

'Father of gay theater'

Houston's own Joe Watts continues to lead the way in helping gay plays make the stage in the Bayou City. Page 15



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Presbyterian Rev. Stephen Van Kuiken this week was handed down a mixed verdict on anti-gay charges against him. Page 6



President Bush has nominated Alabama Attorney General Bill Pryor, who in 1996 defended an anti-gay ballot initiative to the U.S. Supreme Court, to serve as an appeals judge. Page 5



Renee Fleming excels in Houston Grand Opera's staging of 'La Traviata.' Page 16

TX House panel considers anti-gay foster care bill

Pasadena representative changes wording of measure to target 'homosexual or bisexual' Texans

By PENNY WEAVER

AUSTIN — Gay rights activists who have said for months that a Texas bill filed by a Pasadena lawmaker is directly aimed at gays were proven right during state committee hearings this week.

Rep. Robert Talton (R-Pasadena) on Tuesday presented substitute language for his House Bill 1911, which would prohibit unmarried Texans from serving as foster parents. Originally, the bill stated that the state should "prevent the placement of a

child in a foster home with any unmarried individuals."

As the House State Affairs Committee heard testimony regarding the bill, Talton substituted the phrase "unmarried individuals" with "homosexual or bisexual."

"Foster parents should be assessed on their ability to provide love, support, stability and guidance, not on arbitrary restrictions," said Randall Ellis, executive director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas. LGRL has called H.B. 1911 "one of the most serious and potentially damaging bills" of the current Texas Legislature's 78th session.

"Robert Talton wasted a good portion of not only his constituents' time but the taxpayers of Texas by filing such legislation... that has no merit to it at all. He failed to present one witness to support the claims he made," Ellis said. "He had no idea what

Please see FOSTER CARE BILL on Page 3



Texas Rep. Robert Talton (R-Pasadena) on Tuesday changed wording of his House Bill 1911 to specifically prohibit 'homosexual or bisexual' individuals from becoming foster parents in this state.

Original text of the bill was to prevent 'unmarried individuals' from serving as foster parents. An extended committee hearing was held on H.B. 1911 on Tuesday and Wednesday, and the measure likely will be voted on by the panel next week.

GOP leader compares gay sex to incest

Santorum says comments not 'statement on individual lifestyles' as critics call for resignation

By LAURA DOUGLAS-BROWN

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate's third-highest ranking Republican issued a statement Tuesday charging that an Associated Press article was "misleading" when it quoted him comparing consensual gay sex to incest.

The move did little to placate most gay groups, including Log Cabin Republicans, which demanded Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) either "fully apologize" or step down from his leadership post. But the Republican Unity Coalition, a group that bills itself for "gay and straight 'Big Tent' Republicans," issued a statement that takes issue with some criticism of Santorum.

"My comments should not be miscon-

strued in any way as a statement on individual lifestyles," Santorum said, one day after the AP published an article quoting him urging the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold the Texas state law banning homosexual sodomy.

"If the Supreme Court says that you have the right to consensual [gay] sex within your home, then you have the right to bigamy, you have the right to polygamy, you have the right to incest, you have the right to adultery. You have the right to anything," Santorum said in the interview, taped April 7 and published April 21.

"All of those things are antithetical to a healthy, stable, traditional family," Santorum said. "And that's sort of where we are in today's world, unfortunately. It all comes from, I would argue, this right to privacy that doesn't exist, in my opinion, in the United States Constitution."

Santorum chairs the Senate Republican Conference, placing him third in his party's leadership, behind Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) and Assistant

Please see PULITZER on Page 4



Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), chair of the Senate Republican Conference, told the Associated Press he has 'no problem with homosexuality,' but he does 'have a problem with homosexual acts.' (Photo by Susan Walsh/AP)

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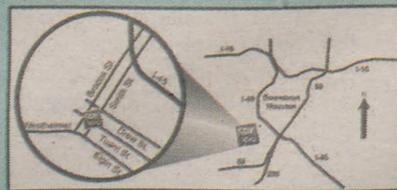
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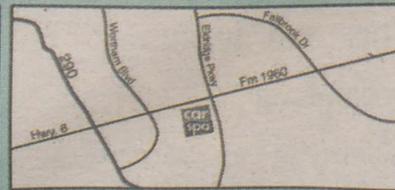
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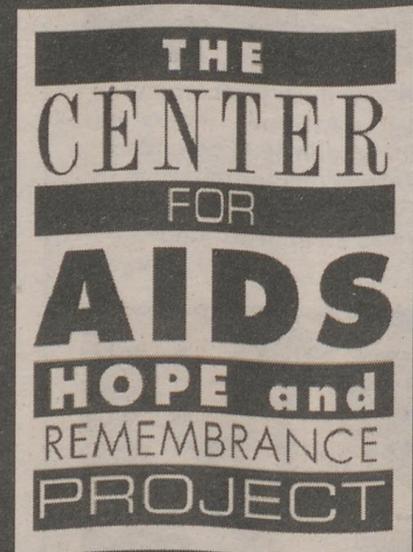
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local news

Dozens testify on behalf of gay foster parents

FOSTER CARE BILL, continued from Page 1

effect, nor did he care, it would have on our already overburdened system."

A number of gay rights advocates and social workers Tuesday denounced Talton's proposed legislation, calling it cruel and crazy.

There aren't enough foster homes as it is, said opponents, who have contended since the bill was filed that it is an attempt to prevent gays and lesbians from providing foster care.

Talton refused to comment to news reporters. He shoved away the hand and microphone of a television journalist in a Capitol hallway.

"I think the committee was impressed by the showing on our side," Ellis said. But he urged gay Texans to speak out and monitor the progress of H.B. 1911.

"It's very much still a threat," he said. "They have until May 12 to report that bill out of committee and send it to the House floor, and that leaves it plenty of time to make it out of the system."

According to the LGRL, testimony on H.B. 1911 did not begin until very late, but many families stayed until the committee adjourned at 3:30 a.m. Testimony was overwhelmingly against the bill, with fewer than five people testifying for the bill and nearly 300 people signing in against it.

The testimony included powerful statements from gay and lesbian families, as well as expert testimony from a variety of witnesses including economists, family law attorneys, and representatives of child welfare agencies, according to LGRL officials.

LGRL contends that, if passed, the bill would have "a devastating effect" on children by dramatically reducing the pool of eligible foster parents.

Testimony did not conclude by the time the panel adjourned, so committee members re-convened Wednesday to finish the hearing. The bill now is pending in committee as its members weigh the testimony. A vote on H.B. 1911 could come as early as next week.

If the committee approves the measure, it goes before the full Texas House of Representatives for a vote.

"We accomplished our objectives, and we made our point," Ellis said of those



David Peavy of Houston Gay & Lesbian Parents said there is still time for people to contact members of the House State Affairs Committee and voice opposition to the anti-gay House Bill 1911.

who spoke to the committee in opposition to H.B. 1911. "LGBT Texans represent a significant resource that the Texas foster care system cannot afford to do without."

Others who spoke out against the bill included Rep. Garnet Coleman (D-Houston), who noted the cost of the bill during a legislative session in which lawmakers face a state budget crisis.

"This bill has a multi-million dollar

price tag," Coleman said. "At a time when the state of Texas is facing one of its worst budget shortfalls in history, this bill is not only insulting to a huge segment of the population, but it is financially and potentially dangerous to the children of our state."

Pro-gay bill considered

Also this week, the House State Affairs Committee heard testimony on H.B. 1136, filed by Rep. Mike Villarreal (D-San Antonio). That measure would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in employment decisions, housing, and public accommodations.

The committee hearings on Tuesday began on a positive note, with the testimony on Villarreal's 1136 coming before the session on the anti-gay H.B. 1911.

According to the LGRL, every witness for H.B. 1136 testified in favor of it, and no one signed in against the bill.

Ellis emphasized that the strong response from gay Texans to fight H.B. 1911 needs to continue in opposition to anti-gay bills and in support of positive measures in the Legislature.

"The community has been fantastic in terms of the response," Ellis said. "We need to be prepared to continue to do that."

"We need to focus on calling our representatives and making sure that they are going to represent their constituency," he added. "I want the community to watch how those people vote. We still have a battle ahead with this bill. It's not over until the session is over."

House Committee on State Affairs

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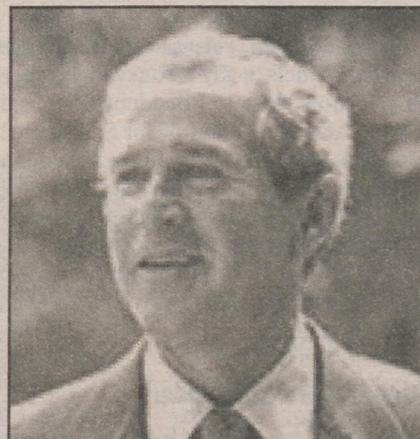
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CONVICTED: Rev. Steve Van Kuiken sat with his wife Debbie as Presbyterian church officials convicted him on one count and acquitted him on another because he has shunned the church's ban on gay marriages. Page 6.



ANTI-GAY NOMINEE: President George W. Bush has nominated for judgeship more candidates with anti-gay records. Page 5.



VIEWPOINT: Columnist J.D. Cerna learns a lesson on living from a neighbor's suicide. Page 11.

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national news

Comments should cost Santorum GOP leader post, gay groups say

SANTORUM SPEAKS, continued from Page 1

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.).

His remarks sparked a predictable firestorm of criticism from Democrats and gay rights groups on both sides of the political aisle, but have so far generated little comment from Republican Party leaders.

"We are expecting an apology, and a full one, and expect that and his dedication to moving forward will allow Sen. Santorum to stay in the party leadership," Patrick Guerriero, executive director of the national gay GOP group Log Cabin Republicans, told Houston Voice after Santorum issued his clarification statement.

"If he does not [fully apologize], we would ask for him to step down," Guerriero said.

Santorum told Fox News Tuesday night that he has nothing for which to apologize.

"I do not need to give an apology," he said. "I think this is a legitimate public policy discussion."

Meanwhile, the Republican Unity Coalition, a group formed by gay Republicans with ties to the president, issued a statement on Wednesday that criticized Santorum's views as "flat-out wrong" but "well within bounds of speech and propriety."

The statement, released by RUC leader Charles Francis, a gay Texan who has been described as close to President Bush, said it was "false and harmful" for Santorum to compare gay sex to bigamy, incest and polygamy, but added, "There is a difference between being wrong and being accused of all kinds of bigotry."

"Good people with animus toward no one can and will disagree," concludes the RUC statement.

Silence from GOP leaders

As furor over Santorum's remarks grew early this week, critics compared his comments to those of Sen. Trent Lott (R-Miss.), who lost his post as Senate majority leader after appearing to support racial segregation.

"I want to say this about my state: When Strom Thurmond ran for president, we voted for him. We're proud of it. And if the rest of the country had followed our lead, we wouldn't have had all these problems over all these years, either," Lott said at a Dec. 5 event celebrating the 100th birthday of retiring Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.), who ran for president in 1948 representing the segregationist Dixiecrat platform.

"Santorum's statements mark the second time in recent months that a Republican leader has made comments



Patrick Guerriero, executive director of the national gay GOP group Log Cabin Republicans, said Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) needs to either 'fully apologize' or lose his leadership post. (Photo by R.O. Youngblood)

marginalizing or attacking an entire segment of the population," the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay political group, said in a statement condemning Santorum's "deeply discriminatory" remarks.

HRC called on Republican leaders "to take quick and decisive action to repudiate Sen. Santorum's remarks."

Yet GOP officials had little to say about Santorum's statements.

The White House did not respond to interview requests on the issue by press time.

Asked at an April 22 press briefing whether President Bush agrees with Santorum's comments, White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer demurred.

"I have not seen the entire context of the interview, and two, I haven't talked to the president about it. So I really don't have anything to offer beyond that," Fleischer said.

Another senior White House official praised Santorum in the original Associated Press article that included the inflammatory comments.

White House Political Director Ken Mehlman called Santorum "one of the original compassionate conservatives."

"The people of Pennsylvania, no matter who they are or where they're from, understand how hard he's working for them, understand that he has a philosophy that is good for them, and that will help improve their state.

"There is nobody who works as hard as he does in getting his message out," Mehlman said.

When Lott made his controversial racial remarks, Bush publicly spoke out against the senator's sentiments a week later, but only two days after the controversy hit the national press.

Lott made his comments Dec. 5; they were first reported in the New York Times on Dec. 10.

The White House initially said it accepted Lott's apology, but in a public speech Dec. 12, Bush said Lott's comment "do not reflect the spirit of our country."

Fleischer said later the same day that

Bush "doesn't think Trent Lott needs to resign," yet the Mississippi senator — who had also compared gays to alcoholics and kleptomaniacs in 1998 — gave up his leadership post on Dec. 21.

Santorum should be given time to correct his comments before the president steps in, Log Cabin leaders said.

"I think the White House is showing appropriate political and professional courtesy in giving him 48 hours to respond himself," Guerriero said. "It shouldn't take the White House to have to scold United States senators about staying within decent parameters in their public comments."

Other leading Republicans have also declined to criticize Santorum.

A spokesperson for Frist, who became Senate Majority Leader in the wake of Lott's resignation, initially refused comment on Santorum's statements to the AP.

A day later, Frist called Santorum "a consistent voice for inclusion and compassion in the Republican Party and in the Senate."

"To suggest otherwise is just politics," Frist told the Associated Press.

'Woefully inadequate'?

Santorum, currently serving his second term as a senator from Pennsylvania after four years in the House of Representatives, has a reputation for focusing on so-called "family" issues like banning late-term abortions and tax exemptions for donations to religious charities.

But he has also reached out to gay Republicans.

"I met with him as recently as earlier this year to discuss the president's global and domestic HIV/AIDS initiatives," Guerriero said. "He has also met with Log Cabin Republican members as a group during our last convention in Washington, D.C., to discuss hate crimes, taxation and other issues he was working with."

Kevin Ivers, who served as public affairs director at Log Cabin before leaving the group last summer to form his own public relations firm, said Santorum's staff repeatedly reached out to the gay GOP group for support in winning approval for President Bush's judicial nominees.

Last spring, Ivers said Santorum met with about a dozen Log Cabin leaders. During the meeting, Ivers said he asked Santorum to support a hate crimes bill pushed by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah).

The Hatch bill is viewed as a competing measure to a hate crimes bill proposed by Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.). Kennedy's bill would add categories of sexual orientation, gender and disability to existing federal hate crime law and expand the federal government's ability to prosecute such cases.

Hatch has said that he supports parts of Kennedy's bill that authorize federal prosecution of anti-gay hate crimes, but criticized Kennedy's bill for going too far in allowing federal intervention in cases where state or local law enforcement offi-

cially prosecute hate crimes.

During the meeting with Log Cabin, according to Ivers, Santorum said he agreed with Hatch's strategy on the bill — a point of view Ivers said Santorum contradicts in his latest statements.

"In the hate crimes debate, Hatch's whole argument was all about restricting federal power," Ivers said. "For Santorum to agree with that, and now be making arguments about preserving [government] power to bust down the bedroom door and arrest people, is just ridiculous."

Last month, HRC praised Santorum, the leading Senate backer for President Bush's faith-based initiative, for agreeing to an amendment that the group said will reduce the chance for groups receiving public funding to discriminate based on religion — a common excuse for bias based on sexual orientation.

Still, Santorum rated only 14 out of 100 on HRC's last congressional score card on gay issues. He has not co-sponsored bills to add sexual orientation to federal hate crimes laws or ban anti-gay job discrimination, and he earned points on only one issue: voluntarily agreeing to a sexual orientation non-discrimination policy for his office.

Nevertheless, Santorum said in his clarification statement that he is "a firm believer that all are equal under the Constitution."

"When discussing the pending Supreme Court Case Lawrence v. Texas, my comments were specific to the right to privacy and the broader implications of a ruling on other state privacy laws," he said.

"In the interview, I expressed the same concern as many constitutional scholars, and discussed arguments put forward by the State of Texas, as well as Supreme Court justices. If such a law restricting personal conduct is held unconstitutional, so could other existing state laws."

Guerriero called Santorum's statement "woefully inadequate."

"Sen. Santorum has a leadership role in coalition building as the Senate GOP conference chairman. You don't build coalitions by divisive and mean spirited statements," the Log Cabin leader said in a press statement.

The U.S. Supreme Court is expected to rule this summer in Lawrence v. Texas, a challenge to the Texas sodomy law that could have broad implications for gay rights.

Battle lines drawn

Along with Log Cabin and HRC, other gay rights groups quickly condemned Santorum's remarks, while groups on the far right rushed to defend the embattled senator.

The Family Research Council denounced HRC and Log Cabin's "smear tactics." The gay groups are "attacking" Santorum in order to "intimidate defenders of marriage and silence critics of the

Please see SANTORUM SPEAKS on Page 5

i MORE INFO

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national news

Bush nominates three judges with anti-gay views

Candidate for post with jurisdiction over Ga. supported anti-gay ballot measure, sodomy laws

By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

WASHINGTON — Less than a month after winning Senate confirmation for a federal appeals court judge who compared homosexuality to cockfighting and bestiality, President Bush nominated three more judges with anti-gay views, according to a judicial watchdog group.

One of the nominees petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold sodomy laws in Georgia and Texas. Another said same-sex relationships could never be as legitimate as a heterosexual marriage and that a wife "is to subordinate herself to the husband."

The third, who is expected to be formally nominated next month, is a former law clerk for the U.S. Supreme Court who lobbied behind the scenes to uphold Georgia's anti-gay sodomy law in the landmark 1986 case *Bowers v. Hardwick*.

Officials at Alliance for Justice, a gay-friendly group that monitors presidential appointments of judges, said the latest nominees bring to seven the number of Bush's federal judicial appointees who are considered to

have records hostile to gay civil rights. The Senate so far has confirmed two of the seven.

On April 9, Bush nominated Alabama Attorney General Bill Pryor to a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit, which has jurisdiction over Alabama, Georgia and Florida. In 1996, in his capacity as Alabama's then-deputy attorney general, Pryor co-authored a friend of the court brief supporting Colorado's anti-gay ballot initiative in the U.S. Supreme Court case of *Roemer v. Evans*.

The ballot measure, which the high court declared unconstitutional, amended the Colorado Constitution to prohibit local governments in the state from passing laws protecting gays and lesbians from discrimination. Last year, Pryor successfully defended an Alabama law banning sodomy between unmarried adults in a challenge to the law before the state's court system. A short time later, he wrote a strongly worded amicus brief declaring Alabama's support for the Texas sodomy law in the Supreme Court case *Lawrence v. Texas*, which the court is expected to decide in June or July.

The Texas law "does not criminalize petitioners' sexual orientation, which may or may not be a matter of choice," Pryor wrote in his brief. "Rather, the Texas anti-sodomy statute criminalizes petitioner's sexual activity, which is indisputably a matter of choice."

Granting a constitutional right to



President Bush earlier this month nominated Bill Pryor, Alabama Attorney General, to a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit, which includes Georgia. Pryor said sexual orientation is a choice and compared it to necrophilia and bestiality in a brief he filed supporting an anti-gay sodomy law in Texas. (Photo by AP)

choose one's partner and whether or how to "connect sexually," Pryor wrote, "must logically extend to activities like prostitution, adultery, necrophilia, bestiality, possession of child pornography, and even incest and pedophilia (if the child should credibly claim to be 'willing')."

The president submitted Pryor's nomination to the Senate on April 9, eight days after

the Senate confirmed Bush appeals court nominee Timothy Tymkovich, the former solicitor general of Colorado. Tymkovich has compared homosexuality to cockfighting, bestiality, prostitution and suicide.

Bush is also poised to nominate Michael Mosman to the U.S. District Court in Oregon. Mosman is a former Supreme Court law clerk to the late Justice Lewis Powell. According to two authoritative books on the Supreme Court, one by lesbian journalists Deb Price and Joyce Murdoch, Mosman wrote a series of strongly worded memos to Powell in 1986 urging Powell to vote to uphold the Georgia sodomy law, which the Supreme Court did in a 5-4 decision.

Bush nominated his third appointee, James Leon Holmes, earlier this year to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas.

Nan Aron, Alliance for Justice president, stated in an April 25 letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee that Holmes is a "zealous" advocate for doing away with a woman's right to choose an abortion and has made "extreme statements" on the issue of separation of church and state, gay rights and gender equality.

Aron pointed to a joint article Holmes wrote with his wife asserting that same-sex relationships should not be regarded as having "equal legitimacy with heterosexual marriage."

Senator's remarks draws criticism from key Democrats

SANTORUM SPEAKS, continued from Page 4

homosexual political agenda," said FRC President Ken Connor.

Leaders with LLEGO, the National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization, took the opposite side, sending a letter to Frist and Congressional Hispanic Conference Chair Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.) calling for Santorum's removal as a party leader.

His comments "are an affront to the growing number of same-sex families raising children in loving and caring homes," wrote Martin Ornelas-Quintero, LLEGO executive director.

Smelling the possibility of political blood in the water, prominent Democrats — including the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and at least four 2004 presidential candidates — also denounced Santorum's remarks and called on Republicans to remove him from leadership.

"The silence with which President Bush and the Republican Party leadership have greeted Sen. Santorum's remarks is deafening," said Howard Dean, one of a crowded field of Democrats vying to challenge Bush in 2004.

Dean, who as Vermont governor signed a bill into law creating civil unions for gay couples, said the silence "implicitly con-

done a policy of domestic divisiveness, a policy that seeks to divide Americans again and again on the basis of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation."

Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.), another Democrat running for president, also used Santorum's remarks — which he said "take us backwards in America" — as an opportunity to criticize Republican leadership.

"The White House speaks the rhetoric of compassionate conservatism, but they're silent while their chief lieutenants make divisive and hurtful comments that have no place in our politics," Kerry said.

Democratic presidential contender Sen. John Edwards (R-N.C.) issued a statement calling the comments "disturbing and inappropriate."

"It is unfortunate that this prejudice still exists in this country," he said.

Rep. Dick Gephardt (D-Mo.) said he was "disappointed with the Republican leadership's insensitivity and blatant disregard for the rights of millions of Americans."

The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee also called on Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), the state's senior senator, to denounce Santorum, but Specter declined.

"I have known Rick Santorum for the better part of two decades and I can say with certainty he is not a bigot," Specter said in a statement.

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national news

Church court tells pastor to stop marrying gays

Rev. Stephen Van Kuiken found guilty for performing same-sex unions, acquitted for ordaining gays

By CHRISTOPHER SEELY

BLUE ASH, Ohio —The permanent judicial commission of the presbytery of Cincinnati found Rev. Stephen Van Kuiken, of Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church, guilty April 21 on a count of marrying same-sex couples and not guilty for ordaining non-celibate gay men and lesbians as elders and deacons.

The guilty verdict required votes from at least five out of seven members of the commission. The vote on both charges was 6-1.

Van Kuiken could have been permanently excluded from the office of minister for marrying gay men and lesbians, but he received the mildest form of rebuke available to the judicial commission, said Martha Sexton, judicial commission chair.

"You are directed to perform marriage ceremonies only for a man and a woman," said the commission in its written statement of censure. Same-sex "holy unions" cannot contain "specific liturgical forms from Christian marriage," according to the statement.

The rebuke told Van Kuiken what he

already knew, and he will appeal the guilty verdict to the regional permanent judicial commission that oversees Presbyterian churches in Michigan and Ohio, he said in a written statement. Van Kuiken has 30 days from the announcement of his verdict to appeal.

"The [permanent judicial commission] already knows that this is not a position from which I will be rehabilitated," Van Kuiken said.

The court could have done more in its statement to "make a stand" against the code forbidding gay marriage, he said in an interview with Southern Voice.

"Even with a guilty verdict, they could have criticized or raised concerns about the law itself," he said. "I make the point that just enforcing the law is never an excuse. We always have the option. We always have the choice."

But the cut-and-dry ruling statement reflects the limited powers granted to the judicial commission, said Charles Brown, an elder at Wyoming Presbyterian Church in suburban Cincinnati.

Brown was the only member of the commission who voted to convict Van Kuiken for ordaining non-celibate gay men and lesbians, and he dissented on the gay marriage vote, calling in a written statement for a harsher punishment to prevent Van Kuiken from performing gay marriages. Brown suggested temporary exclu-



Rev. Stephen Van Kuiken sits with his wife Debbie at the Blue Ash Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, as his verdict is read April 21. (Photo by David Kohl/AP)

sion from the office of minister.

"We can't determine that the constitution is right or wrong," Brown said in an interview. "We are required and bound to interpret the constitution as it now stands."

Currently, Presbyterian ministers may bless same-sex couples, but not marry them. Sexton concurred.

"It doesn't matter if we agree with the law of the church," she said. "All we can do is assess the law and issue punishment."

Constitutional changes can only be made by appeal or through legislation at

the church's national General Assembly level, but past attempts to amend the constitution with gay-friendly legislation have not passed, Sexton said.

The commission did let Van Kuiken off the hook for ordaining non-celibate gay men and lesbians, but it did not change the constitution to give the green light for gay men and lesbians who have sex to be ordained.

Van Kuiken was found not guilty because the commission voted that ordination is a matter that falls under the jurisdiction of a church's session of elected elders, not the church's minister. The minister is only to "officiate" at the ordination ceremony as a ceremonial figure, according to the commission's ruling.

The next time the General Assembly can alter the constitution with gay-friendly legislation is next year, Van Kuiken said. This year's assembly convenes May 24-31 in Denver, and gay issues are not slated for discussion.

"All I'm saying is that there ought to be an option for gay people if they are in the church and they want to view their relationship the same way that some straight people view their relationship," he said.

Brown said that there is "absolutely" a place for gay men and lesbians in the church membership, but declined to reveal his personal views on gay marriage or ordination.

"The constitution says what it says," he said. "As an elder, I took a vow to follow the constitution."

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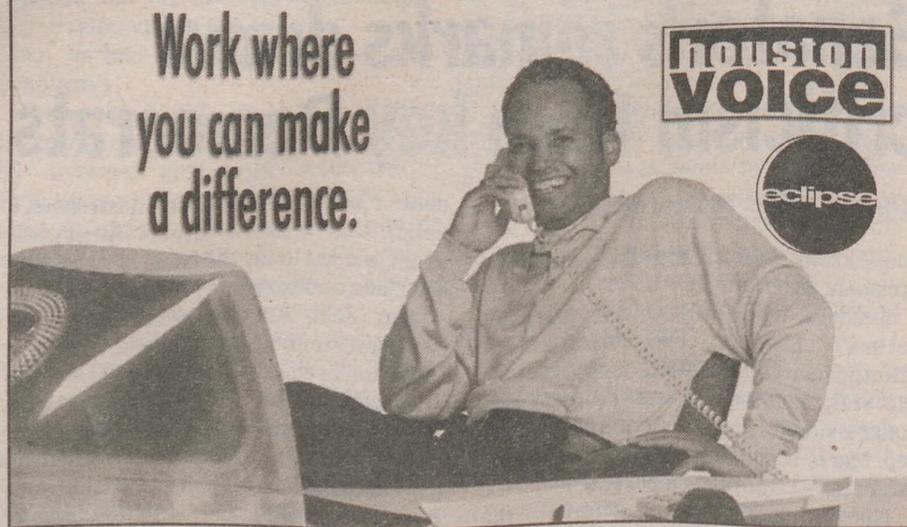
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national news

Anti-gay shareholder resolution fizzles at Coca-Cola

ATLANTA — One shareholder's attempt to get Atlanta-based soft drink giant Coca-Cola to drop sexual orientation from its non-discrimination statement fizzled when he didn't appear at last week's annual meeting to support it. Hou-Yin Chang, a South Carolina resident who owns 49 shares of Coke stock, proposed the measure asking Coca-Cola to end its support for "the homosexual lifestyle and other deviant lifestyle behaviors." The Coca-Cola Company held its annual meeting April 16 in Houston. "Neither Mr. Chang nor his proxy was on hand to present his proposal, and a vote can only be held for a shareowner proposal if it is properly presented at the meeting," said Racquel White, spokesperson for the company, which recommended that stock holders vote against the measure. Chang cannot submit any more resolutions for two years, she said. Meanwhile, pro-gay resolutions pushed by shareholders at J.C. Penney and FedEx prompted those companies to announce plans to amend their non-discrimination statements to include sexual orientation, according to New York City Comptroller William C. Thompson, who filed the resolutions on behalf of city pension funds. The city's five pension funds hold \$23.3 million in J.C. Penney stock and \$60.6 million in FedEx stock.



Hou-Yin Chang proposed a shareholder resolution asking Coca-Cola to rescind policies that 'support the homosexual lifestyle,' but did not attend the meeting to bring the measure to a vote. (Photo courtesy of Chang's Web site)

Family of slain Tenn. activist files wrongful death lawsuit

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — The family of a Knoxville gay activist strangled by someone he met at a local gay bar sued the man who admitted killing him, the Knoxville News-Sentinel reported. In the wrongful death lawsuit filed in Knox County Circuit Court, Joseph Camber's family seeks \$2 million in damages from Chad Allen Conyers. Camber, who co-chaired Knoxville Pride, was last seen April 20, 2002, leaving the Carousel II, the Knoxville gay bar where he worked as a bartender. His body was found early the next morning. Conyers was sentenced to 15 years probation after pleading guilty March 21 to voluntary manslaughter. During sentencing, Conyers apologized for the killing, but offered no explanation for how it happened. Under a procedure known as judicial diversion, if Conyers does not violate his probation, his record will be cleared.

Sirius launches first 24-hour gay satellite radio

NEW YORK — Satellite radio broadcaster Sirius announced April 15 the launch of OutQ, providing around-the-clock "complete news and entertainment programming for the gay, lesbian, bisexual & transgender community," the company said in a statement. Jay Clark, Sirius vice president of entertainment and information programming, noted that the company already offers other specialized material, including conservative shows. "When you have 100 streams of programming, you can step out a little bit," he told the Los Angeles Times. The gay service will broadcast live shows weekdays from 3 a.m. to 6 p.m., with hourly news breaks, as well as replays and "best-of" programming. OutQ is available to all of Sirius' subscribers, who pay \$12.95 per month, as well as on the company's Web site, www.sirius.com. Current hosts include Wayne Besen, John McMullen, Michelangelo Signorile, Derek Hartley and Romaine Patterson. Sirius cited some 30,000

subscribers last year, according to the New York Times. Competitor XM cites 500,000.

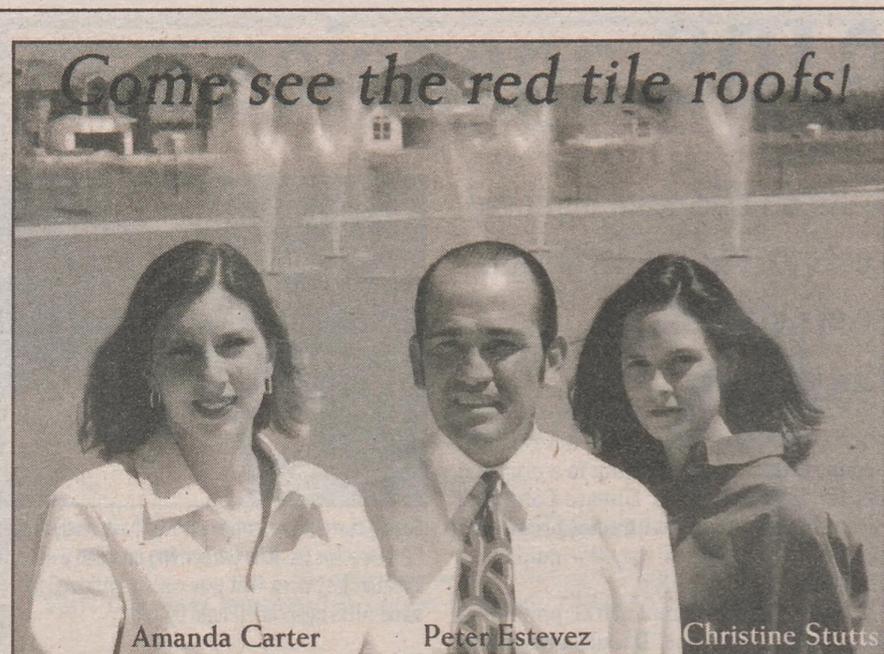
Cincinnati hate crime law faces legal fight

CINCINNATI, Ohio — Equal Rights Not Special Rights, a group opposing gay-inclusive legislation, asked the Hamilton County Common Pleas Court for an injunction April 9 to stop the city's new hate crimes law from taking effect, the Plain Dealer reported. The group, which includes state Rep. Tom Brinkman (R-Cincinnati), contends the law violates the city's one-of-a-kind charter amendment banning laws based on sexual orientation. The amendment, approved in 1993 by 63 percent of voters, bars the City Council from enacting or enforcing laws that give gays "any claim of minority or protected status, quota preference or other preferential treatment." The city's new hate crimes law, passed two months ago in the wake of an anti-gay murder, says that crimes against the elderly, disabled or gays can lead to six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine. "The city is going out of its way to protect people based on sexual behavior," said David R. Langdon, attorney for the gay rights opponents.

Ky. gay-straight club can meet in high school

ASHLAND, Ky. (AP) — U.S. District Judge David Bunning ruled April 18 that the Boyd County school district must allow the Gay-Straight Alliance to meet on campus and treat it no differently than the Bible club. Bunning granted a request from the ACLU, representing students who filed suit against the school district, for an injunction to give equal access to the Gay-Straight Alliance. The school district banned all school clubs in the wake of controversy over the gay group, but Bunning concluded from two days of testimony that some student groups, including the Bible club and drama club, continued to meet on campus despite the ban.

From staff and wire reports



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national news

AIDS agencies pan federal HIV proposal

Health officials want improved access to HIV testing, greater use of rapid test

By JENNIFER J. SMITH

ATLANTA — Concern over the removal of counseling from HIV testing in a proposal from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention led officials with some prominent AIDS agencies to greet the new guidelines with a lukewarm response.

But in calling current AIDS prevention efforts “a disappointment,” Dr. Julie Gerberding, the CDC’s director, said “it is time for physicians to screen HIV in the same way they do for other conditions” and urged for routine testing of people at risk for the disease.

Gerberding unveiled the \$35 million proposal for voluntary guidelines during an April 17 press conference in Atlanta, the CDC’s headquarters. The guidelines call for doctors and health care workers to question patients about HIV testing, an “opt-out approach,” instead of waiting for them to ask, Gerberding said.

The guidelines also call for increased use of the recently-approved rapid HIV test, which can rule out infection in 20 minutes, though positive results require additional testing, she said.

The proposal also advocates for the creation



Saying current prevention efforts ‘have really stalled,’ CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding unveiled a new HIV initiative last week that was quickly criticized by some AIDS agencies. (Photo by AP)

of new models for diagnosing HIV infections outside medical settings, such as prisons and other institutions, working with people diagnosed with HIV and their partners, and incorporating HIV testing in the routine battery of prenatal tests.

The CDC has “removed the requirement ... that there be education as part of testing,” Gerberding said.

“It works, but in a medical environment it’s a barrier because medical personnel don’t have the time for preventative counseling,” she said.

The new strategies will be forwarded to states, which will ultimately decide how to implement them.

“We want to eliminate access to the medical system as a barrier to testing,” Gerberding said.

Each year, about 40,000 new HIV cases are diagnosed in the United States. More than 800,000 people live with HIV and a quarter of those people don’t know they have been infected.

The CDC proposals drew a strong, quick response from AIDS agencies.

“We have grave concerns about this specific proposal,” said Ana Oliveira, executive director of the Gay Men’s Health Crisis in New York. “This proposal relies on a healthcare system that historically has not reached those communities that are most at-risk and most underserved, particularly communities of color.”

Mark Ishaug, executive director of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, portrayed the new initiative as both exciting and troubling.

“While the CDC is right to redouble efforts helping HIV-positive people receive needed medical care and support in new infections, its apparent retreat on counseling and risk-reduction services — such as condom distribution and outreach programs — represent a significant step backwards,” he said.

But Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases, defended the CDC proposal, arguing that by removing current barriers to testing, more people will find out if they are HIV-positive.

“We know that most people, when they know they’re infected, are more careful with their sexual partners,” Fauci said.

The Human Rights Campaign, the nation’s largest gay political group, praised the CDC pro-

posal, but urged counseling to continue to be a part of HIV testing, according to Winnie Stachelberg, the organization’s political director.

“We maintain that HIV/AIDS testing should be accompanied by the appropriate counseling, both before and after diagnosis,” she said.

Some AIDS agencies, including Florida AIDS Action, criticized the CDC for not consulting AIDS organizations in the development of its proposal.

“We have concerns over how these initiatives will be implemented and regret that the CDC did not consult the community while developing these strategies,” said Gene Copello, executive director of Florida AIDS Action.

But several conservative groups are applauding the CDC’s effort.

Former U.S. Rep. Tom Coburn, an Oklahoma Republican who has advocated for abstinence education over condom usage as a member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, praised “the Bush administration’s new HIV prevention initiative” a day before CDC even released it.

“For too long the CDC’s policies have protected the virus rather than the public,” Coburn said in a statement. “This new initiative will work to stop HIV in its tracks by identifying those who are infected earlier and empowering those individuals to protect their own health and prevent passing the virus onto others.”

Sandy Rios, president of the Concerned Women for America, a well-known conservative force, characterized the initiative as lifesaving.

The Associated Press contributed to this story

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Body of gay Boston University professor found in river

BOSTON (AP) — A body found floating in the Charles River was identified April 15 as John Daverio, a gay Boston University professor and chair of the musicology department whose disappearance a month ago baffled investigators and the university community. While an autopsy determined the cause of death was drowning, the circumstances of Daverio's death were still unknown, said Emily LaGrassa, a spokesperson for the Middlesex County district attorney's office. Daverio was last seen on March 16 around 8:40 p.m. Daverio, 49, was one of the world's leading scholars on the work of composer Robert Schumann. He recently published a book called "Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann & Brahms," which explored the link between art and life in the work of the three musicians. At the end of a 1994 review in Current Musicology magazine, Daverio wrote that he was gay, according to the Boston Globe. In the article, he asked whether, as a gay Italian-American musicologist, he was betraying his background by concentrating on a straight, Germanic composer like Schumann, according to the newspaper. "I intend neither to be flippant, nor to allow my epilogue to degenerate into a Personals Ad, but only to say that I am a long way from resolving these questions," he wrote.



The Boston University rowing team discovered the body of John Daverio, a professor and musicologist, in the Charles River near campus. Police said he drowned. (Photo by AP/courtesy Boston University)

Fla. man gets house arrest in hate crime beating

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Three men beaten as they left a gay pride party last year are angry after their attacker was sentenced to two years of house arrest followed by four-years probation. Devin Scott Angus, 21, had faced up to 30 years in prison. He pleaded guilty earlier this month to charges of aggravated battery and battery with evidence of prejudice, a hate crime. Prosecutors wanted a four-year prison sentence from Circuit Judge Chet Tharpe, while Angus's attorney asked for a two-year prison sentence. "I hope this judge isn't involved in any other discrimination cases, because evidently he doesn't know how to handle these," said Steven Hair, 26, who has been to the dentist 20 times to repair teeth knocked out by the beating he took from Angus. The assault happened July 7, on the last day of PrideFest, a six-day Tampa and St. Petersburg event. The victims were leaving a party at the Florida Aquarium when Angus confronted them in a parking garage.

Three charged in death of bisexual Calif. man

SALINAS, Calif. — One of three people charged with the murder of a bisexual man blamed her two co-defendants for the crime during interviews with the Salinas Police Department, according to the Californian. Jeanne Soja, 29, said she was present during the assault on Robert Alan Maricle, 30, last December but denied taking part in his death, according to her attorney, Tom Washington. "She gave a fairly detailed statement to them," Washington said. Police charged Soja and her boyfriend, Dominique Daniel England, 19, and his friend, Daymon Douglas Schrock, 20, with murder. A police account says the trio kidnapped, tortured and killed Maricle and he was last seen alive at Soja's apartment on Dec. 14, according to the newspaper. Maricle's remains were found April 8. Soja, England and Schrock were arrested April 9-10. "What you have is

an incomplete account by one defendant," Monterey County Assistant District Attorney Berkley Brannon told the newspaper. "I can tell you that a lot of people gave statements."

Philadelphia gay group wants to investigate trans homicide

PHILADELPHIA — Members of Racial Unity, an African-American gay group, are so frustrated with the police investigation into the death of Mizah Morris that they are launching their own probe of her Dec. 24 death and offering a \$1,000 reward for information that leads to an arrest in the case, according to the Philadelphia Daily News. "We have to go down on a grassroots level and find out what happened," Asa Khalif, president of Racial Unity, told the newspaper. Morris, who was African-American and transgendered, was struck in the head on Dec. 22 and died two days later. Police ruled her death a homicide, but no witnesses or clues have been unearthed. Gay activists said police haven't investigated properly. Two weeks ago, the district attorney's office said it would conduct a second investigation.

Gay retreat in La. hit by vandals for second time

POLLACK, La. (AP) — A gay rustic retreat was attacked by vandals for the second time since February, the camp's owners reported. Joe Gary and Skip Ward said that in late March a gate and fence, built to replace another gate and fence destroyed by vandals in February, were torn down. Gary, 40, runs the camp each year from mid-March to mid-November with his partner, Ward, 82. No one has been arrested. Grant Parish sheriff's deputies said they are investigating. "Why are they bothering me? I think it's simply hatred and homophobia," Ward said. The acts of vandalism will cost about \$1,500 to fix, Ward estimated.

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editorial

Tough times for gay Republicans

Sen. Santorum's anti-gay remarks and Bush's parade of conservative judicial nominees calls into question the lobbying effectiveness of Log Cabin Republicans.

By KEVIN NAFF

t

HOSE POOR FELLAS AT the Log Cabin Republicans sure get a lot of practice in damage control. From Trent Lott's recent racist remarks to President Bush's endless

stream of anti-gay judicial nominees, it's becoming increasingly difficult for gays to announce with a straight face that they vote Republican.

And now comes Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum, who stunned many with his comments in an AP interview this week that likened homosexuality to, among other things, incest.

Santorum, a second-term Republican and chair of the GOP conference in the Senate, is the third-ranking member of his party's leadership. He told AP, "If the Supreme Court says that you have the right to consensual [gay] sex within your home, then you have the right to bigamy, you have the right to polygamy, you have the right to incest, you have the right to adultery. You have the right to anything."

Anything? Equating consensual gay sex with all-out anarchy is a bit of a stretch, even for a Republican.

Of course, there have been the usual half-hearted apologies and "you-took-it-out-of-context" excuses, but this latest gaffe illustrates just how beholden the GOP remains to the ultra-conservative right-wing and, further, just how ineffective LCR has been in changing minds and attitudes of its party leaders with regard to gay rights.

THIS SHOULD BE LCR'S HEYDAY, with a popular Republican president and control of both houses of Congress and a majority of state governorships in GOP hands. Yet each week brings a new round of attacks on gay rights and verbal assaults from the GOP leadership.

These hostile and bigoted Republicans

are emboldened by a president who has fostered a fundamentalist Christian atmosphere in the White House, and whose campaign pledge of "compassionate conservatism" is clearly just a hollow, meaningless slogan.

Just last week, the Defense Department brought in Rev. Franklin Graham to preside over a Good Friday service at the Pentagon, despite objections from Muslim employees offended by the evangelist's earlier statements that Islam is a "very evil and wicked religion" intent on "world domination."

Last month, Bush's education secretary, Rodney Paige, told the Baptist Press, "I would prefer to have a child in a school that has a strong appreciation for the values of the Christian community, where a child is taught to have a strong faith — where a child is taught that there is a source of strength greater than themselves."

Someone needs to remind Paige that he's not running a Catholic school in Peoria. He's in charge of public education for the country's young people — all of them, not just the Christian ones.

In addition, Bush has nominated — or is planning to nominate — a total of seven men to federal judgeships who have records that are hostile to gay rights issues, according to judicial watchdog group Alliance for Justice.

James Leon Holmes, for example, wrote in an article that, same-sex relationships should not be regarded as having "equal legitimacy with heterosexual marriage." He also noted that, "the wife is to subordinate herself to the husband, ... and the woman is to place herself under the authority of the man."

This is clearly not the kind of person we want sitting in judgment of women, gays or anyone else with a gender, skin color or sexual orientation that Holmes doesn't like.

BUT THE PROBLEMS AREN'T UNIQUE to Washington and Bush's administration; in fact, Republicans are actively obstructing gay rights initiatives all over the country. The Texas state Senate gave final approval last week to a bill that bans Texas from recognizing same-sex civil unions or marriages. It was sponsored by a Republican.

Meanwhile, lawmakers in Vermont have introduced the "Marriage Restoration Act," which would repeal the state's historic civil unions law and void the 5,000 unions performed since July 2000. The bill was introduced in the House with 16 cosponsors — all of them Republican.

And Minnesota state Rep. Arlon Lindner recently questioned on the House floor whether gays were persecuted in the Nazi Holocaust. You guessed it, Lindner is a Republican.

These insults and persistent attacks on issues important to lesbians and gay men beg the question: Why is LCR such an impotent and ineffective voice for change within the Republican Party? As the organization's motto notes, "inclusion wins." Obviously, the GOP under Bush isn't looking to include gay men and lesbians in a meaningful or respectful way.

LCR officials have some serious soul searching to do as they convene their national convention on May 8. Their leaders must begin to exert some real influence in Washington and demonstrate to their dues-paying members that the organization has a purpose and strength that goes beyond issuing anemic press releases each time a Republican leader bashes gay people.

Without evidence of effective lobbying and tangible change during the remainder of Bush's first term, LCR members ought to question the purpose of the organization. If LCR's leaders can't exert some influence over a popular "compassionate" president whose party also controls Congress, then the organization is woefully broken.

As for the GOP and President Bush, we can hope they will kick Santorum out of his party leadership role, just as they did to former Senate Majority Leader Lott for making racist comments. It remains to be seen if the GOP is more tolerant of gay bashing than it is of racism.

@ Kevin C. Naff is news editor of the Washington Blade, sister publication to this newspaper, and can be reached at knaff@washblade.com



viewpoint J.D. CERNA



It took watching a 67-year-old woman leap to her death for me to realize the value of friends and little pink pills you can turn to for help.

Suicide isn't so painless

ONE DAY, I WATCHED SOMEONE LEAP to their death on purpose.

It was February. I was sitting in my apartment, A116, unemployed and trying to write.

"No! Don't do it!" someone was screaming from somewhere outside.

I went to my balcony and looked up. Seven stories directly above my head was a 67-year-old woman, from A816, climbing onto her balcony's railing.

Neighbors were sticking their heads out of windows, screaming at her, "No! Don't do it!" It reminded me of that '60s TV show "Laugh-In," when the celebrities would poke their heads out of little windows and tell jokes.

I started screaming it, too. "Nooo! Don't do it!"

I immediately climbed up the railing like a suicide-stopping Spiderman. I had barely gotten a hold on the upper railing when she threw her head back, stretched her arms out, and let her body fall.

The last thing she said was, "I can't take it anymore."

She came at me, all 100-and-lots of pounds of her. I jumped down and ran back inside. I must have done that pretty fast, because I saw her fat body drop past the balcony from Up to Down.

Thud.

Part of me couldn't bear to look, but the other part of me did. Her body was bloating on the lawn under my apartment. She — it — was

purple. Her internal organs were exploding. She looked like a giant, dying, purple grape.

THAT NIGHT I WENT TO A PARTY I'D been invited to. I was this ball of energy, a supernova. I struck up conversations with people; I cared about every word they uttered. I was fascinated with language; it was a miracle we could communicate with each other. I was in awe of everything.

A boy at the party smiled at me, and I gave him my number. I didn't give a shit what people thought about anything I did. It was as if I were dead (as "It" was by then) and was now a ghost. I could leave earth anytime, and in the meantime, I was gonna have a blast and ask boys out without an ounce of fear.

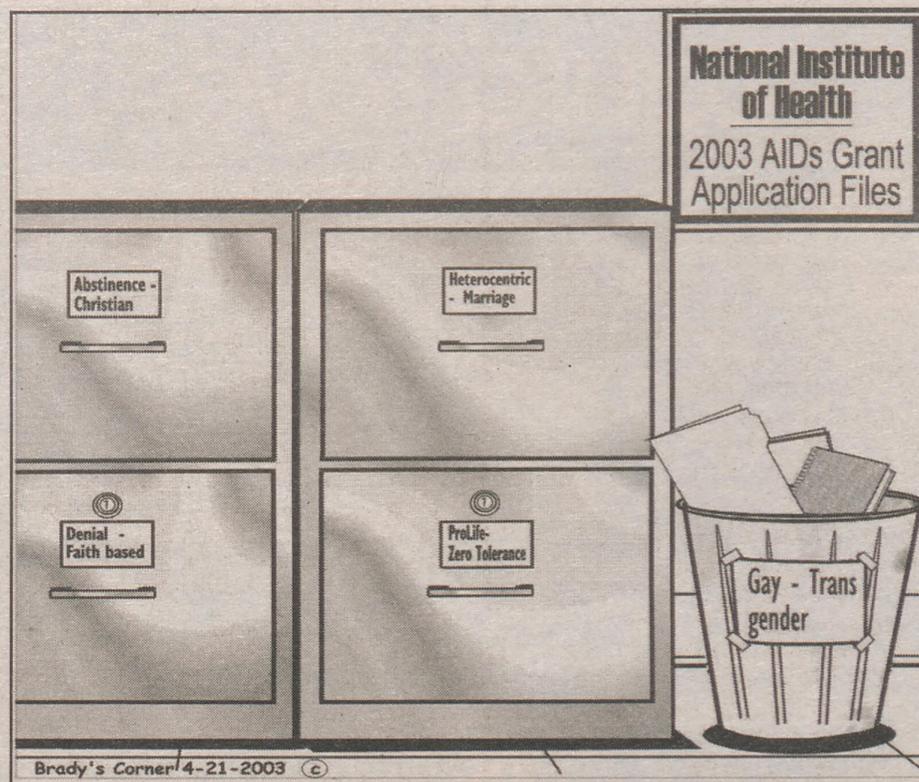
A week later the anxiety came. I stopped calling the boy. I wasn't sleeping. I wasn't eating because I wasn't sleeping.

A guy at my gym asked me how I had acquired such "great abs."

I told him, "Lack of sleep has caused lack of appetite and that's why I have great abs." When you don't sleep there are no new days, just one that goes on forever.

I finally went to a doctor. She told me I had Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Oh, so that's what it was. She prescribed Paxil.

Two nights later I found I couldn't ejaculate on Paxil. That was bad, because orgasms were something I prescribed for



Brady's Corner 4-21-2003 ©

myself regularly to relieve anxiety.

After Paxil, the doc moved me to Celexa. My orgasms were back, like old friends. Celexa's color is pink. I love that. I can just see the lab guy, on the day they invented Celexa and seeing that it was gray, saying, "This is an anti-depressant, girls. We really ought to make this pink."

Celexa allowed me to sleep and further helped decrease the anxiety, though I did have this nagging feeling I was supposed to be anxious about something.

I DECIDED TO FACE THE TRAUMA HEAD-ON. I became determined to take something positive from watching a woman jump to her death.

At her age of 67, I vowed, I will be so close to my friends that were I to feel as though I "just couldn't take it anymore," I

would step down from the railing, call my friends, and tell them, "I was gonna kill myself but I thought how awful it would be to wreck the community we've created over all these years. Let's go play a game of pool and get really passionate about everything from abs to coffee to God to zebras and see all of it for the miracle it fucking is and never take any of it for granted, ever."

They'll ask what drug I'm on, but they'll know where I'm coming from.

What's ironic about suicide is that your death is a great way to find out how much you really did matter to people. Better to find it out while you're still alive, I figure.

@ J.D. Cerna is a writer and actor in Washington, D.C. and can be reached at johncdc@aol.com.

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on the record



"In every society, the definition of marriage has not ever to my knowledge included homosexuality. That's not to pick on homosexuality. It's not, you know, man on child, man on dog, or whatever the case may be."

U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), in an April 22 interview with Associated Press, commenting on the Texas sodomy case pending before the U.S. Supreme Court (Transcript, released April 23)

"I'm sorry, I didn't think I was going to talk about 'man on dog' with a United States senator, it's sort of freaking me out."

Associated Press reporter Lara Jakes Jordan, reacting during an interview with Santorum to his remarks on homosexuality and marriage (Interview transcript, released April 23)

"The RUC believes there is a difference between being wrong and being accused of all kinds of bigotry. ... We believe it is well within bounds of speech and propriety for Senator Santorum to support the state of Texas. Good people with animus toward no one can and will disagree on Lawrence vs. Texas, just as they do on many contentious cases that come before the Court."

Charles Francis, gay Texan and friend of President Bush, defending Santorum on behalf of the Republican Unity Coalition, a group for "gay and straight 'Big Tent' Republicans" (April 23)

"Gay bashing is not a legitimate public policy discussion; it is immoral. Rick Santorum's failure to recognize that attacking people because of who they are is morally wrong makes him unfit for a leadership position in the United States Senate. Today I call on Rick Santorum to resign from his post as Republican Conference chairman."

Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean, the governor of Vermont, reacting to Santorum's AP interview and subsequent refusal to retract his statement (April 23)

"Las Vegas was built as a sexy alternative for a vacation. It was always meant to be a place where you could go and do those naughty things. Here, you can let your hair down, and that's what makes the city successful. We're hoping to turn this into a gay strip."

Josh Hessling, the 37-year-old owner of Blue Moon Resort, which bills itself as the first gay resort off the casino district in Las Vegas (Sunday Herald, Glasgow, Scotland, April 13)



"I don't do anything political. I never have, even though I'm considered a political person. People know I'm gay now, and that's it. ... That's where it ends."

Lesbian comedian Ellen DeGeneres, promoting the D.C. date of her current stand-up tour, in an interview with the city's anti-gay, ultra-conservative newspaper; she declined interviews with the local gay press (Washington Times, April 16)

"We're all here, and we all have our differences, but we all have one thing in common: We're all gay. ... That was my obligatory gay reference. I have to do it or else people will leave here and say, 'She didn't do anything gay. She's not our leader. Where's our leader?'"

DeGeneres, in her April 16 appearance at Lisner Auditorium in Washington, D.C.



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KALETRA is indicated for the treatment of HIV infection in combination with other antiretroviral agents.

Safety Information

KALETRA should not be taken with Halcion®, Hismanal®, Orap®, Propulsid®, Rythmol®, Seldane®, Tambocor™, Versed®, Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, Rifamate®, Mevacor®, Zocor®, ergot derivatives or products containing St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*). Discuss all medicines, including those without a prescription, and herbal preparations you are taking or plan to take with your doctor or pharmacist. KALETRA should not be taken if you have had an allergic reaction to KALETRA or any of its ingredients.

Pancreatitis and liver problems, which can be fatal, have been reported. Tell your doctor if you have or have had liver disease such as hepatitis. In patients

taking protease inhibitors, increased bleeding (in patients with hemophilia) and diabetes/high blood sugar have occurred. Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients receiving antiretroviral therapy. Some patients receiving KALETRA have had large increases in triglycerides and cholesterol.

In clinical trials, the most commonly reported side effects of moderate or severe intensity were: abdominal pain, abnormal bowel movements, diarrhea, feeling weak or tired, headache, and nausea. This is not a complete list of reported side effects.

KALETRA oral solution contains alcohol.

KALETRA does not cure HIV infection or AIDS and does not reduce the risk of passing of HIV to others.

Please see adjacent page for Patient Information.

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KALETRA®(lopinavir/ritonavir) capsules
(lopinavir/ritonavir) oral solution**ALERT: Find out about medicines that should NOT be taken with KALETRA.** Please also read the section

"MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH KALETRA."

Patient Information**KALETRA®**

(kuh-LEE-tra)

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

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

What is KALETRA and how does it work?

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

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

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

Does KALETRA cure HIV or AIDS?

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

Does KALETRA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

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

How should I take KALETRA?

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

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

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

What happens if I take too much KALETRA?

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

As with all prescription medicines, KALETRA should be kept out of the reach of young children. KALETRA liquid contains a large amount of alcohol. If a toddler or young child accidentally drinks more than the recommended dose of KALETRA, it could make him/her sick from too much alcohol. Contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately if this happens.

Who should not take KALETRA?

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

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

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

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

Can I take KALETRA with other medications?*

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

MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH KALETRA:

- Do not take the following medicines with KALETRA because they can cause serious problems or death if taken with KALETRA.
 - Dihydroergotamine, ergonovine, ergotamine and methylergonovine such as Cafergot®, Migranal®, D.H.E. 45®, Ergotrate Maleate, Methergine, and others
 - Halcion® (triazolam)
 - Hismanal® (astemizole)
 - Orap® (pimozide)
 - Propulsid® (cisapride)
 - Rythmol® (propafenone)
 - Seldane® (terfenadine)
 - Tambocor™ (flecainide)
 - Versed® (midazolam)

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

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

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

Medicines that require dosage adjustments:

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

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

- If you are taking oral contraceptives ("the pill") to prevent pregnancy, you should use an additional or different type of contraception since KALETRA may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.
- Efavirenz (Sustiva™) or nevirapine (Viramune®) may lower the amount of KALETRA in your blood. Your doctor may increase your dose of KALETRA if you are also taking efavirenz or nevirapine.
- If you are taking Mycobutin® (rifabutin), your doctor will lower the dose of Mycobutin.

A change in therapy should be considered if you are taking KALETRA with:

Phenobarbital
Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
Carbamazepine (Tegretol® and others)

These medicines may lower the amount of KALETRA in your blood and make it less effective.

Other Special Considerations:

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

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

What are the possible side effects of KALETRA?

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

- The most commonly reported side effects of moderate severity that are thought to be drug related are: abdominal pain, abnormal stools (bowel movements), diarrhea, feeling weak/tired, headache, and nausea. Children taking KALETRA may sometimes get a skin rash.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What should I tell my doctor before taking KALETRA?

- If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant: The effects of KALETRA on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known.
- If you are breast-feeding: Do not breast-feed if you are taking KALETRA. You should not breast-feed if you have HIV. If you are a woman who has or will have a baby, talk with your doctor about the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that HIV can be transmitted through breast-feeding.
- If you have liver problems: If you have liver problems or are infected with Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C, you should tell your doctor before taking KALETRA.

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

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

How do I store KALETRA?

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

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

General advice about prescription medicines:

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

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Out on the Bayou

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Staying power

When it comes to gay plays in Houston, all signs point to Joe Watts and Theatre New West

By KAY Y. DAYUS

WHILE NOT EXACTLY THRIVING, gay theater in Houston is alive and well thanks in no small part to actor, director, producer and general theater dogsbody, Joe Watts, who works out of and practically lives in Theatre New West in the heart of the Montrose.

His latest production, "The Altruists," written by Nicky Silver and directed by Joe Angel Babb, opened last weekend to favorable reviews. Watts says the production is "politically correct" because it features two lesbians, two gay men and two heterosexuals, none of whom ever get out of bed during the play.

That explains the three unmade beds on the stage and the rest of the jumble in the theater when Watts was interviewed by the Voice. It was the last-minute clutter that signals the opening of a new production — the usual chaos before the order when the play opens.

Watts is clearly comfortable and happy in this setting and he's easy to interview — he likes to talk. And when he talks, he is animated. His hands move constantly, expressive hands at that, and he sort of shifts around in his chair. Obviously he loves the theater, the drama and everything involved with it.

Watts is one of the few producers in Houston still consistently staging gay-themed plays and revues. Others that have come and gone include The Little Room Downstairs Theatre, which folded a couple of years ago. Also gone is The Ashland Street Theatre Co., which, while not a gay company, launched several shows that included gay characters.

Unhinged Productions, located in Atomic Café in downtown Houston, still produces gay theater. Theatre LaB Houston, Stages Repertory Theatre and DiverseWorks all feature some gay- or lesbian-themed works.

Bienvenue, apparently soon-to-be renamed Stargazer, produces racier material such as "Naked Boys Singing." Watts isn't too keen on the nude theater productions. "It's sad that you have to put a naked body on stage to make money," he says. But make money it does.

Having given his view of naked theater, Watts announces that there is some nudity in his next production, "Jerker," and he's frank about why. "Nudity sells. I need a cash cow to bring in some money so I can run these two theaters," he says with an ironic grin.

"The play is about two men, two beds and two phones. They never meet one another the whole play — they are always on the phone," Watts explains. "It's very funny."

He has just finished taking auditions for the parts and seems pretty sure he's found the right men for the roles, which he says can be difficult in Houston.

"There's not an abundance of good-looking male actors between 20 and 40 in this town. There are more in Dallas and even in Austin," he says. Watts likens the phenomenon to what he sees as the lack of continuity and solidarity in Houston's gay community.

Wait a minute: He has two theaters? Yes, Watts has just acquired another space in his current location, a building that

also houses 1415 Bar and Grill (formerly Sonoma Restaurant). With seating for around 75, the new theater, dubbed "Theatre New West Too," is smaller and more intimate than the original 125-seat space. He plans to use both settings.

WATT HAS BEEN DUBBED THE "FATHER OF GAY theater in Houston," or grandfather as he laughingly calls himself, referring to his age. He's come a long way since those early days.

In the early '80s, with fellow actor John David Etheridge, he began his odyssey into the world of gay theater, with the founding of Diversity Theatre. The "homeless" theater put on plays wherever the troupe could. The first, an all-male cast of Noel Coward's "Private Lives," was staged in the long gone Pink Elephant, a gay club billed as the oldest in Texas. Several more were produced there, including perhaps Watts' personal favorite, Mart Crowley's "The Boys in the Band."

The company folded after a couple of years and Etheridge left for Florida, but Watts had not had his fill of theater. He formed The Group (Theater Workshop), a theatrical workshop that held meetings featuring guest speakers, improvisation and stage training and readings of works by local playwrights.

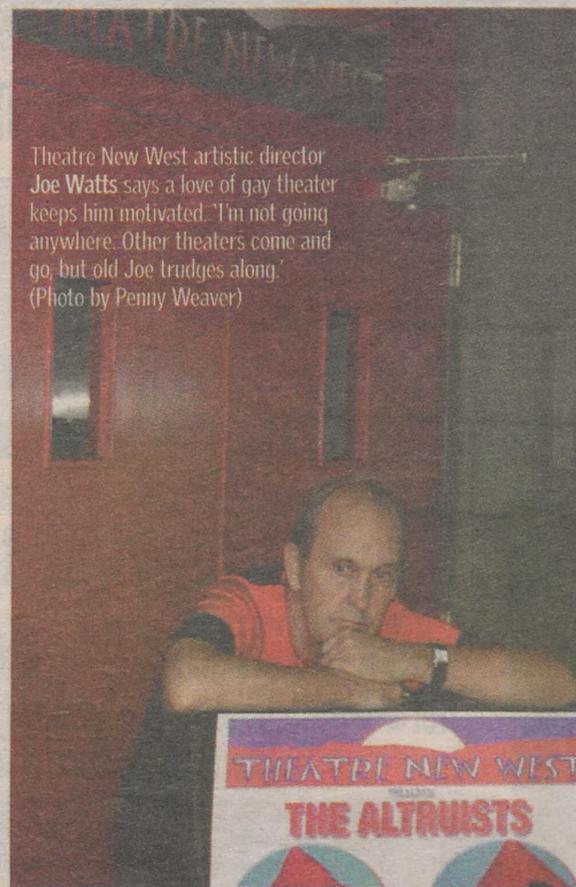
He stopped the workshops in 1985 when he produced Jeff Hagedorn's "One," the first-ever play about AIDS. This one-man play about a man with AIDS made its debut at the First Unitarian Church's Channing Hall and proceeds went to the then-newly formed AIDS Foundation Houston.

Watts would stage shows to coincide with Pride Week and went on to produce plays such as "Franny," "The Queen of Provincetown," "Gulp!," and two AIDS-related plays. These were staged at the Galleria-area Kindred Spirits, a now defunct upscale lesbian bar, a place fondly remembered by many of the older lesbians in Houston and celebrated annually with the Kindred Spirits Reunion.

In 1988, Watts took his gay theater into Houston's mainstream when he staged "A Dance Against Darkness" at Main Street Theater. Watts said in a Houston Post article written by William Albright at the time that he wanted "to take AIDS theater out of gay bars and into mainstream or legit theater spaces." He also said that too few straight people attended his bar shows. Wright wrote, "and though the Houston Post has consistently covered his productions, the Houston Chronicle has from the beginning refused to cover them because, Watt said, its theater critic told him the shows are too special-interest-oriented."

OBVIOUSLY, WATTS AND GAY THEATER HAVE COME a long way — his latest production, "The Altruists," was reviewed by the Houston Chronicle, and favorably at that. In fact, all his productions are now reviewed by the mainstream press and well as by gay and lesbian publications.

Watts did all this while continuing his full job with KRTS for more than 40 years. He began his foray into theater as an actor and appeared in several venues including the Alley Theatre. His favorite role was as Michael in "Boys in the Band," staged by, of all places, Baytown Little



Theatre New West artistic director Joe Watts says a love of gay theater keeps him motivated. "I'm not going anywhere. Other theaters come and go, but old Joe trudges along." (Photo by Penny Weaver)

Theater. Through Diversity Theatre, Watts was fortunate enough to direct his own version of "Boys in the Band." It was possibly his favorite play and the first he directed.

"I was hooked. I didn't know I could do it," he says of directing. He's not done much acting since — he "loves the control and the power" of directing. "It's like giving birth to a group of actors and to look on as a proud parent," Watts explains.

The Chicago musical revue "Fairy Tales" was Watts' first production at Theatre New West in June of 2000, and it opened to "rave" reviews. He likes to do revues because he has more leeway in his directing. "I don't have a story line that I have to stick to and you can make every song a different story," he explains.

Besides, he says, it's hard to get the rights to plays because many are on hold for the big theaters like the Alley Theatre. "Bigger theaters get first dibbs. I get frustrated that I can't always get the better things."

Still, he's not done too badly in all these years. He's staged "The Greatest Story Ever Told," voted by the Houston Press as the Best Gay-Themed Show of 2002. And there's the must-see-to-understand-its-title play, "One Tit, A Dyke & Gin." He was even the first male director and producer of "Dos Lesbos." He had to get special dispensation from the playwright to do the play since the script specifies it can only be produced by women.

Yes, Joe Watts has come a long way, even though he was diagnosed HIV positive around 10 years ago. "I wear the crown. I'm not ashamed. The cocktail of pills literally saved me," he says. "I wouldn't be here without them."

This self-named "odd duck or old theater queen" is not getting rich either. Is he at least earning a living?

"So far, not really. But I hope it's going to get better with the new space," Watts says. "It's been rough for me personally for the last three years (when he lost his job at KRTS), but I'm not giving up. I'm not going anywhere. Other theaters come and go, but old Joe trudges along."

His philosophy is that, "Every good play should be like a roller coaster ride where we should feel all the emotions in one evening."

The theater is Joe Watts' personal passion and all signs are favorable that he will continue the roller coaster ride for quite some time yet.





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—Mary Ann McBee
Fitness Exchange



houston voice ALL THE NEWS FOR YOUR LIFE AND YOUR STYLE

opera RICH ARENSCHIEDT



Diva flawless in
Houston performance
of difficult role

'La Traviata' excels

YOU COULD FEEL THE ANTICIPATION in the hall. Well-known to Houston audiences, she came out on stage and launched into a completely new chapter in her stunning career without so much as the blink of an eye. Her signature platinum blonde coif, black leather... Oh, wait a minute... this review isn't supposed to be about Annie Lennox, but, rather, about the other diva to hit the boards this past weekend, soprano Renee Fleming in her much-awaited debut as "Violetta" in Houston Grand Opera's "La Traviata."

That said, the previous paragraph still applies (minus the platinum hair and leather) to Fleming, who rocked the Wortham Center in a Verdi different sort of way.

"Traviata" is the signature piece for any soprano. Its vocal demands straddle three completely different singing styles: coloratura (requiring a passenger seat on a Lear Jet), dramatic (requiring requisite vocal outrage) and lyric (requiring a very Jack Korvorkianesque approach to vocal production). It's full of pitfalls and trap doors requiring those lucky enough to sing the role have to sit on a high "C" while supine on a sofa or lying in a bed covered with quilts. Many less-than-successful Violettas resort to the "screech and reach" technique whereby the soprano thinks that if she sings loud enough, the note will happen on its own — something particularly debilitating for the listener.

Fleming had none of that and, unlike any previous Violetta I've heard, brought her characteristic warmth to almost every note.

There was much anticipation and some consternation over the way in which Fleming's Violetta came to Houston. This project has been in the works for a while with an original debut at the Met some years ago that never materialized. Some of Fleming's own comments regarding her debuting this role in Houston were viewed as less than flattering. In this case, New York's loss is Houston's gain. This "Traviata" is the result of careful career planning on the part of a very savvy musician.

Many of Fleming's important debuts have happened here and she attributes HGO as having a major influence in propelling her career, beginning in 1988 with her role as the countess in Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro." Houston was lucky enough to see her first Arabella and her first Marschallin in a magical 1995 production "Der Rosenkavalier." Fleming has been working closely with HGO Music Director Patrick Summers to bring Violetta to death.

"Traviata" is an easy opera to like; it's got all the goods: glamour, amour and morte. One of the most efficient synopses reads this way: "Violetta, a consumptive courtesan, falls madly in love with Alfredo. Alfredo's father convinces Violetta that she

must leave Alfredo to preserve his family's honor. Alfredo publicly insults Violetta at a party. The guests are shocked. Violetta dies."

The original title for the work was "Amore et morte" (love and death) but Verdi, in keeping with a mid-19th century movement toward artistic realism, renamed it "La Traviata" (the fallen woman). This era was full of cad: noblemen who used women, wrecked their lives and then married "respectfully."

"Traviata" is frequently oversung and overflung. Volume is often substituted for musical intensity. Dramatic excess is peddled instead of realism. Under the guidance of conductor Summers and director Frank Corsaro, this production reflects an attitude of careful musical and emotional control. This Violetta doesn't cough like she's hacking up a hairball, nor is she insane with desire for her Alfredo. In this production, it's as if she's known the ending of her life from the very beginning of it.

Paul Charles Clark's portrayal of Alfredo is a wonderful match to Fleming's Violetta. For two artists that have never worked together, they possess wonderful vocal synergy. Clark's warm tone was the perfect counterpart, offering his musical line with ease and assurance. Bruno Caproni as Alfredo's blustery father is a classic Verdi baritone, rounding out an excellent trio in this "Traviata."

This dark and sumptuous production with sets and costumes by Tony Award-winning Brit Desmond Heeley mirrors Violetta's tenuous world perfectly. The opening scene foreshadows what's ahead without sacrificing any opulence. This courtesan's salon reflects a lady at the height of her seductive power. The costumes are equally radiant. Of special note was the one worn by the hunky dancing matador. An audible separation of fabric was heard by those seated in the first few rows as his derriere (discreetly covered by white tights) made its inadvertent operatic debut. To his credit, the guy was a champ and didn't miss a step.

When creating the role of Violetta, composer Giuseppe Verdi told the director of the theater in Venice that he needed a "woman in the prime of her strength." HGO is a long way from Venice or New York, but Fleming and company possess what both locales would want had they premiered this excellently conceived and executed interpretation of this operatic classic. Though Annie Lennox has left Houston in her slinky silver tour bus, Renee Fleming can be seen expiring now through May 4.

i MORE INFO

'La Traviata'
Houston Grand Opera • 713-228-OPERA
www.houstongrandopera.org

out on the town JOHNNY HOOKS

Houston International Festival this year focuses on our neighbor to the south

Get out, Mexican style

HELLO HOUSTON. MY NAME IS Johnny Hooks and this new bi-weekly column is called "Out on the Town." I am a longtime resident of Houston, though I have also been lucky enough to call San Francisco and New York City home. I am in a long-term relationship, his name is Brian and we live in the Woodland Heights with our four cats: Halle, Mika, Sally and Emma.

Now I know you're asking yourself: Why should you, the GLBT and S (straight) community, listen to moi? Why look to my column for advice on what to do when you and yours go "out on the town"? Well, I've had my share of adventures in this town: the night Rich's opened, the night Heaven burned down, the opening of the Wortham Center, too many fund-raisers to count (ha ha!), including one with our man Bill, and so on.

My previous columns in other pubs dealt with entertainment, queer media, and the many queer scenes of our community. Out on the Town challenges me to focus my unique vision on our local scene and see what comes into view. The main direction I have is that the focus be "gay," whatever I choose to highlight. Well my dears, this started me thinking: What sort of things would qualify as "gay" (for the sake of peace within our community, in this column unless specifically addressed, "GAY" will represent all GLBT persons).

Hmmmm. We are a very diverse and large group, no longer confined to one area, say the Montrose, as was the case when I first came out. Many of us have families now, and dare I say it, traditional home lives - it's not just about bars and tricks and such anymore.

So I took a look around town and asked myself: "What do I spy with my gay little eye?"

THE HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL APRIL 25 - MAY 4

WHY: The 32nd annual iFest draws more than 500,000 people to the heart of downtown and spotlights Mexico this year. Whether you and your friends walk, bike or drive, it's worth the effort to experience Houston's largest festival. Of note to our womyn sisters and their families is the Chase Plaza de Mexico on the grounds of the Julia Idelson Library. Check out Frida's Cantina, a whimsical replica of artist Frida Kahlo's famous studio/home Casa Azul. Look for live entertainment, food and beverages (including beer), all hosted by Frida look-a-likes! There's an interactive photo booth, bullfighting

exhibit and Mexican film site as well. Plus the Blind Boys of Alabama and Ballet de Folklorico perform at other sites during the two-week run of iFest.

For more information, call 713-654-8808 or visit the official Web site at www.ifest.org.

WHO NEEDS A REASON TO SHOP? Nobody I know, but for added value, how about a charity shopping day where some items are only a dollar!

Look no further: Buffalo Exchange presents the annual Dollar Day Sale, which benefits the Buffalo Field Campaign, a non-profit org that works to raise awareness to our Native American free-range buffalo. I picked up a T-shirt and a faux Burberry cowboy hat at last year's sale that I wore all summer for only \$2! Don't miss this chance to own clothes you gave up for resale years ago.

For more information, go to www.buffaloexchange.com.

SEEK OUT:

MUSIC: Madonna's "American Life." The beyond-iconic Madonna returns with her 10th studio album offers an exercise in reflection that highlights her burgeoning guitar prowess and techno artist Mirwais' future production. The only mega-artist from the '80s to retain her power and influence (sorry Michael!), this album will speak to you and your life no matter where you are. Plus as a gay man, I have to love it!

WEB: I know all of you want to know what America's most conservative and outspoken right-wing gay columnist is up to, and so you can with his own Web site. Be you Log Cabin Republican or hardcore Democrat, this site is sure to have you forwarding articles 1-2-3! www.AndrewSullivan.com

TV: I'm torn between these two television events to recommend, so I'll mention them both:

All My Children — The big kiss (the first lesbian kiss on daytime) between Bianca (Erica Kane's daughter!) and girl-toy Lena takes place on April 28, but just like a soap the effects will continue to be felt, so set your VCR! Always remember to catch up: see the Friday or Monday show!

Eloise at the Plaza — Every queen I know grew up wanting to be the bratty yet lovable Eloise, of the famous book series, and finally someone has gotten around to putting these classic tales on film. Check it out on 4.27.03 on ABC channel 13 at 7 p.m.

See you next time here at Out on the Town, Houston!

Johnny Hooks may be reached via e-mail through editor@houstonvoice.com

MARGOT KIDDER joins
Amy J. Carle & Starla Benford

FINAL HOUSTON ENGAGEMENT
THE

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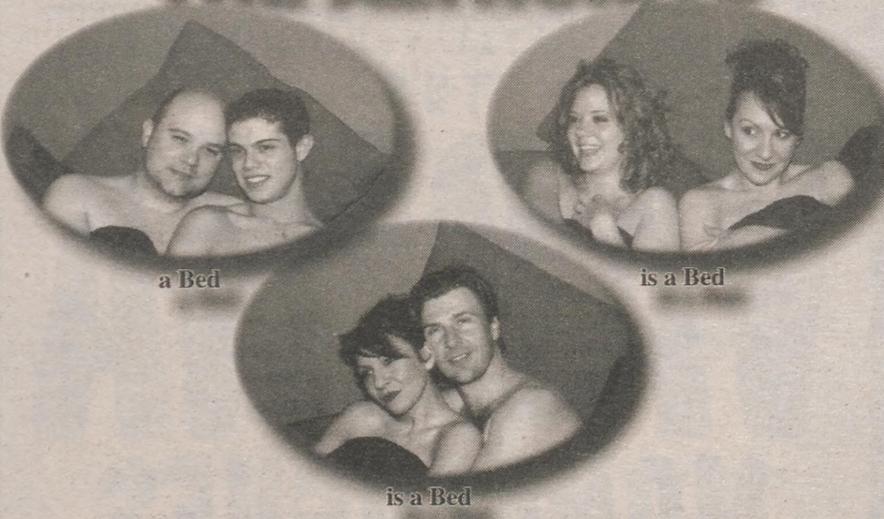
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sports LEE DAVIS

Houstonians take honors in Lone Star volleyball tourney and prepare for busy summer

Sports action flies

FORGET SPRING! IT SEEMS SUMMER IS approaching without a chance for spring. Gay sports look to be in full swing as we dust off our cleats and ready for another fun-filled, action-packed summer of events.

Scrums ahead

The Houston Roughnecks invite you to join them, as a player or a supporter.

Recently, our own Roughnecks smeared the Dallas Diablos 20-0. You know how I like for anything Dallas to be beaten. The club is actively seeking sponsors for their upcoming season, and they accept in-kind and cash sponsorships. They offer different levels of sponsorship and ways to gain visibility in the rugby and Houston community.

For more information, contact the Houston Roughnecks at www.roughnecksrugby.org/home.htm.

Bricks still kickin'!

The Independent Billiard League of Houston (IBL) requests that teams call in scores to 713-942-0781 by 8 p.m. Friday following play.

After Week 8 of play, Bricks Kicks is sporting a perfect 8-0 record. The Bandits, Ebony, Ivory, Jaded and BRB Sidewinders are tied with 6-2 records. B. Hunter has a 18-3 record, with V. Henry, C. Bateman, R. Hines and R. Chew following closely with 18-6, 15-6 and 15-6 record, respectively.

Congratulations to R. Chew for the Break & Run win in Week 7 and to B. Brehm for the Rack & Run title in the same week.

For more information, contact the IBL on the Web at <http://iblhouston.com>.

Goals for everyone

The Montrose Soccer Club of Houston is open to men and women who have experience playing soccer.

The only requirements for membership are that potential recruits be team players, know the rules of soccer and have the basic skills (you don't have to be a pro, just played before). New members don't even have to be gay, just willing to be mistaken for gay.

For more information, send an e-mail to MontroseSC@soccer.com or go to www.geocities.com/MontroseSoccer, or log on to other sites such as the international Gay & Lesbian Football Association, Oak Lawn Soccer Club, or West Hollywood Soccer Club. If you have the international flair, contact the Munich Elves (yeah, in Germany).

Love 40

The Houston Tennis Club meets on Wednesday and Friday evenings from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Can't make it during the week? Look for them on Sunday from 9 a.m. until noon. For more information, contact the group at 713-692-2701 or via e-mail: houstontennisclub@aol.com.

Lone Star Classic

The Montrose Softball League announces its Memorial Day Weekend Lone Star Classic Softball Tournament is May 23-26 this year.

Registration is on Friday, May 23, for Division B, C, and D. Early registration postmarked by May 3 is \$300 with a fee of \$350 for those who register between May 3 and May 17. The host hotel is the Houston Renaissance Hotel.

This tournament attracts teams from all over the United States and Canada. Participants and spectators alike will have a chance to meet and greet people and show them what Texas — more specifically, Houston — hospitality is all about. For more info, contact MSL at www.montrosesoftballleague.com.

Gay basketball

Keep the full-court press going on this issue. Many people have an interest, as I'm getting lots of response. For those who missed it before: Anyone interested in a gay basketball league? Keep your inquiries coming to me via editor@houstonvoice.com.

World Series Softball

The NAGAAA (North American Gay Amateur Athletic Association) announces its 27th annual tournament to be held in ... George Bush's back yard? Close, but better yet, in Washington D.C., beginning Aug. 17, 2003.

Rooms are expected to fill up fast, so contact the organizers of this popular tournament via e-mail at information@Series2003.org or call 202-543-0326.

Volleyball tourney

The Lone Star Volleyball Association held its Houston Classic XIV Tournament from April 17-19.

Tournament results were:

A Division — San Antonio Killer Instinct in 1st, San Antonio Greek Gods 2nd and San Antonio Piranhas in 3rd. Looks they were intent on getting home to Fiesta with lots of extra medals. The A Division All-Stars were Andrew Scott, Loreno McFarland, Carlos Mendoza, Jeff Gonzales, Jesse Sandoval and Steve Sandoval, all from San Antonio. Congratulations to Steve Sandoval, voted the tournament Most Valuable Player.

B Division — Dallas Get-U-Sum won 1st, with Houston House of Volley and Houston Locker Boys at 2nd and 3rd, respectively. All-Star honors went to Kevin Thibodeau of Austin, Justin Burriss and Chris Cacioppo of Houston, and Darnell Williams and Daniel Bokor of Dallas. Nick Sehr was honored with Most Valuable Player kudos in that division.

C Division — New Orleans Twenty Somethin' came in 1st, Houston Lightning took 2nd and Houston Eight Isn't Enough nabbed 3rd. The All-Stars were David Delgado and Jose Polendo from Houston, Ryan Flint and Jonathan Robles from Dallas, and Erich Sollenberger from New Orleans. Rick Talley from New Orleans was honored as the Most Valuable Player.

Congratulations to the Lone Star Volleyball gang on hosting another great season's tournament.

community calendar

SATURDAY, APRIL 26

Houston Gay & Lesbian Parents. Parents' Night Out at Pappasito's. www.hglp.org.

Men's Gathering of Houston. Dialogue meeting, 6:30-9:30 p.m. "Black MSMs (MSM - Men who have Sex with Men): A Look at their Mind, Sexual Behavior and Consequences." Special guests will be Monica Goffney and Gloria Sanchez of the Harris County Health Department. First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston, 5200 Fannin. Church phone: 713-526-5200. Men's Gathering of Houston: 713-528-4461.

EVERY SATURDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lambda Center. Alcoholics Anonymous. 11:30 a.m. Eye Opener Group, 8 p.m. Saturday Night Live, 9:30 p.m. Willing Ones Group, 1201 W. Clay. 713-521-1243 or 713-528-9772. www.lambdahouston.org.

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

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

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in, noon-5 p.m. • CATS (Community Awareness for Transgender Support), 2 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

SUNDAY, APRIL 27

BFLAG. Blind Friends & Family of Lesbians, Gays, Transgenders, and Bisexuals meet at 2p.m. at 4202. For more information, call 713-526-6526 or e-mail wordgarden@houston.rr.com.

PFLAG presentation. "Coming Out" is the title of a "Welcoming Congregation" discussion to be led by PFLAG members at Henry David Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 3945 Greenbriar, Stafford, TX. 9 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.

Integrity. GLBT Episcopalians & Friends group meets every fourth Sunday. 12:30 p.m. brunch. Maria Selma Restaurant, 1619 Richmond.

EVERY SUNDAY

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

Center for Spiritual Living. Services at 11 a.m., for children at 10:50 a.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808. The center also has commitment ceremonies, metaphysical bookstore and classes.

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

Community of Kindred Spirits in Beaumont. Worship at 6 p.m. 1575 Spindletop Ave., Beaumont, Texas. 409-813-2055. E-mail: cksrev3@netzero.net

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

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

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

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

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

Gay Bowling Leagues. 7 p.m. Palace Lanes, Bellaire Blvd. 713-861-1187.

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

GLOBAL. Gay Lesbian Or Bisexual Alliance. University of Houston GLBT student group meeting. 2 p.m. at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.uh.edu/~global. E-mail: global@bayou.uh.edu.

Grace Assembly Church. Gay/gay-affirming congregation. 11 a.m. service. 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leo1@easttexas.net.

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

H.A.T.C.H. Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals meets 6-9 p.m. at Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond Ave. 713-529-3590. www.hatchyouth.org.

Houston Roughnecks Rugby Club. Practice from 4-6 p.m. For more information, log on to www.roughnecksrugby.org.

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

Lambda Center. Alcoholics Anonymous. 9:30 a.m. Came to Believe Group. 1201 W. Clay. 713-521-1243 or 713-528-9772. www.lambdahouston.org.

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

Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:45 & 11:15 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 281-298-2780.

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

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

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

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

Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Adult discussion, 9 a.m. Service, 11:15 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.

Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 502 Church St. Service, 10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.

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

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in, 2-6 p.m. • GLBT Community Church with Rev. Melissa Wood: Bible study, 10-10:45 a.m., worship 11 a.m. www.geocities.com/glbtc • STAG (Some Transgenders Are Guys), 7 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

MONDAY, APRIL 28 EVERY MONDAY

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

Free HIV Testing. Houston Area Community Services. 9 a.m.-noon at Joseph-Hines Clinic, 1710 West 25th St. 713-526-0555, ext. 231, 227 or 226.

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

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

Gay Bowling Leagues. 9 p.m. Palace Lanes, Bellaire Blvd. 713-861-1187.

Gay Fathers/Fathers First. Support group. 8-9:30 p.m. Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Tom, 713-726-8736. www.geocities.com/gaydadshouston/

Grace Assembly Church. Gay/gay-affirming congregation. 7 p.m. aerobics class. 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leo1@easttexas.net.

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

Houston Roughnecks Rugby Club. Practice from 6:30-8:30 p.m. For more information, log on to www.roughnecksrugby.org.

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

Lambda Center. Alcoholics Anonymous. 8 p.m. Beginners' Group. 1201 W. Clay. 713-521-1243 or 713-528-9772. www.lambdahouston.org.

Montrose Clinic. Offers weekly peer support groups for gay and bisexual men with HIV. Spanish speaking group meets, 6:30 p.m. 215 Westheimer. 713-830-3050. Grupo de Apoyo para Latinos gay y bisexuales VIH positivos. Lunes 6:30. Para mas informacion llama al 713-830-3025.

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

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

TUESDAY, APRIL 29

Houston Outdoor Group. General meeting and newsletter mailout. Don and Ray's. 713-522-7809. HOGLINE: 713-KAMP-OUT.

EVERY TUESDAY

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

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

Free HIV Testing. Houston Area Community Services. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Joseph-Hines Clinic, 1710 West 25th St. 713-526-0555, ext. 231, 227 or 226.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m.-midnight at Club Houston. Also 4-8 p.m. at 611 Club, 611 Hyde Park. 713-830-3000.

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

GLBT Pentecostals. Bible study, prayer, 7 p.m. in the Heights. For info: 936-931-3761; e-mail: www.Wgbl947@cs.com.

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

Introduction to Buddhism. All welcome at 634 W. Temple in the Heights. 7 p.m. Carlton, 713-862-8129.

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

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • Lesbian Coming Out Group, 7 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30

Houston Gay & Lesbian Parents. Newsletter mailout at Buffet Express. www.hglp.org.

EVERY WEDNESDAY

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.; SOM Discussion & Exploration, 7 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

Crystal Meth Anonymous (CMA). 8:15 p.m. meeting. Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond Ave., Room 15.

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

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

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

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

Gay Bowling Leagues. 6:30 p.m. Palace Lanes, Bellaire Blvd. 713-861-1187.

Grace Assembly Church. Gay/gay-affirming congregation. 7 p.m. aerobics class. 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leo1@easttexas.net.

Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal, 7-9 p.m. 1307 Yale. 713-528-4379.

Houston Roughnecks Rugby Club. Practice from 6:30-8:30 p.m. For more information, log on to www.roughnecksrugby.org.

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

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

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in, 2-9 p.m. • Free HIV testing, counseling, 6-9 p.m. • Houston Pride Band rehearsal, 7:30 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

THURSDAY, MAY 1

EVERY THURSDAY

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

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

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

Free HIV Testing. Houston Area Community Services. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Joseph-Hines Clinic, 1710 West 25th St. Also 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Gallery Medical Clinic, 5900 North Freeway, and Club Toyz from 9 p.m.-midnight. 713-526-0555, ext. 231, 227 or 226.

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

Free HIV Testing. 7-9 p.m. at All Star News, 3415 Katy Freeway. Health clinic with free testing for HIV and syphilis. 713-869-7878.

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

Gay Bowling Leagues. 9 p.m. Palace Lanes, Bellaire Blvd. 713-861-1187.

GLOBAL. Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual Alliance at the University of Houston-Central Campus. Weekly meeting, 6 p.m. e-mail: nguy0023@hotmail.com.

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

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

Lake Livingston GLBT Support Group. 7 p.m. dinner and discussion. Grace Assembly Church, 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leo1@easttexas.net.

Lambda Skating Club. 8 p.m. Tradewinds Skating Rink. www.neosoft.com/~lrsc. 713-523-9620.

Montrose Clinic. Offers weekly peer support groups for gay and bisexual men with HIV. English speaking group meets, 6:30 p.m. 215 Westheimer 713-830-3050.

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

Recovery From Food Addiction (RFA). Meeting for 12-step program open to all. Noon-1 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1805 W. Alabama St. RFA: 713-673-2848. www.geocities.com/rfa77235/. E-mail: rfaworldservice@aol.com.

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

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

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop in 2-9 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

FRIDAY, MAY 2

EVERY FRIDAY

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

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

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

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

Grace Assembly Church. Gay/gay-affirming congregation. 7 p.m. aerobics class. 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leo1@easttexas.net.

H.A.T.C.H. Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals meets 7-10 p.m. at Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond Ave. 713-529-3590. www.hatchyouth.org.

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

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

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

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

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

VOLUNTEER/SELF-HELP

ECHOS. This non-profit ministry of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany is dedicated to helping people access health and social service systems. Free medical services include HIV, STD and hepatitis testing. Call for dates and times of services. 9610 S. Gessner. 713-270-0369. E-mail: echos-houston@swbell.net.

Gay & Lesbian Switchboard Houston. Volunteers offer a friendly ear to callers in need of information, nonjudgmental support and anonymous counseling to the GLBT community. 713-529-3211. www.gayswitchboardhouston.org.

HoP-ON. Anyone can join this non-profit moderated e-mail announcement list that helps facilitate advocacy work and organizing efforts for gay Houstonians. Quantity of postings is strictly limited. Postings include press releases and action alerts from national, state and local gay and allied organizations. For info or to join, access www.groups.yahoo.com/group/HoP-ON/.

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

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

Pride Committee of Houston. Volunteers sought for Pride 2003 preparations. This is the 25th Pride celebration. www.pridehouston.org. E-mail: volunteers@pridehouston.org. 713-529-6979.

appts

a weekly guide to arts & entertainment activities for gay Houstonians

SPECIAL THIS WEEKEND

Masters of Leather will hold its sixth annual Master and Mistress of Leather Title Competition as a fund-raiser for the Donald R. Watkins Memorial Foundation. Registration is 8 p.m. to midnight on Friday, April 25, and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday, April 26, at the Ripcord, 715 Fairview. The contest begins at 3 p.m. Sunday, April 27, at Rich's, 2401 San Jacinto. Contestant entry is open to all people. Tickets: \$5 in advance, \$10 at the door. For more information, contact Terry Latimer (Polo) at 713-928-8605.

TUESDAY, APRIL 29

GLBT Night at the Opera will be presented by Houston Grand Opera as Grammy Award-winner Renee Fleming sings her first-ever Violetta in Verdi's popular "La Traviata." Cost of \$100 includes two cocktails and light hors d'oeuvres by don Carlos Catering before the Opera at Keys West, transportation to and from the opera by Ron's American Limousines (limited seating available to first 20 paid reservations), and orchestra level seats. 713-228-OPERA. www.houstongrandopera.org

CLUB SCENE FRIDAY, APRIL 25

The U.S.O. Show will be hosted by the Viscount and Viscountess of the Royal, Sovereign & Imperial Court for the Single Star of Houston, Inc. (R.S.I.C.S.S.). 8 p.m. E.J's, 2517 Ralph.

SATURDAY, APRIL 26

The Nellie Count of the R.S.I.C.S.S. will host a garage sale and cookout. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Chances, 1100 Westheimer.

The Count & Countess Show will be hosted by the Count and Countess of the R.S.I.C.S.S. 8 p.m. Michael's Outpost, 1419 Richmond.

SUNDAY, APRIL

Q Puzzle

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13	
14					15						16				
17					18						19				
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22						23	24					25		26	
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43					44	45					46				
47					48						49				
	50		51								52				
53								54	55						56
57								58						59	
60								61						62	

"Request on Your Knees"

Across

- Segments of "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf"
- Immeasurably vast hole
- Zips up
- Cho's "I'm the One ___ I Want"
- Susan's partner in "Thelma and Louise"
- Garfield's whipping boy
- Happy gay guy's prayer
- Old flames that you take back?
- Type of torpedo, to Odo
- How to moan in bed
- Stroke your boa, e.g.
- Love, to Billie Jean
- Become excited again?
- The Indigo Girls' "___ Complicated"
- You might use one to go to Rio
- Eureka Springs hrs.
- Lahr of "The Wizard of Oz"
- Cruises a room at gay.com
- With 53-Across, unhappy gay guy's addition to the prayer
- Where two bones touch
- Middle name of "Jailhouse Rock" singer
- Tongue of the cut (abbr.)
- Strap on a stallion
- Painter Francis
- Scotch partner

- Org. for Jodie Foster
- Misses for R. Bonheur
- Refusal to a leather daddy
- Sensitivity set
- Tongue
- See 33-Across
- Silence for Tchaikovsky
- Stick your protuberance where it doesn't belong
- Memo starter
- "Ziegfeld Follies" costume designer
- Simple kind of question
- "___ On Down the Road"

Down

- It swallows plastic and spits cash
- QAF director McDougall
- Date
- Come to the fore
- Misrepresented stats, perhaps
- Gravel-voiced actor Arthur
- Long, to a Samurai?
- Wesley of "To Wong Foo, Thanks For Everything! Julie Newmar"
- It perfumes your drawers
- Left to pirates
- Sculptor Lewis
- Elton John, e.g.
- Feinstein or Boxer (abbr.)
- Like the decor at an Ian Schrager hotel

- Many, many moons
- Cross-dresser Joan of ___
- Roz portrayer on "Frasier"
- Daily grind
- ___ Vegas (Liberace Museum locale)
- Do-over for Martina
- TV band
- Frasier's wheels
- Leopold or Loeb
- It's tiny but attractive
- Greek love
- Ho from Hawaii
- Episodes with Dr. Kerry Weaver
- International Mr. ___
- Claim of some porn stars
- Song in "Jesus Christ Superstar"
- Susie Bright and others
- Revolver or Cartwheel
- Like Bessie Smith's singing
- Of the Van Trapp family's escape route
- British actress Ward
- Da. before Mardi Gras
- The "N" of NLGJA (abbr.)
- By ___
- Suction head
- Threesome in "Roma"
- Gay guys, for short
- Came out on top
- Pee-___ Herman

Answers on Page 20

ISN'T IT TIME?



GET TESTED

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713-526-0555 ext. 226

Jump or antique?



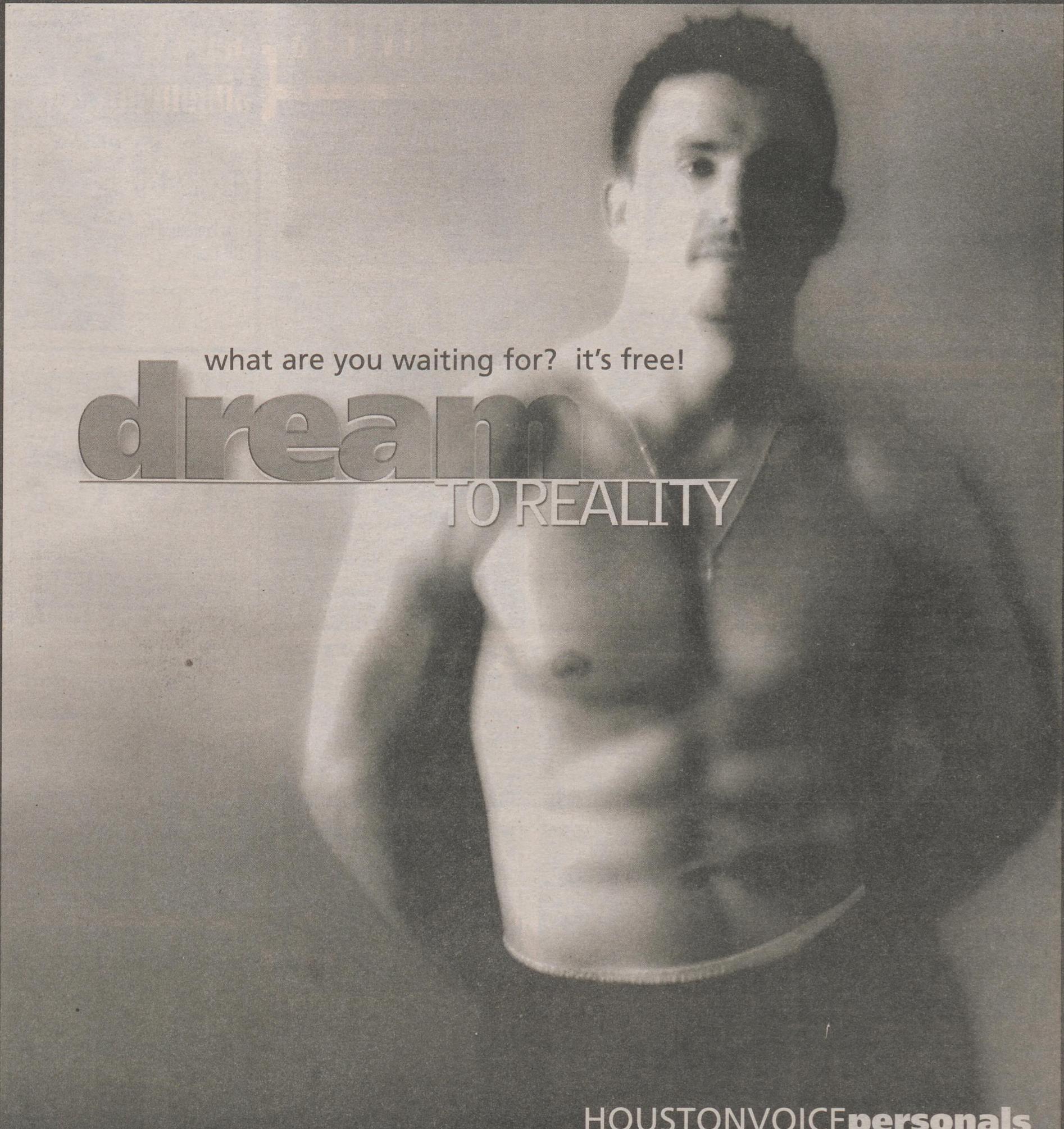
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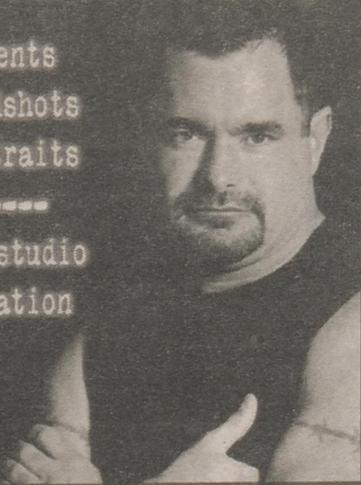
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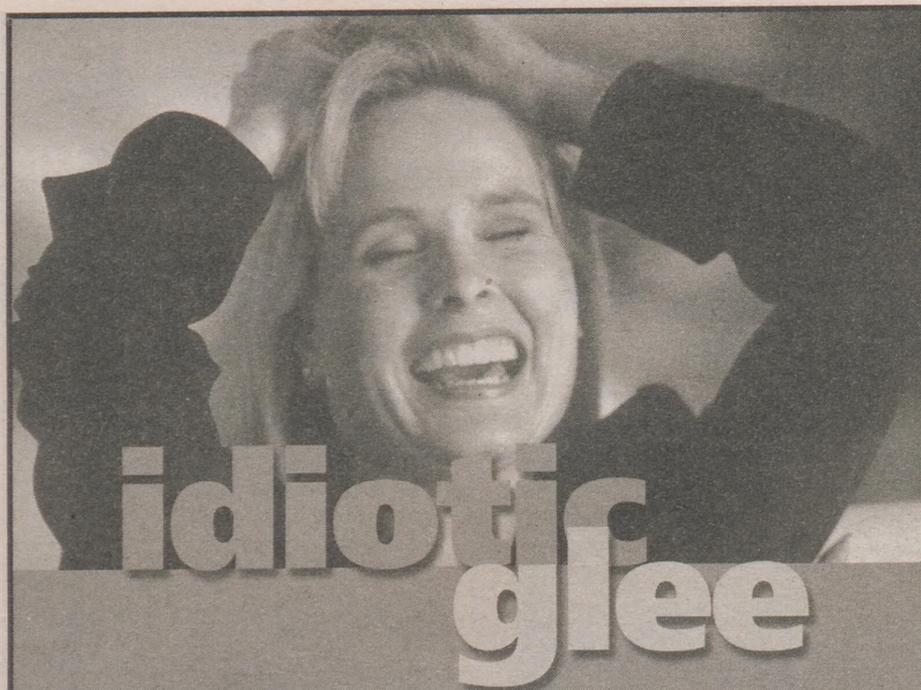
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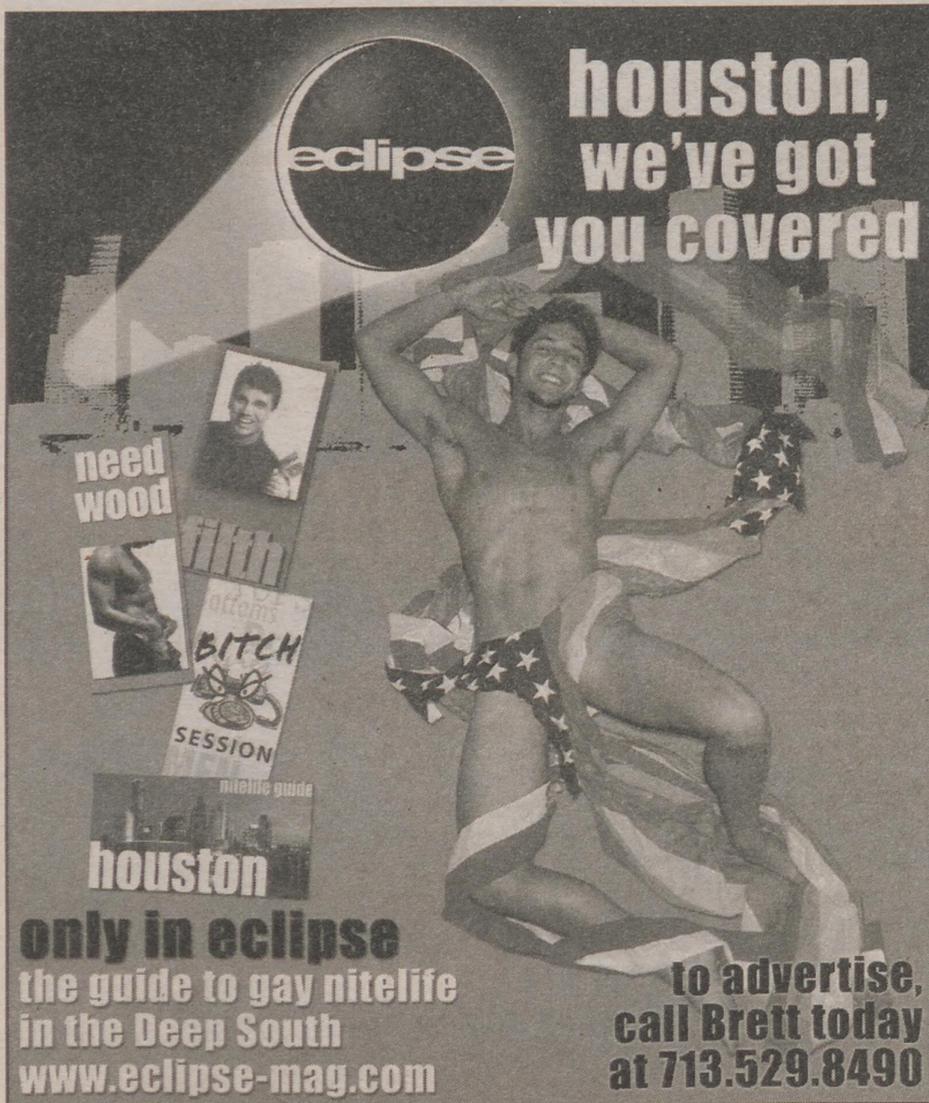


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My Stars!

April 25 - May 1



ARIES (March 21 to April 20)

The new moon on May 1 falls in your house of money, which means that you need to focus exclusively on getting your financial life in order, darling. If you've been a ditz, get serious. A Taurus can help you to grow up fast. You'll feel more sexually empowered after you've balanced your checkbook, babe.



TAURUS (April 21 to May 20)

The stars are with you this week, darling. It's a perfect time for you to talk your way into an all-expenses-paid vacation. Seriously, your gift of gab can lead to tangible gifts if you work that smooth, sexy Taurean voice of yours. Start talking to new people, especially a Gemini.



GEMINI (May 21 to June 21)

Uranus and Mars could help you to change your career this week — in a most direct and abrupt way. If you have been over your job for a while, now is the time to let those in the know realize that you're ready to move up. Don't sign anything while Mercury is retro. But begin wheeling and dealing. Another Gemini helps.



CANCER (June 22 to July 22)

This whole week is a sexy, sassy build up to love, so enjoy every minute of it. You may feel especially emotional as the new moon arrives on May 1. Allow yourself to have all your feelings ... then take your medication. An Aries may jump you when you least expect it. Act as surprised as you want, but everyone will still know that you asked for it!



LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22)

This is a grand week for you to do something grand and public to let the world know how talented you are. Use your skills as an artisan and as a public relations diva to get your name out there on the tip of everyone's lips. That spot is exactly where a Sag would like to be right now.



VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22)

Put your money where your mouth is concerning your family ... but please, do it gently. Teach your relatives the meaning of the word "boundaries," and then go out and break every rule in the co-dependency handbook with a Leo. On the job, you can put an old habit to rest.



LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22)

The new moon on May 1 falls in your house of collaboration. Seek out a partner who complements you, not one who swipes all your best ideas! Get rid of teammates who are parasites and open the door to a new partner and a new deal. A Cancer understands your needs.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21)

This is the perfect week for you to start your summer plans early. Give up control and live in the moment, when it comes to love. Your sex life improves immediately when you practice what you preach with a hot and (surprisingly) spontaneous Capricorn.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21)

Work takes precedence over play during the days ahead, so please don't slack off. You need to get serious about a job issue. If you've been avoiding learning an important skill, then for God's sake — teach yourself, kid! A Libra can instruct you on paper, and in bed.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19)

It's a good week for you to call people who you've been afraid to call, darling. Your confidence and your charm are extremely strong, so get some momentum going. Powerful people are drawn into your web of ambition and sincerity, which is a powerful combination in itself. You may fall into bed with a Scorpio.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18)

This is a fine week for you to redo your home or redo your relationship with your family. (Which do you think is easier?) An Aries wants to move into your bedroom on a regular basis, so make sure you're ready. The new moon in your house of home and family on May 1 brings you unexpected luck in these areas. Don't blow it.



PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20)

Your friendships are deep and meaningful but also a helluva lot of fun this week, Pisces dears. So revel in good times with the people who understand you best and even think your crazy quirks are cute. A Libra thinks you're really cute and isn't above making out with you in public. Put on something slutty, and get ready for a most controversial (but harmless) month of May.

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

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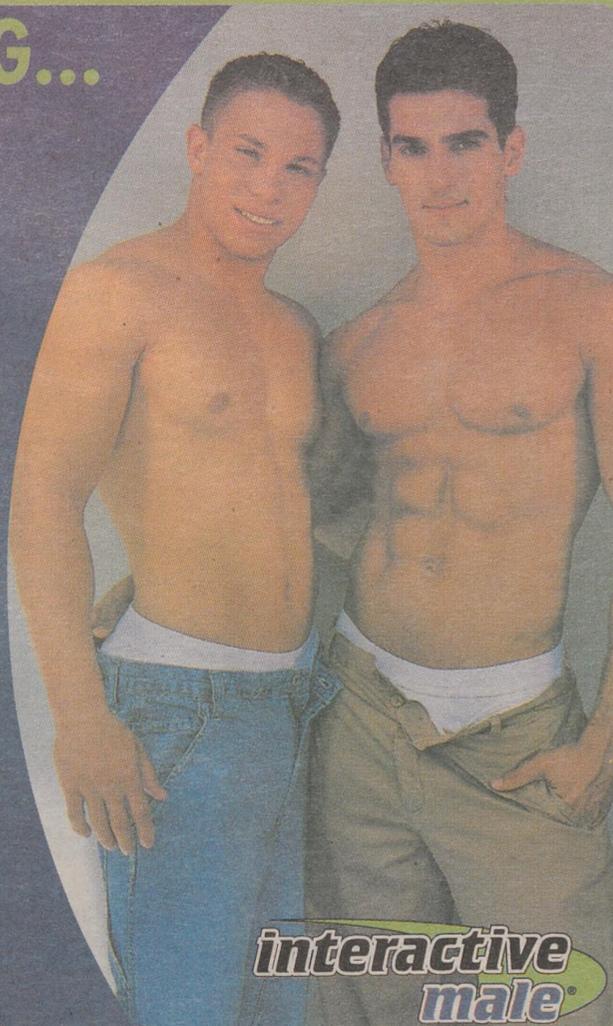
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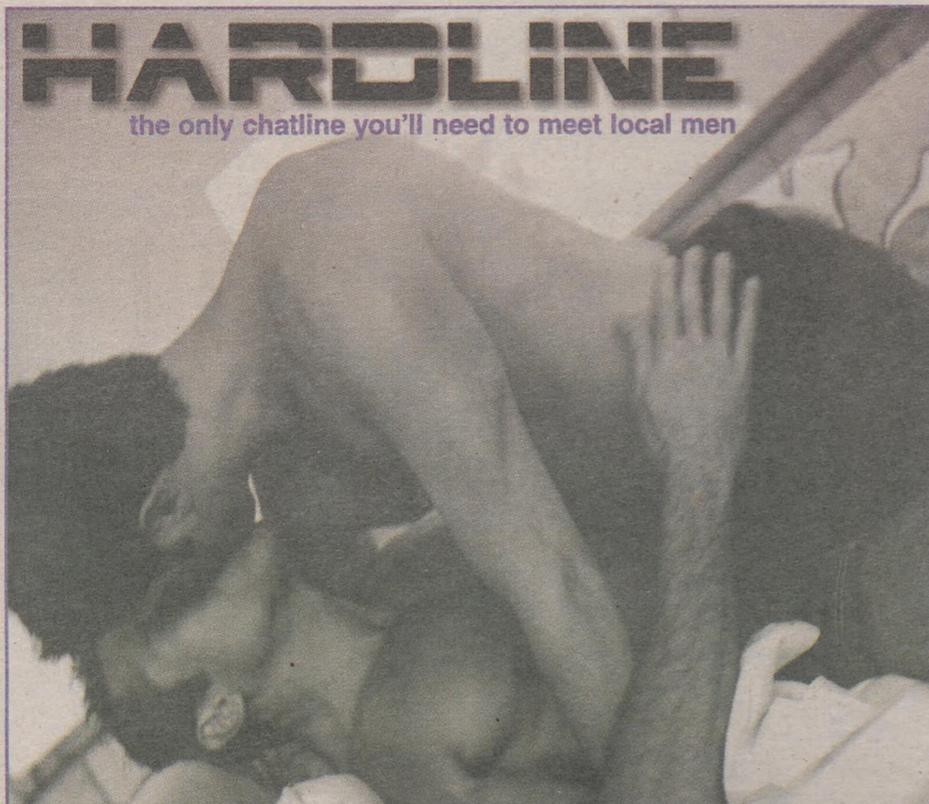
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