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Maxwell, smart
Brini Maxwell rifts
 on gracious living. (Just don't
 call her a drag queen.)
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NOVEMBER 11, 2005

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 elections set for next month. **Page 3**



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MARRIAGE AMENDMENT: Federal
 marriage amendment advances. **Page 7**



Kathi Seay, of Austin, shows a newspaper ad supporting Proposition 2, which bans gay marriages, at a gathering held at Great Hills Baptist Church in Austin Tuesday night. (photo by Brian K. Diggs)

Texans approve ban

By ERIC ERVIN

More than three-quarters of Texans who went to the polls Tuesday voted to approve a state constitutional amendment defining marriage as only the union between a man and woman.

"I do think that the people of Texas have spoken," said state Rep. Warren Chisum (R-Pampa), who drafted the resolution resulting in Proposition 2.

"People are concerned about marriage and who can be married and I think other states will follow that," Chisum said.

Chisum said he was expecting the proposition to pass, but was surprised by the margin of approval.

"We were blown away by the incredible turnout

and strong support for Proposition 2," Kelly Shackelford, who helped Chisum draft the resolution, said in a prepared statement.

Shackelford, president of the Free Market Foundation and a member of Texans for Marriage, said the approval of the proposition sends a loud message from Texas voters to Congress to move forward on a federal constitutional amendment banning gay marriage.

"Texans from every race and background spoke loudly that they want marriage to be between one man and one woman," Shackelford said. "They believe that children deserve mom and dad, and they don't want that tinkered with."

Please see **VOTING** on Page 4

Alito record has conflicting views on HIV bias

Nominee fought discrimination protections in 1986, but backed them in 2001

By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

U.S. Supreme Court nominee Samuel A. Alito signed on to a 2001 appeals court decision striking down a policy that prohibited the placement of a foster child into a Pennsylvania home because another child living there had AIDS.

The unanimous decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in Philadelphia — where Alito has served as a judge since 1990 — declared that the policy adopted by Center County, Pa., violated a clause in the Americans With Disabilities Act, which bans AIDS-related discrimination.

Alito's support for the 2001 decision, which was hailed by AIDS activists, came 15 years after he helped write a Justice Department opinion during the Reagan Administration asserting that employers had a legal right to fire people with HIV due to "fear of contagion, whether reasonable for not."



Attorneys for Lambda Legal continue to find mixed results as they read through the many opinions by **Samuel Alito**. The gay legal organization has not taken a position on Alito's nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court. (Photo by Dennis Cook/AP)

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 receives \$1.2 million grant
 to help gay senior citizens.
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dish
 Actor Jake Gyllenhaal
 shows off his muscles
 in new military film.
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i am ready.

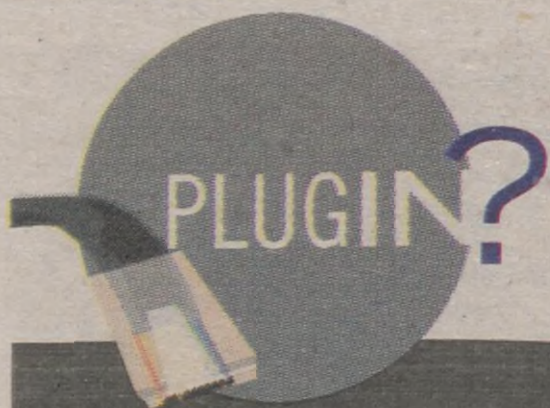
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local news

Lesbian in runoff for at-large City Council post

By ERIC ERVIN

This week's Houston City Council elections yielded few surprises, with incumbents winning re-election. But there will also be three runoffs next month to fill seats.

One of the runoff elections will put community activist Sue Lovell, who is a lesbian, against Jay Aiyer, a member of the Houston Community College System Board of Trustees. The two candidates are vying for the council at-Large Position 2 seat. Councilman Gordon Quan, who will be term-limited, currently occupies the seat.

Lovell endorse by GLBT Political Caucus

The Houston GLBT Political Caucus endorsed Lovell. She previously ran for council Position 4 in 2003, but placed third out of four candidates.

However, on Tuesday Lovell received 32 percent of the vote, or 45,776, compared to Aiyer, who received 26 percent, or 37,173. Runoff elections are held when no candidate receives majority of the vote.

"We're incredible pleased that she (Lovell) came out ahead and pleased with the results of some of the other candidates as well," said Jack Valinski, vice president of the caucus.

Lovell said she will continue to campaign on a platform focused on community service and activism. She has no plans to change her campaign strategy.



Running unopposed, incumbent City Controller Annise Parker was re-elected this week and council candidate Sue Lovell is headed for a runoff.

"There's no reason to," Lovell said. "The fact that we're leading proves that people like our message and ideas."

Lovell believes her professional experience, including owning a printing business and working in the state controller's office, makes her the best candidate for the position. Also, she said the civic work she's done in the community prepares her for the council job.

"I thought that some of that creative commitment could be used on City Council," Lovell said.

Lovell said her focus is on improving

the community by providing police and fire services, along with job opportunities.

College trustee seeks improvements

Aiyer has received an endorsement by former Mayor Bob Lanier. The community college trustee and lawyer said he wants to preserve public safety, repair aging infrastructure, expand park space and improve public transportation. He also wants to improve quality of life for Houstonians by improving what he believes is an overburdened health care system, and work to provide cleaner air and water.

"I am running for Houston City Council at-Large Position 2 because I believe that there is a better way for city government to continue to move Houston forward," Aiyer said. "We need city government that delivers value to the taxpayer, as well as the high quality services our citizens deserve."

City Council

In other results, seven caucus-endorsed candidates were elected or re-elected to City Council. Caucus-endorsed Mayor Bill White was re-elected face down, with 91 percent of the vote.

"Houstonians stepped up to support an unknown businessman two years ago," White said at victory party Tuesday night. "I want to thank people who went to the polls today and endorsed the direction of the city."

Peter Brown, an architect and urban planner, won the at-Large Position 1 seat

currently held by Councilman Mark Ellis. Brown, who is endorsed by the caucus, lost a close race in 2003. Felicia-Galloway Hall, who was endorsed by the caucus, will try to succeed her mother, Councilwoman Carol Mims Galloway, and compete in a runoff against youth center Director Jarvis Johnson for the District B council seat. Galloway's will be term limited.

Re-elected unopposed was council members Ronald Green, who was endorsed by the caucus, Ada Edwards, Addie Wiseman and Pam Holm. Council members Toni Lawrence, Shelley Sekula-Gibbs, M.J. Khan and Michael Berry, who defeated caucus-endorsed candidate Mike Stoma for at-Large Position 5, overwhelmingly won re-election.

In a special election to fill the seat left vacant by the late District 143 state Rep. Joe Moreno (D-Houston), who died in a May car accident, caucus-endorsed Laura Salinas will face Anna Hernandez.

Caucus-endorsed Richard Cantu did not make the runoff for the District 1 seat of the Houston Independent School District Board of Education. For the council District C seat, caucus-endorsed candidate Herman Litt lost his bid for the position, which is currently held by term-limited Councilman Mark Goldberg.

Civic club president Anne Clutterbuck and lawyer George Hittner will face each other in a runoff.

Valinski said the candidates seek endorsements by the caucus. He said before the endorsements are made, candidates must pass and screening process.

Center awarded \$1.2 million grant for gay elder services

By ELLA TYLER

Dealing with issues involving one's sexuality shouldn't linger into the senior years, but thanks to a \$1.2 million grant, the Montrose Counseling Center will provide services to address the problem.

Services funded by the grant are aimed specifically at helping gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender senior citizens. The grant is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to provide mental health services to older adults.

It will be awarded in \$400,000 installments each year for next three years, said Dr. Ann J. Robison, executive director of the center.

"Getting older shouldn't mean that you have to go back into the closet," Robison said.

"We have already begun to furnish psychiatric, case management and counseling services to this group, and we will be adding peer counseling and peer-led support groups in the future," said Chris Kerr, coordinator for Montrose Counseling Center's LIFE Program.

"Outreach is a very important compo-

nent of the program," Kerr said. "Older gay people remember when homosexuality was considered a mental illness. People were institutionalized, given shock therapy, had their behavior criminalized. They don't trust therapy."

A helping hand

Kerr said the program is hiring gay part-time workers who are older than 60 to do outreach and will work with Alzheimer's Association, Prime Timers, Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, Lesbians Over Age Fifty, Older Lesbians Organizing for Change, Four Season's Club and other groups to identify seniors who may need encouragement to seek services.

"We try to be specially vigilant when one of a pair dies," said Steve Stewman, a member of the gay men's social club Prime Timers.

"In mixed gender couples, it's not uncommon for the remaining spouse to wither away and die within a year, but no one thinks about that with gay couples," Stewman said. "Now we have a place to send people for help."

Jane Bavineau, of Care for Elders, a partner of Sheltering Arms, a large, non profit agency providing a compete range of services to senior citizens in the Houston area, is very pleased to hear the



The Montrose Counseling Center recently received a \$1.2 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

center has received the grant.

"Money for services for seniors is scarce, and no one pays for mental health services, so this grant is great," Bavineau said.

"Access to services—just knowing what's available and who to call—is a problem," she said. "You can find almost any kind of services if you can pay for them, but if you can't, there are often waiting lists."

Strategic plan

The Care For Elders group recently developed a strategic plan for helping older adults in the Houston area. The plan

notes that gay senior citizens have the same concerns as most aging adults—loneliness, health and income problems.

In addition, significant losses from death and disability of friends and partners create more concerns, the plan notes.

Fear of rejection by children and grandchildren, along with prejudice attitudes of some health care providers are unique to the gay community, the plan notes.

Kerr said as older gay people become more dependent on outsiders for care, they often wrestle with idea of going back into the closet because of fear of rejection from those who take care of them.

"They will go back into the closet," she said.

Kerr said the grant will allow the center to educate other professionals about issues facing older gay people.

"When we were doing surveys of some nursing homes and asking about treatment of gays, we would hear the nursing home staff say, 'Oh, that's not an issue, they're not having sex so they're not gay anymore' which is wrong on two counts," Kerr said.

"There is that assumption that being gay is just about sex, and of course older people have sex," she said. "I've seen reports about a rise in sexually transmitted diseases in nursing homes because there's no education about safe sex for senior citizens."

MORE INFO

Montrose Counseling Center
701 Richmond Ave.
Houston, TX 77006
www.montrosecounselingcenter.org

news

More than 76 percent of Texas voters approved ban

VORTING, continued from Page 1

Overwhelming opposition

According to the Secretary of State's office, final election results show a little more than 76 percent of voters favored the proposition and nearly 24 percent opposed it. The office reported statewide voter turnout of 17.81 percent.

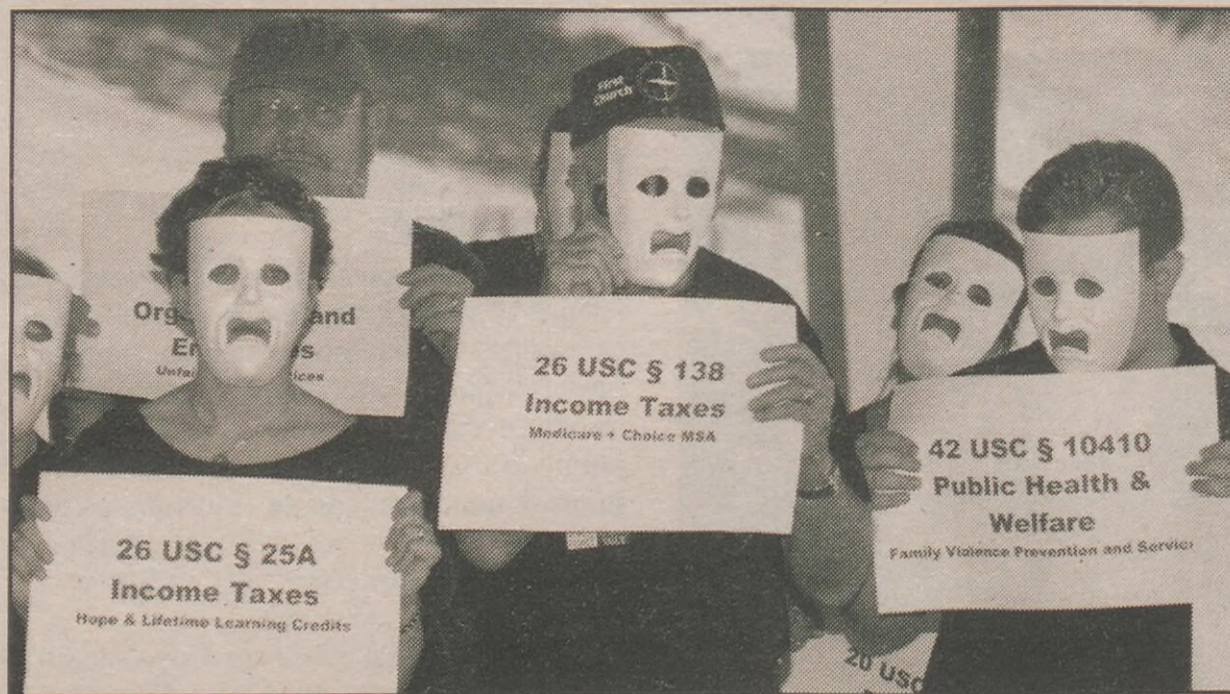
In Harris County, voter turnout was 17.49 percent. Precincts in the Houston neighborhood of Montrose, which has a large gay and lesbian population, reported turnouts of around 35 percent.

"We're very disappointed of course," said Jack Valinski, vice president of the Houston GLBT Political Caucus. "We worked very hard. It was an uphill battle.

"Whenever minority rights are put before majority vote, you're not going to win," Valinski said.

Support for the controversial Proposition 2 was widespread, including Gov. Rick Perry, church leaders, social conservatives, and some members of the Ku Klux Klan. Opponents included other church leaders, who said the proposition could affect all marriages because of its wording, and gay rights organizations.

Campaigns on both sides of the debate



Opponents of Proposition 2, a constitutional ban on same-sex marriages, wore 'tragedy' masks during a rally last month.

flooded the state with television, newspaper and radio ads, along with rallies. Last week, members of the Ku Klux Klan held a rally in Austin.

The television commercials opposing the proposition featured local gay couples and parents of gay children. They started airing last month on local CBS, NBC and ABC affiliates. The approach was one sel-

dom used in the other 18 states that have passed constitutional bans on gay marriage, people talking plainly about the need for legal recognition for gay couples.

The commercials were also featured on DVDs, which were handed out during a door-to-door canvassing on voters in Houston neighborhoods.

The amendment states that marriage in

Texas will be defined as "the union of one man and one woman" and the state "may not create or recognize any legal status identical or similar to marriage."

Texas already has an existing law defining marriages as unions between persons of the opposite sex, but Tuesday's overwhelming vote to enshrine the definition in the state constitution makes it more difficult for future legislatures to change.

Fight continues

Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said he was not surprised by the outcome of the election. He believes supporters of the amendment had more resources to fight the battle.

"We were out resourced and didn't have the time they did," Foreman said.

Foreman said the task force's fight for equality for gays will not end with the recent defeat.

"This is a long-term struggle and we just got to keep fighting," Foreman said. "Our community has made more progress than any other human rights struggle.

"We are making incredible progress against incredible odds. It's not a question of if, but when," he said.

AIDS group to oppose Alito's confirmation

ALITO, continued from Page 1

The two positions relate to legislation carrying very similar types of federal protection against bias on the basis of disability, but the latter opinion came after the landmark Supreme Court case of *Bragdon vs. Abbott*, which held that HIV-positive persons were always covered under the Americans With Disabilities Act.

"We have to look at the good and the bad," said Lisa Hardaway, spokesperson for Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund, a gay litigation group that is studying Alito's record.

Hardaway said Lambda would withhold judgment on Alito's nomination until after it completes its own review of his record in hundreds of decisions as an appeals court judge as well as documents he prepared while working at the Justice Department.

"We don't know what we might find tomorrow or the next day," she said.

Marriage issue looms

Lambda attorney Jon Davidson said the group is also reviewing a series of rulings by Alito on cases involving abortion and requests by foreign nationals for U.S. political asylum in which Alito appears to have used marital status as a deciding factor.

The New York Times, which first reported on the cases where Alito linked asylum decisions to marriage, quoted Alito as saying in one of this decisions

that the "marriage relation" is important in "so many areas" such as "income tax, welfare benefits, property, inheritance, testimonial privilege, etc."

Davidson and other gay rights attorneys are expected to examine these cases with great interest because Alito, if approved by the Senate, is likely to decide on a number of Supreme Court cases involving same-sex couples.

In the 2001 foster care case, the Centre County Children & Youth Services agency adopted a policy barring the placement of HIV-negative children in homes with children who have HIV. The agency adopted the policy after a husband and wife team, who won awards for their past service as foster parents, applied to take in a foster child into a home in which one of their own children, an 11-year-old boy, had AIDS.

The agency said it was concerned that "roughhousing" between children could lead to HIV transmission. The agency also cited statistics showing that a significant percentage of foster children in their teenage years engaged in sexual assault against other children. The agency argued that an HIV-negative foster child might sexually assault the HIV positive child and contract HIV.

The foster parents, identified only as Mary Doe and John Doe, of State College, Penn., filed suit in federal court to overturn the policy. The U.S. District Court upheld the policy, and the parents appealed before Alito's Third Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals.

In its unanimous ruling, the Third

Circuit court ruled that the Americans With Disabilities Act bars the type of policy adopted by the county, saying the risk of HIV transmission from the 11-year-old boy to a potential foster child was remote and did not reach a threshold for such risk provided under the disabilities law.

The county's "blanket policy discriminates against the Does because of [their son's] HIV positive status even though the probability of HIV transmission, and consequently the risk, is next to zero."

Much of the case's outcome was predetermined by the Supreme Court's ruling in *Bragdon*, leaving gay and AIDS legal experts wondering how Alito feels about that decision. The *Bragdon* case was decided by a 5-4 margin that included both Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and Chief Justice William Rehnquist in the dissent.

Even 'irrational' HIV bias OK

Hints of Alito's view about the scope of the ADA can be found in the the 1986 Justice Department opinion he helped write, and which was first reported on last week by the Washington Post.

The memo concerns the Rehabilitation Act, which barred discrimination within the federal workforce on the basis of disability, but the 2001 foster care decision that Alito joined said the Rehabilitation Act and the subsequently-passed ADA cover and don't cover the same types of discrimination.

"We certainly did not want to encourage irrational discrimination, but we had to interpret the law as it stands," the Post quot-

ed Alito as saying sometime after the Justice Department released its 1986 opinion.

At the time the memo was written, Alito was working in the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel and was assigned to research whether the Rehabilitation Act could be invoked to ban discrimination against HIV-positive federal workers.

The opinion, written in the early days of the AIDS epidemic, concluded that workers with the AIDS virus were not protected from discrimination, even if the mistreatment was based on faulty, unproven, or "irrational" medical assumptions, including the belief that AIDS could be transmitted by casual contact.

Alito's role in writing the controversial opinion has prompted the National Association for People with AIDS to oppose his nomination to the Supreme Court.

"If this is an example of the kind of legal thinking he has, it's very unsettling," said Terje Anderson, NAPWA's executive director.

Gay cases

Only hours after President Bush announced Alito's nomination on Oct. 31, news surfaced that he had ruled against one gay-related case while ruling in favor of another.

In 2000, a family sued challenging a school policy banning harassment for sexual orientation, race and religion.

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national news

HRC targets Congress with trans ad campaign

By ELIZABETH WEILL-GREENBERG

When Lauren Jansen told her employer she planned to transition from male to female, her boss told her to “deal with your gender issue elsewhere.”

In January 2004 Jansen was fired from her job as a manager at a construction company in Iowa, after working there for 24 years and 10 months, she told the Blade in a telephone interview. She had spoken with her managers about her need to become a woman but had not begun transitioning yet.

“They both indicated they didn’t have any problems with that,” she said. However, one higher-up opposed it, she said.

“It filtered up,” she said. “One person in the company didn’t like it and terminated me.”

Jansen filed a federal lawsuit alleging discrimination based on gender stereotypes and settled with her former company. She decided not to pursue it any further, she said, because she feared that if it went to the Supreme Court, a conservative majority might wipe out any rulings in favor of transgender rights.

Jansen is just one of the transgender people profiled in a campaign launched by Human Rights Campaign and the National Center for Transgender Equality. In an effort to raise awareness around transgender discrimination in employment, the groups have placed ads in Roll Call, a leading publication for Congress, featuring Jansen and others.

They have also distributed a report on transgender discrimination in health care, employment, housing and the criminal justice system to members of Congress.

“Sexual orientation” and “gender identity” are not specifically categories protected



NOT
COUNTER-TERRORISM EXPERT NEEDED

That was the message to Diane Schroer, a 25-year Army Special Forces Officer specializing in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism. Diane spent her career conducting sensitive operations, briefing decision makers and developing strategies to keep our homeland safe. Upon her retirement, Diane was offered a government job as a counter-terrorism expert.

For her whole life, Diane knew she was meant to be a woman even though she was born a man. When she told her employer she was transitioning from male to female under the guidance of her doctors, they withdrew the job offer.

Most Americans believe federal law already protects transgender people like Diane from discrimination. It doesn't. And 78 percent of voters think it should be illegal to fire someone just because

The Human Rights Campaign began running this ad in a Capitol Hill newspaper in an effort to support adding gender identity to the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, a bill that would prohibit workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation.

under federal law against discrimination. The Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which was first introduced into Congress in the 1970s, bans employment discrimination based on sexual orientation.

HRC hopes that this campaign will educate Congress on the need to include transgender people in ENDA as well. Last year, the HRC board voted to oppose employment protections for gays if it did not also include protection for transgender workers.

According to Jay Smith Brown, HRC spokesman, group officials are organizing meeting with the bill's lead sponsors to discuss reintroducing ENDA as trans-inclusive.

The bill's lead sponsors, Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA), Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Rep. Christopher Shays (R-CT), were not available for comment. A spokesperson said Sen. Jim Jeffords (I-VT) would be supportive

of trans-inclusive language.

Several states and jurisdictions, including California, Minnesota, Rhode Island and New Mexico, do have protections against discrimination for transgender people, according to HRC. However it is still legal to fire someone based on sexual orientation in 34 states and their gender identity in 44 states, according to HRC.

The report, called “Transgender Americans: A Handbook for Understanding,” describes transgender employees being fired for nothing more than their gender identity, as well as the problem of chronic underemployment. Jansen, for instance, said she had difficulty finding another job in construction since she was fired at the age of 56.

“It took me 11 months to find a job,” she said. “I sold everything I had.”

Half the pay

Her former employers offered her two weeks pay but if she accepted it, she would have to agree not to sue. She declined the offer.

Jansen now works as a barista in a coffee shop, making a salary of less than \$15,000 — “poverty level,” she said. At her construction company she earned more than \$30,000 per year.

But, it's not only the pay cut that has troubled her, she said.

“When I was fired it was really devastating,” she said. “I liked what I did. I enjoyed the business. I dedicated my life to this place.”

While Jansen's boss may have disapproved of her gender transition, she said that people in her hometown of Sioux City and her co-workers were supportive.

“After it became public knowledge, I couldn't go anywhere without someone

saying, ‘Hi Lauren, you are so courageous,’” she said. “My biggest supporters were the guys in the construction business — the guys doing the dirty work.”

Antonia Gilligan, another transgender woman featured in the ads, had less support at her last job as a toxic substance monitor at a laboratory in New York. When she informed employers in 1990 of her plans to transition, they removed her from accounts, which lowered her pay.

One of her supervisors insisted on calling her by her male name, even after she transitioned, she said. Even though she brought in \$500,000 of business out of the company's total \$8 million in sales, she only received a \$1,000 bonus, while others, she said, took home a \$15,000 bonus.

Ultimately the discriminatory treatment forced her to leave. She then started her own business.

“There was a long history of harassment from the president down,” she told the Blade. “Some of it was subtle, some not so subtle.”

HRC's Brown said he hopes that the ads featuring people like Jansen and Gilligan will personalize the issue and tackle the invisibility many transgender people say they face. Awareness about transgender discrimination lags far behind knowledge of gay rights, he added.

Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, said ENDA is unlikely to pass the current GOP-controlled Congress, but it is still important to inform people about the discrimination people experience, said.

“It's our collective job to be educating them,” she said. “That's how we're going to win this thing.”

Gay men fueling rising syphilis rates in U.S.

By DYANA BAGBY

For the fourth year in a row, syphilis rates in the U.S. are on the rise and gay men are fueling the increase, according to data released Tuesday by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

“Increasing cases of primary and secondary syphilis among men who have sex with men are believed to be largely responsible for the overall increases in the national syphilis rate observed since 2000,” states the CDC's Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2004 report. “Additionally, CDC estimates that MSM comprised 64 percent of primary and secondary syphilis cases in 2004, up from 5 percent in 1999.”

The findings come after syphilis infections in the U.S. reached an all time low in 2000.

Syphilis remains a public health problem in metropolitan areas with large populations of men who have sex with men, according to the report.

For the third consecutive year, San Francisco had the highest rate of any U.S. city in 2004 — 45.9 cases per 100,000 people. The second highest rate of syphilis last

year was Atlanta with 34.6 cases per 100,000 people. Rounding out the top 10 were: Baltimore with 33.2 cases per 100,000; New Orleans with 16.4 cases per 100,000; St. Louis with 14.1 cases per 100,000; Detroit with 13.5 cases per 100,000; Washington, D.C., with 12.2 cases per 100,000; Dallas with 11.6 cases per 100,000; Jersey City with 10.8 cases per 100,000; and Chicago with 9.7 cases per 100,000.

New York City ranked 19 with 7.7 cases per 100,000.

From 2003 to 2004, the rate of primary and secondary syphilis — the early stages of the disease that indicate recent infection — increased 8 percent, from 2.5 to 2.7 cases per 100,000 population, said Dr. John M. Douglas, director of the Division of STD Prevention at CDC's National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention. The number of cases increased from 7,177 in 2003 to 7,980 in 2004, he explained.

The CDC has made reducing the rising rates of syphilis among gay and bisexual men a priority, added Dr. Ronald O. Valdiserri, acting director of CDC's National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention.

“When it comes to reducing syphilis

among men who have sex with men, there is no simple solution,” he said during a teleconference Tuesday with reporters. “Since 2003, we have partnered with health departments and community organizations to implement new prevention studies.”

Regular syphilis screenings, especially among HIV-positive gay men, remains an important tool in combating the rising rates, Valdiserri added.

Other prevention and awareness campaigns include posting educational materials on gay Web sites. In Boston, for example, a successful CDC and Massachusetts Health Department campaign includes posting informative ads and banner messages on manhunt.com about syphilis, explained Dr. Douglas. Boston ranks 13 in the U.S. for syphilis infections, with 9.1 cases per 100,000 people.

Since the 1990s, an increase in high-risk sexual behavior among gay and bisexual men as well as an epidemic of crystal meth use are “intersecting and exacerbating transmission of syphilis,” Valdiserri said.

In addition, studies are finding that gay men who engage in oral sex to reduce their chances of HIV infection are sur-

prised to find they can contract syphilis through oral sex, Valdiserri said.

Other findings in the report that directly impact gay men include:

- Nearly 25 percent of gonorrhea cases among gay and bisexual men in 2004 were resistant to fluoroquinolones, a first-line treatment for the disease, up from 15 percent in 2003. In April 2004, CDC recommended that fluoroquinolones no longer be used as treatment for gonorrhea among men who have sex with men. These antibiotics were also not recommended to treat the disease in anyone in California or Hawaii, where resistance has been widespread for years. Outside of these states, the prevalence of fluoroquinolone resistance among heterosexuals remains low at 1.3 percent.

- STDs also increase the risk of HIV transmission by up to five times, and syphilis may even speed HIV disease progression, according to the report. In addition, because STDs and the risk behaviors associated with them increase the likelihood of acquiring and transmitting HIV, the rise in STDs could indicate potential increases in new HIV infections among gay men.

national news

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"It filtered up," she said. "One person in the company didn't like it and terminated me."

Jansen filed a federal lawsuit alleging discrimination based on gender stereotypes and settled with her former company. She decided not to pursue it any further, she said, because she feared that if it went to the Supreme Court, a conservative majority might wipe out any rulings in favor of transgender rights.

Jansen is just one of the transgender people profiled in a campaign launched by Human Rights Campaign and the National Center for Transgender Equality. In an effort to raise awareness around transgender discrimination in employment, the groups have placed ads in Roll Call, a leading publication for Congress, featuring Jansen and others.

They have also distributed a report on transgender discrimination in health care, employment, housing and the criminal justice system to members of Congress.

"Sexual orientation" and "gender identity" are not specifically categories protected



The Human Rights Campaign began running this ad in a Capitol Hill newspaper in an effort to support adding gender identity to the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, a bill that would prohibit workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation.

under federal law against discrimination. The Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which was first introduced into Congress in the 1970s, bans employment discrimination based on sexual orientation.

HRC hopes that this campaign will educate Congress on the need to include transgender people in ENDA as well. Last year, the HRC board voted to oppose employment protections for gays if it did not also include protection for transgender workers.

According to Jay Smith Brown, HRC spokesman, group officials are organizing meeting with the bill's lead sponsors to discuss reintroducing ENDA as trans-inclusive.

The bill's lead sponsors, Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA), Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Rep. Christopher Shays (R-CT), were not available for comment. A spokesperson said Sen. Jim Jeffords (I-VT) would be supportive

of trans-inclusive language.

Several states and jurisdictions, including California, Minnesota, Rhode Island and New Mexico, do have protections against discrimination for transgender people, according to HRC. However it is still legal to fire someone based on sexual orientation in 34 states and their gender identity in 44 states, according to HRC.

The report, called "Transgender Americans: A Handbook for Understanding," describes transgender employees being fired for nothing more than their gender identity, as well as the problem of chronic underemployment. Jansen, for instance, said she had difficulty finding another job in construction since she was fired at the age of 56.

"It took me 11 months to find a job," she said. "I sold everything I had."

Half the pay

Her former employers offered her two weeks pay but if she accepted it, she would have to agree not to sue. She declined the offer.

Jansen now works as a barista in a coffee shop, making a salary of less than \$15,000 — "poverty level," she said. At her construction company she earned more than \$30,000 per year.

But, it's not only the pay cut that has troubled her, she said.

"When I was fired it was really devastating," she said. "I liked what I did. I enjoyed the business. I dedicated my life to this place."

While Jansen's boss may have disapproved of her gender transition, she said that people in her hometown of Sioux City and her co-workers were supportive.

"After it became public knowledge, I couldn't go anywhere without someone

saying, 'Hi Lauren, you are so courageous,'" she said. "My biggest supporters were the guys in the construction business — the guys doing the dirty work."

Antonia Gilligan, another transgender woman featured in the ads, had less support at her last job as a toxic substance monitor at a laboratory in New York. When she informed employers in 1990 of her plans to transition, they removed her from accounts, which lowered her pay.

One of her supervisors insisted on calling her by her male name, even after she transitioned, she said. Even though she brought in \$500,000 of business out of the company's total \$8 million in sales, she only received a \$1,000 bonus, while others, she said, took home a \$15,000 bonus.

Ultimately the discriminatory treatment forced her to leave. She then started her own business.

"There was a long history of harassment from the president down," she told the Blade. "Some of it was subtle, some not so subtle."

HRC's Brown said he hopes that the ads featuring people like Jansen and Gilligan will personalize the issue and tackle the invisibility many transgender people say they face. Awareness about transgender discrimination lags far behind knowledge of gay rights, he added.

Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, said ENDA is unlikely to pass the current GOP-controlled Congress, but it is still important to inform people about the discrimination people experience, said.

"It's our collective job to be educating them," she said. "That's how we're going to win this thing."

Gay men fueling rising syphilis rates in U.S.

By DYANA BAGBY

For the fourth year in a row, syphilis rates in the U.S. are on the rise and gay men are fueling the increase, according to data released Tuesday by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

"Increasing cases of primary and secondary syphilis among men who have sex with men are believed to be largely responsible for the overall increases in the national syphilis rate observed since 2000," states the CDC's Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2004 report. "Additionally, CDC estimates that MSM comprised 64 percent of primary and secondary syphilis cases in 2004, up from 5 percent in 1999."

The findings come after syphilis infections in the U.S. reached an all time low in 2000.

Syphilis remains a public health problem in metropolitan areas with large populations of men who have sex with men, according to the report.

For the third consecutive year, San Francisco had the highest rate of any U.S. city in 2004 — 45.9 cases per 100,000 people. The second highest rate of syphilis last

year was Atlanta with 34.6 cases per 100,000 people. Rounding out the top 10 were: Baltimore with 33.2 cases per 100,000; New Orleans with 16.4 cases per 100,000; St Louis with 14.1 cases per 100,000; Detroit with 13.5 cases per 100,000; Washington, D.C., with 12.2 cases per 100,000; Dallas with 11.6 cases per 100,000; Jersey City with 10.8 cases per 100,000; and Chicago with 9.7 cases per 100,000.

New York City ranked 19 with 7.7 cases per 100,000.

From 2003 to 2004, the rate of primary and secondary syphilis — the early stages of the disease that indicate recent infection — increased 8 percent, from 2.5 to 2.7 cases per 100,000 population, said Dr. John M. Douglas, director of the Division of STD Prevention at CDC's National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention. The number of cases increased from 7,177 in 2003 to 7,980 in 2004, he explained.

The CDC has made reducing the rising rates of syphilis among gay and bisexual men a priority, added Dr. Ronald O. Valdiserri, acting director of CDC's National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention.

"When it comes to reducing syphilis

among men who have sex with men, there is no simple solution," he said during a teleconference Tuesday with reporters. "Since 2003, we have partnered with health departments and community organizations to implement new prevention studies."

Regular syphilis screenings, especially among HIV-positive gay men, remains an important tool in combating the rising rates, Valdiserri added.

Other prevention and awareness campaigns include posting educational materials on gay Web sites. In Boston, for example, a successful CDC and Massachusetts Health Department campaign includes posting informative ads and banner messages on manhunt.com about syphilis, explained Dr. Douglas. Boston ranks 13 in the U.S. for syphilis infections, with 9.1 cases per 100,000 people.

Since the 1990s, an increase in high-risk sexual behavior among gay and bisexual men as well as an epidemic of crystal meth use are "intersecting and exacerbating transmission of syphilis," Valdiserri said.

In addition, studies are finding that gay men who engage in oral sex to reduce their chances of HIV infection are sur-

prised to find they can contract syphilis through oral sex, Valdiserri said.

Other findings in the report that directly impact gay men include:

- Nearly 25 percent of gonorrhea cases among gay and bisexual men in 2004 were resistant to fluoroquinolones, a first-line treatment for the disease, up from 15 percent in 2003. In April 2004, CDC recommended that fluoroquinolones no longer be used as treatment for gonorrhea among men who have sex with men. These antibiotics were also not recommended to treat the disease in anyone in California or Hawaii, where resistance has been widespread for years. Outside of these states, the prevalence of fluoroquinolone resistance among heterosexuals remains low at 1.3 percent.

- STDs also increase the risk of HIV transmission by up to five times, and syphilis may even speed HIV disease progression, according to the report. In addition, because STDs and the risk behaviors associated with them increase the likelihood of acquiring and transmitting HIV, the rise in STDs could indicate potential increases in new HIV infections among gay men.

national news briefs

Federal marriage amendment advances in the U.S. Senate

WASHINGTON — Senator Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) cast the deciding vote on Wednesday to advance a proposed constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage. The vote moved the measure out of a Senate subcommittee instead of letting it be put aside until next year. The federal Marriage Protection Amendment advanced on a 5-4 vote, with all five Republicans voting in favor and all four Democrats voting against. Gay activists had hoped the moderate Republican from Pennsylvania would kill the amendment for this year. Although Specter, who chairs the full Senate Judiciary Committee, voted to bring the amendment out of his constitutional subcommittee, he said last year he opposes a constitutional ban on gay marriage in principle and would have voted against it had it reached the Senate floor. The Human Rights Campaign, the nation's biggest gay rights lobby,



Pennsylvania Sen. Arlen Specter, a Republican, cast the deciding vote to permit a potential constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage to proceed in the U.S. Senate. Specter said he is against the amendment, but decided it needed to be considered by the larger body.

endorsed Specter's Democratic opponent in his re-election bid last year. The amendment now goes to the full Judiciary Committee next week. With Congress expected to adjourn for the year in late November or early December, Capitol Hill observers have said the full Senate was not expected to vote on the amendment this year even if the full Judiciary Committee approves it. In addition to Specter, the GOP members of the constitution subcommittee include Senators Sam Brownback (R-Kan.), chair; Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.); John Cornyn (R-Tex.) and Tom Coburn (R-Okla.). Democratic members include Senators Russell Feingold (D-Wis.), Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), and Richard Durbin (D-Ill.).

PlanetOut, Inc. acquires publisher of Advocate, Out

SAN FRANCISCO — PlanetOut, Inc., which operates a number of the most popular gay Web sites including Gay.com, announced on Wednesday that it has acquired LPI Media, Inc., which publishes the Advocate and Out magazines, among other interests. PlanetOut, which is a publicly-traded company, announced it has paid \$24 million in cash, approximately \$7.1 million in seller-financed debt and will reimburse certain prepaid and other expenses totaling approximately \$1 million for LPI Media. "This transaction will further advance our strategy of building a far-reaching media and entertainment company which aggregates the largest gay and lesbian media brands," Lowell Selvin, chairman and chief executive officer, PlanetOut Inc., said in a news release announcing the deal. This was not the first attempt by PlanetOut to acquire LPI. In March 2000, PlanetOut released a letter of intent to merge with Liberation Publications Inc., but in March 2001, PlanetOut announced that the merge was canceled, due to the downturn in the Internet market. In addition to the Advocate and Out, LPI Media also publishes gay-themed books through Alyson Publications, and gay adult magazines including Men and Freshmen through SpecPub, Inc.

Religious group burns gay flag at Indiana gay business

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — About two dozen members of the Old Paths Baptist Church protested outside a gay business on Monday, including burning a Gay Pride flag and chanting "Fags die, God laughs." According to a report in the Indiana Daily Student, the

student publication at the Indiana University, whose campus is in Bloomington. "I was playing on the computer and somebody came in and said to look outside," said Bobb Easterbrook, a clerk at the gay-owned kitchen supply store. "I was like, 'Ahh. Uh oh.' I'm going to hell, I guess." John Lewis, pastor of the Old Paths church, said protesters burned the Gay Pride flag at Inner Chef because they believe gays will burn in hell. "The elite city of Bloomington harbors an elitist, faggot business called the Inner Chef, which openly and unabashedly claims they are against God Almighty," Lewis said. Stephen Chambers, the co-owner of the business, said, "It's kind of sad that there are people that have such a twisted view of what Christianity is about."

Calif. school lets student paper run articles on gay teenagers

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) — High school journalists who fought to publish articles on sexual orientation were finally able to distribute the stories late last week. Editors of the Kernal, the student-run monthly publication of East Bakersfield High School, wrote the articles earlier this year based on interviews with gay students. Principal John Gibson banned the articles before they could be published last school year. He said then he feared students profiled in the stories would be harassed. The students sued the school district, but a judge backed the principal's decision until there was a full review of the school's concerns. In October, school officials relented and gave the student paper permission to run the stories.

From staff and wire reports

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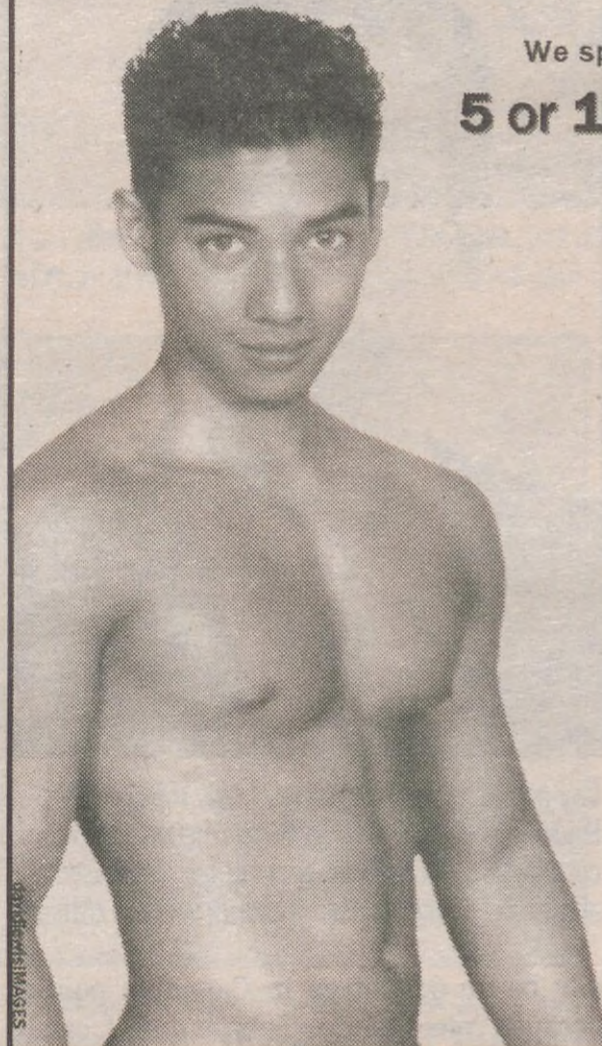
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national news

Montreal gay pol's drug use increases popularity

Andre Boisclair is top candidate to lead the Parti Québécois

By EARTHA JANE MELZER

Gay politician, Andre Boisclair, remains the frontrunner in the race to lead Quebec's separatist party, Parti Québécois, despite his recent admission that he used cocaine while serving in the provincial parliament.

Parti Québécois members are scheduled to vote for party leader by telephone Nov. 13 to 15. There are nine candidates. As of mid-September, Boisclair appeared to have twice the support of his nearest rival, Pauline Marois, a former deputy premier who has held several senior cabinet positions.

In 1989, at 23, Boisclair began his political career as the youngest person to be elected to the National Assembly of Quebec. Boisclair served as citizenship & immigration minister and as social solidarity minister in former Premier Lucien Bouchard's Parti Québécois cabinet. He also served as environment minister in former Premier Bernard Landry's Parti Québécois cabinet. In 2004 he attended Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Boisclair is described as a centrist — cautious around the sovereignty issue and not focused on having a referendum on independence soon.

The fact that Boisclair is gay has not been an issue in the campaign. Canadians have elected an openly gay men to Parliament and mayor of Winnipeg.

With his good looks and urban flair, he has emerged as the top candidate to lead the party that seeks independence for the French-speaking Canadian province.

All of the seats in Quebec's provincial legislature are occupied by two parties — the Liberal Party and the Parti Québécois. The Liberal Party is losing popularity, and some political observers believe that the Parti Québécois could win the next provincial election. If Boisclair is leader of the Parti Québécois when this happens, he could become Premier of Quebec.

Admitted cocaine use

Asked in September by an Ontario newspaper whether he had used cocaine while in office, Boisclair said, "What I want to tell you is that I made mistakes, things I regret. Yes, I consumed. I can't be clearer than that."

Boisclair's admission created a stir in the Canadian press, but it does not seem to have harmed him in the polls — the Montreal Gazette reported that he gained 11 points the day after he admitted the drug use.

David Rayside, professor of political science and director of the Center for Sexual Diversity Studies at the University of Toronto, said that being openly gay can actu-



Gay politician Andre Boisclair leads the race for leadership of the Parti Québécois, despite admitted cocaine use. His poll numbers actually increased after he revealed he used the drug while in office.

ally be an advantage in Canadian politics because voters tend to believe that if candidates are open about their sexual orientation, they will be open about other matters as well.

Quebecois are more accepting of sexual difference than most Canadians, and social conservatives are less influential in the French-speaking province, Rayside said. But the fact that Boisclair has not suffered from the news about his drug use is, "at some level surprising even by Canadian standards."

One possible explanation is a reaction against trying to attack a candidate, Rayside said.

"Attack ads are risky in Canada and particularly in Quebec because there is an attitude in Quebec and in Canada that one's personal life does not matter ... We tend to know little about the religious beliefs of politicians, about their family lives, their kids tend not to be in the limelight."

Philippe Lucas, a French Canadian from Montreal, who works with the drug policy organization DrugSense said, "Quebequers have a very European attitude about social issues like drug use and sex. ..."

"Although formerly politically dominated by an authoritarian Catholic Church, Puritanism has no place in Quebec culture, and most of us consider the prudish attitude associated with English Canada to be a result of England and America's conservative social influence."

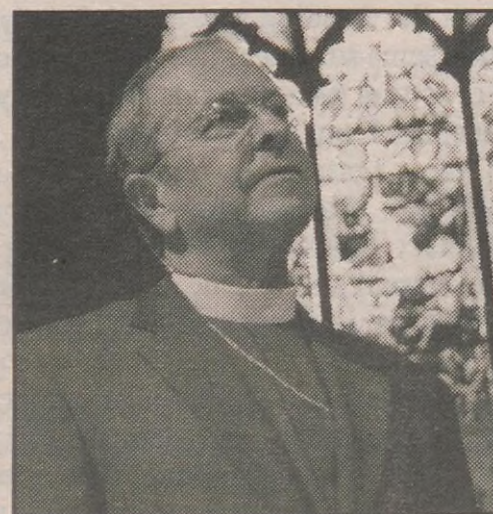
In Montreal, cocaine use, although frowned upon, was widespread throughout the '80s, he said, and there is a general feeling that if Anglos frown upon certain behavior (i.e. sex and drugs), then it must be OK.

Lucas said that some in the French Canadian press declared Boisclair's candidacy dead after news hit about his drug use, and that Boisclair's honest and self-effacing approach to discussing the matter was responsible for his recovery in the polls.



religion news

Gay bishop meets with leader of Anglican Church in London



Bishop Gene Robinson of New Hampshire, the first openly gay Episcopal bishop, last week traveled to London and met with the Rowan Williams, archbishop of Canterbury, leader of the worldwide Anglican Church. (Photo by Manuel Ceneta/AP)

LONDON (AP) — The wider Anglican Church would be a "more godly place" if it were to embrace gays, the first openly gay Episcopal bishop said Saturday. Bishop Gene Robinson addressed a crowd of about 150 at St. Martin-in-the-Fields church in London to mark the 10th anniversary of Changing Attitude, a British-based group that promotes the ordination of openly gay clergy. Robinson said his home state of New Hampshire in the United States "is the one place in the world where I am not the gay bishop. I'm just the bishop. ... It is a wonderful feeling." But other dioceses have refused to countenance the ordination of openly gay priests and bishops. "It never occurs to them that the church might be a better place and a more godly place with our full inclusion," Robinson said. Rowan Williams, the archbishop of Canterbury, who is struggling to hold the Anglican Communion together despite an acrimonious split over homosexuality, met last week

with Robinson. The session between the two was described as "friendly, but candid." No details of their discussion were released.

Episcopalians in Massachusetts avoid vote on same-sex blessings

MANSFIELD, Mass. (AP) — Representatives of Episcopal congregations in Massachusetts sidestepped a vote on whether to endorse a report that condemns appointments of gay bishops and calls on the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada to enact a moratorium on same-sex blessings. Instead, the 220th convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts endorsed a neutral resolution that calls for more study of the 2004 report, commissioned by the head of the Anglican Communion. At issue was the 2003 ordination of New Hampshire Bishop Gene Robinson, the denomination's first openly gay bishop, and divisions over homosexuality in the Episcopalian priesthood.

Iowa pastors protest forum with gay groups

BURLINGTON, Iowa (AP) — A group of southeast Iowa pastors planned an organized protest of a school-sponsored forum set for this month on bullying and its effect on gay students. The Burlington School Board helped host and participate in the GLBT Youth in Iowa Schools Task Force meeting at James Madison Middle School. The group of pastors said they oppose focusing the attention on school safety for that specific group of students. "We're just strongly against it," said Rev. Steve Perkins of St. John AME Church. Perkins and his fellow ministers do not want to see gay students singled out as a specially protected class of students. If that happens, the ministers fear that proponents of "the homosexual lifestyle" will gain access to the hearts and minds of Burlington youth, Perkins said. A new policy adopted by the school board in August prohibits harassment based on traits including sexual orientation.

Texas preachers' group signs up conservative voters

DALLAS (AP) — Conservative ministers have gathered in invitation-only meetings across Texas for months to listen to speeches from Gov. Rick Perry, Republican officials and religious leaders. The leader of the Texas Restoration Project says the group's meetings help pastors mobilize their flocks to vote in an effort to restore the state's religious heritage. "Each briefing will provide important information and resources you can use in your own congregations to promote voting in Texas," reads one of the invitations. Despite religious trappings, critics charge the Texas Restoration Project's focus is all about politics: organizing to pass a constitutional amendment against gay marriage and to re-elect Perry.

Swedish Lutherans approve ceremonies for same-sex couples

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Sweden's Lutheran Church has authorized special church ceremonies for same-sex partners, but the ceremonies will not be traditional weddings. The Swedish Church Assembly, the decision-making body for the Church of Sweden, voted 160-81 last week to approve the blessing ceremony. The issue has been debated since the Scandinavian country recognized civil unions for gay couples in 1994. Later this year, a government-appointed committee will report on whether the law allowing civil unions between same-sex couples should be changed to include marriage as well. More than 7 million of Sweden's 9 million residents belong to the Church of Sweden.

From staff and wire reports

out in houston

(Photos by Dalton DeHart)



Janet F. Clark, honorary chairwoman of Bering Omega's 'Art Song and Arias'; Cathryn Rodd Selman, Margeret Jordon, John W. Schwartz and Fiona Dawson are pictured at the event.



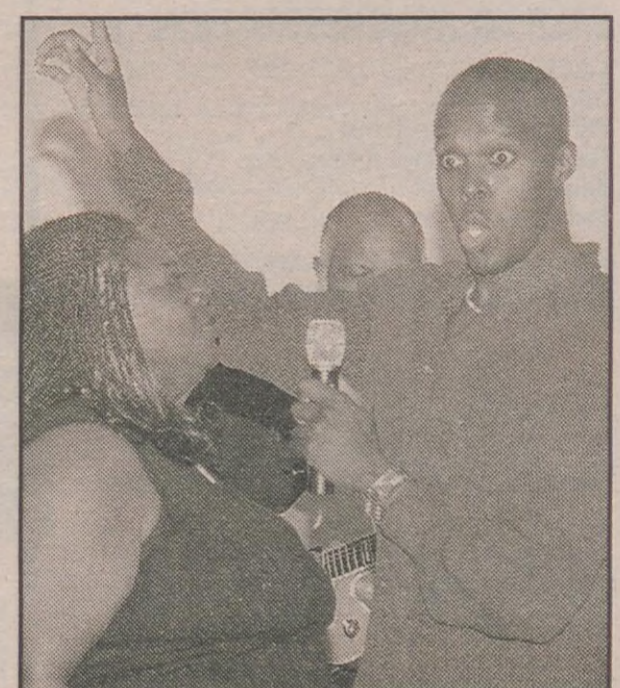
Bryan Hlavinka, Diunna Greenleaf, Ken Gayle and Jon Denning at the recent Gospel Brunch at the Crystal Ballroom of Rice Lofts. The fund-raiser helped raise money for AIDS charity.



Kay Van Cleave, president Lucy Watson and Derise Dunstan look on as Sally Jewell signs in for services at The Montrose Clinic's Lesbian Health Initiative.



Lilly Roddy and Phyllis Frey take a break before their first concert at the Houston GLBT Community Center.



Diunna Greenleaf and Ken Gayle belt out a tone during the Gospel Brunch.

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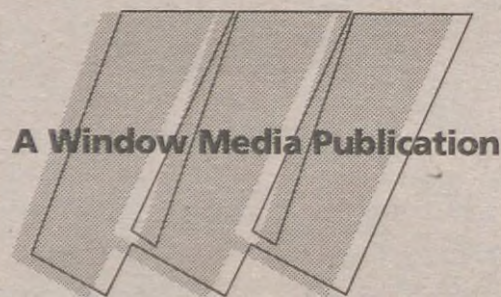
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Forum

HOUSTON VOICE

NOVEMBER 11, 2005

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editorial

Different strokes

I can't say that I'm surprised of the outcome. This is Texas my gay and lesbian friends. A red state. Bush country.

By ERIC ERVIN

B

YOY MEETS GIRL. BOY and girl get married. They have children and live happily ever after.

Well, it doesn't always work out that way folks. Sometimes boy meets boy and girl meets girl (different strokes for different folks), and the couples want to create families. There's nothing wrong with that.

They try to make their unions official, but if the gay couples live in Texas it's out of the question.

Texas voters spoke loud and clear this week at the polls, approving a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages. The approval makes the "Lone Star State" the 19th to pass such bans.

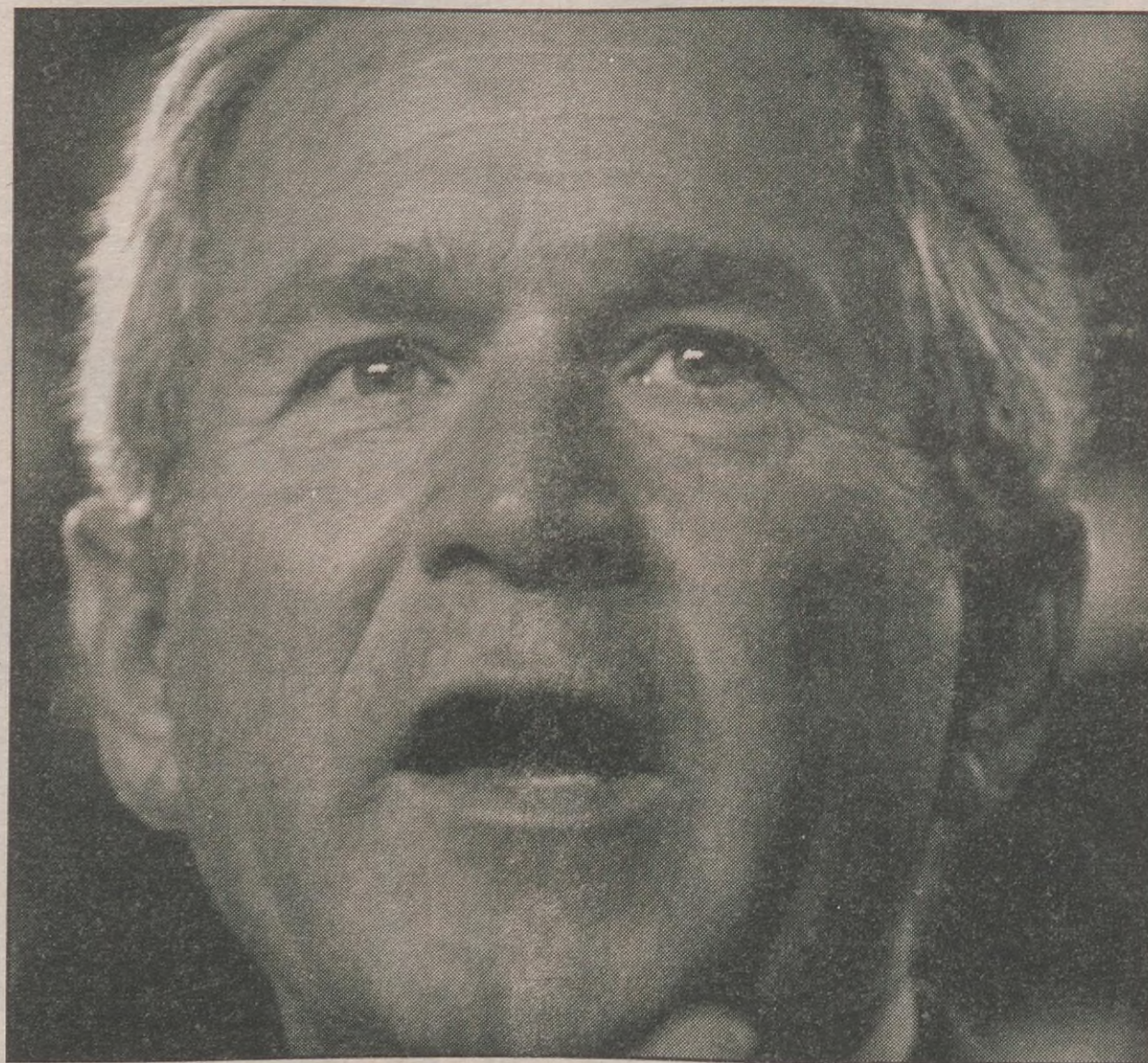
"It's incredibly difficult to win when you put to rights of minorities up for popular vote," said Matt Foreman, executive director with the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force. "If you put the right to desegregate schools, interracial marriage, or access to contraception up for vote, I'm sure it would pass."

More than an overwhelming 76 percent of voters favored the proposition. Nearly 24 percent opposed it. Statewide voter turnout reached 17.81 percent, which is more than the 12 percent recorded in 2003 when voters approved a constitutional amendment limiting lawsuit damages.

Here in Harris County, voter turnout was 17.49 percent. Precincts in the gay hood of Montrose reported turnouts of around 35 percent.

However, it wasn't enough. I can't say that I'm surprised of the outcome. This is Texas my gay and lesbian friends. A red state. Bush country. The home to many conservatives who pride themselves on so-called "family values". Do I need to go on?

Let's look at the options here: Allow two people who love each other to legally spend the rest of their lives together, or deny them that right and make it impossible for them to receive the same benefits as heterosexual couples.



Texas, home state of President Bush, approved a constitutional amendment Tuesday banning same-sex marriages. The amendment was overwhelmingly approved by more than 76 percent, and it was rejected by nearly 24 percent.

Yeah, I've heard all of the arguments from supporters of the proposition. All the bull about preserving the family and same-sex marriages influencing homosexual behavior among children.

Well, how many heterosexual couples' marriages end in divorce? Most of them. And if little Johnny or Mary Sue is gay or straight, then seeing their gay or lesbian parents together it's going to make a difference.

I've got two male cousins who are gay and both grew up with a mother and father. So how does Texans for Marriage explain them apples?

Foreman is confident one day the entire country will allow same-sex marriages. I agree with Foreman.

As he pointed out, in the past changes were made in the rights of minorities and woman in this country.

"Our struggle has made more progress than any human rights struggle," Foreman said. "We are making incredible progress against incredible odds. It's not a question of if, but when."

My advice the gay couples is to keep on loving each other. Continue raising children to be productive adults who contribute to society.

Don't let Tuesday's election results stop you.

@ Eric Ervin is editor of the Houston Voice and can be reached at eervin@houstonvoice.com



viewpoint STEPHEN FALLON



Could the values in gay male relationships contribute to our STD and HIV infection rates?

'Playing around' has a price tag

A FEW MONTHS BACK, MY FRIEND Oscar was describing his new relationship over dinner. His boyfriend of two months had suggested that they commit to one another exclusively.

When Mitch heard this declaration of exclusivity, he snorted from across the table, "Please! I'll have him by Christmas." Though everyone was laughing, Mitch's comment struck me sour.

Why don't more gay guys encourage one another's committed relationships? Our party line is that we're just more realistic and honest with each other than straight lovers are.

But does our "honesty" extend as far as mocking and trying to trip up any relationships that are committed?

When my friend Chris took a weekend trip with a group of gay athletes, one of the other athletes hit on him. Chris said, "Thanks, but I have a boyfriend." This didn't slow the other guy's advances.

When Chris removed the guy's straying

hand from his chest, the guy challenged, "What? Don't you guys have rules for when you're out of town?" It was inconceivable to this guy that any gay male relationship would even try to be truly exclusive.

This expectation that "playing" is inevitable in any gay relationship has come to worry me. I've been working in public health for a decade, and witnessed the anxiety that gay men feel when they find out they've caught HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea, herpes or Chlamydia.

COULD OUR VALUES CONTRIBUTE TO our disproportionate STD and HIV infection rates?

Surveys conducted in seven U.S. cities among 5,600 young gay and bisexual men, ages 17-29, find that 10 percent are already HIV positive. Infection rates for just about every other STD tracked are also higher for gay men than for straight men or women.

The point isn't that straight folks are pure, and we are hedonistic. But for

straight couples, sexual exclusivity is at least the stated goal. Notwithstanding the sort of mutually undeserving, hetero imbeciles paraded on "Jerry Springer," when a straight spouse cheats it's supposed to be the exception that proves the rule of presumed fidelity.

In anonymous surveys, about a third of straight married people admit to having ever had an affair. But in a recent survey of gay men in sexually exclusive relationships, nearly one-third had cheated within three months of starting the relationship. More than half of them had unprotected sex when they strayed.

Did these men slip up sooner because their pledges were at odds with general gay male expectations?

Wedding or civil union vows spoken before friends and family send a message of planned fidelity. A spouse feeling the urge will have to work harder to manage an affair away from the eyes of neighbors or friends.

WE SEEM TO EXPECT "OPEN" relationships. Another long survey of 4,295 gay and bisexual guys in six U.S. cities found the average guy had seven sexual partners during the past six months, though about half of the men were in primary partner relationships.

To be sure, plenty of guys have caught HIV or STDs even staying true to their partner, either because they didn't get tested together at the outset, or because one of them strayed and brought an infection home. But from a general safety perspec-

tive, even imperfect or serial monogamy is preferable to "honestly open" relationships.

A person newly infected with HIV is 12 to 20 times more contagious than after the immune system has started to fight back. If a guy becomes HIV infected during a rare one-night stand, or within a mostly monogamous relationship, he will likely pass through his "peak contagion period" without exposing anyone else.

Yet if he became infected while "playing" in an open relationship, or during a regular "trick," then each of the guys he has unprotected sex with in the coming two months will face a much greater risk of catching his virus.

How about if relationships are sexually open only when partners use condoms? Many gay men use condoms improperly, putting them on only after already entering a partner a few times during foreplay.

The impact of such slip-ups is multiplied when these blunders take place with more partners. Though guys who "play" tell me that they're extra careful, gay guys with multiple partners are statistically no more likely to use condoms than those with just one partner.

I'd oppose anyone who tried to legislate against individual sexual choice. But maybe it is time for us to encourage exclusive relationships.

@ Stephen Fallon, Ph.D., runs a Florida-based consulting firm and can be reached at sfallon@skills4.org.

viewpoint JASMYNE CANNICK



So far, we haven't exposed the secret sex lives of black pastors, but their hypocrisy is on notice.

Outing hypocrisy by black pastors

NO SINGLE PROTEST I HAVE participated in has garnered as much attention as the "Outing Black Pastors" campaign that I did with my colleague Keith Boykin.

It was a simple idea hatched in a casual conversation of black gay activists while in Washington, D.C. Frustrated with the increasing number of attacks on same-gender loving people by black pastors, we decided to take action.

The action in this case was calling out black pastors on their hypocrisy as it relates to gay issues and their relationship to the current Bush administration.

Each day for one week, we profiled a black pastor, highlighting his relationship with the Bush administration, recent homophobic gay comments, and ending with the question: Is this pastor gay?

Starting with mega-church pastors Eddie Long and T.D. Jakes, we included profiles of other prominent ministers, including Los Angeles' Noel Jones and

Charles Blake, D.C.'s Willie Wilson, Chicago's Gregory Daniels, New Orleans' Paul Morton, Georgia's Creflo Dollar, and ended with a joint profile of ex-gay gospel singer Donnie McClurkin.

For the record, there is nothing wrong with asking a question. My experience has shown that the people who are the most adamant on certain issues also tend to be dealing with their own issues. People who are comfortable with who they are usually don't care as much about what other people are doing.

Which led me to an obvious question: Are these pastor's gay?

REMEMBER THAT DESPITE ALL OF his racist rhetoric, former senator segregationist Strom Thurmond, now dead, fathered a black daughter to everyone's surprise.

Conservative pundit and frequent GOP candidate Alan Keyes caused a stir during the 2004 Republican convention by label-

ing Vice President Dick Cheney's lesbian daughter a "selfish hedonist." Alan Keyes' daughter Maya is a lesbian.

Being able to point out the hypocrisy that exists on our issues is why we have a democracy.

I have received more than 1,000 e-mails regarding this campaign, and they continue to come in. While a good number are positive, I've also received threats on my life for "bringing harm to a man of God."

And if the e-mail wasn't a threat, I was blasted for speaking badly about men of God and put on notice that I was on a direct path to hell, as opposed to a more scenic route.

Must we be reminded that anyone can claim to be a man of God? Jim Jones said he was a man of God and because of him, 913 people, many of whom were black, died in a mass murder-suicide.

President Bush claims he was called upon by God to lead this country and look at where we are today. Rev. Craig Ward of the Brookings African Methodist Episcopal Church considers himself a man of God, but he was still arrested in Oakland for trying to negotiate a \$20 oral sex act.

TO DATE, OUR CAMPAIGN NEVER specifically "outed" anyone's sexual orientation or secret sex lives. But we did expose in depth the ties that certain black pastors have with the Bush administration, which is equally dangerous and harmful to black people.

To bring about change, sometimes you

have to deviate from traditional methods. That was the case with this campaign.

We pushed the envelope and brought the discussion of homophobia in the black church and President Bush's "faith-based initiative" to mainstream black America. Had we simply complained about yet another black preacher spewing anti-gay hate, we wouldn't have garnered as much attention.

This campaign was a way to fight back and challenge the authority of people using God to oppress a group of people. It sent a clear message that some of us are tired of the hypocrisy about same-gender loving people, and we're willing to take this conversation out of the black gay community and into mainstream black America.

It's my right and responsibility to fight every day against oppression in all of its many forms, whether in government, big business or, yes, the church.

I feel especially duty bound to take up the issue of homophobic black pastors so they can redeem themselves before it's too late and go to heaven with me and everyone else, including lesbian and gay men who've earned a place up there.

@ Jasmyne Cannick is a board member of the National Black Justice Coalition and co-producer of "Noah's Arc," a new cable series on black gays. She can be reached via www.jasmyneconnick.com.

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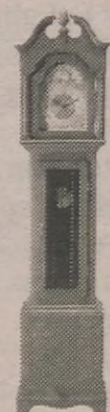
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on the record



"It is insulting to see Tatu acting the way they do. It feels like they're trying to make a bit of a joke out of being a lesbian. It's sad."

British singer Alex Parks, who came out in a BBC interview, on the Russian duo that feigned being lesbian lovers (Gay.com.uk, Nov. 2)

"The church was happy to receive my gifts as long as I paid the price for its discriminatory policy by remaining in the closet. Once I met my partner and found that I was hiding the most important relationship in my life, that price was too high for me."

Beth Stroud, on being defrocked as associate pastor of First United Methodist Church of Germantown in Philadelphia by the United Methodist Church's Judicial Council (Los Angeles Times, Nov. 6)

"We all know who's gay and who's not — but we don't talk about it. Those of us who are, we talk to each other because we know that we can find the support that we're not gonna get from a lot of other people. But I also think there are a lot of players in the WNBA that would love to come out, but for lots of reasons they're scared."

WNBA superstar Cheryl Swoopes on other lesbians in the league (Advocate, Nov. 22)



"The next successful [Democratic presidential] candidate has got to have some means to say, OK, we believe and we worship the prince of peace, not pre-emptive war, or we're moderate on the abortion issue, or we believe marriage by definition in our church ought to be between a man and a woman, but we believe in full civil rights for gays who want to be partners."

Former President Jimmy Carter, on tour promoting his new book "Our Endangered Values: America's Moral Crisis" (Associated Press, Nov. 4)

"The conference voted to recommend that the current sodomy laws be changed. The conference believes that no private sexual act between consenting adults should be forbidden. ... Discrimination against homosexuals in hiring should be forbidden."

Supreme Court nominee Samuel Alito, writing a 1971 college report on privacy rights on behalf of a committee of more than a dozen students (Associated Press, Nov. 2)

"This week, they came out and said [Supreme Court nominee Samuel Alito] supported gay rights. Come to find out that was in 1972. A lot has changed since then. I had a girlfriend in 1972."

Film director John Waters (HBO's "Real Time with Bill Maher," Nov. 4)

"We have a homosexual scandal, not a pedophilia scandal."

Catholic League President William Donohue on the child sexual abuse allegations against priests (The Advocate, Nov. 22)

"I'll be the straight actor they keep calling whenever they need someone to play a gay role. While all of the gay actors I know will keep being cast in straight roles."

Actor Val Kilmer, who plays a gay detective in the current movie "Bang, Bang, Kiss, Kiss" (Softpedia News, Nov. 2)



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Heating up
Gay couples heats
things up on TV show.
Page 16

NOVEMBER 11, 2005



maxwell, smart

A BOOK, NICOLE KIDMAN FILM AND NEW TV SEASON ADD UP TO WORLD DOMINATION — ONE HOME AT A TIME — FOR STYLE ICON BRINI MAXWELL

By TONY PHILLIPS

M

R. PINK, THE MID-CENTURY, retro-chic emporium on W. 16th Street, seems a logical place to meet Brini Maxwell, a Chelsea denizen who's wholeheartedly dedicated to the gracious living of a bygone era. So I'm a little taken aback when my favorite television hostess shows up as Ben Sander: mild mannered, just as blond — albeit with a little less bounce — and casually turned out in a tan suede jacket over an orange cashmere hoodie. It's only when he makes a beeline for the nested 1950s mixing bowls that I realize I am, indeed, shopping with Brini.

But first things first: The new book is called "Brini Maxwell's Guide to Gracious Living: Tips, Tricks, Recipes & Ideas to Make Your Life Bloom," which the author says "creates a mission statement for me."

And if that's sounding a tad corporate, bear in mind that Maxwell has made the quantum leap from cable access cult fave to Style Channel staple as "The Brini Maxwell Show" kicks off its second season on the network this week.

Still, Maxwell is refreshingly more Heloise than Martha Stewart. Consider her tip for treating ring around the collar: "Treat the stain with a little shampoo — it's made to dissolve body oils — and then wash as usual. That ring will disappear like a husband on trash day."

Wondering how you made it thus far without Brini's bible? So am I as she picks up what's either a very small plate or an ashtray without cigarette grooves. "What's that?" I ask. She flips it over and answers, "Limoges." This is someone who knows her way around the house. But she spends quite a bit of time outside the home as well. Maxwell's on a perpetual book tour that recently had her performing table top demonstrations at Macy's and signing books at the Chelsea Barnes & Noble.

Baggage claims

I confide to Maxwell that her publicist griped about the small fortune he was spending on hair and makeup. "Well, a girl wants to look pretty," she counters. "And you should see the fortune I've spent on wardrobe."



Please see **BRINI MAXWELL** on Page 19

BRINI MAXWELL dishes a retro wit with her new 'Guide to Gracious Living.'

BLACK TIE DINNER: 'Diva' drops in for AIDS charity fund-raiser. Page 14

LESBIAN BRAWL: Two NFL cheerleaders get it on in the bathroom of a nightclub. Page 18



nitelife JOHNNY HOOKS



Gay-friendly actress/comedian Kathy Griffin slated to appear at Black Tie Dinner, party stops at South Beach and cats look for new homes

'Diva' to appear at Black Tie Dinner

EVEN THOUGH WE WON'T BE GETTING married or civilized in this state anytime soon, let's just look towards the future and move on. Some of you may be actually moving out, from what was heard at various election night watch events, but until then HotGG gives you some reasons to get out and about in this glorious fall weather.

THE BIGGEST EVENT THIS WEEKEND is the annual **Black Tie Dinner** with the "Diva of the D-List" **Kathy Griffin**. Definitely not a lesbian, but a staunch supporter of all things gay, Griffin will surely take the voters of this state to task about Prop. 2. This year's event, themed "**Bright Lights, Big City**", will be held Saturday, Nov. 12, beginning at 7 p.m. at the Inter-Continental hotel and will also feature music and dancing by **Rotel and the Hot Tomatoes**. Some people have asked HotGG what exactly is this dinner all about. Besides handsome men and women all glammed up, dinner, dancing and the hilarious Griffin, the event raises lots of money every year for organizations in the Houston

area. This year's beneficiaries include **AIDS Foundation Houston, Bering Omega Community Services, Uncommon Legacy Houston, Casa de Esperanza, AssistHers**, and the **Montrose Counseling Center**. Houston Black Tie Dinner is a charitable organization that has raised more than **\$1.6 million** over the past 13 years in support of more than 20 non-profits in Houston that serve gays, lesbians and transgender people. In fact they are the leading charitable organization raising funds enabling these organizations to keep their doors open. For more information, visit www.houstonblacktiedinner.org.

ALSO ON SATURDAY NIGHT, THE **Gay.com "Come Together Across America"** party lands at **South Beach**. Surely you have seen those hot billboards on Montrose with the hunky men lying together in bed! Now you can have a chance to experience it for yourself. Tickets are \$15 in advance including the VIP express entrance (short line) or \$20 at the door and are sold at **South Beach**,

Meteor, JR's, M2M Fashions, Hollywood Super Center and at **MaleUWear**.

SPEAKING OF MALE UWEAR, 415 Westheimer, the business is holding a raffle to raise money for charity. Called the "**Big Basket**", it's an actual big basket, hence the name, filled with merchandise in excess of \$800! Tickets can be purchased at Male U Wear for a mere \$1. All money raised will be given to **Bayou City Boys Club** for their **Red Ribbon Toy Drive**. The "Big Basket" is filled with merchandise from **Male UWear, Crossover Gifts, Eclipse Sunless Tanning, and Sorrento Ristorante** and is now on display at Male U Wear.

SUNDAYS ARE ALWAYS SO BUSY AND this week is no exception. First up, is a the puurfect way to begin your day. **Adopt-A-Cat** is holding its annual silent auction fund-raiser and 11th anniversary celebration at the **Houston Racquet Club**. **Adopt-A-Cat**, Houston's only feline, no-kill

shelter and sanctuary is "expanding the circle of compassion" from noon to 4 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom of the Houston Racquet Club, 10709 Memorial Drive, just east of Voss Road. In addition to shelter operations, **Adopt-A-Cat** provides foster homes and coordinates local adoption events to care for Houston's homeless cats and kittens. **Adopt-A-Cat** depends entirely upon support and donations from generous and compassionate people like you.

Admission is \$25. For more info, call 281-463-8998 or visit www.adoptacathouston.org.

ON SUNDAY NIGHT, GET READY FOR A fantastic show from the one and only **Aurora Briar!** She presents "**Thanks For The Memories**" starting at 6 p.m. and running till 9 p.m. So get over to **Keys West**, 817 West Dallas. This will be an evening of food, fun and fabulous entertainment all benefiting The Montrose Clinic's "Women's Program" and The Assistance Fund's "Medication Program." For more information, call 713-571-7870.

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

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dining J.A. CHAPMAN

New downtown restaurant
opens with little to delight customers

Good but not great

SOMETIMES ALL PEOPLE WANT IS something they can count on.

If they're running late in the morning or grabbing a quick lunch, what they really need is a restaurant that isn't going to serve up surprises. The Corner Bakery is just such a place.

The restaurant's downtown location is the first foray into Houston for this chain, owned by Brinker International, which also includes Chili's, Maggiano's Little Italy and On The Border, among others. Their focus is on casual dining, and the Corner Bakery certainly fits the mold.

With an ideal location in the Reliant Energy Plaza building, across from the funky Metro light rail fountains, the Corner Bakery is already bustling with downtown workers.

Like most casual dining spots, you order at the counter. You can get your food to go or they'll bring it to your table when it's ready. The menus hang above the counter in an easy to read format, and the cheery but muted décor is relaxed and non-threatening. It's the very picture of a pleasant, modern chain restaurant.

Mornings are busy, as workers grab a cup of coffee on their way to work. Pick from among four flavors at the beverage bar. If you're hungry, try a pastry or a more substantial breakfast entree.

I couldn't resist the huge cinnamon roll (\$2.29). Its sugary glaze beckoned from under the glass cover and I could feel my blood sugar spiking even before the first bite. Unfortunately, as I found to be the case with much of the food at the Corner Bakery, it didn't live up to the hype.

Oh sure, it was good enough with plenty of cinnamon and a soft, doughy texture, but served cold. Also, the tempting glaze wasn't nearly as plentiful as it had seemed on the counter. The end result was good without being great – a trait I found repeated over and over at Corner Bakery.

The sunrise scrambler plate (\$4.79) is a good enough way to start the day. The eggs are scrambled with applewood bacon, sautéed mushrooms and cheddar cheese, all served with crisp sourdough toast on the side.

Unfortunately, the accompanying oven-roasted potatoes are small, mushy squares that must have started frozen. Like most entrees, it's substantial and filling, but distinctly average.

The lunch menu offers a variety of soups, salads, sandwiches and pastas.

Their most popular sandwich is the chicken pesto (\$5.99). It's served on a nicely crisp baguette, with arugula, tomato, and sweet and spicy vinaigrette. It's tasty, but a complete mess to eat. Sauce runs everywhere, and the fillings spill out of the baguette. Be sure to stock up on napkins.

The chicken pomodoro panini (\$5.99) is a little easier to handle. Sliced chicken breast, basil, spinach and a garlicky pesto mayo are all grilled together in sourdough bread. It's warm and spicy and there's plenty of it.

All sandwiches come with chips, which are packed inside a box over the food, if you order it to go. The result is a greasy, messy bag of chips. Request that yours be packed separately, if you don't want to wipe down the bag.

For a more substantial meal, try the chicken carbonara (\$6.99). Roasted chicken, peas, bacon and breadcrumbs are tossed with linguine in a cream sauce. It's a little skimpy on the toppings, and the cream sauce is somewhat heavy, but it's tasty and filling. And the thin, focaccia-like herbed garlic bread on the side is a winner.

Corner Bakery offers plenty of desserts. From chocolate chip cookies (\$1.19) to dream bars (\$1.99), they're all good without being great. The mini bundt cake (\$2.29) – I tried chocolate – tastes like it comes from a mix and is covered with a fudge chocolate frosting. They'll satisfy most people, but no one will be clamoring for the recipe.

And that's pretty much how it goes at the Corner Bakery. The food is dependably good, no one will be offended, and everyone will find something to eat.



Corner Bakery

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www.cornerbakery.com

Food: ●●●●●

Service: ●●●●●

Scene: ●●●●● 1/2

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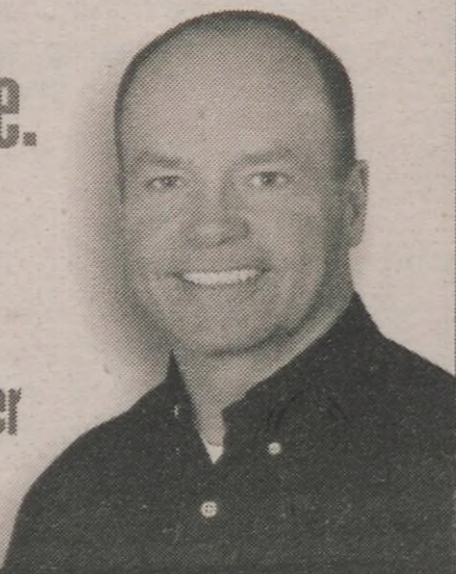
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television BRIAN MOYLAN



Without taking itself too seriously, Here!
 TV's 'Dante's Cove' wraps plenty of gay
 hot-and-heavy in a supernatural plot.

TV turns up the heat

WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER, IN THE world before the Internet, the only exposure I had to erotic material was the late-night, soft-core shows "Emmanuelle" and "Red Shoe Diaries" on subscription cable channels like Showtime and Cinemax.

So, for me, watching Here! TV's original series "Dante's Cove" was a bit of nostalgia, bringing me back to the days where there was never any penetration, but plenty of suggestive writhing, panting and bodies glistening with sweat. However, this time around, the hot guys and glamorous girls weren't getting it on with each other, but other men and women.

The first two-hour installment aired on Here! in October and the second airs throughout November. Here! is available as an on demand service on most digital cable providers (including the major D.C. carriers Comcast, Cox and RCN/Starpower) and as a streaming channel on satellite provider DirecTV.

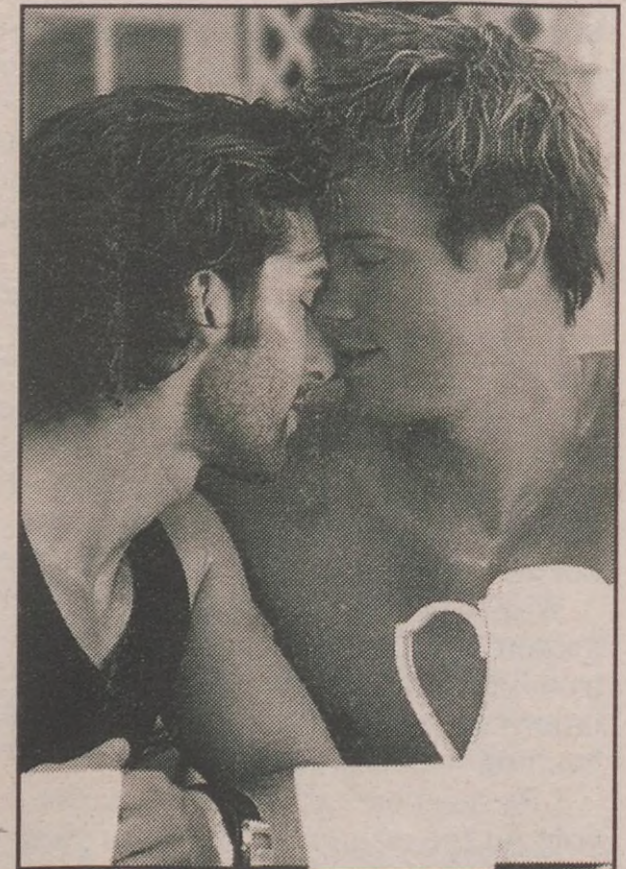
DANTE'S COVE IS A MYSTICAL BEACH town where everyone is gay (or at least bi or curious), it's always hot and no one wears both a shirt and pants at the same time.

Really, it's a fictional California town (though the series is filmed in Canada) and the action centers around the Hotel Dante, an all-gay Melrose Place-style complex where all the residents know each other and have interpersonal drama.

Oh, and there are ghosts. There are some witch/vampire/spirit things too. And a guy chained in the basement, but not in an S/M, leather bar kinda way either.

The action centers around Kevin (Gregory Michael) who moves in with his boyfriend, Toby (Charlie David), at the Hotel Dante after his parents kick him out of the house for being gay. Also in the house is Toby's lesbian best friend Van (Nadine Heiman) and bisexual Amber (Zara Taylor).

To keep things rolling between sex scenes (mostly between Michael and David) there's a mystical story about the evil gay spirit Ambrosius (William Gregory Lee) who was imprisoned by his witchy fiancée (Tracy Scoggins) for cheating on her with the butler. He needs a young man to kiss him to set him free and sets his sights on Kevin.



As the central couple on Here! TV's 'Dante's Cove,' Toby (Charlie David, left) and Kevin (Gregory Michael) spend lots of time making out and lounging around scantily clad. (Photo courtesy of Here! TV)

The "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" shenanigans get a little out of control and silly as the series progresses and things start to shift from (gasp!) the sex scenes to the plot.

THAT SAID, "DANTE'S COVE" IS well-made, full of attractive people in exotic locales (cue the abandoned lighthouse) doing dirty things. And yes, it is that lurid. The sex scenes are prolonged, graphic and entirely gratuitous. Like Showtime's "Queer As Folk," the boys get most of the play, but there are some nominal scenes with the girls thrown in for good measure.

Unlike "Queer As Folk," "Dante" doesn't bother taking itself seriously or worrying about silly things like social messages. In that arena, it's more like Jet Set Productions' award-winning hardcore, Web-based soap opera "Wet Palms." The plot is fun and makes the characters more engaging, but we all know the real reason people are tuning in.

Starting in December, the first two segments of "Dante's Cove" will be broken down into six half-hour episodes that will air each month until the second season premieres. Production starts on the next twelve episodes early next year.

For those who like to go all the way, the first six episodes of "Wet Palms" are available at www.wetpalms.com and the final three episodes start airing next week and will be available on DVD the first week in December.

i MORE INFO

'Dante's Cove'
 Here! TV
www.heretv.com

'Wet Palms'
www.wetpalms.com

film TONY PHILLIPS



'Jarhead' hits the Persian Gulf looking for action and finds out that's where the boys are, and they're lovers instead of fighters.



Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus, and it's Jake Gyllenhaal (left) as a swarthy, sexy Marine with his 'partner' Peter Sarsgaard in the new movie 'Jarhead.' (Photo courtesy of Universal Pictures)

'Head and soldiers

THERE ARE MISLEADING QUOTES AND then there are misleading quotes. "Welcome to the suck," an ironic greeting offered to a Marine entering into the first Persian Gulf conflict takes on a number of meanings — both sexual and otherwise — throughout the course of the new movie "Jarhead."

Oscar-winning director Sam Mendes' third film (after "American Beauty" and "Road to Perdition"), this is the most homoerotic war picture since "Shaving Ryan's Privates," and that certainly wasn't shown in any respectable movie houses.

Between glimpses of sweaty, barely-clothed Gulf War Marines and endless discussion about masturbation, Mendes updates the late '60s rhetorical Vietnam protest question — "What if we gave a war and nobody came?" — to 1989, with U.S. ground forces in Saudi Arabia bored so stiff that all they think about is their stiffies.

"Jarhead" centers on 20-year-old Marine Tony Swofford and most of the film's relentless voiceover is directly from his 2003 best-selling memoir of the same name. "Swoff" is played with an extremely watchable intensity by Jake Gyllenhaal, whose upcoming role in "Brokeback Mountain" will surely lure a few gay fans to this war flick. Well, that and the fact he's buffed up and shirtless for a good portion of it.

After enthusiastically enlisting and the obligatory basic training humiliations, Swoff, a third-generation grunt, is quickly plucked from obscurity to train as a sniper.

After they're worked into a frenzy and instructed to "kick some Iraqi ass" by an over-the-top Lt. Col. played by Chris Cooper, they're scared shitless with chemical warfare drills by Staff Sgt. Sykes, versed with

tent-chewing abandon by Jamie Foxx.

Including "Stealth," this is his second unfortunate performance since winning the Academy Award for "Ray." He'd better be careful, or someone is going to call the Oscar repossession committee.

GAY AUDIENCE MEMBERS MAY BE hoping for some hot man-on-man action (maybe between Gyllenhaal and his shooting partner, played by his fellow Peter Sarsgaard) will be as disappointed as those who joined the Marines looking for combat action. In both cases, there is plenty of tension, but nothing ever really happens.

For Swoff and the rest of his crew, the terror of the war isn't dodging bullets, but trying to avoid the boredom of being sent to a place where there is nothing left for them to do.

To pass the time, our troops simulate blowjobs and anal sex for an embedded reporter in a football scene that quickly turns striptease after Tony calls for a "field-fuck." They keep tabs on cheating Stateside girlfriends by using dried mashed potatoes to plaster notes like "this bitch fucked my brother" to their "Wall of Shame." They duct tape each other to metal cots for some impromptu branding.

The film's mechanics emerge as our boys continue to wait for some ground action with "Saddam Insane" and his million-strong forces. But his army is wiped clean by relentless U.S. air raids and without an enemy to train his rifle on, Tony eventually turns his gun on an unfortunate platoon-mate.

Still, he only manages to shoot after stumbling onto what resembles an extremely bellicose circuit party when the war is called off. And that may be the problem with "Jarhead." The testosterone, miles of sand and ennui of 21st-century warfare suggest nothing so much as a contentious summer share at Rehoboth Beach. Just add water.

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dish

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

Lesbians gone wild

NFL cat fight, Brazilian gay kiss get waxed and porno prayers

Dish never ceases to be amazed at low-rent behavior, but this one did get her panties in a bunch.

According to the Charlotte Observer, ANGELA KEATHLEY and RENEE THOMAS, two NFL cheerleaders for the Carolina Panthers were arrested early Sunday morning at a Florida nightclub for doing the nasty in one of the club's bathroom stalls. Now, this sounds like some trashy gay boys Dish knows, but lesbians?

Other patrons began yelling at the pair, because they needed to use the potty for its intended purpose. The ladies stumbled out of the stall and the arguing got more heated. Finally, Thomas punched an irate woman in the face, giving her a black eye.

When the police arrived, Thomas gave the police a driver's license of a cheerleader who wasn't even in the state at the time of the incident.

Keathley, the other classy lady, was reportedly so drunk that she could barely stand up and screamed obscenities and resisted officers while being escorted out of the club. Dish, on the other hand, has never resisted handcuffs or officers.

Thomas is being charged with one count of battery and giving a false name. Keathley is being charged with disorderly conduct and obstructing an officer.

No goodnight kiss

Brazil's steamy temperature got even hotter last Friday in anticipation of the nation's first televised gay kiss.

According to the BBC, luscious Latin actors BRUNO GAGLIASSO and EROM CORDEIRO were scripted to kiss on the final episode of the hit show "América," and both of the actors report filming the much-anticipated lip-lock.

Friday night arrived with a huge audience tuning in. The show came and went and lots of Brazilians went to bed without any man-on-man action.

The show's screenwriter, Gloria Perez, told Globo newspaper, "[The director] and I made the scene ... We fought for it and I cannot deny that I was frustrated that it wasn't shown."

Globo TV denies having cut the scene, and the company claims it aired everything that was sent by "América" producers.

According to Perez, the gay relationship was incredibly well-received by the Brazilian public. "Even heterosexual men,



After getting it on in a public bathroom, NFL cheerleaders Angela Keathley (left) and Renee Thomas were arrested for punching out a bystander and other unsavory conduct.

who tend to be more conservative, wanted the kiss," Perez says. "The actors also were frustrated. After all, they had staged it with much enthusiasm."

And there's nothing like men kissing with enthusiasm!

Say a prayer

It's not often that Dish gets somber, but she will to announce the death of Falcon Studios president TERRY MAHAFFEY.

According to the Bay Area Reporter, Mahaffey died early on Sunday, Oct. 30, due to complications related to cancer. The Falcon president was only 51-years-old.

Mahaffey first joined the venerable porn company in 1996. In 2003, he took over as president and chief creative officer of Falcon, the largest gay-owned producer of erotic films in the world.

One of Mahaffey's business associates, Todd Montgomery, said the porn mogul was a leader in pushing the safe-sex image in porn.

"Terry was very adamant that everybody here be committed to safe sex. Not everyone got on board right away with that. Terry worked behind the scenes and had a very strong influence," Montgomery told the BAR.

A 20-year-survivor of HIV, Mahaffey's philanthropic spirit was well-noted by San Francisco community members. He reportedly helped San Francisco's LGBT community center reach its large fundraising goals by keeping the Charles M. Holmes

Foundation, the original owners of Falcon studios, on track with its \$1 million dollar pledge.

State Assemblyman Mark Leno (D-San Francisco) said of his friend Mahaffey in the BAR, "I think he was proud of the work he did in continuing to promote a safe sex message to gay men and at the same time recognizing the celebratory nature of human sexuality."



Bruno Gagliasso



Terry Mahaffey



Send comments, suggestions to
Dish@houstonvoice.com

eclipse



Maxwell misses foil

BRINI MAXWELL, continued from Page 13

Since we're trading gossip and secrets, I tell Maxwell I was a big fan of her cable access program, but have yet to see her Style Channel incarnation. "You poor dear," she says. "You don't have digital cable?"

She patiently explains the difference. "I was very disappointed when they didn't pick up Mary Ellen," Maxwell says. "She was my sidekick. I miss her. I miss having a foil." It's a testament to her ability to hold her own, but Maxwell begs off. "It's easier with a sidekick because you can communicate humor more, but we've moved forward and we're still presenting useful information in a humorous way."

With this, she picks up a tiny, silver pig shot through with little holes. "Salt shaker?" I inquire. She shoots me a look and corrects. "No, it's an hors d'ouvres server. You put toothpicks in there," she says, pointing out the holes. "And then the toothpicks hold the finger food." Perhaps a bit too eager, I reply, "Oh, like that Chia Pet thing in your book." Another look, and then a patient, "Yes, dear."

Patience is a virtue Maxwell possesses

in spades. I ask her where it comes from and the conversation turns to her mother, who for years directed Maxwell's show on public access.

Mom yelling "cut" laid the groundwork for a well-adjusted child to leave his chosen profession after a prestigious internship for designer Michael Kors and a bachelor's degree in fashion design from F.I.T. to pursue his own dream. That dream was birthed from "a divine thrift shop purchase of 1950s nesting bowls," which might explain

Maxwell's fascination when we first arrived at Mr. Pink.

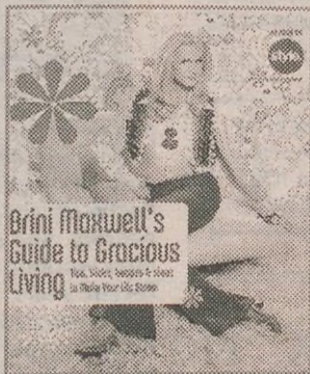
Mattress pads

So is Maxwell merely a creation of Ben the actor (who just wrapped a part in "Fur" with Nicole Kidman as '50s photog Diane Arbus) or is Brini a homemaking expert? "That's a good question," Ben says. "I like to stay behind the

scenes. Even for this interview, you're talking to Brini. I've decided I'm only going to accept roles that are biological women. I don't know how to play drag queens. Brini isn't a drag queen, she's an authority, a real person, a woman."

Brini, the character, arrives when I ask Ben if he'd eventually like to transition into living her 24/7.

"Oh, no, no, no," he laughs. "Too much work. It's not something that I want to cheapen. I'm not saying that there's anything wrong with playing drag queens. People misunderstand. I like to think of myself as a 'mactress.' It's a combination of male and actress, like blactress. But Brini's backstory is similar to mine, just to make things easier. She's a product of the late '60s and '70s." And Maxwell's one product we're fortunate to have placed firmly in Chelsea.



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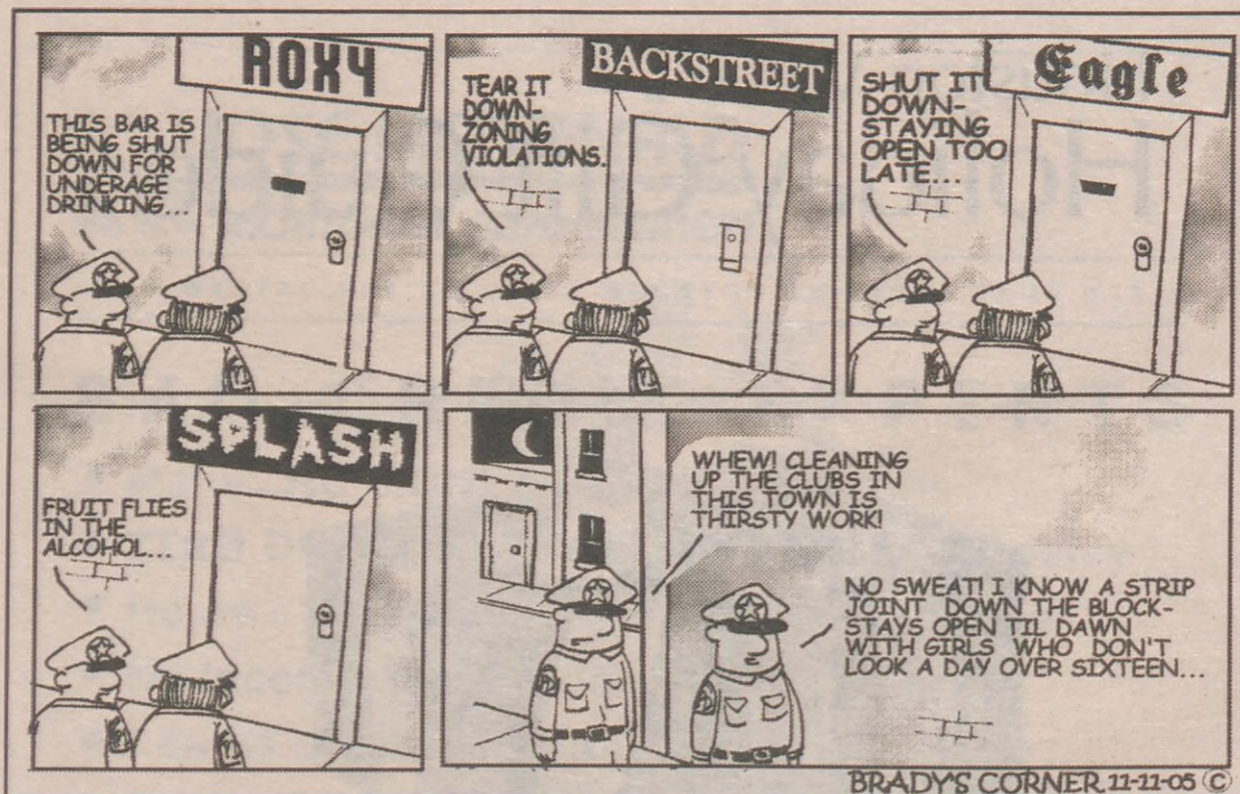
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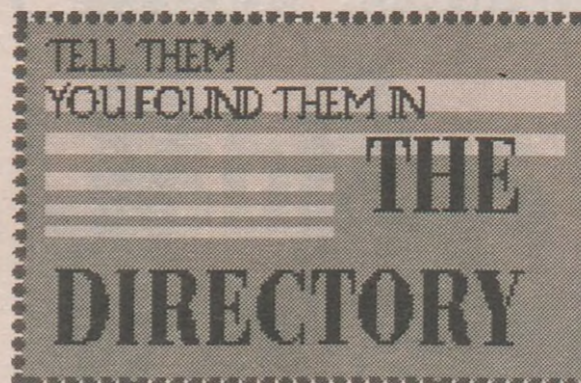
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OBITUARIES



Jo Anne Roberts, who was known to a great many people in the GLBT community, died at her residence in late July, 2005. Born September 10th 1947, Jo Anne was a native Texan and a graduate of Texas A&M with Bachelor and Masters degrees in Aerospace Engineering. She served in the United States Air Force, later working as an engineer at Brown & Root. In more recent years, she founded and owned Sago, a computer consulting service. Jo Anne was a vibrant, colorful member of the Houston transgender community. She was direct, honest, outspoken, delighting most and infuriating some. She was an accomplished seamstress, avid reader, computer junkie, gardener and loved to tinker with cars. Jo Anne was a member of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church where she participated in Wednesday Evening Bible study, volunteered in the church office, and served as an usher. She was also involved in Integrity.

Friends will gather to remember Jo Anne and celebrate her life at a Memorial Service on Saturday, November 19, 2005 at 10:00 am, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1805 West Alabama. A reception at St. Stephen's will follow the service.

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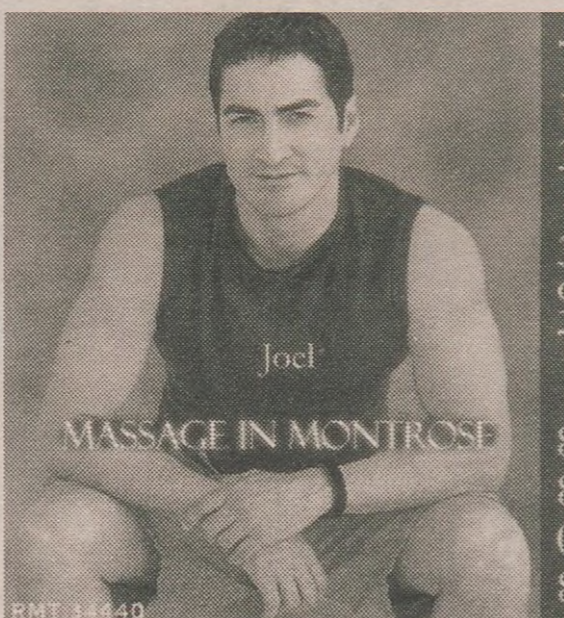

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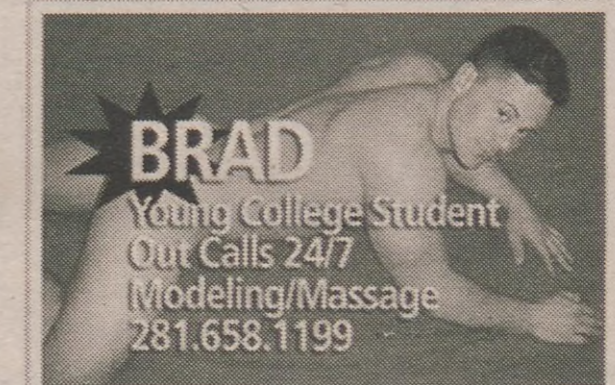
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UH...I'D LIKE IT IF WE COULD JUST TAKE A MINUTE AND THINK ABOUT OUR INTERDEPENDENCE WITH NATURE AS WE CELEBRATE THE SOLSTICE.

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RIGHT. WHAT ARE YOU, CYNTHIA?

I SAY CYNTHIA HAS DIED ON THE HOLIDAY. IT'S HER FIRST CHRISTMAS AWAY FROM HOME.

OKAY. IT'S ALL THE SAME TO ME. THE SUN RETURNS, THE MASCULINE PRINCIPLE IS REBORN OF THE GODDESS... I MEAN, WHAT'S JESUS IF NOT ANOTHER SUN DEITY?

THAT'S OKAY. TO BE HONEST, I'VE BEEN RETHINKING THINGS LATELY. I MEAN, I'M STILL A CHRISTIAN, BUT I'M DEFINITELY TRANSITIONING.

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In person: Bring completed order form with payment to the Houston Voice offices (M-F, 9-5 pm) 500 Lovett Blvd, Suite 200, Houston.

Ad policy: Houston Voice reserves the right to edit, reclassify or reject ads not meeting Houston Voice standards. No refunds for early cancellation. Misprints: Houston Voice is not responsible for misprints appearing after first week. Check ads promptly.

DEADLINES: 8am Wednesday for online submissions only.

5:30pm Tuesday for all other submissions.

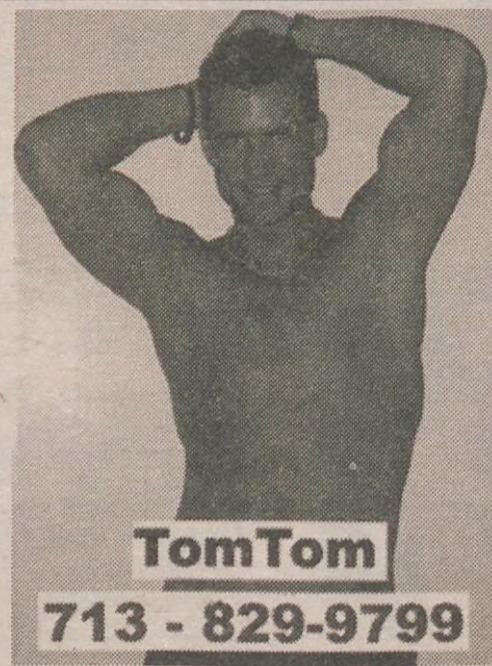
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Why do we have to choose types? That just limits the number of men I can sleep with.

THIS TECHNOLOGY WORLD HAS dumb-ed down communication so much that people text message more than they call. And it takes longer to text than to call! Soon we'll be hearing: "Why doesn't he ever text message me?" Let's communicate the real way.

WHY IS IT PEOPLE JUST CAN'T accept that there are honest bisexuals who are not confused? Yet there are lesbians and gay men who continue to lie to their partners. D.L. falls into every category.

IT'S ABOUT TIME THAT THE "B" IN GLBT gets dropped. They've ridden on our coattails and ignored us at the voting booths long enough!

IF ANAL SEX WITH A MAN IS WHAT makes your boat float, then so be it. It's really unfair to involve a third party who is not aware of your true sexual orientation.

HOW IS IT I AM TOO YOUNG TO GO out with you when I wasn't too young for you to have sex with? It just amazes me that after you've put your clothes back on, you feel like you're robbing the cradle?

COULD SOMEONE PLEASE EXPLAIN the obsession of young males with their eyebrows? What is with the carefully manicured arched brow that feathers off into nothing at the outside?

IF OUR PROFILES ON NON-SEXUAL sites state that we are in a relationship and 100 percent dedicated to each other, it means we don't want you trolling on us.

BISEXUAL GIRLS SAY THEY ARE GAY because the stigma against bisexuals still exists in a big way. I'm a lesbian, and I feel like a lesbian when I'm with women. Why do you care what I call myself anyway?

I AM NOT A DRAG QUEEN.
I am a gender illusionist.

HOMOS HATE TOO MUCH. IF I HEAR one more person bitching about fat dykes, big bears, gym bunnies, skinny twinks, daddies, sons, poz people and trannies, I'm going to go crazy.

TO THE GUY WHO SAID "BOTTOMS should be sued for false advertising, when they say "slowdown" or "ow!": If you want

something loose, go buy a prostitute.

WHEN ARE WE GOING TO FINALLY come together? We all want to be accepted yet we feel some strange need to flash our flamboyant selves as if we have more of a right to exist than any other lifestyle.

WHY DO SO-CALLED "ANDROGYNOUS" women get their knickers in a twist about lipstick girls? "Androgynous" is generally a synonym for "ugly as shit dyke." So what if we're selective?

IF YOU'RE GOING TO ACTIVELY cruise the men's room in your own store, don't get pissy and call security on them when they refuse your advances.

JUST BECAUSE I'M DATING YOU doesn't mean I have to spend all my waking hours keeping you entertained. Try to develop an inner life.

I LOVE MEN IN THEIR 40S. THERE IS nothing finer than a man in his 40s who takes care of himself. So for all you age haters, you can keep your 20 year olds.

I DON'T KNOW WHICH IS WORSE: right-wing conservatives incessantly trying to deny my civil rights or other gay people who support our enemies or are apathetic.

MY ANAL-RETENTIVE TRAIT IS AN obsession with my nails. I just can't stand it when my nails aren't symmetrically cut and clean. I spend time everyday shaping, cleaning and cutting them. And when I meet a guy with dirty fingernails, I just want to get a nail file, don latex gloves and work it!

WHY IS IT THAT SO MANY HOT manly Arab men charm the hell out of you and are quite randy in the sack, then afterwards, they tell you how much they love their wife and kids?

YOU CAN'T FIND SOMEONE TO LOVE? Start with yourself because that is more attractive than throwing yourself at everyone who pays you any attention.

IF YOUR BOYFRIEND WANTS TO know why we don't hang out more, tell him that my negative impression of him comes from you constantly bitching about him.

I WANT TO KNOW WHY SO MANY lesbians put emphasis on what people do for a living and how much money you make instead of getting to know the person first.

IF YOU REALLY LOVED ME, A LITTLE spontaneous flatulence wouldn't bother you so much.

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

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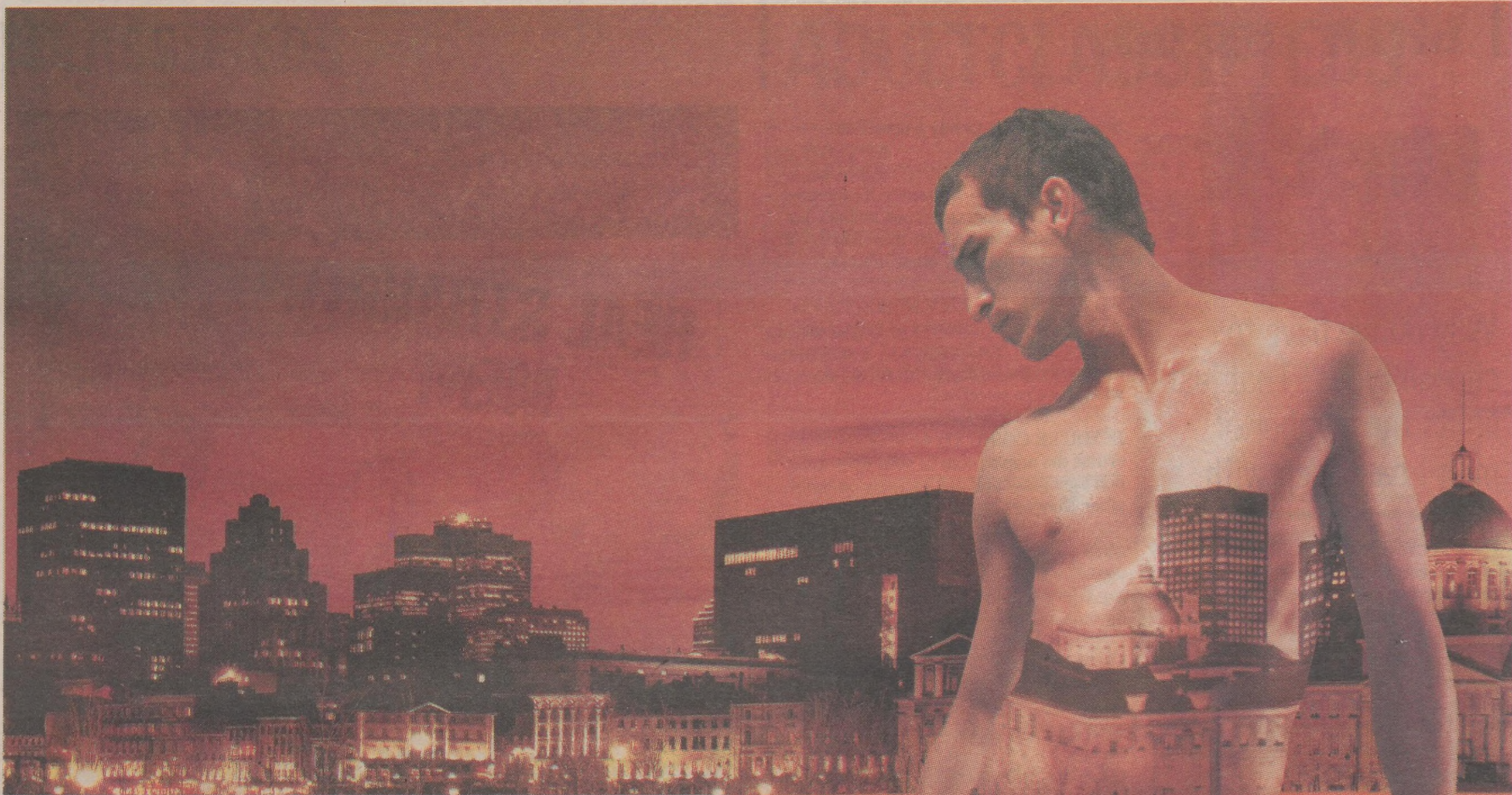
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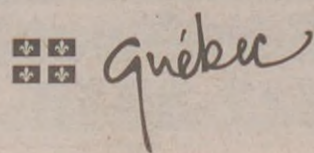
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