

Oscar contender

Javier Bardem talks about his role in 'Before Night Falls'

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The 14th annual Texas Lesbian Conference takes on the theme 'Rainbows on the River' in San Antonio March 23-25

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Rev. Ralph Lasher, program director of Cornerstone Empowerment Center, says 'so many people within the community we're serving have been alienated and rejected by their churches... we feel their emotional and physical healing also requires spiritual healing.'

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This weekend, Houston plays host to the Community Planning Leadership Summit for HIV Prevention, an event expected to draw as many as 2,000 in the AIDS prevention and treatment field

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Court upholds homosexual conduct law

Attorneys say next step is State Court of Criminal Appeals, possibly U.S. Supreme Court

by WENDY K. MOHON

The full 14th Court of Appeals issued a ruling Thursday upholding Section 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code, also known as the homosexual conduct law.

The decision overturns a June ruling by a three-judge panel of the same court that said the law violated the Texas Constitution because it discriminates based on sex. Texas has had a sodomy law since 1860, but the state decriminalized sodomy by opposite-sex partners in 1974.

The case stems from the 1998 arrests of John Lawrence and Tyron Garner, whom sheriff's deputies charged with sodomy after finding the men engaged in sex in

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Tyron Garner, left, and John Lawrence were represented by Houston attorney Mitchell Katine, right, in a 1998 case that is being used by Katine and the Lambda Legal Defense Fund to attempt to strike down the state's homosexual conduct statute. The 14th Court of Appeals on Thursday upheld the law, but Lambda plans to appeal.

Richardson officer first trans cop in state

Despite national reports, S.A. officer not the first in Texas to transition to female

by GIP PLASTER

When Diana Powe saw a recent news service article about a San Antonio sheriff's deputy planning to have a sex-change operation, it caught her attention.

When she read the article's claim that the deputy, who is just beginning the three-year process of becoming a woman, would be the first police officer in the state to make the change, she knew there was a mistake.

Powe, who used to be a man named D.J., came out as transgendered to her superiors in the Richardson Police Department last year. Then, she came out to the citizens of the Dallas suburb and the rest of the Dallas-Fort Worth area several weeks ago when she agreed to an interview with a FOX-affiliate reporter who had learned of her through a supposedly anonymous tip.

Like the San Antonio deputy, Powe still has her job and says her department is not discriminating against her.



Richardson Police Officer Diana Powe has been working as female within the department since last year. Recently, a sheriff's deputy in San Antonio made national news by coming out as transgendered as well.

A 20-year veteran of the force, the former sergeant took a voluntary demotion to officer and pursued a crime analyst job away from public view before she came out to her chief.

"My thought was they would have an easier time dealing with it this way. Now, in

hindsight, I don't think it would have been a problem," she said.

Dozens of transgendered officers patrol the nation's streets and perform other jobs crucial to the safety of their jurisdictions with varying levels of acceptance by the department and the community, according to experts.

'Another day'

In San Antonio, Bexar County Sheriff Ralph Lopez said Lt. Brian Lunan, a traffic supervisor at a county substation, notified a chief deputy on Feb. 21 that he intended to first grow his hair longer, then begin dressing as a woman full time.

Lopez said the 15-year veteran had already explained the procedure to his family and had spoken with some of his subordinates about it.

Lopez order an interview with a psychiatrist and after two meetings with Lunan that the sheriff characterized as "brief," the psychiatrist confirmed what Lunan must have already known—the man wanted to become a woman.

Once the officer's hair becomes longer

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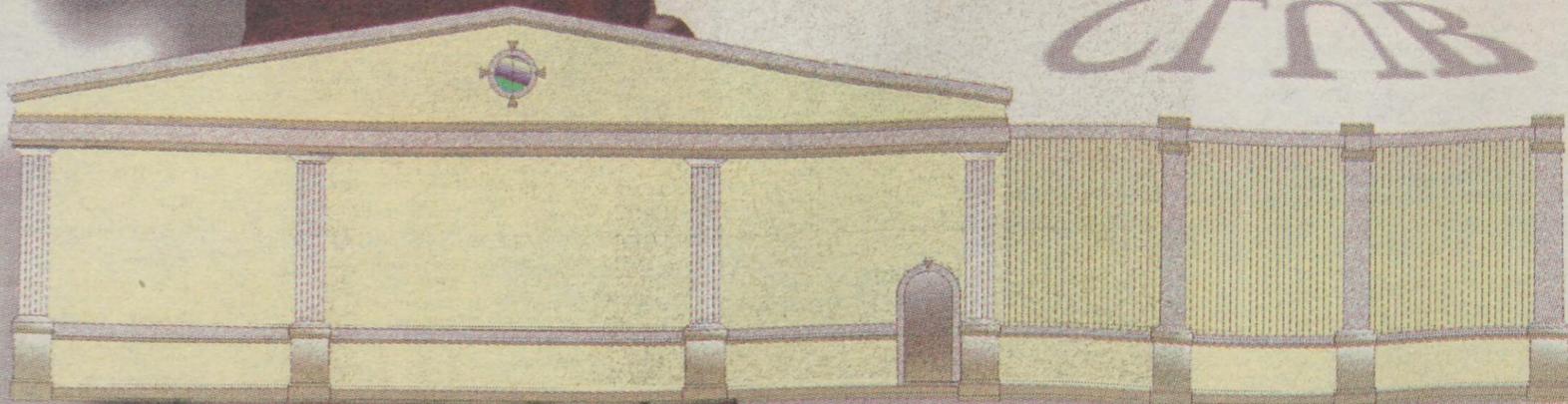
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TLC held in San Antonio

Annual state lesbian conference to feature activist Luz Guerra

by MARIA MINICUCCI

The Texas Lesbian Conference remains the only state-wide event specially planned and carried out for the purpose of educating, expanding consciousness and empowering lesbians throughout the state. And, each year, the task of carrying out the mission for TLC is shared among Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and Austin.

This year's 14th annual event, dubbed "Rainbows On The River," will be held on March 23-25 at the AmeriSuites River Walk in San Antonio.

The history of the conference has been a grassroots approach drawing on the diverse and complex dimensions of lesbian lives. The conference organizers focus on bringing to the forefront the political, social, psychological, philosophical and humorous aspects uniquely experienced through lesbian perspectives.

Therefore, everyone from the workshop facilitators, to entertainers, to keynote speakers are selected based on their commitment to and ability to embrace the "whole lesbian."

For example, previous keynote speakers who have been chosen include Col. Margarethe Cammermeyer, Gloria Anzaldua, Urvashi Vaid, Allison Bechdel and Susie Bright.

This year's keynote speaker is Luz Guerra. For more than 25 years, Guerra's work has focused on social oppressions in the U.S., women and social change in Latin America, consulting and training

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AP PHOTO/ERIC GAY

The colorful umbrellas seen along the River Walk in San Antonio appear to capture the theme for this year's Texas Lesbian Conference—'Rainbows on the River.'

Christian counseling for gay community



KIM THOMPSON

Rev. Ralph Lasher, program director of Cornerstone Empowerment Center, says 'so many people within the community we're serving have been alienated and rejected by their churches, at least hurt by their churches, we feel their emotional and physical healing also requires spiritual healing.'

Cornerstone Empowerment Center helps with coming out issues, grief counseling, family problems

by ROBERT HENDERSON

Whether it's issues relating to coming out, dealing with life-threatening illness or a lack of acceptance from family, the Cornerstone Empowerment Center works to help Houston's gay community deal with these problems through Christian counseling.

The Empowerment Center operates as a program of the Houston Cornerstone Association, a non-profit corporation, 501(c)(3), founded about 10 years ago by members and friends of Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, said Ralph Lasher, the program director for the Center.

"The Cornerstone Empowerment Center is a program of the Houston Cornerstone Association, but the particular counseling and education program is a partnership of the Community Gospel

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around the nation

Opponents of gay mayor in AZ successful in forcing recall vote

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP)—Residents have been successful in forcing a recall election for openly gay Mayor Neil Giuliano, who came under fire for opposing contributions to the United Way for the Boy Scouts of America. The Maricopa County Recorder's Office certified that opponents of the four-term mayor submitted enough signatures to prompt a Sept. 11 election. "It would save a lot of agony, divisiveness and money if the mayor would just resign," said A.J. LaFaro, chair of the recall petition committee. Giuliano, who also came under fire for his support of large development projects, said he would not step aside. One City Council member said he expects a six-month campaign to disrupt city business. "The mayor has done an excellent job, ... they won't field another candidate that the citizens will like better," said Council member Dennis Cahill. Giuliano handily won his fourth term last March.

Merger between gay magazine publisher, online venture halted

LOS ANGELES—As gay Internet giant PlanetOut completes one union, it dissolves another. PlanetOut and Liberation Publications, Inc., the parent company of gay magazines *Advocate* and *Out*, released a letter of intent last March to merge. Those plans were officially cancelled last week. "A number of things happened between March and the present time," says LPI President and CEO Jim Franklin, noting a slowing economy has a lot to do with the decision. "Certainly the market for all kinds of dot-com companies became rather unsettled." And when PlanetOut began focusing on another merger, this one with Online Partners, the parent company of Gay.com, that became the priority, said Bryce Eberhart, a PlanetOut spokesman. "We really got focused on that, and that was our priority," Eberhart said. Now that the union of the Internet's largest gay sites is almost complete, Eberhart said, PlanetOut reexamined the possible merger with LPI. "Both LPI and we felt that it was a good time to terminate it," he said. "We really wanted to focus on our online business."

Lesbian pilots, couple killed in crash prior to start of air race

BOSTON—Two lesbians who were getting ready to start an international air race were killed when their plane crashed off the coast of Iceland, the *Boston Globe* reported. Gwen Bloomingdale, 58, a former lawyer who had argued before the U.S. Supreme Court, and her partner Barbara Gard, 52, a major in the Massachusetts National Guard, both of Provincetown, were accomplished pilots who had entered the London to Sydney Air Race 2001, and were flying to London to start the race. Their twin-engine plane disappeared from radar 40 minutes after leaving Keflavik International Airport. The women had set up a Web camera in their cockpit, and were going to allow Internet users to track their progress in the race from their Web site. "God love them," Bloomingdale's daughter-in-law, Debbie, told the *Cape Cod Times*. "They're together, doing what they wanted."



Pilots Barbara Gard (left) and Gwen Bloomingdale, a lesbian couple from Provincetown, were headed to London for an air race when their plane crashed off Iceland.

Conservatives continue bashing ambassador nominee over gay workshop

BOSTON—Former United Nations Ambassador Alan Keyes blasted Massachusetts Gov. Paul Cellucci for his handling of a sex education scandal and called on the U.S. Senate to kill his nomination as U.S. ambassador to Canada, the *Boston Herald* reported. Keyes said that Cellucci is "not a fitting representative of American values, nor of the values that the Bush administration claims to represent." President Bush, a close friend of the governor, trounced Keyes in Republican presidential primaries last year. Sources on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which must approve the nomination, have repeatedly said that Cellucci's appointment is in no danger. The campaign against Cellucci was initially launched by a group called the Parents Rights Coalition, which charged that a state-sponsored workshop last year that offered gay sex education was an affront to traditional family values.

PA school dumps lesbian comedian, who may retaliate with lawsuit

PITTSBURGH (AP)—The producer for lesbian comedian Suzanne Westenhofer—whose scheduled appearance at a Roman Catholic women's college in Pittsburgh was canceled—is considering a lawsuit against Carlow College for breach of contract and discrimination based on sexual orientation. "I'm going to pursue the legal avenues available to me," said Cindy Klink, a producer for gay and lesbian entertainers. "I feel because she is a gay entertainer and it's a gay event, that's why they canceled." Westenhofer, who has appeared on HBO and on network television, said she is not an offensive comic. "The only thing edgy about me is that I am gay," she said. Meanwhile, Carlow administrators, who will not discuss the cancellation,

said they are considering a new policy about use of 915-seat Antonin Hall. The show has been rescheduled at a Jewish community center that seats 500.

—From staff and wire reports



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police beat

Suspect arrested for murder of transgendered Houston man

HOUSTON—Houston Police arrested a suspect March 9 in connection with the murder of a transgendered man, Francisco Javier Luna, 29, who was killed at approximately 4:30 a.m., March 4. Aurelio Campos, 19, alias Wayo Campos, was charged with murder in the 338th State District Court with no bond. Police say after a thorough review of this homicide, they are confident that this was not a hate crime. Investigators say they believe Campos did not realize the victim was male until a moment of intimacy, during which Campos became angered and shot the victim. Police responded to residents' reports of gunshots fired in the area and Luna was discovered dead in a business parking lot at 7844 Ave. E. in downtown. He was wearing women's clothing and makeup. A brown women's wig was found near the body.

Jury selection opens in case of AR man charged with killing boy

BENTONVILLE, Ark. (AP)—Fifteen potential jurors were asked to return to court Tuesday so a judge and lawyers can decide if they will hear the case of a man charged in the rape and murder of a 13-year-old boy. Prosecutors want Joshua McCabe Brown executed for the rape and killing of Jesse Dirkhising on Sept. 26, 1999.

Brown and his boyfriend, Davis Don Carpenter, are charged with capital murder and six counts of rape. Carpenter faces a May 7 trial. Prosecutors say Dirkhising died after being tied up, drugged, gagged with his own underwear and repeatedly raped and sodomized. Carpenter was a friend of Dirkhising's parents. The boy's grandmother told police that the seventh-grader spent weekends at the men's apartment while working at a Rogers hair salon with Carpenter. A medical examiner said Dirkhising died of positional asphyxia, unable to breathe after being placed face down on a bed. Brown, 23, has asked that the trial be moved to a different county, but Clinger said he wanted to hear from potential jurors before deciding. Carpenter, 39, will be tried later because of indications the men will try to blame the other for the boy's death.



Jury selection started this week in the trial of Joshua McCabe Brown, an Arkansas man charged in the rape and murder of a 13-year-old boy.

Jealousy over trans girlfriend may have led to brutal NY slaying

BUFFALO—A New York teen may have been murdered because of his relationship with a transgendered girlfriend, the *Buffalo News* reported. The body of James J. Mack, who had been beaten, strangled, sexually assaulted with a broomstick, submerged in a tub of water and then burned in a dumpster, was found Jan. 22 behind a Catholic church. Cause of death was drowning, blunt force trauma and strangulation, authorities said. Four men and one woman, ages 18 to 20, have been charged with the crime. Mack's relationship with a transgendered teen known as Tashia may have been the motive, a prosecutor said. "I think 'jealousy' is the right word for it," said Frank Clark, Erie County district attorney. Apparently, friends and relatives believed Tashia is female, though she was born a biological male.

LA prisoner pleads to 'crime against nature' after caught having sex

BENTON, La. (AP)—One of three Bossier Parish inmates accused of engaging in sex acts near an elementary school while on a work detail pleaded guilty Monday to a crime against nature, a prosecutor said. William A. Wright, 32, entered the felony plea in a case that led Sheriff Larry Deen to curtail work crews near schools. Some Princeton Elementary School students and teachers saw Wright and two fellow inmates engaged in sexual activity together behind a brush pile Oct. 9, authorities said. Wright entered his plea after prosecutors agreed to dismiss a second, less serious charge of obscenity. Wright also has promised to testify against co-defendants Willie James Harris, 42, and Andre Blaze, 29, who are scheduled for trial on May 14. Wright faces up to five years in prison for the crime against nature, as the state's sodomy law is called, but could receive some consideration at sentencing for his cooperation and guilty plea.

UK cop pleads to lesser charge in attempted murder of girlfriend

LONDON—A lesbian police sergeant was cleared of charges that she had attempted to kill another female officer with whom she had a relationship, the *Electronic Telegraph* reported. After acquittal, Sgt. Tina Nash, 41, admitted to a lesser charge of assaulting Inspector Sara Glen, 31, and causing her bodily harm. The prosecution claimed that Nash had tried to strangle Glen with a T-shirt as she slept in bed. But Nash said that she "lost it" as she wrapped the T-shirt around Glen's neck and she denied any intention of killing her. Nash, who lived with Glen, was angry because Glen wanted to end their relationship and was having an affair with another officer, a former girlfriend of Nash's. Judge Mark Dyer told Nash that he considered the assault "very serious and prolonged," and that prison was still an option he was considering.



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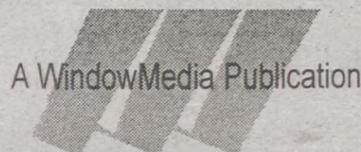
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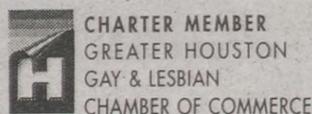
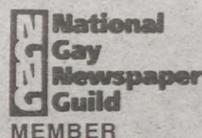
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EDITORIAL

Opening that Pandora's box called 'pedophilia'

by CHRIS CRAIN

The story of Jesse Dirkhising is shocking and disturbing. Two Arkansas men, who were probably lovers, stand accused of tying up 13-year-old Jesse, then drugging him, gagging him with his own underwear, and repeatedly raping him.

According to police, when one of the two men stopped to eat a sandwich, he noticed that Jesse had stopped breathing. The youth was pronounced dead on arrival at a local hospital. Both men, aged 21 and 37 at the time, are charged with capital murder.

Jesse's story is shocking, but is it a proper story for a gay newspaper? After all, right-wing zealots often arouse public fear of gays by raising the specter of adult gay men engaging in sexually predatory behavior with boys. A story like Jesse's is especially inflammatory.

That fear has been just below the surface, and at times broken the surface, in the debate over whether gays should be banned from leadership positions in the Boy Scouts. Opportunistic lawyers will also raise the issue in contentious custody cases involving a gay parent.

Is it a responsible thing for this newspaper, and other gay publications like it, to play into that fear by reporting stories like Jesse's?

Then there's the story, included in the Atlanta edition of this week's *Southern Voice*, of a former Boy Scout leader arrested in Roswell, Ga., earlier this month after police say the 42-year-old showed up to have sex with a 14-year-old. The meeting had been arranged over the Internet, but the "youth" turned out to be a member of an FBI task force monitoring chatrooms popular with men seeking sex with under-age males.

The FBI isn't saying whether the former Scout leader is gay, and most gay men would not consider sex between a man in his 40s and a 14-year-old to be "gay sex" in the first place; most would consider it pedophilia or child molestation.

So is it a proper story for a gay newspaper, especially in the midst of the Boy Scout debate?

In both cases, and in many like it, the answer is yes, partly because it is important to draw lines and define terms when dealing with emotionally charged issues like "pedophilia" and "underage sex," and partly because of this newspaper's journalistic mission.

Pedophilia vs. underage sex

Not every instance of sex between an adult and a minor of the same gender is pedophilia, under the law or under prevailing psychological standards. It all depends on the age of the youth.

If the younger participant is over the age of 16, in most states the sex is legal, if frowned-upon, and it certainly isn't consid-

AR men charged with raping boy Page 5

ered pedophilia by those who study the phenomenon.

If the youth is post-pubescent, but under the age of 16, the sex is unlawful, but because it is non-consensual, not because the perpetrator is considered a pedophile. State laws aren't intended to draw a line marking pedophilia; that's a diagnosis left up to psychologists. Age of consent laws are intended to protect young people who aren't old enough to meaningfully agree to sexual activity with an adult.

Stories that involve unlawful sex between adult males and teenage males are stories about gay people, and make the 'cut' for *Southern Voice*.

In fact, the American Psychological Association limits the definition of pedophilia to adults, almost always men, who have strong sexual urges toward pre-pubescent youths, usually 13 or younger.

That means accepting a hard and disturbing truth: When an adult male has sex with a post-pubescent male, usually 13 or older, then that's usually a case of wrongful behavior by a gay man, not the psychotic behavior of a pedophile we can conveniently exclude from our definition of "gay."

For that reason, more than any other, stories that involve unlawful sex between adult males and post-pubescent males are stories about gay people, and make the "cut" for publications like *Southern Voice*.

Things get much more murky when the adult has engaged in sexual activity with a victim who is pre-pubescent, usually 13 or younger among males.

In some cases, a pedophile will have urges toward a single gender; in other cases, the adult male will seek out children of both genders. In no case is the gender match-up between adult and child what determines whether the pedophile is "gay" or "straight."

For those pedophiles who are also sexually attracted to adults—and therefore can be considered to have a "gay" or "straight" sexual orientation—there is no particular connection with the gender they prefer among adults and the gender they prefer among children.

And, to put the lie to the discredited old myth, there is no evidence of a greater incidence of pedophilia among gay men than among straight men.

As a result, in almost all the cases in which an adult male has engaged in unlawful sexual activity with a pre-pubes-

cent male, it is extremely unlikely the adult is "gay" at all. That means it's not a story for a gay publication, unless it is otherwise clear that the adult is gay, either through self-identification or some other evidence.

The sexual victimization of children is an extremely important topic for all of us, gay and straight. But for a publication limited to issues of specific relevance to gay men and lesbians, the issue of pedophilia is newsworthy only when a conservative activist or jurist raises it in an effort to tar us all with the scarlet "P."

Journalistic mission

Some readers won't be satisfied with the decision to report on adult male sex with underage, but post-pubescent, males just because we can safely say it involves gay sex.

Why is it newsworthy, especially when our enemies and most of the general public won't take the time to parse through psychological manuals for the definition of pedophilia?

Not every example of gay underage sex is noteworthy, to be sure, but it is when, for example, the adult charged is a public figure, as in the recent arrest of the Atlanta man who founded the internationally famous DragonCon expo.

Stores of gay underage sex are often also newsworthy when law enforcement authorities are conducting a "sting" aimed at gay men, especially in the burgeoning sex space on the Internet. It's also newsworthy when there is evidence that the adult sought out roles where he could come into contact with teenage males.

Both of those factors led to the decision to print the item this week on the Roswell man charged in the FBI sting.

The journalistic mission of *Southern Voice* is to cover news relevant to gay readers in an objective and fair fashion. At the same time, it is a founding principle of this publication, and most other gay newspapers, to champion the cause of full equality for gay men and lesbians in society.

Hiding stories that reflect poorly on individual gays, or even individual gay civil rights organizations, advances neither mission. Our readers, and our community, are best served by a full and fair accounting of the bad news as well as the good.

To the extent some gay men abuse positions of authority to seek out sex with underage, post-pubescent males, our community must step up to the plate and address the issue—even if it means risking bad press or a tit for tat in some public policy debate with a social conservative.

If you don't buy that answer, ask a gay man who feels he was taken advantage of when he was in his teenage years, while he was still struggling with his sexuality, much less his sexual orientation.

Of course, we can't ask Jesse Dirkhising. But we can do our part to see to it there aren't any more who suffer like him.

Homosexual conduct case to be appealed within 30 days

> Continued from Page 1

Lawrence's home. The officers were responding to a false third-party report of an armed intruder. Police arrested both men and held them in jail for more than 24 hours before releasing them on \$200 bond each. The two men pleaded "no contest" to the charges in criminal court.

"The government does not belong in people's bedrooms policing consensual adult intimacy, nor can it have one rule for gay people and another one, granting more freedom, for non-gay people," said Lambda Legal Director Ruth E. Harlow.

Harlow, who argued the case before the Texas court, said the ruling "guts the right to privacy," however, Justice J. Harvey Hudson wrote in the 14th Court's majority opinion, "Neither the state nor federal constitutions contain an explicit guarantee of privacy. Thus, there is no general constitutional right to privacy."

Houston attorney Mitchell Katine, who represented Lawrence and Garner, said he will work with Lambda to appeal the case to the State Court of Criminal Appeals within the next 30 days for a discretionary review, meaning the court may choose not to hear the case.

"We think there is a likelihood that they will hear the case," Katine said, but added that should the court refuse the case or if it also upholds Section 21.06, he and Lambda are prepared to take the case before the U.S. Supreme Court.

"I think there is a chance of the U.S.

Supreme Court taking this up," Harlow said.

"When you have such strong opinions on both sides, it demonstrates the need for a higher court to issue a clear decision," Katine noted.

The 14th Court of Appeals' 57-page ruling issued Thursday included a 29-page dissenting opinion filed by Justice John S. Anderson, the judge who wrote the majority opinion for the three-judge panel's ruling in June. Anderson was also the target of an alleged letter-writing campaign last fall by members of the Harris County Republican Party attempting to convince Anderson to reverse his ruling.

In his dissenting opinion, Anderson wrote: "The contention that the same conduct is moral for some, but not for others merely repeats, rather than legitimizes, the Legislatures' unconstitutional edict..."

"The behavior to be discouraged is deviate sexual intercourse between same sex couples. That same behavior between heterosexual couples is, by implication, moral and something to be encouraged. Sodomy is either immoral or it is not. It appears that the State's vigorous defense of 21.06 has been advanced without due consideration of the inconsistency of, on the one hand, condemning sodomy as immoral, but on the other implicitly embracing sodomy as perfectly normal. Again, such incongruity is not exceedingly persuasive."

Katine said much of Hudson's majority opinion contains incongruous statements including a passage that suggests hetero-



John Lawrence

Tyron Garner

sexuals also may violate the homosexual conduct law, therefore 21.06 does not discriminate based on sexual orientation.

Hudson wrote: "While homosexuals may be disproportionately affected by the statute, we cannot assume homosexual conduct is limited only to those possessing a homosexual 'orientation.' Persons having a predominately heterosexual inclination may sometimes engage in homosexual conduct. Thus, the statute's proscription applies, facially at least, without respect to a defendant's sexual orientation."

In his dissenting opinion, Anderson also wrote: "The Legislature's removal of the prohibition on heterosexual sodomy while retaining it for homosexual sodomy cannot, in my view, be explained by anything but animus toward the persons it affects..."

"It is manifestly illogical to suggest that sodomy, when performed by heterosexuals promotes morality and family values, and the same acts when performed by same sex couples, denigrates morality and family values."

"The Texas Constitution does not protect morality; it does, however, guarantee equal-

ity to all persons under the law. My personal views on the conduct involved here are irrelevant to the outcome that I believe is required."

Bill Delmore, the assistant prosecutor in the Harris County District Attorney's office who handled the case, told the Associated Press Thursday he was pleased with the ruling.

He also said that the Legislature should throw out the sodomy law if that's what Texans want.

"My concern was primarily that the decision be made in the Legislature so we could protect the people's right through their elected representatives to determine what conduct they believe to be immoral and ought to be against the law," Delmore said.

Katine said the case could drag on "another year to three years. When we started this, we all knew this would be a lengthy process, but we knew it was important."

"I'm confident that sooner or later we'll be successful," Harlow said.

Texas is one of just four states in the country, including Arkansas, Kansas and Oklahoma, which prohibit same-sex sodomy. Twelve other states have laws prohibiting same- and opposite-sex sodomy.

"All over the country, regardless of political bent, these statutes are being struck down," Harlow said, noting that Georgia recently overturned its sodomy statute. "Texas residents should have no less protection against the privacy of acts in their own bedrooms than those residents in Georgia."

GenderPAC: Attitudes improving toward transgendered

> Continued from Page 1

than allowed by the department's uniform dress code, Lunan will be asked to continue performing his duties in plain clothes.

"Once he has gone into the phase that he dresses as a woman, he can be a patrol lieutenant as a woman," Lopez said in an interview.

Lunan, who declined to appear at the sheriff's press conference about the officer, issued a statement thanking the department for its understanding and saying that he would not do media interviews.

"I have been diagnosed with gender identity disorder. I will be receiving treatment to correct this problem," Lunan said in the statement.

He expressed gratitude for the sheriff's "support in this unusual situation" and said the department has been "very understanding."

"This is a difficult matter that has been made easier by their empathy and sensitivity," Lunan said.

But Lunan's support from colleagues has not been unanimous. Deputy Eulalio Guerrero told the Houston Chronicle that he opposes the gender change based on his religious beliefs and said he is "uncomfortable" with the situation.

While the situation has drawn the atten-

tion of some radicals like Fred Phelps, a pastor who is known for picketing the funerals of people who died of AIDS, Lopez said that does not concern him.

"You mean that idiot that came down from Kansas?" the sheriff said. "There's always that fringe, but I can live with that."

More Texas officers may soon follow in Powe's and Lunan's footsteps, according to longtime national transgender activist and attorney Phyllis Frye.

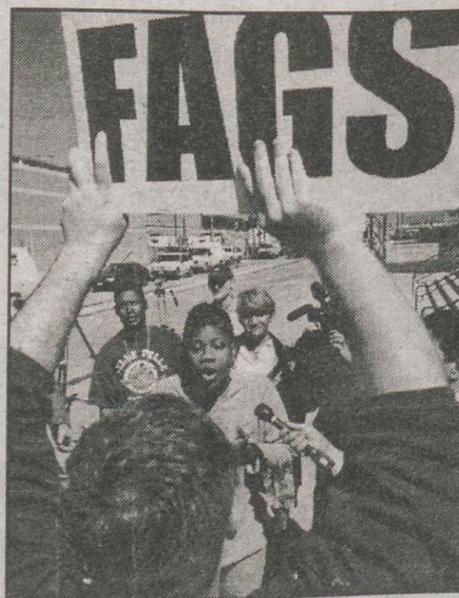
"I know of at least four more officers in the state that have not yet come out. Two others have resigned, not under pressure, but because they didn't want to come out in their police departments," Frye said. "The law enforcement community has their percentages, too," she said.

For Lopez, however, the realization that he has a transsexual officer is just another part of the daily routine, he said.

"Today's another day," he said. "Tomorrow the sun is going to come up in the East again."

National gender rights advocacy group GenderPAC's executive director Riki Wilchins said she applauds the sheriff's attitude and the trend toward improving workplace rights.

The organization has come under fire in recent weeks from some activists who say the organization has abandoned the transgendered community in favor of other gen-



Diann Rosser, center, and other passersby argue with a Topeka, Kansas, Westboro Baptist Church member protesting outside the Bexar County Sheriff's office in San Antonio March 5, after Bexar County Sheriff Ralph Lopez held a news conference to talk about Lt. Brian Lunan's decision to undergo a sex-change operation. Lunan may continue to perform his duties as a patrol lieutenant after he begins to live as a woman and undergoes the operation, Lopez announced at the news conference.

der issues.

"GenderPAC supports the right of everyone to a safe and fair workplace," she said. "I think this is part of wider move that we're witnessing that gender ought to be a basic right of all employees. And I think the actions of the sheriff and his employee are testament to that."

There is also other evidence of growing acceptance of transgendered workers. A recent change by the San Francisco board of supervisors makes the surgeries involved with changing gender identities, which can cost as much as \$80,000 per person, covered by city employees' health plans.

A less accepting picture of transsexual officers was painted in Hoboken, N.J. last year, however. In that city, charges were filed against an officer who took time off to go through the year-long experiment of living as a woman required by doctors before gender surgery because she refused to come back to work during the so-called "real-life test." A civil suit filed in response by the officer was settled in June 1999.

Having a transsexual police officer on any force is an "extreme challenge," according to Thomas Whetstone, a professor at the University of Louisville's Southern Police Institute.

"As much as we would like it to be a non-event, it is one," he said.

Faith-based funding under fire from all sides

Gays join conservative religious leaders in expressing doubts about Bush's initiative

by ANDY COLE

Even after a week in which the White House hesitated, religious conservatives criticized, and the most prominent Democratic backer offered only tepid support, President Bush's faith-based initiative appeared to be back among the administration's legislative priorities.

"It's full speed ahead" was the message from the White House on Tuesday, according to Mercy Viana, a White House spokesperson.

But on Monday, the future was in doubt for Bush's proposals to make it easier for religious organizations to receive federal grants for social services they provide.

Don Eberly, deputy director of the White House Office of Faith-Based & Community Initiatives, told the *Washington Post* that the administration was "not ready to send our own bill" to Congress.

The remark surprised both the White House and the two representatives slated to sponsor a faith initiative bill in the House. Speaking in Florida, Bush quickly said that he was "moving forward."

Liberal groups, including the American Civil Liberties Union and Americans United for the Separation of Church &

State, have opposed Bush's faith initiative, fearing that it will require clients of social service providers to endure invasive proselytizing in order to receive aid.

And there are implications for gay men and lesbians, according to Eric Ferrero, head of the ACLU's Lesbian & Gay Rights Project. Among these, Ferrero lists the potential for making shelters and counseling less accessible for at-risk gay youth.

"In most of the country, people can't just say, 'I don't like this service provider. I'm going to walk to the one down the street,'" Ferrero said. "That might work in New York or downtown Atlanta, but in a lot of the country—I venture to say most of the country—people don't have those kinds of options."

U.S. Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) was an early supporter of proposals to open social service funding to religious groups. But in a recent interview with *Beliefnet.com*, an online magazine for spiritual issues, Lieberman took more of a wait-and-see attitude.

"I think it's okay to take a couple of months and try to put our heads together," he said. "I feel strongly that we can't adopt a system here that allows religious groups to meet a lower standard of civil rights protection than non-religious groups."

Lieberman said this "lower standard" included the issue of discrimination based on sexual orientation.

In the past week, the political left has

not been the only—or even the most vocal—source of criticism for Bush's plan.

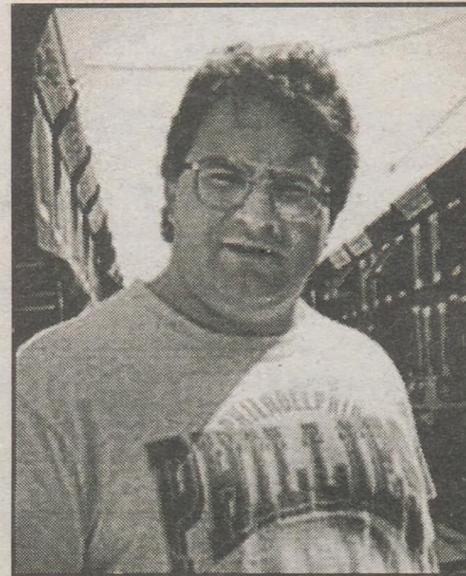
Pat Robertson, head of the Christian Coalition, wrote an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* arguing that permitting religious groups to apply for funding could lead to government support of non-mainstream groups which, in his view, "creates an intolerable situation."

Jerry Falwell, in an interview with *Beliefnet.com*, said "it is doubtful that we will ever apply for any assistance under the faith-based initiatives, as Mr. Bush has proposed them."

Richard Land, head of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said he would not touch federal money "with the proverbial 10-foot pole."

In response to this criticism from the religious right, John Dilulio, director of the White House Office for Faith-Based & Community Initiatives, lashed out at unnamed opponents of the plan in the *Religious Right*.

"It's fine to fret about hijacked faith," Dilulio said at a meeting of the National Association of Evangelicals last week. "But to many brothers and sisters who are desperately ministering to the needs of those who the rest of us in this prosperous society have left behind, such frets would persuade more and rankle less if they were backed by real human and financial help," he said.



John Dilulio, director of the White House Office for Faith-Based & Community Initiatives, last week lashed out at critics, which have included gays and conservative Christians.

INFO

Office of Faith Based & Community Initiatives

John Dilulio, director
phone: 202-456-6708

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local news

HIV conference this weekend

Summit focusing on
prevention expected to
draw up to 2,000

by KAY Y. DAYUS

Houston's downtown Hyatt Regency Hotel is the site for this weekend's Community Planning Leadership Summit for HIV Prevention, and those attending are expected to be a veritable list of "who's who" in the AIDS prevention and treatment field.

"Community Planning, Changing the Course of the Epidemic," is the theme for this year's conference, which runs March 16-18. The summit offers 60 workshops and other sessions designed to enhance the HIV prevention planning skills of participants.

"This is the first major HIV conference in Houston and will draw people involved in community planning from across the country," said Steven Walker, executive director of the Donald R. Watkins Memorial Foundation and one of the conference organizers.

Walker said that Houston was chosen for this seventh summit because its community

planning group was active in forcing Mayor Lee P. Brown to declare a state of emergency over the high rate of AIDS infections in the African-American community.

Houston is one of six cities funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta to have a community planning group to help battle AIDS. The other cities are Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Philadelphia, the cities with the highest rates of AIDS infections.

Walker said he is anticipating a large gathering this weekend. "We're expecting somewhere between 1,200 and 1,700 people. It may even be as many as 2,000," he said.

The conference is separated into four tracks: Effective Interventions, Future Trends in Community Planning, Managing the Process and The Steps of Community Planning.

Some of the workshops include; Creating Youth Prevention Programs That Work, Latino Experience in Community Planning and Asian and Pacific Islander Experience in Community Planning.

Established in 1987, the NMAC is the premier national organization dedicated to developing leadership within communities of color to address the challenge of HIV/AIDS.

INFO

www.nmac.org

4-legged race

20th annual K-9 Fun Run
set for March 25

by KAY Y. DAYUS

On your mark, get set, go for the 20th Annual Houston Humane Society K-9 Fun Run 2001: A Race Odyssey, on March 25. And remember, your four-legged friend is the entrant, not the owner; but you need to go along to keep any little pow-wows from turning into bow-wows.

For the expected 2,000-plus entrants someone might have to keep doggie tempers calm, but according to Christy Check, public relations director for the Houston Humane Society, that's not usually too much of a problem.

"Luckily, they all usually get along. Oh, we have a little argument here and there, but for the most part, it's okay," said Check.

But the main reason for the event is to promote "humane awareness and education and end animal suffering and abuse," as well as raise money for the Society.

"We receive no federal, state or local funds and rely solely on donations and special events," said Check. This event is the Society's largest fund-raiser of the year.

And even if your dog can run and you can't, do not despair; there is something for



The 20th annual Houston Humane Society K-9 Fun Run is expected to draw more than 2,000 two- and four-legged participants March 25.

everyone's pace. This doggie day in downtown's Sam Houston Park begins at 8:30 a.m. with a one-mile competitive run.

Next comes the one-mile non-competitive jog at 9 a.m. and 9:30 a.m., it's the one-mile walk for the strollers.

There are a few rules. You must have proof of rabies inoculation with a vet's name, no retractable leashes are allowed and your dog must be over six months old.

INFO

713.434.5555

www.houstonhumane.org

health news

Native Americans could see next wave of HIV infections, feds say

WASHINGTON—HIV rates are climbing among Native Americans in the U.S., causing government AIDS officials to fear that they will be the next wave of infections in the epidemic, *AIDS Alert* reported. Eric Goosby, director of HIV/AIDS policy for the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, called last week for prevention messages targeted at young Native Americans, who "have participated historically in behavior patterns that are of high risk for transmitting HIV: alcoholism and injection-drug use." Goosby noted that Native Americans also have high rates of sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancy, indicators of unprotected sexual activity that could lead to increased HIV infection. More than 2,000 cases of AIDS were diagnosed among Native Americans in the United States and its territories in 1999, a 25 percent increase over the number of cases in 1997, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

WeHo voters defeat measure that mandated free condom giveaways

WEST HOLLYWOOD, Calif. (AP)—Voters defeated a measure that would have required West Hollywood bars and clubs to hand out free condoms to patrons. Measure A, which lost by nearly 60 percent of the vote, would have forced businesses deriving more than half their revenue from liquor sales to provide condoms and safe-sex literature to customers, and required the city to provide businesses with at least 500,000 free condoms a year. A group named "No on A—It's a Trojan Horse" opposed the measure and spent about \$7,000 to defeat it. In January, City Council members voted unanimously against a mandatory condom distribution program, and expanded the currently existing voluntary distribution program to 350,000 condoms a year, a program that has been in place for eight years. "The key message was that the city has a successful program and we want to support that. Mandatory programs don't work," said Randy Scott, campaign director for "No on A." AIDS Healthcare Foundation supported the referendum, calling it a public health issue, and collected the signatures necessary to put it on the ballot.

AIDS vaccine protocol keeps monkeys healthy for months after infection

WASHINGTON—Studies have found that a new AIDS vaccine protocol was successful in keeping monkeys healthy for months after they were infected with a similar virus, Reuters reported. In the study, scientists injected 24 monkeys with two vaccines each—one that carried virus genes, and a second booster shot, months later, to prompt an immune response. The animals were then infected with a high dose of a virus that gives monkeys a disease similar to AIDS. During 20 weeks of monitoring, the virus was suppressed to nearly undetectable levels in 23 of the vaccinated monkeys, and the animals showed no disease symptoms. The other monkey had higher virus levels, but still far lower than those in four unvaccinated monkeys that got sick. The findings provide "some of the best evidence to date that a preventive HIV vaccine may protect against AIDS," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases, which funded the research conducted with Emory University in Atlanta. Studies of a similar approach on humans could begin early next year.



Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases, said a recent study provides strong evidence that a vaccine could protect against AIDS.

Breast cancer detection needs a new 'gold standard,' study says

WASHINGTON—A medical institute has released a study calling for more research on new technologies for detecting breast cancer, CNN reported. A research committee at the Institute of Medicine looked at 17 breast imaging tools, including digital mammography, ultrasound, computer-aided detection systems and MRI. None of them has replaced the most traditional treatment—X-ray film mammography—as the "gold standard" in breast cancer detection, according to the study. "I think we've had a tendency to sit back and say, 'This is an old question... we've solved. Mammography's enough.' It's not enough," said Dr. Craig Henderson of the University of California-San Francisco and a member of the committee. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death for cancer in U.S. women.

Newly diagnosed women have lower levels of HIV in blood than men

BALTIMORE (AP)—A study has found that women newly diagnosed with HIV have far less virus in their blood than men at the same stage, a difference that later disappears. The researchers checked the blood of 156 male and 46 female injection drug users every six months. They found that newly diagnosed men had an average of 50,766 copies per milliliter, while women averaged 15,103. The finding is less relevant than it would have been before treatment guidelines for AIDS were changed earlier in January. When the article was written, it was thought best to put patients on antiviral drugs when their AIDS virus levels reached 20,000 particles per milliliter of blood plasma, but now guidelines call for waiting until there are 55,000 particles per milliliter.

—From staff and wire reports



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> Continued from Page 3

Church, Maranatha Fellowship-MCC, Cornerstone Association and Resurrection-MCC," Lasher said.

"So many people within the community we're serving have been alienated and rejected by their churches, at least hurt by their churches, we feel their emotional and physical healing also requires spiritual healing. We are providing a complement to other counseling in the community through individuals and organizations."

The therapists with the Empowerment Center are "independent contractors." They have their own private practice or a full practice with an organization. Most of their work through the Empowerment Center is evening and weekends.

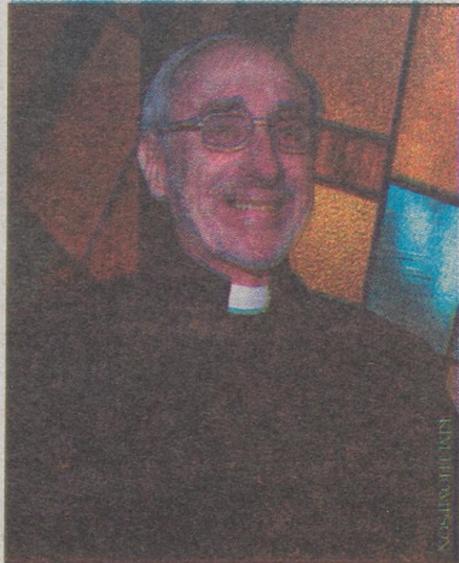
Lasher has taught classes on Christian sexuality since 1987. He said he has never had a class of less than 50 and has had as many as 150 participants in a single course.

His experience has shown him there is a major need in the community for dealing with issues of religion and spirituality to help people recover from some of the abuse received from the variety of religious backgrounds.

The Empowerment Center also seeks to help people heal from the hurt incurred within their own family. Lasher said he thought society has made some progress in growing away from the interpretation of Sigmund Freud setting the cause of gay men as the "weak father, strong mother" pattern. He has found more of the attitude of "you're an embarrassment to the family" although he has even found some amelioration of that also.

"The major thing we see overlapping spiritual and psychological counseling is the great amount of shame and guilt people have resulting in internalized homophobia," Lasher said.

"There are other things such as the shame and guilt over nudity and sex. From a Bible scholar's point of view, I'm bothered by our trying to deal with a religious heritage equating marriage, relationships with



Rev. Ralph Lasher

'reproduction.' That's not the basis of the relationships we have, yet we try to live it sometimes."

The Empowerment Center also conducts educational programs. Lasher said many times people become more comfortable in an education group with others of sexual minorities knowing they are not alone in their orientation. Educational programs may also serve the purpose of illuminating a counseling need of a person.

He cited the example of an educational program concerning the impact of growing up in a dysfunctional home. The result maybe an individual would choose to relate to an Al Anon group because the children of alcoholics have an increased risk factor of becoming alcoholics themselves.

One of the issues the Cornerstone Empowerment Center plans to help people deal with is the whole issue of "coming out." Lasher said one of the behaviors they have noticed at Resurrection-MCC is people driving around the church several Sundays before they are able to gather the courage to go in the building.

Sometimes people will try to "just put a toe in the water" by coming in discreetly

through a side door. They are really surprised when they see a co-worker there. The immediate reaction is to hide but as their fear is overcome by reason the inner dialogue is "Why should I hide? They're here too," according to Lasher.

He said the Empowerment Center also tries to help people with relationships including the spiritual component of their relationship. They also seek cooperation between the service providers in the community. One of the churches has a grief group. Cornerstone has referred people there.

Lasher has contemplated going there himself since he lost his partner of 45 years last summer.

There are also support groups for incest survivors and other types of abusive relationships.

Lasher is involved in assisting to set up the business side—policies and procedures—of the Cornerstone Empowerment Center. They have set up a "sliding scale" fee structure so services may be available to less affluent.

Attorneys have been active in creating the contracts between the Empowerment Center and the therapists as well as assisting the board operate in a way not threatening the legal continuation of the program. Lasher serves as a contact person for the Empowerment Center from the answering service.

The nature of the Empowerment Center program is such that structures are not particularly important. Most of the counseling is referred to therapists in private practice who have their own offices.

The classes are held at Resurrection-MCC or other churches who have asked for a class to be presented. Lasher sees a need for some office space in the future and perhaps some space for couples' counseling.

INFO

Cornerstone
Empowerment Center
281-820-8592

Director Kelli Herd featured at conference

> Continued from Page 3

in the area of racism. Her most current involvement has been designing a training program for progressive lesbian activists in Washington State.

Among the activities planned for the conference weekend are an array of workshop topics presented by lesbians throughout the state with expertise in everything from flirting to health and financial concerns.

Last year's conference held in Houston brought out more than 200 participants.

Representing lesbian humor at this year's conference is Karen Williams. Williams has been featured on the HBO program, "We're Funny That Way," and has performed on Olivia Cruises and at comedy clubs across the United States and Canada. Austin's Queer Poetry Jam will open the evening's entertainment.

Also featured at the conference is Kelli Herd, director of "It's In The Water."

INFO

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Chinese psychiatrists to no longer list homosexuality as mental disease

GUANGZHOU, China—In a major reversal, Chinese psychiatrists have decided to stop classifying homosexuality as a mental disease, the *Los Angeles Times* reported. New guidelines to be issued next month by the Chinese Psychiatric Association will drop all references to homosexuality as a pathological condition, said Chen Yanfang, vice chair of the association's standing committee, which voted unanimously for the change. While the revised standards suggest that same-sex desires can be a "mental disorder" for people unhappy with their orientation, those who are fine with being gay have no need of psychiatric help, Chen said. As recently as 1994, the psychiatric association adamantly stated its opposition to World Health Organization standards calling for acceptance of homosexuality. "This is progress—a leap forward for the gay community," said Roger Meng, who manages a gay Web site in Guangzhou.

Teletubby actress sheds quiet role for lesbian romp on U.K. television

LONDON—The actress who plays one of the Teletubbies has filmed a graphic lesbian sex scene that was set to air Wednesday on British television, the *Sun* reported. Pui Fan Lee, 29, who plays the red Teletubby Po, will appear in "Metrosexuality," British TV's most sexually explicit show. Pui's character Jaye will have a string of lesbian affairs, and in a scene from this week's show, she will appear naked and perform oral sex on another woman. "There will be quite a stir when people realize Jaye is the same person as innocent Po," said a source identified only as a "telly insider." Filming is set to begin soon on the last season of "Teletubbies," and a friend of Pui said that the actress was looking to branch out. "She read the script of 'Metrosexuality' and saw it as different and a bit of a challenge," the friend said.



Pui Fan Lee, who plays Teletubby Po, was set to appear this week on the U.K.'s most sexually explicit show in a string of lesbian affairs.

U.K. gay rights activist beaten for attempting arrest of Zimbabwe leader

BRUSSELS—A prominent British gay rights activist was beaten by bodyguards when he tried to make a citizen's arrest of Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe on March 5, Reuters reported. Peter Tatchell of Outrage, yelled "Arrest Mugabe, arrest the torturer" as the veteran African leader left the Hilton Hotel in Brussels. In the ensuing scuffle, Tatchell was pushed to the ground and beaten by the president's bodyguards. "What was done to me was of no real consequences compared to the far, far greater brutality that is meted out to the people of Zimbabwe by the Mugabe regime," said Tatchell, who has objected to anti-gay remarks Mugabe has made in the past. He was arrested following a similar incident in London last October, but charges were later dropped. Mugabe has called gay men and lesbians "lower than dogs."

Canadian charged with disrupting gay ceremony says she was assaulted

CAMBRIDGE, Ontario—A Canadian woman who protested at a high-profile gay wedding in Toronto says she was assaulted by the church's security guard, the *Toronto Star* reported. Erika Kubassek, who is also charged with assaulting the minister who conducted the Jan. 14 ceremony, claims the assault happened while the guard escorted her out of the church. Kubassek, who says she is a "Prophetess of the Lord," interrupted the service prior to the wedding by standing up and reading scripture. "I'm going to the Justice of the Peace right in the same courthouse I will be in [tomorrow]," Kubassek said. She said the trial "will be quite a battle between light and darkness." The wedding was the first attempt by gay Canadians to use the ancient ritual of banns to create legal gay marriages. The couples' court cases to force the Ontario government to recognize their unions are pending.

AIDS drug giants to slash prices for medications in South Africa

LONDON—U.S. drug maker Merck said March 7 that it was slashing the price of two AIDS drugs in developing countries to a level at which it would make no profit on their sale, Reuters reported. The cost of Merck's drug Crixivan will be \$600 per patient per year while Stocrin will be offered at \$500. The move came after an Indian generic drugs manufacturer, Cipla, announced its plans to offer a cocktail of AIDS drugs for as little as \$350 a year. "We have indications that other companies are in the process of doing the same," said John Liden, a World Health Organization spokesperson. Liden said Cipla's move forced a recognition that the drug companies' plan to roll out cheaper AIDS drugs on a country-by-country basis was moving too slowly. Great Britain's GlaxoSmithKline, the world's largest manufacturer of AIDS drugs, pledged in February to decrease prices in developing countries by 90 percent. Switzerland's Roche Holdings AG said it has no plans to reduce prices at this time, and U.S. corporation Bristol Meyers Squibb had no comment.



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—From staff and wire reports

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Out on the Bayou

A guide for your leisure time

HOUSTON VOICE • MARCH 16, 2001

Javier, Reinaldo and Oscar

'Before Night falls' actor talks about

Oscar-nominated role

by D.L. GROOVER

No actor truly wishes to be compared to any other, but Javier Bardem might accurately be described as the Iberian Russell Crowe, only with morals.

Like Crowe, Bardem's screen persona is a sensitive tough guy with smoldering machismo; he's a natural on the screen; and his roles trade on his physical presence and no-nonsense approach to playing edgy characters whether addicts or cops.

Like the Australian actor who's also nominated for Oscar's Best Actor, he's perched on the edge of international stardom through his stunning portrayal of exiled gay Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas in Julian Schnabel's gripping biography "Before Night Falls."

And like Crowe this week, Bardem is on a non-stop press junket and pacing the floor in Hollywood before the March 25 ceremony.

"Trying not to eat his nails," he confesses.

"All this amount of work we nominees do with promotion," he says half-joking in his heavily-accented baritone, "in a way we wish something to happen. You're doing this for something, you're not doing it for nothing.

"Of course, in a way you want to win, because if I win,

> Continued on Page 16

'Stiff' and limp and Sam Shepard, too

Spymonkey offers up dead-on comedy, Alley's 'Flea' bugs, IBP hits high notes

by D.L. GROOVER

There's going to be a noise ordinance issued to Theater LaB any time now, because the waves of non-stop laughter bursting out of this intimate clapboard venue have got to be annoying the neighbors.

Spymonkey, a quartet of zanies with a devout European cult following, brings us a live version of Monty Python by way of the Marx Brothers and Benny Hill in what could charitably be called one hell of an hilarious show about death, mourning and funerals—"Stiff." It's inspired lunacy of the highest caliber, and most definitely the fun-

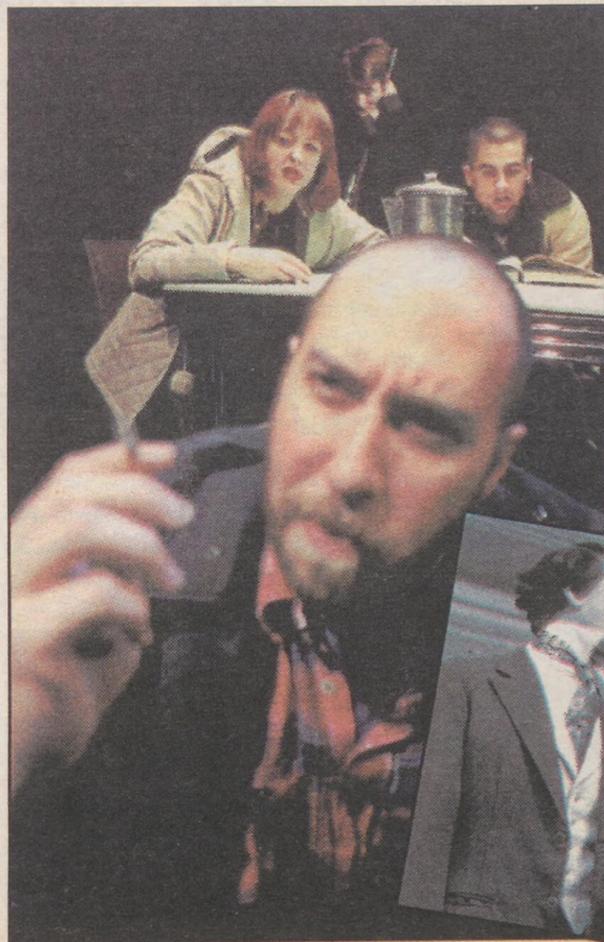
niest production you'll see this season, if not next.

Victorian actor Forbes Murston (prim Toby Park) has hired a trio of distracted performers (Harpo-like Aitor Bassuri, Teutonic Stephen Kreiss, the sublime Petra Massey) to enact his loving, memorial tribute to his dead wife.

Needless to say, they take his play, twist it like a Mobius strip and generally run amok, dragging him along with a vengeance, as well as the body of the dearly departed, or "diseased" Mrs. Murston. Murston's bouts of exasperation only prod the loonies to higher forms of insanity.

What's so delightfully fulfilling is that the accomplished verbal comedy is totally in sync with the superb slapstick in this theater of the absurdly funny. Dada, Pirandello and Jessica Mitford meet the four stooges, and civilized behavior gets a custard pie smack in the kisser.

> Continued on Page 16



Troy Schulze, Tamarie Cooper, Jodi McLaughlin and George Parker star in IBP's 'Action' and 'Chicago,' left; while Todd Waite and Jamison Stern are featured in Alley's 'A Flea in Her Ear,' below.



Bardem: 'A gay person is much more than a sexual option'

> Continued from Page 15

Reinaldo Arenas wins. The Oscar won't belong to me, it'll belong to him. The guy who really gave his life because of all of this. That's why, in a way, you want something to happen."

Bardem is no stranger to winning awards. In a career that has spanned little more than a decade, the 32-year-old actor, born in the Canary Islands, has a bookshelf filled with Goyas (the Spanish film industry's Oscar), numerous best and supporting actor awards from prestigious international film festivals and the Spanish Actors Union, and just as many nomination plaques, such as this year's Golden Globe.

He's a genuine movie star in his native Spain, where Madrid cab drivers shout encouragement to him, the paparazzi besiege and stalk him, and fans mob him wherever he goes. If he wins the mother of all film awards, his choices will be limitless.

Win or lose, if he desires, he could "go Hollywood" and fill the empty footprints of Antonio Banderas whose career choices lately have dropped him off the radar.

Or, more likely, Bardem will continue to pursue those cutting-edge roles and working with those directors, as he has in more than two dozens films, who turn out intriguing, thought-provoking movies.

Bardem's obvious talent could be said to be partly inherited, for he comes with theatrical pedigree. The Bardems are the Barrymores of Madrid, and Javier is the latest in a long family line of distinguished actors and directors: mother Pilar, sister

Monica, brother Carlos, uncle Juan Antonio, and grandfather Rafael have worked on stage and in film and television for decades.

Bardem's own career jump started in 1992 under the direction of Bigas Luna in "Jamón, Jamón," a gritty wildly melodramatic sex tale of betrayal, obsession and ambition. As a lower class life-force who's bribed by his rich boss's wife to seduce the sensuously ripe Penelope Cruz, the beefy Bardem succeeds in his mission while also simultaneously seducing the wife.

He drives everyone to distraction, and this over-the-top film ends amid dust and tragedy. The film was a sensation because of the palpable heat of the leads, and Bardem was off and running.

But it was through his work with renowned gay Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodovar in "Live Flesh" (1997) where Bardem became known to international audiences.

Playing a paraplegic cop in Almodovar's surprisingly controlled and stylish take on marital infidelity and obsession, Bardem's physicality, even hampered by a wheelchair, is breathtaking. His broken nose, shattered before he made "Jamón, Jamón," gives his face with those shaded eyes a pugilistic visage that only adds to his elemental mystery.

"I had an operation before I did 'Jamón, Jamón,'" he says with a laugh, "but at time goes by, my nose started to go down and break in pieces."

Surprisingly, Julian Schnabel offered Bardem the supporting role of Arenas' best friend and fellow survivor, Lázaro Gómez

I don't think to portray the gay person is something you should not feel proud of. A gay person is much more than a sexual option. It's also a behavior, a mental option. It's also hard.

—Javier Bardem

Carriles in "Before Night Falls."

"I said yes immediately because I sensed this was going to be a wonderful movie, but then they offered me the role of Reinaldo, and that took me more time to decide."

He credits the key to his performance to his close working relationship with Carriles, Reinaldo Arenas' great friend who escaped with him to America during the 1980 Mariel boatlift and to whom Arenas dictated his haunting memoir "Before Night Falls" while he was dying of AIDS and unable to type.

Reinaldo Arenas committed suicide in 1990. Carriles co-wrote the screenplay with Schnabel and Cunningham O'Keefe.

"In that case, I was lucky to work with Lázaro," Bardem laughed, "I'm sure that Geoffrey Rush [nominated for his portrayal of the Marquis de Sade in "Quills"] got it much more difficult than me. To get somebody that's still alive who knew the Marquis de Sade is difficult.

"I was lucky in that sense because I knew

somebody that knew Reinaldo very well. So that helped me a lot with my research. When I had any questions, I would go to him.

"Lázaro really insisted a lot in that film in his body language, in something that was really specific for Reinaldo. He taught me how he would walk, how he would talk, how he would move his hands. What I tried to do was not imitate, but try to really get the essence of that, the sense of him."

The other sense Bardem had to portray was Arenas' homosexuality. Spanish machismo didn't stand in this professional's way. It wasn't even an issue.

"I don't think to portray the gay person is something you should not feel proud of," Bardem explained. "A gay person is much more than a sexual option. It's also a behavior, a mental option. It's also hard.

"I don't have any concern about doing that, and what I liked about "Before Night Falls" is that Julian treats that issue with a lot of respect. You can tell that besides being a gay, he was chased because he was an artist, also. That's cool. Because the role of the movie normalize the idea of the gay people. It's not a movie from the ghetto, you know? It's not a gay movie."

Though lyrically depicted in almost hallucinogenic images of both visual and aural power, matching Arenas' prose and poetry to an amazing degree, "Before Night Falls" tells the tale of man's overwhelming desire to speak in his own voice, to express himself as he sees fit. His defiance to any repression is his cry of freedom.

Infernal Bridegroom stages Sam Shepard one-acters

> Continued from Page 15

'Chicago' & 'Action'

If you're in need of a primer on the theatrical iconography of Sam Shepard, then this fascinating exploration by Infernal Bridegroom Productions of two early one-acters fit all requirements.

Although separated by 10 years, these plays are quintessential Shepard, hitting all his high notes: alienation, disaster right outside the door, sudden erupting violence, evocative visual language that provokes as well as paints, theatrical flair, Brechtian distance, love/hate of family and community ties, all tempered with equal measures of hyper-realism and surrealism.

"Chicago" (1965) is the extended soliloquy of a fish out of water. Although Stu (Charlie Scott) remains in his tub, splashing and venting at the world outside, he wears pants. Something is out of joint. Images of water abound in his flailing at life - comfort and danger just under the calm blue surface. He's adrift, yet can't grasp out for the lifeline.

Although director Jason Nodler has simplified Shepard's streamlined staging by removing the silent characters who appear throughout Stu's visions, and Joy (Tamarie Cooper) no longer encircles the black space

with a wagon of luggage to constantly return to him, Shepard's haunting thesis of Man caught unable to fit into the great scheme of things reverberates like a scream under water.

"Action" (1975) won Shepard the first of many theater awards, and this four-character drama deserves the praise. With a ratty Christmas tree as silent witness, these sad sacks, who huddle around the table waiting for dinner, are emotionally as immobile and out of place as that vestige of holiday cheer and warm family. As in most of Shepard, the men wreck their lives and the women clean up the mess.

Something ominous has happened outside their winter cabin, something fearful that keeps them prisoner, but it's nothing compared to what personal fears keep each trapped in their own skins. Lupe and Liza (Tamarie Cooper and Jodi McLaughlin) make the food, clean the laundry, and sweep up the broken chairs that Shooter (George Parker) keeps smashing in frustration.

"I'm looking forward to me, the way I picture me," says Shooter, staring far off. "Am I completely hidden. Maybe I'm gone," replies Jeep (Troy Schulze, in an exemplary performance), peeking out from under his overturned easy chair.

Incapable of taking constructive action, they spin their fears into visual fables, trying to make sense of their lives.

"Create a reason for me to move," Shooter commands, after finding a fish in their water bucket. For what seems the first time in his life, Jeep gives directions as Shooter guts the fish.

The four can't function without each other. A dysfunctional family is better than none. At the end, the smell of roasting turkey mingles with dead fish. A perfect aural metaphor for these strangers in a strange land.

'A Flea in Her Ear'

Speaking of food, what would you say to a 150 pound soufflé? Run away, run away, might be appropriate when force-fed the Alley's doughy and overbaked wreck of Feydeau's classic froth of a farce, "A Flea in Her Ear."

Director Gregory Boyd, who in the past has shown little respect for Stoppard and Shakespeare, stomps on the lesser light of Feydeau, giving this theatrical pastry a filling of lead. In this shrill, frenetic, over-the-top, fairly tasteless and groin-grabbing recipe, no one shines in this kitchen.

The actors try their best to keep some professional dignity (Jamison Stern as palette-losing Camille fares the best), but most come off like surly waiters, exhausted at the end of this banquet from hell.

Using cheap circus music and sound effects, whiteface makeup, fantastic costumes and hairdos, this low-rent idea of farce should be scraped off the plate and quickly put down the disposal. This is unworthy microwave theater, not fine cuisine. Mr. Boyd, back to cooking school.

INFO	"Stiff"
	Through March 18 Theater LaB Houston, 1706 Alamo 713-868-7516
	"A Flea in Her Ear"
	Through March 24 Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Avenue 713-228-8421
	"Chicago" & "Action"
	Through March 18 Infernal Bridegroom Productions @ The Atomic Café, 1320 Nance 713-522-8443

Bayou Calendar

'Song of the Bow'

Swifter than an eagle and stronger than a lion, Jonathon, a strapping Israelite officer in the wars against the Philistines and eldest son of King Saul, loved David "as he loved his own soul." For David, Jonathon's love "was wonderful, passing the love of women." Their Biblical friendship, if not love affair, unheralded for its passion, is the play within the play of Wayne Harrel's world premiere drama. A mother to assuage her grief over her gay son's suicide, posthumously stages his play about the biblical boyfriends. The re-telling opens everyone's eyes—and hearts.

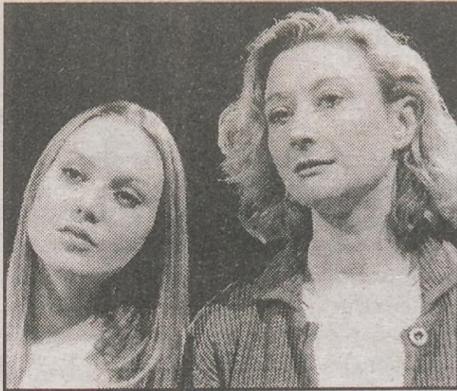
Through April 14
Bienvenue Theatre, 3722 Washington Ave.
713-426-2626

'Car Pool' by Laura Hembree

Put five corporate males in a car as they commute over six months, and you have the basis for Hembree's comedy/drama of inter-office and inter-personal relationships in contemporary America. How they deal with layoffs, takeovers, and mergers, while also trying to hold their private lives together, is the toll these guys pay on life's highway.

March 16 to April 8
Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway

(Wagh & D'Amico)
713-527-8243



'Full Bloom'

Phoebe is 16 years old and starting to blossom, and she's sensitive and precocious enough to see the culture that surrounds her is obsessed by youth and beauty. As she gets prettier by the day, she grows sadder at what she rightly perceives, losing her bloom. Playwright Suzanne Bradbeer, inspired by Salinger's classic tale of displaced youth, "Catcher in the Rye," looks at society's morbid infatuation with appearance and is none too pleased, either.

March 8 - April 17
Main Street Theater, 2540 Times Boulevard (in Rice Village)
713-524-6706

'Real Love, The Artwork of John Lennon'

As a benefit for Operation Smile, a non-profit organization that provides operations to children with facial deformities, Yoko Ono unveils an exhibition of her late husband's art work spanning the Beatles period through 1980, the year he died. Lyric manuscripts, some controversial works from the infamous Bag-One raid in 1970, and family drawings done for son Sean will be on sale, also. If Mrs. Lennon shows up, please don't confront her with screams that she broke up your favorite band of all time. She already knows that. A \$2 donation at the door is asked for O.S.

March 16, 17, 18
Borders Books, River Oaks, 3025 Kirby
888-ART-1969

'Miss Saigon'

This epic weepy of a musical by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schonberg (creators of "Les Miserables") transplants Puccini's "Madame Butterfly" to the Vietnam war era and the 1975 fall of Saigon. Derivative of other musicals,

there's a slimy master of ceremonies ("Cabaret") lots of shirtless soldier boys ("South Pacific") mediocre tunes (any other over-produced musical from this period), and that helicopter (Phantom's coup de theatre). All the noise, lavish mise en scene, amplified voices, unmemorable music and lyrics, swamps the affecting simple love story, but it can still pack an emotional wallop if you turn off your brain.

March 20 to April 1
Arena Theatre, 7326 Southwest Freeway @ Fondren
1-800-678-5440

'Disparate Ingredients'

Now, this sounds promising. A world premiere musical by Richard Laub, Little Room Downstairs' artistic director, about a big city mayoral election, an ultra-conservative politico, his gay (but closeted) spin doctor, and the politico's illegitimate son. Any city we know?

March 16 to April 21
Little Room Downstairs, 2326 Bissonnet
713-522-5737

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Eating Out

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Incomplete 'Complique'

Cafe has style down pat, should take food more seriously

by TRAYCE DISKIN

If you're going to take over space that was the legendary Pot Pie on lower Westheimer, best to do it with gusto. Although the Pot Pie moved long ago to more spacious digs several blocks away, the original structure remains as sacred to many steadfast Montrosians, as say, the Menil Collection, Pride Parade or Mary's.

So, for many reasons, the owners of CAFE COMPLIQUE had the right idea when they quickly moved in and transformed the institution's former bungalow with coat after coat of yellow.

Not, mind you, a cowardly, shrinking yellow, but a dizzying, psychedelic lemon yellow, matched only by the equally festive greens, violets, reds and indigos painted inside.

And once inside, the slatted picnic table booths and wooden walls glow like a child's popsicle stick house painstakingly, but shabbily painted on the last day of arts and crafts class.

Add in a kitschy clutter of Urban Outfitters-like vases and flowers and the effect is fun, funky and charmingly casual.

With numerous higher-end (and often marvelous) restaurants dotting neighborhood streets, it's important that Montrose maintain its diversity with affordable, laid-back cafes that don't take themselves, or their food, too seriously.

Cafe Complique, however, unfortunately errs on the side of not taking its food seriously enough. Offering many standard cafe items with a Middle Eastern touch, the menu often includes strange and jarring combinations.

For instance, the Falafel Sandwich (\$3.99) is served on rather crusty French bread, with those marinated banana peppers so essential on any Subway sandwich, but too tart and rubbery for deep-fried chickpeas. And while I applaud the falafel balls for not being overly greasy, their dry, crumbling texture, along with the French bread, makes for a messy and tasteless mouthful.

A similar fate befalls the Grilled Taco Salad (\$5.90). The flame-grilled corn, black beans, corn chips, olives, tomatoes and onions all blend wonderfully, but the tangy vinaigrette kills the otherwise Tex-Mex flavorings with the sour kiss of too much vinegar.

To be fair, however, Complique does offer quite a range of salads and many of them tend to include incredibly fresh ingredients in harmonious balance. The Al Menga (\$6.25) features juicy chunks of mango, black beans, corn, pico de gallo and a light and creamy mango dressing. The fried tortilla strips lend an added aesthetic touch to this already festive platter.

The Caesar Pleaser (\$5.90) and the Coyote Caesar (\$5.90) similarly achieve salad glory with plump cherry tomatoes, zesty parmesan

café
complique



1525 Westheimer
713.529.5774

FOOD FILE

Food: 

Service: 

Value: 

Scene: 

-  Opt for bread, water at home
-  OK, if you really must
-  Fine for most
-  Worth the drive, so live a little
-  As good as it gets

and, on the Coyote, a spicy, smoky dressing.

The soups and appetizers deserve to be more varied, although the French Mushroom Soup (\$2.99) is silky and deliciously seasoned.

The Calamari (\$5.50) forgoes the usual bite-sized squid pieces lightly dusted in batter for seriously deep fried, thick rings. The coating is dark and slightly burnt and, based on appearance, the calamari could be easily mistaken for fried onion rings. Based on taste, the coating would be more appropriate on fried mozzarella sticks.

In the sandwich department, there are also major gaffes and minor successes. The Tuna Lemonaise (\$5.90) advertise a "lemonaise" that will "knock your socks off," but after a few bites, I could hardly taste the piquant vinaigrette. The tuna, however, is well blended and the bread itself was fresh and pliant this time.

My Veggie Pizza (\$8.50) didn't fail for lack of well-sautéed veggies, including thick strips of Portobello mushroom, delightfully gooey eggplant and fresh cherry tomatoes (although I was particularly looking forward to the sun-dried tomatoes promised in the menu description). The culprit, once more, was a bitter and unpleasant coating that tasted like an overload of balsamic vinegar.

No matter how smooth the mozzarella succulent the mushrooms, it was almost impossible to eat without wincing from the sour tang of each bite. The Greek (\$8.50) or the Tropical (\$8.75) with pineapple, mango, ham and pepperoni, lacked this mystery ingredient and were, by contrast, quite tasty.

If Cafe Complique invested the same amount of energy into the dishes as they do in the quick and friendly service and cosmic decor, they would be on their way to creating their own, delightfully affordable, Montrose legacy.

"quote/unquote"

compiled from REX WOCKNER



"I go on[line] with a fake name, and there are all these guys with their fake names and no one is saying anything except how they're looking for sex. I usually get into these funny arguments with people because no one is saying anything intelligent or interesting. I get bored of it very quickly. Someone will ask me what I'm wearing, and I'll tell them hoop earrings and full make-up, just to piss them off, and before you know it, they've logged off!"

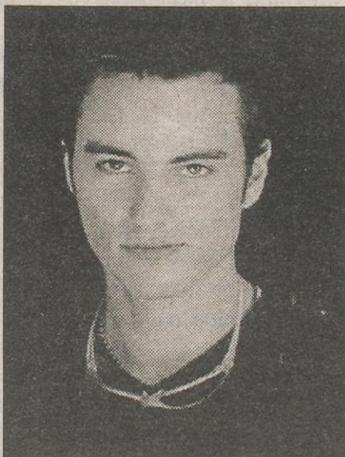
—Boy George (left) to *eclipse* magazine, March 17 issue

"At first, I was wondering if I would upset anybody because I don't actually have a penis. But then I decided if they were going to hire any woman, it should be me, because I know so many trannies that I felt like I could do the role with a certain amount of dignity."

—Actress Lisa Edelstein who plays the male-to-female transsexual on "Ally McBeal," to *Out* magazine, March issue

"I've got gaydar. You get hit on by a few guys, you can start to tell by a look. It's been... different!"

—Actor Kerr Smith (right) who plays a gay character on TV's "Dawson's Creek," to *Out* magazine, March issue



—Actor Kerr Smith to *Out* magazine, March issue

"I was doing the press line [at the 1999 GLAAD Awards in Los Angeles] and Whoopi Goldberg was in front of me doing her thing. She was doing an interview, and she turned around, walked up to me, and said, 'I really love what you're doing. Keep it up.' And she walked away. I almost fainted."

"No one would dispute that sex without latex can be much, much more intimate. But how intimate do you need to be, with whom, and when? Does it mean the same to you to not wear condoms with your lover as with the guy you met last Thursday whose name and HIV status you didn't know, or the guy you'll trick with tonight? ... Isn't taking care of each other also part of intimacy?"

—San Francisco AIDS activist Dan Wohlfeiler writing at GayHealth.com, Feb. 16

"I think ['Will & Grace' is] hysterical. It makes me laugh so hard, I can't breathe. I think it's a lot to ask of a show to carry the entire weight of the gay movement. No way."

—Lesbian comedian Kate Clinton to the *Advocate*, Feb. 27

"Larry Kramer hasn't written a play in years, or led an ACT UP demonstration since last century, but the acclaimed author and prickly conscience of the gay-rights movement can still pick up the phone and lecture Tom Brokaw or Leslie Stahl on their gay and AIDS coverage. Everyone takes his call."

—Author Michelangelo Signorile writing in *New York* magazine, March 5



"We're the one subculture where fame reduces your ability to get laid—if someone comes up to me in a bar and says, 'I saw you on television,' that's it, I have no interest in having sex with that person."

—Author Andrew Sullivan (left) to *New York* magazine, March 5



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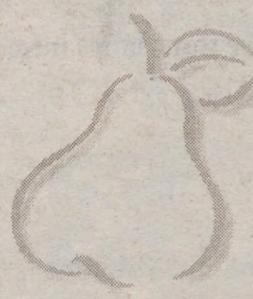
— San Francisco Chronicle

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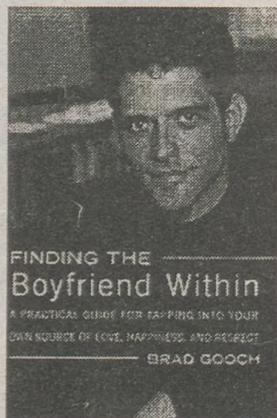


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out in music

by KRISTY KENNEDY

Takin' the Rapp

Stage and screen actor Anthony Rapp releases a CD of queer-tinged pop music or 'alternapop'

You may recognize him from the Broadway musical "Rent," or remember him as Tony in "Dazed and Confused," but these days Anthony Rapp has other things up his sleeve.

His debut album, titled "Look Around," is his latest project. A self-described "music freak," Rapp is extending his talent from the stage and the silver screen into a new area and is more than just a little excited about it.

"It was amazing to get the shipment at my door," he says. "I am very proud of it."

Growing up in the '80s, Rapp counts new wave and pop bands like Talking Heads, XTC, REM, Wham, Crowded House and artists such as Madonna, Cyndi Lauper and Peter Gabriel among the biggest influences on his own musical style, which he describes as "alternapop."

His sound is reminiscent of Matthew Sweet, but with a few unexpected twists and turns. He's been compared frequently to Michael Stipe and Elvis Costello.

The album is an eclectic mix of pop tunes, mellow ballads and a few louder, high-energy singles thrown in for posterity. "I like that about it," says Rapp. "I'm really proud of the eclecticism of the music."

He co-wrote many of the songs on the album with Joe Pisapia, a Nashville-based musician whom Rapp was introduced to through a mutual friend, Carolyn Lowen. From the start, there was an instant connection.

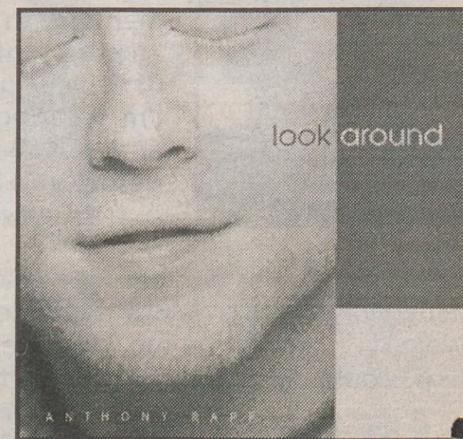
"It was just one of those rare, magical things," Rapp remembers. "When we met it was two like minds coming together. You don't always find that."

The songs are all very personal, dealing with heartache, love lost and found, the struggle for individuality and relationships.

Rapp came out publicly about eight-and-a-half years ago. In the song "Just Some Guy," he sings openly about his relationship with his boyfriend.

He was concerned at first how Pisapia would feel about that, and whether or not he'd feel comfortable writing about two boys, but Rapp was amazed at his open-mindedness and willingness to try something new. And it worked.

In "Visits To You," a song about Rapp's mother, who died from cancer, Pisapia again was right in sync with him. "It was so



generous of him to open himself up like that for me—we hadn't really known each other that long," Rapp says. "The lyrics were somewhat abstract at first, but Joe really helped it to take shape."

The fifth song on the album, "Always," is the companion song to "Visits to You," according to Rapp. "It's about leaving home after visiting my mom while she was sick," he says.

Rapp's message is quite clear in "Living Alive." It's an anthem of sorts for many gay and lesbian youth. He got the idea for the song and some of the lyrics while spending time with a gay and lesbian youth group.

"The sign on the wall read 'There's only one you for all time—fearlessly be yourself,'" he remembers. In the song, he says "You can't be anyone else; you've got to be yourself."

He thinks it's important to make that statement, especially for kids who are struggling with their sexuality. "I was afraid it might sound too cheesy, but it is what I believe," he explains.

"For me it's important to be direct, and not to speak 'in code' about things," he says. "I've gotten a lot of positive feedback from both straight and gay fans."

In addition to his burgeoning music career, he is also up for a supporting role in an upcoming Ron Howard movie starring Russell Crowe. "The Beautiful Minds" is the story of a mathematician, played by Crowe, who struggles with schizophrenia and overcomes it to win a Nobel prize. Rapp plays a fellow student and friend of Crowe's.

He is also considering a few more musicals and wants to do a brief tour later this summer, hopefully also performing at several Pride festivals and coming through the south sometime this spring. He plans to make another album later next year.

"I approach my life and my work with authenticity and honesty, and I hope that my music is an extension of that," he says. "For me, it has to have an identifiable heart—I try to recognize the human experience in everything."

INFO

Anthony Rapp

www.anthonyrapp.com

on screen

FILM, VIDEO & TV REVIEWS

by STEVE WARREN

Lesbian death watch

Death parts female couples in two new films

It's taken long enough to get lesbians on screen, and two of the latest are about to die. Despite the coincidence of the films premiering—one on cable, the other in theaters—four days apart, this is not a throw-back to the days when the queer had to croak at the end of the movie as punishment for his or her *sins*. If anything the newest fatalities are too good to live.

Finding out in the opening moments of **BLOW DRY** that Shelley (Natasha Richardson) is terminally ill could make you think you've been misled by the silly ads that promise "a new comedy from the writer of 'The Full Monty.'"

Well, yes and no. It's hardly a feather-weight romp, but all things considered it's relatively fluffy.

Shelley lives in a Yorkshire town with her partner Sandra (Rachel Griffiths), down the block from her ex-husband Phil (Alan Rickman) and their son Brian (Josh Hartnett). They run rival haircutting businesses and haven't spoken in 10 years, but when the national hairdressing championships come to town Shelley wants them to team up and enter.

The point, she explains to Phil late in the film, is: "You, me, Brian, Sandra. Family."

Phil isn't moved as much by Shelley's pleas as by the chance to defeat his old rival, reigning champion Ray Robertson (Bill Nighy), who plays dirty. Ray's estranged daughter Christina (Rachael Leigh Cook), on whom Brian had a crush when they were seven, is visiting from Minneapolis and is drafted into serving as the model for her father's team.

Most of the humor is in the cracks between the story's serious building blocks. Not too big a deal is made of the women's lesbianism.

The town obviously accepts them as a couple, but Phil admits at one point that it bothers him. Most of the men in the competition are flamboyant, but not necessarily gay.

INFO

'Blow Dry'

★★ 1/2

Directed by Paddy Breathnach
Starring Alan Rickman, Natasha Richardson, Rachel Griffiths

Queer Quotient: A lesbian couple is woven into the fabric of an English village. Only the ex-husband of one of the women shuns them.

Four events, each on a different day, allow time for the various plots to develop and for the film's overall hair designer Jenny Shircore to show off her often hilarious creativity.

If last year's "The Big Tease" turned you off to movies about hairdressing competitions, "Blow Dry" may turn you on again.

Rodrigo Garcia, son of internationally renowned novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez, has written five remarkably insightful vignettes for his directorial debut, **THINGS YOU CAN TELL JUST BY LOOKING AT HER**.

Perhaps you can tell something about Garcia just by looking at his movie. He shows sisterly love, mother love and lesbian love; but in all the heterosexual couplings the people are simply satisfying a physical need, even if the women hope for more.

Like the recent "A Girl Thing," "Things You Can Tell..." features a to-die-for cast in several stories about women; but this "woman thing" sends the earlier film back to the minors.

INFO

'Things You Can Tell Just by Looking at Her'

★★★★

Directed by Rodrigo Garcia
Starring Glenn Close, Holly Hunter, Calista Flockhart

Queer Quotient: One of the five vignettes is a tender story about a lesbian couple.

Showtime: March 22, 6 p.m., March 25, 1 p.m.; Showtime 2: March 21, 7 p.m., March 30, noon, 7 p.m.



Natasha Richardson's terminal illness doesn't dampen the comedy 'Blow Dry,' which co-stars Rachel Griffiths as her partner and Alan Rickman as her ex-husband.

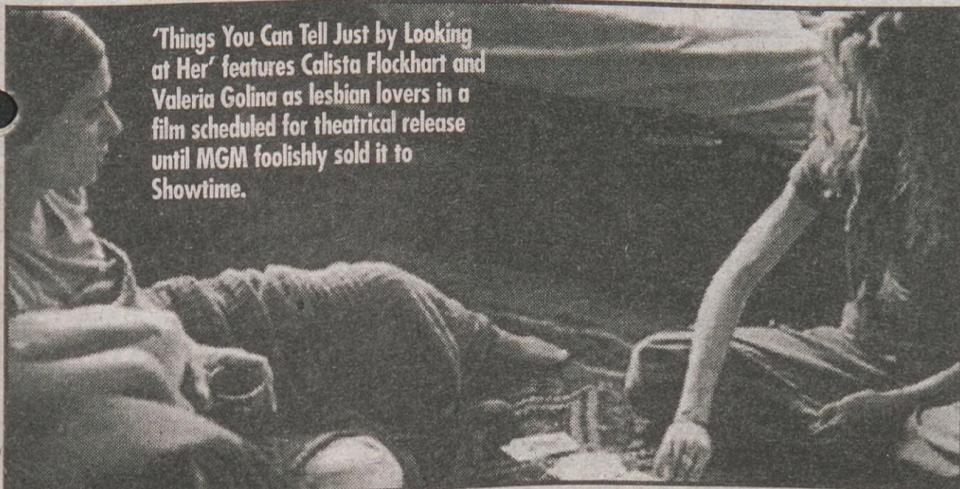
Calista Flockhart and Valeria Golina, as lesbian lovers, co-star with Glenn Close, Holly Hunter, Kathy Baker, Amy Brenneman and Cameron Diaz. When the film was scheduled for theatrical release, I thought it could make history by furnishing all five nominees for Best Supporting Actress.

Since MGM foolishly sold it to Showtime that could still be true, but they'll

be competing for Emmy, not Oscar.

Despite hints of the paranormal in their stories the women all feel very real; it's easy to see why actresses accustomed to leading roles consented to be part of this ensemble.

"Things You Can Tell..." was almost one of the best films of 2000; now it's the best so far in 2001. It deserved a theatrical run, but see it wherever you can.



'Things You Can Tell Just by Looking at Her' features Calista Flockhart and Valeria Golina as lesbian lovers in a film scheduled for theatrical release until MGM foolishly sold it to Showtime.

Spring things?

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saturday, march 17

After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM. 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. 713-526-5738.
Q-Patrol walks the streets 8:45 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.
Dignity mass. 7:30 p.m. for gay Catholics. 713-880-2872.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Rosary 8 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama. 713-528-6665.
Houston Chain Gang Bicycle Club. Call for ride locations. 713-863-1860.
Gay & Lesbian Breakfast Club. 9:30 p.m. 281-437-0636.
Houston Wrestling Club. Practice. 1:30 p.m. 713-453-7406.
Rainbow Fishing Club. Meeting. 713-526-7070.713-880-9235.
Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours noon to 4 p.m. • Gay Broadcast Network rehearsals. Noon. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
Classic Chassis Car Club. Chili Cook-off. 713-797-8615.
Asians and Friends. St. Patrick's Day Pot Luck party. 713-626-6300.
Houston Area Bears. Social at Mary's. 713-867-9123

sunday, march 18

Blessed Sacrament Liberal Catholic Church. Study Group 11:30 a.m. Mass 12:30 p.m. www.blessed-sacrament.net. 713-476-9776
Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals meets. 713-942-7002.
Rainbow Riders. A bicycle club for women. 713-869-1686.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Holy Rite Eucharist I 7:45 a.m.; Holy Rite Eucharist II 8:55 a.m.; Education hour 10 a.m.; Choral Eucharist 11 a.m. 713-528-6665.
Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Church. Service. 6:30 p.m. 713-528-6756.
Resurrection MCC. Services. 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10 a.m. Youth Sunday School 11:15 a.m. Handbell Choir rehearsal 1:30 p.m. 713-861-9149.
Grace Lutheran Church. Sunday school for all ages 9 a.m. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-528-3269.
Community Gospel. Service at 11 a.m. & 7 p.m. Sunday School for children 10 a.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
Houston Mission Church. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-529-8225.
Covenant Church, Ecumenical, Liberal Baptist. Service 9:30 a.m. & education hour 11 a.m. 713-668-8830.
Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Services at 8:30 a.m. & 10:50 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 713-526-1017.
The Women's Group. Meeting & Discussion. 10:45 a.m. 713-529-8571.
Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 502 Church St. Service 10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.
First Congregational Church (Memorial). Service at 10 a.m.

Christian Education. 11:30 p.m. 713-468-9543 or fcc-houston.org.
Unitarian Fellowship of Houston. Adult forum 10 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 713-686-5876.
Gay Catholics of St. Anne's-Houston. 5 p.m. worship service. Dinner and social. alexcam@wt.net. 713-623-0930
Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation: Adult discussion 9:45 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.
First Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:30 & 11:30 a.m. Brunch available 10:30 a.m. Panel Discussion: Bisexuality. 1:30 p.m. 713-526-5200. church@firstuu.org.
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours 2 to 4 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
PFLAG-Galveston & Woodlands. 2 p.m. 713-867-9020.

monday, march 19

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

tuesday, march 20

For Mature Audiences Only. Support group. 7 p.m. Bering Memorial UMC. 713-526-1017.
Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Club Houston. 713-830-3000.
Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-524-0439.
Bering Support Network. Lunch Bunch Gang 11 a.m. 713-526-1017.

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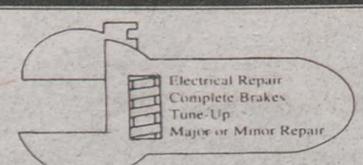


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calendar

Gay Men's Process Group. 7 p.m. 3316 Mt. Vernon. 713-526-8390.
 Men's Network. Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual men. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
 Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.
 CPR Classes. 3 p.m. 713-607-7700.
 Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition. • Lesbian Coming Out Group. 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
 Kolbe Project. Women's Group. 7 p.m. 713-861-1800.

wednesday, march 21

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. 2015 Thomas Street 713-793-4026.
 STD Exams & treatment. HIV Testing. Free. AVES. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.
 Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Mary's, Venture-N & E's. 713-830-3000.
 BiNet Houston. 7:30 p.m. Women's Social. 713-467-4380
 Women's Network. Montrose Counseling Center Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual women. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
 Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 936-441-1614.
 Project: Caesar. Workshops. AFH. 3203 Wesleyan. 713-623-6796.
 Out Skate Rollerskating Club. 8 to 10 p.m. 8075 Cook Road. 281-3-5818.
 Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. 7 p.m. 713-880-0670.
 Bible Study. Noon & 6:30 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal. 713-526-6665.
 Spiritual Uplift service. 7 p.m. Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Resurrection MCC. 713-861-9149.
 Freelance Art Classes by Kermit Eisenhut for HIV+ individuals. 1 to 4 p.m. Lunch provided. 713-523-9530.
 Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
 Lesbian Literature Discussion Group. 7 p.m. 713-523-3037.
 Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal. 1307 Yale. 713-527-0931. www.houstonprideband.org.
 Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. Various Support Groups 7 p.m. 713-526-1017.
 Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition • Free HIV testing by the Montrose Clinic 6 to 9 p.m. • 713-524-3818.

thursday, march 22

Gay Men's Chorus of Houston. Open rehearsal. 7 p.m. 4807 San Felipe. 713-521-7464.
 Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. 7 p.m. 713-880-0670.
 Hep C Recovery. Support Group. 6:30 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017, Ext. 211.
 STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.
 Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Toy Disco. 713-830-3000.
 Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.
 Lambda Skating Club skates. 8 p.m. Tradewinds. Skating Rink. www.lambdaroll.org. 713-410-7215.
 FrontRunners. Running Club. 6:30 p.m. 713-522-8021.
 HIV Art Course Program. 1 to 4 p.m. Kermit Eisenhut. 713-524-9530.
 Women's Clinic. Montrose Clinic. 713-830-3000.
 Community Gospel. Service. 7:30 p.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
 HIV Testing. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.
 Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

friday, march 23

Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (H.A.T.C.H.) Meeting. 713-942-7002.
 Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. Rich's. 713-830-3000.
 STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.
 Frost Eye Clinic. Free eye exams for people with HIV. 713-830-3000.
 Q-Patrol walks the streets. 9 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.
 Kolbe Project. Morning Prayer. 10 a.m. 713-861-1800.
 Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
 Positive Art Workshop. 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Patrick Palmer. 713-526-1118.
 Lesbian and Gay Voices. KPFT 90.1 FM. 7 p.m. 713-526-5738.
 Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
 Kolbe Project. Movie Night. "Remains of the Day." 713-861-1800.

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PROJECT L.E.A.P.

The PWA Coalition-Houston announces the start of Project LEAP, an intensive training program for HIV positive individuals and others who want to advocated for HIV/AIDS related services and funding • A 100 hour, 6 month program begins in April and will teach you all you need to know • For more info call Rich Arenschieldt at 713.522.5428 ext 28 or 1.800.999.0325

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Steven's House, an intermediate care community residence for people with HIV/AIDS, is seeking volunteers to help with the Bayou City Art Festival March 23-25 • Please call for more information * Steven's House 713.522.5757 or Brian Woodward 713.529.6179

Gay & Lesbian Breakfast Club now forming • Walk Memorial Park 8:00 AM every Saturday morning • 3 Mile track • then head to breakfast at Java Java Cafe at 911 11th Street • Call 713.861.9149 or see our website: <http://members.aol.com/morningclub/index.htm>

Youth Empowerment Advocates of Houston, an outreach center for homeless youth, is seeking the following donations: clothing, hygiene supplies, towels, books, videos and backpacks • Call Andrea 713.523.9324

The Spay & Neuter Assistance Program (SNAP) will provide FREE spaying, neutering, rabies vaccination and Houston city license for animals belonging to qualifying low income dog & cat guardians • Call 713.522.2337 for qualifications, locations or more information.

QUIT SMOKING!

Volunteers needed for research study using hand-held computer at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. Free nicotine patches! Call 713-792-2265

BAY AREA GAYS

Is a new social group in the greater Clear Lake area for "young-ish" gay men (ages 20-40) • Call 281.488.0537

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Project CAESAR is looking for a P/T Outreach Educator • Bilingual a plus, and minorities are encouraged to apply • Experience in HIV/AIDS education preferred but not necessary • TDH grant funded position, up to 30 hours per week • Great job for student • Fax or mail resumes to: Director of Education, AIDS Foundation Houston, Inc., 3202 Wesleyan Annex, Hou, TX 77027 • FAX 713.623.4029 • No phone calls please

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Wanted to Rent

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Occasions

Birthdays



Bob Bouton

Houston Area Bears Mike S. (3/17) and Bob "my name is on a lot of club roster birthdays" Bouton (3/19) growl in a birthday this week.

Classic Chassis Car Club members Tim W. (3/17), Robert B. (3/22) and Mark H. (3/22) can't steer clear of their birthdays this week.

Asians and Friends club member Robert B. (3/17), Bill B. (3/19) and Larry E. (3/22) celebrate birthdays this week.

Walter, aka Buffy, slaps the mayo on his birthday sandwich on March 18.

Sexy Kimberly Short sneaks in a birthday on March 20.



In memory of the late Felicia Flesheater (Julian Glass), there will be a fund-raising show, "When Pigs Fly," at the Brazos River Bottom on Sunday, March 18 at 8:30 p.m. This will benefit the RSICSS's Reign XVII.



The Rabbit, bartender extraordinaire, hops over his birthday on March 20.



Papa Del McGee will be celebrating his birthday in the Gentry style on March 18.



Super cute boy toy Chineaux, aka Ahzweepé, will toast his March 18th birthday with a tall glass of bingo juice. "You're using it wrong, sir!"



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YOUR WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

March 16 - 22

ARIES (MARCH 21—APRIL 20)

The new moon in your sign (late on March 24) ushers in a time of new beginnings and new inspirations. This is the period when you can accomplish the most if you act the most Aries-like. That means be impulsively brave, start projects you feel passionate about, and screw like you're 17 again. A Pisces shares your teen-like lust.

TAURUS (APRIL 21—MAY 20)

Mercury in your house of friends during this cycle means that you need to make an effort to communicate with your little boy and gal pals. Don't take for granted that they're there for you 24/7. Stop being so practical and start tapping into your wisdom. You can trust another Taurus to give you what you want in the sack.

GEMINI (MAY 21—JUNE 21)

Passionate Mars in your house of love makes March more of a lion than a lamb month for you, babe, so prepare to be swept away. Try writing down your dreams every morn and interpreting the metaphors beneath the mundane. A Libra thinks you're just dreamy.

CANCER (JUNE 22—JULY 22)

The Sun over the top of your chart bodes well for big career moves. Stop being so cautious and wishy-washy! If you are feeling ambivalent or in a total state of ennui, now is the time to make the necessary changes. Make it better or leave. An Aries pushes you in the right direction.

LEO (JULY 23—AUG. 22)

Be on the look out for people from other countries who can change your life. The Sun is transiting the most international sector of your chart. Get on top of a love situation (particularly if you want to get on top of a Virgo) before it gets more complicated. You have the ability to get what you want if you are willing to be both greedy and generous, sweetie.

VIRGO (AUG. 23—SEPT. 22)

If you are feeling frustration in your career because of a gap in your education, now would be a good time to fill that hole. Now is not the time to be casual with your promises or your sweet body. An Aquarius wants to possess you. How dramatic!

LIBRA (SEPT. 23—OCT. 22)

Look deeply at the messages you are sending to your day-to-day colleagues and friends. Are you being hostile in a passive way? If you're not ready to face a shrink (or yourself!), then expel some of your nervous anxiety by chatting with your friends. A Leo is your tower of strength.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23—NOV. 21)

If you are on the verge of obsession in your love life, try to stay on that edge for a little while longer. As April winds down, love will come to you full force. The oddest people can help your career, babe. And the oddest flirtation with a Capricorn could help your ego and your heart.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22—DEC. 21)

Go easy on someone who is too young and stupid to know he or she has hurt you. If a door has recently slammed shut in your face, maybe it's for a reason. Find a door that opens more easily, and you may discover fulfillment on the other side. A Cancer will listen to your troubles and make it all better.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22—JAN. 19)

Uranus and Neptune in your money house suggest that taking a creative approach to your financial and career goals. This is the right time for you to focus on a home improvement project that will also improve your mood. A Gemini wants to enter your bedroom and turn you from off to on.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20—FEB. 18)

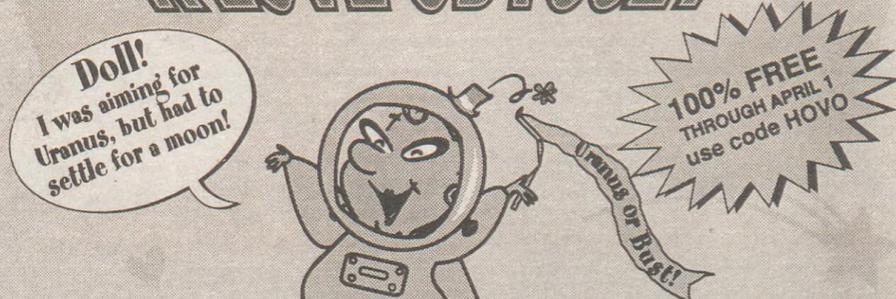
Your personal stock is climbing in late March, and so is your career reputation, as long as you stop stepping on people's toes. You need to read into the symbolism behind your life's victories and crises. A Sag holds the decoder ring.

PISCES (FEB. 19—MARCH 20)

If you can give up your private loneliness and reach out into the world, you can dry your own tears. Money could be in your pocket (in gobs) by May if you put your energy into a lucrative side project. A Scorpio would like you to put your hands in his or her pockets. You'll find honey - not money - there, _honey_.

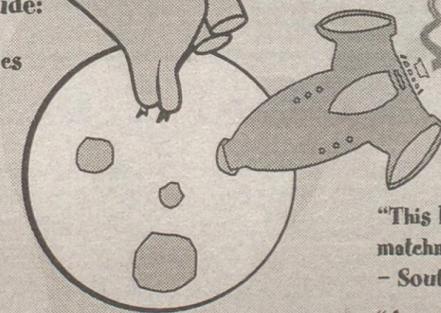
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