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Their two cents' worth

Nationally syndicated advice columnists give advice on gay issues that is more and more gay-friendly. Page 15



INSIDE



Counsel including Houston attorney Mitchell Katine prepare to argue against Texas' sodomy law on March 26 before the U.S. Supreme Court. Page 3



Montrose Softball League prepares for a new season, as athletic options for gay Houstonians increase this spring. Page 18



Stages Repertory Theatre hosts a delightful dreamers' play in 'Syncopation' through next week. Page 19

Anti-gay Texas bill advances

Dozens of lawmakers sign as co-authors on proposal to block gay marriage

By PENNY WEAVER and RHONDA SMITH

A number of state lawmakers have signed on as joint authors and co-authors of an anti-gay bill proposed to the Texas Legislature for its current session.

Rep. Warren Chisum (R-Pampa) is the primary author of House Bill 38, also known as the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Chisum has filed the bill for consideration by state lawmakers, who entered the 78th session of the Texas Legislature this month. This is Chisum's fifth attempt at getting such a bill voted into law.

This week, Chisum circulated a memo inviting fellow House members to sign on as co-authors, and as of Thursday, 22 had done so. Another four signed as joint authors of the bill, which would prevent the state from recognizing same-sex marriages or civil unions.

The Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas



State Rep. Warren Chisum filed one of two early anti-gay bills for the Texas House of Representatives to consider. This week, Chisum advanced his bill opposing gay marriage by inviting fellow house members to sign on as co-authors.

stated in a press release this week that the bill is unnecessary and redundant because Texas law already defines marriage as existing between one man and one woman.

"This bill is a slap in the face to the GLBT community in Texas. The Texas Family Code already states that [a marriage] 'license may not be issued for a marriage of persons of the same sex,'" said Randall Ellis, LGRL executive director. "Federal law already addresses the concerns of same-sex unions from other states being recognized in Texas. What more do they want?"

"The only thing this bill does is perpetuate homophobia and hate in Texas," Ellis added. "The GLBT [community] should be outraged. How dare they do this to us!"

House members sign on

Under the federal Defense of Marriage Act, Texas does not have to recognize same-sex couples united in other states. The federal law also creates a definition of marriage as a "legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife."

Lawmakers who have signed as joint authors to the Texas bill are Charlie Geren (R-River Oaks), Edmund Kuempel (R-Seguin), Scott Campbell (R-San Angelo) and Chuck Hopson (D-Jacksonville).

Among the 22 House members who signed as co-authors are several Harris County lawmakers: District 132 Rep. Bill Callegari (R-Houston), District 127 Rep. Joe Crabb (R-Kingwood), District 129 Rep. John Davis (R-Houston), District 133 Rep. Joe Nixon (R-Houston), and District 128 Rep. Wayne Smith (R-Baytown).

Gay activists warn that the DOMA proposal is a preview of the anti-gay climate that

Please see ANTI-GAY BILL on Page 5

Gay Latinos stepping out of shadows

Census names ethnic group largest minority in U.S. as gay Latinos increase visibility

By JENNIFER J. SMITH

Alexis Markova took to the stage on a recent Friday night, appearing before a crowd of a few hundred people tightly packed around the dance floor of an Atlanta club.

A male-to-female transgender, Markova performs in the weekly drag show at Chaparral, which once a week draws a mixed, but mostly gay, crowd to the otherwise straight Hispanic nightclub.

Markova and the drag show during Chaparral's popular gay night on Fridays provides an example of the growing gay Hispanic population in the South and its struggle for acceptance in a conservative ethnic group.

"There are a lot of gay Latinos here, but there are a lot of straight Latinos too," said

Markova, a Texas native. "We're totally accepted by our community — straight guys blow kisses and ask for my phone number all the time."

Gay Latinos are struggling to create an identity, a break from their mostly low-profile past as a double minority, at a time when Hispanics have become the nation's largest minority group.

Numbers released by the U.S. Census Bureau last week show that the Latino population surged to 37 million as of July 2001, 13 percent of the U.S. population of 284.8 million and slightly outstripping the 36.2 million — or 12.7 percent — of African Americans.

"We've known for a long while about the dramatic rise in the community, and the Census has provided the strong focus we've needed," said Martin Ornelas-Quintero, executive director of the National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization (LLEGÓ), the nation's largest and oldest gay Latino civil rights group.

"Now it is our job to make people focus on the Census and respond to it," he said.

The importance of the Census results on the future of Latinos — including gay

Latinos — should not be underestimated, Ornelas-Quintero said.

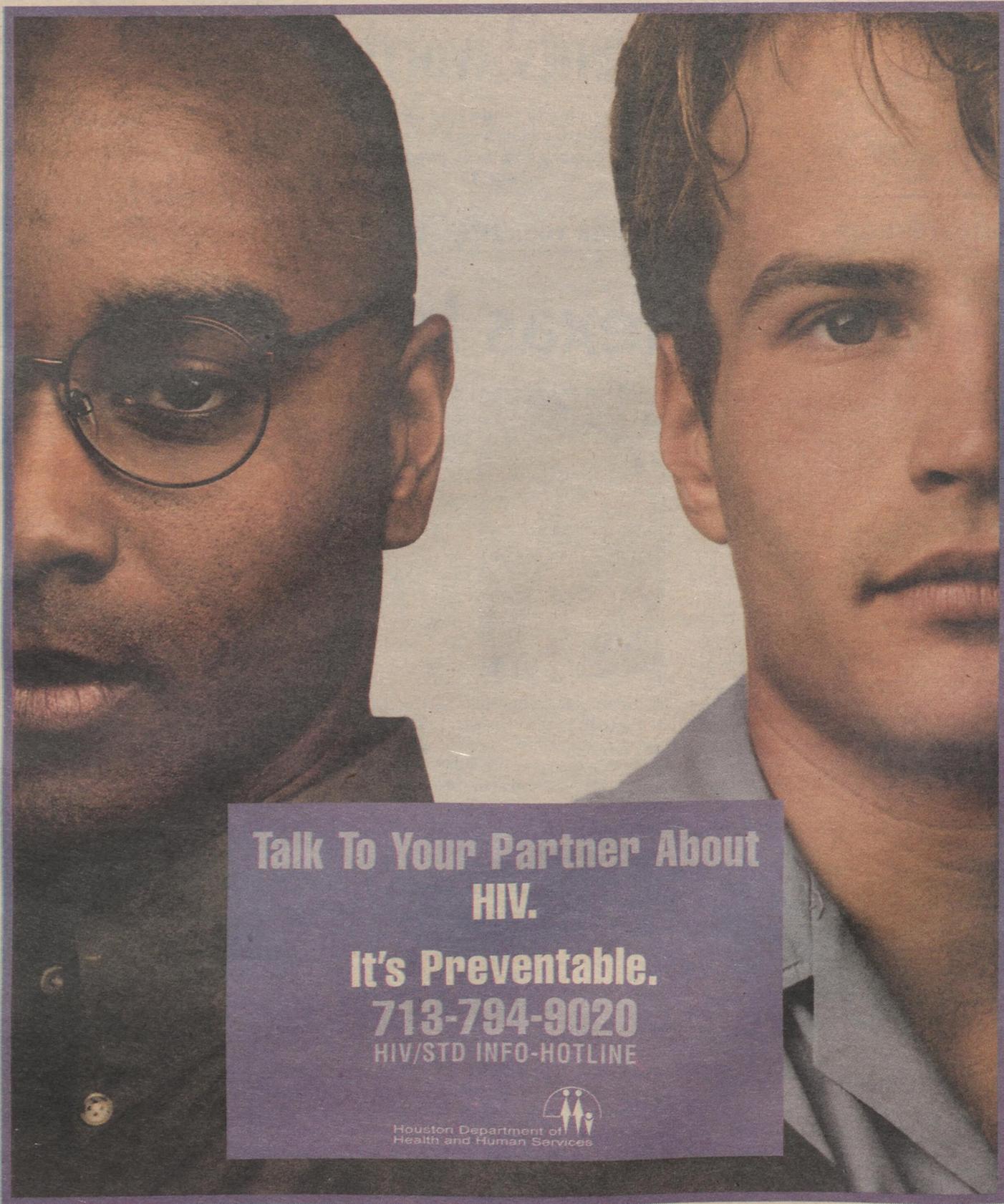
"It's a way for us to be able to build our political clout and in a real way improve the day to day lives of those in our community," he said.

While the federal government officially counts Hispanics, putting a number on gay Hispanics is not nearly as simple, according to Ornelas-Quintero. The group does not try to estimate the gay Latino population in the U.S., but when pushed, he said, the group "uses the same three to 10 percent of the population range everyone else uses."

"In the GLBT community, how accurately does the Census capture gays and lesbians?" Ornelas-Quintero said. "The closet is real, but for us as Latinos we can make the reasonable conclusion that if the Latino community is the largest minority, the Latino GLBT community is the largest minority gay group."

Gay Latinos share concerns with other gay civil rights organizations, like HIV/AIDS, hate crimes and bias and misrep-

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national news

Opposition grows to sodomy laws

Both sides prepare briefs in run-up to Supreme Court challenge to Texas law

By RHONDA SMITH

Numerous individuals and organizations representing civil rights, religious, legal, academic and public health interests have submitted amicus briefs urging the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn Texas' sodomy law.

Those opposed to overturning the "homosexual conduct" law have until Feb. 18 to submit similar friend-of-the-court briefs, and one of the Lone Star State's legal representatives on the case said Wednesday that none have done so yet.

"We have several agencies and organizations lined up who have indicated they plan to submit briefs," said William J. Delmore III, an assistant district attorney in Harris County.

The Supreme Court has set March 26 as the date it will hear oral arguments in the case of *Lawrence and Garner v. Texas*, according to Houston attorney Mitchell Katine, local counsel for the petitioners in the case.

Delmore said that in addition to two religious organizations, the Pro-Family Law Center in Escondido, Calif., has expressed interest in submitting a brief opposing any effort to overturn the sodomy law. The center's mission is "to oppose the 'gay' movement and its destructive agenda by providing essential pro-family information and resources for attorneys and activists," according to the group's Web site.

Center officials declined to comment when contacted by the Voice.

Bill Murray, a spokesperson for the Family Research Council, said that organization also plans to file a brief opposing attempts to overturn the sodomy law. When the U.S. Supreme Court announced in early December that it would hear the case challenging the constitutionality of the Texas law, which prohibits same-sex sodomy only, the Family Research Council's president spoke out against the move.

"The court's willingness to take on a case involving the Texas law just 16 years after it ruled in a nearly identical case suggests that some justices view their role essentially as political, manipulating the Constitution to conform to the latest social



The U.S. Supreme Court is scheduled March 26 to hear arguments in a sodomy case involving gay Houstonians **Tyron Garner** (left) and **John Lawrence** (center). The two men were arrested in Lawrence's Houston home in 1998 after a false report led police to their bedroom, where they were discovered engaging in anal sex. Their attorneys are challenging the constitutionality of the Texas 'homosexual conduct' law. (Photo by David J. Phillips/AP)

fashions and fads," said Ken Connor, the FRC president.

In 1986, the high court ruled, in the case of *Bowers vs. Hardwick*, that Georgia's law banning consensual sodomy did not violate privacy rights. The Georgia Supreme Court struck down the law on similar grounds in 1999.

The Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund, which is lead counsel representing the two gay men in Houston who were convicted under the Texas sodomy statute, filed its brief Jan. 16 urging the high court to overturn the law and the *Bowers vs. Hardwick* precedent.

Consensual sex illegal

The Supreme Court is expected to hand down a decision in the case, *John Geddes Lawrence and Tyron Garner v. State of Texas*, in the summer.

The case against the two gay men began in a Houston bedroom in 1998 when sheriff's deputies, responding to a false report of an armed intruder, entered Lawrence's apartment and found him and Garner engaging in anal sex.

Both men were arrested for violating the sodomy law and jailed overnight. They pleaded no contest to the Class C misdemeanor and each paid a \$200 fine, plus court costs.

The state law under which the two men were charged, Section 21.06, bans intimate relations, including oral and anal sex,

between consenting adults of the same gender. Texas earlier had a sodomy law that applied to everyone, but decriminalized such activities between different-sex partners in 1973.

Lawyers for the two men argue that the Texas sodomy law violates the guarantee of equal protection and the fundamental right to privacy safeguarded by the U.S. Constitution.

"As the experience of Lawrence and Garner vividly illustrates, Section 21.06 puts the State of Texas inside its citizens' homes, policing the details of their most intimate and private physical behavior and dictating with whom they may share a profound part of adulthood," Lambda Legal lawyers wrote in the brief they submitted Jan. 16.

Lawyers for the gay men also argue that the Texas sodomy law takes away from same-sex couple the freedom to make their own decisions, based on their own values and relationships, about the forms of private, consensual sexual intimacy they will engage in or refrain from.

"The state defends this law only by saying the majority wants it so," the legal brief states. "Texas asserts a power of the majority to free itself from state dictates about private, consensual sexual choices, while using the criminal law to condemn and limit the choices of a minority."

The lawyers for Garner and Lawrence also argue that the Texas sodomy law vio-

lates the guarantee of equal protection because the statute "creates classes of persons, treating the same acts of consensual sexual behavior differently depending on who the participants are."

As a result, they said, "the law's discriminatory focus sends the message that gay people are second-class citizens and lawbreakers, leading to ripples of discrimination throughout society."

Privacy argument favored

Ruth Harlow, legal director for Lambda Legal, said the equal protection and right-to-privacy arguments are both important. She acknowledged, however, that if the court favors the equal protection argument it might only lead to sodomy laws being abolished in the four states that limit their ban to sexual acts between gay couples. In addition to Texas, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma have consensual sodomy laws that apply only to gay people.

"We can win on either one of the claims, but the right-to-privacy claim would have an impact on all the states that still have consensual sodomy laws in place," she said. "So that claim is a very important one."

Alabama, Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Utah, as well as Puerto Rico, have consensual sodomy laws that apply to heterosexual and homosexual adults. But Lambda Legal officials said the laws are invoked almost exclusively against lesbians and gay men and carry penalties that range from fines to 10 years in prison.

"The equal protection claim would have a direct impact on fewer states, but that's a very key area of the law for lesbian and gay equality in the long term," Harlow said. "So that would also be quite a powerful victory."

She noted that lawyers representing gay clients use the equal protection clause any time the government singles out gay people for certain discriminatory treatment, such as denying them employment or refusing custody or visitation rights for gay parents.

"A ruling by the Supreme Court that further emphasizes the government cannot just single out lesbians and gay men because of moral opposition to homosexuality would be helpful to use in all kinds of different contexts," Harlow said.

A group of professors nationwide who teach and write about constitutional law submitted an amicus brief that also argues that the Texas sodomy law violates the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. They contend that the statute fails conventional equal protection analysis because it is not rationally related to the achievement of a legitimate state interest.

"Texas has identified no rationale for why it has condemned the acts prohibited by [the sodomy statute] beyond its

Please see **SODOMY CASE** on Page 6

MORE INFO

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national news

Gay Latinos flexing newfound political muscle

HISPANICS, continued from Page 1

resentation in the media, Latino activists across the country said. But they also are concerned about issues specific to their ethnic group, like immigration and support from mainstream gay civil rights organizations.

"I think there are issues of convergence that a number of organizations and individuals can agree on," Ornelas-Quintero said. "It's like hate crimes — it's a top issue for mainstream GLBT groups, but it ranks lower down for Latino groups. Immigration is a top mainstream Latino issue, and for GLBT Latino groups, too. The point of convergence is the Permanent Partners Immigration Act."

The legislation would modify the federal Immigration & Nationality Act to provide same-sex partners of U.S. citizens the same immigration rights currently awarded to legal spouses of U.S. citizens. It would expand the federal definition of family to include permanent partners.

The growth of a movement

Most activists agree that the current gay Latino movement began to take form in the mid-1970s in San Francisco when Rodrigo Reyes formed the Gay & Lesbian Latino Alliance (GALLA). When Reyes died of AIDS in 1992, the movement temporarily faltered, but several satellite groups sprang up around the country in the mid-to-late 1990s.

While LLEGÓ remains the only national group for gay Hispanics, it is far from the only organization focusing on gay Latino interests. States with large Latino populations like California, New York and Texas are home to smaller groups.

Many states have at least one gay Latino service organization, according to resource guides maintained by *qvMagazine* and *Tentaciones*, two of the leading gay Latino magazines in the U.S.

Mano y Mano, a coalition of New York Latino gay organizations, is an example of the size and focus of gay Latino groups today.

Founded in 1997, the group gets its focus and a large amount of its strength from HIV/AIDS funding. Based out of the Latino Commission on AIDS office, the group is currently fighting two fronts, according to Director Andres Duque.

The Somos Project seeks to combat homophobia among Latinos, while the Capacity Building Project provides grants to smaller gay Hispanic organizations in New York, he said.

LLEGÓ raises the profile of gay Latinos as a whole, but it is difficult for a national organization to speak for the diversity that defines individual gay Latinos, Duque said.

"While we support and celebrate the incredible diversity and number of Latino gay organizations that exist just in New York and see strength in having these organizations do collaborative and individual work, mainstream organizations often interpret this as weakness and get confused when they cannot identify one person or institution that can act as a spokesperson for the whole," he said.

Duque does not eschew partnerships



Martin Ornelas-Quintero, executive director of the National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization, helped organize a meeting Tuesday between gay Latino activists and members of Congress, including Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.).

with more mainstream groups — Mano a Mano has partnered with the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, a media watchdog group — but lack of outside recognition does not preclude "doing our own work our way," he said.

But that confusion among mainstream groups can impact fund-raising, Duque said.

While LLEGÓ boasts a \$2.8 million budget, most of the smaller gay Latino groups operate on much less, according to activists.

Focus on Latino issues?

Lack of attention to Latino issues by mainstream gay organizations helped motivate the founding of some gay Latino groups, said Martha Duffer, executive director of ALLGO, a gay Latino group in Austin, Texas.

"Mainstream gay groups are not interested in working with people of color beyond tokenism, particularly when it brings in economic and other social justice issues, which they tend to mistakenly believe to be unrelated to their focus," Duffer said.

"Similarly, mainstream Latino groups are hesitant to compromise their 'causes' by visibly aligning with GLBT Latinos/as due to fear of alienating some of their supporters," she said.

But that appears to be changing as groups like the Human Rights Campaign, GLAAD and the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force point to recent outreach efforts to gay Hispanics.

GLAAD attended the 2002 Latin Pride Festival in Los Angeles and held its first Latino Media Symposium focusing on gay coverage, according to Mónica Taher, GLAAD's western regional media manager.

The Washington, D.C.-based HRC, the nation's largest gay civil rights group, reached out to Latinos last year, according to Donna Payne, HRC's constituent field organizer.

HRC partnered with LLEGÓ for the last five years and sponsored two Latin Pride celebrations in 2002, Payne said. HRC also lobbies members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus on gay issues.

Mainstream Latino civil rights groups also appear to be warming to gay issues, activists said.

The National Council of La Raza, the largest and oldest national Latino civil rights organization in the U.S., drew fire last year when an official said the group does not "con-

done Latinos that are lesbian or gay."

The statement prompted a public conflict with LLEGÓ, which demanded a public apology. La Raza officials later characterized the statement and its ensuing controversy as a misunderstanding.

"La Raza has very strong ties to GLBT issues," said Lisa Navarrette, public relations director for the organization. "We have supported ENDA and hate crimes legislation from the beginning, and we were the first Latino civil rights group to become involved in the fight against HIV and AIDS in the mid-1980s."

"There is absolutely nothing anti-gay about the organization," Navarrette said.

LLEGÓ representatives agreed with La Raza's assessment of the conflict.

But while La Raza promotes gay issues, not all Latino families are as accepting.

"Gay activity is more accepted as a past-time among Latinos than Caucasians," said Carlos Munos, a gay activist in Dallas. "Many Latino mothers have a saying: 'He got stung by a bug, and he'll be over it soon.'"

"The only problem is if the 'gay activity' becomes permanent," he said. "Then it's like many other ethnic communities, where all you hear is how you've shamed the family."

In some Latino communities, gays still find the slur "jota" hurled at them — the Spanish equivalent of dyke or faggot, activists said.

Media images

Some gay Latino activists decry perceptions of a low profile — "Invisible to whom? We've always been able to see each other," Ornelas-Quintero said — but others point to poor portrayals of gay Hispanics in both gay publications and daily newspapers.

In gay publications such as *Out*, *Genre* and the *Advocate*, as well as TV shows like Showtime's "Queer as Folk" and NBC's hit sitcom "Will & Grace," images are overwhelmingly white, according to GLAAD's Media Reference Guide.

HBO's hit drama "The Sopranos" did go against the grain and showcase gay Latinos last year, but as drug dealers. "Will & Grace," considered by some gay activists as the standard bearer for gay television shows, includes a Latino character, but she's a maid with ongoing immigration troubles.

"When they are included in television shows that represent gay life, it is often by focusing on racial stereotypes or using

them for humor which can affect self-esteem," said Loren Javier, cultural interest manager for GLAAD.

"We are, however, seeing more recently positive representation of LGBT Latinos on television shows such as 'Resurrection Blvd.' and the 'George Lopez Show,' which hopefully is a sign that the media is starting to value our community's diversity," Javier said.

Political muscle

With increasing numbers and growing visibility, gay Latinos are also flexing their political muscle.

On Tuesday, gay Latinos held their first event on Capitol Hill when dozens of executives from health agencies that serve Latinos and gays met with members of Congress, according to Noemí Pérez, LLEGÓ's director of policy and public affairs.

"We are stepping up our involvement on the Hill," said Pérez, who called the event a major success.

Included in the session were gay Reps. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) and Jim Kolbe (R-Ariz.), as well as Reps. Linda Sanchez and Xavier Becerra, both Democrats from California, and Rep. Tom Udall (D-N.M.).

Frank thanked LLEGÓ and other Latino gay advocates for opposing efforts to "drive a wedge" among Latinos over social issues like gay rights, according to Pérez.

"It's important to know the role you play in preventing the right wing from breaking us apart," Frank said.

This month LLEGÓ will host a workshop on lobbying legislators about gay Latino concerns, an important step, according to Ornelas-Quintero.

In 2000, Latinos represented 19 percent of new reported AIDS cases in the U.S., though they constituted less than 13 percent of the population, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

The rate of AIDS per 100,000 Latinos was 22.5, compared to 6.6 for whites and 58.1 for blacks.

In Massachusetts, Sen. Jarrett Barrios turned two terms in the state House of Representatives in to a successful run for state Senate, becoming one of the few openly gay statewide elected Latino officials in history.

Barrios recently introduced legislation calling for civil unions in Massachusetts.

"I suspect there are people in my community who are troubled by my sexual orientation or some of the things that I have done," he said. "But they've never spoken to me about it."

i MORE INFO

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www.nclr.org

local news

Activists: Freedom to marry 'within reach'

ANTI-GAY, continued from Page 1

may prevail in the current Texas Legislature, which is majority Republican.

"I think this issue is indicative of how things will be for the GLBT community this session," Ellis said. "The feeling in Austin is that the far right will jump at every chance they get to attack our community. We can not allow this to continue.

"Every legislator that supports this bill will hear from our members," he added. "And in the November 2004 election, legislators that supported this bill will hear from us again. We are not going to simply disappear, and there will be a price to pay for supporting this hateful bill."

Last session, a Texas Defense of Marriage Act was passed out of the Texas Senate, but failed to make it out of committee in the House of Representatives, LGRL officials note. Lobbyists contend that the shift in the balance of power in the House after the November elections increases the possibility of this session's bill passing both chambers of the Legislature.

National issue

Thirty-six states across the country have enacted laws in recent years that limit legal recognition of civil marriages to heterosexual couples. And this year, conservative lawmakers in both Texas and Utah hope to advance similar proposals.

But civil rights advocates working for equal marriage rights for same-sex couples are not waving any white flags.

"Winning the freedom to marry is within reach," said Evan Wolfson, executive director of the Freedom to Marry Collaborative, a national organization based in New York City. "The more we talk about it, the more we force the discussion around marriage, rather than running away from the word, the more we tug the center in our direction."

Mary Bonauto, civil rights project director at the Boston-based Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, a legal rights organization, expressed optimism this month about the outcome of a lawsuit GLAD filed in 2001 on behalf of seven gay couples in Massachusetts who are seeking the legal right to marry. Similar cases are pending in New Jersey and Indiana.

"We wouldn't have filed the case unless we thought the court would be fair to us," she said. "Massachusetts has a strong state constitution and strong liberty protections. In some ways, we couldn't be in a better place. But it's still a marriage case."

Bonauto is GLAD's lead attorney on the legal case, filed on behalf of couples in Massachusetts who argue that the right to marry whom they choose is protected under the state constitution. Jennifer Levi of GLAD is Bonauto's co-counsel on the case. The plaintiffs



Randall Ellis, executive director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, calls House Bill 38, a Defense of Marriage Act, 'a slap in the face' to gay Texans.

also contend that Massachusetts cannot justify denying same-sex couples from marriage and the numerous legal benefits it provides.

Overcoming DOMA

Bonauto is scheduled to argue the case before the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court during the first week of March. The seven-member court, which includes many judges appointed by Republican politicians, is expected to render a decision in the summer, she said.

Bonauto said last year that the first state to allow marriage for same-sex couples would provide a legal basis to challenge the federal law that bans them.

Congress approved and President Clinton signed the federal Defense of Marriage Act in 1996 to prohibit federal recognition of gay marriages. DOMA also purports to grant states the right not to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states.

Bonauto, who is gay, also applauded efforts by state lawmakers from California to Connecticut, who are pushing forward marriage, civil union and sweeping domestic partnership proposals designed to garner same-sex couples the same legal rights available to heterosexual counterparts.

In Massachusetts, several lawmakers have proposed a civil union bill similar to the law passed in Vermont in 2000 that grants gay couples virtually all the rights and responsibilities of marriage that are afforded by state law. This marks the first time Massachusetts lawmakers will confront the issues of civil unions.

A bill legalizing same-sex marriages and a proposal that would grant health care benefits to the domestic partners of public employees also have been proposed in the Massachusetts legislature this year.

The introduction of the bills follows a battle last year in Massachusetts over an anti-gay constitutional amendment, which would have reserved the rights and benefits of wedlock to unions between one man and one woman. The voter-initiated amendment died on Dec. 31, but supporters have filed a suit with the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court to resuscitate it.

Edward Pawlick, a lawyer for the Massachusetts Citizens for Marriage, said the pro-gay bills do not reflect the will of the state's citizens.

"I think there are very few people in Massachusetts who want what they have in Vermont," he said.

Since Vermont approved its bill in 2000, lawmakers in five states — California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Rhode Island and Washington — have introduced civil union legislation, according to the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force.

"It's very important that in state legislatures and in the public at large that there be discus-

sions and visibility about who gay families are," Bonauto said during a telephone interview from her home, as her 1-year-old twin daughters vied for attention in the background. "We don't have the same protections every family needs."

N.J. suit progresses

In New Jersey last June, seven gay and lesbian couples filed a lawsuit against the State of New Jersey in Hudson County Superior Court in Jersey City seeking the right to marry. The case will be moved to Mercer County, based on the attorney general's request, and is expected to reach the state Supreme Court by mid-2004.

"We're finding a rapidly growing interest on the part of couples to get legal recognition of their relationships," said David Buckel, coordinator of Lambda Legal's Marriage Project and lead counsel on the New Jersey case.

"We're working in all states but felt this most keenly in New Jersey," he said, "where the latest census reflects there are 16,000 same-sex couples."

Like in Massachusetts, Lambda Legal officials said the lawsuit is based solely on the New Jersey Constitution so the state Supreme Court will most likely have the last word in the case.

Fifty-five organizations, including Lambda Legal, the ACLU of New Jersey, and the state's National Organization for Women chapter, are sponsoring the meetings. They are titled "Supporting All Roads to Justice: Marriage Equality in the Courts, Domestic Partnership in the Legislature."

"Perhaps the most important message these

town meetings will send is that you don't have to choose between supporting marriage equality and domestic partnership recognition," Deborah Jacobs, executive director of the ALCU of New Jersey, said in a written statement.

Buckel agreed. "We've seen a tremendous step forward in our community in New Jersey with the statewide recognition that domestic partnerships work and marriage work can go hand-in-hand," he said. "We've often had this problem of folks viewing them as mutually exclusive."

Wolfson of the Freedom to Marry Collaborative echoed Buckel.

"We should each do our part, thinking how it contributes to the larger whole and not just go for the easiest, quickest, most attainable short-term fix," he said. "Any piece of work we do should be connected to this larger engagement under way to move the middle of the public in support of our freedom to marry and full equality."

Wolfson said gay civil rights leaders in several states are thinking about these issues in a more strategic way.

"Too often, activists respond to the pressures of the moment or limit our broader civil rights agenda to what can be attained on a legislative agenda, instead of focusing on this broader public engagement," he said.

Buckel noted that gay civil rights advocates are working on an important domestic partnership bill in the New Jersey legislature. It is important, he said, because it calls for making extensive legal protections available to gay couples.

The Associated Press contributed to this report

i MORE INFO

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national news

Opponents of Texas sodomy law file amicus briefs

SODOMY CASE, continued from Page 3

lawyers' declaration that the law reflects a choice about the morality of those acts," they wrote. "Given the way [the sodomy law] actually operates, it does not serve as a means of preventing these acts. It can be explained only as a means of singling out gay people for burdens not imposed on other individuals. The law can and is used as an excuse to persecute gay people, even if it is seldom directly enforced."

Ban all sodomy laws?

William B. Rubenstein, a law professor at the University of California at Los Angeles, helped write the legal brief submitted by the Lambda Legal attorneys. He said the Supreme Court justices could adopt their equal protection argument and, depending on how they wrote their legal opinion, it might not address the action of states whose sodomy laws apply to homosexual and heterosexual adults.

"However, it's fair to say that the laws, nonetheless, have a special impact on gay people," he said. "So the court could essentially use the same argument we use as a way to strike down all sodomy laws,

saying they generally have this unequal impact on gay people that renders them unconstitutional."

Delmore, one of the assistant district attorneys in Harris County, said that in the Supreme Court brief that Texas officials plan to submit in February, they essentially will expound on the argument they used in the case at lower court levels.

Lawyers for the State of Texas have said there is no need for the courts to intervene in a debate that is ongoing in various state legislatures. They also have said the Supreme Court's decision in *Bowers vs. Hardwick* should remain intact.

"In light of the fact that homosexual anal sodomy was viewed as criminal behavior under state law and the common law for a period of centuries, that conduct could not conceivably have achieved the status of a 'fundamental right' in the brief period of 16 years since *Bowers* was decided," they said in a brief to the Texas Court of Appeals.

Lawyers for Texas also argued in the previous filing that though morality is a fluid concept and public opinion about moral issues might change over time, "what has not changed is the understanding that government may require adherence to certain widely-accepted moral standards and sanction deviation

from those standards, so long as it does not interfere with constitutionally protected liberties."

Laws 'fuel anti-gay bias'

The Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay political organization, submitted a brief opposing the Texas sodomy law, along with various other civil rights groups, including the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, the National Center for Lesbian Rights in San Francisco, the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund, and all the gay civil rights organizations in states that have sodomy laws intact.

Liz Seaton, senior counsel for HRC, said they argue in part that sodomy laws brand lesbian and gay people as criminals and that stigma fuels anti-gay bias, discrimination and violence against that population.

Roger Pilon, vice president for legal affairs and director of the Cato Institute's Center for Constitutional Studies, said that organization's brief questions whether the government has any business intruding into the sexual lives of people and into the privacy of their homes.

The Cato Institute is a nonpartisan, libertarian think tank in Washington, D.C.,

that often takes conservative positions.

"It was a matter of coming to the defense of individual liberty and limited constitutional government," he said.

Dana Berliner, senior attorney for the Institute for Justice, a libertarian organization in Washington, D.C., echoed Pilon.

"The state has no more power to criminalize consenting adult sexual conduct than it does to regulate what I make for dinner or what time I go to bed," she said. "It's hard to imagine a more stark example of invasive government power than the power to go into bedrooms and tell consenting adults which exact activities they may or may not engage in."

The Institute for Justice also submitted an amicus brief in *Dale vs. Boys Scouts of America*. In that case, Berliner said her organization argued that the Boy Scouts should be able to exclude gay people as members.

"Although it might seem that these positions in these cases are conflicting, we think our position is the same, namely that it's just not government's business to say the Boy Scouts have to let gay people in, even if that's the right thing to do," she said. "And it's not the government's place to say things about morality."

Rhonda Smith can be reached at rsmith@washblade.com.



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around the nation

Recording industry's chief lobbyist to quit high-profile post



Hilary Rosen, a lesbian and chief executive of the Recording Industry Association of America, will quit her \$1 million-a-year job by year's end. (Photo by Dennis Cook/AP)

WASHINGTON — Hilary Rosen announced Jan. 23 she would step down as chief executive of the Recording Industry Association of America, effective at the end of the year, the New York Times reported. Rosen is the partner of Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay political group. Birch has also announced she will leave her post at the end of 2003. The couple said they want to spend more time with their children, twins who were adopted as infants in 1999. Rosen, the music industry's most prominent lobbyist in Washington, headed popular programs like Rock the Vote, while not backing away from controversial issues, such as the recording industry's 1999 lawsuit to curb the free music Web site Napster. She said she is unsure what she will do next. "I've been asked to sit on some corporate boards. I'm sure I'll look at other things. But for the next year, I will be focused here," said Rosen, who earns more than \$1 million per year.

Domestic partner benefits rare in the NFL, survey shows

SAN FRANCISCO — A recent survey by the gay sports Web site Outsports.com found that many teams in the National Football League are unwilling to even discuss the issue of domestic partner benefits, much less offer the benefits to their staff and players. Outsports.com contacted the NFL's 32 teams, the NFL Players Association and the NFL's administrative office. The league office employs about 400 people and does not offer DP benefits, although "it is something we've been looking at," Greg Aiello, the NFL's vice president of public relations, told Outsports.com. Only one team, the San Francisco 49ers, said it offers DP benefits to staff, although the team's players do not receive the benefits because they are covered by a collective bargaining agreement. Of the other 31 teams, 13 did not respond to the survey, seven responded but refused to comment, and 11 said they don't offer DP benefits. A handful of NFL players were caught in controversy recently when they made anti-gay statements.

Court witness sues lawyer who called her 'man-hater'

PHILADELPHIA — A woman who testified against Ira Einhorn at his murder trial is suing the former hippie guru's attorney, claiming he damaged her reputation by calling her a man-hater, the Associated Press reported. Genie O'Brien filed her lawsuit Jan. 23 in U.S. District Court, saying she is not a man-hater or lesbian and seeking unspecified damages from attorney William T. Cannon. O'Brien testified that she saw Einhorn's girlfriend, Holly Maddux, bruised and intimidated during her years with him. Einhorn was convicted and sentenced to life without parole for murdering Maddux in 1977, but jumped bail in 1981 and was on the lam for 20 years before he was extradited from France. After O'Brien's testimony, Cannon told reporters outside the courthouse that she and another female witness "seem to be ... the kind of ladies who are part of the pro-feminism movement, who might be termed man-haters."

W. Va. scraps gay-inclusive anti-bullying program

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — West Virginia's attorney general's office is dropping an anti-bullying program for public schools that conservative groups had alleged promoted homosexuality, the Associated Press reported. "A program that has aroused so much controversy and objection is no longer useful," said Managing Deputy Attorney General Fran Hughes. The Civil Rights Team Project operated in about 20 public schools until October, when parents and conservative groups complained. Under the attorney general's program, a handful of students from each school served as role models and reported and stopped harassment. Some of the program's material, which was removed by the attorney general's office late last year, suggested that role model students wear T-shirts with slogans like "Straight but not narrow" and use words like "parent" instead of mother and father or "date" instead of boyfriend or girlfriend.

Groups oppose military gay ban, impending Iraq war

WASHINGTON — As the U.S. readies for war with Iraq, the largest human rights organization based in the country announced on Jan. 23 its opposition to the U.S. military's ban on openly gay soldiers, known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." "The US prides itself on its human rights record yet it permits its military to remain a bastion of officially sanctioned discrimination against homosexuals," Human Rights Watch said in a report. But a spokesperson for the Pentagon told the Agence France-Presse that "the Department of Defense remains committed to treating all service members with dignity and respect, while fairly enforcing the provisions of the law." Meanwhile, the Audre Lorde Project and the LGBT Program of the American Friends Service Committee released on Jan. 27 an "Open Letter to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two Spirit and Transgender Communities Opposing War." The letter is signed by 20 other gay groups.

From staff and wire reports

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medical report

Skin infection among gay men 'viciously resistant' to treatment



Gary Cohan, a gay physician, is one of several AIDS experts in Los Angeles raising concerns about a new drug-resistant skin infection seen in gay men in the area.

LOS ANGELES — An emerging epidemic of drug-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, known as staph, is striking gay men in the area, leaving them with severe boils, deep abscesses and widespread surrounding inflammation, according to the Los Angeles Times. The painful skin infections started appearing last fall, but it took doctors until recently to confirm a connection between the cases. The infection appears to be spread by skin-to-skin contact, including sex, but could also be contracted at health clubs, steam rooms and other warm, moist environments. Dr. Gary Cohan, the gay managing director of Pacific Oaks Medical Group in Beverly Hills, one of the nation's largest private AIDS practices, said he used to see one antibiotic-resistant staph case a year among hospitalized AIDS patients. Now, two patients a week come to the office with "abscesses filled with a viciously resistant staph." "The concern is this organism could spread to and cause disease in the community at large," said Dr. Peter Ruane, an infectious disease specialist in Los Angeles. "It seems to be able to attack normal skin in healthy people."

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S.D. lawmakers consider bill loosening constraints in HIV reporting

PIERRE, S.D. — A state House committee approved last week a bill granting the Iowa Health Department legal authority to alert prosecutors about people with AIDS who are having sex without disclosing their medical status, according to the Associated Press. The bill now heads to the House floor for additional debate. "We need the ability, in very rare instances, to present that information to law enforcement when someone displays a blatant disregard of public health statutes," said Doneen Hollingsworth, state health secretary. The legislation was prompted by last year's conviction of a college student who had sex with his girlfriend without letting her know he was HIV positive. The state ACLU said the bill would violate a person's right to privacy and could cause people to avoid telling their doctors if they suspect they are infected with the disease.

Experimental AIDS vaccine from Emory sees human tests

ATLANTA — An AIDS vaccine developed at Emory University is being tested on human subjects, university official told the Associated Press last week. Some 30 volunteers are enrolled in the initial series of clinical trials in three cities, including San Francisco and Birmingham, Ala. "Every new AIDS vaccine candidate that enters human studies brings us closer to understanding HIV and the human immune system, and to ending the worldwide AIDS pandemic," said Rafi Ahmed, director of Emory's Vaccine Center. The experimental vaccine applies a new two-step strategy but neither component incorporates the actual virus into subjects. Emory researchers said it induces the immune system to respond to specific features of HIV so the system can respond to the actual virus if it should appear. The first clinical trial, planned to run for a year, will focus on assessing the safety of a DNA primer vaccine among HIV-negative volunteers, according to AP.

Poor coping skills limit quality of life for people with HIV

WASHINGTON — People with HIV who live in pain or "give up trying to deal with" the disease have less energy and more limits on their activities, according to a new study reported by the Health Behavior News Service. Pain was also a big factor in diminishing the quality of life for the study participants, who said that it affected everything from their ability to carry groceries to their performance at work and at school, according to researcher Dr. Mark Vosvick of the University of North Texas. "When treating patients with HIV, health care providers must attend not only to disease status but also to the individual's reports of pain. This is particularly important given that pain is often under-treated in AIDS patients," Vosvick said. He and colleagues collected information from 142 HIV-positive women and men about their coping strategies, overall health and pain, and their quality of life.

Gates provides \$200 million for medical research

WASHINGTON — Pursuing a novel idea for preventing or treating AIDS is among the possibilities software billionaire Bill Gates hopes to spur with \$200 million for promising but overlooked medical research for diseases in poor countries, the Washington Post reported. "There has got to be, given market signals, systematic underinvestment in research on diseases of people who cannot afford medical treatment," Gates said in announcing the grant from his charitable foundation. "It's just a basic fact that 90 percent of the world's health research spending goes on 10 percent of the problems." The \$200 million will be disbursed after a committee of scientists from around the world spends about nine months identifying what Gates called the "grand challenges" of global health.

From staff and wire reports



police beat

Suspected serial killer of gay men indicted in N.J.

TOMS RIVER, N.J. — A grand jury indicted suspected serial killer Richard W. Rogers Jr., 52, on two counts of first-degree murder Jan. 21 in the dismemberment killings of two gay men, according to the Philadelphia Inquirer. Rogers stands accused in the July 1992 death of Thomas R. Mulcahy, 58, and the May 1993 slaying of Anthony Marrero, 44. Rogers, a nurse, is suspected but not charged in at least three other similar killings. Prosecutor Thomas Kelaher said no decision has been made on seeking the death penalty against Rogers, who was arrested in May 2001 through a national law enforcement fingerprint network. Prints from the killings matched a set taken from Rogers when he was arrested in the 1973 hammer slaying of a fellow student. Rogers was acquitted in that case. He remains held on \$1 million bail. No date has been set for his arraignment.

Richard W. Rogers Jr., was indicted by a grand jury for his suspected role in the homicides of Thomas R. Mulcahy and Anthony Marrero, both gay men. (Photos by AP)



Ninth victim added to death toll in South African massacre

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — Sex workers and members of four gay organizations joined the African National Congress to host a Jan. 26 memorial service for nine men killed at a gay massage parlor, according to the Cape Times. As names of eight dead were being released once families identified the bodies, the ninth victim — one of two who initially survived being bound and having his throat slit — was added to the death toll. A 10th victim is in critical condition. Cape Town's Triangle Project agreed to manage a relief fund for the victims' families and to "work with the police," said Dawn Betteridge, Triangle director. Police remain tightlipped on the investigation, but sources have said that they seek information on four white men seen leaving the scene. Some leads indicate the massacre was sparked by money owed in a drug deal.

Letter from suspected Calif. trans killer won't be released

SAN JOSE, Calif. — A judge ruled Jan. 17 that a letter implicating one of four suspects in the killing of transgendered teen Gwen Araujo will not be made public, according to the San Jose Mercury News. Judge Dennis J. McLaughlin said that lawyers did not follow proper procedures submitting the letter for evidence. Jailers intercepted the letter, written by co-defendant Jaron Nabors, detailing Jason Cazares' alleged role in the Oct. 4 slaying. Deputy District Attorney Connie Campbell called the ruling fair. "It complied with the law and equity," she said. Cazares, 22, Nabors, 19, Jose Merel, 23, and Michael Magidson, 22, are charged with first degree murder with a hate crime enhancement. At least one defendant — Magidson — had sexual relations with the victim, according to police. The four beat and strangled the teen at a party when Araujo was discovered as a biological male though she appeared as a female, police said. All four pleaded not guilty.

Minn. man on trial for passing HIV pleads to lesser count

IOWA CITY, Iowa — A Minnesota man accused of knowingly transmitting HIV during unprotected sex in Iowa entered a plea to a lesser crime Jan. 24 just as his trial was about to commence, according to the Associated Press. Aaron Dahlberg, 25, pleaded to one count of willful injury, in which a defendant does not admit guilt but agrees that he could be convicted based on the evidence. Dahlberg's attorney Leon Spies said the resolution stemmed from doubts both sides had about what would have been a highly publicized trial. "It was very important that there be some predictable resolution of this long ordeal, and one that still affords [Dahlberg] some semblance of privacy," Spies said. Dahlberg was charged in July 2001 with failing to reveal he was HIV positive to an unnamed man before unprotected sex. If convicted of criminal transmission of HIV, Dahlberg could have faced up to 25 years in prison. Sentencing is set for Feb. 28.

Whereabouts of misplaced gun used in gay assassination discovered

SAN FRANCISCO — For more than 24 years since a jury convicted Dan White in the 1978 killings of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk, the gun used in the slaying was missing. But a civilian clerk with the San Francisco Police Department destroyed the gun in 1983, police told the San Francisco Chronicle last week. White, a disgruntled former city supervisor, gunned down Moscone and Milk after he was refused his job back after quitting the Board of Supervisors to protest a gay rights ordinance sponsored by Milk, who was gay. Former police clerk Joe Dito, now 83, said he destroyed the .38-caliber Smith and Wesson in 1983 in accordance with the police department's operating procedure, reducing the handgun to pieces that were later taken to an iron works foundry. Dito recorded the destruction of the weapon in a police ledger that was apparently lost.

From staff and wire reports

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Issue 1162

Forum

HOUSTON VOICE

JANUARY 31, 2003

PAGE 10

editorial

Is Key West paradise lost?

Gay travel alert: An influx of drunken, young and often homophobic straight tourists has turned this gay-friendly mecca into a Daytona-Cancun-Ft. Lauderdale clone.

By KEVIN NAFF

eVERY YEAR AROUND THIS time, newspaper travel writers trot out stories touting the Caribbean and south Florida as places to escape winter's chill. Two recent pieces, one in the Dec. 8 New York Times and another in the Dec. 13 issue of *Southern Voice*, feature Key West, Fla., as a quirky, gay-friendly place to relax, watch the sunset, and hang out with the island's eclectic mix of residents.

But an unseemly element has joined that mix in recent years. In addition to the gypsy kids, gays, bikers, and wannabe pirates, Key West now attracts the Daytona Beach crowd: thousands of raucous, drunken young people apparently unaware of Key West's reputation for accepting all-comers. Anything goes on the island. Or at least it did.

There's nothing wrong with raucous, drunken fun. Countless thousands of gay men and lesbians have partied in Key West for decades. The legendary Copa nightclub was the scene of more than a few rowdy celebrations before it closed.

There is something wrong, however, with young partiers who treat the gay population — residents and tourists alike — with disdain and hostility, blissfully unaware that they've chosen a gay hot spot for their spring break revelry.

After many annual trips to Key West, my friends and I arrived last March anxious to relax and let down our guard. Gay couples had always walked hand-in-hand in Key West, even along the crowded and touristy Duval Street and Mallory Square.

There are gay guesthouses, gay bars, shops, gay snorkeling cruises, and just about any gay-exclusive activity you can imagine, from clothing-optional swimming pools and leather bars to pricey, upscale restaurants catering to a gay clientele.

BUT LAST YEAR'S VISIT SHOWED US the new, ugly side of a rapidly changing island.

We were subjected to repeated anti-gay slurs while walking along Duval Street and even the most progressive among us felt uncomfortable displaying the most benign forms of public affection. Holding hands is out of the question unless you're willing to take on a gang of drunken frat boys from Auburn.

The dwindling number of gay bars (really down to just a handful now) were packed with heterosexuals hopefully seeking out their first drag show experience. The site of the Copa, the former epicenter of Key West's gay party scene, is now occupied by a cheesy, cavernous club catering to spring breakers who are recruited by street hawkers promising all-you-can-drink Coors Light.

Evidence for Key West's changing attitudes goes beyond the anecdotal. According to Florida's most recent hate crimes report, more than 15 percent of hate crime victims in the state were targeted for their sexual orientation.

So far, Key West remains a relatively safe place for gay travelers. According to a Key West Police Department official, the island had three reported hate crimes in 2001, two of which were motivated by sexual orientation. But in the first three months of 2002, there were already two reported hate crimes, both gay-related.

Just last month, two gay men were chased and assaulted by multiple attackers after leaving the popular Bourbon Street gay bar, according to a Key West police official. Despite the relatively small numbers of hate crime attacks, the year-to-year comparison points to a rise in the incidents of reported gay-related hate crimes.

THE CAUSES OF THIS UNFORTUNATE shift in Key West's culture are as diverse as the island's population. Some responsibility likely falls on the shoulders of MTV, which picked Key West for its summer

beach house locale a couple of years ago. It was an ironic choice, given that Key West has never been known for its beaches.

After a full summer of daily over-exposure on MTV, Key West took another big step in its transformation from gay-friendly enclave to just another blighted Daytona-Cancun-Fort Lauderdale clone.

Other factors contribute to Key West's changing culture, not the least of which is the terrible toll that AIDS has taken on the area's gay residents. A visit to the AIDS memorial at the end of White Street serves as a somber reminder that the disease has devastated the island.

The cruise industry also brought change, with behemoth ships regularly docking near Mallory Square and flooding the tacky T-shirt shops and new upscale boutiques with trampling hordes from middle America. Key West's own marketing efforts ("America's Caribbean Island!") are also changing the composition of visitors.

It's a shame that some of the new visitors are spoiling the fun of gay regulars who discovered Key West for its eccentric, nonconformist culture and history of independence and tolerance. Maybe if the new revelers had a better understanding of the island's history, they would lighten up and become a more tolerant part of the mix.

Key West was settled in 1822 and by the middle of the 19th century was the wealthiest city in the U.S. The Great Depression brought tough times and Key West declared bankruptcy in 1934; a 1935 Labor Day hurricane brought more hardship to island residents, washing away their only link to mainland Florida. It took World War II to put Key West on the map again, as Naval investment helped to turn things around.

Despite the military presence, Key West residents retained their outsider identity and in 1982 took the name "the Conch Republic," proclaiming independence from the U.S. The island then declared war on the U.S., but promptly surrendered and requested economic aid.

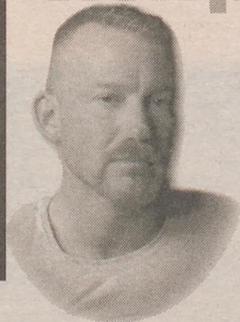
Throughout the ups and downs, island residents maintained their unique sense of identity and accepted everyone, including Afro-Caribbean people, Greeks, Cubans, gay men and lesbians, wealthy European party-seekers, bikers, sailors, fire-eaters, runaways, artists, and misfits of all description.

With a little understanding and a lot of luck, perhaps Key West can absorb the new influx of tourists and spring breakers while preserving its gay-friendly tradition. Until then, gay travelers should be prepared for an experience not entirely picture postcard perfect.

@ Kevin Naff is news editor of the *Washington Blade*, a sister publication to *Houston Voice* and can be reached at knauff@washblade.com.



viewpoint WILL CLARK



Adult videos do influence how we behave. That's why the industry needs to take a firm stand to promote safer sex and not barebacking.

Condom-less porn is back

I'VE BEEN INVOLVED IN ONE WAY OR another in the gay porn business for much of the past eight years — from stage performer to actor to columnist to fund-raiser to activist championing AIDS causes in an era when most people seem to forget that AIDS still exists.

The biggest challenge of my porn career has been in fighting one particular battle: holding the industry to the commitment it made years ago to portray safer-sex images in our product.

Just because we can make a video depicting two guys doing it without rubbers, should we? That's today's ethical question.

Sadly, showing unsafe sex and slapping a trendy name on it has become big business. Even the most ardent supporters for promoting responsible behavior on video have started a long, dark slide that threatens to encompass the entire industry and do away with condoms in gay porn altogether.

Chi Chi LaRue is the only director in the gay porn industry who has had the balls to make a public promise not to ever show unsafe sex in his videos.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO SHOW IMAGES that are promoting safer sex in gay porn?

I believe that we all learn things conscious-

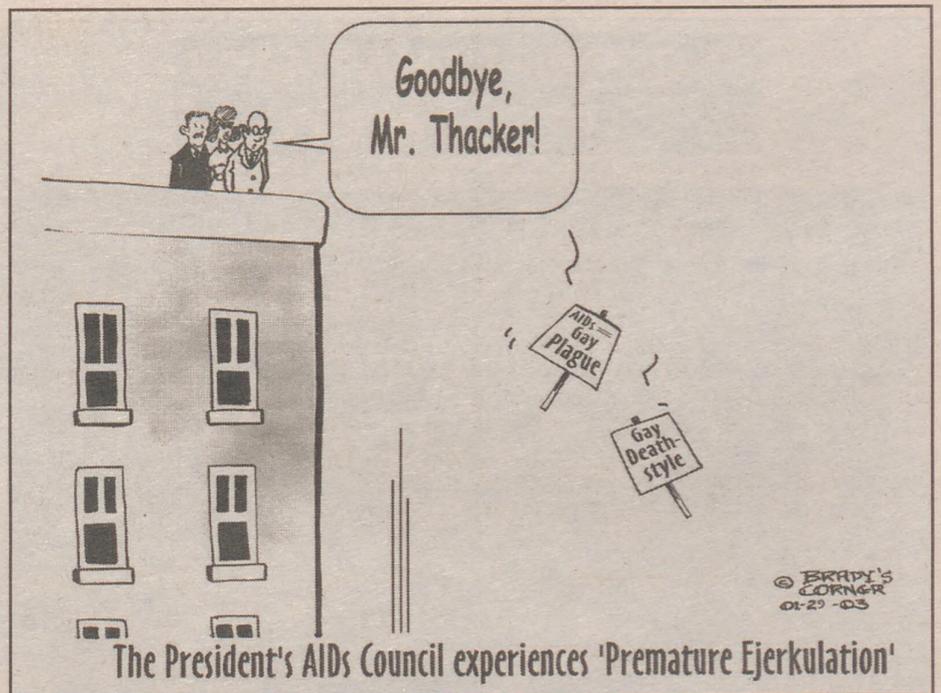
ly or subconsciously from watching gay porn. Maybe it's a new position, or a fetish we never thought would turn us on. Or maybe discovering we get turned on by sex in unusual locations — a barn, the woods, Home Depot.

If we aren't in some way influenced by gay porn, how do you explain the peroxide blondes, shaved pubes and the popularity of Calvin Klein underwear? OK, I'm being facetious. But the reality is that Madison Avenue knows that folks are influenced by the media — all media.

Many of us find ourselves in situations where we're asked to choose, sometimes explicitly, sometimes tacitly, whether to engage in unsafe behavior: This isn't really a moral choice so much as it is thinking through how a moment of passion could likely lead to a lifetime of taking pills and wondering if that cough is "it."

I'm sure that the whole culture of sharing loads and eroticizing unsafe behavior stems from our positive brothers trying to re-ignite our sex culture, which was eclipsed for so many years. The videos are merely a symptom of that rather than the cause.

STILL THE QUESTION REMAINS: JUST because we can make this kind of product, should we?



My own personal hell began three years ago when I questioned the wisdom of Adult Video News nominating an unsafe sex video for a "Best Of" award at the GayVNs.

The year before I had been honored with a performer's award for my efforts around the country raising money and awareness for AIDS causes. So it's not as though I leapt into the fray without some background in championing this cause.

AVN claimed that they had to nominate the video and had to review and promote them because they "are part of the industry." So are child porn and snuff films.

Their response was a hissy fit that those things are illegal and showing unsafe sex is not. I then posed the above question to them: Just because you can, should you? Their answer was to blackball me in the industry. Big corporate magazine distributed to all the adult shops around the country vs. Will Clark, a performer-turned-columnist ... fair fight, huh?

I even received threats from the unsafe-sex video companies themselves. They threatened

to sue me. Their performers sent me death threats. I particularly liked the guy who said he was going to come over and rape me and infect the executive director at an AIDS agency.

Although those issues have thankfully subsided, even writing this column gives me pause. Do I want to raise the issue and risk going through all that again?

In other words, just because I can write about it, should I? The answer, for me, is yes.

Despite any personal loss, there is a larger concern here. We as a community need to recommit ourselves to staying safe no matter our HIV status.

The temptations to practice unsafe sex are fierce and all around us. But now is not the time to give up. Every day I have to recommit to practicing safer sex.

Images and sexy talk lure us all into thinking that safer sex is no big deal anymore. It is.

@ Will Clark is an adult video star and activist and can be reached at willclark1@aol.com.

ETHAN Encore.....

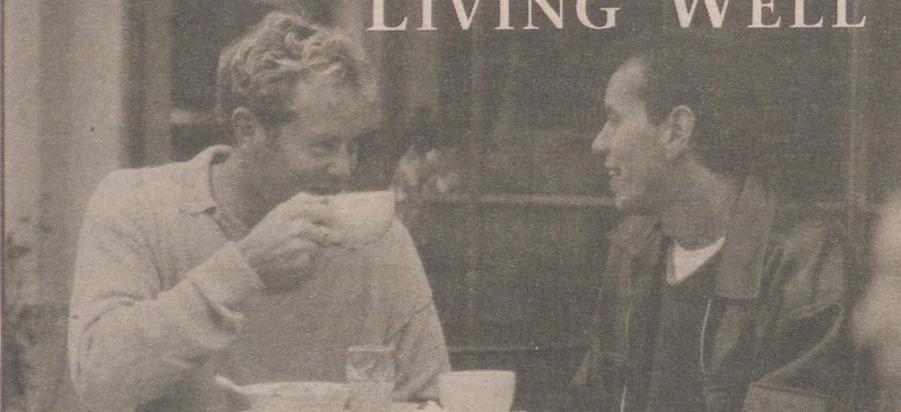
by Eric Orner

<p>After The 3 day weekend you had to work.</p> <p>With Ethan Green</p>	<p>Feeling ISOLATED AFTER WORKING OVER a 3-DAY WEEKEND, our Hero CALLS A FEW FRIENDS TO SEE WHAT HE MISSED..</p>	<p>Your 20 - something friends</p> <p>ETHAN, THAT PARTY WUZ THE BOMB! YAH. SORRY YOU MISSED IT DUDE X GOTTA GOTTA 'NOTHER CALL. LATER!</p>	<p>Your 30 - something friends</p> <p>EeTh, IT WAS THE BEST WEEKEND EVER! VERY HOT PARTY. NEXT TIME YOU GOTTA TELL THAT BOSS OF YOURS TO GO WHOOP! I GOTTA CONFERENCE CALL. GOTTA RUN. MUAH MUAH!</p>
<p>Your 40 - something friends</p> <p>MISS GREEN YOU MISSED AN EXCEL- LENT EVENT GIRLFRIEND. YOU'RE BECOMING A REG- ULAR BOB CRATCHIT. WHAT? CRATCHIT... THE GUY WHO WORKED FOR SCROOGE.? NEVER MIND. BUT PLEASE MARY DON'T YOU KNOW ABOUT CALLING IN SICK? YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN WHO WAS THERE: EVERYBODY I HAD MY PHOTO TAKEN WITH MARLO THOMAS..</p>	<p>Your 50 - something friends</p> <p>JUST TAXING BACK FROM THE AIRPORT DEAR. THE EDITH PIAR FESTIVAL WAS EXTRAORDINARY! YOUR PROVENCE WAS THERE! BRIGITTE BARDOT, JERRY LEWIS, BOTH MRS. MIT- TERANDS. SIGH. SO FABULOUS. & YOUR OTHER AUNTIE HAD ONE TOO MANY GRAND MARNIERS & WOUND UP KISSING GERARD DEPARDE UNDER A BANQUET TABLE.. .. HOW WAS YOUR WEEKEND DEAR?... OH MY. NOW DYAB</p>	<p>Your best friend.</p> <p>THE PARTY SUCKED YOU DIDN'T MISS A THING</p> <p>SURE.</p> <p>(PAUSE) BUCK?</p> <p>Yeah?</p> <p>THANKS FOR BEING MY BEST FRIEND.</p> <p>My pleasure</p>	

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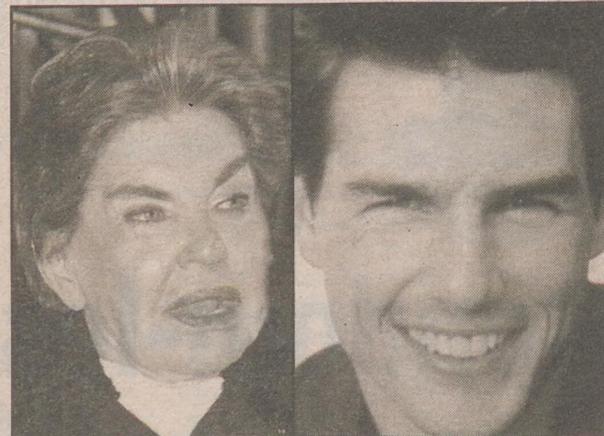
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on the record

"He's gay! He's a fag!"
Leona Helmsley, upon seeing actor Tom Cruise on television, according to testimony from her ex-security chief at a trial in which the hotel magnate is accused of discriminating against a gay employee (New York Post, Jan. 22)



"The coffee won't turn you gay. I actually had somebody ask me that once, in an e-mail."

Catherine Kelly, co-founder of GayCoffees, www.gaycoffees.com, a company that gives back a portion of revenue from coffee sold to gay and AIDS-related charities (Associated Press, Jan. 22)

"He is the kind of American statesman and public servant that we all pray God will give us more of."

Rev. Rob Schenck, president of the National Clergy Council, on Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore, who in a judicial opinion, described homosexuality as "so heinous that it defies one's ability to describe it"; Moore received an honorary doctorate in divinity from the council and the Methodist Episcopal Church U.S.A. (Associated Press, Jan. 21)



"If it were just about higher ratings, we would put **Bill Hemmer** in a tight, white T-shirt and our numbers will go up. But I'm not sure it would be good for the brand."

Jim Walton, CNN chairman, on the ratings war being won by racier Fox News Network, referring to the hunky male anchor who has something of a cult following among some heterosexual women and gay men (Associated Press, Jan. 24)

"His stated view that AIDS is a 'gay plague' is both offensive and wrong. As Mr. Thacker's own tragic illness makes clear, HIV/AIDS is an epidemic that afflicts men, women and children of all backgrounds. And — more importantly — every person living with HIV deserves treatment and compassion."

Sen. Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.), reacting to news that Jerry Thacker, who has referred to homosexuality as "a deathstyle," had withdrawn his name after being named by the White House to the Presidential Advisory Commission on HIV & AIDS (Jan. 23)

"That remark is far removed from what the president believes. ... The president, in terms of what he has done for the issue of AIDS, has brought a real focus to increasing funds, both domestic and foreign policy, to help people with AIDS, the president's view is totally the opposite of that."

Bush Press Secretary Ari Fleischer, reacting to statements by PACHA nominee Jerry Thacker that AIDS is "a gay plague" (White House Press Briefing, Jan. 23)

"I mean, if I actually have a lot of gay fans out there, and there's been some fantasies. ... I mean, rock on! It's nothing but positive for me."

"Joe Millionaire" star Evan Marriotti ("Entertainment Tonight," Jan. 27)

"The city of Paris has announced a campaign to attract more gay tourists to Paris. The first step of the campaign is to roll two giant boulders to the base of the Eiffel Tower."

Talk-show host Conan O'Brien (NBC's "Late Night with Conan O'Brien," Jan. 23)



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KALETRA is indicated for the treatment of HIV infection in combination with other antiretroviral agents in patients 6 months of age or older. KALETRA does not cure HIV infection or AIDS and does not reduce the risk of passing of HIV to others.

Safety Information

KALETRA should not be taken if you have had an allergic reaction to KALETRA or any of its ingredients.

KALETRA must not be taken with certain drugs due to the potential for serious and/or life-threatening side effects. Discuss all medicines, including those without a prescription and herbal preparations, you are taking or plan to take with your doctor or pharmacist.

Pancreatitis and liver problems, which may cause death, have been

reported in patients receiving KALETRA. Tell your doctor if you have or have had liver disease such as hepatitis. Your doctor may want to monitor your liver function. In patients taking protease inhibitors, increased bleeding (in patients with hemophilia) and diabetes/high blood sugar have occurred. Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients receiving antiretroviral therapy. Some patients receiving KALETRA have had large increases in triglycerides and cholesterol.

The most commonly reported side effects of moderate or severe intensity are: abnormal bowel movements, diarrhea, feeling weak or tired, headache, and nausea. Children most often reported diarrhea, rash, taste aversion, and vomiting.

KALETRA oral solution contains alcohol.

Please see adjacent page for Patient Information.

www.kaletra.com
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May 2002

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KALETRA™
(lopinavir/ritonavir) capsules
(lopinavir/ritonavir) oral solution

ALERT: Find out about medicines that should NOT be taken with KALETRA. Please also read the section "MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH KALETRA."

Patient Information

KALETRA™
(kuh-LEE-tra)

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

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

What is KALETRA and how does it work?

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

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

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

Does KALETRA cure HIV or AIDS?

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

Does KALETRA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

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

How should I take KALETRA?

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

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

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

What happens if I take too much KALETRA?

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

As with all prescription medicines, KALETRA should be kept out of the reach of young children. KALETRA liquid contains a large

amount of alcohol. If a toddler or young child accidentally drinks more than the recommended dose of KALETRA, it could make him/her sick from too much alcohol. Contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately if this happens.

Who should not take KALETRA?

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

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

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

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

Can I take KALETRA with other medications?*

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

MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH KALETRA:

- Do not take the following medicines with KALETRA because they can cause serious problems or death if taken with KALETRA.

– Dihydroergotamine, ergonovine, ergotamine and methylergonovine such as Cafergot®, Migranal®, D.H.E. 45®, Ergotrate Maleate, Methergine, and others

– Halcion® (triazolam)

– Hismanal® (astemizole)

– Orap® (pimozide)

– Propulsid® (cisapride)

– Rythmol® (propafenone)

– Seldane® (terfenadine)

– Tambocor™ (flecainide)

– Versed® (midazolam)

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

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

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

Medicines that require dosage adjustments:

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

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

- If you are taking oral contraceptives ("the pill") to prevent pregnancy, you should use an additional or different type of contraception since KALETRA may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

- Efavirenz (Sustiva™) or nevirapine (Viramune®) may lower the amount of KALETRA in your blood. Your doctor may increase your dose of KALETRA if you are also taking efavirenz or nevirapine.

- If you are taking Mycobutin® (rifabutin), your doctor will lower the dose of Mycobutin.

- A change in therapy should be considered if you are taking KALETRA with:**
Phenobarbital
Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
Carbamazepine (Tegretol® and others)
These medicines may lower the amount of KALETRA in your blood and make it less effective.

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

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

What are the possible side effects of KALETRA?

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

are thought to be drug related are: abnormal stools (bowel movements), diarrhea, feeling weak/tired, headache, and nausea. Children taking KALETRA may sometimes get a skin rash.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What should I tell my doctor before taking KALETRA?

- If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant:** The effects of KALETRA on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known.

- If you are breast-feeding:** Do not breast-feed if you are taking KALETRA. You should not breast-feed if you have HIV. If you are a woman who has or will have a baby, talk with your doctor about the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that HIV can be transmitted through breast-feeding.

- If you have liver problems:** If you have liver problems or are infected with Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C, you should tell your doctor before taking KALETRA.

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

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

How do I store KALETRA?

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

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

General advice about prescription medicines:

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

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Out on the Bayou

Indeed, Miss Manners has come to believe that the basic political division in this country is not between liberals and conservatives, but between those who believe that they should have a say in the love lives of strangers and those who do not.
Miss Manners (Judith Martin)

Letters on gay issues in widely read columns like Judith Martin's 'Miss Manners' and Pauline and Jeanne Phillips' 'Dear Abby' are overwhelmingly respectful and supportive.



Miss Manners

Q: I am a middle-aged man who enjoys wearing women's clothing. I have always restricted this behavior to the privacy of my apartment, but now I have a wonderful opportunity to venture out ... in New York City. I am worried that it may be impolite to impose — however tastefully — my uncommon sartorial tastes on an unwitting public ...

A: Miss Manners has more faith than you do in the sophistication of New Yorkers. While it may be true that they have rarely observed anyone of lady-like appearance and demeanor whose sartorial taste runs to the subdued, modest and demure, she believes they can be trusted to absorb the shock. She wishes you pleasant holiday.

Miss Manners (Judith Martin)

Q: What should I say to a homosexual couple when I encounter them on the street?

A: How about 'hello?'

Miss Manners (Judith Martin)

Advice worth taking

By MIKE FLEMING

IT'S BEEN SAID THAT ADVICE IS THE ONLY free offering that people won't take. But even if folks don't ultimately follow what they hear, the multitude of advice columns in virtually every medium suggests that people at least seek counsel before tossing it to the wind.

And when it comes to gay issues, times have changed for columnists and readers alike.

The subject of homosexuality was scarce in mainstream columns as recently as 40 years ago, but that norm has given way to informed, thoughtful answers to gay questions, according to the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, a gay media watchdog group.

"It's not simply the fact that responses from columnists are more informed, but they now give more information," Cathy Renna, news media director for GLAAD, said in an interview two years ago.

GLAAD regularly receives calls from columnists looking for the most appropriate support referral for a troubled letter writer, she said.

SOME TRADITIONAL ADVICE COLUMNISTS, LONG known for answering questions about wedding gifts and table manners, now regularly dispense respectful responses to gay-oriented questions.

One of the most widely syndicated is "Miss Manners," penned since 1978 by Judith Martin.

When her column began, Martin made a name for herself by dispensing practical advice that put the onus of etiquette

Please see **ADVICE** on Page 16

As Miss Manners' column reaches 24 years, how has counsel on gay issues changed over the decades?

DEAR TRANSGENDERED: YOU ARE NOT A MISTAKE. I CONGRATULATE YOU FOR BEING HONEST ABOUT WHO YOU ARE, KNOWING IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT FOR SOME PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND. I ALSO APPLAUD THOSE FAMILY MEMBERS WHO SUPPORT YOU. MANY TRANSEXUALS LIVE VERY SUCCESSFULLY IN THEIR NEW GENDER AND CLAIM THEY ARE TRULY HAPPY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THEIR LIVES.

DEAR ABBY (PAULINE AND JEANNE PHILLIPS)

Dear Abby

Q: Trevor (my 10-year-old son) has taken an interest in cooking and dance. He doesn't mix well with other boys, is teased constantly ... He is effeminate and introspective. I have come to the conclusion that Trevor is a homosexual — or rather, will be when he's more developed. ... What can I do to make this 'coming out' process easier on my son?

A: The most important thing you can do for Trevor is let him know you love him unconditionally, regardless of his eventual orientation. By all means, talk to him about sexuality, in an age-appropriate way. If your son is being harassed at school, discuss it with the principal. Your son is legally entitled to an education free of harassment.

Dear Abby (Pauline and Jeanne Phillips)



out on the bayou

Advice on gay issues swings in gays' favor as years pass

ADVICE, continued from Page 15

on making people feel comfortable rather than on what is "proper." Knowing which fork to use could be an issue of too many forks on the table, rather than a chance to weed out folks "in the know" from those who aren't, Martin asserted.

That use of down-to-earth practicality now often translates into educating readers on gay issues. In response to a letter asking what to say when meeting a gay couple, Martin answered, "How about 'hello'?"

Other mainstream columnists have also offered gay-supportive advice.

"Dear Abby," founded by Pauline Phillips ("Abigail Van Buren") and written by her daughter Jeanne Phillips since 1987, and "Dear Ann Landers," which halted publication upon the death of writer Eppie Lederer (the elder Phillips' twin sister) last year, are the most widely syndicated advice columns in history.

Lederer became the first to openly discuss homosexuality in 1958 and used her influence to force some news outlets to run her gay-supportive answers.

"I've changed my mind about a few things," Lederer said in a 1990 interview with the Chicago Tribune. "Early on, I knew nothing about homosexuality. Later, I became sympathetic... I believe I helped them in their struggle for acceptance."

Lederer's realization was a windfall for



Sex columnist 'Dr. Ruth' Westheimer joins other advice mavens in consistent gay support.

Dr. Ruth' Westheimer

Dear Reproductive Mom: Whatever homosexuality is, it is not a disease that can be cured. ... There are organizations that claim to 'brainwash' a gay person into thinking that they are straight, but I don't believe that would really be what's best for your son. Rather than try to change his sexual orientation, I believe you need some help in learning how to accept his sexual orientation.

— 'Dr. Ruth' Westheimer

gays, said Meryl Cohn, who writes "Ms. Behavior," a syndicated gay advice column that regularly appears in gay newspapers.

"I remember feeling, growing up, that she made an attempt to be open-minded a bit ahead of her time," Cohn says. "She helped people of my parents' generation to feel a little less freaked out by queers."

Phillips quickly followed her sister's lead in "Dear Abby."

"When I began writing my column, homosexuality was a crime. It still is, in some places. ... I've learned a lot since then, and in recent years, closet doors have been swinging wide," Phillips writes on her Web site.

"Dr. Ruth" Westheimer, who became a

household name for matter-of-fact sex advice in the 1980s, always supported gays and regularly told gay readers and their families to accept themselves.

"[Homosexuality] is not a disease to be cured," she repeated on many occasions.

BUT EVEN WITH SUPPORT FROM mainstream columnists, there was still a void for uniquely gay quandries when Cohn began her column 11 years ago, she says.

Miss Manners and Dear Abby often tell mainstream readers how to deal with gays, but Cohn and other gay columnists directly address gay interests, she says.

"I didn't know of any other gay and lesbian advice columnists at the time, and the

mainstream ones certainly weren't addressing issues like body piercing or lesbian fashion," Cohn says. "And I've rarely seen them discuss gay and lesbian relationships."

Questions and responses have changed, even during Cohn's relatively short time in print, she says.

"I receive fewer coming out questions, which I take as a positive sign," Cohn says. "I think it means more people are already out and making their way fairly comfortably."

"I've noticed an increase in questions from gay men looking for other men who want serious relationships and ... and an increase in questions from lesbians who want casual sex but can't find other lesbians who'll boff without commitment," she adds.

Dan Savage, a columnist whose syndicated "Savage Love" is among the most widely distributed columns by an openly gay writer, bought Lederer's desk from her estate when she died last year "to keep it in the advice business."

His tongue-in-cheek responses often raise eyebrows ("Go ahead and fuck him," read one piece of recent advice), but that freedom comes from a debt he owes to Lederer, Phillips and Martin, he says.

"Considering the papers that they run in — small town, rural — and the gay-positive things both have to say on a regular basis, we should be sending them boxes of chocolate on a daily basis," Savage says.

Paige Parvin contributed to this report

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travel ETTORE TOPPI

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Paradise in Gran Canaria

WHILE MOST AMERICANS HAVE ONLY a vague concept of the Canary Islands, this volcanic archipelago off the coast of Africa holds a special place in the hearts of vacationing Europeans. The most popular of these islands is Gran Canaria.

Home to a complicated ecosystem, Gran Canaria is almost equal parts forest, mountains, farmland, and desert. It is the desert climate — guaranteed warmth and clear, sunny days with cool ocean breezes — that attracts most visitors to this leisure-seeker's paradise. The cities and towns on the southern-most area of the island are home to a seemingly endless string of resorts and beach clubs, mostly built in the 1960s and 1970s to take advantage of the burgeoning tourist trade.

The oceanfront city of Playa del Inglés has become a frequent destination for European gays, and many of its establishments now cater to them. It is this environment, geared toward comfort and privacy, that makes Playa del Inglés an ideal gay vacation destination.

The currency here is the euro, and Gran Canaria is a completely duty-free island, so leisure-time euros go surprisingly far. Food, liquor, cigarettes and leather are exceptional values.

The low cost of goods, services, and accommodations also means that package deals are very easy to come by. This is a great way to satisfy your European vacation jones on a shoestring.

There are no direct flights to Gran Canaria from the United States. However, flights to Las Palmas (Gran Canaria's capital city and the location of its international airport) are available from many European cities. The trip can be done in one very long day, but it's a better idea to make this part of a longer holiday.

Bookend Gran Canaria with London, Paris, Barcelona, Madrid, or whatever appeals to you. A good tour company choice for queer travelers is gay owned and operated DiversionsBlue (www.diversionsblue.com), which covered the costs of this reviewer's maiden voyage to the Canary Islands.

GETTING AROUND IN PLAYA DEL Inglés on Gran Canaria is easy and affordable. Given the climate, most attractions are not an easy walk during the day, so use the cheap and abundant taxis. Although Playa del Inglés is a fairly safe city, tourists can be easy prey for pickpockets; at night, consider a taxicab.

Make no mistake: A holiday in Playa del Inglés is about two things: lazing in the sun by day and partying until dawn. An average day starts with breakfast at noon, beach until 5, lunch, siesta, dinner at 10, and then making the party rounds from midnight until 6 a.m. Others say that's too early to stop, with numerous after-hours clubs to choose from.

Gay travelers who want the full Playa del Inglés experience can visit the gay nude beach at station #7 in Las Palomas. It's difficult to imagine so many gorgeous, naked European men in one place. There are amazing sand dunes here, so scenic beauty abounds in every sense.

For those seeking a more demure holiday, rent a car and check out other areas of this most lovely island.

Drive to Puerto Rico and take a dolphin-watching expedition. The sight of the volcanic mountain cliffs plunging into the sea will take your breath away. Take one of the boats that stops in Mogan, a quaint fishing village. Start your trip around 4 p.m. and you'll have the added treat of watching the sun set and the moon flickering on the water soon after.

Plan a picnic in the Tamabada Pine Forest, marvel at the soft floor of pine needles, and take in the spectacular view from the summit down to the coast.

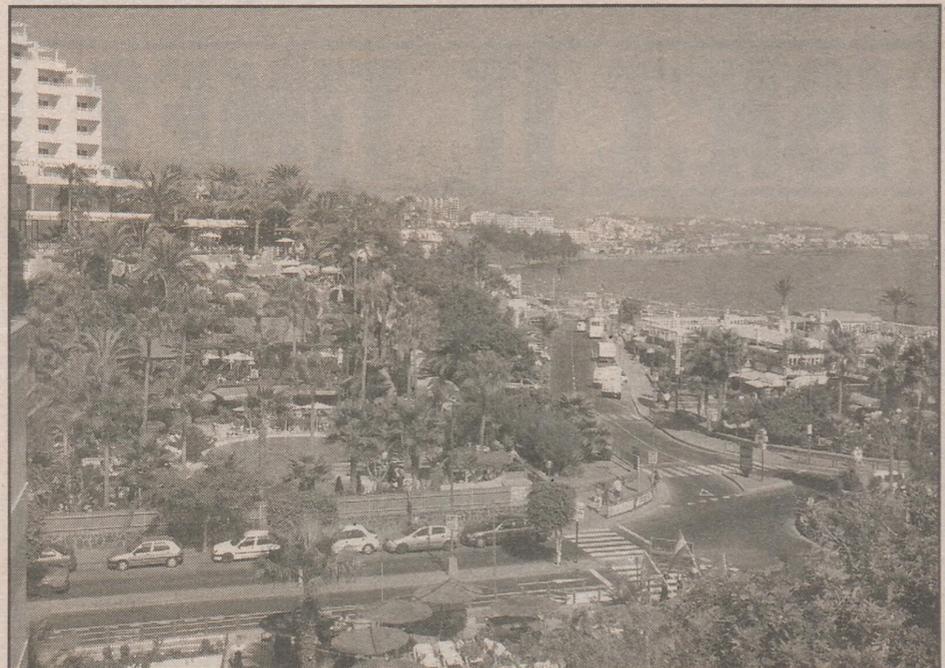
Visit Teror and Vegueta, two of Gran Canaria's most charming and historically important cities. They have preserved much of their original architecture, dating from as far back as the 15th century when Christopher Columbus lived on the island.

QUEER TRAVELERS ARE LIKELY TO BE most comfortable in an exclusively gay or gay-friendly complex. The newest, most luxurious, and arguably the best value of the exclusively gay properties is Respect Holidays' Los Almendros property.

Guests are free to wander about with or without clothing — except when the maids are working. While this might sound like a lot of pressure, the vibe here is so laid back that it's difficult to imagine anyone being uncomfortable, despite the level of fitness (or lack thereof).

Los Almendros offers 33 bungalows set among neatly landscaped gardens. They include air conditioning and TVs (with pay-as-you-go gay porn videos at 11 p.m. nightly). Further setting this property apart are its large, sparklingly clean swimming pool, well-maintained Jacuzzi, and on-site bar and restaurant.

Keep in mind that American hotels often include many more amenities than even luxury hotels abroad. It is the availability of so many amenities that puts Los Almendros at the top of the list for so many American travelers.



One of the most popular of the Canary Islands off the African coast, Gran Canaria has plenty to offer to gay tourists, including a nude beach and scads of gay bars and discos. (Photo by Ettore Toppi)

Playa del Inglés is home to 11 major shopping centers, or centros. By day, they are crammed with parents and children, buying everything from groceries to electronics to leather to souvenirs. When the sun goes down, the centros take on a new life. The shops close down and the restaurants, bars and discotheques open.

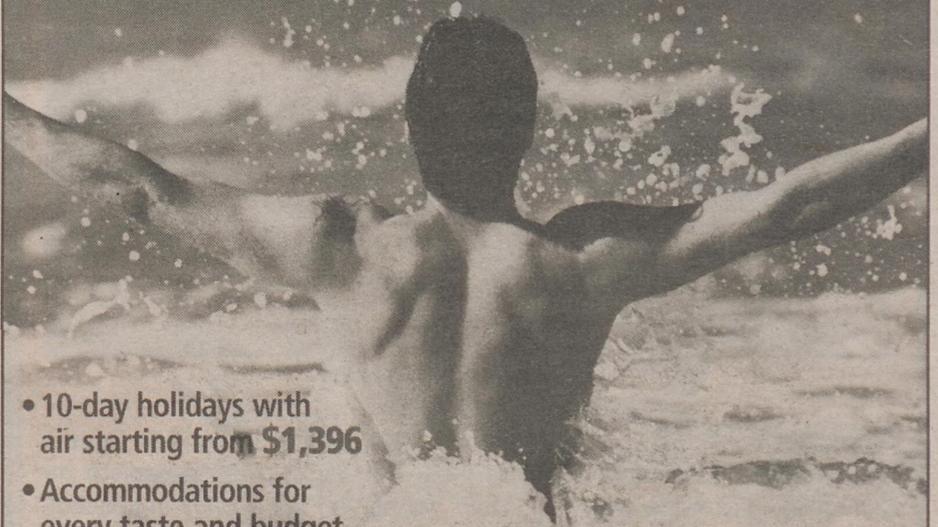
The Yumbo, the largest of the centros in Playa del Inglés, is the nexus of the city's gay nightlife. Sporting no fewer than 40 gay bars and discos, the Yumbo

starts jumping at about 11 p.m. and does not slow down until sometime after sunrise. Surely if Disney World ever adds "Gay Bar Land" to the Magic Kingdom, Yumbo will be the model.

What will be perhaps most astonishing to U.S. visitors is the number of backrooms to be found in these bars. They are generally advertised with large neon signs. If you indulge, please negotiate your terms and stick to your guns. You'll be happier when the buzz wears off.

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sports LEE DAVIS

Upcoming spring means new opportunities for gay Houstonians to play softball, golf and more

Sports teams gear up

Rack 'em

The Independent Billiard League of Houston (IBL) beginning-of-season tournament was held recently at Bricks, coinciding with the second (and final) registration for the upcoming season. Ken Bailey took first, with George Amolochitis earning second, Gary Gray taking third and Corey Collins coming in fourth. Currently, 20 teams are registered for the spring season, which begins on Feb. 6.

For those interested in participating, each team's sponsorship dues of \$55 per team need to be turned in with the team applications (at least two members) to constitute a valid team. Also due with the applications are the BCA dues. If you played last season, you are automatically a member of BCA. Team dues are \$120 (\$40 per player) and need to be turned in at the first meeting after the start of the season. For more information regarding IBL, check out the Web site <http://iblhouston.com>.

Winter down and batter up

The Montrose Softball League (MSL) has a new home for the upcoming spring season. All games will be played at P.J.'s Park in Spring, Texas. Although the park means a longer drive for most members, the fields are said to be exceptional and park officials are welcoming the MSL with open arms.

MSL's Recruitment Day is scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 15, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Memorial Park Fields No. 4 and 5. All players interested in joining the league are welcomed to stop by and get acquainted. Coaches and managers will be present and pickup games will be played. Clinics will also be held. Players of all skill levels are welcome, and food and drink will be available. Anyone who would like to assist with Recruitment Day activities may contact Sam Wilson at the MSL Web site of www.montrosesoftballleague.com/. Help is needed with registration, coaching, clinics, food, fliers and more.

Gay conference

The National Gay & Lesbian Athletics Conference will take place in Boston from March 28-30. For more information, contact Lee Davis via e-mail at editor@houstonvoice.com.

Softball tees

The Montrose Softball League recently announced its first Golf Tournament will be held Saturday, April 12, at Waterwood National Resort & Golf Club. The shotgun start time is 9 a.m. The entry fee is \$65 and monies will benefit league charities. The fee includes greens fees, shared carts, and range balls. Prizes will be awarded to the first-, second- and third-place finishers. For more information, log onto www.montrosesoftballleague.com/.

Soooooey!

Contact the Houston Outdoor Group (HOG) every Saturday for a Memorial Park walk. Walkers meet in front of the Tennis Center.

General meetings are held every Tuesday from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Contact Don and/or Ray at 713-522-7809 for information, or log on to www.absentmind.net/hog.

Fall league stats

The Lone Star Volleyball Association (LSVA) recently released team standings for Fall 2002. In the Recreational Division, Desi's Team took first, with Alex's Team and Diego's Team following in second and third places, respectively. All Stars from that division include J. Chamberlain, L. Robinson, J. Garibay and L. Sifuentes.

The Competitive Division completed with Slayers in first place, Perez at second place and Critters taking third place. J. Hyser, R. Hiroki and Mario were the All Stars representing this division.

The Power Division finished with Scrubbs in first place, Texas Exes taking second and Aerial Attack in third place.

Anyone interested in playing volleyball and meeting new friends is invited to stop by the Jarabeck Center on the University of St. Thomas campus at 3800 Mount Vernon Blvd. from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Sundays. First-time players and visitors can play for free, so go out and join the fun! For more information, check out the league Web site at www.lsva.org or call 713-717-LSVA.

Ice follies

Like the idea of great fun and an opportunity to skate like Tai & Randy, Dorothy Hammill, or Rudy? Whoever your skating idol is, join the Lambda Roller Skating Club and meet new people while getting great cardio stimulation. The club can be found at <http://www.neosoft.com/~lrsc>. E-mail: lrsc@neosoft.com.

Muddy water

The Montrose Soccer Club of Houston is open to men and women who have experience playing soccer. For more information, send an e-mail to MontroseSC@soccer.com or go to <http://www.geocities.com/MontroseSoccer>.

Limber up

The Houston Tennis Club meets on Wednesday and Friday evenings from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Weekends not good for you? Meet the club on Sundays from 9 a.m. until noon. For more information, contact the Houston Tennis Club at 713-692-2701 or log on to houstontennisclub@aol.com.

Lanes to spare

Don't forget that there are many opportunities out there for all bowling levels of play. Contact Tom O'Dell at 713-861-1187 or 713-220-5700, extension 331, for information on the Inner Loop Alternatives (four-person mixed teams) at palace lanes on Sundays at 7 p.m. Tom's also in the know for the 9 p.m. Monday, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday and 9 p.m. Thursday leagues.

Call Pat at 281-437-6218 for information on the Monday Night Women's League. Bowling begins at 6:45 p.m. at the Dynamic Lanes, 6121 Tarneff.

New bicycle club

The "Bike For A Better City" bicycle club (temporary name) is forming for bicycle enthusiasts in the Montrose area and all of Houston. The first rides will begin this spring.

Anyone interested in signing up for the free mailing list or helping plan rides and organize the club may call John at 713-523-6381.

theater DON MOSER



Stages Repertory Theatre's 'Syncopation' offers dreams and rhythms in early 1900s New York

Try a dreamers' play

HENRY RIBOLOW, A JEWISH MEAT-packer in turn-of-the-century New York City, had an all encompassing dream, a singular passion in his life: to dance for royalty.

Like his idols Irene and Vernon Castle, Henry wanted to reign over the world of ballroom dancing, which was taking the U.S. by storm in the early 1900s. Ballroom dancers like the Castles were the purveyors of good taste, elegant manners, and the new jazz music arising from black musicians. Anna Bianchi, a "beader" in the garment district of New York, had the same dream as Henry — and probably more courage — but not the consuming passion.

"Syncopation" is about dreamers who find the courage and the passion in each other to take those first steps (no pun intended) toward realizing their dreams.

The above is the main theme of "Syncopation," now playing at Stages Repertory Theatre. But there are other texts to the play that are just as thought-provoking and important.

THE SETTING IS ONE ALTERNATE thread. Designed and constructed of discarded objects from junkyards, dumpsters and trash heaps, this play's set also has a story to tell. Designer Jodi Bobrovsky remarks that "having people's effects on stage adds a certain energy. You can feel the ghosts." Comprised only of four columns, a dance floor, a few chairs and benches, and hidden chandeliers, the stage is the sixth floor ("176 steps") dance rehearsal studio for Henry and Anna. In that old and dusty space — the location for many dreamers before them — Henry and Anna renew the forgotten artifacts on the columns with their dance.

Then, too, there is the reading of "Syncopation" according to class. Just four days before the time of this play, New York City had experienced the worst factory fire in its history, the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire of March 25, 1911. Some 146 women died in that fire in circumstances that could have been avoided: The factory owners had locked the exit doors to keep the women from leaving early, fire escapes collapsed, firemen's ladders were too short, and on and on.

As a "beader" — a seamstress who focused on sewing beads on garments — Anna was still in shock from the tragedy: It could have been her factory; there were few safeguards for the working class in those times. And as a meat-packer — dancing with a leg of lamb — Henry and his dreams also found occupationally fertile ground.

HOWEVER YOU WISH TO INTERPRET "Syncopation," it is a wonderful, uplifting



Sofia Gomez and Thomas Prior star in the well-done 'Syncopation,' playing through Feb. 9 at Stages Repertory Theatre. (Photo by Bruce Bennett)

story of the human spirit. Most important, though, to the enactment is the quality of the acting, and I simply can't imagine it being any better.

Thomas Prior, who plays Henry Ribolow, is flawless and completely believable as the Jewish meat-packer wanting so badly to dance for royalty. His dance steps as well as his impassioned soliloquies to the audience never failed to entertain. Sofia Gomez as Anna Bianchi, wanting the fullness of the changes in turn-of-the-century America, pulls you into her fears and aspirations as if you were her best friend. Her movements, at first jerky and then finally fluid ("without counting"), parallel her emotional growth in the real possibility of their dream.

Many people in the opening audience could not contain themselves when it came time for applause, so tight and seemingly effortless were their performances.

If dreams and rhythm are still in your heart, this is one play you will thoroughly enjoy.

MORE INFO

'Syncopation'
8 p.m. Fridays & Saturdays
3 p.m. Sundays
Through Feb. 9
Tickets: \$32-\$42
Discounts for students and seniors
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www.stagestheatre.com

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dining TRAYCE DISKIN

From its *décor* and floor plan to its entire menu, this pan-Asian restaurant serves up quality

Rickshaw's tastes excel

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE MANY DETAILS to focus on in Rickshaw's impressively stylish interior, there's no getting around the rickshaws themselves. On a far wall, above the curved booths and flickering table candles, loom life-sized photos of these once ubiquitous modes of transport. Depending on your perspective, these carriages either represent the exotic glory of the Orient, or an imperialist history where privileged foreigners were laboriously carried through city streets by far less wealthy natives.

Fortunately, Rickshaw, a pan-Asian bistro, offers diners much more than cultural images and history. With an expanded bar that elegantly sweeps out into an intimate corner of the large dining room, the layout of the restaurant itself is as smart and sexy as the *décor*. The dark cherry wood tables, gray and maroon upholstered chairs, and dim lighting all contribute to an ambience that's simultaneously trendy and classic.

On a recent night, as some friends and I waited at a bar table under triangular ceiling lights lined with ruby-colored glass shards, we noted how pleasant it would be simply to enjoy a few drinks and appetizers. Then we saw the menu and changed our minds.

WE STARTED WITH THE DELICIOUS Coconut Crab Cake (\$8), with its sweet velvety filling and crispy golden exterior of toasted coconut and seasoned breadcrumb crumbs. Rather than pulp the meat into stringy strands, thick hunks of white crabmeat allowed the cake to hold its shape as we scooped up the Asian cole slaw and turmeric aioli with each forkful. The aioli, a gorgeous rusty orange color, jazzed up the slaw and completed the impressive presentation with its bold zig-zags across the bone-white plate.

In fact, we were so seduced by the coconut that we asked our server to bring a side order of Coconut Fried Rice (\$5), a heady mixture of caramelized onions, cubed white chicken meat, chunks of coconut, peas, and rice so greaseless it seems more steamed than fried.

We chose the shrimp variety of Wongs Dumplings (\$4), which featured translucent dough stuffed with plump, glossy shrimp. We lamented the small size of the tasty dumplings, which are served in a rather large bamboo basket, and wished we had ordered more if only to dip into the sweet vinegar sesame sauce.

Evidence of the "pan" in "pan-Asian," the Macau Martini (\$7) transcends the ubiquitous Chinese, Japanese, and Thai dishes with this tropical ceviche featuring citrus-marinated seafood with avocado and a wasabi cocktail sauce. We loved how the juicy marinade infused each piece with a tanginess that, combined with the wasabi, creates a heady combination of flavors and textures that dance on the palette.

BOTH THE NOODLE AND SUSHI DISHES easily distracted us from the entrée section of the menu, which offers a wide range of beef, chicken, duck, and seafood choices. The comparably expensive nigiri sushi (\$3 - \$8.50 for two pieces) is unmistakably fresh, although we found the yellowtail and salmon more so than the slightly tried tuna. The more reasonably priced, snazzier rolls are a far better choice.

Both the noodle and sushi dishes easily distracted us from the entrée section of the menu, which offers a wide range of beef, chicken, duck, and seafood choices.

The Hot Geisha (\$6.50) — yes, but at least it's a cheekier allusion than the restaurant's moniker — rivals the many seafood entrees with its salmon tempura topped with spicy baked mussels. The Rickshaw Crunch (\$8), with spicy yellowtail, crunchy wonton chips, tuna, avocado, and caviar, may be one of the most sumptuously decadent rolls ever created.

Although noodle dishes like the Pacific Rim Saute (\$10), with scallops, calamari, shrimp, vegetables, and oyster sauce, sounded irresistible, one friend chose the more basic and hearty Beef Udon. The addition of bamboo shoots, veggies, black mushrooms, onions, spinach, and snow peas couldn't temper the overpowering meaty flavor of the broth and thin but fatty beef tenderloin slices.

For dessert, we enjoyed a Green Tea Mousse (\$4), which, like the tea itself, was refreshing and light. Those in search of a more decadent dessert may be disappointed, but we were happy to attack the thick layers of sponge cake and mousse without feeling too guilty or overstuffed.

It would be easy to blame our lengthy stay on the slow and often inattentive service, but after moving over to the bar, we knew the excellent food and seductive atmosphere had much to do with it, too.



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Value: ●●●●●●

Scene: ●●●●●●●●

● = Stay home and eat cereal

●●● = Well, if you really must

●●●●● = Fine for all but the finicky

●●●●●●● = Worth more than a 20-minute drive

●●●●●●●● = As good as you'll find in this city

community calendar

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Houston Buyers Club. Free BIA (Bioelectrical Impedance Analysis) the first two Saturdays of the month. Hours: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Houston Buyers Club, 3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 604. 713-520-5288. http://www.houstonbuyersclub.com/bia_testing.html

EVERY SATURDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in, noon-5 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2

EVERY SUNDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3

National Minority AIDS Council. KIC (Knowledge, Interaction, Connection) training, free HIV/AIDS training session for service providers. Daily sessions, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., from Feb. 3-7. Crowne Plaza Hotel, 1700 Smith St. 713-739-8800.

EVERY MONDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • AVER (American Veterans for Equal Rights), 7 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

Lesbian Health Initiative of Houston, Inc. Nonprofit organization working for lesbian health meets the first Tuesday of each month. 7 p.m., 404 Westheimer. 713-603-0023. www.lhihouston.org.

EVERY TUESDAY

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

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

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

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

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

Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous. Support group. 7 p.m.

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

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

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

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

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5

EVERY WEDNESDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in, 2-9 p.m. • Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus meeting, 7 p.m. Guest speaker is Houston City Council member Ada Edwards • Free HIV testing, counseling, 6-9 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6

Gay/Lesbian Jewish Study Group. Meets the first Thursday of the month. 7:30-9 p.m. at Congregation Beth Israel, 5600 North Braeswood Blvd. Alan: 713-523-3673 or Rabbi Glickman: 713-771-6221.

Gulf Coast Transgender Committee. Meeting. 713-780-4282.

Stonewall Law Association of Greater Houston (SLAGH). Luncheon with guest speaker Mitchell Katine, local attorney for petitioners in Lawrence and Garner v. Texas, the historic case before the U.S. Supreme Court this spring. Cost: \$15 for SLAGH members, \$20 for non-members. Cost includes meal, beverage and dessert. 11:30 a.m. Café Montrose, 1609 Westheimer. RSVP: 713-227-1717, or by e-mail: rsvp@slagh.org. For more information, see the group's Web site at www.slagh.org.

EVERY THURSDAY

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

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

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

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

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

FrontRunners. Running club. 6:30 p.m. 713-522-8021. Web site: <http://homeswbell.net/laathon/houfir.htm>. E-mail: larathon@swbell.net.

GLOBAL. Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual Alliance at University of Houston-Central Campus. Weekly meeting, 6 p.m. e-mail: nguyen0023@hotmail.com.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7

National Black HIV Awareness Day. Event from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. marks the awareness day, with guest speakers including Mayor Lee Brown. Thomas Street Clinic, 2015 Thomas St. 281-HIV-INFO. www.blackaidsday.org.

Service of Healing. For persons living with HIV/AIDS. Held the first Friday of each month. 7 p.m. Christ Church Cathedral Golding Chapel, 1117 Texas Ave. 281-331-4851.

EVERY FRIDAY

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

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

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

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

Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (H.A.T.C.H.) Meeting, 7-10 p.m. 713-942-7002.

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

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

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

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

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • In Our Own Write, poetry night, 8 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

VOLUNTEER/SELF-HELP

Gay & Lesbian Switchboard Houston. Volunteers offer a friendly ear to callers in need of information, nonjudgmental support, crisis intervention and referral services, emergency shelter and advocacy services to crime survivors who may need someone to accompany them to a hospital for medical attention or assistance in filing a police report. 713-529-3211.

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

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

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

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

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

appts

a weekly guide to arts & entertainment activities for gay Houstonians

SPECIAL SATURDAY, FEB. 8

Lesbian speed dating is an event for women who want to meet other women. This is the second annual lesbian speed dating session in Houston. The event starts with general socializing and ice-breakers, and then participants have seven-minute conversations with seven different people. The women are paired up and given a list of suggested questions to help get everyone started. At the end of the night, participants use a match card to note who they would like to see again, and organizers later determine mutual matches and alert the participants. The event is produced by Gal Pals, a division of the Houston Women's Festival. The evening's schedule includes a general mix-and-meet at 8 p.m., and that portion of the night is free and open to all. Registration: \$20. 6 p.m. Meteor, corner of Genesee and Fairview. Pre-registration encouraged. 713-861-3316. www.hwfestival.org/galpal.htm.

MUSIC

FRIDAY, FEB. 7

St. Petersburg Legacy is Da Camera of Houston's second program in the current season's Music & Literature series. The cultural world of St. Petersburg is explored in an evening that celebrates great Russian composers and poets through song settings, chamber music and readings. Tickets: \$20, \$30 and \$35. The production will be held at Zilkha Hall in the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. For more information: Da Camera Music Center, 1427 Branard. 713-524-5050. www.dacamera.com.

GALLERIES

THROUGH FEB. 22

Scott Teplin's "Lubricious" is the New York-based artist's first Texas exhibition. Teplin's offbeat collection of drawings, wallpaper and video obsessively and humorously explores the malleable nature of lubricants. Free admission. Gallery hours: Noon-6 p.m. DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway. 713-223-8346. www.diverseworks.org.

THROUGH MARCH 9

Museum of Fine Arts Houston presents "Old Masters, Impressionists, and Moderns: French Masterworks from the State Pushkin Museum, Moscow" in an ongoing exhibit. The showing brings together 76 landmark French paintings from one of the world's great museums of fine arts. It includes Impressionist and Post-impressionist works by Degas, van Gogh, Monet and Renoir, plus early Modern works by Bonnard, Breque, Matisse and Picasso. Admission: \$7. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Audrey Jones Beck Building, 5601 Main St. 713-639-7300. www.mfah.org.

ONGOING

Gulf Coast Archives & Museum of GLBT History Satellite Exhibition. The first exhibition from the GCAM collection presented at the Houston GLBT Community Center honors the NAMES Project Houston. Community Center, 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

Positive Art Workshop Photography Exhibition. Artists living with HIV/AIDS created these pictures with accompanying text. Houston GLBT Community Center, 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

CLASSIFIEDS

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HEIGHTS (718 E. 13th 1/2 St) Cute, 1920s, bungalow. 2 BR / 1 BA, 2 car garage + bonus RM & studio. Historic features; mod conveniences, landscaped, roses. \$169,000. (713) 426-2954.

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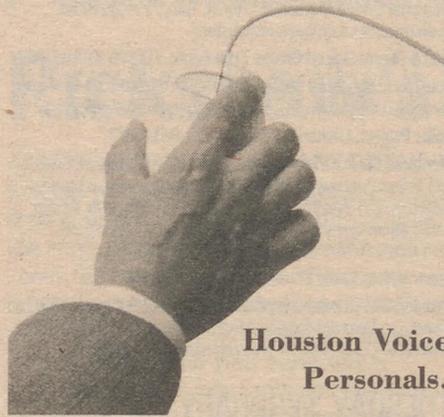
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CLASSIFIEDS

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LOVE NOTES ARE HERE!!! Tell that special someone how much you love them. LOVE NOTES are printed in our February 14th edition. The cost is \$10 for 20 words or less & will run with a heart attached to the ad. There will be special prizes for the best LOVE NOTE (male & female). You can submit your LOVE NOTE by calling (877) 863-1885 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm EST.

PERSONALS / WOMEN

LOVE NOTES ARE HERE!!! Tell that special someone how much you love them. LOVE NOTES are printed in our February 14th edition. The cost is \$10 for 20 words or less & will run with a heart attached to the ad. There will be special prizes for the best LOVE NOTE (male & female). You can submit your LOVE NOTE by going to our website www.houstonvoice.com or by calling (877) 863-1885 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm EST.

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PERSONALS ARE COMING TO HOUSTON

in 2003!! Go to our website to submit your personal ad now. The ads will be stored and assigned a voicemail box for publication in January; there will also be a Voicelink assigned to the ad which will allow our online users to click on your Voicelink & send you an email. Please make sure you submit your ad with an e-mail address. You can also call us toll free (877) 863-1885.

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- Began like Sheehan, with "off"
- Porn producer Chi Chi
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- "Desert of the Heart" novelist Jane
- "And on this farm he had a chicken, ___"
- Sea bordering Kazakhstan
- Gershwin and Levin
- White House novelist?
- Blow it
- Would-be master's test
- Social outcast
- "The Mating Season" director Mitchell
- Emphatic affirmative, to Gloria Anzaldua
- Hrs. in Key West
- Lynn Flewelling's "___ in the Shadows"
- It perfumes your drawers
- White House architect?
- Roddy McDowall in "Escape from the Planet of the Apes"
- Clumsy come-on
- Where to find San Francisco and Santa Fe
- Type of shot for Pam Parsons

- The "T" in T.E. Lawrence

- The listener lends it
- Stocking stuffer
- '69 and others
- White House G-man?
- Barbra's "Funny Girl" co-star
- "It ___ Necessarily So"
- "Over my dead body!"
- Arouse
- ___ Exchange (advocate.com feature)
- "Lesbians ignite!" e.g.
- Enc. to Susie Bright
- "Chicago" producer Meron
- What Melissa Etheridge puts out

- Out of this world
- Wing for 37-Across
- Continue not to be asked or to tell
- Poet Adrienne
- Biathelete's slats
- Vanna White's cohort Pat
- Barbra, Judy, or Bette
- Theater admonition
- Word with top, for Mauresmo
- Poet ___ Wu
- Martina's sign
- Cole Porter's "___ Gigolo"
- Cry of Dorothy
- Songwriter Holly
- Papers of W. H. Auden
- Fawcett's old flame
- Lack of vigor
- Parts for Dykes on Bikes
- Well-wisher's second word
- Whoopi and others, in "The Lion King"
- Come to terms
- "___ Eclipse"
- Madonna song of 1993
- Be hard to find
- R.E.M.'s "The ___ Love"
- Change the decor of
- It connects Dick to Dyke
- One that gets laid
- Lawyers' things

Down

- Debussy's key
- Chou En-___
- "We ___ Family"
- Night of Renee Vivien
- Singer Michael
- Be intense like a queen
- Coin of Versace's homeland
- Straight ___ arrow
- Soft rock
- Cock-and-bull story
- The Continent, to Britten
- Tickles pink
- "___ Hearts"
- Grecian vessel

Answers on Page 24

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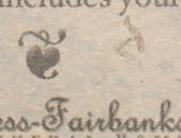
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My Stars!

January 31 — February 6



ARIES (March 21 to April 20)

Mars and Pluto are conjunct in your house of travel in early February, which means that a sudden trip out of town could lift your spirits and expand your world. The same old faces and places are dragging you down. Drag an Aquarius out of town with you.



TAURUS (April 21 to May 20)

The Sun and Neptune join forces at the top of your chart to bring you a lot of creative career opportunities. But with each offer comes a modicum of confusion. Do research on potential partners. A Gemini will help you play detective. Who doesn't love a mystery?



GEMINI (May 21 to June 21)

Venus in your house of collaboration bodes well for artistic pursuits. The key is finding the right partner. Choose someone who challenges you. An Aries won't let you get away with your usual tricks!



CANCER (June 22 to July 22)

You're the center of attention to one special person. Don't worry about pleasing the crowd. The internal workings of your relationship matter most. Another Cancer is totally in sync with you.



LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22)

The challenge for you now, Leo, is to keep your head on straight when every impulse is telling you to do something crazy and reckless in your love life. It's Neptune, darling, and it's making you mad! A Capricorn may have trouble understanding your angst. Show — with your body — how you feel.



VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22)

Day-job woes begin to melt away this month as tedious colleagues finally get out of your hair. Now you need to figure out if you're happy in your particular gig. The distractions are gone. The question is, what's left? A Sag wants to be your after-hours lover.



LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22)

Mars and Pluto conjunct in your social third house bring you new pals and business connections. A Cancer wants to be more than just a help-mate — perhaps even a mate for life. Say "help!" because you may not be ready to settle down just yet.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21)

You may have gotten off on the wrong foot with a new lover. Take a step back and try to see things from the other point of view. Your sarcasm is getting in your way. A Virgo needs the gentle approach.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21)

Your words are magical in early February, Sag. Find ways to make money using your verbal and written powers. Don't worry about succeeding in just one area. Spread yourself around for best results. A Gemini likes your unpredictable side.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19)

The Sun and Mercury in your sign make you a great politician this month. Your diplomacy skills lead to a better job. Now that your status is on the rise, do something grand and impulsive to impress a Pisces.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18)

Your empathy is on full-tilt during your birthday season, sweetie. You can't support every lost cause, though you will try — and that's what makes you such a dear, dear idealist. A Scorpio needs some personal attention though, so put the world on hold for at least one night.



PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20)

You really need to calm down and look at a work situation realistically. You're feeling trapped and overreacting. Okay, you're afraid you're being paranoid. So what? Have a heart-to-heart with another Pisces and clear the air. Everything will be fine within two weeks.

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



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