

'STRONGER'

Recording artist Kristine W stops in Houston during promotional tour

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Baylor College of Medicine studies affect of HIV on vision

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Houston Gay Men's Chorus tunes up for new season.

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Transgenders protest HRC exec's visit to Houston

Group tells Birch to put gender issues on HRC agenda

by KAY Y. DAYUS

Holding up signs that read, "Sub Human Rights Society," and "Transgenders are human too," around 25 people from the transgender community picketed outside La Colombe D'or on Wednesday as a large invited group waited inside the exclusive restaurant to meet and hear Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign.

The protesters, members of the transgender group, Texas Gender Advocacy and Information Network, were protesting the HRC's exclusion of the transgendered from the organization's work.

Specifically, said TGAIN founder and executive director, Sarah DePalma, they were protesting HRC's failure to back the



PHOTO: DALTON DEHART

The San Jacinto Apartments, built in 1923, have been restored to house homeless veterans with special needs such as HIV and other serious illnesses. The building, with 36 efficiency apartments, opened Aug. 24.

inclusion of transgendered people in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act in Congress.

• Birch lauds Gore during Houston visit See Page 10

"We want to get the HRC's attention and get transgenders put on the agenda," said DePalma. She said that transgenders were committing suicide at an alarming rate in the last few years because of discrimination in the workplace.

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GOP defends letter campaign over sodomy law

Gary Polland tells state Committee on Judicial Affairs his unsent draft to sway judge was protected by free speech

by WENDY K. MOHON

Harris County Republican Chair Gary Polland told the state Committee on Judicial Affairs that an unsent letter he asked his GOP treasurer to draft to a judge deciding the fate of the homosexual conduct ruling was within the realm of free speech.

The committee was conducting the fact-finding hearing Wednesday, held in Houston City Council chambers in the city hall annex at 900 Bagby, to determine if legislation is needed to govern communication between political parties or lawyers and judges when the communication is about pending court cases.

The investigation was prompted by a letter, drafted by Harris County GOP treasurer Paul Simpson and leaked to the Houston Chronicle, that was circulated among 14 Republican Party chairs in the counties surrounding Houston. The letter was never sent, but was addressed to Justice John S. Anderson and demanded that he reverse his opinion in the homosexual conduct case or drop his bid for re-election.

Anderson was on the three-judge panel of the 14th Court of Appeals which overturned the state's homosexual conduct law, commonly referred to as the sodomy law, in June based on the equal rights provision in the state Constitution. That ruling has been challenged by the state and is currently being reviewed en banc, in other words,

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PHOTO: WENDY K. MOHON

Gary Polland speaks to the state House Committee on Judicial Affairs Wednesday in Houston City Council Chambers. Polland stated during the fact-finding hearing that he believed an unsent letter he asked local GOP treasurer Paul Simpson to draft to Judge John S. Anderson regarding the homosexual conduct ruling was within the realm of free speech. The committee was investigating the controversy surrounding the letter to determine if new laws are needed to govern how political parties and lawyers communicate with judges about pending cases.

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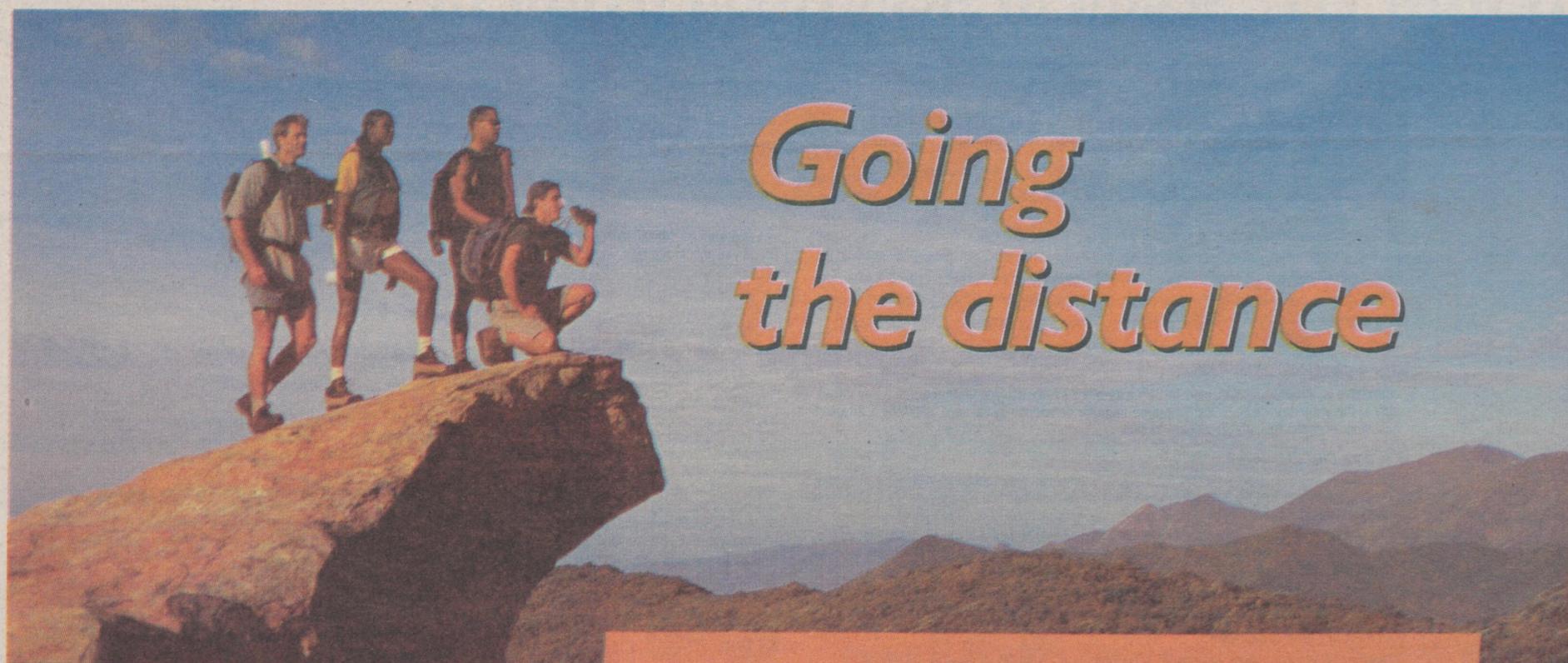


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■ HIGHLY EFFECTIVE THERAPY

CRIXIVAN in combination with antiretroviral agents is a powerful protease inhibitor that fights HIV and is among the preferred treatments for HIV in federal healthcare guidelines.¹ CRIXIVAN can help reduce the chance of illnesses and death associated with HIV; CRIXIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 T-cell count, as shown in studies over a one-year period. Some patients may not experience these effects. CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS.

■ DURABLE RESULTS

In a landmark study, over 90% of 31 patients receiving a combination of CRIXIVAN, AZT, and 3TC reduced their serum viral load below the limit of detection after 24 weeks. Importantly, the limited number of patients who chose to stay with the study for longer periods of time maintained these results through the one-year mark. In a separate study, 30% of 261 patients receiving dual therapy of CRIXIVAN and AZT had serum viral loads below the limit of detection at 48 weeks. In another landmark study, 43% of 40 patients receiving combination therapy with CRIXIVAN, AZT, and 3TC had plasma viral loads below the limit of detection at 40 weeks. In this study of over 1,000 patients, the group of patients receiving CRIXIVAN along with 3TC and AZT achieved a reduction in deaths and AIDS-defining illnesses over those taking 3TC and AZT alone. Overall, the number of deaths was inadequate to assess the impact of CRIXIVAN on survival. Blood viral loads were measured by available tests and the virus may still be present in other organ systems.

■ THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CRIXIVAN

CRIXIVAN can be taken with a light meal or on an empty stomach. Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN may develop stones in the kidney or urinary tract. For some, this can lead to more severe kidney problems, including kidney failure. Drinking at least 6 glasses of water each day may help reduce the chance of forming these stones. Other side effects reported include rapid breakdown of red blood cells and liver problems.

As with other protease inhibitors, changes in body fat, increased bleeding in some patients with hemophilia, and increased blood sugar levels or diabetes have been reported. Additionally, severe muscle pain and weakness have occurred in patients also taking cholesterol-lowering medicines called "statins." There are some common medications and AIDS-related medications you should not take with CRIXIVAN. Also, taking CRIXIVAN with any products containing St. John's wort, an herbal supplement, is not recommended because it may lead to increased viral load and possible resistance to CRIXIVAN. Discuss all medications you are taking or plan to take with your doctor.

For more detailed information about CRIXIVAN, please read the information immediately following this advertisement.

¹ Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in HIV-Infected Adults and Adolescents. Panel on Clinical Practices for Treatment of HIV Infection, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), May 5, 1999.

Remember to ask your
doctor about CRIXIVAN.

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(indinavir sulfate)
Capsules



Please read this information before you start taking CRIXIVAN. Also, read the leaflet each time you renew your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this leaflet does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss CRIXIVAN when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when using CRIXIVAN and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

What is CRIXIVAN?

CRIXIVAN is an oral capsule used for the treatment of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). CRIXIVAN is a type of HIV drug called a protease (PRO-tee-ase) inhibitor.

How does CRIXIVAN work?

CRIXIVAN is a protease inhibitor that fights HIV. CRIXIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 (T) cell count. CRIXIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

CRIXIVAN is usually prescribed with other anti-HIV drugs such as ZDV (also called AZT), 3TC, ddI, ddC, or d4T. CRIXIVAN works differently from these other anti-HIV drugs. Talk with your doctor about how you should take CRIXIVAN.

CRIXIVAN has been studied in adults. The safety and effectiveness of CRIXIVAN in children and adolescents have not been established.

How should I take CRIXIVAN?

There are six important things you must do to help you benefit from CRIXIVAN:

1. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every day as prescribed by your doctor.** Continue taking CRIXIVAN unless your doctor tells you to stop. Take the exact amount of CRIXIVAN that your doctor tells you to take, right from the very start. To help make sure you will benefit from CRIXIVAN, you must not skip doses or take "drug holidays". If you don't take CRIXIVAN as prescribed, the activity of CRIXIVAN may be reduced (due to resistance).
2. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every 8 hours around the clock, every day.** It may be easier to remember to take CRIXIVAN if you take it at the same time every day. If you have questions about when to take CRIXIVAN, your doctor or health care provider can help you decide what schedule works for you.
3. **If you miss a dose by more than 2 hours, wait and then take the next dose at the regularly scheduled time.** However, if you miss a dose by less than 2 hours, take your missed dose immediately. Then take your next dose at the regularly scheduled time. Do not take more or less than your prescribed dose of CRIXIVAN at any one time.
4. **Take CRIXIVAN with water.** You can also take CRIXIVAN with other beverages such as skim or non-fat milk, juice, coffee, or tea.
5. **Ideally, take each dose of CRIXIVAN without food but with water at least one hour before or two hours after a meal.** Or you can take CRIXIVAN with a light meal. Examples of light meals include: dry toast with jelly, juice, and coffee (with skim or non-fat milk and sugar if you want) or corn flakes with skim or non-fat milk and sugar. Do not take CRIXIVAN at the same time as any meals that are high in calories, fat, and protein (for example — a bacon and egg breakfast). When taken at the same time as CRIXIVAN, these foods can interfere with CRIXIVAN being absorbed into your bloodstream and may lessen its effect.
6. **It is critical that you drink at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquids (preferably water) throughout the day, every day. CRIXIVAN can cause kidney stones.** Having enough fluids in your body should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Does CRIXIVAN cure HIV or AIDS?

CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking CRIXIVAN may still develop infections or other conditions associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important for you to remain under the care of a doctor. Although CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS, CRIXIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses, including death, associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

Does CRIXIVAN reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

CRIXIVAN has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

Who should not take CRIXIVAN?

Do not take CRIXIVAN if you have had a serious allergic reaction to CRIXIVAN or any of its components.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor if:

- You are pregnant or if you become pregnant while you are taking CRIXIVAN. We do not yet know how CRIXIVAN affects pregnant women or their developing babies.
- You are breast-feeding. You should stop breast-feeding if you are taking CRIXIVAN.

Also talk to your doctor if you have:

- Problems with your liver, especially if you have mild or moderate liver disease caused by cirrhosis.
- Problems with your kidneys.
- Diabetes
- Hemophilia
- High cholesterol and you are taking cholesterol-lowering medicines called "statins".

Tell your doctor about any medicines you are taking or plan to take, including non-prescription medicines, herbal products including St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), or dietary supplements.

This medication was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep CRIXIVAN and all medicines out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately. This leaflet provides a summary of information about CRIXIVAN. If you have any questions or concerns about either CRIXIVAN or HIV, talk to your doctor.

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Patient Information about CRIXIVAN® (KRIK-sih-van)

for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection
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9024512

Can CRIXIVAN be taken with other medications?*

Drugs you should not take with CRIXIVAN:

SELDANE® (terfenadine)	HISMANAL® (astemizole)
VERSED® (midazolam)	HALCION® (triazolam)
ORAP® (pimozide)	Ergot medications (e.g., Wigraine® and Cafergot®)
PROPULSID® (cisapride)	

Taking CRIXIVAN with the above medications could result in serious or life-threatening problems (such as irregular heartbeat or excessive sleepiness).

In addition, you should not take CRIXIVAN with the following: Rifampin, known as RIFADIN®, RIFAMATE®, RIFATER®, or RIMACTANE®.

It is not recommended to take CRIXIVAN with the cholesterol-lowering drugs MEVACOR® (lovastatin) or ZOCOR® (simvastatin) because of possible drug interactions. There is also an increased risk of drug interactions between CRIXIVAN and LIPTOR® (atorvastatin) and BAYCOL® (cerivastatin); talk to your doctor before you take any of these cholesterol-reducing drugs with CRIXIVAN.

Taking CRIXIVAN with St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), an herbal product sold as a dietary supplement, or products containing St. John's wort is not recommended. Taking St. John's wort has been shown to decrease CRIXIVAN levels and may lead to increased viral load and possible resistance to CRIXIVAN or cross resistance to other antiretroviral drugs.

Drugs you can take with CRIXIVAN include:

RETROVIR® (zidovudine, ZDV also called AZT)	EPIVIR™ (lamivudine, 3TC)
ZERIT® (stavudine, d4T)	isoniazid (INH)
BACTRIM®/SEPTA® (trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole)	DIFLUCAN® (fluconazole)
BIAXIN® (clarithromycin)	ORTHO-NOVUM 1/35® (oral contraceptive)
TAGAMET® (cimetidine)	Metadone

VIDEX® (didanosine, ddI) — If you take CRIXIVAN with VIDEX®, take them at least one hour apart.

MYCOBUTIN® (rifabutin) — If you take CRIXIVAN with MYCOBUTIN®, your doctor may adjust both the dose of MYCOBUTIN and the dose of CRIXIVAN.

NIZORAL® (ketoconazole) — If you take CRIXIVAN with NIZORAL®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

RESCRIPTOR® (delavirdine) — If you take CRIXIVAN with RESCRIPTOR®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

SPORANOX® (itraconazole) — If you take CRIXIVAN with SPORANOX®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

SUSTIVA™ (efavirenz) — If you take CRIXIVAN with SUSTIVA™, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

Talk to your doctor about any medications you are taking.

What are the possible side effects of CRIXIVAN?

Like all prescription drugs, CRIXIVAN can cause side effects. The following is not a complete list of side effects reported with CRIXIVAN when taken either alone or with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss with you a more complete list of side effects.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN developed kidney stones. In some of these patients this led to more severe kidney problems, including kidney failure or inflammation of the kidneys. Drinking at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquid (preferably water) each day should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN have had rapid breakdown of red blood cells (hemolytic anemia) which in some cases was severe or resulted in death.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN have had liver problems including liver failure and death. Some patients had other illnesses or were taking other drugs. It is uncertain if CRIXIVAN caused these liver problems.

Diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) have occurred in patients taking protease inhibitors. In some of these patients, this led to ketoacidosis, a serious condition caused by poorly controlled blood sugar. Some patients had diabetes before starting protease inhibitors, others did not. Some patients required adjustments to their diabetes medication. Others needed new diabetes medication.

In some patients with hemophilia, increased bleeding has been reported.

Severe muscle pain and weakness have occurred in patients taking protease inhibitors, including CRIXIVAN, together with some of the cholesterol-lowering medicines called "statins." Call your doctor if you develop severe muscle pain or weakness.

Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking protease inhibitors. 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 and arms may also happen. The cause and long term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.

Clinical Studies

Increases in bilirubin (one laboratory test of liver function) have been reported in approximately 10% of patients. Usually, this finding has not been associated with liver problems. However, on rare occasions, a person may develop yellowing of the skin and/or eyes.

Side effects occurring in 2% or more of patients included: abdominal pain, fatigue or weakness, low red blood cell count, flank pain, painful urination, feeling unwell, nausea, upset stomach, diarrhea, vomiting, acid regurgitation, increased or decreased appetite, back pain, headache, dizziness, taste changes, rash, itchy skin, yellowing of the skin and/or eyes, upper respiratory infection, dry skin, and sore throat.

Swollen kidneys due to blocked urine flow occurred rarely.

Marketing Experience

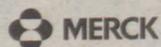
Other side effects reported since CRIXIVAN has been marketed include: allergic reactions; severe skin reactions; yellowing of the skin and/or eyes; heart problems including heart attack; abdominal swelling; indigestion; inflammation of the kidneys; inflammation of the pancreas; joint pain; depression; itching; hives; change in skin color; hair loss; ingrown toenails with or without infection; crystals in the urine; painful urination; and numbness of the mouth.

Tell your doctor promptly about these or any other unusual symptoms. If the condition persists or worsens, seek medical attention.

How should I store CRIXIVAN capsules?

- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules in the bottle they came in and at room temperature (59°-86°F).
- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules dry by leaving the small desiccant "pillow" in the bottle. Keep the bottle closed.

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Restored apartment to house vets with HIV

Complex will offer more than shelter; support services also provided

by ELLA TYLER

The historic San Jacinto Apartments at the edge of downtown at 1111 McIlhenny have been restored to house homeless veterans with special needs such as HIV and other serious illnesses. The building, with 36 efficiency apartments, opened Aug. 24 and is already half full, said Earl Hatcher of the Housing Corporation of Greater Houston, the non-profit corporation which manages the project.

The project gives its residents more than a roof over their heads. It is a therapeutic community, the first of its kind in Houston. "With illnesses like HIV and Hepatitis C, you can give people medication, but if they continue to lead the lifestyle that gave them their illness, it's not much use," Hatcher explained. "It is a drug-free environment and we provide on-site support-
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The San Jacinto Apartments, built in 1923, have been restored to house homeless veterans with special needs such as HIV and other serious illnesses. The building, with 36 efficiency apartments, opened Aug. 24.

Baylor launches HIV study

Clinical trial to examine affect virus has on vision

by RICH ARENSCHIEDT

Houston continues to maintain its reputation for excellence in low-cost, high-quality care and services to people affected by HIV/AIDS.

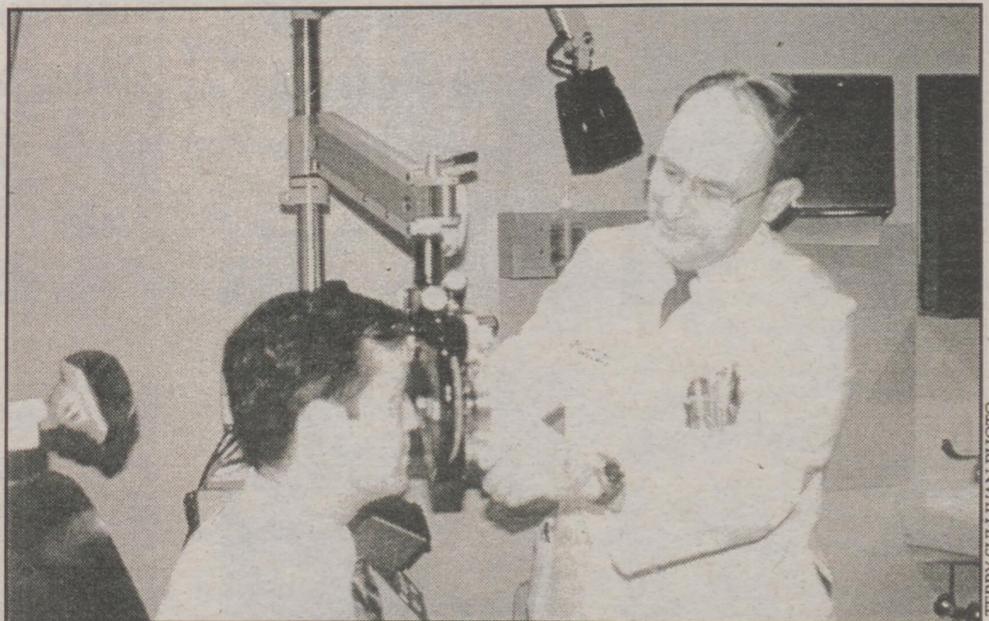
Doctors in the public and private sectors strive to stay on top of the ever-changing pile of information in order to deliver effective HIV treatment. Much of this therapy is the result of clinical and observational trials in which HIV-positive individuals participate.

Baylor College of Medicine's Department of Ophthalmology is currently enrolling patients in a comprehensive study focusing on HIV and its long-term affect on vision and eye health.

According to study director, Dr. Richard Lewis, professor of ophthalmology, individuals with HIV need to pay special attention to their ocular health, primarily as the result of the opportunistic infection, Cytomegalovirus (CMV).

This virus is normally present in about half of the general population, but as with most opportunistic infections, it becomes especially troublesome in immune-suppressed individuals. An ocular condition known as CMV retinitis is common in patients with late-stage AIDS, and has historically been the largest cause of HIV-related blindness.

"In the beginning of this epidemic, oph-



Dr. Richard Lewis, professor of ophthalmology at Baylor College of Medicine, performs an eye exam on Steve Spencer, research coordinator for Baylor's comprehensive study on the long-term affect of HIV on vision.

thalmologists were virtually overwhelmed by individuals who were having to face severe opportunistic infections of all types," Lewis said. "Viral infections from CMV were prevalent in the lungs, gastro-intestinal system and also in the eyes."

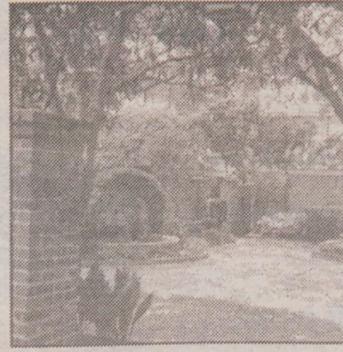
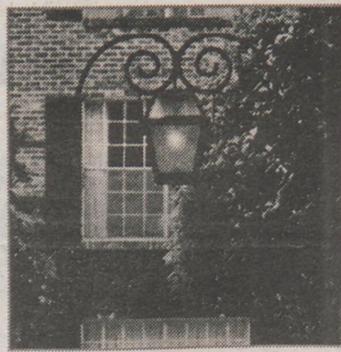
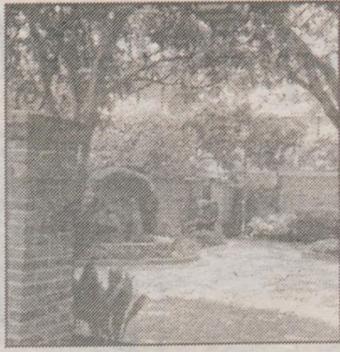
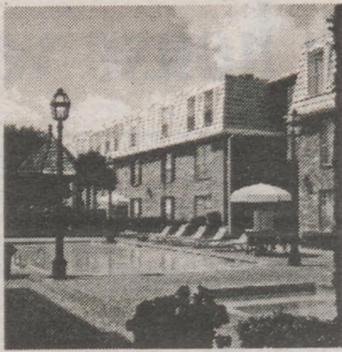
In 1987, treatment for HIV was embryonic. There were no protease inhibitors, no triple-drug combos and very few choices for physicians treating patients.

"At that time, more than 35 percent of patients with AIDS were experiencing some level of blindness as a direct result of CMV infection," Lewis said.

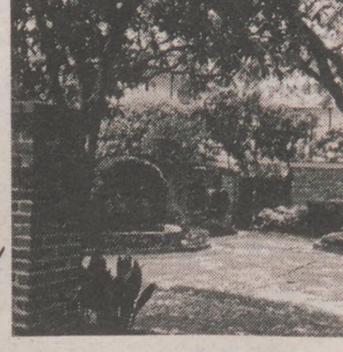
In response to this, the Longitudinal Study of Ocular Complications of AIDS (LSOCA) was born. This study was developed at Johns Hopkins Medical School in Baltimore and is still enrolling participants.

"This collaborative clinical trial was one of the first in ophthalmology to utilize a multi-center approach to study a large number of patients at clinics nationwide that could deal with ocular complications resulting from HIV infection on a long-term ongoing basis," said Lewis.

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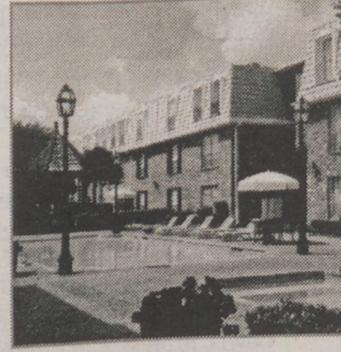
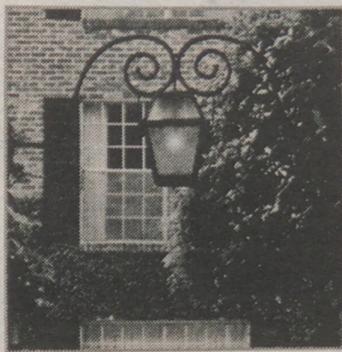
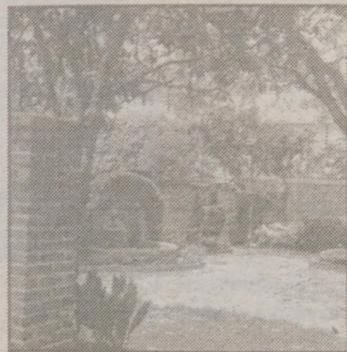
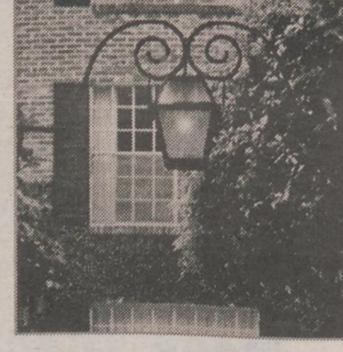
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N.J. judge, citing ban on gay marriage, refuses lesbian's name change

NEWARK—A New Jersey state judge has denied a lesbian's request to legally change her surname, the *New York Times* reported. The ACLU of New Jersey announced it would assist in Jill Bacharach's appeal of State Superior Court Judge Anthony J. Iuliani's denial of her request to hyphenate her last name and add her partner's surname. Iuliani said he denied the request to keep from giving the impression that New Jersey recognizes same-sex marriages. New Jersey law allows name changes for virtually any reason other than to perpetrate fraud, dodge creditors or avoid criminal prosecution. "It takes some creativity to come up with a new way to discriminate against lesbian and gay people," said Shannon Minter, senior staff attorney for the National Center for Lesbian Rights in San Francisco. Bacharach, 32, and her unidentified partner, were took part in a Vermont civil union Sept. 10.

Anti-gay group in N.Y. attempts ad claiming Hillary Clinton a lesbian

ROANOKE, Va.—New York television stations are refusing to broadcast an ad that implies that U.S. Senate candidate Hillary Clinton is a lesbian, the *Roanoke Times* reported. The ad was produced by the Christian Action Network, a conservative Christian lobbying



An anti-gay lobbying group is trying to air a commercial that claims Hillary Clinton is a lesbian. Clinton is locked in a tight race with U.S. Rep. Rick Lazio for New York's open Senate seat.

organization in Virginia that claims about 150,000 members. According to its executive director, Phillip Vaught, the ad is composed of video images of Clinton and a voice-over that says, "It is rumored that Hillary Clinton is a lesbian. It is rumored that Hillary Clinton supports homosexual marriage. It is rumored that Hillary Clinton will leave her husband upon taking office. ... Sometimes rumors are true." So far two stations have called the ad "unacceptable for airing." The group was sued by the Federal Elections Commission for a 1992 ad that said Bill Clinton's vision for America includes "job quotas for homosexuals, giving homosexuals special civil rights, allowing homosexuals in the armed forces." Founder Martin Mawyer once worked for Rev. Jerry Falwell.

'Dr. Laura' TV show halts production to retool show after weak debut

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Production of "Dr. Laura," the controversial TV show starring radio personality Laura Schlessinger, has been halted, part of a pre-planned hiatus to retool the show, a spokeswoman said. Ratings for "Dr. Laura" have been a disappointment, in some cities drawing fewer viewers than the show it replaced. Schlessinger, 53, has been roundly criticized by gay civil rights activists for anti-gay comments on her radio show, including calling gays "deviant" and "biological errors." Critics of the TV show claim that Schlessinger's avoidance of controversial topics has made it too tame; TV writers have panned the show. Meanwhile, Coca-Cola joined a growing list of sponsors to drop the show. StopDrLaura.com, a Web site created to oppose the show and flood advertisers with protest e-mails, said that 50 companies have told local stations not to air their ads on the show.

United Way in N.C. city drops gay protection over Boy Scout partnership

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (AP)—Under pressure from the local Boy Scouts council and contributors who threatened to halt donations, United Way of Forsyth County, N.C., has decided to drop words barring discrimination based on sexual orientation from its partnership agreements. Agencies must sign the agreements to receive money from United Way. In June, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the Boy Scouts of America to retain its policy barring gay Scouts or troop leaders. Since then, United Way agencies and other organizations nationwide have been redefining their relationships with local Scout groups. Boy Scouts supporters threatened to cut off contributions to United Way if the words on sexual orientation weren't cut; gay-rights activists threatened to stop giving if the clause was cut. At stake was more than \$400,000 earmarked for the Scouts. United Way President Ron Drago said the language in the agreement would have required his agency to protect a group that is not protected from discrimination by federal law. "It's absolutely the right thing to do," said Pete Rodda, a local Boy Scout leader and Forsyth County tax assessor and collector.

R.I. court allows lesbian to petition for visit with non-biological son

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP)—By a 3-2 vote, the Rhode Island Supreme Court ruled Monday that a lesbian may not prevent her former partner from asking for the right to visit the son they raised. The decision gives de facto parents in the state the same rights to petition for visitation as biological and adoptive parents. Maureen Rubano and Concetta DiCenzo, the biological mother, had a child through artificial insemination in 1991. The couple raised the child until they split in 1996. DiCenzo signed a consent order granting Rubano permanent visitation rights, but later attempted to revoke it, calling Rubano's visits "disruptive and confusing." But the court found that "[t]he fact that DiCenzo not only gave birth to this child but also nurtured him from infancy does not

mean that she can arbitrarily terminate Rubano's de facto parental relationship with the boy," Justice Robert Flanders wrote in the majority opinion.

—From staff and wire reports

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EDITORIAL

No happy ending to ex-gay's un-fairy tale

by CHRIS CRAIN

For some 40 minutes on the night of Sept. 19, John Paulk left behind his day job as leader of the ex-gay movement and husband to ex-lesbian Anne, and walked into a dingy Washington, D.C. gay bar.

By all accounts, including Paulk's, he thoroughly enjoyed his 40 minutes in Mr. P's, cavorting with other patrons, happily admitting that he is gay, and speaking "intimately" with another male patron, at least according to one witness.

That all ended in the flash of a camera in the hands of Wayne Besen, a Human Rights Campaign staffer who has zealously investigated a movement that argues we can be converted through Christian prayer into leaving behind "the gay lifestyle."

Paulk ran from the camera like the worst kind of scam artist in a "60 Minutes" exposé, only Paulk and his wife had already appeared on that venerable Sunday newsmagazine, proudly telling of their heterosexual love for one another.

By the next afternoon, a nervous Paulk faced the music, admitting his visit, though offering the lame explanation that he'd been searching for a restroom. Perhaps, as "Tom" from Chicago suggested in a forum posting on the *Voice* Web site, Paulk really did need to use the bathroom and took the name of the bar—Mr. P's—a little too literally.

Paulk would have been more believable if he had argued he was an undercover evangelist, searching for souls in the belly of the Beast.

But to his credit, Paulk did acknowledge that he stayed out of curiosity. After 13 years without stepping foot in a gay bar, he wondered how things had changed. It was opposition research, he argued, not proselytizing.

More likely, Paulk found himself in a familiar and comfortable atmosphere, surrounded by people freely living a life he has denied himself for years. He enjoyed himself because for those 40 minutes, he was an ex-ex-gay.

But he had straightened himself out by

the next day, when he reaffirmed in an interview with this newspaper that he was a happy heterosexual, still in the full bloom of romantic love with his wife.

Less than 24 hours after he was an ex-ex-gay, Paulk was a ex-ex-ex-gay, giving him something in common with Newt Gingrich and Congressman Bob Barr (R-Ga.), sponsor of the anti-gay Defense of Marriage Act, who each can claim a trio of ex's.

Paulk's superiors at Exodus International, the ex-gay ministry, and Focus on the Family, a right-wing Christian ministry, were less convinced of his gay-

For 40 short minutes,
John Paulk left behind his
politics and enjoyed life
as an ex-ex-gay.

turned-ex-turned-gay-turned-ex status.

Both groups are of the same school as Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.), and view homosexuality as an addiction, like alcoholism. That makes them as skeptical as many of us about Paulk's explanations, publicly questioning whether he has fallen off the hetero wagon.

"I believe he was enjoying a temporary escape from the responsibilities of the rest of his life," said Bob Davies, executive director of based Exodus International North America.

There is an element of truth to the addiction analogy because anyone who has struggled for years in the closet knows that, like alcoholism, the temptation of homosexuality always looms, no matter how long it's been since last acted upon.

The difference, of course, is that being gay doesn't lead to an obsessive pattern of behavior that interferes with a well-adjusted life. Homosexuality, like heterosexuality, is morally and psychologically neutral. It's what you do with it that determines how

happy you are.

The better analogy is to being left-handed. You can try for years to use your right-hand, but it will never feel completely natural, and the temptation will always be there to use the hand that feels normal for you.

Imagine how John Paulk felt for those precious 40 minutes, after 13 years of using the wrong hand, to feel completely free to use the natural one. For that reason, John Paulk is more deserving of our pity than our scorn.

At the same time, Besen and other gay rights activists are to be commended for putting a lie to the happy ending in Paulk's ex-gay un-fairy tale.

Paulk and his compatriots at Exodus, however well-intentioned they may be—and most probably are well-intentioned—are responsible for enormous psychological and emotional damage in the lives of hundreds, if not thousands.

The first-line victims are the "ex-gays" themselves, like the Exodus spokesman who told this newspaper several weeks ago that he had been celibate for 18 years. How truly sad.

In a cover story last month, this newspaper reported on the tragic consequences of ex-gay ministries and "conversion therapy," its psychobabbling cousin.

Dozens more stories, many of them just as heart-wrenching, are told in first person on the *Voice* Web site (www.houstonvoice.com), which experienced more than a half-million hits and several hundred forum postings in the first few days after Joel Lawson first broke the story on Sept. 20.

But we should have even more sympathy for the second-tier victims, heterosexuals who enter into relationships with these ex-gays, some not even knowing their partner's pink-checked past.

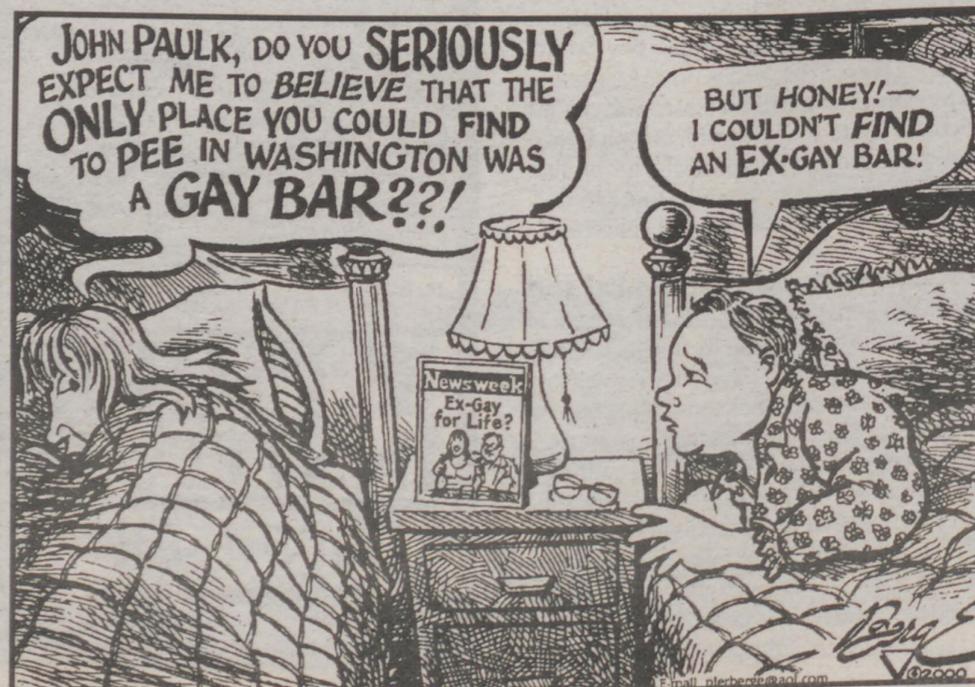
Any of us who have attempted heterosexual relationships have a sense of the gross injustice for these partners, even if they enter with eyes open. However much genuine platonic love and affection is there, the relationship is deprived of the romantic spark and sexual connection that spells the difference between friendship and real love.

The truly straight partner, no doubt sharing the prevailing societal view that heterosexuality is inherently natural for everyone, has far less information about what they're getting themselves into than does the struggling ex-gay.

But that's not the case for John Paulk, who is married to an ex-lesbian, Anne. The couple has two children; let us pray they haven't inherited any genetic predisposition to homosexuality.

Let's also maintain some empathy for the Paulks themselves, whose struggle is a familiar one to so many of us. As the poster couple for the ex-gay movement, they enjoy far less freedom than most of us to sort through their emotional struggle.

But there is hope. When Exodus was just three years old, in 1979, two of its founders—Gary Cooper and Michael Bussee—left their wives for each other.



Confronting racism in the Houston's LGBT community

by TAMARA JONES and JENNIFER HOLLADAY

The Houston LGBT community is racist. Does that statement surprise you? Well, it shouldn't. When it comes to the issue of racial justice, the Houston LGBT community is not that different from any other community in any other town in this country.

We are all still struggling with the legacy of racism. The question is how honest are we willing to be about this reality of (LGBT) life in America?

Let's start by making sure we're all on the same page when it comes to vocabulary. Racism is a doctrine or teaching, without scientific support, that does three things.

First, it claims to find racial differences in things like character and intelligence. Second, racism asserts the superiority of one race over another or others. Finally, it seeks to maintain that dominance through a complex system of beliefs, behaviors, use of language and policies.

Racism ranges from the individual level in which personal biases and prejudices manifest in action, to the institutional level in which economic, social and/or political organizations and institutions act in ways that support the belief in the superiority of one group over others.

What can we do about racism in the LGBT community? The first step is to engage in dialogue. Honest conversations about race and racism in our community, however, are few and far between, and even more so when those conversations happen across racial groups.

The fact is that many of us are still scared by our own diversity. We "celebrate"

our differences without fully understanding how those differences are experienced by others in our community.

Although we know that part of the answer to racism in the LGBT community lies in communication among racial groups, attempts to do so are often only minimally effective.

When we—an Afro-Caribbean lesbian and a white lesbian who have only recently met—sat down to write this piece, we quickly realized that despite our extensive individual experiences doing anti-racist work, we were still nervous about writing this essay together. Our experience, we believe, mirrors the experience that many people have when racism is the focus of conversation.

There is a tremendous amount of fear that can accompany conversations about race. Some of us are afraid that we'll say the wrong thing and be labeled a racist; others of us are afraid of being subjected to the pain of hearing a racist remark. Everybody's afraid of the anger that could be unleashed if the conversation takes a wrong turn.

So we all play it safe and remain silent.

The hard truth is that a lot of whites don't know how to talk about racism responsibly. We rely too heavily on people of color to do the work.

Somewhere along the way, we were taught that racism is exclusively about the "of color" experience and not about whiteness. We don't talk about race with other white people or to our own spirits nearly enough, and we let our fear about making a misstep or our guilt over past injustices render us silent.

On the flip side, many people of color can express deep anger rooted in our experiences of racism. In multiracial settings, we can lose our patience quickly and our unchecked anger makes true dialogue impossible.

In addition, it is easy to step into the role of 'race expert,' particularly when white fear and guilt support our doing so. As the 'experts' on race and racism, there is very little that we feel we don't already know, and so we put more of our efforts into talking and less into listening.

We sometimes fail to listen to other people of color or to recognize how racism is experienced differently by groups that make up other "communities of color." Again, meaningful dialogue becomes impossible.

As debilitating as fear, guilt, anger and overconfidence can be, the answer is not to rid us of these feelings. Rather, the challenge is to harness and channel them so that they do not become barriers to building cross-racial relationships that can help to realize a truly multiracial queer community.

Who's prejudiced in our community? We all are. The simple fact is that we've all been raised in a racist environment, and all of us, regardless of skin color, have internalized racist beliefs.

We took in the stereotypes and prejudices with our mother's milk and Saturday morning cartoons. Rather than waste more time debating who's really racist and who's not, let's agree that we have all been socialized as racists.

The goal is to be honest about the lies we've been taught, and to replace them

with the truth.

Being anti-racist is a life-long process, not an identity. That process begins as we acknowledge the role that racism plays in all of our daily lives and as we share experiences and insights toward the creation of a community that transcends the white supremacist, heterosexist patriarchy into which we are all born.

The Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center's forum, "Racist Rainbow....Who Me?" will provide an opportunity for all of us to explore what is necessary to build a truly multiracial, multiethnic LGBT community in this city.

Without a deliberate commitment to building and sustaining anti-racist environments in our organizations and at every level of our community, the promise of harmonious diversity represented in our rainbow flags will be nothing more than an empty dream.

Jennifer Holladay and Tamara Jones are both members of the planning committee for the Racist Rainbow Forum. Holladay also is a producer with the Southern Poverty Law Center and can be reached at [jholl@mindspring.com](mailto:jhall@mindspring.com). Jones is the Facilitator of the Justice Ministry at Resurrection MCC and can be reached at jsticeministry@mail.com.

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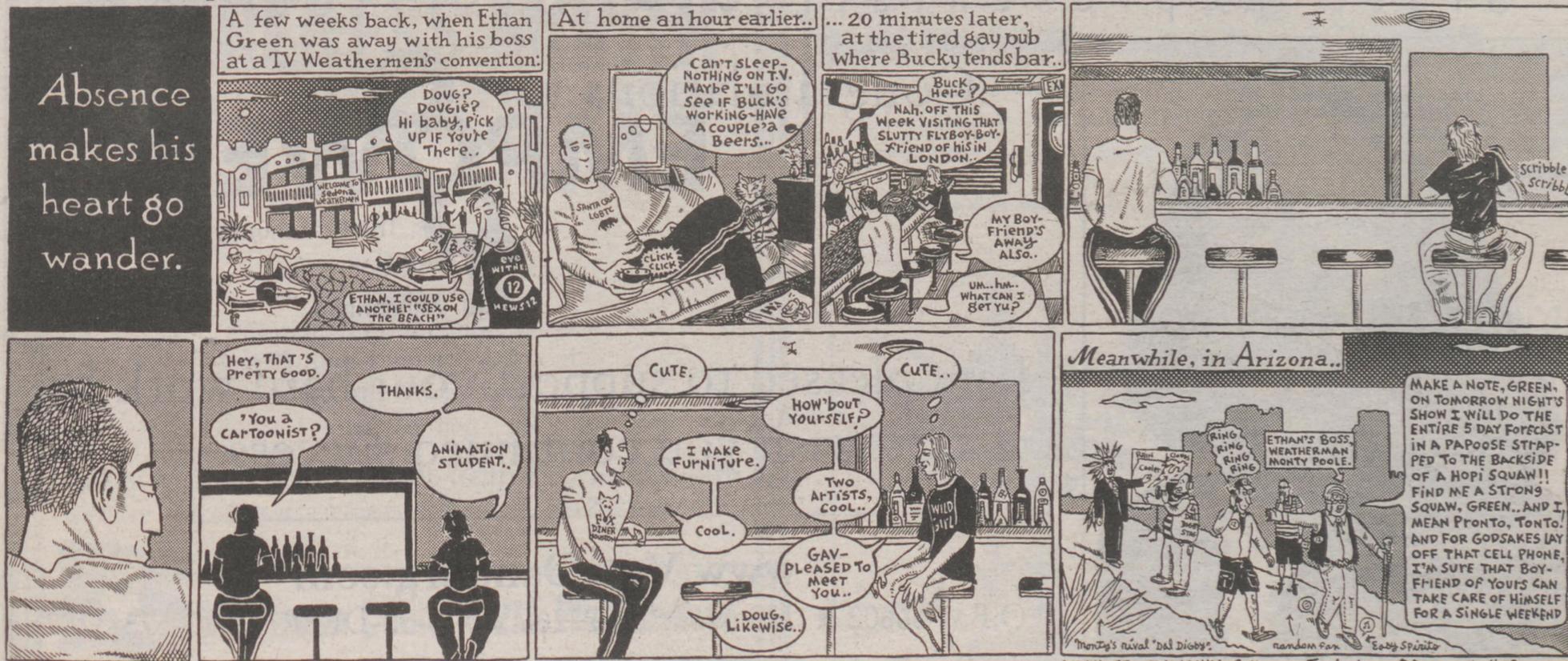
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The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Green...

...by Eric Orner



Birch catches ride to Houston with Clinton

HRC director drumming support for hate-crimes legislation, Gore

by KAY Y. DAYUS

Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, arrived late for her appointment in Houston Wednesday evening at Houston's exclusive La Colombe D'or restaurant in the heart of the Montrose. But that was okay; she was in good company—President Bill Clinton's to be exact.

Birch flew in on Air Force One with the president from Dallas where both were attending an HRC event. Birch said that after it was over, the president asked her where she was going next.

"I said I was going to Houston. He said, 'Do you want a ride?'" Turns out that Clinton was also coming to Houston to attend an event at the Hyatt.

Judging from the applause for Birch from approximately 250 of Houston's gay and lesbian movers and shakers, the wait was worthwhile. Birch was in Houston to drum up support for the HRC and for the upcoming presidential election, and to talk about the gains the GLBT community has made and what is needed to make greater strides in the future.



Elizabeth Birch

• Transgenders protest Birch visit
See Page 1

She said that in order to move forward, Houston needs to continue to invest in the likes of State Representative Debra Danburg and City Council member Annise Parker, both of whom were present.

"We need to invest in these people and we need to invest in the local community center. To move forward, we need strategic, cumulative and concentrated action," she said.

On the upcoming Presidential election, Birch had good words to say about Vice President Al Gore.

"He's a good, good man. We must do all we can to get him elected."

But, she had little good to say about Texas governor George W. Bush.

"There are some incredible Republicans. Some who take risks, some who walk out on planks. And he's not one of them," she said to a roar of laughter.

Birch speaks to transgender protest group

> Continued from Page 1

"We're talking about people who are flat broke and desperate; people who have taken their own lives. And while we're talking about people actually dying, the HRC is talking politics," said DePalma.

DePalma added that she doesn't think that Birch is a bad person and that in some ways the HRC has made an effort to accommodate transgenders.

But, she added, they haven't done enough.

"They've done it at the margins. But, when it comes to the thing that really counts, which is getting us into ENDA (Employment Non-Discrimination Act), they haven't moved an inch since 1994," said DePalma. "We want in ENDA. That's what really counts. We want in before we lose more people."

Before going into La Colombe D'or, Birch first stopped outside on the Montrose sidewalk to talk to the Protestors. Several even had their photograph snapped with her.

In an interview with the *Voice*, Birch said, "We care a great deal that discrimination based on gender identity gets addressed in this country and we think there's a need for education on a mass scale."

And although Birch thinks there needs to be legislative solutions to aid the transgendered, she also thinks the time is not quite right.

"We are willing to continuously look at this though. Someday I would love to see a piece of legislation called 'Gender.'"

Birch also said that solutions ultimately have to be articulated from the transgender leadership, but that it was not politically feasible right now, referring to the fact that the Congress does not really understand the transgender community.

Birch said she recognizes that the transgendered were in the front lines during Stonewall, but, she added, "When it comes to the public consciousness, there's been relatively little visibility of the transgendered up until recent years. We have to begin at the beginning and we begin by educating people."

To that end, she said, HRC has sponsored a number of lobby days in Congress where members of the transgender community sit down and talk to members of Congress or their staff and start to translate the reality of their everyday lives.

She said that while they (HRC) are not blind to the discrimination in the workplace against the transgendered, she stressed that they need to tackle things in "an iterative and parallel fashion."

But while the HRC moves slowly, DePalma says she worries about how many more transgendered will die before legislation protecting them is passed by the government.

"We have to get the HRC to care," she said.

Debra Danburg

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Clinton: GOP 'minority rule' is ducking hate-crime bill

DALLAS (AP)—President Clinton accused Republican congressional leaders Wednesday of deliberately ducking his long-languishing hate crimes legislation because they fear it would split the GOP's base.

"If it doesn't get to be law, it's because the leadership doesn't want it," Clinton said during a luncheon fund-raiser with gay Democrats. He noted that, in light of a spate of hate crimes in recent years, the bill is supported by more Americans and by a majority of lawmakers in both parties.

"There has been a sea-change movement," Clinton said. "More and more people are identifying with our common humanity. Increasingly, society is moving to higher and higher levels of decency and justice. It's just a question of whether the leadership of the Republican Party in the Congress stays to the right of the country on this issue."

Clinton was in Texas to help raise money for his party and to attend a "Texas Tribute" in his honor. The three events he attended Wednesday were meant to raise \$1.5 million for Democratic candidates.

Clinton described the presidential candidates, Texas Gov. George W. Bush and Vice President Al Gore, as "two fundamentally patriotic people" whose vastly different views on the economy are being blurred by "daily coverage of this or that flap" over smaller matters.

Later, at a fund-raiser in Houston for Rep. Max Sandlin, Clinton expressed frustration with press coverage of the campaign, saying reporters are more fixated on the personal quirks of the candidates than on the issues.

"They tell you everything that's wrong with Gov. Bush. And they say, 'Oh, my goodness, we may be too tough on him, let's load up on Gore for a week.' ... I think it's a bunch of bull in terms of how it affects you," Clinton said. "I don't think America is very well served by all this rigamarole, trying to confuse people into thinking that if you can just find which one has the worst quirks, you'll know to vote for the other one. That's a bunch of hokey."

But Clinton didn't talk shop all night. He crooned along with country singer Billy Ray Cyrus, who sang "Achy Breaky Heart" at the president's request.

GOP head defends letter to judge in sodomy case

> Continued from Page 1

by the full nine-member court.

Pollard told the state House committee, chaired by Rep. Senfronia Thompson, D-Houston, that he would never have signed the letter as written, but admitted the intent of the letter was to "let him (Anderson) know that the Republicans in the 14 counties are not happy with his performance on the bench and believe that he is legislating as opposed to doing the work that we believe a judge needs to do, which is following the law."

Pollard noted that the letter was drafted prior to the court's decision to review the ruling en banc and said once that review was pending, he dropped the notion of sending the letter to Anderson.

"I did not want to send the letter once I found out it was going to the full court," Pollard said. "That was my decision. I thought that would be inappropriate contact."

He said he had no knowledge of how the draft was leaked to the press.

When asked if he thinks legislation is needed to prevent political party leaders or lawyers from communicating with judges regarding pending cases, Pollard said, "I do not think that the laws in Texas should change in any way. And I think to do so would run the risk of stepping on the U.S. and Texas Constitutions."

Pollard presented the committee with copies of the Declaration of Independence

and the U.S. Constitution, saying "it's a handy book to have, actually, and I thought you'd like to have it when we're spending so much time talking about the First Amendment."

Simpson told the committee that the act of drafting the letter, at Pollard's request, was protected by the Constitution.

"You don't lose that First Amendment right just because you get involved in politics," he said.

The Houston attorney who fought to get the homosexual conduct law overturned, Mitchell Katine, said he found the GOP's argument that their actions were protected by the Constitution ironic.

"A lot of people mentioned today about their fear that if judicial regulation are put in place, those regulations could run afoul of the Constitution," Katine said. "That is the same argument we're making."

Katine noted that the three-judge panel based their decision to overturn the homosexual conduct law on the state's Equal Rights Amendment to the Texas Constitution because it discriminates based on sex. Texas has had a sodomy law since 1860, but the state decriminalized sodomy by opposite-sex partners in 1974.

The House committee will likely determine by late October whether to recommend changes in state laws regarding communication between political parties or lawyers and judges. No other hearings are scheduled.

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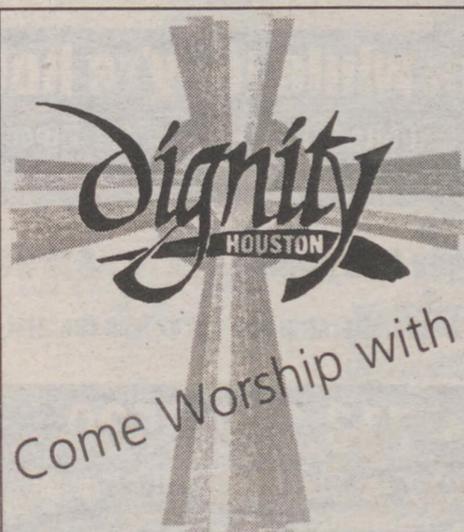
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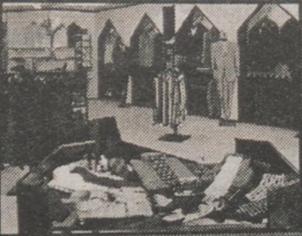
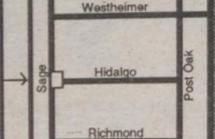
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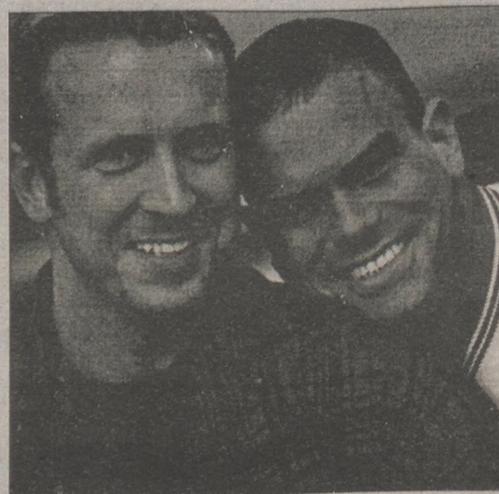
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Complex to house vets with HIV

> Continued from Page 5

ive services to help people live with their illness. Kathy Barton, a counselor from the Veterans Administration Medical Center, comes to the project regularly.

"We have support groups that deal with substance abuse, 12-step meetings, and also give them help with issues like nutritional needs, getting food, and treating depression, for example."

The manager of the project is Everett Hull, a formerly homeless veteran, who has six years experience working with homeless people. "Everett can help with anything," Hatcher said proudly.

The apartments were built in 1923, probably for employees of the Hearst Corporation, Hatcher said. The building had fallen into major disrepair, but was structurally sound. The renovation retained the original floor plans, a classic example of the early 20th century flat, but updated the kitchens and baths and added central air conditioning.

"When we scraped up the old linoleum we found oak floors in the halls and pine in the units," Hatcher said.

The building was painted and its original masonry arches, stone obelisks and decorative transom window over the entry were restored. The fire escape was replaced with an interior stairwell and flowers were

It is a drug-free environment and we provide on-site supportive services to help people live with their illness.

—Earl Hatcher,
Housing Corporation of
Greater Houston

planted in the courtyard, he said.

In the public areas, the walls were given faux finishes, and glass sconces and pendant light fixtures were installed. The project was funded by a \$1.5 million grant from the city of Houston's Department of Housing and Community Development. Some of the work on the restoration was done by the Harris County Department of Community and Juvenile Justice Education's HUD Youth Build program.

Rents are subsidized by HUD.

"Our goal is to provide an environment where our residents can remain clean and sober, and where they can thrive. When they live with others who support and understand them and where they make friends they can rely on for help, I think that will happen," Hatcher said.



Felix Fraga, vice chairman of the Housing Corporation of Greater Houston; U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee; Tom Forrester Lord, president of the housing corporation; Houston Mayor Lee P. Brown and Houston City Councilman John Castillo cut the ribbon last month to signal the official opening of the San Jacinto Apartments. The complex is Houston's first apartment community for homeless veterans living with HIV and related illnesses.

The Housing Corporation of Greater Houston also just completed the restoration of the De George Hotel, near the old Union Station. It was built in 1913 built for railroad employees but had become "a true flop-house" Hatcher said.

It will also house homeless veterans. The

architect for the project was Jim Gwin Architects. The contractor was Nation's Construction, and Janita Lo was the interior designer. The garden was designed by Hampton Gardens.

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Baylor enrolling HIV patients in eye study



TERRY SULLIVAN PHOTO

Individuals enrolled in a Baylor College of Medicine study on the affect HIV has on vision will receive a thorough eye exam including dilation of the retina, something not usually done during routine eye exams.

> Continued from Page 5

Two drugs, Foscarnet and Ganciclovir (now standard CMV therapy), were among the first to be tested in trials conducted by LSOCA. Valuable information regarding the effectiveness and toxicity of these drugs was gathered as the result of this research.

As different drugs to combat CMV became available each was added to trial protocols and the benefits of newer therapies were determined. In some cases, FDA recommendations for drug approval resulted directly from LSOCA research.

As the result of treatment advances in HIV, in recent years the purpose of this trial has shifted. With the advent of protease inhibitors, incidents of CMV retinitis have decreased to a more manageable level. This has allowed ophthalmologists to concentrate on an entirely different but equally important question—who is at risk for developing HIV-related ocular disease and how can that be predicted?

"T-cell counts have been the best predictor of this," Lewis said. "We know that patients with t-cell counts under 100 should be concerned about CMV and those with counts under 50 are substantially at risk for CMV infection."

Participation by individuals with AIDS has enabled the LSOCA study to become one of the most successful of its kind.

There are currently more than 1,800 patients enrolled nationwide, 100 of them in Houston.

Eligibility criteria are simple: participants must be at least 13 years old and have an AIDS diagnosis. There are no restrictions on drug therapy and patients in the LSOCA study can participate in any other HIV-oriented trial.

"It is important to note that this study is observational in nature," Lewis said. "Our goal is to determine who is at risk for developing ocular complications as the result of HIV."

Participants will receive a thorough eye examination including dilation of the retina, something not usually done during routine eye exams, and an extensive interview regarding their medical history.

Patients who are diagnosed with ocular complications will be seen every 90 days and those with no active eye disease will have clinic visits every six months.

"There are several benefits to participation," said Lewis. "Individuals who enroll will be working with a very skilled group of investigators. Our doctors have extensive experience with HIV and ocular health."

The eye provides a unique gateway into the body as it is the only place where blood vessels and nerve tissue are plainly visible. Many illnesses can be diagnosed during a retinal exam.

In addition to CMV, other medical conditions such toxoplasmosis, tuberculosis, PCP, diabetes and elevated tryglicerides are visible during a routine screening.

"If further medical intervention is necessary, we can refer patients to infectious disease professionals here at Baylor. We can also provide information to the patient's own physician, who will then develop a treatment plan," Lewis said.

One of the strong points of this study is the accessibility that participants have to the highest possible quality of observational eye care—something crucial to Lewis and his research coordinator, Steve Spencer.

"We encourage patients enrolled the study to notify us as soon as they notice any change in their vision," Spencer said. "We can get them into the clinic and examined by an ophthalmologist familiar with their specific needs quickly."

This is important because, according to Lewis, "CMV in the eye literally kills the retina—it spreads quickly and the infected tissue does not regenerate."

INFO

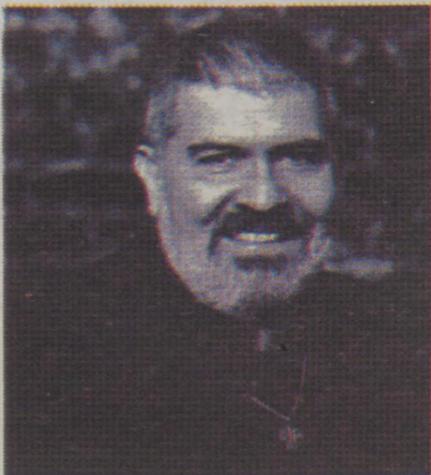
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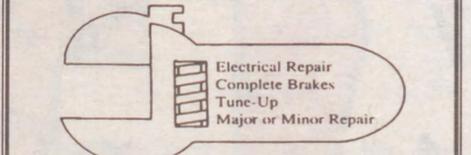


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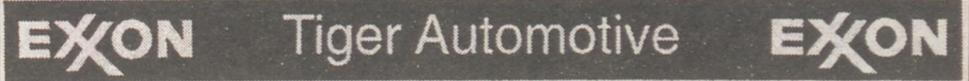


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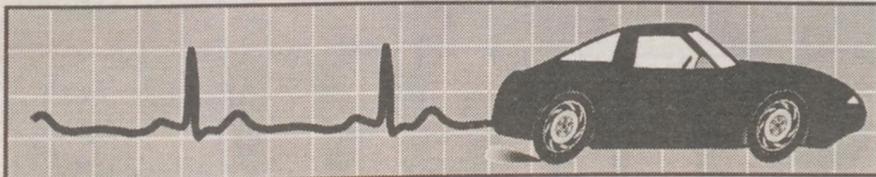


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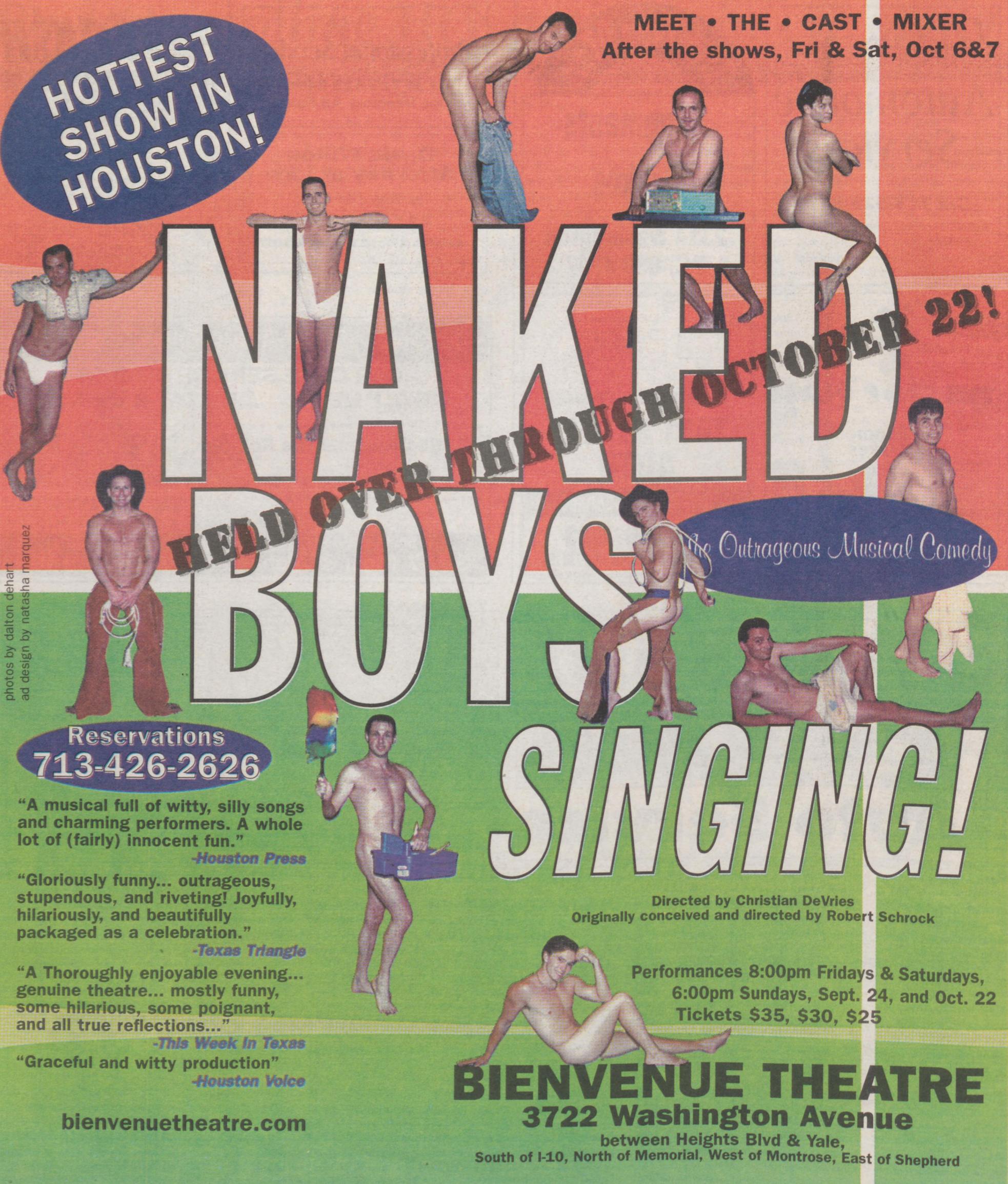
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Out on the Bayou

A guide for your leisure time

HOUSTON VOICE • SEPTEMBER 29, 2000

'Stronger' than ever

Recording artist Kristine W is back with a chart-topping single and a new CD

by STON SEIBER

Kristine W is relaxing on a sofa in her Houston hotel room. She looks radiant—as usual—but decidedly different from the last time we spoke four years ago when she was still plugging "Land of the Living."

She's in town to promote her new album "Stronger." After a wine and dine with local radio execs at KRBE she'll take to the stage for a crowded room of Houston club-goers at Rich's.

There's no doubt in my mind they'll notice the difference in Kristine as well. She's wearing about five pounds less her standard make-up, her hair is curly and blonde and she looks about 10 years younger. Not to say that Ms. W ever looked anything remotely less than youthful.

It's just sans the heavy eyeliner and dark hair she looks somewhat juvenile.

"Yeah, there's no more dark hair," she says as if bidding farewell to an old friend. "It was at the suggestion of one of my dancers at a gay pride event. I was wearing a black outfit and it became obvious if I was even going to show up at all I would need to lighten my hair.

"As for the make-up, well, I always had so much on my face. It was a psychotic thing I guess. I felt naked without it. I would be at a photo shoot or something yelling, 'I need more make-up.' I felt it was time to make a change."

Kristine W's life is a story based on change. Her father's sudden death when Kristine was only 3 pushed the family

into economic impoverishment. Despite the hard times, the fact that she sprung from a showbiz family was not lost on the impressionable child.

As a child she would warble to the likes of Donna Summer and Diana Ross in school talent shows. Later still she would join her mom in a mother daughter act, playing piano and singing at weddings and on cruise lines.

To most of us it sounds like a good time. There's no doubt Kristine enjoyed being center stage, but this was her way of helping mom put food on the table.

Clearly, the work could be hard. After capturing a Miss Washington State title, Kristine would head for Vegas. It was here that she would eventually capture the notoriety which would push her over the top.

Now after a decade of performing seven nights a week, W has decided to slow things down a bit.

"I'm not doing the Vegas thing anymore," she explains. "That would kill me if I kept up that pace, plus I'm not really even in town that much anymore. I'm jumping back and forth from coast to coast, doing the club thing."

The "club thing" Kristine refers to is actually the place she first came in contact with the gay community.

"I've found so much support personally and professionally from gay people," she says happily. "It's a community I feel I've really come to know, which makes me dedicated to the work I've done with appearances at AIDS benefits."

W made a recent nightclub appearance in Atlanta during gay pride festivities. "I

loooooove Hotlanta," she gushes enthusiastically. "It's a beautiful city and I've been to most of the gay clubs there."

Her connections to the capital of the south run deeper, actually. Especially when you press the issue about connections to the gay community and queer friends. Seems this disco diva is close pals with another diva with roots that run deep in the ATL.

"RuPaul and I hang out a lot," she says with a smile. "As far as this CD goes, there hasn't been a song he hasn't been involved in some way or another. He's pretty critical about music, he's got a great ear and he's very direct about what he thinks and says. I value his opinion very much."

In addition to RuPaul, W maintains a close relationship with Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato, the queer production duo behind World of Wonder and the management team for W and RuPaul.

For the uninitiated, Barbato and Bailey are responsible for such recent noteworthy documentaries as "The Eyes of Tammy Faye" and "Party Monster."

"Those guys have so-got that multimedia thing going," she says with a chuckle.

While we're on the subject of production let's not forget about that new album W is hawking these days. After nine weeks on the Billboard dance charts, at press time the single "Stronger" had spent five weeks in the number one position.

In just the past week the title cut has slipped to the number five position. Despite the drop, it proves the point that W can still

> Continued on Page 18



Singing out with pride

Houston's Gay Men's Chorus tuning up for new season

by D.L. GROOVER

If there's ever been a finer testament to endurance and commitment in Houston's gay community, it most certainly will be found in its splendid Gay Men's Chorus.

With remarkable longevity and resilience, our own chorus has just started rehearsals for its 22nd season, an unbreakable run of continuous music making since its founding in 1979 as the Montrose Singers. Although there's no doubt as to origin of that mother-of-all gay choruses, San

Francisco's, its descendants still bicker over the top five spots and who can lay claim to being one of the oldest.

Tony West, marketing chairman of HGMC, former president of the board, and a chorus member, explained with great pride Houston's place in history. "Twenty-two continuous, consecutive years, that's pretty impressive. Once San Francisco toured the U.S. back in 1979, it was like a little gay Johnny Appleseed. Everywhere they went a little chorus sprung up. They were all in the same year, one after the other.



FOUNDED IN 1979 AS THE MONTROSE SINGERS, THE HOUSTON GAY MEN'S CHORUS IS CURRENTLY REHEARSING FOR ITS 22ND SEASON.

Suddenly choruses were appearing out of nowhere."

And disappearing. It takes more than a group of guys who love to sing to keep a chorus alive, to keep it on track, to make it thrive. It takes hard work, long hours, constant rehearsal, and money. The '80s was the coup de grace for many of these organi-

zations. Just when the groups were coalescing, the scourge of AIDS decimated their ranks.

In the chorus since February 1993, Rex Gillit, former director and board president, remembers the discordances.

> Continued on Page 19

Kristine W. takes time to talk during Houston promotion

> Continued from Page 17

lay claim to the title Disco Diva. But there's more to W than just the thud-thud-thud of the dance floor beat. W writes her own material, as well.

She points to a few specific titles as significant for her. "Clubland' is a good story," she offers.

"It's about being part of the club scene and how it's okay to be whoever you are and how everybody's accepted. I thought the jazz overtones were a beautiful part of that.

"There was a lot of drama surrounding 'Waters Run Deep,'" she recalls. "Getting it exactly right and making it the way it should be. This album, in fact, was a cross-pollination of different artists. With so many different talents involved, I think we were able to make the music as interesting as it could be.

"We spent a lot of time on this project," W says matter-of-factly, and not oblivious to the fact that it has been three years since her last recording effort.

"We recorded in Frankfurt, Stockholm, Toronto, Los Angeles and New York.

"Stronger' has been described by critics as powerful, soulful and savvy. In truth, the CD is an energetic collection of dance floor grooves that run the gamut from smooth to

funky, encompassing dance floor, rhythm and neo-soul.

"The songs on 'Stronger' are about love, enjoying life and not taking anything for granted," W continues. "Over the years, I've learned you have to fight for everything in life, to be in love, to make the music you want, to keep relationships going strong. I've also learned that things aren't always what they appear."



PHOTO: DALETON DEHART

INFO

Kristine W 'Stronger'
RCA Records
www.Kristinew.com

Annual festival hits Heights

by D.L. GROOVER

When Oscar Martin Carter had an idea in 1891, he came up with a mighty fine one. He bought 1,700 acres of forested land four miles from the center of town on a rise far enough above the bayou to escape the constant yellow fever and flooding along the water.

He called his dream The Heights. Arguably, Carter turned his "first class residence and manufacturers' locality" into reality in so short a time and at such a profit that it's surprising that his idea of the world's first planned subdivision didn't really catch on again for another 100 years—Levittown on Long Island.

Much has been lost, but there's an amazing amount of original material extant—more than 100 structures are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places. O.M. Carter's dream is to be celebrated this Sunday, Oct. 1, with the 24th annual Heights Festival from noon to 6 p.m.

Co-sponsored by the Houston Heights Association and the city of Houston Parks and Recreation Department, this civic street fair will comprise everything a festival requires to be successful: varied and loud music, food, T-shirts, food, arts and crafts, food, antiques and collectibles, food, children's games and food.

Starting at 1 p.m., a Grand Parade will chug down stately Heights Boulevard with marching bands, art cars, vintage autos and "local celebrities." Three stages along the route will offer constant entertainment, which will leave you wheezing and breathless after a Jazzercise class, Tae-Bo, or a Ju-Jitsu demonstration.

Marmion Park Gazebo at 18th Street and Heights Boulevard has an all-day program featuring 10 singer/songwriters with their own distinctive style, who have a half-hour apiece to make an impression.

To celebrate the new bike path on the Boulevard, this year's parade theme is "Pedal Pushing." Visitors are encouraged to come to the festival on less than four wheels. However, if the Burghers of the Heights would reinstate the electric trolley, what a happy day that would be.

And leave your pets at home. In accordance with the regulations of the Parks and Recreation department, they are not allowed. Admission is free.

INFO

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Bayou Calendar

Beau Travail

Or "Billy Budd Joins the Foreign Legion." In Claire Denis' French film from 1999, the homoeroticism inherent in Melville's novella, from which this movie is loosely adapted, is splashed across the Mali desert in scorching Technicolor. Perspiration never looked so sexy. Although Miss Dietrich and her legionnaire from "Morocco" are missed, there's plenty of body art in all those ruddy soldiers exercising under the hot sun and piercing glare of sadistic Sgt. Galoup (Denis Lavant). Part fashion layout, part tragedy, part cool.

Sept. 30, 7:30 p.m. & 9:30 p.m.
Oct. 1, 7 p.m. & 9 p.m.
Rice Media Center Entrance #8,
University Blvd. & Stockton Drive

An Evening Of Texas Contemporary Dance

It's not all dance for this sixth annual weekend of modern dance at Miller Outdoor Theater. In addition to a mixed bill that includes two premieres by Houston Ballet principal Dominic Walsh and the Sandra Organ Dance Company, as well as works by Suchu Dance, Weave Dance Company, Fly Dance Company and Sharir + Bustamante Danceworks; producer Christina Giannelli has programmed the world premiere of Eve Beglarian's "The Continuous Life." Commissioned by DiverseWorks for

OrchestraX, Beglarian's symphonic work has been inspired by the sights and sounds of Houston. If there're no sounds of whining mosquitoes the size of Mothra or overturning 18-wheelers on I-45, can this be Houston? There's a guitar strum-along section for those who have thoughtfully packed their Gibson in their picnic hamper.

Sept. 30 & Oct. 1, 8 p.m.
Miller Outdoor Theater
713-284-8350

An Evening Of Art Songs & Arias

As a pioneer in the GLBT community and as a tireless advocate and philanthropist, Phil Lacy was peerless. His selfless contributions to all manner of organizations will be honored in memoriam in this sixth annual fund-raiser for Bering Omega Community Services, Houston's preeminent HIV/AIDS caregiver. Seven singers will spin operatic melodies, show tunes and spirituals into vocal gold, all for a noble cause and worthy tribute.

Oct. 6 Reception @ 7 p.m.; concert @ 8 p.m.
Rice Crystal Ballroom
909 Texas Avenue
713-524-9304

Rehearsals begin for Houston's Gay Men's Chorus

➤ Continued from Page 17

"I was a member back in the early '80s, from '82 to '85 or so. The Chorus went through some pretty difficult times after we lost our director back in the 1980s, and it just about nearly ceased to exist. We went through a period when there were five or six guys singing chamber music.

"There wasn't any kind of focused leadership and, of course, during the middle '80s was when we were hit the hardest by AIDS. The whole community was pretty demoralized, and it was certainly that way for the chorus, too."

In Gillit's opinion, the man most responsible for keeping the Chorus afloat during that time was Jeff Cothran, whom he called a visionary leader and inspiration. The GMCH has named their highest award in honor of Cothran and his tireless work on its behalf.

"He was a member in the middle 1980s and basically kept the chorus together during the time that it was fundamentally falling apart," Gillit added. "In the view of a lot of people, [he was] pretty much single-handedly responsible for us not going out of existence all together back then. He was the key person responsible for getting the organization together, incorporated, and improved by the IRS as a tax-exempt, 501(c)3 organization. That was kind of the rebirth of the chorus when that happened."

When Gillit participated in a memorial

concert for Cothran, he renewed his acquaintance with the chorus and immediately joined them again.

"The chorus was clearly in a completely different condition than it had been when I left," he explained. "I dove in with gusto and ended up getting elected president of the Chorus's board four months later. I served as president for only one year, thank goodness; but I've been on the board of directors continually since then.

"To tell you the truth, the reason that I've been so passionate about it for the past eight years has been that I've seen gay choruses in general, and this one specifically, have a really positive affirming role in their communities.

"For some reason, the combination of music with being out and gay breaks through barriers that a lot of other communications doesn't really manage to get through. We find that people are more receptive to seeing that gay people are pretty much just like everybody else when they first meet us in a context like a concert.

"We've had members come out to their parents by inviting them to concerts that they sing in."

INFO

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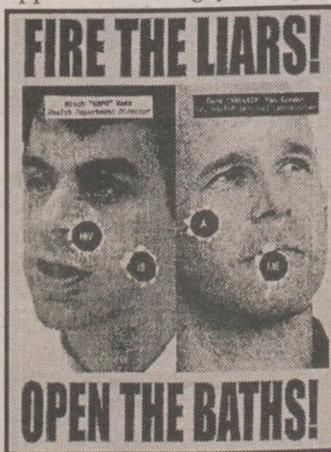
health news

Cloning techniques could soon allow gay men to produce 'male egg'

LONDON—A scientist who has pioneered cloning techniques has said that it is theoretically possible to create a "male egg" that would enable two men to use their own DNA to conceive a child, the *Age* reported. Dr. Calum MacKellar, a lecturer in bioethics and biochemistry at Edinburgh University, said scientific advances could soon make it possible to remove the DNA from an ovum and replace it with a man's DNA, which could then be fertilized with another man's sperm. That egg could then be implanted in the womb of a surrogate mother, who would carry the child to full term. MacKellar, who runs a non-profit organization called European Bioethical Research, said similar techniques were used to create Dolly, the world's first cloned sheep. One scientific issue still needs to be overcome, MacKellar said. The embryo would lack certain maternal genes that enable it to develop normally. "Some advances have been made in this respect so we might not be as far away as we thought," he said.

AIDS dissenters in San Francisco face new campaign against them

SAN FRANCISCO—Some of the city's AIDS activists have organized a campaign against ACT UP/San Francisco, the renegade ACT UP chapter that argues that HIV does not cause AIDS, the *San Francisco Examiner* reported. The campaign by AIDS Activists Against Violence & Lies started with a full-page ad signed by 194 individuals and five organizations that appeared in two gay newspapers here. The ad asked the community not to patronize ACT UP/S.F.'s medical marijuana club and urged city action to keep the group from harassing HIV educators. "I sense a commitment, finally, within our community to confront their violence and their violent message," said Michael Lauro, whose ACT UP/Golden Gate changed its name to Survive AIDS to limit confusion with ACT UP/S.F. That group plans to respond with a full-page ad of its own, said member Michael Bellefountaine. "These are the people who told us that protease inhibitors were the cure, and it's no wonder they are rallying around to suppress our message," Bellefountaine said.



Posters like these from ACT UP/San Francisco, which argues that HIV does not cause AIDS, have raised the ire of a group of activists reorganizing to oppose the AIDS dissenters.

Antibiotics find tough foe in resistant strains of gonorrhea, CDC says

ATLANTA—Strains of gonorrhea that are resistant to treatment with common antibiotics are becoming more common in the U.S., Reuters reported. More than 360,000 cases of the nation's No. 2 sexually transmitted disease were reported in 1999, according to a report from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. A CDC-sponsored surveillance system has detected the first known cases of gonorrhea resistant to azithromycin, a commonly used antibiotic, in the Kansas City area last year. In addition, cases of fluoroquinolone-resistant gonorrhea, commonplace in Asia and the Pacific Islands, have risen sharply in Hawaii since 1997, the CDC said. "We lost in the 1980s the ability to treat gonorrhea with penicillin and tetracycline, said CDC epidemiologist Chris Iverson. "We now are seeing development of resistance to two newer antibiotics, limiting our options."

Feds attempt crackdown on unapproved AIDS test kits sold over Net

WASHINGTON (AP)—AIDS testing kits that have not been approved for use in the U.S. and could produce inaccurate results are being exported to other countries through sales over the Internet, Federal Trade Commission officials said last week. A 1996 law permits medical devices not approved for U.S. sale to be exported to countries that have agencies similar to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration. Once overseas, the products can then be reshipped to developing nations. FTC Commissioner Orson Swindle said in a statement that allowing the export of defective kits could harm people, and advocated a "hard look at whether current export laws and practices adequately address the export of devices that, if faulty, may contribute to the spread of AIDS." Swindle made the statement during a press conference that announced a settlement with Sova Tec Diagnostics of Novato, Calif., which brokers overseas sales of the tests. The company had promoted unapproved HIV tests as "the most accurate technology available," the FTC said.

Prostate cancer tests at 40 could save lives, computer models show

ATLANTA—A new study indicates that expanded use of a blood test to screen men over age 50 for prostate cancer might also save the lives of younger men, CNN.com reported. A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* used computer modeling to predict the effectiveness of using the prostate-specific antigen blood test to screen men for cancer every two years beginning at age 40. "Our model would suggest that, compared to testing at age 50, that for every 10,000 men screened, we would prevent one prostate cancer death," said Dr. H. Ballentine Carter of Johns Hopkins University. Currently, the American

Cancer Society recommends that the test be offered to all men yearly after age 50, sooner for those at high risk for the disease.

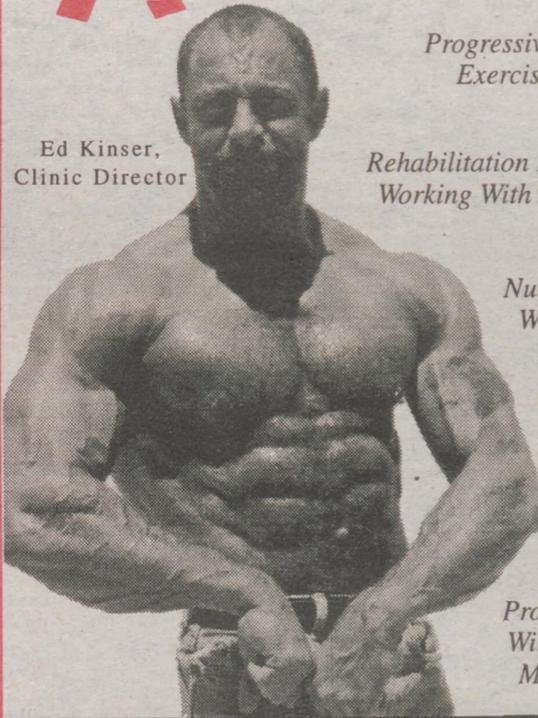
—From staff and wire reports

For more news, visit www.houstonvoice.com



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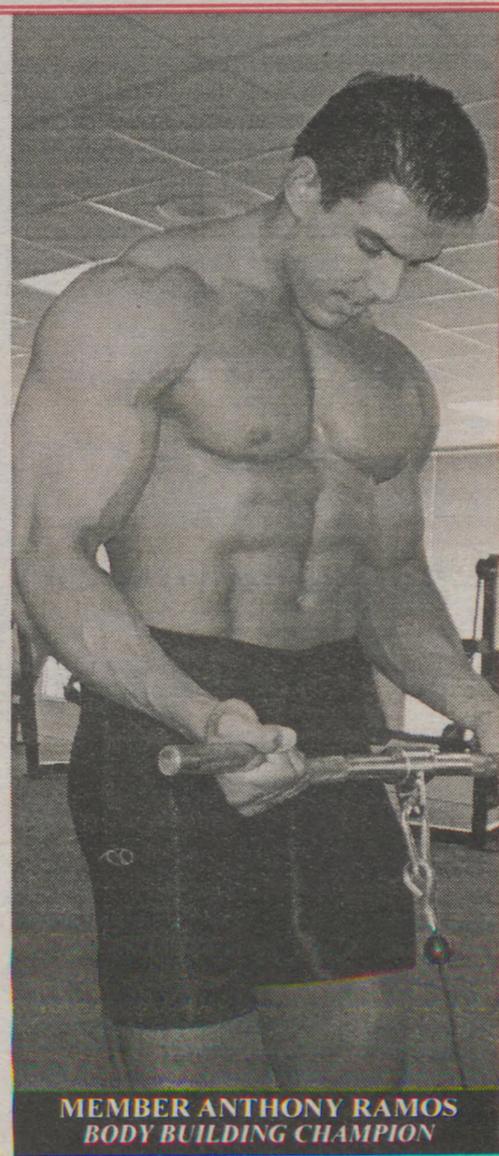
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Eating Out

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Empty promises

Habanero Blue doesn't deliver menu's high praise

By TRAYCE DISKIN

Before I even stepped foot in **HABANERO BLUE**, the name intrigued me. Not only because blue habanero peppers don't exist, but it had the ring of a funky, yet undiscovered new place.

Another curious aspect of the menu is the running superlative commentary after many dishes. For example, our Crab Empanadas are apparently "the best of anywhere in Houston!" And as far as the Grilled Salmon goes, you "must try this dish—it's wonderful!"

The Crab Empanadas with Papaya and Cilantro Pesto (\$8) were impressive, although a pesto lover like myself yearned for more of a garlic kick. The fluffy, steamed meat fit snugly into the heavily fried, but quite greaseless shells, and the papaya lent a nice tropical flavor to each bite.

Was Habanero Blue's menu simply setting us up for disappointment? For starters, the murky Poblano salsa accompanying our chips was mild, but a bit too sweet, although it made a welcome departure from a typical red salsa. Our server raved about the signature Blueberry Margaritas, and while I appreciated the sharp potency, I didn't know what to make of the blueberry factor. Blue they were—well, purple, really—but the taste was all sour lime, salt, and tequila and hardly any smoothly blended fruit.

The Crab Empanadas with Papaya and Cilantro Pesto (\$8) were impressive, although a pesto lover like myself yearned for more of a garlic kick. The fluffy, steamed meat fit snugly into the heavily fried, but quite greaseless shells, and the papaya lent a nice tropical flavor to each bite.

Habanero's identifies itself as a place for "Mexican Cocina," and one should not expect an overabundance of Tex-Mex dishes such as flautas, burritos or quesadillas, although these do appear as lunch specials once or twice a week. Rather, dishes like Roasted Pork with Gouda Cheese Torta (\$11), Poblano Chile with Pulled Roast Beef and Pulled Potatoes (\$10), and Filet Mignon in Berry-Red Wine Sauce (\$19)

offer more hefty, and more formal choices.

While my friend enjoyed her side of Poblano Mashed Potatoes, the Fried Chicken Breast (\$11) seemed little more than rather bland meat coated in oil and tons of black pepper.

The same equation fit the Pollo Pollo Torta (\$10), which featured an identical chicken breast slapped between two halves of hard Italian bread. The sliced avocado offered a brief salve for the rough dough and chicken that repeatedly scraped the roof my friend's mouth each time she negotiated a bite.

The Grilled Shrimp Fajitas (\$12) came sizzling, as fajitas should, on a skillet with fresh and succulent peppers and plump, well-cooked shrimp. My friend ate them happily, and allowed that there was little one restaurant's fajitas could do to upstage another's.

My Seafood Enchiladas (\$12), however, were drowned in a clay brown chili sauce so salty that it made it difficult to enjoy the flaky crab meat tucked inside the smothered tortillas. The accompanying pinto beans and rice were dried out and crusty—something I blame on the time they must have spent under kitchen heat lamps while our server was nowhere to be found.

I'm usually willing to forgive slow or inattentive service during a bustling rush, but in the two hours we dined, only two other parties stopped in. When our waiter appeared, he was always friendly and perhaps overly enthusiastic, much like the oral equivalent of the menu commentary. "You'll have to try the rest next time," he beamed. He rhapsodized over the margaritas each time we ordered, but neglected to remember that we ordered one with salt.

We would have preferred efficient, even service over a hard sell any day, and it's unfortunate that Habanero Blue can't yet offer food or service that speaks for itself. The prime downtown location and roomy atmosphere would make a pleasant happy-hour or dinner venue.

HABANERO BLUE
1601 Commerce
713.224.2268

FOOD FILE

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Service: ☺☺
Value: ☺☺☺
Scene: ☺☺☺☺

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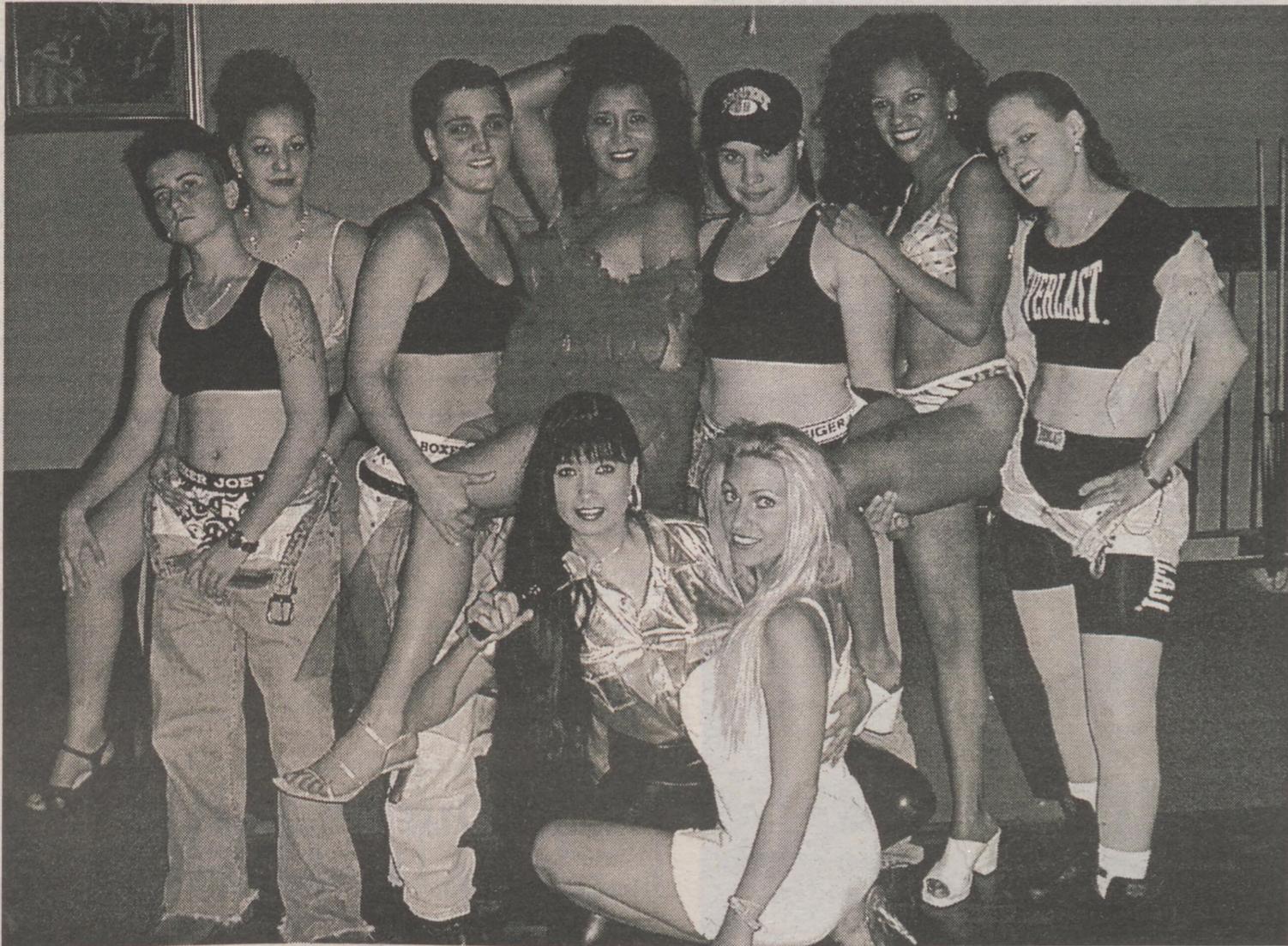


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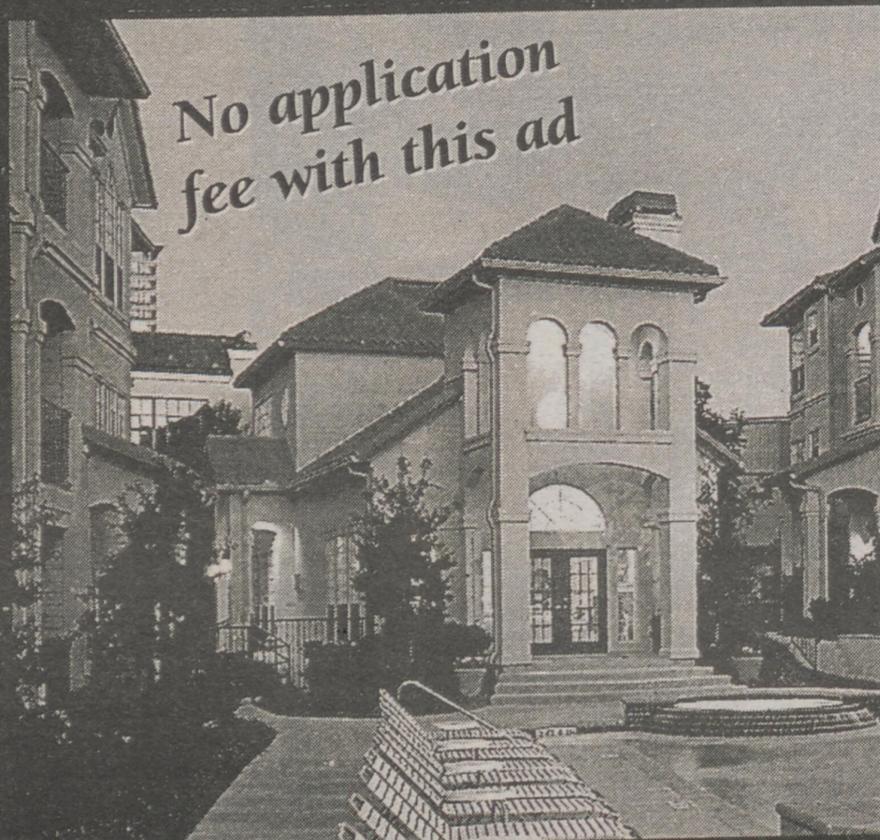
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saturday, september 30

After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM. 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. 713-526-5738.
Q-Patrol walks the streets 8:45 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.
Dignity mass. 7:30 p.m. for gay Catholics. 713-880-2872.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Rosary 8 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama. 713-528-6665.
Houston Chain Gang Bicycle Club. Call for ride locations. 713-863-1860.
Houston Wrestling Club. Practice. 1:30 p.m. 713-453-7406.
Rainbow Fishing Club. Meeting. 713-526-7070.
Houston Faerie Circle. Meeting. 2 p.m. 713-533-0150.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Southwest Center. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. 281-633-2555 & Conroe 936-441-1614.
Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours noon to 4 p.m. • Montrose Writer's Project. 3 to 4:30 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-528-3818.
Names Project. Yard sale. Westheimer & Waughcrest. 713-528-NAMES.

sunday, october 1

Common Group (formerly New Hope Christian Center) Worship Service. 11 a.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals meets. 713-942-7002.
Rainbow Riders. A bicycle club for women. 713-869-1686.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Holy Rite Eucharist I 7:45 a.m.; Holy Rite Eucharist II 8:55 a.m.; Education hour 10 a.m.; Choral Eucharist 11 a.m. 713-528-6665.
Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Church. Service. 6:30 p.m. 713-528-6756.
Resurrection MCC. Services. 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10 a.m. Youth Sunday School 11:15 a.m. Handbell Choir rehearsal 1:30 p.m. 713-861-9149.
Grace Lutheran Church. Sunday school for all ages 9 a.m. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-528-3269.
Community Gospel. Service at 11 a.m. & 7 p.m. Sunday School for children 10 a.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
Houston Mission Church. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-529-8225.
Covenant Church, Ecumenical, Liberal Baptist. Service 9:30 a.m. & education hour 11 a.m. 713-668-8830.
Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Services at 8:30 a.m. & 10:50 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 713-526-1017.
The Women's Group. Meeting & Discussion. 10:45 a.m. 713-529-8571.
Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 502 Church St. Service 10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.
First Congregational Church (Memorial). Service at 11 a.m. Christian Education. 11:30 p.m. 713-468-9543 or fcc-houston.org.

Unitarian Fellowship of Houston. Adult forum 10 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 713-686-5876.
Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation: Adult discussion 9:45 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.
First Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:30 & 11:30 a.m. Brunch available 10:30 a.m. 713-526-5200. church@firstuu.org.
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours 2 to 4 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
Blessing of the Animals. Kolbe Project. 3 p.m. 713-861-1800.

monday, october 2

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

tuesday, october 3

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Club Houston. 713-830-3000.
Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-524-0439.
Bering Support Network. Lunch Bunch Gang 11 a.m. 713-526-1017.
Gay Men's Process Group. 7 p.m. 3316 Mt. Vernon. 713-526-8390.
Men's Network. Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual men. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.

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calendar

Lambda Skating Club skates. 8 p.m. Tradewinds. Skating Rink. 713-410-7215.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Lesbian Coming Out Group. 7 p.m. • Lesbian Island Association meeting. 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
Impotence support/discussion group. 7 p.m. 713-523-0451.
Lesbian Health Initiative. Monthly meeting. 713-603-0023.
Greater Houston Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Chamber of Commerce. Monthly meeting. 7 p.m. 713-523-7576.

wednesday, october 4

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

thursday, october 5

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

Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. 7 p.m. 713-880-0670.
Hep C Recovery. Support Group. 6:30 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017, Ext. 211.
STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.
Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Toyz Disco. 713-830-3000.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.
FrontRunners. Running Club. 6:30 p.m. 713-522-8021.
HIV Art Course Program. 1 to 4 p.m. Patrick Palmer 713-526-1118.
Women's Clinic. Montrose Clinic. 713-830-3000.
Community Gospel. Service. 7:30 p.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
HIV Testing. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818
Gulf Coast Transgender Community. Meeting/support group. 7 p.m. 713-780-4282.

friday, october 6

Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (H.A.T.C.H.) Meeting. 713-942-7002.
Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. Rich's. 713-830-3000.
STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.
Frost Eye Clinic. Free eye exams for people with HIV. 713-830-3000.
Q-Patrol walks the streets. 9 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.
Kolbe Project. Morning Prayer. 10 a.m. Movie Night. 7 p.m. 713-861-1800.
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
Positive Art Workshop. 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Patrick Palmer. 713-526-1118.
Lesbian and Gay Voices. KPFT 90.1 FM. 7 p.m. 713-526-5738.
Mishpach Alizim Shabbat Services. 8 p.m. 713-748-7079.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
Community Awareness for Transgender Support (CATS) Meeting/support group. 6 p.m. 409-927-1705.
Art Show opening. DragonShadow. Hyde Park Gallery. 713-526-2744.
Houston Gay & Lesbian parents. Fall Campout. 713-284-4939.

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

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Occasions Birthdays

King Father for life Dot Thompson will rule her birthday on Oct. 1.

Miss Camp America's own David S. will have a big hair of a birthday on Oct. 2.

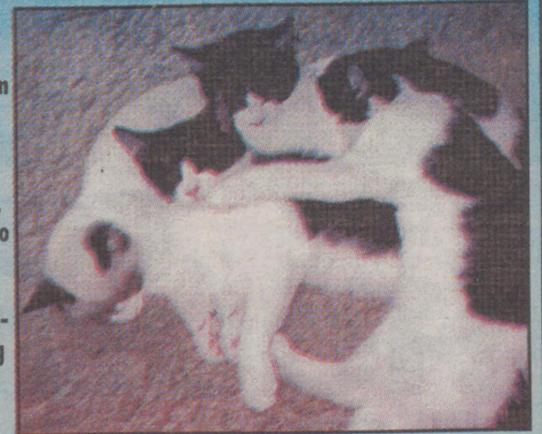
Miss Ouisa (Rex) has his chicken legs for his birthday on Oct. 5.

The Houston Voice welcomes your special occasions. Send e-mail to croberts@houstonvoice.com. Fax: 713-529-9531. Mail: Occasions, Houston Voice, 500 Lovett Blvd., Suite 200, Houston, Texas 77006. Please include a telephone number so occasions can be verified and considered for publication.



How many packages of Depends will Creath Robison need on his big dog birthday Oct. 1?

Our pets of the week are Bandita, Julius, Rodd & Todd. They were recently rescued from the mean streets by Houston Voice graphic designer Natasha Marquez, but are desperately searching for permanent homes. (They bring the tabby tally up to a whopping eight, which is far too crowded even for a cat lover.) They're very friendly, litter-box trained, and are looking for owners that will have them fixed (but not declawed!).



If you'd like to adopt one (or two... or four) of them, contact Natasha at the Houston Voice at 713-529-8490.



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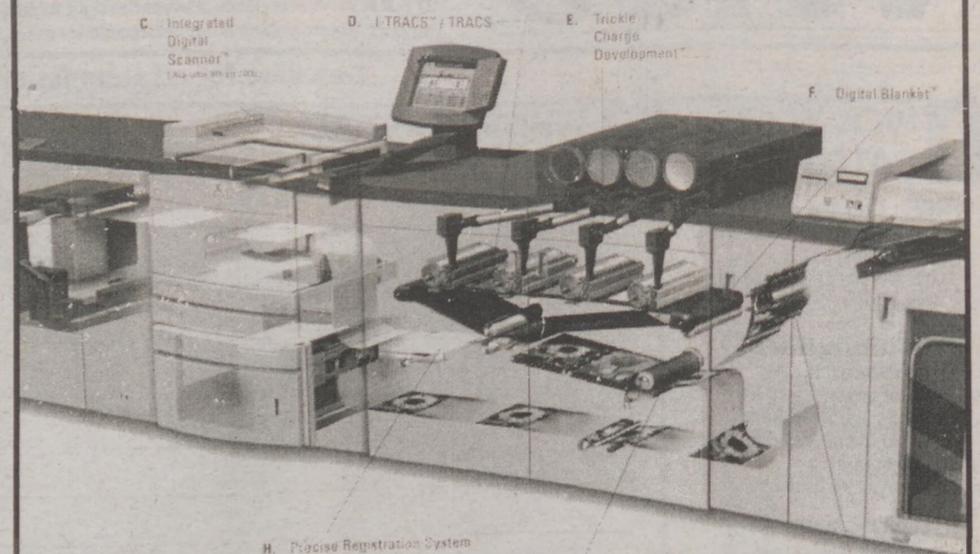
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My Stars!

by JILL DEARMAN

YOUR WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

September 29 - October 5



ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

While the Sun is opposing you, you may feel less in control than usual. That makes this the perfect time to act the part of the bottom in all your relationships. You have a lot to learn about the people around you, particularly your bizarre buddies. A Sagittarius could surprise you on many levels. Practice your poker face.



TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

If you are feeling trapped in your job, take heed! While the Sun transits your day job sector, you have an opportunity to get a new and better position. Aren't you fed up? Early October is the perfect time to make one small step in the direction of freedom. A Cancer will hold your hand.



GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

You and a mysterious person in your life could get closer and closer and closer in the days ahead... but still not touch! Enjoy the tease and torment; relief comes later. Do something wild and unexpected in the name of something you believe in passionately. In the process, you may shock an Aquarius into noticing you and nuzzling up to you.



CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

The Sun in your fourth house may bring out your cautious side, and that's just fine. If you have to wait before letting the world know how grand your plans really are, so be it. The Sun in your house of kinfolk may make you wish you had been raised by wolves. Turn to the loving breast of an Aries for guidance.



LEO (JULY 24 - AUG. 23)

The Sun and Jupiter are both giving you extra chances to find your sexual other half. He or she could be at the gym or in the supermarket or across the world. Don't freak out if you run into someone you once loved who you now think is a sadistic creep. Put some of that energy into a productive relationship with a Gemini.



VIRGO (AUG. 24 - SEPT. 23)

You may have to walk away from someone you are attracted to emotionally and physically and say to yourself, "If and when the right time comes, I'll go back." You have to put your negativity aside for a little while, dearest. A Capricorn needs to know that you believe in him or her.



LIBRA (SEPT. 24 - OCT. 23)

You may have to make a business decision that scares you, sweetie, but you can make anything happen while the Sun is in your sign and Mercury and Venus transit your house of concrete accomplishments. Think about focusing on one huge success, and put the little details aside for the moment. A Taurus will handle those.



SCORPIO (OCT. 24 - NOV. 22)

Imagine yourself running through the victory tape. That image can become a reality within a month or two. Venus in your sign could make you feel a little competitive, jealous and possessive when it comes to romance. A Cancer finds your brand of obsessive love emotionally unthreatening and sexually arousing.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 23 - DEC. 22)

As Venus is moving slowly through your house of endings and new beginnings, you may be wondering, "Where's my new beginning?" If you rest, it will come that much sooner. You feel a deep kind of longing; transform your ache into joy by telling a Leo exactly what you need.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 23 - JAN. 20)

You may have to rely on three parts faith and one part the power of your own machinations when it comes to your career, darling. Do your job well and find joy in your real life after you punch out for the day. A Pisces can show you what life is all about.



AQUARIUS (JAN. 21 - FEB. 19)

As the Sun hits your house of ideas, consider taking a class or brainstorming with people you find bizarre and brilliant. Change one thing about the way you do business and you could experience a domino effect of pleasure and freedom. A Virgo looks at you with awe. Look back.



PISCES (FEB. 20 - MARCH 20)

You are about to become someone's dream. Can you handle the responsibility? The pressure? I think so. The Sun in your eighth house brings out all the deep contradictions of your nature. Explore them with someone who can handle your dark side—like a Scorpio.

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

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