



Outing the dead
Obit writers struggle with when it is appropriate to out the dead in print.
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AUGUST 26, 2005

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ONLY IN CA: Supreme Court notes custody rights. Page 5



Gay groups oppose Roberts nomination

Activists say Supreme Court pick hostile to minority as well as privacy rights

By EARTHA JANE MELZER

Four of the nation's largest gay rights organizations announced on Thursday their opposition to the nomination of Judge John G. Roberts Jr. to the Supreme Court, claiming his record is hostile to the rights of privacy and minorities.

The Human Rights Campaign, the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, the National Center for Lesbian Rights and Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays released a united statement of opposition on Thursday, Aug. 25.

"For his entire adult life, John Roberts has been a disciple of and promoted a political and legal ideology that is antithetical to an America that embraces all, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people," said Matt Foreman, executive director of the Task Force.

"He has denigrated the nature and scope of the constitutional rights to privacy, equal protection and due process as well as the federal government's role in confronting injustice."

People for the American Way announced its opposition to the Roberts nomination a day earlier and released a 50-page report detailing its concerns.

"Our review of John Roberts' record and the tens of thousands of pages of documents released by the administration show that confirming John Roberts would endanger much of the progress made by the nation in civil rights over the past half-century," said Ralph Neas, president of People For the American Way.



The nation's biggest gay and lesbian rights groups announced late this week that they oppose the nomination of Judge John G. Roberts Jr. to the Supreme Court. (Photo by Pablo Martinez Monsivais/AP)

"If John Roberts replaces Sandra Day O'Connor, the balance of the court will shift to the right for decades to come, imperiling Americans' constitutional rights and liberties."

Groups have been scrambling to determine Roberts' judicial philosophy since President Bush

Please see **ROBERTS** on Page 7



Englishman Anthony Freud will succeed David Gockley as Houston Grand Opera's General Director and Chief Executive Officer.

Gay Brit is selected as new head of HGO

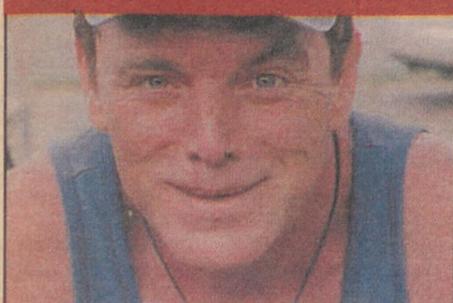
Anthony Freud hails from the Welsh National Opera and brings a new vision to HGO

By RICH ARENSCHIEDT

IN AN EXPECTED CHANGING OF THE GUARD AT HOUSTON Grand Opera, it was announced that Anthony Freud, currently General Director of the Welsh National Opera (WNO), will succeed David Gockley as HGO's General Director and Chief Executive Officer in March 2006.

Born in London in 1957, this gay Englishman brings a wealth of energy and expertise that belies his age. The score of his accomplishments is impressive. During his tenure, the company doubled its contributed income and was instrumental in the completion of the recently opened \$210 million Wales Millennium Theater, a

Please see **OPERA** on Page 18



Local life
Re-making the Heights is a calling for artist Jeff River Law
PAGE 8

dish
A new TV show about Princess Margaret's life includes girl-on-girl action.
PAGE 17



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local news briefs



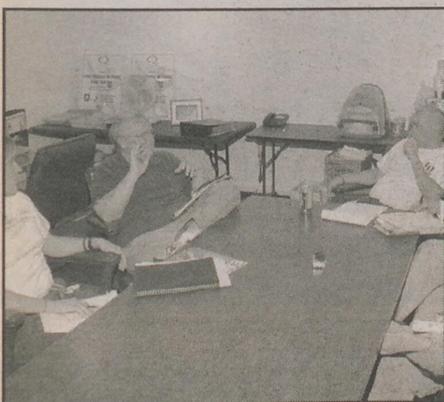
At the opening of his campaign headquarters, City Council candidate Peter Brown (right) talked with U.S. Rep. Shelia Jackson Lee (D-Houston) and former San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

Council candidate Peter Brown opens campaign headquarters

Peter Brown, a candidate for At-Large, Position 1 on the Houston City Council, opened his campaign headquarters at 3907 Main with speeches by U.S. Rep. Shelia Jackson Lee (D-Houston) and former San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros. Sue Lovell, a candidate for At-Large, Position 2 on the council also attended the event. Both Brown and Lovell are endorsed by the Houston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Political Caucus (PAC).

The Meadows Foundation grants \$150,000 to Montrose Clinic

The Montrose Clinic is the recipient of a two-year, \$150,000 grant from the Meadows Foundation with the prospect of an additional \$50,000 in matching funds. Clinic officials said the award will allow the facility to expand its ability to provide HIV-focused healthcare services to indigent and underserved individuals. The Meadows Foundation is a private philanthropic institution started in 1948 by Algor H. and Virginia Meadows. Since that time, the foundation has awarded more than \$430 million to more than 2,000 Texas agencies and organizations.



Activists include Glen Maxey (second from left) met in Houston recently to strategize about defeating the proposed marriage amendment in November. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

Activists gearing up to defeat marriage amendment

Activists in Houston are gearing up to defeat a proposed constitutional amendment that would not only forbid same-sex marriage but would also prevent recognition of civil unions. The election is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 6, the same day that Houstonians will cast votes for mayor, city controller and several city council seats. The Houston Equal Rights Alliance

(HERA) and No Nonsense in November are teaming up to stage a block walk on August 27 and a volunteer recruitment drive on August 31. The block walk will begin with a meeting at the Houston GLBT Community Center (3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 207) at 10 a.m. Volunteers will knock on doors from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in an effort to identify supporters of equal rights. The volunteer recruitment drive is at 6 p.m. at the Community Center. Contact volunteer@houstonhera.org. Also on August 31, activists will stage a training session for an upcoming bar recruitment drive. The session starts at 6:30 p.m. at the community center. For more information, contact johngilbanez1@yahoo.com.

Montrose Counseling Center Notes Suicide Prevention Week

Counselors at the Montrose Counseling Center will mark Suicide Prevention Week, Sept. 4-10, by urging anyone contemplating the taking of their own life to make a call to the Houston Gay & Lesbian Switchboard at 713-529-3211. Since gay and lesbian youth are five times more likely to attempt suicide than straight youth, center officials said they seek to provide some methods of coping with the isolation, rejection, confusion and marginalization youth experience. "Some of our clients experience this marginalization two-fold, in a society that not only stigmatizes gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons but also stigmatizes those who reach out for mental health care," said Ann J. Robison, the center's executive director. She added, "With this focus on suicide prevention week, we hope members of the GLBT community know there's a place they can go for help, whether it's through H.A.T.C.H., Gay & Lesbian Switchboard or making an appointment to see a therapist in a GLBT-affirming environment like the Montrose Counseling Center."

From staff and wire reports

local news

'Spanky' gets probation for indecency with a child charge

Victim's advocates say a light sentence for 'Spanky' sends the wrong message

By BINNIE FISHER

The man who homeless teens in Montrose knew as "Spanky" has been handed a four-year probated sentence after he agreed to plead guilty to a charge of indecency with a child.

James Michael Broomas, 51, was first arrested July 6, 2004 and accused of having sexual contact with a 15-year-old boy in 1999.

Broomas, a certified public accountant from Baytown who maintained an office in Montrose, pleaded guilty Aug. 4, 2005 to a second-degree felony in connection with the 1999 incident, prosecutors said.

Under a deferred adjudication agreement, Broomas will not have a conviction on his permanent record provided he successfully completes his probation. The court ordered him to register as sex offender and abide by the restrictions that distinction places on him.

Andy Kahan of the Mayor's Crime Victims Office said he and other victim's advocates are not happy with the outcome of the Broomas case.

"His victims get to deal with a lifetime of scars, and he gets probation," Kahan said. "It's a sweetheart deal."

Broomas got his nickname because he was infamous for paying good money for sex that included spanking. One street youth told the Voice last summer that Broomas paid \$50 for sex with street kids, more than other predators who troll the streets of Montrose and usually expect more for less money.

Kahan noted that by his own admission, Broomas told prosecutors that he had operated in the Montrose area for at least 20 years without being arrested until last summer.

Attorney Chip Lewis, who represented Broomas, said while he realizes that many people may look at the four-year probated sentence and shake their heads, it was probably the best prosecutors could have done under the circumstances.

Harris County Assistant District Attorney Lance Long acknowledged that prosecutors had difficulty finding credible witnesses.

A 'fair' outcome

"I think it was fair," Long said.

Long said he and investigators worked through a street ministry to find witnesses for the case. "It was very hard to strike a balance and get these kids to come forward. I'm law enforcement."

He likened the world of street youth to



James Michael Broomas, known as "Spanky" on the streets of Montrose, has struck a deal with prosecutors on charges of indecency with a child.

a "sub-society. They have their own rules."

In the end, Long said, Broomas gave investigators a statement admitting to paying street kids for sex that included spanking.

"He said in his statement that he had been doing it for about 20 years," Long said.

Lewis said he sought to show prosecutors that his client's conduct was not what would normally be thought of as that of a sexual predator.

Lewis said the acts Broomas committed with street youth in Montrose did not include sexual penetration. He described his client as "very debilitated."

Long said although he doesn't know about Broomas' ability to perform sex, he noted that investigators seized bondage equipment and videotapes from Broomas' Montrose apartment. He added that in interviewing victims, "They all said that what he did was way out there."

Kahan said it is not unusual for a first-time sex offender to receive a probated sentence.

"It's the lesser of evils. At least it gets them in the system," he said.

In most cases, Kahan said, "You're probably dealing with cases where there is very little if any direct evidence. Basically it's one person's word against another."

In many cases, Lewis said, witnesses were reluctant to testify against Broomas.

Although there are no stipulations regarding whether Broomas can spend time in Montrose, Lewis said, he has indicated he likely will move his office out of Houston.

The assistant district attorney said the case was to have gone to trial earlier but was delayed because Broomas suffered a stroke from which he is currently recovering.

Long said he worries about the street kids left to bobble in Spanky's wake. Homeowners in the Montrose area have called on authorities to do something about the problem.

"As a homeowner, they would bother me," Long said. "On the other hand, when you get to know these kids, you learn they've had bad lives."

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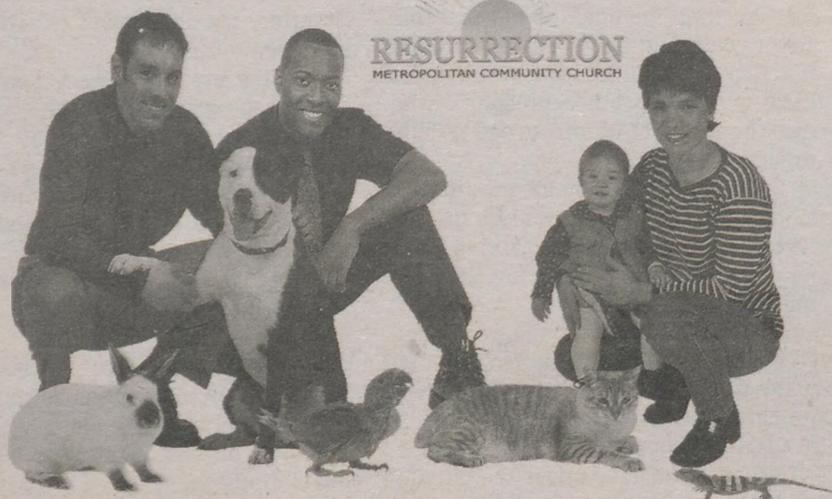
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national news briefs

Calif. court backs custody rights, duties for gay couples

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Same-sex couples who raise children are lawful parents and must provide for them if they break up, the California Supreme Court ruled Monday. The precedent-setting decision puts former gay and lesbian couples on equal ground with unmarried heterosexual couples who break up and marks the latest decision by the court recognizing rights of same-sex couples. The justices, ruling in three cases, said for the first time that custody and child support laws that hold absent fathers accountable and protect children from the stigma of illegitimacy also apply to estranged gay couples who used reproductive science to conceive. In doing so, one woman was granted the right to be the second mother of twins after the birth mother moved out of state. The court also ruled that a lesbian cannot avoid paying child support for her former partner's biological children, and that another woman could not go to court to terminate the parental rights of her former lover, years after obtaining a court order stipulating they were both parents. Courtney Joslin, an attorney with the National Center for Lesbian Rights, said, "This is the first time any state supreme court in the country has made this ruling."



Courtney Joslin (right), an attorney with the National Center for Lesbian Rights, this week praised a California Supreme Court decision that acknowledges custody rights for gay couples. (Photo by Jeff Chin/AP)

Christian group disrupts Gay Day at Phillies game

PHILADELPHIA — As the Phillies battled the Washington Nationals last week, participants in the ball park's Gay Day faced members of a fundamentalist Christian group, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported. Repent America protested Gay Day, in which many fans attended the game as part of a Gay Pride group. The national anthem at the game was performed by the Philadelphia Gay Men's Chorus. For the third year, Repent America's Michael Marcavage attended the game in protest of Gay Day, and he and another man held a sign that read, "Homosexuality Is a Sin, Christ Can Save You" at the top of Section 303 in right field, the newspaper reported. "This is totally offensive to me," James Duggan, a fan who argued with Marcavage, told the Inquirer. "These people are false Christians."

Fla. activists near goal on gay marriage ban

TALLAHASSEE — Organizers have collected nearly enough signatures to put a gay marriage ban proposal on the November 2006 ballot, the St. Petersburg Times reported. The measure would amend the Florida constitution to ban gay unions, and leaders of the effort said they expect within days to have enough signatures to prompt a review by the Florida Supreme Court. The "Florida Marriage Protection Amendment" would amend the state constitution to define marriage as a union between one man and one woman, specifying that no other kind of marriage or legal union is equivalent to marriage. Organizers must have 611,009 signatures by Feb. 1 to put the proposal on the ballot, the Times reported. It defines marriage and also bans other legal unions, and there is a constitutional requirement limiting citizen petitions to only one subject, said Nadine Smith, executive director of Equality Florida.

Mass. to vote on anti-marriage amendment again on Sept. 14

BOSTON (AP) — Massachusetts state legislators voted Wednesday to meet next month for a Constitutional Convention aimed at debating for the second time a proposed amendment replacing gay marriage in Massachusetts with Vermont-style civil unions. Members of the House and Senate have already given initial approval to the amendment, but the state constitution requires them to approve identical language in two successive sessions before the amendment can be put before state voters. That would occur in 2006. Legislative approval has been thrown into doubt after some supporters in the initial vote announced they had changed their mind. The most recent is Rep. Anthony Petrucci (D-Boston), who was quoted this week as saying he will not vote for the proposal despite supporting it last year. Petrucci told Bay Windows, a gay Boston paper, that legalized gay marriage has "made strong unions among people who have not had the opportunity until that time to get married." The Supreme Judicial Court ordered the state in 2003 to begin marrying gay couples, effective May 17, 2004. Since then, thousands of same-sex couples have wed in the only state to sanction such marriages.

Ore. State Bar continues ban on National Guard advertising

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. (AP) — The board of directors of the Oregon State Bar has voted to continue its ban on Oregon national guard advertising in its bulletin because of the military stance on gays. In an 11-3 vote last week, the board rejected a recommendation from an advisory committee that would have allowed the Oregon State Bar Bulletin to resume accepting recruitment ads. The committee had urged the board to exempt the military from the bulletin's policy of prohibiting ads for employers that discriminate in hiring.

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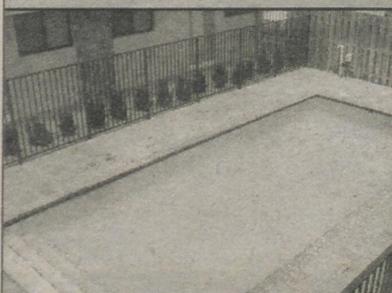


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national news

Rights groups slam Roberts on privacy, minority rights

ROBERTS, continued from Page 1

announced on July 19 that Roberts was his pick to replace Sandra Day O'Connor, who is retiring.

Scant paper trail

Researching Roberts' record has proved challenging in part because of his limited number of rulings—he has been a judge only since his 2003 appointment to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, considered the second most influential federal court in the nation.

Prior to serving on the bench, Roberts worked as a lawyer in private practice at the D.C. firm of Hogan & Hartson, as White House counsel in the Reagan administration and in the Justice Department of President George H.W. Bush.

The coalition of gay rights groups said it is troubled that the Bush administration has denied the Senate access to documents from

Roberts' service as deputy solicitor general from 1989 to 1993. These documents are said to include Roberts' writings on cases involving voting rights, abortion rights and the separation of church and state.

Reports that Roberts had done some pro bono work on the Romer vs. Evans gay rights case while in private practice at Hogan & Hartson have led some to conclude that he is not personally anti-gay, but the gay groups insisted on Thursday that the work is not relevant to how Roberts would rule as a Supreme Court Justice.

"Roberts has repeatedly written that the court should not stand up for civil rights, but rather allow legislatures to enact such laws as they wish—even those that deny the rights that Americans understand to be fundamental," the groups wrote.

The gay rights groups also expressed concern about whether Roberts would rely on sound science when making decisions of concern to gay men and lesbians.

"In spite of the clear consensus among social science, psychiatric, psychological, and medical associations in favor of GLBT equality, courts are frequently presented with unfounded assertions that there is conflicting evidence," the groups wrote.

Against this backdrop, the groups said, "We were troubled to learn that Roberts, as a Reagan administration attorney,

seemed to disregard mainstream scientific evidence about how HIV is transmitted.

In September 1985, Roberts cautioned President Reagan against stating that the AIDS virus could not be spread through casual contact among school children. In fact, in August 1985 Centers for Disease Control guidelines clearly stated that "Casual person to person contact, as among school children, appears to pose no risk."

Back in July, before Roberts' 1985 statements on AIDS were released, the Gay Men's Health Crisis, a community-based non-profit involved with AIDS, announced its opposition to Roberts' nomination.

The group stated that Roberts' record of supporting religious activities in public spaces, and his opposition to the right to privacy indicated that as a justice he would endanger those affected by HIV/AIDS.

'A great justice'

Christopher Barron, political director of the Log Cabin Republicans said, the gay GOP group will wait until Roberts' confirmation hearing before deciding its position.

"We are continuing to talk to our allies on the Hill to ensure that the right questions get asked of Judge Roberts on where he stands on issues of basic fairness for the LGBT community," said Barron.

Bryan Pruitt, former president of the



ON THE WEB

Lambda Legal petition & questions
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D.C. chapter of Log Cabin, described the gay groups' opposition as predictable.

"From everything that I've read, Judge Roberts is going to be a great justice," said Pruitt, an active Log Cabin member, emphasizing that he was speaking only for himself. "Of course it is not surprising that HRC and other liberal interest groups would come out against him."

Though Pruitt was unfamiliar with the groups' concerns about Roberts' record, he said he felt Roberts should be given a chance to answer questions on numerous issues, especially equal protection.

Pruitt said that the groups that announced opposition to Roberts were "pre-judging the situation," and should wait and allow him to answer questions during the confirmation hearing.

Lambda Legal, a legal group that focuses on gay rights, has begun gathering signatures for a petition urging senators to ask Judge Roberts 30 law-based questions about gay and lesbian civil rights during the confirmation hearing.

The confirmation hearing process is scheduled to begin on Sept. 6.

MORE INFO

Gay groups opposing the confirmation of Judge John G. Roberts Jr. to the United States Supreme Court:
 Gay Men's Health Clinic
 Human Rights Campaign
 National Center for Lesbian Rights
 National Gay & Lesbian Task Force
 Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays

Falwell speaks in favor of gay rights

By EARTHA JANE MELZER

The Human Rights Campaign has formally thanked Rev. Jerry Falwell for speaking in favor of equal rights for gay men and lesbians.

Falwell is a high profile religious leader and founder of the Southern Baptist Liberty University. President Bush called on Falwell to discuss potential Supreme Court nominees prior to naming his pick to the court.

On Aug. 5, during an appearance on MSNBC's "The Situation with Tucker Carlson," Falwell said he was not troubled by reports that Supreme Court Justice nominee Judge John G. Roberts Jr. had done volunteer work for gay rights activists on the case Romer vs. Evans.

In that case the Supreme Court ruled 6-3 that the state of Colorado could not create laws with the sole intention of discriminating against gay men and lesbians. Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas—the judges that President Bush has said best represent his preferred judicial philosophy—along with Chief Justice William Rehnquist, dissented from this opinion.

Falwell, who in the immediate aftermath of Sept. 11, ascribed the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center to "the pagans, the abortionists, and the feminists and the gays and lesbians," and who describes himself as "very conservative,"

said that if he were a lawyer, he too would argue for civil rights for gays.

In response to a comment from Carlson that conservatives, "are always arguing against 'special rights' for gays," Falwell said that equal access to housing and employment are basic rights.

Falwell went on to say, "... civil rights for all Americans, black, white, red, yellow, the rich, poor, young, old, gay, straight, et cetera, is not a liberal or conservative value. It's an American value that I would think that we pretty much all agree on."

"Like most Americans, it seems Rev. Falwell has reached the conclusion that everyone deserves basic rights," said Joe Solmonese, president of the Human Rights Campaign. "... I hope he also supports legislation that would deliver on these values."

"[F]airness is something that we should all agree on so in many ways this is no surprise," Solmonese wrote in an Aug. 9 letter to Falwell. "One day, I hope you'll even join me on a trip to Capitol Hill to argue for this basic right."

Falwell was not available to talk with the Blade about his views on gay issues. His office said that he was deluged with requests for comment on fellow televangelist Pat Robertson's call for the assassination of the Venezuelan President.

Earlier this summer Falwell spoke at an ex-gay conference organized by the

Christian group Exodus International. During his sermon he spoke warmly about the efforts of the activist group Soulforce, which seeks to free gays from religious oppression and is based in Lynchburg, Va., near Falwell's church. Soulforce has done extensive outreach to Falwell.

Falwell also spoke at length about a major heart operation he had had earlier that week.

Soulforce was founded by Mel White, a gay man who had worked closely with Falwell (even ghostwriting his autobiography) and his partner Gary Nixon.

White and Nixon founded Soulforce and moved and rented a house across the street from Falwell's church in 2001, Nixon said, after they realized that Falwell was not going to change his views and accept gays without long term persuasion.

"I think last month when he dealt with his heart condition he got closer to his maker," Nixon said. "And I think he knows in his heart that what he was doing is wrong."

Nixon said that Falwell has achieved his goal of having kids from elementary school through college all on one campus, and that now he is talking about his mortality and may be interested in, "making up with the people he has hurt so much."

"He is a sly old fox. I think he knows he has all these gay people on his campus and



Southern Baptist Rev. Jerry Falwell, founder of Liberty University and the conservative political group, the Moral Majority, received a "thank you" from the Human Rights Campaign after he referred to equal access to housing and employment as "basic rights" and called civil rights for gays "an American value." (Photo by AP)

all these gay people working for him."

Nixon said that he believes Falwell is capable of changing his positions on gay people and that he and White want to be there when Falwell decides to welcome gays into his church.

"We want to be there, Jerry, when you decide you need us," Nixon said. "Hopefully it will be in our lifetimes."

Local Life

HOUSTON VOICE

AUGUST 26, 2005

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A wizard, perhaps? Or a guru. Or a prophet.

Jeff Law has creatively transformed the Heights more than once over

By JOHNNY HOOKS

In another place and time, Jeff River Law, owner of the October Gallery and Indian Summer Lodge in the Heights, might have been a wizard.

Or a guru.

Or a prophet.

The Indian Summer Lodge, just off White Oak Boulevard at 605 Columbia, is described on its Web site as a "tropical industrial warehouse folkitecture" and an "art and craft gallery, events venue, artisan weekend market and bamboo emporium" that offers relief for "the mall weary."

The complex is a marvel to behold, with towering bamboo trees, multiple-levels, criss-crossing decks and pathways all built by hand by Law himself. Clearly this is not just an average gallery, as Law never creates anything ordinary.

Law is the man who almost single handedly was responsible for the renaissance of the tony 19th street in the Heights in the 1990's. When he first arrived there in the early 1980's, there were "only a few shops on the street" he recalls. "They weren't even nice enough to be called antiques stores really."

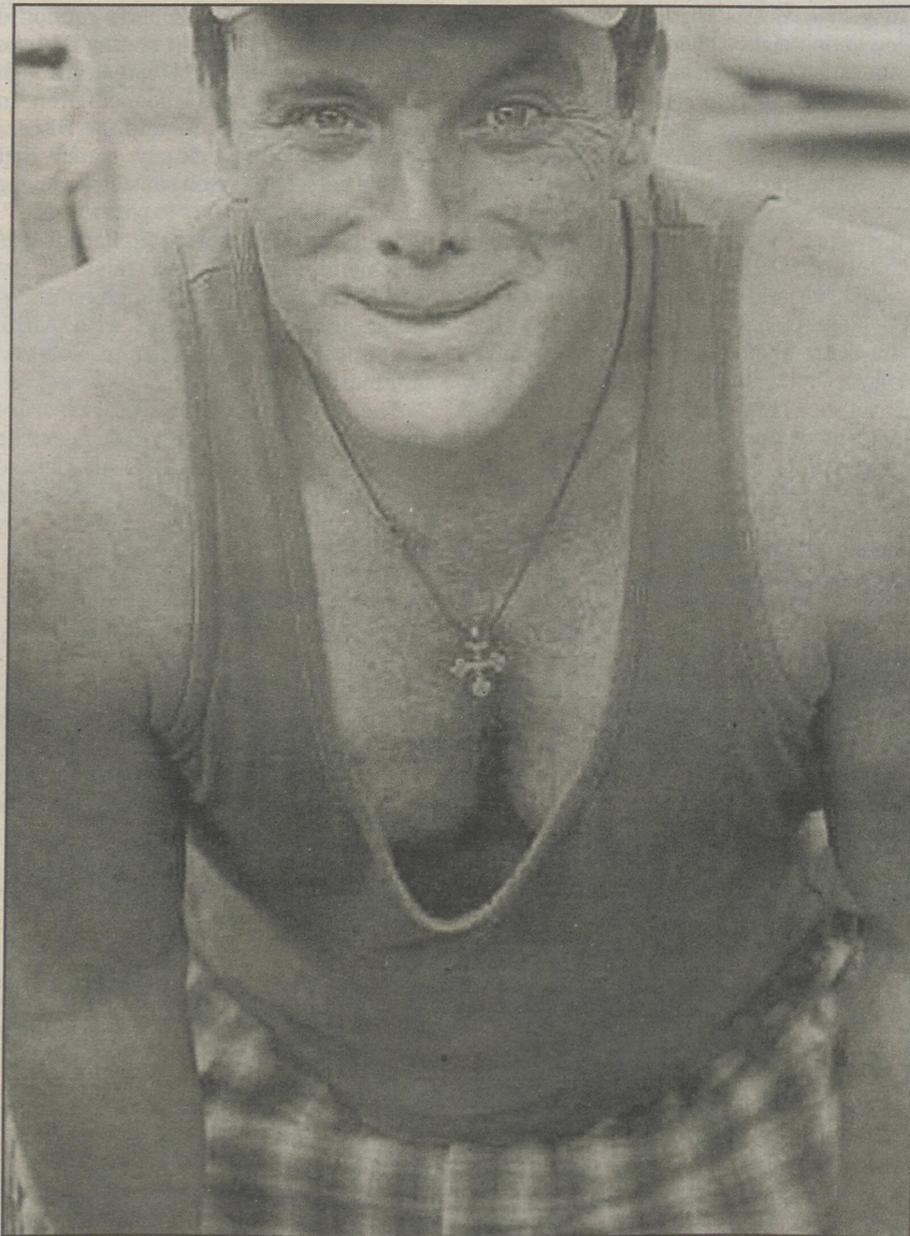
Now 19th street is home to chic restaurants, hip stores filled with objects de art and trendy clothing boutiques. For Law, his canvas is often the neighborhood in which he lives and works.

Jeff River Law was born in Clinton, Iowa "on the banks of the Mississippi river" (hence his sing-song middle name) on Halloween in 1952.

"I still have a thing for the Mississippi. It showed up in my work as a curvy line for years, whether I was building out a space or designing landscapes. It still does actually," he says.

He named his October Gallery in honor of his birthday month. Law has three brothers, and his mother now lives in Arizona. His father is deceased.

He attended grammar and high school in Iowa, and found himself at a Catholic



Jeff River Law has a knack for creating and for promoting that which has been created.

college for two years. Asked whether he was considering the priesthood, he laughs and says "well I was born Jewish, raised Methodist, became Catholic, then became communist, then was into transcendental meditation and finally traveled around with a female evangelist for several years, all before I was 19."

It seems matters of the spirit and creation have called to Law for many years. "Yeah, my parents didn't know what to do with me. They put me away for a few years when I was 15 because they didn't know what to do with me."

He arrived in Houston in 1973 and attended Houston Baptist University, where he "studied their line." At the time he had yet to come out to himself or to anyone else, but he remembers "when I was in the institution, there were all these kids there, it was the late 1960's, the counter culture revolution was booming. Hippies, flower-power and free love. So I definitely flirted with those aspects."

He goes on, "That was my first clue that others had similar feelings as I did. But you have to remember, in those days gays were monsters. There was no "Will and Grace." But I am a Scorpio, so that's my job, to seek knowledge."

After banging around doing odd jobs as a waiter and an art model, he came out and met his first lover around the Bicentennial in 1976. "It was unusual that we met and stayed together for many years. While everyone else was out having crazy sex, yet we stayed together."

Law became a teacher in the Alief school district where he taught, what else, art, to the talented and gifted and to the mentally retarded.

While creating a summer project for his students, Law became interested in paper-making. What started as a one-time project soon became a full-time passion, and Law was soon making more money from his art than from his teaching.

Unfortunately, the paper-making took

over "every inch" of his and his lover's house and yard so while he was out of town, his lover moved him into a dingy studio on 19th street. That became the first of three locations of his famed October Gallery.

"I have always tried to build community, to knit people together. My speeches are always peppered with 'we can work together.' That really comes from the turmoil of my early family life," he remembers.

He eventually formed a merchants association with help from the first urban supported, city-helped program of its kind in Houston. But that program was geared towards the property owners, not the tenants taking the risks to trying and turn 19th street around.

"They didn't care, so most of us did it ourselves." Stores, design studios and eventually galleries did crop up and take root and Law says, "I actually helped birth my competition."

Finally in 2002, after 20 years and three locations, Law decided to close his 19th street gallery. "That was like attending a month-long wake. Our customers were crying and grieving and really upset" he says.

Over the next year, he realized he was "too young to play golf all the time" and pondered his next move. "What was I going to do that was meaningful?" he wondered. He realized he found himself recharged when he looked in his own yard.

"I had been growing bamboo and other plants for years, to relax me. I love watching things grow," he says. "I love talking to rocks and plants and earthworms, and I love rehabbing homes and buildings."

"I had looked all over the city for the right space and guess what. I found the perfect spot, in the Heights. Again!" So he bought the property and began transforming it into the cultural and landscaped oasis it has become today.

"I sell artists and art that is outside the mainstream because I have a fabulous eye and enjoy bringing the spotlight to all this amazing work that otherwise might go unnoticed," he says. "I am an avid supporter of bamboo, I just love it. I wish the city would plant more of it. It's perfect for Houston. Especially at the airports. This complex is an extension of my self, my soul and my art."

Asked what is next for the multi-talented River Law, he smiles and says "Well I just took a drive from one end of White Oak to the other. This street is exploding with new businesses. Maybe another merchants association to help keep us growing? If I am lucky, in 20 years I'll be able to look back at this part of the Heights and say I remember when."

MORE INFO

Indian Summer Lodge, October Gallery and Art Garden
605 Columbia at White Oak, Houston, Texas
713-869-0444.
Hours: Monday - Thursday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.;
Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Sunday
11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

out in houston

(Photos by Dalton DeHart)



Sean Hawkins (second from left) kicked off a new non-profit organization to be called Saving Animals.



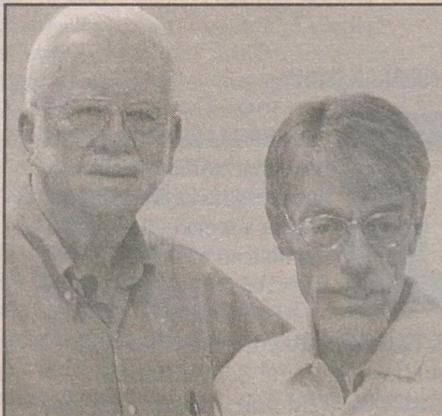
City Council candidate Peter Brown (center) posed for a photo with his family during the recent opening of his campaign headquarters.



H.A.T.C.H. youth recently staged a carwash to raise money for a trip to Dallas to march in that city's Pride Parade in September.



Tina and Tyson Faust of Miller Brewing Co. have signed on to help Sean Hawkins get Saving Animals off the ground.



John Kellet (left) is one of Houston's gay pioneers who recently recorded his memories for Jimmy Carper of Gulf Coast Archive and Museum.



Chanel Cartier and Marc Cohen will preside over the Imperial Court of Houston Space City Empire as empress and emperor.



Among those who attended the opening of Peter Brown's campaign headquarters were former San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros and Sue Lovell, a candidate for At-Large, Position 2 on the City Council.

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editorial**Weld's political flip flops**

Former Mass. Gov. William Weld used to support gay marriage. But now he wants to be governor of New York.

BY MUBARAK DAHIR



FORMER MASSACHUSETTS Governor William Weld was once held up as the epitome of how a socially liberated Republican could be the best friend of the gay community.

At a meeting of the New York Log Cabin Republicans during the Republican National Convention in August 2004, Weld said that gay marriage "is the conservative point of view. It's making the same demands on gays and lesbians as are made on everyone else when they want to commit to each other for a lifetime. I'm surprised that that is not a more broadly held point of view."

No wonder the gay Republicans gave this man their first lifetime achievement award in 2003.

And when Kevin Smith, Weld's former chief of staff, married Mitchell Adams, Weld's former revenue commissioner, just a month after same-sex marriage became legal in Massachusetts, the former governor's image as an unwavering ally in the gay marriage crusade was solidified as he delivered the homily at the two men's wedding.

But now, Weld has fuzzied that Kodak moment.

IN MID-AUGUST, WELD DISMAYED GAY rights advocates of all stripes, but particularly his gay Republican admirers who had so long held him up as a beacon of hope in the Republican Party.

Weld has apparently begun hedging his support for gay marriage. Essentially, Weld ended up saying he supported the right of same-sex couples to tie the knot in Massachusetts, but thought that gay and lesbian couples in other states, including New York, should be satisfied with civil unions.

The first hint of Weld's backpedaling came when the New York Post asked Weld if he supported gay marriage. The one-time gay marriage champion gave a one-word answer: "No."

Soon after, the New York Times reported Weld saying that he supported same-sex nuptials only in Massachusetts, based on the high court's reading of that state's

constitution. But in New York and other places, Weld told the Times, he would only go as far as supporting civil unions.

Gay rights activists all over the country were scratching their heads in wonder and disbelief at Weld's seemingly illogical stance that it is OK for gay people to walk down the aisle in one state, but not another.

Arline Isaacson, a Boston activist who has lobbied for expanded gay and lesbian civil rights in Massachusetts for more than two decades, gave Weld the highest possible gay superlative for his past support of same-sex marriage: "He has been fabulously supportive of us," she told the Boston Globe about Weld's history of supporting gay and lesbian marriage.

She said she wanted to be sure that "he's not being misunderstood... there was never any equivocation in the last few years about how he views same-sex marriage."

And Patrick Guerriero — who described Weld as "a personal friend and my political mentor" — said he was willing to give Weld "the wiggle room to walk through this and talk through this."

And that is exactly what the former governor seems to be doing: wiggling.

I DON'T KNOW WILLIAM WELD, AND I don't want to presume to speak for him.

But if you ask me, his new-found wishy-washiness on gay rights makes perfect sense.

It's not logical in any way, of course. But it makes perfect political sense.

And despite the fact that the former governor is now employed by a private equity firm in Manhattan called Leeds Weld & Co., he is the consummate politician.

In fact, it looks like he may well be running for office again soon.

At the end of July, New York Governor George Pataki announced he would not seek a fourth term as the state's highest elected official.

Immediately, Weld's name was batted about as a potential successor.

Many of New York's highest-elected Republicans are a relatively moderate crowd. To wit, take former New York Mayor Rudy Guilliani, and current Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

While Pataki's record on gay rights isn't stellar, it is far from dismal.

In 2002, Pataki made a famous deal with the Empire State Pride Agenda, a New York state gay rights group: In return for their endorsement, he promised to get the Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act passed, which had been languishing in the state's capital for 31 years, largely at the mercy of state Republican leaders. He delivered on his promise, and quickly signed the law that protected gays and lesbians against discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations.

Following the September 11 terrorist attacks on New York City, Pataki issued an executive order recognizing the surviving partners of gays and lesbians killed in the attacks as equals to married heterosexual partners for getting compensation related to the attacks.

And Pataki has said he opposes amending the U.S. Constitution to prohibit same-sex marriage.

But Pataki continues to oppose gay marriage.

New York is a bigger, messier, more complicated kind of place than its famously liberal northern neighbor, Massachusetts. While even a Republican governor in Massachusetts can find political cover to come out in favor of gay marriage, a New York gubernatorial hopeful isn't as likely to win a mass of votes on that issue.

I suspect that Weld has realized that while New York voters don't want their Republicans to be mean-spirited, they don't want them to be Massachusetts liberal, either.

WHILE WELD'S APPARENT SHIFTING in the political wind is crushingly disappointing, it really isn't surprising.

Politics is about compromise, and gays and lesbians still remain pretty low on the political totem pole. That means our rights remain the ones that politicians feel they can easily compromise.

Especially when it comes to same-sex marriage. Especially after the way Bush's political team played the gay marriage trump card in the last elections. And especially since most Democrats aren't any better when it comes to gay marriage.

The saddest part in the turn-about of a politician like William Weld, of course, is that, based on his previous history, it's likely that Weld actually does believe in gay marriage.

But in politics, it doesn't really matter what a candidate believes in.

All that really matters is what he is willing to stand up for.

@ Mubarak Dahir is editor of the Express Gay News and can be reached at mdahir@express-gaynews.com



viewpoint ANTHONY M. BROWN

Thanks to the 'h' word — husband — we now realize just how many intangible benefits there are to being married.

Confessions of a gay married man

ON JULY 23, MY PARTNER — NO WAIT — my husband Gary and I were married in Montreal. It was the most amazing experience of my life and I am still buzzing!

Being the control freak that I am, I was a little tense going into the weekend. I turned into groomzilla on more than one occasion, usually followed by a conciliatory e-mail or a very penitent phone conversation.

The worst was when I e-mailed, on the day after the first subway bombings in London, an invited guest who lived in London and chastised him for not returning the RSVP card sooner. I didn't even ask if he was OK. Once Gary

reminded me that humanity comes before wedding planning, I sent one of those previously mentioned conciliatory e-mails. My friend couldn't have been nicer in forgiving my narrow mindedness.

But everything came together for the big day and I am proud to say that we threw one hell of a party. Seventy friends and family members journeyed to Montreal for the celebration. I was overwhelmed by the love that surrounded us and I realized why marriage for all is so important.

When you stand among your family and chosen community to declare your

love for another, they are enrolled in keeping you together as a couple. They take a vow to support you and to honor your marriage. It is something that many gay people don't understand simply because they have never had the opportunity to experience it.

The anti-equality opposition does not want us to feel that support. They do not want us to stay in committed relationships because then their argument that we are all promiscuous and don't know true commitment falters. They are scared that if we feel the support of our loved ones in marriage, we won't be so different from them after all.

While hearing your mother-in-law say, "That was the best wedding I have ever been to," also feels indescribably good (especially to a control freak who needs to be stroked on a regular basis) there was no better feeling than to experience our guests respond, "We will," when asked by our minister whether they would support our marriage. Another intangible benefit is the privilege of introducing Gary as my husband. I still catch myself saying, and typing, "partner," but it's getting easier.

At first, I was scared. Introducing Gary as my husband is like coming out all over again. I have been quite comfortable saying, "This is my partner Gary." No sweat. But there is no clearer way to get the point across than using the "h" word. There's no chance that someone would think we are in some kind of busi-

ness together. "Husband" says it all.

I'm actually surprised at how warm people have been. Just one week after the wedding we traveled to Gary's 25th high school reunion. Someone in the class had seen our wedding announcement in The New York Times and e-mailed it to the group. Everyone couldn't have been nicer, including the same guys who had flushed Gary's books down the toilet in high school while screaming, "fairy Gary!" By being honest, we gave them the opportunity to share their growth with us.

One last intangible benefit, perhaps the most powerful, was the effect it had on Gary's mother, an Italian American Catholic who has lived a life of service in the church and to her Western Pennsylvania community. Over the last 16 years, Gary's mom has not only welcomed me into her family, but she has embraced me as her son. But she could never say the word "gay." On our trip home for Gary's reunion, we heard her say, "Gary is gay" no less than three times. She told everyone in her hometown that she had gone to her son's wedding, that he was gay and, "That was the best wedding I have ever been to." It doesn't get much better than that.

@ Anthony M. Brown heads his law firm's Nontraditional Family and Estates Law division and is on the Board of Directors of The Wedding Party. He can be reached at anthony@theweddingparty.org.

viewpoint MICKEY WEEMS

Crystal myths won't help anyone. Let's make Tina legal and regulate her. And stop calling her a 'her'!

Tina is not such a bitch

TINA IS OFTEN DESCRIBED AS IF SHE were Public Enemy No. 1. The increase in meth addiction is called an "epidemic," as if the drug were also a disease. Health officials have declared war on her.

News flash: crystal methamphetamine is a psychoactive substance. It is not a living being. It is not a microorganism, neither is it female, evil, or our enemy — or a bitch.

In the stories of addicts, however, Tina is all these things and more. Tina knows all the right people and attends all the best parties. She seduces her victims, enslaves them with pleasures beyond imagination, and laughs.

Actually, Tina sounds more like a diva. The reason for this delusion is easy to see.

Crystal meth is used by gay men who do not want to miss the next party, after-hours, or trick from the Net or bathhouse. In other words, the users do not want to sleep.

Sleep deprivation can sometimes lead to profound insights. Eventually, however, it will cause delusions.

Crystal-induced alertness does not take away the mind's need for sleep. If we are not allowed blissful unconsciousness to achieve this vital insanity, we will lose our minds while we are awake.

In the twilight of semi-sanity that comes with staying up too late, it is not surprising that libidos become unleashed. Sexual repression takes a backseat as reason loses its hold. Many of us crave this moment.

Too much sleep deprivation is dangerous. Addicts hallucinate, make wild accusations, and utterly ignore the fact that they are responsible for killing themselves.

People who smoke crystal form their own social circles. They bond together on physical, emotional and spiritual levels. For them, Tina is the passport into a close-knit "in crowd" where, too often, they support each other's delusions.

THE TINA "EPIDEMIC," HOWEVER, IS A misnomer. The real problem is lack of personal accountability. When your desires override your common sense, Tina becomes merely a means to increase stamina, sexual freedom and acceptance.

Let's look at two other social "diseases": anorexia and steroid abuse. Both the anorexic and the 'roid freak are so obsessed with body image (including sex appeal) that nothing can convince them to stop their self-destructive behavior.

This does not mean that diets are the cause of paper-thin sickly women, or that steroids make men look like an air hose set on maximum was stuck up their ass. Plenty of people go on slimming diets without endangering their lives. Many steroid users do cycles responsibly.

Nobody's yelling about those bitches "Miss Atkins" and "Miss Deca." For delusional addicts to project their lack of personal accountability onto Miss Tina is one thing. But is it appropriate for counselors and health officials to do so as well?

Perhaps. When talking directly to addicts,

perhaps we should humor them and talk about "that bitch," describe the addict as a victim in an epidemic, or that we need to fight back against the enemy. But too many anti-crystal activists buy into these myths when discussing things in the public forum.

ANOTHER MYTH IS THAT ALL TINA users become addicts, from the first bump. I will agree that 90 percent of those who admit to using crystal meth might be addicts seeking treatment.

Those who are responsible in their use, however, rarely announce the fact. False statistics can only hurt activists' credibility when people find out that it is not true.

This is not a myth. Production of Tina is now a rural American folk art. Moonshine stills have been replaced with meth labs, at huge cost to families and the environment.

The desire for crystal does not signal an epidemic but rather a potentially taxable market. We need government-regulated, pharmaceutical grade Tina, nontoxic and environmentally safe when produced. I'm sure that Merck would be happy to oblige.

We need educational programs on proper crystal use, especially for gay men. We are so sexual, repressed, body-paranoid and in-crowd driven, it is no wonder so many of us love Tina. So let us have it and caveat emptor.

@ Mickey Weems is a doctoral candidate at Ohio State University and can be reached at mickeyweems@yahoo.com.

eclipse



Gay boy in the band
U.K. boy band member
Mark Feehily has told
the Mirror he's gay.
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GAY HOUSTON NIGHTLIFE, ARTS & CULTURE

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AUGUST 26, 2005

a grave dilemma

OBITUARY WRITERS DEBATE WHEN TO OUT THE DEAD

By ELIZABETH WEILL-GREENBERG

W

HEN MELODI KNAPP WAS KILLED IN A CAR crash in May 2002, her family submitted two obituaries to the Dallas Morning News. Both included her date of birth, her hometown and a list of relatives and friends she left behind.

But in one of those lists, Knapp's life partner was omitted. The family split was even more noticeable when they held two funerals and Knapp's corpse was only present at one.

WHEN OBITUARY WRITERS REPORT ON A GAY PERSON'S death, or any death for that matter, they can step into a thorny mess of secrets, family squabbles and conflicting memories, several sources said.

"My sense from even the most out, comfortable, well-adjusted, emotionally healthy gay people is that there is concern about when to identify as gay in the newspaper," explains Kelly McBride, the ethics group leader at the Poynter Institute, a school in St. Petersburg, Fla., for journalists.

The issue becomes more complicated after the person has died and the reporter has to rely on siblings, parents and children to articulate their loved one's wishes. And it is not only the dead person's privacy that is at issue, McBride points out; a partner may not want to be identified as gay.

"All of those people won't agree," she says. "Competing with all of this is the truth. Portraying the truth is your ultimate goal."

KAY POWELL, OBITUARY EDITOR AT THE ATLANTA Journal-Constitution, notes that there are some local older gay couples who have worked hard to keep their sexual orientation a secret. It's "disrespectful" to out them against their wishes in an obituary, she says.

"I would not out somebody in an obit," Powell explains.

If the surviving partner agrees to be identified as gay in the story, however, it can be enormously helpful for readers.

"We have a lot of long, longtime couples," Powell says. "They are business partners, as well as companions in life. They worked assiduously to keep it private from family, from co-workers. ... They had two separate phone lines.

"A lot of people don't realize the efforts they had to go through. It's a slice of Atlanta history that's an important story to get out there. More people can read it and say, 'I knew her all this time and I never knew she was gay.... I knew his mama through the circle at church.'"

Powell says the more ordinary it seems the more, bit-by-bit, peoples' thinking changes.

While journalists seek to publish verifiable truths, a person's sexual orientation can be a difficult fact to prove without legal documentation like a marriage certificate.

"I found a general willingness, on the part of obituary editors in [Australia, the UK, the U.S. and Canada] to include references to same-sex surviving partners," Nigel Starck told the Blade in an e-mail.

Starck, a program director at the University of South Australia, wrote his dissertation, "Writes of Passage," on obituary practices in the four countries.

"I still find that actual practice is haphazard. Sometimes same-sex partners are included in the text; at other times they're ignored," he said. "Yet there appears to be a global obsession with including spouses."

Absent legal standing, reporters must rely on interviews, family and biographies. Rumors, several reporters say, have no place in obituaries unless they were previously reported.

"If the rumor has risen to the point that it's been broadcast then you say 'it's rumored,'" says Alana Baranick, an obituary writer at the Cleveland Plain Dealer. But reporters shouldn't include it if "it's just scuttlebutt you've heard around."

Carolyn Gilbert, founder of the International Association of Obituarists, agrees that sexual orientation, like other information in an obituary, should only be included if it can be confirmed by other sources.

Next month, Gilbert is to serve on a panel, "The Closet Six Feet Under," at the National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association's conference, which will be held in Chicago.

"The news obit requires the writer to do research and to check facts; therefore, if sexual orientation is a publicly known factor, it would likely be included UNLESS (and this is a big UNLESS) it cannot be corroborated by several sources OR unless the family of the deceased has indicated it not to be a factor in the obituary," Gilbert told the Blade in e-mail.

"The obit writer does not have an obligation to 'out' someone. Likewise, an obit writer does not have an obligation to 'de-gay' someone intentionally," she says. "If facts re: sexual orientation cannot be confirmed by a number of sources, it should not be addressed."

UNFORTUNATELY, RUMORS MAY BE ALL OBITUARY writers can know for many of the gays, lesbians and bisexuals who are now dying. They are of a generation when their sexual orientation was not discussed openly, further complicating reporters' ability to corroborate a person's sexual orientation, as Eric Hegedus, president of the National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association pointed out.

"Part of the problem is if someone hasn't lived openly or spoken openly, you're not going to be able to prove it journalistically," Hegedus says.

That was the problem Washington Post reporter Adam Bernstein encountered when he wrote an obituary for Ismail

Please see **OBIT** on Page 19

A LOOK AT LYNDE: Paul Lynde may have been considered a second-rate actor, but his biography is top drawer. Page 14

ON THE MENU: If a glance at the menu suggests Raising Cane's serves only chicken fingers, they do. Page 15

RETHINK TV

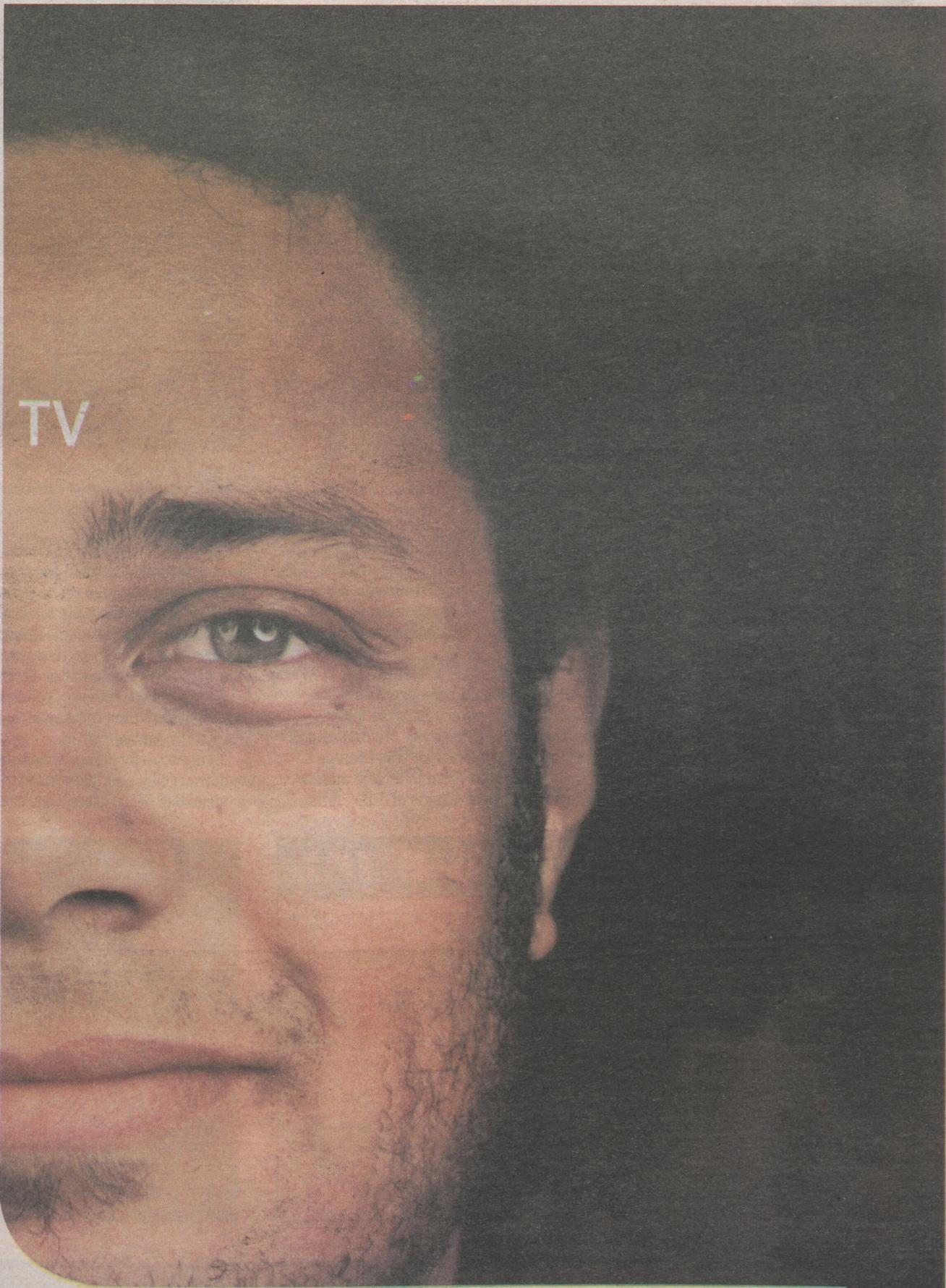


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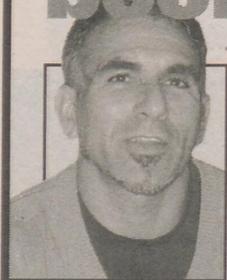


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books STEVE WEINSTEIN



Although Paul Lynde made millions laugh on 'Hollywood Squares' and 'Bewitched,' his own life was anything but fun and games.

What price fame?

A SECOND-RATE CELEBRITY USUALLY gets the biography he deserves, but Paul Lynde got posthumously lucky. Steve Wilson and Joe Florenski, both Lynde fans, do a first-rate job on this gay actor's distinctly non-illustrious career.

Before fans start griping, consider this. Lynde first won notice in a minor off-Broadway revue that was considered old-fashioned when it debuted. He went on to win national attention as the fifth-billed star on Broadway and, later, in the film version of a middling musical comedy.

Furthermore, he was only in eight episodes of "Bewitched," the sitcom that solidified his reputation. (He portrayed

Uncle Arthur.) His greatest career success was as a featured player on a daytime quiz show, though he reigned supreme in the center square.

Wilson and Florenski show the travails of a performer who had to fight the double-headed monster of homophobia and his own inner demons. All too often, Lynde lost this battle. Sarcasm and drugs (especially, but not limited to, alcohol) were his weapons of choice.

If it sounds like an E! or VH1 biography, well, yes, he has been the subject of those. It speaks volumes to the kind of life Lynde led that his surviving sister objected to an A&E "Biography" of the actor because it dealt with his sexual orientation.

AS A YOUNGSTER IN A SMALL TOWN in Ohio, Lynde showed promise as an actor, a career choice he pursued at Northwestern University. He majored in theater with classmates who included Cloris Leachman, Patricia Neal and Charlotte Rae (of "Facts of Life" fame).



'Bewitched,' perhaps the gayest show ever on network TV, featured gay actor Paul Lynde as mischievous Uncle Arthur. (Photo courtesy of TV Land)

Upon graduating, he moved to New York and slowly worked his way up the ladder, from summer stock to Broadway. In "Bye, Bye Birdie," his breakthrough role, Lynde played the put-upon father of a teenage daughter smitten with a rock star directly modeled after Elvis.

Lynde's part, like everyone else's, was trimmed down for the movie to highlight sex kitten Ann-Margret.

Lynde's performance was a standout and, ironically, solidified his persona as the modern dad of an exploding nuclear family.

But in private, Lynde was becoming a hard-drinking, bombastic bully.

If "Birdie" made Lynde a star, "Bewitched," which aired on ABC from 1964 to 1972, made him a likable character. In the rosy afterglow of nostalgia, "Bewitched" has become a touchstone of gay sensibility on network TV.

The very premise — a suburban housewife has a secret life and tries to suppress it — is certainly "queer" enough. The fact that the cast showcased gay performers like Lynde, Agnes Morehead and Dick Sargent, who replaced Dick York as Samantha's husband, Darrin Stevens, only made it more so.

What held it all together was Elizabeth Montgomery, who looked bemusedly on like a fag hag presiding at a gay bar.

Now a star, Lynde parlayed his fame into the center square on "Hollywood Squares."

The success of "Squares" had nothing to do with the lame game show premise and everything to do with the stars' snappy repartee.

But Lynde wasn't happy. He watched his career languish in the daytime TV ghetto while fellow classmates Leachman and Neal (and even Ann-Margret) picked up Oscars. He drank, picked fights, and paid for hustlers. He got fat, thin, and fat again.

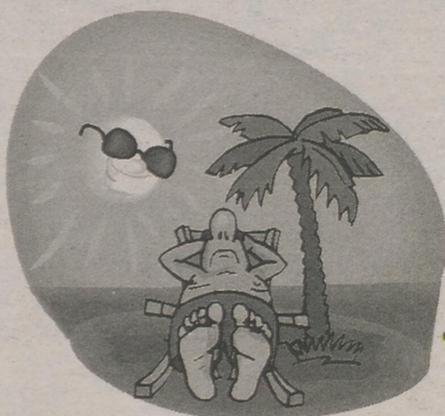
At the end of his life, in 1982 at age 55, Lynde apparently was contemplating a move back to New York. He never made it and died in his Beverly Hills home of cardiac arrest.

Nevertheless, nearly every gay performer cites him as an influence and comics still revere his timing.

MORE INFO

'Center Square: The Paul Lynde Story'
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dining J.A. CHAPMAN

Don't expect to find salads, soups de jour or garlic mashed potatoes at Raising Cane's because they only serve chicken fingers

Better like chicken fingers

"THEY ONLY SERVE CHICKEN fingers?" I asked, somewhat hesitantly. My Louisiana State University alumnus friend and I were making a pilgrimage to the newly opened Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers, where he claimed practically to have lived while in college.

"Yep," he said with a knowing look. "But trust me, these chicken fingers are so good, you won't want anything else." I have to admit I was skeptical, as we rolled into the newly-concreted parking lot of Raising Cane's in far west Houston. From the outside, it appeared to be just another chain restaurant, with stucco and brick walls and a big bright sign.

Inside, it looked alarmingly like a fast food restaurant, which indeed it is. You order at the counter from a giant menu display behind the cash registers. Your food is served on disposable plates, or wrapped ready to go. They even have the plastic serving trays.

But this is no ordinary fast food restaurant.

To begin with, the chicken is never frozen. All the food is made fresh daily on the premises. And the décor is just a bit upscale, with wide, cushy booths, attractive tables, and hip pop culture posters and photos on the walls. Employees busy about with spray bottles and brooms keeping it all spotless.

As advertised, the only thing on the menu is chicken fingers and accompanying sides. You can order combos, like the box combo (\$5.99), which includes four chicken fingers, fries, coleslaw, Texas toast and a cup of Cane's sauce plus a drink. Or you can order the chicken fingers in "tail-gate boxes" of 25 to 100 (\$16.99 - \$54.99). All sides can be ordered separately.

But how's the food? Surprisingly, it's really good. The chicken fingers are marinated for 24 hours and then battered by hand and fried. The chicken is extremely tender and moist, and since it's not cooked until you order, it's served crispy and piping hot. I was impressed.

THE REST OF THE FOOD IS PRETTY good as well. The coleslaw is made fresh on site and is still crisp. The crinkle cut fries are thick and tasty. Even the Texas toast is hot off the griddle. And then there's the mysterious sauce. Slightly sweet, sort of tangy, with a hint of spice, it works well with the chicken fingers. But don't ask what's in it - they'll never tell.

Raising Cane's was founded in 1996 in Baton Rouge by Todd Graves, after a Hemmingway-like odyssey. After college, he wanted to start his chicken-fingers-only restaurant, but the banks wouldn't loan him any money. Undeterred, he headed



west to work as a boilermaker in a refinery and then as a salmon fisherman in Alaska.

When he returned home, he started his restaurant, which he named after his dog, Raising Cane. It's been a Baton Rouge institution ever since.

But what if you don't want chicken fingers? Well, there's always the sandwich combo (\$5.49), which puts three chicken fingers on a Kaiser roll, and comes with the usual sides. It's still chicken fingers, but at least they're presented differently. The roll is very fresh and comes with a crisp bit of romaine lettuce. It's a nice change.

Other than that, if you don't like chicken fingers, you're stuck with the sides or nothing.

It's an odd concept, serving just chicken fingers, but apparently it's doing pretty well. This is the first Houston location, but more are slated to open within the year. And there are locations as far north as Colorado and Ohio.

As we finished our meal, my friend sat back in the booth and happily pronounced these chicken fingers as good as the ones he remembered in his LSU days. I knew he'd be back. And the funny thing was, I knew I'd be back as well.

Raising Cane's says that making the best chicken fingers is their one love.



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A party for Andy 'Champa' Moore, Rich's turns 22, a how-to flick for lesbians and tix go on sale for Bering Omega's 'Art Songs.'

No more Moore

WE'RE HERE, WE'RE QUEER AND we're back for another look at upcoming Bayou City events that you will not want to miss. This week we peek at a lesbian how-to video, say goodbye to Champa and save the date for Bering!

NO MORE MOORE! FOR THOSE IN THE know, Houston's Andy "Champa" Moore is an icon on wax, having spun with well-known DJ's such as Deep Dish, Tiësto, Keoki, Paul van Dyk and Paul Oakenfold. Moore, the former resident DJ at the long-closed legendary Club S.O.M.E (oh the nights HotGG spent twirling there) is now making the jump to the capital of cool, New York City. Friday, August 26 hear him one last time at "The City that Never Sleeps," the official farewell party. But you won't just hear Moore, your hips will be treated to the sounds of a real who's who of local spin masters including JD Arnold, Surrain, Bruno B, Henry Chow, Little Martin, Gracie Chavez, G. Wizz, Hippo and Estefex, Ben Clark and Seth Jones. The groove is set to run from sundown to dawn at Clark's, 314 Main in downtown. Call 713-237-8220 or visit www.loveisinthemusic.com. \$10 gets you in, that's almost a dollar a DJ kids!

SATURDAY SAPPHIC NIGHT!
According to the Web site, "If you've been wondering why there hasn't been a new lesbian romantic comedy in the last several years, you're not alone, but the new offering from Passion Fruit Video, 'How To Pick Up Girls: A Guide For The Dating Impaired' just fits the bill!" The mockumentary has tongue firmly planted in the, um cheek as the story follows four single lesbians looking for love, in spite of some horrifically funny bad date stories from their friends. With a soundtrack by Lilith Fair artist, and recent Pride Fest performer Rachael Sage, as well as Cindy Pruitt, Astrogen and Sylvia Trench, the movie hits the mark and clearly shows it's understanding of lesbian culture in a way that few films about lesbians have done before, and the humor is right on target. Austin filmmaker Alpha brings this "how to" for its Houston debut to Chances, 1100 Westheimer on Saturday, August 27 at 7 p.m. Call 713-523-7217 for more.

ALSO ON SATURDAY, THE NATIONAL Leather Association bartends at Ripocord, located at 715 Fairview. Stop by and grab a cold beer before heading over to Rich's for the club's 22nd Birthday! You read that right, 22 years ago in August of 1983, two historic events occurred here in Houston.

HoVo on the go-go

Hurricane Alicia roared ashore, and Rich's roared open. You are cordially invited to celebrate 22 years of non-stop dancing and fun with a special concert by Thea Austin, the booming voice behind "The Worst Thing For Me" for Pusaka, "Rhythm Is A Dancer" for Snap, "Just About Had Enough" with Beathustlers and "Can't Get Enough" with Sousearcher.

Plus, the ticket that admits you on Saturday is also a free pass to the Sunday Anniversary T-Dance, which includes the infamous pool and hot tub. Saturday party down with DJ Mark D, Doors at 9 p.m. 21 and up only please and Sunday shimmy to DJ Michael Kessler. www.richs-houston.com or 713-759-9606 for ticket info. Stop by M2M Fashion on Montrose for your pre-sale tickets.

SAVE THE DATE! BERING OMEGA'S signature annual benefit "SING FOR HOPE: An Evening of Art Songs & Arias" is Saturday Sept. 17 at 7:00 p.m. at Zilkha Hall in the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts.

This intimate evening of classic arias and popular showstoppers from favorite musicals will be performed by eight of the fastest-rising stars of the international Opera world. Following the performance an Encore! supper on stage hosted by the artists for all event sponsors. Soprano Camille Zamora has given Houston a unique and priceless performance event! "SING FOR HOPE" was born from her commitment to Bering Omega and her compassion for people whose lives are touched by HIV/AIDS. For eleven years, she has organized this intimate evening, and this show has gained tremendous popularity, clearly a "must-attend" event on the Houston social scene. All tickets are \$125 and \$250 and are sold at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 713-315-2525 or at www.thehobbycenter.org.

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

dish

There's a Fine Line Between Telling the Truth and Talking Trash

The queen's English

Gay boy bands, lesbian princess, bi doctors and other reasons Britannia rules

Boys and girls, Dish has always had a lot of respect for our gay counterparts across the pond and it seems things are a whole lot more tolerant there for gay folks these days. At least there's a handful of good entertainment news that seems like a new, gay Camelot is dawning in the British Isles.

First up, there's **MARK FEEHILY**. We may not know who he is, but in the U.K., he's like **JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE** — and he just came out of the closet. Last week, Feehily, 25, a member of the super popular boy band Westlife told the London newspaper the Mirror that he is gay.

"I want people to know the truth," he said. "I am gay and I'm very proud of who I am. I'm not asking for sympathy, or to be a role model for someone else. I simply felt it was the right time to tell the truth."

Not only is he out, but he's dragging another young, sexy male pop singer out with him. Surprisingly, it's not **CLAY AIKEN**. Feehily is dating Kevin McDaid, 21, a member of the boy band V.

"I'm sure Westlife fans will be pleased I'm happy," said Feehily, whose picture has been a pin-up for girls across the land. "All the lads in Westlife have settled down and are in relationships, so why can't I be?"

Feehily told the Mirror that his band mates, Kian Egan, Shane Filan and Nicky Byrne, knew about his orientation, but didn't discuss it publicly before the announcement and that they are all fine with it. The group has had 12 No. 1 singles in their native land and just finished a sold-out, 56-date world tour.

Pretty, pretty princess

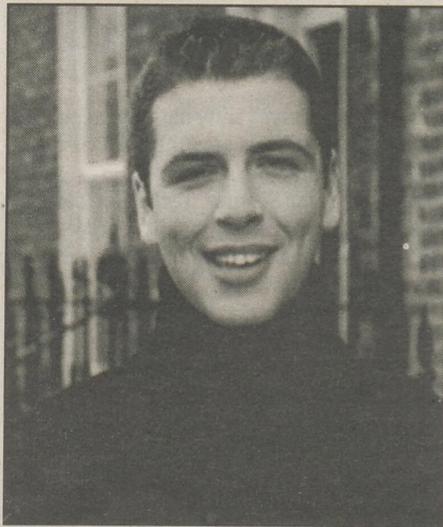
It looks like boy banders aren't the only ones coming out — so is **PRINCESS MARGARET**. OK, **QUEEN ELIZABETH II**'s glamorous younger sister died in 2002 at age 71, but, according to the Associated



Princess Margaret

Press, an upcoming English television movie is depicting her "secret life," including a girl-on-girl snogging session and smoking some "strange cigarettes" at a party.

"I think some people will find it quite arresting and challenging," Kevin Lygo, director of television at Channel 4, which is airing the movie, told the Associated Press. "It's factually accurate, and it's a racy romp."



Mark Feehily, one of the members of popular British boy band Westlife, came out of the closet last week.

Call the doctor

Many Americans grew to love "Doctor Who," the BBC television show about a time-traveling, galaxy-hopping mystic and his companions, who fought their evil enemies, the Daleks, across dimensions. Though it has aired on PBS in the U.S. for decades, the nearly 40-year-old show was cancelled in 1989.

RUSSELL T. DAVIES, the creator of the British "Queer As Folk," revived the show this year. He served as executive producer and wrote nine of the 13 new episodes, which aired on the BBC through June. He even included a new character, Captain Jack Harkness, a bisexual explorer played by **JOHN BARROWMAN**, who stars with **CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON**'s Doctor.



John Barrowman

"It wasn't me sort of dying to get a bisexual character on screen," Davies told Doctor Who magazine (yes, there's a magazine) about the character. "Yes, I'm a gay writer, but I was thinking: Jack's from the 51st century so of course he's going to go out with men and women."

Alas, the new episodes, which were a ratings smash, aren't scheduled to be aired in the United States anytime soon, eluding both PBS' schedule and BBC America, the cable channel responsible for showing most BBC material here.

Davies told the Mirror last week that Harkness won't be back for the show's second season, but will return for the third season in 2007.

Some gay sci-fi groups have already gotten their hands on bootleg copies of the new series. The rest of us will just have to wait, or hop in our time machine.

@ Send comments, suggestions to Dish@houstonvoice.com

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Retired Venture Capitalist, "Frankie Fast Fingers" discusses some investment possibilities with EJ's Host, Robert. (Unsuccessfully)

local cover story

Opera can be addictive according to new HGO General Director

OPERA, continued from Page 1

venue that received international acclaim. Last year Freud was appointed a Trustee of the United Kingdom's National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, an organization that oversees a \$500 million trust to promote talent, creativity, and innovation.

Though committed to remain in the "land of milk and money" until December, Freud will spend some additional time here between now and March.

Under Freud's leadership the WNO has been one of the largest and most successful touring organizations in Europe, garnering more national awards than any other company in the country. Though the WNO and HGO are very different in scale and focus, this dichotomy fascinates Freud.

"The WNO is a company of 250 full-time employees (double that of HGO) that produces 120 performances annually. WNO essentially exists to tour. All of our productions travel through England, Wales and when funding permits, worldwide."

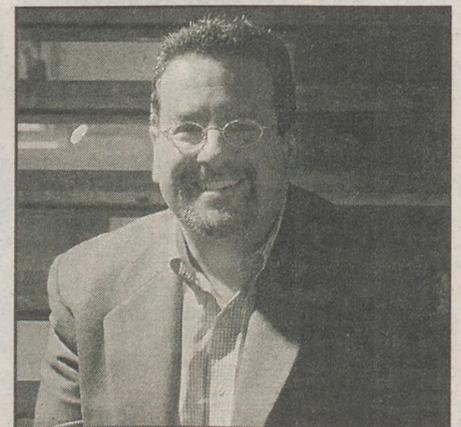
Not daunted by the job

Assuming HGO's leadership after Gockley's prolonged reign might prove daunting to many, but Freud isn't worried. "This change comes at a very interesting time for HGO," Freud said. "David's legacy has been extraordinary. His tenure over 33 years and his achievements, developing and creating a world class company in Houston, have been unique, duplicated nowhere else in the world."

Coming across the Atlantic to a multicultural megalopolis has completely infatuated Freud. "I can't wait to immerse myself in the city, in the company and in all of its various constituencies that HGO is there to serve." Freud has a framework of cultural relevance that permeates much of his thought process regarding the arts and opera. "The last thing I want to do is create European company here - that doesn't interest me. I'd much rather concentrate on how HGO can increase its impact in Houston."

Freud has a reputation as an innovator. At WNO he developed a "radical and intensive" outreach program which seeks to "involve a large and diverse public in the company's work, through participation in and experience of live opera."

Clearly this gent has a broader stage in mind for HGO. "Outreach and 'in-reach' are both crucial," Freud said. "How we communicate with our current and potential audience is critical. Houston's unique diversity compels us to break down barriers associated with opera. In my view opera is not inaccessible at all, but rather, it's the best form of entertainment there is."



HGO's new head, Anthony Freud, says anyone can become addicted to opera.

Through his experience in touring and working directly with artists as an executive producer for the Phillips Classics record label, Freud knows how fickle the music business can be.

Given HGO's reputation as the most elitist (and expensive) of all of the city's larger arts organizations, Freud's attitude about operatic expansion could breathe a breath of new life into the city's cultural lungs.

"An opera company can only succeed if it has a dynamic, proactive and developing relationship with the stakeholders and constituents that it exists to serve," he said.

Addicted to opera

Freud gives audiences credit for being more receptive to opera, a view not shared by all performing arts executives. "Audiences are highly intelligent - they don't need to be spoon fed. Once you persuade someone to become involved with opera, people get hooked quickly. It happened to me in my early teens."

In the midst of this major leadership change Freud will keep one aspect of the HGO's mantra constant: a commitment to artistic excellence and quality.

"In order to be truly popular a company has to be truly excellent; opera requires an uncompromised environment," he said. "There's nothing as bad as bad opera, but there's nothing as good as good opera."

Freud prefers a performance style that is a "fusion of theater and music that animates the work and makes it relevant to today's audience."

Assuming the helm of HGO is something that Freud does with knowledge of the organization's history and future. "The wonderful thing about HGO is that they honor David Gockley's achievements while realizing that it's time to examine what has been accomplished, to take stock, and to consider new directions for HGO. That's something that I've been very encouraged to hear and have found very inspiring."

Freud and his partner of 21 years will be relocating to Houston in the New Year.

MORE INFO

Houston Grand Opera
www.houstongrandopera.org

eclipse cover story

Reporting sexual orientation a thorny issue for obit writers

OBIT, continued from Page 12

Merchant and omitted mentioning his 44-year relationship with James Ivory.

"I could not find evidence of a romantic relationship," Bernstein told the Blade.

Of the mainstream news accounts reviewed for this article, only the Los Angeles Times explicitly stated that the two were a gay couple. The New York Times obituary mentioned the men shared a house and listed Ivory among Merchant's family members, as one of his survivors.

Reuters and the Associated Press mentioned Merchant and Ivory were "partners," but didn't explain the extent of their relationship.

Bernstein says he did not include author Susan Sontag's sexual orientation in her obituary because of space constraints.

"I was told to cut back on what she was known for," he said.

After Sontag's death last Dec. 28, media outlets often omitted the "open secret" of her lesbian relationships, most recently with famed photographer Annie Liebovitz, or mentioned them only in passing.

In the cases of Sontag and Merchant, obituary writers like Bernstein were asking themselves: "To what extent do you point something out that they were not open about discussing?"

Several obituary writers that the Blade spoke with said they will only explicitly state a person's sexual orientation if it advances the story or played a central part in their career.

"Family members may know Uncle Joe is gay but there's no reason for it to come up in conversation," Powell said. "Why should you make it an issue when they die?"

If a "life partner" or "companion" is listed among the survivors, they feel it's redundant to state the person is gay.

"Why do you need to spell it out?" asks Baranick at the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

U.S. obituary writers are also constrained by the American formula for obituaries, which are more résumé recitations than personal anecdotes, noted the Post's Bernstein. British obituaries, he says, unlike their U.S. counterparts, often reveal more intimate details.

In the U.S., editors often see private tidbits as "prurient and irrelevant," he explains.

"[American obituaries] read dry," he says. "I try to overcome that by putting in anecdotes. There's still a lot of suspicion by editors who feel it doesn't add anything to the story."

Bernstein noted that the British Guardian newspaper's obituary for Luther Vandross seamlessly wove the rumors about his sexual orientation into his life story.

It read: "He filled the role of 'lover man' once occupied by Marvin Gaye and Al Green, yet while they brought a seductive finesse to their performances, Vandross's voice embodied distant grace

and beauty, an endless swooning romance. Acknowledging this, he noted, 'People tend to see me platonically, fraternally. They don't lust.' Questions about his sexuality annoyed him; he refused to comment on speculation that he was gay."

But, as difficult as it is to verify, or as tangential as it may seem, it can be devastating to ignore a person's sexual orientation in an obituary.

"It further reinforces the message that it is not acceptable to be gay," says McBride at the Poynter Institute. "For all

those people out there who know the person is gay the message they hear is it's a shameful thing. It ignores some of the core details about an individual. It tells a half-truth."

While McBride says she understands the time and space constraints reporters were under when they wrote about Sontag's death, she still viewed it as a "missed opportunity."

"It's important to acknowledge people who have contributed significantly to this world; it's important to acknowledge their otherness," she says. "It makes the

otherness seem not so other."

Just as when a black person enters a predominantly white field or a woman breaks into a male-dominated career, the barriers a well-known gay person break down should also be discussed, she says.

The omissions can lead to the invisibility of gay community members, whether they are heroic, common or despised.

McBride says leaving out a person's known sexual orientation, "belies the fact that in some respects gay people are fully integrated already, we just don't

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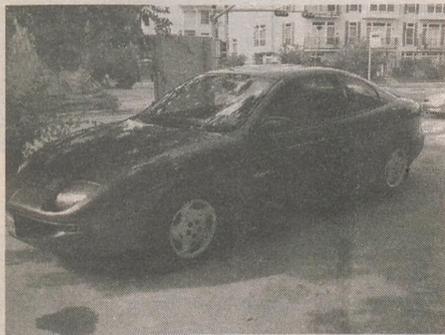
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 BY GLEN HANSON and ALAN NEUWIRTH

AND IT CAME TO PASS THAT WE ARE DOWN TO BUT TWO CONTESTANTS: SKY AND JAMAAL... ONE OF WHOM ADAM SHALL PICK AS HIS STEVE... AND ONE OF WHOM WILL BE REVEALED AS THE SERPENT!

I CREATED THE UNIVERSE IN 7 DAYS, AND VERILY, HERE BENEATH THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE, YOU WILL HAVE 7 MINUTES TO EAT ADAM'S FORBIDDEN FRUIT -- USING ONLY YOUR MOUTHS.

REMEMBER, ADAM, IF THOU PICKEST THE SERPENT, YOU LOSE AND IT'S BACK TO STOCKING SHELVES AT WALMART FOR YOU!

ADAM SHALL JUDGE WHO PARTAKES OF HIS FRUIT IN THE SEXIEST WAY.

SKY AND JAMAAL, WHEN THOU HEAREST GABRIEL BLOW HIS HORN, THOU SHALT BEGIN!

BRUCE ALMIGHTY

READY?

UH... YEAH, I SUPPOSE SO...

YAH, I JUS' HOPE MY MAMA AIN'T WATCHIN'!

ADAM, ART THOU READY?

DAMN STRAIGHT! TWO DUDES WORKIN' ON MY FORBIDDEN FRUIT?! LET'S GO!

TOO TOOO TOOT!!

YEAH, YOU LIKE THAT FRUIT, DON'T YA?

TIC TIC TIC

PEEL! SURP!

THAT'S IT, CHOKE ON MY FRUIT!

I'VE NEVER FELT SO DEGRADED IN MY LIFE... JUST KEEP THINKING... MY OWN EXHIBIT AT MOMA, MY OWN EXHIBIT AT MOMA...

TIC TIC TIC TIC

TOO TOOO TOOT!!

OKAY, TIME'S UP! THE COMPETITION HATH ENDED! AND I THINK I'M DEAF IN ONE EAR.

BRUCE ALMIGHTY

SO, MY SON. THE MOMENT HATH COME TO CHOOSE THY PARTNER IN PARADISE! WHO SHALL IT BE...?

UHHH... THIS IS, LIKE, A TOTALLY TOUGH DECISION, BUT I GUESS I WOULD HAVE TO CHOOSE...

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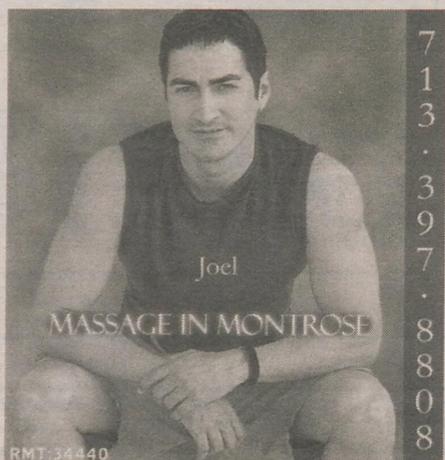
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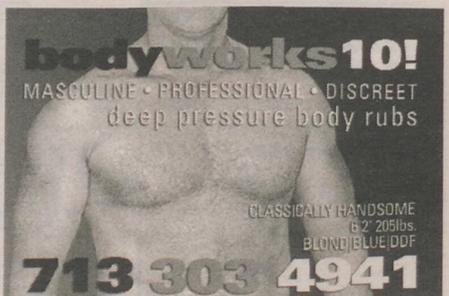


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bitch session



I remember when gay men got together, they talked about sex, bars and tricks. Now all they talk about is real estate.

WHY DO SOME MEN ACT OFFENDED if you're open about wanting sex, but will put out in a heartbeat if you play it coy?

STRAIGHT MEN COULD BE JUST AS promiscuous as gay men if they screwed around with each other. Now there's a novel idea!

IF YOU ARE NOT INTERESTED IN A second date, have the decency to say so and not just ignore my e-mails.

HOW CAN YOU CALL YOURSELF A friend when you knew my partner was screwing around for years and didn't tell me?

I HATE GAYS! LEAVE ME THE HELL alone! You people are always talking to me, trying to make me gay!

SWEETHEART, NOBODY HATES YOU because you have a nice ass and a six-pack to die for. They hate you because you are so damn full of yourself.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY GUYS who don't want a relationship insist on asking those of us who do out on dates.

COSMOS = BOTTOM JUICE. IT'S TIME to learn how to drink. "Sex and the City" is over.

WHY CAN'T GAY MEN STICK TOGETHER and not try to deceive one another every chance they get?

WHY DO ADULT TOY STORES SELL penis-shaped dildos to men and cone-shaped vibrators to women? Why not penis-shaped vibrators for all? It's discrimination! Where's HRC?

IT'S BAD ENOUGH THAT YOU CHEAT on your boyfriend, but please don't expect me, as your friend, to giggle at your stories and give you tacit support. If we don't respect our relationships, why should straight people?

WHEN WILL I FINALLY WISE UP AND stop agonizing over being with hot guys who make it clear they don't feel anything for me?

WHY DO MEN WASTE SO MUCH TIME and money doing drag when it always

makes them look like over-the-hill women with garish makeup and gaudy dresses? You look like clowns in gowns.

SYPHILIS IS BACK? I WASN'T AWARE it had ever gone away. Always play safely — always.

WHY DO WE HONOR OUR OPPRESSORS by valuing the most masculine among us, who are closest to those who oppress us, while devaluing drag queens and others who are the most opposite and who our oppressors find the most difficult to accept?

WHEN YOU WANT SOMEONE WITH porn-star looks and a certain age, that's just the way life works. But when I want someone whose IQ exceeds his shoe size, I'm an intellectual snob. Thanks for clearing that up for me.

IF YOU STIFF YOUR LOVER OF 14 years just because the house is only in your name, next time find a hustler rather than a boyfriend. You are cut from the same cloth.

WHEN I SAY, "GET COMFORTABLE" ON the bed, that doesn't mean your head should obstruct my view of the porn.

WHY IS IT THAT WHEN I SAY NO, some men just won't accept it? I saw you blowing that guy behind a dumpster. Then you say that you love me? Get the hint: It's never gonna happen!

I JUST LOVE MY GAY TV! THANK God for Logo! I will never watch a straight channel again!

WHAT'S WITH ALL THE GAY GUYS getting married? It was bad enough knowing I couldn't, now I have to face the fact I can't find anyone now that I can.

TO THE LESBIAN DRAMA QUEEN: My relationship with my boyfriend is crowded with you in it, and you are causing more problems than there needs to be.

WHAT'S ALL THIS HOOPLA ABOUT meth-amphetamine use by gay men? It's not a new thing. I can remember meth use in the 1970s. There's nothing wrong with drug or alcohol use in moderation.

I AM A MALE, AND I WANT TO GET TO know more about being gay and how to get a partner.
BITCH BOY RESPONDS: And you're starting with "Bitch Session." Lord!

YOU SAY "WE'VE GROWN APART" AND you're getting used to your "independence." Is that why you cheated on your ex with me and told me you loved me, only to drag me down, too? Once a cheat, always a cheat.

Editors' note: These are real bitches, sent in by real readers, about gay life's little annoyances, and the big ones, too. Got a bitch? Call 1-800-858-8088 or e-mail: bitch@expressgaynews.com

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Join us for a final Transporter 2 Party

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