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Change of heart?

Debate continues over claims that gay men and lesbians can change sexual orientation.

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APPLAUSE: Another win for 'Brokeback Mountain.' Page 7



Fifteen same-sex couples exchanged marriage vows Feb. 18 as part of events sponsored by the Foundation for Marriage & Family Equality Inc. in observance of National Freedom to Marry Week. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

Life goes on after Prop. 2

Gay-rights groups not giving up fight for their equality

By ERIC ERVIN

The series of events that took place last week in observance of National Freedom to Marry week could benefit gay men and lesbians who are depressed because of last year's approval of

Proposition 2, a state constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages, said a counseling center official.

Organizers with the Foundation for Family & Marriage Equality Inc. sponsored the weeklong series of events. It included parties, picnics, seminars, a demonstration in which six same-sex couples tried to apply for marriage licenses, and a mass same-sex wedding ceremony.

Chris Kerr, LIFE program coordinator with the

Please see **PROPOSITION 2**, on Page 3



The new boob tube

Gay TV programming is increasingly available online

By GREG MARZULLO

Those who want their gay TV are finding a growing array of options, including 24/7 all-gay cable networks like Logo and now online outlets for watching shows previously available only on TV.

The web isn't just for blogs, podcasts and cruising sites. The ability to download and watch gay-themed TV programs from the internet is gaining momentum as viewers increasingly demand instant gratification from content providers.

Gay television network Here!TV and the newly formed OutZoneTV.com, a collaborative effort between Bravo and PlanetOut.com, are working to provide all-hours access to gay programming via the web.

"New technology always provides new opportunities for us to

Please see **WEB TV** on Page 18



local life
Houston clubs propose 'Let Us Entertain You' for a weekend of fun nightlife. Page 8

dish
Country great Willie Nelson releases another song about love between cowboys. Page 17



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cover story

Many same-sex couples attend more than one event

PROPOSITION 2, continued from Page 1

Montrose Counseling Center, said normally those who are dealing with issues concerning their sexual orientation wouldn't participate in such events but seeing others fight for equality could help them cope with feelings of rejection. The LIFE program coordinates all of the center's psychotherapy services.

"They're not at that level," he said. "In general, I hope that those kind of measures give some hope that people are not ready to give up."

Kerr said he has not seen an influx of patients at the counseling center who are going through depression as a result of the ban.

"I do process most of the intakes for the center," Kerr said. "I don't remember seeing any that say specifically I'm here because of Proposition 2."

However, Kerr said it's not unusual that the mental health of some gay men and lesbians could be affected by the ban. Kerr considers it a personal attack when he hears of discrimination against gays, and understands why it would make some gay men and lesbians depressed.

"It's possible," he said. "Every time I read something I can feel myself shrinking down one more inch."

But Kerr said last week's celebrations could offer hope.

"I believe those things can help," Kerr said. "That can have a little bit of positive encouragement."

Several couples participated in more than one event last week, showing up at the demonstration at the Harris County clerk's office and wedding. They believe the state's ban is discrimination.

"It's sad," said Darrin Brindle. "I feel like marriage is a fundamental right and we're being discriminated against."

Brindle has been in a same-sex relationship with Mark Eggleston for seven years.



Six gay couples and gay-rights supporters protested last week in front of Harris County government offices. Each gay couple tried to apply for a marriage license, but was denied because of the state's ban on same-sex marriages.

He said they will continue to ask for a marriage license until same-sex marriage is legal in Texas.

"Our relationship is no different than theirs," Eggleston said.

After spending time outside county offices holding signs that read "Honor Gay Marriage," "My Kids Deserve Equal Rights Too" and "Civil Marriage is a Civil Right," the couples and gay-marriage supporters lined up and entered the building.

All of the couples said they want the same rights and protections that are guaranteed to straight couples. They said the law jeopardizes gay couples' rights to secure their relationship through documents such as wills, powers of attorney and second-parent adoptions.

"It's hurtful," said Michelle Dean, who arrived with Kelly Gilbert, her lesbian

partner of 10 years.

Last week's protest was the fourth time the couple tried to apply for a marriage license. They also said they won't give up the fight until gay marriage is legal in Texas.

"We'll come down every year until the (Texas) Constitution no longer can be changed through prejudice and bigotry," Gilbert said.

Christopher and Jonathan Wellington, who changed their last names to show their commitment to each other, have been together for 28 years. Last week was the second time they've participated in the demonstration. They said they wanted to take a stand, just as others have done throughout history when challenging laws such as racial discrimination.

"Well, why didn't Rosa Parks give up her seat on the bus?" Christopher Wellington responded when asked why he participated in the demonstration. "It puts a face on this issue. It shows that we are real people who love each other."

Christopher and Jonathan Wellington are pastors at Community Gospel Church, where 15 same-sex couples exchanged marriage vows Feb. 18 to be "partners in life." Some of the couples have been together for almost 28 years. They're children and other family members attended the ceremony.

"Although the state of Texas does not recognize marriage between same-sex couples, this in no way diminishes the unions we celebrate today," said Rev. Matt Tittle with Bay Area Unitarian Universalist Church. "In fact, it strengthens the love you have for one another."

Tittle told the couples that their love has to be stronger in order to face discrimination.

"In our society, the romantic bond of love between two women or between two men is usually received with misunderstanding, fear and constant dis-



Couple Jonathon and Christopher Wellington are at the county clerk's office last week trying to receive a marriage license.

i MORE INFO

Foundation for Marriage & Family Equality Inc.
3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 207
Houston, Texas 77006
713-227-1717
www.familyequality.org

Community Gospel Church
4305 Lillian
Houston, Texas 77007
713-880-9235
www.communitygospel.org

Montrose Counseling Center
701 Richmond Ave.
Houston, Texas 77006
713-529-0037
www.montrosecounselingcenter.org

crimination," said. "Love in the face of such obstacles is tested unlike that of most couples."

Jessie Moore and Jessica Randel, a lesbian couple who have been together for two years, attended the wedding ceremony and exchanged vows. They both believe they've met their soul mate, and are angry about the ban.

"It infuriates me," Moore said. "It's legal in my heart and no matter what the state says, that's all that matters."

In Austin, officials with Waterloo Counseling Center said they've seen an increase in the number of gay and lesbian patients dealing with suicidal thoughts and behaviors. They said the patients believe they are disenfranchised and discarded because of the ban.

Last November, more than 76 percent of Texas voters approved the same-sex marriage ban. Statewide voter turnout reached 17.81 percent, the highest since Gov. Rick Perry's tort reform measure.

local news

Victory Fund holds Houston brunch

Two gay local officials receive hero awards at second annual event

By ERIC ERVIN

Inspiration and admiration took center stage Feb. 19 at the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund Houston Brunch as two local gay public officials were honored and three others spoke of their fight against discrimination.

The Washington, D.C.-based political organization offers openly gay candidates professional training and financial support to help them get elected. In the past 14 years, officials said the organization has helped increase the number of openly gay public officials from 49 to more than 300.

Houston City Controller Annise Parker, the city's first openly gay councilmember, has been an inspiration for other gay candidates to run for public office in city's as far away as San Antonio.

"She has been our pioneer, our frontrunner," said Janine Brunjes, secretary of the organization's board. "Without a local hero like Annise Parker, we wouldn't get anywhere."

Parker is humble about her political accomplishments. She thanked her supporters for helping her get elected to the City Council and controller posts. Parker received the organization's Local Hero Award.

"You have given me opportunities to have jobs I love," she said. "You have given me opportunities to be a steward for the future of Houston."

Parker said her positions have allowed her to appoint gay men and lesbians to influential city posts. There was a clear showing of support for Parker's bid for mayor, but she has not publicly expressed any desire to run for the seat.

"It is my goal and mission to get re-elected, but my other goal is to get Parker elected mayor," said Houston City Councilmember Sue Lovell.

Lovell, who was elected in a runoff election last December, also received the Local Hero Award. The new councilmember, who was outspent by her opponent, credits the organization with helping her win the election.

"If it wasn't for the Victory Fund, I wouldn't be here," she said. "We had the money needed to spring into action."

Lovell said in the weeks leading up to



U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), (second from left), Houston City Controller Annise Parker, San Antonio Councilmember Elena Gujardo, Houston Councilmember Sue Lovell and Dallas County Sheriff Lupe Valdez at the second annual Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund Houston Brunch.

the election, she was the target of discrimination, and her three sons were criticized for being adopted.

"It's important to be vigilant against people who use those tactics," she said. "When that happens, we will have victories."

Inspiring others

Elena Gujardo, an openly gay San Antonio councilmember, credits Parker with helping her ease fears of being an openly gay candidate and connecting her with the organization. She said her opponents were ready to attack her based on her sexual orientation.

"I called her (Parker) up and we had lunch," Gujardo said. "She told me that you've really got to get hooked up with the Victory Fund."

Gujardo said she didn't decide to run a seat on the San Antonio City Council to promote a gay agenda, but to serve everyone in her city. She said her position allows her to give a gay person's perspective on different issues, which was beneficial during meetings with the city's mayor to discuss hiring a new police chief.

"I told the mayor that that new police chief should not be afraid of the GLBT community," Gujardo said. "That wouldn't happen if I was not there at the table."

Lupe Valdez made history when she defeated eight candidates and was elected sheriff of Dallas County. Valdez became the first-ever woman, Hispanic and lesbian to hold the position.

It was not an easy feat to conquer. She faced discrimination and financial problems. After working out of her home for seven months, Valdez's grass-roots campaign shelled out \$4,000 for office space in an economically disadvantage section of the city. The sheriff said this was a lot of money to spend because she only had \$4,015 in the bank.

"I kept \$15 in the account just to keep it open," Valdez said. "Right in the middle of all this is where the Victory Fund came in."

Valdez said the money and training offered by officials from the Victory Fund helped her win the election.

"Victory Fund comes in, in the nick of time," she said.

After the election, Valdez said a woman who has a gay son approached her and shared stories of his struggles with accepting his sexual orientation. Valdez said at that moment, she realized her win inspired others.

"I wondered what this heterosexual, anglo, suburbanite, who is probably a Republican, have in common with me," Valdez said. "She said to me 'You're my son's hero, your election validated who he was.'"

Valdez said she was happy she could be an inspiration, but is concerned with many other gay youths who don't have role models.

"What about the gay children in rural areas who don't have anyone to look up to?" she asked. "We must not stop validating our people."

An essential part

U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) credits the organization with helping gay candidates get elected. He said it aids in the fight against discrimination.

"The Victory Fund has been an absolutely essential part of our efforts," Frank said. "We are the benefactors of all the work that you do."

Frank touched on many controversial issues, including gays in the military and same-sex marriage. Last year, Texas voters approved a constitutional amendment defining marriage as only the union between a man and woman.

"The only people who have been affected by gay marriage in Massachusetts is those who live across the street from lesbians and had to buy them a present," Frank said.

Frank said conservatives often try to make personal choices for others by passing laws. He said this creates a dilemma for many gay politicians who are left with having to choose between their personal life and career, which is unfair.

"We're on the moral side and they're on the immoral side of these issues," Frank said. "It's immoral for a 15-year-old girl to be bullied because she's a lesbian."

Frank, who delayed revealing his sexual orientation back in the 1980s because of another politician's disclosure, said although there has been progress in the fight for gay rights, discrimination still exist.

MORE INFO

Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund
1705 DeSales St. NW, Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-842-8679
www.victoryfund.org

obituaries

John Vernon Sahn, 44

John Vernon Sahn, 44, who was highly involved with HIV/AIDS charities and research efforts in Houston, died Jan. 23.

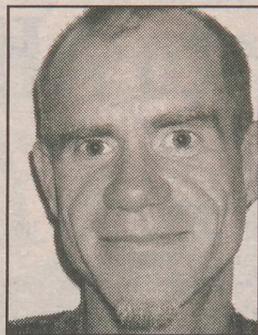
"It was an honor and a privilege to have spent the past 12 years together," said same-sex partner Reed Anderson.

After retiring from a job as maintenance supervisor at a local apartment complex, Anderson said Sahn became an HIV/AIDS activist.

Sahn was a member of the Ryan White Planning Council for five years. Friends said he worked tirelessly while on the council, devoting his time and energy on various committees where he made decisions on allocating funding to local HIV/AIDS service organizations.

They said Sahn took his work on the council very seriously, and volunteered for many events to raise HIV/AIDS awareness. He participated in many HIV/AIDS programs in order to learn more about the disease and how it could be defeated.

Sahn participated in clinical trials. Friends said he was a true soldier in the fight to have medicine available to everyone affected with the disease.



John Vernon Sahn was a local HIV/AIDS activist and a member of the Ryan White Planning Council.

In his spare time, Sahn often attended events at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, where Anderson said he was always excited to view exhibits. He also taught himself architecture and engineering and loved to attend lectures on modern design. Sahn spent the last three years designing a home for the couple.

Other hobbies included photography, television production, welding, writing, hiking and camping. Sahn's adventurous personality inspired him to become a pilot and drive motorcycles.

Other survivors include his parents Ann and Vernon Sahn of San Antonio; sisters Carol Sahn Allen and her husband Marvin of Austin; and Susan Peteete and husband Mark; and children Matt and Laura of New Braunfels.

Donations can be made in Sahn's memory to Legacy Community Health Services. The agency, which was created last year by the merger of the Montrose Clinic and The Assistance Fund, provides medical and financial assistance to HIV/AIDS patients.

Staff report

Scott Alan Gibson, 41

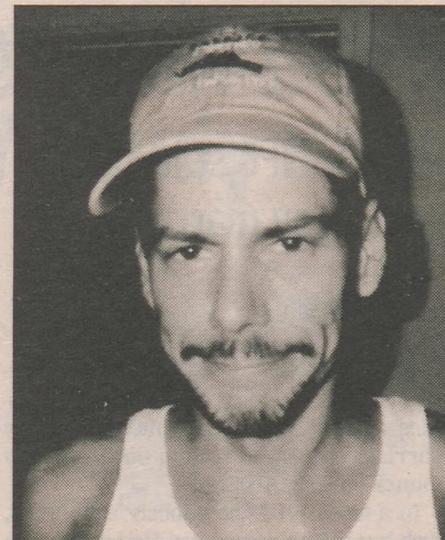
Scott Alan Gibson, who was a long-time volunteer with AIDS Housing Coalition Houston/AHCH Inc., passed away Feb. 11 due to complications from the disease, according to a close friend.

Gibson, 41, became affected with the HIV virus in 1994, and moved back to Houston where he ended up sick and homeless after losing his house and business to Hurricane Andrew.

According to a friend, Gibson wanted to use his experience in maintenance, landscaping and security work at the local AIDS coalition and started volunteering there in 1999. The organization presented him with the Citizen Hero Award in 2001.

While he wasn't helping others, friends said Gibson loved the nightlife in Houston and Miami. He was responsible for technical support at the now closed Club Nsomnia, which was a popular after-hours nightclub.

A pet lover, Gibson was often referred to as "Dr. Doolittle." He operated a successful pet shop called Fins & Feathers



Scott Alan Gibson often volunteered with AIDS Coalition Houston/AHCH Inc.

Pets in Florida. He leaves behind dogs, birds and fish.

Gibson's survivors include long-time companion and best friend Matt Locklin, who cared for him until his death; parents Gary and Betty Gibson; brother Troy Gibson; sister Rochelle Gibson, all of Pasadena, Texas; and many other family members and friends.

Donations can be made to AIDS Housing Coalition Houston/AHCH Inc. The organization provides education services to empower people of all ages who are affected with the disease to continue living their lives.

Staff report

i MORE INFO

John Vernon Sahn Memorial Donations
Legacy Community Health Services
1116 Jackson Blvd.
Houston, Texas 77006
713-529-4788

i MORE INFO

Scott Alan Gibson Memorial Donations
AIDS Housing Coalition Houston/AHCH Inc.
502 West 24th St.
Houston, Texas 77008
713-864-1795
web.wt.net/-ahch

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national news

Bush names anti-gay minister to AIDS panel

Former NFL star Lusk backs gay marriage ban

By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

WASHINGTON—President Bush recently appointed a Baptist minister who advocates a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage to the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

In a move yet to be publicly announced, Bush last month named Rev. Herbert Lusk, a former Philadelphia Eagles football star and current pastor of Philadelphia's Greater Exodus Baptist Church, as one of five new members of the presidential AIDS advisory panel, according to a current panel member.

Lusk is a member of the board of advisers for the Alliance for Marriage, a conservative religious organization that lobbies lawmakers to support a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage. He did not respond to interview requests.

Bush also appointed to the AIDS council Troy Benavidez, a member of the national board of directors of the Log Cabin Republicans, a gay GOP group based in Washington, D.C.

Benavidez is a New Mexico native who recently moved to Philadelphia with his



Gay rights opponents Tony Perkins (left) and James Dobson are close allies of Rev. Herbert Lusk (center), who has been named to President Bush's AIDS advisory panel. (Photo by Joseph Kaczmarek/AP)

domestic partner to become director of national and state alliances for AstraZeneca, the international pharmaceutical company based in Wilmington, Del. For the past four years, Benavidez worked as manager of state governmental affairs at the company's office in Albuquerque, N.M.

Benavidez said his company does not produce AIDS drugs and that his interest in serving as a member of the panel is based on his longstanding interest in helping to fight AIDS.

Lusk heads a multi-million dollar faith-based social services agency in Philadelphia that he founded called People for People. Lusk told the New York Times the organiza-

tion receives about \$10 million a year in government funds, with at least \$1 million a year coming from federal faith-based grants.

Lusk has publicly rejected claims by critics that the federal grants came as a reward for his strong endorsement of President Bush in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections. Bush has visited Lusk's Philadelphia church twice during the past five years, according to media reports.

At Lusk's invitation, conservative religious leaders, including Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family and Rev. Jerry Falwell, came to Lusk's church on Jan. 8 for a rally in support of Bush's nomination of Samuel Alito to the U.S. Supreme Court. The rally, dubbed "Justice Sunday III," was viewed by hundreds of thousands of conservative Christian followers through a live television hookup.

Stacey Sobel, executive director of the Philadelphia-based Center for Lesbian & Gay Civil Rights, said she is not aware of Lusk taking a public position on gay rights legislation or other gay rights issues pending before the Philadelphia or Pennsylvania governments.

Existing members of the AIDS advisory council learned about Lusk's appointment and the appointment of four other members through an e-mail announcement they received earlier this month

from Joseph Grogan, the council's executive director.

According to David Resnick, a gay council member, Grogan said the new members would be formally announced at the next meeting, which is scheduled to convene in Washington, D.C., on March 16.

Resnick, a dentist who specializes in dental care for people with AIDS, is chief of dental services for the Fulton County, Ga., public hospital system. He is the only remaining openly gay member of the panel. Log Cabin's Bonavidez will raise the number of open gays to two when he joins the group next month.

Gay Republican activist Abner Mason, who has served on the panel for the past four years, is set to leave as his term expires just as Bonavidez comes on board.

Other new panel members named by Bush are physician Robert Redfield, associate director and co-founder of the Institute of Human Virology at the University of Maryland's Baltimore campus; and physician Robert Bollinger, professor of Infectious Diseases & International Health at Johns Hopkins University.

Bush last month also appointed to the panel Alan Holmer, former president and chief executive officer of the Pharmaceutical Research & Manufacturers of America.

Only one state now facing gay adoption ban

Measures opposing gay marriage remain hot topic in state legislatures

By DYANA BAGBY

Despite fears from gay rights activists that bills to ban gay adoption would be a hot topic in state legislatures this year, only one such ban has actually been introduced — and it appears unlikely to win approval.

Ohio gay families are the first to face what some gay groups claim may be a potential onslaught of state bills to ban gay people from adopting or becoming foster parents, as social conservatives attempt to ride on the coattails of successful anti-gay marriage bans.

Ohio House Bill 515 was introduced Feb. 9 and states a person may not adopt "if the individual is a homosexual, bisexual or transgender individual; the individual is a step-parent of the child to be adopted and is a homosexual, bisexual or transgender individual; the individual resides with an individual who the court determines is a homosexual, bisexual or transgender individual."

Other states that gay rights activists speculate might introduce similar bills include Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri, Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas.

With many state legislative sessions under way, some activists are surprised no other gay adoption bans have been introduced.

"It is interesting only one state has filed a bill to ban gay adoption and, frankly, that's not where we expected to be," said Jennifer Chrisler, director of the Family Pride Coalition, a national organization that works for gay families.

Chrisler said her group is organizing with local and national groups, including the Human Rights Campaign and the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, to defeat bans on gay adoptions.

"Some people know they can very easily use this as a political wedge issue. Texas will have another foster ban in 2007. But polling shows people believe it should be up to social scientists and professionals to determine what is best for the child — perhaps this is why the issue has lost its steam," Chrisler added.

While Georgia is on the list of potential states to see legislation to ban gay adoption or foster care, no bill has been introduced, and the General Assembly is set to adjourn in about two weeks.

Georgia Equality received a \$28,000 grant from the Human Rights Campaign to hire a lobbyist to specifically combat any proposed bill to ban gay adoption or foster care.

"I think they realized the timing was all wrong. This is an election year and they decided to go after issues Georgians are interested in, such as immigration and taxes," said Chuck Bowen, Georgia Equality executive director.

Carrie Evans, HRC state legislative director, said the group also granted money to Mississippi to fight any proposed

gay adoption measures.

"We are treating this issue with a level of intensity," Evans said. "I think the that fight state and national gay groups are putting up are forcing the social conservative groups to take a step back."

Ohio bill 'divisive'

Ohio is the first state this year to go after gay adoption, but seven states last year filed measures to ban gay adoption and, in some cases, ban gay foster parents as well.

The 2005 bills in Arkansas, Alabama, Indiana, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia all failed, but activists said that doesn't mean gay adoption is no longer a hot topic for social conservatives.

"These people cannot reproduce. ... Experimenting on children through gay adoption is a problem," Rev. Russell Johnson, chair of the Ohio Restoration Project, a conservative Christian group, told USA Today in a Feb. 20 article.

The Ohio bill was introduced by a Republican, Rep. Ron Hood of Ashville. But it was immediately derided by GOP House Speaker Jon Husted as "divisive," and it is not expected to pass.

"There's growing concern within the Republican Party of continuing to introduce this divisive legislation," Scott Borgemenke, Husted's chief of staff, told the Associated Press. "We don't think there's some cottage industry of homosexual adoptions. We do believe people are losing their jobs."

Equality Ohio praised Husted's comments.

"The swift and strong opposition to this bill from the leadership in Ohio's General Assembly is a sign that Ohio's legislators put the needs and interests of Ohio's children first," Lynne Bowman, the group's executive director, said in a prepared statement.

Florida is currently the only state to expressly ban adoption by all gay people, although Utah restricts adoption to married couples, effectively banning gays, according to the ACLU Lesbian & Gay Rights Project. Mississippi bans adoption by gay couples.

Arkansas and Nebraska do not ban adoption by lesbians and gay men, but do prohibit them from becoming foster parents, according to the ACLU.

Marriage bans

This year, voters in six states will decide whether or not to alter their state constitutions to ban same-sex marriage. Legislatures in another 13 states are considering whether to put similar measures on the ballot in future elections, according to HRC's Evans.

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) is also calling for a June 5 vote in the Senate on the Marriage Protection Amendment, which would change the U.S. Constitution to define marriage as only between a man and woman.

Tennessee's proposed ban on same-sex marriage is likely to pass, said Chris Sander, spokesperson for the gay Tennessee Equality Project.



news in brief

'Brokeback' wins 4 British awards, slips Singapore censors

LONDON — "Brokeback Mountain" won four awards including best picture Feb. 19 at the British Academy Film Awards. Ang Lee was named best director for "Brokeback," which is up for eight Oscars on March 5. Jake Gyllenhaal won the best supporting actor and said onstage that the movie, whose commercial success is unprecedented for a gay-themed film, "means even more to me socially than it does artistically." Backstage, he told reporters, "I've had a lot of people say to me after the film, to my surprise, 'Thank you for making it.'" Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana, who adapted Annie Proulx's short story, won the adapted screenplay prize. The film is playing to an ever-widening international audience. In Singapore, moviegoers over the age of 21 will be allowed to see the film despite the nation's strict laws against gay sex. "Brokeback" will carry a "mature theme, sexual scenes" warning. Singapore gay activists were pleased that state censors permitted the film to be screened. Singapore's media content director told BBC News that Brokeback Mountain was approved because it did not "promote or glamorize the lifestyle."



Jake Gyllenhaal, (left) Heath Ledger, Michelle Williams, Ang Lee and James Schamus were awarded trophies by the British Academy of Film & Television Arts for best film for the movie Brokeback Mountain. (Kirsty Wigglesworth/ AP Photo)

'Warcraft' will no longer silence players about sexual orientation

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — An uproar in the popular "World of Warcraft" online game has spurred the game's maker to review its treatment of gay players. The game, which draws more than five million players worldwide, was hit by controversy last month after a player was threatened with expulsion from the virtual Warcraft world when she sought to recruit others into her gay-friendly team. Blizzard Entertainment, the game's maker, apologized last week to the player, Sara Andrews of Nashville, Tenn. It said the warning was a mistake and won't be repeated, according to Andrews and her attorney from Lambda Legal. Gay-friendly teams already exist in Warcraft, but when Andrews sought gay and gay-friendly players, Blizzard viewed the effort as potentially harassment of non-gay players.

Federal court refuses appeal from Matthew Shepard killer

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — A federal judge has refused to grant a review to the case of Russell Henderson, one of two men convicted in the 1998 murder of gay University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard. U.S. District Judge Clarence Brimmer last week rejected Henderson's motion for a writ of habeas corpus. Henderson claims he was never told of his right to appeal, effectively denying him an appellate lawyer. A state district court and the Wyoming Supreme Court previously rejected Henderson's motion. In April 1999, Henderson pleaded guilty to his role in the robbery and murder of Shepard. He was sentenced to two consecutive life sentences, but prosecutors agreed not to seek the death penalty because of the plea deal. Henderson and Aaron McKinney beat Shepard and tied him to a fence outside Laramie in October 1998. McKinney is also serving two life terms.

Moscow gay activists fight for Gay Pride parade

MOSCOW — Plans for Russia's first Gay Pride parade have been vetoed by the city government, prompting gay activists to threaten legal action in the European Court of Human Rights. Gay activists have been campaigning for Russia's first Gay Pride event on May 27, which marks the 13th anniversary of the decriminalization of homosexuality. A spokesman for Moscow's mayor said the parade would not be allowed because of reactions from religious leaders, the Independent in London reported. Earlier this month, a Muslim cleric warned Russian Muslims would stage violent protests if the Gay Pride march went forward. "If they come out on to the streets anyway, they should be flogged," the cleric said. Gay organizer Nikolai Alekseev said preparations for the parade will continue, and an official application will be made in May.

N.Y. appellate courts rule against gay marriage and D.P. law

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Two appellate courts rulings disappointed gay rights advocates last week. A midlevel state appeals court upheld the state's marriage law as constitutional Feb. 16, handing a defeat to same-sex couples seeking to be married in New York. The five-judge panel ruled in three separate cases brought on behalf of gay couples denied marriage licenses. The similar cases could eventually end up before the state's highest court, the Court of Appeals, which is expected to decide the issue. Two days earlier, the state's highest court dealt a victory to New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, ruling an anti-discrimination law passed by the City Council over the mayor's objections violated state law. The Equal Benefits Law, enacted in June 2004, required the city to do business only with contractors and property owners that agree to provide the same benefits for the domestic partners of employees as they do for the spouses of employees.

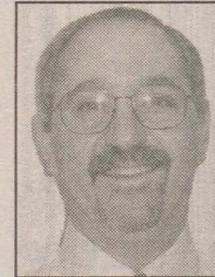
From staff and wire reports

national news

Early treatment key to fighting HIV, study says

Results may lead to revised guidelines on starting drug therapy

By ANDREW KEEGAN



Dr. Kenneth Lichtenstein, a research scientist at the University of Colorado, said research suggests people infected with HIV may need to begin treatment upon diagnosis, regardless of their T-cell count.

Results of an ongoing study may lead the federal government to re-evaluate guidelines for when people with HIV should begin taking medications to combat the virus.

Preliminary research compiled by Dr. Kenneth Lichtenstein at the University of Colorado showed that highly active anti-retroviral therapy early in the course of an HIV infection may significantly reduce the occurrence of major treatment-related side effects.

"Our study isn't the end all of all studies," Lichtenstein said. "But it should provoke dialogue to soften guidelines on when to begin treatment."

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services establishes guidelines for HIV treatment. Factors that determine when to begin HIV therapy center around a person's viral load and T-cell count.

A viral load test detects the amount of virus present in the blood, and a CD4 (T-cell) test reveals how much damage HIV has done to the immune system.

An uninfected person has 500-1,500 T-cells per cubic millimeter of blood. The current federal guidelines recommend that people with HIV start treatment when T-cells fall below 200. The agency notes there is "inconsistent data" supporting therapy before the count falls below 350. Until now, delaying treatment is based on the toxicity of the drugs, which can lead to treatment-related complications.

With a grant from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Lichtenstein examined the medical records of 2,304 HIV-positive people in eight U.S. cities who were part of the HIV Outpatient Study between 1996 and 2005.

The study found that patients with a T-cell count above 350 that began early treatment were 60 percent less likely to develop kidney problems than those who initiated therapy at a T-cell count of 200 or lower.

Results also indicate early treatment led to a 30 percent decrease in patients experiencing numbness in the hands and feet, and a 60 percent drop in lipoatrophy — the loss of fat beneath the skin.

It may be too early to abandon current treatment guidelines, but ongoing studies may eventually change how treating the virus is addressed, Lichtenstein said.

"Personally speaking, I believe we are moving in that direction of advance treatment," he said.

According to a spokesperson for the DHHS, Lichtenstein's study is not yet reviewed by an independent panel that establishes the nation's HIV treatment guidelines. But the guidelines are updated frequently, and the panel meets monthly to discuss revisions, the spokesperson said.

Updating treatment guidelines may be important for general physicians, but one HIV specialist said the official rules are more of a "cookbook" approach.

"We don't use exact numbers," said Dr. Daniel Berger, medical director of NorthStar Medical Center in Chicago, which serves more than 3,000 HIV-positive patients. "A seasoned HIV specialist should be able to discern when to begin treatment."

Berger said he recently began therapy on a patient exhibiting brain symptoms even though his T-cell count was above 700.

"I believe the pendulum may be swinging back to the 'hit hard, hit early' attitude due to less toxicity in new treatments," he said.

Drug holiday discouraged

Lichtenstein's research also supported the findings of another recent study that determined drug conservation HIV therapy had a detrimental effect on patients.

The Strategies for Management of Anti-Retroviral Therapy trial, sponsored by the National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases, was halted last month after preliminary data indicated that patients taking AIDS medication only when their immune system dropped below 350 T-cells were twice as likely to have the disease progress.

The theory was that patients might be able to take medication breaks, which would reduce cost and serious side effects.

Researchers enrolled nearly 5,500 patients whose T-cell count exceeded 350 in the four-year study. One group discontinued anti-retroviral therapy until their count fell to 250, at which point they would renew medication. The second group continued therapy throughout the trial.

Patients in the on-again, off-again group also saw an increase in drug side effects to the heart, kidneys and liver.

LUEY Weekend promotes Houston's nightlife

33-year-old event coincides with Mardi Gras and attracts New Orleanians to the city

By JOHNNY HOOKS

The annual event known as "Let Us Entertain You", or LUEY, Weekend is upon us, but with the devastating hurricanes of last year taking a bite out of the New Orleans Mardi Gras festivities, organizers were not sure what to expect for 2006.

Happily, according to Scott Kenyon, who is once again chairman of the Houston Council of Clubs, the group who sponsors the weekend party, organizers are expecting capacity crowds.

"Indications are from pre-registration online," Kenyon says. "We will have a larger crowd this year."

The 11 official clubs are Colt 45's, Brotherhood of Pain, LoneStar boys of Leather (LSBOL), FireDancers Houston Tribe, National Leather Association/Houston (NLAH), Houston Area Bears (HAB), Rainbow Wranglers, Misfits Houston, Sundance Cattle Company, Texas Leather & Lace, Houston Nomads and the Women In Power Society (WIPS). Auxiliary clubs include Gulf Coast Archive Museum (GCAM), Houston Big Men's Club, the Imperial Court of Houston/Space City Empire, Miss Camp America Foundation and PWA Holiday Charity and others.

Kenyon has high expectations for this year's event.

"Registration for the weekend is limited to 1,000 guests," he says. "I expect it to be very close to that number. We traditionally have a number of people who come to Houston after attending Mardi Gras in New Orleans."

Kenyon could only speculate why attendance is expected to be so large this year.

"Maybe it's the slightly later timing and the cold winter in the north is making a trip to Houston more attractive this year," Kenyon says. "Whatever the rea-



Each year, Houston-area clubs roll out the red carpet for local and New Orleans residents during LUEY Weekend.

son, we are glad to see everyone and want to show them a great time in Houston."

LUEY Weekend annually coincides with the close of the Mardi Gras celebrations in both New Orleans and Galveston. Registration is only \$15 for residents living in Harris and adjoining counties. Events are free for out of town guests.

The weekend is billed as one of Houston's biggest events. It's a time for the men and women involved in the local Levi/Leather scene to show off the famous Houston hospitality we've seen and heard about since Katrina.

The weekend kicks off with registration that includes savory homemade burgers, Thursday, March 2 from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. at E.J.'s. Registration continues throughout the weekend, including Friday, March 3 at 8 p.m. at Mary's Naturally, Saturday, March 4 at 10:20 a.m. and at 611 and Ripcord at 1 p.m.

The official host bars for this year are the Brazos River Bottom, E.J.'s, Mary's Naturally, Rich's-Houston, the 611 and the Ripcord. Each day during LUEY Weekend, different clubs are allocated an hour or more to host a party.

Evening events include a barbeque dinner from Demeris BBQ, served at the Brazos River Bottom and the First Ladies Tiffle Hats Parade.

LUEY weekend was created 33 years ago by the Texas Riders organization as a way to continue the Mardi Gras party for those returning from New Orleans.

In its earliest days, LUEY weekend consisted of a small bar "run" where men and women traveled en masse to

each host bar. The event has grown over the years with close to a 1,000 registered guests from 34 states and five countries participating.

Kenyon is excited about a new club joining the ranks this year.

"Along with the member clubs in the Houston Council of Clubs, a number of other community organizations serve as auxiliary organizations that help us out with elements of LUEY Weekend," he says. "This year we are pleased to add a new auxiliary organization, Southern Country."

The tiffle hat competition has always been a spectacle, and this year looks to be no different.

Kenyon explains the event.

"Each club or organization is invited to create a hat, which is traditionally worn by the partner of the president of that group," he says. "The groups have become quite competitive in their attempts to create the most creative entry."

The spouses of each club owner will wear the hats in the parade Saturday, March 4 at 4 p.m. at the Ripcord. A secret panel of judges will choose a winner, who will receive an award at the "Show of Shows" on Sunday.

Many years into the LUEY weekend tradition, the Houston Council of Clubs added the "Show of Shows" event. It marks the closing of festivities for the weekend events, and is held on the final Sunday afternoon. The member clubs present the "Show of Shows" where each club is given 10 minutes to perform.

There is no theme, but the results are a campy scream festival where everyone from Dick Cheney to Paris Hilton is fair game for these skewering skits.

This year's "Show of Shows" will be held at Richs-Houston on Sunday, March 5 from noon until 3 p.m., with the show starting at 1 p.m. Kenyon has high hopes for this year's show.

"This camp spectacular show features productions created and performed by member and auxiliary organizations of Houston Council of Clubs," he says. "This year's show is bigger than ever, with more numbers and productions by clubs performing for the first time or (ones) that we have not seen on stage in a few years." Kenyon says

He says the show is popular with visitors and local residents.

"The show is always a highlight of the weekend, and usually the talk of the town for a long time after," Kenyon says. "The 'Show of Shows' has developed a following over the years.

"Many people who cannot attend the rest of the weekend come out to see the campy revue poke fun at movies and TV, as well as just some great entertainment. And there is no cover charge."

Throughout the year, the council holds fund-raisers to raise money to help pay for the weekend's events. Kenyon believes it benefits the city.

"Bringing in over 1000 people annually does a lot of good for the image of Houston and gives members of other clubs a chance to taste the good gay life in Houston." he says.

MORE INFO

LUEY Weekend, March 2-5
Houston, Texas
www.lueyweekend.com

out in houston

(Photos by Dalton DeHart)



Tim Brookover, "Noah's Arc" star Rodney Chester, Itay Hod, comedian Vicki Shaw and Bob Witeck at a party sponsored by the Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce and the gay television network Logo.



Ryan Lindsay, Matt Adams, John Palmer and Dominick D'Aunno at a "Spaulding for Kids" event at Palmer's art gallery.



Barry Mandell, Mark Ng, Glynda McGinnis and Harold Kelly at the Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce 'Honoring Our Allies' luncheon.



This year's winners of the Mystery and Fantasy Mardi Gras Ball put a lot of work into their costumes.

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Forum

HOUSTON VOICE

FEBRUARY 24, 2006

PAGE 10

editorial

Swinging both ways

Councilmember Sue Lovell sought and won

two gay group endorsements, but still didn't

want her sexual orientation in a headline.

By ERIC ERVIN

W

HILE GLUED TO MY DESK working on a busy afternoon before last November's Houston City Council election, I received a call from newly elected City Councilmember Sue Lovell.

She called to thank me for an article in *The Voice* about her advancement to a runoff election against Houston Community College trustee Jay Aiyer for the At-Large Position 2 seat. But she also expressed her displeasure with the story's headline.

The article, "Lesbian in runoff for At-Large City Council post," included a picture of Lovell, who is openly gay, and Houston City Controller Annise Parker, who is also a lesbian.

Lovell insisted that everyone already knew her sexual orientation and to announce it in a headline was not only unnecessary, but had the potential of costing her the election. She worried the article would be used in negative campaigning by her opponent.

It's a decision gay candidates have been wrestling with for decades: Should I come out of the closet and gain the support of gay voters and political action groups or keep my sexual orientation private?

"Why not 'Lovell in runoff for At-Large Position 2?'" she said at the time. "Everyone in the community knows I'm a lesbian. It's no secret."

It's unclear whether Aiyer and others who worked on his campaign knew Lovell is a lesbian, but the information was not hard to discover.

Lovell is also identified as a lesbian in the article, but she didn't seem to have a problem with it there. She was calling about the headline.

I went over the facts with the candidate: Are you openly gay? Yes. Was it the first time that your sexual orientation has been reported in the *Houston Voice*? No. Did you have a problem with this newspaper identifying you as a lesbian in the past? No.

"I just think it will be best not to have it laying around all over town in the newspaper that I'm a lesbian," Lovell said.

The *Voice* article did not "out" Lovell, who chose freely to disclose her sexual ori-

entation and not in response to any sort of scandal. It was volunteered information.

Of course, there have been gay Houston councilmembers before, but Lovell is only the second to publicly disclose her sexual orientation. Parker, who is often seen with her same-sex partner at city events, was the first.

SHOULD A POLITICAL CANDIDATE'S sexual orientation be considered an attribute worth reporting and debating when seeking office? Does someone's sexual orientation better qualify her for a job?

It could be at times, when voting for instance on domestic partner benefits for city employees or other gay issues that could come before City Council.

Knowing that Lovell is a lesbian and would probably be a voice on gay issues at City Hall is certainly important to gay Houstonians, whether they knew, as Lovell said everyone did, or not.

But the role of the media, including gay and lesbian newspapers, is not to help or hinder her campaign or that of her opponent's. Our job is to present the facts and let our readers decide how they feel and will vote.

Lovell reminded me that the "smart" thing to do as editor of the gay newspaper is to endorse the gay candidate in an editorial.

But would she have been displeased with an endorsement editorial with the headline, "Lesbian candidate is the right choice for At-Large Position 2?"

If being a gay candidate should earn her an endorsement, then why shouldn't it be included in the headline?

Lovell and other gay candidates can't have it both ways. On the one hand, she wanted the support of this newspaper because she is gay, and her race covered favorably because she is gay.

On the other hand, she didn't want the reports to highlight in headlines that she is gay because that might harm her campaign. Swinging both ways, at least in this way, smacks of hypocrisy.

Lovell sought and won an endorsement from the Washington, D.C.-based Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, which only donates money to openly gay candidates, with the idea that gay public officials will be the most effective advocates. David Arpin, a member of the national organization's

board, said \$70,000 was raised for Lovell's campaign.

Lovell received a Local Hero Award from the organization last weekend during its annual Houston brunch. The Houston GLBT Political Caucus also endorsed the new gay councilmember, choosing her over Aiyer.

And yet she worried that if some conservative Republican from her opponent's campaign had stumbled upon the article, it would give them fuel for a bonfire of trash ads against her. It's possible, but newspapers are responsible for the accuracy and fairness of their stories, not the gay-baiting ways in which some political candidates might use coverage.

IT'S A MYSTERY WHY LOVELL'S SEXUAL orientation was never reported in other Houston newspapers. Is it only because being gay is important to a gay publication but not the mainstream press?

Or did Lovell promote her sexual orientation only in gay circles, while securing endorsements and campaign contributions to help her win the election?

In the November general election, Lovell received 32 percent of the vote compared to 26 percent for Aiyer. In the Dec. 10 runoff, Lovell took 50.8 percent, narrowly defeating Aiyer's 49.2 percent.

The margin was only 579 votes out of more than 35,000 cast. Only 4 percent of the city's registered voters came out to cast ballots.

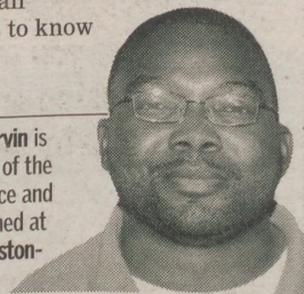
Robin Brand, senior vice president of politics and strategy, said the organization only endorses and supports gay candidates. The organization claims to have helped more than 700 gay candidates win elections since 1991.

Lovell's win is highlighted on the website of the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund as an important election victory last fall.

Only time will tell if Lovell will continue to swing both ways on her sexual orientation, using it to her political advantage while shielding it where she believes it may hurt her politically.

The gay groups that endorsed her, and the gay Houstonians who supported her, will be better served if she reconciles her sexual orientation as something that's relevant for all Houstonians to know about her.

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



viewpoint JACK KENNY



'Book of Daniel' was cancelled because of religious right protests that went unanswered by gay rights advocates.

And then they came for 'Daniel'

I WOULD LIKE TO SET STRAIGHT A FEW things about your recent article on the American Family Association ("AFA boycotts up group's profile," news, Feb. 17), and on the growing number of other groups of hate-mongering bullies.

You quoted political science professor John Bruce as saying that "the cancellation of 'Book of Daniel' was likely because nobody was watching it."

That is not entirely accurate, and Professor Bruce should probably do a little more research before he throws out conclusions of that sort. It is true that our numbers dwindled, but that decline was the direct result of a much more drastic decline in promotion from our network.

The only promotion "Daniel" ever got was in the form of "on-air promos" — commercials for the show, aired only on NBC. That's it. No print campaign, no bus stops, no billboards, no radio, etc. And in our second week, we received a total of three on-air promos; as a result, our numbers dropped.

In the third week, we received no promotion whatsoever, and once again, a drop in numbers. You simply cannot expect people to run to a new show if you don't tell them about it — especially one airing at 10 p.m. on Friday.

Frankly, I was amazed anyone watched at all, considering our broadcast seemed to be one of the best-kept secrets in Hollywood.

NOW, LET'S LOOK DEEPER. WHY WOULD any network want to suffocate a show that got 90 percent favorable reviews, and had, by most accounts one of the best casts ever assembled for a television program?

Controversy Advertisers hate controversy. Witness the lack of advertising on the first season of "NYPD Blue," or even the first few episodes of "Desperate Housewives." "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" had almost no advertisers when it began, then, after it gathered an audience, advertisers began clamoring for time.

There are dozens of examples. Shows that push the envelope need to be supported by their network, and this network was under pressure from its affiliates and advertisers, which in turn were under siege from the AFA. So it became easier to let us die, rather than weather the storm.

And that storm of hatred, fear and homophobia was begun by the AFA. A full month before our premiere, the AFA launched a campaign.

Not unlike the Nazis, they are well



organized, they hide behind God, and they fan the flames of fear and hatred to go after a vulnerable target. But here's the new twist, they've learned how to harness the internet to their best advantage.

With a simple point and click, they overwhelmed the advertisers and affiliates with e-mails, and made the show radioactive. What's more, the advertisers, the affiliates and NBC were hearing nothing from any other groups.

There was no voice on the other side of the issue to speak up — no one outraged at their homophobic attacks on me or the gay characters — so we went down.

MAKE NO MISTAKE, THIS IS NOT ABOUT "The Book of Daniel." We were simply a tool for them to raise money — probably hundreds of thousands of dollars.

These organizations have no interest in "hate the sin, love the sinner." They want us dead. I am absolutely serious about that.

And as a community, we are going to have to learn to be at least as active and vigilant as they are, otherwise they will win again — and next time it won't be a TV show, it'll be your personal freedoms.

If we don't start standing up for ourselves whenever one or any of us is attacked — as I was, very publicly for being a "practicing homosexual" — we will lose what little ground we've gained in the past few years, to say nothing of achieving any new rights or equalities.

They have the tacit support of the White House, many powerful members of Congress, and probably the Supreme Court. They put out bulletins, frightening their members of the "gay agenda," but there's just one agenda at work here, and that's their desire for our annihilation.

Our heroes need to start stepping forward and speaking out, or, as Pastor Martin Niemoller put it so many years ago, when dealing with those other Nazis, "And then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak out."

@ Jack Kenny is the openly gay writer behind "The Book of Daniel," the NBC series starring Aidan Quinn as an Episcopal priest with a gay son; he can be reached through this publication.

THE

Q

Considering the recent killings at a Massachusetts gay club, do you feel safe at Houston area gay clubs? Why or why not?



Of course. In Houston with the number of folks that live here, being a queer is not a mainstream thought on most of the public's mind. I live here and have for all of my life and have had no problems to date.

JOHN UTSEY, 33
Houston
Audio visual technician



I do feel safe going out in Houston. For the most part, areas around the clubs are well lighted and security is often visible.

GEORGE HAWKINS, 47
Houston
Financial planner



Yes, I feel safe in the Montrose area because of the dense gay population in and around the bars.

BURK HUGHES, 32
Houston
Financial advisor



Yes, I feel safe because most of the time when I go out, I do so with a few if not several of my closest friends. Plus, the venues I frequent always have the police department members at the door.

ALEJANDRO RINCON, 25
Houston
Hotel



I feel as safe in our clubs as I do in any public place. I try to be aware of my surroundings anywhere I go. We cannot let this type of crime prevent us from living our lives.

ROBERT SHIPMAN, 25
Houston
Event consultant

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Interviews and photos by Dalton DeHart

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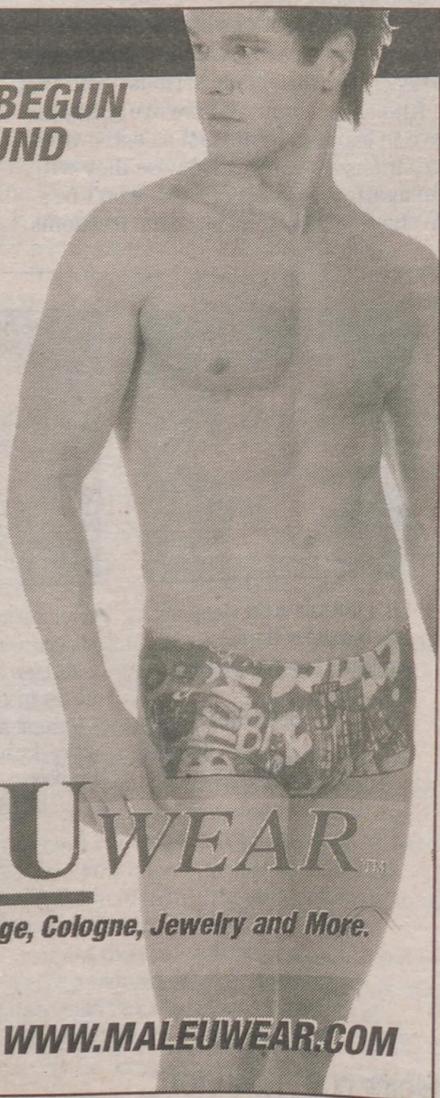
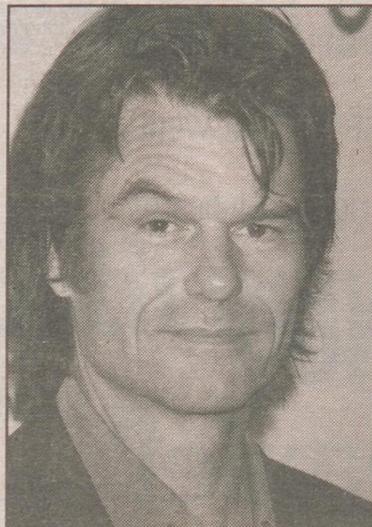
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"It moved me like no other love story I have ever seen."

Actor **Jake Gyllenhaal**, after winning best supporting actor at the British Academy Awards (Reuters, Feb. 19)

"After having done that film, I have not done another studio picture in 20-some odd years."

Actor **Harry Hamlin**, on the 1982 movie "Making Love," in which he played a gay character (Fox's "O'Reilly Factor," Feb. 21)

"[Heath] Ledger and [Jake] Gyllenhaal aren't going to be hurt, I don't think. I think that picture will win."

Talk show host **Bill O'Reilly** in an exchange with Hamlin and gay 1950s heartthrob **Tab Hunter** about "Brokeback Mountain" (Fox's "O'Reilly Factor," Feb. 21)

"They really are the ruby slippers of our time."

Tom Gregory, the winning bidder in an eBay charity auction of two shirts worn by **Heath Ledger** and **Jake Gyllenhaal** in "Brokeback Mountain"; Gregory paid \$101,100.51 for the shirts (Associated Press, Feb. 22)



"Supporting an LGBT fundraiser for Hillary Clinton will actually hurt our community. It will send a message to other elected officials that you can be working against us during this critical time and not suffer a negative pushback from the gay community. We have become a community that throws money at politicians and we demand nothing in return."

Alan Van Capelle, executive director of the Empire State Pride Agenda, in an internal memo issued earlier this month (New York Observer, Feb. 21)

"All attempts to organize a gay parade, in any form, open or disguised, will be resolutely quashed."

Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov, reacting to anti-gay threats from Russian Islamic and Jewish leaders in response to plans for a Gay Pride parade (Independent, Feb. 22)

"I believe that equality for lesbians and gay men is a fundamental human right. Equality must include the right to hold Gay Pride parades and other public events, which celebrate the contribution of the lesbian and gay communities to the life of the world's great cities."

London Mayor Ken Livingstone reacting to the Moscow mayor's announcement (PinkNews.co.uk, Feb. 22)

"[She] gave a face and a story to our struggle. If we win marriage equality, we will be able to point to **Laurel Hester** and her partner, **Stacie Andree**, as the couple, as much as any other, who made history happen."

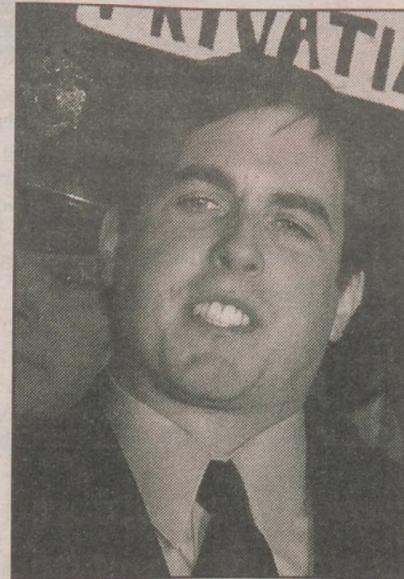
Steven Goldstein, chair of Garden State Equality, following the death of **Laurel Hester**, 49, a law enforcement officer suffering from cancer whose efforts to ensure that her pension benefits would be extended to her domestic partner drew national media attention (Associated Press, Feb. 18)

"Now that we've defined what marriage is, we need to take that further and say children deserve to be in that relationship."

Greg Quinlan of the Pro-Family Network in Ohio, referring to efforts by Christian conservatives to ban gay adoption (UPI, Feb. 21)

"If they choose to be married, they should have the right to do so and if things don't work out as, unfortunately many relationships don't work out, that shouldn't be news. The issue really is the rights involved rather than any individual personalities."

New Paltz, N.Y., Mayor Jason West, on word that the first gay couple he married two years ago has now split up; that marriage and a number of others performed by West were later dissolved by the courts (Mid-Hudson News.com, Feb. 17)





Loving change

Goapele mixes it up in her latest CD 'Change it All', offering romantic songs and an end to injustice.

Page 16

Revisiting reparative therapy

New book examines impact of debate over whether gay people can become straight

By RYAN LEE

NEW YORK PSYCHIATRIST ROBERT L. Spitzer was always a rebel, and his rabble-rousing research alternately made people view him as a hero and a saboteur of the gay rights movement.

"I admit, there is something in me that is always looking for trouble or something to challenge the orthodoxy," Spitzer says in an interview published in the upcoming book "Ex-Gay Research: Analyzing the Spitzer Study and Its Relation to Science, Religion, Politics and Culture."

The book brings together for the first time a series of analytical essays, most of which are critical, about a 2001 study by Spitzer that suggested some "highly motivated" gay men and lesbians can change their sexual orientation through "reparative therapy" with a counselor or religious group.

Scores of Spitzer's mental health colleagues instantly rebuked what they considered methodological flaws in his study, namely that it was based entirely on self-reports gleaned from 45-minute telephone interviews with 200 people who said they were no longer gay or lesbian. More than 65 percent of subjects in the study were referred by religious and social groups dedicated to reparative therapy, and 78 percent of participants at one point served as spokespeople for ex-gay therapies.

But despite much of the mental health field denouncing Spitzer's study — and even Spitzer himself noting that someone converting from completely homosexual to completely heterosexual "rarely, if ever" occurs — media accounts of the Spitzer report touted it as "proof" that sexual orientation was a choice.

"An explosive new study says some gay people can turn straight if they really want to," read the opening sentence of the Associated Press story in May 2001, which largely set the tone for other media reports.

Religious organizations and groups dedicated to reparative therapy continue to laud the study as a message of hope for those who want to escape "the gay lifestyle."

"Basically what we're saying is, at last, the Spitzer study is giving legitimacy to this [reparative] therapy," says Joseph Nicolosi, director of the National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality, an ex-gay group also known as NARTH. Nicolosi is also a contributor to the new book examining Spitzer's study.

Gay rights organizations responded to the study by criticizing its methodology, and by attempting to paint Spitzer — whom they once considered an ally — as being in bed with religious conservatives. Gay psychiatrists voiced concern about the impact of Spitzer's study on gay rights.

"The study is deeply caught up in the gay and lesbian civil rights movement based on the implicit idea that people are born gay — just like people are born black, or born belonging to another minority group — and so therefore you can't discriminate against them because they're born that way," says Jack Drescher, who co-edited "Ex-Gay Research" and is also editor of the Journal of Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy.

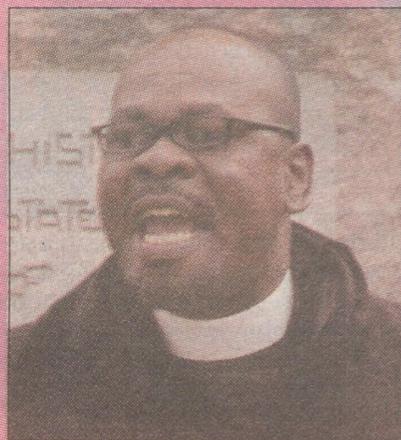
As provocative as the study was, what made it most explosive was the history of its author, Drescher says.

"If anybody else would've done this study, it wouldn't have ever been an issue," Drescher says. "But the Religious Right and people who market these types of therapy are exploiting Spitzer's status and history."

IN THE EARLY 1970S, SPITZER BECAME the "ring leader" of an effort to remove homosexuality from the American Psychiatric Association's roster of mental disorders, a listing many critics of

Please see EX-GAY on Page 19

Two sides of the story



Ex-gay

For those who say it can't be done, Rev. D.L. Foster is glad to stand witness that gay people can turn straight with the help of God.

"I don't believe that apart from Jesus Christ there can be true freedom," says Foster, an Atlanta-area pastor who says he was gay for 11 years of his adult life, but currently has a wife of 13 years and four children.

"I took the traditional path of Christian transformation," Foster says. "I don't view myself as transforming from homosexual to heterosexual because I tend to look at my life through a wider lens — I think I transformed from being a sinner to being saved," Foster says.

For the past five years, Foster has operated Life Lines, a conversion program for gay men and lesbians unhappy about their homosexuality. Foster says he hopes Life Lines helps others avoid the isolation and despair he experienced transitioning from gay to straight.

"If you identify as someone who has come out of homosexuality, then you will come into resistance, both politically and spiritually," Foster says. "I think [being gay] is a destructive lifestyle from my own experience has taught me, and I haven't found one person yet that has said, 'Being gay is the best thing to happen to me.'"



Ex ex-gay

Levi Kries at one time wanted to eliminate his gay desires so he could grow closer to God, but he decided to accept his homosexuality when he realized he was disrespecting Jesus by pretending to be straight.

Today a budding recording artist (see story, Page 32), Kries was once a Tennessee teenager so immersed in his spiritual quest that he stopped attending his parent's Southern Baptist congregation so that he could secretly enroll in an ex-gay program at a nearby Charismatic church.

One of the counselors at Kries's new church outside of Knoxville ordered workbooks and tapes from Exodus International, a religious group focused on converting people into "ex-gays." Kries committed to the Exodus regimen for six years, but once he began working in groups with other "ex-gays," Kries says he realized the program was a farce.

"I began to look at the groups I was in, and what I did see was successful suppression," Kries says.

He tried to suppress his same-sex desires until he had a religious epiphany different than the one folks at Exodus expected.

"My god is not a half-ass — if he is going to heal me, he's going to heal me and I'm not going to have to suppress something," Kries recalls. "I thought, this pretending is an insult to the sacrifice Jesus made for me."

NIGHTLIFE: A popular lesbian nightclub celebrates 10 years of partying. Page 14

BOOKS: A former gay NFL player is 'Alone in the Trenches' and opening up about the emotional turmoil he suffered. Page 15

Loss Grief Healing... Grace.

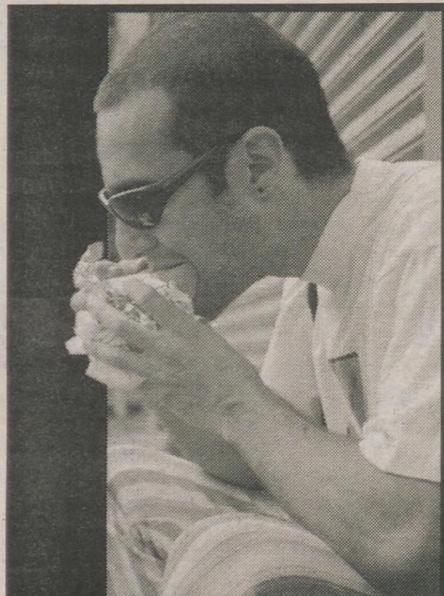
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FRIDAY, FEB. 24



Theater New West continues to present a production of "Women Behind Bars" at Club Resurrection, 711 West Gray, starting at 8 p.m. The five-week run of the popular farce ends March 11. Shows take place Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$20. For more information, contact Joe Watts at 713-522-2204.

SATURDAY, FEB. 25



The Jive Sisters, a local band of lesbian and bisexual musicians, will perform at 7:30 p.m. at Houston Community College's Town and Country Campus, 1060 W. Sam Houston Parkway North. Admission is free. For more information, call 713-863-7435.

SUNDAY, FEB. 26

The Friends of Pride will host their first-ever "Sing-Along Show Tunes Brunch" at Ninfa's, 1650 Post Oak. A \$35 admission fee includes bottomless mimosas and food. Lonnie Tanner will lead participants on a grand piano. For more information, contact Carol Wyatt at 281-820-1008 or visit www.fophouston.org.

THURSDAY, MARCH 2

Pride Houston will announce this year's grand marshals for the 2006 Houston Pride Parade during a party from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Guava Lamp, 570 Waugh. The party will include hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. There are four grand marshal positions, including honorary, organization, male and female.

Gay author and former Houstonian Elaine Taylor will read excerpts from her book "Final Betrayal" at 6:30 p.m. at Murder by the Book bookstore, 2342 Bissonnet. For more information, contact Murder By The Book at 713-524-8597 or e-mail kimmac@pacbell.net.

nightlife JOHNNY HOOKS



A popular lesbian nightclub
celebrates 10 years of partying, and
Galveston lets loose for Mardi Gras.

Ten-years planning

HOVO ON THE GO-GO WELCOMES you back with another fun filled week-end of parties and events.

CAN YOU BELIEVE THE NEW BARN, one of the four-in-one clubs at Chances, is celebrating its 10th anniversary on Friday, Feb. 24? Join your partner for a mechanical bull ride, the \$3 "yard of beer", prizes, giveaway's and more.

The fabulous Lady D performs at Chances on Saturday, Feb 25. Also, don't forget the weekly karaoke sessions following the screening of Showtimes "The L Word" on Sunday nights.

Chances is open everyday from 2 p.m. until 2 a.m., while the New Barn is open Thursday through Saturday from 8 p.m. till 2 a.m. Their mini bar, the G-Spot is only open Thursday through Saturday from 8 p.m. until 2 a.m., while the ultra exclusive Chi Chi bar only rears its head on Friday and Saturday at 10 p.m. The night spot is located at 1100 Westheimer Road. For more information, call 713-523-7217 or visit www.chancesbar.com.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO GET TICKETS to the 24th annual Krewe of the Moons of Uranus bus trip to Galveston, our nelly neighbor to the south. On Saturday, Feb 25 for only \$45, you get a round trip party on wheels, which features breakfast, prizes, hourly shuttle service to the island's bars and the Strand, and a viewing of the huge Krewe of Momus Grand Night parade. For more information, call The Ripcord at 713-521-2792 or 713-529-2325.

IF YOU ARE STAYING IN TOWN, then head over to Rich's who, along with The Texas Circuit Boyz present Carnival Morabito featuring superstar DJ Susan Morabito. This event is a Mardi Gras party Rich's style. Susan has packed dance floors at nearly every club in New York City and now she turns her attention to Rich's. Go to www.richs-houston.com or call them at 713-759.9606 for more details.

AREN'T WE ALL SEARCHING FOR A little bit of Eden? Well, Saturday night look no further than "After Eden: A Theatrical Lounge Party" at the swanky Corinthian downtown. This

HoVo on the go-go

sure to be legendary event is the after party for the Stages Theater "Searching for Eden" Gala that is being held at the establishment earlier in the evening.

Hot photographer Jay Rusovich, who is known for his gender bending life-sized portraits, has already shot the co-chairs Lucinda Loya and queer man about town Milton Townsend. HotGG hears the pictures are amazing. "After Eden" features an open bar as well as other earthly delights including a fabulous grilled cheese station, candied apples and dirty martinis. The event takes place Saturday night, Feb. 25 at 10 p.m., following the Stages Gala, upstairs at The Corinthian, 201 Main Street. Tickets are \$75 per guest or free with gala attendance. Contact the development office at 713-527-0220, extension 204 or gala@stages theatre.com.

FINALLY, IF YOU'RE IN THE MOOD for a road trip to see a legendary group then listen up. The Village People are heading to the L'Auberge du Lac Hotel & Casino in nearby Lake Charles, La. on Thursday, Mar. 2 to kick off the casino's "Boogie on the Bayou" pool parties.

The most famous queer band ever will sing and dance alongside the luxury resort pool and lazy river, with beautiful Contraband Bayou as their stage backdrop.

"Boogie on the Bayou" will feature fab food and drink specials. Doors open at 5 p.m. with live entertainment scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. The group will perform at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$5 per person or free with a L'Club card, and are available at the door on the day of the event. Guests must be 21 years of age to attend. To learn more about this event, call the reservations line at 1-866-580-7444 or visit www.ldlcasino.com.

books GREG MARZULLO

Good tight ending

Former gay NFL player Esera Tuaolo's new memoir 'Alone in the Trenches' scores on topic but fumbles on style

By GREG MARZULLO

ESERA TUALO'S MEMOIR OF BEING gay in the NFL, "Alone In The Trenches," chronicles his time as a pro-football player and the emotional turmoil he suffered during that time.

Tuaolo, the son of Samoan immigrants, was born and raised on the island of Oahu in Hawaii. He spent his time on his parents' banana farm until his father died when Tuaolo was entering eighth grade, and the young boy moved to the mainland to live with an abusive brother.

In high school, his athletic prowess surfaced, and he won a football scholarship to Oregon State University. Shortly after his college career, he joined the Green Bay Packers in Wisconsin, then the Minnesota Vikings, the Jacksonville Jaguars, the Atlanta Falcons and the Carolina Panthers. After a nine-year career, he retired from the NFL in 1999. He came out publicly in 2002 in a news segment on HBO's "Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel."

Tuaolo now works as a motivational speaker and in the theater. Aside from his skills on the field — as a nose guard, a defensive player who is positioned across from the center player of the opposing team — he was also known for his singing voice. He was asked to sing the national anthem at a variety of NFL games, including after he had publicly come out.

"ALONE IN THE TRENCHES" IS written by Tuaolo with the aid of John Rosengren, a freelance journalist who has authored four books. After completing a master's degree in creative writing at Boston University and writing articles for more than 75 publications, you would think Rosengren would have done a better job.

The simplistic and terse sentence structure creates an abrupt rhythm that frequently distracts the reader from the meaning of the book.

"I was a cartoon junkie as a kid. I watched 'Superfriends' whenever I could. I tried to do whatever I saw them do on TV," the book reads.

By stringing any of these sentences together into independent clauses linked



Esera Tuaolo, co-author of his memoir 'Alone In The Trenches,' opens up about the unendurable pain of being gay in the NFL. (Photo courtesy of EseraTuaolo.com)

by simple conjunctions, the book could achieve some kind of flowing tone.

Fragmented narrative and non-linear storytelling plague Tuaolo's story. Wild shifts in topic are common in the book, and in some cases, specious connections between passages evaporate all together. In one section, Tuaolo talks about the importance that a book by David Kopay, another NFL player who came out after his retirement, had on his life.

"His book gave me the strength to think that if something did happen, if someone did come along, I would pursue a relationship with him. Kopay's book gave me courage."

The very next sentence leaps schizophrenically to an unprecedented subject.

"Ever since I listened to my mom and dad play the ukulele and sing traditional Samoan songs around the campfire on the beach, I had loved music."

ALTHOUGH THE STYLE IS HIGHLY problematic, the book does make a compelling emotional impact. Tuaolo wrestles with suicide and drinking because of his all-too-present paranoia of discovery. Every time the media picked up on a play of his and his face went out over the wire, he lived in fear of an ex-boyfriend coming forward to out him. His success as an athlete became a liability.

Tuaolo finally does meet the man of his dreams, which speeds up his impending NFL retirement. The passages about his life with his partner, Mitchell, are refreshingly honest, revealing the dysfunctional patterns that gay men can bring to relationships with one another.

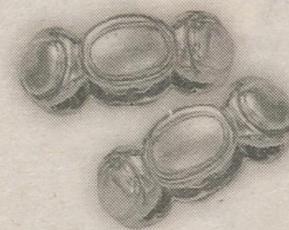
"Growing up, I had learned that love wasn't true unless someone was jealous. That was based on seeing my father cheat on my mother ... I learned that men in love weren't to be trusted," Tuaolo writes.

The writing in the book improves dramatically when Tuaolo addresses coming out. Now openly gay, he finds his voice along with his freedom, and his direct addresses to the reader seem more inspired and less awkward.

For Adam
and Steve



For Anna
and Eve



*Because in the beginning,
they only had one choice.*

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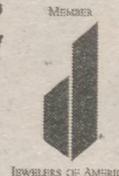
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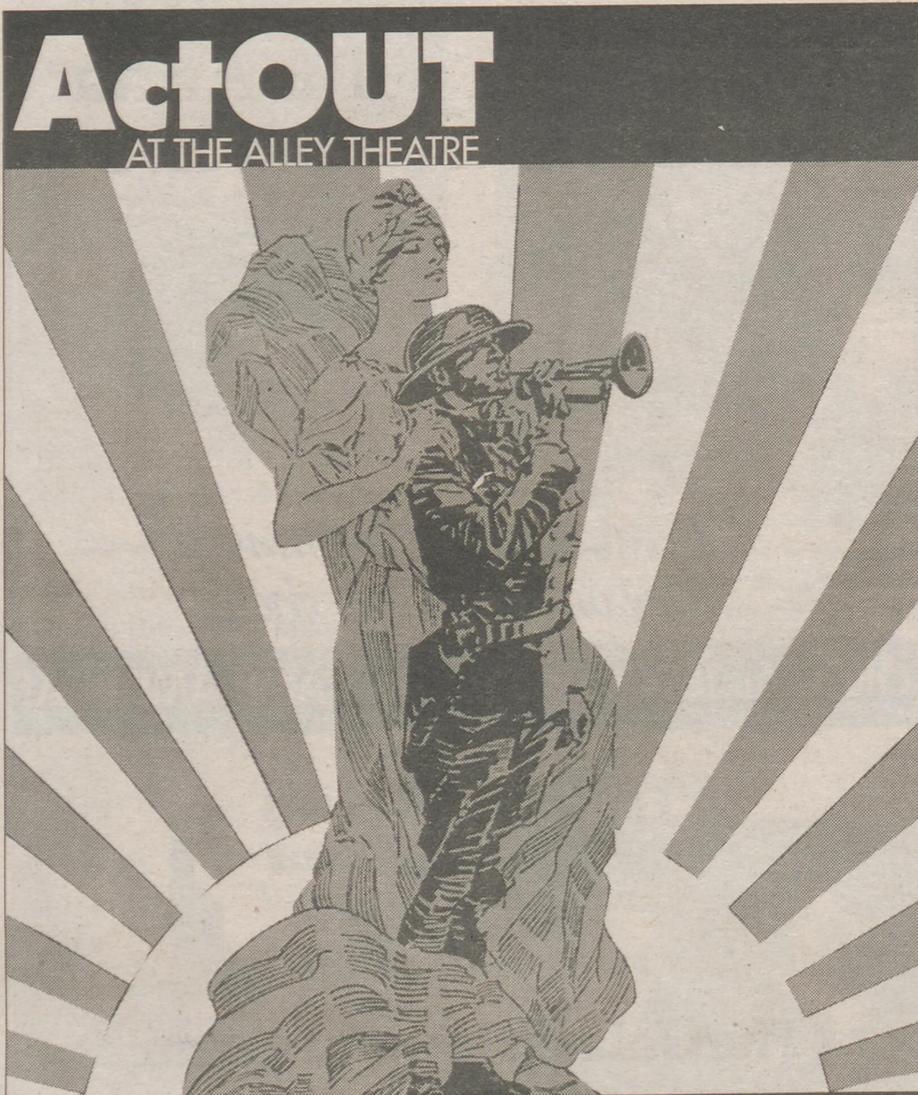
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music BUCK C. COOKE



With something for both the heart and the head, Goapele is all business in her calls for social change and romance on her new CD.

Goapele don't play

LOVE SONGS AND POLITICAL MESSAGES may not normally go hand-in-hand, but Goapele (pronounced "Gwa-pa-lay") completely rewrites the script on her sophomore release, "Change It All."

Think of the album as Goapele's statement, like Janet Jackson's "Rhythm Nation 1814" without the dance beats.

The first track, "Intro," and the title track call for political reform and criticize the lack of educational funding, the money spent on war and the proliferation of corporate America killing small business. Goapele does not shy away from controversy or pull any punches.

Another track calling for change is "4am," an anthem for perseverance that reminds us that even people who are a "long way from heaven" can strive for change.

Proving that hindsight is 20/20, "If We Knew" imparts the lesson that the past and the present impact the future. Goapele uses powerful viewpoints to tell the story of a son who grew up without a father's love and was a victim of child abuse.

BUT ROMANCE BLOSSOMS ON THE album as well. "First Love" is a sweet ode to discovering romance, and in "Crushed Out," Goapele pours out devotion to a man that she craves with her soul — but he knows nothing of her feelings. Ain't that a bitch?

One of the few up-tempo tracks on the album, "Love Me Right," is a bouncing plea for loving the right way. Goapele tells her man to "come on and love me right" and talks about "pushing, pulling, leaning, laying, laughing." Guess that says it all.

Goapele sings of passion, devotion, fidelity and long-lasting love in "Good Love." Using her powerful voice to paint a picture, she chronicles her struggle to win a "battle of the heart." Her voice emotes the hurt that sometimes comes with longing for perfect love, belting the notes like a stringed instrument.



Goapele

"Different" finds Goapele musing over a relationship that might have been — or still could be because things changed. Clyde Carson contributes the male side of the story, telling Goapele that she had her own issues in the relationship.

"You" celebrates the special kind of connection two people achieve in true intimacy. "One look at you/ You see right through me/ You know my moods/ You know what I'm thinking/ Feel what I'm feeling/ 'Cause you're my best friend true."

MOST OF THE album is home grown, but

Goapele teams up with superstar producer and artist in her own right, Linda Perry, on "Darker Side of the Moon." A nod to Pink Floyd, the track is classic Perry, a lesbian known for her work with Christina Aguilera and Pink among others, singing the praises of someone who supported Goapele from the shadows, allowing her to shine.

Goapele recorded the album near her Bay Area home and released the CD on her own label, Skyblaze Recordings. The singer co-wrote every track but one, arranged all of the vocals and co-produced the album.

Her rich voice lends itself to romantic ballads, but social justice is in her blood. One set of grandparents survived the horrors of the Holocaust, and another experienced the injustice of Apartheid in South Africa. Given the subject matter on the CD, her background clearly colored her political and social views.

With her unique sound, unfaltering convictions and courage to speak her mind, it is no surprise that Goapele is receiving critical praise and winning some noteworthy fans, including Stevie Wonder and Prince.

"Change It All" is full of soul and spirit and Goapele is one of a kind

i MORE INFO

'Change It All'
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Sony Urban Music/Columbia Records
www.goapele.com



Strike the right note! Concert listings at
www.houstonvoice.com
MUSIC LISTINGS

dish

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

Gay Cowboy Willie

Gay country twang,
Britain's ball players,
and a homo Hitchcock

DISH HAS A CERTAIN FONDNESS FOR country music. It evokes images of men in chaps doing things with their lassoes that are not fit for print.

Now there's a soundtrack for these fantasies. Country singing legend **WILLIE NELSON** released a new song, "Cowboys Are Frequently, Secretly Fond of Each Other," chronicling the experience of gay cowboys. Released to iTunes on Valentine's Day, the song also premiered on **HOWARD STERN's** Sirius radio show on Feb. 16.

"This song's been in the closet for 20 years," said Nelson in a prepared statement upon the song's release.

The song was originally written in 1981 by singer-songwriter Ned Sublette who's from Lubbock, Texas, and Nelson said he rediscovered it in March 2005 when looking through unreleased songs to record for iTunes, an internet-based music catalogue and online music store.

"What did you think all them saddles and boots was about," croons Nelson in the song. "Inside every cowboy there's a lady who'd love to slip out."

While the lyrics aren't in line with the politically correct view of gay men as "real" men, no one can really expect the cadaverous country singer to be up-to-date on the finer points of gay rhetoric.

Nelson's tour manager for three decades, David Anderson, is out to the singer, and he totally supports his boss' pro-gay music choices, including performing the song "He Was a Friend of Mine" for the "Brokeback Mountain" soundtrack.

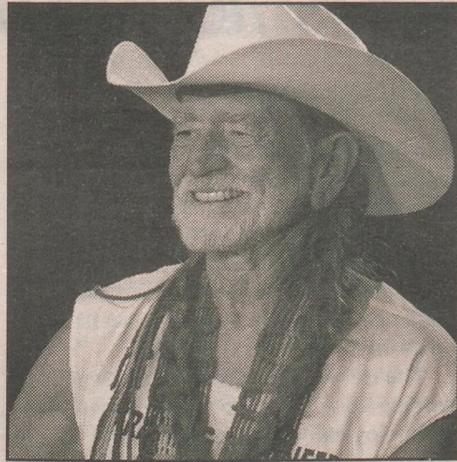
"I want people to know more than anything — gay, straight, whatever — just how cool Willie is and ... his way of thinking, his tolerance, everything about him," Anderson told the Dallas Morning News.

Just like Anderson, Dish is quite fond of Willie as well.

Playing around

In typical British tabloid sketchiness, News of the World reports (without any legitimate sources) that famous British football players are playing ball in more ways than one.

Supposedly two well-known footballers and a recognized musician (**ROBBIE WILLIAMS**, anyone?) were filmed enjoying a ménage a trois — or ménage a quatre if you count the cell phone. Supposedly one of the players crams the mobile down his pants and then does something with it that the paper says is too obscene to print. The other player calls the mobile number, and Dish is guessing Player A gets a sonic prostate exam.



Country star **Willie Nelson** releases another gay-related song following his performance of 'He Was a Friend of Mine' on the soundtrack of 'Brokeback Mountain.' (Photo by Jon C. Hancock/AP)

In a second wave of ball-play gossip, the same paper reported that one of the players from the first threesome has now been caught in a second sex party. A teammate apparently plopped down \$5,000 in cash and asked "Will anyone suck my [four-letter naughty word]."

Unsurprisingly, this dirty boy obliged. In Dish's fantasies, the player is **DAVID BECKHAM**.

Some of the players also allegedly enjoy a "look Ma, no hands" game where they try and guide their naughty bits into the mouth of a friend without using any help from their hands.

Dish knows they must be amateurs, because she's always scored big in that kind of match.

Strange compliment

Legendary filmmaker of the strange and twisted, **ALFRED HITCHCOCK**,



Matt Lucas

will be getting a gay wash in an upcoming biopic.

MATT LUCAS, the gay co-creator of BBC America's comedy series "Little Britain," will be playing the great director of freaky flicks according to the San Francisco Bay Times.

Dish can only wonder what kind of a backhanded compliment it is to get cast as the porcine Hitchcock.

Lucas hasn't appeared on the big screen before this, except for a bit part as Cousin Tom in the 2004 zombie film "Shaun of the Dead," and the Hitchcock film isn't scheduled to begin shooting until later in 2006.



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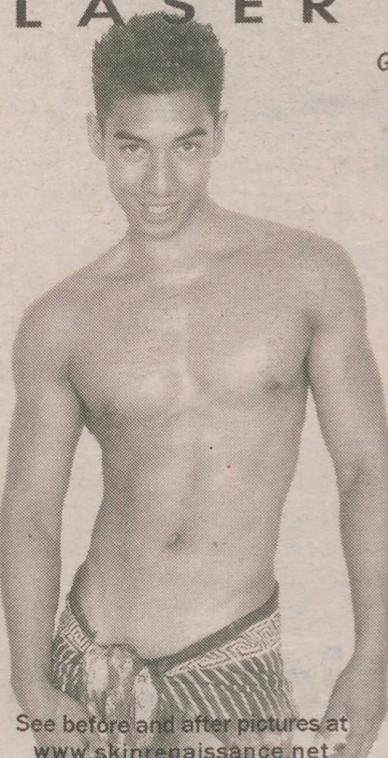
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Send comments, suggestions to
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cover story

Gay television fans finding satisfaction online

WEB TV, continued from Page 1

connect with our audiences," says Eric Feldman, the 37-year-old executive vice president of programming and operations for Here!TV, which is currently available on most digital cable providers as an on-demand service. "To be able to reach your audience, you really need to be available on as many systems as possible."

The Here!TV solution to this trend is pairing up with Google video. For the technologically impaired, go to the Google homepage and click on "more" at the right side of the bar above the search box. You'll be taken to a page with expanded search options. Find the "video" link and then type "here tv" into the search box.

While Here! occasionally charges a fee, OutZone.com, which will feature streaming video rather than downloadable content, will be completely free. PlanetOut, a leading gay internet company that also encompasses Gaycom, merged with LPI-Media in November 2005 to create a consolidated media company that includes the Advocate, Out and HIVPlus magazines.

PlanetOut will be promoting and selling advertising for Bravo's OutZone.com says the company's president, Mark Elderkin, 42.

"We came up with a partnership opportunity that leverages [Bravo's] efforts in gay programming and our strength in national advertising sales," says Elderkin, who is gay.

According to Elderkin, advertisers will have a 10 to 15 second spot at the beginning of each video. Unlike television where viewers can get up and get a drink during boring commercial breaks, internet viewers have to watch the advertisements before the segment begins.

"[Advertisers] can get really innovative and deliver things that were limited to TV only," says Elderkin.

Bravo will be relying on the advertising power of its partner to spread the word about OutZoneTV.com to PlanetOut's five million plus monthly visitors.

"They absolutely have an expertise in advertising to people who are targeting gay and lesbian viewers," says Jason Klarman, the senior vice president of marketing and brand strategy for NBC-owned Bravo.

Klarman says the company is still developing its programming content, but familiar Bravo shows are slated to be part of the available lineup. Re-runs of previous shows "Boy Meets Boy" and "Manhunt: The Search for America's Most Gorgeous Male Model" will make their appearance on the site.

"We have a very loyal gay viewership to the channel," says Klarman. "Bravo is a very upscale, urbane pop culture channel."

SOME GAY MALE VIEWERS HAVE used streaming video for content other than Bravo shows. Online video streaming was pioneered in part by the internet's most stalwart industry: porn.

"The two places in the world where you

can count on excessive money spending is in the government and the adult [industry]," says Mark Hovanec, a producer with Jet Set Productions, the company behind the "Wet Palms" porn series. Consisting of nine episodes, the serial is a dialogue heavy (especially for porn) comic soap opera full of hardcore gay sex.

"Wet Palms" first appeared on the net in September 2004. Full episodes were available to those who couldn't wait for the DVD release.

"While no one got rich off our web sales, it was a huge component in branding that made people feel this is a product to be taken seriously," says Hovanec. "This is not just porn du jour."

The use of new technology by porn companies is nothing new, according to Seth Clark Silberman, currently a lecturer in the women's studies department of Emory University in Atlanta, Ga., and a past lecturer for the Larry Kramer Initiative for Gay & Lesbian Studies at Yale University in New Haven, Conn.

"Technology has always been connected to sexuality," Silberman says. "Most of the reasons VCRs became as popular as they did was because you could rent porn on videos."

Hovanec agrees that now-mainstream technology was first used by ground-breakers in the porn industry.

"The video conferencing that occurs at major corporations today is a direct result of the work done by 'Live and Raw'," says Hovanec, referencing an internet TV program where subscribers can watch young men have sex live. "The internet has been the cutting edge for very practical business applications that are being used by traditional industries."

WHILE PORN MIGHT BE THE DRIVING force behind unfolding online video capabilities, using the web to watch shows normally found on television remains largely an untested practice. Networks and studios are not willing to give up all their assets.

"I don't want to watch 'Harry Potter' online," says Hovanec. "I want the packaging, the booklet. You're dealing with people who want instant gratification and then the people who want the tangible product."

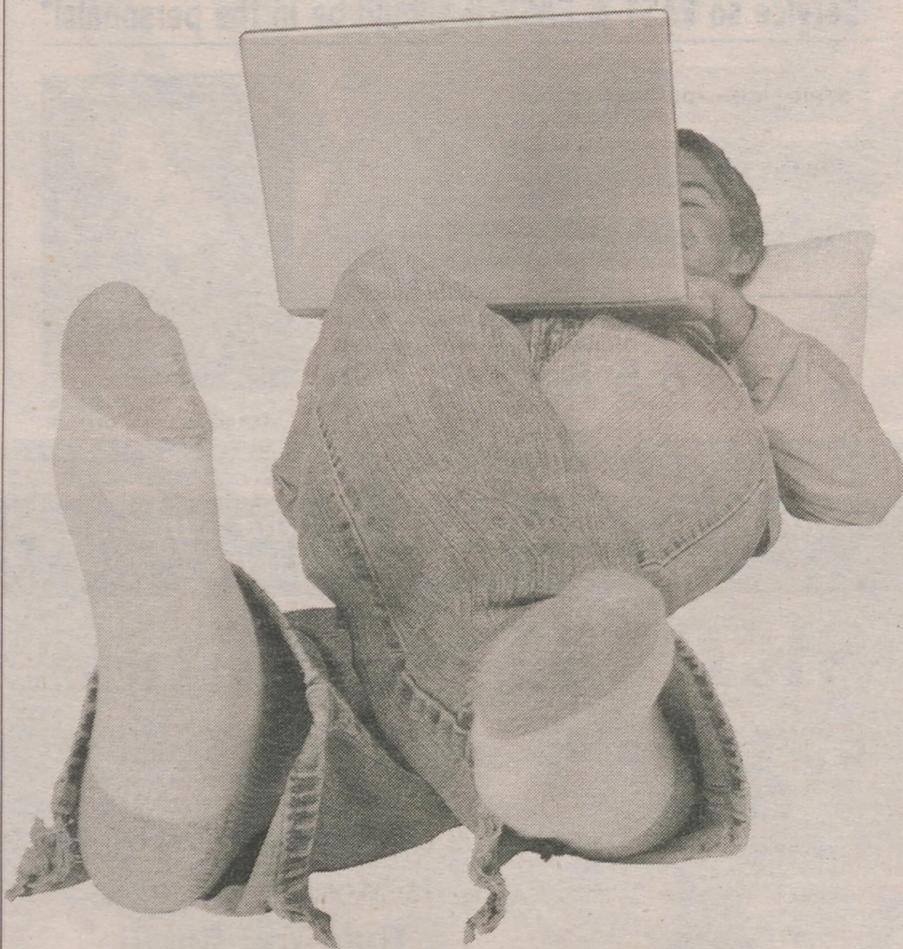
Stephen Tropiano, gay TV expert and author of "The Prime Time Closet," says it's too early to toss in the towel on standard TV.

"These companies are trying the web out to see if people are going onto their computer and watching on a regular basis," says Tropiano. "What probably is the smartest thing for networks is to make stuff available for people to watch at any time."

The popularity of on-demand cable channels, which allow the viewer to access a show whenever you want, can be seen as the beginning stages of the direct connection between the internet and cable.

Both Hovanec and Feldman believe that the next jump is for internet video streaming to communicate directly with your cable box on the TV.

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eclipse

Ex-gay study gave 'comfort to enemy,' author says

EX-GAY, continued from Page 13

gay rights used to justify deeming gay people sick or diseased.

Spitzer arranged a meeting between gay activists and the task force revising the Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, organized a symposium on the matter, and in 1973, marshaled a proposal to eliminate homosexuality from the DSM.

"As far as the '73 decision itself, I certainly think more people have been helped than have been hurt," Spitzer says in the upcoming book. "I'm proud that I had something to do with it."

Ironically, Spitzer became interested in ex-gay research in much the same way.

At its annual conference in 2000, the APA adopted a position statement recommending "that ethical practitioners refrain from attempts to change individuals' sexual orientation" until there was scientific evidence that reparative therapy produces a greater benefit than harm to patients.

A group of ex-gay protesters at the APA conference caught Spitzer's eye.

"I got the idea, 'Gee, well maybe it's not so open and shut about changing sexual orientation,'" says Spitzer, who then tried to organize a symposium looking at whether some people could go from gay to straight.

After gay mental health experts agreed to participate in the symposium, but then withdrew, Spitzer says he became more determined to look into reparative therapy.

Spitzer says gay colleagues were outraged at the idea, and he got unexpected support from religious conservatives who would later turn his results into a marketing campaign for their social agenda.

"I'm glad I did the study, [but] I'm not entirely satisfied with the way I wrote it up," Spitzer says. "I have given aid and comfort to the enemy. I suppose more people were hurt than might be helped [by reparative therapy], but I believe the study has some scientific value."

ALL OF THE ESSAYS IN THE UPCOMING book on Spitzer's study were previously published, but Drescher says it is important to combine them into a single volume to rekindle debate and highlight the study's ongoing impact.

For example, in 2001, conservative lawmakers in Finland cited the Spitzer study while arguing against same-sex marriage in that country. Spitzer, who supports same-sex marriage, wrote a letter to the Finnish parliament saying that his finding should not be used to justify anti-gay laws.

The book contains the original study, commentaries supporting and opposing its findings, and a lengthy interview between Drescher and Spitzer.

Supporters of reparative therapy say the Spitzer study highlights that change is possible.

"The Spitzer study, along with others, supports the notion that homosexuality is



more fluid than fixed in some individuals, and that some individuals can indeed make changes in core features of their sexual orientation," says A. Dean Byrd, chair of NARTH's Scientific Advisory Committee and another contributor to the book.

THERAPISTS MUST ALWAYS BE CONSIDERATE of their clients' religious beliefs, but Dowling College psychology professor Marcus Tye says he and many mental health experts consider attempts to alter sexual orientation via faith-based therapy contradictory to science.

"When a client comes in asking to change their sexual orientation, we really have a conflict of two things: One is their sexual orientation, and the second is their values about their sexual orientation," says Tye, who also contributed to the book. "If they're asking for help because they're distressed, we have to change one of those, and so I think we

should change the one that reasonably can be changed without significant damage."

Many ex-gay groups tout limited parts of Spitzer's study without warning of the possible negative effects of reparative therapy, Drescher says.

"Since there is no regulation of how the ex-gay organizations operate, nobody can force them to talk about the side effects — there is no equivalent to the FDA in the psychiatric market," Drescher says.

But Nicolosi from NARTH argues that every kind of therapy has the potential to fail, and so individuals should not be denied an opportunity to undergo reparative therapy simply because it may not work for everyone.

"The only acceptable treatment of homosexuality should not be gay-affirmative therapy," Nicolosi says. "Once you realize you are gay, some, not all, can choose not to be — that's a tricky message, so it's easy for folks to get lost in the message."

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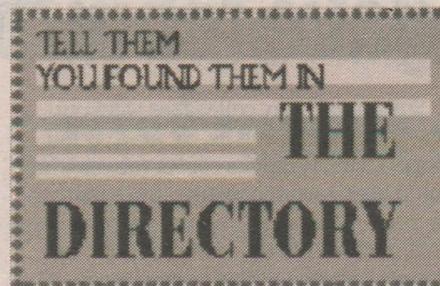
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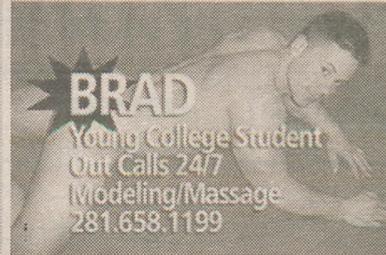
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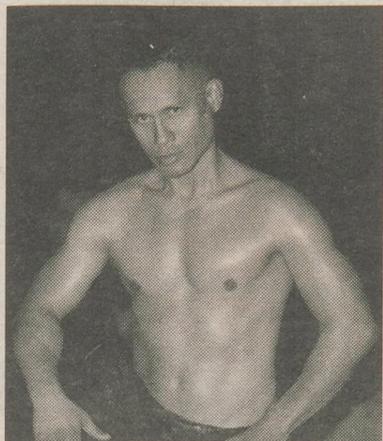
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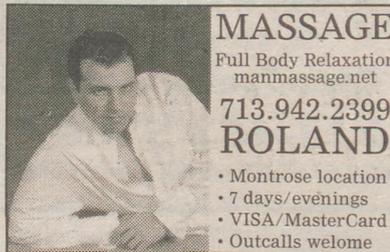
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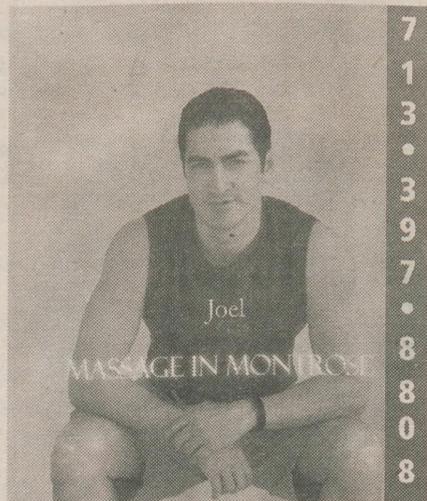
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Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel



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J.R.! LOOK! HOW 'BOUT A NICE STRING BEAN?

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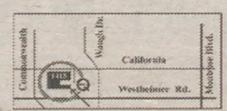
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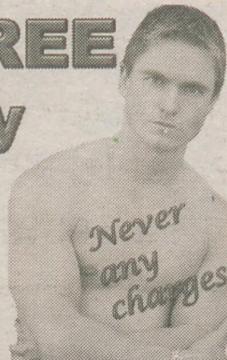
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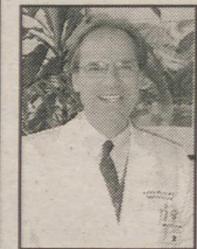
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bitch session

I remember being out at the 'discos' in 1973 when the police raided them. Be thankful that period in gay history is over, or did they just find another way?

YOU SMASHED MY LAPTOP AND ruined my life. I got over you, and now you want me back. Do you think I'll ever go back to you?

LESBIANS HAVE AN ODOR, AND I don't know why. Why?

WOULD SOMEONE PLEASE OPEN A gay bar that features showtunes and karaoke more than just once a week?

LET'S NOT BASH BREEDERS; IF IT weren't for two nice heterosexual breeders, I wouldn't be here. But if I wanted to adopt children and move to the suburbs, I would have been straight.

Bitch Boy responds: So much for nature over nurture.

IF YOU REALLY NEED TO BE TOLD, being a white gay man over 40 does not automatically mean I have money.

BITCH BOY, WHENEVER I SUBMIT AN intelligent rebuttal to something that's been printed, it never gets published. You always have to be the diva.

Bitch Boy responds: Better rethink that theory.

ALL YOU PREPPY LOOKING FAGGOTS

wearing penny loafers are cheap losers. I got dimes in my loafers.

I'M SO SICK WITH EVERY DISCUSSION being about "Brokeback Mountain." Yes, it was a good movie but can we please move on? How many times can we kick that dead horse?

THERE'S MORE LAMB THAN BEEF IN "Brokeback Mountain." A straight romance with such tame love scenes would never get an "R" rating. If Clara Peller was still alive, she'd be asking, "Where's the beef?"

WHY DO BOTTOMS INSIST I USE OVER-priced lube when spit is a proven alternative, as shown in "Bareback Mountain."

YOU'RE LIKE EASTERNS. WHEN everybody says no, you say yes.

Bitch Boy responds: I think everybody is saying, "Huh?"

DON'T "HONEY" ME AND EXPECT ANY special favors from me.

HOW COME YOU WERE SO NASTY that I finally got you out of my life, yet I feel so sad you're gone?

LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS DON'T qualify as human because that requires the ability to reason. If you're not a one-issue voter, then form your own party that doesn't sell all our rights for your tax break.

TO THE PERSON WHO CLAIMED black politicians support issues only because they're "in vogue": How dare you! Minority leaders identify with oppression and mistreatment. Of course they fight for other victimized minorities.

TO THE GUY (UNDOUBTEDLY WHITE) commenting on black men "in the life": Black gay men create their own conceptual/sexual spaces because they're often not welcome in "white" spaces, other than as fetish material.

TO THE WHITE GUY WHO DOESN'T get the term "in the life": For you to understand the term, you must first get a life!

Bitch Boy responds: Or at least a closet.

TO THE IDIOT WHO WANTS SAME-SEX

conjugal visits in prisons: What do you think they do all day? You'd be a little redundant.

PRISONS? CONJUGAL VISITS? WHERE do I sign up?

I'M GLAD I CAME ACROSS "BITCH Session." I'm much more sane than I previously thought. Poofy mentalists, the lot of you.

HAD I KNOWN THAT GAY MEN PLAY more mind games on other gay men than straight men do on their women, I would've stayed in the closet and gotten myself another girlfriend!

WHY DO YOU QUEENS ENJOY PURSU-ing a guy if he doesn't show any interest, and the second he starts showing interest, you back off and act like you're not interested?

I'M TOO CHICKEN TO BREAK UP WITH my partner, so I think I'll just avoid her phone calls and e-mails. Is that tacky?

IF YOU CHOOSE TO SPEND YOUR money and time in the baths, that's your decision. But don't call me complaining about your little thing dripping or having to pay the clinic for the fourth time in a year! Don't you think it's time to connect the dots?

Bitch Boy responds: Or connect the festering sores, sounds like.

TO THE PERSON WHO CALLED ME A "jackass" and said there aren't more visible gay Native Americans because the white man killed them off: Where were you when those two Native American women tried to marry recently? Being a minority within a minority, racism and entrenched homophobia keeps the red man in his closet!

TO THE BITCH WHO THINKS "BEAR" equals "troll": Obviously, this little boy likes them beefy and hairy, but they don't like him.

I HAVE A FRIEND WHO IS A "TROLLY bear." He also happens to be the best friend I've ever had, unlike you meth-headed freaks who attend funerals instead of weddings every six months.

WHEN DID DANCE MUSIC HAVE TO

become so depressing? What happened to the good ole days when going out wasn't such a trial? Note to gay DJs everywhere: We want fun, happy music again!

WHEN GUYS ARE LOOKING FOR SOME one who is "DDF," does that mean they're looking for someone who practices safer sex like they do? I think not!

I'M BISEXUAL. IT'S NOT A PHASE. I was born that way. Of all people, why can't you understand that? So, bi-te me! Bi bi, have a nice life!

WHY CAN'T Y'ALL LEAVE US BI'S alone? Don't hate on us. We just find that love comes from all people, not just one sex. We're not always thinking about the other sex when we're with you.

YOU CALL ME DRY AND BORING, BUT the truth is you're not worth the effort for me to think of anything funny to say.

THE ONLY TRUTH IS THAT THERE IS no truth. Stupid humans can't seem to agree on anything of any importance.

THE CONSERVATIVES THINK THAT with every battle they win, they're winning the war against us faggots. The truth is they're drawing more people to our cause and helping us win. Keep it up, constipated bitches!

HOW CAN SOMEONE BE "EX-GAY?" Once you've had Jack, you can't go back!

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH HOLIER-than-thou family advocates lashing out against gay people who are excellent citizens with just one small wish to publicly commit to their partners for life? Please keep your hate confined to the walls of your trailer home.

IF YOU THINK IT'S BAD BEING GAY today, consider this: The "red states" used to institutionalize gay people and castrate them. Today they just stigmatize us and find every way to strip us of our rights.

Editors' note: These are real bitches, sent in by real readers, about gay life's little annoyances, and the big ones, too. Got a bitch?

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TOYS FOR MEN



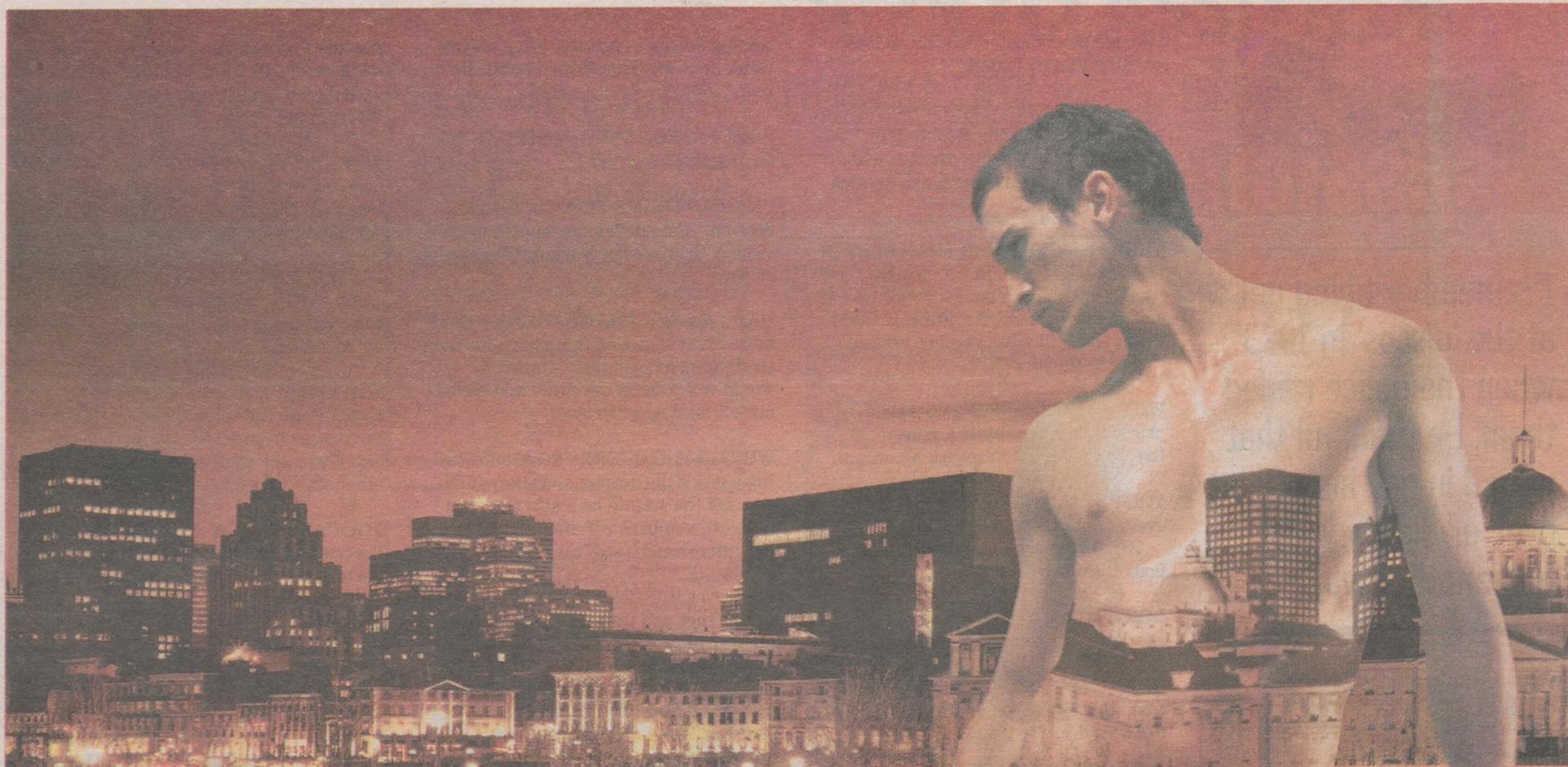
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