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Sing out, sister
Lesbian singer-songwriter
Melissa Ferrick headlines
Houston Women's Festival.
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documentary bores. **Page 17**



U.S. House passes hate crimes bill

Activists hail 'historic' vote
on gay, trans-inclusive
civil rights measure

By ELIZABETH WEILL-GREENBERG

The U.S. House of Representatives unexpectedly approved a bill Wednesday that includes a hate crimes provision inclusive of protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity, marking the first time a trans-inclusive measure has passed either house of Congress.

Some gay rights activists had feared that adding transgender language to a hate crimes bill would doom the measure.

"It shows unequivocally that those that thought Congress couldn't pass a trans-inclusive bill were just wrong," said Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality. "I don't know of a single vote we lost because it was trans inclusive."

Lawmakers voted to amend the Children's Safety Act by adding what was known as the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which would extend federal hate crimes laws that cover crimes motivated by race, color, religion and national origin to include crimes based on actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, disability and gender identity.

The hate crimes amendment was co-sponsored by Reps. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), John Conyers Jr. (D-Mich.), Christopher Shays (R-Conn.) and Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.). The



Wis. Rep. **Tammy Baldwin** and Mass. Rep. **Barney Frank**, who are gay, co-sponsored the amendment that would add protections based on gender identity to existing federal hate crimes laws. (Photo by Dennis Cook/AP)

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Sharlie Hicks, a preoperative transsexual, said she at first thought it was a joke when police arrived at a Texas shelter to arrest her for using the women's shower. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

Trans, gay hurricane evacuees face bias

Gay relief efforts cite different
methods for distributing funds

By ANDREW KEEGAN

As Hurricane Katrina's flood waters recede, cases of discrimination against gay and transgendered survivors are beginning to surface.

Gay organizations stepped in to help last week after a transsexual evacuee spent five days in jail for using a women's shower at a Texas shelter and a gay man suffered vandalism of his personal belongings at a shelter in Shreveport, La.

The majority of people experiencing discrimination from relief agencies are transgendered, according to Ann Robison,

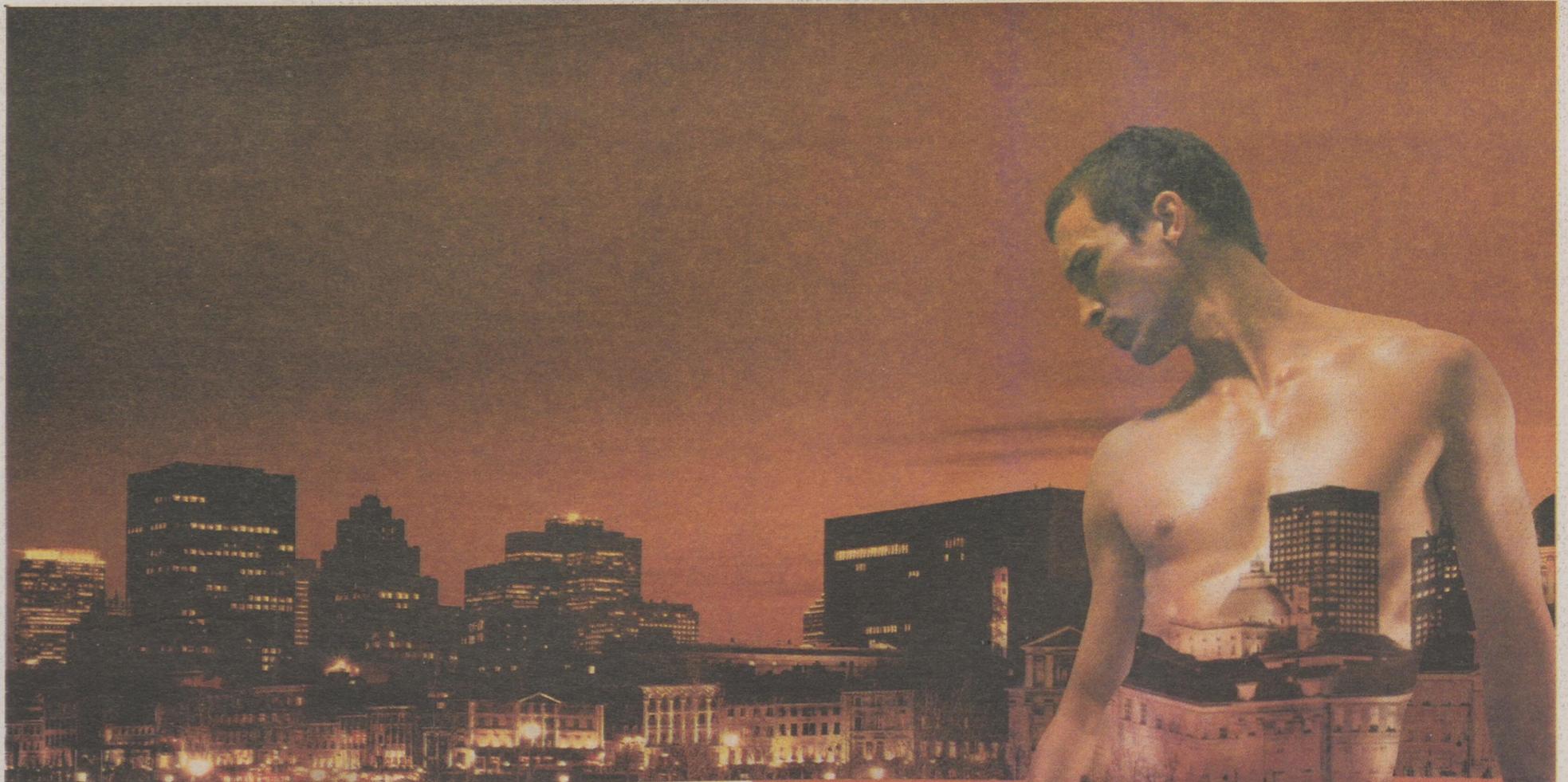
Please see **HURRICANE** on Page 3



eclipse
Literary icon **Rita Mae Brown**
explains why 'it's a strange and
odd time to be an American.'
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dish
How winning 'Survivor' may
make gay **Richard Hatch**
into a loser in federal court.
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local news

Gay evacuees seek Houston's help

Phones 'ringing like crazy' at local agencies

By ELLA TYLER

From support groups to fund-raisers, local gay and HIV agencies continued reaching out this week to the thousands of Hurricane Katrina evacuees who now call Houston home.

The Montrose Counseling Center, which provides services to those dealing with sexual orientation, gender identity and HIV issues, held its first support group for Katrina survivors last week and keeps getting busier.

"Our phone has been ringing like crazy," said Sally Huffer, community projects specialist at the center.

Six people attended the center's first support meeting for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered hurricane victims, and Huffer predicted attendance would increase in the next few weeks.

"I was talking to one woman who had to leave New Orleans and she told me, 'It just hit me, and I cried all weekend'. I think a lot of people are saying 'I'll just deal with it later,'" Huffer said.

Meetings are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and walk-in attendees are welcome. "There's no intake or fees," Huffer said.

Montrose Counseling is also offering case management services. "These are for people with HIV and people with other issues too," Huffer said. "If someone has HIV, we also offer one-on-one counseling, and if someone has been harassed, we have help through our hate crimes counseling."

Case managers can help with problems like filling out paperwork, getting vouchers for food and clothes, getting Texas identification and locating permanent housing, Huffer said.

'Spirit is still there'

The gusto with which gay Houstonians have responded to the needs of hurricane victims makes John Szewczyk, organizer of Houston's Rainbow Cross, feel proud.

"I was at an EJ's and heard an older man from New Orleans tell a younger man that

this was like the beginning of the AIDS crisis in the '80s, when there was a need and everyone worked together to help out," Szewczyk said. "It's nice to see that spirit is still here in the community."

Offers of help have come in to Houston's Rainbow Cross from across the country, he said. "People have offered housing, pet care, transportation and more."

Local bars and clubs have also stepped up to help with a variety of small fund-raisers, Szewczyk said. "Both of the Courts, the Colt 45s, Third Coast Family, the Big Men's Club, Fire Dancers — this is just the list I can think of off the top of my head — have been raising funds," he said.

A yahoo group has been set up for people to post how they are helping. "If people go to yahoogroups.com and type in HoustonsRainbowCross in the find group box, they will find it," Szewczyk said.

Ripcord has begun an "Adopt A Shift" program, where bartenders give up one of their shifts to a bartender from New Orleans. "It gives them a chance to earn some money," Szewczyk said. "We hope other bars will do this too."

Led by Paige Mahogany, Creating Awareness For Transgender Support has also reached out to Katrina victims. A benefit at Bartini last week collected clothes, shoes, makeup and toiletries for transgendered and gay evacuees from New Orleans.



Houston gay and transgender groups have launched a variety of efforts to help hurricane evacuees like the thousands living in the Astrodome and other shelters. (Photo by David Zalubowski/AP)

Other groups that are helping include the Houston GLBT Community Center, Montrose Clinic, Bering Omega Community Services and AIDS Foundation Houston.

Szewczyk, who convened a meeting Sept. 2 to launch gay hurricane relief efforts, said he will convene a meeting toward the end of the month to make plans for the long term.

"We will see what the newer needs are and pass along information about how this phase worked," he said.

LGBT Relief Fund to meet with local gay agencies

HURRICANE, continued from Page 1

executive director of the Montrose Counseling Center in Houston.

"We plan to talk with the Red Cross when this settles down. We have reports of transgender individuals not being allowed to take donated female clothes. That's ridiculous," Robison said.

New Orleans evacuee Sharli'e Vicks, a preoperative transsexual, was arrested Sept. 4 by police at Texas A&M University in College Station after using the women's shower at Reed Arena, a temporary relief shelter for storm victims. Vicks, 20, said her 16-year-old cousin, also a preoperative transsexual, was detained for using the women's shower but eventually released to the care of an older sister who was staying at the shelter.

Vicks, a middle school substitute teacher who is undergoing hormone treatment, arrived at the shelter Sept. 3. It wasn't until the third shower that a problem arose, she said.

"I asked the volunteer posted at the shower if I could use it," Vicks said Sept.

13. "She said, 'sure.'"

When campus security arrived to arrest Vicks for criminal trespass, she said she thought it was a joke, until police handcuffed and booked her.

"They didn't tell me anything in jail except that the court system was backed up for six months to a year and I should expect to be there that long," Vicks said.

Texas A&M police, who booked Vicks under her legal name of Arpollo Vicks, did not respond to interview requests.

John Van Alstyne, corps of cadets commander for Texas A&M, was in charge of the shelter. "All decisions were mine and I have no comment," he stated via email.

Vicks' story became public only by chance. A reporter for the College Station Eagle stumbled upon her arrest record while looking for another case, according to Vicks.

The Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay rights group, and Mara Keisling, president of the National Center for Transgender Equality, then contacted the university demanding charges against Vicks be dropped.

"We were made aware of the situation on Thursday, after business hours," said David Smith, HRC vice president of policy. "I contacted the detention center that evening and got nowhere after speaking with an extremely homophobic sergeant."

Texas A&M Vice-Provost Bill Perry contacted Smith on Sept. 9 indicating all charges against Vicks were being dropped.

The Montrose Counseling Center relocated and arranged housing for Vicks and her relatives, Smith said.

Gay man harassed

A gay man sheltered at the Louisiana State University Shreveport relief shelter experienced harassment from other evacuees, according to Ken Beatty, director of the Philadelphia Center, Shreveport's AIDS service agency.

Beatty said he received a call from a nurse working at the shelter expressing concern for the man's safety. The nurse indicated that everything the man brought to the shelter had been covered in shaving cream.

"The housing stock is almost gone in our area," Beatty said. "I, personally, along with a few friends, am helping the gay person in the shelter return to New York."

Officials at the LSUS shelter did not respond to phone calls for comment.

Anticipating further cases of discrimination, the Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund posted a toll-free number, 866-542-8336, for gay men and lesbians affected by Katrina to report problems.

The agency has not received any complaints from gay evacuees to date, according to the group's national headquarters in New York.

Money trail

In addition to helping individual hurricane victims like Vicks, national and local gay groups have joined in the deluge of

relief funds created to aid those hurt by the disaster.

But the gay-specific funds take two decidedly different tacks when determining how to distribute what they raise. Some, like the Rainbow World Fund, forward the money to general relief agencies; others, like the Hurricane Katrina LGBT Relief Fund, plan to give their funds directly to gay groups.

The Rainbow World Fund, a gay humanitarian agency, has raised more than \$250,000 to feed evacuees, according to Jeff Cotter, the group's director.

Rainbow World Fund then gives the money to America's Second Harvest, the nation's largest food bank network, to provide food to the survivors of Katrina.

"It's important our efforts are public and people see we contribute positively to the world, regardless of sexual orientation," Cotter said.

The Hurricane Katrina LGBT Relief Fund, promoted by a coalition of national gay rights groups, had generated approximately \$50,000 as of Sept. 13, according to Craig Bowman, executive director of the National Youth Advocacy Coalition.

The funds have not been distributed, Bowman said.

"We are waiting for the federal response to die down so we can see exactly what people need," he said.

Bowman said gay relief organizations in Houston are at the forefront of likely recipients for the fund, given the area was the first to receive evacuees. A meeting with Houston's gay service providers is scheduled for Sept. 15, he said.

i MORE INFO

Montrose Counseling Center
Disaster Relief
713-529-0037, ext. 352
Support group for survivors
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Tuesday and Thursday
METRO Routes 25 and 34
www.montrosecounselingcenter.org

i MORE INFO

• Hurricane Katrina LGBT Relief Fund
www.nyacyouth.org
• Rainbow World Fund
www.rainbowfund.org

Saturday, September 24

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at Jones Plaza Downtown, 600 Louisiana

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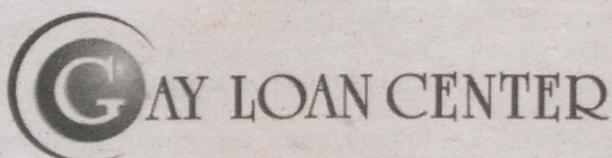
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national news

Tenn. may shut down 'ex-gay' facility

State takes steps against Love in Action

By EARTHA JANE MELZER

Exodus International's flagship 'ex-gay' residential treatment facility, Love in Action, is facing possible closure by the state of Tennessee for unlawfully treating mentally ill gay men.

Founded in 1973, Memphis-based Love in Action claims that it is the oldest and largest group to focus on the "prevention or treatment" of same-sex attraction.

The organization attracted widespread attention earlier this year after a Tennessee teen wrote on his blog that his parents were sending him to the program in an effort to change his sexual orientation, and appealed for help.

Amidst the outpouring of concern for the teen, reports surfaced that Love in Action clients had been traumatized by their treatment at the program. Questions arose about whether the facility was operating within the law.

On Sept. 12, the state of Tennessee announced that its Department of Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities had determined that Love in Action is operating two "unlicensed mental health supportive living facilities."

"The [state] went in and visited and found that they were providing room, board and personal care for mentally ill people," Lassiter said. "The clients were determined to be mentally ill because some of them had been treated by psychiatrists and were on medication."

It appears that Love in Action has taken on responsibility for the care of these people, Lassiter said, and unlawful operation of a personal support service is a misdemeanor in Tennessee.

Lassiter explained that the department of mental health notified John Smid, Love in Action's executive director, advising him that he must stop operating the homes or apply for a license within seven days. Smid did not respond, and a second letter was issued informing him that if he does not stop operating the homes or apply for a license by Sept. 15, the department would recommend that a cease and desist order be issued.

If the order is issued, state authorities will demand that Love in Action immediately stop operation of its residential facilities and will offer assistance in relocating the residents.

Gerard Wellman, business administrator for Love in Action, and a former Love in Action client, said Sept. 13 that the organization has been in contact with the state but would not comment further.

"As a church, we operate under a different set of rules," Wellman said. "But all options are on the table."



Tennessee officials determined that the 'ex-gay' group Love in Action, led by **John Smid**, is illegally operating two 'mental health supportive living facilities.'

Applying for an Initial License as a mental health facility in Tennessee requires only a basic safety review including criminal background checks, and fire and environmental safety inspections, according to officials.

Morgan Fox, who has been filming a documentary on Love in Action, said he doubts the organization will seek licensing.

"They may want to play the victim," Fox said. "If they get into the position of being shut down, they can get Exodus and the Christian right behind them to defend what they do."

Exodus International did not return calls by press time.

Wayne Besen, author of "Anything But Straight: Unmasking the Scandals & Lies Behind the Ex-Gay Myth," celebrated news of Tennessee's action against Love in Action.

"Tennessee is rightfully and responsibly protecting its citizens from unscrupulous and unlicensed practitioners posing as genuine mental health professionals," Besen said.

A former Love in Action client, Peterson Toscano, said he felt validated by the actions of Tennessee officials.

"We were so trusting in the authority that they had. They used clinically couched language to make it seem legitimate and spiritual language to make it seem powerful ... to make people endure it," Toscano said.

Toscano was a client at Love in Action between July 1996 and October 1998.

Toscano said that while he was a client, Love in Action staff dispensed psychotropic drugs to clients and administered psychiatric tests to clients.

A separate investigation by the Department of Health this summer determined that Love in Action is not required to be licensed as a drug and alcohol treatment facility because it is faith-based.

national news

Roberts recognizes right to privacy

Nominee refuses to give views on sodomy case

By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

WASHINGTON — Judge John G. Roberts Jr. disclosed for the first time this week that he believes the U.S. Constitution protects the right of privacy, but legal experts said his carefully guarded comments gave no indication of whether he feels the doctrine should include gay civil rights.

Roberts discussed his views on privacy rights and a wide range of other subjects during the second day of the Senate Judiciary Committee's confirmation hearing on his nomination to the Supreme Court as the nation's 17th chief justice.

The Supreme Court's landmark 2003 case of *Lawrence vs. Texas* cited constitutional privacy right protections as the basis for overturning the 1986 case of *Bowers vs. Hardwick*, along with state sodomy laws that for years defined sexual relations among gays as criminal acts. Gay rights attorneys have said constitutional privacy rights are pivotal to future gay rights cases, including cases seeking to legalize same-sex marriage.

"Do you believe today that the right to privacy does exist in the Constitution?" Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), chair of the Judiciary Committee, asked during the

Sept. 13 session.

"Senator, I do," Roberts said. "The right to privacy is protected under the Constitution in various ways."

In discussing his understanding of privacy rights, Roberts pointed to the Constitution's First, Third and Fourth Amendments, which are part of the Bill of Rights. Among other things, they protect citizens against improper searches and seizures by the government, protect against restrictions of freedom of speech and assembly, and prohibit the establishment of an official state religion.

Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) asked Roberts whether he agreed with Justice Clarence Thomas' dissent in the *Lawrence* case, in which he refused even to recognize a general right to privacy.

Roberts agreed with Schumer there was a "substantive right of privacy but would not say if he agreed with Thomas or with the holding in *Lawrence*, citing his general policy of not stating his views on specific cases.

Mixed reviews

Gay rights attorneys and legal observers, including senators on the Judiciary Committee, had differing views on the significance of Roberts' views on privacy rights.

Lara Schwartz, an attorney and chief legislative counsel for the Human Rights Campaign, said the privacy rights associated with the First, Third and Fourth

Amendments are universally accepted by conservatives as well as liberals. Schwartz said Robert's cautiously worded comment on personal privacy linked to the 14th Amendment — which the Supreme Court cited in the *Lawrence* decision — did not indicate whether he supports such rights.

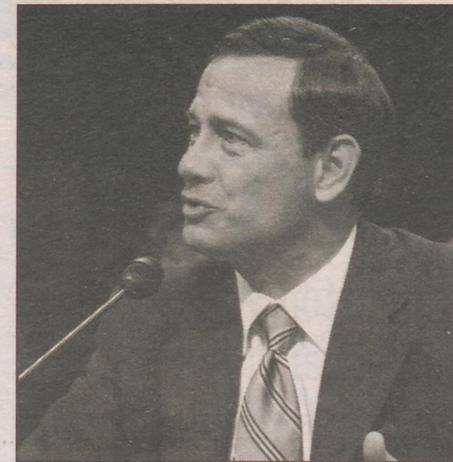
Prior to Tuesday's hearing, public knowledge of Roberts' views on privacy rights were limited to memos he wrote in the 1980s as an assistant attorney general in the Reagan administration.

In response to Specter's questions, Roberts said his memos during the Reagan presidency reflected his role as an advocate for a conservative administration. He said his often quoted memo characterizing privacy rights as an "amorphous" right that could not be found in the Constitution referred to a statement by someone else.

"[M]y views today are as I've just stated them," he told Specter.

'Every good lawyer'

Specter was the only senator to mention gay rights during Tuesday's hearing session when he asked Roberts about his decision to provide pro bono legal advice to gay rights lawyers who argued the *Romer vs. Evans* case, which overturned the anti-gay amendment in Colorado. But Specter limited his question to why Roberts chose to help a "gay rights" case and didn't ask Roberts if he agreed with the court's decision on the case.



Judge John Roberts answers questions during his Senate confirmation hearing on Wednesday. President Bush nominated Roberts to replace U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist. (Photo by Rudy K. Lawidjaja)

"Every good lawyer knows that if there is something in his client's cause that so personally offends you, morally, religiously ... then you shouldn't take it on," Specter quoted one of Roberts' colleagues in his law firm as saying. Specter noted that the colleague said Roberts expressed no such moral objection to taking that case.

"Does that accurately express your own sentiments" in working on a 'gay' case?" Specter asked Roberts.

"I was asked frequently by other partners to help out, particularly in my area of expertise, often involving moot courting," Roberts said. "And I never turned down a request. I think it's right if there had been something morally objectionable, I suppose I would have [declined the case]."

Hate crimes bill a mixed victory for some activists

HATE CRIMES, continued from Page 1

amendment passed Wednesday 223 to 199; the full bill later passed overwhelmingly.

"Special recognition needs to go to Barney Frank and Nancy Pelosi for their leadership," said Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force. HRC singled out Baldwin for her work as well.

Frank has been outspoken in his opposition to adding transgender protections to the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, a bill that would outlaw workplace bias on the basis of sexual orientation. But he has championed inclusion on the hate crimes measure as more feasible politically.

Most representatives voted along party lines, though 30 Republicans voted for it and five Democrats voted against it, according to HRC.

A hate crimes bill has passed the Senate three times before and the House has held two procedural votes in favor of gay-inclusive hate crimes legislation in the past, according to Christopher Labonte, HRC's deputy political director. But every time, the measure has been killed by GOP Congressional leaders during conference negotiations between the two houses of Congress.

The current hate crimes bill in the Senate, co-sponsored by Sens. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Gordon Smith (R-



Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, said the hate crimes vote proves Congress is willing to pass trans-inclusive legislation.

Ore.), does not explicitly include protections based on gender identity.

"This is the first time an explicitly written transgender inclusive bill has been passed by the House or the Senate," Labonte said. "It's amazingly historic."

The Task Force also applauded the vote. "For the first time the House voted to extend protections to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Americans in a meaningful way," Foreman said.

"It's even more remarkable it occurred

first in the House, which is more conservative than the Senate," he added.

'Very troubling act'

Some gay rights activists were troubled by the bill to which the hate crimes amendment was attached—the Children's Safety Act, which has raised civil liberties concerns among some.

Keisling said the hate crimes amendment was attached to a "very, very troubling" act.

"Parts of the bill are really bad," she said. Foreman said his organization was also concerned about the underlying bill. One provision requires all states to set up sex offender registries, he said.

"In some states, public lewdness is a sex offense," Foreman said. "Public lewdness laws are disproportionately and unfairly enforced against gay men in cruising areas."

U.S. Rep. Melissa Hart (R-Pa.) said the measure was designed to protect children from sex offenders, who have an unusually high rate of recidivism.

"There are over 100,000 sex offenders who have failed to register in communities as they are required to do under existing law," Hart told the Reuters news service. "They are currently living and working in our communities. Many could be residing near schools or playgrounds."

How they voted

DEMOCRATS VOTING AGAINST (5)
Berry; Boren; Davis (TN); Tanner; Taylor (MS).

REPUBLICANS VOTING FOR (30)
Bass; Biggert; Boehlert; Bono; Castle; Dent; Diaz-Balart, L.; Diaz-Balart, M.; Fitzpatrick (PA); Foley; Gerlach; Johnson (CT); Kelly; Kirk; Kolbe; LaHood; Leach; LoBiondo; McCotter; Platts; Reichert; Ros-Lehtinen; Saxton; Schwarz (MI); Shays; Shimkus; Simmons; Walden (OR); Weldon (PA); Weller.

ABSTAINING (11)
Barton (R-TX); Beauprez (R); Clyburn (D); Gilchrest (R); Harman (D); Hoekstra (R); Melancon (D); Payne (D); Royce (R); Walsh (R); Weiner (D)

Reuters reported that the White House supports the underlying bill, and issued a statement praising it for "a strong, comprehensive approach to addressing crimes, especially sex crimes, against children."

Labonte said that HRC did not have a position on the Children's Safety Act.

The Children's Safety Act also calls for the creation of a national DNA database of anyone arrested or detained by a federal agency, according to Jack King, public affairs director for the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

'Art can and does change the world'

Houston Women's Festival offers full day of performers, vendors

By LAURA DOUGLAS-BROWN

Melissa Ferrick is accustomed to life on the road.

"I'm sure you've heard the poor musician's story a million times," Ferrick says. "It is really hard when you are on the road. You are in a city twice a year so it takes 10 years to see someone 20 times."

But performing at events like next weekend's Houston Women's Festival makes all the travel worthwhile, Ferrick says.

"Houston has become one of my favorite places to play," she says. "Because of my relationship with Jay from the Women's Festival and my alliance with the Mucky Duck, Houston has proven to be a city that thrives on the support of independent music. I am so excited to play the Women's Festival and am honored to have been asked back."

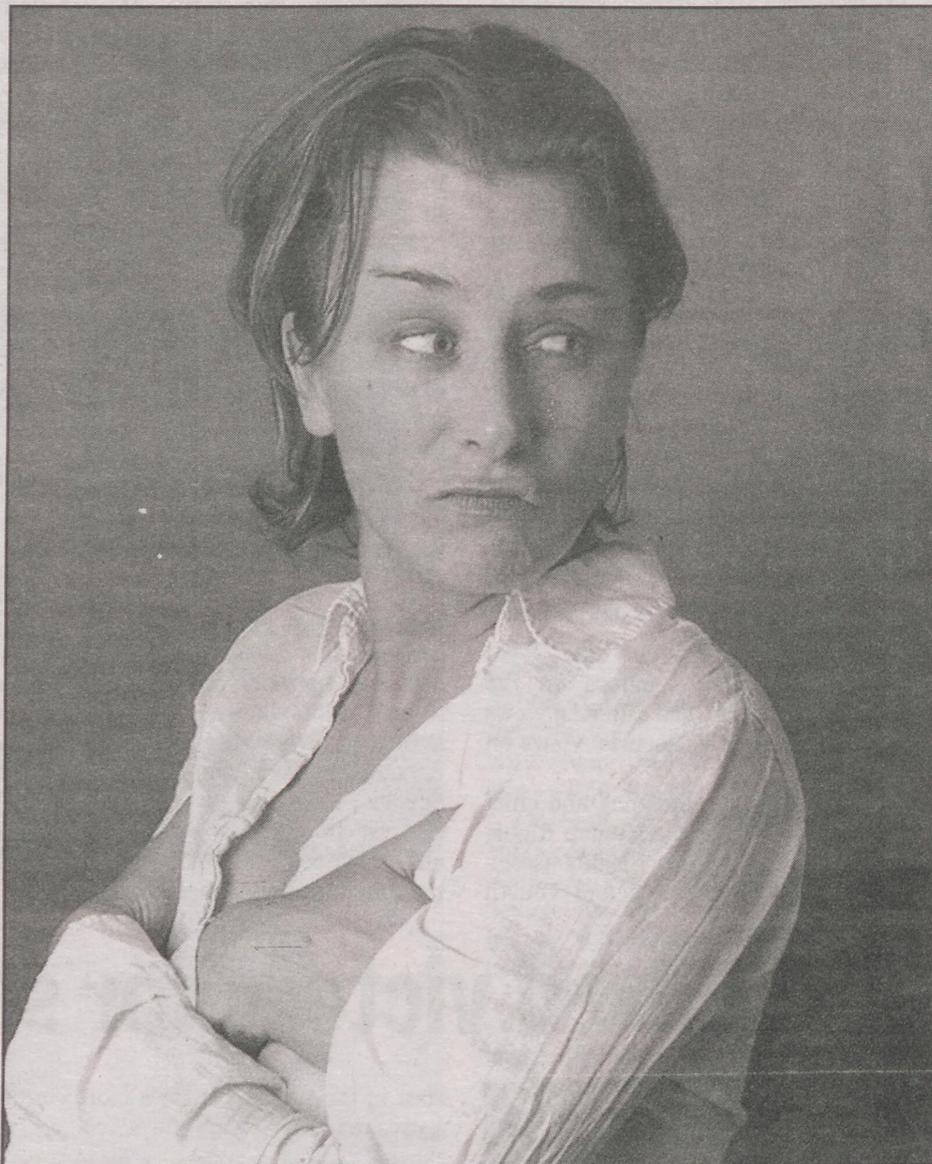
Ferrick headlines the Sept. 24 festival, capping off a full day of entertainment at Jones Plaza that features a marketplace and a stage schedule packed with lesbian favorites.

"She brings such raw talent to the festival, as well as an energy that only Melissa Ferrick can bring to the stage," says Jay Poudrette, producer of the festival.

Organizers are "absolutely thrilled" to host Ferrick, since she is "committed to give every performance everything that she has — she pours her heart and soul into these performances with great enthusiasm," Poudrette says.

The 11th annual Houston Women's Festival is expected to draw 1,500 to 2,000 attendees. And while the festival bills itself as the "largest annual event for the women's community in Texas," all people — including men — are "absolutely" welcome, Poudrette says.

The Athena Art Project, the non-profit group that puts on the festival, focuses on three simple beliefs: "Art can and does change the world," "Women are worthy," and "The Gulf Coast region, and Houston



A decade after deciding to speak openly about her sexual orientation, Melissa Ferrick headlines the Houston Women's Festival on Sept. 24.

in particular, is fertile ground for creativity and art appreciation of all kinds."

"I think that focusing on all music is extremely important," Poudrette says.

Long road to success

Like many lesbian musicians, and no doubt many of the fans who will turn out for the Houston Women's Festival, Ferrick has faced difficult decisions about disclosing her sexual orientation.

But unlike the "other Melissa" to whom she is frequently compared, Ferrick didn't wait to secure fame and fortune before coming out.

In 1991, while still a student at the Berklee College of Music, she received a last minute invitation to open for Morrissey at the Great Woods Amphitheater in Boston. The regular opener had canceled, and with little more than an hour's notice, Ferrick impressed the former Smiths' frontman so much that he invited her to open the rest of his U.S. and all of his U.K. tour.

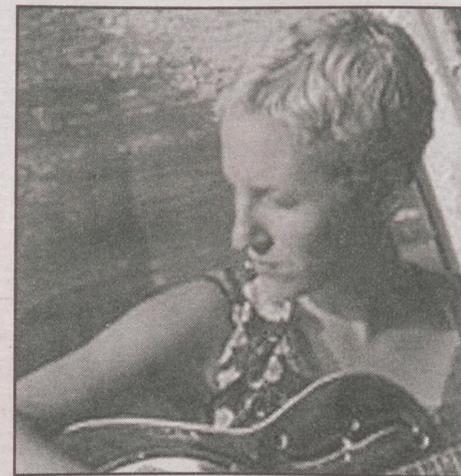
A recording deal with mega-label Atlantic Records followed, which resulted in Ferrick's first recordings: 1993's "Massive Blur" and 1995's "Willing to Wait." But when the efforts garnered more critical praise than financial success, Atlantic execs decided they were not willing to wait for Ferrick, and dropped her from the label.

But Ferrick did take one important step while signed to Atlantic, although she now questions the initial motivation: She came out publicly in a 1995 interview with *The Advocate*, a national gay magazine.

"Because my music is so goddamned honest, I think it would be really horrible of me not to be totally honest with my fans," Ferrick said then. "They're listening to me sing about things that are sometimes really hard to take, so how could I be shut-mouthed about the fact that I'm gay?"

Ten years later, Ferrick offers a more cynical take on the label's motivation for the interview.

"Honestly, it was a publicity play," she



Natalia Zukerman, currently on tour with Melissa Ferrick, is known for slide guitar and bluesy, jazzy tunes. (Photo by Emily Baron)

Festival line-up

Whitney McCray	Noon - 12:35 p.m.
Beth Wood	12:50 p.m. - 1:20 p.m.
Yvonne Perea	1:35 p.m. - 2:05 p.m.
Natalia Zukerman	2:25 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.
Tamaras	3 p.m. - 3:35 p.m.
Susan Gibson	3:45 p.m. - 4:20 p.m.
Holly Light	4:30 p.m. - 5:10 p.m.
Michelle Mayfield	5:20 p.m. - 6:20 p.m.
Patrice Pike	6:45 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Melissa Ferrick	8:30 p.m. - 9:45 p.m.

said earlier this year.

"It was what the record label wanted at the time because of the press I could get," she said. "They thought we could sell more records and narrow down the audience. ... Looking back now, I think it was a business ploy rather than a heartfelt thing."

Ferrick has followed her heart since leaving Atlantic, rebuilding her career from the ground up and gaining legions of lesbian fans with her often angsty, aggressive style of acoustic songwriting.

She tours consistently and has released an album each year, including her most recent, 2004's "The Other Side" on the independent label Right On Records.

And Ferrick isn't bitter about the sometimes indirect road she has taken to success. "This is my God-given path, and I will not judge or doubt it for one second," she has said. "I've seen very clearly that any plans I make will not happen, so I need to get out of the way and let the world take me where it will. ...

"It's been a life-threatening job at some points, and I'm really grateful to be here, to get cleaned up and sober and move on. ... I want to have a lot more fun this time."

Andy Zeffer contributed.

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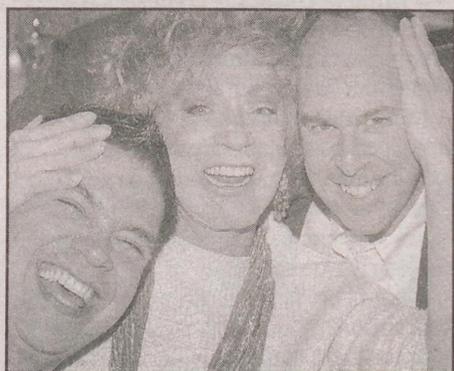
The Houston chapter of the Human Rights Campaign collected donations for hurricane relief at Berryhill.



The MD Anderson GLBT Network celebrated its first anniversary at Meteor.



Volunteers turned out to help hurricane evacuees at the George R. Brown Convention Center.



Miss Holly Woodlawn held court at the Houston Gay & Lesbian Film Festival.



HRC President Joe Solomnese speaks in Houston.



Whitney McCray and Lauren performed after one of the film fest showings at Diverse Works.

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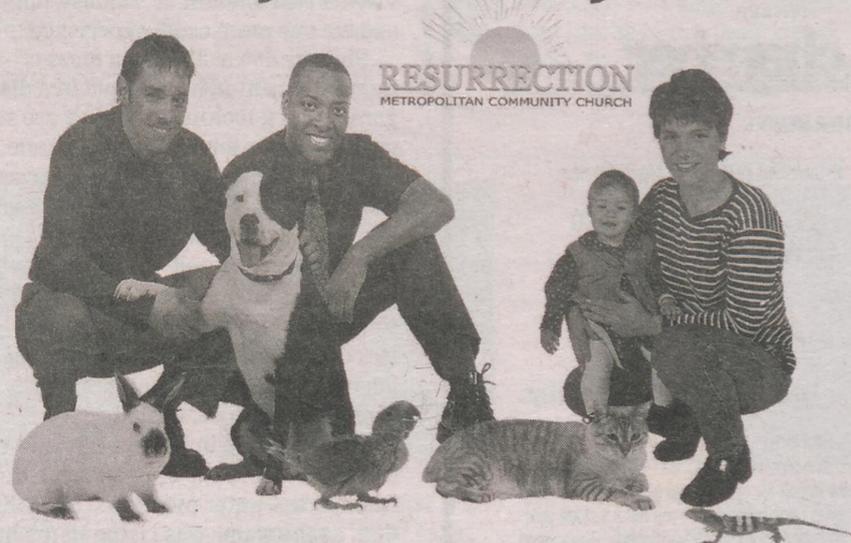
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Photographers DALTON DEHART, KIMBERLY THOMPSON

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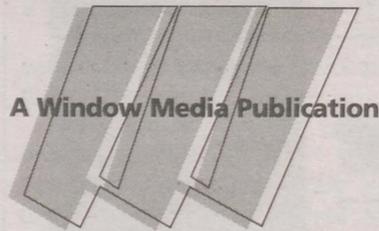
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Forum

HOUSTON VOICE

SEPTEMBER 16, 2005

PAGE 8

guest editorial

We already know how to help

Hurricane Katrina leaves many of us asking what we can do.

The answer is simple: the **same things** we've done for 20 years of facing the AIDS epidemic in our community.

By RICH ARENSCHIELDT

a

LARGE AFRICAN-AMERICAN woman approaches. She's 84 and concerned about her prescription that has been filled at the temporary pharmacy, created to meet the extensive medical

needs of thousands of infirm and elderly Katrina victims. She is one of almost a thousand people I have interacted with on a day that gives new meaning to "Labor Day."

My protective professional demeanor has disintegrated. I smell like I've been wading through the waters of New Orleans myself, and my heart has been breaking for 10 solid hours. I smile at this woman who has, by her countenance, survived a vast amount of sadness, only to endure one more cruel experience.

She sits down. There's a mass of humanity behind her; people in a disorganized fury, looking as if they are still engulfed in an emotional storm, one which continues to inhabit and ravage their own minds as it did their homes and neighborhoods.

I introduce myself, naively believing that this assumed familiarity would somehow calm her. I ask how she is — not in a common everyday way, but with a purposeful intensity that humanizes our contact and simultaneously depletes me.

Tears well up in her eyes. The levee is breached and in the next moment, demolished as the water overflows. She tells me that, as the water was rising in the home that she shared with her daughter and two grandchildren, (ages four and six), her daughter, unable to swim and stranded on a countertop, screamed for her to take the kids and get out of the house while she still could.

That was the last time she saw her daughter.

Taking her grandchildren out into the water, shouting for help, she lost her grip on one and then, moments later, the other. She watched them both disappear, help-

less and unable to do anything to save them. Neither of the children knew how to swim.

Katrina has killed her entire family. She has no recollection of what occurred after that or how she arrived in Houston. She is here alone and has no idea what will happen in the future.

I look at her in utter disbelief and ask if she needs to talk with someone. She grasps my arm as if she herself is drowning, and says, "I just did. Thank you." She shuffles off and is replaced by others who I am unable to see through my own uncontrolled weeping.

SIXTEEN HOURS AFTER THE DAY began, it mercifully ends. At home I eat an entire large pizza. Since I don't have any heroin, "Papa John's" is the next best thing (a coworker confesses that she utilized a similar coping mechanism, consuming almost a gallon of homemade ice cream).

In my nice clean house, lying on my nice clean bed, I cannot pry the weekend's human tsunami from my mind. Even after 40 hours immersed in its sights and smells, it's incomprehensible. I am utterly mystified.

What is my personal response to this devastation? What is the response of my community? The subsequent day's events clarify the answers to those two crucial questions.

FEMA (Feeble Emergency Management Administration) clearly can't find its own bureaucratic butt with its own misguided finger. Georgie Porgy is on vacation watching the value of the oil stocks in his investment portfolio skyrocket, and 25,000 refugees are encamped three miles away from my house. What can I do? What can we do?

The answer is simple: the same thing we've done for 20 years.

For two decades the gay community has been ravaged by an epidemic. What did we do when marginalized individuals, shunned by government, needed help? We organized, mobilized and prioritized com-

munity concerns ourselves. People forget that substantial federal funding for HIV didn't really kick in until almost 10 years after the start of the epidemic.

Back in the 1980s and early '90s we took care of people, raising money one dollar at a time. We checked in on our HIV-positive friends and neighbors. We walked their dogs, bought them tanks of gas and loaves of bread. We were care team leaders, advocates, case managers, counselors, transportation providers and food banks.

WE KNOW A LOT ABOUT THE devastation of entire communities, neighborhoods and loving family partnerships. We coped with that loss largely through individual acts of kindness, small tokens of respect and gratitude, not through huge government intervention. Is it possible to share those same personal actions with Katrina victims?

Recently I noticed a lady with a gaggle of kids in an old SUV with Louisiana license plates. She was watching the gas (and her money) disappear into the tank, shaking her head and looking in her wallet. She didn't see me but I watched her for about 20 gallons worth of time. As she headed toward the cashier I paid for the gas.

She looked at me with tears on the way. But with a quick smile I said, "Please, no tears, we've both seen lots of those this week." She laughed and I laughed and then we both drove away.

The near-term needs are simple: kind gestures, tanks of gas, loaves of bread, and maybe a hotel room or two.

Let's do what we always have.

@ Rich Arenschieldt is a Houston-based writer and educator specializing in work with nonprofit organizations. He can be reached at rarenschieldt@aol.com.



viewpoint KEITH BOYKIN



It's not enough anymore to vote.
We have to make sure our friends
stay that way once in office.

Benedict Arnold is only the latest

A FEW MONTHS AGO, NO ONE WOULD have believed that Louis Farrakhan would be chatting with gay and lesbian leaders on a conference call while William Weld would be distancing himself from the LGBT community. But that's exactly what happened over the summer.

Farrakhan, the historically homophobic Nation of Islam leader, found himself reaching out to black gays to encourage them to attend his Millions More Movement March in October. On the other hand Weld, the traditionally gay-friendly former Massachusetts governor, found himself wiggling out of his state (and his past) in an attempt to carpetbag his way to the Republican nomination for governor of New York.

We've seen this before. Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton promised as a candidate to lift the ban on gays in the military and then compromised into "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" as president.

Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry voted against the anti-gay Defense of Marriage Act, which Clinton signed, but then supported a defense of marriage restriction in his own state when he ran for president.

And Vice President Dick Cheney ran for office as a right-wing conservative but then seemed to moderate his views on gay civil unions after his daughter was outed.

When it comes to gay issues, who knows where anyone stands? As a young lawyer, John Roberts assisted gay rights activists preparing to argue their case in *Romer vs. Evans*, which overturned an anti-gay initiative in Colorado.

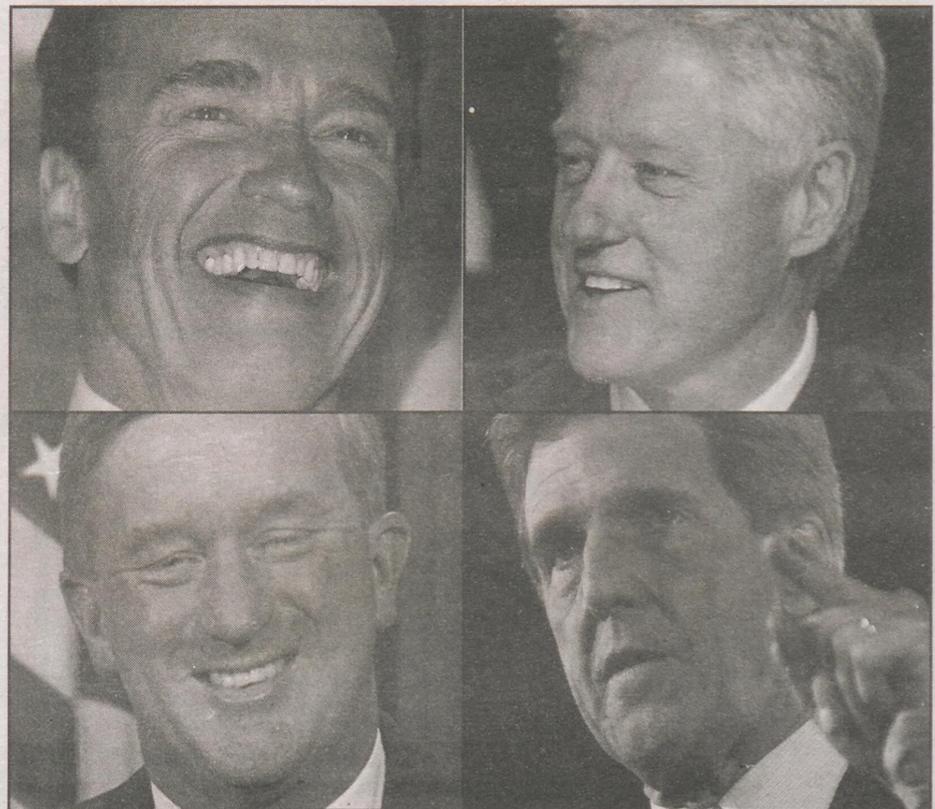
But no one expects Roberts to be so progressive as a Supreme Court justice.

AND THEN THERE'S ARNOLD. AS A young bodybuilder, Arnold Schwarzenegger was known to be friendly to gay men, even posing naked in the gay magazine *After Dark*.

"Gay people are fighting the same kind of stereotyping that bodybuilders are," he said in 1977. But as governor of California this year, Schwarzenegger promised to veto a bill allowing gays and lesbians to marry.

With friends like these, who needs enemies?

Maybe it's time we stop giving our support, our money and our votes to candidates who don't support us. Maybe



What do Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bill Clinton, William Weld and John Kerry have in common? Their walk never matched their talk on gay rights.

it's time we stop supporting Democrats who take our money but won't take our positions.

Maybe it's time we stop sucking up to powerful Republicans just because they have power. And if we're going to sleep with the enemy, we should at least get something positive out of the relationship.

When I worked in the White House back in the first term of Bill Clinton's administration, I was shocked to discover that the anti-gay right is so much better organized than the pro-gay left. While conservatives flooded our offices with boxes of anti-gay postcards and letters, progressives lagged far behind in generating pro-gay messages.

IF THERE'S ONE LESSON WE SHOULD

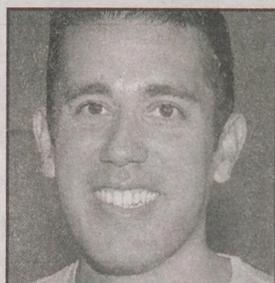
take away from our fickle relationship with politicians and public figures, it is that we must hold our leaders accountable, and in this post-Katrina world, accountability will be the new buzzword of the second Bush term.

So it's not enough to vote on Election Day. We also have to write letters, send e-mails, make phone calls and speak up on our blogs to get our voices heard. Let's take a lesson from the Arnold Schwarzenegger of 1977 and remember to flex our muscles.

@ Keith Boykin is the author of 'Beyond the Down Low: Sex, Lies & Denial in Black America.' He can be reached through his Web site, www.keithboykin.com.

THE Q

Many gay men, lesbians and transgendered people have worked tirelessly toward Hurricane Katrina relief. What message should that send to those who denounce gays?



I think it proves that people are willing to help all people during times of need and that sexual orientation is irrelevant during times of crisis.

Eduardo Elizondo, 36
Houston
Program manager



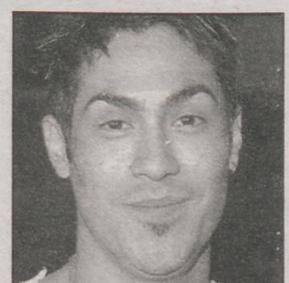
The way people have come together to aid those affected by Hurricane Katrina regardless of race, religion, sexuality, should show those that denounce gays that we are all human and share as a common bond that we are on this planet together for better or worse.

David Serra, 24
Houston
Architect



Despite what people think of us, you realize in a time of disaster, humanity and love for your brother is greater than misguided beliefs.

Tim McConico, 31
Houston
Manager / sales



It should show that everyone is equal, not only because of a disaster like Katrina, but because everyone is human. Those who denounce gays need to take a reality check because they, too, may be affected in some way through this.

Ray Dofies, 25
Houston
Dance instructor/choreographer



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on the record



"I vote for President Mubarak because I could not find any candidate more handsome than **Hosni Mubarak.**"

Mohany Ziad, 48, an Egyptian voter in the town of Torah, expressing excitement for the incumbent president-dictator (International Herald Tribune, Sept. 8)

"This is a Christian country and Christian teaching is very clear on these matters. I am extremely concerned that young people today are being bombarded with literature which suggests that a homosexual relationship is the same as a heterosexual relationship, which it is not."

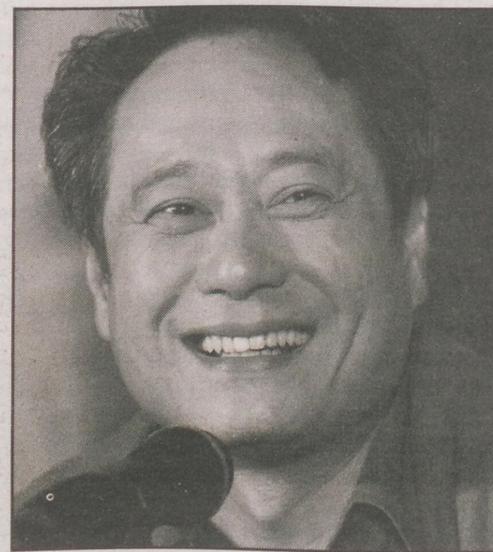
Conservative Party spokesperson Gerald Howarth, responding to news the British government plans to allow same-sex couples in the military to register their relationships to live in barracks previously reserved for married couples (Gay.com.UK, Sept. 13)

"I think anyone who has engaged in homosexual activity, or has strong homosexual inclinations, would be best not to apply to a seminary and not to be accepted into a seminary."

Archbishop Edwin O'Brien, the American prelate overseeing a sweeping Vatican evaluation of every seminary in the United States on reports the Vatican is considering banning gay men from becoming priests (Associated Press, Sept. 12)

"I'm so glad it's prevailed here and was received so warmly. The love story has good vibes. I hope it will penetrate prejudices."

"Brokeback Mountain" Director Ang Lee, accepting the coveted Golden Lion Award for best film at the Venice Film Festival (CTV News, Sept. 11)



"They're really sick and tired of what they hear out of Washington — the harsh partisanship they hear every day, especially from the Republican side. And unfortunately Senator Santorum has been a leader in that by being very aggressive and determined, it seems, to divide people and sometimes to demonize people."

Senate candidate Bob Casey, a Democrat, on Rick Santorum, the GOP incumbent in Pennsylvania, who Casey claims has used wedge issues like gay rights to divide America (Associated Press, Aug. 29)

"I love to dance, and I know people love watching me dance. But at the same time, it never was intended to be an everyday thing on the show. What people talk about more than the show itself is the dance."

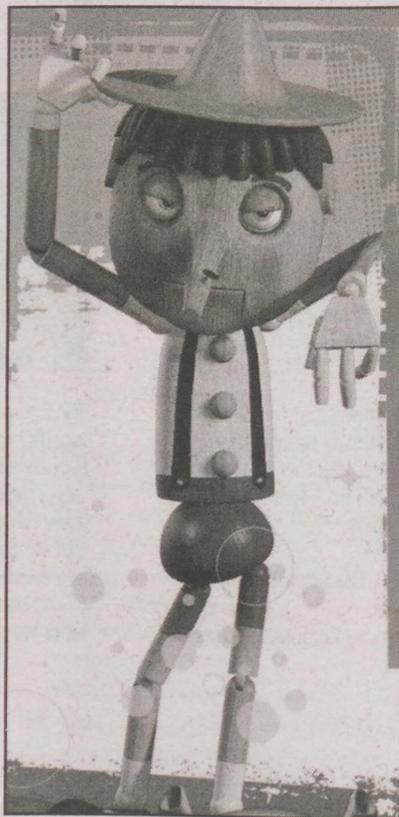
Lesbian daytime talk show host Ellen DeGeneres on why she may stop doing her happy-feet boogie (Associated Press, Sept. 1)

"He was too gentlemanly to take me on. Come on! I'm just breathless at the hypocrisy of a man who came in with a mob who were there chanting to shout me down."

New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, who accused her election rival Don Brash of bringing a mob of hooligans who called her a "no-kids lesbo," a "scrubber" (an ugly girl) and a liar at a televised debate; Clark is married but once said, "If I hadn't gone into politics, I would not have married." (New Zealand Sunday Star Times, Sept. 4)

"It's a great movie, but why in the world did you have to have **Pinocchio** wearing a thong?"

John Bell, a student at Act One, a Christian organization training would-be Hollywood execs, on his objection to the sexual undertones in "Shrek 2" (Details magazine, September)



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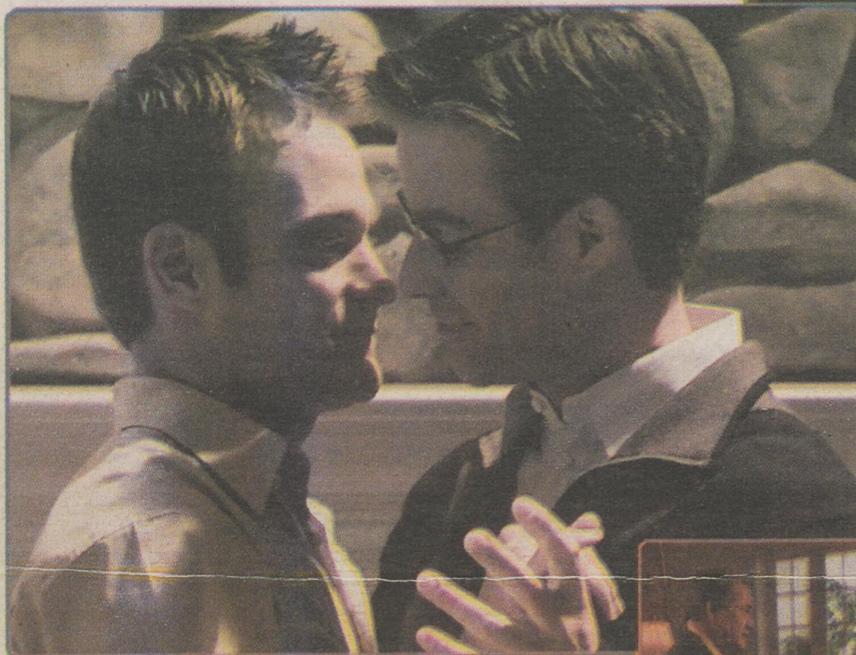
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Foxy lady

Lesbian writer Rita Mae Brown loves life on the farm — and being outfoxed by her prey

By DYANA BAGBY

THERE'S HAY TO BE CUT, FENCES TO PAINT, horses to train and feed to buy. And that's just in one day.

Life on her vast farm in small-town Afton, Va., is hardly laid back for iconic lesbian writer Rita Mae Brown, 60, whose day essentially begins before sunrise and ends well after sunset.

"I grew up on [a farm] — it's kind of what I know," Brown says. "I had to live in cities in order to make my way, because you can't make money farming anymore. As soon as I made my money, this is all I ever wanted. It's just in your blood."

Brown breeds and raises Thoroughbreds and crosses Thoroughbred and Quarter horses for foxhunting. Her newest mystery "The Hunt Ball" is part four in a series where foxhunting — a favorite pastime for Brown — plays a central role.

American foxhunting, stresses the animal lover who also writes a series of mysteries with her cat, Sneaky

i RITA MAE BROWN

Age: 60; born Nov. 28, 1944

Residence: Afton, Va. (outside Charlottesville)

Birthplace: Hanover, Pa.

Education: New York University, undergraduate degree in Classics and English; degree in cinematography from the New York School of Visual Arts; and a doctorate in political science from the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C.

Occupation: Writer, farmer

Background:

- Participated in the 1969 Stonewall Riots
- A Yankee by birth, Brown considers herself a Southerner after being raised in Florida.
- Started writing mysteries, a genre she at first abhorred, as a way to pay bills in the late 1980s during a Writer's Guild strike.
- Veteran of Hollywood and TV writing, wrote the horror movie "The Slumber Party Massacre" in 1982.
- In 1982, her ABC series, "I Love Liberty," won an Emmy nomination. She was again nominated for an Emmy in 1985 for the NBC mini-series "The Long Hot Summer."
- Past loves include actress and writer Fannie Flagg and tennis legend Martina Navratilova.

Current relationship: Involved in a two-year, long-distance relationship with Hollywood producer Judy Lynn Pastore.



Iconic lesbian author Rita Mae Brown takes up most of her days with farming, fox hunting and a ranch full of pets.

Pie, is much different than English foxhunting — where the hunters go out to slaughter the sly creatures as a way to protect their newborn sheep.

"Sheep is one of [England's] larger agricultural products. [But in America], the fox didn't do anything to us unless you're a poultry farmer. We don't want to kill them," she tells Southern Voice in a telephone interview during a break from farm chores.

Brown's love of the sport, which her family enjoyed for generations, comes from watching the hounds at work, she says. And watching the foxes, well, outfox the hunters.

"I like being outsmarted by a fox and love watching their tricks and being a victim of their tricks," she says with a laugh. "It's always good to be reminded humans aren't at the top of the food chain."

'Not self-conscious at all'

BROWN BURST ONTO THE LITERARY SCENE MORE than 30 years ago with "Ruby Fruit Jungle," a book that looked at lesbian sexuality through the frank, and humorous, eyes of Molly Bolt, a semi-autobiographical character who made waves wherever she went. The book remains a lesbian must-read to this day.

Like her character, Brown is known for making waves in her struggles for justice. She started the first gay campus group in the late 1960s and participated in the 1969 Stonewall Riots.

She attended the University of Florida but was expelled for taking part in a civil rights rally, so she went to New York University on scholarship to study classics and literature. She became active in the feminist movement and urged the then-fledgling National Organization of Women to openly recognize its lesbian members.

When it comes to writing, her classical training makes the work second nature, she adds.

"I'm not a self-conscious person at all," Brown says. "I've done it so long. I'm like a Major League Baseball player — I don't think about my swing, I just hit the ball out of the park."

'Strange' time

TODAY, BROWN UNDERSTANDS THAT SOCIETY still oppresses gay people, but she believes we let our enemies — namely the "Christian Right" — define the debate.

"It's a strange and odd time to be an American ... for, lack of better words, those who are gay or lesbian," she says. "And I say that because ['gay' and 'lesbian'] sound like job descriptions — they just don't say it all.

"But it's a strange time because of the attack from the Christian Right — and whoever defines the issue, wins the debate," she says. "All the things they are squealing about are completely irrelevant.

"The real issues are: can we feed our people, can we protect our people? Do we need to send billions of dollars to a country that is going to thumb their noses at us? Not because two men want to get married who have been together 25 years. And that's a religious issue," she adds.

But mostly, she considers the public struggle as "endless entertainment," she says. "Until I get the tax bill, and I realize I'm paying for these suckers. We all are."

READ HISTORY, BROWN SAYS



Authors Edmund White (left) and James Baldwin are among Rita Mae Brown's recommended reading list of gay authors.

Rita Mae Brown's "Ruby Fruit Jungle" (1973) is considered the seminal lesbian novel, but Brown acknowledges she doesn't keep up with contemporary gay authors.

"I can't recommend anything to young lesbians," she says.

Instead, she recommends all people, including young gay people, read Shakespeare and Greek classics as well as historical novels. Brown herself prefers biographies and military history, including novels about Churchill and Robert E. Lee.

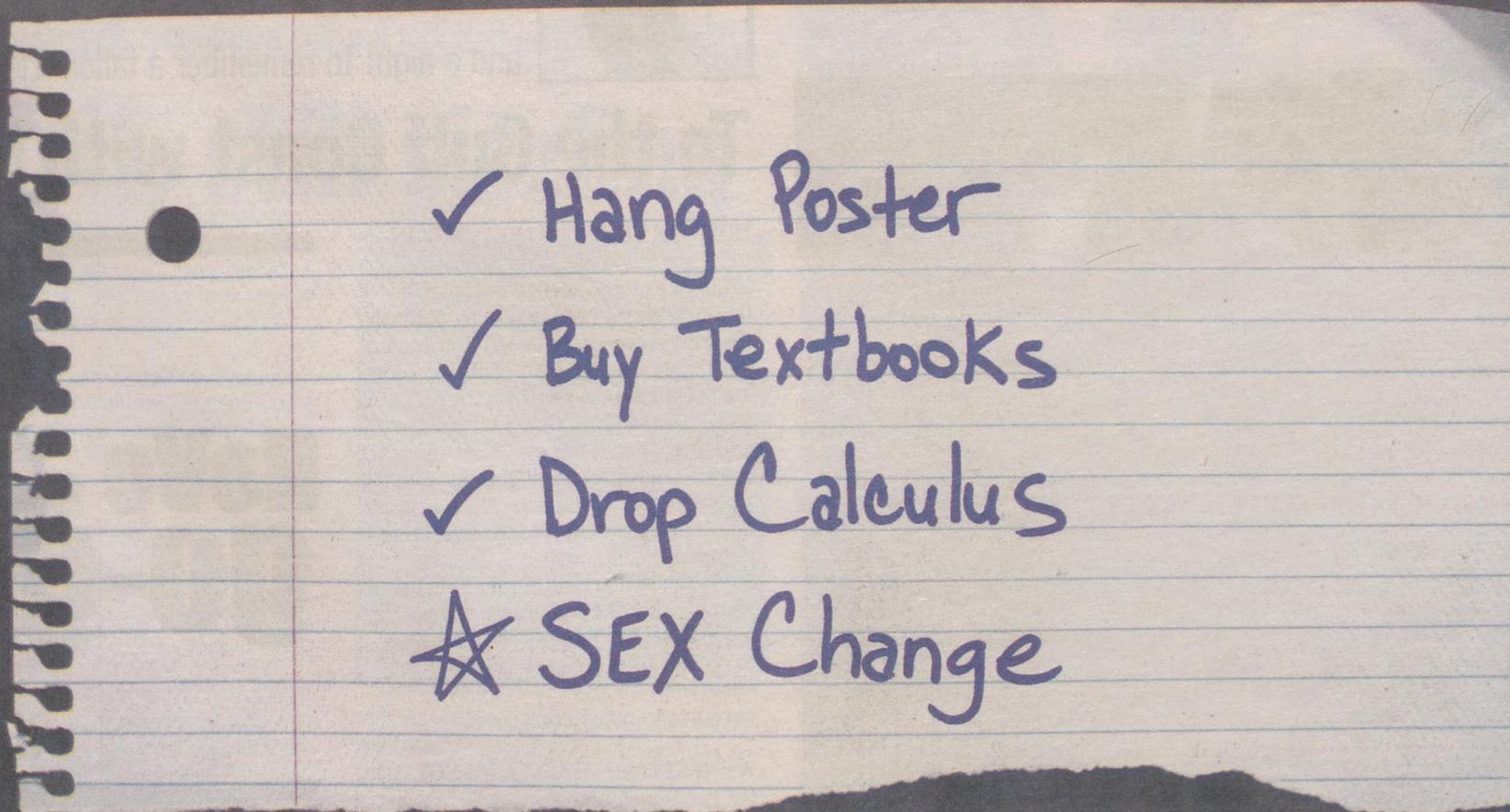
Her favorite gay authors include Edmund White and James Baldwin.

"Read those who can actually write as opposed to the 'I'm queer, feel sorry for me,'" Brown says bluntly.

GULF COAST LOVE: Houston gay bars ask patrons to open hearts, wallets for hurricane benefit. Page 14

STILL 'BURNING': Documentary that introduced the world to drag 'vogue' finally makes it to DVD. Page 15

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Benefits continue for Katrina victims,
local performance of 'Bent' begins again,
and a night to remember a fallen friend.

To the Gulf Coast with love

HOVO ON THE GO-GO RETURNS IN full force this week, dishing about all things queer and beyond in Houston. Recently we told you to watch out for the **Charles Armstrong** benefit for Katrina. Mark your calendars for **Monday, Sept. 19**, at **JR's Bar & Grill**, on the Santa Fe side. "**To the Gulf Coast with Love**" will be hosted by our own **Kofi** and will feature your favorite employees from the stable of Armstrong bars: Meteor, JR's, South Beach and the Montrose Mining Company.

The show starts at 10 p.m. so bring your checkbooks and purses and prepare to dig deep. We can only hope our fave bartender from JR's will be there. You know who you are!
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WE RECEIVED WORD FROM NOT ONE, but two Houstonians who have taken their acts on the road to glowing reviews. The Mayor of Montrose, **Ray Hill**, called from Philadelphia, Pa., to report his one man show, "**Ray Hill: The Prison Years**," has been playing to capacity crowds. In fact the **Philly Fringe Festival** requested Ray extend his run by one week to accommodate ticket sales. Reviews can be found at philly.com and our mayor will be returning to Houston sometime Friday, Sept. 16.

Then came word from the adorable **Rob Nash** that his one man show "**Holy Cross Sucks!**" was given a huge hug from the gay, er, gray lady herself, the *New York Times*. Reviewer **Rob Kendt** said in part: "Mr. Nash definitively delineates each character, even when they communicate only with a nod or a shrug. Surprisingly, the result is not a manic performance... Mr. Nash comes off instead as uncannily mellow and unflappable, moving across a simple stage from scene to cross-cut scene."

"**Holy Cross Sucks!**" runs through Oct. 1 at **Ars Nova**, 511 West 54th Street, Manhattan. Call 212- 868-4444 for tickets if you are headed to NYC.

LOCAL THEATER FANS ARE ALSO embracing the return of "**Bent**." **Joe Watts' Theater New West** once again brings this riveting drama to life at the **Holocaust Museum** for only five performances on Sept. 15, 19, 20, 27 and 28. Curtain time for all performances is 7:30 p.m. Admission is by donation (the requested amount is \$20.) Reservations are requested and can be made at 713-522-2204.

Audience members of **Bent** will also be able to view the incredible permanent exhibit at Holocaust Museum Houston, and "**In the Shadow of the Swastika**,"

HOVO on the GO-GO

a world-premier exhibit that chronicles the life of **Herman Wygoda**, a Polish Jew whose family was killed during the Holocaust and who lived a life of narrow escapes. Wygoda overcame his tragedy and went on to command a partisan unit that ultimately liberated the city of Savona, Italy.

"**Bent**" by **Martin Sherman** plays at the Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline St. Contact **Joe Watts** of Theatre New West at 713-522-2204 or via email at theatrenwest@aol.com

THE POLLS ARE OPEN AT www.houstonvoice.com. Go there to vote for our annual "**Best of Gay Houston**." We need to know who you love, where you love to go, and who some of your heroes are. Shameless plug ahead! By the by, why wasn't a category available for Best Columnist?

FINALLY, LONGTIME HOTGG FRIEND and leader of the bands **Buddhacrush** and the **Zealots**, **Tim McGlashen** unexpectedly died in August and an evening of celebration and remembrance is scheduled for **Sunday, Sept. 18**, at the **Meridian**, 1503 Chartres. See diverse performances by **Norma Zenteno**, **Orange Is In**, the **Zealots** and more. A \$10 donation will be accepted at the door, opening at 5 p.m. with the show beginning at 6 p.m. All ages are welcome. 713-225-1717

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

dvd TRAY BUTLER

Finally on DVD, 'Paris is Burning' revealed a gay subculture in New York City built around voguing, a cultural tool that instilled solidarity.

Paris, still sizzling

IF YOU LISTENED CLOSELY TO THE first single from RuPaul's most recent effort, "Red Hot," you might have tripped over a particularly clunky line of dialogue.

In "Looking Good, Feeling Gorgeous," Ru takes a break from the monotonous chorus and delivers a quirky little insult, something about an "overgrown orangutan," which doesn't really mesh with the rest of the track.

Chances are, not many fans realized the glamazon was quoting "Paris is Burning," the 1990 documentary that chronicled the fascinating subculture of Harlem's competitive drag balls.

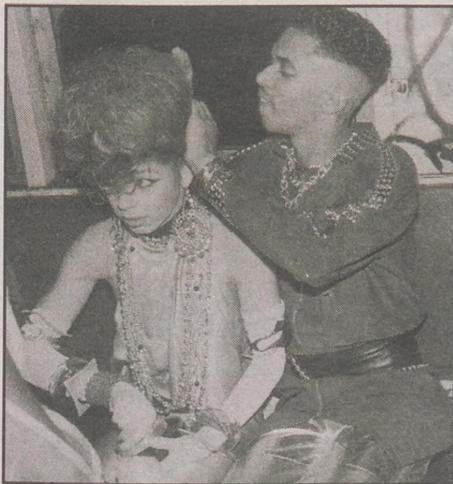
Though the film won top honors at Sundance, became a surprise box-office contender and is considered by some critics to be a modern classic of gay cinema, "Paris is Burning" just arrived on DVD this month.

To see Jennie Livingston's documentary now, nearly two decades after many of the pageants were first filmed, might be akin to reopening a high-school yearbook for the first time in many years. There's an immediate sense that something genuine has been lost, that times have changed, and an aching reminder that we can never really go back, which is probably for the best.

LIVINGSTON STARTED THE PROJECT when she was 22 and taking classes at New York University. An encounter with a group of guys voguing in Washington Square Park led to unprecedented access and exposure to the elders of the black and Latino drag world — regal den mothers who kept their "children" in line and their "houses" in order.

The documentarian spent two years collecting footage of balls, street life, personal interviews and, yes, voguing. This was before Madonna made "Vogue" a worldwide cliché, and the prima donnas of "Paris is Burning" strike their poses with a fierce realism the Material Mom could scarcely mimic.

Though her filmmaking experience was limited at the time, Livingston elegantly focuses on a handful of compelling characters who reveal the tenacious truths of a particularly urban phenomenon. House mother Pepper LaBeija proves to be the documentary's most cap-



With 'Paris is Burning,' filmmaker Jennie Livingston created a persuasive time capsule of gay black and Latino urban life in the late 1980s.

tivating voice, with her tales of disapproving parents and personal strife.

Equally striking is the doomed and diminutive Venus Xtravaganza, who was murdered in 1989, before the film was finished (and who delivers that orangutan insult later repeated by RuPaul).

BUT THERE'S MUCH MORE TO "PARIS is Burning" than its exploration of drag. The ball competitions include contestants playing thematic dress-up in unexpected categories such as "Executive" and "Town and Country" — imitations of white affluence informed by "Dynasty" and corporate America.

Even more captivating are the film's flashes of what were once mundane moments in the life of the city: underage gay street kids congregating on sidewalks, "shade" showdowns in public parks and shots of the meager Elks Club meeting halls where the balls were held.

Livingston, whose latest production is a short film titled "Who's the Top," couldn't have realized it at the time, but she documented an identity and a city that would not last.

Because we now know the rest of the story — that voguing became a flash-in-the-pan fad, the devastating impact AIDS would have on many of the movie's principals, that LaBeija passed away in 2003 after suffering a heart attack — "Paris is Burning" emerges as a bittersweet time capsule of queer New York in the late 1980s.

The arrival of "Paris is Burning" on DVD probably won't inspire a whole new generation of drag neophytes to rush out and research their nearest ball competitions. But maybe it'll make certain dance-floor divas dig even deeper for material to sample.

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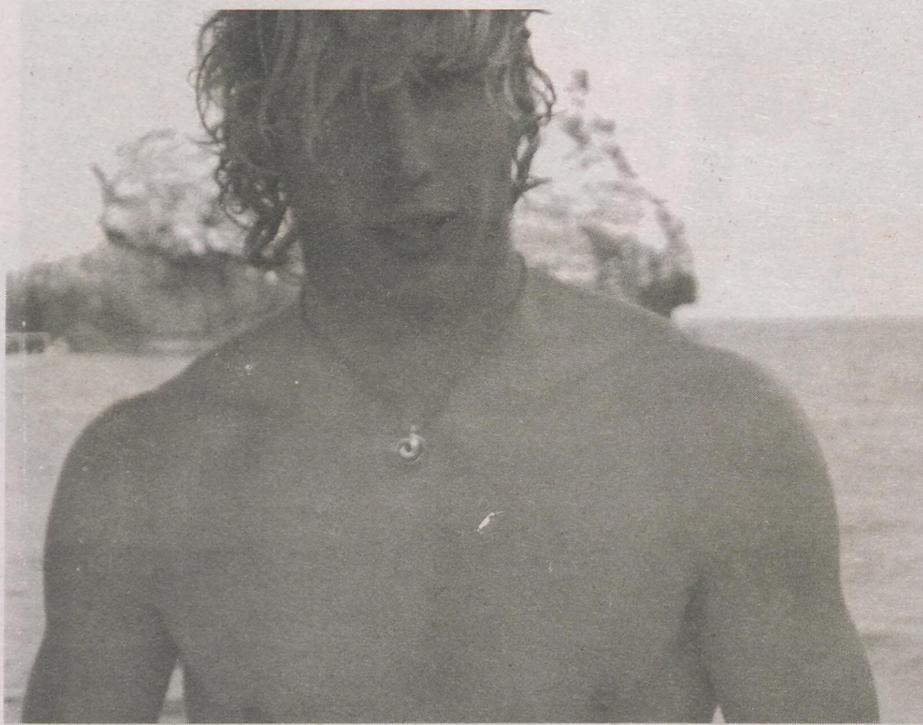
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music DAN MILLER



Give Sleater-Kinney credit for keeping it fresh on the group's latest album, *'The Woods,'* though it's not their best offering.



Sleater-Kinney is comprised of Carrie Brownstein, Janet L. Weiss and Corin Tucker. (Photo by John Clark)

Leap of faith

THE FIRST TRACK ON SLEATER-KINNEY's latest album, "The Woods," might make you think you are listening to a different band.

"The Fox" starts out with growling, meat-grinder guitars that evoke a mood much more intense than anything the ladies have done before. It's only when Corinne Tucker's signature wailing vocals appear that it becomes clear that this is the new, more muscular Sleater-Kinney.

Sleater-Kinney has never been a quiet band; they're no strangers to distorted guitars or quick tempos. But this departure from their signature spunky sound is deliberate, and makes the trio, originally from Washington state and now based in Oregon, into a much different band. The girls have never sounded this gritty before.

This new, heavy sound is not a subtle change in tone. Given the band's rabid following, it could backfire massively. So, does the artistic chance pay off?

The answer: sort of. The truth is that the album is both gutsy and uneven.

THERE ARE SOME GREAT SONGS here, such as the album's first single, "Entertain," as well as "Modern Girl" and "Rollercoaster." While these are some of the poppiest tracks on "The Woods," they also show how Sleater-Kinney's melodic sensibilities have been able to translate to their new sound.

Even "The Fox," which almost seems like it was thrown in first for shock value, is a tight, intelligent, heavy song. These are the qualities that have made

Sleater-Kinney so popular with their base and made records like "Dig Me Out" modern classics.

While "The Fox" is a warning of what's to come, one of the tracks that epitomizes the band's new change in direction is "Let's Call It Love." An epic jam that clocks in at more than 11 minutes and is drenched in feedback and echoing shouts, the bulk of the song is a gritty instrumental, with Tucker's guitar intertwining with out guitarist Carrie Brownstein's.

This murky song seems indulgent, though. "Love," the most extreme example of loud rock on the record, is fine for the first couple minutes, but it disintegrates into noise.

It seems like the song is more of a statement on the band's image than an example of a song that needed to be more than 11 minutes long.

THE POLAR OPPOSITE OF "LOVE" on "The Woods" is "Modern Girl," a twinkling, leisurely paced love song. Complete with harmonica flourishes and heavy static effects, it's the lightest song on the record, both in tone and in subject matter. In addition, it's one of the best and most pleasurable songs on the record.

This doesn't suggest that Sleater-Kinney should shy away from its distortion pedals and stick to lighter fare. Not by a long shot.

Much of the time (in fact, most of the time), this new direction works. By roughening up some of their own edges and making their songs less digestible, Sleater-Kinney is challenging listeners to make a leap with them.

The ugliness of songs like "Steep Air" may not be as immediately easy to listen to, but at the same time the change seems healthy. Re-making "Dig Me Out" isn't helping anyone out.

"The Woods" is not likely many peoples' favorite Sleater-Kinney album, but it's a sign of a fully functioning, evolving unit.

At the very least, give them credit for keeping it fresh.

MORE INFO

'The Woods'
May 2005

www.sleater-kinney.com

television BRIAN MOYLAN



It's either a sign of progress or fatigue that Sundance Channel's new documentary series 'Transgeneration' is pretty darn pedestrian.

Difficult transitions

FOR A CHANGE, IT MIGHT BE A GOOD sign that a television series is boring. Considering the subject matter, it's a good thing that "Transgeneration," a new show that debuts on the Sundance Channel at 10 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 20, is quite dull.

This eight-part documentary series (to call it "reality television" would be to cheapen it) highlights the lives of four transgendered college students — two male-to-female and two female-to-male. Aside from the occasional sassy drag queen, the only time viewers really see transgendered people on television or in movies is in documentaries.

It's as if filmmakers are so busy poking, prodding and analyzing them to try to understand their lives that they don't take the time to include them in the scripted dramas and comedies that even gay people are regularly featured in these days.

That's why it's good that "Transgeneration," made by gay-owned documentary production company World of Wonder, isn't that exciting. It seems that after all these years of documentaries, the titillation of "top surgery," hormones and transitioning has worn off.

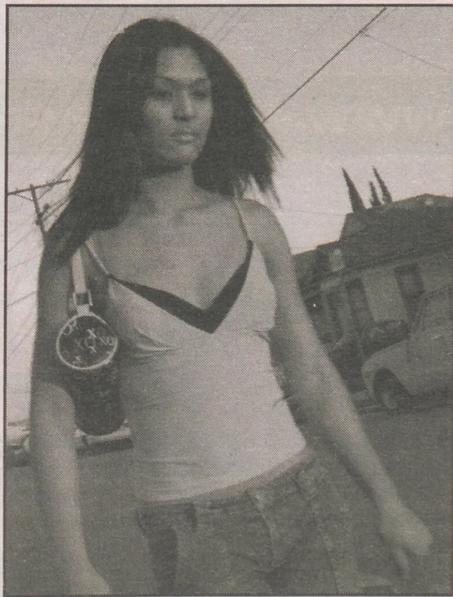
As it turns out, their lives are just like ours, which doesn't always make for compelling television.

THE SHOW FOCUSES ON GABBIE, A sophomore MTF at the University of Colorado at Boulder; Lucas, a senior FTM at the all-female Smith College in Massachusetts; Raci, a hearing-impaired, MTF Filipina freshman on full scholarship at California State University, Los Angeles; and T.J. a native of Cyprus and a graduate student on a Fulbright scholarship at Michigan State University. All but Gabbie have other trans people in their immediate circle of friends.

You don't see lots of schoolwork getting done and, unlike Showtime's excellent trans documentaries from last year, "Rene's Story" and "Jamie's Story," there isn't a lot of talk or footage about the technical aspects of living as a transgendered person.

All of the subjects and their friends discuss who is receiving hormones and who isn't, when or if they want to have surgery, and the effects of these procedures. But most footage details the confusing minutiae of any college existence.

Gabbie, an isolated loner with few social



Raci, a deaf Filipina student, is one of the subjects of Sundance Channel's 'Transgeneration,' a new series that follows four transgendered college kids. (Photo courtesy of Sundance Channel)

skills, has a hard time fitting in and making friends. T.J. has personality clashes with Andy, a loud-mouthed FTM "anarchist" who's part of his circle of friends. Lucas is trying to pull away from the activism that defined his experience for his first three years at Smith, partially because he's disillusioned with campus politics.

THE MOST FASCINATING SUBJECT IS Raci, who is struggling with several hardships. Her family is poor and she shares a room in a crowded house with her aunt. She also buys hormones off the street, rather than from a medical doctor. And Raci finds it difficult to work at many of the part-time jobs available to college students because she can't hear well.

Utterly transparent, the other students don't know the attractive Raci is transgendered, and she would prefer to keep it that way. Gay audience members will be able to sympathize with her feeling protected from ridicule and harm by keeping the secret, but simultaneously haunted by paranoia that someone will find out.

People tuned into other World of Wonder shows, like Bravo's "Showbiz Moms and Dads," to see wacky people and how they behaved. But there's no wackiness in "Transgeneration." The drama that unfolds in the four subjects' lives revolve around money, fitting in and future plans, which are all fairly pedestrian and will be familiar to most anyone who's been to college.

The trans angle may nudge people to tune in initially, but only those who are fascinated by what average students go through in college will return for episode two.

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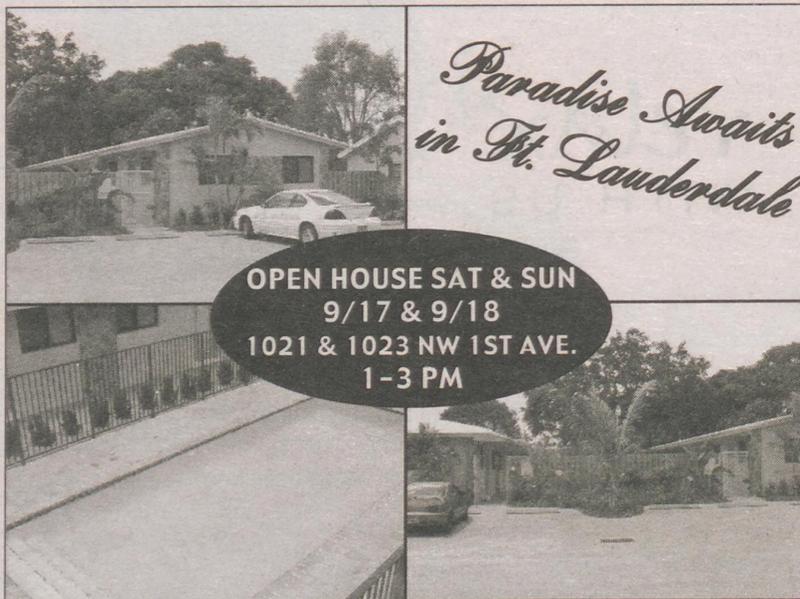
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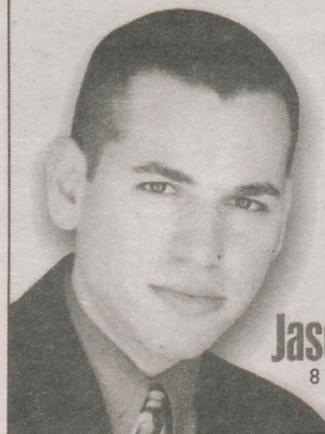
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dish There's a Fine Line Between Telling the Truth and Talking Trash

No escape, Hatch

Richard Hatch faces the feds, Jessica Simpson is uncool and Kylie's coping well

LAST WEEK, a jury voted for **RICHARD HATCH**. But this time, it wasn't a group of people voting for the gay gadabout to win a \$1 million prize on CBS's "Survivor," like he did in 2000. It was a grand jury indicting him on 10 charges, from tax evasion and filing a false tax return to wire fraud, bank fraud and mail fraud, the Associated Press reports.

In January, Hatch, who lives in Rhode Island, consented to a plea arrangement with federal prosecutors, copping to two counts of tax evasion. But he mysteriously backed out of the deal at the last minute. Now, he's headed to court and could face 75 years in prison and millions of dollars in fines.

Surprisingly, the core of the case has to do with Hatch's notorious \$1 million prize, which he apparently failed to claim on his tax return. According to the indictment, Hatch had two different accountants draw up returns that included the winnings, but didn't file when he saw he would owe hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxes.

Instead, he filed a return that didn't include the winnings or the \$327,000 he got for co-hosting a Boston radio show. In return, Hatch received a \$4,500 refund.

The clothes-shucking reality star, currently in Bravo's "Battle of the Network Reality Stars," is also accused of misusing \$36,500 donated to Horizon Bound, a charity he set up after his "Survivor" win.

Hatch additionally is accused of using \$10,000 he received from a celebrity charity appearance on the "Weakest Link" to renovate his house.

Picture perfect

Gay photographer **DAVID LaCHAPELLE** is furious with the sisters Simpson, so says New York Daily News gossip Lloyd Grove.

LaChapelle was supposed to shoot a Rolling Stone cover of **JESSICA** and **ASHLEE SIMPSON** but the deal was scrapped. Now he has nothing but harsh words for the duo, and they have nothing good to say about him.

"They're everything that's wrong with music," the photographer told Grove.

"They're nothing. They have nothing. They hold no interest whatsoever for anybody. They're reality-red-carpet, lip-synching television stars.... I don't think they offer anything."

But a handler for the Simpsons claims they canned

David LaChapelle

LaChapelle, who is currently in Europe



Richard Hatch may have to survive prison if he's convicted of tax fraud and other financial misdeeds.

promoting his acclaimed documentary "Rize," due to his lack of talent.

"When you do a cover with your sister, you both want to look like who you are," a "source" told Grove. "David doesn't have that skill. The girls were looking for a photographer who wasn't a one-trick pony."

LaChapelle didn't take too kindly to the sisters' remarks.

"I was only doing it because of my relationship with Rolling Stone," he said in a statement. "We were going to try and make the Simpsons look cool. I realize now that is an impossible task."

Ouch.

On the mend

Now on to some sisters that we love. News and entertainment Web site Ireland Online published a hopeful note about gay icon **KYLIE MINOGUE** from her equally iconic sister, **DANNII**.

She predicted that 36-year-old Kylie, who was diagnosed with breast cancer in May, would eventually be OK.

"Kylie's not better yet, but she will be," Dannii says. "My sister is coping amazingly well with the treatment. I don't know how she got to be such a strong person but she's a real fighter. She is already talking about getting back on stage."



Kylie Minogue

And, girl, you know all the boys will be there in the front row.

Hold my hand

"Lord of the Rings" star **ELIJAH WOOD** is amused by the Web sites, like veryverygay.com, that continue to speculate about his sexual orientation, he tells dubious entertainment Web site contactmusic.com.

"It's this kind of joke Web site that maintains that they have proof that I am very, very gay in various photographs [and] photographic evidence of me holding hands with a male," he says of the oft-Photoshopped pictures. "These people have a lot of time on their hands and my hat's off to them because it's very good work."

@ Send comments, suggestions to Dish@houstonvoice.com

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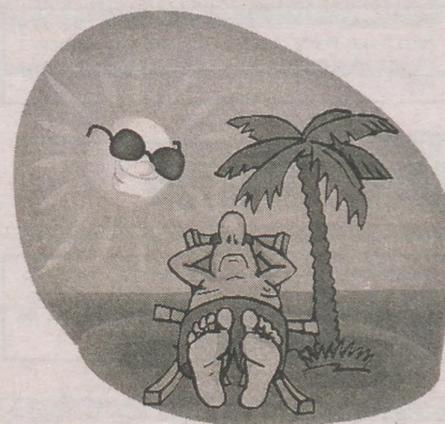
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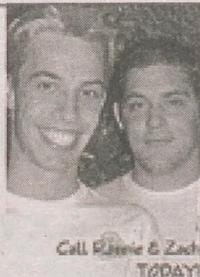
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Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel

pilgrim's regress
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IN KEEPING WITH OUR NATION'S NEW MORAL MANDATE, THIS COMIC STRIP HAS CHANGED ITS FORMAT TO RELIGIOUS ALLEGORY.
CAN OUR HEROINE FIND HER WAY TO SALVATION DESPITE THE MANY ABSTRACT-CONCEPTS-EMBODIED-IN-HUMAN-FORM THAT LITTER HER PATH?

HERE SHE IS, MS. SECULAR HUMANIST, FLOUNDERING IN THE SLOUGH OF DESPOND.
...IRAQ IN FLAMES... RESISTANCE SPREADING... TWICE AS MANY IRAQI CHILDREN STARVING THAN BEFORE THE WAR... OUTSOURCING TORTURE...
WHAT SHALL I DO TO BE SAVED?
BUSH WINS! GOP CONGRESSES ALL BANNING GAY GAYS... TAKE OUT THE FEDERAL JUDICIAL SYSTEM!

SHE SETS OUT ON HER QUEST, STOPPING TO VISIT NEIGHBOR OBSTINATE. THEN, IT'S ON TO NEIGHBOR PLIABLE.
WHY'S THE MEDIA IGNORING THIS? WHY ARE WE ALL JUST ROLLING OVER? MY MOTHER COULD HACK AN ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINE. I REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE ELECTION RESULTS!
I WISH I COULD REFUSE TO ACCEPT THIS CREDIT CARD BILL. TELL ME YOU DIDN'T GIVE \$500 TO THE DNC AT THE LAST MINUTE.
IT'S UP TO US TO BREAK THROUGH THIS CULTURAL POLARIZATION. TO CONNECT WITH RED STATERS, WE NEED TO GET COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT OUR FAITH.

MS. LITTLE-FAITH AND MS. LOVE-LUST WEIGH IN.
YEAH, I'M SURE TELLING SOME KNUCKLE-DRAGGERS ABOUT YOUR KABBALAH MEDITATION GROUP WOULD HEAL THE RIFT RIGHT UP.
LOOK, PEOPLE VOTED REPUBLICAN BECAUSE OF THE GAY MARRIAGE THING. THEY'RE TERRIFIED OF SEX.
IF WE'RE SERIOUS ABOUT REACHING OUT TO EVANGELICALS, LET'S PLANT SUBLIMINAL MESSAGES ON FORN SITES. "JESUS LOVES YOUR ORGASM."

UPON FLEEING, OUR HEROINE RUNS INTO GIANT DESPAIR.
I'M MANAGING WHEN MY PANIC ABOUT BUSH PROVOKING A NUCLEAR TERRORIST ATTACK GETS TOO INTENSE...
...I SWITCH TO MY FEAR OF BEING ROUNDED UP AND SHIPPED TO A GULAG FOR INTELLECTUALS IN KENTUCKY.
ONWARD SHE TREKS, BUT BEFORE REACHING HER FINAL GOAL, OUR PILGRIM MUST PASS THROUGH THE TEMPTATIONS OF VANITY FAIR.
...CIA AND STATE DEPARTMENT PURGING DISSIDENTS... VOTING IRREGULARITIES... WAR CRIMES... IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM...
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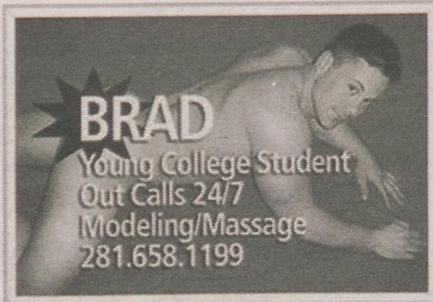
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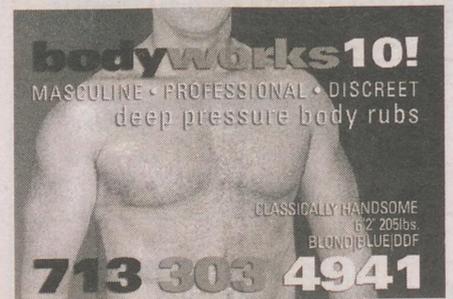
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DEADLINES
8am Wednesday
for online submissions only.
5:30pm Tuesday
for all other submissions.

bitch session



Where are the men who want to work on a relationship rather than work you in at their convenience?

SO IS THE TOP/BOTTOM DYNAMIC the gay male version of the lesbian butch/femme scene?

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED THAT straight bars have sticky floors with empty beer bottles all over the floor and gay bars are cleaner?

YOU KNOW, DATING WOULD BE easier if gay men would actually tell you they don't want to see you anymore.

YOU ARE VERY ATTRACTIVE. WHY would you need to go online for a date? Most guys would be falling at your feet!

TO THE 41-YEAR-OLD WHO "WASTED" years being bitter over his last boyfriend: You didn't necessarily waste time by choosing not to date. Don't listen to creeps who say you're too picky or should "lower your standards." Check out what their relationships are like!

I THINK I CAN ANSWER THE GUY who asked what an "edge" is and why jerks are interested in it? These are pathetically shallow people who can't find ways to interest themselves so they expect others to do it for them. Kapeesh?

AFTER WE HOOKED UP, YOU SAID you felt guilty for cheating on the person you're already seeing. Funny, that hasn't stopped you from cruising the same place I met you.

BEING A "JOCK" IS A LIFESTYLE, NOT a body type. I play sports and the "jock" in my online name means "let's play a sport together," not just trade pics back and forth.

FOOTBALL AND HOCKEY PLAYERS are jocks, you silly tina twink. Just because you look good wearing one does not make you one.

THERE WAS THIS IDIOT WHO ASKED my two friends and me for our phone numbers while walking to 7-Eleven. We gave him bogus numbers after he insisted. Just because someone works out and has a great body doesn't make them attractive.

TO THE PERSON ASKING FOR AN explanation of gay culture: Those so-called "butch" gay bodybuilders who love queeny disco diva music are typically not really butch at all unless they stand perfectly still and don't utter a word.

YOU MAY BE A BIT OF A STEREOTYPE if all your words end in a hissing sound, your shoulders sway back and forth when you walk and you wear makeup.

I'D LIKE TO BITCH ABOUT ALL THE wonderful selfless comments in "Bitch Session" like "not my problem, not my disease," "don't blame me" or "don't hate me for being ...": People, get your act together and start taking some responsibility for your position in this society.

IF YOU'RE GOING TO COME OVER TO my place to trick, can you at least have the courtesy to wait until your syphilis sore or herpes canker has gone away? Geesh!

WHAT'S WITH ALL THE GUYS WHO say they're bottoms and then they're all like "ow!" "stop!" "slow down!?" They should be sued for false advertising!

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

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In Her SHOES



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In Her SHOES

Weekend

October 6th 2005 thru October 8th 2005

OCTOBER 6th 2005

6:45pm - Join us for a Red carpet pre-party at the Edwards Theater, 3839 Wesleyan Drive for a special advance screening of the 20th Century Fox movie IN HER SHOES, starring Cameron Diaz, Toni Collette and Shirley MacLaine. Open bar provided by UV Vodka and Phillips Distilling Company.

7:30pm - Special screening of the movie begins.

9:30pm - Join us for the after party at Magic Island 2215 Southwest Freeway, with an open bar provided by UV Vodka and Phillips Distilling Company.

OCTOBER 7th 2005

7:00pm - Spend a glamorous evening at the Intercontinental Hotel and enjoy a IN HER SHOES inspired theme event including a buffet and open bar provided by UV Vodka, Phillips Distilling Company and DMC Worldwide. Evening will include a fashion show and Disco provided by Meteor. Magic Show by Magic Island and the special gift bags and prizes.

OCTOBER 8th 2005

7:00pm - Another glamorous evening at the Intercontinental Hotel. Open Bar provided by UV Vodka and Phillips Distilling Company.

9:00pm to 2:00am - Join the afterparty to end the IN HER SHOES weekend at Magic Island. Open bar provided by UV Vodka and Phillips Distilling Company. See the Magic Show, Palm readers, Fortune tellers and strolling magic show, enjoy a special rated dinner and the Disco.

Ticket price \$150.00 for the entire 3 days of events.

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