

houston VOICE

A YEAR OF QUOTE/UNQUOTE

Notable quotables in '01
Words can be daggers. Ask Elton John, who sparked controversy in February. A year in quotes.



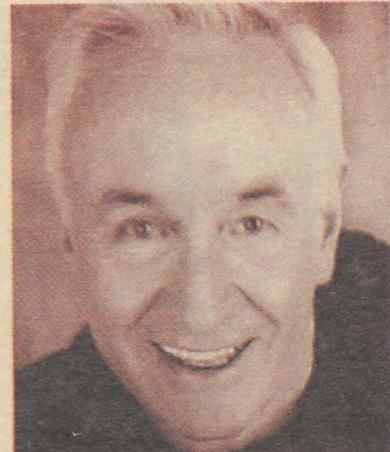
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ISSUE 1105

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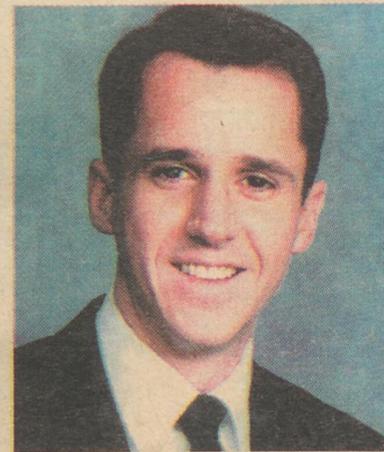
DECEMBER 28, 2001



our year
before
and after

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2001



Year in TX brings victory, defeat for gays, page 7

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SOUTH YEAR IN REVIEW

Big wins, big losses for Deep South gays

Activists continue fights for hate crime laws, job protection, DP benefits around the region

by JENNIFER J. SMITH

Gay rights battles in the Deep South remained a study in contrasts in 2001, with historic victories echoed by stunning defeats.

Although the New Orleans City Council voted unanimously to codify domestic partner benefits for city employees, voters in Houston, approved a charter amendment banning the benefits there — despite a strong lobbying effort from gay activists.

Several schools around the South enacted pro-gay measures in 2001, including the University of Mississippi, which added sexual orientation to its non-discrimination policy, and South Carolina's Furman University, which became the first college in that state to offer domestic partner benefits.

But lawmakers in Mississippi and Alabama refused to add gays to hate crimes laws, and Southern cities remained high on the list of new cases of full-blown AIDS.

JANUARY

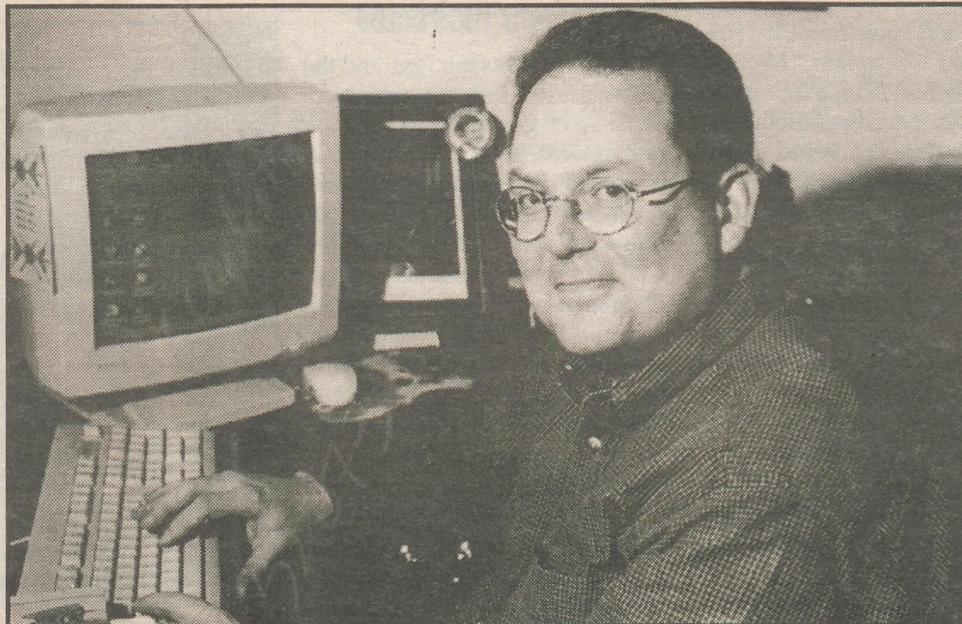
Pro-gay commercials hit Mississippi airwaves. Equality Mississippi, a gay advocacy group, ran first-of-its-kind television advertising spots intended to lessen the taboo surrounding gay issues in the state. The planned 132 spots, costing a total of \$3,000 and running on MTV and VH1, marked the first time a gay group took to television in Mississippi.

FEBRUARY

Mississippi lawmakers drop hate crimes bill. A Mississippi House bill that would have added sexual orientation to the state's hate crimes law and a Senate measure that could have led to a state constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage both died in legislative committees without discussion. For gay rights leaders in the state, the failure of the pro-gay bill and the anti-gay measure meant nothing lost, but nothing gained.

Alabama rally marks anniversary of Gaither's death. More than 100 people gathered on the steps of the State Capitol in Montgomery, Ala., on Feb. 19 in a memorial vigil for Billy Jack Gaither, a gay man beaten to death by two men in Sylacauga in 1999 because of his sexual orientation. In his memory, state Rep. Alvin Holmes (D-Montgomery) introduced House Bill 423 that would classify crimes motivated by sexual orientation as hate crimes. The state House approved the bill by a three-vote margin in May, but the state Senate failed to pass it.

TN's first openly gay candidate runs for



Social worker Carlton Cornett became the first openly gay Congressional candidate in Tennessee's history when he announced his bid for the U.S. House seat currently held by Rep. Bob Clement (D-Nashville).

House seat. Carlton Cornett announced his campaign for the U.S. House of Representatives seat currently held by incumbent Rep. Bob Clement (D-Nashville). The first openly gay Congressional candidate in Tennessee history, Cornett, a clinical social worker, is campaigning for the Nashville-area seat by promising legal rights for same-sex couples, abortion rights, and public welfare and health care reform. The race will be on the 2002 ballot.

MARCH

Ole Miss adds gays to bias policies. While the battle to add sexual orientation to non-discrimination policies can be a difficult fight in some places, including the South, a gay student group at the University of Mississippi won their battle with little turmoil. Ole Miss's policies were quietly updated by dropping the term "sexual orientation" into the school's existing policies at the urging of the campus Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Student Association.

APRIL

Alabama Presbyterian church goes 'gay-affirming.' University Presbyterian Church became the first of the denomination's Alabama congregations to publicly declare it welcomes all people regardless of sexual orientation. The congregation is now affiliated with More Light Presbyterians, a national organization that calls for the inclusion of gay men and lesbian in church leadership.

MAY

TN court rules in favor of lesbian mom. The Tennessee Supreme Court found in favor of a lesbian mother in a custody dispute, a case that could have national implications for gay parents, legal experts said. In a unanimous decision, the high court overturned an appellate court's earlier decision prohibiting the daughter

of the defendant, Julia Eldridge, from visiting overnight in the presence of her mother's lesbian partner.

JUNE

Gays protest Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans. Soulforce, led by Rev. Mel White, brought its agenda of pro-gay religious reform to New Orleans during the Southern Baptist Convention in June. While the conservative Baptists were inside the Louisiana Superdome passing resolutions to "preserve the American family" and to "minister homosexuals away from their lifestyle," a public protest organized by White and his Soulforce organization led a jazz funeral procession of some 100 people down bustling Poydras Street.

JULY

Miami jail guard accused of abusing trans inmate. An immigration jail guard was sentenced July 24 to eight months in jail for sexually abusing a transsexual Mexican immigrant, even though the victim insisted she had been raped twice by him. The prosecution grew out of charges by nine detainees that were victims of sexual abuse at Krom Detention Center, prompting the transfer of all women detainees last December. Lemar Smith, 33, was originally charged with rape but pleaded guilty in May to two misdemeanor counts of sexual contact with a detainee in his custody.

AUGUST

Census documents gay couples throughout the Deep South. The number of reported gay couples in Tennessee increased 900 percent from the 1990 Census to the 2000 Census, the largest of any Southern state, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, released Aug. 8. In comparison, Florida's same-sex "unmarried partners"

increased 383 percent, Louisiana's increased 562 percent, Mississippi's increased 609 percent, South Carolina's increased 613 percent, Alabama's 659 percent, Georgia's 451 percent and North Carolina and Kentucky both increased by 720 percent.

SEPTEMBER

Partner of slain Tampa officer denied pension benefits. The woman who shared her life with a Tampa police officer slain in the line of duty vowed to fight for the officer's pension benefits after being denied them. Tampa Police Det. Mickie Mashburn was denied the pension benefits of her life partner of 10 years, Officer Louis Marrero, who was shot to death in July by a fleeing bank robber. Tampa's police and fire pension board said only legal spouses can collect survivor's benefits and the two were not legally married.

New Orleans codifies domestic partner benefits. The New Orleans City Council unanimously codified Mayor Marc Morial's domestic partner order into law, making the city one of just a handful of Southern municipalities to grant DP benefits for city employees.

OCTOBER

KY presbytery votes against removing ban on gay clergy. The Transylvania Presbytery voted Oct. 13 to reject a proposal to permit the ordination of gay clergy in the Presbyterian Church (USA). One delegate abstained from the 83 to 50 vote. To become church policy, the measure must be approved by a majority of the church's 173 presbyteries before the General Assembly meets in June 2002.

NOVEMBER

Full-blown AIDS cases highest among Southern cities. Some 13 cities in the South, including New Orleans and Baton Rouge, were among the top 20 metro areas in per capita rankings of new full-blown AIDS cases last year, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. Miami tops the list with 58 cases per 100,000 people, putting the city ahead of New York and San Francisco. Other Southern cities on the list include New Orleans; Baton Rouge, La.; Wilmington, N.C.; Columbia, S.C.; and Memphis, Tenn.

DECEMBER

USC faculty approves gay-inclusive anti-bias policy. The faculty senate at the University of South Carolina approved adding sexual orientation to the school's Equal Opportunity policy, drawing outrage from conservative state lawmakers and school trustees. The university's president hasn't said whether he will forward the pro-gay policy to the board of trustees for approval.

STORY OF THE YEAR

Gay life before and after Sept. 11

by LISA KEEN

One by one, their faces began emerging in the press following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. There, in photographs that previously had been seen only by those who had been part of their lives, were ordinary people on vacation, or at home on the West Coast or in offices on the East Coast that sky-blue Tuesday morning.

With each photo came the story of where they were when hijackers seized four commercial airline jets and slammed them into the Pentagon, the twin towers of the World Trade Center, and a field in Pennsylvania.

An Associated Press report this week put the total of people killed, identified and presumed dead, at 3,015.

The attack took their lives and launched a war in Afghanistan that overshadows every other news story this year.

And it is a story that begins, for many gay Americans, with the 16 victims who, thus far, have been identified as gay by friends and family.

They include Joe Ferguson, an educational outreach director at National Geographic, a rugged man with a big smile who adopted a fox terrier to save it from being put to sleep. He died in the plane that slammed into the Pentagon.

They include Pamela Boyce, an accounting executive on the 92nd floor of One World Trade Center, with a sassy smile and a fondness for competitive disco dancing.

There was Ronald Gamboa, striking a fatherly pose with his 3-year-old son David in Hawaiian shirts. Both were lost, along with Gamboa's partner and David's other father, Daniel Brandhorst, when their plane brought down an icon of the New York City skyline.

They include British-born Graham Berkeley, who had only recently obtained his green card after a 10-year struggle to stay in the United States, and Jeffrey Collman, a flight attendant who had asked for an assignment on Sept. 11 so he could take off from work on Sept. 28, his birthday.

And there was Sheila Hein, who had served in the Navy but, as a civilian, had been working as a visual information specialist for the Army at the Pentagon.

There was David Charlebois, in the cockpit at the first officer's seat on the American Airlines flight that hijackers crashed into the

Pentagon, and New York City Fire Department Chaplain Mychal Judge, who had been administering last rites to a dying firefighter moments before the World Trade Center collapsed upon them.

There was Jack Keohane, whose partner found him, dying, on the street in front of the World Trade Center; Keohane had been talking with his mother on a cell phone when debris from the collapse struck him.

Carol Flyzik, a marketing executive for a medical software firm, had spent countless hours restoring the Victorian home she shared with her partner in New Hampshire.

William Karnes had moved from a small town in Tennessee to New York to work as a software trainer for a firm that had leased the last block of offices available at the World Trade Center, on floors 94 through 100 in Tower 1. A vice president at that same firm, Catherine Smith, had recently built a beach house on the Jersey shore with her partner of many years.

Miraculously, Renee Barrett, an employee of Cantor Fitzgerald on the top floors of the north tower of the World Trade Center, made it to the ground. But she later died, said her MCC-Manhattan pastor, of burns she sustained in the attack.

Luke A. Dudek, the food and beverage controller for the Windows on the World restaurant at the 107th floor One World Trade Tower, did not make it out. Sept. 11 was his first day back at work, following a vacation he spent renovating a new building for the flower business he operated with his life partner.

And then there was Mark Bingham, an everyman — a rugby player, business owner, Republican, only child, world traveler, a protective kind of guy who considered his mother to be "a goddess." He was the last passenger to board the United flight that wound up on the ground in Pennsylvania after, it is believed, Bingham and several other passengers wrestled control from the hijackers, possibly preventing an attack on the U.S. Capitol.

There was at least one gay victim on each of the four flights, in each of the three buildings struck, and among the rescuers who responded to the scenes, and there were almost certainly more who were gay but who were not out or have not yet been identified.

A movement redirected

Their loss was our loss, and the nation's loss. But the impact of Sept. 11 of gay America, and on our movement, is still unfolding, just as it is for America generally.

Sixteen minutes after the first flight, carrying flight attendant Collman and businesswoman Flyzik, crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center, the second flight, carrying Berkeley and Gamboa and Brandhorst and their son, crashed into the south tower.

At that moment, Americans became aware how shockingly vulnerable we were to terrorism and that our sense of security and invincibility at home might never be restored.

Thirty-five minutes later, when a third airplane, carrying Ferguson and co-pilot Charlebois, slammed into the Pentagon in Washington, that sense of vulnerability intensified.

A fourth plane aimed toward Washington crashed into the ground in Pennsylvania one hour and 19 minutes after it began, thanks to the heroism of Bingham and his fellow passengers.

The impact for the world has already been enormous and is not yet fully realized. There is a war in Afghanistan and a hunt for Osama bin Laden. His capture — "dead or alive," as President Bush has put it — will almost certainly lead to other attacks.

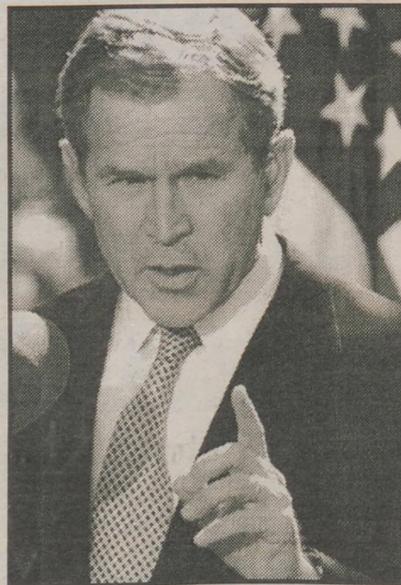
Taking place at the cusp of recession, the attacks have also deepened the nation's economic downturn, with thousands more jobs lost, especially in the travel and hospitality industries where so many gays make their living.

Political agenda set aside

The president's political agenda wasn't the only one sidelined by Sept. 11. The gay movement's hopes of passing laws on hate crimes and employment non-discrimination were set aside, at least for now.

A Senate hearing on the Employment Non-Discrimination Act had been scheduled for Oct. 2. And head-counters at the Human Rights Campaign are confident they already have more than 51 votes, after coming so tantalizingly close to winning passage five years ago.

HRC hopes a hearing and a vote in the Democratic-controlled Senate may still come early next year, for ENDA and for the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which HRC believes



The Sept. 11 attacks changed the focus of legislative matters in Washington, D.C., where gay activists — prior to the tragedy — had counted votes and hoped for Senate passage of a workplace bias ban and hate crime bill, though President Bush has been mum on the workplace bill and has said he opposes a hate crime bill. With his public approval ratings high, overcoming Bush's opposition may prove difficult, according to political pundits.

now has the filibuster-proof support of more than 60 senators.

But the GOP leadership in the House opposes both measures and the president has stayed silent on ENDA and said during the 2000 campaign that he doesn't support HCPA, so both pieces of legislation face an uphill battle, especially in the post-Sept. 11 political climate.

Instead, since Sept. 11, gay lobbyists have focused on fighting to ensure that a fair sum of money donated to charities and appropriated by Congress for the families of the Sept. 11 victims goes to the families of the gay victims, most of whom had same-sex partners.

Last week, the special master assigned the task of doling out federal money to the terror victims said he would not exclude gay survivors from applying for funds, but their eligibility will hinge on state laws that rarely recognize their legal rights.

Perhaps responding to an enormous call for national unity following the attacks, even the Defense Department recognized same-sex relationships, acknowledging Pentagon manpower analyst Sheila Hein's partner and assigning her a "casualty officer" to help her manage affairs follow-

ing Hein's death.

Support for gays emerged from unfamiliar places, even as it was inspired by familiar foes.

After Rev. Jerry Falwell, the anti-gay televangelist, said on Pat Robertson's "700 Club" that gays, feminists, "pagans and the abortionists," among others, bore some responsibility for the terrorist attacks, even conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh chastised him, as did the Family Research Council.

"Suggestions of this kind are one of the reasons why all conservatives get tarred and feathered with this extremist, bigoted, racist, sexist, homophobic label of image that isn't true," Limbaugh said on his nationally broadcast radio program.

"This is not the time to further wound America's spirit by casting blame on our fellow citizens," agreed FRC President Ken Connor.

The outcry against Falwell and Robertson was so overwhelming that Falwell apologized and Robertson later called Falwell's original comment "totally inappropriate," even though he said he agreed with it at the time.

Old battles, new context

Some old prejudices against gays, however, were unmoved.

As the Pentagon geared up to send troops to Afghanistan, scheduled discharges were suspended for everyone except those to be dismissed because of their sexual orientation.

When blood banks put out a call for donations to help with those injured in the attacks, they turned away men who have had sex with another man at anytime since 1977, relying on a Food & Drug Administration policy adopted 16 years ago, dismissing the results of the sophisticated blood tests developed since that time.

Gay activists reacted quickly when the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and other charities initially withheld relief services and funds from the same-sex partners of attack victims. Eventually, some charities agreed to include gay partners. That money, while important to the survivors, amounted to a fraction of what the spouses of straight victims expect to receive.

— Chris Crain contributed to this report.

NATIONAL NEWS IN REVIEW

2001: Gay numbers, cultural influence rise

Year was one of pivotal politics, memorable moments from state capitals to small screen

by ERIC ERICKSON

Like so much in 2001, many of the advancements — and setbacks — in gay politics, religion and culture that made news were forgotten in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

But despite the tragedy, the year will go down as one of continued acceptance for gay civil rights.

And unfortunately, the year also saw anti-gay bias rear its ugly head.

Unusual partnerships

When George W. Bush was inaugurated in January as America's 43rd president, some gay activists were waiting in the wings, ready to pounce in case the new president ignored gay issues.

But in April, it was Bush's far right supporters who were angered when he appointed an openly gay man as the White House AIDS czar.

Gay activists called the appointment of Scott Evertz a victory, as he was both the first openly gay appointee by a GOP administration and to an executive branch position.

Bush made history again in September when he named openly gay foreign service officer Michael Guest as Ambassador to Romania. Unlike the last time an openly gay man, James Hormel, was named as ambassador, Guest's nomination publicly ruffled few conservative feathers.

The partnership between an openly gay man and Romania is striking particularly as the nation has one of the worst records in Europe regarding treatment of gays.

Other partnerships popped up around the country when data from the 2000 U.S. Census was released this year. The report showed a dramatic jump in the number of reported same-sex households and included a gay household in all but 22 counties in the country.

While unmarried same-sex partner households represented half of one percent of all America's households, they made up 12 percent of all unmarried partner households, according to the Census.

California, New York, Texas and Florida topped the list of states with the largest percentage of reported same-sex households. Those four states alone accounted for more than one-third of all same-sex partner households in the country.

Perhaps the most controversial partnership of the year came when oh-so-gay Elton John joined controversial rapper Eminem on stage in February to perform a duet during the Grammys.

Some gays criticized Eminem for anti-gay lyrics in his music. John agreed to perform with Eminem, saying he couldn't reject the "olive branch" offered by the rapper. John's

move was supported by many musicians, including Madonna, but maddened some gay activists like Robin Tyler who, in an open letter to John, said he should "resign from your commitment to appear with Eminem at the Grammys, or go down in history as a gay Uncle Tom who foolishly allowed himself to be used as a tool against his own people."

Milestones

Without a doubt the most notable milestone this year is the one gays wished never had to be commemorated: AIDS turned 20. Federal health officials documented the first case of the "gay cancer," what later would become known as AIDS, on June 5, 1981 in Los Angeles.

In two decades, AIDS went from being known as primarily a gay disease to one that affects every stripe of life in America, from professional athletes and movie stars to politicians and children.

While the number of new reported AIDS cases has leveled off to about 40,000 annually, other reports in 2001 show that AIDS is quickly becoming a more prominent threat in racial minorities, with the CDC saying that one-third of all young black men are infected with the virus.

The CDC marked another milestone in 2001 as its Epidemic Intelligence Service marked its 50th anniversary in April. Home to the CDC's "disease detectives," the EIS was responsible for much of the early days of AIDS, becoming the subject of the 1993 HBO movie "And the Band Played On."

In July, *Bowers v. Hardwick* turned 15. The 5-4 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Georgia's sodomy law in the case of Michael Hardwick, an Atlanta bartender arrested in his own bedroom for sodomy.

Although Georgia's sodomy law was overturned by the state Supreme Court in 1998, activists and attorneys say the stridently worded ruling in *Bowers v. Hardwick* continues to have impact, both in court cases around the country and on the activists it helped inspire in Atlanta.

And in April, a heterosexual editorial newspaper writer for the Rutland Herald was awarded journalism's top prize — for advocating gay issues. David Moats received the Pulitzer Prize for the editorials he wrote in support of civil unions for same-sex couples.

Vital votes

Homosexuality was, as always, a hot topic in religion in 2001. In March, the Presbyterian Church USA voted to defeat a measure that would have banned same-sex unions.

In June, that same denomination's General Assembly voted to recommend lifting a ban on ordaining gay and lesbian cler-

gy. The issue is hardly settled: Presbyteries vote on the issue and a final tally won't be taken until next year.

At its annual meeting in June, the Southern Baptist Convention voted in favor of a resolution congratulating President Bush for his refusal to designate June as "Gay Pride Month," instead asking him to recognize the summer month as "Heterosexual Family Pride Month."

The group, meeting in New Orleans, also passed other anti-gay measures as Soulforce and other gay religious activists protested.

This spring, Maryland's House of Delegates voted in favor of a bill banning sexual orientation discrimination in housing, public accommodations and employment, making Maryland the 12th state in the country to include gays in a statewide bias bill.

In November, voters in four cities across the country supported gay civil rights. In Michigan, voters in two cities rejected amendments that would have prevented passage of gay-friendly measures. In Florida, Miami Beach voters approved domestic partner benefits for city employees.

The news wasn't as good in Houston, where voters approved a ban on domestic partner benefits for city employees.

Transitions

Elizabeth Toledo's tenure wasn't even a year old when she stepped down as the executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force. Initially criticized for coming out as a lesbian only a short time before her appointment to lead NLGTF, Toledo said her decision not to renew her contract was for personal reasons.

Toledo's replacement was announced in May when longtime Los Angeles gay activist Lorri Jean was named the new executive director. Critics chastised NLGTF for naming its seventh consecutive lesbian to lead the organization.

Also in May, the ACLU named its first-ever openly gay executive director. Attorney Anthony Romero became the sixth leader of the ACLU, often considered the nation's most influential civil rights group.

Romero came under fire by some gay activists when he refused to release the name of his long time partner. Critics questioned how the head of one of the nation's most influential civil rights groups could have a partner who remain unidentified.

"I just hope that the community understands that there are personal reasons, there are privacy issues that relate to this," Romero said of his partner in June.

Another transition in 2001 brought glee to some gay activists. In April, "Dr. Laura" Schlessinger said she would stop taping her TV talk show, which had been the target of a vigorous boycott by activists who said she was anti-gay.

Schlessinger issued a statement attributing the end of her TV show largely to the



Scott Evertz became the first openly gay White House appointee by a GOP administration when President Bush named him AIDS czar in April.

boycott of advertisers powered by "portions of the gay community." The infamous "doctor" was off the TV airwaves in about six months.

The Internet was the home to a huge dot-com transition that merged the two largest gay-oriented Web sites. PlanetOut merged with Gay.com's parent company, Online Partners, in the spring. The merger drew fire from activists who said it would create an Internet monopoly for gay news and information.

While both sites have maintained individual looks and layout, many of the staff members work for both.

In July the new company, PlanetOut Partners Inc., announced a 10 percent cut in its staff, located in San Francisco.

The end of the year also brought the end of Pat Robertson's career with the anti-gay Christian Coalition, which has been in decline for many years. Robertson, 71, founded the coalition in 1989, after his presidential campaign failed.

He announced on Dec. 5 his plan to resign, and the Washington-based organization's board of directors named him president emeritus. But gay activists said Robertson will still be able get out his anti-gay message through his "The 700 Club."

Another transition was announced this year, but gay activists have to wait until 2003 for U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) to retire. The anti-gay lawmaker said in August that he will not seek re-election next year.

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TEXAS NEWS IN REVIEW

Mixed bag of highs, lows for Houston

Victories held in check by defeats for gay Texans in 2001

by PENNY WEAVER

In the history books, 2001 for gay Texans may be recorded as a strange mixture of both victory and defeat, hopes realized and hopes dashed.

Gay Houstonians had progress on the agenda early in the year as the Houston City Council considered offering same-sex domestic partner benefits. While Mayor Lee Brown and gay leaders later dropped that effort in favor of a non-discrimination ordinance, the move was deemed successful when that ordinance became law in July.

Perhaps the biggest issue of the year was City Prop. 2, a measure to prevent the city from offering health and other benefits for domestic partners of its employees. The proposition was approved by a narrow margin, a defeat that many gay activists still hailed as progress, particularly in light of the last similar vote in the city.

In that 1985 battle, Houston voters overwhelmingly rejected civil rights for gays. But this year, even in defeat, gay Houstonians found some hope for the future, and made several marks of progress.

JANUARY

Council considers domestic partner benefits. Houston City Council members were set to consider issuing health benefits to same-sex partners of city employees. Openly gay Council member Annise Parker helped power the issue before the panel.

FEBRUARY

Mayor switches tack in DP debate. Houston Mayor Lee Brown, who had proposed a measure to offer domestic partner benefits for city employees, dropped that plan in favor of a sweeping anti-bias ban. Gay activists in the city supported the change in tactics.

MARCH

Court upholds homosexual conduct law. The 14th Court of Appeals upheld the Texas homosexual conduct law in a case that originated from the 1998 arrests of two gay Houstonians. John Lawrence and Tyron Garner were charged with sodomy after sheriff's deputies found the men engaged in sex in Lawrence's home. The officers had responded to a false third-party report of an armed intruder. The case has been appealed to the Texas Supreme Court.

APRIL

Sodomy repeal bill progresses. Legislation, sponsored by gay-friendly Rep. Debra Danburg, D-Houston, to repeal the

state's sodomy law passed a House committee. The bill was aimed at striking down the homosexual conduct law, which prohibits sodomy between same-sex couples. Texas decriminalized sodomy, defined by the law as anal or oral sex, for heterosexuals in 1973.

MAY

Texas lawmakers protect, rebuff gays. Gov. Rick Perry signed into law the James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act, which provides enhanced penalties for crimes committed based on a victim's status as a minority, including being gay. Also, the Texas House approved a bill to protect schoolchildren or their parents from discrimination because of factors including sexual preference. But later in the month, state lawmakers in the Texas House approved a bill that included an amendment to prohibit the state from recognizing same-sex civil unions.

JUNE

Tropical Storm Allison hits hard. More than 30 inches of rain from Allison killed 23 people and caused \$5 billion in damage to southeast Texas. Local organizations serving gay Houstonians sustained millions in damages.

Court upholds non-discrimination order. The Texas Supreme Court dismissed a lawsuit challenging Mayor Lee Brown's city hall policy banning discrimination based on sexual orientation. The lawsuit was brought by City Council member Robb Todd, who challenged the mayor's right to issue the order.

Police officers participate in Pride. Gay members of the Houston Police Department marched in the annual Pride Parade for the first time ever. The HPD contingent included two police cars, and four officers rode and walked the length of the parade route.

JULY

Openly gay judge appointed. Mayor Lee Brown appointed Steve Kirkland, an openly gay man, Associate Justice of the Municipal Court of Houston. He is only the second openly gay judge in the city's court system. Nominated by Houston City Council members Annise Parker and Gabriel Vasquez, Kirkland was given a green light for the job during Pride week in June by the entire Council.

Non-discrimination ordinance passes. Houston City Council members approved a measure to protect gay municipal employees with a 10-4 vote. The proposal was co-sponsored by Mayor Lee Brown and Council member Annise Parker and outlaws discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, race, religion, age, gender or disability for city employees.

Gay Houston man murdered. Juan Manuel Miyar-Laris, 38, was found stabbed to death in his Galleria-area apartment on July 21. There was no sign of forced entry



The only openly gay member of the Houston City Council, Annise Parker this year helped champion anti-discrimination legislation and fight against the anti-gay City Prop. 2, which eventually won narrow approval by voters.

and nothing was missing from the apartment, so police believed Miyar-Laris knew his killer.

AUGUST

Police kill suspect in gay man's murder. Following a pursuit, Houston Police officers shot and killed Haywood Louis Ogburn, 33, a suspect in the murder of gay Houstonian Juan Manuel Miyar-Laris. Police had served a warrant at the suspect's residence and he fled the scene, leading to the pursuit and eventual shooting by law enforcement officers. Ogburn became a suspect in the case after a Crime Stoppers tip.

New trial ordered for gay death row inmate. Convicted for the 1983 stabbing murder of W.T. Wise of Houston, Calvin Burdine's case on appeal was championed by defense attorneys and gay civil rights advocates who alleged homophobia and a poor defense as contributing to his conviction. An appeals court ordered a new trial for Burdine, stating he was denied his right to a fair trial because his lawyer slept during the original proceedings.

Census reveals gays in all parts of Texas. The release of Census 2000 data from Texas showed that gays live in almost every county in the Lone Star State. Those figures show that Texas ranks third — behind only California and New York — in the percentage of same-sex households reported. Of the nearly 600,000 same-sex households shown in Census figures, 7.22 percent are in Texas. Houston reported 6,076 gay households; Dallas came in at 4,988, San Antonio with 2,278, Austin at 2,532 and Fort Worth at 1,245.

SEPTEMBER

Gay man murdered in his home. Two men were charged after police pursued two

vehicles stolen from the Montrose home where Cesar Antonio Vela, 70, was found killed. Troy Lee Bailey, 31, was charged with capital murder, and Curley Charles Simien, 43, was charged with felony theft in the case. Vela, a retired airline executive, was found dead in his home. Police believed he was strangled.

Anti-gay measure put on ballot. Conservative Dave Wilson and his group, Houstonians For Family Values, powered a move to collect enough signatures to put on the city's fall ballot a measure that would prevent the City of Houston from offering health insurance and other benefits to the domestic partners of its employees.

OCTOBER

State to appeal gay death row inmate's case. Chuck Rosenthal, Harris County district attorney, announced that he had asked the state attorney general to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court the case of gay death row inmate Calvin Burdine. Although Rosenthal indicated the state would appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court, no further action was taken in 2001.

NOVEMBER

Anti-gay City Prop. 2 passes. Despite a unified and strong effort by gay political activists and gay-friendly supporters, voters approved the anti-gay City Prop. 2, which prevents the City of Houston from offering health insurance and other benefits to same-sex domestic partners of its employees.

Gay votes key in mayor's race. Aiming for another term, Houston Mayor Lee Brown battled against former City Council members Chris Bell and Orlando Sanchez. The incumbent and Sanchez won enough votes to compete in a runoff. Annise Parker earned re-election and avoided a runoff by gaining just more than 50 percent of the vote for her at-large post.

DECEMBER

Pro-gay mayor re-elected. Lee Brown won a third and final term in office by a slim margin of 52 percent to 48 percent garnered by his opponent, anti-gay Orlando Sanchez. It was a mixed victory in the runoff for Houston City Council seats, however, as some pro-gay candidates won but others lost. Gay-friendly Ada Edwards prevailed in District D, which includes heavily gay Montrose, while pro-gay candidates Claudia Williamson and Andrew C. Burks, Jr. were defeated.

Maxey to step aside. The only openly gay state legislator in Texas, Rep. Glen Maxey, a Democrat, announced he would not seek re-election. Houston gay political activists said the loss of Maxey — who was put into a new area with two other liberal lawmakers by Republican-powered redistricting — will diminish the voice of gays in state politics.

houston VOICE

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Issue 1105

EDITORIAL

Another year of infamy for gay Americans

by CHRIS CRAIN

It hadn't been 60 years since our last day of infamy.

For many Americans, Sept. 11 was the first time in their lives that they had felt so galvanized, so unified in their grief and their anger, and in their determination never to let such evil be repeated.

But it hasn't been nearly that long for most gay Americans. On Oct. 12, 1998, another fall day just three years ago, we learned that Matthew Shepard had passed away. The slight 21-year-old — who still wore braces — had slipped from a coma several days after being robbed, beaten, burned, tied up and pistol-whipped, his skull so badly fractured that surgery couldn't help.

Across America, we held our vigils, shared our pain and our rage, and then set about the task of doing what we could to prevent hatred of our kind from ever taking another life.

Sept. 11 was different, of course. This time, we grieved alongside an entire nation — feeling more united than singled out. It's been said by some that the terrorists who struck that day are guilty of a hate crime, too, of enormous proportions.

If the rhetoric of the radical Islamists responsible for Sept. 11 is to be believed, they are fearful of how Western culture, backed by American might, threatens their backward-looking, ultra-traditionalist way of life.

But in the strict legal language of hate crime laws, our victims weren't targeted because of their nationality or even religion. The hate was focused more on our culture and our values. The target wasn't Christian or Jewish or secular, but a society that permits all of the above, along with Muslims and those of other faiths, to co-exist peacefully.

Even before authorities pinned the crime on Osama bin Laden and his network of terrorists, Americans (and the Western world generally) knew instinctively that we were all targets. It was a hate crime of sorts, aimed at all of us.

In the same way, gays in America (and around the world) felt instinctively three years ago that it could have been any of us up on that fencepost in Wyoming, left to die.

Because Matthew Shepard was targeted at least in part for being gay, his murder changed the course of the gay movement, focusing attention on violence against gays and the need for hate crime laws. For many straight Americans, the compelling and sympathetic story of this young man was the first time they ever identified with someone targeted by homophobic hate. He could have been their son, their brother, their friend.

After her son's death, Judy Shepard released a statement that received broad distribution. "Go home," she said, "give your kids a hug, and don't let a day go by without telling them you love them." The universal pain of a mother's grief resonated with America in ways that thousands of faxed press releases from gay rights

organizations never could.

It's still early, but the Sept. 11 terror attacks may have a similar galvanizing effect for the gay rights movement, among us and those we still must convince. With the media more willing than ever, especially since Matthew Shepard, to tell our stories, the country has learned about the heroism of gay men like Mark Bingham and Father Mychal Judge, though many press outlets found a gay Catholic priest, chaplain to the New York Fire Department, too hot to handle.

And among all the families who lost loved ones in the terror attacks, the gay survivors are finally getting their share of attention, after initially being ignored by a press ethic that sometimes still treats homosexuality as a dark secret.

Ever since that horrible day, Americans have wrapped protective arms around those who lost loved ones in the terror attacks, donating unprecedented millions

Unmarried Sex Partners!" Four days before Christmas, the group's leader, Rev. Lou Sheldon, is sharing with the country that his organization is "deeply concerned that tax dollars may go to the unmarried sex partner survivors of those who died in the events of 9-11."

Could we script this any better? Many Americans will never forget how Rev. Fred Phelps and his clan loudly protested at Matthew Shepard's funeral, holding signs that said, "Fag Matt in Hell." Falwell, Robertson and now Sheldon, are proving yet again how tone-deaf prejudice can be.

The impact of Sept. 11 will also help redirect our movement in important ways. In addition to the new attention on legal recognition of our relationships, gay Americans have now become as interested in events around the world as our straight fellow citizens.

To date, the gay rights movement in this country has been incredibly insular, with

Three years ago, we mourned alone, singled out for who we are. This time around, our grief and anger is shared by a nation, and our enemies, domestic and foreign, are on the run.

for their support. Now, in trickles that are gathering momentum, reports are coming out about how the gays who first suffered from the loss of a life partner, now are facing unfair treatment from public and private funds set up to assist them.

Just last week, the special master assigned to oversee the distribution of federal funds to victim families set the stage for what could be ugly confrontations between the blood families and the chosen families of the gay victims from Sept. 11. Under the rules announced last week, state probate law will determine who is eligible to collect compensation for those killed in the terror attacks.

Most states, even progressive and gay-friendly ones, provide little or no official recognition for same-sex partners. If the press does its job, many Americans will now learn, in incredibly compelling fashion, how unjust and unfair the system is. Men and women who have lost their life partners, shattering lives and plans built over many years together, will be entitled to nothing, while families of origin will collect everything, even though most did not rely at all financially on sons and daughters who left home years earlier.

Just look how the fallout from the terror attacks has laid bare the frighteningly cold agenda of our opponents. Tinky Winky was nothing compared to the marginalization visited upon Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson after they infamously agreed that gays were among those to blame for Sept. 11.

After the special master's announcement last week, the Traditional Values Coalition rushed to release a press statement headlined, "No Tax Dollars to

almost no attention paid in the gay press and in our organizations to the plight of our brothers and sisters outside the U.S. We may celebrate their victories, mostly in Europe, but we do not address their persecution.

The attention now on the Middle East and the Islamic world has awakened that interest, offering an important opportunity to groups like the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission. So far, the leftist politics of the IGLHRC leadership in San Francisco has squandered that chance, twisting the group's mission to oppose military attacks on the Taliban regime, which was perhaps the most brutally anti-gay in the world today.

Like the attack on Matthew Shepard three years ago, the Sept. 11 attacks have so many lessons relevant to our movement, albeit in more indirect fashion.

The terrorists, for example, were motivated by an exclusionary brand of religion that aspires to government power, so perhaps the larger lesson about separation of church and state won't be lost on the public.

And the failure of moderate and progressive Muslims to establish an effective counterweight to the conservatives and radicals who control most of the world's mosques is an invaluable lesson about how the fight for an inclusive society cannot pause on Sunday, at church, or Saturday, at synagogue, or on Friday, at Muslim prayer services.

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

The best of viewpoints pages, 2001

Editor's note: With so much attention the last three months on the war against terrorism, it's hard to remember the months preceding Sept. 11. Here you'll find excerpted the best from our viewpoint pages before that day of infamy.

Michael Alvear

Resolutions for 2001

NBC: Have Will Truman guest-slut on Showtime's "Queer As Folk."

Log Cabin Republicans: Make Mary Cheney your honorary president.

She's just like you — white, rich, and closeted. Plus, she's been on her knees for Bush a lot longer than you have.

Lying just to get laid:

I'm not sure when it first happened. I guess a couple of years ago when I sensed the truth was getting me nowhere. So I lied. It started after meeting some hot 20-something I met at a bar. He asked me an innocent question, but in the tone you ask for someone's HIV status: "How old are you?"

Lying about your age is like lying about your sexual orientation. It's a way of using credit to buy your way into acceptance. Only later, when the bill comes due, do you see the true cost of the purchase.

The lesbian embrace of ugly

Why are gay women so afraid of beauty?

There is a relentless sameness in most of the lesbian world, a dullness that pervades things, not just in the way they look, but in everything around them — their bars, their restaurants, their cars, their homes. Almost everything about the lesbian aesthetic reminds me of the Post Office: Plain, boring and ugly.

The lesbian embrace of all things ugly also seems to be a refusal to support the patriarchy's standard of beauty. Well, you go, girls.

But in your zeal to give patriarchy the finger, you lost your hands, arms, bodies and soul.

Ladies, you've cultivated ugliness' long enough. I say cast off your potato sacks and show a little leg.

Erin O'Briant

Pity the wretched lesbians. Trembling in our tacky tube socks at the specter of female beauty, clad only in natural-fiber gunne sacks, stumbling blindly in the face of gay male loveliness. Bullshit.

Michael Alvear makes plenty of preposterous generalizations about lesbians. What sad souls Alvear must have encountered in his slog through the supposedly monolithic lesbian community.

Lesbians do have our own styles — from punk to corporate to hippie to high femme to andro to stone butch — and many of them come up short when measured by mainstream standards of beauty. But we don't care.

If a few insular gay men don't think we're gorgeous, so be it. Doesn't matter to me. I'm busy salivating over the dykes in stompin' black boots and tight T-shirts.

Rev. Jim Webb

The Great Lavender Divide

While it will be a challenge to bridge the "great racial divide" in America, scaling the great Lavender Divide among gays will also be tricky.

Coming out in college, I believed I had reached the Promised Land of complete accep-



Stephen Fallon

Bitter break-ups

Love was supposed to be a grand, self-sustaining fire. That's the way it is in the movies, where love conquers all. When people run up against the clunky human limitations of real relationships, they feel cheated. It was all supposed to be about sunsets and orgasms, not about yawning through visits from your lover's rowdy friends, paying bills together or debating who snores louder.

Some guys find a way to reorient their expectations, to take simple pleasure in things like holding hands on the drive to Target for the new bathroom light bulbs.

Others alternate between the flip sides of the storybook world: All guys are evil bastards; but wait, this new guy is an angel, and everything will be easy now. Yet the wholesale demolition of happy memories brings its own pain.

The big AIDS lie

I'm compiling a list of stupid slogans about HIV and AIDS. Remember this one? "AIDS. It's everybody's problem." I'll let you in on a secret. That's a lie.

Just this month, a new study insinuated the most unsupportable lie of all: that lesbians are at significant risk of HIV infection. The truth is, lesbians are probably the least at-risk demographic group of all Americans, right behind convalescent nuns. HIV is a disease that gets put inside of people through penises or needles.

AIDS remains a social problem for lesbians. Our lesbian friends have served selflessly as caretakers for gay men.

While so many gay men hide from the truth in a drug-soaked dance of denial at circuit parties, lesbians are there to pick up the pieces.

I guess AIDS really is everybody's problem. It's just not everybody's disease.

Mark King

The normalization of AIDS

Until the mid '90s, we had tremendous prevention campaigns. They were called funerals. Nothing today offers such stark motivation. I once thought people who took sexual risks were blithely screwing on the bodies of my dead friends. But any activist, educator or physician who still feels the same needs a time-out.

The relative danger of risky sex now feels, to many, on a par with plenty of other life-threatening habits. And the fact remains that most gay men make thoughtful sexual choices, whatever they may be.

Barebacking as psychotic behavior is a myth. Any men who actually want HIV comprise a sick little corner of life only the Internet could reveal.

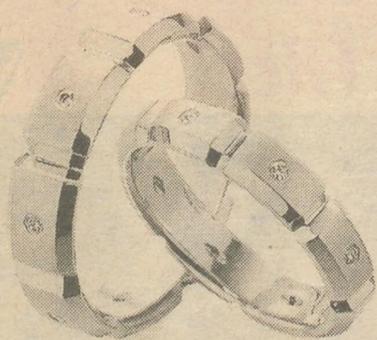
Focusing on this phenomenon tells me we finally got tired of demonizing circuit parties and needed a new target of scorn.



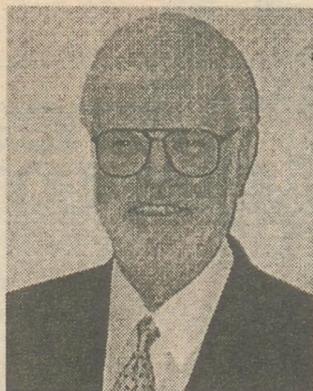
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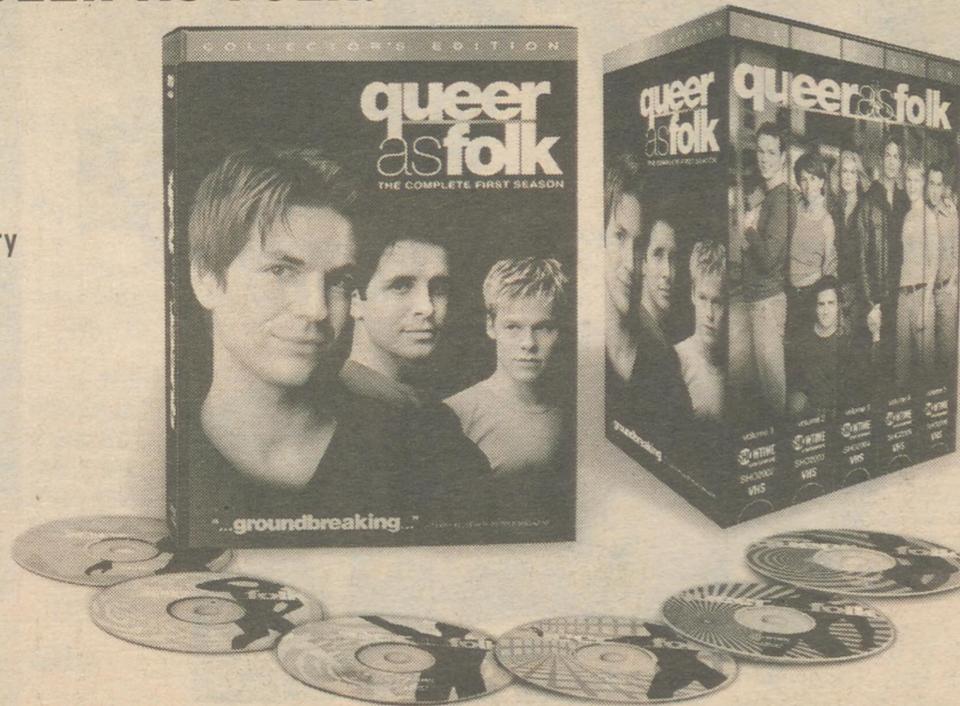
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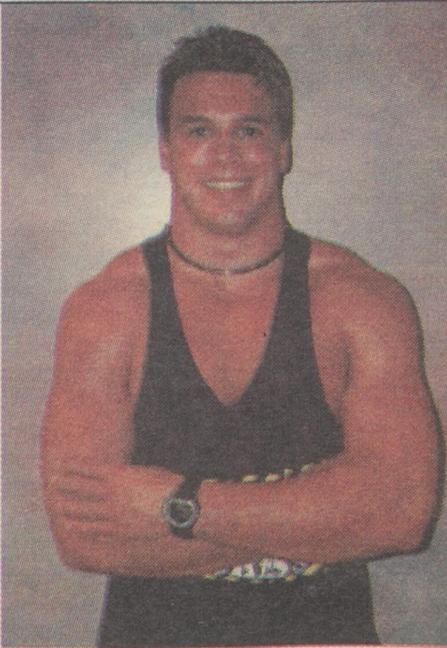
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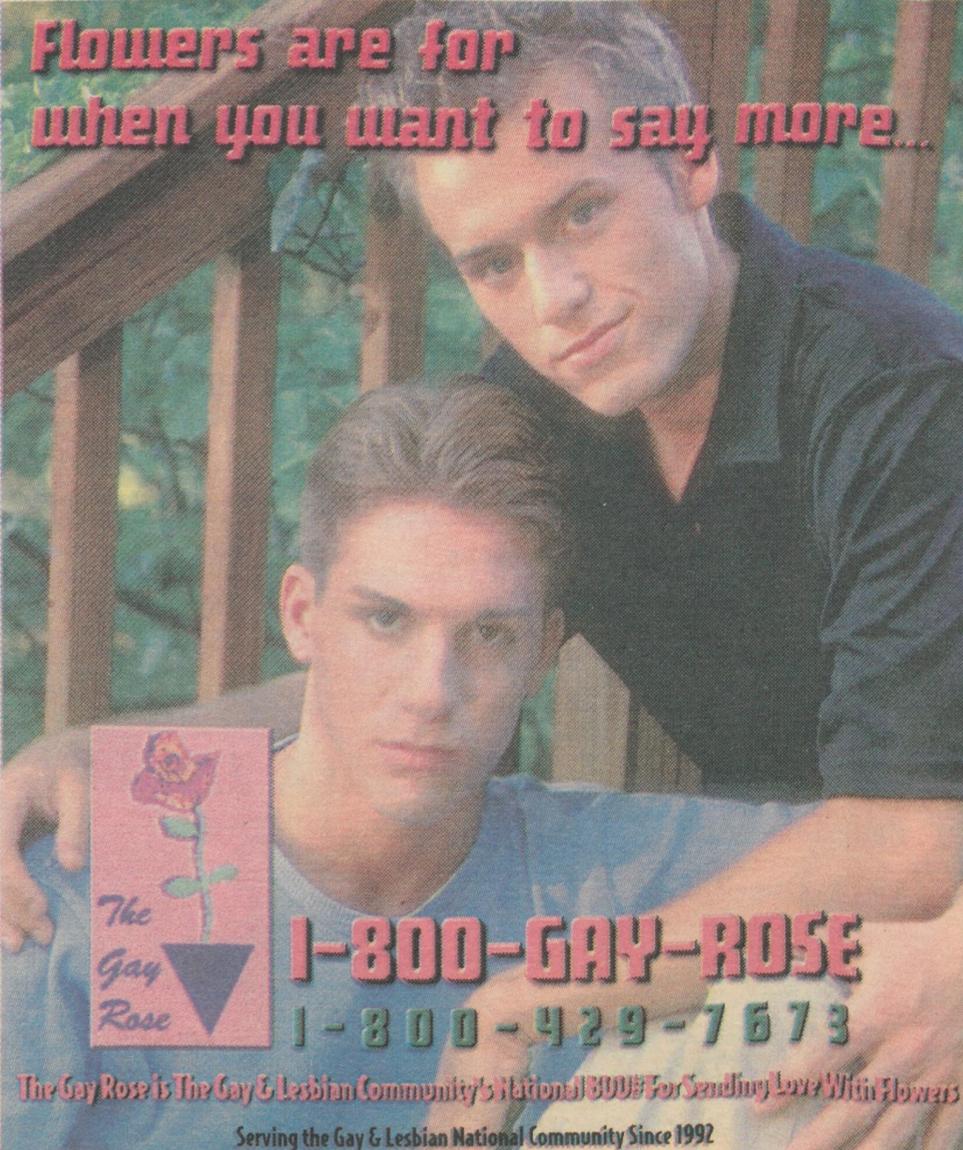
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The big noises of 2001

January

"My words are like a dagger with a jagged edge that'll stab you in the head, whether you're a fag or lez, or the homosex, hermaph or a trans-a-vest, pants or dress. Hate fags? The answer's yes. Homophobic? Nah, you're just heterophobic."

— More lyrics from rapper Eminem's Grammy-nominated "The Marshall Mathers LP"

February

"I'm a big fan of [Eminem's] music and I said I would be delighted to [perform a duet with him at the Grammy Awards]. I know I'm going to get a lot of flak from various people who are going to picket the show. ... I'd rather tear down walls between people than build them up. If I thought for one minute that he was a hateful bastard, I wouldn't do it."

— Elton John to the Los Angeles Times, Feb. 9

"By agreeing to appear on stage as back-up singer to Eminem at the Grammys, you are spitting on the grave of Matthew Shepard, and every other hate-crime murder victim. ... Your choice is clear: Resign from your commitment to appear with Eminem at the Grammys, or go down in history as a gay Uncle Tom who foolishly allowed himself to be used as a tool against his own people."

— From a Feb. 13 open letter to Elton John by longtime lesbian activist Robin Tyler

March

"I don't know what all the controversy is about, quite frankly, I've met Eminem. I met him backstage. And he's really gay. About the gayest guy you'd ever meet."

— Grammy Awards host Jon Stewart during the ceremony

"I thought we were going to grow old together and we'd be there for each other for the rest of our lives."

— Ellen DeGeneres on her breakup with Anne Heche to Britain's Now magazine, March 22

"On a scale of one to 10, I'll give him a 20. He's all man. I wish every man were so gay."

— Ines Misan, singer Ricky Martin's new gal-pal, as quoted in the British tabloid the Sun, March 22



Elton John and Eminem

'You faggots can vanish to volcanic ash and re-appear in hell with a can of gas and a match.'

—Lyrics from rapper Eminem's Grammy-nominated 'The Marshall Mathers LP'

April

"Unfortunately, [my TV show] never even had a chance for the audience to decide... because the advertisers were intimidated and threatened by GLAAD and their constituency. ... So, they couldn't get advertisers because they were scared and upset. And so, the stations put me on at two in the morning."

— Dr. Laura Schlessinger on CNN's "Larry King Live," April 2

May

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

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

June

"I figure I'm doing the early mid-life crisis, dating a 26-year-old and buying a Camaro."

— Lesbian rocker Melissa Etheridge on her new relationship with Tammy Lynn Michaels, who stars on the WB TV series "Popular," as quoted by Fox News, June 7

"I don't know that I would want to [continue], if my lover left. ... Should I have said that, about being your lover?"

— Matthew Broderick, asked by USA Today in a joint interview how long he and Nathan Lane would continue in co-starring roles in the Broadway hit "The Producers"

"It's too late. The rumors have started."

— Nathan Lane, responding to Broderick in the same USA Today interview

"I didn't understand it then, I don't understand it now."

— Singer Melissa Etheridge, on her reaction to learning that her former long-time partner Julie Cypher was "no longer gay," as quoted by USA Today, June 15

"I think Elton John would sing with a toilet-roll holder if he thought it would get him more publicity. ... It's sad that [Eminem] has to stoop to that level [of homophobia in his music]. I'd still shag him, though."

— Boy George on Elton John's Grammy Awards duet with Eminem as quoted by peoplenews.com, June 28

July

"I cannot believe we have this redneck, good-old-boy, illiterate doofus as leader of the free world. When we have someone like Gore who is smart and motivated and caring and compassionate? I cannot believe it."

— Openly lesbian actress Tammy Lynn Michael of TV's "Popular" to mightybigtv.com, July 14

August

"Friends, no. We're co-parents and definitely meet and agree and can participate on a level of parenting for our children. We live back-to-back. Our houses [share a yard], so the kids have this sense of home in one space. So we meet there, [but] I wouldn't say we have a happy friendship."

— Rocker Melissa Etheridge on Julie Cypher, who recently broke up with her after 12 years, announcing that she was no longer gay, to Etc. magazine, Aug. 3

September

"I really don't want to talk about her, but I will say that nothing surprises me."

— Ellen DeGeneres on Anne Heche's heterosexual marriage and pregnancy, to the Associated Press, Sept. 13

October

"If it means more money, sure."

— New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, agreeing to appear in drag on Showtime's "Queer As Folk" to raise money for disaster relief in the form of pledges from members of the Empire State Pride Agenda, as quoted by the New York Post, Oct. 12

November

"It's such a great thing that I'm gay because I could not stand to put up with a crying woman now. I couldn't do it."

— Contestant Brandon Quinton on CBS TV's "Survivor," Nov. 8

December

"I don't think pornography like that should be lying around where innocent people can read it in the lonely stretches of the night."

— Gay actor Sir Ian McKellan, star of the upcoming "Lord of the Rings," on why he tears out the pages of the Gideon's Bible containing Leviticus 18: 22 — "Thou shall not lie with mankind as with womankind; it is abomination." — when he finds the books in hotel rooms.

"I'm not gay. [I blurted it out and thought I should] just run with it. Free publicity. It should be wonderful for my career."

— Ellen DeGeneres, during her host monologue for the Dec. 15 episode of "Saturday Night Live." She thanked her husband "Jerry" for minding the fort while, "Here I am, gaying it up, fruiting around."

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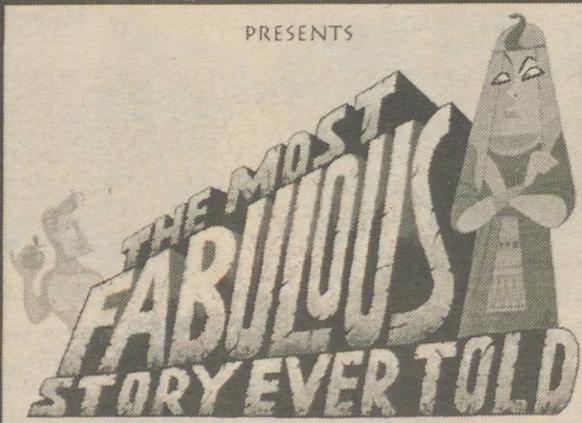


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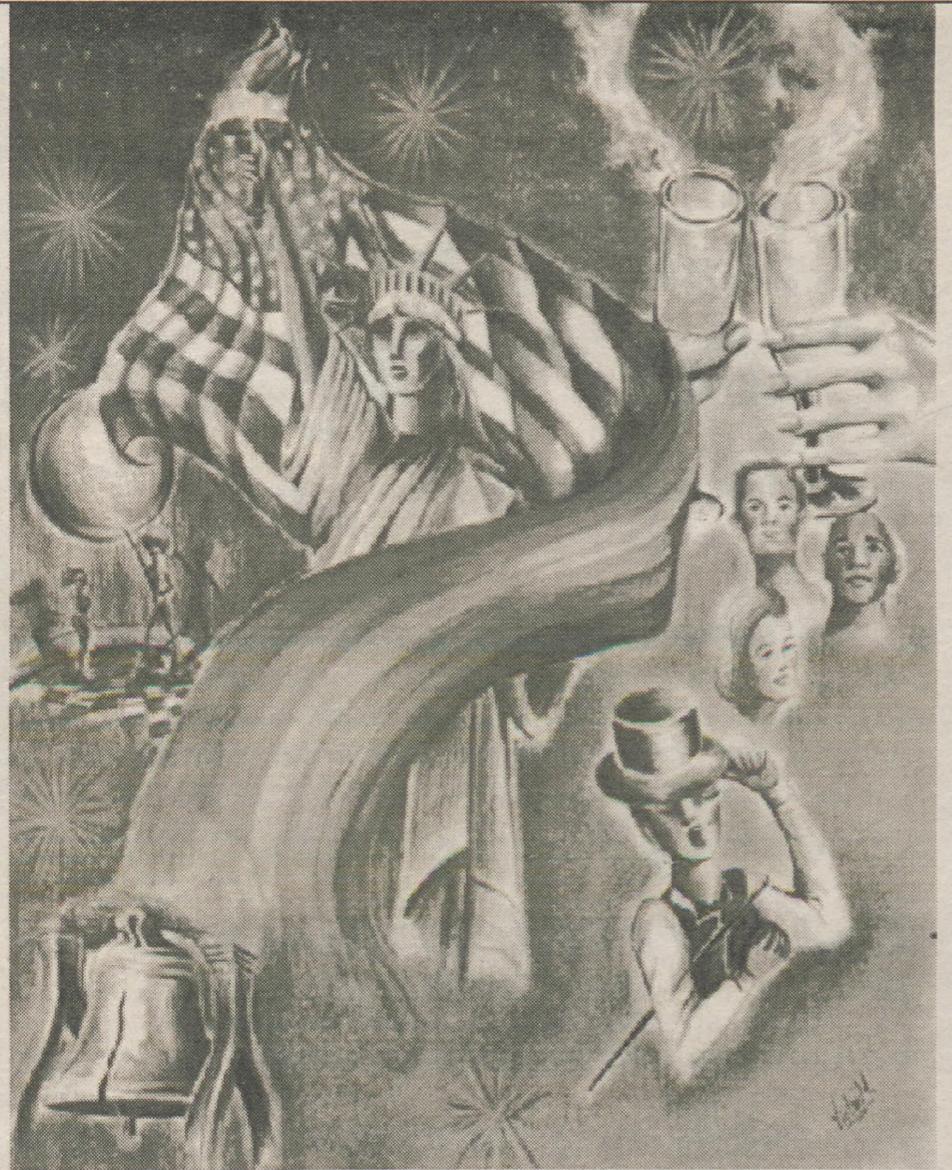


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eating out

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Must style forego substance?

Restaurant makes a new stop for trend-seekers

by TRAYCE DISKIN

Entering Hotel Derick, the new boutique hotel across from the Galleria, one can't help imagine that scores of fearful, bemused guests must be hiding out in the rooms above while trend-crazed, dressed-to-kill locals commandeer the lobby floor.

The upscale but oh-so-hip hotel is impressive in its sleek, minimalist décor, which blends effortlessly into the interior of Ling and Javier, the hotel's signature restaurant. Bone white walls and plush, sprawling couches dominate the lounge area, and the dim lighting and deep-green throne dining chairs help create the uber-trendy stage where the crowd gathers to see and be seen.

The problem, however, is that with factors such as velvet ropes and bouncers at the entrance and egregiously poor acoustics, there's nothing the least bit subtle or relaxing about a night of drinks and dining.

Ling and Javier, ironically, flaunts its minimalism in your face.

This is not to imply that the staff is as stuffy or pretentious as the atmosphere. Midriff-clad hostesses do their best to honor reservations, and servers take the time to explain menu items and specials to each diner individually (with the loud music and chatter, delivering any information to a group is nearly impossible).

Perhaps the problem is that the lounge portion seems to spill over into the dining area. Although there are pockets of relative quiet, make sure you're sitting next to an adequate conversationalist. You won't be able to hear a thing from anyone else at your table.

After a few bites of our entrees, we began to suspect that perhaps all the bells and whistles had a purpose — to distract diners from the often lackluster cuisine. But before this harsh epiphany, the appetizers gave us hope. The Siu Mai Pot stickers with Shrimp and Vegetables (\$9) featured succulent shrimp and were well-steamed and tasty, especially due to the mandarin orange dipping sauce. The Wok Roasted Shanghai Mussels (\$8) were also lauded for the sweet soy and chile sauce, but the mussels themselves were withered and scrawny.

The Lobster Cantonese Packages (\$12) achieved near perfection with crispy dough that cradled lobster marinated in white wine and peach nectar.

The menu divides itself among small, middle and large categories, known to less cultured diners as appetizers, salads and entrees. The main dichotomy, though is between Chinese and Cuban cuisine. And

while we liked the idea of specializing in food from two regions, rather than conforming to the popular "fusion" route, it proved just another case of style over substance.

The specialty, Peking Duck with Scallion Pancakes (\$20), consisted of overly dry meat and bland, oily crepes. The Pan Fried Grouper (\$18) sat beneath a bed of brown butter, almonds and mashed plantains, but retained little flavor from these accompaniments. The Five Spice Chicken Breast with Drunken Onions and Soy (\$16) was well-cooked and abundant, but to our dismay, the enticing-sounding "drunken onions" were merely sliced white onions slushed with a gelatinous soy sauce.

The Orange Blossom Beef with Soy Peas and Cashews (\$18) was a serious disappointment to one of our friends, who lamented each piece of tangled, fat-strewn piece of meat.

The Red Snapper Steamed in Banana Leaf (\$20) was a rare high point with its moist, tissue-soft meat and a piquant Pineapple Mojo on the side. At first I was surprised to find out that "mojo" was just another word for something between a salsa and marinade, but just like Austin Powers' secret ingredient did to the International Man of Mystery, this culinary version gave the snapper its zest.

Ling and Javier offers an excellent wine list and dessert menu. However, if you like a little conversation, relaxation and quality with your dining, you may want to search elsewhere. But if the scene of the moment is your thing, gather your entourage and up at the velvet ropes.

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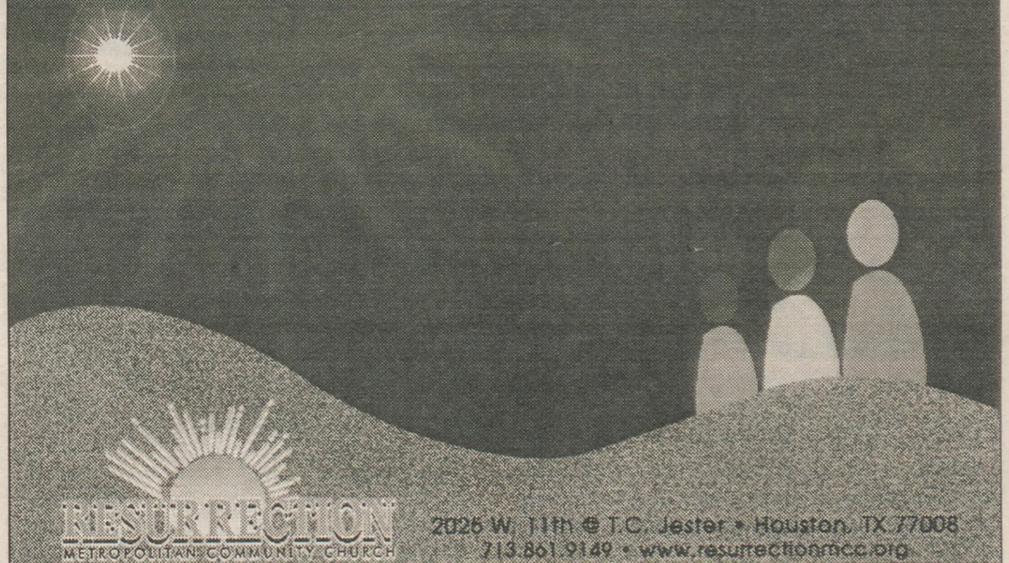
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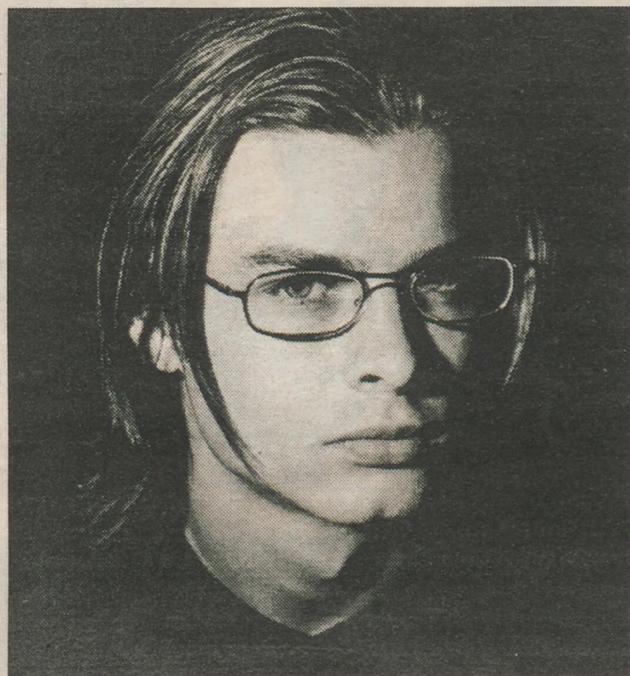
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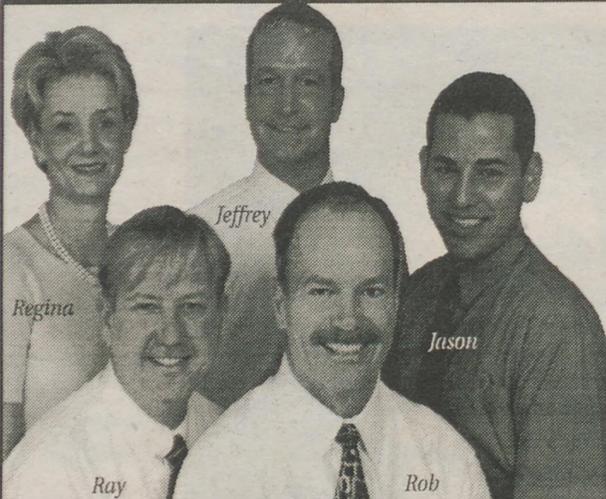
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community calendar

saturday, dec 29

every saturday

- After Hours.** KPFT 90.1 FM. 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. 713-526-5738.
- Dignity mass.** 7:30 p.m. for gay Catholics. 713-880-2872.
- Gay & Lesbian Breakfast Club.** 9:30 a.m. 281-437-0636.
- Houston Chain Gang Bicycle Club.** Call for ride locations. 713-863-1860.
- Houston Wrestling Club.** Practice. 1:30 p.m. 713-453-7406.
- Q-Patrol walks the streets** 9:30 p.m. Convenes at community center. 713-528-SAFE. E-mail: qpatroljnc@aol.com
- Rainbow Fishing Club.** Meeting. 713-526-7070 or 713-880-9235.
- St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.** Rosary 8 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama. 713-528-6665.
- Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center.** Drop-in noon-4 p.m. • Center cleanup, 10 a.m. • Texas Association for Transsexual Support, 3 p.m. • STAG (Some Transgenders Are Guys), 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

sunday, dec 30

every sunday

- Anarchist Black Cross Federation/Anarchist Reading Group.** 1 p.m. www.houstonabc.org. 713-595-2103
- Bering Memorial United Methodist Church.** Services at 8:30 & 10:50 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 713-526-1017.
- Community Gospel.** Service at 11 a.m. & 7 p.m. Sunday School for children 10 a.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
- Covenant Church, Ecumenical, Liberal Baptist.** Service 9:30 a.m. & education hour 11 a.m. 713-668-8830.
- First Congregational Church (Memorial).** Service at 10 a.m. Christian Education, 11:30 p.m. 713-468-9543 or fcc-houston.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.
- Gay Catholics of St. Anne's-Houston.** 5 p.m. worship service. Dinner and social. alexcam@wt.net. 713-623-0930.
- Grace Lutheran Church.** Sunday school for all ages 9 a.m. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-528-3269. Houston Mission Church. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-529-8225.
- Houston Tennis Club.** 9 a.m. to noon. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com
- Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Church.** Service, 6:30 p.m. 713-528-6756.
- Rainbow Riders.** A bicycle club for women. 713-869-1686.
- Resurrection MCC.** Services. 9 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.
- 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.
- The Women's Group.** Meeting and discussion. 10:45 a.m. 713-529-8571.
- Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation.** Adult discussion, 9:45 a.m. Service, 11 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.
- Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County.** 502 Church St. Service, 10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.
- Unitarian Fellowship of Houston.** Adult for 10 a.m. Service, 11 a.m. 713-686-5876.
- Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center.** Drop-in 2- 5 p.m. • LOAF (Lesbians Over Age Fifty), 2 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. • 713-524-3818.

monday, dec 31

every monday

- AIDS Mastery.** 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
- Free Eye Clinic.** Free eye exams for people with HIV. 713-830-3000.
- gayDAR. Wellness Community.** Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-526-1017, Ext. 211.
- Gay Fathers/Fathers First.** Support group. 8-9:30 p.m. Grace Lutheran Church. Tom, 713-726-8736. www.geocities.com/gaydadshouston/
- Gay Men's Chorus of Houston.** Open rehearsals, 7 p.m. 713-521-7464.
- Grief & Divorce Support Groups.** 7 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017, ext. 208.
- HIV testing. STD exams and treatment.** Free AVES. 1-6:15 p.m. 713-626-2837.
- Houston Tennis Club.** 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
- Kolbe Project.** Eucharist 7:30 p.m. 713-861-1800. Lesbian & Gay Voices Radio Show. 8-10 p.m. KPFT 90.1. 713-529-1223.
- Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry.** Open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 936-441-1614.
- Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center.** Drop-in 6-9 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

tuesday, jan 1

- Psychic and Health Expo.** Noon to 6 p.m. Information on aromatherapy, acupressure, chiropractics and more. Admission: \$2. CenterPoint for Body, Mind & Spirit, 1920 Hollister. www.centerpointhouston.com. 713-932-7224.

every tuesday

- Bering Support Network.** Lunch Bunch Gang 11 a.m. 713-526-1017.
- CPR Classes.** 3 p.m. 713-607-7700.
- For Mature Audiences Only. Support group. 7 p.m. Bering Memorial UMC. 713-526-1017.
- Free HIV Testing.** Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Club Houston. 713-830-3000.
- Gay Men's Process Group. 7 p.m. 3316 Mt. Vernon. 713-526-8390.
- Gay youth.** New program for young gay males, ages 18-29. 7 p.m. 614 Avondale. 713-533-9786.
- Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous.** Support group. 7 p.m. 713-524-0439.
- Houston Women's Rugby Team.** No experience necessary. Practice, 6:30-8:30. Westland YMCA.

community calendar

Kay, 713-208-1529.

HTGA. Support group. 7 p.m. 713-520-0439.

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

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

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

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in 6-9 p.m. • Lesbian Coming-Out Group, 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

wednesday, jan 2

Classic Chassis Car Club. Monthly meeting. 7 p.m. Blue Agave Restaurant, 1340 West Gray. www.ClassicChassisCarClub.org. 713-797-8615.

every wednesday

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Dinner, 6:30 p.m. Various support groups, 7 p.m. 713-526-1017.

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

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

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

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

Houston Tennis Club. 7:30-9 p.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com
Lesbian Literature Discussion Group. 7 p.m. Meets every other Wednesday. 713-383-6738.

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

Spiritual Uplift service. 7 p.m. Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Resurrection MCC. 713-861-9149.

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.

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in 6-9 p.m. • Free HIV testing, counseling, 6-9 p.m. • Houston Committee for People's Radio, 6:30 p.m. • Bi-Net Houston. 7:30 p.m. 713-524-3818.

thursday, jan 3

Lesbian Jewish Study Group. Monthly session convenes first Thursday of each month. 7:30-9 p.m. Congregation Beth Israel, 5600 N. Braeswood Blvd. Alan, 713-523-3673, or e-mail ahur111@aol.com.

every thursday

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

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

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

Gay Houston. New social group for all ages. 7 p.m. 713-526-9318.

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

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

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

Lambda Skating Club. 8 p.m. Tradewinds. Skating Rink. www.lambdaroll.org. 713-410-7215.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.

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

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

Spanish Charla Conversation Group. Empire Cafe, 7 p.m. Email charlahouston@msn.com. 713-416-7203.

Women's Clinic. Montrose Clinic. 713-830-3000.
Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop in 6-9 p.m. • Monthly board meeting, 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

friday, jan 4

Service of Healing. For persons living with HIV/AIDS. First Friday of each month. Christ Church Cathedral Golding Chapel, 1117 Texas Ave. 7 p.m. 281-331-4851.

every friday

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

Govinda Yoga Club. Free yoga classes at 3115 West Loop South, No. 21. 713-439-0455.

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

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

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

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

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

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in 6-9 p.m. • Hawthorne Men's Club, 7:30 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818

volunteer/self-help

Gay & Lesbian Help line. For gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth. Staffed by volunteers of all ages. 6-11 p.m. Monday-Friday, 5-10 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. 888-340-GLBT.

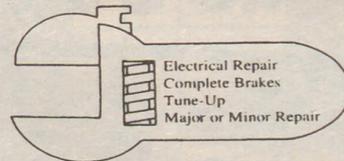
Peer Listening Line. Youth only. Staffed by GLBT youth for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth. 5-10 p.m. Monday-Friday. 800-399-PEER.

Volunteers needed. Trauma volunteers needed at Memorial Hermann Hospital to comfort and support family members in the emergency and trauma departments. 866-666-6772.

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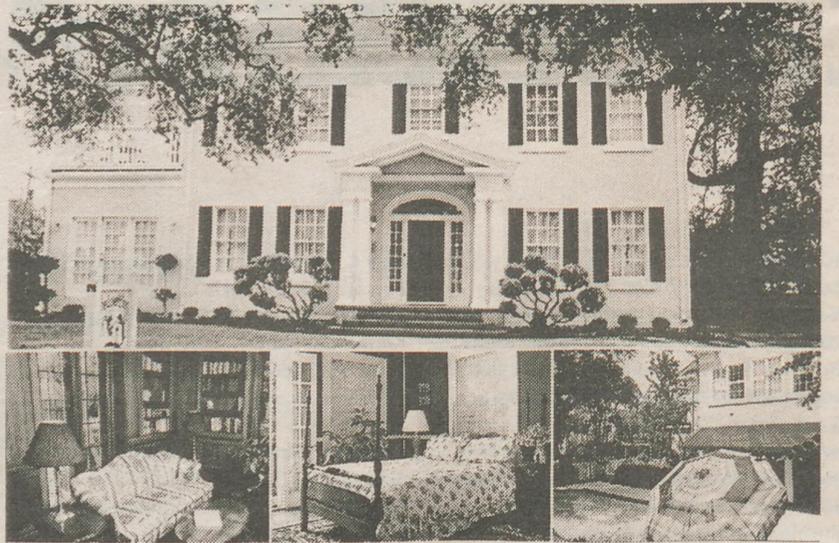
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Q Puzzle

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13		
14					15					16						
17					18					19						
20				21						22						
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56	57	58							59					60		
61								62					63			
64								65					66			
67								68					69			

"A CROSSWORD ABOUT NOTHING"

ACROSS

- Rupert Everett's "The Next ___ Thing"
- Inflict upon
- Computer company with domestic partner benefits
- "How Jane Austen's ___ Became a Lesbian"
- "___ Cowgirls Get the Blues"
- "Gay Men's Friendships" author Peter
- Composer ___ Carlo Menotti
- Disappear ___
- Niles or Marty
- "I Could Have Danced ___ Night"
- "If He Walked Into My Life" writer
- Basketball's Mariah Burton ___
- "...___ evil..."
- "What ___ thinking?"
- Also
- First openly gay electee to statewide office
- Pee-___ Herman
- St. named for Queen Elizabeth I
- Election da. for 32-Across
- Gym bunnies do it to their pecs
- This, to Gloria Anzaldua
- "A Star Is Born" director
- Hard feelings
- Problem for a drag queen's hosiery
- Bear
- Condom or Greek opponent
- ACT UP founder
- Michael Jackson's buddy Geller
- Type of queen
- Straight ___ arrow
- Ken of "Say Uncle"
- Guardian spirits
- Cain's "closet" role
- Italian auto
- More queer
- Word after who or what
- New-age composer John

DOWN

- Started out
- "Dirty Dancing" director Ardolina
- Ellen Hart's _ A ___ Sacrifice_
- Catch some rays at South Beach
- Lambda Legal ___ and Education Fund
- "June Is Bustin' Out All ___"
- Discharge on one's face
- Way to serve your meat
- Anger, but not Kenneth
- Straight and ___
- Amsterdam transport
- First name among lesbian poets
- Property claim
- J of JEB
- Respond to an anti-retroviral cocktail, hopefully
- Swallow
- Elton John's "Step ___ Christmas"
- "Return of the Jedi" critter
- San Francisco Supervisor Mark
- Look at a hottie in a bar
- "If ___ I Would Leave You"
- Ben of Vice Versa
- Middle name of "Jailhouse Rock" singer
- "Singing for ___ Lives"
- Asks from one's knees
- Weaving, who wrote of Priscilla
- Travel like Earhart
- "Socrate" composer Satie
- Threesome of England, France, and Russia
- Poet Lucien ___, friend of Ginsberg and Burroughs
- Artist Yamaoka
- David, who wrote a show about 56-Across
- Stand next to Georgia O'Keefe
- Mary Poppins portrayer Andrews
- Drag queen Joey
- Lauren Wright Douglas' "___ Life"
- Apple's apple, e.g.
- Tried to look like Bette Davis
- Split apart
- Jan & Dean's "Dead ___ Curve"
- Frequently, to Emily Dickinson

Answers on Page 22

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OCCASIONS

CCCC Member Alan D. celebrates his birthday on 12/31.

Maranatha member Jerry Ann C. rings in the new year on her 12/31 birthday.



Lordy, Lordy Fred is 40!

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Henry

Koeb

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Answer to Puzzle on Page 21

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

My Stars!

by JILL DEARMAN



YOUR WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

Dec. 28 – Jan. 3



ARIES (March 21 to April 20)
Mars in your house of ex-es could put a few hexes on relationships that are over and done with - but that you can't seem to let go of! Why are you hanging onto the past? Your lesson for the new year? Let go and let yourself love again. An Aquarius is ready for you.



TAURUS (April 21 to May 20)
Mercury in your house of learning is pushing you to expand your intellectual horizons. Yes, you are a hot thing. But there's more to you than that, isn't there? Stop selling yourself short, darling. A Pisces sees the real you. The whole you.



GEMINI (May 21 to June 21)
This is your year to make money from your wit and wisdom, darling. If you can put your ideas into writing (instead of just blathering your brilliant thoughts to your buddies in bars), you can make a mint. A Libra can help.



CANCER (June 22 to July 22)
Jupiter will not let you down, as it transits your sign in the new year. Don't let yourself down, sweetie. You can make your own luck, but you can self-sabotage too. The choice is yours.



LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22)
Put the focus on what you want to change in your own life in 2002, and don't bother trying to fix up other people's lives. Set a good example. You have too much intelligence and integrity to waste. You are an Aquarian's hero.



VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22)
Uranus is still forcing you to pay attention to your body, darling. Listen to the signals it's sending. You worked way too hard in 2001, and you've got to find a way to get more balance in your life in 2002. A Capricorn can help.



LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22)
Saturn is transiting the education sector of your chart. If you are feeling insecure about your lack of worldly knowledge in a key subject, perhaps you should take a class or go back to school. Saturn supports those who work slowly but consistently. A Leo can lead you in the right direction.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21)
Your social life catches fire at the beginning of the year. Don't worry about overbooking yourself. It will all work out. A Taurus will back you up in a business meeting. Do your homework, and deal with everyone with a smile, you surly thing.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21)
Finances are high on the list of priorities for the new year, and the stars will give you a few good ideas. Try to use them! Deal with the new not the old. A Libra is excellent to bounce ideas off of and to bounce on the bed with.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19)
Three planets in your sign at year's end and the new year's beginning should put you in an optimistic frame of mind. You should take the lead when arranging holiday plans with friends. If you leave it to them, you'll only communicate by e-mail. A Leo needs to see you, feel you, and touch you. Hmm ...



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18)
While Jupiter is in retrograde in your health sector, take an inventory of your physical state. You can make yourself feel better inside and out if you pay attention. A Scorpio notices you (and your darling body) more than you realize.



PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20)
The moon in your house of love on Jan. 3 could bring you a lovely surprise phone call or e-mail to lift your January blues. Be open to the overtures of a Gemini. Start the year off right!

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

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