates it claims the banner ads are worth.

But even assuming that *Ambush* Web banners are worth their blinks in gold, an exclusive media sponsorship makes no sense for New Orleans Pride. If organizers believed the bid from *Southern Voice* and *Eclipse*, which also included free Web banners, was inferior, then they could have awarded *Ambush* a higher level of sponsorship. That's how every other gay community event handles things.

A gay community Ambushed

It's high time that New Orleans' gay community learned a little more about the abusive business practices employed at *Ambush* that are antithetical to a "community" publication.

Ambush also demands exclusive media sponsorship of Southern

tactics like those employed by *Ambush* are anti-competitive and have no business in the marketplace, much less within the gay community.

However *Ambush* chooses to treat its advertisers, community event organizers like those at the Alliance of Pride have a responsibility to act in the best interest of the entire gay community, not just one segment of it and certainly not in favor of a single business owner with a Bill Gates fetish.

There's still time for *Ambush* to lower the sword of Damocles it is now holding over the New Orleans Alliance of Pride. But if Naquin-Delain refuses to do the right thing, then Pride organizers need to rethink their divisive, wrong-headed stance.

INFO

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VIEWPOINT

Travel rules for the wandering homosexual, et al

RICH ARENSCHIELDT

It's August... everyone knows what that means. People flee this concrete city like the Bush twins running from an Austin Police Department cruiser on 6th Street. Lately, it's been so hot, the phrase "clambake" has new meaning in the lesbian community.

Obviously, we have to vacate. This is one of the reasons that straight folks are so jealous of us. While they are at trapped at home with children who have spent all summer finding internal storage compartments for pellets from the inside of a beanie baby that was inadvertently impaled on the lawnmower, we are headed somewhere, anywhere else.

In pondering what to do, where to go, and who to go with, I paused to reminisce about my recent trip with a 50 percent queer quartet earlier this year. My best friend and I teamed up with our fave married couple, Stephen (aka "Silent Bob"), and his wife, Janeen (aka "middle child" who was ignored far too much early in life).

We decided to go on a midwinter sojourn to merry old England—ah, the U.K. in February! The flowers (dead), the people (pale enough to be dead), and the history (about pale people who are dead). Who could ask for anything more?

We attempted some pre-trip planning, but these sessions just degenerated into exploring the latest red wine and various "smells like your great aunt's feet" cheeses. Besides, I had been to London before and figured that we could improvise. I would lead my charges gayly around the city. Stephen, the lone heterosexual male, was mildly concerned.

We didn't worry too much about the weather, but perhaps we should have. A travel low point: being lost in London (with me as the sure-footed guide) at 1 a.m. in a freezing torrential downpour, unable to



Cary, Janeen, Stephen and Rich pause during a marathon sight-seeing excursion through London.

find any transport whatsoever. This was not a "group hug" inspiring event. We survived, which brings me to the most important point—travel with people you like.

Wanderlust will test your friendships to be sure. You'll learn all kinds of new and uninteresting things about people you spend every moment with.

One of the most telling events was when we decided to buy Janeen a caricature drawn by some starving artist. Unfortunately, none of us realized that this type of portraiture accentuates one's already peculiar features. In this case, Janeen's plump proboscis qualifies. She saw her finished portrait (complete with aircraft carrier-sized nasal cavity) and spent the next hour watering nearby plants via hysterical sobbing that reverberated throughout one of Europe's most elegant museums. Who knew?

In addition to knowing your companions, it's advisable to go to a city where you know someone. This way they can show you the local sights, let you see things "off the beaten path," and save you several hun-

dred dollars in lodging in exchange for some stale chocolates that your ex-boyfriend gave you last Valentine's Day. "Re-gifting..." a fine art.

After mooching off your host (your mother's cousin's dog groomer) you can always reciprocate. Exclaim with sincerity, "Oh, Herman and I would LOVE to have you come to Houston!" Don't worry, you're safe; everyone knows nobody visits here. If by chance they do want to see our town, just tell them, "Sorry, I've got blood in my urine and have to be quarantined." People usually don't require additional details.

If for some reason you must pay for accommodation, caveat emptor. Our hotel brochure pic must have been taken at "The Ritz" and inadvertently wrongly transferred. Judging by their attitude, the hotel staff was apparently still angry at the English-speaking world for some turn of the century colonial exploitation.

Apparently, the employees were more adept at stealing our possessions than

updating the Stonehenge-style bedding. We would have been more comfortable in one of the royal tombs. As our stay lengthened, the resulting lack of sleep made us each exponentially more "morning puffy."

On the last day, I resembled blowfish that had been stung by a hoard of bumblebees. I was not feeling totally fresh either. Our budget hotel bath was so small I could only clean half of myself on any given day. With no shower, I had to put my head underwater by grasping the back of my knees and holding my breath, something I am utterly unaccustomed to doing. We were not amused.

One important thing is often overlooked: Travel is full of trade-offs. You feel compelled to see everything. We approached sightseeing as though the crown jewels would soon be bought by Bill Gates, never to be seen again. Four people who do nothing but eat and look at computers all day now think they can compete in 10 hours of Olympic-level speed walking.

Thank God for that delicious combination of codeine, Tylenol and alcohol!

We did get to do some cool stuff. We crawled around the top of Westminster Abbey in 1000-year-old dust. We also enjoyed a leisurely gourmet breakfast at a charming country inn. The meal was so leisurely that we missed our flight back to Houston and as a result, had to stay awake for 32 hours.

England followed us home. On the trip back, we thought, "What is that awful smell?" It was us—impersonating aged Stilton cheeses.

Don't forget the cardinal rule—traveling with friends requires constant sensitivity to their needs. Maybe next time I'll stay home.

Rich Arenschieldt is a freelance writer and is recovering nicely from that "blood in the urine" ailment. Feel free to book your stay at his place.

Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel



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Michaels, Etheridge

"I was out with a bunch of girlfriends. 'Popular' had literally wrapped for the season—and the series, for that matter—the night before. I had been avoiding gay bars the entire time I was working so all of a sudden I was like, 'Let's go out! C'mon, girls, I don't care who sees me!' So we were sitting at this table and there she was. So up until then, I'd been living in a virtual tunnel for the past 10 years. I mean, I knew who she was, but I wasn't super aware. I mean, I'm not a celebrity stalker or anything."

—Actress Tammy Lynn Michaels from TV's "Popular" on meeting her new girlfriend, rocker Melissa Etheridge, to mightybigtv.com, July 14

"If one has to sum up [my breakup with Julie Cypher], you could say, 'Okay, [Julie's] just not gay.' I believe it's much, much more than that. She also fell out of love with me, personally. ... In my family, divorce is failure. But I know now that ultimately it was me taking care of myself, doing the best for myself and it's not a failure."

—Lesbian rocker Melissa Etheridge to L.A.'s *Lesbian News*, July issue

"We need to elect a lot of liberal Democrats! Work real hard to elect them to Congress in 2002! AIDS needs to be up there with or above every human concern the government deals with, which certainly isn't going to happen with the piddling amount of money Bush assigned to it!"

—Bisexual syndicated gossip columnist Liz Smith to the AIDS magazine *A&U*, July issue

"The great thing about Eminem is he's so interested in homosexuality. 'Stan' is a gay love song. We've actually written a song for our next album called 'The Night I Fell in Love' that's written from the point of view of an 18-year-old boy who goes to an Eminem concert and meets him backstage and ends up going to bed with him."



Tennant, Eminem

—Neil Tennant of the Pet Shop Boys to Atlanta's *Etcetera* magazine, July 6

"It's been my experience that most gay and lesbian people across the country, even some of the most politically astute and interested of us, feel depressingly detached, sometimes hopelessly so, from the national organizations in charge of our movement. In short, few of us feel the national organizations are even the tiniest bit relevant to our lives. Certainly NGLTF isn't the only organization suffering from this kind of disconnect. But it's fair to say that in recent years NGLTF has suffered from the problem more than other large national gay and lesbian groups."

—Syndicated columnist Mubarak Dahir in a July filing

"I made a list one time for the AIDS Quilt. I had 20 names on the list, and that was 10 years ago. And those aren't just acquaintances or people that I used to know. These are like my agents, a cousin, hairdressers and directors. I've lost track now."

—Actress Lucie Arnaz to the AIDS magazine *A&U*, July issue

"Who isn't sick of seeing some movie about twentysomething white kids in a gay ghetto? Enough of that."

—Thomas Bezucha, director of the gay-themed film "Big Eden," to the *New York Blade News*, July 13



Patricia Ireland

"Today, [outgoing National Organization for Women President Patricia] Ireland says her [heterosexual] marriage is still strong, but the D.C.-based [gay] relationship is over. It ended approximately three to four years ago, though the two women are still friends and share joint custody of two cats. They meet once a week or so to hand off the felines. The other woman is now in another relationship, Ireland says, and is living with and raising a child with her new partner."

—*Washington Post*, July 19

health news

Condom use may not prevent spread of STDs, fed report says

WASHINGTON—A National Institutes of Health report released July 20 shows that sex condoms can reduce the spread of HIV and gonorrhea, but there is not enough evidence to say for certain that condoms protect against other sexually transmitted diseases, the Washington Post reported. The report said researchers could not draw conclusions about the adequacy of condoms in reducing the risk of disease "other than HIV transmission in men and women, and gonorrhea in men." AIDS activists had distributed the report July 19, contending that the Bush administration would use it to promote an abstinence-only agenda, the Associated Press reported. An estimated 12 million Americans become infected with STDs annually, according to the surgeon general, the Post reported. The activists argue that abstinence warnings are not as effective in preventing sexually transmitted diseases as encouraging the use of barrier contraceptives such as condoms, according to AP.

Drug-resistant HIV in newly infected patients on the rise

NEW YORK—A number of recent studies show that drug-resistant HIV is the cause of a rising number of new HIV infections worldwide, according to Medscape.com, a medical information Web site. Figures from seven surveys of four European countries, Quebec, nine North American cities, and Madrid show that drug-resistant HIV causes up to one quarter of all new infections. Studies show that in Switzerland 5 percent of new HIV infections are caused by the drug-resistant virus, compared with 10 percent in France, 13 percent in Germany, and 14 percent in the United Kingdom. A study of new HIV cases in nine North American cities showed that drug-resistant HIV caused 16.5 percent of infections. In Quebec, 21 percent of all new HIV cases were caused by the virus, while 26-percent of the cases in Madrid were linked to resistant HIV, according to the studies. The drug-resistant HIV responsible for the new infections was shown to be resistant to at least one standard anti-HIV drug, the most common being AZT. Researchers estimate that of all new HIV infections linked to drug-resistant virus, more than one third are caused by HIV that is resistant to more than one medication.

Company files for approval of 20-minute HIV test under study

BETHLEHEM, Pa.—OraSure Technologies last week filed with the U.S. Food & Drug Administration for pre-market approval of its HIV test that is capable of detecting HIV antibodies in just 20 minutes, *Business Wire* reported. The test, called OraQuick, can use oral fluids, whole blood, blood serum or plasma samples to scan for HIV antibodies. Orasure filed a pre-market application for the serum and whole-blood applications only; the company plans to file for plasma and oral fluid applications in the fourth quarter of 2001. "Critical decisions about treatment depend on the availability of accurate, immediate HIV test results, and we expect OraQuick to fill that need," said OraSure CEO Robert D. Thompson. The drug is undergoing clinical trials in the U.S.

Campaign launched to slow meningitis among Toronto gays

TORONTO, Canada—Public health officials in Toronto confirmed last week that five cases of meningitis have been reported among gay and bisexual men over the last two months, killing two, *Gay.com* reported. The city has seen 22 cases of the disease since January, up from last year's rate of 16 for the same period, according to the Toronto Sun. Robert Trow, program coordinator with the Hassle Free Clinic in Toronto, said this is the first time there has been a noted increase of meningitis among gay men. Toronto Public Health is seeking the assistance of the Ontario health ministry to provide vaccines to combat the spread of the disease. A campaign to inform gays of the increased risks and promote precautionary measures has been launched through posters and other advertising, the Sun reported. Meningitis is an infection causing inflammation of the membranes covering the brain and spinal cord and can be caused either by a virus or bacteria. Although the initial symptoms of viral and bacterial meningitis are similar, the viral version is less serious and symptoms usually disappear within two weeks. The bacterial version requires immediate attention and can be life-threatening. Meningitis is spread through saliva, usually by kissing or sharing food, drinks, cigarettes or any sexual acts involving saliva contact.

Drug breaks are harmful to HIV treatment, AIDS experts say

CHICAGO—A group of about 50 AIDS treatment experts said that structured HIV treatment interruptions—stopping drug therapy for brief periods of time—do not work, ABCNews.com reported. The announcement came July 18 at the 2001 Sessions of the International Association of Physicians in AIDS Care. Studies show that the so-called drug holidays have poor results and often make the health of those requiring the HIV medications worse, said Renslow Steerer of Cook County Hospital in Chicago. "People have gotten sick again. There have even been some deaths," he said. Treatment interruptions have gained the attention of many HIV-positive people hoping to reduce the debilitating side effects of chronic nausea and diarrhea. But the treatment experts, while advocating further studies into the effects of treatment interruption, warn that study evidence to date shows that the drug breaks are more harmful than helpful.

—From staff and wire reports

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HFFV still soliciting signatures for anti-gay referendum

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The Constitution guarantees that we all have the same opportunities, the same rights."

Three years ago, Brown issued a similar executive order, but it was challenged by Councilman Rob Todd and tied up in court until recently when the Texas Supreme Court upheld Brown's order, opening the door for the ordinance.

Republican Councilman Mark Goldberg, whose district includes the Montrose, the city's largest gay neighborhood, was the only member absent for the vote. Parker said he was supposedly out of town. However, she added, "There was some speculation about where he was."

Parker said she kept relatively quiet during the debate over the ordinance because she has already said so much in the past. However, she said that Councilman Jew Don Boney gave "an outstanding speech" in favor of the ordinance. She also praised Councilman Gabriel Vasquez for his support at the council meeting.

After the meeting, Vasquez said that passing the ordinance, "was the right thing to do. It was a long time coming and a significant step forward for the city of Houston."

Grant Martin, Parker's campaign manager, said, "I was very proud of my council member, Annise Parker, my LGBT community, and our allies today as City Council passed a nondiscrimination ordinance that includes sexual orientation and gender identity."

Earlier this year, Brown proposed offer-



I think we'll win at the ballot. The world has changed a lot since 1985.

—Annise Parker

Houston City Councilwoman

ing benefits to same-sex city employees but in the face of opposition withdrew the proposal and instead pursued the non-discrimination ordinance.

Both the mayor and Parker noted that domestic partner benefits is a separate issue that will still be pursued.

"The two are not tied together. That is another battle for another day...hopefully before I leave office," Parker said. She is up for re-election to her last term in November and, if victorious, would leave office in December 2003.

However, Dave Wilson and the conservative group he spearheads, Houstonians for Family Values, are challenging the same-sex benefits issue. Although Wilson said he is not against the anti-discrimination ordinance, he has said many times that he is against allowing privileges for domestic couples extended to domestic partners of the homosexual community.

"Homosexuals should not have the same benefits that heterosexuals have, nor should heterosexuals living together. Benefits are a reward to married heterosex-

ual people," Wilson said in a recent interview with the *Voice*.

Wilson's group is currently trying to raise 20,000 signatures of registered Houston voters to place the issue on November's ballot. According to Wilson, he already has 18,000 signatures. If passed, such a vote would bar the city from providing benefits to anyone but employees, their spouses and their dependent children, as well as prevent any privilege in promotion, hiring or contracting on the basis of sexual orientation.

Wilson has until Aug. 15 to turn in the required signatures. Wilson said his own deadline is to have them in by the end of July.

Parker's happiness at the victory was tinged by the fact that the ordinance can still be challenged. But she feels that Wilson's challenge will not prevail. "Dave Wilson's petition could have an impact even as poorly worded as it is and as nutty as some of his supporters are," she said. "However, the Republican mainstream has ignored his efforts. That's why he has had to go to direct mailings to get his signatures."

Even if Wilson gets the signatures and turns them in on time and the issue goes on the ballot in November, Parker thinks the voters of Houston will reject it. "I think we'll win at the ballot. The world has changed a lot since 1985."

Parker was referring to the last time City Council voted for a similar nondiscrimination ordinance that was overturned by voters in a 1985 referendum.

And if the voters don't reject the issue, Parker thinks Wilson's efforts will eventually fail. "Even if it passes, there will be legal challenges to it because the wording of the petition is flawed. If he were to win, it could be challenged in court later."

Parker noted that she had much support for the ordinance, not only from the mayor and her colleagues, but also from a cross section of the community such as a group called Clergy for a Fair Houston.

Clergy from the Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection, Bering Memorial United Methodist, St. Stephens Episcopal, First Church Unitarian Universalists and others signed a petition urging adoption of the anti-discrimination ordinance.

With passage of the ordinance, Houston joins some 246 other states, cities and counties across the nation with similar ordinances. These include Austin, Fort Worth and Travis County in Texas. More than 1,900 U.S. employers have non-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation.

Houston-area Reps split by party lines on faith-based bill

>Continued from Page 1

laws by allowing religious charities, such as the Salvation Army, to engage in employment discrimination against gays.

Kolbe said he voted against the Conyers motion to delete the anti-gay language because it "went too far." He noted that the motion included a second provision that would prohibit federally funded religious charities from hiring "only employees of their own religious faith," an action he said he could not support.

"I have been assured that my concerns about pre-emption of state and local nondiscrimination laws will be addressed in conference," Kolbe said.

He was referring to a promise by White House officials and House GOP leaders that they would deal with the issue if a similar measure also passes the Senate and a conference committee works out the differences in the two bills before it goes to the president for his signature.

The Senate has yet to take up the legislation, and gay activists say they are hopeful that chamber's version of the faith-based measure will not include the anti-gay language in the House version. A Senate-passed bill that doesn't include the anti-gay language would give pro-gay lawmakers greater leverage in persuading the House-Senate conference committee to kill the language.

But during the House debate on July 19,



Sheila Jackson Lee

Democratic lawmakers, including openly gay Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), argued that the House should "fix" what they called a serious problem—a clause in a bill that, for the first time, would give the federal government authority to sanction discrimination. Frank

said the issue was too important to leave to the Senate when the House had the chance to address the issue.

"It is funny, when I heard this was the faith-based bill, I thought they were talking about faith in God, not faith in the Senate," Frank said during the debate.

Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.), the Republican floor manager for the faith-based legislation, said small churches would likely be the main beneficiary of the legislation, which he said would provide federal funds to help such churches provide services to the poor.

He said the Conyers motion would force these small churches to hire people who are not of their same religious faith, an argument that he and other House Republicans used to oppose the Conyers motion on grounds other than its stated aim to remove anti-gay language from the faith-based bill.

Kolbe's decision to vote against the motion to delete the anti-gay language came one day after he and as many as 20 of his moderate Republican colleagues threatened to join forces with Democratic House members to vote for the motion. Capitol Hill observers viewed that threat as a mini rebellion by GOP moderates against the hard-line conservatives who make up the House Republican leadership.

The so-called insurrection surfaced when the House Rules Committee, which is controlled by the GOP leadership, rejected a proposal by Rep. Mark Foley (R-Fla.) to delete the anti-gay language through an amendment on the House floor.

Foley's proposed amendment stated that nothing in the faith-based initiatives bill "shall alter the duty of a religious organization receiving assistance or providing services under any program described [in the bill] to comply with state and local civil rights laws."

The action by the GOP moderates prompted House Republican leaders to postpone for one day a vote on the faith-based initiatives bill. During the following 24 hours, the White House waged a massive lobbying campaign to win back the support of the moderate Republicans, according to staff members of several of the House members.

White House officials, among other things, urged the moderates to drop their

plan to back the Democrat-sponsored motion, known as a "motion to recommit" the faith-based bill, saying President Bush would take steps to work with the Senate to "address" concerns about anti-gay discrimination through a conference committee.

The last-minute lobbying helped persuade the most moderate GOP House members to drop their support of the Conyers motion. When the vote was taken, the number of moderate Republicans who voted for the Conyers motion dwindled from what some predicted could have been as many as 20 or more to just four.

Those four were Rep. Mark Foley (R-Fla.), Rep. Connie Morella (R-Md.), Rep. Jim Leach (R-Iowa), and Rep. Christopher Shays (R-Conn.).

"They were all under tremendous pressure to stay on the reservation," said one House Democratic staffer, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Foley's press secretary, Kirk Fordham, said Foley made it clear to House GOP leaders that he planned to vote for the motion, and he said it's his understanding that Morella, Shays, and Leach also made their intentions known in advance.

Fordham also noted that Republican House leaders scheduled a vote on the motion and the faith-based initiatives bill only after they were assured that they had the votes to defeat the motion and pass the bill.

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➤ Continued from Page 3

apartment fire," Hill said. "The assailant is kind of leaving calling cards with matches.

"There's reason to believe that this assailant wasn't exactly a rocket scientist," Hill said.

Crime Stoppers is offering a \$25,000 reward for clues leading to the arrest and charges filed against a suspect in the killing. Typically, Crime Stoppers offers a \$5,000 reward in such cases, but friends and family of Miyar-Laris have contributed an additional \$20,000 to the reward.

"The victim's employer contacted us on behalf of the family asking what they could do to assist in solving this crime," said Kim Ogg, Houston Crime Stoppers executive director.

Miyar-Laris worked as an art director for Urban Retreat, a River Oaks spa for men and women.

Ogg said Crime Stoppers can often provide information from anonymous tips that police might not find otherwise.

"We operate an anonymous hotline that provides additional information to help solve crimes," said OGG. "Often, this is

information about facts or evidence that the police might not even know about."

Although, as of presstime, no tips regarding the Miyar-Laris case had been called into the hotline, Ogg said she's hopeful the case will be solved.

"I believe based on the facts of this case, that the police will be able to solve this crime, just based on the facts and the evidence already collected."

Hill agrees and says he thinks someone in the gay community may have seen or knows of the murderer.

"The struggle was very bloody, so the assailant was very bloody. That's hard to hide," Hill said.

Police have traced Miyar-Laris's whereabouts until about 2 a.m., July 21. They believe he dropped a friend home in the Montrose and told the friend he was heading home.

Hill theorizes that Miyar-Laris may have picked someone up on the way.

"It's thought that he might have swung back down lower Montrose and picked someone up," Hill said.

Hill pointed out that the area where

Miyar-Laris's vehicle was discovered is near the intersection of Washington and Shepherd, an area known as a "cruising spot" for Hispanic prostitutes. But Hill said it's also possible the victim may have met his killer in the Montrose.

Hill said it's important that anyone with information about the case come forward.

"If business owners are worried about coming forward because they're afraid of negative publicity, they need to get over it," Hill said. "There's someone out there who is a danger to everyone and they need be caught."

Calls to the Crime Stoppers hotline are strictly confidential and protected by law, Ogg said.

"If a person calls our hotline, their identity remains anonymous. We legally protect our callers' identities," said Ogg. "The police and other agencies can't offer that kind of protection."

INFO

Crime Stoppers
713-222-TIPS

Flyers with information about the Crime Stoppers reward for clues in the murder of Juan Manuel Miyar-Laris are being circulated in Montrose and Heights areas. The night of his death, Miyar-Laris visited several gay bars in the Montrose with friends. His stolen vehicle was later found near the Heights.

No time for a vacation? Take a day trip

Numerous interesting locales are just a few hours away from city

by KAY Y. DAYUS

It's summer in Houston—that unbearably hot, humid, steamy time of year when most people want to escape to cooler climes, which is most anywhere but Houston, except for maybe New Orleans.

What if you can't escape? Maybe you can't afford a holiday, can't take the time off work or just don't have the will to figure out where to go, make the reservations or pack, or maybe you hate to fly.

- Plan a 'family' vacation
- Gay world travel

Page 15

- Gay accommodations

Page 15

- Protect home while away

Page 19

Take heart. The Houston area offers day trips galore where you can at least temporarily escape the traffic, noise, air pollution and the hustle and bustle of the city. Perhaps your best guide to these sometimes offbeat, sometimes not, places is Carol Barrington's "Day Trips from Houston."

Barrington puts together some interesting day trips guiding you from one small town or place to another and she gives interesting tidbits about each place, as well as where you can eat or shop.

If you don't want to buy the book, here are some ideas for day trips from Houston that don't require a lot of driving, but make you

feel that you got away, at least for a little while.

Brenham is only a hop, skip and a jump away on US-290 and is jam packed with interesting little antique shops. Founded in 1844 and settled by Germans, Brenham was occupied and partially burned by Union troops during the Civil War. As Barrington says, if Brenham were not a 72-mile commute it would be overrun with refugees from Houston.

If you're not into antiquing, visit the Brenham Heritage Museum located at 105 S. Market. Open Wednesday through Saturday, the museum houses memorabilia and artifacts dating from Brenham's birth.

Other places worth a look are Gerson Artworks at 307 West Alamo; the Giddings-Stone Mansion, a Greek revival home built in 1869; and the Giddings-Wilkin House, 805 Crockett, thought to be the oldest house still standing in Brenham.

And a trip to Brenham wouldn't be complete without a visit to the Blue Bell Creameries; makers of Texas' famed ice cream, where weekday tours and tastings are offered.

Also well worth a visit is Pleasant Hill Wineries at 1441 Salem Road, a small family-owned winery where you can enjoy a guided tour and taste their commendable wine.

If you have children, New Braunfels might be the place for you if only to take them to Schlitterbahn, which means "slippery road" in German. But no slippery road is this; it is the state's largest water park and resort with steep and fast water chutes to keep the kids happy all day—and it just might bring out the kid in you too.

Should you enjoy it so much that you need to spend another day, stay at Schlitterbahn's resort, which offers 130 riverside rooms, cottages and private



Fifty miles south of Houston, Galveston offers shopping, dining and six gay bars. The gulf city is just one of many interesting spots that are only a short drive away from Houston that can provide the feel of a mini-vacation.

Jacuzzi suites.

New Braunfels also boasts the Natural Bridge Caverns, that gets its name from the 60-foot natural limestone bridge that graces its entrance.

Right next door is the Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch where you can see more than 65 exotic species of animals from giraffes and wildebeests to baboons and buffaloes. The main tour is a ride through 200 acres of ranchland in your own vehicle.

Whilst in this general area, a tour of the area's Painted Churches is well worth the effort. A map of the church locations can be found at Schulenburg's Chamber of Commerce.

The Czech settlement of Dubina is the location of the frescoed Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church; next is Ammannsville's Gothic St. John the Baptist Church; and on to Praha and the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church; and finally to High Hill and the painted murals of St. Mary's Catholic Church. Most of the churches are still in use today.

For a complete change, Galveston is always an option and it's less than 50 miles south of Downtown Houston. Galveston has miles of

beaches, not Florida's sugar white beaches granted, but still a beach and lots of it.

If you're not a beach lover, there's plenty to see in the historic areas and old downtown where you can shop and stroll to your heart's content. Eat at one of the many seafood restaurants located on the wharf or the seawall.

If what you desire is true peace and quiet, head out to Bolivar Island on Texas-124, where you will find 32 miles of sandy beaches. There's not a lot on the island, which is why many go, except for some small communities, fishing camps and an abandoned lighthouse dating back to 1872.

Bolivar Flats, on the southwest tip of the peninsular, is deemed one of the prime birding areas on the upper Texas Gulf Coast.

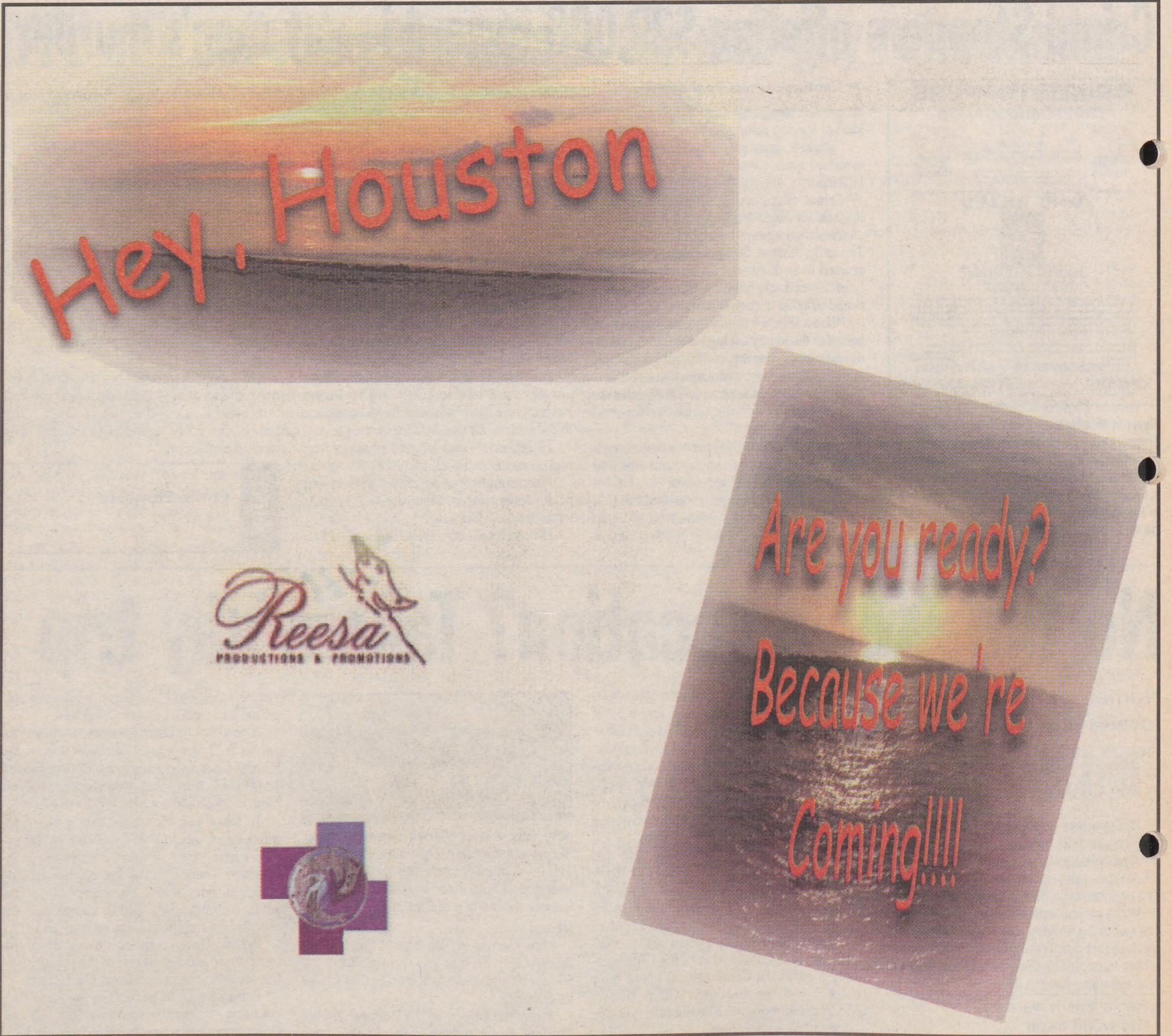
For a change of pace, take the ferry that connects Bolivar's southwestern tip to Galveston and return to Houston on I-45. The ferry is free and worth the ride.

For a little Native American culture, head north on US-59 and then east on US-190 and arrive around 65 miles later at the Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation. Sam Houston founded the 4,600-acre reservation in the Big Thicket in 1854.

Start your visit at the museum and then explore the Big Thicket on the Indian Chief train or the open bus. Tribal dances are held in the replica of an Indian village daily in the summer and on the weekends the rest of the year.

Round out the day at the Twelve Clans restaurant and shop for a souvenir in the gift shop, where you can find beautiful Indian woven baskets made from needles of the rare long-leaf pine.

Check out Barrington's book for many more interesting places to visit, all within a short distance from Houston's city limits.



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Out on the Bayou

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HOUSTON VOICE • JULY 27, 2001

The world's your oyster,
a *gay* one at that

Gay-friendly international destinations abound

by D.L. GROOVER

What are you waiting for? There's no better time than right now to pack your bags and head into the unknown. Travel is the best at clearing our head of useless cobwebs, giving us a fresh look at how other people live, and making us see what is and is not important in the daily grind.

Obviously for our traveling community, the major international capital cities are the most popular queer magnets with their numerous bars, clubs, gay newspapers, bed & breakfasts, and thriving underground. Gay-friendly cities abound.

Paris has recently elected a gay mayor and a transsexual city council member, making the French capital truly gay Paree. London has long been known as the preeminent gay mecca of Europe, where you have the advantage of being able to speak English to the stranger who wakes up next to you in the morning. Amsterdam is always good for a cheap toké and sexual abandon; Berlin is a ledermeister's dream; Rome and Athens both relive the ancients' dolce vita; Mexico City is well-trod and but two hours away; and Rio de Janeiro is exotic and randy, but there's a cholera scare in Brazil, so travel agents are loathe to send the norte americanos down to samba land.

Perhaps you might appreciate some novel adventures. These international destinations are noted for their laid-back lifestyle and tolerance for gays. As in life, 'Don't be stupid' is a good rule to follow when traveling. If you wouldn't saunter down a dark alley off Fannin, don't do it in Bangkok. So, in no order or importance, we give you the world.

Ibiza

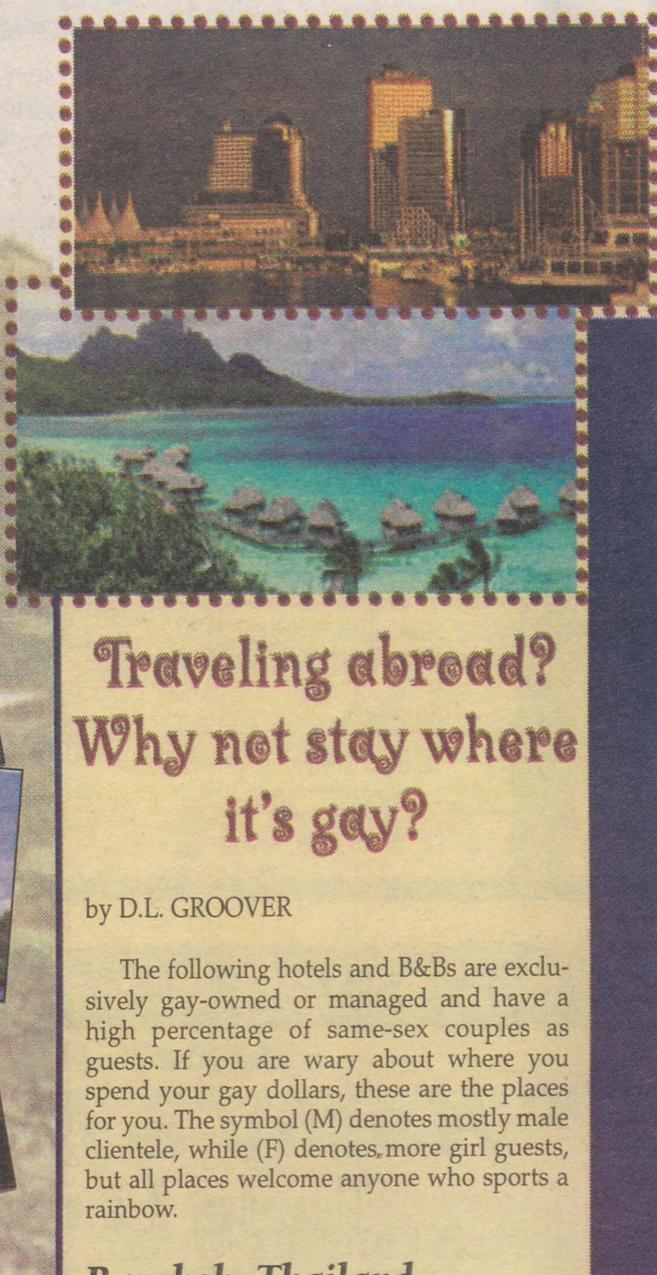
What better place to start than on a scrumptious, paradise-like island in the Mediterranean Sea? One of Spain's Balearic Islands (Majorca is one of the group), Ibiza is what the French Riviera used to be: full of glitz, wannabe glitz, and cubic zirconium glitz.

Peppered with old washed-out hippies, no-talent artists, fat tourists from the Fatherland, and more club kids than South Beach on a Saturday night, this majestic sublime island is still heavenly because of its magnificent coastline, truly fabulous beaches, archeological ruins that date to Caesar, the medieval terraced D'Alt Vila (old city), and a vibrant gay life that flaunts itself like a Texas-sized rainbow flag.

There is a gay beach, La Playa Es Cavallet, with an appended nude beach, naturally, at the Salinas bus stop. Finding your way through the parking lot, the gap in the fence, along the houses, a left turn, down a stone path, and through the bushes may not be everyone's ideal day at the beach, but if you crave Fire Island, this beautiful stretch of heavy duty cruising and non-stop action might make you forget all that sand in your trunks.

Ibiza must mean "party" in Catalan, since that's the daily grind, night or day. There are a score of

> Continued on Page 17



Traveling abroad?
Why not stay where
it's gay?

by D.L. GROOVER

The following hotels and B&Bs are exclusively gay-owned or managed and have a high percentage of same-sex couples as guests. If you are wary about where you spend your gay dollars, these are the places for you. The symbol (M) denotes mostly male clientele, while (F) denotes more girl guests, but all places welcome anyone who sports a rainbow.

Bangkok, Thailand

Tarntawan Place Hotel, 119/5-10 Surawang Road, 66-2-238-2620. A favorite of Gay Utopia Tours, this boutique-style hotel is close to all that special southeast Asian nightlife. Moderate price for fine service.

Phuket, Thailand

Connect Guesthouse, 125/8-9 Rath U Thit Road, Patong Beach, 66-76-29-41-95. Swedish-owned and so near the beach you'll be sand chafed. Internet café's a plus. Swedish cleanliness at reasonable prices.

London, England

The New York Hotel, 92 Philbeach Gardens, Earls Court, 44-20-7244-6884. Upscale and reserved, even though its neighbor establishments are fellow Friends of Dorothy. \$120-\$150 for a double. (M)

Philbeach Hotel, 30-31 Philbeach Gardens, Earls Court, 020-7373-1244. Large Victorian townhouse that gets lots of repeat

> Continued on Page 17

THE AMERICAN PROSPECT

Dear Mr. President,

I didn't vote for you, but you keep making my day. The liberal magazine that I edit, The American Prospect, has doubled its circulation since last fall. Your administration is slavishly pro-business—but it's also good for our business.

The more you keep pursuing policies that most people think are nuts, the more people are eager to find alternatives. Imagine, cutting taxes on the richest one percent of Americans, instead of giving ordinary people secure health care and good schools.

Please—keep it up, Mr. President, and the sometimes gutless Democrats in Congress will come roaring back. You tried to squeeze crusty old Senator Jim Jeffords—everything from disinviting him from a major education event honoring a teacher from his own state to threatening Vermont's dairy farmers. You squeezed him so hard he quit the Republican party.

Just when I think you've learned something—when it looks like you've decided to repair to the middle of the road and be the kind of president that you promised in your campaign—you do it again! Scuttling the treaty on global warming. Drilling for oil in Alaska rather than pursuing conservation. Threatening to veto the patients rights bill. Spending taxpayer dollars on religious schools. Appointing protégés of Jesse Helms to the federal appeals courts.

Here at The American Prospect, we keep watching your performance with wonder and appreciation. Even my Democratic friends are so appalled that they are starting to step up to the plate, and support bold things like living wage laws and universal health insurance. They're actually going to block some of your court nominees.

Your administration wasn't what I had in mind, but it could be the most tonic thing for American liberalism since Franklin Roosevelt.

Sincerely,

Robert Kuttner
Co-editor

Let the President know he didn't buy your vote! Donate your tax rebate to organizations that Bush wouldn't want you to support.

Check them out at www.prospect.org/bush

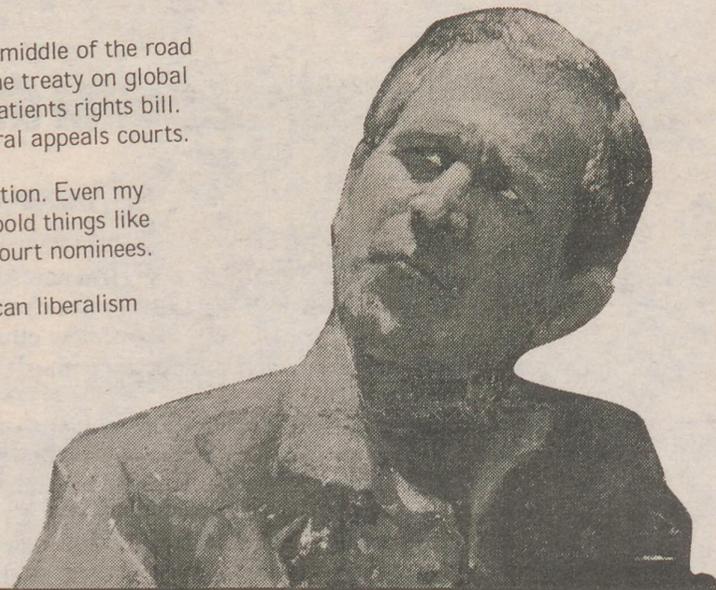


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Photo courtesy of www.aadpup.com

From Prague to Vancouver, there are gay meccas worldwide

➤ Continued from Page 15

gay bars and dance clubs, and if you thought the beach bunnies were friendly, wait until you amble into the expensively refurbished (more marble than King Farouk's bathroom) "Angelo," the overly crowded "Capricho," the newest and tiniest "Fabu! Velvet," the nooks and crannies of the "Galeria," or the alternative grunge scene at "Kinky."

This is Europe, and very gay, so don't expect nightlife to heat up much before midnight or even later. Their motto seems to be: tomorrow, you can sleep on the beach.

Phuket, Thailand

Ever since Anna Leonowens swirled into Siam on those hoop skirts and beguiled their king, tourists have flooded into the tropical, constitutional monarchy of Thailand and been beguiled themselves. Although the politicians have stamped their gilded foot down on those infamous "sex tours," from China and Germany mostly, tourism is up and away in this golden land of pagodas, lush foliage, and beatific smiles.

Homosexuality has never been illegal here, and the openness and frankness of some of Bangkok's legendary wares is pretty shocking to those unused to non-Puritan attitudes.



Halfway down the backward comma shape that is Thailand is the glorious island of Phuket. That's pronounced Pu-KAY, so you don't make a fool of yourself at the airport. For a few years, it's been an exclusive enclave for those in the know, but since gay travelers are in that forefront, the island has now become a very desired spot. It is renown for its natural beauty, on the edge of the Andaman Sea, and only an hour's flight from Bangkok.

This is a spot for doing nothing, but if you just can't sit still on their softest-of-soft beaches, there's plenty to occupy your time.

The high season is November through May, and it gets off to a very gay start indeed with Thailand's annual Gay Festival near the first weekend in November.

The Patong Beach area is the gay section of Phuket, but it's also where every kind of nightlife is concentrated. If you want to stay away from the party boys and katoeys (lady boys), you need only stay at one of the posh beach hotels of Karon or Kata. Your luxury vacation on Phuket can be as gay as you'd like, just what a vacation should be.

Costa Rica

Every travel agent heralded this central American country as the next gay mecca. While not known as strictly a gay destination, such as Provincetown or Fire Island, there's enough gay-friendly activity in capital city San Jose and the Quepos-Manuel Antonio National Park area to keep any vis-

itor happy and satisfied.

It's eliminating things to do that's troublesome. Many gay Americans now make their home in this lovely country, and it's easy to see why.

San Jose has a lively nightlife with plenty of gay entertainment whether it's a drag show at Los Cucharones or Sunday afternoon Latin dancing at La Avispa (the Wasp).

Prague

Paris may have its lights, London its Shakespeare, Vienna its sacher torte, Venice its romance, but Prague, capital of the Czech Republic, has some of all of that—on a Bohemian level—and, to top it off, it has become the gayest place in Europe.

Renown for its architecture, Prague is equally famous for its incredible history and artistic culture. Perhaps nothing is more stirring than their recent Velvet Revolution of 1989, led in part by dissident playwright Václav Havel and hundreds of thousands of Czech citizens. Communism collapsed in a whisper under the immense statue of King Wenceslas, and Havel became the Czech president.

The "city of the hundred spires" is the



hottest place in Europe right now. It has a vibrancy and artistic spirit not unlike NY's, but feels even more contemporary and hip. Gay bars for every proclivity, discos, and cafes proliferate throughout the city.

Prague has the wonderful double whammy of being open and extremely tolerant of gays, and at the same time having those gay places set in a stunning movie backlot location.

Vancouver

At the far western edge of Canada, along the same straight as Seattle, only 143 miles south, lies Victorian Vancouver, the country's third largest city. If you like pristine natural beauty with a crisp edge and lung-searing clean air, this thriving, and very gay, metropolis is for you.

Gay events are heating up come August, all revolving around Vancouver's 23rd annual Pride Parade Aug. 5. Leather Pride Week starts off the festivities, Aug. 2 through 6; to be overlapped by the Queer Film Fest with its amazing 170 entries, Aug. 5 through 23; to be followed by the North American Conference on Bisexuality, Gender, and Sexual Diversity at the University of British Columbia, Aug. 9 through 12.



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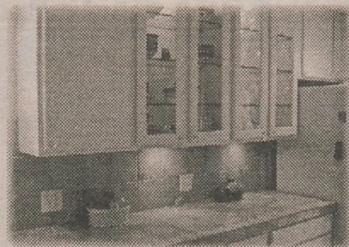
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Gay-owned, managed B&Bs can be found in many international cities

> Continued from Page 15

business. It can get wild, just ask the more buttoned down fellows from the New York. \$95 for a double. (M)

Clone Zone Apartments, 64 Old Compton St., 020-7287-3530. With a name like this, did you expect a straight hotel? The English chain store that sells fetish wear and sex toys has gone into the hotel business. Quite reasonable at \$120 for a double, and if you've forgotten anything for the evening, you know where just where to find it.

Redcliffe Hotel, 268 Fulham Road, 020-7823-3494. The gals don't get expensive luxury here, but in exchange for moderate rates, they get quiet clean comfort, just like at Mumsy's. Doubles range from \$103-\$120. (F)

Rainbow Stay Guest House, Islington, 44-20-207-713-5287. Islington, home to Sadler's Wells and numerous experimental theater venues, is the hot new place to stay, somewhat like NYC's gay-themed Chelsea. Moderate for all the amenities and grunge eye candy.

Noel Coward Hotel, 111 Ebury Street, Belgravia, 44-20-7730-2094. Yes, that Noel Coward. Here're his former digs when his Mum ran a respectable guest quarters out of their house. It doesn't reflect his tonier silk smoking jacket days, but it's still his and doesn't cost a queen's ransom to stay there. \$120 will get you a double with bath. Posh, my dear.

Number Seven Guesthouse, 7 Josephine

Avenue, Lambeth, 020-8674-1880. This renovated Victorian is 5 minutes from London's large gay dance club, The Fridge, and minutes away from Substation South, London's newest. \$118-\$135 for a double.

Paris, France

Hotel Louvre Richelieu, 51 rue de Richelieu, 1st arr., 33-1-42-97-46-20. Almost around the corner from the Opera and the Louvre, this gay-owned and operated hotel is a simple place with simple Paris prices, about \$125 a night for a double.

Hotel Central Marais, 2 rue Ste. Crois de la Bretonnerie, 33-1-48-87-56-08. How convenient, a hotel above a gay bar. Spiffy look, and you may just get a date downstairs. Reasonable rates for Paris.

Brandon's, a private studio in an 18th century townhouse on the quiet side street of rue Bourbon le Chateau, can sleep four if you're friendly. If you stay less than seven nights, it's \$100/person; but it's a great location. Hey, this is Paris, splurge a little.

Ibiza, Spain

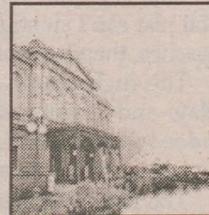
Marigna, Al Sabini 18, Ibiza, 34-971-30-49-12. Although this place is outside the walled Old City in Figueretas, you're never too far from any action on this hottie little isle. Their brochures boast they're the largest gay hotel in Europe, and at 44 rooms, they're probably right. \$37 - \$67 double will get you real close to the leather crowd who

gather at one of the two bars located inside Marigna. Those real hombres just love chintz.

Torre del Canoningo, Mayör 18, 34-971-30-38-84. Available from April through October only, the 7 units in this renovated medieval tower house can accommodate 6 with ease. For \$40 what are you waiting for?

San Jose, Costa Rica

Hotel Colours, 800-277-4825. New pool, new gardens, new guest house make this Central American beauty the most recommended hotel by all the gay travel agents. Extremely reasonable rates for all the pleasures.



Las Banderas B&B, near La Amistad Park, 506-381-5768. Comfy and warm like a favorite serape, this moderate-price gay owned little charmer thinks of everything: on-site massage, Internet access, guided tours. Ole.

Quepos, Costa Rica: Hotel Casa Blanca de Manuel Antonio, 506-777-1316. Near the gay beach, this moderately priced very gay little resort is home away from home to the discerning gay and lesbian. If you love to make your own tortillas, rent a suite with kitchenette.

Prague, Czech Republic

Hotel Sidi, Na Kampe 10, 02-536-135.

Gay friendly and almost built into the 14th century landmark Charles Bridge. Incredible central location for \$120 double.

Penzion David, Holubova 5, 02-549-820. This decorative 3-story house near the equally decorative Mozart Museum displays its intentions with a prominently displayed rainbow flag. The drawback to this amazingly inexpensive spot, \$63 double, is its out-the-way location. Like Cinderella, the Metro shuts down at midnight, and the only way to get back is by taxi.



Lesbos, Greece

Antiopo Women's Hotel, Skala Eressos, 30-1-956-3218. What more appropriate site for a women's hotel than Lesbos, the home of that mother-of-us-all, Sappho, and smack in the village where she was born, Skala Eressos. The woman's beach is but a bacchante's leap away. Moderately priced for all that free estrogen. (F)

Rome, Italy

Hotel Scalinata di Spagna, Piazza Trinita dei Monti 17, 06-679-3006. Elegant, exclusive, and with a romantic roof terrace, at \$110-\$250 for a double, it's the favorite dolce vita site for the discriminating gay traveler.

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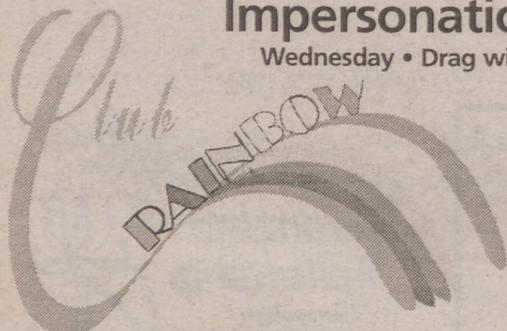


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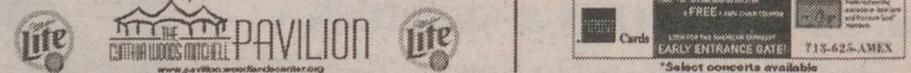


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● Make certain your home is safe before vacationing

by KAY DAYUS & ELLA TYLER

Here's how to ensure the security of your home and the health of your garden while you're soaking up the sun on a beach in Barcelona or roaming around ancient Rome.

Summer is prime vacation time and burglars know it, so you need to make your home look like someone is still there while you're away.

Have a neighbor watch your home while you're gone and ask them to report anything suspicious to the police. Either cancel the newspaper and put a hold on your mail or ask the neighbor to pick up the fliers and other papers that get left on the door. If you are taking the car, see if your neighbor will park a car in your driveway now and then.

If your home has a built-in alarm, test it before you leave and update your emergency-calling list with the monitoring company as well as your neighbors.

Leave shades, blinds and curtains in normal positions. Set lamps and a radio on timers so they will go on and off periodically and create the illusion that someone is home. Timers are inexpensive and easy to use and some are sophisticated enough to change the preset times so they won't be too regular. Leave on a porch light and an outside light if possible. Burglars hate light.

Turn your phone ringer off and keep your answering machine volume turned down so a would-be burglar won't listen outside your home for the unanswered ringing inside the house.

Put your valuables in a safe hiding place. Thieves are usually in a hurry and want to get in and out as quickly as possible, so they grab what they see and leave.

If you are burgled, you will be glad that, at least, you kept records of serial numbers and photos, receipts and any other identification of your valuables. The police and the insurance company will need them.

An unkempt lawn and garden is one sign that the owner is gone. Before you leave tidy everything up, pull weeds and cut spent blooms. Most lawns can go for 10

days without being mowed. If you will be gone longer, arrange for someone to mow.

A healthy lawn that has been kept two to three inches tall and flower beds with three inches of mulch will be fine for at least a week without water. Water deeply the night before you leave and ask your kind neighbor to turn on the sprinklers and soaker hoses if it doesn't rain for a week.

Make this job easier work by setting the sprinklers up and getting a timer that turns the water off. Timers that turn hoses both on and off are available but are more expensive. Tell said kind neighbor to feel free to cut flowers and pick vegetables.

Most established trees and shrubs will be fine for at least two weeks without water. However, plants in pots and hanging baskets present a problem, unless water-retaining polymers have been added to the soil. The small pots might need to be watered daily. The way to reduce their need for water is to move all the potted plants that you can move to the shadiest spot in the yard.

The sun-loving plants will be fine for their brief stay in the shade. Put them as close together as you can, perhaps in a kid's swimming pool. Water them well and ask the neighbor to come sprinkle them for five minutes or so every three days. You also could set up a system with wicks running from a vessel of water to each pot, but that is a lot of work.

The pots that are too heavy to move should have a three-inch layer of mulch and be watered once a week.

If you have an insect or fungus problem, treat it before you leave, but don't fertilize unless you have a seriously malnourished plant. You do not want anything to grow fast while you're gone.

If you will be gone more than a week, move the house plants to the bathtub or shower and water them well. They should be fine for two weeks. Be sure they get some light, artificial is fine, and leave the air conditioning set at 80. If the house gets too hot, plants will die.

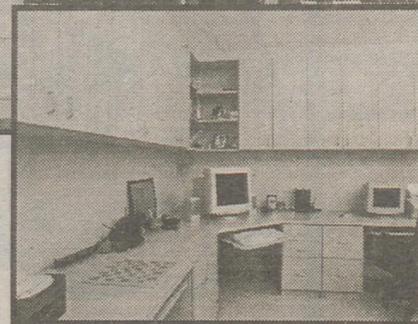
Now you can leave without worrying about the home front while you're gone.

Are the dog and cat ready for their trip to the kennels? Do you have your plane tickets, traveler's checks and passport all in hand? Bon voyage! And bring back something nice for your neighbor.

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Eating Out

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Pleasant misnomer

With or without drinks, Bombay Brasserie offers relaxed atmosphere, authentic North Indian cuisine

by KATHREEN LEE

Whenever one goes to a restaurant that has the word "brasserie" in its moniker, of course one has to make the obligate brassiere-boulder-holder jokes. Actually, the etymology of "brasserie" derives from a French word "to brew" and means an establishment which offers alcoholic beverages, especially wine and beer.

While I did not get a chance to explore the libations offered at **BOMBAY BRASSERIE**, I can confidently certify that their namesake should lie more in their superior cuisine than whatever alcoholic concoctions they can offer.

Serving North Indian cuisine, Bombay Brasserie offers a host of Tandoori specialties, curries, breads and vegetable dishes. If you're unfamiliar with Indian foods, then you might want to start off with the Chef's Platter (\$7.95), an appetizer for two which features a vegetable samosa, a crispy turnover stuffed with spiced potatoes, peas, and herbs. The platter also comes with vegetable fritters and chicken fritters, which are surprisingly light and non-greasy.

Instead of the typical heavy batter exterior surrounding a sparse and vacant interior characteristic of most fritters, the light dough provided a subtle carapace to the substantive fresh vegetables and tender chicken. This would be an auspicious start for fried food lovers.

However, this combination platter does not represent a complete cross section of Bombay Brasserie's repertoire, and I would urge diners to sample some of their popular tandoori or curry dishes. For those unfamiliar with the tandoori style of food preparation, meats, poultry and seafood are prepared in a pit oven made of clay and immersed in a marinade for a prolonged period of time. Afterwards, the various food items are skewered and broiled on charcoal for the finishing touches, and finally served with sizzling smoke billowing from the blazed meats.

Every time a neighboring table ordered tandoori chicken, lamb or shrimp, my dinner companion and I half expected fire alarms to be set off and water sprinklers to emerge from the polished tin deco tile ceiling. Fortunately, fears were unfounded and we were able to enjoy our meal in arid serenity.

Curry dishes are offered with chicken, lamb, shrimp or vegetables. For those who prefer more tender meats, the Lamb Saagwala (\$13.95) would be the recommended choice. Supple chunks of lamb are immersed in a viscous creamed spinach and curry sauce. The delicate and pervious

The Bombay Brasserie

5160 Richmond
Houston, TX 77056
713.355.2000

FOOD FILE

Food:

Service:

Value:

Scene:

Opt for bread, water at home

OK, if you really must

Fine for most

Worth the drive, so live a little

As good as it gets

lamb is saturated in the incredibly rich curry, and each bite is accentuated with the individual flavors of the creamy sauce.

The dense curry can be, for some, overpowering and I would recommend curry novices to diffuse the hearty flavor by dipping Naan (\$1.95) into the sauce. Naan is a thin, soft and fluffy bread made from fine flour that is a staple of Indian cuisine. Much like how rice is used in Chinese cuisine to dilute strong foods, naan also provides a mild and absorbent backdrop for many rich Indian flavors, such as the curry.

The naan at Bombay Brasserie exceeded those of many other establishments in that in the preparation of the bread, the chef used just enough butter and oil to achieve the perfect combination between a soft downy texture and a mild burnt taste which accentuated the bread's flavor. If need be, I could have survived through the meal on their naan alone.

Bombay Brasserie offers a diverse array of dishes, including many vegetarian dishes, which can be sampled on several combination platters (\$14.95-\$19.95). The varied assortment allows diners with more discriminating tastes to experiment with a melange of flavors before settling on their personal favorites.

Not only does Bombay Brasserie invite diners with diverse tastes through their assorted dishes, but the restaurant also maintains a diverse clientele. Whenever I have dined at the restaurant, the customers have always been comprised by a mixed body of races and ages.

If you see an ad on TV for Bombay Brasserie, don't be fooled by their commercial, which they happened to have been taping during one of my visits. While my friend and I were slightly disconcerted by the homogeneously white commercial cast considering the racial heterogeneity of their true clientele, the gist of their message—great food with a great atmosphere—is authentic.

Ashland Street Theatre shuts down

Electrical problems close venue, cancel 'Blue Boys' production

STAFF REPORT

After a two-year run, Ashland Street Theatre in the Heights not only brought down the final curtain this week, it also closed its doors permanently after being "red tagged" by the city of Houston for electrical problems.

According to management, all ticket holders for the new play "Blue Boys" can expect to get a refund in the mail within the next two weeks or so. "Blue Boys" starring Ryan Idol was set to open July 27.

Idol, a popular adult film star who's been in Houston for more than a week rehearsing the play, said he's disappointed the story of his friend, Joey Stefano will not be told on stage in Houston.

"If I had known about the electrical problems with the theatre, I would have waited them to have been corrected before jumping into rehearsals," Idol said. "But, at the very least, I got to get more in touch with the universe of spirituality through Nicholas Anthony Iocona, Jr. (Joey Stefano)."

An electrical wiring update had been ordered by the city's Fire Department several weeks ago, according to a press release. But because of the high cost of the work, the update was not carried out.

This week, the Fire Department ordered the building officially locked up because it was considered unsafe for the volume of people anticipated to attend the theater's latest production.

Ashland management said there is simply no way they can financially afford to have the extensive electrical work carried out. All future productions by the theatre company have been cancelled.

A recorded message greets callers to Ashland and says, "We are closed. We appreciate your patronage for the last two years... It was a lot of fun. We've gone fishing."

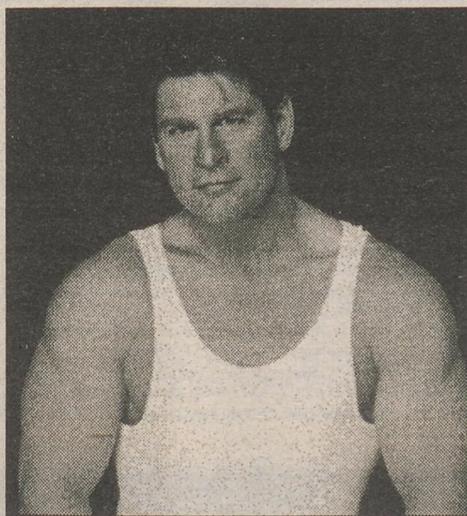
Vaughn Dampier, owner of Ashland, did not return phone calls from the *Houston Voice*.

Idol said he hopes playwright Gregg Rodriguez will stage the production of "Blue Boys" at another venue or in another city.

"It is a shame that this tribute to Nicholas Anthony Iocona Jr. could not have gone up," Idol said. "I believe it was a very entertaining piece and there was a great message from Joey, through me, for all to see."

Ashland was known for its offbeat gay and straight productions such as "Fat Men in Skirts," "The Tales of the Last Formican," and "Midnight at Boyesque," a series of drag comedies.

Ashland's recorded message also states that ticket holders for "Blue Boys" may leave their name, number and address on the answering machine in order to receive a refund in the mail. Ashland's number is 713-426-3019.



Adult film star Ryan Idol was slated to star in the Ashland Street Theatre production of 'Blue Boys,' but problems with electrical wiring have forced the closure of the theater and cancelled the production. Ticket holders may request a refund by calling 713-426-3019.

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-Steve Warren, HOUSTON VOICE

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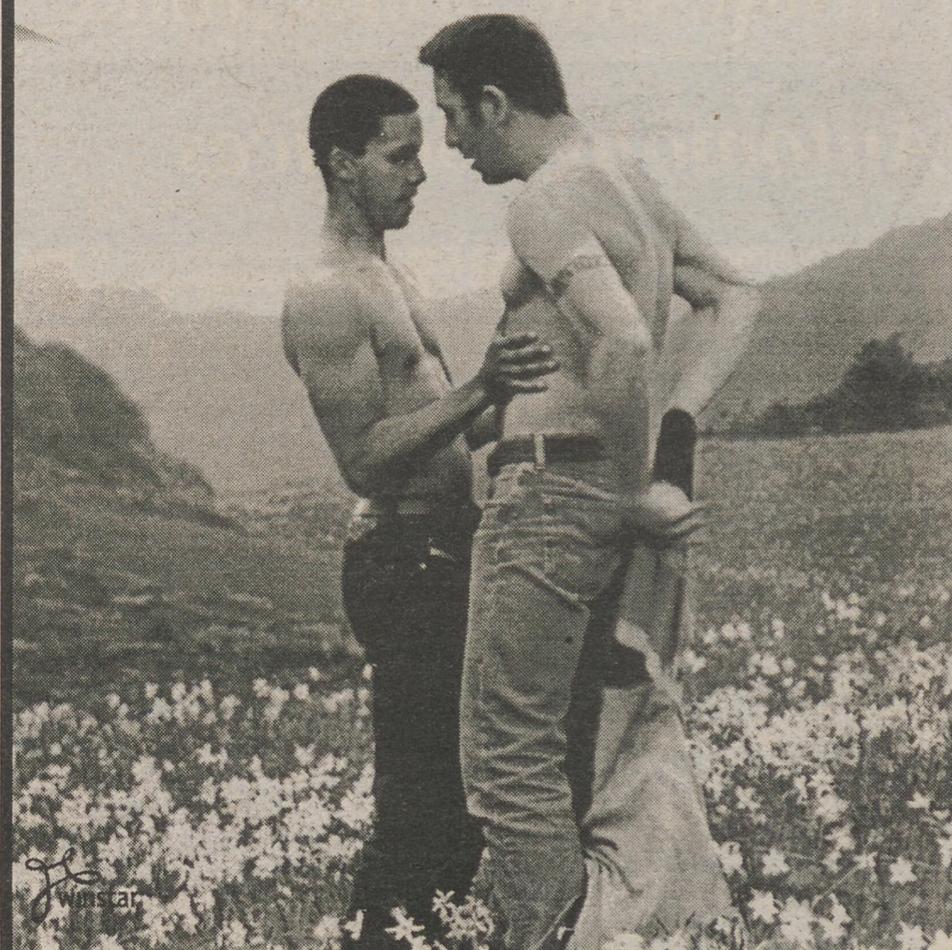
-Brandon Judell, AMERICA ONLINE / indieWIRE

"If JACK KEROUAC had been a gay Frenchman, ON THE ROAD might have been the Adventures of Felix."

-Louis B. Parks, HOUSTON CHRONICLE

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Sonoma closes, TNW still operating

Rumors are flying that Sonoma Restaurant on California Street in the Montrose has closed for good, but owner Jay Allen said he's just "exploring his options."

A large realty sign posted to the building's fencing advertising "restaurant, office or club space for lease" sparked rumors around town and on the gay activist message board, Han-Net, that Sonoma had gone out of business. Allen said he wanted to refurbish the restaurant over the summer, but is now considering other uses for the building.

"Originally, my concept was to close the restaurant for remodeling right after Gay Pride," Allen said. Tropical Storm Allison altered those plans. When he tried to find contractors to recarpet the building, he said most were too busy with post-flooding jobs.

"Basically, they all gave me the pooh-pooh on the job until August," Allen said. "Had we not had the flood, Sonoma

would still be open today."

He said since the closure of the restaurant, offers have been pouring in with proposals for everything from parking lots to townhomes, but Allen said he would prefer to see the structure turned into something to benefit the gay community.

"As a businessman, I want to do what is best for my business interest, for the building, the neighborhood and the community," Allen said.

Allen, who also owns Pacific Street and other establishments in the area, said that the restaurant would continue operation on Thursdays, playing host to private parties, and on Sundays for the Party on the Patio T-Dance.

Allen said he'll make a decision about the restaurant's fate by Labor Day.

He noted that Theatre New West has a lease for their portion of the building through Dec. 31 of this year.

—Kay Y. Dayus & Wendy K. Mohon

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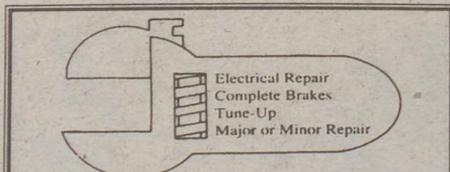



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community

saturday, july 28

After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM. 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. 713-526-5738.
Q-Patrol walks the streets 8:45 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.
Dignity mass. 7:30 p.m. for gay Catholics. 713-880-2872.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Rosary 8 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama.
713-528-6665.
Houston Chain Gang Bicycle Club. Call for ride locations. 713-863-1860.
Gay & Lesbian Breakfast Club. 9:30 a.m. 281-437-0636.
Houston Wrestling Club. Practice. 1:30 p.m. 713-453-7406.
Rainbow Fishing Club. Meeting. 713-526-7070. 713-880-9235.
Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours noon
to 4 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition. • 803
Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
"Sizzlin' Summer Fabric Sale". 7 a.m. 4617 Montrose 713-526-2637.

sunday, july 29

Rainbow Riders. A bicycle club for women. 713-869-1686.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Holy Rite Eucharist I 7:45 a.m.;
Holy Rite Eucharist II 8:55 a.m.; Education hour 10 a.m.; Choral
Eucharist 11 a.m. 713-528-6665.
Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Church. Service. 6:30 p.m.
713-528-6756.
Resurrection MCC. Services. 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Adult Sunday
School 10 a.m. Youth Sunday School 11:15 a.m. Handbell Choir
rehearsal 1:30 p.m. 713-861-9149.
Grace Lutheran Church. Sunday school for all ages 9 a.m. Service
10:30 a.m. 713-528-3269.
Community Gospel. Service at 11 a.m. & 7 p.m. Sunday School for
children 10 a.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
Houston Mission Church. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-529-8225.
Covenant Church, Ecumenical, Liberal Baptist. Service 9:30 a.m. &
education hour 11 a.m. 713-668-8830.
Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Services at 8:30 a.m.
& 10:50 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 713-526-1017.
The Women's Group. Meeting & Discussion. 10:45 a.m. 713-529-8571.
Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 502 Church St. Service
10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.
First Congregational Church (Memorial). Service at 10 a.m.
Christian Education. 11:30 p.m. 713-468-9543 or fcc-houston.org.
Unitarian Fellowship of Houston. Adult forum 10 a.m. Service 11
a.m. 713-686-5876.
Gay Catholics of St. Anne's-Houston. 5 p.m. worship service.
Dinner and social. alexcam@wt.net. 713-623-0930
Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation: Adult discussion
9:45 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.
First Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:30 & 11:30 a.m.

Brunch available 10:30 a.m. Panel Discussion. 1:30 p.m. 713-526-5200. church@firstuu.org.
Anarchist Black Cross Federation/Anarchist Reading Group. 1
p.m. www.houstonabc.org. 713-595-2103
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. to noon. Memorial Park at the
Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com
Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center • 803 Hawthorne.
713-524-3818.

monday, july 30

Gay Fathers/Fathers First. Support group. 8 p.m.
www.GayFathers-Houston.org or 281-505-1788.
Frost Eye Clinic. Free eye exams for people with HIV. 713-830-3000.
HIV testing. STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 1 p.m. to 6:15
p.m. 713-626-2837.
Kolbe Project. Eucharist 7:30 p.m. 713-861-1800.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
936-441-1614.
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center.
713-692-2703.
Lesbian & Gay Voices Radio Show. 8 to 10 p.m. KPFT 90.1. 713-529-1223.
AIDS Mastery. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
Grief & Divorce Support Groups. 7 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017,
Ext. 208.
gayDAR. Wellness Community. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-526-1017, Ext. 211.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours from
6 to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition
• 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
"Homosexuality and the Bible" Workshop. 7 p.m. Maranatha
MCC. 713-528-6756.
StoneWall Democrats. 7 p.m. stonewallhouston@hotmail.com.

tuesday, july 31

For Mature Audiences Only. Support group. 7 p.m. Bering
Memorial UMC. 713-526-1017.
HTGA Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-520-0439.
Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Club
Houston. 713-830-3000.
Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-524-0439.
Bering Support Network. Lunch Bunch Gang 11 a.m. 713-526-1017.
Gay Men's Process Group. 7 p.m. 3316 Mt. Vernon. 713-526-8390.
Men's Network. Discussion group for social, educational develop-
ment of gay and bisexual men. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling
Center. 713-529-0037.



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calendar

Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.

Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. @ hour free dance workshops. No partner needed. Beginner. 2 Step, Waltz, Shuffle & Swing Drop in anytime. 8:30 p.m. 713-528-9192.

Classes. 3 p.m. 713-607-7700.

BiNet Houston. Men's Social. 7 p.m. 713-467-4380.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition. • Lesbian Power Dating. 7:30 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

Bi-Net Houston. Men's Mixer. 713-467-4380.

Houston Outdoor Group. Monthly meeting and mailout. 713-522-7809.

wednesday, aug. 1

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. 2015 Thomas Street 713-793-4026.

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Mary's, Venture-N & E's. 713-830-3000.

BiNet Houston. 7:30 p.m. Women's Social. 713-467-4380

Women's Network. Montrose Counseling Center Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual women. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.

Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 936-441-1614.

Project: Caesar. Workshops. AFH. 3203 Wesleyan. 713-623-6796.

Out Skate Rollerskating Club. 8 to 10 p.m. 8075 Cook Road. 281-933-5818.

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

BiNet Houston. 7:30 p.m. Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Resurrection Church. 713-861-9149.

Freelance Art Classes by Kermit Eisenhut for HIV+ individuals. 1 to 4 p.m. Lunch provided. 713-523-9530.

Houston Tennis Club. 7:30 - 9 p.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com

Lesbian Literature Discussion Group. 7 p.m. 713-523-3037.

Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal. 1307 Yale. 713-527-0931. www.houstonprideband.org.

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. Various Support Groups 7 p.m. 713-526-1017.

Center for AIDS. Women's mixer. 7 p.m. 713-527-8210.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition • Free HIV testing and counseling 6- 9 p.m. • Houston Committee for People's Radio. 6:30 p.m. 713-524-3818.

Center for AIDS. Women's mixer. 713-527-8210.

Classic Chassis Car Club. Monthly meeting. 713-797-8615.

thursday, aug. 2

Gay Men's Chorus of Houston. Open rehearsal. 7 p.m. 4807 San Felipe. 713-521-7464.

Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. 2 hours, free Line Dance instruction. No partner required. Drop in anytime. Brazos River Bottom. 8:30 p.m. 713-528-9192.

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

STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Toyz Disco. 713-830-3000.

Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.

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

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

HIV Art Therapy Program. 1 to 4 p.m. Kermit Eisenhut. 713-523-9530.

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

Community Gospel. Service. 7:30 p.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.

Gay Houston. New social group for all ages. * p.m. 713-526-9318.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition 6:30 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

friday, aug. 3

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

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. Rich's. 713-830-3000.

STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.

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

Q-Patrol walks the streets. 9 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.

Kolbe Project. Morning Prayer. 10 a.m. 713-861-1800.

Houston Tennis Club. Houston Tennis Club. 7:30 - 9 p.m.

Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com

Positive Art Workshop. 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Patrick Palmer. 713-526-1118.

Lesbian and Gay Voices. KPFT 90.1 FM. 7 p.m. 713-526-5738.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition.

Lesbian Movie Night. 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. • 713-524-3818.

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

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Occasions

Birthdays

Four Seasons member Ed I. turns over a birthday leaf on July 28.

Krewe of Olympus member Clint H. starts a parade for his July 28 birthday.

Happy motoring birthdays to CCCC members Casey K. (7/22), Greg W (7/26), Paul S. (7/30), Ben VB. (7/30), Marsha B. (8/3) and Mike S. (8/3).

Vernon W. sneaks in a birthday on Aug. 3.

Asians and Friends members Karl M. (7/28) and Richard D. (7/31) toast to their birthdays this week.

Houston Area Bears members David C. (7/28), Julio A. (7/29) and Peter F. (7/39) claw in a birthday this week.

Ron Dixon celebrates his birthday at the Santa Fe Bar on Sunday, July 29 @ 1-4 p.m. Ya'll come!

Maranatha MCC member Gerald G. celebrates his birthday on July 28.

Jerry Morin sings in his birthday on Aug. 1.



Angelic Hanna Jordon Lindberg brings joy to her two Mommies and Daddy for her 4th birthday on July 29.



Meet Nixon, a 6-month-old Classic Brown Tabby. He loves to play with other kittens but also likes lots of human attention. To find out more about taking Nixon home, call the Houston Humane Society at 713-433-6421, Ext. 5555.



Sean Carter (center) combined his 30th birthday celebration with a fund-raiser for H.A.T.C.H. and the Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center. Wishing him well were Tim Brookover, president of HLGCC and Don Haubold of H.A.T.C.H.

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CALENDAR

Friday • July 27 Morning Prayer 10am Movie Night 7:00pm "Lone Star"	Friday • August 3 Morning Prayer 10am
Monday • July 30 Eucharist 7:30pm	Monday • August 6 Eucharist 7:30pm
Thursday • August 2 Potluck 7pm Speaker: Montrose Counseling Center	Friday • August 10 Morning Prayer 10am

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YOUR WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

July 27 - Aug. 2



ARIES (MARCH 21—APRIL 20)

You have every reason to celebrate life in early August, so don't let petty people spoil your party. Your old confidence could return this week as Mercury puts clever words in your mouth. At last you can woo and inspire with your tongue—a tongue that is especially tempting to a Scorpio.



TAURUS (APRIL 21—MAY 20)

The Sun's transit through your home sector could bring out the happy homemaker in you. Your job in early August is to teach those around you what you know best: the healing power of silence. Be both Daddy and Mommy to your friends. Another Taurus is especially in need of your tender loving care.



GEMINI (MAY 21—JUNE 21)

You don't always have to put hysterical people first. Make time to get in touch with your deepest needs. Balance your need for passionate unpredictability in your love life with an equally strong desire for stability in your work life. Follow a Sag's lead.



CANCER (JUNE 22—JULY 22)

Venus goes into your sign at the beginning of August and puts you back in touch with the crazy romantic fool that you used to be. You may not understand what's going on inside your body, darling, nor inside your mind, so don't jump to any conclusions, yet. Avoid major decisions and spend time with a lighthearted Gemini.



LEO (JULY 23—AUG. 22)

Mercury in your sign gives you wit and charm. Perhaps a tad too much! If ever there was a time to let down your guard and say, "What's the worst thing that could happen? I could get hurt. Big deal," this would be the time. A Taurus wants to be tempted.



VIRGO (AUG. 23—SEPT. 22)

The Sun's transit through your house of the past could bring you back together with an old love, but don't expect it to last. Jupiter in your house of friendship could make you seem available to everybody, so be careful who you make coffee dates with—especially with your best friend's partner. An Aquarius wants to be your lover.



LIBRA (SEPT. 23—OCT. 22)

A chance to improve your standing in the community could present itself in early August. Try to be humble and put others first. Study a new religion, philosophy, or take a Berlitz language course and speak in tongues with a world-weary Aries.



SCORPIO (OCT. 23—NOV. 21)

The full moon early on Aug. 4 could trigger a bit of necessary upheaval on your home front. Competing hard isn't the answer now—letting your brilliance speak for itself is. Let a Capricorn come after you.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22—DEC. 21)

Pluto is your pal and your rival in early August, as you are forced into the position of catalyst once again. Stop obsessing over trivial people and concentrate on the most important person in your life: you. All right, if you have to seduce and conquer someone, make it another Sag.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 22—JAN. 19)

Now that the eclipses have passed and Jupiter is in your house of love, August could turn out to be a highly romantic time for you. Let go of a little self-control and you can let more love into your life. Something magical yet strangely logical could begin with a Pisces. Why didn't you two get together before this?



AQUARIUS (JAN. 20—FEB. 18)

The full moon early on Aug. 4 in your sign could bring a major revelation in your love life. You could finally see that some of the fears you sense in your partners are really your own. Delve deeper into your past and explore why you burned the bridges that you did.



PISCES (FEB. 19—MARCH 20)

You are ahead of the curve when it comes to creativity, darling, but your practical abilities are a little weak. Take that extra yoga class or box 'til you drop. You need a constructive physical outlet—in addition to the one you have in a Cancer.

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

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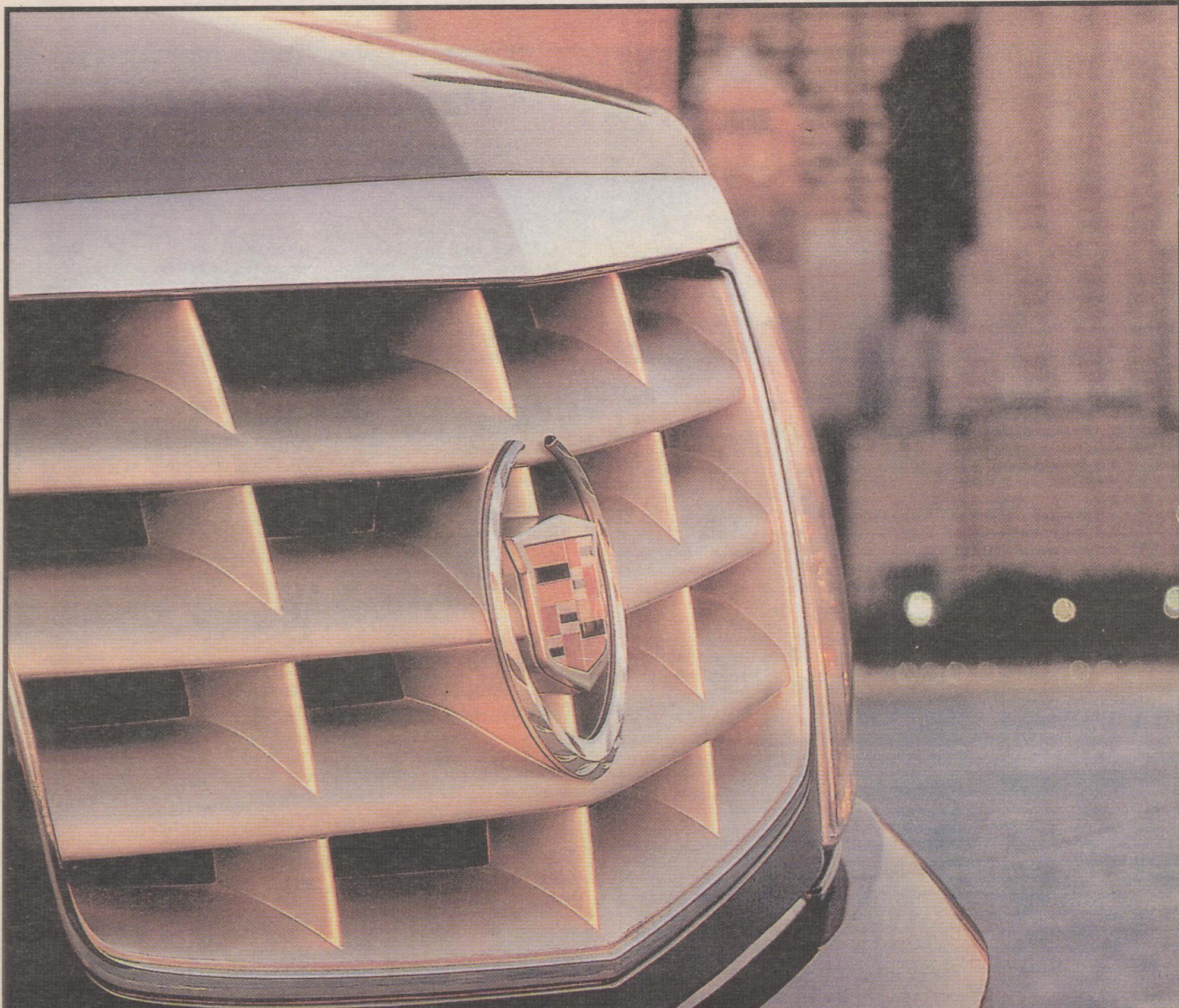


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