

houston VOICE



Jane & Troy

The Voice's new cartoon strips find humor in everyday gay life. Page 14

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MAY 7, 2004

Prom ban prompts suit

Austin high school policy nixes same-sex guests

By BINNIE FISHER

An attorney for a civil liberties group is prepared to sue a Texas school district if necessary over a rule that prevents students from bringing same-sex guests to the high school prom.

The case involves 16-year-old Sherrell Ingram, who was told she could not bring her best friend to the Lago Vista High School prom because the school prevents students from purchasing tickets for same-sex prom guests from outside the school district.

"This student is not gay," said Judith Schaeffer, deputy legal director of People for the American Way. "She doesn't want to go to the prom by herself. She wants her best friend to go with her."

Schaeffer, who was contacted by the girl's mother, Ginger White, has sent a multi-page letter to the school's principal, Donna Larkin, asking her to reconsider the policy.

"Our intent is to get officials to do the right thing," Schaeffer said.

If school officials don't change the policy immediately, Schaeffer added, "The next step is very likely a lawsuit."

Lago Vista, near Austin, is a small community with only one high school. Schaeffer said the friend Sherrell Ingram wants to bring to the prom is from another district.

In her letter to the principal, Schaeffer said, she pointed out that the policy against same-sex prom guests violates Title IX of the



Lago Vista High School, near Austin, has refused to allow students to bring same-sex guests to their school prom, as these students did in Hayward, Calif. The Texas school has been unwilling to revisit the policy, even though the 16-year-old in question says she is heterosexual and wishes only to bring her best friend to the event. (File photo by Tom Gallagher/AP)

Education Amendments of 1972 and that the law prevents any federally funded education program from discriminating because of a person's sex.

"There can be no question that your policy violates this important

federal law," Schaeffer wrote in her letter. "Sherrell has been denied the right to bring a female friend to the prom solely because Sherrell is a female. If Sherrell

Please see **SAME-SEX PROM** on Page 6



Presumptive Democratic Presidential nominee **John Kerry** promised gay supporters that if elected he would work to make sure gay couples receive all the federal benefits married couples receive, even though he does not support gay marriage. (AP photo)

Gays at Kerry's campaign table

Other minority groups complain, but two gay men are in candidate's inner circle

By ADRIAN BRUNE

With a strong Congressional voting record on gay issues, many gay Democrats pinned their White House hopes on Sen. John F. Kerry as the candidate to put same-sex marriage on his platform. But in late February, the presumptive Democratic nominee for

Please see **KERRY** on Page 8

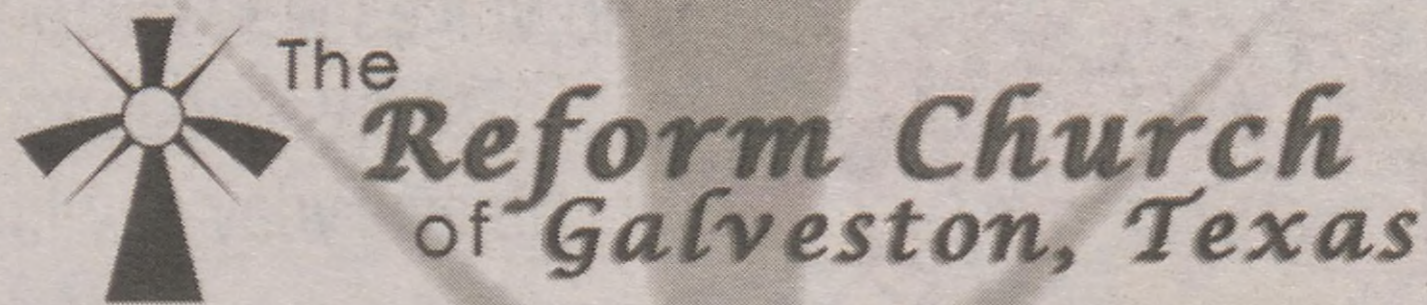
REMEMBERING AVALON:
Robert Avalon, gay brother of Mayor Bill White, dies.
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ASSURANCES FROM ON HIGH:
Activist meets with new chief regarding after-hours clubs.
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houston news

Robert Avalon, mayor's brother, mourned in many circles

Avalon is credited with securing gay endorsement for his brother, Mayor Bill White

By JOSEPH MOLNAR

The death of openly gay composer and pianist Robert Avalon was mourned this week in music circles, in the gay community and at City Hall.

Avalon, 47, was credited with securing the endorsement of the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus for his brother, Houston Mayor Bill White, when he ran for the city's top office last year.

Avalon, who adopted his maternal surname, had recently suffered from ill health and was diagnosed with testicular cancer on April 29. The next day he was rushed to a hospital, where he died of cardiac arrest.

Avalon's first love was music. He was known as a talented composer and pianist. It was his burgeoning involvement with gay politics that brought him to the forefront in the gay and lesbian community.

Sue Lovell, a member of the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus and the Democratic National Committee, said she met Avalon when his brother was running for chair of the state Democratic Party several years ago.

"The first endorsement Bill White sought was with the Caucus, and he brought his brother along," she said. "From what I understand, that was the first interaction he (Avalon) had with the gay and lesbian political community."

Since then, however, Avalon found himself increasingly drawn to politics. When White ran for mayor, Avalon once again approached the HGLPC first to seek the gay endorsement.

When his brother was sworn in as mayor in January, Avalon played the national



Robert Avalon (center) posed with his parents, Bill and Gloria White, during the January city inauguration ceremonies. (Photos by Dalton DeHart)

anthem in front of a crowd of about 4,000 people at the inauguration ceremony.

Based on his passion and determination, the organization's president, Ken Jones, asked Avalon to run for a board seat last fall. He accepted the invitation and was elected in December, to assume programming duties. He developed a wide range of programs for the organization's meetings.

At a recent meeting, Avalon presented a program that included a representative of an adoption service that includes gays and lesbians as prospective parents.

"He was very well loved and appreciated by all of us, and we're really sorry he's gone," Jones said. "Robert was passionate about everything he was involved in. He was not involved in politics because of his brother, but he wanted us to know he was involved in GLBT issues because he genuinely cared about them."

The night before he died, Avalon attended the group's weekly meeting.

"He typically minimized his personal problems," Jones said. "He was a little more quiet than usual, but until the night before he died, I didn't know he had health problems."

Avalon was working when he fell unconscious Friday. His brother reported that he had a heart attack on the way to the hospital, was resuscitated and had a second and final heart attack.

Avalon's dedication to his work and attendance at the meeting was not unusual. During his 1986 performance for the Texas Sesquicentennial in San Antonio, Avalon played with a 102-degree fever.

"It's possible to give one's best during an illness because one draws inward and blocks out all distraction," he said. "It can create intense, focused concentration."

Avalon moved to Houston from his hometown of San Antonio about 15 years ago because of the city's cultural and artistic diversity. He was fluent in Spanish and spent a great deal of time in Central and South America.



Pianist and composer Robert Avalon (right) was active in campaigning for his brother, Mayor Bill White.

i MORE INFO

Memorial Service for Robert Avalon
5 p.m. Sunday
First Cumberland Presbyterian Church
2119 Avalon Place

As a composer, Avalon was attracted to modern music and composed almost entirely within that realm. In a 1999 interview, he said he avoided the experimental sounds of the avant-garde movement except as transitions, and believed improvisation during concerts added life to the work. He also said he believed in the democratization of music, that his music could be understood and appreciated by everyday people.

"I want people to respond naturally to my music regardless of whether or not they've taken a music appreciation course and regardless of whether they've read a hyperbolic press release or a rave review telling them they must hear it," he said. "I have faith in intelligent ears that will listen to music that suggests rather than points in a direction without shepherding thoughts."

He taught many students over the years, and some of them went on to become accomplished musicians. He founded the Foundation for Modern Music in a Montrose office with his partner, Wayne Dockery, as a means to promote modern music to the public and give composers and performers the opportunity to showcase their work. The organization's "Music of Today" concert series became a popular outlet for his own work, as well.

"All I know is that life is brief," he once said. "I will remain true to my music, always creating what has meaning for me with the hope that it will have meaning for others."

Additional survivors include Avalon's parents, Gloria and Bill White. A memorial service is planned at 5 p.m. Sunday at The First Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 2119 Avalon Place.

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BOY IN HOUSTON: Boy George was just of those seen out and about in Houston this week. Page 4



NATIONAL GAY LATINO LEADER: Martin Omelas-Quintero will leave the National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization this summer. Page 7



DISGUSTED BY NUDITY: Tom Coburn, co-chair of the Bush AIDS Advisory Board, canceled his subscription to Poz magazine because of nudity on the cover. Page 12

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Houston Voice, 500 Lovett Blvd., Suite 200, Houston, TX 77006. Houston Voice is published weekly, on Friday, by Window Media LLC. Subscriptions are \$92/year for 52 issues (only \$1.77 per issue).

houston news

Police chief offers assurances regarding bar inspections

Gay activist says meeting with new police chief takes heat off Montrose

By BINNIE FISHER

In a recent meeting with Police Chief Harold L. Hurtt that lasted more than an hour, gay activist Ray Hill said he walked away with an assurance that allows operators of gay after-hours clubs in Montrose to breathe easier.

The chief could not be reached for comment regarding the meeting, but Hill said Hurtt assured him that as long as after-hours establishments in Montrose continue to operate within the law, "There will be no interruption of business raids or inspections in Montrose."

If minor infractions are suspected during routine inspections, Hill said, "They will be responded to surgically without turning on the lights and stopping the dancing."

Hill was present early on March 17 when the newly created Hot Spot Task Force converged on La Gaviota Nite Club, 8011 Harrisburg, and arrested about 30 people.

The task force was created in response to an incident earlier in the month when firefighter Kevin Kulow was killed fighting



Gay activist **Ray Hill** shakes hands with Houston Police Chief **Harold L. Hurtt** after meeting with the chief regarding inspections of after-hours clubs. (Photo by George Mixon)

a fire at a north Houston after-hours club that was still serving alcohol after 2 a.m.

Hill said Hurtt corrected him when he referred to what happened on Harrisburg as a "raid."

"We verbally danced around that issue," Hill said. "The chief was quick to correct me when I called it a raid."

Hill said Hurtt told him that police refer to what happened on Harrisburg as an "inspection."

i MORE INFO

Hot Spot Task Force Hotline
(713) 308-2582

Hurtt listened to Hill's concerns and indicated that he wants to work with the gay and lesbian community. Hill explained to the chief that Montrose is a 24-hour economy where as much money is exchanged at 2 a.m. as is exchanged at noon.

Hill also assured the chief that of all the clubs in the city, those in Montrose are probably most adamant about following the law regarding after-hours operations.

He said he told the chief that clubs in Montrose welcome general inspections, where officers enter the bars either in uniform or undercover to check for violations.

The police department has set up a hotline for complaints regarding illegal activity at after-hours clubs. Hurtt said police will investigate those clubs that are turned in via the hotline.

"These establishments that remain open late-night (after midnight) and after-hours (after 2 a.m.) have a significant impact on the quality of life for local residents and businesses in Houston," Hurtt said during a recent press conference to announce the hotline. "Large crowds, illegal parking, discharging of firearms, loud noise, disturbances, drugs, prostitution,

public order issues and violent crime are frequent concerns of area residents."

Hill said he would advise patrons of clubs where illegal activity is evident to think about potential consequences.

"My advice is, if you go into a bar and notice liquor laws being violated and there is obvious illegal activity going on with or without the cooperation of the management, go elsewhere," he said.

Of those arrested on Harrisburg, police said, 24 were taken into custody for public intoxication. Two were arrested for outstanding warrants and one person was arrested for possession of a controlled substance.

In addition, police said, city inspectors issued six citations to the club owner for various code violations. The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission is investigating one club employee for soliciting the sale of alcohol, police said.

Hill said his meeting with Hurtt was cordial, but he said he got the impression that the chief's dealings with the gay community in Phoenix — where he receives high marks from gays and lesbians — may have been on a different level.

"The situation politically is a little different," Hill said. "There may have been nothing in his experience in Phoenix to prepare him to deal with uppity queers."

Still, Hill said, he believes the gay community can enjoy a good working relationship with the chief and his staff.

Last week in Houston



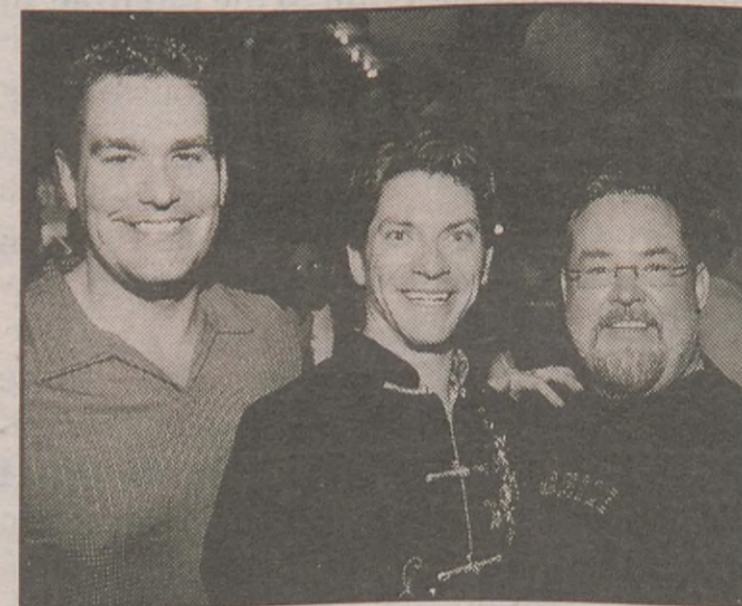
Sean Carnahan (right) looks on as (from left) **Boy George** spins at Rich's with his road manager, **Amy**, fellow performer **Amanda Le Pore** and Houston fan **Bubba McNeeley**. (Photos by Dalton DeHart)



An ensemble from the Gay Men's Chorus Houston performed recently at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church.



Allison and U.S. Rep. **Chris Bell** (from right) talked with Montrose Clinic Executive Director **Katy Caldwell** and Board Chair **Marianne Huerter** during the clinic's annual Stepping Stones Luncheon.



Scott Rice (left) and **David Lebuff** (right) joined **Mikel Reper** for the recent opening of his new Galveston business, **The Nest**, an upscale home furnishing boutique.



Political consultant **Grant Martin** (left) and his partner, the Rev. **Paul Fromberg**, (right) recently talked with Mayor **Bill White** at a going-away party for the two men who are moving to San Francisco.

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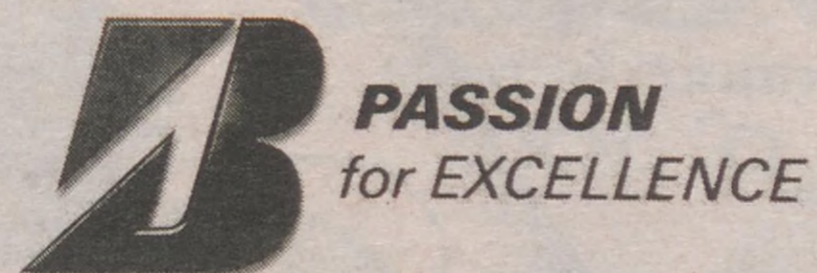


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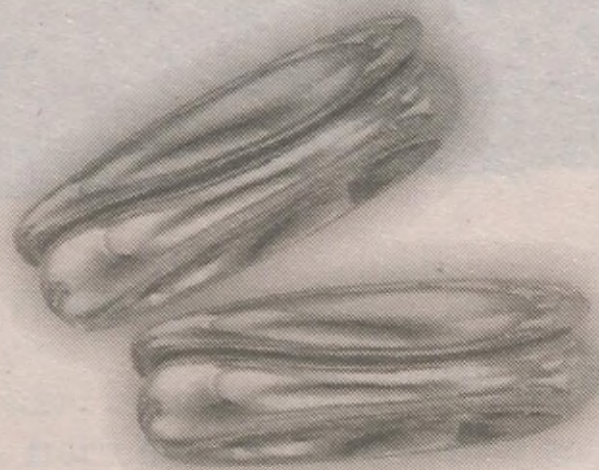
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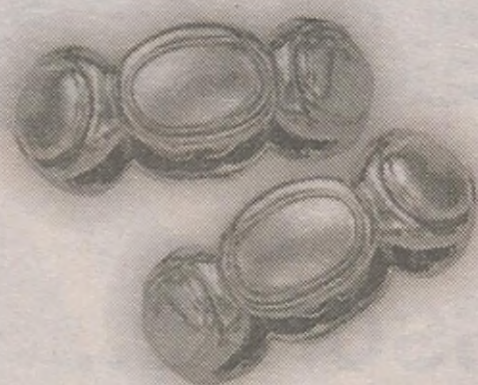


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national news

Student seeks policy change in time for prom

SAME-SEX PROM, continued from Page 1

were a male, she could bring her female friend to the prom."

Schaeffer also argues that the policy violates the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment by stipulating that a male may bring a female to the prom while a female may not.

"Your policy thus discriminates against the school's female students as a class, without any legitimate justification," the letter says.

Schaeffer said in addition to being concerned for the harm the policy has done to her own daughter, White has indicated she is concerned for gay and lesbian students who are prevented from bringing same-sex dates to the prom.

Ingram said she first learned of the policy when she went to buy a ticket for her friend and was confronted by a sign indicating there would be no tickets sold for same-sex prom guests.

Ingram showed the sign to her mother, who works in the school cafeteria and asked her, "Isn't this illegal?"

Ingram said the policy has put a damper on what should be a joyous occasion.

"It's supposed to be a special night that you're supposed to share with people you like to be around," Ingram said. "If they're setting limits on who you can and can't bring just because of their sex, it's not going to be great anymore. It's not going to be special."

Schaeffer said the policy apparently originated because of fear that if males at the school invited males from other districts, there might be trouble.

"If you're worried about students from outside the district, then don't allow any outsiders," Schaeffer said.

When first confronted by the policy, Schaeffer said, the girl's mother appealed to school administration.

"She was stonewalled," she said. "It's really sad that this mother has had to go out and get a lawyer."

Schaeffer said if the school district doesn't change the policy, she will seek immediate relief from the courts.

"We will need expedited relief from the courts," she said. "The prom is May 15."

Officials from the school district did not return calls from the Houston Voice.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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national news

LLEGÓ director resigns after 8 years with Latino gay group

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization or LLEGÓ announced Tuesday that Executive Director Martín Ornelas-Quintero plans to resign effective July 31. Ornelas-Quintero has headed the organization since 1996, when it had fewer than a dozen employees and a budget of \$500,000. The staff now is double that size, the group's budget has tripled and the scope of LLEGÓ's work also has expanded, according to a LLEGÓ press statement. Ornelas-Quintero's contract expires on July 31. The group's board of directors has opened a national search for a replacement. "Under Martín's leadership, LLEGÓ has become a model of strength and stability among LGBT organizations, particularly LGBT organizations of color," board co-chair Gloria Nieto said in the statement. "We are looking for someone who can reinforce that solid foundation and build upon Martín's many accomplishments." Founded in Washington in 1987, LLEGÓ's mission includes addressing the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on Latinos. The group also has sponsored leadership programs and youth health initiatives.



Martín Ornelas-Quintero took over the National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization eight years ago when it had fewer than a dozen employees. He resigned this week. (Photo by Leigh H. Mosley)

Hackers target Web site of group fighting anti-gay amendment

WASHINGTON — A leading organization working to stop an anti-gay amendment to the U.S. Constitution was attacked via its Web site last week, according to group leaders. Robin Tyler, chair of www.dontamend.com, said actions by hackers forced the organization to temporarily shut down its e-mail list and apologize to its subscribers last week. On April 29, the site sent an e-mail to its list with the names of senators who support the anti-gay Federal Marriage Amendment, plus the names of senators who may support it, and those who do not, dontamend.com said in a statement. Someone hacked into the site's list-serve and caused the list of nearly 20,000 to switch to an open posting system, with all those on the list receiving copies of routine administrative messages, flooding spam into subscribers' e-mail, according to Tyler. Due to the incident, about 500 subscribers canceled, the group stated. When many began to realize that the site was the victim of hackers, Tyler noted, supportive e-mails began to pour in.

Gay Internet firm PlanetOut announces bid to go public

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — PlanetOut Inc., an online media company that operates Internet sites geared to gay and lesbian audiences, announced last week that it plans to go public in the near future. In documents filed with Securities & Exchange Commission, the San Francisco-based company said it hopes to raise up to \$75 million with an initial public offering of stock that would trade on the Nasdaq Stock Market under the symbol "LGBT." PlanetOut, which operates Gay.com and three other gay- and lesbian-oriented Web sites that have more than 3.3 million active users worldwide, has been somewhat of a success story amid the ruins following the bursting of the dot-com bubble four years ago. Still small by corporate standards, it had revenues last year of \$19 million, compared to the \$962 million brought in by Internet search engine Google, which revealed plans for its own long-awaited stock market debut last week as well. But the company has increasingly moved toward profitability.

Two injured as party barge flips during gay event at Texas lake

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A party barge flipped while on a lake and sank Sunday, injuring two of the 60 people aboard, police said. Officials said everyone was accounted for. Two people were taken to the hospital with minor injuries. The Austin American-Statesman reported in its online edition that the barge flipped over during Splash Day, a semiannual event for gays. Krista Umscheid, a spokesperson for the Lower Colorado River Authority, said sheriff's divers were checking compartments of the sunken, double-decker pontoon boat as a precaution. Umscheid said witnesses reported that the boat started tilting and overturned when all its passengers moved to one side of the craft as it neared Hippie Hollow, a lakeside park and the only public nude beach in Texas. The nose of the boat was touching the shore at the time of the accident. The boat sank in 50-60 feet of water.

Court: Firing worker for anti-gay harassment not religious discrimination

LOS ANGELES — The Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled last week that an evangelical Christian fired from her job because she harassed a gay worker was not discriminated against on the basis of religion, the Metropolitan News-Enterprise reported. Evelyn Bodett admitted that she made anti-gay statements to a female subordinate, and the court agreed with Cox Communications' stance that it fired Bodett for violating its anti-harassment policy, not for her religious beliefs, the newspaper reported. An 18-year employee at Cox's Phoenix operation, and its predecessor, American Cable, Bodett admitted that she made disapproving comments about Kelley Carson's sexual orientation on several occasions, the News-Enterprise reported. She also persuaded Carson to attend church with her and attend a religious conference, the newspaper reported. Bodette told her superiors that "sometimes there is a higher calling than a company policy," according to the News-Enterprise.

From staff and wire reports

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national news

Observers claim Kerry has improved gay focus

KERRY, continued from Page 1

president dealt them a serious blow by publicly lending his support to a constitutional amendment prohibiting same-sex marriage in Massachusetts, his home state.

Within two weeks and under fire from those same Democrats, Kerry appeared at a San Francisco fund-raiser thrown by several gay political heavyweights, in which he promised that if elected president, he would award state-approved gay couples the same 1,138 federal benefits married couples currently receive.

It marked the first time Kerry spoke specifically about granting gay couples these federal benefits, which are currently prohibited under the Defense of Marriage Act passed in 1996. To some observers, the extended olive branch demonstrated the gay influence within his inner-circle.

At the same time black and Hispanic organizers openly criticized the Kerry campaign in the media this week for a lack of diversity and appeal to minority voters, gay leaders continued to publicly support his candidacy, satisfied for now with their place at the campaign table.

"I've been impressed with what I've seen," said Cheryl Jacques, the president of the Human Rights Campaign, who joined the organization this year after serving in the Massachusetts state legislature. "In my past professional career, I've had the privilege to work with him, and we're regularly contacted by staffers to give us a heads-up on issues important to us."

Two gay aides among campaign's top 15

In a prominent story published in the April 30 issue of the New York Times, minority groups complained about the lack of diversity among the top echelon of Kerry campaign staffers, but the campaign responded by pointing to two men, one black and one Hispanic who are among the 15 highest campaign officials who take part in a daily 7:30 a.m. conference call.

There are two gay men among those same 15 top Kerry campaign officials participating in the 7:30 a.m. call: Deputy Campaign Manager Steve Elmendorf, and Bob Farmer, a close Kerry friend and adviser.

While neither is not among the nine aides always at the candidate's side, Elmendorf said he and Farmer, the national campaign treasurer, "were involved in every decision that's made here throughout the day."

Among the black activists complaining in the New York Times article about the lack of diversity on the Kerry campaign is Donna Brazile, who was Al Gore's campaign manager four years ago. In something of an irony, Brazile refused at that time to answer questions about her sexual orientation, even though she had a history of gay rights activism, including a seat on the board of the Millennium March on Washington.



Steve Elmendorf is one of two gay men on Sen. John Kerry's daily campaign teleconference.

Brazile and other activists have suggested that minority representation on the Democratic nominee's presidential campaign has eroded because candidates are taking their votes for granted. But the gay presence is the most significant it has ever been in an election effort, Elmendorf maintained, proving that Kerry considers gay voters instrumental in the race for the White House.

"I've been involved in presidential campaigns since 1984, and I've never known of a campaign that's as thoroughly integrated with gay people as John Kerry's," the deputy campaign manager said. "We have unlimited access to the candidate, and that's not always true of past candidates."

At the same time, it's unclear whether the presence of gay staffers is part of Kerry's commitment to gay rights so much as it is the happenstance of what staffers he picked on the basis of their merit.

"I'm not here to represent the gay community, though," Elmendorf acknowledged. "I'm here to run the political strategy, just as Bob [Farmer] is here to manage the money."

Damage control on marriage

Experts have predicted that same-sex marriage will dominate the social agenda in the elections, after already emerging as one of the most divisive political, cultural and legal debates of 2004. A survey conducted by the Pew Foundation found increasing support for gay marriage over the past five years, but a Boston Globe poll showed opposition to same-sex marriage jumping 10 percent since the Supreme Judicial Court ruled that gay couples have a constitutional right to marry in Massachusetts.

While President Bush backed a federal constitutional amendment banning gay unions, Kerry has sought middle ground, advisers say, by supporting civil unions and federal benefits, opposing a federal amendment but endorsing a gay marriage

ban in his home state's constitution.

After being inundated with complaints from gay rights advocates for his amendment remarks, the Kerry campaign acted quickly to fix the situation, bringing in Mark Seifert from Gen. Wesley Clark's campaign as the director of outreach to gay voters.

Kerry also added longtime Boston activist Mary Breslauer, a former HRC staffer, and Beltway operative Jeff Trammell, an HRC board member, as the campaign's gay liaisons. Trammell played a similar role on the Gore campaign in 2000.

"I haven't asked most of the people running around here if they're gay, but [campaign manager] Beth Cahill has been around the progressive community for a long time and really pulled together people from different backgrounds to lead this campaign," Trammell said.

With their strong Massachusetts and HRC ties, Kerry's gay advisers could play a key role in garnering an endorsement in the coming weeks from the nation's largest gay group — a seal of approval the candidate personally asked for during a call to Jacques last month.

The former Massachusetts state senator — a guest of Kerry at both his Beacon Hill and Georgetown residences — would not comment on the prospective endorsement. However, at an HRC reception in San Francisco, Jacques hinted it would be forthcoming.

"Our board will take a good, hard look at Senator John Kerry and you will soon hear our decision on endorsing him, which will be good news," Jacques said, according to the Bay Area Reporter. "He has the best record on gay issues ever, better than Clinton, better than Gore, better than Bill Bradley. This guy is good."

Yet, even Jacques expressed disappointment with Kerry's marriage stance. It's a bitter pill she said that gay groups have learned to swallow without complaining, afraid of pushing too hard and galvanizing social conservatives.

"Am I disappointed he doesn't endorse gay marriage? Absolutely. But a lot of our heroes are not there yet on gay marriage," Jacques said. "If we have an open door in the White House, we are light years ahead of George Bush."

Advisers keep Kerry's focus

Elmendorf said that advisers are not always going to agree with the candidates on "all the issues," though Elmendorf said he played a key role in brokering the peace between gay leaders and Kerry after his remarks threatened to jeopardize their support. He said he wants the campaign to retain a strong focus on Kerry's advocacy for other issues important to gays, especially the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

Now arguably Kerry's top gay adviser, for 12 years, Elmendorf worked for U.S. Rep. Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.) either in the field or on Capitol Hill. After cleaning out his desk as chief of staff at Gephardt's former campaign headquarters in down-

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town Washington, Elmendorf accepted the offer to join the Kerry campaign shortly after Gephardt dropped out.

"I wanted Dick Gephardt to become president," Elmendorf told the New York Times in late January. "I wanted to work for him in the White House. It was very hard to lose."

"But I entered this two-year period planning to work on a campaign," he continued, "and once he lost, I thought it was best to keep going. There's no question in my mind that John Kerry is the best candidate still in the field."

Farmer, a native of Massachusetts but resident of Florida, raised considerable money for Kerry from the swing state before signing on to manage the campaign's nationwide fund-raising efforts late last fall. During the Clinton administration, Farmer served as the counsel general to Bermuda, and was technically the nation's first gay ambassador, though not confirmed by Congress.

The prominent involvement of openly gay staffers in the Kerry campaign stands in sharp contrast to his GOP opponent. The Bush campaign did not return phone calls by press time about whether any of its lead staffers were openly gay, though media reports have not indicated that any are.

Chris Barron, the political director of Log Cabin Republicans, a gay GOP group, did tell the New York Times Magazine last month that, "The reality is there are gay men and women working in tons of Republican offices, in the White House and in the president's re-election campaign."

As the election year progresses, gay political organizations will continue to look to those gay advisers closest to the campaign and apply pressure when necessary.

Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, said that since Kerry publicly declared his marriage views, the Massachusetts senator has not made any more missteps to alienate the gay base — a sign that he has received some crucial advice.

"We're now counting on these gays and lesbians close to the campaign to convince the senator to defend us in the war President Bush declared on gay America," Foreman said. "Kerry has the same challenge as Bush and that is to have their bases energized and ready to vote."

"Bush has done an exceptional job in making sure his largest base will turn out in force for him. The gay community is an essential component of the Kerry base, and in order to get his base to enthusiastically come to the polls, he's got to stand up for us."

Adrian Brune can be reached at abrune@washblade.com.

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If Senate Democrats lived up to promises to gay voters, the anti-marriage amendment would be dead. They haven't, and it's not.

By MATT FOREMAN

YOU'VE GOT TO HAND IT to the Bush administration; they take care of their own. Wealthy folks have received tax breaks; Star Wars defense contractors are reaping billions; pollution controls on business are being eased; national forests have been opened to logging.

Perhaps nothing is more glaring, however, than what has been done to cater to the demands of the religious right.

For them, the constitutionally-mandated separation between church and state has been breached by the president's "faith based initiative." Federal law now bans "late-term abortion" at home and the administration has relentlessly attacked family planning programs abroad.

With barely a shred of empirical evidence to show they work, "abstinence only" programs — that actually ban access to real sex education or HIV prevention information — are being lavishly funded.

Even with all of these giveaways, the religious right demanded more and they got it: the president's active support of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibiting the recognition of same-sex marriage and enshrining the second class citizenship of gay and lesbian couples in our nation's most sacred document.

We can moan and groan, but President Bush is delivering money and issue red meat to a part of the electorate that was responsible for 40 percent of his votes in 2000. In return, they are energized, grateful, and will turn out en masse in November: an essential ingredient if Mr. Bush is to be re-elected. Old-fashioned, smart politics.

SO WHAT ARE THE DEMOCRATS DOING to protect and energize a critical part of their base, namely gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender voters? After all, our people consistently and overwhelmingly vote Democratic. (In light of the GOP's lousy positions on so many key gay issues, it's

not hard to understand why.)

In fact, we are the party's third most loyal bloc of support — just behind African-American and Jewish voters. We've remained loyal in spite of slaps like "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the federal Defense of Marriage Act, and the failure to enact a single federal law acknowledging our existence, even when the Democrats controlled the White House and one or both houses of Congress.

Just as important in this day and age, our people raise a ton of money for the party — far outstripping our proportion of the vote. Given all of this, you would think the party would be willing — rhetorically and legislatively — to stand up for us.

Let me be specific. I don't understand why we should have to spend one more hour, one more dime, make one more phone call or write one more letter to make sure an anti-gay, anti-marriage constitutional amendment is dead on arrival in the U.S. Senate.

Last July 17, Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle pledged that Senate Democrats would kill the federal marriage amendment if it ever came to a vote. We were all grateful and relieved to hear that pledge.

Still, it didn't feel like such a big lift to me because killing the amendment requires only 34 votes, and there are 48 Democrats, five of whom are retiring at the end of this year. In other words, every single Democratic senator considered "at risk" this fall could be "let off the hook" on this vote, if necessary, and the amendment would still be defeated.

We've since discovered that the Daschle pledge was a classic display of Washington legalese. You see, it apparently applied only to "the" Federal Marriage Amendment as written last year. If the amendment is reworded so it still outlaws same-sex marriage anywhere in the country but leaves the door open to state-based domestic partnerships or civil unions, all bets are off.

As a result, LGBT organizations — including my own — are making desperate appeals to their members asking them to press their representatives in Washington to oppose the amendment.

Our allies at the Human Rights Campaign, for example, have raised \$6 million to fight it. Log Cabin Republicans and their principled new leader Patrick Guerriero are spending \$1 million on anti-amendment advertising.

Ironically, even the Democratic Party has jumped on the bandwagon, seeking 500,000 signatures on petitions opposing the amendment to be circulated during gay pride events this summer.

FOR ME, IT'S APPALLING — INDEED, sickening — that scarce resources are being sucked into this work. Every resource we have should instead be funneled to our allies in the 10 or more states facing ugly and divisive campaigns to ratify anti-marriage state constitutional amendments this November. Sadly, it looks as though our allies will be left nearly high and dry, again.

We thought we could help head this off and give some cover to those now getting squishy on us by getting a few senators from safe — and that means truly safe — seats not up for election this year to say unambiguously that they would oppose any amendment seeking to restrict marriage rights. (There's no shortage of ways to say this without — God forbid — having to endorse marriage equality.)

Turns out not even they would come through. One response I got from a safe seat was, "You can't ask us to say we'll oppose any amendment. ... What if the amendment is reworded to specifically authorize civil unions?" Like that could happen — when hell freezes over.

Sorry, I can't buy this. We're not even asking Senate Democrats to take a stand for full equality or asking them to vote against a popular measure. In fact, no poll shows majority support for the amendment.

No, this is about amending the U.S. Constitution to take away rights from a minority, something that has never occurred in the history of our nation. If Bob Barr, the anti-gay author of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, is against amending the Constitution this way, how hard should this be for our "friends?"

The religious right knows how to play adult politics. They insist on getting something in exchange for their support. It's time we did the same.

Our people are owed a renewed pledge — now — that any anti-marriage amendment is dead on arrival in the Senate. If we can't get something this simple and this just and this easy, then...

@ Matt Foreman is executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force and can be reached at mforeman@nglftf.org.

viewpoint SHANNON E. WYSS



Educating homophobes won't win the marriage fight. If we wait for them to be 'ready,' we'll wait centuries.

Don't blame gays for marriage fight

BRUCE CARROLL BLAMES THE BACKLASH against gay marriage on "radical gay groups" who are "forcing marriage down the throats of America" ("A fine mess we're in now," op-ed, April 23).

I strongly disagree. This backlash is not the fault of LGBTQ activists but of homophobic people who are unwilling to expand, even slightly, their definition of marriage.

Let's not forget who's in charge here: Straight people control the government and just about everything else in the U.S.

This battle was also not started in the last year by so-called "radical" gay groups, as Carroll contends. (The Human Rights Campaign, radical?) It has been percolating for at least 10 years.

I also have to question Carroll's preferred approach. When has relying purely

on education ever won civil rights?

People were appalled at the idea of women's suffrage in the early 20th century. And no amount of education during the same time would have convinced industrialists that a five-day work week and eliminating child labor were good things.

The majority of white folks in the 1960s certainly weren't willing to embrace interracial marriage. But all of these changes happened anyway — through legislation that came as a result of social activism.

Would we be willing to accept the continuation of child labor, male-only suffrage, and miscegenation laws just because white people or men weren't "ready" to accept an end to those injustices? I doubt it. People in power do not

give up their control or domination; they have to have it taken away.

WHO ARE OUR POLITICAL HEROES from past civil rights battles? Are they the women who were jailed and went on hunger strikes to earn the vote or those who argued against women's suffrage because men "weren't ready"?

The farm workers who struck for improved working conditions or those who remained silent? The factory workers who walked out or those who continued to work long hours for substandard wages because the bosses "weren't ready" to give them union organizing rights?

Similarly, our heroes in this battle are those who have taken a stand at some personal or political risk. They are public officials in California, New York, Oregon, and New Mexico. They are the couples who lined up at city halls to get married. They are in the organizations struggling for marriage rights now that this battle is upon us.

They are the local, state, and federal legislators voting against anti-gay marriage bills and, more importantly, those proposing and voting for pro-gay marriage bills. In 100 years, these are the people we will look back upon and admire.

YES, HETEROSEXUALS STILL NEED TO be educated about LGBTQ issues.

However, this is slightly less critical now than it was 30 years ago, at least about the lives of monosexual queers.

Today, the vast majority of people in

the U.S. will admit to knowing someone who is lesbian or gay. If they aren't making the connection between the people they know and the rights we need, then they aren't doing their part to open up their minds and educate themselves — and we need more visible civil disobedience to help them make those connections.

We aren't trying to "legislate morality," as Carroll asserts. We are trying to have our basic human rights recognized.

Heterosexuals don't have to marry us in their churches, synagogues, mosques, or temples; they do have to marry us in city hall. That doesn't require waiting for them to be ready; it requires fearless legislators and activists.

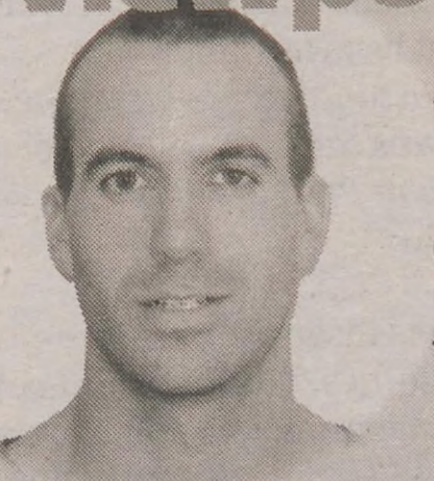
No, marriage is not the only or even the most important battle that we face. That feeling is especially strong within the radical wing of the queer movement. But we're facing the marriage issue now, and ignoring it isn't going to make it go away.

Sitting down to educate homophobes who don't want to see us get married is not, by itself, going to do us any good. If we wait for them to be "ready," we're going to be waiting centuries.

Let's work on changing the laws now. While everyone else catches up, we'll be walking down the aisle.

@ Shannon E. Wyss, a self-described 'gender-queer radical' living in Washington, is working on a book about transgender and 'gender-queer' high schoolers. She can be reached at hugdyke@earthlink.net.

viewpoint CYD ZEIGLER JR



Worthy gay issues are undermined when gays cry wolf at every annoyance, missing the chance to put 'gay' back in gay rights.

Less drama from queens, please

IF I DIDN'T LAUGH, I'D CRY.

A press release came in from the National Center for Lesbian Rights announcing that Sharon Stone was accepting their Spirit Award for 2004. The award, according to the NCLR, "recognizes important contributions by allies of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community."

But it was only 10 years ago that lesbians were marching around with signs protesting the detrimental impact of the movie "Basic Instinct." In particular, they singled out Stone's I'm-not-wearing-any-underwear starring role for its negative portrayal.

Then people complained that coverage last week of the two guys protesting by climbing up a tree in Central Park was insensitive because one of them was transgendered.

Any 32-year-old — gay, straight, trans-

gendered, bisexual or otherwise — cannot climb a tree in the middle of the day in Central Park in underwear with a 17-year-old boyfriend and then perform oral sex on him, and not expect to have their situation sensationalized in the tabloid press.

Gay and Asian groups foamed at the mouth recently because Details, a magazine with a gayer sensibility than many nominally gay rags published a one-page satire entitled "Gay or Asian?" that poked fun at their indirect target audience.

But the final straw came when the ACLU loudly declared that, "Gov. George Pataki was way out of line in his disparaging comments about same-sex marriage." Pataki's crime? He made a funny reference to a sexual relationship with State Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno.

Have we lost the ability to laugh at ourselves?

WE HAVE BECOME WHAT WE WARNED others about: humorless and thin-skinned. We've become a community just waiting to be offended.

We open the newspaper every day, hoping that some Republican has mentioned the word "gay" so we can attack him as an enemy. We read about our organizations, or an e-mail from a friend of a friend of a friend asking us to sign some online petition because someone, somewhere, made a joke about being gay.

Who took the "gay" out of homosexuality?

Gay men have a long history of being labeled "drama queens." Now we're putting the limits of that label to the test.

Organizations that represent us to the larger world have perfected the art of taking a non-issue and blowing it out of proportion. Straight people have begun to tune us out. We're now becoming the queen who cried wolf.

John Won, co-chair of the Gay Asian & Pacific Islander Men of New York, argues that the Details piece made "gay APIs" feel invisible and "exacerbated homophobia in the API community."

The magazine piece was frat-boy humor. In theory, what Won says might make some sense. But did it really throw gay Asian-Americans into personal torment and subject them to mass ridicule?

THE PROBLEM WITH EXPENDING energy fighting lame jokes is that it

potentially deflects energy from fighting very real problems, such as drug abuse, unsafe sex and marginalizing the old, fat, skinny — pick your prejudice.

If protesters would simply state that an article, a TV show or a wisecrack is offensive, that might be enough. But every time someone cracks an off-color joke, or says they might oppose a bill, activists immediately wax indignant.

The comments certainly warrant a reaction. But consider the over-reaction to Pataki's comments. At the opening of a factory, Bruno implied that he and the governor were an item. Pataki took the bait and responded, "I don't mind making love to you. Just don't ask me to marry you."

You'd think the governor advocated quarantining the state's gay residents. It's a J-O-K-E.

I'm waiting for the outraged e-mails and letters from those who believe that I'm insensitive. Will they accuse me of being a privileged white man who doesn't understand the plight of people who have been treated as second-class citizens for years? Am I undermining their hard work?

I've already prepared my response: By alienating everyone but those who already agree with them, we're undermining our otherwise very worthy causes.

Let's put the "gay" back in gay rights.

@ Cyd Zeigler Jr. is associate editor of the New York Blade, a publication affiliated with this newspaper. He can be reached at czeigler@nyblade.com.

action! alert

Conflict of whose interest?

National gay journalist group drops fired gay reporter from panel

By CHRISTOPHER SEELY

WHEN THE NEW YORK TIMES FIRED freelance reporter Jay Blotcher over his past affiliation with AIDS group ACT UP, he says he felt wronged since he saw no conflict of interest with the work he did more than a decade ago and his non-AIDS related work for the Times.

But last month when the National Lesbian & Gay Journalism Association removed Blotcher from serving on a panel at the group's national convention this summer, he says he felt betrayed again.

"You expect injustice against gays and lesbians in this world — you don't expect to see it in your own community," Blotcher said.

NLGJA has apologized to Blotcher, but won't reinstate him on the panel, said Eric Hegedus, vice president of print and new media for NLGJA.

"The convention planners found some individuals who were better suited," Hegedus said.

Blotcher, a former NLGJA member, was originally asked to speak on a panel discussing ethical guidelines for gay reporters covering gay issues. But once convention planners fleshed out the session — a 90-minute forum on whether a gay reporter can objectively report on issues such as gay marriage — they selected journalists that work in mainstream newsrooms, instead of freelancers like Blotcher, Hegedus said.

Several plenary sessions are included in the NLGJA's convention in New York, scheduled for June 24-27.

The session coordinator contacted Blotcher to serve on the panel, but NLGJA "powers that be" said they would "prefer Jay not be on the panel," said Kelly McBride, the session moderator and an ethics faculty member at the Poynter Institute, a journalism think tank in Florida.

"I'm assuming that NLGJA leadership is acting in good faith," McBride said.

BLOTCHER ASKED NLGJA FOR A written explanation for being removed from the panel, but had not received one at press time, he said. Blotcher did receive an apologetic telephone call after Southern Voice made inquiries about the matter at NLGJA, he said.

Blotcher criticized NLGJA for not backing him after the New York Times fired him. He said his ouster from the newspaper is retribution, in part, for ACT UP's outspoken criticism of the Times' coverage of AIDS in the 1980s.

"NLGJA does not have a record of



After being fired by the New York Times over his past affiliation with an AIDS group, Jay Blotcher says the National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association 'sidestepped' his dismissal. (Photo courtesy of Jay Blotcher)

being courageous or have a high profile of taking a stand on any issues," he said.

But Blotcher's case was too ambiguous for NLGJA to become involved, Hegedus said.

"We initially offered him some advice and suggested an employment lawyer," Hegedus said. "It was a personnel matter and we couldn't understand all circumstances."

The Times dismissed Blotcher in January, not over his membership in ACT UP, but "because of his work as a press spokesman and a public relations consultant," Arthur Sulzberger, chair of the New York Times Co., said at a shareholders meeting April 13, according to meeting transcripts obtained by Blotcher.

Blotcher served as media coordinator for ACT UP from April 1989 to January 1990.

Ann Northrop, one of the original members of NLGJA, said she was "appalled" by NLGJA's refusal to take a stand against the New York Times decision and for "kicking him off the plenary session."

"NLGJA should be up in arms about it and instead they'd rather hold expensive fund-raising dinners where they cozy up to establishment media bigwigs rather than challenge the policies and practices of those mainstream media," Northrop said.

Northrop, a former journalist with CBS News and ABC, now anchors the national cable television show "Gay USA" on DISH network.

NLGJA declined comment on the criticism.

ACTION! INFO

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on the record

"He's here, he's queer, and his name is Michael Vick"

The headline on an undated, bogus news report about the Atlanta Falcons' star quarterback from a bogus news service called the Global Associated News

"I won't even feed into that. ... Everybody who knows me, knows how I get down. It's not even an issue."

The real Michael Vick, dispelling the gay rumors on a local radio station (V-103, April 27)

"You've put so much of your life into politics and the city. If you don't slow down and make yourself a real person, you're going to lose everything."

North Miami City Council member Scott Galvin, 35, on why he decided to come out (Miami Herald, May 3)

"It goes back 40-plus years that I've had this in me, that I've had the wants to be a female. It just got stronger and stronger as time progressed."

Tom Murphy, 48, a member of the Rapid City, S.D., City Council, on his decision to undergo a sex change operation and change his name to Marla; Murphy was active in the effort to defeat a statewide measure banning civil unions (Associated Press, May 4)

"I'm going to have to deal with a lot of grief in the neighborhood. I'm a little worried about how my family is going to react."

Actor Joseph Gannascoli, on the likely reaction in his native Brooklyn to a scene in this week's "Sopranos" in which he is caught having sex in a car with another man (N.Y. Daily News, May 3)

"There are other forms of cohabitation, and it is good that they be recognized. ... They are not the same as marriage. We will leave the term marriage for that which it has always referred to, and other arrangements should be given other names."

Monsignor Manuel Monteiro de Castro, the papal ambassador to Spain, telling a conference of Spanish bishops that the Catholic Church owes same-sex couples some form of recognition, a position very different from Pope John Paul II's (The Guardian, London, May 5)

"Governor [Brad] Henry's support for this legislation is disgusting and goes against Democratic principals which value American families. This law threatens abandoned and orphaned children by refusing to afford them stable, loving homes."

Dave Noble, executive director of the National Stonewall Democrats, criticizing the Democratic governor of Oklahoma for signing a measure prohibiting gay couples residing out of state from adopting children in that state (Press release, May 4)

"I would like to be shown what homosexual union can produce children. These are not loving relationships. These are promiscuous encounters."

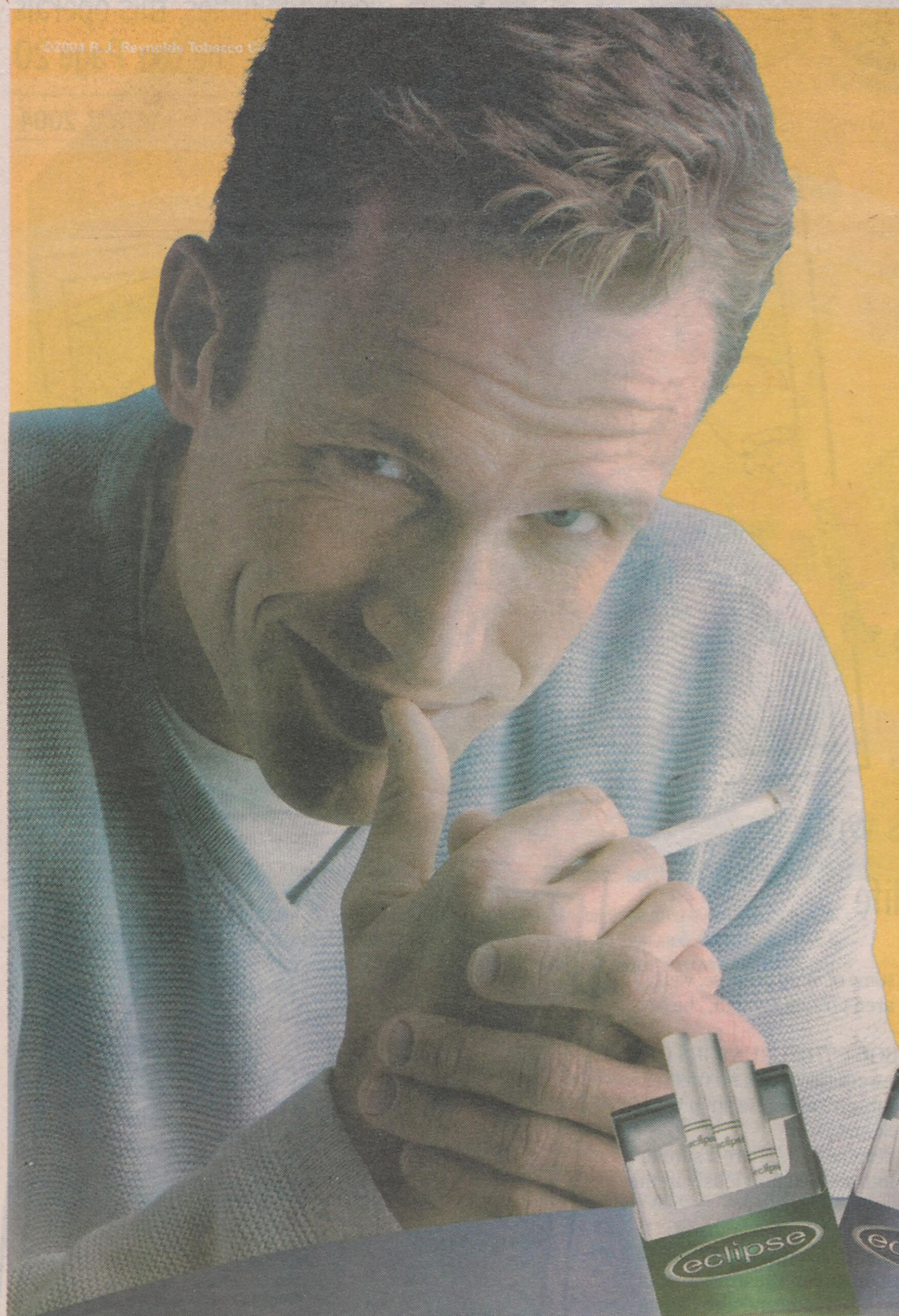
Rev. Robert Hernandez, pastor at Potters House Christian Church in Santa Rosa, Calif., speaking out at a Sonoma County Council meeting against a resolution supporting gay marriage; the resolution passed 4-1 (Santa Rosa Press Democrat, May 3)

"He's a doctor — why is he so disgusted by naked bodies? You'd think that even if he disagreed with us, he'd still get the magazine for the information. It's indicative

of the hostility that those of us living with AIDS face from this administration. We disgust them."

Sean Strub, publisher of Poz magazine, on the request by Tom Coburn, co-chair of President Bush's AIDS advisory council, to cancel his subscription after the most recent cover depicted 80 nude HIV-positive readers of the magazine (New York Post, May 3)





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MAY 7, 2004



Wacky 'Barber'

With arias sung from moving vehicles, this opera's way over the top. Page 20

Serial HUMORISTS

HoVo expands weekly offering of cartoons with new additions drawing humor from daily life

By CHRISTOPHER SEELY

FOR GAY CARTOONISTS PAIGE BRADDOCK AND Mike Derry, it's easy to find humor in the ordinary, everyday lives of gay men and lesbians.

Braddock, the creator of "Jane's World," and Derry, who illustrates "Troy," have successful comic strips in print publications across the U.S. and on the Web.

"Jane" and "Troy" are now featured every other week in Houston Voice, alternating weeks with the newspaper's veteran strips, "Dykes to Watch Out For" and "Chelsea Boys." (Strips appear in the Classifieds, beginning on Page 22)

Braddock says "Jane" is a "slice of life with a slight surreal component," noting the appearance of space aliens in the strip.

"There is always some mundane detail of daily life that gets blown way out of proportion," Braddock says. "It's a little more slapstick from real life ... reality-based but not so grounded that unexpected things can't happen."

Much of the activity in "Jane" takes place in diners or coffee shops among a group of lesbian friends and acquaintances.

"If it were a sitcom, it would be like 'Seinfeld' meets 'Ellen,'" she says.

In the world according to "Troy," Derry's strip chronicles the lives of gay men living in West Hollywood.

"Everything is kind of based on something that happened or a story that somebody told me ... either parts of my personality or friends of mine," says Derry, who lives in Los Angeles

But most of the storylines in "Troy" are embellished, he says.

"You have to make some of it up because, well, sometimes things just aren't funny enough," he says.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CREATORS OF "Jane" and "Troy," viewers need look no further than the semi-autobiographical comic strip worlds construed by Braddock and Derry.

Braddock and her heroine Jane share a similar employment history. Both worked previously in the newspaper industry.

Braddock graduated from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville in 1985 with a bachelor's degree in fine arts specializing in illustration. She worked a short stint at USA Today and for several small papers in the South.

But it wasn't until she started as a writer and illustrator at the Atlanta Journal-Constitution in 1991 that she conceived "Jane" based on old children's readers about Dick, Spot and Jane, she says.

"I knew I wanted to be a cartoonist, so I ended up working in journalism for 10 years," she says.

"I wanted Jane to be an 'everywoman' representative of every woman," Braddock says. "But what happens is, you write what you know. So she ended up being the gay everywoman."

After an eight-year stint at the AJC — all the while working on "Jane" — Braddock got "burned out on journalism" and relocated to northern California to take a job as the creative director for Charles Schultz's studio, home of the "Peanuts."

"Jane" veers from Braddock's life by beginning when Jane is terminated from her journalism job and starts work at a quickie mart.



"She looks at it as a great opportunity to work on the novel she needs to write, but she never gets anything done," Braddock says.

THE OTHER GLARING DETAIL OF BRADDOCK'S real life manifested in "Jane" is Jane's villainous ex-girlfriend Chelle, a central character named after one of Braddock's ex-girlfriends "that pissed me off," Braddock says.

"I wrote her into the script as a total bitch," she says.

But since Chelle was introduced to the strip, Braddock says she and the real-life ex have mended fences.

Please see COMIC STRIPS on Page 24



NOT BAD ENOUGH: 'Jekyll & Hyde' needs a bad boy who's really bad, not just listless. Page 17

IN ON A SECRET: The best Italian food in Houston is a stone's throw from Jones Hall downtown. Page 18



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
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*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.

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REYATAZ™
 (atazanavir sulfate) 200 mg capsules

Rx 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/Dispersion 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 to 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 methylergonovine 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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music J.B. BLACK

Flat performances,
listless songs fail to
energize 'Jekyll & Hyde'

No dynamic duo

IT'S SAD THAT BAD BOYS HAVE ALL the fun. Unfortunately, the current touring production of "Jekyll & Hyde" is anything but fun. The latest offering from Houston's Theatre Under the Stars closes this weekend at the downtown Hobby Center.

Based on Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 novella of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, this bland show limps dully along instead of crackling with energetic performances. It seems difficult to take a premise rich with dramatic promise – the struggle between good and evil – and drain the essential life out of it, but "Jekyll & Hyde" makes the difficult seem easy.

Audiences are familiar with the oft-told tale of Jekyll and Hyde, and therein lies part of the problem: Rather than offer audiences something new, exciting and entertaining, this "Hyde" sticks to a flat paint-by-numbers approach.

It spins a story that we've already seen dozens of times before through various media. As directed by Robert Cuccioli, "Jekyll & Hyde" seems content with being merely OK, when it has several opportunities to be unbelievably great.

In this retelling of the classic tale, Dr. Henry Jekyll (Kevin Gray) is trying to separate man's positive nature from his destructive one. His request to conduct human experiments using his new serum is rejected by a medical board of governors. In desperation, he injects his formula into himself and unleashes his evil alter ego, Mr. Hyde.

However, Hyde isn't so much unleashed in this production as he is merely given a different collar and a new yard to play in. You might expect Jekyll to – let's just say it – get down with his bad self.

But Gray's Jekyll and Hyde are no dynamic duo. Gray's transformation from good to evil mainly involves lowering his voice and loosening his ponytail, and that's really about it. If only Gray would artistically let his hair down and give Hyde more free rein to chomp on some scenery, his Hyde would be more wickedly entertaining.



Luba Mason, as Lucy, shines as she sings, 'Bring On the Men.'

Jekyll's lackluster transformation emphasizes how dull the rest of the production is. There is an absence of suspense in the first act leading up to Jekyll's release of his inner wild child. It's neither dramatic nor melodramatic; let's just call it "mellow-dramatic."

THE ENTIRE STORY HAS TO BE DRIVEN by Jekyll's transformation, but a ferocious Hyde stays hidden away. Ironically, as Jekyll first contemplates injecting himself, he sings a song called "This is the Moment." Unfortunately, it's not much of a moment.

The songs themselves are largely forgettable and unimaginative, which is a sin for a musical. By the second act, songwriters Leslie Bricusse and Frank Wildhorn seem to have run out of creative steam, reprising their opening tune not once, but twice.

A production that strives for the dramatic often sways confusingly into hammy comedy. A glaring case in point is the board of governors. Given the tone of the rest of the production, it's hard to understand if the board members' outlandish costuming and lines are meant to be intentionally funny or not.

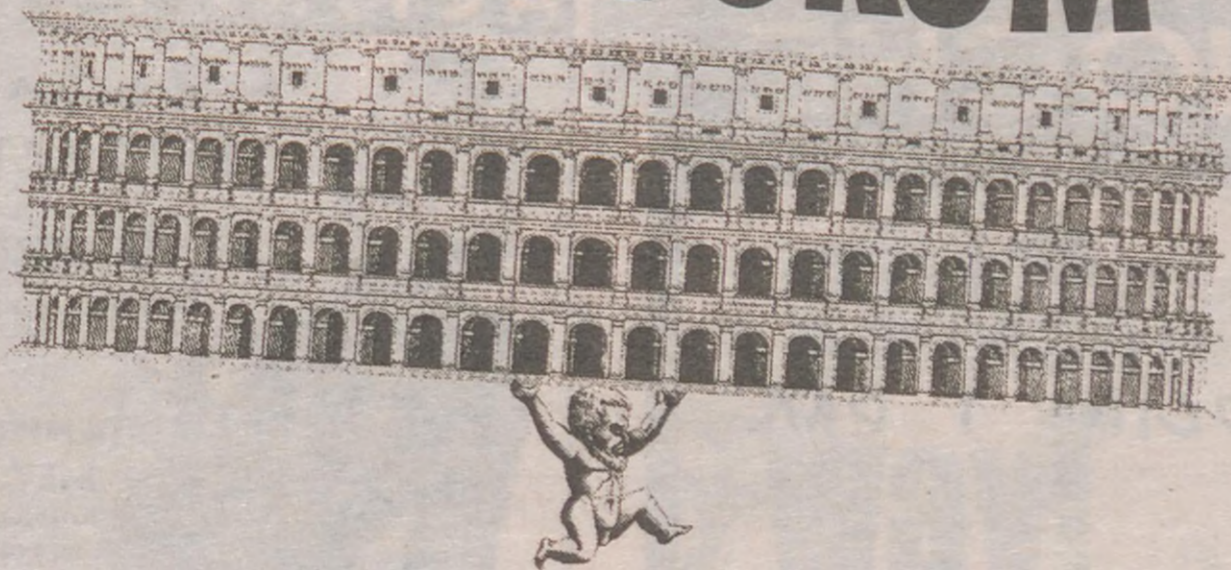
If there is one positive note in this production, it rests with dynamic actress Luba Mason. The memorable Mason portrays Lucy, a spicy prostitute who is befriended by Jekyll and tormented by Hyde. Mason does not need special effects to show the fiery spark that she ignites onstage as Lucy. She rises well above the show's flatness, as evidenced in her introductory number, "Bring On the Men."

If only the rest of "Jekyll & Hyde" could match Mason's vitality, this would be great entertainment, rather than just mediocre.

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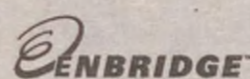


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dining J.A. Chapman

That little trattoria across from Jones Hall may have the best Italian food in town

It's the well-seasoned food that shines at Perbacco

I'M GOING TO LET YOU IN ON A secret the best Italian food in Houston won't be found at one of those upscale, famous restaurateur places, and it's not hiding in some undiscovered hole in the wall.

You'll find it at Perbacco, a charming and unassuming downtown bistro, located on the ground floor of the Pennzoil building, just across from Jones Hall.

Owner Vittorio Preteroti has run a restaurant in this location for more than a decade. Most recently, the spot held the Blue Willow, and before that it was Buca di Bacco. When Preteroti returned to this location after a few months home on his native island of Capri, he opened Perbacco, bringing back the well-loved Buca di Bacco menu and even the same kitchen crew.

The décor has been redone in a clean, blue and white theme, reminiscent of European beach cabanas. It has a fresh, airy feeling with modern long, oval light fixtures accentuating the high ceiling. Four large black and white photos from Capri dominate the longest wall, while individual signed photos of famous patrons add a personal touch behind the counter.

But it's the food that really shines at Perbacco. On a recent weekend evening, I took two friends along to try it out. We arrived just as most of the crowd was finishing up and heading for their curtain times at the various nearby theaters. Vittorio - yes, please call him by his first name - immediately found us a table and made us comfortable.

At his recommendation, we started off with the misto caprese (\$8.95) and bruschetta (\$2.00). A decadent platter of marinated eggplant, spicy red peppers with pinenuts, crisp, minty carrots, artichoke hearts, olives, and mozzarella with basil appeared before us. We dug in, using the crusty white bread from the bread basket to sop up the flavors.

And then the bruschetta appeared - thick slices of that delicious bread slathered in olive oil and topped with chunks of fresh tomato, garlic and basil. Simple, well-prepared and fantastic. One of my dining companions turned to me and said, "I didn't eat this well in Rome." The prosciutto and melone (\$8.95) provided a sweet contrast to the misto caprese, and both the cantaloupe and prosciutto were top quality.

THE MENU OFFERS A VARIETY OF pastadishes, as well as traditional meat and fish dishes. Low carb options are available as well. Vittorio is happy to accommodate any request. All main courses come with a fresh garden salad

and your choice of dressings. Try the excellent feta cheese vinaigrette, a garlicky mix with a salty feta accent.

The nightly special was an excellent snapper fillet sautéed in white wine, garlic, tomatoes and capers, topped with fresh lump crab meat and served over angel hair pasta (\$21.95). The fish and crab were just-caught fresh and the sauce was obviously made to order. The veal marsala (\$16.95) was impressive, served in a thick, rich marsala wine sauce loaded with mushrooms. The more basic penne al bacco (\$12.95), penne with fresh spinach, tomatoes and grilled chicken tossed in garlic and olive oil, was expertly done with the freshest of ingredients.

Don't miss the desserts (around \$5 each). The chocolate almond flourless torte was unexpectedly moist and light. Profiteroles, those decadent cream puffs, came filled with the traditional cream and covered with rich, dark chocolate. And the limoncello sorbet was a light, lemony treat.

At lunch Perbacco is a bit more casual. You order at the counter, get your salad, bread, beverage and silverware on a tray and find a table. The main course is delivered to you. The lunch menu is similar to the dinner menu, and, as always, you can request something if you don't see it.

I tried the straw and hay chicken (\$8.95), green and white linguine tossed with a garlicky tomato sauce with ribbons of fresh basil and topped with grilled chicken. Like most of the other dishes, it was well prepared, with simple, quality ingredients. And, again, it was delicious.

Perbacco is that rare find of a restaurant where you feel like you're dining with friends. Whatever food likes or dislikes you have or fads you're following, Vittorio is happy to accommodate. The food is simple and prepared with top quality ingredients. The results are outstanding.

Perbacco
 700 Milam at Capitol
 713-224-2422

Food: 101101010101
 Service: 101101010101
 Value: 1011010101
 Scene: 10110101
 ♣ = Stay home and eat cereal
 101101 = Well, if you really must
 101101101 = Fine for all but the finicky
 101101101101 = Worth more than a 20-minute drive
 101101101101101 = As good as you'll find in this city

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opera RICH ARENSCHIELDT

HGO gives this 'Barber'

a 1950's pop culture edge

with plenty of comedic relief

'Barber of Seville' gets a bouffant

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA'S SPRING repertory opens with a lively 1950's pop culture version of Rossini's comedy, 'The Barber of Seville,' with HGO studio alum Joyce DiDonato as Rosina.

As the curtain rises, it becomes clear that this staging is anything but stodgy. Count Almaviva (Richard Croft), in love with the young Rosina, has followed her home and arrives on stage in a vintage red 1964 Buick Electra convertible. Moments later, the good-natured barber, Figaro (Earle Patriarco), arrives on a less than sumptuous Vespa scooter. Opening arias are sung while singers are driving about the stage.

Thus, the fun begins and never relents. The madcap aspects of this 'Barber' are further heightened by the comic touches of Australian director Lundy Hume. Given the fact that most Americans probably learned bits and pieces of this work from various 'Bugs Bunny' cartoon adaptations, over the top hilarity should be expected.

The story begins with Rosina, trapped in a dingy old house by the elderly but persistent Dr. Bartolo (John Del Carlo). Bartolo, with the assistance of his odd friend and priest, Don Basilo (Vladimir Ognovenko) would very much like to marry Rosina.

Rosina, however, has other plans. She has secretly fallen in love with a penniless student, Lindoro. However, Lindoro is actually the wealthy and powerful Count Almaviva, who is testing Rosina to see if her love is genuine. The Count, desperate to meet Rosina enlists the help of the crafty but well-intentioned Figaro to make the match a reality.

THIS WORK, COMPOSED IN 13 DAYS, had an accident-prone birth. In addition to onstage mishaps, it is rumored that at the 1816 premiere in Rome, a stray cat ran across the stage during the performance and created pandemonium among the cast. Though no cat was evident in this HGO production, the well-timed antics of the singers make it seem as though there might have been a frantic feline waiting in the wings.

Much of the humor in this production stems from the excellent set and costume design by Australian Dan Porta. Placed on a revolving platform, this production serves to provide a seamless venue for all sorts of dramatic high jinks.

i MORE INFO

'The Barber of Seville'
Houston Grand Opera
Wortham Theater Center
501 Texas
Through May 15th
713-228-OPERA



Count Almaviva (Richard Croft) makes a grand entrance in 'The Barber of Seville.'

Characters walk, run or are chased through a multitude of doors, leading from scene to scene. Rosina and her room are clad in an array of pinks, (reminiscent of the film 'Muriel's Wedding') in dainty contrast to the rest of the dreary home.

HGO music director Patrick Summers leads the orchestra and singers in an upbeat rendering that has exactly the correct mix of bluster and sensitivity.

Mezzo-soprano DiDonato has sung Rosina for her debuts in Paris and Tokyo, and it's a difficult role that she masters easily. Rossini requires agility, range, and expression from singers, and most of this cast meets the bill.

DiDonato moves easily within this music, especially with her Act One aria 'Una voce poco fa.' Here she collaborates wonderfully with Summers and the HGO orchestra, who have played with increasing finesse at each offering throughout the season. During other scenes in 'Barber,' Summers takes much of this production at a good clip and everyone follows adroitly.

With regard to major characters in 'Barber,' many opera directors paint Figaro as somewhat underhanded. Director Hume has given him a happier hue. Baritone Earle Patriarco (last seen in HGO's 2002 'La Boheme') portrays Figaro as a happy-go-lucky guy trying to do the right thing. With his Elvis style hairdo and snazzy costuming, Patriarco fits this production perfectly. Other supporting singers, most notably the two basses, provide a great musical foundation for this cast. Russian Ognovenko as the unusually costumed priest looks like a menacing Boris Karloff. But, beware, in this production looks can be deceiving. John Del Carlo as Dr. Bartolo is commanding onstage musically and otherwise.

HGO's 'The Barber of Seville' rushes to the finish line in just under three hours. This production is so entertaining and musically solid that it seems to get there in half the time.

community calendar

SATURDAY MAY 8

All-Spanish Worship Service/Noche Espiritual 7 p.m. Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, 2026 W. 11th. 713-861-9149.
After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM. 1-4 a.m.
Dignity mass. 7:30 p.m. for gay Catholics. 713-880-2872. Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 11 p.m.-2 a.m. at Viviana's. 713-830-3000.
Gay & Lesbian Breakfast Club. 9:30 a.m. 281-437-0636. Lambda Center.
Alcoholics Anonymous. 11:30 a.m. Eye Opener Group, 8 p.m. Saturday Night Live, 9:30 p.m. Willing Ones Group. 1201 W. Clay. 713-521-1243 or 713-528-9772. www.lambdahouston.org.
Montrose Soccer Club. 10 a.m. practice. Woodrow Wilson School, Fairview and Yupon. New players welcome, but beginners not currently being admitted. 713-862-9491. http://geocities.com/montrosoccer. E-mail: montrosoccer@yahoo.com.
Q-Patrol. Volunteers walk the streets to help prevent hate crimes. 9:30 p.m. Convene at community center. 713-528-SAFE. E-mail: qpatrolinc@aol.com
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Rosary 8 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama. 713-528-6665.
Houston GLBT Community Center. CATS (Community Awareness for Transgender Support) board meeting, 2 p.m. 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org.

SUNDAY MAY 9

Front Runners Houston. Runners meet at Memorial Park at 8 a.m. for a three-mile run. http://home.swbell.net/lorathon/houfr.htm. E-mail: larathon@swbell.net. 713 522-0899.
Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Services at 8:30 & 10:50 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 713-526-1017.
Center for Spiritual Living. Services at 11 a.m., for children at 10:50 a.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808. The center also has commitment ceremonies, metaphysical bookstore and classes.
Community Gospel. Service at 11 a.m. & 7 p.m. Sunday School for children 10 a.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
Community of Kindred Spirits in Beaumont. Worship at 6 p.m. 1575 Spindletop Ave., Beaumont, Texas. 409-813-2055. E-mail: cksrev3@netzero.net
Covenant Church, Ecumenical, Liberal Baptist. Service 9:30 a.m. & education hour 11 a.m. 713-668-8830.
Emerson Unitarian Church. Adult education, 10 a.m. Service, 11 a.m. Lunch at noon. www.emersonhou.org.
First Congregational Church (Memorial). Service at 10 a.m. Christian Education, 11:30 a.m. 713-468-9543 or fcc-houston.org.
First Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:30 & 11:30 a.m. Brunch at 10:30 a.m. 713-526-5200. church@firstuu.org.
Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 9 p.m.-midnight at Club Inergy. 713-830-3000.
Gay Bowling Leagues. 7 p.m. Palace Lanes, 4191 Bellaire Blvd. 713-861-1187.
Gay Catholics of St. Anne's-Houston. 5 p.m. worship service. Dinner and social. alexcam@wt.net. 713-623-0930.
Grace Assembly Church. Gay/gay-affirming congregation. 11 a.m. service. 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leo1@easttex.net.
Grace Lutheran Church. Sunday school for all ages 9 a.m. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-528-3269.
H.A.T.C.H. Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals meets 6-9 p.m. For meeting information, call 713-529-3590. www.hatchyouth.org.
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m.-noon. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com
Lambda Center. Alcoholics Anonymous. 9:30 a.m. Came to Believe Group. 1201 W. Clay. 713-521-1243 or 713-528-9772. www.lambdahouston.org.
Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Church. 10 a.m. service. 3333 Fannin, Suite 106. 713-528-6756.
Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:45 & 11:15 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 281-298-2780.
Resurrection MCC. Services, 9 and 11 a.m. Children and Youth Sunday School, 10 a.m. Children's service, 11 a.m. 713-861-9149.
St. Patrick's Reformed Catholic Mission. Sunday Mass at noon. Holy Unions available. Group meets at the Hair Express, 3310 Delaware, Beaumont, Texas 77703. 409-781-8152. E-mail: bwatson1@gt.rr.com.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Holy Eucharist, Rite I, 7:45 a.m.; Holy Eucharist, Rite II, 8:55 a.m.; Education hour, 10 a.m.; Choral Eucharist, 11 a.m. 713-528-6665.
Sunday Brunch. For HIV-positive men. 11 a.m. Riva's, 1117 Missouri St. Paul, 713-880-0690. e-mail: PznBuff@aol.com.
The Women's Group. Meeting and discussion. 10:45 a.m. 713-529-8571.
Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Adult discussion, 9 a.m. Service, 11:15 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.
Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 502 Church St. Service, 11 a.m. 713-686-5876.

Houston GLBT Community Center. Some Transgenders are Guys (STAG)), 6 p.m., 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org.

MONDAY MAY 10

Free HIV Testing. 4-8 p.m. at All Star News, 3415 Katy Freeway. Health clinic with free testing for HIV and syphilis. 713-869-7878.
Gay Bowling Leagues. Women's league. 6:45 p.m. Dynamic Lanes, 6121 Tarnef Drive. 713-861-1187.
Gay Fathers/Fathers First. Support group. 8-9:30 p.m. Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Tom, 713-726-8736. www.geocities.com/gaydadshouston/
Grace Assembly Church. Gay/gay-affirming congregation. 7 p.m. aerobics class. 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leo1@easttex.net.
Grief & Divorce Support Groups. 7 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017, ext. 208.
Kolbe Project. Eucharist 7:30 p.m. 713-861-1800. Lambda Center, **Alcoholics Anonymous.** 8 p.m. Beginner's Group. 1201 W. Clay. 713-521-1243 or 713-528-9772. www.lambdahouston.org.
Montrose Clinic. Offers weekly peer support groups for gay and bisexual men with HIV. Spanish speaking group meets, 6:30 p.m. 215 Westheimer. 713-830-3050. Grupo de Apoyo para Latinos gay y bisexuales VIH positivos. Lunes 6:30. Para mas informacion llama al 713-830-3025. Queer Voices Radio Show. 8-10 p.m. KPFT 90.1.
Houston GLBT Community Center. Lesbians Coming Out 7 p.m. American Veterans for Equal Rights, 7p.m. 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818, www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org.

TUESDAY MAY 11

Bering Support Network. Lunch Bunch Gang, 11 a.m. 713-526-1017.
Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 1-7 p.m. at the clinic, 215 Westheimer and 3311 Richmond, Suite 100; 4-8 p.m. at The 611, 611 Hyde Park; and 8 p.m. - midnight at Club Houston, 2205 Fannin. 713-830-3070.
GLBT Pentecostals. Bible study, prayer, 7 p.m. in the Heights. For info: 936-931-3761; e-mail: www.Wgb1947@cs.com.
Houston Roughneck Rugby. Practice from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. For more information, log on to www.roughneckrugby.org.
Houston Women's Rugby Team. No experience necessary. Practice, 6:30-8:30. Westland YMCA. Kay, 713-208-1529.
Introduction to Buddhism. All welcome at 634 W. Temple in the Heights. 7 p.m. Carlton, 713-862-8129.
Rainbow Ranglers. Free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. No partner needed. Beginner 2 Step, Waltz, Shuffle & Swing. 8:30 p.m. 713-528-9192.
Houston GLBT Community Center. Lisa Wannemacher Relationship Seminar, 7 p.m. Lesbian Coming Out Group, 7 p.m., 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org.

WEDNESDAY MAY 12

MS Healing Art, with Salli Babbitt, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Metropolitan Multi-Services Center, 1475 West Gray, 713-523-9530.
Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.; SOM Discussion & Exploration, 7 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.
Physically Challenged Healing Art, with Salli Babbitt, 1 p.m. - 3:30 p.m., Metropolitan Multi-Services Center, 1475 West Gray, 713-523-9530.
OutSkate. This roller Rink skate club hosts Gay Skate Night at Zenith Roller Rink, 8075 Cook Road every Wednesday from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. \$5 entry plus skate rental. 281-933-5818, Dobie367@aol.com.
Crystal Meth Anonymous (CMA). 8:15 p.m. meeting. Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond Ave., Room 15.
Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Support Network Pot Luck Dinner, 6:30 p.m. Various support groups, 7 p.m. 713-526-1017.
Bible Study. Noon & 6:30 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal. 713-526-6665.
Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 4-8 p.m. at Mary's, 1100 Westheimer; 9 p.m.-midnight at Ripcord, 715 Fairview; 10 p.m.-1 a.m. at EJs, 2517 Ralph; 10 p.m. - 1 a.m. at Midtowne Spa, 3100 Fannin. 713-830-3000.
Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 2015 Thomas St. OraSure method. Call for appointment. Sharon, 713-873-4157.
Community Gospel Service. 7:30 p.m. 713-880-9235. www.communitygospel.org.
Gay Bowling Leagues. 6:30 p.m. Palace Lanes, 4191 Bellaire Blvd. 713-861-1187.

Grace Assembly Church. Gay/gay-affirming congregation. 7 p.m. aerobics class. 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leo1@easttex.net.
Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal, 7:30-9:30 p.m. 1307 Yale. 713-862-1488.
Houston Tennis Club. 7-9 p.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com
Spiritual Uplift Service. 7 p.m. Resurrection MCC. 713-861-9149.
Houston GLBT Community Center. Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, 7 p.m., 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org.

THURSDAY MAY 13

HIV+ Healing Art Group, 1-4 p.m., Kermit Eisenhower Studio, 1953 Montrose Blvd., 713-523-9530.
Free HIV Testing. Houston Area Community Services. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Joseph-Hines Clinic, 1710 West 25th St. Also 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Gallery Medical Clinic, 5900 North Freeway, and Club Toyz from 9 p.m.-midnight. 713-526-0555, ext. 231, 227 or 226.
Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m.- midnight at Brazos River Bottom (BRB), 2400 Brazos, atd at Cousins, 817 Fairview, and 4 -8 p.m. at All-Star News, 3415 Katy Freeway. 713-830-3000.
Free HIV Testing. 4-8 p.m. at All Star News, 3415 Katy Freeway. Health clinic with free testing for HIV and syphilis. 713-869-7878.
FrontRunners Houston. Runners meet at Memorial Park at 6:30 p.m. for a three-mile run. http://home.swbell.net/lorathon/houfr.htm or e-mail: larathon@swbell.net. 713 522 0899.
Gay Bowling Leagues. Luci Duos. 9 p.m. Dynamic Lanes, 6121 Tarnef Drive. 713-861-1187.
GLOBAL. Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual Alliance at the University of Houston-Central Campus. Weekly meeting, 6 p.m. e-mail: nguyen0023@hotmail.com.
Hep C Recovery. Support group. 6:30 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017, Ext. 211.
Houston Roughneck Rugby. Practice from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. For more information, log on to www.roughneckrugby.org.
Houston Women's Rugby Team. No experience necessary. Practice, 6:30-8:30. Westland YMCA. Kay, 713-208-1529.
Lake Livingston GLBT Support Group. 7 p.m. dinner and discussion. Grace Assembly Church, 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leo1@easttex.net.
Lambda Skating Club. 8 p.m. Tradewinds Skating Rink. www.neosoft.com/~lrsc. 713-523-9620.
Montrose Clinic. Offers weekly peer support groups for gay and bisexual men with HIV. English speaking group meets, 6:30 p.m. 215 Westheimer 713-830-3050.
Rainbow Ranglers. Free C&W dance lessons. No partner required. Brazos River Bottom. 8:30 p.m. 713-528-9192.
Recovery From Food Addiction (RFA). Meeting for 12-step program open to all. Noon-1 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1805 W. Alabama St. RFA: 713-673-2848. www.geocities.com/rfa77235/. E-mail: rfaworldservice@aol.com.

FRIDAY MAY 14

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 2015 Thomas St. OraSure method. Call for appointment. Sharon, 713-873-4157.
HIV+ Healing Art Group, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Kermit Eisenhower Studio, 1953 Montrose Blvd., 713-523-9530.
Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 1-5 p.m. at the clinic, 215 Westheimer and 3311 Richmond, Suite 100; 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. at Rich's, 2401 San Jacinto; 10 p.m. - 2 a.m. at The Meatrack, 2915 San Jacinto; 10 p.m. - 1 a.m. at Midtowne Spa, 3100 Fannin; 10 a.m. - 1 a.m. at EJs, 2517 Ralph. 713-830-3070.
Grace Assembly Church. Gay/gay-affirming congregation. 7 p.m. aerobics class. 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leo1@easttex.net.
H.A.T.C.H. Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals meets 7-10 p.m. For meeting information, call 713-529-3590. www.hatchyouth.org.
Houston Tennis Club. 7-9 p.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com
Kolbe Project. Morning prayer, 10 a.m. 713-861-1800.
Q-Patrol. Volunteers walk the streets to help prevent hate crimes. 9:30 p.m. Convene at community center. 713-528-SAFE. E-mail: qpatrolinc@aol.com
Houston GLBT Community Center. Women's Game Night, 7p.m., In Our Own Write (Poetry Night), 8-10 p.m., 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org.

appts.

SATURDAY MAY 8

The annual Cinco de Mayo Fiesta, a fundraiser for Lazarus House, 4106 Austin, is from 2-7 p.m. at the facility, which is dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of the chronically ill in the gay and lesbian community. The event will feature margaritas and Mexican food. 713-526-5071.

MONDAY MAY 10

Today is the deadline to make reservations for the Tuesday dinner meeting of the Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce. Networking begins at 6 p.m. Tuesday, and the dinner is at 7 at the Warwick, 5701 Main St. Chamber members with success at marketing their own businesses will reveal how it's done. www.ghlcc.org or 713-23-7576.

TUESDAY MAY 11



The Houston Comets face the Connecticut Suns at 7:30 p.m. at Toyota Center, 1510 Polk St., in a preseason game. Tickets start at \$8 and are available at www.houston-comets.com or by calling 713-627-WNBA.

THURSDAY MAY 13



Pulitzer Prize winning author Alice Walker will give a reading for the 23rd season of the Inprint Brown Reading Series at 7:30 p.m. at Texas Southern University's Sawyer Auditorium, 3100 Cleburne. Walker, best known for 'The Color Purple,' will read from her newest work, 'Now is the Time to Open Your Heart.' The reading is free and open to the public and will be followed by a book sale and signing by the author. www.inprint-inc.org.

FRIDAY MAY 14

A special midnight showing of 'Moulin Rouge' is on tap tonight and Saturday, May 15, at River Oaks Landmark Theatre, 2009 Gray. Free tickets are available at the Houston Voice, 500 Lovett, Suite 200.

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

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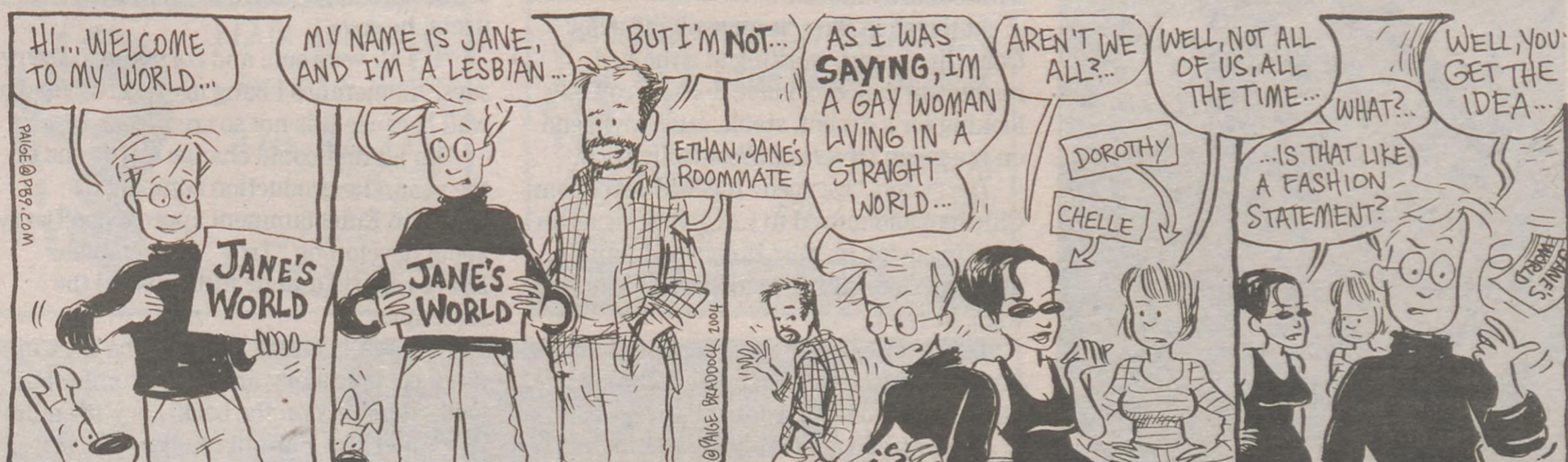
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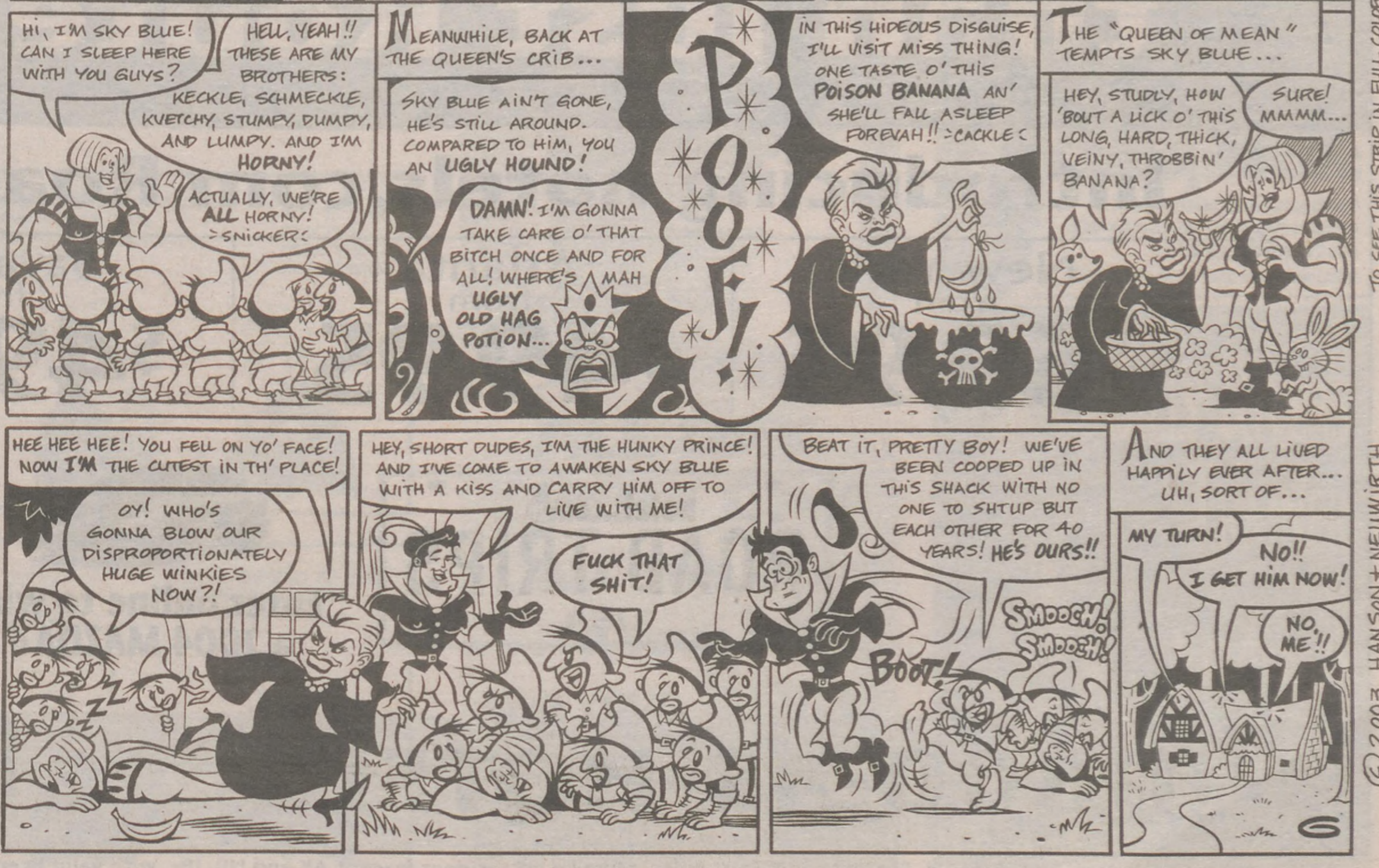



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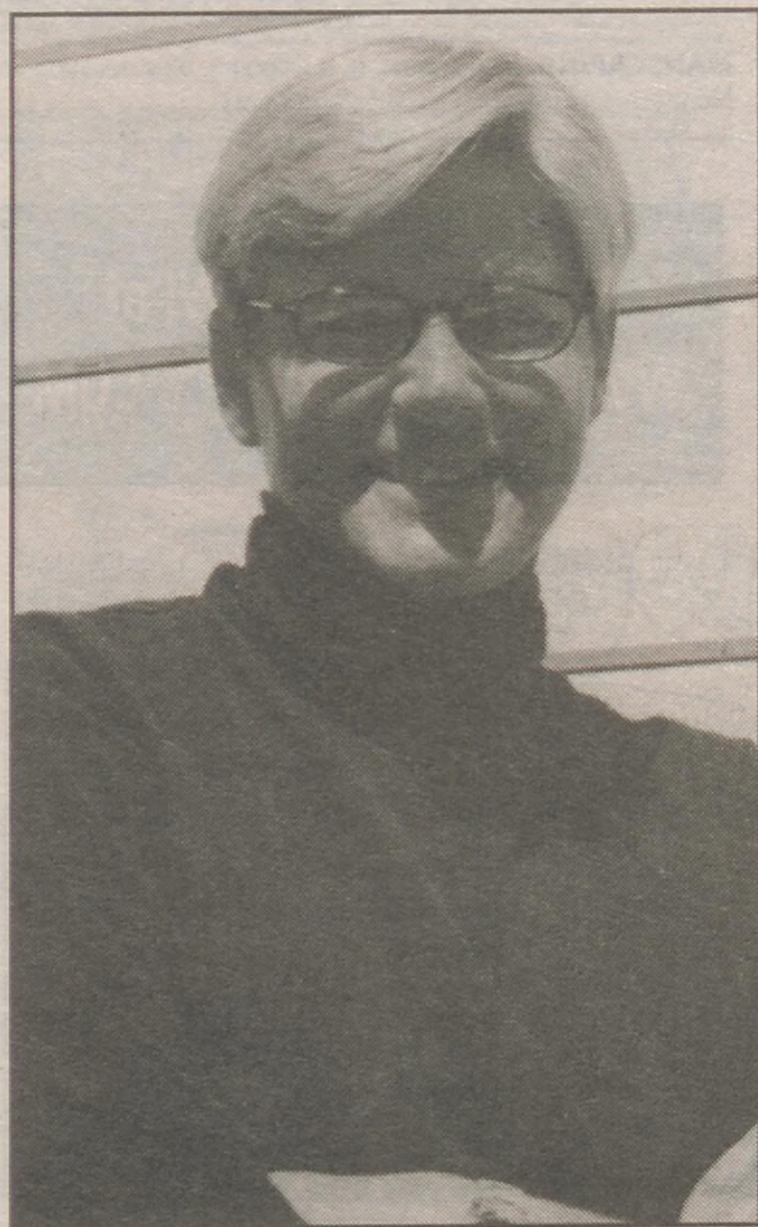
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eclipse cover story

'Jane's World', 'Troy' cartoons offer 'slice of life'



Cartoonist and former Atlanta resident **Paige Braddock** celebrates more than a decade of her 'slice of life' cartoon 'Jane's World' with her latest compilation of six months worth of the strip. (Photo courtesy Paige Braddock)

COMIC STRIPS, continued from Page 14

"She loves the fact that she has a cartoon character named after her," she says.

TWO OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN "Troy" carry pieces of Derry, he says.

"At first, I identified most with Troy," Derry says. "It was sort of me, but I was never that naïve, either. I had to make him a little more innocent."

In the strip, Troy is an aspiring actor from Cincinnati, working at a themed restaurant called "Planet Hero." Troy is looking for a decent, stable, cute boyfriend on the mean streets of West Hollywood.

Derry, too, "escaped" the Midwest (from Chicago) and moved to L.A., working as an aspiring actor in West Hollywood. But he also bears resemblance to Troy's roommate Rigo, he says.

Derry describes Rigo as a "handsome, hunky, self-assured" bartender who gets basically anyone he wants.

"I identified a lot with Rigo, actually," Derry says. "I had been bartending for about five years at that point."

"Troy" was conceived in L.A., after Derry had a chance meeting at a photo shoot, where he made connections with people in search of an illustrator for BENT

Magazine, he says.

In 1998, "Troy" debuted in BENT, and has since appeared in publications throughout the U.S., U.K., Canada and on the Web at 365Gay.com.

With a bachelor's degree in fine arts in illustration from Northern Illinois University, Derry also works fulltime as a Web animator. He creates e-learning modules in which computer-generated characters appear on screen to instruct users, he says.

"It's all very cute and corporate," Derry says. "Sometimes I bang my head against a wall because it is not so creative."

But all that could change by the end of the year. The production company Envision Entertainment approached Derry about developing "Troy" into a movie. Derry reports that he just finished the screenplay.

"I'm really jazzed about it," he says. "I used a couple story lines from comics but focused mainly on the back story. It's more like 'American Pie' but really gay ... sex and raunchiness."

If all goes well with production, Envision Entertainment also wants to develop Troy into a television series, and Derry will be able to leave his corporate job and work on "Troy" full time.



After nearly six years as the illustrator for the gay cartoon 'Troy,' **Mike Derry** is hopeful that by the end of the year the strip will be his full-time job. (Photo courtesy Mike Derry)

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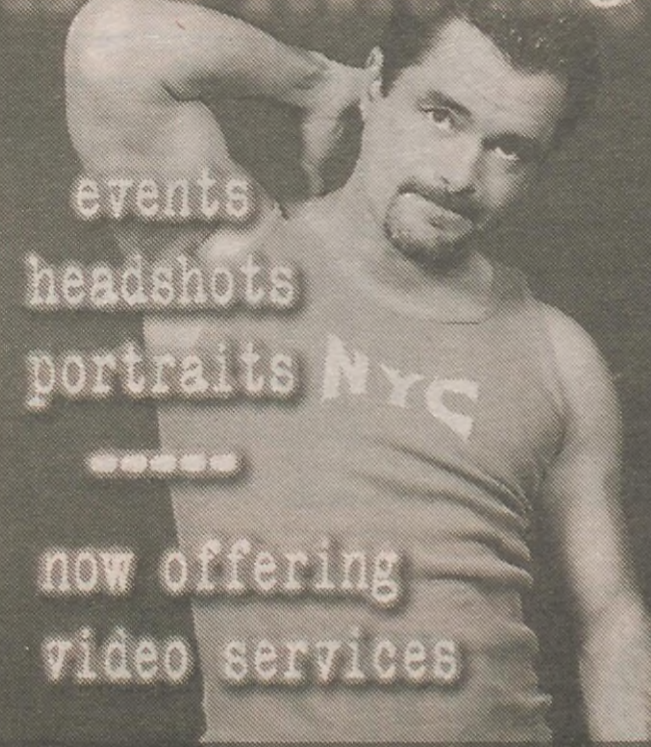
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These are real bitches, sent in by real readers about gay life's little annoyances, and the big ones, too.

WHY ARE WE ALWAYS LAST TO GET IT?
 I thought that the Gay New Year's Resolution in 2004 was that the buzz cut/bald head and goatee look was over! Never was attractive, never will be attractive. For the balding guys, don't compound the problem with facial hair.

TO THE DJ COMPLAINING ABOUT THE shortage of dance music: Do some research and you may find there are other countries producing unbelievable tracks. It doesn't all happen in America you know.

TO THE GUY WHO BITCHED ABOUT being put out on the street after sex: Maybe he lost respect for you after you so easily tricked out that he no longer had any interest in you as a friend or anything more. Show some self-respect and don't pull your pants down on the first date or meeting.

MY BITCH IS WITH OLDER GUYS WHO want you as their cook and housekeeper, but who want to cruise every other bitch in town.

PEOPLE WHO COMPLAIN THAT "QUEER As Folk" does not contain enough graphic sex between people who are actually committed to each other are taking the show a little too seriously.

TO THE SELF-DESCRIBED "HOT MAN" who complained about a certain Arab kid who chose not to talk to you: What's with the phrase "learn what gay means in English"? Just because he'd "rather talk to women and ignore hot men" and drink Coke? Sounds to me like what he was avoiding that night were assholes and alcohol. Learn what the words "bigot" and "pigeonhole" mean in English.

MAYBE I'M TAKING THIS OUT OF CON- text, but if the Arab kid is offended by guys drinking alcohol, why does he go to bars?

TO THE PERSON WHO SAID HETERO- sexuals would accept gay men more if we were more monogamous: How many monogamous men do you think there are, gay or straight? Who cares what heteros think anyway? I only care what the people I care about think about me.

TO THE GAY REPUBLICAN WHO SAYS other issues outweigh the "gay agenda": If so, then why use the word "gay" in front of Republican when you describe yourself? Using the word or identifying yourself as Gay carries a responsibility beyond just being a token to get noticed and used by the GOP to appear compassionate.

GAY REPUBLICANS JUST DON'T GET IT. While the political agenda is not exclusively gay, "gay issues" should be side by side with national defense, taxes, regulation, and foreign policy. It is normal, expected, and conservative to advocate your personal interests.

REPUBLICANS ARE SO UNIFORMLY anti-gay that I cannot imagine how anyone can possibly justify ever voting Republican. Are there really gays out there who think those hate-spewing Republicans will ever change?

I'M THE ONE WHO CAME DOWN ON the poz guy who wanted compassion. I never wanted him not to make the best of his life; I wouldn't have it any other way. The problem is that he and countless others think HIV can't hurt them anymore or is just part of life. He certainly won't think he's immortal when he's all alone because his friends don't think he's beautiful anymore.

I USED TO BE ONE OF YOU MUSCLE boys, taking off my shirt, hunting and tricking to my dick's delight. Now I'm settled in a relationship and living in the suburbs. I hope you're having fun. I don't miss you a bit!

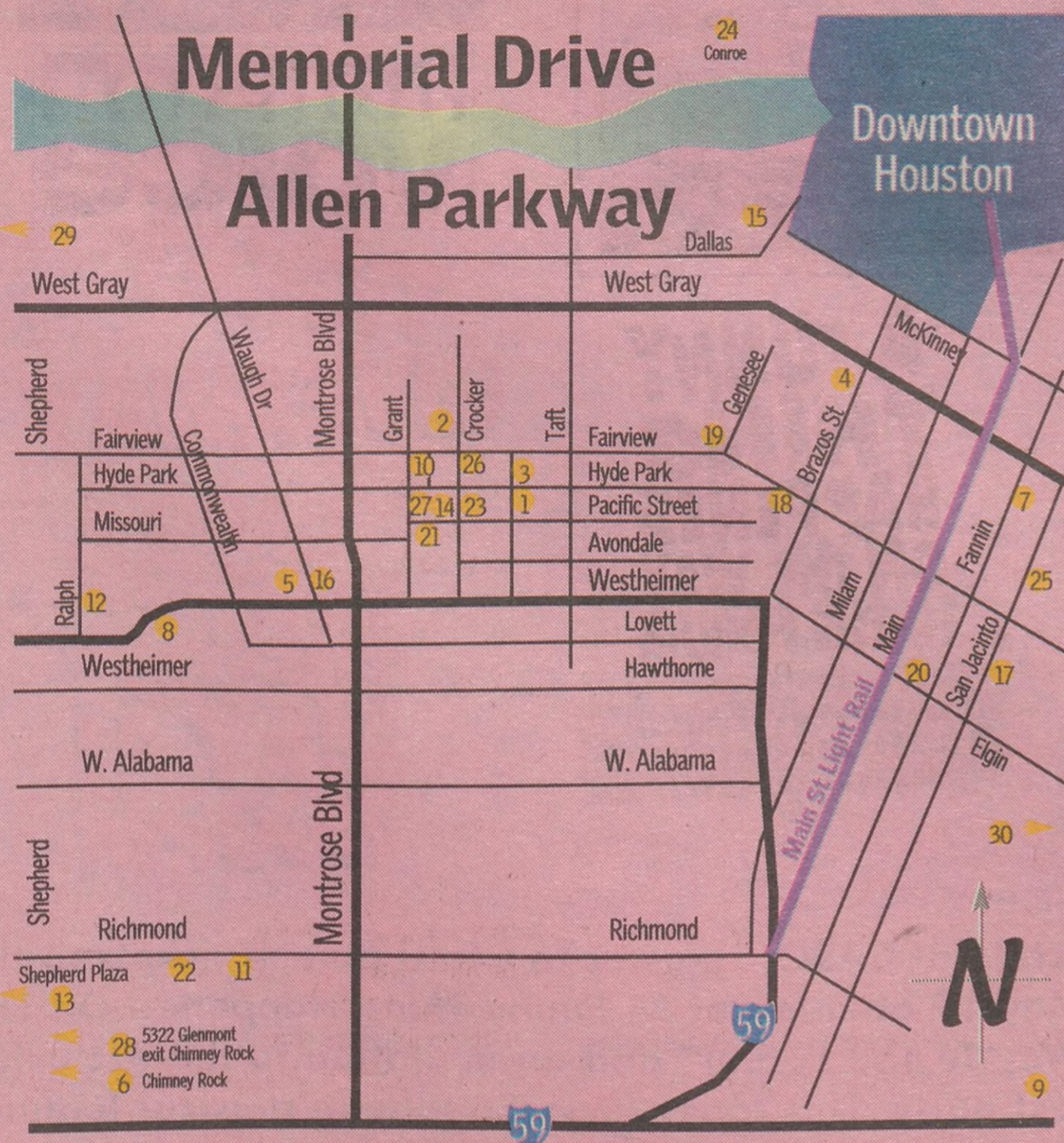
AT THE SUPERMARKET I ALWAYS BUY my steak in a see-through package and often check the weight to see that it's accurate. Why is it then that the hottie who expects me to foot all the expenses of an evening or weekend gets offended if I ask to see up front if he "measures up"? My mama told me to always "get what ya pays for."

TO THE MAN WHO CANNOT HELP HIS girlfriend redecorate her house, take her shopping or pick out a lip color: What exactly is a "normal man" and if you are one, which you're not, why are you bitching?

THIS IS TO THE MAN WHO CAN'T HELP his women friends pick out dresses or lip colors: The problem is he said that wasn't normal, but the fact is, it's fabulous. In this woman's life, fabulous IS normal, so I guess he'll go on living his boring normal life.

TO THE PERSON WHO DOESN'T WANT Bush reelected, but doesn't think we should vote for someone else just because he's not Bush. Hell! Just because he's not Bush is the best reason to vote for someone else. George Bush is a big fat liar!

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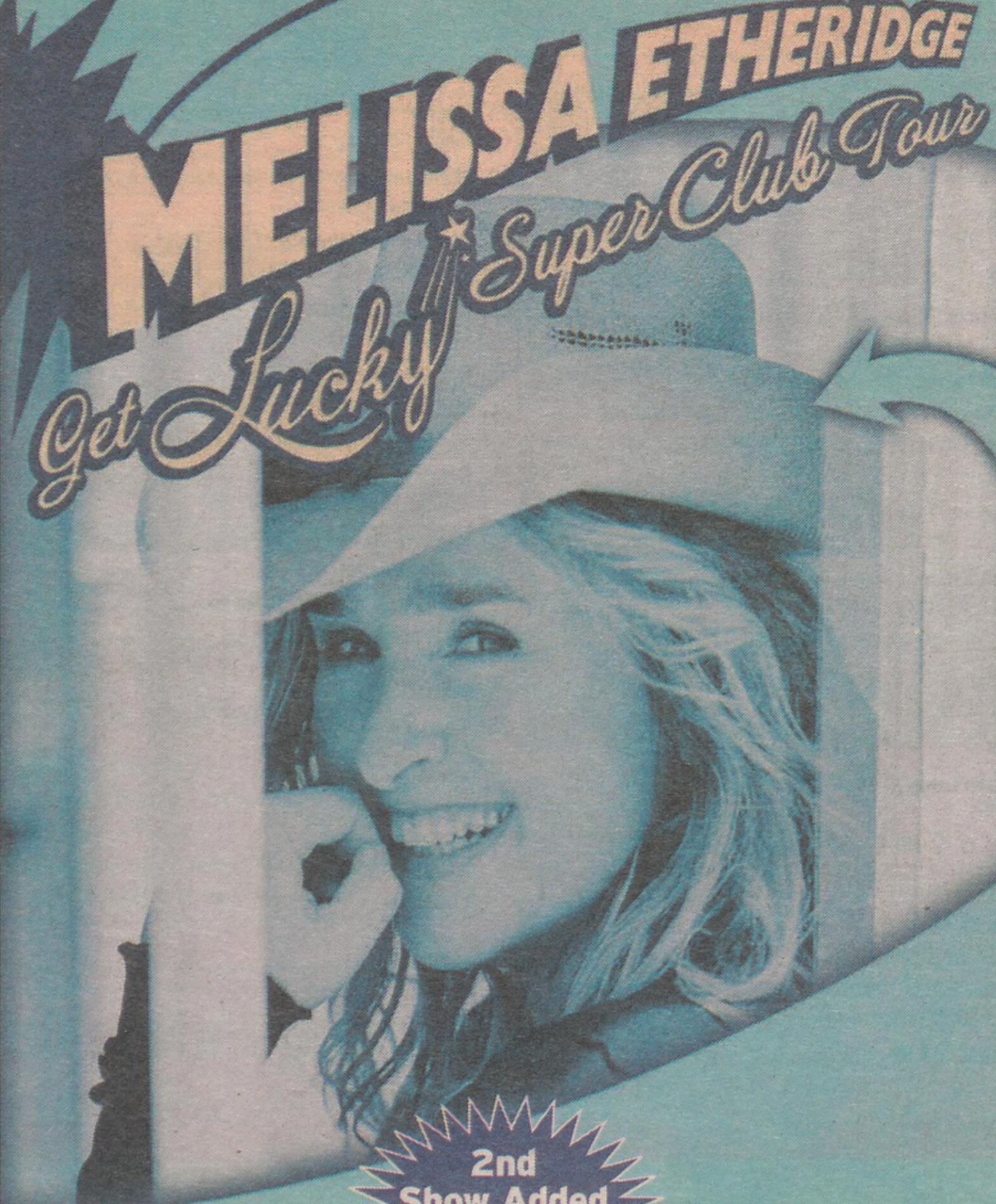
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