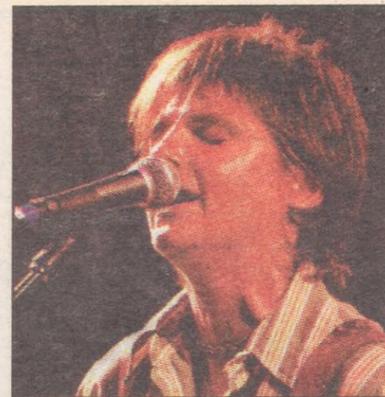


Going 'Stag'

Indigo Girls' Amy Ray releases solo CD
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Houston Mayor Lee P. Brown helped the Human Rights Campaign honor the Byrd family Saturday for their support of Texas' proposed hate crimes bill. The March 4 gala raised \$100,000.

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Houstonians For Family Values founder Dave Wilson said he was 'flabbergasted' when a letter was circulated by several of his conservative friends discouraging support of Wilson's petition drive. HFFV is pushing for a referendum to ban same-sex benefits for city employees.

Page 2



Dinner on the go will be redefined March 24 during a progressive dinner benefiting AssistHers and An Uncommon Legacy. Ken Malone and Joe Culotta are two of the hosts of the multi-course meal.

Page 13

Houston Presbyteries vote to ban gay unions

Amendment O, prohibiting same-sex marriages, narrowly approved in New Covenant Presbytery

by GIP PLASTER

Presbyterian ministers and elders in four of Texas' five denominational districts—called presbyteries—have voted by narrow margins to reject a change in church law that would prohibit same-sex marriages in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

But here, the news is not as good. Houston's New Covenant Presbytery narrowly approved the ban. So far, 53 of the denomination's presbyteries have voted in favor of the ban, called Amendment O, and 78 have voted against it, according to the denomination's unofficial count.

At least 87 of the denomination's

173 presbyteries must vote in favor of the ban for it to become a part of the denomination's book of order.

In the New Covenant Presbytery, the measure was approved 143-141, according to recording clerk Janice Schessler.

"It was approved by written ballot Feb. 10," she said.

Last Saturday, Grace Presbytery in Dallas became the most recent to reject the ban.

In that presbytery, clergy and elders voted 206-204 to reject Amendment O.

With 185 congregations, Grace is the largest of the state's presbyteries and the second largest in the denomination.

The close margin "shows that Presbyterians in Texas, like Presbyterians across the county, are genuinely in a place of uncertainty with this issue," Rev. David Wasserman, general presbyter of Grace Presbytery, told the Associated Press.

In San Antonio's Mission

> Continued on Page 7



A deep rift is growing in the Presbyterian Church USA over Amendment O, which would ban same-sex unions. Last week, the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta narrowly rejected the measure, while Houston's New Covenant Presbytery approved the ban by a small margin.

R.O. YOUNGBLOOD

Suspect identified in trans murder

Police expect arrest today

by WENDY K. MOHON

Houston Police have already filed murder charges and hope to make an arrest of a suspect wanted in the death of a 29-year-old transgendered male found murdered in downtown Sunday morning.

Two other suspects are also under investigation. "We've ID'ed the shooter and we're hoping to make the arrest in the morning," HPD Sgt./Det. C.T. Mosqueda told the *Houston Voice* Thursday morning.

The suspect, Aurelio Campos, 19, alias Wayo Campos, is wanted in the shooting death of Francisco Javier Luna, 29, who was killed at approximately 4:30 a.m., March 4.

Police responded to residents' reports of gunshots fired in the area and Luna was discovered dead in a business parking lot at 7844 Ave. E. in downtown. He was wearing women's clothing and

> Continued on Page 7

Pride grand marshals announced

Grand marshals for the 2001 Houston Gay & Lesbian Pride Parade will be Mitchell Katine, Dalia Stokes, Blake and Gordon Weisser and PFLAG Houston.

More than 520 Houston-area individuals voted by mail-in ballot and poll voting for individuals and groups who had been nominated for the four grand marshal positions.

The 2001 Grand Marshals and all of the nominees were honored at an announcement party held by the Pride Committee of Houston at the Art League of Houston Gallery on March 8.

Male grand marshal Mitchell Katine is a Houston lawyer who is currently representing two men challenging the Texas Homosexual Conduct Statute 21.06 in cooperation with the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.

Dalia Stokes, who will serve as female grand marshal for the 2001 Pride Parade, is a lawyer with the firm of Bayless & Stokes. She founded River Oaks Democratic Women, a group that supports advancing equality for all.

Honorary grand marshals Blake and Gordon Weisser are longtime members of PFLAG Houston. They have been active in the PFLAG/H.A.T.C.H. Youth Scholarship Foundation, they sponsor the group's southwest mid-month support group and they network with HISD administrators and counselors.

PFLAG Houston, the 2001 Honorary organization grand marshal, provides an always-reliable source of love for the GLBT community, family and friends through its three missions of support, advocacy and education.

The grand marshals will preside over Houston's nighttime Pride Parade on Westheimer between Woodhead and Whitney on Saturday, June 23, at 8:45 p.m.



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HRC Houston gala raises \$100,000

James Byrd Jr. family honored for support hate crimes legislation

by KAY Y. DAYUS

Almost 850 people accepted the Houston Human Rights Campaign's invitation to "Discover their World," as they attended an emotionally charged evening at the HRC's annual gala and dinner last Saturday night at the Westin Galleria Hotel.

• More HRC gala photos Page 14

According to Bret Baccus, co-chair for the event, the evening was a great success.

"We could not have been more pleased. We were thrilled to have the Byrds, the guests and the elected officials. There was a great energy and response," said Baccus.

Although they are still crunching numbers, the event was also a financial success, said Baccus.

"We easily cleared \$100,000." He added

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Houston Mayor Lee P. Brown presents an award to Stella Byrd, mother of hate crimes victim James Byrd Jr. during the Houston Human Rights Campaign annual gala March 3. The Byrd family was recognized for refusing to allow the words, 'sexual orientation,' to be deleted from the proposed Texas hate crimes legislation.

DALTON DEHART

Support wanes for Houstonians For Family Values

Conservatives discouraging Dave Wilson's petition drive to ban same-sex benefits for city workers

by D.L. GROOVER

Starting a firestorm can be risky business. If you're not on constant vigil against wind shift, the back draft may incinerate you. Dave Wilson is not toast yet, but he's had to scramble to don his asbestos armor.

In an ironic twist of the political winds, his Houstonians for Family Values' anti-gay petition drive to amend the City Charter on same-sex health insurance benefits and "privileges in promotion, hiring, or contracting" based on sexual preference, has enflamed his own hard-core group of conservative heavy hitters, who have countered Wilson's letter drive with a heated campaign of their own to snuff his out.

Strange bedfellows, indeed.

The letter, sent Feb. 28 and signed by 14 opponents to Wilson's petition, singled out the timing, the content and the context of HFFV's petition, saying that the precipitous action of the proposal "could inadvertently do considerable damage to the pro-family cause in Houston."

Although citing the legal flaws in having three subjects included in one amendment when the Local Government Code, section 9.004, specifies only one subject per amendment, the letter stresses, however, the con-



Dave Wilson, founder of Houstonians For Family Values says he's 'flabbergasted' that his conservative friends, including Harris County Republican Party Chairman Gary M. Pollard, have signed a letter discouraging support of Wilson's petition to oppose same-sex benefits for city employees. The letter states that the timing, the content and the context of HFFV's petition 'could inadvertently do considerable damage to the pro-family cause in Houston.'

cern over perceived "careless words or actions that facilitate our opponents' efforts to discredit our cause."

This refers to Pastor Aubrey Vaughn of Grace Baptist Church and his placard-bear-

ing supporters during the City Council debate, whose homemade signs spewed such eye-catching slogans as "All Fags Must Die" and "Faggots For the Fire."

"Such rhetoric," the letter explained, "has no place in civil discourse over matters of public policy. It is self-defeating. We have reluctantly concluded that we cannot support the signing of this petition... and will succeed in uniting the people of our city to affirm Houston's commitment to the family as the keystone of our community."

Among the conservative voices who signed the letter were Pastor Laurence White, Greater Houston Area Pastors Roundtable chairman; Gary M. Pollard, Harris County Republican Party chairman; Steven Hotze, Conservative Republicans of Harris County chairman; Paul Bettencourt, Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector; and City Councilman Robb Todd—all friends and associates of Dave Wilson.

Wilson was blindsided by this concerted action, surprised by this "sucker punch" from a coalition of activists who shared his views and stood with him.

"Yes, I was flabbergasted," Wilson said, "because half of those people who signed that letter were working with me. If I'm going to punch somebody, I'm gonna look them in the eye and tell them I'm gonna punch them. I'm not into sucker punches."

In the past week, Wilson has received threatening telephone calls, two of his cars have been "tampered with," and HFFV's headquarters on Melbourne have twice been targets of shootings.

> Continued on Page 12

around the nation

Trans activists accuse national rights group of going 'mainstream'

WASHINGTON—A political action committee that represents transgendered people has been accused of "pursuing a mainstream strategy" that de-emphasizes its connection to the transgendered community, the *Washington Blade* reported. GenderPAC was founded by activist Ricki Ann Wilchins in 1995, who incorporated it in 1999. A new mission statement adopted in December pledges to "ensure every American's right to their gender, free from stereotypes, discrimination and violence, regardless of how they look, act or dress or how others perceive their sex or sexual orientation." Its prior mission was to create "a broad-based inclusive national movement for gender, affectional, and racial equality." Shortly after the change, Monica Helms, director of Atlanta-based Trans=Action, criticized the changes in an op-ed piece. In January, 22 gender activists sent a letter to several dozen activists nationwide to express "concern about the current crisis in transgender politics." GenderPAC's board said in a letter that their inclusive group represents transgender Americans.

County Democrat official in KS drops party after gay caucus forms

TOPEKA—The Democrat's treasurer in Shawnee County, Rita Cline, changed her party affiliation to Republican after a caucus of gay Democrats met at a party gathering last month, the *Topeka Capital-Journal* reported. The first meeting of the Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Democratic caucus was attended by U.S. Rep. Dennis Moore and state party chair Tom Sawyer. Organized by Steve Brown, Kansas' openly gay delegate to last summer's Democratic National Convention, the caucus promised anonymity to any member who requested it. "My only condition with membership is if you don't want your name on a public list at the state level, let me know and it won't show up," Brown told the *Lawrence Journal-World*. Cline, who was sued earlier in her career for posting "In God We Trust" in her office, objected to the group. "I will not be a part of any organization that promotes and condones the breaking not only of Kansas law, but also God's law," she said.



Rita Cline, a county treasurer for Democrats in Kansas, switched parties and became a Republican last week after state Democrats supported the formation of a gay caucus.

MA state troopers revise what's public after rest stop sex lawsuit

BOSTON—Massachusetts Gov. Paul Cellucci reacted strongly against a new plan from state troopers that seems, to relax a ban on sex at highway rest stops, the *Boston Herald* reported. The change was part of a court-ordered settlement with an unidentified gay man who sued the state because officers twice forced him to leave a Cape Cod rest stop. State police alleged the man had "unlawful intent" simply by being at the rest stop. The new order reiterates the state's ban on sex in a "public place," but says that an area may not be considered public if it is hidden so that a reasonable person wouldn't expect to be seen by passers-by. It also says no one can be asked to leave a public area unless there is unlawful conduct. The settlement pays the man's attorneys fees, but no damages. The state "absolutely would not tolerate any sexual activity in public rest areas," Cellucci said in his March 2 statement, reinforcing that authorities will continue to prohibit sex at rest areas.

FL authorities shut down voyeur Web site Dude Dorm over city regs

TAMPA—City officials shut down Dude Dorm, a controversial Internet Web site featuring sometimes-nude college-age men, Reuters reported. City inspectors ordered the site's cameras turned off for unspecified violations of its business license. Entertainment Network, Inc., which runs Dude Dorm and its sister Web site, Voyeur Dorm, said Tampa police "raided" Dude Dorm without a warrant, ordering the residents to leave and threatening them with arrest if they did not turn off the cameras. Tampa police said officers simply accompanied city officials on an inspection of the premises and did not need a warrant. The two sites have feuded with the city for years over the issue of operating "virtual" businesses in residential areas. Dude Dorm features college-age men living together in a Tampa house rigged with cameras in every room. For a fee, subscribers are able to watch. The site was meant to appeal to women and gay men.

Conservative backlash grows over ambassador nomination by Bush

BOSTON—A Newton father's crusade against gay sex education in Massachusetts public schools has reached Capitol Hill, where he is hoping it will interfere with Massachusetts Gov. Paul Cellucci's nomination to be ambassador to Canada, the *Boston Globe* reported. Brian Camenker, president of the Waltham-based Parents' Rights Coalition, privately met March 1 in Washington with about a dozen Republican staff members on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which would evaluate Cellucci's nomination. The controversy erupted last March when a secretly-recorded tape was released from a workshop called "What they didn't tell you about queer sex" that was run by the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network. The firestorm resulted in the firing of two state Department of Education employees, one of whom is suing for wrongful termination. Within days, Camenker's anti-Cellucci campaign is expected to intensify when the activists are to send all 100 U.S. senators the audiotape from the conference.

—From staff and wire reports



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Brazilian man allegedly kills four over joke suggesting he was gay

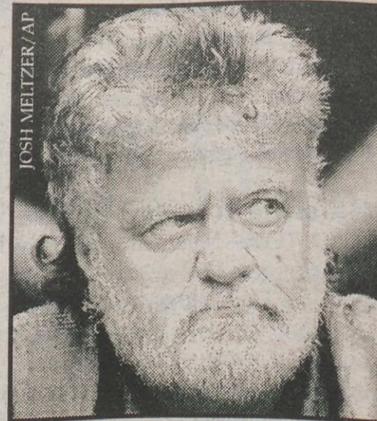
SAO PAULO, Brazil (AP)—A 56-year-old farmer, reportedly angered by a friendly joke questioning his masculinity, shot to death three of his friends and a cousin and then killed himself, the Brazilian press has reported. The shooting happened in Jundiai, about 40 miles north of Sao Paulo. Duilio Pessoto left his rural home by car armed with two revolvers. He allegedly shot his first victim on a nearby road as the man drove by and killed two more men at a bar, according to media reports. Pessoto then drove further down the road, pulled the car over and shot his fourth victim and himself on the street, police said. Local residents said Pessoto was angry because somebody had made a joke suggesting that he was gay. Pessoto was single and apparently lived alone. He was regarded as a lonely and religious man who volunteered at the local church.

New stats in IA show men more willing to report they are rape victims

AMES, Iowa (AP)—Iowa State University officials said crime statistics indicate a new willingness by male students to report they are victims of forcible sex. Loras Jaeger, the school's security chief, said male victims generally have been unwilling to talk in the past because they were typically ridiculed. "If you think sexual assault is underreported by women, and it is, you can imagine what it is with men," he said. The statistics show that four of the 62 unofficial cases reported last year in Story County, which encompasses Ames, were sexual attacks against men, with other males as the perpetrators of the assaults. Officials estimate that nine in 10 offenses still go unreported. Julie Harders, who coordinated the team that collected the reports, said that generally 90 percent of rape victims know their attackers. "It's not the stranger in the bushes," she said. "It's the date or the boyfriend or the classmate or whatever."

VA man who allegedly shot up gay bar calls himself 'Christian soldier'

ROANOKE, Va.—The man accused of killing one person and wounding six others when he allegedly shot up a gay bar last September wrote a letter to the *Roanoke Times*, referring to himself as a "Christian Soldier working for my Lord." Ronald E. Gay, 55, does not implicate himself in the shootings, but says of gays that "their meeting places and bars will be destroyed with them" if they don't move to "their city," San Francisco. A psychiatrist hired by Gay's family examined him in February, with the evaluation due soon, a prosecutor said. Gay's trial is set to begin May 21. Police say he has confessed to slaying Danny Lee Overstreet, 43, and shooting six other customers of the Backstreet Café. Gay, a Vietnam veteran, has been jailed without bail since his arrest and faces seven terms of 20 years to life. Police said Gay was angry about harassment over his name and humiliated that three of his sons had changed their last name.



Ronald Gay, the man who allegedly killed one man and injured others in a shooting rampage, said he targeted the gay bar as a 'Christian soldier.'

Alleged serial killer of trans Brazilian women seeks parole

RIO DE JANEIRO—Brazilian transvestites are concerned that a man accused of being a serial killer of transvestites has asked to be released on parole because he is infected with AIDS, Reuters reported. Paulo Sergio de Oliveira, 25, who confessed to the shooting and stabbing deaths of 15 transvestites in the remote western state of Mato Grosso do Sul, is slated to stand trial this week for the killings. Oliveira said he killed out of revenge after discovering that his transvestite sex partner had infected him with HIV, authorities said. "But now his defense lawyers have filed a request for Oliveira... to go on parole immediately because he has the HIV virus and may not live for long," said Cristiane Stefani, president of the local transvestites association. Brazilian prison officials have started discussing the possibility that prisoners with AIDS who are near death complete their sentences on parole or in half-way houses. If convicted, Oliveira could face 150 years in prison sentence.

Judge delays first trial for teens accused in slaying of gay WV man

FAIRMONT, W.Va. (AP)—West Virginia teen David Parker will not stand trial in the murder of a gay man before June, a judge ruled Feb. 27 in granting a defense team request for a postponement. A specific date will be set later. Defense lawyers asked for the delay because they were having problems coordinating schedules for defense experts and witnesses, and a delay "would promote fairness to everyone involved." Last week, prosecutors also said they needed more time to prepare. Parker and Jared Wilson are accused of beating Arthur Warren to death July 4 and running over his body to make it look like an accident. Prosecutors said the beating began when Parker became angry with Warren for telling others about a sexual relationship the two had. Wilson's trial is scheduled to start May 29.

—From staff and wire reports



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around the world

Australian lesbian awarded \$4,500 for butcher shop harassment

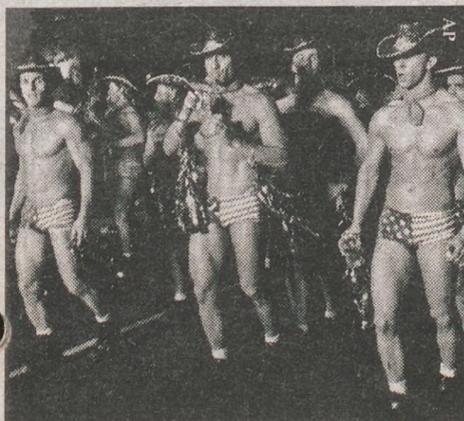
SYDNEY—An Australian lesbian has been awarded \$4,500 in damages after a butcher sold her a dog bone carved into the shape of a penis, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported. Federal magistrate Rolf Driver found that Sarah Johanson had been the victim of unlawful sexual harassment after Michael's Meats sold her the carved bone. Johanson said that as a result of the incident she developed a severe anxiety reaction and felt discriminated against because of her sexual orientation. She complained to the manager of the butcher's shop but said she was laughed at, and she claimed the incident contributed ultimately to her leaving her job at a florist shop in the same shopping center. Officials at Michael's Meats refused to publish a formal apology and said the incident occurred because of a chain of events initiated by a junior shop assistant who had made the bone for unrelated purposes. He has since been fired. "This case concerns a dog bone, but no ordinary dog bone," Driver said in announcing his award to Johanson.

Gay hair stylist denied life insurance from Thailand's largest insurer

BANGKOK—A celebrity hair stylist claims he has been turned down by Thailand's largest life insurer because he is gay, the *Bangkok Post* reported. Somsak Chalachon, 44, said his application and check to increase his current life insurance policy, including health-care coverage, had been rejected by American International Assurance Co. An accompanying letter said the company could not accept him as a client, but did not give a good reason, he said. "I then searched for the real reason from the agent and found that the rejection was made because I am gay," said Somsak, who had been an AIA client for 10 years. Sutti Rajitrangsan, AIA senior vice-president, said the company reserved the right to refuse policies, to raise premiums, limit coverage or set additional conditions for certain clients with high-risk jobs or lifestyles. "If the company accepts too many high-risk clients, it would affect overall premium rates," he said.

Gay Mardi Gras parade in Australia draws 500,000 to political event

SYDNEY—Nearly a half-million spectators watched the Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras parade March 3, believed to be the world's largest Gay Pride event, Reuters reported. The parade kicked off with a float full of pink flamingoes holding babies in their beaks, representing the parade's theme of gay parenting. The parade, which took place



four days after most traditional Mardi Gras celebrations, had 175 floats and an estimated 7,500 marchers. "A lot of people come to the parade because it's fun, but I think they recognize Mardi Gras' political and social dimensions," said BWP member Stuart Stark. Last year's parade drew some criticism for its more outrageous rather than political approach. An economic impact survey showed that the 1998 parade generated about \$31.6 million in revenue for Sydney businesses.

Nearly 500,000 hit the streets of Sydney last weekend for the annual Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras parade.

London mayor criticized for funding new domestic partner registry

LONDON—Mayor Ken Livingstone has set aside budget funds to start a registry for gay couples, the *London Times* reported. To publicize the registry, Livingstone wants to give away the first 100 licenses, and perform some of the commitment ceremonies himself. He has also offered the London Assembly headquarters to any couple who are refused the use of their local town hall. London's Tory politicians oppose the plan, saying the six-figure amount allocated to start up the registry is too much. "This is an absolute travesty which makes a mockery of marriage which the Conservative Party is trying to promote," said Shadow Home Secretary Ann Widdecombe.

Paper for 'trysexuals' enters tightening gay market in Australia

SYDNEY—Sydney's gay publications are still dealing with the fallout from last year's collapse of the Satellite Group, a publishing and real estate business that owned several Australian gay newspapers, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported. Shortly after the bankruptcy, the staff of Satellite's Sydney paper, *Capital Q*, was approached by the Alternative Media Group to start a new paper, called G. Six weeks later, the same staff left en masse to start another paper, called SX. The editor of the city's oldest gay paper, the *Sydney Star Observer*, said his publication has been unaffected by the turmoil. "After 22 years we're widely considered the journal of record for the Sydney gay and lesbian community," said Marcus O'Donnell. The creation of yet another publication, the *Sydney Organ*, which its publisher Lawrence Gibson said is directed at "sexual fringe dwellers" or "trysexuals," leaves four publications, each of which costs about \$1 million annually to produce, chasing money in an advertising market that is slightly less than \$3 million a year. The pressure on the publications is expected to increase when ad budgets shrink after Sydney's Mardi Gras celebration.

—From staff and wire reports



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Women on the Web

Two leading sites for women merge but independent lesbian-oriented sites abound

by ERIN O'BRIANT

Two high-traffic women's Web sites announced a merger earlier this month that could mean less content variety for users of mainstream Internet sites aimed at female users.

But smaller, independent sites for lesbians continue to proliferate, offering a range of content for nearly every interest.

iVillage Inc., owner of popular women's site iVillage.com, announced that it will acquire Women.com Networks Inc., creating the world's largest and most comprehensive Internet destination for women.

Carl Fischer, iVillage vice president of corporate communications, could only provide "really limited" information about the merger, as the company is in a "quiet period" during the transition.

The two companies merged to boost both sites' advertising sales, he said.

"It just makes a tremendous amount of sense in terms of efficiencies. We will become much more attractive to advertisers," Fischer said.

"There's only about 15 percent overlap between the two companies and one company can do better than two. There's a much stronger synergy for the two companies to do it combined."

Fischer said Women.com was "struggling" financially before iVillage.com acquired the site.

No decisions have been made about whether to merge content, he said, and the company is "working to figure out the best way to move forward."

He also said he doesn't think combining the sites' sales will mean less editorial choice for readers. "There are numerous other sites up there that cater to women and this puts us ahead of the pack," Fischer said.

He also indicated that iVillage.com, which has a chat room for lesbians and a few other items of interest to the gay community, will continue to have lesbian-friendly content.

Openly lesbian Atlanta City Council member Cathy Woolard worked at iVillage.com when the site started up and said a diverse membership wasn't necessarily an initial goal for the company.

"They... discovered that they had a very consistent demographic—young, educated, 30-something white women with children. Although I think they were interested in bringing more women of color into their site, I don't believe that they were really focused on going beyond making the business model work for the audience they had successfully captured," Woolard notes.

Fischer couldn't comment on what lesbian-oriented content may be included on Women.com, a site that currently offers no material specifically for lesbians.

Lesbian sites growing fast

Internet-savvy lesbians haven't waited for mainstream women's sites to provide content for them—they've created an enormous network that includes lesbian-oriented magazines, personal ads, sex sites, calls to action, arts and entertainment announcements, chat rooms, technical advice, and even clothing.



Chrystal Romero (left) and Shahnaz LaCaze own Girlfriends.com, a site that sells a clothing line for lesbians and offers other features designed to keep buyers coming back for more.

With 300,000 registered female users and another 200,000 monthly female visitors, PlanetOut.com boasts the title of the Internet's biggest lesbian Web site. The lesbian base at Gay.com, the other large general interest Web destination, comes in at about half that.

PlanetOut Partners President Megan Smith said the reason PlanetOut is more popular with women is simple: women prefer personals, men prefer chat. PlanetOut's features more personal pages while Gay.com offers a vast universe of chat rooms.

"Women in general are very much using the Web for communication, for community, to make friendships, to connect," said Smith.

Claudia Miller, executive editor of LesbiaNation.com, said her site has also seen tremendous growth from the increase in the number of lesbians surfing the Web.

"In the two years that we've had this, we started with about 1,000 members. Since then it's grown to having more than 20,000 members, and those are just the ones who are registered. We have 180,000 visitors a month," she said.

And the number of lesbian-oriented Web sites is growing fast, said Miller.

"I think with LesbiaNation you're seeing that women don't want to be relegated to a corner of a gay and lesbian Web site, they don't want to have to search for the women's corner. They want something that's all for women."

Stacy Bias, owner of TechnoDyke.com, said she sees the distinction between mainstream and independent sites growing.

"I see them separating," she said of the sites. "They're headed in two different directions, I think the whole Web is."

"The mainstream sites are going more towards advertising and focusing on rev-

enue models, trying to save their asses," she continues. "The indies that didn't have much funding to begin with are headed off into more grassroots things. I'm seeing indie sites get together and hunker down."

Miller said advertisers need to pay more attention to lesbian spending.

"Women are overlooked," she claimed. "Advertisers think we don't spend money, but we do. People underestimate the value of the lesbian dollar and I think women also really respond to things that are targeted to them."

Technodyke.com is among the sites to pop up recently. Bias said she celebrated the site's one-year anniversary in February.

"We're a volunteer operation," she explained. "There are no paid positions, including my own. It's myself and 33 volunteer writers and then I also use contributions from other writers. We started out as a glorified homepage—I just figured it would be me ranting about my day."

But that isn't what happened at all. Thanks to the hunger for lesbian-oriented Web space, Technodyke.com took off.

"I bought the domain name, and I got started and people just kind of kept coming. I added more as more people came, more got involved in helping out. It's just a community kind of like any other online magazine but trying not to be so mainstream."



Though PlanetOut is aimed at both gay men and lesbians, 30 percent of its 1 million members are lesbians, the largest lesbian contingent of any site on the Net.

Bias, who works as a graphic designer, said it's the sense of community that keeps her motivated.

"I've gotten some really amazing responses from people," she said. "Our audience is really intelligent."

On the site's forum, she said "the big topics are gender issues and feminism and a lot of topics that I don't see discussed on mainstream sites. It has become a place for people to come talk about issues. I think that's why I keep doing it—because they keep surprising me."

Surfing lesbian style

It would be nearly impossible to list all the lesbian and lesbian-friendly sites on the Web. But there are plenty of places to jump in and begin surfing. Most of the sites listed below include links to help the lesbian Internet surfer on her journey.

Butch-Femme.com is run by a butch-femme couple. Confusing graphics make it tough to read, but the site includes plenty of information and resources, including live chat.

Dykesworld, based in Germany, is the mother of all lesbian Web sites, with page upon page on every topic imaginable. It can be difficult to navigate, but is worth the surf. (www.dykesworld.de)

Dyxploitation's site asserts, "As dykes, we are members of a special, exclusive, and glamorous social subset. ... As members of said glamorous social subset, it is safe to assume the whole world revolves around us." Hysterically funny content includes a mock-Cosmo quiz and a feature article detailing three easy steps to a dyke revolution. (www.dyxploitation.com)

Girlfiend presents a lesbian line of clothing, but the best part is a page that lets users dress a cartoon lesbian in the outfit of your choice. The owners began producing Girlfiend clothing four years ago when they noticed that most Pride T-shirts were geared toward gay men. (www.girlfiend.com)

Girlfriends and Curve, the two leading lesbian magazines, both highlight articles from their print version on their Web sites. Advertising information and writers' guidelines are included. (www.curvemag.com and www.girlfriendsmag.com)

HerCurve.com features erotica, forums, Web mail, and an entertaining column written "from a butch perspective." (www.hercurve.com)

Lesbian.com compiles an exhaustive list of Web sites of interest to lesbians. Click there to link to sites covering everything from politics to business to gardening. (www.lesbian.com)

LesbiaNation is a large online community for women, offering news, feature articles, sports information, chat rooms, and personal ads. (www.lesbianation.com)

Michigan Womyn's Music Festival—also known as the annual lesbian convention—has just posted its 2001 entertainment and intensive workshop schedule online. The site's relatively new chat forum is a popular way to keep in touch with festival friends. (www.michfest.com)

On Our Backs. Quick! Read the premier lesbian sex mag online to find out how spoken word wizardess Michelle Tea and her girlfriend used their sizzling chemistry and a rabbit-fur coat to score a steak dinner and a trip to Disneyland. The site includes hot photos and selected articles from the print editions. (www.onourbacksmag.com)

Ban sometimes rejected over local control, not gays

> Continued from Page 1

Presbytery, the amendment was defeated by a wider margin—179 to 209.

"We have not historically been split right down the middle like New Covenant," said Sylvia Washer, presbytery executive. "I would say this is in our tradition."

The Palo Duro Presbytery, based in Lubbock, rejected the ban 46-56 while Midland's Tres Rios Presbytery rejected the amendment 42-48.

The amendment would add the following new section to the denomination's book of order:

"Scripture and our Confessions teach that God's intention for all people is to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman or in chastity in singleness. Church property shall not be used for, and church officers shall not take part in conducting, any ceremony or event that pronounces blessing or gives approval of the church or invokes the blessing of God upon any relationship that is inconsistent with God's intention as expressed in the preceding sentence."

The presbyteries are voting on the amendment because of a mandate from the denomination's governing body, the General Assembly.

Opponents of the measure argue that it is so vaguely worded as to possibly prevent

other ceremonies, such as baptisms, funerals and communion for same sex couples.

"It's got a strange inclusiveness in it that makes people question whether they can pronounce a benediction, because that's a blessing, [whether] you can't say a blessing at dinner with gay people there. That's just vague beyond belief. People are worried about church services, baptisms of the kid of a lesbian couple," Rev. Mary McClintock Fulkerson, an ordained Presbyterian minister and associate professor of theology and divinity at Duke University, said in an interview.

Some also argue that it is unnecessary because The Book of Order already defines marriage as between a man and a woman and that the proposed amendment unduly infringes upon the pastoral responsibilities of pastors and sessions.

Those in favor of the measure, however, argue that a Permanent Judicial Commission's decision last spring that same-sex union ceremonies are allowable in the denomination "as long as they are not considered the same as marriage ceremonies" has created a loophole in The Book of Order that must be closed.

The controversy over Amendment O is the latest debate in decades of struggle within the 2.6-million member Presbyterian Church over same-sex unions and the ordination of openly gay and lesbian people

who do not remain celibate.

In 1996 and 1997, the Presbyterian Church ratified Amendment B, a fidelity and chastity requirement for ordained church officers. Though it does not address homosexuality directly, the amendment prevents non-celibate single people from being ordained.

In 1997 and 1998, Presbyterians voted on Amendment A, an attempt to repeal Amendment B. That measure failed.

Only pastors and elders vote in the presbytery-wide elections, which are cast by secret ballot.

Although the Amendment O is trailing and appears unlikely to pass, a poll conducted last August and released last week by Presbyterian News Service indicates that a majority of Presbyterians favors such a ban.

The poll found that 67 percent of members, 66 percent of elders and 53 percent of pastors along with one-third of clergy not serving congregation—said that same-sex union ceremonies should not take place in Presbyterian churches.

The poll also found that 57 percent of members, 61 percent of elders, 50 percent of pastors and 30 percent of other clergy said that "Presbyterian ministers should be prohibited from performing a ceremony that blesses the union between two people of the same sex."

Suspect may not have known victim was male

> Continued from Page 1

makeup. A brown women's wig was found near the body.

Police are uncertain how Campos and Luna met, but believe the two arranged to meet downtown.

"Basically, the victim was told by this particular suspect to meet him at the 7800 Block of Canal," Mosqueda said. "We don't know if it was a drug deal or a sexual-type deal."

Mosqueda said witnesses saw Luna enter the passenger seat of Campos' vehicle.

"There was some type of activity in the vehicle—we don't know what—but something occurred that set the suspect off and he jumped out of the car and ran around to the other side and shot the victim," Mosqueda said.

Luna then reportedly exited the vehicle and fell the ground where Campos allegedly shot Luna several more times. Campos then reportedly fled the scene in his vehicle.

Mosqueda said the suspect was heard referring to the victim as "she" and may not have known that Luna was male. The detective added that though Luna was reportedly seen "on the corners of the streets in the area," it is unknown whether the victim was a prostitute.

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VIEWPOINT

Is Rothko policy really news to gay community?

by D.L. MURPHY

We, in Houston's gay community, have known for many years that the

Rothko Chapel will "bury us but not marry us." Recent calls urging our community to work to force the Rothko Chapel to allow same-sex unions led this writer to try to understand, "why is this becoming an issue now?"

What I have discovered is unsettling at best, heartbreaking at worst.

I, personally, think that Rothko Chapel's policy to refuse same-sex unions is a direct contradiction of their published mission to be "a place where the experience and understanding of all traditions are encouraged and made available."

Like many of us, I've accepted the policy without really a second thought. All of the recent uproar suggested to me that perhaps a deeper look at the situation was in order.

What I find is disheartening.

Rumor and innuendo have been floating around for weeks. I have been hearing "Rothko's executive director has it in for blacks, Jews, gays and feminists. It's because she's Muslim and you know they hate us."

However, no one will flat out tell me this in an interview setting. And everyone forgets the no same-sex union policy was in place long before the current executive director was hired.

Attempts to contact ex-employees have been unsuccessful. One long-term ex-employee, in an e-mail to a friend, stated "Worrying about the meanness and cruelties of the director provoked my departure..." However, this ex-employee, in this same e-mail, suggested all communications about this issue be through their attorney.

A second ex-employee won't return telephone calls. And lawyer working on behalf of one of the ex-employees has not returned

telephone calls.

Suna Umari, executive director at the Rothko Chapel, won't return telephone calls, and who can blame her? Would you agree to an interview to answer vague charges from individuals who will not make a public statement about you alleged misconduct?

The more I worked on this story, the more uneasy I became. What was happening was all too familiar to any queer person—whispered rumors, gossip, innuendo, the sentence left unfinished. All these tactics are being used to trash the reputation of both an individual and a community institution.

Does Umari have and express prejudices against different segments of our community? As far as I have been able to determine, she simply maintains the long-standing policies of the Rothko Chapel. This is what executive directors are paid to do. I don't know if she "has it in for us," but everyone I talk to, those who should be "in the know" bring up Rothko Chapel's executive director's religious affiliation.

I am beginning to believe that the rumors are based in the underlying racism of the queer community.

After two weeks of trying to define and write this story, I am left saddened and angry. I expected better of my queer community. We claim we want to have a diverse community (i.e., one that includes "us") while failing to address our own issues around racism (i.e., one that includes "them").

We have reverted to the tactics (gossip, rumor, and innuendo) that have harmed so many of us throughout our life. We are failing to act as just and righteous people.

We are failing to treat others the way we demand to be treated. We are failing to remember the lessons so painfully learned by each of us. We are failing to act as a community of different people working towards a common end. And I am very saddened by the whole mess.

So, here's an offer. If anyone has anything

concrete to say about the management of the Rothko Chapel and is willing to speak openly, contact us here at the Voice. We will listen, investigate, and duly report what we find including quotes with your name attached.

If you do not have direct first-hand knowledge of bigotry and hatred at Rothko Chapel, or have such knowledge and are unwilling to speak publicly, please be quiet. You are not doing any of us any good. And you may very well be making it impossible for us to work together to get what we say we want.

In the meantime, let's try to work for change in a positive way. Rothko Chapel is a part of our community and has been a tremendous resource to all of us. Over the years, I have received great solace and comfort from friends and loved ones gathered at Rothko Chapel to celebrate the life and mourn the death of our beloveds.

So, let's do the same with Rothko Chapel that we would with any other well-meaning, cared for, but misinformed member of our community—help them to change.

Don't like the long-standing policy to not allow same-sex weddings? Okay, let's work on an above-board and open campaign to change this policy. Let's not do to them what has been done to us.

Let's all try to remember that trashing ultimately tears down our community. It sets us at one another's throats, providing an outlet for our fears and our rage.

The fact that the fear and the rage should be directed at the underlying causes of our oppression rather than at one another is being lost. We are wasting all of the energy we could be using to engender real change.

We are doing real harm to everyone involved, especially ourselves. We are losing an opportunity to be seen as credible people with a legitimate complaint.

D.L. Murphy is a freelance writer. She may be reached at possumproducts@cs.com.

Wilson praises HFFV article

To the Editor:

For a newspaper that's audience is ideologically opposed to Houstonians For Family Values political agenda, I am astounded at the accurate, detailed and objective quality of journalism by David Groover ("Group wants city charter to prohibit DP benefits," *Houston Voice*, March 2).

I thank him for his professional journalism and the newspaper for printing the story. I only wish the *Houston Chronicle* and the *Houston Press* would get it this straight.

Sincerely yours,
David B. Wilson





VIEWPOINT

Lesbians for justice and liberation for all

by MARIA MINICUCCI

The month of March is one of my favorite times of the year for one very good reason: it is International Women's Month and the entire month is devoted to women.

Women are also one of my favored passions! All over the world, women are planning and participating in festivities honoring our struggles and our spirits.

The dedication to women's efforts for a gentler, kinder world actually took place 90 years ago in Europe. Klara Zetkin, a German socialist, organized and launched a series of marches and strikes across Europe throughout the month of March in the name of peace and attaining rights for women.

Aleksandra Kollontai, a Russian feminist and an ally of this mass movement described the marching and striking from country to country as, "one seething, trembling sea of women."

Vladimir Lenin was convinced that the public protests against political, social and economic injustices to women were serious enough to declare the March 8 strike for "bread and peace" an official holiday, now known as International Women's Day.

In the 1970s, women's voices across the United States were carrying the same messages of protest against a culture predicated on hate, destruction and discrimination against women. This speaking out and acting up in the late sixties and early seventies was due, in large part, to women speaking to each other about the ways of the world and how these ways affected women.

In living rooms, church basements,

parks, wherever women gathered, we began to question and then to refuse to accept the conditions of shrunken lives and shrunken spirits. Little by little, voice by voice, this intolerance for discontent mushroomed into an entire movement.

Of course, the women's movement was not the first or the only movement committed to social change. In our lifetime; a civil rights movement sprung up to liberate us from racist beliefs and actions. An anti-war movement during the Vietnam war strove to liberate us from acting on unnecessary acts of violence.

A free-love movement attempted to liberate our minds and bodies from an anti-sex culture. However, the Women's Liberation Movement represented intolerance for all of it. The feminist platform was committed to the end of discrimination in all of its formidable and insidious forms.

Yes, women had a deep desire for liberation. We wanted it all; we wanted it for all persons!

Our dedication to attaining this goal was as fierce as our desire was deep. We felt and did things that many of could not have believed possible. We loved it. We loved the feeling, we loved the doing, we loved going beyond the imaginable, we loved going for it all!

We took up a similar fight as our international comrades 90 years previously as we took to the streets singing the demands, "we want bread and roses."

In 1978, one particular city, Sonoma, Calif., decided to acknowledge women's efforts by setting aside one week in March as National Women's Week. Our perseverance and persistent public out-



Vladimir Lenin was convinced 90 years ago that the public protests against political, social and economic injustices to women were serious enough to declare a March 8 strike for 'bread and peace' an official holiday, now known as International Women's Day.

cries for change led to Congress turning our week into an entire month in 1987.

Thirteen years later, our plight remains as dire. Our protests, however, have become less audible.

In 2001, International Women's Month celebrates women's efforts while at the same time questions our stamina as we face ongoing acts of treachery against the "weaker sex" around the world: 25,000 brides burned in India for an insufficient dowry, honor killings and rapes of women family members in Jordan, Pakistan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq;

women forbidden to attend school, work, be admitted to hospitals in Afghanistan; 85-115 million girls subjected to genital mutilation as reported by the World Health Organization.

In the United States, acts of treachery perpetrated upon women are perhaps not as blatant and therefore, equally as dangerous and destructive.

In the United States, women have chosen complacency over confrontation. Unfortunately, the perpetuation of woman-hating has outlasted the fierceness of feminism and feminist principles. Alas, women cannot afford to be complacent.

We are at a crucial crossroads and need to make an equally crucial decision—risk the consequences of remaining reverent to the tyranny of misogyny or risk the consequences of accepting the magnitude of our lives.

Lesbians have an integral role in this decision. If the relentless terrorization of women is rooted in contempt for our sex and sexuality, a sure-fire antidote would be rooted in bold and relentless acts of women loving women.

Acts that we may perceive as ordinary, or common can, in fact, turn the world inside out and upside down.

As author Joan Nestles so splendidly relays, "...the body bliss and splendor in my soul that I came to know and want, always, ... a woman reaching for my breasts or parting my legs is never a common thing, ... her fingers finding me or her tongue taking me are not mysterious acts to be hidden away, the embraces, the holdings on, the moans, the words of want, are acts of sunlight."

They also are acts of revolution.

Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel





VIEWPOINT

I'm not sure I want to give you that...

by RICH ARENSCHIELDT

They say that people can be connected by the dreams that they share. Gosh, I certainly hope not. During an otherwise uneventful dinner with my gay sis, Paige, and her main squeeze, Sunny, I hear something that makes my mufeleta want to reappear.

Ubiquitous in her happiness, Sunny announces to me that she has just had my baby. "It was great," she said "Paige and I decided to have a baby and we asked you to be the donor."

While Sunny blabbed on about how cool it was to preserve the genetic family link—oddly enough something that my mom had always cautioned us against proliferating—I felt my own loins contracting seeking a less accessible safety zone.

A few months later I wake up from a similar nocturnal admission—I am present at the same event. Sunny is glistening in the post-partum glow, Paige is full of pride and I am sitting there wondering if I'm stuck in an episode of "Queer As Folk" gone terrible awry.

I am now the biological father to some gender-neutral entity that has the propensity to single handedly drain my checking account and give me a legal headache the likes of which of Anna Nicole Smith has never seen.

What is the basis for all of this worry?

Upon closer examination I realize it's all about sperm. How silly is this? Are they kidding? I can imagine why people get so up in arms (or should I say "hands") about it.

It's amazing to me that such a substance is subject to fluctuations in value dependent on the situation. After all, one would suspect that, according to purely anecdotal evidence, that there is a plethora of it produced. With 86,400 seconds in a day and a population of approximately 100 million males in America (you do the division—it's too icky even for me), you'd think there would be a steady stream of supply.

Unfortunately I bet that most of the stuff ends up in a facial tissue. However, the minute two lesbians need it, it becomes priceless and subject to all sorts of complicated provisional restrictions.

I've never understood the concept of a "bank" for it either—why doesn't someone just open up a drive-thru? I can hear it now "...Welcome to Spunky's where there's a vas deferens between us and the other guys... May we biggie size that order for you?"

Like the former high-tech laden stock market, it is clearly ovum valued.

Even if you get past the difficulties of making a donation that isn't even tax deductible, what about after the birth? My fantasy pictures me as a Quentin Crisp-type of gay uncle who takes the tyke to Paris for the weekend, thus escaping the lesbian drudgery of endless

re-runs of "This Old House."

While Mommy and Mommy are erecting another tool shed in the yard, my impeccably dressed wee one and I will be standing in the Louvre teary-eyed in front of a vast Monet.

On the plane ride home, my ward will be wonderfully well behaved, unlike the 5-year-old Petrie dish that I sat in front recently. This urchin rocked my seat until I turned and said, "Listen, we need to come to an understanding—you agree not to kick my seat for eight hours and I promise not to throw you out of this plane at 35,000 feet."

His shocked parents were of the "Mommy-and-Daddy-are-not-pleased-when-you-behave-in-that-manner" school of spawn discipline, but were suitably impressed at the effect that my death threat had on their son's behavior. No doubt he probably called the "1-800-Abusing Me" number upon arriving home and his parents are now doing 25 years hard labor for attempting to make him behave.

Say that the parenting plan doesn't turn out as expected. What if the warning our mothers gave us, i.e. "I hope you have kids just like you," doesn't turn out?

With my luck, Sunny and I will be the first case where homosexuality is proven to be absolutely non-genetic. With a gay father and lesbian mother what do we do if our gift from God has expressly heterosexual leanings? What if, at that age of glandular

enlightenment, our son's vocabulary consists solely of "beer," "girlfriend," and "carburetor"? This could be problematic.

I get nervous when I go to my mechanic to get the oil changed in my car. Even though I take the Tinky Winky doll out of my back seat, I'm sure the pink neon triangle over my head blinks "Pansy, Fairy, Balletomaine" in rapid succession.

I can't even talk to those greasy guys without lowering my voice so much that I sprain something. What would I do with a kid who wants nothing more than the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit issue?

Everything might turn out okay. He could (and probably would) be a well-adjusted and loving kid. This could be a fabulous undertaking, but beware—men are again a commodity.

Our once cursed bodily fluids are now marketable. If two happily married, financially secure, 30-plus women, you know are spending more time than usual with you, be very careful. You might unknowingly be a candidate for their "Daddy/Donor Short List."

Whatever you do, don't let them take you out for a meal. These are anxious women whose reproductive capacity is waning. At brunch simply say "No eggs, thank you—I'll have the oatmeal."

Rich Arenschioldt is a freelance writer currently pondering the continuum of his DNA.



VIEWPOINT

'Surrendering' wives undermine all women, gays

by JENNIFER VANASCO

Surrender, a recent book says. Surrender control of your household accounting, decisions about purchases, control over your sex life—surrender, in fact, any ideas you might have about the "Myth of Equality."

Does this sound good to you? Of course not. Gay men and lesbians have been fighting for decades to have full control over our lives. We certainly wouldn't want to "surrender" anything for which we have fought so hard.

Yet thousands of heterosexual women all over the country are attending "surrendering" meetings with Laura Doyle, author of "The Surrendered Wife: A Practical Guide to Finding Intimacy, Passion and Peace with a Man."

Men should handle the checkbook, Doyle says, and decide when and where to have sex. If a husband asks a wife her opinion, she should say, "Whatever you want."

She should ignore and forgive sexual indiscretions that occur away from home. She should stop insisting that he share household chores or childcare, instead trusting to his innate generosity and caring that he will do these things on his own. She should never tell him what she

Men should handle the checkbook, says a popular author, and decide when to have sex. If a husband asks a wife her opinion, she should say, 'Whatever you want.'

thinks and never ask him what he feels.

Following her program, Doyle says, will result in more free time, better sex, more expendable income and a more harmonious relationship.

"I am a feminist," Doyle told the *Washington Times*. "Definitely, to my core. I see this as the next stage in feminism. That we acknowledge that what we want at work is different from what we want at home."

At work, women might want to manage others, Doyle says. But at home, they want to be managed. Compliant. They want their husbands to handle all the difficult decisions so that they can be free to shop for shoes and fuss over their masculine man.

Right. Good bye, power couple—hello, Stepford Wives.

Do these women have so many rights that they can afford to give some of them away?

It may sound tempting to give up all responsibility for your life, but only a fool agrees to such a devil's bargain. After all, having control over our own

lives is what differentiates us from prisoners and children.

The surrendering movement is, of course, a throwback to the 1950s—or the 1990s and the Promise Keepers—or last year, and the Baptist vow that women should submit to their husbands. Some men, it seems, always want women to give up whatever control they have eked out—and some women are too willing to give it to them.

It may not seem so, but the surrendering movement has everything to do with gay men and lesbians. Just as movements that empower a single group also raise up all others who are also fighting, so, too, do disempowering movements pull the noose of subservience closer around all our throats.

No matter what Doyle says, disrespectful attitudes toward women don't begin and end at the front door of the home. Men who are trained to believe that they deserve power over women will

act like they have power over women.

Disrespectful attitudes seep into the workplace. A supervisor whose wife never disagrees with him isn't going to look kindly upon a female employee who is speaking her mind.

What becomes of lesbians if heterosexual women are once more reduced to arm candy? If a woman becomes nothing without her husband by her side, then two women together are less than nothing. And if the heterosexual world forces us all back into stiff gender roles, what happens to gay men? Or bisexuals? Or transgendered people?

Our civil rights movement is based on the idea that there is not one kind of normal, that roles within relationships are fluid, that there is a range of possibilities when it comes to sexual orientation and gender roles.

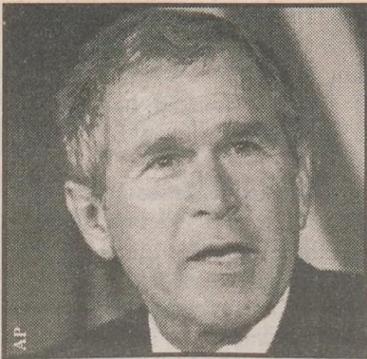
The surrendering movement threatens this. It threatens us as much as it threatens the heterosexual women who seem desperate to give in to its calming opiate of a message.

Jennifer Vanasco is a Chicago-based syndicated columnist and can be reached through this publication or send e-mail to vanasco@chicagofreepress.com

health news

Bush's budget blueprint funds increases in research, AIDS programs

WASHINGTON—President Bush proposed a budget for next year that calls for a \$2.8 billion increase in funding for the National Institutes of Health, the agency that oversees AIDS research programs for the federal government, the *Washington Blade* reported. The recommendation maintains a bipartisan plan adopted in 1998 to double the NIH budget over a five-year period. Bush also proposed unspecified increases in funding for the Housing Opportunities for People With AIDS program and for the U.S. Agency for International Development's effort to combat AIDS in developing nations. In addition, the budget proposes a \$124 million increase in the federal Community Health Care Centers program, which provides assistance to low income people with AIDS. White House officials said more details will become available when the president submits his full fiscal year 2002 budget to Congress in April. Winnie Stachelberg, Human Rights Campaign's political director, praised the NIH funds, but expressed concern that the administration may need to cut funds from other AIDS programs to make up the money difference.



President Bush's budget plan outlines spending increases in federal health research and programs for low income people with AIDS.

Some 40 percent of gay teens attempt suicide in MA, report says

BOSTON—One of the contributing factors to Massachusetts' high suicide rate is the large number of suicide attempts among gay high school students, the *Boston Globe* reported. A state Department of Public Health study found a 4-to-1 ratio of suicide to homicide in the state in 1998, much higher than the national rate of less than 1.5-to-1. The study found that about 10 percent of Massachusetts high school students attempted suicide in 1997. Broken down by sexual orientation, about 40 percent of gay and bisexual students attempted suicide, compared to about 10 percent of their heterosexual peers. "[Gay students] are no more mentally unstable than other students, but they are susceptible to victimization by their peers," said Ellen Connorton, coordinator of violence prevention and intentional injury at the state agency. The state appropriated \$750,000 last year toward preventing suicides among gay teenagers, but later decided to spend the funds on outreach to all students.

D.C. officials pull controversial AIDS pamphlet with religious citations

WASHINGTON—An AIDS pamphlet paid for and distributed by the District of Columbia government advises readers that "Jesus is our hope!" and cites the Bible 30 times, the *Washington Post* reported. The 15-page booklet, "A Christian Response to AIDS," carries the logo of the D.C. Health Department's Administration for HIV/AIDS, and was handed out during a recent health fair, said Wayne Turner, a member of the D.C. chapter of ACT UP. "An error was made in ordering it, and another error was made in putting our name on it," said Leila Abrar, a spokesperson for the health department. "Whatever [remaining pamphlets] we have will not be distributed." The department spent \$380 for 1,000 copies of the pamphlet; the remainder will not be distributed, Abrar said. Turner said the pamphlets themselves were fine, but they shouldn't have been distributed by the city. "If a church itself was producing and distributing this kind of material, that's great," he said.

Rat gene may aid human defense of sexually transmitted diseases

WASHINGTON—Chinese researchers announced that they had found a gene in rats that seems to produce a compound that defends against sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, Reuters reported. The researchers looked at the sex organs of rats, which seem to have at least some natural protection against sexually acquired infectious diseases, where they focused on the epididymis, an organ in the testicles involved in sperm production. They found a gene controlling a protein particle called Bin1b. There are possible equivalents in humans and chimpanzees. Tests showed that the particle suppressed the growth of the common E. Coli bacteria, which the researchers said suggested the peptide acts as a line of defense against infection. "It may also act as a reservoir of sexually transmitted bacteria," the researchers wrote. They theorized that the process could also lead to breakthroughs in contraceptive technology.

FDA panel supports new oral drug to treat vision problems in PWAs

GAITHERSBURG, Md.—Swiss drug giant Roche Holdings won support from U.S. advisers for a new oral drug to treat vision problems in AIDS patients, Reuters reported. A FDA advisory panel unanimously voted to back the new drug, called valganciclovir, for treatment of the eye disease cytomegalovirus retinitis, which affects up to 40 percent of late-stage AIDS patients. "The panel is recommending its approval based on the fact that the sponsors showed clear efficacy" in initial treatment of the condition, said Princy Kumar, an advisory panel member. The FDA usually accepts the recommendations of its advisory panels. A minority of members of the committee expressed concern that some patients in trials of the treatment had developed acute anemia.

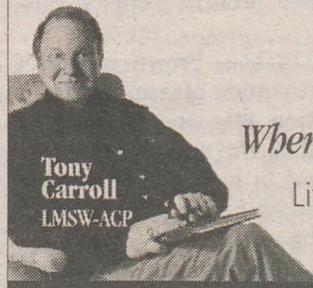
—From staff and wire reports



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Stella Byrd to HRC crowd: 'You are good people'

> Continued from Page 2

that it wasn't only the financial success that made organizers happy; it was also the chance to educate people on the issues facing the community and to express the goals of the HRC. "We are so proud of the evening," he said.

Comedian Georgia Ragsdale ably and humorously emceed the evening's festivities and awards, and Billy Bean, ex-major league baseball player, was the guest speaker.

The VIP guest list was a veritable who's who of Houston politicians. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Congressman Ken Bentsen, State Rep. Debra Danburg, Mayor Lee P. Brown, and city Councilmembers Annise Parker, Chris Bell, Carol Galloway, Gordon Quan, Carroll Robinson and Gabriel Vasquez, and others were all in attendance.

An emotional video about James Byrd, Jr., and Mathew Shepard, who were both viciously slain in hate crimes, was shown prior to Brown introducing members of the Byrd family. The family received a special recognition award for refusing to allow the

words, "sexual orientation," to be deleted from the proposed Texas hate crimes legislation bill.

In his introduction, Brown said that equality for all regardless of race, religion or sexual orientation was one of his core beliefs. Saying that Byrd and Shepard were "innocent victims of hate and discrimination," he introduced Byrd's mother, Stella, who accepted the award.

In a short, but emotional acceptance speech, Stella said, "I always like to be around good people; they look out for each other. And you are good people." As she looked out into the sea of faces, she repeated, "You are good people."

Continental Airlines was this year's recipient of the Corporate Equality Award. Continental, Houston's home-based airline, not only provides its gay and lesbian employees with domestic partner benefits, but also includes sexual orientation in its nondiscrimination policy. Continental is also a big contributor to the HRC.

Longtime Houston activist, Sue Lovell, received the Political Equality Award. Lovell has a number of firsts to her name—

first woman president of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus; first openly gay or lesbian from Texas elected to the Democratic National Committee; founding board member of the National AIDS Action Council; and the list goes on.

In her short thank you speech, it was clear that she has only just begun and will continue the fight for gay and lesbian rights, when she said, "We will fight until hell freezes over."

This year's Community Service Award went to Gary Teixeira for his many years of service to the community.

Teixeira is best known for his work with AIDS Action Foundation, Bayou City Boys Club, Bering Community Service Foundation, Black Tie Dinner, HRC Federal Club and PFLAG.

Houston City Councilmember Parker took the stage briefly to talk about the mayor's recent decision to temporarily withdraw from the same-sex benefit fight for city of Houston employees and to instead pursue a non-discrimination ordinance to protect lesbian and gay employees.

If forces opposing the ordinance get

20,000 signatures, the referendum will go on the ballot in November. If that happens, an unusually animated Parker said, "We're going to kick ass in November," to cheers and applause.

A lively auction led by auctioneer, Renee Jones Introligator, raised several thousand dollars for the HRC, as did the silent auction. Listening to Introligator was entertainment itself and she twisted her tongue around the numbers and kept up a fast paced auction.

Guest speaker, ex-major leaguer, Billy Bean, rounded out the evening with a speech about the torment of his being gay and in the major league baseball.

Bean talked about his struggles with his sexuality while he was in the league and of how difficult it was for him to come out. He did come out after two personal tragedies that affected him greatly, and made him ashamed of fearing to tell.

Bean praised Stella Byrd for her honesty and said how much it meant to him. In his own defense about the length of time it took him to come out, Bean said, "everyone is out in his own time or place."

HFFV headquarters target of two shootings

> Continued from Page 2

The police have no leads. He keeps a surprisingly light touch about all this, and laughs when he explains his change of mind over perceived perpetrators.

"You got to keep some balance, you know? This weekend I got four more bullet holes in my building. I called the police again. I first thought it was coming from the homosexual community, but now it might be the religious right."

In response to his conservative allies turning against him, Wilson sent out a rebuttal letter on March 2 to Harris County precinct chairmen and the Pastors Roundtable wherein he dismisses the letter's charges as disregarding the facts and slanting the truth. He will not be deterred, even when one of the signers urging him to quit his crusade is his own pastor.

Wilson believes the reason for the group's letter is to protect their slate of candidates in November's city-wide elections. He's baffled and angry that his own group of religious right conservative Republicans won't battle for what they've preached so vocally in the past.

"I'm not gonna take any guff from any of them," Wilson boasted, "and I'm not gonna back down one inch from Steven Hotze."

"Quite frankly, the signer Laurence White, who's head of the Roundtable, he's my pastor and my two kids go to his school! He and I have had words. Here he is, the head of the church and my spiritual adviser, on the one hand, and on the other, my political enemy."

The letter sent out by Hotze, Todd,

I was flabbergasted because half of those people who signed that letter were working with me. If I'm going to punch somebody, I'm gonna look them in the eye and tell them I'm gonna punch them. I'm not into sucker punches.

—Dave Wilson, Houstonians For Family Values founder

White, et. al., may or may not have had an effect on HFFV's petition drive. Wilson admitted that the response has slowed, but he expected that since his letter asked respondents to return their signatures by March 8.

He would not release the number of signatures he's received.

"I'm not at liberty to give that out. They're still coming in. We're going to have to have another mailing, but we planned on that. We've got over half of them."

"It's hard to tell whether it's the date or the letter that's caused the slow down, but really, this letter hasn't had time to get out. If the letter is going to hurt me, today or tomorrow I'll start really seeing it, but I've already seen the decline."

Then, Wilson said how much he enjoyed talking to a lesbian earlier in the day. "It was a lot better than the stress I get. We have a difference of opinion, but she was reasonable."

He paused, and with surprising candor said this:

"My brother-in-law who lived with us for a couple of years, my wife's brother, is homosexual. I have a brother-in-law who's

homosexual [who now lives in Biloxi], and two uncles, one of them died of AIDS, the other one died of respiratory lung failure associated with AIDS.

"I am not anti-gay, and I'm offended—see, that's the thing that made me the angriest with these preachers and this religious right group. I got tied in with that other group. But my group of religious right conservative Republicans is still hammering me and saying that's who I am. That's what pisses me off. I'm not about that, and that's



Dave Wilson says response to his Web site and letter campaign to ban same-sex benefits for city workers slowed, but he expected that since his letter asked respondents to return their signatures by March 8.

not what we're about. I don't like it.

"You know, people say, what if one of your kids grows up to be gay? What kind of stupid question is that? You still love your kids."

"Homosexual behavior to me is a sin, like adultery is a sin, stealing, lying, all of them are sins. Nobody's perfect, and me, I am one of the biggest sinners. I'm not perfect, but I've been around the homosexual lifestyle, had people personally in my family, and it's against the laws of nature, and I feel that in my heart."

"I don't love those people less and I'm not trying to burn anybody at the stake. That's just how I feel, and that's what this is about. I really feel there's a cultural decline in our country, and the homosexual agenda is one thing that threatens it, the single parent family threatens it, just people getting away from basics of what's right and wrong, and even respect for one another is threatening it."

"I don't know, it's a real complicated thing, and it's not an easy issue. One thing for sure, I'm not going let anybody say I'm anti-gay and full of hate and intolerance, because that's not true at all. I do have different views, but I expect to be respected for my views, and I respect people for their views, too."

"We may not agree on this or that, but I'll tell you where I'm at, the whole thing. I don't have anything to hide."

For this article, Councilman Robb Todd, through his office spokesman, "refused to comment," but referred all questions to Alan Blakemore, conservative political consultant, who did not return the *Houston Voice's* calls.

Dinner on the go for a good cause

Progressive dinner March 24 benefits AssistHers, An Uncommon Legacy

by KAY Y. DAYUS

Want some tantalizing tidbits to titillate your taste buds and a lot of fun? Then you might want to check out the upcoming progressive dinner slated for March 24 and sponsored by and benefiting AssistHers and An Uncommon Legacy Foundation.

This is the fourth year of the dinner and it promises to be the largest, said Janine Brunjes, who is on the National Board of Directors for Legacy.

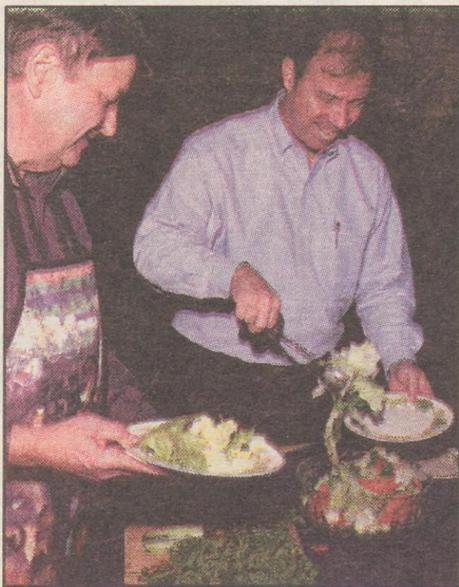
"Over the years, we have grown from one bus to four buses with 65 people on each bus," said Brunjes.

Each bus travels a different route to a different home. First stop, diners are treated to cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. Then it's on to another home for soup and/or salad.

Two of the salad makers will be Ken Malone and Joe Culotta, partners for 24 years, who live in the West University area. Malone says he's not yet sure what the salad ingredients will be, but he does know the dressing.

"We'll have a raspberry vinaigrette dressing with blue cheese," he said. Although they have been on the dinner trip before, Malone and Culotta are first-time hosts for the dinner and are looking forward to it.

Malone says he is glad to help out



KIM THOMPSON

Two of the salad makers for the March 24 progressive dinner will be Ken Malone and Joe Culotta, partners for 24 years, who live in the West University area.

AssistHers and Legacy.

"AssistHers is a great organization. It fills a niche no one else is doing. And there aren't many lesbian organizations to get involved with, to be perfectly honest."

Malone adds that Legacy is a great organization as well. "I'm just not as involved with them as I am with AssistHers."

Malone and Culotta are up to the task and ready to have around 65 people descend on

them for salad before they bus off to the entrée. "I'm excited about it. It'll be a lot of fun," said Malone.

A word of caution. Don't eat too much at the salad stop, because the entrée and dessert are still to anticipate.

All the buses converge on the same home for dessert and coffee says Brunjes. Frank Staggs will be the busy host to around 240 people. "Frank has the perfect home for a lot of people. It's an old church with a raised platform like a pulpit where people can speak from," said Brunjes.

All the hosts make their own choice as to what they serve and some make it themselves while others have it catered. There was a host planning reception hosted by Wayne Gresham and Rick Lockwood, where it was explained what was expected, said Brunjes.

Since there is only a short time, 45 minutes to an hour for each course, organization is of the essence said Brunjes. "There may be disabled people and we have to make sure there are ramps and we have to tell them they have to set up their house so people can file through." Other than that, it's up to the hosts.

Last year, the event raised about \$6,000 which was split between the two organizations, said Brunjes. This year they hope to surpass that figure.

Everything is donated. The hosts donate the food and the buses are provided by Avatar Associates, Bocado's Restaurant, Debra Brashears and Gary Teixeira. "So," Brunjes, "it's nice. The net proceeds are for

each organization."

Brunjes said she likes the idea that both men and women are hosts. "It shows how cohesive the men and women are in our community."

And, Brunjes said, the dinner is fun. "Not only are people giving to two great causes, it's a great evening of fellowship and good food and fun. It's better than just going to a restaurant; you meet a lot of new people."

Another good thing about the dinner is that it's not a black tie affair, you don't have to dress up.

"You can just be casual and ready to go," said Brunjes.

Proceeds from the benefit help AssistHers with operating funds and Legacy with scholarships and grants.

Last year, according to Brunjes, Houston's Legacy gave out \$21,000 in grants and scholarships to the lesbian community. Scholarships are given to out lesbians who are active in the community and furthering their education.

AssistHers is an organization of volunteers who take care of lesbians with chronic and debilitating illnesses.

INFO

Progressive dinner

March 24

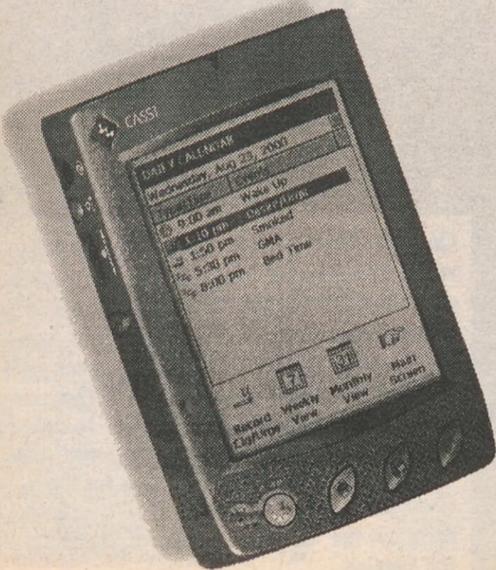
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4,000 participate in AIDS Walk



The 12th annual AIDS Walk Houston, in partnership with Chase, raised hundreds of thousands for the programs and services of AIDS Foundation Houston and 10 partnering agencies.

Approximately 4,000 individuals participated in the March 4 event, which organizers say was an all-time high.

The annual walk raises funds and awareness throughout the Houston community to provide education, housing, food, medical care, pediatric programs, counseling and job training to more than 100,000 individuals infected or affected by HIV/AIDS.

"With the support from the AIDS Walk I have a place to live for my daughter and the resources to find a job eventually placing me back into mainstream society," Tammy Hardy, resident at an AFH housing project, said.

"I can't thank people enough for their participation and involvement because without their help people like myself would have nowhere to turn."

Human Rights Campaign Gala



Clockwise from top left: Billy Bean, pictured with Janine Brunjes, was the keynote speaker at the Houston Human Rights Campaign held March 3; also honored at the event was Stella Byrd, mother of hate crimes victim James Byrd Jr.; Houston Councilwoman Annise Parker announced that the city will continue to fight for same-sex benefits for employees; comedienne Georgia Ragsdale served as emcee for the event and several 'flight attendants' helped carry out the 'Discover the World' theme for the evening.

Out on the Bayou

A guide for your leisure time

HOUSTON VOICE • MARCH 9, 2001

AMY RAY GOES 'STAG'

Indigo Girl releases solo CD

by LAURA BROWN

"Stag." It means going it alone, without a date, or in the context of a "stag party" or "stag movie," something intended for men only.

Striking out on her own, Amy Ray of the Indigo Girls said it makes the duo stronger when one member branches out to explore new ideas. Amy Ray's new album, released March 6, encompasses all the meanings of its title.

The openly gay native of Atlanta, Ga. is on her own, without Indigo Girls' partner Emily Saliers; on her own independent record label, Daemon Records; and open to exploring both the positives and negatives of her own masculine side.

It is, as Ray describes it, entrenched in the "Southern punk ethic-subversiveness with a smile."

But "Stag" isn't all smiles, and it isn't just Indigo Girls minus Saliers.

Alone, Ray is edgier, angrier and not afraid to move beyond the folksy style that made the Indigo Girls famous—although she is quick to say she isn't moving away from the duo.

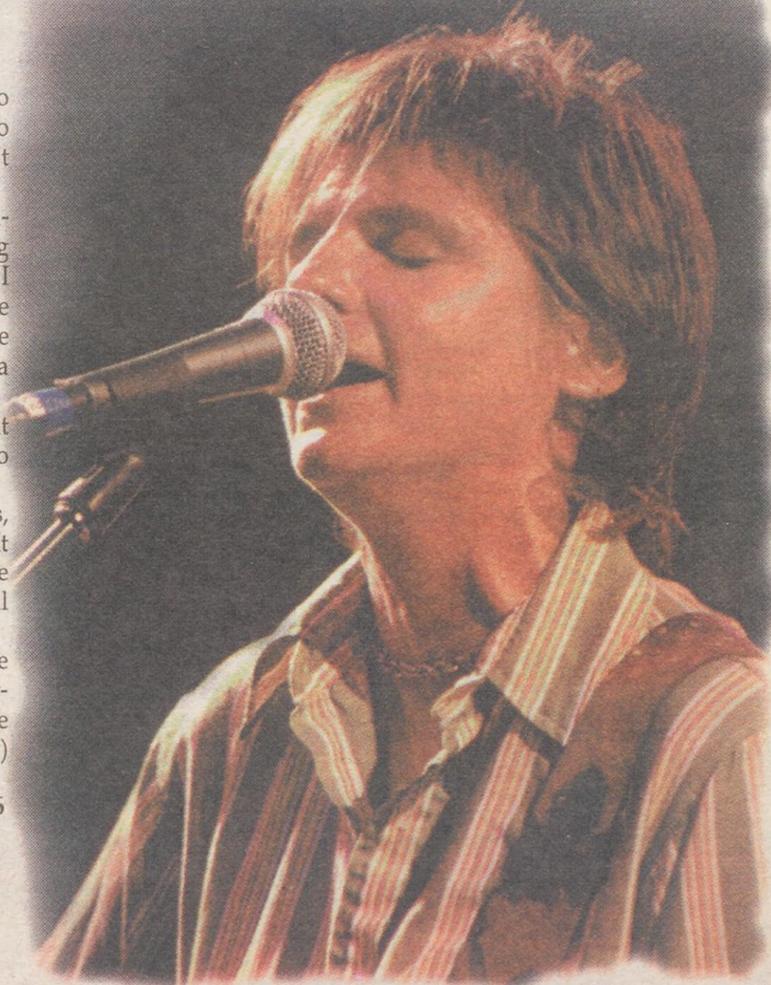
"There is a certain pointedness lyrically that I didn't feel would be as effective with two very strong voices singing," Ray says of the songs on "Stag." "I think Indigo Girls are at their best when we are singing counter melodies. ... so I think it would be almost a waste of us to do something with more like a singular voice."

Solo projects often signal a band's imminent demise, but Ray is quick to calm fears that her solo project is anything more than just branching out.

"I think Indigo Girls are different from most bands, and this actually makes us stronger," Rays says. "It doesn't feel on the verge of breaking up, it feels like moving full steam ahead. This should be a natural evolution for every band."

The project also put Ray on the other side of the microphone from her usual duties at Daemon, performing with artists from the label including the Rock*A*Teens, 1945 (formerly Three Finger Cowboy)

> Continued on Page 16



'POPPEA' MEETS 'THE LADY IN THE DARK'

Musicals depict early days of opera, tuneful psychoanalysis

BY D.L. GROOVER

Two completely different musical works are given smashing productions this week in the Bayou City.

One is from the very first days of opera history, Monteverdi's L'INCORONAZIONE DI POPPEA, and the other, Kurt Weill, Ira Gershwin, Moss Hart's LADY IN THE DARK, is a classic, though rarely revived, Broadway musical.

We are graced and equally blessed with both.

Italian genius, Claudio Monteverdi was a founder of opera and single-handedly transformed the operatic stage into the one we are familiar with to this day. He bridged

> Continued on Page 17



za, played by Leslie Maness, tries to decide which man she loves: the married lover, Terry Jones, the movie star, Ilich Guardiola, or the advertising manager, Robert Leeds, in the Main Street Theater production, 'Lady in the Dark.'

Ray CD includes tribute to Matthew Shepard

> Continued from Page 15

and Danielle Howle, as well as the infamous Joan Jett and the independent North Carolina-based queer punk band, the Butchies.

"It was cool, and it totally made me more familiar with how they work in the studio," she says.

Only the album's first track, "Johnny Rottentail," features Ray alone, accompanying herself on mandolin—an instrument familiar from Ray's recent Indigo Girls tunes like "Gone Again," but without the sing-along feel.

From there, "Stag" is a journey of rock and mostly punk, taking listeners from "Laramie," the town where gay Wyoming college student Matthew Shepard was killed in what may be the country's best known anti-gay hate crime, to the call to "put away your hate" that closes the CD's final track, "On Your Honor."

Before recording "Laramie," Ray visited the town, and says she was struck by the energy. "Standing in the bar where he was, knowing the field [where Shepard was left tied to a fence to die] is that direction—the vision you have of any hate crime that is covered so extensively."

But the message of "Laramie" is that the town, and the crime, weren't unique—and the blame reaches much deeper in society than just the two thugs convicted of murdering Shepard.

"Poor man do the bidding for the rich man/Those rednecks are just doing what the classy fuckers' thinking," Ray sings. "And tolerance it ain't acceptance/I know

you wanted it to be/when you're out in Laramie."

From "Laramie," the CD explodes into outright anger on "Lucystoners," named for the 19th century American suffragist.

In fact, the different format of "Stag" may give some Indigo Girls fans pause. But the rawer lyrics and punk sound offer both insight into the artist and plenty to keep CD players spinning.

Still, you probably won't hear it on the radio or read about it in Rolling Stone—a fact Ray acknowledges in no uncertain terms.

In "Lucystoners," she takes sure aim at a music industry she says has refused to give Indigo Girls and other women musicians their due, personified by Rolling Stone's Jann Wenner.

"Janny Wenner, Janny Wenner, Rolling Stone's most fearless leader," Ray taunts, with the Butchies providing additional vocals, guitar, bass and percussion. "Gave the boys what they deserve, but with girls he lost his nerve."

The song, Ray says, is about the entire music industry, not just its most famous magazine.

"They believe they are focusing on their main demographics, and that men don't want to read about women musicians unless they have a bikini on. ...

"I don't think they sit in board meetings and say, 'Let's diss all female musicians.' It's much more institutionalized than that," she says.

But the fact that Wenner is openly gay and seems unable to view women outside of feminine stereotypes strikes Ray as particu-

larly ironic.

"I think sexism and homophobia are really tied together, and I think for him to be gay and still be sexist is amazing," she says. "He doesn't see the connection between someone who looks down on a gay man because he acts like a woman, and how that is sexist—it's saying that being like a woman means being less."

But Ray's gender politics, which permeate "Stag," aren't just directed outward.

In songs like "Hey Castrator," "Measure of Me" and "Mtns of Glory," she explores the masculine side that many women are taught to hate or hide—and that some lesbians in relationships with more feminine partners feel is all they are allowed to express.

"I see you licking your lips/at the slope of her hips," Ray sings in "Hey Castrator," joined by guest vocalist Joan Jett. "I got disgusted with my own ownership. ... Take it out of me."

"Measure of Me" puts the question succinctly, directed to the boy who "thinks I'm damaged goods" because "I dress like him, I take him down":

"Is it the boy you need in me, or the girl that you could be?" she asks.

But by "Mtns of Glory," Ray explores how giving up the masculine side that can come with so many negative connotations is also a loss. "I'm gonna miss being the boy," she sings. "I'm going to miss being the man."

"I do wrestle a lot with gender on the record, with my own recognition of the male part of me," Ray admits. "I hate it



sometimes and I feel that I embrace it sometimes. 'Castrator' is about that male side of myself, and how I can relate to some of that misogyny or objectification of women."

But masculinity, expressed by men or women, isn't all bad, Ray quickly points out. "I don't think people are that black and white," she says.

"Sometimes my partner relates to me from my boyish side, that part of me that is like an adolescent boy, and sometimes that's fine," she says. "Then there are times when you are like, 'Wait a minute. I can be everything.'"

"We all want that," Ray concludes. "We just want to not be limited."

Bayou Calendar

'Full Bloom'

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

March 8 - April 17

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

'Stiff'

Spymonkey, the cult-darling theatrical quartet (Aitor Barauri, Stephen Kreiss, Petra Massey and Toby Park), arrives with this lacerating farce after triumphs at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and London's Mime Festival 2001. This side-splitting surreal romp has the great

English tragedian, Forbes Murdston, reenacting a funereal tribute to his dearly departed wife. Dare we say that everything that can go wrong does? Comic morticians on parade. You'll laugh yourself to pieces, just like poor Mrs. Murdston.

March 7-18

Theater LaB, 1706 Alamo
713-868-7516

'Pilobolus Dance Theatre'

Another darling of the theatrical circuit, this time it's that mind-bending, pretzel-forming, thought-inducing dance company, Pilobolus, in a one-night only show. The idiosyncratic movement and creative images range from nightmarish Bosch to angular Giacometti to pastoral Botticelli, and then they'll throw in some Martha Graham just for laughs. Witty and wicked, once you see them, you'll never forget them.

March 10, 8 p.m.

Jones Hall
713-227-4SPA

'Star Wars: The Magic of Myth'

Anything you ever wanted to know about the making of that pop cultural supercalifragilistic-expealidocious mega-hit, George Lucas' cinematic achievement that refuses to go away—"Star Wars"—you'll find answers to your heart's content in this block-buster show that's going to pack the MFAH like rusty girders on the DeathStar. Given the glossy imprimatur by the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, this gargantuan exhibition links these grade-B kid movies to what apparently seems lesser classical myths and world literature. Luke Skywalker meets Odysseus. As the catalog states, "upon exiting the exhibition, browse through the special Star Wars gift shop." Now, that's the real culture.

March 11 through June 24

Tickets, \$10

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1001 Bissonnet
713-639-7771

Personal appearance by writer Laurie R. King

Author King, creator of the lesbian police detective Kate Martinelli in such books as "Night Works," "To Play the Fool," and "With Child!," arrives at Murder By the Book as night falls to read from and sign copies, of course, of her latest fiction, "Folly." Taking a needed convalescence to soothe her anxiety and restore her mental health, Rae Newborn (get it?) sets out to Folly Island (got it!) to rehab her great-uncle's house. Crippling paranoia sets in. Sometimes, those voices aren't always in your head.



March 12, 6 p.m.

Murder By The Book, 2342 Bissonnet

HGO delivers physical, beautiful production of 'Poppea'

> Continued from Page 15

Renaissance and inspired the Baroque with his melodic invention, adventuresome harmony, and superb pairing of music to word with psychological rightness. It's safe to say he invented opera.

His last work, from 1642, is his masterpiece. Although Busenello's story is shaky history at best, the characters behave like real people, while their emotions color the expressive, haunting music. The perfect combo these old Italians created wouldn't be heard again for a generation.

Coming as he did from the church, Monteverdi also helped popularize the use of the castrato on stage, those "disenfranchised of nature" with ethereal voice and dazzling coloratura, coupled with leather lungs. We can get a taste of what they sounded like with the countertenors on view at HGO.

We also get to experience a spectacularly Baroque production with exotic period instruments and mannered performances, albeit filtered through modern sensibilities and some '70s Jean Pierre Ponelle inspiration, that sweeps the listener into a Venetian theater circa 1650. It's a lovely ride through opera's old canals. Conductor David Fallis plays this exquisite work like the fine drama it is, not like some musty manuscript.

The physical production by the crack team from the Opera Atelier from Toronto with descendent deus ex machina, brilliant-

ly painted flats of perspective, sumptuous costumes, and singing and acting of the highest caliber (with some reservations), is a most worthy version that even the old priest himself, Monteverdi, would be proud.

While Michael Maniaci (Nerone) certainly has the heft of a tenor, his male soprano doesn't come to the fore until well into the second act, where his legato phrasing and creamy voice soar on Monteverdi's inspired tunes. Countertenor Matthew White fares better throughout as protagonist Ottone, deeply dramatic one scene, plangantly lyric the next, grief-filled and despondent in another.



For early music aficionados, lovers of imaginative stage mise-en-scene, or the chance to wallow in some ravishing singing, Houston Grand Opera is the place to be.

No way does the above impugn Main Street Theater's sparkling "Lady in the Dark," however. Although pared to the bone, stripped of lavish sets and full orchestra, this beefed-up concert version of this



classic 1941 "musical play" is damned near definitive.

Moss Hart, who wrote the book, was so enamored of his recent psychoanalysis that he convinced Weill and Gershwin to turn the theme into a musical. Although Hollywood beat them all to the punch with RKO's 1938 "Carefree" with Rogers and Astaire, this was the first time such a subject was fodder for a Broadway audience.

For its time and place, they acquitted themselves admirably, turning Liza Elliot's couch sessions into musical set pieces of urbane wit, charm, and insight.

This musical play is heavy on the book, but to the credit of director Jeff Galligan and his fine troupe of performers these lengthy scenes of exposition fly by since we've been mesmerized by the quality of the musical numbers. Perhaps it's the numbers' successful realization that makes us want to get right to them.

Assisted in the staging by Mary Galligan and Rob Babbitt, the extended musical visions are dreams, indeed. Whether in self-

serving praise of Liza as the "Fabulous One in Your Ivory Tower," or during a nightmare of a wedding, "This Woman at the Altar," or the justly famous "Circus Dream" from Act II, where Liza is put on trial like Alice in Wonderland, only here she's plopped down with Barnum & Bailey, these songs are the crux of this play, and the ensemble work throughout is exceptional.

A great comedy turn. Michelle Britton, as busybody Alison Du Bois, gives an equally camp performance, half Edna May Oliver, half Eric Blore, all funny. And Roberts Leed's Charlie Johnson, hard-bitten advertising director, has just the right amount of wise-cracker savvy and rumpled charm to finally get the girl of his dreams.

Great shows, great music, great performances.

'L'Incoronazione di Poppea'

Through March 18

Houston Grand Opera, Cullen Theater @ Wortham Theater Center

713-227-ARTS

'Lady in the Dark'

Through March 11

Main Street Theater @ Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd.

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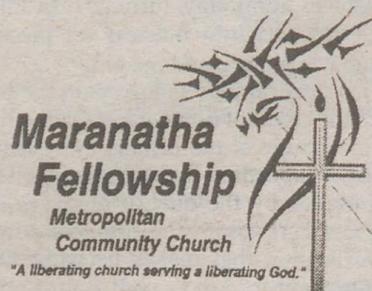
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on screen

FILM, VIDEO & TV PREVIEWS

by STEVE WARREN

Gays with guns

THE MEXICAN is a disposable but entertaining star vehicle for Brad Pitt and Julia Roberts. They have one of those relationships that appears so dysfunctional you wonder why they bother, but that seems to be Hollywood's idea of romance these days.

While Brad's in Mexico picking up an antique pistol for a gangster he's indebted to, Julia is kidnapped on the way to Las Vegas—to ensure the gun winds up in the right hands. Her captor (James Gandolfini) is a romantic guy who gives her advice but has never been lucky in love himself.

His luck changes when he spies Michael Cerveris at a roadside café. In a cute bonding scene Roberts catches Gandolfini cruising and he comes out to her.

To say she's supportive of the new couple would be an understatement. "It's just beautiful!" she says, and granted—it is beautiful to see love blossom between two balding, middle-aged guys instead of the usual young hunks.

Being a romantic, Julia is okay with any kind of love, especially when it appears to be mutual and doesn't involve all the baggage she and Brad are carrying.

Except for the opening sequence the stars have no scenes together until the final half-hour, so in many ways the relationship between Roberts and Gandolfini is the heart of "The Mexican." It's like a "Will & Grace" episode directed by Quentin Tarantino, but at least this Will gets laid.

Considering "The Mexican" opened the same weekend as the new season of "The Sopranos," Gandolfini doesn't take much of a career risk in playing "Tony" as a real soprano.

Overall the movie is a mixed bag with



Gay hitman James Gandolfini holds fag hag Julia Roberts captive in 'The Mexican.'

more positives (a literate, often witty script; slightly surreal visuals) than negatives (clichéd scenes and plot twists, Nancy Sinatra's overplayed "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'" on the soundtrack).

The gay relationships in THE CAVE-MAN'S VALENTINE are of the sick and twisted variety. The one nice little queen included here is a junkie.

Adapted from his award-winning mystery novel by George Dawes Green, this is director Kasi Lemmons' follow-up to "Eve's Bayou,"

my favorite film of 1997. It stars the great Samuel L. Jackson in a showy role as the schizophrenic hero, Romulus Ledbetter.

You couldn't ask for a better pedigree, yet the movie rarely rises above so-so in its execution.

Romulus, who lives in a cave in a Manhattan park, is a Juilliard-trained composer/pianist who sees images on a television that's not plugged in and believes he's being spied on by a "Cornelius Stuyvesant" from the top of the Chrysler Building.

When Rom finds the body of a young man in a tree outside his cave, his friend Matthew (Rodney Eastman) tells him deceased Scotty used to model for trendy photographer David Leppenraub (Colm Feore), who tortured and branded him with a heart on his ass. Matthew thinks Scotty was killed because "he was just too beautiful for them," and incidentally because he was blackmailing Leppenraub with a videotape.

Rom becomes a citizen detective (which makes him CD-Rom), trying to keep a grip on reality and build a case against Leppenraub. Pathetic but sympathetic Matthew, the most positive gay character because he really loved Scotty, is hardly a balance for the kinky art fags.

Terence Blanchard, whose film scores deserve more recognition, creates neoclassical compositions for Romulus that rank with those of "The Red Violin." For a jazz trumpeter he certainly knows the classical piano.

That the resolution of "The Caveman's Valentine" is vaguely unsatisfying makes it fit in with the rest of the picture. All of this wouldn't be as disappointing if the star and director didn't rate such high expectations.

I don't know how GLAAD will react to "The Caveman's Valentine," but I'd say there are a lot more queers of all stripes in movies and television today than there were a decade ago when the perverted serial killer of "The Silence of the Lambs" stirred so much controversy. Gandolfini in "The Mexican" and Jason Isaacs in "Sweet November" more than offset the dark side depicted in "Caveman."

'The Mexican'

★★★

Directed by Gore Verbinski

Starring Brad Pitt, Julia Roberts, James Gandolfini

Queer Quotient: Julia's a fag hag again, with sympathetic hit man Gandolfini taking Rupert Everett's place.

'The Caveman's Valentine'

★★ 1/2

Directed by Kasi Lemmons

Starring Samuel L. Jackson, Colm Feore, Ann Magnuson

Queer Quotient: A straight schizo plays detective to solve a murder in the world of art fags.

INFO

homefront

Why feed your trees?

Trees need proper nutrients to survive, thrive

by JAMES W. DOYLE

A client recently told me that she did not need to feed her trees because the trees in the forest were not fed and they do quite well.

I explained to her that in a forest environment, the essential elements needed for growth are derived from the breakdown of soil minerals and organic matter. Fallen leaves, twigs and branches provide an excellent ground cover that is low in density, resistant to compaction and allows for rapid entry of rainwater.

In urban and suburban landscapes, many of these processes do not occur. The trees in our lawns are in a foreign environment and have to compete with the grass for the nutrients.

Most of us want a neat, manicured lawns and landscape void of leaves and twigs. By removing this debris, we are removing the food for the trees. In Houston, this is especially true, as everyone wants a beautiful lawn with tall growing trees.

We feed the lawns three or four times a year. We feed the azaleas at least once a year with azalea food and even feed the dog, but so many times we forget about the trees.

Most homeowners assume that by feeding the lawn, the trees are getting fed. This is a wrong and dangerous assumption. The high-nitrogen, quick-release fertilizer that we use for the lawn never gets to the root system of the trees.

The St. Augustin grass absorbs most of the nutrients before the trees get a chance to absorb the nutrients. The level of nutrients that do get to the root system of the trees is often not adequate to supply the need of the trees. The quick release of the fertilizer does not really allow time for the slower growing trees to absorb much, if any of it.

When we do not take the nutrient needs of the trees into consideration, we see higher amounts of problems. Like anything in nature, the weak are always attacked first. Trees that are nutrient deficient grow more slowly and are susceptible to injury from drought, air pollution, soil compaction, extreme temperatures and disease agent.

Many insects are either attracted to weakened plants or do more damage to nutrient deficient plants. All these factors impact the appearance and shorten the life span of the trees and shrubs in Houston.

When is the best time to feed trees?

Most arborist say that a late fall or early spring is best, However if the proper fertilizer is used, a feeding can be accomplished anytime a tree needs it.

The best method, of course, is to have the feeding completed by a professional arborist. All good arborist will consider the health of the trees and the soil type and the nutrient needs for the trees.

Secondly, by injecting the solution into the ground at high pressure it de-compacts the soil allowing oxygen and new roots to move into the void.



The difference between fed and unfed trees can mean life or death to your trees. Arborists recommend annual feedings to keep trees healthy.

The professional arborist can assess the need for both macro- and micronutrients by performing a soil analysis. I fully believe that just as a doctor does for humans, a qualified arborist should write a prescription for the trees and shrubs and the solution should be mixed to meet each property's need.

The soil condition on your property may not be the same as on your neighbor's. By performing a soil test prior to feeding, an arborist can add certain elements to help adjust the pH of the soil. The arborist also can add more of other elements, if needed, to a base fertilizer.

Tree and shrubs require 16 essential elements to grow and produce viable seed. Three of these elements—carbon, hydrogen and oxygen—are absorbed from the air and water. The remaining elements are absorbed from the soil via the root system. Nutrients must be dissolved in water for the absorption.

If the trees do not receive all of these elements, in the quantity required, the tree could develop signs of stress. This problem can be costly to treat or worse, you may have to remove a dead tree due to improper care.

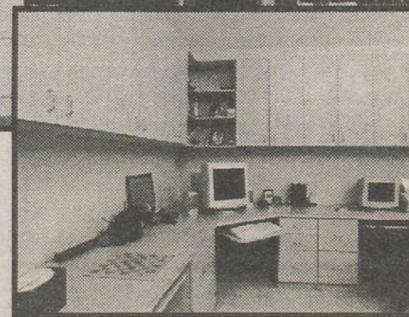
How do you prevent all of these problems? Keep the tree healthy by feeding it once a year, with a balanced nutrient program; watering correctly and having your arborist inspect the trees periodically. Take a proactive approach to the health of your trees.

James W. Doyle is a certified arborist with the Texas Chapter of the ISA and a member of the American Society of Consulting Arborist. He can be reached at Bartlett Tree Experts, 713-862-4777 or by e-mail at jdoyle@bigplanet.com.

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Eating Out

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Moving on up

Ouisie's Table now has elegant atmosphere combined with sumptuous food

by KATHREEN LEE

Located within a quiet residential nook off of San Felipe, **OUISIE'S TABLE**, pronounced "wee zee," serves traditional southern cuisine integrated with different foods from various ethnic origins.

Some of you Houston old-timers may remember Ouisie's Table & The Traveling Brown Bag Lunch Co. formerly on Sunset Boulevard when it opened in 1973. Now relocated to a different site, Ouisie's Table, a nickname derived from the proprietor's aunt, Elouise, offers the same quality food in a new elegant environment.

When you walk in the front door, you feel like you're walking into the large foyer of a luxurious home. The main dining room is reminiscent of an Ivy League faculty club with its heavy dark wooden furniture, high ceiling, large fireplace, light but modest art work, and an openness that breeds familiarity.

Although the tables are slightly crowded and I felt like our neighbors were dining with us at our table, the quiet atmosphere helped dissipate the crowded feeling.

The specials for the evening are described in colorful chalky writing on a large blackboard hung conspicuously in the dining hall. One such special offered that evening was the Chilean Sea Bass (\$28) served with seafood risotto and grilled asparagus. The minimal seasoning on the incredibly moist and tender bass brought out the fish's natural flavors. Bits of lobster and crab mingled in the pearly rice of the creamy risotto and perfectly complemented the texture and flavor of the fish.

Another special offered that evening was the Herb Crusted Lamb (\$32) which was served with green beans and herbed mashed potatoes. The moist and tender flanks of lamb crumbled easily and provided some moisture to the slightly dry potatoes.

Other meat dishes offered at Ouisie's include the 10-ounce Grilled Ribeye (\$22) which is drowned in a tangy cabernet demi-glaze and served with scalloped potatoes and sautéed spinach. One of the few fare items that actually resembles something out of a southern cookbook, the rib-eye's natural flavors, cooked to a perfect medium-rare, merged fluidly with the sweet demi-glaze to create a sumptuous fare.

If you're not in the mood for something heavy and would prefer a quick light dinner, you can substitute the Steamed Black Mussels (\$10) from the starters menu as your entrée. Immersed in



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FOOD FILE

Food: 

Service: 

Value: 

Scene: 

 Opt for bread, water at home

 OK, if you really must

 Fine for most

 Worth the drive, so live a little

 As good as it gets

a tomato, garlic, white wine and herb broth, the substantially sized mussels were fresh, without a hint of the fishy musk often lingering on mussels.

A fitting complementary dish to the more somber mussels is Ouisie's House Salad (\$4.50) served with its homemade vinaigrette. While the tangy citrus flavor of the dressing often overpowered the salad, the zesty flavor of the vinaigrette helped bring out the deep rich flavor of the mussels and made for a perfect light meal.

The only disappointment of the evening was the raspberry ganache poured over the Tres Leches (\$6). Although the cake itself was sweet and moist, the raspberry sauce tasted more like a cheap Smuckers jelly spread poured cloyingly over the otherwise delectable dessert.

Outside of the open main dining hall, you can find a cozier atmosphere in one of Ouisie's Table's array of private rooms. For example, the Cooper's Bin offers an intimate setting in a stately wine cellar, or if you want something more lively and romantic, then Alsey's Nest, which features a piano, its own small garden, and a small fireplace can provide the perfect setting for a private celebration. All these different rooms offer an elegant selection for anyone planning a party.

The elegant quiet atmosphere and luxurious rich foods at Ouisie's Table offers the perfect setting for anyone planning a large celebration or just a romantic evening out.

"quote/unquote"

compiled from STAFF REPORTS

"Jesus does not want these people in his heaven."

—Ronald Gay (right), charged with shooting to death one man and wounding six others last September in a Roanoke, Va., gay bar, in a letter he wrote to the *Roanoke Times*. Police say Gay was upset over harassment he's received about his last name.



"It's time for our public figures to stop hiding [in the closet] and for journalists to stop helping them. Many media outlets... accept these infringements on free expression as the cost of doing business. So reporters reluctantly sign contracts agreeing not to ask celebrities about their sexual orientation."

—Maer Roshan, deputy editor of *New York* magazine, in an essay in the current issue of the publication, which is dedicated entirely to "Gay Life" in New York City today

"Ah, we didn't publish those because of space limitations. We were already five paragraphs too long."

—Maer Roshan, who is openly gay, explaining why *New York* magazine didn't publish the names of 33 powerful gay New Yorkers who declined to be photographed for the cover of the publication's special issue dedicated to "Gay Life" in New York, as reported in the *New York Daily News*, March 2



"Buffy kisses a girl... Grosse!"

—*TV Guide* headline about an episode of the WB television show 'Grosse Pointe,' in which Sarah Michelle Geller (left), of "Buffy, the Vampire Slayer," gets kissed by female character Marcy Sternfield; Geller reacts with horror and disgust

"The first thing you have to get used to is the taste."

—Jake Glazeski, a University of Nebraska student, describing his same-sex relationship in a column published in the March 1 issue of the *Daily Nebraskan*, the student newspaper

"[Mardi Gras] has been getting less response from the homosexual community itself and there are strong divisions as to whether it is helping their cause. We have been arguing all the time that this just reinforces all the stereotypes. The more conservative homosexuals are realizing that dozens of men dressing up in fairy dresses does not help them to be taken seriously."

—Rev. Fred Nile, a famously anti-gay minister, reacting to news that attendance was down at Sydney, Australia's Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras, in the *Sydney Sun-Herald*, March 4

"I feel sad for you and truly regret that I cannot offer a solution. I hope that you will try to understand how difficult it is for parents who had a male child and were asked to call that child 'Madeline.'"

—Syndicated advice columnist Ann Landers (right), in her March 4 column in response to a letter from a transgendered woman whose parents have rejected her ever since she completed sex reassignment surgery



"Now that 'Will & Grace' is a ratings hit, the network science labs are trying to clone its success by experimenting with gay-themed sitcoms. But, with products like 'Some of My Best Friends' and John Goodman's canceled 'Normal, Ohio,' the formula-crazy programmers have forgotten that a popular element of 'Will & Grace' is the subversive joy it takes in its characters' diversity. That show tries to laugh at stereotypes, not pander to them."

—*Boston Globe* TV critic Matthew Gilbert, criticizing early episodes of 'Some of My Best Friends,' a sitcom adaptation of the 1997 film 'Kiss Me Guido'

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community

saturday, march 10

After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM. 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. 713-526-5738.
 Q-Patrol walks the streets 8:45 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.
 Gay & Lesbian Breakfast Club. 9:30 a.m., Memorial Park tennis center, 1500 E. Memorial Loop Drive. 281-437-0636.
 Dignity mass. 7:30 p.m. for gay Catholics. 713-880-2872.
 St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Rosary 8 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama. 713-528-6665.
 Houston Chain Gang Bicycle Club. Call for ride locations. 713-863-1860.
 Houston Wrestling Club. Practice. 1:30 p.m. 713-453-7406.
 Rainbow Fishing Club. Meeting. 713-526-7070. 713-880-9235.
 Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours noon to 4 p.m. • Gay Broadcast Network rehearsals. Noon. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
 Gulf Coast Transgender Community. Support Group. 713-797-8615.
 Asians and Friends. Bar Night at Guava Lamp. 713-647-7249.
 Feng Shui. Discover session. 713-932-7224.
 Houston Outdoor Group. Breakfast at Java Java. 832-251-6063

sunday, march 11

Blessed Sacrament Liberal Catholic Church. Study Group 11:30 a.m. Mass 12:30 p.m. www.blessed-sacrament.net. 713-476-9776
 Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals meets. 713-942-7002.
 Rainbow Riders. A bicycle club for women. 713-869-1686.
 St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Holy Rite Eucharist I 7:45 a.m.; Holy Rite Eucharist II 8:55 a.m.; Education hour 10 a.m.; Choral Eucharist 11 a.m. 713-528-6665.
 Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Church. Service. 6:30 p.m. 713-528-6756.
 Resurrection MCC. Services. 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10 a.m. Youth Sunday School 11:15 a.m. Handbell Choir rehearsal 1:30 p.m. 713-861-9149.
 Grace Lutheran Church. Sunday school for all ages 9 a.m. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-528-3269.
 Community Gospel. Service at 11 a.m. & 7 p.m. Sunday School for children 10 a.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
 Houston Mission Church. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-529-8225.
 Covenant Church, Ecumenical, Liberal Baptist. Service 9:30 a.m. & education hour 11 a.m. 713-668-8830.
 Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Services at 8:30 a.m. & 10:50 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 713-526-1017.
 The Women's Group. Meeting & Discussion. 10:45 a.m. 713-529-8571.
 Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 502 Church St. Service 10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.
 First Congregational Church (Memorial). Service at 10 a.m. Christian Education. 11:30 p.m. 713-468-9543 or fcc-houston.org.

Unitarian Fellowship of Houston. Adult forum 10 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 713-686-5876.
 Gay Catholics of St. Anne's-Houston. 5 p.m. worship service. Dinner and social. alexcam@wt.net. 713-623-0930
 Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation: Adult discussion 9:45 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.
 First Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:30 & 11:30 a.m. Brunch available 10:30 a.m. Panel Discussion: Bisexuality. 1:30 p.m. 713-526-5200. church@firstuu.org.
 Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
 Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours 2 to 4 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
 Bears on the Bayou. Gambling Trip. 713-867-9123
 PFlag. "Gay & Jewish" Issues. 10:30 a.m. 713-667-9336.

monday, march 12

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

tuesday, march 13

For Mature Audiences Only. Support group. 7 p.m. Bering Memorial UMC. 713-526-1017.
 Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Club Houston. 713-830-3000.
 Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-524-0439.
 Bering Support Network. Lunch Bunch Gang 11 a.m. 713-526-1017.
 Gay Men's Process Group. 7 p.m. 3316 Mt. Vernon. 713-526-8390.

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calendar

Men's Network. Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual men. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
 Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.
 CPR Classes. 3 p.m. 713-607-7700.
 Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition. • Lesbian Coming Out Group. 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
 Classic Chassis Car Club. Officer's meeting. 713-797-8615

wednesday, march 14

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. 2015 Thomas Street 713-793-4026.
 STD Exams & treatment. HIV Testing. Free. AVES. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.
 Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Mary's, Venture-N & E's. 713-830-3000.
 BiNet Houston. 7:30 p.m. Women's Social. 713-467-4380
 Women's Network. Montrose Counseling Center Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual women. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
 Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 936-441-1614.
 Project: Caesar. Workshops. AFH. 3203 Wesleyan. 713-623-6796.
 Out Skate Rollerskating Club. 8 to 10 p.m. 8075 Cook Road. 281-933-5818.
 Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. 7 p.m. 713-880-0670.
 Bible Study. Noon & 6:30 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal. 713-526-6665.
 Spiritual Uplift service. 7 p.m. Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Resurrection MCC. 713-861-9149.
 Dance Art Classes by Kermit Eisenhut for HIV+ individuals. 1 p.m. Lunch provided. 713-523-9530.
 Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
 Lesbian Literature Discussion Group. 7 p.m. 713-523-3037.
 Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal. 1307 Yale. 713-527-0931. www.houstonprideband.org.
 Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. Various Support Groups 7 p.m. 713-526-1017.
 Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition • Free HIV testing by the Montrose Clinic 6 to 9 p.m. • 713-524-3818.
 Houston Area Bears. Dine-out. 6:30 p.m. 713-867-9123.

thursday, march 15

Gay Men's Chorus of Houston. Open rehearsal. 7 p.m. 4807 San Felipe. 713-521-7464.

Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. 7 p.m. 713-880-0670.
 Hep C Recovery. Support Group. 6:30 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017, Ext. 211.
 STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.
 Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Toyz Disco. 713-830-3000.
 Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.
 Lambda Skating Club skates. 8 p.m. Tradewinds. Skating Rink. www.lambdaroll.org. 713-410-7215.
 FrontRunners. Running Club. 6:30 p.m. 713-522-8021.
 HIV Art Course Program. 1 to 4 p.m. Kermit Eisenhut. 713-524-9530.
 Women's Clinic. Montrose Clinic. 713-830-3000.
 Community Gospel. Service. 7:30 p.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
 HIV Testing. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.
 Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
 Family to Family Adoption Services. Workshop. 6:30 p.m. 713-249-5941.
 Gulf Coast Transgender Community. Support Group. 713-780-4282.
 Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce. Deadline for Newsletter. www.glhcc.org.

friday, march 16

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

To list an event, call Carolyn Roberts at 713-529-8490, fax at 713-529-9531, or e-mail editor@houstonvoice.com. Deadline is Friday at 5 p.m.

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APARTMENT BUILDING

Sought for Transitional Housing • Established Montrose area 501(c)3 non-profit organization with excellent credit and rental history seeks community-minded landlords to partner in providing transitional housing for medically disabled from our community • Small apartment building or 4-plex sought • Responsible group acts as property manager, guarantees rental payments, makes improvements, tax benefits and more • Housing and support services only - NOT a medical care facility or hospice • AHCH, Inc 713.521-1613

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

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

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

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

QUIT SMOKING!

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

BAY AREA GAYS

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

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Prestigious Museum District hair salon looking for stylist to join our family • Stations available on lease or commission basis • Call 713.528.2435 for immediate consideration

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

GUAVA LAMP

Bar Back needed • Apply in person to Guava Lamp, 2159 Portsmouth • Monday through Friday, 1:00pm to 6:00pm • No phone calls, please

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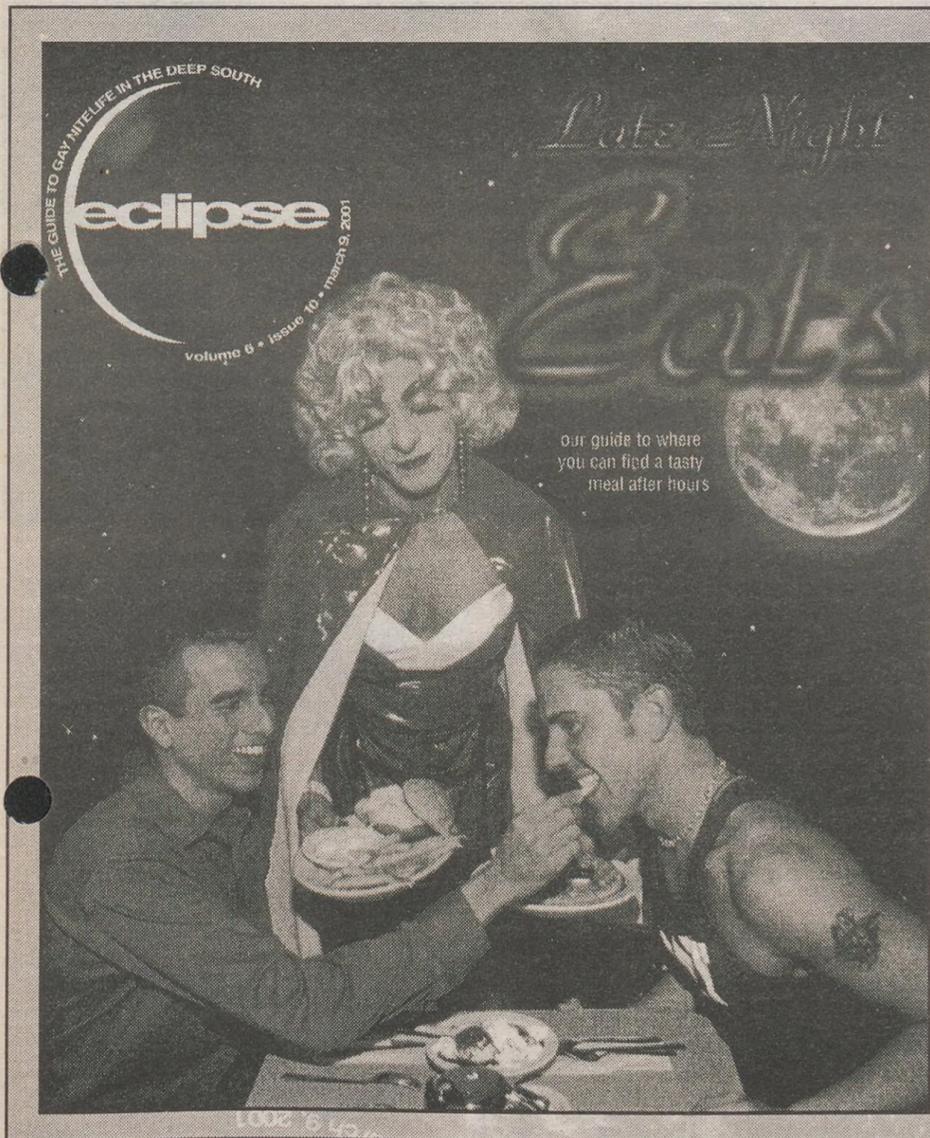
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 *First 20 words

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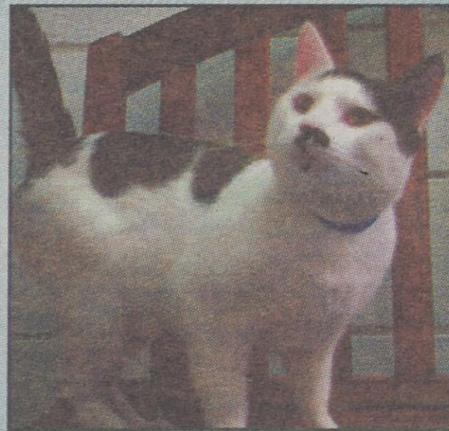
Birthdays

Asians and Friends member John M. has a birthday on March 13.

The one... the only Jane (Mack) Austin wrestles in a birthday on March 15.

Old Cadillac lover Kenny rides in a birthday on March 10.

Belated birthday greetings to Cara Lynn, who framed her tiny birthday polaroid snapshot in a 22"x36" frame on March 4.



Pet of the Week

This is Doc—isn't he cute with his mustache? He is 10 months old and likes to play the field (if you know what we mean). He is very affectionate and waiting for his match made in heaven.

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by JILL DEARMAN



YOUR WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

March 9 - 15

ARIES (MARCH 21—APRIL 20)

This is the right week for you to take it easy financially and avoid putting yourself into even more in debt than you already are. When your butch ruler, Mars, conjuncts Pluto later this month, you could feel a sense of freedom and opportunity you haven't felt in a long time. But for now, play it safe. And that means with a Cancer, too.

TAURUS (APRIL 21—MAY 20)

Things are not as grim as they seem in your love life. In fact, they are only starting to get interesting. Here's the rub: you may still want to play the field. A Capricorn is open to an open arrangement, but be careful how much fire you play with, honey.

GEMINI (MAY 21—JUNE 21)

Jupiter in your sign promises that for every little bit you give you get much in return. Do a favor for a colleague and the rewards come back to you threefold. A Virgo lover digs your ever-so-specific approach to sex and fantasies. Invest in the proper costumes, babe!

CANCER (JUNE 22—JULY 22)

Jupiter is traveling through the most mystical sector of your chart right now, which means that good fortune comes when you are at your most gracious and receptive. If you're involved, it's time to appreciate what you have and go out with your partner more, you stay-at-home bumpkin. Sagittarians are particularly attracted to you now.

LEO (JULY 23—AUG. 22)

Stop being so passive about committing to what you want. Your ruler, the Sun, is transiting the sector of your chart that rules marriage and business collaboration, suggesting hitches in both personal and professional life. In love, a big over-the-top gesture works wonders. A Pisces is open to your brand of old-fashioned romanticism.

VIRGO (AUG. 23—SEPT. 22)

You are so much closer to getting what you want than you think you are, darling. Think of this time like "finals week" in school and push yourself. Get behind one project that you really believe in. A little obsessiveness works to your advantage right now, especially where a Gemini is concerned.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23—OCT. 22)

Take advantage in Pluto's forward motion through your house of ideas ('til the 17th, when it goes retrograde) and pursue some of your more brilliant schemes and ideas. This is the right time for you to ask yourself what you learned from your last (and messiest) relationship. A Taurus is keeping the flame alive for you.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23—NOV. 21)

A little forcefulness goes a long way as the Sun and then Mercury (beginning St. Paddy's Day) transit your house of glamour and drama. Your sexuality and creativity commingle nicely, especially when you're swapping stories and spankings with an Aries.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22—DEC. 21)

Mars in your sign makes a most delectable aspect to Neptune in March, and you can reap the benefits by taking some time away from your daily routine. Don't worry about your enemies; they are actually a lot more silly and harmless than they appear. Put some energy into a hot and secret relationship with a Virgo.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22—JAN. 19)

Please avoid listening to the dreary advice and gossip of friends during this season. You are your own best advisor, and you don't need to drive yourself nuts by taking everyone else so seriously. Turn on your charisma and stop being so goddamned self-deprecating. A Libra is drawn to the power of your ego.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20—FEB. 18)

You are the master of your own fate, particularly in March, when Mars and Neptune are working in your favor. Instead of concentrating on watching your back, put your energy into shaking your moneymaker and shaking up the world (these two pursuits may overlap). A Pisces is growing more and more enamored with you.

PISCES (FEB. 19—MARCH 20)

Go easy on your body during March. Even though this is an utterly favored time for you, you still need to coddle yourself a bit. Shoot a lot of arrows into the sky, sweetie, and some will boomerang back to you with silly, sexy notes attached. It's a Pisces time of year and a Leo knows that you are the whore (I mean horse!) to bet on.

Jill Dearman is the author of "Queer Astrology for Men" and "Queer Astrology for Women." For information on charts and consultations, call 212-841-0177 or e-mail QScopes@aol.com.

Gary L. Franklin

"My Best Friend"

A year ago we said goodbye
Thoughts of you still make me cry
Your wings you grew, now you've flown
Just as I'd always known.

You've gone home to the great big yonder
Some days my thoughts of us I ponder
Of the day we'll meet again
Can't wait to see you, my best friend!

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CALENDAR

<p>Friday • Mar 9 Morning Prayer 10am Movie Night 7pm "The Last of the Mohicans"</p> <p>Saturday • Mar 10 Breakfast Club 9:30am</p> <p>Sunday • Mar 11 Lenten Scripture Series 6:30pm</p>	<p>Monday • Mar 12 Eucharist 7:30pm</p> <p>Wednesday • Mar 14 Enneagram Workshop 7pm</p> <p>Friday • Mar 16 Morning Prayer 10am</p>
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