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Icon Liza Minnelli dishes on life, 'Mama' and her many gay fans.  
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## Houston politicians speak out against marriage amendment

Leaders say Proposition 2 would 'codify hate'

By ELLA TYLER

A diverse group of Houston elected officials, reflecting the city's ethnic and racial mix, appeared at a press conference Tuesday to announce their opposition to Proposition 2.

The measure is an amendment to the Texas Constitution that, if passed, would ban gay marriages and forbid state recognition of any legal status identical or similar to marriage. The amendment will be voted on Nov. 8.

"This proposal would ban use of any contract similar to marriage that affects people of the same gender," said Houston City Council member Gordon Quan. "My faith tells me that people should love and respect one another. This amendment is opposed to that."

Quan said many people are not aware of the proposition because they have been tied up with other matters like hurricane relief. He urged voters to "look carefully at this amendment and vote no."

"This proposition is divisive and it's just not right," agreed Council member Adrian Garcia. "This is about keeping people whole as a couple. If we are compassionate people, we must prove that we are by voting no to this amendment."

Garcia, a former police officer, characterized the opposition as one of compassion and said there were many important issues the Texas Legislature could have tackled such as school financing and children's health.

State Rep. Alma Allen (D-Houston), a former member of the Texas State Board of Education, also was critical of the legislature's failure to pass a school finance bill or act on children's health.

"They couldn't do that, but managed to pass this



Houston City Controller Annise Parker, a lesbian, said the proposed amendment banning gay marriage could have a dire effect on her family. (Photo by Dalton Dehart)

divisive and meaningless proposition," Allen said. "I am against Proposition 2. I don't want anyone to get confused about that."

"As someone who is two times a minority —by my race and as a woman—I cannot support this amendment," Allen said. "We need to remember that 40 years ago interracial marriages were not allowed, and 30 years ago women couldn't have credit cards of their own."

### 'Personal issue'

Houston City Controller Annise Parker, a lesbian, thanked the other elected officials for coming out and

Please see PROPOSITION 2 on Page 3



Roderick Keith Johnson, who is gay, claims he was sold as a sex slave and raped on a daily basis while imprisoned in Texas. (Photo by Torin Halsey/AP)

## Gay man sues over prison rapes

Officials claim plaintiff wrote love letters to alleged attackers

By ELIZABETH WEILL-GREENBERG

Former Texas prison inmate Roderick Johnson's letters to prison officials sound like the frantic pleas of a drowning man. "Please lock me up. Please move me from this madness," one

Please see PRISON on Page 4



**news**  
Supreme Court pick Harriet Miers backed gay 'civil rights,' but also sodomy law.  
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**local life**  
Groove Girlz like Lisa Tran hope to change nightlife for Houston lesbians.  
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## local news

# Marriage amendment will divide state, critics say

PROPOSITION 2, continued from Page 1

speaking against the proposition. Parker is unopposed for re-election on Nov. 8.

"This is a much more personal issue to me," Parker said. "It is already illegal for me to marry the person I love and have shared my life with for the past 15 years.

"To add insult to injury, this amendment will permanently and formally say I can't marry her," she said. "It also says I can't enter into domestic partnership contracts with her. If this passes, the agreements we have made about the children we are raising together may disappear."

Parker called the amendment unnecessary and hurtful. She called a vote against the amendment a vote for true family values.

"It has a particularly disproportionate impact on couples with children, and impedes their ability to plan and provide for their children's futures," Parker said.

Asked about the affect of the legislation on families, Parker stressed that she is not an attorney, but said "this means that courts will get involved and no one knows what will happen."

"In other states, this bill has been given very broad interpretation. For example, in Ohio and Utah, domestic violence protections have been denied to victims of same-sex domestic violence," she said.

Opponents of Proposition 2 point out that governmental bodies in four states that have passed similar amendments have discontinued domestic partner benefits.

They predict that Dallas and Austin, which now offer domestic partner benefits to their employees, would be required to stop offering them.

In addition, 88 large companies based in Texas offer domestic partner benefits, and opponents of the measure believe that some companies may cite the amendment as an excuse to withdraw the benefits.



Houston City Council member **Adrian Garcia** (at podium) spoke out against Proposition 2 during an Oct. 4 press conference at City Hall. He was joined by (left to right) **Randall Ellis**, former director of the Lesbian & Gay Rights Lobby of Texas; **Giovanni Garibay**, Garcia chief of staff; State Rep. **Garnett Coleman**; Houston City Controller **Annise Parker**; State Rep. **Alma Allen**; and Houston City Council member **Gordon Quan**. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

### 'Killing of love'

State Rep. Garnet Coleman (D-Houston) called the proposal "a proposition of hate."

"This will divide the state and makes scapegoats of some," Coleman said. "We must remember that not too long ago African Americans were divided off and oppose this amendment."

"Constitutions, both our national and state ones, are supposed to protect rights, not deny rights. It goes against the very grain of what a constitution is about," he said.

During this year's regular legislative session, state Rep. Warren Chisum (R-Pampa) introduced a resolution banning gay marriage, and Rep. Robert Talton (R-Pasadena) introduced one banning gay marriage and banning civil unions. Proposition 2 is the result of the two politicians' efforts.

"They claim the purpose of this amendment is to protect marriage but what it really does is codify hate," Coleman said. "What they did is legislate the killing of love."

### Voter registration

The last day to register to vote in the Nov. 8 election is Monday, Oct. 10. There will be deputy voter registrars at many Montrose area bars Saturday, Oct. 8, from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Participating bars included Brazos River Bottom, Guava Lamp, Keys West, JR's, South Beach, The Mine, Chances, the New Barn, G-Spot, Decades, Meteor, Rich's and Inergy.

# Libraries face protest over gay-themed books

By **ERIC ERVIN**

Children's books that deal with homosexuality will be the focus of a protest Saturday of Montgomery County libraries.

Members of American Veterans in Domestic Defense are seeking to remove about 70 children's books from the system's seven libraries. They claim the books, which include "It's Perfectly Normal," "The Perks of Being a Wallflower" and "The Plastic Man," contain explicit material not suitable for young children.

Members of the veterans group could not be reached for comment by press time Thursday.

Jim Cabaniss, president of the group, told the Associated Press that his group believes the books contain pornographic

pictures or promote homosexuality.

"Our purpose is to deal with the excessive smut and pornography in the children sections of the library," Cabaniss said.

Montgomery County Library Director Jerilynn Williams could not be reached by press time, but told the Associated Press she is aware of Saturday's protest, but has not been contacted by the group.

"We respect their right to have an opinion about material in our libraries," Williams said. "We stand strongly on the right of individuals to access information and the right of individuals to choose material they deem appropriate for themselves or their dependent children."

Cabanis told the Associated Press that some residents have approached Montgomery County Commissioners Court and the library board to protest the



American Veterans in Domestic Defense, led by **Jim Cabaniss**, plans an Oct. 8 protest at Montgomery County libraries. (Photo by AP)

books. In 2002, the books were removed, but later returned following a recommen-

dation from a library panel and county commissioners.

## obituaries

### Kevin Leroy Davidson, 49

Gay rights activist Kevin Leroy Davidson, 49, died Sept. 28 in Houston of AIDS-related causes, according to his friend Burton Bagby.

Davidson, a native of North Lewisburg, Ohio, was owner of The Resume Company and founder of the Houston Area Coalition of Teen Homosexuals, or HATCH, and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Chamber of Commerce—two organizations dedicated to gay men and lesbians in the Houston area.

Founded in 1987, HATCH is Houston's only organization directly servicing gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth between the ages of 13 and 20. Teens from the greater Houston area, including Galveston, Kingwood, Victoria and other outlying communities attend HATCH's confidential, bi-weekly drop-in programming.

HATCH is a project of the Montrose Counseling Center in Houston.

"It's no coincidence that one of the most prestigious awards that the HATCH youth give out at their annual banquet is the Kevin Davidson Award for community service," Deb Murphy, a friend of Davidson and HATCH youth services worker, said in a press release.

"He was instrumental in the development of the organization, and if it weren't for Kevin through many rough years, there would be no HATCH," Murphy said.



A tireless activist, Kevin Davidson founded several Houston gay organizations.

Davidson also served as board chair of the PFLAG/HATCH Youth Scholarship Foundation and Houston GLBT Political Caucus, and board member of the Executive Professional Association of Houston, a gay and lesbian business alliance.

"The biggest gift that Kevin brought to any organization was his extraordinary organizational abilities and his smile," said Burton Bagby, who served on the GLBT Political Caucus Board with Davidson.

Bagby, who spoke of Davidson's relentless work ethic and dedication to his business and social causes, said approximately 150 people attended Davidson's Oct. 3 memorial at Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, where selections from Davidson's favorite musical, "Sound of Music" were played to an audience of friends, family and HATCH youth.

In his spare time, Davidson enjoyed traveling, river rafting and spending time with his family.

"One of the things that made Kevin such an interesting person was his fun side. He was never afraid to say and do anything," said Don Hauboldt, a friend of 16 years. "I believe, looking at his accomplishments, that he would have no regrets."

Davidson garnered numerous awards for his community service, including the 2005 EPAH President's Award and the 2002 Houston Black Tie Dinner Humanitarian Award.

Survivors include parents Robert and Dorothy Knapp Davidson, sister Diana Davidson and brothers Keith and Jerry Davidson, as well as extended family and friends.

— Bo Shell

and a close circle of friends who encouraged him, but he was just stubbornly determined to stay with us as long as he could."

Garza, a native of Cuero, Texas, worked as a manager for Security Finance for 14 years until the disease slowed

him down. He then turned his focus to helping others fight AIDS through the Bering Support Network at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church.

"He had a winning smile, a great personality, and was always ready for a hug," said Jerry Goree, a friend of two years and director of congregational care at Bering Memorial.

Garza's survivors include his mother, Olivia Ruiz Garza; father, Santiago Garza, Sr.; brothers Jim and Rick Garza; sister Diana Torres; and many other family members.

Memorials in Garza's name may be directed to the attention of Jason Cryer at The Assistance Fund, 1116 Jackson Blvd., Houston, Texas 77006.

— Bo Shell



Ruben Garza worked with an AIDS support group at Bering United Methodist Church.

### Ruben Garza, 43

Ruben Garza, 43, whose own fight against AIDS inspired him to work with other HIV-positive people, died of the disease Sept. 27 in Houston, according to friend and caretaker Rodney Honerkamp.

Honerkamp said Garza's struggle with HIV inspired him to work with the Houston chapter of the Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS, or DIFFA.

"Ruben has been my friend since 1999 and during that time, I've seen first hand how AIDS affects someone you love," Honerkamp said. "It's always frustrating for those of us who are in people's lives that way and I guess what I was looking for was a way I could do something to support him."

From the wait staff at Garza's favorite restaurants to the nurses, doctors and hospital staff that assisted him during his frequent stays, Honerkamp said Garza always found friends and allies in the lives he touched.

"He was one of the most optimistic people that I've ever known," Honerkamp said. "He had wonderful doctors who supported him

#### **i** MORE INFO

Kevin Davidson Memorial Donations  
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#### **i** MORE INFO

Ruben Garza Memorial Service  
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www.beringumc.org

# Texas prison system criticized as 'rape capital'

PRISON, continued from Page 1

letter read. "Do I have to end up dead or hurt to get you to see that I am in danger and constant fear?"

Johnson, who is gay, alleges he was repeatedly raped by other inmates and is suing six prison officials who he claims ignored his pleas for help. He also claims the officials ridiculed him for being gay. The ACLU is representing him in the case.

Jury selection in the case began Sept. 19 in U.S. District Court in Wichita Falls, Texas. The trial remained ongoing at press time.

Before going to Texas' Allred Prison, Johnson was housed in safekeeping at Huntsville, according to the ACLU's complaint. A State Classification Unit member told Johnson he would stay in safekeeping once he was moved to Allred, the suit maintains. Johnson, a non-violent offender, was convicted of burglary.

But once at Allred, any protection he had disappeared, he has claimed. Johnson was sold from inmate to inmate as a sex slave and raped almost every day from September 2000 to April 2002, he has said

in court testimony.

One witness, who said Johnson was his gang's "property," testified that a rape cost \$4 to \$7, the New York Times reported. Johnson didn't receive any of the money.

Johnson's cellmate testified that he saw Johnson raped several times and another testified that the guards knew but ignored the assaults, according to media reports.

Each time Johnson went to the Unit Classification Committee to ask to be moved, the officials told him, according to the ACLU, to "fight or fuck."

Johnson was later transferred to the most gang-addled building at Allred.

#### Officials deny charges

Prison officials have said that Johnson's claims were investigated but never substantiated and they deny ridiculing him for being gay.

"There was a lack of credibility by the claims that were made," said Mike Viesca, spokesperson for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. "The UCC based its decision on investigations — they thought there was not enough substantiation."

Asked why Johnson was moved after

the ACLU intervened in April 2002, Viesca didn't respond.

Officials claim that Johnson wanted to be transferred to safekeeping to be close to a lover and is manipulating the system. But ACLU spokesperson Kara Gotsch pointed out that Johnson asked to be moved anywhere — even to solitary confinement.

Also, she added, the person officials are referring to as Johnson's lover was not at Allred until August 2001. Johnson's complaints started soon after he arrived at the prison, in September 2000.

Johnson also wrote love letters to his alleged rapists and "falsified documents," according to the defendants.

Gotsch said Johnson has admitted forging a letter from his grandmother, who did not know he was gay at the time. He thought that if the prison received a complaint from someone on the outside, officials might intervene, she explained.

Details on the alleged love letters were unavailable by press time.

#### 'Rape capital'

The Human Rights Watch found in its

report on male inmate rape that sexual slavery was "commonplace" in some of Texas' harshest prisons.

A federal judge ruled in 1999 that Texas prisons were overrun with "a culture of sadistic and malicious violence."

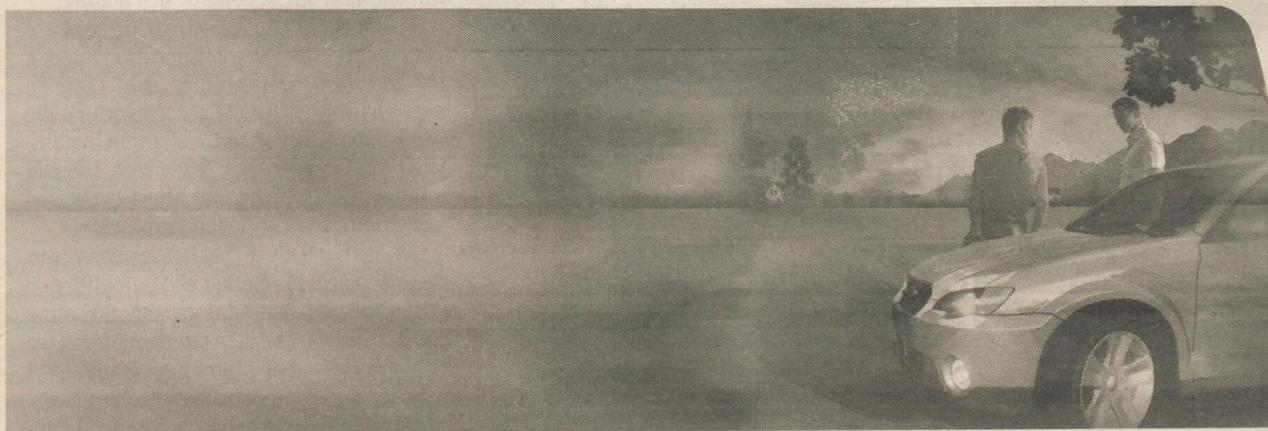
According to Bureau of Justice Statistics, Texas prisons have the highest number of allegations of inmate on inmate sexual assault in the country. In 2004 there were 550, and 13 were found to be substantiated. The next highest state, Ohio, had 86 allegations.

"The fact that we have that type of statistic is actually positive," Viesca said. "People feel comfortable enough that they can report."

In a written statement he added, "There were several claims that inmate witnesses were harmed during their stay at the Allred Unit as they prepared to testify. These claims were not true."

But the fear of retaliation in Johnson's case is so strong that the judge ordered reporters not to publish the names of witnesses who are inmates.

"We believe Texas is the rape capital of the country," Gotsch said.



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## national news

## Supreme Court nominee backed gay 'civil rights'

Miers opposed repeal of Texas sodomy law

By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

WASHINGTON — U.S. Supreme Court nominee Harriet Miers stated in a signed 1989 questionnaire from a Dallas gay rights group that she agreed gays should have the same civil rights as heterosexuals, but she opposed repealing a Texas law criminalizing gay sex.

The questionnaire provided the first glimpse into Miers' views on gay rights during a week when officials with both liberal and conservative advocacy groups scrambled to uncover her position on issues likely to come before the court.

President Bush on Monday announced his selection of Miers as his second of two nominees to the Supreme Court. The announcement came four days after the Senate confirmed Bush's nomination of federal appeals court Judge John G. Roberts, a conservative, as chief justice.

The president described Miers as a personal friend for more than a decade and as a conservative who shares his own "strict constructionist" views on how the Constitution should be interpreted.

Miers, 60, is the former head of a prominent Texas law firm and current White House legal counsel. She completed the questionnaire for the Lesbian/Gay Political Coalition of Dallas during her successful 1989 campaign for a seat on the Dallas City Council.

She met with members of the Dallas gay group during that campaign and later appointed a well-known gay attorney to a city board that oversees federal grants, according to two former members of the group.

According to a report in the Dallas Observer, Miers "was very uneasy" and at first balked at the idea of meeting with the gay rights group, but was urged to do so by Lorlee Bartos, a liberal activist who was running Miers' campaign. Bartos claims she convinced Miers to attend the meeting.

Miers' statement on the questionnaire that she opposed repealing the Texas sodomy law came 14 years before the U.S. Supreme Court, to which she is now a nominee, struck down that law in its landmark *Lawrence vs. Texas* decision in 2003.

Miers was 44 at the time she completed the questionnaire. She gave no direct indication in her response about whether she believed that state sodomy laws banning sexual relations between consenting adults — either gay or straight — violated the U.S. Constitution's privacy rights clause, as decided in the *Lawrence* case.

Sodomy laws remained on the books in only a handful of states, including Texas, at the time the Supreme Court handed down the *Lawrence* decision.

"Do you, as an individual citizen, support the repeal of Section 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code which criminalizes the



President Bush nominated White House Counsel Harriet Miers to the U.S. Supreme Court this week. Miers filled out a questionnaire in 1989 saying she supports equality for gays but also refused to support the repeal of the Texas sodomy law. (Photo by Rudy K. Lawidjaja)

private sexual behavior of consenting adult lesbians and gay men?" the questionnaire asked.

"No," replied Miers in a one-word answer.

Louise Young, former co-chair of the Lesbian/Gay Political Coalition of Dallas, noted that Miers gave supportive responses to other questions pertaining to gay rights and AIDS, leading members of the group to believe Miers was not a "right-wing ideologue" hostile to gays, despite her position on the sodomy law.

### Equal or special rights?

In response to the question, "Do you believe that gay men and lesbians should have the same civil rights as non-gay men and women?" Miers said, "Yes." Because the answer was brief and the question open-ended, it's not clear whether Miers supported gay rights as a general matter, or whether she considered gay-specific civil rights protections to be "special rights," as conservatives have long argued.

Miers also stated on the questionnaire that she agreed with the gay group's position that the city of Dallas "has the responsibility to fund AIDS education and patient support services."

Asked if the city should increase its level of funding for AIDS services over and above the then level of \$550,000 per year, Miers stated, "Yes, assuming need and resources. I do consider the AIDS illness as a serious total community problem."

In response to a question asking if she believed "qualified gays or lesbians should be denied employment (including employment by the police and fire departments) by the City of Dallas solely because of sexual orientation," Miers said, "I believe that employers should be able to pick the best

qualified person for any position to be filled considering all relevant factors."

While taking the time to complete the questionnaire and to meet with members of the group, Miers checked a box on the questionnaire indicating she was not seeking the group's endorsement for her City Council race.

"I thought it was unusual that she was not seeking our endorsement," Young said. "But the fact that she showed up at our meeting indicated she was not hostile."

News of Miers' interaction with Dallas gays during her brief, two-year stint in electoral politics alarmed conservative advocacy groups. In statements released this week, some conservative Christian groups, including the Family Research Council, complained that in nominating Miers, President Bush might have broken his promise to appoint a staunch conservative to the high court who holds views similar to Justices Antonin Scalia or Clarence Thomas.

Family Research Council President Tony Perkins expressed concern that Miers "was helping to legitimize the drive of homosexual organizations for power and influence over our public policies."

Concerns raised by conservative groups prompted President Bush to call a news conference Tuesday to reassure his critics on the right that Miers is a true conservative and holds "strict constructionist" views on how the court should interpret the Constitution.

### Gay groups react

Gay rights groups, meanwhile, had mixed opinions on Miers' responses to the Dallas gay group's 1989 questionnaire.

Joe Solmonese, president of the Human

Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay political group, said the questionnaire "raises the possibility that she is more fair-minded than our opponents are hoping."

Kevin Cathcart, executive director of Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund, a gay litigation group, noted that Lambda waged a five-year court fight to overturn the Texas sodomy law as the lead group that litigated the *Lawrence vs. Texas* case. He said Lambda was troubled that Miers expressed opposition to repealing the Texas statute.

"We do not believe that her statements in 1989 alone decide whether she is qualified to a lifetime appointment to the Supreme Court," Cathcart said. "At the same time, we firmly believe that a nominee is qualified only if she demonstrates the necessary legal intellect, experience and judicial temperament as well as a clear commitment to fairness and equality for all Americans. Ms. Miers' support for a criminal law that openly discriminated against gay people calls into serious question whether she possesses this commitment."

### Good Dallas record

Former Dallas Lesbian/Gay Political Coalition member Marc Lerro said Miers appointed Dallas gay attorney Don McCleary to Dallas' Community Development Block Grant Board, which helped the city decide how to spend federal housing and urban development funds.

Lerro said he endorsed Miers for the Council post, saying he recalls that she expressed general support for equal rights for gays and indicated she opposed discrimination based on sexual orientation. He said Miers "welcomed" his endorsement and included his name in her campaign literature.

"I can't say policy-wise that she will be good on our issues," Lerro said. "But on a personal level, she was very open to having gay people serve on boards and commissions."

Miers, who is single and never married, is credited with breaking barriers against women in the legal profession by excelling as a corporate trial lawyer and becoming the first female to be chosen as the leader of a prominent Texas law firm.

She achieved additional milestones by becoming the first woman chosen as president of the Dallas Bar Association in 1982 and the first woman elected president of the State Bar of Texas in 1992.

Her association with President Bush began in 1994 when then Governor-elect Bush named her to his transition team. She served from 1995 to 2000 as chair of the Texas Lottery Commission as a Bush appointee.

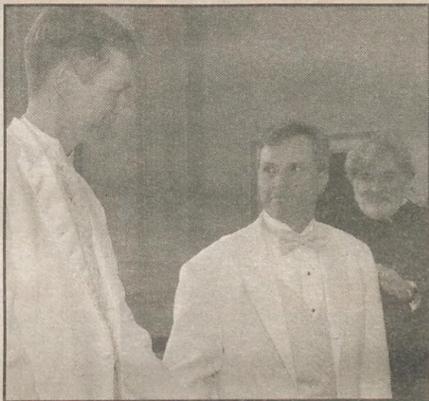
In 2001, President Bush named her to the post of assistant to the president and staff secretary at the White House. In 2003, Bush appointed her as deputy White House chief of staff, and in February 2005 he named her Counsel to the President.

Miers is the first Supreme Court nominee since the late Chief Justice William Rehnquist, who was appointed to the high court in 1971, who has never served as a judge prior to being nominated.

## national news

### Gay couples celebrate as civil unions commence in Conn.

HARTFORD — Gay and lesbian couples across the state celebrated Connecticut's landmark civil union law as it went into force Saturday, the Hartford Courant reported. "It's a historic day, and we wanted to be part of it," Lidia Agramonte, 47, of New Britain told the newspaper. Agramonte and her partner, Maria Gomez, 50, arrived at Hartford City Hall at 7:30 a.m., 90 minutes before the office opened, to obtain their civil union. Although Hartford officials were prepared for hundreds of couples — preparations complete with a rainbow flag over city hall's entrance — only 26 arrived. But one of those couples was Democrat Art Feltman, a Hartford state representative, and his longtime partner. Connecticut is the first state to allow legal recognition for gay couples without being directed to do so by courts. Two rallies outside the state Capitol protested the law, with one group against civil unions and the other in favor of same-sex marriage. The lack of uproar and national attention to the issue in the state was not lost on people like Charlotte Johnson, 63, who obtained a civil union with her partner of 38 years, Joan Gauthey. "We come from the era where the best thing for us was shock treatment," Johnson told the Courant. "We've come a long way."



Dale James Wallington (left) and Conn. state Rep. Art Feltman (center) pictured with Judge Robert K. Killiam, were among the couples that obtained civil unions in Hartford City Hall on Oct. 1, the first day the unions were legal in the state. (Photo by Jessica Hill/AP)

### Mich. Senate to consider asking court to block same-sex benefits

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — The state Senate is expected to take up two measures this week that would ask the Michigan Supreme Court to issue an order preventing state and local governments from providing benefits to the same-sex partners of their workers. The resolutions were introduced after an Ingham County judge ruled that public universities and governments can provide health insurance to the partners of gay employees without violating the Michigan Constitution. Ingham County Circuit Judge Joyce Draganchuk said the purpose of a 2004 constitutional amendment was to ban gay marriage and civil unions — not to keep public employers from offering benefits to gay employees.

### Pa. opponents of anti-bias law end legal challenge

ALLENTOWN, Pa. (AP) — Opponents of a city ordinance that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity have decided not to take their legal challenge to the state Supreme Court. Their decision means an Aug. 11 ruling by a Commonwealth Court will stand. A three-judge panel said the city could legally broaden its anti-discrimination ordinance. That ruling reversed a decision by a Lehigh County judge, who initially struck down the anti-bias protections, saying the city exceeded its authority under state law. In 2002, Allentown amended its Human Relations Commission act — a law that prohibited employment and housing discrimination based on such factors as race, religion or country of origin — to include sexual orientation and gender identity. The legal challenge was later filed by landlords Gerry S. Hartman, John Lapinski and Robert and Debbie Roycroft.

### Gay youth coming out at a younger age, study says

NEW YORK — A new Time Magazine cover story details a Penn State study of young people that shows teens now more commonly disclose that they are gay and at a younger age. Time's report cites Ritch Savin-Williams, author of "The New Gay Teenager" and chair of Cornell's human development department. His book details a Penn State study of 350 young people from 59 gay groups. Back in the 1960s, gay men said they recall first desiring other males at an average age of 14; lesbians at that time averaged age 17 for initial same-sex attraction. But Savin-Williams reviewed more than a dozen studies to find that by the 1990s, those average ages for first gay attractions were 10 for gay men and 12 for lesbians. The book reveals that the average gay person comes out just before or after high school graduation these days. Time's report cites the increasing numbers of Gay-Straight Alliances in the United States — from approximately 100 in 1997 to more than 3,000 gay and gay-friendly clubs in schools now.

### Tenn. mayor sends envoy to city gay event, declines proclamation

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The mayor of Knoxville declined to issue a city proclamation or to speak at a gay rally and festival scheduled for Oct. 15, but he will be sending a representative, event organizers said last week. Mayor Bill Haslam was invited by the Rainbow Community Awareness Project, which is organizing the event. Organizers hope it will be one of the largest gay events ever in East Tennessee. While organizers said they were disappointed with the mayor's move, they were thankful to welcome a representative of the city.

From staff and wire reports

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## 'Girlz' wanna have fun — and raise money

Volunteer group produces lesbian parties that benefit Pride

By JIM FARMER

Call it partying with a purpose.

Tired of the dearth of women's activities in the Houston area, a group of friends formed Groove Girlz Productions just over a year ago. The non-profit organization hosts its latest event, "Girlz Just Wanna Have Fun," tonight at Club 1415 California, with proceeds benefiting Pride Houston.

Founded by Houston residents Yvonne Feece and Rebecca Mahaffey, Groove Girlz was established in response to the growing number of girl parties that have popped up in cities such as New York, Miami and Chicago the last few years.

"We looked around and saw that there wasn't much geared for the women in the area," Mahaffey says. "Many of the events here are geared just towards men. We were all frustrated. For many of us, it was the same old same old. You'd go to places and hear the same dance music. Many women, too, just don't like going to bars and clubs. Not everyone likes that scene.

"Having these parties is a way to have something for us, an environment where we can all have fun," she says.

The first party in October 2004 got off to a somewhat rocky beginning. "It started off as a little group of us doing the planning and the first party had a pretty small crowd, no more than 75 people. Some girls showed up and said they'd heard there was a party but didn't really know what it was about," says volunteer Kristina Martinez.

Yet by the time the second event — Groove Girlz Gone Wild Mardi Gras Style — rolled around in February of this year, attendance ballooned to about 350. The Pride event in June also boasted a strong turn-out.

### MORE INFO

**Girlz Just Wanna Have Fun**  
Oct. 7, 10 p.m. - 2 a.m.  
1415 California

**Groove Girlz Productions**  
P.O. Box 66071  
Houston, Texas 77266-6071  
281-221-5372  
[www.groovegirlz.com](http://www.groovegirlz.com)



Lisa Tran is one of the volunteers who helps Groove Girlz Productions keep putting on bigger and better parties for Houston women. (Photo by Dalton Dehart)

### Enthusiastic volunteers

Groove Girlz' growth wouldn't be possible without the help of volunteers like Martinez and Lisa Tran, Feece says.

"They've both been fundamental to the organization," Feece says. "Lisa started this year and has been mostly working with merchandising. She also made a beautiful flyer for the 'Girlz Just Want to Have Fun' party that drew a lot of attention."

"Kristina has been volunteering a little bit longer, since the very beginning. Last year she got us a flatbed trailer for our float at Pride. Without her we would have been just a group of women walking in the parade," Feece says.

Proceeds from the Groove Girlz events

go to Pride Houston, where many members already volunteer. After paying off expenses, the extra profits go to creating Pride events with women in mind. "We are very proud that we can not only offer events such as these but do good things for the community," Martinez says.

Tran's first party was in February and she was immediately smitten. "For me, having these kind of events is important. I like to come out and meet people and be social," she says.

She attended the Pride party as well and feels that the buzz is starting to get out. "We've been lucky in that the clubs we've used have placed posters of the flyers inside, which has been helpful," Tran says.

"I also know that some of the volunteers have been interviewed on the radio to talk about what we are working on. But I feel what has helped us the most has been the word of mouth, people telling their friends that they came and had fun. We are always trying to continue to get the word out."

The Groove Girlz website was created last year after the first party. In the future, members hope to post pictures of past events on the site.

### 'Very much female'

The atmosphere at Groove Girlz events is one of a traditional dance party, with a good mix of women.

"We tend to attract some younger women but we also see an older crowd as well," says Martinez. "Our first few parties were for ages 21 and over, but Friday's is the first one that was 18 and over."

Next year the organization is again planning a party in February and one in October, as well as a Pride party. "That's the plan, to keep having three a year," Feece says.

Another long-term goal is to bring together men and women, without regard to race, sexual orientation or gender identification.

"We used to have a place to go where everyone felt comfortable, but everything now is either a gay bar or a lesbian bar," Martinez says. "Right now some men do come, but mostly the guys are friends of the women. Our parties are still very much female, and will probably remain that way,

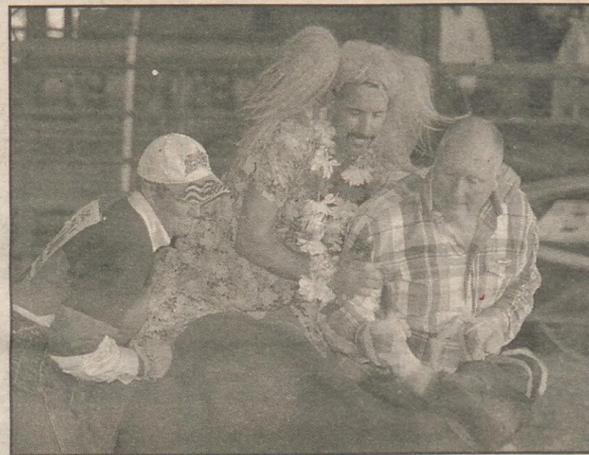
but we don't turn anyone away at the door."

At "Girlz Just Want to Have Fun" on Oct. 7, six DJs are scheduled to spin music into the wee hours of the night. A ladies' auction, featuring 10 women, will also be held with winners receiving a dinner gift certificate in addition to their "date."



# out in houston

(Photos by Dalton DeHart)



Gay cowboys and cowgirls showed off their skills and endurance last weekend during the 2005 Space City Stampede, held at the Houston Farm & Ranch Club. The event, which is sponsored by the Texas Gay Rodeo Association, has helped raise money for charities for the last 20 years. (Photos by Dalton Dehart)



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# Forum

HOUSTON VOICE

OCTOBER 7, 2005

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## editorial

# The funny side of prison rape

The swishy stereotypes of 'The Longest Yard' are a depressing reminder of how far Hollywood hasn't come in 30 years, and GLAAD in five.

By CHRIS CRAIN

**S**TUCK ON A PLANE RIDE from an airline in bankruptcy, I had expected to see a lousy movie, and "The Longest Yard" didn't disappoint. What did surprise was the dated, cheap-shot homophobia that pervaded the film, starring Adam Sandler and Chris Rock. This was, after all, the 2005 remake, not the 1974 original.

But no, there was Tracy Morgan, like Sandler and Rock, a "Saturday Night Live" alum, leading a harem of swishy convicts who happily make themselves sexually available to the "real men" behind bars. These "ladies" — yes, that's what they were called — were decked out in full make-up, girly do-rags, and even spangled cheerleader outfits. Together, they sashayed their way through the gay equivalent of black-face relief.

Sure, a movie audience ought to check their hyper-sensitivities at the door, especially for a low-brow comedy about a football team of abusive guards taking on their maligned prisoners. But this flick went so far over the line that not 15 minutes passed without some low blow about gay sex and effeminacy, always portraying gay men as women.

When Tracy Morgan seduced one of the "real men" prisoners, the previously butch object of her affections giddily applies lipstick. When one of the guard players was slipped estrogen to replace his steroids, he not only became sensitive and feminine, but developed homosexual tendencies as well.

Even Patrick Bristow, the openly gay actor from the groundbreaking "Ellen" sitcom, pitched in for some old-school caricatures before Sandler's character winds up in jail, vamping about in an ascot and managing to be pitiful, offensive and not even funny all at the same time. No last-ditch effort to revive a sagging career so deserved to bomb.

IT'S BAD ENOUGH THAT THE SWISHY stereotypes of "The Longest Yard" offer a depressing reminder of how far Hollywood hasn't gone in portraying gay people fairly, especially in the action comedies that straight men flock to see. But these campy convicts eager to service their masculine cellmates play into a

much more vicious, real-life reality.

This month in Wichita Falls, Texas, the same state where "The Longest Yard" takes place, a real gay inmate by the name of Roderick Johnson is in federal court, suing prison guards for doing nothing to stop an inmate gang from selling him as a sex slave, offering him up to be raped for as little as \$3 to \$7. Gang members nicknamed Johnson "Coco," and at times forced him to wear make-up, according to trial testimony.

Over and over for 18 months, Johnson filed paperwork begging to be placed in a special unit for openly gay prisoners and other vulnerable inmates. Prison officials, who admit being aware of the abuse, rebuffed those requests.

The guards' real defense is — you guessed it — that slightly built Johnson, who is openly gay, enjoyed the sexual interest of these multiple men. Where in the world would prison officials get such a crazy notion? It wouldn't be from popular culture, would it? Movies like "The Longest Yard"?

That swishy, come-hither routine by Tracy Morgan doesn't seem so funny now.

SO HOW DOES HOLLYWOOD BLOW IT so badly, trivializing a horribly violent situation for a few cheap laughs? Don't expect much of an answer, or even any sympathy, from Paramount Pictures, the movie studio behind "The Longest Yard" remake. These are, after all, the same suits who launched "Dr. Laura" Schlessinger in a TV talk show.

What's truly sad is that the politics surrounding the "Dr. Laura" controversy are getting their own remake here, too. When Paramount launched "Dr. Laura" in 2000, many gays were furious that a self-proclaimed doctor who had called gays biological mistakes would now have a nationwide TV audience.

But the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, ostensibly created for just this sort of outrage, was caught flat-footed. Joan Garry, the group's executive director, had built her career with Viacom, Paramount's parent company, through stints at MTV and Showtime. She was embarrassingly gun shy about taking on her old employer, preferring a strategy of private meetings and insider



It's all swish and stereotypes for Tracy Morgan (right) and company in 'The Longest Yard.'

influence that accomplished nothing.

Things started happening only when grassroots activists launched StopDrLaura.com and started targeting Paramount and the show's advertisers. Within a matter of weeks, "Dr. Laura" was banished to late night and ultimately off of television.

Apparently, Garry didn't learn her lesson. "The Longest Yard" was in post-production, marketed and released all while Garry was winding up eight years at the helm of GLAAD. But Garry was apparently too busy penning tearful goodbye e-mails than to (finally) fight a public battle against her former employers.

But why would we expect Garry to take on Paramount, especially now that parent company Viacom has come out with Logo, the gay cable channel?

Why? Because it's hypocritical for an entertainment giant like Viacom to make money off of gay sensibilities with Logo and then rush into theaters a big-time comedy like "The Longest Yard" that gets cheap laughs at the expense of the worst sort of tired, offensive stereotypes about gay men and prison.

Why? Because Roderick Johnson and others like him have enough to deal with just staying alive and safe, not to mention preserving some shred of human dignity, and don't deserve portrayals that mock and even encourage their violent abuse in a Paramount-produced movie.

Just a few days before my flight featuring "The Longest Yard," my cable company finally added Logo. In the middle of a "gay history marathon" featuring "Cabaret" with Liza Minnelli, a Logo news report featured a gay prison activist talking about Johnson's case. The activist said that Johnson and others are treated as property, as sex slaves, because they are viewed as less than human, and because underneath all those caricatures is pure hate.

Someone at Logo needs to run that tape over to the suits at sister-company Paramount, and while they're at it make a copy for the folks who've replaced Garry at GLAAD.

@ Chris Crain is executive editor for Window Media and can be reached at ccrain@window-media.com



**viewpoint** GEOFFREY KORS



Schwarzenegger can't have it both ways, saying he backs our equality while vetoing a historic marriage law.

# We'll be back, governor

**CALIFORNIA GOV. ARNOLD** Schwarzenegger can impede our progress toward equal marriage rights, and he did exactly that. But he can't defeat the cause of marriage equality.

The dramatic ride of Assembly Bill 849, the "Religious Freedom & Civil Marriage Protection Act," came to a screeching halt last week when Schwarzenegger fulfilled his repeated threats to veto the bill.

In early September, in a pair of landmark votes, the California legislature became the first in U.S. history to pass equal-marriage legislation for same-sex couples, garnering 62 votes between the Assembly and the Senate.

And then the bill was carjacked by the governor.

In his letter to legislators announcing his decision, Schwarzenegger said he believes that the legislature overreached its authority in enacting the bill, claiming it reverses the will of voters who approved Proposition 22 in 2000, which we read as only banning recognition of same-sex marriages from other states.

The governor deliberately ignores the fact that the San Francisco Superior Court has ruled that law to be unconstitutional

and instead is using the legislature's historic vote for equality as a weapon to convince right-wing voters to support his ill-conceived legislative redistricting initiative. SCHWARZENEGGER HAS TRULY exposed himself as just the kind of a poll-driven, double-speaking politics-as-usual governor that he said he wouldn't be.

Somehow, despite the veto, he still says that, "Lesbian and gay couples are entitled to full protection under the law and should not be discriminated against based upon their relationships."

The marriage equality bill presented to the governor was a sterling opportunity to back up that commitment to the rights of lesbian and gay couples with a simple stroke of the pen.

Why did he hold back?

He could have been the first governor in U.S. history to sign equal rights marriage legislation for same-sex couples. He could have risen to the stature of historical figures who had the courage and conviction to push forward civil rights.

Instead, Schwarzenegger chose to become the first governor in history to veto equal marriage rights for same-sex couples.

WE AT EQUALITY CALIFORNIA, THE



organization that sponsored AB 849, believe that marriage equality is inevitable. We know Governor Schwarzenegger believes it as well. But that does not mean that marriage equality won't be hard-won when it finally happens.

Anti-gay extremists, with the support of the majority Republican legislators, are gathering signatures for initiatives that would not only prohibit the courts or legislature from ending discrimination in the marriage laws, but would also eliminate existing legal protections currently provided by law to domestic partners, including rights enacted with the governor's signature last year.

When will the governor finally come out and condemn these mean-spirited initiatives and urge Californians not to sign these petitions?

During his "State of the State" address in January, Schwarzenegger boldly and correctly stated that, "political courage is

not political suicide." It is truly a disappointment that he failed to remember those courageous words last week and follow them up with courageous acts.

California voters will soon get to send the governor a different message, one that John Kerry learned the hard way: Political cowardice is political suicide.

Last week's veto blocked progress on this year's bill, but the momentum behind the marriage equality movement will continue to build. Clip out those newspaper headlines that say "Schwarzenegger Vetoes Gay Marriage Bill" and stuff them in a drawer.

In the not-too-distant future, you may come across those clips and wonder what the fuss over equal marriage rights in

**@** Geoffrey Kors is executive director of Equality California and can be contacted via [www.eqca.org](http://www.eqca.org).

# THE Q

What do you think lesbians and gay men will miss about New Orleans?



The fact that the city is embracing and nonjudgmental, not to mention the fact that it is deliciously decadent.

Chris Higham, 46  
Houston  
Marketing



I think Mardi Gras is the thing that gays will miss most about New Orleans.

Teresa Waldrop, 40  
Houston  
Attorney



Mardi Gras, Southern Decadence and the never-ending party. It will party again.

Max Lambert, 43  
Sugar Land  
Graphic artist



As a straight person, I don't know if I can answer this question well, but I suspect gays, like everyone else, will miss the rich, devil-may-care attitude of New Orleans. I don't know if that attitude will come back after Katrina. I hope I'm very wrong about that though.

Mark Yzaguirre, 34  
Houston  
Attorney



The nightlife, Mardi Gras and its southern hospitality.

Bill Burford, 48  
Houston  
Sales

## don't call it a comeback

LIZA MINNELLI DISHES ABOUT LIFE, REALITY TV AND, OF COURSE, 'MAMA'

By ANDY ZEFFER



**Y**OU KNOW SHE'S A GAY ICON. You know she's Judy Garland's daughter. You know she's been married to at least one gay man. But did you know that Liza Minnelli loves reality television?

Many a gay man has followed Minnelli's career from "Cabaret," "New York, New York," "Arthur" and endless Broadway and tour appearances, to her more recent and scattershot third act.

For two seasons, Minnelli, 59, made frequent guest appearances on Fox's critically acclaimed "Arrested Development," skewering her own glamorous image for high-brow laughs.

Now — with gay production duo Neil Meron and Craig Zadan — she's been around the world promoting a restored version of her seminal, Bob Fosse-produced 1972 television special "Liza with a Z." The new cut will air next year exclusively on Showtime and then will be released, for the first time, on DVD.

As well known as she is for her work on stage and screen, in recent years Minnelli has also been notorious for her personal life, including battles with substance abuse and her headline-grabbing marriage and divorce with David Gest.

Though she has never faded from the spotlight, critics say that Liza is making a comeback. For the faithful, they know that she never left.

**Houston Voice:** With movie versions of "Rent" and "The Producers" coming out, and a big screen take of "Dreamgirls" in the works, do you think that musicals are making a comeback?

**Liza Minnelli:** Yeah, I really do. Neil Meron and Craig Zadan, who produced "Chicago," called me and asked me what I wanted to do. And I said I've written something and they asked me what it was about. I've known Craig since he was 16. He was a fan of mine that I've always been close to, and I admire him so much. So when I told him about my idea, he said, 'Well you have to do it.' So I am writing a movie musical. That is such fun to do.

**HoVo:** Tell us about your upcoming role in the independent movie "The OH in Ohio."

**Minnelli:** Oh honey, I play a sex therapist. I'm in it for about four minutes but the sequence is quite funny. It's like a younger and more glamorous Sylvia Miles



With a lifetime of experience in musicals both on stage and in film, who better to write a musical than Liza Minnelli?

part. This woman is just so obsessed with the idea she can talk about it. I was tortured doing it, because I am so shy.

**HoVo:** Diane Sawyer recently sat down with Barbra Streisand and they spoke about your mother, Judy Garland, and showed a clip of them performing together. Do you think about your mother often?

**Minnelli:** I think I'm like everyone else who thinks of their mother. Everybody thinks of her as Judy Garland but for me she is "Mama." I remember the woman who sat down and helped me with my homework, taught me how to avoid a fight, who drove me to birthday parties — normal things.

Other people always think of her as a tragic figure. But she wasn't. She was really funny. But nobody wants to hear that. But she understood it, even though I didn't understand. I asked her why do people have to say that? And she would just brush it aside and tell me, 'I do what I do and people get what they want to get from it. My job is to give them what they want. Now let's go get a hamburger.'

**HoVo:** Streisand also says she is surprised about how everything is out in the open now, and life has lost its mystery, shadows and "leaving things to the imagination." For example, Viagra commercials, reality shows, surgery on television. Do you feel the same way?

**Minnelli:** I don't know, I think it's kind of funny. It always fascinates me what becomes popular. And when I write a show, I always start with the audience's point of view. If I was sitting there what would I like to see and what would make me excited? So it is interesting to see what people get into. And what I think is the best right now is all these talent shows like "So You Think You Can Dance" and "Dancing With the Stars." Shows like that are fantastic. It's returned to live entertainment because videos took over so much for the longest time. Now shows that are like "The Ed Sullivan Show" are back.

**HoVo:** Would you ever write an autobiography?

**Minnelli:** If I ever sit down long enough to put it on the page. I like doing things. I always think I can do everything I've ever done and do it better.

**HoVo:** Would it be a tell-all?

**Minnelli:** I don't even know what that means. A tell-all is so kind of like a tabloid. I do think there is a way to tell about things without telling on people or making it about dirty little secrets. I think autobiographies can be funny without putting them in the filth category.

**HoVo:** What special message would you like to give to your gay fans about where Liza is now?

**Minnelli:** I am so grateful and so heartened and so determined because of their faithfulness. They have time and again saved my life, because they have been there for me. I want them to know how I will always be there for them; I will never let them down. I may stumble, but I keep roaring back.

**BOYS OF FALL:** Autumn television line-up offers plenty of eye candy for gay men. **Page 17**

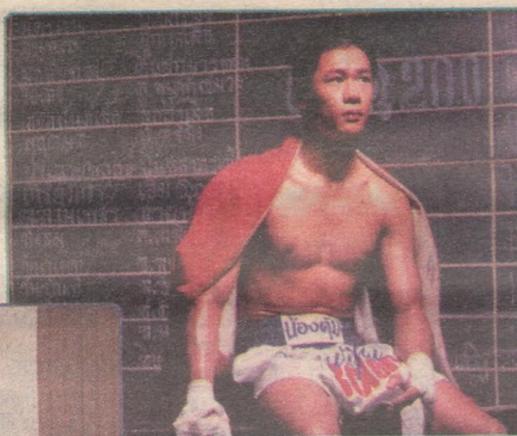
**LESBIANS WANTED:** Reality stars Paris and Nicole seeking female couple. **Page 19**



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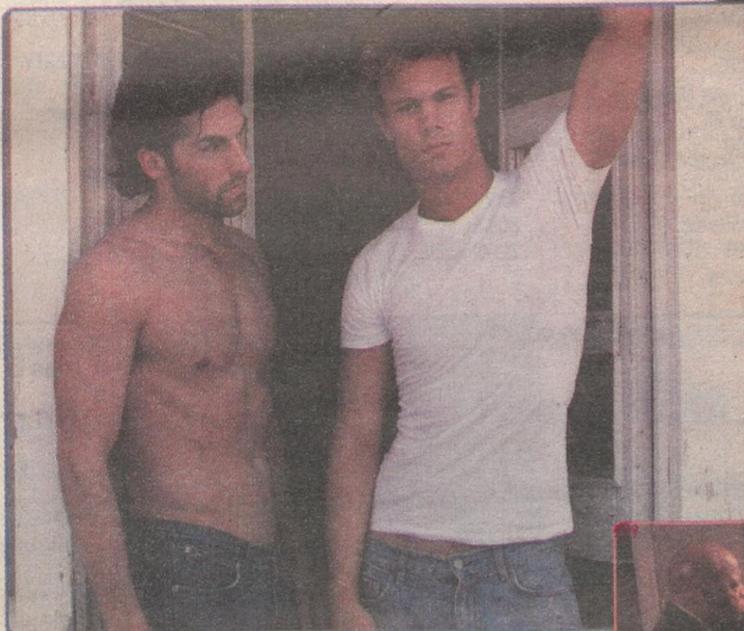
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### Birch & Co.

Former Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign, Elizabeth Birch, sits down for candid one-on-one conversations with some of the most important names in politics, activism and entertainment, including Rosie O'Donnell, Pat Buchanan and Congressman John Lewis.



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The ballots are in and the readers of the Houston Voice have spoken. Perhaps due to all of the natural disasters Houston faced this year, the list of winners reflects many "old school" favorites, whereas last year saw more maverick newcomers. You were clearly playing and paying in businesses that could be considered kissing cousins to good old-fashioned "comfort food" this year.

# BEST OF GAY HOUSTON

## DINING

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# nitelife JOHNNY HOOKS



This weekend, enjoy fall festivals by day, hot parties by night, and your chance to fight the anti-gay marriage amendment.

## 'No Nonsense' in Bayou bars

WELCOME BACK TO HOVO ON THE Go-Go! This week HotGG looks at fall festival fever, a couple of "faboo" nightclub events, NO/NO/NO going out, out, out and the passing of a local hair wiz.

FALL FESTIVAL FEVER HITS THE Bayou City this weekend. First up a group of women designers and artists will showcase their hip and unique goods at the **Gallery, 6303 Beverly Hill**, off Chimney Rock. Customers can enter to win goodie bags while they enjoy music, art and catering samples. In order to beat the Christmas shopping rush, this **Urban Crafters** sale is Oct. 6-8 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. A few of the artists in the show are **Farah Braniff, Ruth Chow, Jill Wesson** and the adorable **Sarah Gish**, publicist to the stars, selling her various Diva-inspired products!

FALL DOWN DOWNTOWN! THE **BAYOU City Art Festival Downtown** is Oct. 8-9 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Artists from across the country have been accepted to this

juried festival which guarantees original fine art and the opportunity to meet the artists in person. Entertainment presented by the Theater District with exceptional food, wine cafes and beer taverns will all help loosen those purse strings, and why not? All proceeds go to local Houston charities. Entrance gates are at Tranquillity Park and Walker, Bagby at Walker, Bagby at McKinney and Bagby and Walker. Admission is \$8.

CLOSER TO HOME, IT'S OPA TIME! This weekend Oct. 6-9 join the original **Greek Festival**, now in its 39th year, and be Greek for a day instead of just for the night! Head on over Friday, Saturday and Sunday from roughly 11 a.m. through 10 p.m. at **Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral Complex, 3511 Yoakum Boulevard**. Tickets at the gate are only \$3 for adults, while children 12 and under are admitted free. Go to [www.greekfestival.org](http://www.greekfestival.org) for all the yummy details.

WHAT IS MUKURU? GO TO

[www.mukuru.org](http://www.mukuru.org) and find out!

THIS SATURDAY, BARS ACROSS THE state have agreed to open their doors to **No Nonsense in November**, the campaign against Proposition 2, which would amend the Texas state constitution to ban gay couples from marrying. Hundreds of volunteers will be participating. To sign up to volunteer, or to get more information about participating in "Come Out and Be Counted," e-mail [Ken@NoNonsenseInNovember.com](mailto:Ken@NoNonsenseInNovember.com). And if you aren't already a registered voter, don't forget to register to vote by Oct. 11 so you will be eligible to vote in the Nov. 8 election.

TIME TO DANCE AWAY YOUR NIGHTS. The **Manhunt World Tour** hits **South Beach** this Saturday night. **DJ Bill Bennett** brings cutting edge visuals and his acclaimed music to Houston with SOBE resident **DJ Jimmy Skinner** opening 9 p.m. until 5 a.m. Advance tickets are \$15 with VIP line entrance on sale at Meteor, JRs, South Beach, M2M and Hollywood Super Center.

GET OUT YOUR DAISY DUKES KIDS! Start the night out this Saturday, Oct. 8, at **Next Dance Club, 2020 McKinney**, for the monthly **Loft Project**. In addition to resident Loft Project **DJ Surain**, this Loft Party features special guest **DJ Randall Jones**. As a bonus, those who pay the \$10 cover for the Loft Party from 10 p.m. until 3:30 a.m. will receive the pre-sales ticket price for the Spoiled Boyz event.

The "R" word forced the Beyond

## HoVo on the go-go

Entertainment's **Spoiled Boyz** 50th event celebration, the **Dukes Of Houston After-Hours Party**, to be rescheduled for Saturday. Los Angeles' legendary remix artist and after-hours expert **DJ Dawna Montel** will be driving the party into the wee morning hours. Daisy Dukes & Rebel Country attire is encouraged. Doors open 3:30 a.m. Advance Tickets available at M2M Fashion. [www.spoiledboyz.net](http://www.spoiledboyz.net) or [www.whatsnexthouston.com](http://www.whatsnexthouston.com).

FINALLY, **MARK CORBETT**, OWNER of **Hot Tops Salon** on Montrose, was killed while riding his bicycle at Montrose and Peden this week. Mark owned Hot Tops for over 20 years and knew lots and lots of people here; and did most of their hair at one time or another. His death has sent a shockwave around the Montrose community. He leaves behind three children and a lot of fabulous locks. He will be missed.

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

## Come Out and Be Counted Help Defeat the Marriage Amendment!

On Saturday, October 8, **No Nonsense In November**, the campaign to defeat the Marriage Amendment, will be at the following bars registering voters and collecting pledges to **Vote AGAINST Constitutional Amendment #2**.

### >> GALVESTON

**3rd Coast Beach Bar**  
3102 Seawall Blvd  
**Robert's Lafitte**  
2501 Ave Q  
**The Pink Dolphin**  
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### >> HOUSTON

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### JR's Bar & Grill - Houston

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On Nov. 8, Vote **AGAINST** Constitutional Amendment #2

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## books JAMES WITHERS

Poet Aaron Smith combines pop culture references  
and gay sexual politics in his first collection,

'Blue on Blue Ground,' a true work of art.

# Out of the 'Blue'

AARON SMITH ISN'T A POET WHO gushes over gay mythological figures like Patroclus. His new poetry collection, "Blue on Blue Ground," avoids the kind of classical allusions that make a high school English teacher giddy.

Instead, he reaches for figures from the modern pantheon and goes for material any fan of "Entertainment Tonight" can appreciate, with lines referring to gods like Brad, Matt and Whitney — Pitt, Damon and Houston, that is.

The poetry snobs out there who might dismiss Smith for his pop culture preferences are missing out. "Blue on Blue Ground" boasts poetry that proves what the art is all about: burnished language and intense inspection of the human heart.

Smith's evolution as a writer began when he was growing up in West Virginia, a place where the people were "very polite," he says. But the young poet noticed a distinction between what was said and what was meant. He came across a poem in a textbook that made him realize that if he could speak clearly and well, people would listen.

Poetry also gave him a chance to write about what he knew.

"That's why there is a lot of pop culture in my work," Smith says. "Television and movies filled my spare hours and I liked knowing I could use them in my poems. It is part of my mythology. We are living in a time of so much media. It would almost be like leaving out a large part of our life experience."

These days Smith's life experience includes working for an academic non-profit and living on Manhattan's Upper East Side. His collection, published this month by the University of Pittsburgh Press, gathers about 10 years worth of work. While studying at West Virginia Wesleyan College, Smith was drawn mostly to female writers because he saw in them a willingness to present more of themselves in their work than their male counterparts.

"Women writers are often more in touch with many sides of themselves," Smith says. "There is an honesty and willingness to be vulnerable."

"BLUE ON BLUE GROUND," SMITH'S first book, overflows with snippets of vulnerability. In "Dark, Awful Man," the



Aaron Smith, a gay poet who could be the love child of Frank O'Hara and Cher, finds the language of Hollywood fits in perfectly with his work.

action oscillates between a therapy session and sex scene. The speaker tells the psychologist that he didn't enjoy the encounter with a man who speaks like a daddy, and the therapist is asking why he didn't leave. The poem ends with lines that call into question everything we usually think about sex and desire.

It reads, "I don't tell her that sometimes I still worry/ there's a hell I'll go to, that for days after sex/ my insides hurt, that sitting here in this chair/ I can honestly say I never want to touch/ a man again."

Smith says that writing these poems was sometimes difficult. "Emotionally it was a lot to write about," he says. "Exploring issues of shame, the body, sexuality, going against the norm."

It's easy to read "Dark, Awful Man" as autobiography, especially since the speaker calls himself "Aaron" and is also gay. Smith warns, however, never to trust poets for the factual truth. Instead trust poets to get the stories that lurk behind the facts.

"The book is not a memoir," he said. "Poets lie a lot. We make up a lot."

The book may not be autobiographical, but it certainly treads in whimsy and hints of sly humor. In "Cher Uncensored" the speaker imagines himself as the singer/actress in the movie "Moonstruck," walking "freshly fucked, kicking a can down the street in/ last night's sultry strapless gown the color of pennies."

Smith proudly writes about gay themes and characters. In "Ars Poetica" the narrator says, "poetry is about what happens, regardless of what group/ is telling it, or at least it used to be."

### MORE INFO

'Blue on Blue Ground'  
By Aaron Smith  
University of Pittsburgh Press  
\$14. www.pitt.edu/~press



## television BRIAN MOYLAN



Sex appeal is sometimes enough to draw an audience and this fall offers a slew of treats for gay male television fans.

## Must drool TV

EACH WEEK MY GAY FRIENDS AND I get together and drool on Monday nights. It's certainly not over football, and, no, we're not salivating from the smell of the pizza we order for dinner. The excitement is reserved for Wentworth Miller, the sexy star of Fox's new show "Prison Break."

Now that the TV season is a few weeks old, audiences and critics have decided what's good, what's bad, what's worth watching and what should be avoided. But for men, it's a bit different. Millions of straight guys tune in to the inanity of Fox's sitcom "Stacked" to watch Pamela Anderson in a tight shirt. Similarly, gay guys will watch the worst dreck if there's guaranteed man flesh. Well, they'll turn on "Stacked" too, but that's because Ms. Anderson is fierce.

"Prison Break" (Mondays) is like gay soft-core porn. Miller stars as a hottie who intentionally gets thrown in prison so he can break out his brother — the equally hot Dominic Purcell — who was framed for murder. He's a structural engineer and he tattooed the blueprints for the prison on his skin so that he can find the way out. He's also had to enlist the help of his cellmate

(Amaury Nolasco) who — surprise — also happens to be smoking hot.

The plot is moderately intriguing, though entirely implausible, but the veiled references to man-on-man action while in the joint and Miller showing off



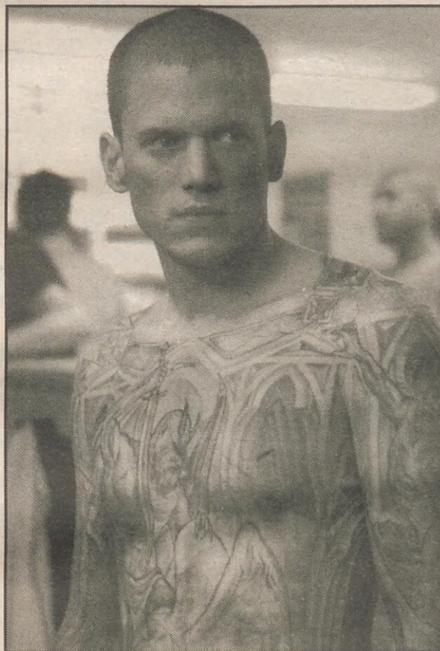
Eddie Cibrian

his tattoos are enough to keep any gay man watching. It's not nearly as graphic as HBO's prison classic "Oz," which showed the action, but it's darn close.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE, IT'S NO SECRET that Fox's "Kitchen Confidential" (Mondays) features a hot male star. Bradley Cooper stars as a no-good chef who is getting a second chance at a wacky restaurant. Gay creator Darren Star really knows how to cast a lead.

For those who are into the young and wan look, Christopher Gorham on CBS' "Out of Practice" (Mondays) is the one for you. This twink is the center of a family of wacky doctors including a mother played by Stockard Channing and a lesbian sister, who, as played by Paula Marshall, isn't so bad looking herself.

While the new craze for this season was scary new programs, it's frightening just how attractive Jensen Ackles and Jared Padalecki are in WB's "Supernatural" (Tuesdays) as a pair of on-screen brothers



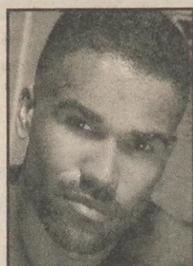
Viewers will enjoy ogling Wentworth Miller not for the art on his skin, but for his amazing physique. (Photo courtesy of Fox)

who are hunting down the mystical evil that killed their mother.

ABC's "Invasion" (Wednesdays) is another eerie man-fest, in part thanks to former "Third Watch" stud Eddie Cibrian. This dimpled delight will make you forget that aliens are taking over the world.

If an alien hunter is what you're looking for (sort of like a male version of a sexy vampire slayer), don't miss Brian Van Holt on CBS' "Threshold" (Fridays). You'll certainly feel safe from extraterrestrials in his arms.

THERE ARE ALSO SOME ATTRACTIVE men returning to television this fall. Teen pinup Freddie



Shemar Moore

Prinze, Jr. has his own ABC sitcom "Freddie" (Wednesdays) where he shares an apartment with four nagging women.

For those who like a man in uniform, former "Law & Order" beefcake Benjamin

Bratt stars as a military man in NBC's "E-Ring" (Wednesdays), based on life in the Pentagon.

And after a few years in the movies, former soap star Shemar Moore brings his beautiful face back to the small screen in "Criminal Minds" (Wednesdays), a CBS show about the g-men who catch serial killers.

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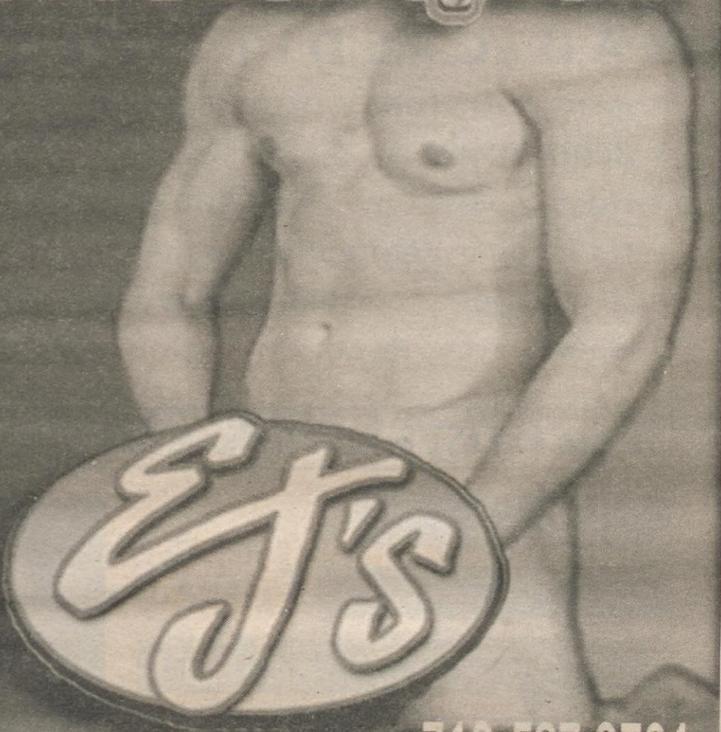
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## Bombshells away

Paris and Nicole seek lesbian couple, Robert Gant is a sexy bachelor and Ashley Judd has a crush on kd

LESBIANS LOCK YOUR DOORS. PARIS HILTON and NICOLE RICHIE are coming for your children! Dish guesses that Hilton had so much fun marshaling the Los Angeles Gay Pride parade this summer that she now wants a little gay baby all her own. Maybe she'll dress it in pink boas and carry it in a designer handbag like her Chihuahua Tinkerbell.

Actually, according to Hollywood gossip portal Defamer.com, Fox producers are looking for a lesbian household in the L.A. area for the next season of the duo's reality show "The Simple Life." It seems that the Sapphic family will host Paris and Nicole (who are no longer friends, but contractually obligated to star in another season of the show) while they go about doing what they do.

"2 Day commitment for \$2500!" an e-mail soliciting potential homes reads. "Paris and Nicole — LIVING IN YOUR HOUSE, LADIES!"

They're really targeting the wrong audience with this plea. It's like giving a circuit boy free tickets to a MELISSA ETHERIDGE concert.

### Bachelor no. 1

Dish congratulates ROBERT GANT (born Gonzalez) the gay actor who played Ben on "Queer As Folk" for several seasons. He was recently named one of People En Español's "25 Sexiest Bachelors."



Robert Gant

Either way, Gant is certainly sexy and takes a place next to other *my caliente* celebs like ENRIQUE IGLESIAS, ENRIQUE MURCIANO (from CBS's "Without a Trace") and TONY GONZALEZ (tight end — hold the jokes,

please — for the Kansas City Chiefs).

Dish just wonders what the title of Gant's new short film, which won raves at Sundance this year, translates into in Spanish. Something tells me "Billy's Dad is a Fudge-Packer" just doesn't have the same impact in another language.

### The horror!

As if ABC's "Desperate Housewives" wasn't gay enough, the show's MARC CHERRY is teaming up with another gay writer for the new show "Kill Switch."

The brainchild of gay "Child's Play" writer/creator/director Dan Mancini, the



Lesbians beware. 'The Simple Life's' Nicole Richie (left) and Paris Hilton are coming for your children!

show is about a woman who is executed for killing her daughter's murderer. Instead of going to hell, her soul is transported into the body of a person who is going to be killed. Once she fends off the would-be slayer, her soul is whooshed away to do it all over again another week.

Cherry describes the project as "Touched by an Angel" meets "Quantum Leap." Dish calls it reincarnation meets creepy.

"I've been turning down offers from other writers right and left because I'm so swamped, but [Mancini's] idea was so strong," Cherry, who will executive produce the show, told Reuters.

Mancini, whose campy sensibility is well on display in "Bride of Chucky" and "Seed of Chucky," says that he and Cherry are a good match.

No word yet on when viewers will get to flick the "Kill Switch."

### Constant craving

ASHLEY JUDD is one of the most glamorous ladies in Hollywood and has a delish race car-driving hubby. So, what is she doing pining after lesbian chanteuse kd lang?

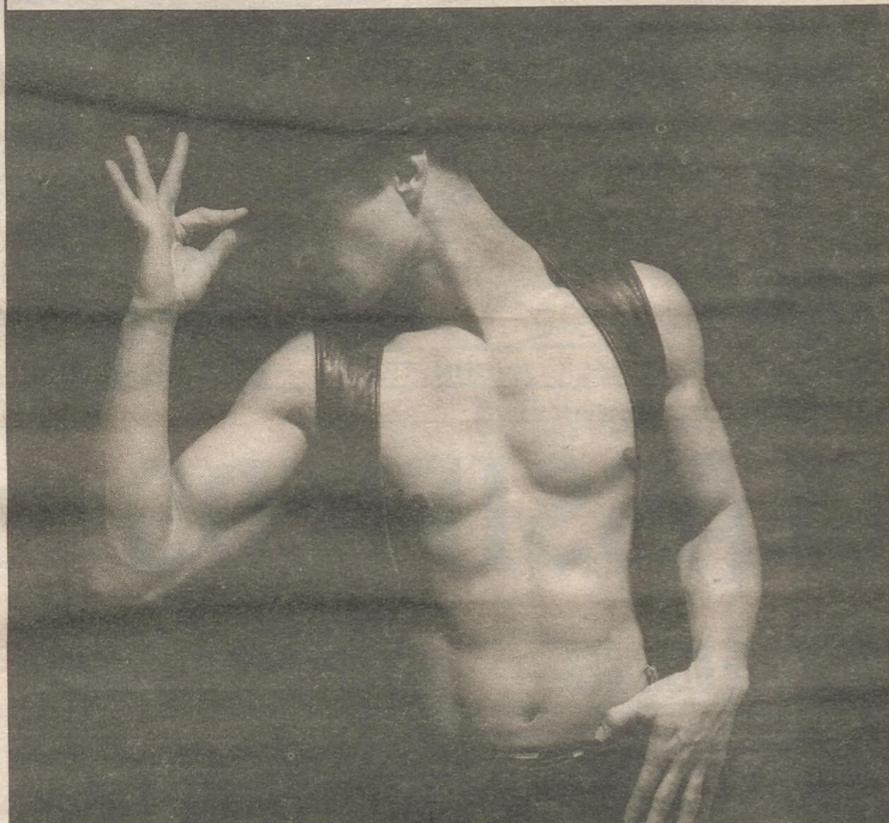
"kd lang is my crush. She is so special. I love her," Judd told the London newspaper, the Sun. I don't think this means she's switching sides, but, if she were, couldn't Judd do a whole lot better than kd lang?

"In my opinion, the two greatest singers of our time are my sister [country singer WYNONNA JUDD] and kd lang," she says.



Ashley Judd

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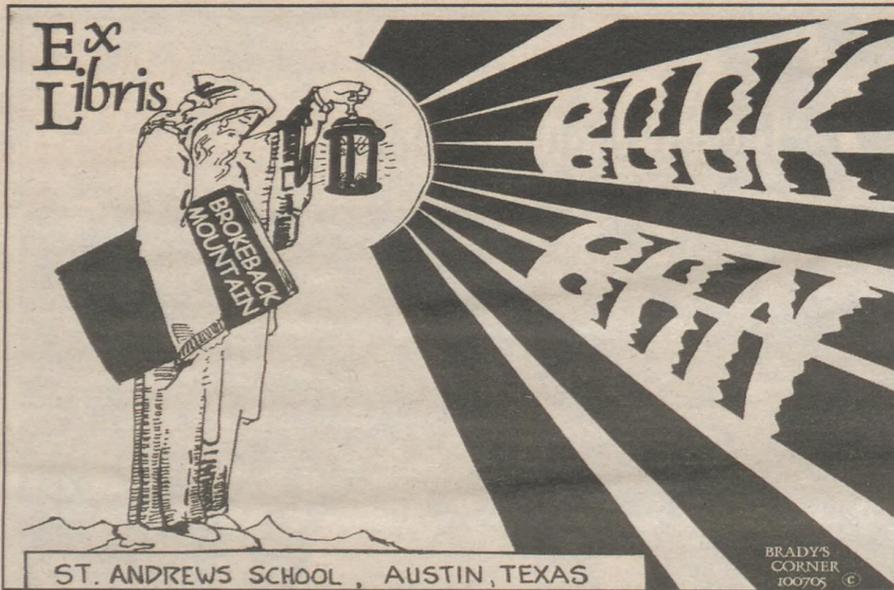
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**SGWM SEEKS ROOMATE** to share 2 BR, 2 BA condo in River Oaks. Security gates, pool, all appls w/WD, cable TV, priv BR. Non-smoker & no drugs please. (713) 520-7662.

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**CLEAN FINANCIALLY STABLE** Lesbian Couple seeks Disease Free Gay White/Asian Man to bring a Child into a Loving Family. Serious inquiries only. Please send email to [babyhoadep@yahoo.com](mailto:babyhoadep@yahoo.com).

**COUPLES 60+ YOU** are invited to participate in an anonymous study of gay and lesbian couples who are 60 years of age or older with at least one partner retired or retiring within 5 years. This study is being conducted by a gay Human Development student at Pacific Oaks College in Pasadena as part of an independent research project. Contact Shaun by phone at (626) 616-5041 or by email at [Shaun@GayGenderResearch.org](mailto:Shaun@GayGenderResearch.org)

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... USE HERPESIA, AND KISS THOSE GENITAL WARTS GOODBYE!

UGH! ENOUGH WITH THE COMMERCIALS! JUST GET BACK TO THE SHOW ALREADY!

SHHH -- IT'S ON!

I CHOOSE... SKY!

REALLY?!

OH, BLEEP.

YES!!

WOO HOO!!

THAT'S MY BOY!

YAP! YAP!

YAAAY!!

SQUEAL!

**MAZEL TOV, SKY!** ADAM HATH PICKED THEE AS HIS STEVE! MY CHILDREN, THE TWO OF YOU WILL BE WHISKED AWAY FOR A TWO-WEEK VACATION ON THE SECLUDED GREEK ISLE OF PHALLUS!

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WAIT A MINUTE! NO WAY! I'M SORRY, MAN, I-- I JUST CAN'T DO THIS!

IT'S BAD ENOUGH THAT I'D HAVE TO SPEND A WHOLE YEAR WITH THIS EGO-TRIPPIN' FREAK... BUT YOU WANT ME-- A PROUD GAY MAN-- TO SHILL FOR A COMPANY THAT PRETENDS TO SUPPORT US AND THEN USES OUR MONEY TO FUND POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS THAT WANNA DESTROY US?! FORGET IT!!

WELL, FOLKS, LOOKS LIKE MISS ROSA PARKS HAS FORFEITED, WHICH MEANS THAT JAMAAL IS OUR WINNER! AND YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, ADAM?

UH... WHAT?

IT MEANS YOU'RE SCREWED -- BECAUSE JAMAAL WAS THE SERPENT! AND IF THE SERPENT WINS, YOU END UP WITH BUPKES!

YES!! CHOKE ON THAT, BLEEP BAG!

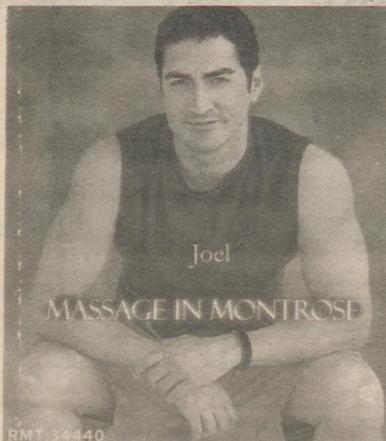
HEY, BRO, REMEMBER, I PICKED YOU... SO YOU'LL STILL INTRODUCE ME TO THAT PRODUCER, RIGHT?

SURE "BRO," BUT FIRST, LEANME INTRODUCE YOU TO THIS!

Y'KNOW, I'VE NEVER BEEN PROUDER OF THAT BOY... OR WANTED TO KICK THE SHIT OUTTA HIM THIS MUCH.

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# CLASSIFIEDS



RMT 34440

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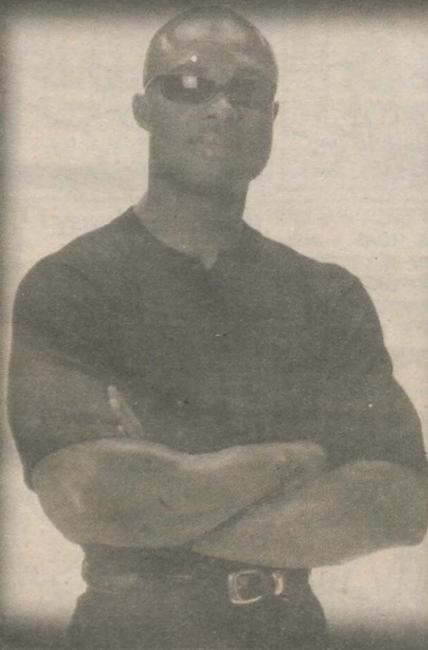
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Looking for a boy? We bring you together.  
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## bitch session



### Why do so many butch dykes try to look like Eminem?

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WHENEVER I GO ONLINE AND SEE the many sluts who so adamantly proclaim themselves "Drug & Disease Free," I think to myself, "Gee, that's how I was at one time." Wake up, boys. You're not invincible.

DOES ANYONE REALLY THINK IT'S funny when Kathy Griffin says someone like Ryan Seacrest is gay? If he is or he isn't, I'm not sure where the funny part is.

WHAT IS ALL THE HOOPLA ABOUT Axe deodorant? Just another example of queers scrambling to buy something that makes them feel like real men? It ain't deodorant that makes anyone a man. Give it up already!

TO THE BEANPOLE LOOKING FOR brawny: You got it wrong, dude. It's not your skinny bod that keeps you from getting guys like me. It's your femme lifestyle.

UNLESS YOU'RE IN OLYMPIC TRAINING, get rid of that damn Speedo. In addition to looking like an ass, it makes you look like a total girl.

WHY DO I GET GRIEF BECAUSE I LIKE FTMs? They are even hotter than butches!

I'M TIRED OF READING OF GAY AND lesbian couples suing each other over children after they break up. I support gay marriage because I believe in gay divorce.

WHY IS IT THAT JUST BECAUSE I'M gay, I'm supposed to be on the side of gay marriage. The one nice thing about being gay is we can part ways without an attorney. The custody hearing is over the dog. By the way you can keep the dog!

FORMER NEW JERSEY GOV. JAMES McGreevey is not a role model. He's a liar, a fraud and is, in no way, a good representation of a gay male.  
**BITCH BOY RESPONDS:** Well, except that he's hot.

I FIGHT FOR ISSUES LIKE GAY marriage rights not because I want to get married, I don't even have a boyfriend. But as a matter of social justice!

IT SUCKS BEING A FAG WITH THE looks, taste and class of a billionaire but only the income that affords the lifestyle of a working stiff!

I HATE IT WHEN I GET REALLY excited fantasizing about a hot guy at work and then shoot in my underwear. It's not easy getting through the day feeling sticky!

WHY CAN'T STRAIGHT GIRLS STAY out of lezzie clubs? If you're going to come into my club, then you must want me to hit on you. Don't get insulted if I do! You've crossed over onto my turf.

WHY DO QUEENS HAVE SUCH unnecessary 'tude? It makes you afraid to say anything to them because they will bite your head off.

WHY ARE ALL THE HOT FEMMES dating each other? Save some for us butches.

TO ALL YOU BUTCH WOMEN: BACK off! I'm a lesbian because I love women, not wanna be men. If I want a man, I'll get a real one.

FUNNY HOW YOU COULDN'T communicate when we were together, but now you use a public forum to tell the world how you feel about "tasteless" ole me. Bitterness is so not your color.

YOU THINK YOU'RE SO POPULAR WITH your so-called friends. You should hear the way they talk about you when your back is turned!

GIVEN HOW MOST CHRISTIANS TREAT gays, loving them would be like loving an ulcer that keeps on biting you no matter how well you treat it!

TO ALL MY GAY BROTHERS, FROM your lesbian sister: To be so into fitness and caring about your bodies, I would think you'd have more respect for those bodies than to sleep around the way you do.

SURE, EVERYONE TO HIS TYPE, BUT A lot of these steroid junkies really do believe they walk on a higher plane than the rest of us. Last time I checked, the world doesn't revolve around big biceps and a steroid needle.

WHAT'S WITH THE GAY MEN WHO have attitudes with the beautiful lesbians out here? It's like you don't want us around.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN a gay man and a lesbian? About 100 sex partners!

ONCE I THINK I'VE FOUND A REALLY hot guy, along comes another — even hotter:

**Editors' note:** These are real bitches, sent in by real readers, about gay life's little annoyances, and the big ones, too.  
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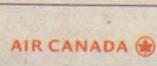
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