

houston VOICE

Celebrate with Melissa

Lesbian rocker Melissa Etheridge brings her celebratory summer tour to Houston next week.
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AUGUST 2, 2002

INSIDE



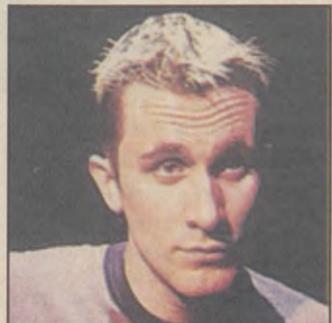
Judge David Patronella will speak this week as a guest of the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus.

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Lorri L. Jean, executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, leads the group in lobbying for an international women's rights treaty.

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Comedic actor Rob Nash offers his own 'Romeo and Juliet' tale at Theatre New West, with mostly hilarious results.

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After-hours club struggles to stay open

Club Nsomnia, AIDS Housing Coalition Houston leaders look for other sources of funds as club's donations dry up

By PENNY WEAVER

Leaders of AIDS Housing Coalition Houston — and at least one politician — are searching for alternative funding sources after a police raid on the after-hours club that funds AHCH eliminated most donations used for the group.

In the meantime, Club Nsomnia remains open without its tradition of Bring Your Own Beer (BYOB).

"The doors are open. A lot of people are under the misinformation that we're closed," said Nsomnia CEO Matt Locklin, who also is executive director and co-founder of AHCH, a nonprofit group that assists persons with HIV/AIDS.

But few people have come to the club —

which has a number of gay patrons — and few have made donations since a July 19 operation led by agents for the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, with assistance from officers with the Houston Police Department.

The TABC alleges that club operators were selling alcohol without a license to do so. In addition, it is illegal in Texas to consume alcohol in a public establishment after 2:15 a.m.

With the club practically empty, and donations at almost nothing, the coalition will be unable to operate without alternative funding, according to Locklin. The organization provides emergency and temporary housing assistants for persons with AIDS, in addition to assisting those clients with food and household goods.

Already, most of the residents in AHCH-assisted housing have moved, Locklin said.

"We're down to one client," he said. "The other clients were all relocated to other situations."

Please see CLUB STRUGGLES, on Page 6



Gay-popular Club Nsomnia, headed by CEO Matt Locklin, is still open as organizers look for other ways to fund the nonprofit AIDS Housing Coalition Houston. The majority of funding to support the group last year came from donations made via the club, known for its BYOB tradition, which is now under fire by law enforcement officials. (Photo by Dalton Dehart)

RAVE Act moves to slower beat

Sponsor predicts eventual passage but meets with critics

By KEITH TAYLOR

The pace of the once fast-moving RAVE Act has slowed as opponents of the bill lobby lawmakers to amend the proposal.

Opponents of the Reducing Americans' Vulnerability to Ecstasy Act would prefer to see the bill scuttled, but at the very least they are seeking changes that would afford more protections to rave party organizers and owners of establishments where gay rave and circuit parties take place.

"There is no impending movement that we know of on the bill," said Chip Unruh, a spokesman for Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.), the bill's primary sponsor. Republicans placed a hold on all legislation coming out of the Judiciary Committee, but that hold has since been lifted, Unruh said.

But he still predicted passage for the legislation.

"It has bipartisan support and doesn't have any real strong opposition that I can think of here in Congress," Unruh said.

Unruh did not rule out action on the bill before adjournment, but he said, "I don't have any strong indication telling me that that is definitely going to be the case."

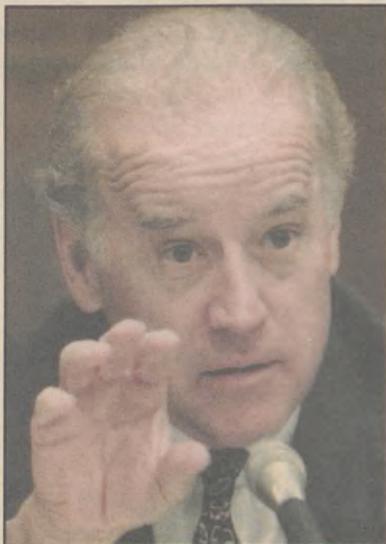
He referred questions about scheduling of the bill to Sen. Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), whose press office did not return phone calls by press time.

Representatives of the Drug Policy Alliance and the American Civil Liberties Union planned to meet Thursday on Capitol Hill with Biden and bill co-sponsors Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Dick Durbin (D-Ill.). The groups want to talk with lawmakers "about ways [the RAVE bill] can be fixed," said Bill Piper, associate director of the DPA.

"We've managed to slow the bill down," Piper said. He said action on the bill is not likely before the Senate recesses this week.

Piper said co-sponsors seem receptive to possible amendments.

Please see RAVE ACT, on Page 7



Sen. Joe Biden, (D-DE) meets with opponents of the RAVE bill, which he introduced, to consider amendments that may provide more safeguards for legitimate rave and gay circuit party promoters.



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SEXUAL ABUSE IN THE CHURCH

Recent discoveries of sexual abuse by Catholic priests and the years of cover-up involved, have left many parishioners wondering who they can trust. While most of the clergy are honorable and trustworthy, some are not and they continue to violate the trust of the innocent and vulnerable. Churches have failed in their duty to protect some of its children from abuse, and have instead been protecting themselves.

Even if the sexual abuse may have occurred while a child, those who are now adults may still pursue cases even if the abuse happened years ago.



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around houston

Judge Patronella to speak on renters' rights issues

David Patronella, presiding judge of Harris County Justice of the Peace Court (Precinct 1, Place 2), will lecture and answer questions on renters' rights topics for gay Houstonians this week. One of the best known judges in Texas, he will speak as a guest of the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus. HGLPC Board of Trustees member Clair Koepsel described the event as a "not-to-be-missed chance for parties on both sides to learn from an acknowledged authority who deals with renter-landlord disputes on a regular basis." The only Democratic judicial incumbent in Harris County, Patronella has held his present position since 1989 and is running for re-election this year. "The focus of his talk will be eviction legalities, and that's a hugely important topic," said Koepsel. "But I hope he has time to say something about the different courts we have as well. We have Justice Courts, County Courts, Municipal Courts, and State District Courts. The county courts are divided into three kinds, and there are four kinds of state courts. We have to elect judges for all these benches, and how many voters really know the difference? We may have to ask Judge Patronella to come back again."

—Gary Garrett

i For info

Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus meeting
7 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 7
Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center
803 Hawthorne • 713-524-3818



The Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus hosts Harris County Judge David Patronella next week for a lecture at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center.

Houston Black Tie Dinner officials choose 2002 theme

"Reflections" has been selected as the theme for the 2002 Houston Black Tie Dinner, according to organizers. Now in its 11th year, the dinner is held each fall. Proceeds from the dinner go toward helping local nonprofit organizations continue the work that they do in service to gay Houstonians. This year's beneficiaries are: Bering-Omega Services, H.A.T.C.H., Lesbian Health Initiative, Montrose Counseling Center, Montrose Clinic, PWA Coalition, and Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church. Black Tie Board President Chris Lewis said "Reflections" as this year's theme "...reminds us of the opportunity we have not only to celebrate and reflect upon our lives after the tragedies of last year, but also to come together as a community yet again, recommitting ourselves to living life to the fullest and pursuing dreams for our community." Board entertainment chair David Greiss said, "The Black Tie Dinner is a wonderful opportunity for both the community, as well as our friends

and supporters, to join together for a night of fun and socializing, all the while knowing that just by their being at the event, much-needed funds are being raised for the local beneficiaries." Tickets and tables can now be purchased online for the event.

i INFO

Houston Black Tie Dinner • Oct. 12, 2002
Intercontinental Hotel • 610 West Loop South
www.houstonblacktiedinner.org

Gone but not forgotten

The popular yellow tabby cat of Mary's... Naturally — dubbed "Mr. Balls" — died recently and will be remembered with a balloon release and memorial service Saturday. Everyone is invited to celebrate the life of this memorable cat, who touched the lives and laps of many people — as long as you had a treat and would pet him, according to Mary's regulars. The event starts at 3 p.m. Saturday at Mary's... Naturally, 1022 Westheimer.



obituary

David Palmer Swem, 44, Avondale resident

David Palmer Swem, 44, of Houston died on Friday, July 26, 2002, at Park Plaza Hospital in Houston after an extensive battle with HIV/AIDS.

Born on April 30, 1958, Swem came to Houston from upstate New York in 1979. He was a long-time client of organizations such as AIDS Foundation Houston, Bering Support Services and Thomas Street Clinic. Despite physical limitations, he managed to continue his favorite activities — playing bingo at the Sons of Herman on Friday nights, growing African violets and taking care of his pets and his friends, according to his family.

In recent years, Swem had become a fixture in the Avondale neighborhood where he lived and walked his beloved dogs several times a day, friends said. He will be remem-



David Palmer Swem

bered for having the "gift of gab," as well as a heart of gold, according to friends and relatives.

He is survived by his parents, Charles and Ethel Swem; sister, Ethel Soukey and her husband Nelson and their children, Troy and Damian, all of New York; brother Charlie and his wife Beverly and their children, Tyler, Christa-Jo, Chas and Drew, all of Florida.

Swem will be cremated, and his ashes will be interred in Harrisville, N.Y., beside his deceased sister and brother.

A memorial service will be held at 1 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 3, at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Casual attire is requested.

—From staff reports

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national news

Gay group pushes for ratification of women's rights treaty

BY RHONDA SMITH

Leaders at the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force urged the organization's members last week to lobby for a 22-year-old international treaty created to promote equality for women.

"Basic equality for women should be a no-brainer," said Lorri L. Jean, executive director of NGLTF. "yet the anti-gay right wing in America has blocked this treaty for nearly a quarter century."

Sean Cahill, director of NGLTF's Policy Institute, said the gay political organization is lobbying for U.S. Senate ratification of the treaty, known as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), because of its direct impact on women, including lesbians.

"Half of gay people are women so it will have a direct impact on lesbians," he said. "But also, it's about equality. As a gay man, I should be concerned about this passing as well."

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted 12-7 on Tuesday, July 30, in favor of ratifying the treaty, which urges nations to remove barriers to equality for women in education, employment, marriage and divorce, health care, and other areas.

Under pressure from conservative opponents to the treaty, the Bush administration recently asked the Senate to postpone a vote on it until the U.S. Department of Justice reviews it. Democrats rejected the request.

Bush officials and Republicans have

said the treaty's text is vague and that they are troubled by related U.N. panel reports. They cited one report calling on China to decriminalize prostitution and another chiding Belarus for using Mother's Day to encourage women's traditional roles.

Secretary of State Colin Powell said in a letter to Sen. Joseph Biden, D-DeL., who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, that while the Bush administration supports the treaty's goals, it wants time to examine the treaty and the "basis, practical effect and any possible implications of the reports."

"It's not a long or complicated treaty," Cahill said. "For the Bush administration to say the Justice Department needs to review it is disingenuous. If he's opposed to it, he should come out and say that."

Scott McClellan, a spokesperson for the White House, told the New York Times that the administration "strongly supports the goals" of the treaty but has concerns about whether it might infringe on U.S. laws.

The ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations committee's, Sen. Jesse Helms of North Carolina, said in a letter that the U.N. panel's findings "are simply out of step with generally held values of democratic nations."

Helms is recovering from heart surgery and voted by proxy against the treaty. He also has expressed opposition to the treaty and accused supporters of it of having a "radical abortion agenda."

Two Republican senators, Gordon

Smith of Oregon and Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island, joined the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's 10 Democrats in voting in favor of the treaty.

Republicans predict uphill battle

Before the president can consider the treaty for ratification, two-thirds of the Senate, or 67 members, would have to vote in favor of granting advice and consent for ratification.

Lester Munson, a spokesperson for the Senate committee's Republicans, predicted the recent vote would only increase objections to the treaty.

"I think we're going to see a lot of people raise their voice with objections and concerns and actual passage on the floor is going to face a stiff challenge," he said.

The treaty's supporters hope to schedule a floor vote on it in the full Senate in September, before the midterm elections. The hope is that pressure from women who support the treaty would push moderate Republicans to vote for it.

Congress is scheduled to adjourn for summer recess from Aug. 5 to Sept. 3.

"The reality is that the right-wing fears that these treaties will undermine their own rigid concepts of the family and religion," she said. "The right wing has used this same anti-woman, anti-gay rhetoric to oppose reproductive freedom and equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, both here in the U.S. and abroad."

Lynne Weil, press secretary for the Foreign Relations Committee, said the full Senate could possibly vote on the treaty in September, if Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) places it on the executive calendar for consideration by the full Senate.

Weil also said, however, that placing the treaty on the calendar does not guarantee a full vote will take place. The Foreign Relations Committee approved the treaty for a vote in 1994 but there were "anonymous holds" placed on it by unidentified senators who did not want a floor vote on it.

The treaty has garnered little attention since 1980 because Presidents Reagan and George H.W. Bush gave it a low priority. The Clinton administration pushed to have the committee consider it in 1994.

When Biden became chair of the Foreign Relations Committee last year, Weil said the supporters of the treaty began examining the option of considering it again.

"To our mild surprise and pleasure," Weil said, "the State Department under the current Bush administration gave this treaty a more favorable ranking than had been expected."

As many as 170 countries have ratified the treaty, which President Carter signed as he was leaving office in 1980.

The U.S. is the only industrialized nation, among 21 countries, that has not ratified the treaty. Other countries that have not ratified it include Iran, Sudan, Syria, Somalia, Monaco, and the United Arab Emirates.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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around the nation

Scouts can be barred from Conn. charity list, judge says

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Connecticut did not violate the rights of the Boy Scouts when it removed the group from a list of charities that state employees contribute to via a payroll deduction plan, a U.S. District Court judge ruled July 22. The Connecticut State Employee Campaign Committee removed the Boy Scouts from its list in 2000 after the state's Commission on Human Rights & Opportunities found that including the Boy Scouts on the list violated the state's anti-discrimination laws. The Irving, Texas-based Boy Scouts, which has a right to ban gay leaders based on a U.S. Supreme Court ruling, and one Connecticut scouting council filed a federal discrimination lawsuit against the state, arguing that exclusion from the list was a First Amendment violation. State Comptroller Nancy Wyman, a named defendant in the lawsuit, lauded the decision. "It just basically states that the state of Connecticut does not, and cannot by law, do business with organizations that discriminate," Wyman said. The Boy Scouts and the group's attorney in Connecticut could not be reached by press time. In San Francisco, judges there have become the first in the state to cut ties with the Boy Scouts over its anti-gay policies, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. San Francisco Superior Court judges and commissioners adopted a policy July 11 saying they would not take part in any organization that "discriminates on the basis of sexual orientation."



Connecticut State Comptroller Nancy Wyman, a defendant in a federal lawsuit filed by the Boy Scouts, lauded a ruling that said the state can boot the organization from its charity list. (Photo by Steve Miller/AP)

Conn. appeals court says it can't dissolve civil union

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — A gay couple's attempt to have their civil union dissolved was rejected by a Connecticut appeals court last week in what is one of the first such tests of the law outside Vermont. Glen Rosengarten and Peter Downes were married in Vermont in 2000, six months after that state enacted the first law in the nation allowing gay couples to enter into a union with some of the same rights as marriage. The Connecticut appeals court ruled that it cannot dissolve their union because Connecticut law does not recognize such relationships. "This is not a test case," said Gary Cohen, Rosengarten's attorney. "These are two very private people who want to have this resolved with dignity and discretion." Cohen said he would encourage Rosengarten to appeal to the Connecticut Supreme Court. Lower court judges had ruled that they did not have jurisdiction.

Lesbian construction worker files bias lawsuit in Ill.

CHICAGO — A woman who worked on the city's Deep Tunnel project filed a civil suit last week against a construction company and her former supervisor, alleging sex discrimination, sexual harassment, assault and battery, and hate crime, according to the Chicago Tribune. Djuna R. Diabor filed suit in U.S. District Court against Kenny-Kiewit-Shea Joint Venture and Robert Dodds, a construction supervisor, said her lawyer, William Ryan. "The construction industry has an obligation to protect employees from this kind of harassment," Ryan said. A Kenny-Kiewit-Shea spokesperson said he had not seen the lawsuit. Several times Diabor's supervisor tried to pull her hands toward his crotch, kissed her, forced his hands inside her clothing and, on one occasion, tried to rape her, the lawsuit alleges, after she told him she is a lesbian.

AIDS ride organizers in Ill. dump Pallotta

CHICAGO (AP) — In seven years, the Heartland AIDS Ride raised more than \$15 million for AIDS-related causes. But shrinking profits and an overall lack of participation have prompted organizers to announce the event has run its last race. The agency is also breaking with Los Angeles-based Pallotta Teamworks, the event's creator and promoter. Pallotta has faced strong criticism recently over its poor returns on AIDS vaccine rides, which the company disbanded last month after low returns for a European event. Last year the Heartland event raised \$5.7 million, but the charities only saw about 35.3 percent of that, officials said. "We have an obligation to our clients, our donors and even our states' attorneys general to have a solid return on every fundraising dollar we spend," said Courtney Reid, president of AIDS Cycle, one of three participating agencies. A scaled down version of the event is planned for next year.

'No' not final answer to HIV-positive 'Sesame Street' character in U.S.

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — PBS won't flatly rule out the addition of an HIV-positive character to "Sesame Street," PBS President Pat Mitchell said July 26. Queried earlier this month by federal lawmakers about an HIV-positive Muppet joining South Africa's "Sesame Street," Mitchell told them no such character was planned for the show's U.S. version. But if the AIDS virus became a more serious problem for U.S. children, "Sesame Street" would be as responsive as it has been to other topics, Mitchell said. The new Muppet character will join South Africa's "Takalani Sesame" in September to help educate children about AIDS at the urging of the South African government.

From staff and wire reports



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local news

Coalition clients displaced from homes

With the threatened closing of Club Nsomnia, HIV/AIDS patients served by AHCH face a housing crisis

By ERIC ERVIN

The apartment in Montrose where Patrick has lived for the last three months is nothing fancy, but it's clean, comfortable and, most importantly, economical compared to other places in this neighborhood.

He has a living room, a large kitchen, eating area, and a place to sleep at night for only \$300 a month in rent. That covers all utilities and even his phone bill.

Patrick, who doesn't want his last name revealed, has been HIV positive since 1993. His current home has been provided by the AIDS Housing Coalition Houston, a nonprofit organization that has arranged emergency shelter and food for people living with HIV and AIDS for about 10 years.

But others like Patrick may not be able to take advantage of this service because of the nonprofit organization's recent financial strains.

The after-hours Club Nsomnia, which funds AHCH, may be forced to close its doors soon after allegations by the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission. Agents with the TABC raided the club the night of July 19 and, since then, all pouring of alcohol has stopped at Nsomnia.

Now, attendance is down, donations are all but dried up and the club's future is in danger. Funding for the coalition is drastically low, according to Nsomnia CEO Matt Locklin, who is also executive director and co-founder of AHCH, and those who were housed in the shelter could end up homeless.

All of the shelter's residents had to vacate as soon as possible, as per a letter sent out last week by the coalition. According to the letter, a previous notification stating that tenants had until Aug. 3 to move out has been changed to "immediately."

The other tenants had already moved out of the apartments this week, leaving only Patrick behind.

Patrick said he feels lucky because he has somewhere else to stay, but he feels sad for others who are not as fortunate as he.

The apartment came at a perfect time in his life, Patrick said. He said he used to live at a friend's house on the other side of town, but the friend sold the home and



Apartments provided by AIDS Housing Coalition Houston — such as those in this building in Montrose — have made temporary homes for a number of HIV/AIDS patients who otherwise may have been on the streets. The drastically reduced business at Club Nsomnia, which largely funds AHCH, may threaten the existence of such emergency shelter. (Photo by Penny Weaver)

moved to another residence.

The apartment gave him a sense of independence and is close to his doctor's office in Montrose, he said.

In order to live in the apartments, occupants must fill out an application, verify their HIV status, and show proof of income. Once the information is verified, clients can move in as quickly as

within a day. They're allowed to stay for a maximum of 90 days.

"This was so easy to move into," he said. "I called Matt up and came by and filled out an application and within the next couple of days I was able to move in."

No security deposit or connection fee was required, Patrick said.

Residents at the shelter are also provided with food every week. The coalition operates two units, which can house two people each.

Patrick said he's thankful for the help that the coalition has offered him, and is sad to see its programs in danger.

"I wasn't sure where I would have gone," he said. "It's just a good thing for people who need it. It's a shame if it's not going to be here anymore."

"I don't know how many people he [Locklin] has helped, but it's a good opportunity for people," Patrick added.

Locklin said he was prompted to start the coalition after a friend's death from AIDS. The friend had to live on the streets because a local service organization could not find him a place to live.

The coalition's shelter is the only one of its kind serving people living with HIV and AIDS in Harris County. The organization also has offered on-site counseling and distributed information on HIV and AIDS from the club headquarters.

Locklin: Coalition may turn to offering emergency shelter

CLUB STRUGGLES, continued from Page 1

U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, whose district includes the Montrose area, said this week that she will try to secure money to keep the program running. Locklin said club organizers will meet with Lee in the coming days.

"We are going to see what options we have to keep the doors opened," Lee said.

The congresswoman said she plans to solicit local government, religious groups, and private donors for funds. She said she was upset when she heard of the news about the AHCH shelters closing.

"I was a little angry, then disturbed," Lee said. "It provides a vital service for the community."

Lee called upon residents to offer support. "This is not something to overlook," she said. "Everyone should be concerned with this."

She believes seeing the coalition go under is a loss to not only the Montrose community, but to the city of Houston as a whole.

"Our success in health in helping people living with HIV and AIDS depends on programs like this," Lee said.



U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee said this week she will try to find financial support for the program.

Locklin said the funding emergency also may lead the coalition to change some of its focus.

"We're looking at trying to open another emergency shelter," rather than fund transitional housing, he said.

In 2001, the coalition raised \$292,000 and spent nearly all of it on its programs, according to Locklin. The group placed 45 people in housing last year, and also offers counseling, food, assistance in paying utilities, and buying clothing and household goods.

"I get at least 10 calls a day for advice, counseling and referrals," Locklin said.

AHCH's routine expenses include the community center lease, apartment leases, janitorial supplies and services, and club expenses such as a DJ, bookkeeper and cleanup. The community center building houses Club Nsomnia in addition to serving as a site for storage, a food bank and fund-raisers.

Most of the \$292,000 the group garnered last year — \$290,000 of which was spent on its programs, Locklin said — was raised through Club Nsomnia, which requests a donation at the door to those who enter the club.

Charges being filed

TABC Lt. Tracy Hudgins said this week that the commission has asked the Harris County District Attorney's office to pursue charges in relation to the July 19 raid at

Nsomnia.

A charge of selling alcohol without a license would be filed against an individual, Hudgins said, presumably Locklin. A spokesperson for the district attorney's intake division said Thursday that no charge has yet been filed. The paperwork likely is still being processed, according to Hudgins, since the TABC report on the operation was just finished Wednesday.

Locklin disputes the TABC's version of events at the club. He denies that Club Nsomnia sells alcohol. He also alleges that TABC agents and HPD officers at the club on July 19 made anti-gay comments and targeted gay clients.

"[HPD] Internal Affairs has accepted our complaint and TABC has accepted our complaint," Locklin said. "We've got a lot of different people breathing down everybody's neck about this situation."

According to Hudgins, however, such a complaint was not made about state agents.

"We have not been accused of making homophobic remarks," he said.

HPD officials could not be reached for comment by press time.

Houston City Council member Annise Parker, the only openly gay person on the council, said her office has looked into whether or not gays were targeted in the raid on the club.

"We have, at this point, concluded our investigation," Parker said Thursday.

"We've visited with TABC and with Matt and the Houston Police Department. We asked for anyone who might have been present during the raid to visit with us, and we haven't heard from anybody."

"We get completely different stories from the two parties," she added. "We've been unable to verify whether there was anything inappropriate going on when TABC came to the club, but all of our evidence shows that Matt was operating illegally."

Parker said that no matter what the cause may be for Club Nsomnia's fundraising, it must operate in accordance with the law.

"The closure may have a real negative impact on the AHCH, but the rules, particularly alcohol rules, apply to everybody," she said.

Alternative and possibly more traditional funding sources for the group would also require more structure for the coalition, Parker noted.

"I think it would cause an overhaul of the organization, which is not necessarily a bad thing," she said.

Locklin is determined to continue work on behalf of HIV/AIDS patients in whatever way he can.

"AHCH deals with AIDS on a personal level. We try to inspire hope in the person again," he said. "I have a burning desire to help people with HIV and AIDS stay off the streets, and whatever way I can, I will."

—Eric Ervin contributed to this story

national news

Biden open to amending

RAVE ACT, continued from Page 1

"I suspect they'll bend, and we'll get a better bill in the Senate," Piper said.

Biden might also be receptive, but because it's his bill, Piper said.

"He takes the issue personally, really," he said.

The bill caught rave and gay circuit party organizers and clubs by surprise, prompting an outcry from opponents who said that the act would unfairly hold business operators responsible for the actions of some patrons.

The bill, which Biden introduced June 18, would amend the federal anti-drug statute known as the Crack House Act. That law allows prosecutors to file criminal and civil charges against owners of buildings that can be shown to "knowingly" allow drug use and sales on their premises.

The RAVE Act would "prohibit an individual from knowingly opening, maintaining, managing, controlling, renting, leasing, making available for use, or profiting from any place for the purpose of manufacturing, distributing or using any controlled substance."

The bill is "too broadly written," Piper said, and by targeting rave events, the matter becomes a free speech issue. Even by calling it the RAVE Act, the bill singles out a particular form of self-expression, Piper said.

Depending on how the bill is enforced,

he said, business owners and promoters could face jail time and fines for the actions of people who attend rave parties. The bill could lead club owners to take steps from eliminating so-called "chill rooms" or stopping techno music, "anything that they think prosecutors aren't going to like."

Piper described the DPA as the nation's largest drug policy organization. It aims to seek "alternatives to the war on drugs" by emphasizing treatment and harm reduction programs. He acknowledged but did not defend the use of drugs by some who attend rave parties.

"People definitely use drugs at raves," Piper said. "But they use drugs at all sorts of events." He said he did not believe drugs are any more prevalent at raves than at other large dance parties.

i FOR INFO

Drug Policy Alliance
925 15th St. NW, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20005
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www.drugpolicy.org

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Issue 1136

Forum

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AUGUST 2, 2002

PAGE 8

viewpoint

Stepping in when straight dads fail

If those who breed would take responsibility for their progeny, there wouldn't be any need for gays to be **Big Brothers** in the first place.

By STEVE FRIESS

O WALKED INTO KELLY Stidham's office for the first time in 1996 and came right out with it.

"I'm gay," I told the caseworker from Big Brothers Big Sisters. "If that's going

to be a problem, let me know now and we can save everybody a lot of wasted time."

Kelly blinked twice, laughed once, told me to have a seat. "It's not a problem for us if it's not a problem for you," she shot back.

That acceptance ended up costing me and my Little Brother a lot of time. Wonderful time. Time swimming. And riding rollercoasters. And eating salty french fries. And watching movies. And telling stupid jokes. And playing catch. And talking on the phone. And washing cars. And celebrating birthdays.

Insidious, evil stuff, all of it. Or, that's what a group of gay-baiting bigots want you to believe. Focus on the Family, apparently not content with the number of homophobia-induced suicides they likely have already prompted, has launched an all-out attack on local chapters of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America for allowing homosexuals to serve as mentors to fatherless boys and motherless girls.

Mind you, most BBBS chapters have been doing this for a quarter-century. This is not news, no matter how breathlessly these alleged Christians insist that Rome just started to burn. But the national organization reaffirmed its policy recently, giving the religious right its big opportunity to butt in.

In doing so, they've trotted out the old canards about gay men having a propensity toward recruitment and child molestation, pointing to the Catholic priest pedophile scandal as proof. Funny how, with little-girl kidnappings now all the rage in the news these days, these

same people haven't thrashed all straight men for their obviously uncontrollable compulsion to snatch children off their front lawns and mutilate them.

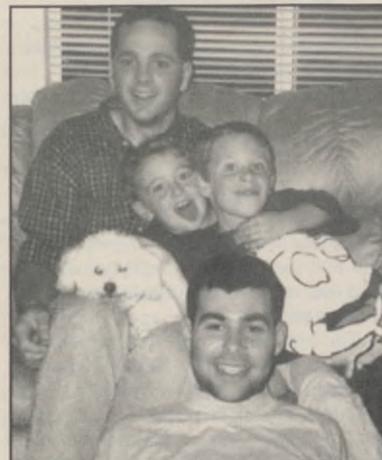
BBBS HAS ALWAYS BEEN HYPER-aware of the potential for a molestation case that would devastate a child and humiliate the organization. They're matching strange adults with someone else's children; caution is key.

That's why they run their mentors through a battery that includes an exhaustive personal background check. You must sit for a lengthy and probing psychological examination, permit a caseworker to determine whether your home is a suitable environment for children and put up with an intense interview in which they quiz you about everything from your sexual experience to your views on parenting and discipline. The Vatican should be taking notes.

In the end, my partner Jim and I were matched with 6-year-old boys who are now almost 12. Their mothers were told in advance that we are gay and given the option of rejecting us as matches if they wish. Considering there were 200 boys waiting for mentors, these lucky mothers were simply grateful for the offer of our time.

My Little Brother's biological father lives nearby but sees him once or twice a year. He flits in and out of this child's life capriciously, routinely disappointing him and constantly giving rise to torturous self-doubt in a boy who must wonder what he did wrong.

From me, this child sees an adult male who consistently and unfailingly loves him, is in constant contact and attends his school plays. He sees that responsible men honor their commitments, work hard to pay the bills, keep clean homes, run



When straight men abandoned their parental responsibility, **Jim Richter** and his partner **Steve Friess** stepped in as Big Brothers and filled the void.

errands and know right from wrong with a certainty that provides him both structure and comfort. Dare I say it, too, that as a child of divorce it has even been good for him to observe my healthy adult marriage.

I'VE NEVER HAD A CONVERSATION about being gay with my Little Brother. His mother and grandmother must have explained it to him, or perhaps he came to understand it because he spent lots of time with Jim and Jim's Little Brother. I do remember my Little Brother once remarking that he's lucky because he got two Big Brothers.

But the Focus on the Family folks aren't really scared that I'll molest my Little Brother. They don't even know us, and they'd likely refuse to spend an afternoon with us even if we offered them the chance.

No, what they fear is that we'll show, by example, that gays are normal, caring, contributing members of the community who live in stable relationships and fulfill their civic and personal duties. They're afraid these children will grow up tolerant or, in the sneering parlance of bigotry, that they will "come to believe that homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle."

What they miss is that Jim and I don't need to "advocate" for acceptance; our behavior earns it.

They also miss the glaring truth that straight men, not gays, cause far more destruction and instability in our culture. If those who breed would take responsibility for their progeny, there wouldn't be any need for Big Brothers in the first place.

@ Nevada-based freelancer **Steve Friess** is a frequent contributor to USA Today, the Christian Science Monitor and Wired. He can be reached through www.SteveFriess.com.



viewpoint PAULA MARTINAC



Now that it turns out women have been put at risk with hormone therapy, maybe the medical establishment will pay attention to us

Maybe now they'll listen to lesbians

WITH THE ALARMING REVELATION that hormone replacement therapy actually increases women's risk for heart disease, stroke and breast cancer, the country may finally be waking up to something lesbian and feminist health activists first talked about 30 years ago — that menopause, like pregnancy, isn't a disease to be "treated."

The danger of HRT is as big a scandal as Enron or pedophile priests, representing a massive breach of public trust. Millions of women have taken synthetic estrogen to relieve the annoying indications of menopause, like hot flashes, loss of sex drive, mood swings, and insomnia, and also to guard against heart disease and osteoporosis. Doctors have even prescribed hormones to perimenopausal women — those in their 40s, just prior to menopause — to deal with pesky problems like irregular periods.

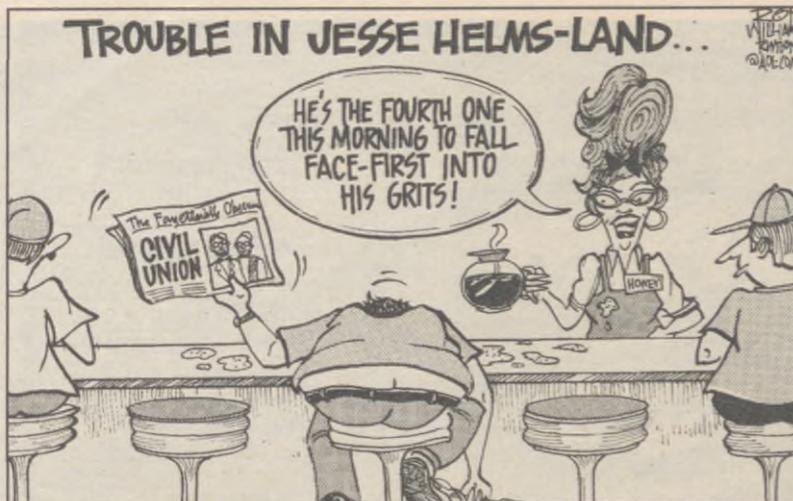
Without a doubt, straight women have been the primary market for this therapy, which amounts to yet another sexist ploy — like Botox or cosmetic surgery — to convince women that they must halt the aging process. Now many of the women who used HRT face life-threatening health issues that could make feeling sweaty, cranky, tired, and not in the mood

look pretty good by comparison.

On the hopeful side, the HRT crisis may help bring the terrible era of overmedicating women to a well-deserved close. In just a few weeks, there's been an explosion of media focus on alternative ways to navigate the trying time that my mother's generation referred to — in hushed voices, of course — as "The Change." And when Katie Couric starts weighing the merits of herbs like black cohosh and valerian for coping with menopause, a lot of women will be listening.

WHAT'S NOT BEING SAID IN THE media, though, is that much of the information about alternative therapies isn't new. During the heyday of the women's health movement in the late 1960s and early '70s, feminists critical of the male-dominated medical establishment began learning about their bodies and sharing this knowledge with other women through clinics, workshops, and books like "Our Bodies, Ourselves." In particular, they sought out natural therapies and preventative medicines from Asian and Native American cultures.

Not surprisingly, a lot of the health-care activists who spearheaded this



movement were lesbians. Among them was Joan Waitkevitz, an M.D. in New York who often had two choices of remedies to prescribe: a conventional pharmaceutical one and an herbal one. If you chose the herbs, there was a well-stocked, lesbian-run apothecary shop in the neighborhood. Many of these lesbian health-care workers brought their valuable knowledge of self-help and natural remedies with them when they volunteered during the AIDS epidemic.

Although it's not what it once was, the feminist health movement is still going strong in some areas, including cyberspace. The pioneering Feminist Women's Health Center in Washington state now has branch clinics as far away as New Hampshire and Georgia. Its Web site (www.fwhc.org) correctly addresses menopause as a wellness issue, not an illness.

THAT MAY BE BECAUSE OUR community, just like mainstream America, often glosses over the health concerns of women over 40, until they become manifested in a disease like

breast cancer. When was the last time, for example, that you read about women's bone health in the lesbian and gay press?

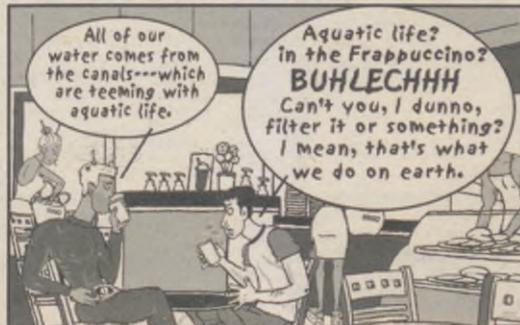
The concerns of younger lesbians, like pregnancy issues and safer sex, make better copy — that is, when they're dealt with at all. We've also virtually erased the enormous contributions lesbians made to managing our community's wellness. Nowadays it's more popular to diss '70s lesbians for going off the politically correct deep end than it is to praise their groundbreaking work in the area of self-help.

What the HRT crisis clearly demonstrates is that health care for middle-aged women is in a sorry state. Ideally, our community would use this information to set up workshops specifically for 40-plus lesbians, implementing the lessons of the feminist health movement. That, of course, means acknowledging that maybe all those granola- and tofu-loving lesbians weren't so crazy after all.

@ Paula Martinac is an author and syndicated writer and can be reached at Lncolumn@aol.com.

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on the record



"It sure doesn't sound like he's growing old all that gracefully."

A spokesperson for **Madonna**, responding to a published quote by **Boy George** criticizing her for allegedly taking Botox injections and insisting that he prefers to "grow old gracefully" (*Salon.com*)

"The prettier-than-ever cast revealed nothing but skin, coming off more calculated and remote than any cast in memory. Seven strangers in the beginning, seven strangers in the end."

TV Guide, panning the final episode of "The Real World: Chicago," which featured two gay cast members and was the highest rated episode of the highest rated season yet for the MTV reality show (*TV Guide*, July 27)

"Other research confirms what therapists have known for decades: Homosexuals are made, not born. And they are frequently 'made' by older men who molest them as youngsters."

Rev. Louis P. Sheldon, chair of the Traditional Values Coalition, on a new Web site designed to debunk "Homosexual Urban Legends," including that gays are "born not made"



"I'm now the representative who just happens to be gay, not just the gay representative."

Ga. State Rep. **Karla Drenner**, the first openly gay elected official in a Southern state legislature (*CNN*, July 24)

"I've really noticed a resurgence of 'gay' by skateboardy kids. Not gay like homosexual. It meant kind of farty, kind of odd."

Gay gossip columnist **Michelangelo Signorile**, on the changing meaning of the word "gay" (*New York Magazine*, July 22)

"These people in the Castro want me and my kind exterminated like roaches. Because that's what we are to them — ugly, soulless creatures that make a mess of their little gay utopia."

Cowan Conaghan, 25, a gay homeless man criticizing hostility toward the homeless in San Francisco's gay Castro district (*San Francisco Examiner*, July 24)

"They pulled the Olympics out and it turned out to be the best thing in the world for Cobb County. ... People still stayed in all of our hotels, still ate in all of our restaurants, still played in all of our recreational facilities. They didn't give a rat's ass whether the Olympic torch came through Cobb County or not."

Cobb County, Ga., Commission Chair **Bill Byrne**, now a candidate for governor, on the anti-gay resolution that resulted in the relocation of the Atlanta Olympic volleyball venue and torch relay in 1996; Byrne's daughter Sharon came out during the ensuing protests (*Associated Press*, July 24)



"I had sex with men in the past. I was tested and am clean. I gave blood."

An anonymous e-mail sent to a number of Canadian blood donor agencies, who have been unable to trace the sender or confirm its legitimacy (*Canadian Press*, July 29)



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Safety Information

KALETRA should not be taken if you have had an allergic reaction to KALETRA or any of its ingredients.

KALETRA must not be taken with certain drugs due to the potential for serious and/or life-threatening side effects. Discuss all medicines, including those without a prescription and herbal preparations, you are taking or plan to take with your doctor or pharmacist.

Pancreatitis and liver problems, which may cause death, have been

reported in patients receiving KALETRA. Tell your doctor if you have or have had liver disease such as hepatitis. Your doctor may want to monitor your liver function. In patients taking protease inhibitors, increased bleeding (in patients with hemophilia) and diabetes/high blood sugar have occurred. Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients receiving antiretroviral therapy. Some patients receiving KALETRA have had large increases in triglycerides and cholesterol.

The most commonly reported side effects of moderate or severe intensity are: abnormal bowel movements, diarrhea, feeling weak or tired, headache, and nausea. Children most often reported diarrhea, rash, taste aversion, and vomiting.

KALETRA oral solution contains alcohol.

Please see adjacent page for Patient Information.

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May 2002

Printed in USA

KALETRA™
(lopinavir/ritonavir) capsules
(lopinavir/ritonavir) oral solution

ALERT: Find out about medicines that should NOT be taken with KALETRA. Please also read the section "MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH KALETRA."

Patient Information

KALETRA™
(kuh-LEE-tra)

Generic Name: lopinavir/ritonavir
(lop-IN-uh-veer/rit-ON-uh-veer)

Read this leaflet carefully before you start taking KALETRA. Also, read it each time you get your KALETRA prescription refilled, in case something has changed. This information does not take the place of talking with your doctor when you start this medicine and at check ups. Ask your doctor if you have any questions about KALETRA.

What is KALETRA and how does it work?

KALETRA is a combination of two medicines. They are lopinavir and ritonavir. KALETRA is a type of medicine called an HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) protease (PRO-tee-ase) inhibitor. KALETRA is always used in combination with other anti-HIV medicines to treat people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. KALETRA is for adults and for children age 6 months and older.

HIV infection destroys CD4 (T) cells, which are important to the immune system. After a large number of T cells are destroyed, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) develops.

KALETRA blocks HIV protease, a chemical which is needed for HIV to multiply. KALETRA reduces the amount of HIV in your blood and increases the number of T cells. Reducing the amount of HIV in the blood reduces the chance of death or infections that happen when your immune system is weak (opportunistic infections).

Does KALETRA cure HIV or AIDS?

KALETRA does not cure HIV infection or AIDS. The long-term effects of KALETRA are not known at this time. People taking KALETRA may still get opportunistic infections or other conditions that happen with HIV infection. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, and *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections.

Does KALETRA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

KALETRA does not reduce the risk of passing HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination. Continue to practice safe sex and do not use or share dirty needles.

How should I take KALETRA?

- You should stay under a doctor's care when taking KALETRA. Do not change your treatment or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.
- You must take KALETRA every day exactly as your doctor prescribed it. The dose of KALETRA may be different for you than for other patients. Follow the directions from your doctor, exactly as written on the label.
- Dosing in adults (including children 12 years of age and older): The usual dose for adults is 3 capsules (400/100 mg) or 5.0 mL of the oral solution twice a day (morning and night), in combination with other anti-HIV medicines.
- Dosing in children from 6 months to 12 years of age: Children from 6 months to 12 years of age can also take KALETRA. The child's doctor will decide the right dose based on the child's weight.
- Take KALETRA with food to help it work better.
- Do not change your dose or stop taking KALETRA without first talking with your doctor.
- When your KALETRA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to KALETRA and become harder to treat.
- Be sure to set up a schedule and follow it carefully.
- Only take medicine that has been prescribed specifically for you. Do not give KALETRA to others or take medicine prescribed for someone else.

What should I do if I miss a dose of KALETRA?

It is important that you do not miss any doses. If you miss a dose of KALETRA, take it as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose at its regular time. If it is almost time for your next dose, do not take the missed dose. Wait and take the next dose at the regular time. Do not double the next dose.

What happens if I take too much KALETRA?

If you suspect that you took more than the prescribed dose of this medicine, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

As with all prescription medicines, KALETRA should be kept out of the reach of young children. KALETRA liquid contains a large

amount of alcohol. If a toddler or young child accidentally drinks more than the recommended dose of KALETRA, it could make him/her sick from too much alcohol. Contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately if this happens.

Who should not take KALETRA?

Together with your doctor, you need to decide whether KALETRA is right for you.

- Do not take KALETRA if you are taking certain medicines. These could cause serious side effects that could cause death. Before you take KALETRA, you must tell your doctor about all the medicines you are taking or are planning to take. These include other prescription and non-prescription medicines and herbal supplements.

For more information about medicines you should not take with KALETRA, please read the section titled "MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH KALETRA."

- Do not take KALETRA if you have an allergy to KALETRA or any of its ingredients, including ritonavir or lopinavir.

Can I take KALETRA with other medications?*

KALETRA may interact with other medicines, including those you take without a prescription. You must tell your doctor about all the medicines you are taking or planning to take before you take KALETRA.

MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH KALETRA:

- Do not take the following medicines with KALETRA because they can cause serious problems or death if taken with KALETRA.

– Dihydroergotamine, ergonovine, ergotamine and methylergonovine such as Cafergot®, Migranal®, D.H.E. 45®, Ergotrate Maleate, Methergine, and others

– Halcion® (triazolam)

– Hismana® (astemizole)

– Orap® (pimozide)

– Propulsid® (cisapride)

– Rythmol® (propafenone)

– Seldane® (terfenadine)

– Tambocor™ (flecainide)

– Versed® (midazolam)

- Do not take KALETRA with rifampin, also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®. Rifampin may lower the amount of KALETRA in your blood and make it less effective.

- Do not take KALETRA with St. John's wort (hypericum perforatum), an herbal product sold as a dietary supplement, or products containing St. John's wort. Talk with your doctor if you are taking or planning to take St. John's wort. Taking St. John's wort may decrease KALETRA levels and lead to increased viral load and possible resistance to KALETRA or cross-resistance to other anti-HIV medicines.

- Do not take KALETRA with the cholesterol-lowering medicines Mevacor® (lovastatin) or Zocor® (simvastatin) because of possible serious reactions. There is also an increased risk of drug interactions between KALETRA and Lipitor® (atorvastatin); talk to your doctor before you take any of these cholesterol-reducing medicines with KALETRA.

Medicines that require dosage adjustments:

It is possible that your doctor may need to increase or decrease the dose of other medicines when you are also taking KALETRA. Remember to tell your doctor all medicines you are taking or plan to take.

Before you take Viagra® (sildenafil) with KALETRA, talk to your doctor about problems these two medicines can cause when taken together. You may get increased side effects of VIAGRA, such as low blood pressure, vision changes, and penis erection lasting more than 4 hours. If an erection lasts longer than 4 hours, get medical help right away to avoid permanent damage to your penis. Your doctor can explain these symptoms to you.

- If you are taking oral contraceptives (the pill) to prevent pregnancy, you should use an additional or different type of contraception since KALETRA may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

Efavirenz (Sustiva™) or nevirapine (Viramune®) may lower the amount of KALETRA in your blood. Your doctor may increase your dose of KALETRA if you are also taking efavirenz or nevirapine.

If you are taking Mycobutin® (rifabutin), your doctor will lower the dose of Mycobutin.

A change in therapy should be considered if you are taking KALETRA with:
Phenobarbital
Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
Carbamazepine (Tagmet® and others)
These medicines may lower the amount of KALETRA in your blood and make it less effective.

- Other Special Considerations:** KALETRA oral solution contains alcohol. Talk with your doctor if you are taking or planning to take metronidazole or disulfiram. Severe nausea and vomiting can occur.

If you are taking both didanosine (Videx®) and KALETRA: Didanosine (Videx®) should be taken one hour before or two hours after KALETRA.

What are the possible side effects of KALETRA?

- This list of side effects is not complete. If you have questions about side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. You should report any new or continuing symptoms to your doctor right away. Your doctor may be able to help you manage these side effects.
- The most commonly reported side effects of moderate severity that

are thought to be drug related are: abnormal stools (bowel movements), diarrhea, feeling weak/tired, headache, and nausea. Children taking KALETRA may sometimes get a skin rash.

- Blood tests in patients taking KALETRA may show possible liver problems. People with liver disease such as Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C who take KALETRA may have worsening liver disease. Liver problems including death have occurred in patients taking KALETRA. In studies, it is unclear if KALETRA caused these liver problems because some patients had other illnesses or were taking other medicines.

- Some patients taking KALETRA can develop serious problems with their pancreas (pancreatitis), which may cause death. You have a higher chance of having pancreatitis if you have had it before. Tell your doctor if you have nausea, vomiting, or abdominal pain. These may be signs of pancreatitis.

- Some patients have large increases in triglycerides and cholesterol. The long-term chance of getting complications such as heart attacks or stroke due to increases in triglycerides and cholesterol caused by protease inhibitors is not known at this time.

- Diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) occur in patients taking protease inhibitors such as KALETRA. Some patients had diabetes before starting protease inhibitors, others did not. Some patients need changes in their diabetes medicine. Others needed new diabetes medicine.

- Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking anti-retroviral therapy. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the legs, arms and face may also happen. The cause and long term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.

- Some patients with hemophilia have increased bleeding with protease inhibitors.

- There have been other side effects in patients taking KALETRA. However, these side effects may have been due to other medicines that patients were taking or to the illness itself. Some of these side effects can be serious.

What should I tell my doctor before taking KALETRA?

- If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant:** The effects of KALETRA on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known.

- If you are breast-feeding:** Do not breast-feed if you are taking KALETRA. You should not breast-feed if you have HIV. If you are a woman who has or will have a baby, talk with your doctor about the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that HIV can be transmitted through breast-feeding.

- If you have liver problems:** If you have liver problems or are infected with Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C, you should tell your doctor before taking KALETRA.

- If you have diabetes:** Some people taking protease inhibitors develop new or more serious diabetes or high blood sugar. Tell your doctor if you have diabetes or an increase in thirst or frequent urination.

- If you have hemophilia:** Patients taking KALETRA may have increased bleeding.

How do I store KALETRA?

- Keep KALETRA and all other medicines out of the reach of children.
- Refrigerated KALETRA capsules and oral solution remain stable until the expiration date printed on the label. If stored at room temperature up to 77°F (25°C), KALETRA capsules and oral solution should be used within 2 months.
- Avoid exposure to excessive heat.

Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Be sure that if you throw any medicine away, it is out of the reach of children.

General advice about prescription medicines:

Talk to your doctor or other health care provider if you have any questions about this medicine or your condition. Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Patient Information Leaflet. If you have any concerns about this medicine, ask your doctor. Your doctor or pharmacist can give you information about this medicine that was written for health care professionals. Do not use this medicine for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not share this medicine with other people.

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SPORTS: Members of the Montrose Softball League head for the Gay Softball World Series. **Page 16**

THEATER: Comedic talent Rob Nash offers his own twist on 'Romeo and Juliet.' **Page 15**



HOUSTON VOICE
AUGUST 2, 2002
PAGE 13

Out on the Bayou

Lesbian rocker Melissa Etheridge puts emphasis on the hopeful flip side of her 'Skin' album in this year's tour

By PENNY WEAVER

THIS YEAR'S SUMMER CONCERT TOUR IS ALL ABOUT celebrating for lesbian rock'n'roll star Melissa Etheridge, who brings her musical party to Texas next week.

"It is so wonderful. I think it's the most fun I've had on tour — ever," says Etheridge, taking time for an interview with the Houston Voice via cell phone while driving en route to her Los Angeles home. "It's so easy. It's such a celebration. The band is phenomenal. The crowds have been — that's probably the best part — I didn't know what the crowds would be like this summer, and they have been insane and really wonderful."

Surely Etheridge's legions of fans would describe her as "wonderful" too, as they eagerly await the eighth album from this Grammy award-winning singer/songwriter known for hits such as "Bring Me Some Water," "I'm the Only One" and "Come to My Window."

Etheridge's walk on the road of fame began with her self-titled — and Grammy nominated — 1988 debut and has since been punctuated with events including her 1993 coming out, launch into parenthood five years ago, widely publicized break-up with ex-partner Julie Cypher, and recent hook-up with actress Tammy Lynn Michaels.

Oh, and she's produced six more CDs, a best-selling autobiography and crisscrossed the nation on fan-pleasing concert tours in the meantime.

The current tour reunites Etheridge with her band after last year's acoustic "Live and Alone" venture.

"It was very introspective; it was very intimate with the audience and there was something to be said about that," she says. "I would love to do that again some time because it was really a very special thing. It was kind of healing and a growing and a journey, that whole thing, and this [year's tour] is just a big party."

"It's a big celebration; it's a lot of fun," Etheridge adds.

"Skin" is divided almost in half, with the first five songs focusing largely on heartbreak and despair, and the second half more hopeful, including her release, "I Want To Be In Love."

"It's funny because...the last tour, 'Live and Alone,' it's like I did the first half of the album, and this tour I'm doing the second part of the album," Etheridge explains. "It's the healing. It's cool."

In an interview a year ago, the singer prepared to go on the road just after her autobiography, "The Truth Is...," was published. The book included stories behind many of her songs, and she was anxious to see what it would be like to perform the tunes knowing that her fans were "clued in" to their origins.

"The audience was very supportive, very much so," she recalls. "It turned out to be a lot less painful than I thought it would be. They turned it into a healing experience, getting all that out."

New hope, new music

NOW, ETHERIDGE CELEBRATES HOPE AND HAPPINESS while on tour. That is a hint at the feel of her next album — so far — which she expects to have out as early as next spring. She's debuting some of the tunes in concert over the summer.

"On tour I've been doing at least one a night and sometimes two," Etheridge relates. The new album is still in its early stages.

"I'm writing," she says. "It's a lot different material

Second 'Skin'



"We recorded and filmed the last couple of shows on 'Live and Alone.' There's a lot of new and yummy stuff on that."

— Melissa Etheridge

Lesbian rock star **Melissa Etheridge** makes three concert stops in Texas beginning Aug. 9, with an Aug. 10 show in The Woodlands on the north side of Houston.

[than 'Skin']. Actually, the music is more rocking than I've done in a long time.

"It's not that depressed, sad person — it's a very happy person who's having sex and really enjoying herself," she adds with a laugh.

Last year, Etheridge described "Skin" as "like throwing up." Her upcoming album — like her personal life — is headed in a different direction.

"This one feels like after you've been sick and then you get well and you look back and you say, 'Wow I'm going to really appreciate well, 'cause I never want to be sick again,'" she explains. "And now I'm well and well is great and I'm celebrating well."

"It's a real celebration, like this tour is," says Etheridge, but that's as specific as she can get so far about the new work. "I haven't put enough of it together yet to say exactly what it is."

She notes she'll have a new DVD coming out in a

couple of months with material from her last tour.

"We recorded and filmed the last couple of shows on the 'Live and Alone' show. There's a lot of new and yummy stuff on that," she hints.

Happiness at home

ETHERIDGE, 41, CONTINUES TO FIND JOY IN raising her children — Bailey, 5, and Beckett, 3. She shares custody with Cypher.

"They are wonderful. They make life worth living. They're insanely great," Etheridge says of her children.

Gay parenthood has been increasingly a political topic in recent years, particularly with Rosie O'Donnell coming out and supporting the fight to repeal Florida's ban on gay parents. But even though Etheridge is several

Please see **MELISSA**, on **Page 14**

out on the bayou

New Etheridge album due out next year

MELISSA, from Page 13

years into the parenting experience, she says it's difficult for her to gauge the progress gay moms and dads are making.

"It's hard to say because, yes, I'm a gay parent, but I'm also a famous gay parent, and famous just outdoes everything," Etheridge explains. "I'm really not the one to talk about like the real issues of gay parenting because I get the first table or whatever... [because I'm famous], I'm always the first in line."

She does recognize the influence she can have as a famous lesbian, and that's fine by her. "It's a responsibility, and I'll take it," she says.

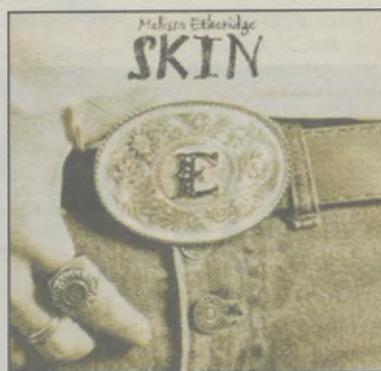
As a parent — as in seemingly all aspects of her life — Etheridge focuses on being open.

"The best thing I can ever do for the kids is be completely 100 percent honest with them and explain everything to them," she adds. "[I] explain that, yes it is unusual to have two moms... it's special, but they know others that do. You just are honest with them about the world.

"You just give them the information so that they're never surprised by anything."

Sure to be reflected in the next album is the singer's happiness as inspired by the love in her life, Michaels, 27, who played character Nicole Julian on television's WB series, "Popular."

The pair met early last year, and Etheridge



says Michaels still can be surprised by the singer's characteristic frankness. In an interview for August's Out magazine, Etheridge revealed that she and Michaels had a platonic first date, but soon got physical.

"Yeah, Tammy came home a couple days ago and went, 'You told everyone we slept together on the second date!'" Etheridge says. "I went, 'I did?' [gasp] Oh I did. Oops."

"She's holding it over my head for a long time," she says with a laugh. "She's gonna get a lot out of that one. That's all right."

Out and open

SINCE COMING OUT NEARLY A DECADE ago — and later confronting persistent specu-

lation about the biological father of her children, and intense scrutiny over the breakup with Cypher — Etheridge draws almost no lines between her public and personal lives.

"Nothing's off limits," she says. "I do limit what I will offer up about the children. I will talk about my experiences with them, but they live their own life and I'm trying to keep as much of that in private as I can. That's probably where I'm most guarded."

Open, honest and raw in the emotions she expresses via her music, Etheridge is similarly forthcoming about her own life.

"It seems crazy, but there's only so much that the public really does want to know, and if you give them the basics they'll leave you alone," she explains. "I'm from the Midwest. That sort of sensibility was in me. I've found that when I was up-front and honest that was when I was the most successful, and I was rewarded, and it was easier."

"It's a lot less energy to be up-front. I've been rewarded for it," she adds. Laughing, Etheridge notes, "I have been asked everything — everything."

Not surprisingly, the most-asked question of Etheridge is, "How do you write a song?" She says if there was a sure-fire formula for the art, she'd pass it along.

"How do you write a song? Everyone wants to know," she says. "It starts with inspiration. That's what's always different. It can be some words, it can be a

musical phrase, it can be an inspiration of a subject, of a person, of anything.

"You have to start with that and then you go, what's next? Lyrics? Music? It's always different."

Beyond this fall's new DVD and next year's new set of tunes, Etheridge has no concrete plans, but would like to branch out as an artist.

"I would like to [do] some other things, outside of music," she muses. "I would like to try other mediums. I would like to be able to still be making my music and making songs that people want to hear and make their own."

"I think that's the most important — I want to keep doing that."

For info

Melissa Etheridge in concert

7:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 9 • Tickets: \$83
Smirnoff Music Center • 1818 First Ave
Dallas, Texas 75210 • 214-421-1111

7:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 10 • Tickets: \$41 and up
Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion
2005 Lake Robbins Drive
The Woodlands, Texas 77380 • 281-363-3300

7 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 11 • Tickets: \$59 and up
The Backyard • 13101 W Hwy 71
Austin, Texas 78738 • 512-263-4146

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theater RICH ARENSCHIEDT

Rob Nash's 'Romeo and Juliet' showcases the actor's genius, but has some room for improvement

Funny by half

NO, THIS ISN'T A REVIEW OF OUR annual outdoor theatrical sweat-a-thon, The Houston Shakespeare Festival, but rather, commentary about an entirely different kind of animal — comedic actor/writer Rob Nash.

Fortunately, the same impresario/rocket scientist that planned the Miller Outdoor Theater series that takes place each August is nowhere near Nash's current offering, "Romeo and Juliet: Sex & Love at Holy Cross High," now showing at Theatre New West on Missouri Street. This show is presented in air-conditioned comfort, not in the terrarium known as Miller Outdoor Theater.

Outdoor theater in Houston does seem a bit odd — cultural mavens in our city seem to have made three egregious assumptions. First, that Houstonians actually want to see Shakespeare, a dubious assumption under the best climactic circumstances. Second, that the most famous of the Bard's lines isn't "Wherefore art thou Romeo?" but rather, "Julio, where's the hell's the mosquito repellent?" And third, that two plays within a week's times constitutes a "festival."

Fortunately, the "other" "Romeo and Juliet" provides a cooler and much less tragic alternative.

Since he is a frequent performer in Houston, Nash's quirky brand of comedy has acquired a definite following of Texas devotees. He has appeared under the auspices of just about every theatrical group in the city and audiences have come to regard him as the kind of actor you might invite to one of your parties to liven things up a bit.

Many know him as the result of his "Dysfunctional Family" saga which includes the now decade old "12 Steps To a More Dysfunctional You" and "12 Steps To a More Dysfunctional Family." The most telling part of the trilogy, "12 Steps to a More Dysfunctional Christmas," packs a humorous holiday punch. These works and a series of one-man comedies detailing adolescence through rosary-colored parochial school glasses have established Nash as an extremely talented writer/actor. Through these various pieces, Nash has found a formula that works well as a means to offer his highly original material.

His "Romeo and Juliet" differs from this formula, especially since it relies heavily on one of the most famous pieces of English drama ever created. In this case, the choice is a good one. While audiences may not be familiar with every poetic line of the work, most know the sequence of events, if only from the Broadway musical equivalent, "West Side Story." Boy meets girl, boy wants girl, girl's family forbids it, boy and girl arrange to secretly marry, then boy and girl die as the result of some inept monk who thinks he's a pharmacist.

In Nash's work, bits of The Bard are interspersed with bits of drama surrounding the production of the production. Nash not

only plays all of the Shakespeare characters but also all of the high school characters portraying those characters. This cast of dozens necessitates quick movement and mental action from Nash. He easily manages staccato style transformations of gender, accent, demeanor, age, and sexuality.

A one-man recitation of the Shakespeare text alone would be daunting; to couple that with an additional cast of separate characters seems a bit impossible, but is entirely within the range of Nash's capabilities.

The difficulty in this production isn't in presenting the two sides of the coin, but in articulating how they relate to each other comedically. The Holy Cross High characters are, in typical Nash style, a hilarious high-school microcosm. Not only does the playwright create these individuals, but he then uses his unique acting abilities to bring them to life onstage.

The potential for humor is endless as these socially flawed teenagers attempt to portray serious Shakespearean roles. As expected, under the magnifying glass of tragedy, the personality disorders of the Holy Cross High School drama group are intensified, a convention wisely utilized by Nash. However, there are many more opportunities in this work for humor than the writer takes advantage of. This is especially true in that most high school kids are oblivious to the true depth of the world's most profoundly romantic tragedy.

While this version of "Romeo and Juliet" has some amusing moments, this writer/actor has in a way shortchanged himself by giving us characters that are not as fully developed as audiences might expect. A fair amount of the original "Romeo and Juliet" text is included in this work and Nash's portrayal of his "south of the border" Juliet is really worth seeing.

That said, I was hoping for more "backstage" interaction from this wacky "cast" of one. Audiences are familiar with the work upon which this show is based. What we'd like to see more of are the characters that the talented Nash brings to life and how they relate to each other.

"Romeo and Juliet" à la Nash is a work that has a few holes. Its inventive creator can aptly fill them with humor.

Romeo & Juliet: Sex & Love at Holy Cross High

8 p.m. Through Aug. 17, Thurs., Fri & Saturday
Tickets: \$18-20 • Theatre New West
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Rob Nash, popular comedic actor and writer, brings to life his own version of 'Romeo and Juliet' now playing at Theatre New West.

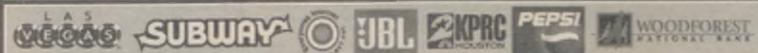
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sports LEE DAVIS

Montrose Softball League sends players to
the Gay Softball World Series this month

Teams head to Portland

Scratched it!

My thanks to Mr. Vargas of the Independent Billiards League (IBL), who corrected my error in the posting of the group's Web site. For information on IBL, surf <http://www.iblhouston.com>.

The Houston area has great opportunities for those who like to play pool. The IBL can be contacted at their site listed above, the Greater Houston Pocket Billiards League at 713-863-8482, and the Houston Metropolitan Billiards League at 713-299-8969.

The main differences between the various leagues are rules, regulations and days/nights of play. Join the fun. Contact one or all of the leagues for membership information.

Spikes

The Lone Star Volleyball Association (LSVA) announced its new season beginning Aug. 18 at 4:30 p.m. at the Jerabeck Center on the campus of the University of St. Thomas. Games for the Women's Division & Intermediate Division are played from 4:30-7 p.m. The Competitive and Power Division play from 7-9:30 p.m. For more information, contact the LSVA at 713-717-LSVA (5782) or visit the Web site <http://www.lsva.org>.

Series play

Four Houston teams will be representing our great city in the Gay Softball World Series to be held in Portland, Ore., from Aug. 18-25. In the "A" Division, we send our perennial powers Houston Force. The "B" Division will be represented by Rich's Chaos carries our hopes for the "C" Division and "D" Division Bering will definitely hustle in trying to bring the trophy back to Houston.

MSL announces two upcoming events for your pleasure. The bus departs JR's this Saturday at 12:30 p.m. — and returns to JR's at 11:30 p.m. — for an exciting gambling/casino trip.

Gamble your cares away from 3:30 until 8:30 p.m. The cost is a nominal \$20 with beverages served on the bus. Additionally, participants will receive a \$10 food coupon or a \$5 gambling voucher. Sorry kids — you must be 21 years of age to attend.

RSVP's were due Monday, July 29, but if you want to see if there's still a seat left, call 713-867-3913. The MSL donates proceeds from fund-raising events such as this to local charities.

The 23rd annual MSL Appreciation & Awards Ceremony is scheduled for this Sunday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Crystal Ballroom at the Rice Hotel, 909 Texas Ave. RSVP's were due July 25, but to see if any seats are still available, call 713-867-3913.

The groups also is planning its annual Fall Fun League. This year the fun league begins Sunday, Sept. 22, and continues through Sunday, Nov. 3. Games will span a period of six Sundays, with

one weekend allowed for rainouts.

Participants will play at Tim Hearn field, located near Memorial and Waugh drives. Teams are typically co-ed, open to all skill levels, are chosen by random draw, and designed to be a lot of fun. Not only do those interested get to play six weeks of scheduled games, but they also can get additional playing time by filling in for absent players on other teams. Cost is \$30.

For more information, check out the league on the Web at www.montrosesoftballleague.com.

Kickers

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

Row, row, row your boat

Call the Rainbow Fishing Club at 713-523-8381. Excursions on charter boats with everything provided, good fellowship, great fun and perhaps the catch of the day await you!

Wimbledon Dreamsicles

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

Rodeo Roadies?

For all of you dudes and dudettes out there, don't forget the great State of Texas is home to one of the nation's greatest representatives in the International Gay Rodeo Association. If you enjoy bare back, western saddles, cattle rustling, bull riding or any other type of rodeo event, contact the Texas Gay Rodeo Association at 281-873-0641, or write them at P. O. Box 130855, Houston, TX 77219-0585.

Boring bowling?

Not in Houston! Don't forget there are many opportunities out there for all levels of play. Contact Tom O'Dell at 713-861-1187 or 713-220-5700, ext. 331, for information on the Inner Loop Alternatives (four-person mixed teams) at Palace Lanes on Sundays at 7 p.m. Tom's also in the know for the 9 p.m. Monday, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday and 9 p.m. Thursday leagues. He's just a Roman fountain of information!

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

First and 10

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



dining KATHREEN LEE

Cherryhurst Grill provides pleasant atmosphere, tasty dishes with only a little room for improvement

Subtle restaurant pleases

ENSCONCED IN THE OAK-LINED residential Cherryhurst community in the center of Montrose, the small new neighborhood restaurant, the Cherryhurst Grill, can easily be missed by the casual passerby. Its modest black awning and large window storefront does not snare one's immediate attention like the more colorful and familiar Domino's Pizza nearby.

But upon just brief inspection, the small, intimate and cozy atmosphere of the Cherryhurst Grill calmly beckons those in the mood for a warm savory meal.

Formerly Cole's Restaurant, the Cherryhurst Grill is still managed by one of its previous owners and maintains the same service staff and chef. Known as "Mama," the chef has had extensive previous experience and was part of the original kitchen staff at La Strada's. The menu is varied without particular emphasis on any type of cuisine, and although the entree list is a bit meat-heavy, vegetarians still have a few salad and pasta options.

For example, fresh squash, zucchini, asparagus, portabella mushrooms, and ricotta and mozzarella cheeses are baked together within the pliant folds of pasta ribbons and topped with a flavorful tomato basil sauce to create a sumptuous Vegetarian Lasagna (\$10). The portions are huge, with the corners of one large cubic serving banking the sides of the substantial serving bowl.

The only complaint was that the tomato basil sauce, while flavorful, was a bit thin and easily ran off the lasagna — an easily remediable factor. The dish would have been perfect if a thicker tomato based sauce richly coated each bite of fresh vegetables and piquant cheese.

Fresh squash, zucchini, asparagus, portabella mushrooms, and ricotta and mozzarella cheeses are baked together within the pliant folds of pasta ribbons and topped with a flavorful tomato basil sauce to create a sumptuous Vegetarian Lasagna.

CHERRYHURST GRILL OFFERS A Create-Your-Own-Pasta where you can choose your own adventure by matching various basic step ingredients. To start, you choose your pasta — linguini or penne. Then you select from four different sauce options: marinara, meat, vodka cream, or basil pesto. From there, your choice of pasta fixings include: sun dried tomatoes, pine nuts, black olives, basil, tomatoes, spinach, mushrooms, carrots, chicken, tuna, shrimp, or crab fingers (\$8.25-\$18.75).

Although the vodka cream sauce sounded decadently rich, I decided to thwart the impending coronary and

The Art of Food and Intimacy
THE CHERRYHURST GRILL

opted for the healthier marinara. Once again, while all the ingredients were incredibly fresh and complemented each other perfectly, the marinara sauce was a bit runny and pooled at the trough of the bowl. However, the pine nuts were roasted perfectly for a combination of its natural tastes with the musky burnt flavor.

While not on the menu, the ceviche is a common specials item. A fresh cilantro-guacamole blend topped a zesty mix of diced shrimp, scallops, whitefish and chopped onions swimming in a sharp vinegar bath. The ceviche lacked the tangy lime or lemon citrus flavor crucial to eliminating fish oil, and therefore had a lingering fishy taste, which unfortunately slightly marred the otherwise tasty dish.

ONE DISH I WOULD PARTICULARLY recommend is the Coconut Shrimp (\$14.50). Large shelled shrimp are swathed in egg, batter and shredded coconut and lightly fried. The preparation does not remove any of the coconut's natural flavors, and the fried batter provides a rough texture to complement the smooth succulent shrimp. The dish is served with a pineapple mango salsa for dipping, but the overly sweet sauce jarred with the coconut flavor, and I would advise you to just ignore its presence.

Most of the desserts are imported from DaCapo's or Amy's Ice Cream in Austin. However, the Cherryhurst Grill prepares its own homemade blueberry sauce to pour over Amy's vanilla malt ice cream. I was excited to try a homemade specialty, but unfortunately, the blueberry sauce was barely noticeable and I found myself trying to scoop larger and larger quantities of it to just get a sense of its flavor.

With its prime location in the heart of Montrose, this neighborhood restaurant offers its patrons a wonderful cozy atmosphere to enjoy a delightful meal (with a few minor tweaks needed here and there) and pleasant company.

Cherryhurst Grill
2100 Waugh Drive
713-942-2100

Food: ●●●●●
Service: ●●●●●
Value: ●●●●●
Scene: ●●●●●

● = Stay home and eat cereal
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appts

a weekly guide to arts & entertainment activities for gay Houstonians

SPECIAL SUNDAY, AUG. 4

"The 20th Anniversary Whorehouse Show" is planned at Sonoma Restaurant. A group of friends has offered up this show for 20 years. It began as a benefit in response to the AIDS epidemic. This year, the fundraiser benefits the National Leather Association's Camp Hope charity fund, which assists HIV-positive children. Tables may be purchased at \$100 and include four seats. For table sales, call Simon at 713-840-1932. 8 p.m. Door charge: \$5. There will be a cash bar. Sonoma Restaurant, 1415 California. 713-522-7066.

SUNDAY, AUG. 4

"The Anna Nicole Smith Show" debuts on E! television, and the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center plans a viewing party. \$5 recommended donation. 8 p.m. at the Center, 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. www.hlgcc.org.

ART CONTEST

The Houston Council of Clubs is soliciting entries for pin and poster designs for "LUEY 30." Let Us Entertain You (LUEY) weekend will be celebrating its 30th year in 2003. Those interested in submitting artwork for consideration should know this information: The pin must contain masks of comedy and tragedy and the phrase "Let Us Entertain You" or "LUEY," with "2003" and "Houston, Texas." The design for the pin should be such that it can be made to reflect the three colors of Mardi Gras: purple, green and gold. The poster must contain the phrase "Let Us Entertain You Weekend," "Houston Council of Clubs," "Houston, Texas" and "March 6-9, 2003." A mention of the 30th anniversary of LUEY weekend would be appropriate also. The pin should be simple in design, as it is usually less than two square inches in size. The poster does not have to match the pin, but should have space available for the design of the pin to be added. Submissions for the pin and poster contest should be delivered to a board member of the Houston Council of Clubs no later than 8 p.m. Aug. 21. All artwork submitted will be displayed and the winning designs will be announced at a special party in September. For more information, contact Loyd Powell at realloyd@prodigy.net or 281-397-6297, or Daddy Rose at podgrish@yahoo.com.

UPCOMING • SUNDAY, AUG. 18

"LIVE 2002," the yearly fund-raiser hosted by Don Gill Productions, this summer will benefit the Gulf Coast Archives & Museum to support the nonprofit group's effort to preserve history for gay Houstonians. A number of local entertainers will offer their talents to contribute to the show. At the event, Miss Camp America, Bouton, Soiree Aubergine and the late Carolyn Roberts will be inducted into the archives. All donations of any size are welcome to benefit GCAM, and may also be sent to Gill at 911 Welch St., Houston, TX 77006. 6:30 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 18. Keys West, 817 W. Dallas St. Don Gill Productions: 713-521-0911

FILM THIS WEEKEND

"Platinum Blonde," directed by Frank Capra, features Jean Harlow, Robert Williams and Loretta Young. 7 p.m. Saturday. Tickets: \$6. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Caroline Wiess Law Building, corner of Main Street and Bissonnet/Binz. 713-639-7515. www.mfah.org.

GALLERIES ONGOING

Gulf Coast Archive and Museum of GLBT History Satellite Exhibition. The first exhibition from the GCAM collection presented at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center honors the NAMES Project Houston Community Center, 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

Positive Art Workshop Photography Exhibition. Artists living with HIV/AIDS created these pictures with accompanying text. Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

Athena Art Project invites women artists to submit works of art, film and video to its annual juried art show. Selected work will be displayed at the eighth annual Houston Women's Festival on Sept. 28. The deadline for entry has been extended to Aug. 17. For more information, call 713-995-5251 or e-mail artshow@hwfestival.org. Web site: www.hwfestival.org.

community calendar

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3

Men's Gathering of Houston. Dialogue meeting. 6:30-9:30 p.m. "Monogamy vs. Open Relationships: Can One Man Satisfy Your Sexual Needs?" Community Gospel Church, 4305 Lillian. Church phone: 713-880-9235. Men's Gathering of Houston: 713-528-4461.

Rummage-A-Rama. Sale hosted first Saturday of each month to benefit AIDS Housing Coalition Houston. 202 Tuam Ave. 713-521-1613.

EVERY SATURDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center. Drop-in, noon-4 p.m. • Bi-Net Houston party and movie. 7:30 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. www.hlgcc.org.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 4

PFLAG-Houston. General meeting with panel discussion, "Why Do You Keep Coming Back?" 2 p.m. Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas. 713-46P-FLAG.

EVERY SUNDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Adult discussion, 9:45 a.m. Service, 11 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org. Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 502 Church St. Service, 10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.

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

Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center. Drop-in, 2-5 p.m. • Viewing party for the premier of "The Anna Nicole Smith Show" on E! \$5 recommended donation. 8 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. www.hlgcc.org.

MONDAY, AUGUST 5

American Veterans for Equal Rights, Houston Chapter. Monthly meeting, first Monday of each month. 7 p.m. Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne. E-mail: BK Silva, AVERHouston@yahoo.com or call 281-415-6876.

EVERY MONDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in 6-9 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. www.hlgcc.org.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 6

Houston Area Bears. Dineout at the 59 Diner. 7 p.m. 713-867-9123. www.houstonareabears.com.

Lesbian Health Initiative of Houston, Inc. Nonprofit organization working for lesbian health meets the first Tuesday of each month. 7 p.m., 404 Westheimer. 713-603-0023. LHIHouston00@aol.com

EVERY TUESDAY

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

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m.-midnight. Club Houston. 713-830-3000.

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

Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous. Support group. 7 p.m.

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

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

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

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7

Classic Chassis Car Club. Monthly meeting. The Café Express, 1422 West Gray. 713-797-8615. www.classicchassisclub.org.

EVERY WEDNESDAY

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

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

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

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

Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal. 1307 Yale. 713-528-4379.

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

Lesbian Literature Discussion Group. 7 p.m. Meets every other Wednesday. 713-383-6738.

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

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

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8

Lesbian & Gay Immigration Rights Task Force-Houston. 8 p.m. meeting. Chris. 713-426-3128. E-mail: lgirtf-houston@egroups.com.

EVERY THURSDAY

BiNet Houston. Group for bisexuals; everyone welcome. 7:30 p.m. Hobbit Café, 2240 Portsmouth. www.flash.net/~bihouse. 713-467-4380.

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

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 4-8 p.m. at The Outpost; 8 p.m.-midnight at Brazos River Bottom and Cousins; 10 p.m.-1 a.m. at Toyz Disco. 713-830-3000.

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

FrontRunners. Running club. 6:30 p.m. 713-522-8021. Web site: http://home.swbell.net/larathon/hour.htm. E-mail: larathon@swbell.net.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9

Houston Area Bears. Movie Night. "Signs," time to be announced. 713-867-9123. www.houstonareabears.com.

Jump Start. Group by Bering Support Network for GLBT people living with disabling conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis, Cerebral Palsy, amputations and head trauma. Meets the second and fourth Friday of the month. 11 a.m. Facilitator: Ken McLeod. 713-526-1017, ext. 208.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 10 p.m.-2 a.m. at The Meatrack; 10 p.m.-1 a.m. at E.J.'s and at Midtowne Spa. 713-830-3000.

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

Freelance Art Classes. By Kermit Eisenhut for HIV+ individuals. 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Light breakfast provided. 713-523-9530.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in 6-9 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. www.hlgcc.org.

VOLUNTEER/SELF-HELP

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

Gay & Lesbian Switchboard Houston. Volunteers offer a friendly ear to callers in need of information, nonjudgmental support, crisis intervention and referral services, emergency shelter and advocacy services to crime survivors who may need someone to accompany them to a hospital for medical attention or assistance in filing a police report. 713-529-3211.

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Volunteers perform a variety of critical tasks which include staffing the information desk during drop-in hours; helping with Center programming and events; working on community outreach efforts, fund-raising and publicity. Card players, writers and artists in particular are needed. 713-524-3818.

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



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DONATIONS NEEDED

PWA Coalition is holding a yard sale on 8/17 & 8/18, benefiting all of our programs. All items are needed. To arrange for drop-off, call Brian Jones at 713-520-9248.

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(Woodhead @ W. Alabama)
RFA 713-673-2848
www.geocities.com/rfa77235/
E-mail: rfaworldservice@aol.com

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Q Puzzle

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13	
14						15					16				
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52	53	54	55						56	57			58	59	
60									61				62		63
64									65				66		
67									68				69		

"She's a He"

Across

- Concern of Todd Oldham
- Single drag queen?
- Olympic medalist Louganis
- Bottom bumper of boats
- Place for Young men?
- "Jane ____" (Moorehead flick of 1944)
- Member of The Gay and Lesbian Arabic Society, perhaps
- Dickinson's "There ____ frigate like a book"
- Madonna song of 1993
- Her name is Rich
- Phallic fish
- Like Eng. at most schools
- Some watch faces
- Peruvian friend of Maya Angelou?
- Links athletic supporters
- Queen's "We ____ the Champions"
- Showing a tiny opening
- Vanilla, to an S/M dyke
- Her name is Anthony
- Give lip service?
- Supporter of bedroom activity
- A porn star may have a big one
- Lahr of "The Wizard of Oz"
- Each
- Killed, to King James
- Once the largest co. with domestic partner benefits
- Reed, who walked on the wild side

- Her name is Harry
- Like dirty jokes, often
- ____-hairs (drag queen's hosiery)
- "____ Paris"
- Sings like Eazy E song
- "Exit to ____" (Rosie flick)
- "God loves everybody," to Mychal Judge
- Queenie portrayed in "Bell, Book and Candle"
- Come quickly
- Gawk like a chicken hawk

Down

- Snake's warning
- Warm to persistent come-ons
- Cole Porter's "Brush Up ____ Shakespeare"
- Liangollen women
- Top
- Charles Nelson Reilly's "The Ghost and Mrs. ____"
- Culture Club's "____ Miracle"
- "Cancer in Two Voices" co-author Butler
- Dinah of a golf classic
- Richard of "And the Band Played On"
- Phillippe, once of "One Life to Live"
- Emma Donoghue's country
- Drag queen ____ Pool
- Christian name of Chastity's half-brother

- "Am I Queer?" exam?
- Barrie's Wendy, e.g.
- "Fritz the Cat" creator Robert
- He wrote about two guys living together on an island
- Albert to Armand, in "The Birdcage"
- "The Naked Civil Servant" author Quentin
- College web address suffix
- Stand next to Cassat
- Place where men wear makeup
- Like the top of the world
- Lube or vibrator, to a sex shop
- Plenty, to Shakespeare
- Out ____ Kicks (gay soccer club)
- ____-mo replay
- Bearse of "Mamed...with Children"
- Rent what you rent
- Took part in an AIDS ride
- Final notices in the "Bay Area Reporter"
- Madonna song in "Dick Tracy"
- Russian river
- Suckers
- Rick's old flame
- Not one single time, to Lord Byron
- Former Baseball heartthrob Bucky, who plays on the other team
- Scottish isle
- Nicest Lesbians ____ (AOL chat room)
- Hot time for Colette

Answers on Page 21

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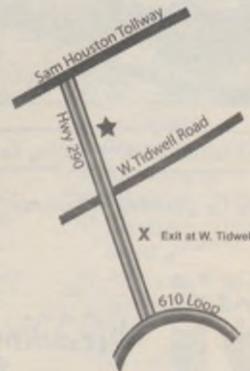
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My Stars!

August 2 - 8

**ARIES (March 21 to April 20)**

Venus moves into your house of love on Aug. 7. During this cycle you may feel a little more vulnerable than usual, but trust me, darling, that's a good thing. An Aquarius helps you to understand yourself on a deeper level.

**TAURUS (April 21 to May 20)**

The Sun conjunct Mars in your house of home and family this week could bring a domestic situation to a head. Try to be an inspiration to your loved ones, darling, not an embarrassment. An Aries can't understand your mixed signals. Clarify!

**GEMINI (May 21 to June 21)**

Your social life may be a bit of a whirlwind during early August, sweetie. Even you may get exhausted by all the hubbub. A fellow Gemini may push you to focus your attention on the most important people in your life. Out with the riffraff!

**CANCER (June 22 to July 22)**

Life is unduly confusing right now, except where money is concerned. Jupiter is shining on this part of your chart. You can make hay while the sun shines and land new gigs while others are complaining about being downsized. A Capricorn offers you a connection and then toys with the idea of a (mutual) seduction.

**LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22)**

With Jupiter, the sun, Mars, and the new moon all transiting your sign in early August, you'd better embrace your power, sweetie. You can't help but push the envelope in love, and why shouldn't you? You can gamble and win. A Scorpio is your prize.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22)**

This is a good time for you to really bury old ghosts and break outmoded ways of dealing in relationships. Your time in the sun is coming soon. But first you must clear away the shadows. Welcome a Sag into your life.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22)**

Venus moves into your sign on Aug. 7 and brings you much joy and inspiration, especially when it comes to love. Your ruling planet validates the evolved part of your romantic nature. Live up to your higher self, dear. A Leo wants to put you on a pedestal.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21)**

Uranus and Neptune retrograde in your house of home and family could make this confusing time in your life even more perplexing. It's the dark before the dawn, dear heart. You are close to the kind of true epiphany you've been praying for. A Taurus comes through for you.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21)**

This is your time to pursue the adventure of your choice. An international trip or a tempestuous affair with a lover from a completely different background may be called for — immediately! A Capricorn expands your way of thinking.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19)**

The Sun conjunct Mars in your house of serious relationships — all week long — should push you to stand up for what you believe in when it comes to love. A little righteousness and a lot of passion take you far. A Gemini wants to go even farther with you.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18)**

It's a tawdry and passionate time in your love life, sweetie. Just when you thought you could handle several lovers at once (or romantic obsessions), Jupiter throws you a few more. Catch a Taurus before she falls too hard.

**PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20)**

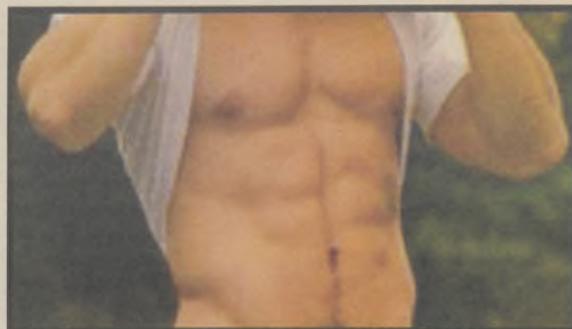
Venus goes into your house of collaboration on Aug. 7. Think about hooking up with a like-minded creative spirit. And then stop thinking about creating, and just start doing it, doll. A Cancer will help.

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

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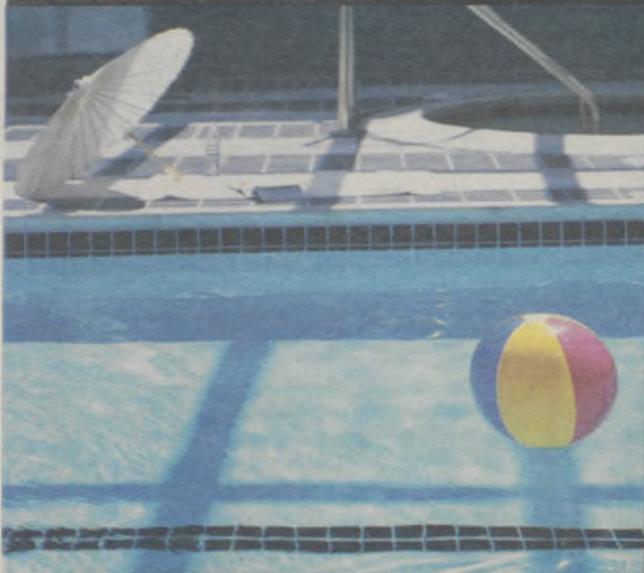
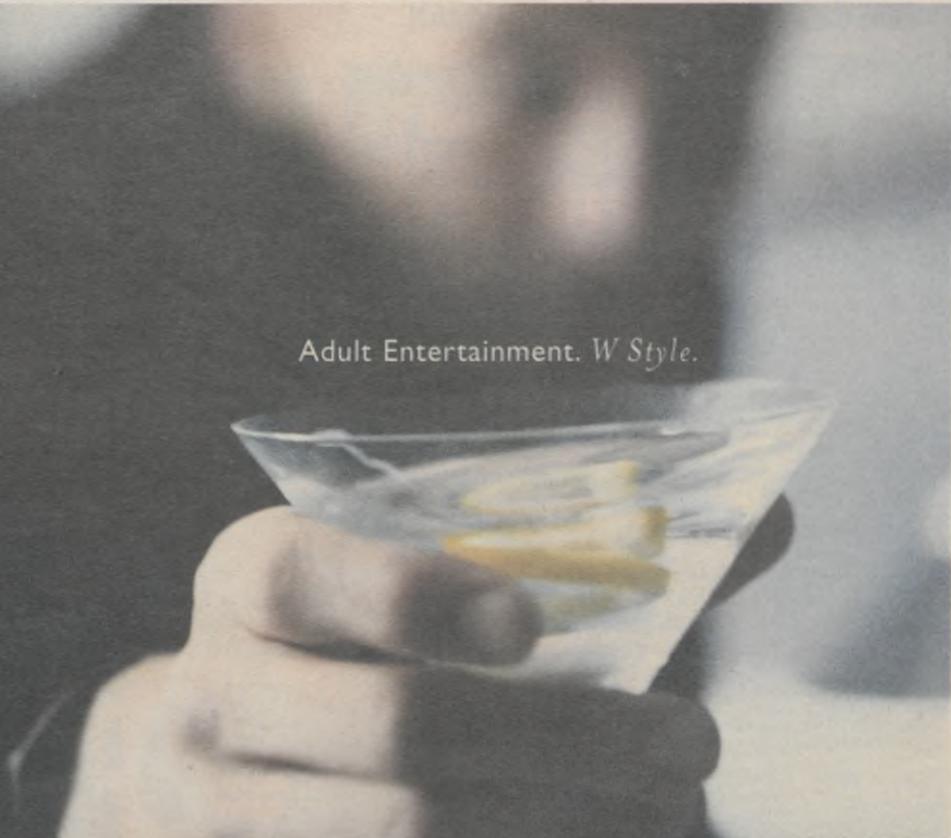
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