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JUNE 4, 2004

WALK DON'T RIDE: Mayor will walk in Pride parade. Page 3



A LEGACY: Eleanor Munger Founded Omega House. Page 4



UPHELD IN OHIO: Judge rules Ohio's registry constitutional. Page 6



Santorum's Memorial Day push for FMA flops

Senators targeted for religious-right onslaught hold firm against FMA

By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senator Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) last week urged his fellow Republican senators to promote a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage as they traveled through their home states during the Memorial Day weekend.

According to the Capitol Hill newspaper Roll Call, Santorum and other Senate GOP leaders issued a series of "talking points" instructing their GOP colleagues to portray the legalization of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts as a "national crisis that requires a national response — a constitutional amendment."

Santorum, who chairs the Senate Republican Conference, which sets the agenda for Senate Republicans, called on his colleagues to raise the gay marriage issue along with other issues such as the economy and the Iraq war during Memorial Day weekend festivities and speeches, Roll Call reported.

But an Internet search of newspaper and television news stories over the holiday weekend — and reports from a coalition of civil rights groups opposing a constitutional ban on gay marriage — indicates that little or no mention of a constitutional amendment surfaced among GOP senators during the three-day holiday weekend.

What surfaced instead, according to scores of news reports, were emotional speeches by politicians and leaders of veterans groups paying tribute to U.S. military service members who died in action during World



Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) urged his colleagues to portray same-sex marriages in Massachusetts as a 'national crisis that requires a national response.' (Photo by AP)

War II and in current U.S. military action in Iraq.

Much of the weekend news programs focused on the May 29 dedication ceremony in Washington of the recently completed World War II Memorial, in which President Bush and other dignitaries honored World War II veterans.

"We did not see any of this surface," said Christopher Anders, an attorney who heads the ACLU's Gay & Lesbian Rights Project office in

Please see **AMENDMENT** on Page 5



Queer Eye's Jai Rodriguez will talk about everything but gay marriage.

Jai Rodriguez shuns M-question

'Queer Eye' culture guy prefers dancing to politics but musters enough pride for Houston's Lift Off

By JOHNNY HOOKS

It's hard to remember what the world was like before "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy." Gay men and lesbians had been conquering the scripted airwaves (albeit slowly) for years through shows like "Ellen" and "Will and Grace."

The difference with "Queer Eye" is that these are real people, live and *really gay* each week in living rooms around the country. Reality programming has had gay superstars, but their sexuality was just a side note.

"QE4SG" was radically different.

The "Queer Eye" guys are gay, and they possess knowledge to which straight men are not always privy. "QE4SG" set out to change the world, "One straight guy at a time."

Please see **RODRIGUEZ** on Page 20



local life
Marcello Gomez finds coming out in the 'burbs to be a challenge, and he finds some gays 'disgusting.'

PAGE 8

dish

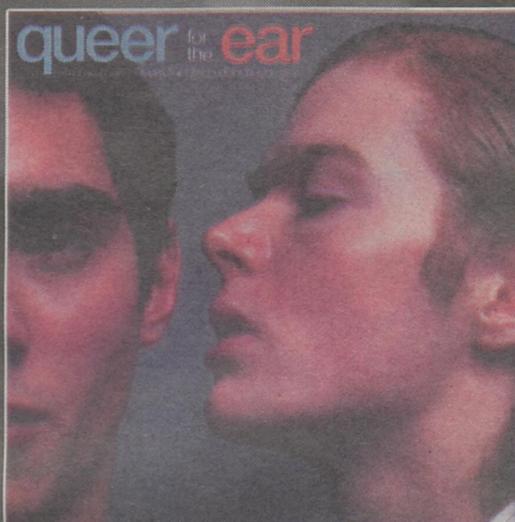
Village Voice columnist says a Fox TV guy once linked to Nicole Kidman hit on gay editor.

PAGE 21



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houston news

Mayor opts to walk not ride in Gay Pride Parade

White said walking in the parade is best way to hear what concerns people most

By BINNIE FISHER

In recent years, it has become tradition for Houston's mayor to ride in the Gay Pride Parade, but Mayor Bill White has confirmed he will not ride in this year's parade.

He'll walk instead.

"Recently, I had the opportunity to ride in the Art Car Parade," White said.

As he was waiting to climb into the car, White said, "I had the opportunity to walk a small portion of the parade route. That provided an opportunity to talk to Houstonians, hear their comments and feed off their encouragement."

These days, White needs all the encouragement he can find. He has faced tough issues in recent weeks, including the city's recently discovered almost \$2 billion shortfall in the pension fund.

An election that was called by White to deal with the shortfall was criticized by city workers, but it was overwhelmingly approved by voters.

Jack Valinski, program coordinator for the Pride Committee Houston, said word that the Mayor will walk in the parade has been received well.

"I think this is a real grass-roots effort of mayor to meet his constituency," Valinski said.

If White is interested in hearing from Houstonians as he walks the parade route, Valinski said, he will find about 150,000 of them along the way.

More gay sightings of White

White, who was enthusiastically endorsed by the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus PAC, is beginning to make appearances at meetings of gay and lesbian organizations. Earlier this year, he was keynote speaker at a meeting of the Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce.

On Thursday, White and Houston City Controller Annise Parker will speak during a meeting of the Houston chapter of the National Gay & Lesbian Journalists Association.

As he walks the parade route, White said, he plans to reach out to gay Houstonians.

"There is a lot I learn in speaking with people in those encounters," he said.

On a hot June night, riding in a car would be easier than walking the parade route, but White said he believes walking is more appropriate.

"In many cases, riding in the parade is



Mayor Bill White rode in the recent Art Car Parade, but he'll walk in the Gay Pride Parade.

appropriate, and I enjoy doing so," he said. "But, it can be insulating. If there is an opportunity to hear from Houstonians, I want to take advantage of that opportunity."

White was first introduced to the Houston gay community by his gay brother, Robert Avalon. At the time, White was running for chair of the Texas Democratic Party.

Avalon, a composer and musician who had not previously been involved in politics, accompanied his brother to a meeting of the HGLPC to seek the group's endorsement.

Avalon again accompanied his brother to a caucus meeting last fall, when White was running for Mayor.

MORE INFO

Houston Gay Pride Parade
June 26

But he died unexpectedly on April 29.

White is still coping with his brother's death one day after he had been diagnosed with cancer.

"I often think about how hard working my brother was and how willing he was to help other people," White said. "Robert will forever be known for the opportunities he created for others to express their artistic talents, as well as for his own music."

White said he found his brother inspiring. "That hard work and willingness to help others will always be an inspiration to me," White said.

Had circumstances been different, his brother might have been with him as the parade gets underway at 8:45 p.m. on lower Westheimer between Woodhead and Whitney streets.

Valinski said the first mayor to participate in a Houston Gay Pride Parade was Mayor Lee Brown.

"Mayor Brown made history," Valinski said.

By opting to walk instead of ride, Valinski said, "Mayor White will make history again."

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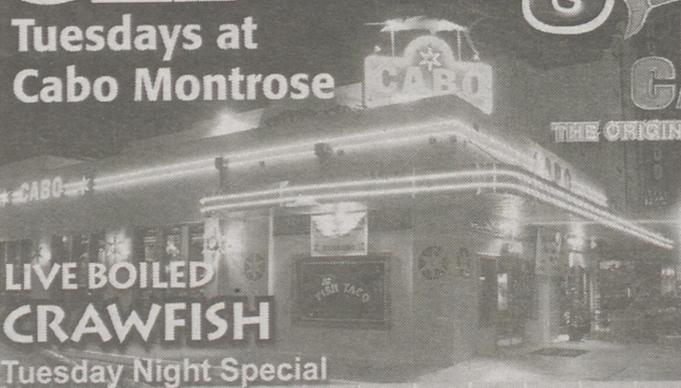
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obituary

A place to call home

HIV/AIDS was her calling, and the Omega House is Eleanor Munger's legacy

Most anyone who had spent a lifetime as a Montessori teacher would consider that to be calling enough, but not Eleanor Munger.

It was after she had retired from teaching that Munger, at 76, found her second calling, one that would leave behind a lasting legacy.



Munger, who founded Omega House, a hospice for indigent AIDS patients, died May 24. She was 92. "She really was a pioneer in the HIV/AIDS was a calling. community," said Laura Valentine, a development specialist with Bering Omega Community Services, which now operates the hospice.

Valentine said Munger, the daughter of a physician, first read about the AIDS crisis in 1980.

"She started volunteering at the AIDS Foundation Houston," Valentine said. "She realized there was a need for some sort of house where someone with AIDS could go and spend their final days in dignity."

In the early 1980s, when the drugs were no longer effective, Valentine said, doctors discharged patients from hospitals and sent them home.

"Many of them had no home to go to," she said. "They had been rendered indigent by the disease and lost their homes."

As for family, she said, too many AIDS patients had been alienated by their families.

"That really was the inspiration for Omega House," Valentine said.

Omega House opened in August 1986 with three beds.

"Omega House opened its doors with 30 days of operating capital," Valentine said.

Although some board members thought it prudent to delay the opening, Valentine said Munger insisted, saying "The need is so great, we have to open now. If this mission is to be sustained, then the money will be there."

The mission was sustained, and the money was there, Valentine said, because Munger would have it no other way.

"She went to every church, every synagogue, every business and said we needed money to get this started," Valentine said.

Omega House eventually expanded and merged with Bering Community Services. In its almost 20-year existence, Valentine said, the house has been home to 751 men and women.

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news cover story

HRC takes First Lady, Mehlman to task over FMA

AMENDMENT, continued from Page 1

Washington, in referring to a constitutional amendment on gay marriage.

Anders said a coalition of several dozen civil rights groups, including the ACLU and gay civil rights groups that oppose a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, continuously monitor public debate over the issue. He said coalition members did not report any unusual or visible activity on behalf of the proposed constitutional amendment, known as the Federal Marriage Amendment, over the Memorial Day weekend.

Patrick Guerriero, executive director of the national gay group Log Cabin Republicans, said officials with LCR chapters throughout the country confirmed Anders' assessment.

Two weeks before Congress recessed for the Memorial Day holiday, the anti-gay group Focus on the Family targeted 10 U.S. senators — six Democrats and four Republicans — for a barrage of telephone calls by FMA supporters.

Senators stay the course

Anders said the ACLU and the coalition of groups opposing the FMA have checked with each of the senators targeted by the Focus on the Family telephone effort. He said the groups have found that none of the targeted senators have changed their position by backing the FMA as a result of the phone campaign.

The senators targeted by the campaign, in addition to DeWine, were Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), the Senate minority leader; Evan Bayh (D-Ind.); George Voinovich (R-Ohio); Bill Pryor (D-Ark.); Bill Nelson (D-Fla.); John Breaux (D-La.); Mary Landrieu (D-La.); Christopher Bond (R-Mo.); and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska).

"It's not a coincidence that we see these targeted senators come from states that are in play in the presidential election," said Cheryl Jacques, president of the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay political organization.

"I think it's very telling that this is less about marriage than about President Bush getting married to his constituent base," Jacques said.

Jacques said HRC doesn't have its own list of targeted senators or House members for a similar telephone or e-mail campaign. "We are taking our message to all members of Congress on a broad range of issues affecting our families. It's an educational campaign about the legal rights that come with a marriage license."

During the past 10 days, HRC sent letters to First Lady Laura Bush and Bush campaign manager Ken Mehlman, taking the two to task for promoting the FMA along with or over and above other issues during the election campaign.

Asked by a Boston Globe reporter aboard Air Force One on May 20 if she agreed with her husband that the



Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) is one of 10 U.S. senators targeted recently by conservatives to increase pressure for them to support the Federal Marriage Amendment.

Constitution should be amended to ban gay marriage, Bush would say only she agreed that the FMA "is something people should talk about and debate."

Her comments came three days after her husband issued a statement reiterating his support for the FMA during the week Massachusetts authorities began performing same-sex marriages there.

In a May 24 letter to Laura Bush, HRC's Jacques took the first lady to task for suggesting a debate on gay marriage, arguing that Americans would rather talk about other issues such as the economy or the war in Iraq during the election campaign.

In a June 2 letter to Mehlman, Jacques urged the Bush campaign manager to reject

advice offered one day earlier by conservative and anti-gay advocate Paul Weyrich that the Bush campaign place more emphasis on supporting the FMA in an effort to divert attention away from the Iraq war.

Last week, Mehlman refused to say whether he or any other Bush campaign staffers were gay, leading a number of online blogs to speculate that Mehlman himself or other top officials in the re-election effort might be closet gays.

In another development on the gay marriage front, a CBS News poll released on May 30 shows that 28 percent of Americans believe gay couples should be allowed to marry, a slight increase from previous polls.

However, the poll also showed that 60 percent of Americans support a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage, with 37 percent opposing such an amendment.

The poll found that 70 percent of respondents say the issue of a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage should have "no part" in the election campaign.

i MORE INFO

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national news

Ohio judge upholds same-sex registry in Cleveland Heights

CLEVELAND (AP) — A judge ruled last week that the nation's first voter-approved domestic partner registry is constitutional. "The city of Cleveland Heights Domestic Partnership Registry is not beyond the scope of the municipalities' grant of power" from the state, Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judge Robert T. Glickman wrote in a five-page ruling. The decision rejected the challenge filed by Rev. Jimmie Hicks Jr., a minister and Cleveland Heights Council member. The judge noted that the registry conferred no specific benefit and wasn't costly for the city. "The taxpayers of the city incur no cost since the registering couples pay a fee to cover the entire cost of the registry," Glickman wrote. Hicks, who had sued in February to stop the Cleveland suburb from continuing to register gay and straight unmarried couples, said he would appeal the ruling. No matter who won at the trial court level, "We knew this would only be round one," Hicks said.



Opponents will appeal a court ruling last week that upheld the domestic partner registry in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, where couples like Inger King (left) and Lars McLeod, began registering in January. (Photo by Mark Duncan/AP)

Dissenter says Ariz. ruling promotes changes on parenting

PHOENIX (AP) — The same day that the state Supreme Court refused to hear a challenge to Arizona's ban on same-sex marriage, a lower court issued a ruling that a dissenting judge said promotes same-sex and group parenting. A Court of Appeals panel's majority ruled last week in a case from Coconino County that a widowed stepparent could be awarded visitation rights to her late husband's son. The boy's natural mother, Brandy Jo Riepe, had custody. The majority said a trial judge was wrong to rule that the stepmother, Janette Rae Smith Riepe, had to prove that her relationship with her stepson, Cody, was at least as equal to the relationship he had with his legal parents. Instead, state law required the judge to use a less-stringent standard: whether the stepson viewed the stepmother as a parent and whether they had a meaningful and lasting parental relationship, the majority said. Judge Daniel A. Barker said in his 78-page dissent that the majority's 16-page ruling effectively let the boy have more than one mother.

Ohio judge rules against language of anti-gay marriage amendment

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Both sides in a legal fight over a constitutional amendment that would ban gay marriage claimed victory following a judge's ruling on petitions to place the amendment on the November ballot. The proposed summary of the amendment for the petitions is misleading, not fair and not truthful, according to the 12-page ruling by Judge Daniel Hogan of Franklin County Common Pleas Court. The amendment seeks to bar any type of civil unions or the legal privileges of marriage to any cohabiting couple. But Hogan also found the requirement under state law that petitions include a summary unconstitutional. He questioned the need for the summary requirement for a two-sentence amendment. "Such a requirement is unconstitutional in this case because it restricts rather than facilitates the petition process," Hogan said.

Mass. judge says gay label is not libel, cites SJC ruling

BOSTON — A federal judge has ruled that stating that someone is homosexual does not libel or slander them, particularly in light of new court decisions granting gays more rights. The ruling by U.S. District Judge Nancy Gertner came as she threw out a lawsuit by a former boyfriend of pop singer Madonna, who claimed he was libeled because his name appeared in a photo caption in a book about Madonna — under a picture of Madonna walking with a gay man. "In 2004, a statement implying that an individual is a homosexual is hardly capable of a defamatory meaning," Gertner said last week in a ruling. Courts in other jurisdictions are split on whether stating that someone is a homosexual is defamatory, Gertner wrote in her opinion. The attorney for plaintiff James Albright, who had worked for Madonna as a bodyguard, didn't immediately return telephone and e-mail messages seeking comment.

U.S. military discharges gays for online personals

LONDON — The U.S. military wants to discharge at least six gay, lesbian and bisexual service members because of their online profiles or personal ads. The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network reported that online personal ads resulted in at least one gay-related firing per month this year so far. The network said the new pattern signals a "significant shift," since the number of such discharges previously was "not significant enough to track separately," group spokesperson Steve Ralls told reporters. The network is monitoring 29 "outing" incidents this year, and the known online cases make up 21 percent of those, according to news reports. The cases are similar in that each involve a soldier who has a falling-out with an acquaintance, co-worker or former love interest, and that person alerts the soldier's supervisors to the online information, media outlets reported. "While outing someone to end their career is despicable, it is, unfortunately, not a violation of any regulation or statute," Ralls said.

From staff and wire reports

The love will last forever.

But how long will President Bush let the marriage last?



May 17 was a momentous day for committed couples in Massachusetts who now have access to equal rights, responsibilities and protections under state law. It's a historic and remarkable victory. But it's not over yet.

But President Bush and his extremist allies are already trying to undo the marriages of same-sex couples in places like Massachusetts, Oregon, and San Francisco.

They're working to pass a discriminatory amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would forever deny same-sex couples the rights of marriage and could forcibly divorce couples who have already married. Opponents of marriage equality are also pushing state constitutional amendments to mobilize their base by discriminating against our families.

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Marcello Gomez (right) uses dance as a form of expression and a method of dealing with prejudice at Alief Hastings High School.

Suburban high schools can prove a challenging terrain

Alief teen says school could be more supportive but has choice words for gay community's ills

By **NAVID AFSHAR**

For Marcello Gomez, dancing is a form of art, expression, beauty and much, much more. In a school and family that aren't fully supportive of his sexuality, Gomez finds tranquility in dance and cheerleading.

"Dance is my safe place to get away from everything," Gomez said.

Gomez is involved in several forms of art and expression at Alief Hastings High School near Houston.

"I'm a cheerleader, I'm part of Alief Jazz Ballet, and I'm also in theater," Gomez said.

There are no sports scholarships in his future, but Gomez's involvement in

school activities has provided opportunities that will help him attend college after graduation.

"Dancing has gotten me scholarships for college, and given me the option to make dance my profession," Gomez said. "It has helped me to strive for my goals, keep my grades up, and keep me out of trouble."

Gomez's school gave him opportunities, but Alief, like too many suburban school districts in the Houston area, did not provide a comfortable environment for coming out.

As the Houston Area Coalition of Teen Homosexuals (HATCH) prepares for its annual Alternative Prom Saturday at the Magnolia Ballroom, Gomez talked

about the difficulty of coming out in a suburban school district where same-sex prom dates are frowned upon.

"Coming out in Alief was somewhat difficult," Gomez said. "I never really came out. I told my closest friends, and it went through the grapevine."

Gomez's coming out process went fairly well, but still had its hardships.

"My family and people at school haven't accepted [my sexual orientation] completely," Gomez said, "My brother doesn't talk to me anymore, and people harass me at school."

Gomez said that harassment isn't his biggest issue, but he believes schools like Alief Hastings could do more to protect gay and lesbian students.

GSA would be nice

"I don't feel that harassment has been a big deal at Hastings," Gomez said. "I haven't had many problems. I just get the

usual 'faggot' every now and then. I think my school could use a GSA," he said, referring to Gay Straight Alliances forming in many high schools across the U.S.

GSA's are more common in inner-city school districts. In the Klein Independent School District, Marla Dukler sued to get a GSA at her school. She won.

Although his school has had issues with accepting and protecting gay students in the past, Gomez said things have gotten better.

"We have a lot of support from teachers and students," Gomez said. "But the administration seems to be too scared to take the action to fix these problems."

When a student harasses Gomez, he takes it with pride and does not succumb to what students say.

"People used to make fun of me, and I was like 'Yeah, I am,' and then they left me alone," Gomez said.

Despite a few minor setbacks, Gomez has a positive outlook.

"Being gay isn't really that big of a deal," Gomez said, "I'm not the stereotypical gay guy."

Raquel Garza, a close friend, has high opinions of Gomez.

"I'm really proud of Marcello," Garza said. "He stayed away from drugs and is doing what he needs to do to build his future."

Donathon Flucas, another close friend, agrees.

"Marcello is a great guy. He works really hard at what he does," Flucas said. "He has a lot of talent and a bright future in performance."

Gomez agrees that he has put a lot of hard work into what he does.

"We stayed at school until 6 p.m. or later rehearsing," Gomez said.

Aside from the harassment gay students sometimes face at school, Gomez said he has some complaints about the gay community in general.

"Being gay sucks. You can't find a long-term relationship because everyone is playing each other," Gomez said.

"Sometimes there is harassment, there's a lot of drug usage. Every day is a risk just walking down the street."

Gomez said the actions of a few in the gay community sometimes reflect badly on everyone.

"We look bad to most of the breeders out there," Gomez said.

He said he is sickened when he runs into gay friends who tell him, "I'm high on ecstasy right now." It's sad.

Although he isn't pleased with all aspects of the gay community, Gomez said he still enjoys his life as a young gay man. He said he has found good friends within that community.

"Even though there are bad things, I am glad we have places to go and meet other people," Gomez said. "I used to go to HATCH, and I am really glad that we have a parade to show the pride we have in our community."

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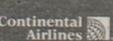
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*Something's Gotta
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editorial

From 'Yep I'm gay' to 'Yep I'm spayed'

Seven years ago, Ellen DeGeneres came out and became über-gay. Now she's salvaged her career by going back in the closet. Is this really progress?

By CHRIS CRAIN

ELLEN DEGENERES HAS managed to put the lie to the old saw that you can't go home again.

No, she hasn't returned to her native New Orleans, but she has revisited the closet, from whence she sprang full-grown into celebrity status just seven short years ago.

When "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" won an Emmy this month for best talk show, it represented a return to grace of sorts for DeGeneres, whose groundbreaking sitcom was abruptly cancelled one season after she came out. A follow-up effort in 2001, "The Ellen Show," flopped in embarrassingly quick fashion.

But now the talk show, like the HBO stand-up special that preceded it, is a rousing ratings success. Being a lesbian, which was so integral to Ellen's career before, has been every bit as important in her comeback — but in reverse.

It's clear that Ellen and her producers have made a deal with the devil, or at least with homophobic studio execs: Ellen gets her show, so long as she's not gay anymore.

"In daytime, the audience doesn't want to be preached at by anybody," says Jim Paratore, president of Warner Bros. Telepictures, which produces the show.

Ellen sounds a similar theme, grateful that she had the chance to prove to station executives "that people would give me another chance."

It's disappointing to see Ellen sell her lesbian soul for ratings, but it represents yet another effort by her to integrate her sexual orientation into who she is as a person and a performer. And therein lie some valuable lessons.

FROM THE MOMENT THAT ELLEN, the person and the sitcom character, came out in April 1997, she was the subject of media glare usually reserved for one-name mega-celebrities like Madonna or Elvis.

No one shines all the time under that kind of scrutiny, and Ellen's personal and professional odyssey has had its wince-inducing moments. In many ways, her own

very public story has mirrored the coming out plot in many of our lives, making her miscues all the more heart-rending.

In her memorable interviews with Time magazine and ABC's Diane Sawyer, she balked at the word "lesbian" — "Yep I'm gay," she said instead — and voiced her discomfort at being anyone's activist. She "just happened to be gay," like so many of us when we baby-step our way out of the closet.

Then, in a blazing media triumph, the character Ellen Morgan came roaring out, and the ratings went through the roof. Her character's highs and lows in those initial coming-out episodes touched millions, and America was riveted by the genuine portrayal.

But when "Ellen" the show emerged again in the fall of 1997, the situation comedy had found its situation — Ellen is gay! — and like so many newly-minted homosexuals rarely ventured outside her comfortable, if somewhat tired, gay ghetto.

At times during that season of "Ellen," it seemed like every conversation, every joke revolved entirely around the title character's sexual orientation. Like many of us, Ellen Morgan became submerged in the gay subculture, single-minded and narrowly focused.

Ellen's "private" life also followed an aching familiar pattern. Just days before her "coming out" episode was to air, Ellen met actress Anne Heche, who had never before dated a woman, at the Vanity Fair Oscar party. Instantly, the two became inseparable.

Within weeks, the couple had gushed their undying, everlasting love-from-first sight to People magazine, and they snuggled in front of then-President Clinton at a formal White House dinner. Fuming over the ensuing public skepticism, they dared the skeptics to just watch them stay together over the years.

Three and a half years, as it turned out.

NOW ELLEN IS BACK ON THE AIR, every day, with a talk show that makes Rosie O'Donnell's retired gabfest look downright edgy. What is it with closeted lesbians and saccharine sweet talk shows anyway?

Ellen, "the Queen of Even Nicer," steers well clear of any reference to being a lesbian, even when it would be painfully easy to make a passing comment.

Several weeks ago, choreographer Paula Abdul of "American Idol" fame was showing Ellen a new dance step and commanded, "Watch my bootie!" The audience laughed, but Ellen nervously changed the focus.

This week, Harry Connick Jr., who plays Mr. Grace Addison on "Will & Grace," joked that his character might "hook up" this season with flamboyant Jack. Again, the audience laughed, but Ellen seemed less comfortable with this gay thing than Connick.

Is this the sort of success to be cheered? Unlike Rosie before her, Ellen is famously gay to her viewers, and it's not as if they're likely to forget.

But by actively avoiding the topic as if she never came out, Ellen sends the message that the lesson she learned isn't one of balancing being gay with other aspects of who she is as a person and a performer. And the lesson isn't to be apolitical on daytime television.

The message she's sending is that she's sorry she talked about being gay in the first place because it's not the kind of thing you can talk about and still be accepted by middle America.

Ellen is characteristically defensive, like Rosie before her, when asked why she returned to the closet.

"I don't understand what people would want me to do — the people who say I'm not gay enough," she recently told Out magazine.

No one expects Ellen to give regular rampages against the Federal Marriage Amendment or to lock lips on camera with longtime girlfriend Alexandra Hedison.

But Ellen's personal life is, in fact, the source of her monologue almost every day, and she could easily mention her girlfriend in much the same way as Oprah Winfrey talks about boyfriend Steadman, or Regis Philbin references his wife, or Kathy Lee Gifford yapped on incessantly about Frank.

After winning the Emmy this month, Ellen said success the second time around was "even sweeter." This time she can relax, she says, "and not have any secrets."

If only that were true, then maybe we could all see more clearly how to balance being gay with the rest of who we are in life, much as our straight brethren do. Our personal lives should be no more and no less off-limits than theirs.



@ Chris Crain is executive editor of Houston Voice and can be reached at ccrain@houstonvoice.com.

viewpoint JOSEF MOLNAR



Preparing for the prom night that wasn't did more for gay rights than the act of protesting the yearly teen ritual.

Memories of a prom that wasn't

WHILE MOST PROM STORIES INVOLVE mundane affairs, my experience with "the prom that never was" would seem better suited to the 21st century, where culture-busting seems to be the norm.

It was 1991, and in my typical fashion, I had become a blue-haired know-it-all high-school senior who spent his nights at underground and gay clubs around downtown Houston, and I loved it.

The photogenic fluff of prom was not a rite of passage in my book, and only glorified a society I had never seen or celebrated and which I had no wish to preserve.

I was fortunate; my open homosexuality never presented more than the occasional

epithet from people I had not known my whole life. I had found tolerance, if only because I remained on the fringe.

My brother, however, had found his niche in the relatively minor theater and band crowds, and I don't think he realized how confining acceptance can be until he tried to take his boyfriend to prom.

I have to admit, the outfit he made in the months before the event was pretty impressive: a high-collared black satin jacket with silver buttons, a white shirt with layered lace down the front and around the cuffs, and a pair of fitted, black twill pants. It was a retro suit our founding fathers would have loved to own.

The daring scheme soon made its rounds of the school, and not everyone was happy about it. There were secondhand threats that my brother would be spit on, jumped by a group of jocks, or even shot as he entered the doors to the event.

My mother, older brother and I were furious. No matter what I may have thought about prom, I was going to defend by any means necessary his right to take the person he wanted, and the three of us made plans to attend as his personal bodyguards.

As the days leading up to prom marched by, my brother put the finishing touches on his outfit. My mother picked out a beautiful white dress and a pair of matching stiletto-heeled shoes in preparation for the worst, figuring she could rely on their pointy tips as weapons.

"There was such a phobia of [homosexuality]," she said. "I hoped nothing would happen, but I was prepared for any fights or anything."

The principal, however, heard about my brother's plan. He grabbed the vice principal, and they made an impromptu stop at our house a few days before the event. During the 15-minute visit, we confirmed the rumors were true and he kindly asked us not to attend.

Despite assurances from my mother and me that we were still willing to go with him to prom, my brother allowed the visit to shatter his dream. What the principal had deemed an appropriate, cautionary

move had been translated into institutional support of heterosexual relationships, and my brother was inconsolable.

The teacher in charge of ticket sales refunded our money, and with watery eyes, apologized for the actions of a few ignorant teenagers. I have never forgotten it.

Looking back, I realize that my brother did more by wanting to go to the prom than I did by rejecting it. He tried to become an equal participant in a tradition restricted to the majority.

"Maybe I should have gone through with it," he said recently, "because it might have made headlines, and it would have changed the situation there. But there was a gun-toting populace around."

That experience has encouraged me to attend the annual Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals prom this weekend as a willing participant.

Most gay youngsters still do not have a place where they can be themselves, and too many adults are cheated out of memories of one of the last great events of their youth. The HATCH prom allows us to live it the way it was meant to be.

I doubt anything will happen, but I'll make sure my knuckles are cracked before I go in.

@ Josef Molnar is a freelance writer living in Houston. He can be reached through this publication.

viewpoint MARTHA ACKELSBURG & JUDITH PLASKOW



Were we to marry, we would be marginalizing those who are single by choice or otherwise.

Why we aren't getting married

WE LOVE EACH OTHER, AND WE'VE been in a committed relationship for nearly 20 years. We are residents of Massachusetts. But we're not getting married.

We fully believe that gay and lesbian couples should have the right to marry, and we celebrate the fact that a significant barrier to our full citizenship has fallen. In not taking advantage of this new right, however, we can more comfortably advocate for the kind of society in which we would like to live.

Those who have fought for gay marriage have made clear that, in the U.S., important benefits are tied to marital status. As the judges of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court noted in the Goodridge decision, "Marriage provides an abundance of legal, financial, and social benefits."

Indeed, more than 1,000 federal benefits attach to marriage; benefits relating to

Social Security, inheritance, tax status, child custody and the like. Other significant benefits — most notably, health care — are often linked to marriage.

Opening up this status to gay couples makes an enormous difference to those in committed relationships in which at least one partner has access to benefits or resources to share.

BUT FOCUSING ON THE RIGHT TO marry perpetuates the idea that these rights ought to be linked to marriage. Were we to marry, we would be contributing to the perpetuation of a norm of "couplehood" in our society. This preference for couples marginalizes those who are single, single parents, widowed, divorced or otherwise living in non-traditional constellations.

The Massachusetts decision argued that

"marriage is a vital social institution. ... The exclusive commitment of two individuals to each other nurtures love and mutual support; it brings stability to our society." By saying so, the judges affirmed our right to marry while at the same time reinforcing very traditional beliefs about the centrality of marriage to the social order.

The Massachusetts decision argues that gay marriage is good for society because children ought to be raised by two parents. The judges stated, in fact, "It cannot be rational under our laws to penalize children by depriving them of state benefits" because of their parents' sexual orientation.

But why is it any more rational to deprive children of state benefits because their parents are not married? Yet, precisely such arguments tying benefits to marriage are being used to justify repressive "marriage promotion" policies that pressure single mothers receiving welfare benefits to marry, and deny them (and their children) significant benefits if they do not marry.

A focus on marriage and familial status also leads us to neglect our social responsibilities to provide adequate child-care, day care, elder-care, etc., that would allow all adults who want to work to be able to do so.

Similarly, a focus on increasing the numbers of people who can get access to health or retirement benefits through their spouses can easily lead us to ignore or deny our societal responsibility to provide basic health care and old age security to all our citizens, regardless of marital status.

IT'S NOT EASY TO WALK AWAY FROM the legal benefits that come with mar-

riage. We are fortunate, in that we do not need to rely on one another's employers for our health coverage, and this allows us the luxury of deciding not to marry.

Nevertheless, as feminists and as lesbians, we have considered ourselves to be part of social movements that were modeling a variety of ways to be in the world, and to be in meaningful relationships, other than through marriage.

Indeed, the early women's liberation and gay liberation movements challenged the claim that the married-couple nuclear family was the only legitimate way to organize our intimate lives.

What happened to that vision? Where are the feminist and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered voices calling for the separation of civil and religious unions?

Why not argue for the elimination of marriage as a legal form and the creation of a status of "civil union" that will allow people to create their own forms, and have them recognized by the state?

At this moment, when there is so much focus on celebrating the right to marry, we want to hold up a vision of a society in which basic rights are not tied to marriage, and which there are many ways to organize our intimate lives, marriage being only one of them.

@ Martha Ackelsburg is a government and women's studies professor at Smith College in Northampton, Mass.; Judith Plaskow is a religious studies professor at Manhattan College in Riverdale, N.Y. They can be reached through this publication.



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on the record



Human Rights Campaign Executive Director Cheryl Jacques, in an open letter to Laura Bush taking her to task for suggesting the public debate the issue of gay marriage (HRC Press Release, May 24)

"I want to thank my friend, Senator Bill Frist, for joining us today. ... He married a Texas girl, I want you to know. [Laughter.] Karyn is with us — a West Texas girl, just like me."

President Bush, acknowledging the Senate Majority Leader in an appearance at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn. (May 27, White House transcript)

"We not only have an epidemic of obesity, we have a huge problem of AIDS and the government's attitude is to do all it can to promote buggery. Maybe those two are somewhat intimately connected."

Lord Tebbit, a Conservative Party member of the British House of Lords, complaining that tolerance of homosexuality — "buggery" is English slang for sodomy — was in part to blame for a rising level of obesity in the U.K. (The Mirror, London, May 28)



"This doesn't mean like, 'The victory of the hippies' or something. Burroughs is not actually famous for accidentally killing his wife or being a narcotics addict or being homosexual. He's famous for being a great writer, and because of that we know about these other things."

James Grauerholz, a friend of gay author William S. Burroughs, on the decision to rename a creek near Lawrence, Kan., after the late Beat writer famous for "Naked Lunch" (Associated Press, May 26)

"If every gay person said, 'We're out of here,' we'd crash the [real estate] market big time."

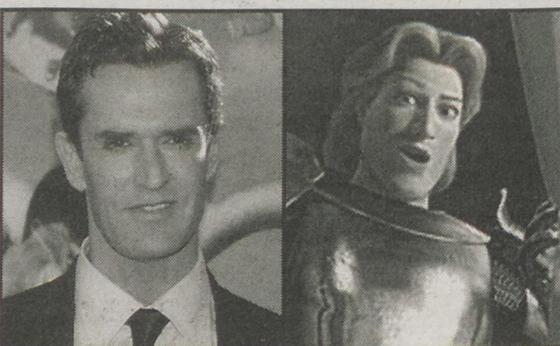
Brad Haransky, 43, a Washington lobbyist who said he and his partner of three years are thinking of moving from northern Virginia to protest the passage of the state's Marriage Affirmation Act, which prohibits recognition of gay marriages, civil unions or domestic partnerships (Associated Press, May 25)

"This reminds me of the Hollywood elite's reaction to Bush being elected. Virginia has always elevated marriage over all other relationships. Traditional marriage is undeniably beneficial to the economy."

Victoria Cobb, lobbyist for Virginia's Family Foundation, calling the risk of gays boycotting Virginia a "ridiculous threat" (Associated Press, May 25)

"If you want me on record, I'm not a coward."

Republican state Sen. Carolyn Allen of Scottsdale, Ariz., who voted against a state constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage; the measure failed 14-12 (Associated Press, May 27)



"I was never allowed to go on to the next step. Because, I think in a trophy business, you can maybe be black but you can't, definitely not yet, be gay."

Out British actor Rupert Everett, referring to his career trajectory after "My Best Friend's Wedding"; he co-stars as the voice of Prince Charming in "Shrek 2" (About.com, May 20)

appts.

SATURDAY JUNE 5

The Rainbow Health Fair, presented by the Lesbian Health Initiative, is scheduled from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Montrose Clinic, 215 Westheimer. The event will include various health screenings, including mammograms, pap smears, and HIV testing. A forum on Safe Physical Intimacy will be presented. www.lhihouston.org



The Houston Gay & Lesbian Film Festival is sponsoring the only Houston screening of Margaret Cho's "Revolution" at 7 p.m. at Rice Cinema on the Rice University Campus, corner of University Boulevard and Stockton. Tickets are \$5 at the door. After the screening, there will be a party at Meteor, 2306 Genesse. Light snacks will be provided. www.hglfff.org.

MONDAY JUNE 7

For the first time, the Unity YOUTH Gay Student Group, AVES Hispanic HIV/AIDS Organization and the League of Latin American Citizens (LULAC) will meet to relay information on their organizations. The meeting is scheduled from 9 a.m. to noon in the Bayou Building Atrium at the University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2900 Bay Area Blvd. 281-283-2575.

The first of several Pride programs will air on Houston PBS, Channel 8, at midnight. Flag Wars takes place in Columbus, Ohio, where the working poor and the elderly fight to hold on to their homes as realtors and gay homebuyers descend in a quest for "fixer-uppers." The inevitable clash exposes prejudice and self-interest on both sides, not to mention the dream of home ownership. www.houstonpbs.org.

THURSDAY JUNE 10

Eat Out and Chip In by dining at selected Montrose area restaurants. A portion of the proceeds will be directed to DIFFA to help fight AIDS in Houston. A list of restaurants is available at www.diffa.org.

Meet Mayor **Bill White** and Houston City Controller Annise Parker when they speak during a meeting of the Houston chapter of the National Gay & Lesbian Journalists Association at 6:30 p.m. at Rouge, 812 Westheimer. For information, email: ThatCurtis@aol.com.



FRIDAY JUNE 11

"Envy the Cockroach" opens at 8 p.m. at dos chicas theater commune, 411 Westheimer and runs through June 26. Authored by Bob Morgan, "Cockroach" is about three prisoners at the Oakdale Reformatory for Women who discover through therapy how they became products of their respective environments. Morgan has authored other dos chicas productions, including "Where's My Dinner, Bitch?" and "Sadomasochistic Xmas." 832-283-0858.

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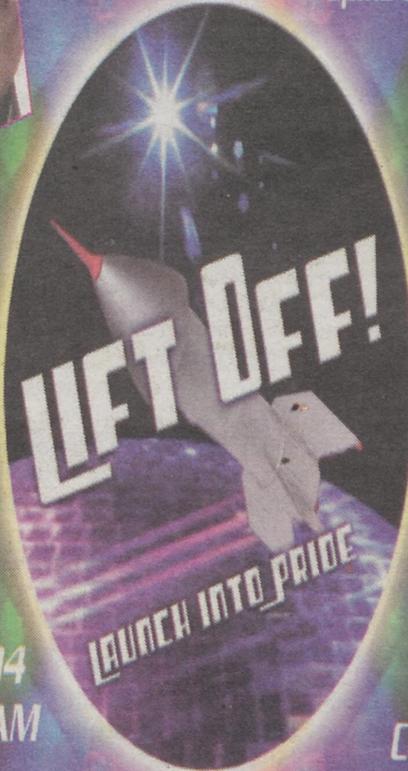
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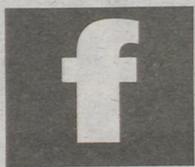
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Madonna's nixed
Israel appearances,
and Dish asks why
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JUNE 4, 2004

Sexing you up

New photo book approaches sex as part of a well-rounded life as writer adds to diverse body of work

By MIKE FLEMING



FANS OF MICHAEL THOMAS FORD probably weren't expecting the gay author's next release to be a coffee table-style photo book full of naked gay men simulating sex. But in "Ultimate Gay Sex," that's exactly the turn Ford takes in the multi-faceted road of his successful writing career.

Ford is best known for the intelligent humor in such collections as "Alec Baldwin Doesn't Love Me," "That's Mr. Faggot to You," "It's Not Mean If It's True" and "The Little Book of Neuroses." Those essay compilations drew national attention and four consecutive Lambda Literary Awards for Best Humor Book.

"My career has always done different things," Ford says. "I've done non-fiction on social issues, the humor columns. All through that time, I was also doing some magazine work."

FORD'S DIVERSE WRITING ALSO INCLUDES HIS syndicated newspaper column called "My Queer Life" and non-fiction books about AIDS and coming out targeted at gay youth. He also penned the interview-based books "The Voices of AIDS" and "Outspoken."

Most recently, Ford is finding retail success with the gay novel "Last Summer." Another fictional tale about gay men, "Looking For It," is set for release this summer.

Despite success in those more traditional literary genres, "Ultimate Gay Sex" is still far from a departure for Ford, he says.

"It's a natural outgrowth of what I do," Ford says. "In any of my books, I set out to write gay men's lives the way they're lived right now, at a particular time. I want men to relate and then examine their own lives, so this is the same in the sex book."

And Ford already has extensive experience writing as a nationally known gay "sexpert," though Advocate magazine readers probably know him better as one of the ghost writers for the fictional sex advice columnist "Tony Palermo."

"When the publishers decided to do a gay sex book, they called the Advocate to find 'Tony Palermo,'" Ford says. "It was a happy coincidence that when they found out it was



The sex advice book 'Ultimate Gay Sex' uses models diverse in ethnicity, age and physical type, an inclusive step that author Michael Thomas Ford says is critical to the book's mission.

Please see **ULTIMATE SEX** on Page 22

DANCE LEGEND: Houston Ballet celebrates centenary of birth of choreographer George Balanchine. Page 17

GAYS & COLUMBINE: Two books and a movie suggest a gay link to the shootings at Columbine High. Page 15



The word on HIV:

Ask your doctor how REYATAZ, in HIV combination therapy, can help you
fight HIV your way.

Individual results may vary.

INDICATION: Reyataz (atazanavir sulfate) is a prescription medicine used in combination with other medicines to treat people who are infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Reyataz has been studied in 48-week trials in patients who have never taken anti-HIV medicines and in 24-week trials in patients who have taken anti-HIV medicines before.

Reyataz does not cure HIV or help prevent passing HIV to others.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:

Do not take Reyataz if you are taking the following medicines: ergot medicines, Versed®, Halcion®, Orap®, Propulsid®, Camptosar®, Vasacor®, Crixivan®, Mevacor®, Zocor®, rifampin, St. John's wort, AcipHex®, Nexium®, Prevacid®, Prilosec® or Protonix®. Do not use Viagra® while you are taking Reyataz without first speaking with your healthcare provider. **This list of medicines is not complete. Discuss all prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamin and herbal supplements, or other health preparations you are taking or plan to take with your healthcare provider.**

Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any side effects or conditions, including the following:

- **A change in the way your heart beats** may occur and could be a symptom of a heart problem.
- **Diabetes and high blood sugar** may occur in patients taking protease inhibitor medicines like Reyataz.
- **Yellowing of the skin and/or eyes** may occur due to increases in bilirubin levels in the blood (bilirubin is made by the liver).
- **If you have liver disease**, including hepatitis B or C, your liver disease may get worse when you take anti-HIV medicines like Reyataz.
- **Some patients with hemophilia** have increased bleeding problems with protease inhibitor medicines like Reyataz.
- **Constant nausea, vomiting, unusual or unexpected stomach discomfort, tiredness, trouble breathing, and weakness in the arms and legs** may be signs of a severe buildup of lactic acid in the blood (lactic acidosis), which can cause death. These events have been reported in patients taking Reyataz with other anti-HIV medicines called nucleoside analogs.

Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking anti-HIV medicines. The cause and long-term effects are not known at this time.

Common side effects of Reyataz taken with other anti-HIV medicines include: nausea, headache, rash, stomach pain, vomiting, diarrhea, depression, fever, increased cough, dizziness, trouble sleeping, pain, tiredness, back pain, numbness, tingling or burning of hands or feet, and joint pain.

You should take Reyataz once daily with food (a meal or snack).

Please see important information about REYATAZ on the next page.

Once Daily REYATAZ is a protease inhibitor (PI) that is taken in HIV combination therapy.

- ◆ Can help raise your T-cells
- ◆ Can help lower your viral load to undetectable*
- ◆ Low chance of diarrhea (shown in clinical trials)†
- ◆ Two pills taken once-a-day (with a snack or meal)

*Undetectable is defined as a viral load of less than 400 or 50 copies/mL.

†REYATAZ in combination therapy had a 6-8% rate of moderate-to-severe diarrhea.

You and your doctor can **fight HIV your way.**


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 (atazanavir sulfate) 200 mg capsules

R ONLY

PATIENT INFORMATION

REYATAZ™ (RAY-ah-taz)

(generic name = atazanavir sulfate)
Capsules

ALERT: Find out about medicines that should NOT be taken with REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate). Read the section "What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?"

Read the Patient Information that comes with REYATAZ before you start using it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This leaflet provides a summary about REYATAZ and does not include everything there is to know about your medicine. This information does not take the place of talking with your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment.

What is REYATAZ?

REYATAZ is a prescription medicine used with other anti-HIV medicines to treat people who are infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). HIV is the virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). REYATAZ is a type of anti-HIV medicine called a protease inhibitor. HIV infection destroys CD4 (T) cells, which are important to the immune system. The immune system helps fight infection. After a large number of T cells are destroyed, AIDS develops. REYATAZ helps to block HIV protease, an enzyme that is needed for the HIV virus to multiply. REYATAZ may lower the amount of HIV in your blood, help your body keep its supply of CD4 (T) cells, and reduce the risk of death and illness associated with HIV.

Does REYATAZ cure HIV or AIDS?

REYATAZ does not cure HIV infection or AIDS. At present there is no cure for HIV infection. People taking REYATAZ may still get opportunistic infections or other conditions that happen with HIV infection. Opportunistic infections are infections that develop because the immune system is weak. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, and *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections. **It is very important that you see your healthcare provider regularly while taking REYATAZ.**

REYATAZ does not lower your chance of passing HIV to other people through sexual contact, sharing needles, or being exposed to your blood. For your health and the health of others, it is important to always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom or other barrier to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood. Never use or share dirty needles.

Who should not take REYATAZ?

Do not take REYATAZ if you:

- **are taking certain medicines.** (See "What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?") Serious life-threatening side effects or death may happen. Before you take REYATAZ, tell your healthcare provider about all medicines you are taking or planning to take. These include other prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.
- **are allergic to REYATAZ or to any of its ingredients.** The active ingredient is atazanavir sulfate. See the end of this leaflet for a complete list of ingredients in REYATAZ. Tell your healthcare provider if you think you have had an allergic reaction to any of these ingredients.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before I take REYATAZ?

Tell your healthcare provider:

- **If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.** It is not known if REYATAZ can harm your unborn baby. Pregnant women have experienced serious side effects when taking REYATAZ with other HIV medicines called nucleoside analogues. You and your healthcare provider will need to decide if REYATAZ is right for you. If you use REYATAZ while you are pregnant, talk to your healthcare provider about the Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry.
- **If you are breast-feeding.** You should not breast-feed if you are HIV-positive because of the chance of passing HIV to your baby. Also, it is not known if REYATAZ can pass into your breast milk and if it can harm your baby. If you are a woman who has or will have a baby, talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.
- **If you have liver problems or are infected with the hepatitis B or C virus.** See "What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?"
- **If you have diabetes.** See "What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?"
- **If you have hemophilia.** See "What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?"
- **About all the medicines you take** including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Keep a list of your medicines with you to show your healthcare provider. For more information, see "What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?" and "Who should not take REYATAZ?" Some medicines can cause serious side effects if you also take REYATAZ.

How should I take REYATAZ?

- **Take REYATAZ once every day exactly as instructed by your healthcare provider.** Your healthcare provider will prescribe the amount of REYATAZ that is right for you. Your dose will depend on your liver function and on the other anti-HIV medicines that you are taking. REYATAZ is always used with other anti-HIV medicines. If you are taking REYATAZ and Sustiva® (efavirenz), you should also be taking Norvir® (ritonavir).

- **Always take REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate) with food** (a meal or snack) to help it work better. Swallow the capsules whole. **Do not open the capsules.** Try to take REYATAZ at the same time each day.
- **If you are taking antacids or Videx® (didanosine) Chewable/Dispersible Buffered Tablets,** take REYATAZ 2 hours before or 1 hour after these medicines.
- **Do not change your dose or stop taking REYATAZ without first talking with your healthcare provider.** It is important to stay under a healthcare provider's care while taking REYATAZ.
- **When your supply of REYATAZ starts to run low,** get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy. It is important not to run out of REYATAZ. The amount of HIV in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time.
- **If you miss a dose of REYATAZ,** take it as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose at its regular time. If, however, it is within 6 hours of your next dose, do not take the missed dose. Wait and take the next dose at the regular time. Do not double the next dose. **It is important that you do not miss any doses of REYATAZ or your other anti-HIV medicines.**
- **If you take more than the prescribed dose of REYATAZ,** call your healthcare provider or poison control center right away.

Can children take REYATAZ?

REYATAZ has not been fully studied in children under 16 years of age. REYATAZ is not recommended for use in babies under the age of 3 months.

What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?

The following list of side effects is **not** complete. Report any new or continuing symptoms to your healthcare provider. If you have questions about side effects, ask your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider may be able to help you manage these side effects.

REYATAZ can cause the following side effects:

- **yellowing of the skin or eyes.** These effects may be due to increases in bilirubin levels in the blood (bilirubin is made by the liver). Call your healthcare provider if your skin or the white part of your eyes turn yellow. Although these effects may not be damaging to your liver, skin, or eyes, it is important to tell your healthcare provider promptly if they occur.
 - **a change in the way your heart beats (heart rhythm change).** Call your healthcare provider right away if you get dizzy or lightheaded. These could be symptoms of a heart problem.
 - **diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia)** sometimes happen in patients taking protease inhibitor medicines like REYATAZ. Some patients had diabetes before taking protease inhibitors while others did not. Some patients may need changes in their diabetes medicine.
 - **if you have liver disease** including hepatitis B or C, your liver disease may get worse when you take anti-HIV medicines like REYATAZ.
 - **some patients with hemophilia** have increased bleeding problems with protease inhibitors like REYATAZ.
 - **a serious condition called lactic acidosis syndrome** (a severe buildup of an acid in the blood that sometimes causes death). Some people who have taken REYATAZ with anti-HIV medicines called nucleoside analogues have developed lactic acidosis syndrome. Lactic acidosis syndrome has happened more in people who are female or obese (very overweight). Lactic acidosis syndrome is a medical emergency and must be treated in the hospital. **Call your healthcare provider right away and do not continue to take REYATAZ and your other anti-HIV medicines unless instructed by your healthcare provider if you get any of the following signs of lactic acidosis syndrome:**
 - You have persistent nausea, vomiting, or unusual or unexpected stomach discomfort,
 - You feel very weak and tired,
 - You have trouble breathing,
 - You have weakness, especially in your arms and legs.
 - **changes in body fat.** These changes may include an increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.
- Other common side effects of REYATAZ taken with other anti-HIV medicines include nausea; headache; rash; stomach pain; vomiting; diarrhea; depression; fever; increased cough; dizziness; trouble sleeping; pain; tiredness; back pain; numbness, tingling, or burning of hands or feet; and joint pain.

What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ with other medicines?

Do not take REYATAZ if you take the following medicines (not all brands may be listed; tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take). REYATAZ may cause serious, life-threatening side effects or death when used with these medicines.

- Ergot medicines: dihydroergotamine, ergonovine, ergotamine, and methyletergonovine such as Cafergot®, Migranal®, D.H.E. 45®, ergotrate maleate, Methergine®, and others (used for migraine headaches).
- Halcion® (triazolam, used for insomnia).
- Versed® (midazolam, used for sedation).
- Orap® (pimozide, used for Tourette's disorder).
- Propulsid® (cisapride, used for certain stomach problems).

Do not take the following medicines with REYATAZ because of possible serious side effects:

- Camptosar® (irinotecan, used for cancer).
- Vasacor® (bepridil, used for high blood pressure).
- Crixivan® (indinavir, used for HIV infection). Both REYATAZ and Crixivan sometimes cause increased levels of bilirubin in the blood.
- Cholesterol-lowering medicines Mevacor® (lovastatin) or Zocor® (simvastatin).

Do not take the following medicines with REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate) because they may lower the amount of REYATAZ in your blood. This may lead to an increased HIV viral load. Resistance to REYATAZ or cross-resistance to other HIV medicines may develop:

- Rifampin (also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®, used for tuberculosis).
 - St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), an herbal product sold as a dietary supplement, or products containing St. John's wort.
 - "Proton-pump inhibitors" used for indigestion, heartburn, or ulcers such as AcipHex® (rabeprazole), Nexium® (esomeprazole), Prevacid® (lansoprazole), Prilosec® (omeprazole), or Protonix® (pantoprazole).
- The following medicines may require your healthcare provider to monitor your therapy more closely:**
- Viagra® (sildenafil). REYATAZ may increase the chances of serious side effects that can happen with Viagra. Do not use Viagra while you are taking REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate), unless your healthcare provider tells you it is okay.
 - Lipitor® (atorvastatin). There is an increased chance of serious side effects if you take REYATAZ with this cholesterol-lowering medicine.
 - Medicines for abnormal heart rhythm: Cordarone® (amiodarone), lidocaine, quinidine (also known as Cardioquin®, Quinidex®, and others).
 - Coumadin® (warfarin).
 - Tricyclic antidepressants such as Elavil® (amitriptyline), Norpramin® (desipramine), Sinequan® (doxepin), Surmontil® (trimipramine), Tofranil® (imipramine), or Vivactil® (protriptyline).
 - Medicines to prevent organ transplant rejection: Sandimmune® or Neoral® (cyclosporine), Rapamune® (sirolimus), or Prograf® (tacrolimus).

The following medicines may require a change in the dose or dose schedule of either REYATAZ or the other medicine:

- Sustiva® (efavirenz).
- Fortovase®, Invirase® (saquinavir).
- Norvir® (ritonavir).
- Mycobutin® (rifabutin).
- Calcium channel blockers such as Cardizem® or Tiazac® (diltiazem), Covera-HS® or Isoptin SR® (verapamil) and others.
- Biaxin® (clarithromycin).
- oral contraceptives ("the pill").
- Videx® (didanosine) or antacids.
- Medicines for indigestion, heartburn, or ulcers such as Axid® (nizatidine), Pepcid AC® (famotidine), Tagamet® (cimetidine), or Zantac® (ranitidine).

Remember:

1. **Know all the medicines you take.**
2. **Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take.**
3. **Do not start a new medicine without talking to your healthcare provider.**

How should I store REYATAZ?

- Store REYATAZ Capsules at room temperature, 59° to 86° F (15° to 30° C). **Do not store this medicine in a damp place** such as a bathroom medicine cabinet or near the kitchen sink.
- Keep your medicine in a tightly closed container.
- Throw away REYATAZ when it is outdated or no longer needed by flushing it down the toilet or pouring it down the sink.

General information about REYATAZ

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use REYATAZ for another condition. Do not give REYATAZ to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them. **Keep REYATAZ and all medicines out of the reach of children and pets.**

This summary does not include everything there is to know about REYATAZ. Medicines are sometimes prescribed for conditions that are not mentioned in patient information leaflets. Remember, no written summary can replace careful discussion with your healthcare provider. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider or you can call 1-800-426-7644.

What are the ingredients in REYATAZ?

Active Ingredient: atazanavir sulfate

Inactive Ingredients: Crospovidone, lactose monohydrate (milk sugar), magnesium stearate, gelatin, FD&C Blue #2, and titanium dioxide.

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dance RICH ARENSCHIEDT

Houston Ballet celebrates choreographer's birth
by showcasing three of his most important works
that chronicle three periods in his long career.

Celebrating Balanchine

HOUSTON BALLET CELEBRATES THE centenary of the birth of iconoclastic Russian-American choreographer George Balanchine this weekend at Wortham Center by showcasing three of his most important works.

Dance companies from Helsinki to Houston are paying homage to Balanchine on the 100th anniversary of his birth, a fitting tribute to a creative force who, in the opinion of many, fundamentally changed dance in the 20th century.

Born in Russia in 1904, Balanchine made his professional debut at the age of ten, as cupid in a Mariinsky Theater production of "The Sleeping Beauty," a work he would adore for his entire life.

Balanchine trained in the tradition of classical Russian ballet, graduating from Russia's Imperial Ballet School in 1921. He then enrolled in a conservatory studying piano, music theory, and composition.

This extensive formal musical training sets Balanchine apart from many of his peers. His scholarly and innate understanding of various musical forms allowed him to completely integrate music and movement.

In 1924 Balanchine formed a small company that was invited to Paris to join Ballet Russes, the company under the auspices of legendary impresario Serge Diaghilev (lover to celebrated dancer, Nijinsky).

The company was disbanded after Diaghilev died in 1929, but Diaghilev's influence would permeate Balanchine's entire life. "My tenure with him shaped and refined my artistic sensibilities," Balanchine once recounted.

Balanchine formed his own dance company, placing himself and his dancers at the epicenter of the artistic revolution that swept the world beginning in the 1930's.

He propelled choreography into an abstract, plotless universe it had never before inhabited. The work that may have served as the genesis for this transformation, "Apollo," was conceived when Balanchine was 24, and it marked his first musical pairing with Russian composer, Igor Stravinsky.

"APOLLO" ENJOYS ITS HOUSTON PREMIER with this showcase and is used to highlight dancers Simon Ball, Zdenek Konvalina and Andrew Murphy. According



Houston dancers Zdenek Konvalina and Barbara Bears perform Balanchine's "Apollo."

to new principal dancer Murphy, performing Apollo was "one of the things that me decide to come to Houston."

With "Apollo," choreographer and composer discarded many of the existing notions of what dance should look and sound like. The New York City Ballet was formed in October 1948, and Balanchine was to shepherd its artistic process and vision until his death in 1983. "La Valse," one of his major works during this period, premiered in 1951. The work, a collection of ensemble pieces, begins innocently enough but progresses to an large and ominous climax. Under the guidance of Patricia Russel, Balanchine ballerina and representative of the Balanchine trust, 19-year old Erin Patak performs the role of The Girl In White exquisitely, as if she were a seasoned Balanchine veteran.

Closing the program is "Theme and Variations," Balanchine's retrospective tribute to his classically based upbringing. Set to Tchaikovsky's Suite No. 3 for orchestra, this work denotes Balanchine's love for his Russian homeland.

Here the dancers in the corps de ballet move in precise unison. Only the dated costuming (which the Balanchine Trust is likely loathe to change) detracts from a completely polished performance.

Houston Ballet has a highly successful record of presenting works by this twentieth century master. Under previous Artistic Director Ben Stevenson, The Company performed many of Balanchine's most celebrated works.

Current Artistic Director Stanton Welch extracts more skill and focus from his company while offering a more contemporary sensibility. Under his leadership, this company is currently performing at the peak of its technique, bringing inspiration to works now considered by some to serve merely as historical markers in the dance canon.

MORE INFO

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books/film DON MAINES



Two books and a recent movie
about Columbine-type shootings
have teen homosexual threads

Teen fascist homosexuals

TEENAGE "FASCIST HOMOSEXUALS" are blamed for Columbine-type shootings in two of the year's most controversial novels — "Project X" and "Vernon God Little."

The same goes for "Elephant," 2003's double grand prize winner at the Cannes Film Festival, recently released on DVD and VHS.

However, a summit of world-renowned mental health experts came to a sounder conclusion about the real Columbine rampage, which shook the nation on April 20, 1999. It wasn't gay angst that fueled Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold to mow down their classmates. Instead, it was that one was suicidal and depressed, and the other (sweet-faced and well-spoken) was a psychopath.

Likewise, the eighth-graders who plan a Columbine-style shooting in Jim Shepard's "Project X" are different as night and day. At an unnamed school in New England, they become best (and only) friends because they are at rock bottom on the social pecking order.

The book's narrator, 14-year-old Edwin Hanratty, is a misfit who started clinging to the even more isolated Flake last spring when a guy they call Dickhead pummeled Edwin with a tree-house Plank. Flake made sure there were no nail marks in Edwin's back.

Even so, they taunt each other with zingers like "Suck my dog's chew toy, how's that?" To which the other one goes, "Your mother's still busy with it."

Everyone "goes" instead of "saying" things in Edwin's pitch-perfect foul language that traces how he and Flake hatch a plan to infect the school's ventilation system with toxic bug powder, then settle on guns like a carbine and a Kalashnikov as their weapons of mass destruction in a chaotic, catastrophic conclusion.

It isn't until 10 pages before the end of the short novel (and mere hours before the shooting spree) that Flake confesses to Edwin that he let an old man give him a blow job the week before.

So much for the sex in "Project X." Yet it gets lumped in as a "fascist homosexual" story by some readers of the comic



Alex Frost, a high school student from Oregon, is cast as Alex in "Elephant."

"Vernon God Little," which surprisingly won its author, newcomer DBC Pierre, the U.K.'s prestigious Man Booker Prize.

THE MASSACRE IN FICTIONAL Martirio, "the barbecue sauce capital of Central Texas," has already taken place when 15-year-old Vernon G. Little begins his version of how he's being made the fall guy after his "Meskin" friend Jesus killed 16 classmates who had taunted them as fags. Stuff like: Vernon tells Max Lechuga to lay off, to which Lechuga responds, "Make me, faggot."

"Vernon God Little" views the violence as burlesque with a town populated by ignoramuses. It's an enjoyable read.

While it's not in the league of elegance where "Elephant" shines, one can imagine how both Booker Prize judges and the Cannes jury might have delighted in giving their top awards to tales of American teen barbarism.

Cannes jurists practically appealed for papal dispensation to take the unprecedented step of awarding "Elephant" both the Palme d'Or (best film) award and its writer and director, Gus Van Sant, honors for best director.

Not a few American critics scoffed at Van Sant's passive approach, casting real kids rather than professional actors in major roles, then offering no easy answers why outcasts don camouflage gear and take revenge against their bullies by spraying them with assault weapons.

Leaving the audience to draw its own conclusions, "Elephant's" writer/director must have stunned some reviewers when the only answer they could live with was to label the killers "Nazi homos."

It's a silly conclusion that says more about the film's critics than the scene in which Alex, one of the shooters, is taking a shower when Eric, the other killer, walks in naked and kisses him.

Earlier, Alex has admitted, "I never even kissed anybody before." Before they enter the school for the last time, Alex looks at Eric and says, "Most importantly, have fun."

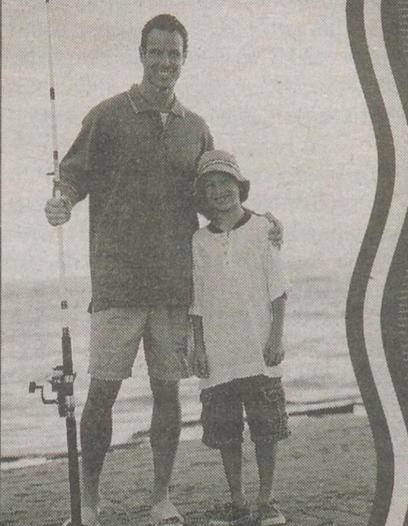
They are a depressive and a psychopath. What they are not is teenage fascist homosexuals.

i MORE INFO

'Project X'
Knopf
176 pages

'Vernon God Little'
Faber and Faber
288 pages

'Elephant'
Available on DVD and VHS

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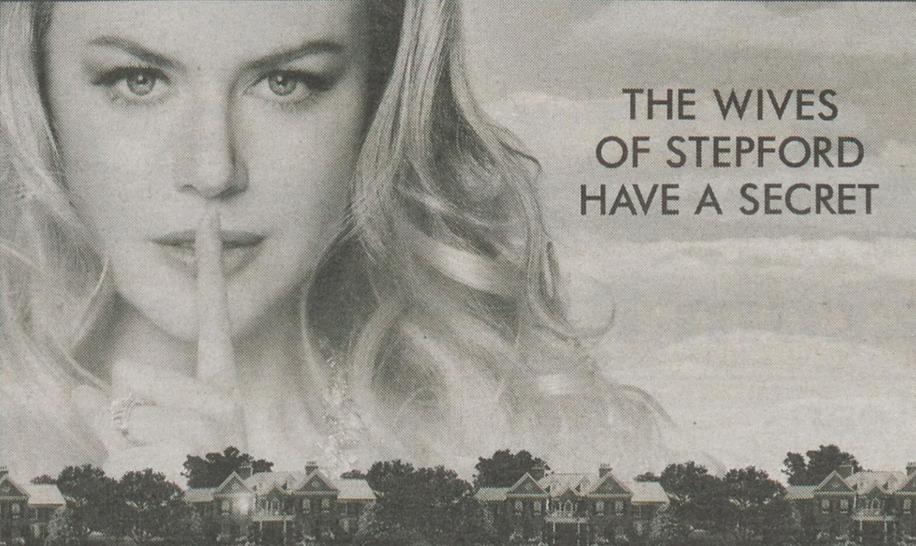


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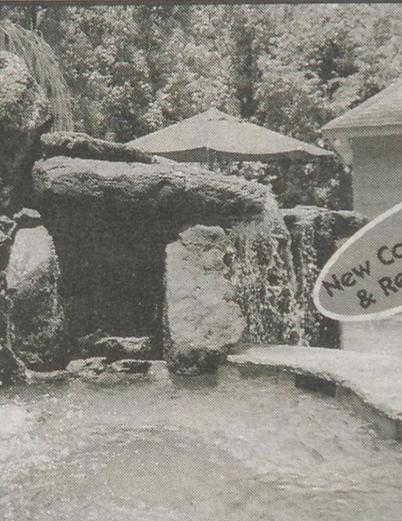
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arts cover story

'Queer Eye's' culture guy headlines Lift Off on June 12

RODRIGUEZ, continued from Page 1

The show not only took back the word "queer" from bigots and bullies, it also made the hosts: Kyan, Ted, Carson, Thom and Jai instant international gay ambassadors.

The worlds of pop culture and politics sat up and took notice. Gay TV shows, scripted and otherwise, exploded, and the very real issue of gay marriage came along.

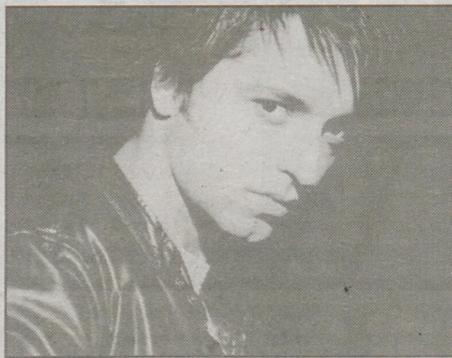
Though not the show's intention, "QE4SG" has rallied a revolution for better design and gay rights as well.

Hosting a TV show is one thing, but ushering in a revolution is quite another. As the stars of "Queer Eye" fan out to Gay Pride celebrations across the country, are they ready to step up and lead or simply decorate the airwaves?

The Houston Voice turned to "QE4SG" cultural guru, Jai Rodriguez, for answers. Rodriguez arrives in Houston on June 12th for Lift Off: Our Launch into Pride, which takes place in conjunction with Empower 2004 at the George R Brown Convention Center.

Rodriguez seemed to have more time for talk about his dance record than his impact on the national campaign for gay and lesbian civil rights. Rodriguez would only agree to an e-mail; it seems the 21st century moves in Internet ways.

Of the questions submitted by the Houston Voice, Rodriguez declined to



Jai Rodriguez headlines Lift Off: Our Launch into Pride June 12 at George R. Brown Convention Center.

answer only this one:

This is an election year. Are you into politics (not the politics of dancing!)? Do you vote? And obviously gay marriage is a super hot topic. Please give us your thoughts on gay marriage. Would you want to? Is there anyone special in your life that you'd want to stand up with?

Although he declined to talk about same-sex marriage, Rodriguez did take a minute to answer these questions.

HOUSTON VOICE: Have you ever been to Houston?

JAI RODRIGUEZ: No, but I love going to new places.

HOVO: You obviously have a love of performing, but was TV always a part of your plan?

MORE INFO

Lift-Off: Our Launch into Pride
9:30 p.m. June 12
George R. Brown Convention Center
www.pridehouston.org

RODRIGUEZ: TV is a thrill...however when we started, we didn't realize that this small cable show would turn into the phenomenon it has. I love theater, that's where I got my start, and I will be returning to my star role as Angel [in "Rent"] in July.

HOVO: Your video shoot looked like a blast. Were you feeling, "I have arrived" or "I can't believe this"?

RODRIGUEZ: Probably. I can't believe that I am here. ... Feel that a lot, I am so blessed.

HOVO: Tell us about your new album and the first single, "Love is Good."

RODRIGUEZ: What a lot of people don't know is that I have been singing and performing since I was a kid. ... It is my first love. I currently tour in my off weekends all across the U.S. to give people a taste of what they'll get. My influences include Justin, Stevie Wonder to Anastacia. I hope people are surprised and happy about my music.

HOVO: Do you watch TV? Which shows do you like? Do you watch "QE4SG"?

RODRIGUEZ: I was addicted to

"American Idol." ... I even got to go to the finale. Usually I have the guys over to my place to watch our show.

HOVO: A quick impression — when you hear the following: Rufus Wainwright?

RODRIGUEZ: An artist that is true and has something to say.

HOVO: Boy George?

RODRIGUEZ: What can I say? He is amazing.

HOVO: Margaret Cho?

RODRIGUEZ: Vocal.

HOVO: Madonna?

RODRIGUEZ: Wow...icon.

HOVO: Being one of the first "international gay ambassadors" must be very exciting, and a bit scary. Do you worry about being typecast like Bob Denver from "Gilligan's Island"?

RODRIGUEZ: No because I didn't start there.

HOVO: It was reported that your Mom had a bit of trouble adjusting to your new status as "gay icon." Was this true? With your music career taking off, how is she dealing with it?

RODRIGUEZ: My mother is wonderful. ... She accepts me and supports me.

HOVO: Finally, since you're coming to Houston for "Empower," the launch of Houston Pride. What does the word "Pride" mean to you?

RODRIGUEZ: Something that you can stand up for no matter what the cost.

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

Madonna and children safe from 'threats,' more on outing a TV anchor, and 'Golden Girls' comes to DVD.

Thank the Lourdes

HER MADGE-ESTY MADONNA WAS so sick with stomach flu that her doctors advised her to cancel the second day of her "Re-Invention" tour, which kicked off May 24 in Los Angeles. The Material Girl cancelled the May 25 show because of the illness but honored tickets the next night, the Associated Press reports.

Fans in Israel weren't so lucky.

Madonna called off plans to perform the tour in Tel Aviv. Several news outlets reported that it was because of death threats aimed at the singer and her children, Lourdes, 7, and Rocco, 3.

"She thought she was being targeted because of her Jewish Kabbalah religion," the London Sun reported about the cancellations.

The newspaper also claimed that Madonna "freaked out" after getting "scary" letters from a Palestinian group. But that's just not true, her handlers say.

"She never received threats," Liz Rosenberg, Madonna's rep, told the New York Daily News.

Rosenberg said Madonna considered playing Tel Aviv months ago, but she never committed to any dates. The singer cancelled the plans after her security team advised her that violence in the area made it unsafe.

Fans in Israel and the U.S. who can't afford the \$100-plus tickets to the show might be able to catch Madonna on CBS. The network recently announced plans to air a two-hour concert special featuring Madonna on the new tour.

No broadcast date has been set yet, but the New York Daily News reports that Madonna will receive \$10 million for the special. CBS wouldn't confirm that figure.

Must-o known more

It appears that gay Village Voice gossip columnist **MICHAEL MUSTO** reads the Houston Voice and its sister papers.

"**KEVIN NAFF** just wrote an editorial saying that on a recent visit to a New York gay bar, one of the [Fox News Channel's] anchors got a wee bit tipsy and hit on him," Musto wrote in his most recent column. Naff is managing editor of the Washington Blade, a publication affiliated with the Voice.

Naff's editorial, which he originally wrote for the Washington Blade and was published in the Houston Voice on May 21, didn't name the Fox anchor. But Musto apparently has some inside scoop that sheds at least a little more light on the subject.



Michael Musto



'Material Girl' Madonna cited safety concerns in her decision to forego a performance in Israel during her current tour. (Photo by Craig McDean)

"Spies tell me the guy in question is the one who said 'blowjob' on the air and was recently linked to **NICOLE KIDMAN**," Musto wrote.

With all these clues, this story has gone from a blind item to a "little-bit-blurry" item.

Dish, who is no stranger to being hit on by closeted newsmen — a fond "hello" goes out to that sexy national anchor, by the way — has figured it out. Can you?

'Golden' rules

As if the endless reruns on Lifetime weren't enough, many gay fans will be overjoyed that the **GOLDEN GIRLS** — portrayed by **BEA ARTHUR**, **RUE MCCLANAHAN**, **BETTY WHITE** AND **ESTELLE GETTY** — are finally coming to DVD.

Web site TVshowsonDVD.com reports that it is very likely that the series' first season, which aired from 1985-86, will be available on DVD Nov. 30, just in time for the holidays. The releases of subsequent seasons are expected to follow.

Now Dish knows what to get TV-loving queens this Christmas.



Bea Arthur

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eclipse cover story

Sex is 'mental, physical and spiritual,' author says

ULTIMATE SEX, continued from Page 14

me, I was already on their short list to do the book. But they thought I would never accept the job."

TO PUT HIS REAL NAME ON A SEX manual, Ford had a few stipulations.

"I said, 'If I'm going to do this book, I want to do something that has not been done before,'" he says. "I want to address gay men's lives in such a way that sexuality is important, but not the most important facet of their lives. The book had to make clear that sex is just part of being a well-rounded person rather than a focus on sex."

The book contains specific information about sex, but it adds something more, according to Ford.

"What the book really does is ask men to question the role of sexuality in their lives," he says. "Is it over-emphasized, under-emphasized? How does it relate to them as whole men in their mental, physical and spiritual lives?"

Besides beautifully shot images and

frank descriptions, the book also finds room for other issues pertinent to gay life. Among chapters on anatomy, sexual health, casual sex and erogenous zones, topics also include coming out, bisexuality, finding a partner, gay unions, handling rejection and beating depression.

Ford also stipulated that "Ultimate Gay Sex" include images that represent a wide range of gay men.

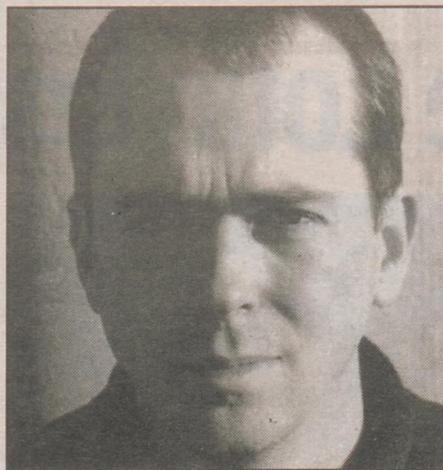
"When we sat down to map out what this book would be, I said that it should show who gay men really are," Ford says. "The photos show a range of ages, races and body types. They are not typical gay porn erotic images. Everyone is not white and buff and ripped, and I think the result is still very sexy."

In order to sell the book, the models had to be attractive, but within that precept, Ford and the publishers sought a wide array of "types," he says.

"I hope there is something for every portion of my audience, something for everybody to explore who we are as sexual, as gay and as people," Ford says.

READERS FAMILIAR WITH FORD'S work can still expect the same approach to "Ultimate Gay Sex" as any of his previous books: finding his personal truth.

"Whatever I'm writing, I don't think about the audience when I write," Ford says. "But I do think about telling the



When Michael Thomas Ford was approached to write 'Ultimate Gay Sex,' it wasn't as much a stretch as some of his readers might think.

truth in every situation. I want to write a truthful version of the experience that I'm addressing.

"When readers pick up a Michael Thomas Ford book, they can expect my version of how I see life," he adds. "It may not be theirs, and they may not like it, but it is definitely how I see the truth. My only obligation as a writer is to tell my truth and tell it honestly."

Expanding his ever-morphing ability to tackle any topic, the next versions of Ford's truth are scheduled to appear in

i MICHAEL THOMAS FORD

Residence: San Francisco, Calif.

Occupation: Writer

Background:

- Real passion is scuba diving
- Family is of Irish and Norwegian descent
- Once voted for George H.W. Bush
- Collects G.I. Joe action figures

Personal: Lives with partner, Patrick, and their dogs, Roger, a 120-pound Black Lab, and Andy, an 8-pound Chihuahua mix.

2005. First comes a novel about gay youth, followed by a collection of erotica, a sequel to "Last Summer" and an exploration into the world of gay pagans and Wiccans.

"Gay men's spirituality is one of the areas of our lives that is still vastly under-explored," Ford says. "I'm very excited about the opportunity to continue doing what I do and making connections with so many different kinds of people."

Having fun while writing and creating those connections keeps Ford motivated.

"Touching people as a writer makes life worth living," he says. "You can't plan connections, only let them take shape as they will, and I've heard from so many people from so many different corners of society that tell me I've made a difference in their lives. That's what it's all about."

i MORE INFO

'Ultimate Gay Sex'

By Michael Thomas Ford

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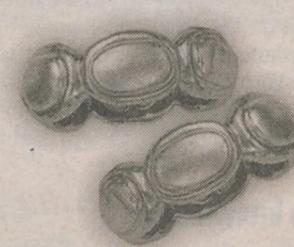
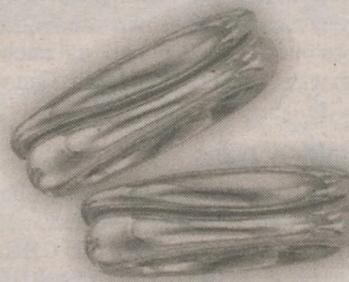
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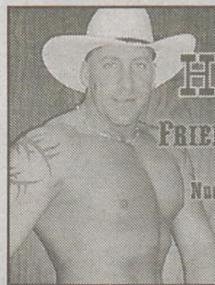
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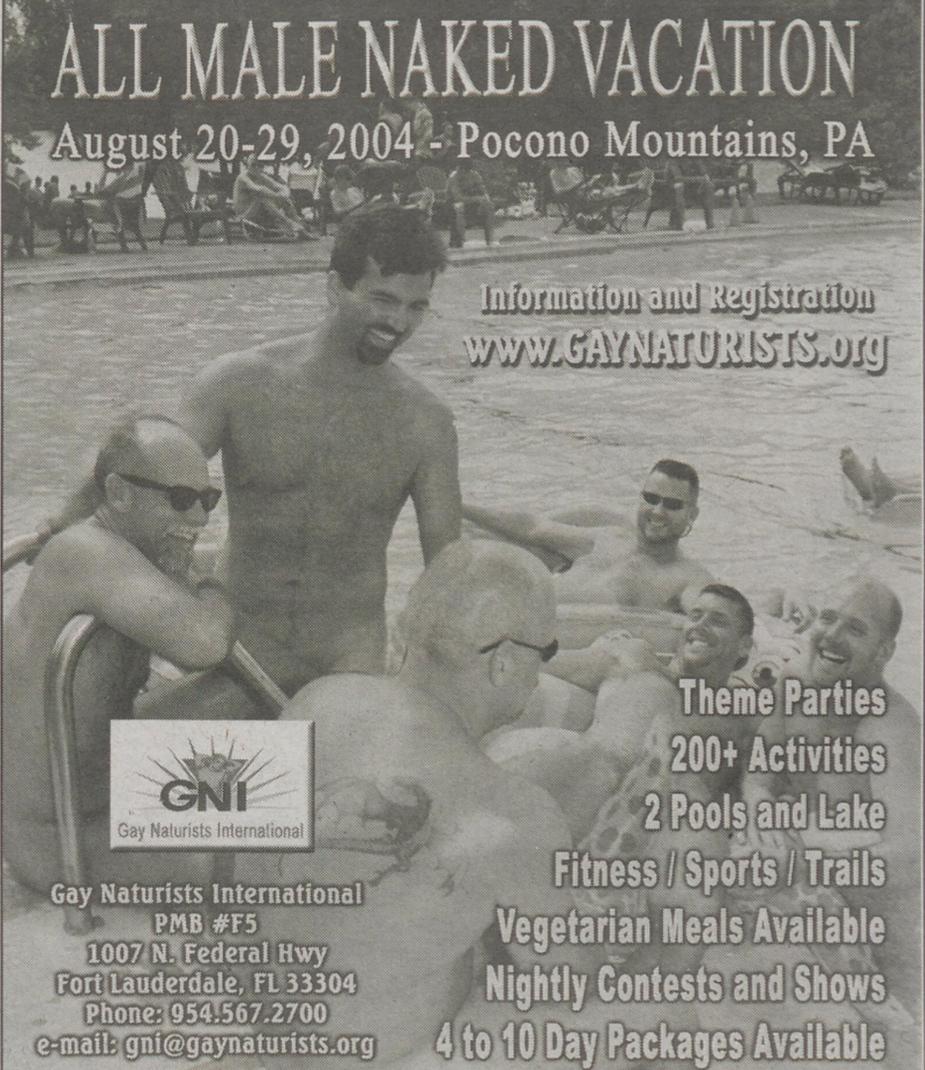
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 Friday, June 25 9pm-3am
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Pre-Parade Festival

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