

houston VOICE



Whores of Babylon
'Queer as Folk' broke new ground and now, the final season begins.
Page 12

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MAY 20, 2005

BAPTIST MEETING: Anti-gay measure to be presented. **Page 3**



GAY CONFAB: June conference is on target. **Page 3**



SOULFUL ACT: Soulforce takes a stand. **Page 6**



Married gays celebrate 1st anniversary

Mass. ruling credited with making history, triggering backlash



Julie Goodridge (left) and her partner Hillary were plaintiffs in the Massachusetts gay marriage lawsuit. They were among the first gay couples to get married last May. (Photo by Chitose Suzuki/AP)

By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

Same-sex couples who married in Massachusetts on May 17, 2004 — the first day their state's historic gay marriage law took effect — celebrated their first anniversary this week from Boston to Provincetown

and dozens of cities and towns in between.

But the joy over their nuptials was offset by an impending vote by the Massachusetts Legislature this fall over a proposed amendment seeking to overturn the 2003 ruling by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court that allowed them to marry. The state

Please see **SEX ED** on Page 7



Tactics by State Sen. Rodney Ellis (D-Houston) delayed a hearing on a proposed constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage and civil unions so that gays and lesbians could be there to testify against it.

Sen. Rodney Ellis delays Senate hearing on HJR 6

Gays and lesbians on Thursday were again traveling to Austin to testify in opposition to a marriage bill

By BINNIE FISHER

Gays and lesbians from around Texas were on the fast boat to Austin Thursday afternoon to testify against House Joint Resolution 6, a measure that would not only ban same-sex mar-

Please see **HJR 6** on Page 4



local life
After a decade-long hiatus, the duo of **Atwood & Comeaux** is together again in song.
PAGE 8

dish
Enough about the gay content or lack of it in 'Alexander,' even if the DVD is out.
PAGE 18



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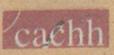
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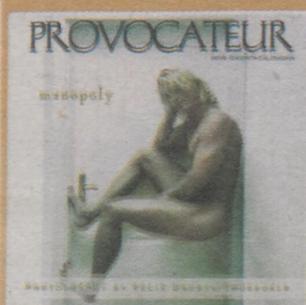
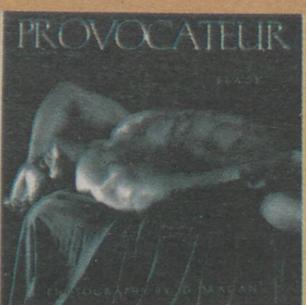
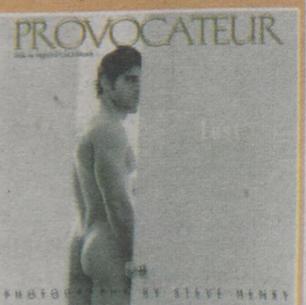
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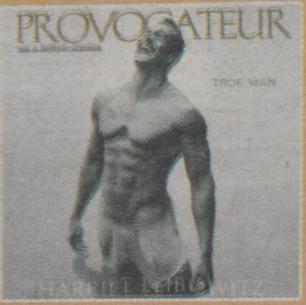
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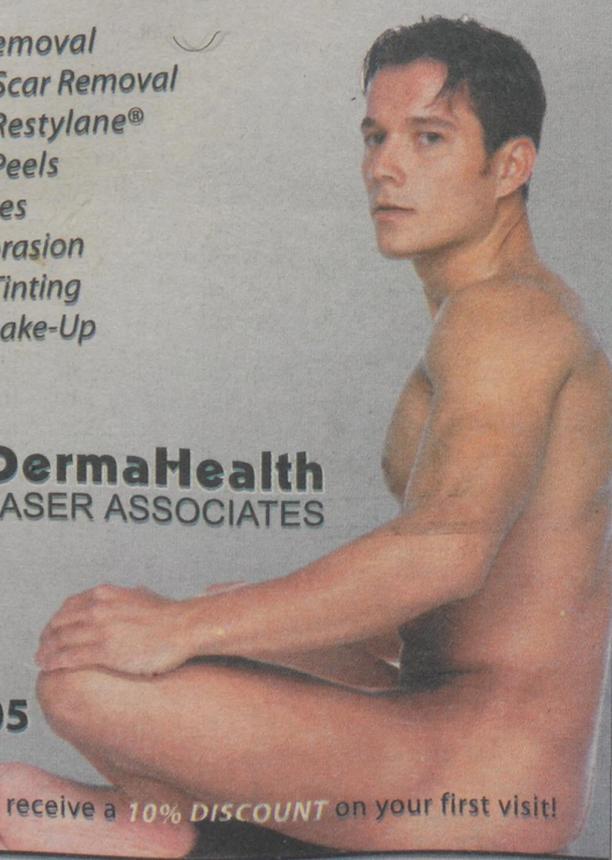
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local news briefs

Resolutions for upcoming conference stacking up

Transgendered attorney Phyllis Randolph Frye said recently that four legal resolutions are ready to be presented at the upcoming Conference on the Future in June, and a fifth is being drafted. Frye said the finished resolutions deal with employment discrimination, discrimination at the Harris County Courthouse, discrimination by police and jailers and the repeal of Texas Penal Code 21.06, the sodomy law that although declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court, still remains on the state's law books. A fifth legal resolution deals with the freedom to marry. Frye said many other resolutions will be presented during the conference, including ones that deal with inclusion of the intersexed into Houston's future, stopping genital mutilation of intersexed infants, transgender bias by the media, transgender access to homeless shelters and transgender sex definition. A similar conference almost 30 years ago resulted in formation of many institutions, including the Montrose Clinic, Montrose Counseling Center and the Q-Patrol. The next planning meeting for the conference is set for 3 p.m. Saturday at the Houston GLBT Community Center, 3400 Montrose, second floor.



Attorney Phyllis Randolph Frye is counting the legal resolutions to be presented at the upcoming Conference on the Future. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

Four Houston charities benefit from Humana awards program

Four Houston charities, including Theatre Under the Stars (TUTS) are finalists for a \$100,000 grant to be awarded in Houston by Humana Houston. The big check was being presented at the Houston Benefits Gala May 19. Other finalists include the Association of Advancement for Mexican Americans, the Education Foundation of Harris County and El Centro de Corazon. The grant marks the first time Humana has presented a large award in Houston.

Bayou City Art Festival Downtown is calling all Houston artists



Bayou City Art Festival Downtown, set for October 8-9, 2005, is accepting artists' applications through May 31, 2005. The application process is done completely online through www.zapplication.org. Entries will be juried June 15, with artist notification on June 22. The application fee is \$25. The annual juried fine art event showcases 300 artists in 15 artistic media: clay, drawing/pastel, fiber/textiles, furniture, glass, jewelry, leather, metal, mixed media, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, watercolor and wood.

Three hundred artists are featured in a four-block area in front of City Hall and around Hermann Square and Sam Houston Park downtown. "We're always looking to increase the exposure for local artists and continue to nurture and support our greater art community," said Lynette Wallace, executive director of the Bayou City Art Festival. "Art festivals are a wonderful way for artists to get exposure to thousands of art patrons over a two-day period." More information on the art festival is available at www.bayoucityartfestival.com or call 713-521-0133.

PBS host Ernie Manouse is looking for an audience

As summer arrives, Houston PBS is continuing to produce new episodes of "The After Party," hosted by Ernie Manouse. Taping takes place on Wednesday afternoons, and Manouse said he is looking for groups of 20 (or two groups of 10 each) to make up the audience each week. "This is a great opportunity for any organization or group to take an afternoon to team build, or as a perk for a job well done," Manouse said.



Audiences get a tour of the studios of Houston PBS, Channel 8, and KUHJ Public Radio 88.7-FM. In addition, Manouse said, audience members receive gifts for participating. He said he hopes groups of individuals who are free from 1-3 p.m. on Wednesdays will consider participating in the taping of "The After Party." Open dates are May 25, June 1, 15, 29 and July 6. E-mail theafterparty@houstonpbs.org.

From staff and wire reports

local news

Resolution calls for churches to investigate public schools

The document will be presented at the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting June 21-22 in Nashville.

By BINNIE FISHER

A minister from Spring is one of two people who have co-authored a proposed resolution to be presented to the Southern Baptist Convention in June that would call on churches to investigate whether local public schools in their cities are promoting homosexuality.

Rev. Voddie Baucham, Jr. said if schools are found to be promoting homosexuality through any number of specified means, churches are advised to call on their members to pull their children out of the schools and either home school them or place them in Christian schools.

The means specified in the resolution include "officially sanctioned homosexual clubs" (such as Gay-Straight Alliances), such deceptive labels as safe sex, diversity training, multicultural education, anti-bullying and safe schools."

Baucham said he and the co-author, Bruce Shortt, have aimed their resolution at churches and not at school districts. It is up to churches to take action. He said the resolution addresses what church members find troubling about public schools.

"The bottom line is, you have people who are aggressively teaching students something that is inappropriate and that undermines what we believe in," Baucham said.

He said he and Shortt deem anti-bullying and safe schools programs to be merely fronts for teaching acceptance of homosexuality as a valid way of life.

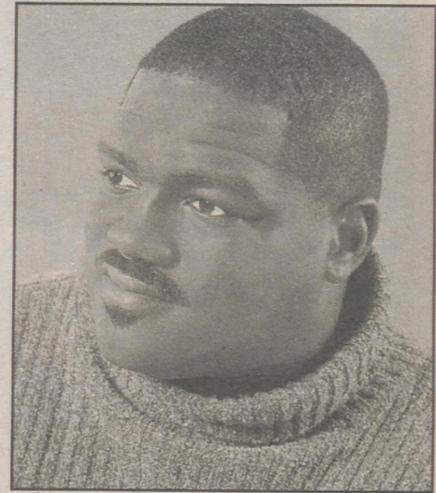
Jim Null, who organizes anti-bullying and safe schools seminars for Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays in the Houston Independent School District, said the authors may have no cognizance of what some students endure at school.

"The resolution's authors clearly have no awareness of the equal access law and even less awareness of how common verbal, psychological and even physical harassment of LGBT students is," Null said.

Tolerance, a form of love

"Tolerance is just a form of love, which the Bible is all about," Null said. "All of a sudden, tolerance is one of the indicators that gays are in control of the schools or are influencing their children."

Rev. Walter L. McFadden, pastor of Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church



Rev. Voddie Baucham, Jr. of Spring, has co-authored a resolution for the upcoming Southern Baptist Convention that calls on churches to investigate whether local public schools are promoting homosexuality.

(UCC), said he is disturbed by the document.

"It is appalling that such a document is being proposed in the context of a gathering of persons of faith who profess faith and relationship with Jesus, given that Jesus consistently devoted himself to defending and serving the disenfranchised of his community," McFadden said.

Baucham said he and Shortt are merely giving Southern Baptist Churches a way around something that they consider to be counter to their faith.

"We recognize that the schools have the right to do that (anti-bullying training, offer GSAs and diversity training)," he said. "The federal government and the courts have already spoken on this issue."

His resolution characterizes homosexuals as having a reduced life expectancy (even less than that of smokers), an increased risk of self-destructive behaviors such as drug use and domestic violence and a greater risk of developing cancer and other diseases.

McFadden noted, "Not only does it reinforce longstanding erroneous stereotypes of GLBT persons, it seems to invent a few new ones I haven't heard before."

Null added, "The real goal of this resolution seems to be the abandonment of public schools in favor of home schooling and private church-based schools where they can control the curriculum, employees, students, policies textbooks, etc."

Baucham said his resolution does not seek to undermine the public schools but seeks only to encourage churches to be diligent, parents to act when schools are not teaching what is deemed appropriate and all churches to provide support for Christian schools, home schooling and alternative models for providing Christian education.

The resolution will be presented at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 21-22 in Nashville.

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local news

HJR 6 committee hearing was originally scheduled Monday

HJR 6, continued from Page 1

riage in the state but would also prohibit civil unions.

It was a boat they came close to missing.

Over the weekend, the proposed constitutional amendment was hastily scheduled for a Monday morning hearing before the Senate State Affairs Committee. Since little notice was given, it would have ensured a small opposition turnout.

State Sen. Rodney Ellis (D-Houston), a member of the State Affairs Committee, tagged the amendment, delaying the hearing until Thursday.

"I am concerned that the late hour of the posting would prevent those Texans passionate about this issue from being able to get to the Capitol to testify on both sides of the matter," Ellis said.

His actions quickly resulted in a charge that since the 79th legislative session ends May 31, the senator's actions were likely to leave the Senate without time to vote on the matter.

"For those that are upset that this standard, often-used parliamentary maneuver means this amendment will not pass, I say: so be it," Ellis said.

State Rep. Warren Chisum (R-Pampa) authored the bill and added the civil unions amendment when the matter was presented to the full House of Representatives for a vote. Chisum could not be reached for comment regarding the proposal's delay.

Prior to the vote in the House, the proposal was heard in the House State Affairs Committee, with only a handful of persons there to testify in favor of the resolution and more than 600 in opposition. The measure prevailed in the House 101-29. It needed 100 votes to pass.

Should the measure make it to the floor of the Senate for a vote, it will again require a two-thirds majority. If approved by the Senate, it would be presented to voters statewide in the fall.

First, though, it will be considered by the State Affairs Committee, which will determine whether to send it to the full Senate for a vote.

The Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas (LGRL) blanketed the state with an e-mail broadcast urging concerned individuals to testify.

Among those who said he would travel to Austin to testify was attorney Jerry W. Simoneaux. He said LGRL had asked him to testify as an expert witness on the legal definition of gender.

"I'm going to give them an example of the problem as I see it," Simoneaux said.

A lesson in gender definition

As he sees it, Simoneaux said, before you can define marriage, you must first define "man" and "woman."

While the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Antonio has defined gender as



State Rep. Warren Chisum (R-Pampa) proposed House Joint Resolution 6 that would ban same-sex marriage and also limit civil unions.

based on chromosomes, Simoneaux said, anomalies do exist.

Legally, he said, a man is defined as XY, and a woman as XX.

"We already know from geneticists that we don't all have XX or XY," Simoneaux said. "It's a very primitive way of defining gender."

Under the Chisum resolution, Simoneaux said, two women could legally marry if one of them had been born a man but had later undergone sexual reassignment.

Among those not planning to testify is Jim Null of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Although he testified before the House State Affairs Committee, he said, traveling to Austin again is pointless.

"The hours of testimony before the House committee, even though it was almost totally against HJR6, accomplished absolutely nothing," he said.

Still, Randall Ellis (no relation to the senator), executive director of LGRL, said he was busy this week rallying the troops. Had the hearing taken place on Monday morning, Ellis said he could have turned out about 50 people. By Thursday, he was planning on many more.

He praised Sen. Ellis for taking the steps he took.

"We have a lot of good allies from Houston," Ellis said. He added that the actions of Sen. Ellis were especially courageous in light of the times.

"A lot of pressure is being put on our friends from the other side," Ellis said. "All of our friends have gotten lots of pressure from their churches."

For his part, Sen. Ellis said, he is only doing what he believes is right.

"Let me be perfectly clear: I oppose HJR6," he said. "It is unnecessary, and it doesn't even do the one thing that its supporters claim it will do—strengthen marriage. What two other people do with their lives has no bearing whatsoever on my marriage, just as my marriage has no bearing whatsoever on their marriage."

He added, "While everyone who favors HJR6 is not a bigot, there clearly are those supporters who are, and they are vocal. To them, I say this: I will not be bullied, threatened or intimidated, so stop trying."

national news briefs

Senate considers 'nuclear option' to force votes on anti-gay judges

WASHINGTON — Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) used most of his debate time on the Senate floor to complain about judicial activism that has allowed gay marriage and prevented Congress from enforcing the Solomon Act. Wednesday's debate was technically over the qualifications of Priscilla Owen to be appointed to the U.S. 5th Circuit Court. However, the broader debate was over GOP plans to trigger the "nuclear option," so named by Mississippi Republican Trent Lott because of the devastating effect it would have on the Senate. It would prevent the minority party from using the filibuster to block judicial appointments, but to do so the majority party will have to rewrite Senate rules. Brownback said the reason this debate has come up is because many Americans are upset over "judicial activism" by some judges that have changed the definition of marriage; or have blocked Congress' authority to regulate funds in the Solomon Act, which mandates every college receiving federal funds allow military recruiters onto campus. Some schools have objected because they have anti-discrimination policies that are violated by the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. The debate over judges was scheduled to continue for the rest of the week.



U.S. Senator **Sam Brownback** used most of his debate time on Wednesday to discuss gay issues in the context of the debate over the 'nuclear option' being considered by the Senate. If triggered, it would prevent the minority party from filibustering judicial nominees. (Photo by AP)

Calif. gay rights lawsuit set to go before high court

NORTH COUNTY — The California Supreme Court this month is set to hear arguments in a North County lawsuit filed by a lesbian couple against a country club, the North County Times reported. The couple allege that the club denied them the same privileges that it offers married members, but attorneys for the country club argue that state civil rights laws do not require that unmarried couples be treated the same as married couples, the Times reported. The couple, B. Birgit Koebke and Kendal French of Tierrasanta, allege that the Bernardo Heights Country Club in Rancho Bernardo violated state law and discriminated against them due to their sexual orientation and marital status by refusing to allow them to join the club as a family, according to the Times. Without going to trial, a Superior Court ruled for the country club, and a state appeals court later upheld part of that ruling and reversed a portion of it as well, the newspaper reported.

Ruling allows same-sex couples to sue in N.J. for loss of consortium

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — A judge's ruling that a same-sex couple can sue for a loss of consortium could expand rights for gays in New Jersey. Superior Court Judge James S. Rothschild Jr. ruled last week that Judith Peterson and Linda Henry of Fair Lawn can continue their claim against St. Barnabas Health Care System, Clara Maass Medical Center and five individuals. Henry, a former paramedic at Clara Maass in Belleville, claimed she was forced to endure a hostile work environment as a result of her gender and sexual orientation, and suffered retaliation after she reported misconduct by co-workers. Henry said those actions led her to suffer a heart attack and other health problems that led her to neglect Peterson, her partner of nine years. In

legal terms, loss of consortium is defined as the inability of a spouse to engage in normal marital relations. Up to now, only married couples have been permitted to sue for loss of consortium. Peterson and Henry filed an affidavit of domestic partnership last August.

Congressman wants to ban gay library books

WASHINGTON — A bill introduced by Rep. Walter Jones would create local parental boards to review library and classroom-based materials before they are bought for public elementary schools. Jones, a North Carolina Republican, said the goal of the Parental Empowerment Act of 2005 is to help parents take charge of the content available to their young children. Jones said the idea for the bill came from an incident in Wilmington in which young children were given access to a book about a gay marriage between two princes. The school board later restricted access to the book "King and King."

Window Media buys South Florida gay guide

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Window Media, publisher of the Washington Blade, the nation's oldest gay newspaper, and several other gay and lesbian publications in the country recently purchased 411 Magazine, a gay entertainment guide based in South Florida. "We look forward to adding 411 Magazine to the nation's largest publisher of progressive publications serving lesbian and gay communities," William Waybourn, president of Window Media LLC, said in a media statement. "Its readership will help boost our reach to more than 1.5 million readers each month." 411 Magazine is distributed to between 11,000 and 13,000 people throughout several Florida counties and cities.

From staff and wire reports

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national news

Activists confront religious homophobia

By EARTHA MELZER

Recent non-violent protests at Liberty University and Focus on the Family headquarters are test runs for a new Soulforce project that will travel the country to demonstrate against religious and military schools that ban gay men and lesbians, organizers said.

Soulforce, based in Lynchburg, Va., seeks to fight religious and political homophobia through nonviolent resistance as modeled by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.

The organization was founded by Mel White, a Christian minister, author and filmmaker who ghost wrote books for Jerry Falwell, Jim Bakker, Billy Graham and Pat Robertson before coming out as gay in 1993.

In protests at Jerry Falwell's Liberty University in Lynchburg and at James Dobson's Focus on the Family headquarters in Colorado Springs, Colo., White, and Soulforce Youth Director Jake Reitan, worked with activists from across the country to test what Reitan calls a new "take it to the street" style of confronting homophobia.

Their experiment involves identifying the institutions and policies most responsible for spreading hurtful stereotypes and misinformation about gays and lesbians and confronting those organizations.

The first step is to write letters. In the case of Liberty University — where Falwell's 12,000 students are forced to sign pledges condemning homosexuality and attend presentations by "ex-gay" activists — White and

Reitan asked for the opportunity to provide a different, more affirming, perspective to students. In the case of Focus on the Family, White and Reitan asked Dobson to stop hurting families by broadcasting violent claims such as: same-sex parents are unfit, gays want to destroy marriage and homosexuality is a disorder that can be cured. In both cases, the institutions did not respond to written requests, so Soulforce escalated its tactics.

At Liberty University, activists mingled with students and initiated discussions about homosexuality and attempted to donate books on gay and lesbian topics to the school library. At Focus on the Family, activists held a picnic and attempted to hand deliver letters explaining the negative impact of Dobson's claims about homosexuality. Focus on the Family shut down their offices that day, Reitan said.

Reitan said that both actions were successful and prove that Soulforce is now ready to begin organizing a larger campaign of direct action modeled on the Freedom Rides in which students traveled through the South to challenge unconstitutional racial segregation in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Reitan has put together a Web site, www.equalityride.com, and a list of religious and military schools that ban gays and lesbians. He said he is recruiting young adults who are prepared to spend two months next spring travelling the country by bus and engaging schools about their anti-gay policies.

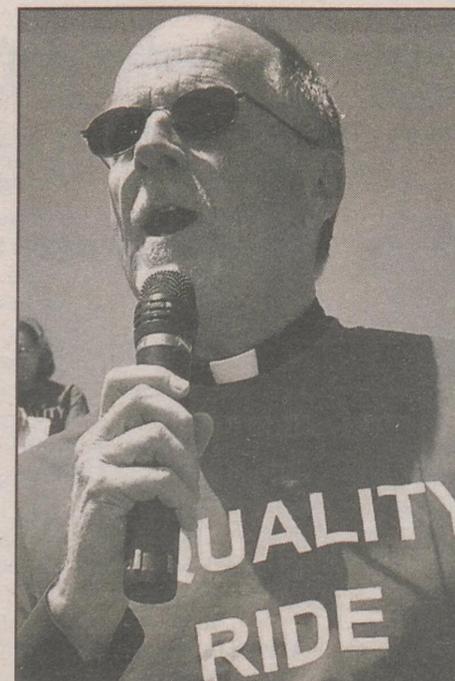
Equality Ride has the support of major gay and lesbian civil rights organizations such as

HRC and the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, officials said. The plan also has vocal support from some of the original Freedom Riders.

"Conservative Christian dogma and its resultant bigotry have been encoded into social customs and codified into laws to deny justice and equality to black Americans and homosexual Americans for centuries," Rodney Powell, a gay man who helped lead the original Freedom Rides, said in a written statement. "The Equality Rides are in keeping with the very best strategies and application of the power of love and nonviolence."

Reitan, a recent graduate of Northwestern University, said he became aware of the need to confront religious schools when a friend of his who was a student at Wheaton College in Illinois explained how he suffered because of that school's policy banning homosexuality. Since he began planning for the Equality Ride, Reitan said, he has received letters from closeted students at religious schools who are looking for help. Reitan said that he expects to visit Brigham Young, West Point, and Wheaton, but that the specific schools will be picked by Equality Riders.

"Professors are required to sign declarations of faith that homosexuality is a sin and the earth is 8,000 years old. They can't talk about evolution," Reitan said. "The basis from which [students] start is so restricted. Fundamentalist colleges are not about the expansion of knowledge, it is about dissemi-



Mel White, founder of the religious gay rights group Soulforce, speaks during a news conference at Liberty University last month. (AP photo by R. David Duncan III/The News & Advance)

nation of their world view."

Equality Ride is using a Google ad campaign so that anytime someone searches for a religious school that has an anti-gay policy, the Equality Ride information comes up.

According to Naomi Schaefer, author of *God on the Quad*, a book about the rise of religious universities, evangelical college enrollment grew 60 percent between 1990 and 2002, while enrollment at other public and private universities remained stagnant.

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national news

Mostly middle-aged gays rushing to marry in Mass.

MARRIAGE, continued from Page 1

constitutional amendment, which cleared the first of two required votes last year, would ban same-sex marriage while legalizing civil unions.

The anniversary celebrations also came at a time when some political pundits have attributed the gay marriage controversy with provoking 13 states into passing constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage in 2004 and prompting at least a dozen more states to consider similar amendments this year. There are now 17 states that have passed constitutional bans on gay marriage, and in some cases, civil unions.

The Connecticut Legislature earlier this year passed a civil unions law for same-sex couples, becoming the only state in the union to adopt such legislation supportive of gay couples since the Massachusetts high court legalized same-sex marriage. Vermont is the only other state with a civil unions law, but the state adopted that law under orders from the Vermont Supreme Court.

Gay rights leaders had mixed views over the impact of the Massachusetts developments, with some saying they would have preferred to have put off the marriage flap until after the 2004 elections.

Conservative religious groups, like the Family Research Council, have said the gay marriage controversy — which came to a head by the Massachusetts developments — played a key role in helping President Bush win election to a second term in office last year. Family Research Council leaders say the gay marriage issue motivated an unprecedented number of evangelical voters to turn out for Bush in Ohio, the state that gave the president his margin of victory by pushing him over the top in Electoral College votes.

Others, like Evan Wolfson, executive director of the gay advocacy group Freedom to Marry, say the court ruling allowing gays to marry in Massachusetts has had an overall positive impact for gay civil rights in general and for marriage rights for gays in particular.

"It has been a year of extraordinary progress in the face of dangerous political developments," Wolfson said. Massachusetts has seen the "reality" of allowing lesbians and gay men to have access to the same institution of marriage enjoyed by their parents, siblings, and neighbors, he said.

Sky hasn't fallen

Using a term that has reverberated throughout Massachusetts, Wolfson and other gay rights supporters note that the "sky hasn't fallen" in the Bay State, despite dire predictions that it would by Republican Governor Mitt Romney and conservative religious leaders.

"As that reality continues to sink in over time," Wolfson said, "hearts and minds will continue to open" on the side of same-sex marriage throughout the country.

While agreeing with Wolfson's assessment, officials with Mass Equality, the statewide gay rights group in Massachusetts, are urging gays in the state against becoming complacent, even though opposition to same-sex marriage rights appears to be receding there.

"On the surface, things appear to be going very well," said Marty Rouse, Mass Equality's campaign director. "There is no tension in the air. There is more interest in the Boston Red Sox than there is in same-sex marriage," he said.

"But when it comes to the legislature, we don't have the votes. Not a single one of the legislators who voted for a gay marriage ban last year has changed their position publicly," he said.

Following a highly emotional debate last summer, a joint session the legislature's two houses — which met in the form of a constitutional convention — voted by a close margin to approve the amendment banning gay marriage and legalizing civil unions. A second vote of approval by a subsequent session of the legislature is required before the amendment goes to voters for final approval.

In the November election, two supporters of the amendment lost while all of those who opposed it won re-election. In addition, three more legislators who oppose the amendment won special elec-

tions since November to fill vacant seats. But according to Rouse, opponents of the amendment need 12 more votes to ensure the amendment's defeat when it comes up again in September and October.

"We need everyone we can get to call their legislators and urge them to vote no," Rouse said.

If the legislature passes the amendment, it must go before the state's voters in 2006 in a statewide referendum.

Polls conducted by the media over the past year have shown the outcome of such a referendum would likely be very close.

U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), who is gay, has said he is hopeful that voters in his state would reject the amendment after having witnessed the effects of same-sex marriage for two full years.

Most people will "wonder what all the fuss is about," Frank said last year.

Crunching numbers

Meanwhile, observers on both sides of the issue have been watching statistics compiled by the Massachusetts office of vital records on the number and type of same-sex couples that have married in the past year.

As of earlier this week, slightly more than 6,100 same-sex couples have wed, the data show, comprising about 17 percent of all of the marriages conducted in the state during the past year.

Data from the vital records office also show that the largest number of marriage certificates went to same-sex couples who were in their 40s, with far fewer going to younger same-sex couples.

Gay activists in the state say they believe same-sex couples that have been together for many years were most likely the ones most interested in getting married as quickly as possible.

In addition, the vital records office data show that the number of same-sex couples getting married each month has declined in succeeding months. Activists say this shows that those who would have married years ago but could not due to the legal ban creating a "bunching" effect during the first few months after legal same-sex marriage became possible. The pace for same-sex couples getting married is likely to mimic that of heterosexual couples,

activists have said.

Mary Bonauto, the attorney who represented the same-sex couples who filed suit to overturn the ban against same-sex marriage in Massachusetts, told the Associated Press that the Massachusetts developments would help advance the cause of same-sex marriage in other states.

"Massachusetts fundamentally changed the question," she said. "Now the question isn't whether gay and lesbian couples should be treated fairly under the law, the question is how and when."

An official with the conservative Christian group Focus on the Family took strong exception to Bonauto's view.

"Gay activists will regret having pushed that limit when they did," Tom Minnery, the group's vice president, told the AP. "It produced the biggest social backlash we've seen in our era."

Wolfson said the assessment by Minnery and other gay rights opponents can't be supported by the facts. Yet he points out many in the news media appear to be accepting it without holding it to scrutiny and "common sense."

According to Wolfson, among the 17 states that passed anti-gay marriage amendments, all but Oregon are hostile to gay civil rights and would never have adopted a measure supportive of same-sex couples for years to come.

"These states were cherry picked by the right wing because they were very conservative to begin with," he said. He said other states expected to pass anti-gay marriage amendments this year are similarly conservative and hostile to gays.

He acknowledged that approval of these amendments makes it more difficult for gay rights to move ahead in certain states, since the amendments must be repealed before marriage rights can be advanced. But their passage would have little practical effect in states like Mississippi, where same-sex couples had little or no rights anyway, Wolfson said.

"This wave of right wing attacks was well under way before Massachusetts," he said. "The right wing back-lashed before we lashed."



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Atwood and Comeaux, together again for a good cause

A legendary Houston musical duo reunites to raise money for Bering Omega Community Services

By DAWN RORIE

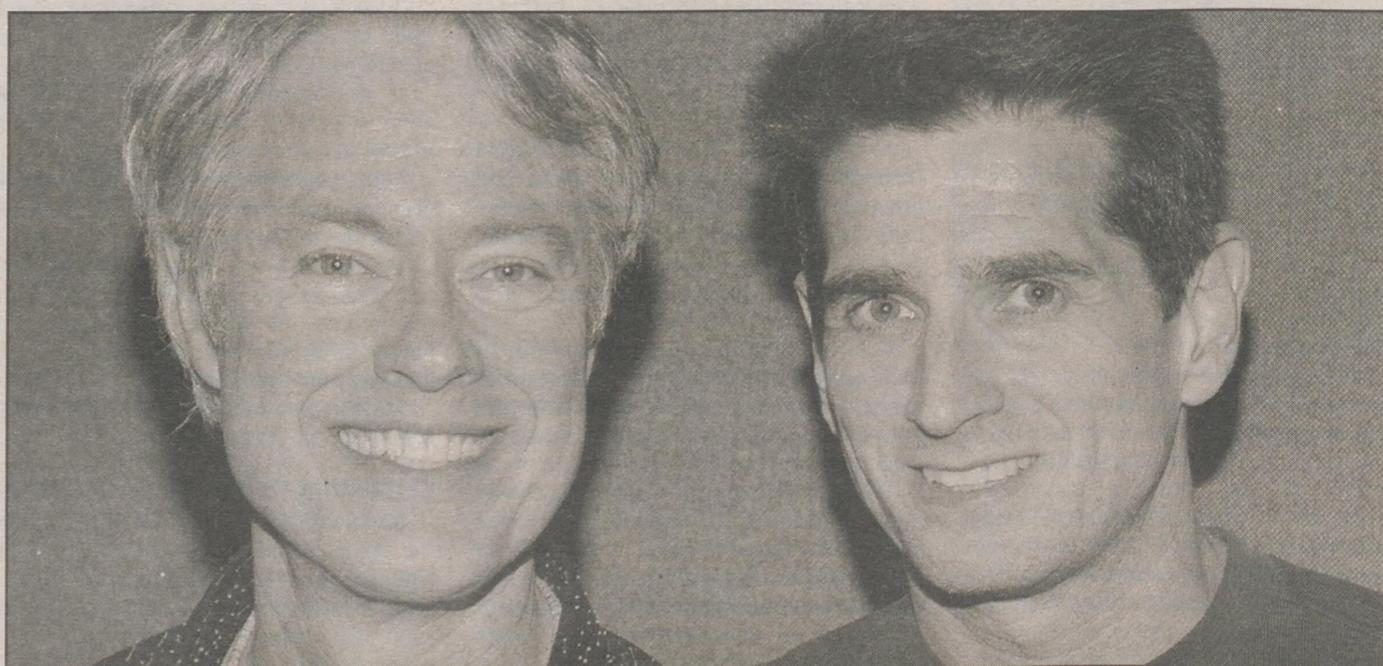
Anyone who was anyone on the Houston nightclub scene in the late '80s and early '90s knew Atwood and Comeaux. The musical duo took the Houston music scene by storm before they went their separate ways about a decade ago.

However, fans of the group need lament no more: Atwood and Comeaux are back, preparing to wow audiences and get them on their feet again. Best of all, it's all for a good cause.

After a ten-year hiatus, Jerry Atwood and Ricky Comeaux will reunite for a performance at the Diana Awards Show this Saturday. Their official reunion concerts, however, will be on Friday, June 3 and Saturday, June 4 at Ovations in the Rice Village. Proceeds from the events will go to Bering Omega Community Services, a local non-profit organization that helps people living with HIV/AIDS.

Atwood and Comeaux are hardly new to the charity event scene. The list of the organizations that have benefited from the duo's involvement with charity fundraisers includes the names of around 175 different organizations, including the End Hunger Network, the Hermann Foundation, the March of Dimes, the Chrons and Colitis Foundation and many AIDS-related causes such as DIFFA and Bering Omega.

The duo has performed at the Wortham Center, Jones Hall and the grand opening of the George R. Brown Convention center in 1986. They have worked with Kenny G, Rich Little and



The musical twosome of Jerry Atwood (left) and Ricky Comeaux are reuniting for three shows that will benefit Bering Omega Community Services. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

Billy Stritch and have performed for a list of celebrities that includes Brooke Shields, Cloris Leachman and former President and Mrs. Bush.

Looking back at the past 20 years, the duo can hardly believe what an amazing ride it has been.

According to Ricky Comeaux, what is now Atwood and Comeaux started out as a few friends who loved to play music and wanted to get together to jam. As time passed by and other participants in their impromptu jam sessions moved away or began focusing on other things, Atwood and Comeaux began performing as a twosome.

Comeaux played the keyboards and sang, and Atwood, who has been described as a "one-man band," sang and played the other instruments.

"All of a sudden, before I knew it, we were working everywhere and doing all of this fun, cool stuff," remembers Comeaux.

The group began playing at birthday parties, bar mitzvahs, cabarets, nightclubs—anywhere that booked duos and trios. From the local Steak and Ale to Baja Sam's and the Post Oak Grill, the group was appearing virtually everywhere.

In addition to the many charity events that the twosome performed at over the years, they also contributed to "Voices for Life," a recording project co-founded by Comeaux.

\$100,000 raised

The project, says Comeaux, was "a local equivalent of the 'We Are the World' project" and featured local groups, celebrities and the Houston Symphony. All together, the album raised just over \$100,000 for local AIDS charities.

Finally, after 14 years of performing together and raising an amazing amount of money for various charities, Jerry

Atwood and Ricky Comeaux went their separate ways.

Atwood stayed in Houston, working as an electrical engineer and continuing with his music career. In addition to performing at various charity events, Atwood is the founder of "A Christmas Songfest," a tax-exempt charitable organization that has raised over a half-million dollars for local HIV/AIDS groups through its annual Christmas gala.

After moving to Louisville and then Reno, Comeaux retired from singing and accepted the position of executive director at the Nevada Opera Association, which was struggling for survival at the time.

Comeaux took the dying opera company and steered it back onto the road to success. He moved to L.A. and served as vice president of the Los Angeles Stage Alliance and editor of its L.A. Stage magazine before returning to Houston for good.

Over the years, Atwood and Comeaux's wide variety of music and energetic shows have created a diverse group of fans and loyal followers. Comeaux woos the audience with his vocals as Atwood furiously works several keyboards and synthesizers at once.

The men perform everything from musical theater pieces by Andrew Lloyd Webber to songs made famous by Elton John and Ray Charles. The twosome was once well known for its "The Phantom of the Opera" performances at Ovations. Audiences would watch in awe as Comeaux emerged in a "phantom" cape and mask, passionately perform a segment from the musical and suddenly disappear in a puff of smoke.

Simply said: an Atwood and Comeaux show has something to please everyone. "The only thing we won't do is rap, acid

rock and opera—although I worked at an opera company, not to worry, I will not sing any opera arias," jokes Comeaux.

Even more amazing than their musical skills is their continued willingness to help out with local charity organizations. It has been a fulfilling experience for both to use their musical talents to help raise money for worthy causes in the Houston community.

Bering Omega Community Services, which will be the sole beneficiary for Atwood and Comeaux's performances, has assisted the HIV/AIDS community for almost twenty years through its dental clinic, adult day care center, financial assistance program and residential hospice. Bering Omega helps an average of 2,600 clients per year and touches the lives of one in three people living with HIV/AIDS in the Houston/Harris county area.

Steve Dixon, who is currently the tour manager for Alicia Keys and Houston resident and long-time Bering Omega supporter Hilary Duff, will also perform at the Ovations reunion event. Dixon left Houston in 1994 to manage musical tours for the likes of The Judds, Britney Spears, *NSYNC, Barry Manilow and many others.

Roger Woest, a Bering Omega board member, ensured that a hundred percent of proceeds go to Bering Omega by paying to secure the use of Ovations for the June performances. Woest also underwrote the cost of Caring Cabaret, a Bering Omega benefit last week at Ovations.

Ricky Comeaux hopes that people will attend the shows whether they are old fans of the group or folks who just want to support a local charity while being entertained. "It really is a low-cost, no-brainer way to support a very worthy organization," he says.

MORE INFO

52nd Annual Diana Awards Show
An Evening at the Moulin Rouge
7 p.m. Saturday
Bella Terraza
2840 Chimney Rock
713-668-3909

Atwood & Comeaux Reunion Concert
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out in houston

(Photos by Dalton DeHart)



The Gay Men's Chorus Houston performed recently in a program titled 'Razzle Dazzle.'



At the Out at TUTS event following a performance of 'Peter Pan,' John Painter (left) and Tracy Silverberg got the opportunity to meet the star of the show, Cathy Rigby.



The cast of 'Peter Pan' posed for a photo during the Out at TUTS event following a recent performance.



Alfred Trevino drives one down centerfield during Montrose Softball League play last week.



Marion Coleman (left) and Trudy Denny, reminisced recently during the recent Kindred Spirits Reunion, remembering a popular women's club once owned by Coleman.



After the Caring Cabaret at Ovations that benefited Bering Omega Community Services, the performers gathered for a photo.



Houston City Controller Annise Parker tips her hat to the crowd during the recent Art Car Parade.



Tricia Lynn (right) presents a check from a fundraiser by Unhinged Productions to Ken Malone, executive director of the Assistance Fund.



Janie Lopez (left) and Alton LaDay thanked Julia's Bistro owner Carmen Vasquez for opening up the restaurant for the Human Rights Campaign's recent volunteer appreciation event.

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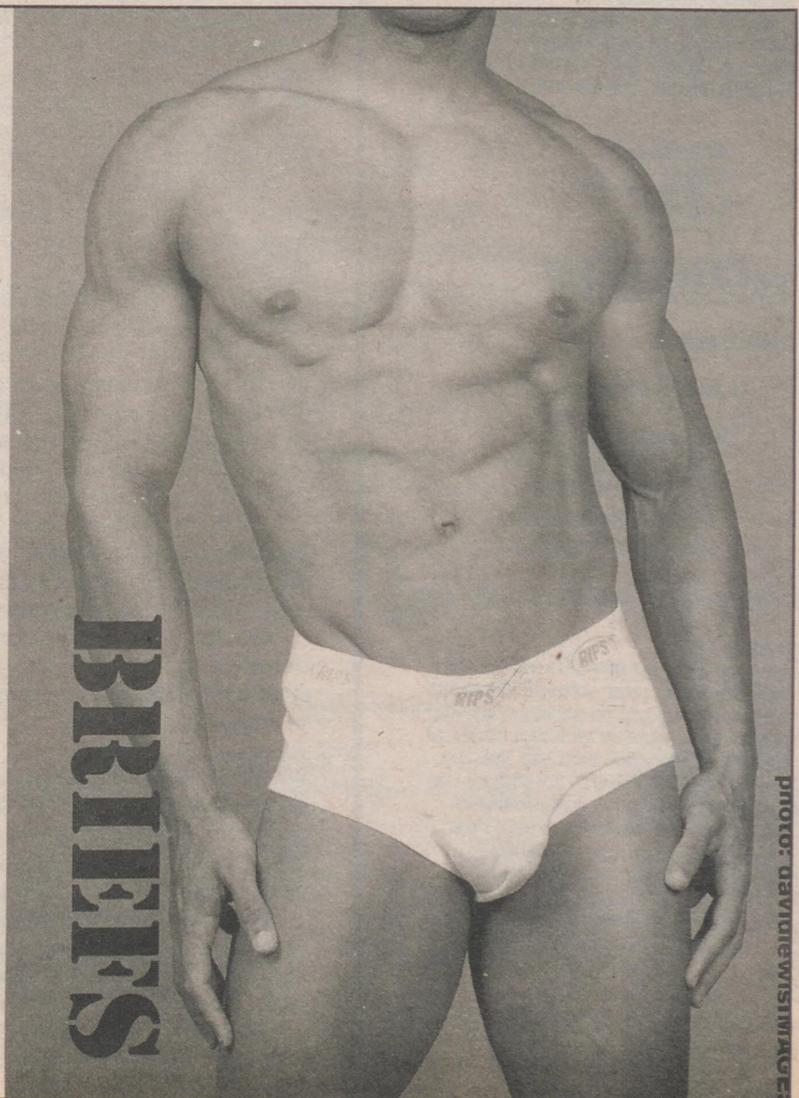
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Forum

HOUSTON VOICE

MAY 20, 2005

PAGE 10

editorial

Complicity in hypocrisy

The closeted, anti-gay mayor of Spokane had accomplices shielding the divide between public policy and 'private life.'

By MUBARAK DAHIR

HYPOCRISY WAS THE word of the day when the *Spokesman-Review*, a daily newspaper in Spokane, Wash., recently published the findings of a three-year investigative effort

that proved the mayor there led a secret gay life.

But the burden of hypocrisy isn't reserved alone for Mayor James E. West, the 54-year-old Republican with a history of fervently anti-gay political behavior. In two decades of political deceit in which West was a zealous opponent of gay rights, he had plenty of accomplices to help him keep his tawdry little secret.

Today, in Mr. West's downfall, at least part of the shock should be reserved for those who waited so long to publicly ask the most basic questions.

Those who should be questioned include a political system that long knew of the anti-gay politician's private life but chose to look the other way; a cowed gay community that dared not cross a powerful political foe; and even the newspaper that eventually ended up exposing West — but only when the charges against him included abuse of minors.

"It's the worst-kept secret in Washington [state] politics," Christian Sinderman, a top Democratic political consultant, told the *Spokesman-Review*.

Why, then, was Jim West never questioned about how his public policies deviated so drastically from his apparently well-known private life?

WEST GAVE THE POLITICAL establishment, gay activists and journalists plenty of opportunity to question how he could be so publicly homophobic while leading a closeted gay life.

As far back as 1983, when West was elected to the Washington state House, he aligned himself with conservatives specifically by taking extreme public stands on hot-button social issues — including gay rights.

In 1985, West was among the state's

most vocal politicians in criticizing then-Gov. Booth Gardner for issuing an executive order banning discrimination in state hiring based on sexual orientation.

In 1986, West was one of 15 Republicans who sponsored a bill that would have prohibited gay men and lesbians from working in schools, day-care centers and some state agencies. The bill included provisions for screening for gays, and firing employees whose sexual orientation became known.

Later in 1986, West voted against the state issuing pamphlets that contained safer sex information to help people protect themselves from HIV. He called the safer-sex information "something people go buy at dirty bookstores."

When West was elected to the state Senate and became one of the Republican Party's most powerful leaders, he repeatedly and vocally opposed civil rights measures that would have expanded state protections in jobs and housing to include sexual orientation.

In the 1990s, West publicly clashed with an openly gay senator from Seattle, who tried to get a statewide gay anti-discrimination bill passed.

In 1998, West voted for the state's Defense of Marriage Act, which prohibits same-sex marriage.

In 2003, West initially forced the sponsor of a Senate resolution honoring women on International Women's Day to withdraw the decree because it called for recognizing women "of all races and sexual preferences." West publicly and heatedly objected to the inclusion of sexual preference.

And most recently, as mayor of Spokane, West threatened to veto a measure passed by the city council to extend domestic partner benefits to city employees. Luckily, the city council passed the law with a 5-2 vote, strong enough to withstand a veto.

ALL THIS, AND YET NO ONE HAD THE nerve to stand up and publicly ask the deceitful politician how he squared his public policy positions with his private life?

"We decided his personal life wasn't germane because his private life is his private

life," said Sinderman, the highly placed Democratic consultant, in an interview with the *Spokesman-Review*, which had asked why the campaign of Laurie Dolan, who challenged West in the mayoral election, chose not to raise the gay issue. "It's not a public issue unless it involves the abuse of power."

Dean Lynch, a former Spokane city councilmember and the town's first openly gay elected official, told the newspaper that the gay community there had "general knowledge that Jim West is a closeted gay man," but that no one acted on it because of "the tremendous power that he wields."

Even the newspaper that eventually told the truth about West did so only after there was a question of whether West sought out sex with underage men, and used his position to offer favors to young men he courted online.

THE MAYOR'S WEB OF DECEIT unraveled when, over the past three months, he chatted online with a Gay.com buddy who identified himself as a 17-year-old.

The young man turned out to be fictional. The newspaper had hired a computer consultant to create the fictional teenager's profile, and over a three-month period, the make-believe gay youth traded flirtatious online chats and instant messages with the mayor.

In earlier exchanges with another, different fictional young man — this one who said he was 18 years old — the mayor offered up an internship.

In the extensive expose and editor's notes detailing the mayor's exchanges with fictional young men and teenagers, the *Spokesman-Review* stressed that the issue with the mayor was not his homosexuality, but his abuse of power.

Current city councilmembers who were interviewed since the story broke have expressed shock at the fact that the mayor used city computers to talk to guys online.

And yet all of this time, no one in all of these circles of power and activism have thought it was somehow wrong that James West was lying to the public through his political agenda? It never struck anyone as immoral that a closeted homosexual was an attack-dog against gay rights?

Since when isn't political hypocrisy relevant? It never crossed anyone's mind that James West was using his political might to hurt unknown thousands of gays across the state simply to cover up his own duplicity?

That is a far more egregious abuse of power than trolling for sex from a make-believe man on Gay.com.

@ Mubarak Dahir is editor of the Express Gay News and can be reached at mdahir@express-gaynews.com

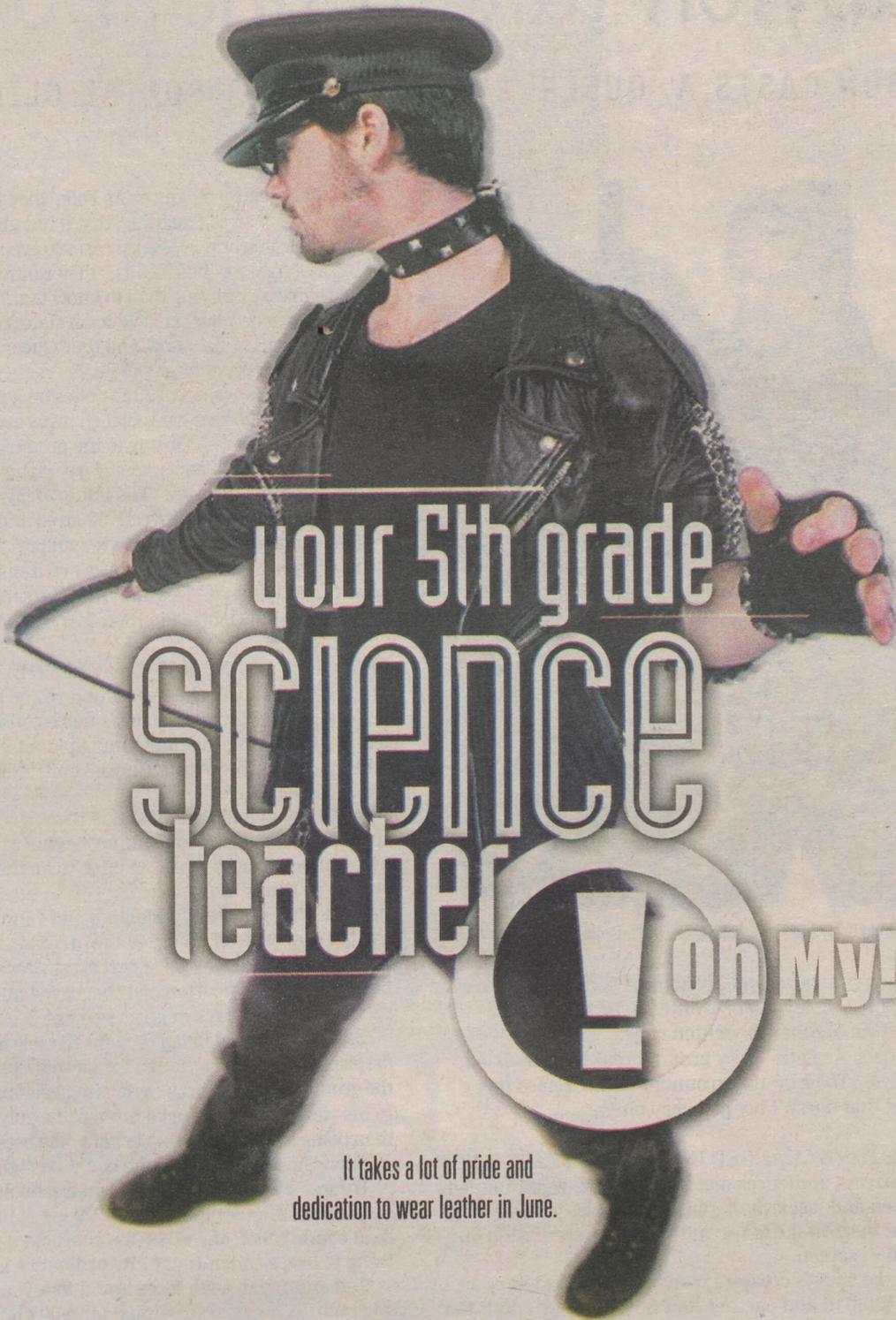




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whores of babylon take a final bow

SHOWTIME SERIES' FINAL SEASON CASTS A 'QUEER' EYE ON PRESENT SOCIAL CLIMATE

By MIKE FLEMING

VIEWERS HAVE COME TO KNOW THE motley family of choice that makes up Showtime's "Queer As Folk," but the anticipation that precedes each new season is bittersweet for fans this year.

As the latest season of trials, tribulations and triumphs kicks off May 22, it comes with the knowledge that there won't be any cliffhangers after the season finale this summer. Producers are calling it quits after five years of the gay soap opera that even its critics call one of the most groundbreaking shows in TV history.

"It was a significant piece of work," co-producer Daniel Lipman says. "Through all the jabs and jeers and cheers, we couldn't be prouder."

Even gay jaws dropped in 2000 when Showtime's highly anticipated series opened with graphic gay sex scenes. Unflinching depictions of sex, between committed and anonymous partners as well as drug-hazed groups, remain one of the show's hallmarks.

"For the first time, we wanted to show gay people complete, whole — and that included having an active sex life," says Lipman, who along with partner Ron Cowen adapted the British series for American television. "Did that ever bother people — both straight and gay!"

"Folk" tackled other gay issues, such as gay bashings, HIV serodiscordant relationships, crystal meth, intolerance and discrimination, and gay parenting.

The show refused to be politically correct. The producers had to take some heat from gay critics who said they were doing a disservice to the gay rights movement by depicting negative aspects of gay life.

"Sure, there are plenty of monogamous couples and gay people having children, biologically or through adoption. They're reflected on our show," Lipman says. "But people wish to deny there's also promiscuity and drug use. Wake up, folks."

Breaking new ground was exactly what drew veteran actress Sharon Gless to her role as smart-mouthed, big-hearted PFLAG mom Debbie Novotny, she says: "I understand a lot of people's lives have been changed because of this show."

Years after "Cagney & Lacey" set a new standard for female characters on television — and garnered Gless



Gale Harold (left) and Hal Sparks take a final stroll along Liberty Avenue.

two Emmy Awards and six nominations as detective Christine Cagney — she wanted to be there as TV turned yet another unwritten page.

"Queer As Folk" "was groundbreaking television," she says. "To be on two groundbreaking series in a career, that doesn't happen very often."

TIMES HAVE CHANGED IN THE FIVE YEARS SINCE mainstream audiences met the complex, well-rounded gay men and lesbians of "Queer As Folk" and gay viewers got their first dose of full-scale representation on the small screen.

As the show's creators ready for their baby's swan song, Lipman and partner Ron Cowen freely admit the public perception and political standing of gay people has changed during the run of the show. "Folk" reflected — and may have affected — those changes, he says.

"We have heard from our straight viewers that before 'Queer As Folk,' they had no idea what gay people were like," Cowen and Lipman say in a written statement. "Now they do."

"We have heard from many, many young gay people who

tell us that because of 'Queer As Folk,' they no longer feel so alone or full of self-loathing, that it has given them the courage to come out, in several cases to even take legal action and fight for their rights," they continue. "Nothing could be more gratifying than to know that."

The Supreme Court struck down state sodomy laws during the run of the show, and the "Queer As Folk" producers cite the onset of gay-inclusive reality programming and gay networks as milestones on a path they laid.

But not all the real-life social changes over five years were for the better, according to the producers. "With the last election, the advancement of gay rights has taken a severe setback," they say. "The issue of gay marriage has ignited an explosion of invective hatred and prejudice."

State and federal officials, with support from the president, are taking action to make gay citizens second-class, according to Lipman and Cowen. And the show's creators intend to go out fighting in their last season.

PERSONAL DRAMAS STILL FORM THE CRUX OF the last season. But the lives and loves of the characters are distinctly framed in today's more conservative political environment, including multiple references to "that fucker in the White House" and "nutcase religious conservatives."

As Michael and Ben gravitate toward a life in the suburbs, their foster son Hunter begins to fit in at his high school. Emmett gets an offer to be the local news station's "Queer Guy," offering tips to heterosexual men (in Pittsburgh, no less!). Melanie and Lindsay are seeing the downside of married life: divorce. Club Babylon is closed to make way for a real estate development, signaling the gentrification of Liberty Avenue and the end of all those cute boys in go-go shorts.

Surprise: Cynical Brian remains the sole holdout. He despises the "homogenization" of gay culture, and he sees the group's acclimation as caving to conservative pressure. In his view, the others are becoming "the only thing worse than being a heterosexual — being a fake heterosexual."

Soon the gang sees that he could be right.

Hunter's world is shattered when schoolmates discover his past. Emmett realizes the TV gig is little more than comic relief, and all of the characters have something to lose as an anti-gay city ordinance is proposed.

Ted and Brian each faces aging in a youth-obsessed gay culture, a gay professional athlete, and a gay member of Congress. Wow! It's clear Cowen and Lipman plan to keep their collective finger on the pulse of gay issues all the way to the end.

Spoilers? Seek ye elsewhere. Hint: Before the inevitable end-of-series resolution, everyone questions themselves, each other, their pasts and their futures before going out with a bang. Literally.

Binnie Fisher contributed to this report.

i MORE INFO

'QUEER AS FOLK'
Sundays at 9 p.m.
beginning May 22
Showtime

THEY DANCE: Dominic Walsh and dance troupe reflect on their most popular works. Page 14

MEN, MEN, MEN: Actor James Black directs an all male cast in the Alley's 'Glengarry Glen Ross.' Page 15



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A dance 'Encore!'

THE DOMINIC WALSH DANCE

Theater is presenting "Encore!" an evening of the company's most celebrated works, to culminate its 2004 and 2005 inaugural season on May 20 and 21 at 8 p.m. at the Wortham Center in the Cullen Theater.

"Encore!" is a celebration of the company's achievements since our world premiere in February, 2003. With this show, we look back at DWDT's accomplishments since its inception. The show will have something for everyone," says Walsh.

There are two people in particular that will be looking forward to "Encore!" During the season finale, Walsh will premier "For The Two of You," an original work he choreographed for his friends and company members, Julie Gumbinner and Lucas Priolo, as a wedding gift.

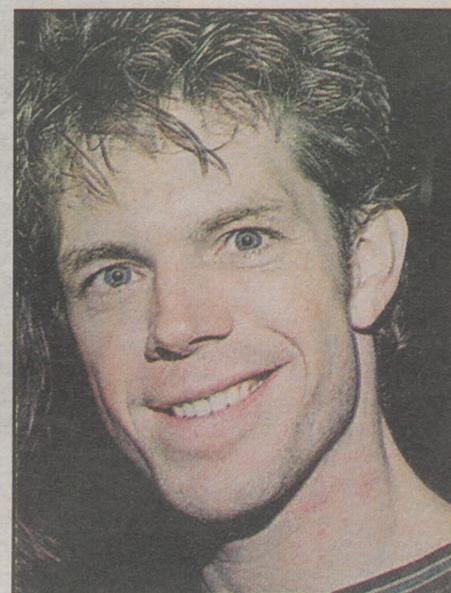
Walsh collaborated with Antoine Plante, artistic director of Mercury Baroque, to create this special piece.

In November 2003, Gumbinner and Priolo were performing the lead roles in "Cinderella" at Miller Outdoor Theatre. Just before the show, Lucas proposed to Julie. As the couple awaited their encore, Lucas produced a pillow that carried a ring of his personal design. When the curtain opened, Lucas fell to one knee and presented Julie with the engagement ring.

This is the second collaboration between Walsh and Plante on original work. The two artists have formed a symbiotic working relationship and have found that their two art forms are quite complimentary. "It is easy for us to work together. We share the same sensibility and approach about creating art," explains Plante.

"ENCORE!" INCLUDES CHOREOGRAPHY by Walsh and international choreographers whose innovative choreographic voices add variety to the bustling Houston dance landscape.

Asked who in the dance world inspires him, the openly gay Walsh says, "There are many brilliant, beautiful, troubling and thought provoking works out there



Gay dancer and choreographer Dominic Walsh reprises some of his company's most memorable works in an upcoming performance. (Photo by Dalton Dehart)

that have simultaneously inspired and humbled me. Jiri Kylian's 'Petite Mort' is a gem on every level, Mats Ek's 'Solo for Two' and Ohad Naharin's 'Minus One.' Christopher Bruce's 'Cruel Garden.' These have all had a powerful impression on me finding my own voice."

"Ben Stevenson's, (who served as artistic director of Houston Ballet from 1976-2003) theater craft, in the way he can tell the classics through classical ballet as the medium for communication, has taught me so much. Stevenson's "Peer Gynt" stands out in my mind. Communication is narrow and shallow right now I feel. I am inspired by any form of honest communication," Walsh says.

The program for "Encore!" includes "Flames of Eros," created for Houston Ballet by Walsh; "Katharsis", with live music by the Terrence Karn Consortium; "Bed Fears, Dream Piles" and "2 & 1 for Mr. B," created in honor of George Balanchine by Spaniard Gustavo Ramirez Sansano to an original composition by Luis Felipe Serrano and Alejandro Delgado.

On opening night, a reception will follow the performance. Bailey Banks & Biddle has generously donated an exquisite Tahitian pearl and diamond necklace to DWDT, which will be given away in a raffle fundraiser. The winner will be announced at the Friday reception. Raffle tickets are available at www.dwdt.org.

There will be a question and answer session after each show.

i MORE INFO

'Encore!'
8 p.m. Friday and Saturday
Wortham Center
550 Prairie St.
Performance tickets:
315-515-2525 or www.thehobbycenter.org
Raffle tickets:
www.dwdt.org

theater DON MAINES



In his 16th season, veteran actor James Black directs the all-male cast of 'Glengarry Glen Ross' and laments a hero's passing.

It's raining men!

AT THE ALLEY THEATRE, IT'S RAINING men! That is, at least on the Arena Stage, where David Mamet's "Glengarry Glen Ross" is playing with its all-male cast.

Upstairs on the main stage, it's a different story and a different gender represented. There, the all-female cast of Robert Harling's "Steel Magnolias" (directed by actress Judith Ivey) is holding court.

Master and commander of the men is director James Black, a resident company actor who is taking a respite from a busy year of choice roles to direct Mamet's comedy-drama about salesman in a fly-by-night real estate office.

After "Glengarry Glen Ross" closes, the theater plans to stage Ira Levin's "Deathtrap," a suspense drama that features an ambitious gay playwright, in the Alley's "Summer Chills" festival.

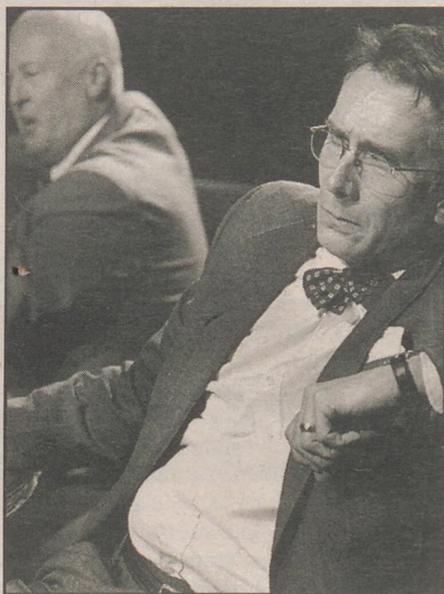
THE PRODUCTION OF "GLENGARRY Glen Ross" celebrates the 20th anniversary of its Pulitzer Prize win for best drama. On Thursday, there will be a post-performance "Talk-Back" in which the audience will be encouraged to stay and discuss the performance. Black expects the main topic to be the play's "newfound relevance."

"In a post-Enron world, especially in Houston, you can see how the play really is a microcosm of the cesspool of capitalism," he says. "It's much like how 'The Crucible' (which the late Arthur Miller wrote as a parable of McCarthyism) mirrors our current political climate."

Miller passed away on Feb. 10, just four days after Black completed a bravura run in Miller's play, "After the Fall," and two weeks before Black reprised his role as John Proctor in the Alley's encore production of "The Crucible."

"It was heartbreaking," Black remembers. "His literary manager had come down to see 'After the Fall,' and he returned to tell Arthur Miller what a great production it was. Arthur Miller was thrilled because he hadn't ever seen a great production of 'After the Fall.' So he decided that he would come to Houston to see 'The Crucible.'"

"I was so looking forward to the opportunity to shake hands with a hero," Black says. "It seems like every time I get near



James Belcher (left) is Dave Moss and Todd Waite is George Aaronow in the Alley Theatre's production of 'Glengarry Glen Ross.' Photo by John Everett

an Arthur Miller play, I grow as an artist."

BLACK'S ARTISTRY HAS TAKEN HIM from "the high school drama gig" growing up in La Porte to 16 seasons at the Alley and opportunities to star on Broadway and London's West End.

Five years ago, Alley artistic director Gregory Boyd began letting Black take the helm as director, beginning with Douglas Carter Beane's comedy fable, "As Bees in Honey Drown."

"I really, really enjoyed it," Black smiles. He even got to direct his wife, actress, Shelly Calene-Black ("I'm the hyphen," he quips), a Houston girl whom he met at the Alley when they both appeared in Bertold Brecht's "Jungle of the Cities."

"Directing, you get to be part psychologist, part minister," he laughs, "and part cheerleader."

He adds, "My strength as a director is being very understanding of the actor's process and the challenges and foibles of being an actor," Black explains. "I learned from the great director Trevor Nunn — who directed me in London and on Broadway in (Tennessee Williams') 'Not About Nightingales' — to let actors find their own way and take over their own performance so that it feels self-generated, very organic. I don't like to be too result-oriented."

Although Black is mum on details of the Alley's new season, he says the schedule will be announced any day now and that he will be "busy acting" in his 17th year at Houston's preeminent theater.

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Flavors pop when veggies and spices are wrapped up in a whole-wheat tortilla, and there's even a little fish to be found on the menu at oh-so healthy Field of Greens

Feeling so healthy

I FEEL SO HEALTHY. I'VE JUST finished lunch at Field of Greens, a new, mostly vegetarian restaurant in the Upper Kirby District. The food is fresh, well prepared, and oh so good. What a bonus that it's nutritious as well.

Field of Greens is the reincarnation of the former Soya Café on Blalock. Some of the same menu items appear, and the same focus on quality vegetarian dishes is still apparent. The menu is mostly vegetarian, with plenty of vegan options, and a few fish dishes for the non-vegetarians.

It's a simple place. You order at the counter and they bring the food to your table. The walls are done in a soothing sage green and low-key jazz music adds to the relaxing ambience.

Be sure to try the soups (\$3.95/\$5.95). They're innovative, all vegetarian and change daily. The black bean and broccoli soup has a tomato broth base, with loads of cumin to spice it up. Black beans and chunks of broccoli add texture, but overall the soup is light and soothing.

The organic millet and vegetable soup is thicker, loaded with vegetables, and has a hint of curry. It too is surprisingly light, but filling enough for a meal. The soups come with crackers on the side.

The vegetarian chicken fried steak sandwich (\$7.95) is made with okara, the soy pulp that's left over after making soymilk or tofu. It's deep fried, tempura style, and served on a bun with lettuce, tomato and an herbed mayonnaise. It didn't really taste like chicken-fried steak to me, but it was still delicious.

The falafel burger (\$6.95), an occasional special, was a nice change from traditional falafel. Spicy falafel flattened into a patty was served on a whole-wheat bun with tomato, sprouts and a tangy yogurt sauce. It zinged with flavor.

Non-vegetarians might want to try the super tuna sandwich (\$6.95), made with diced apple, chopped pecans and served on wholewheat pita bread.

I wanted to try it too, but instead I ended up with the vegan chicken salad sandwich (\$6.95) by mistake. It's a tasty mix of tempeh, pickles, onions and egg-less mayonnaise, served on spouted wheat bread and I thoroughly enjoyed it, despite the mix up.

FIELD OF GREENS HAS ONLY BEEN open a few weeks, and they're still working out some of the kinks. Ordering mix-ups happened to me twice, so be sure to check both your order ticket and your food when it arrives.

Communication between the kitchen

Field of Greens
Healthy Cuisine

and the counter staff needs fine tuning, as we were told something couldn't be prepared when in fact it was available. An additional person at the counter would help too - the same person takes orders, serves food, and handles take out customers. As a result, service can be a bit scattered.

Nonetheless, the staff is very friendly and helpful. Any errors are quickly rectified, and every effort is made to be sure the customer is happy. As the restaurant gains its footing, no doubt things will smooth out.

The portion sizes at Field of Green are generous. The meal-sized green spinach salad (\$7.50) was topped with onion, radish and perfectly grilled asparagus, and tossed with a rich, garlicky dressing. Two of us split it and still had enough left over to take home.

If you're really hungry, try a main dish. The vegetarian fajitas (\$8.95) come with strips of marinated and grilled wheat roast, a hearty substitute for meat. Grilled peppers and onions, guacamole, and an interesting, sour pico de gallo make up the toppings, while beans and rice and wholewheat tortillas round out the meal. All the ingredients were fresh, and the flavors popped. It's a real meal.

Field of Greens is probably the best vegetarian restaurant in town. Fresh, healthy ingredients and innovative dishes put to rest the notion that vegetarian food is boring. With a few fish dishes thrown in, there's something for everyone.

If you treat yourself to a meal at Field of Greens, chances are you'll feel healthy too.

Field of Greens
2320 W. Alabama
713-533-0029

Food: 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 1/2
Service: 10 | 10 | 10 | 1/2
Value: 10 | 10 | 10 | 10
Scene: 10 | 10 | 10 | 10

☛ = Stay home and eat cereal
10 | 10 = Well, if you really must
10 | 10 | 10 = Fine for all but the finicky
10 | 10 | 10 | 10 = Worth more than a 20-minute drive
10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 = As good as you'll find in this city

nitelife JOHNNY HOOKS



Kristine W's back in town, the lights, the sound of the new Rich's, a Pride unveiling, Iowa Jill and a new men's underwear shop.

Rich's is back!

IF YOU CAN WRENCH YOURSELF away from all the **Star Wars** hype this weekend, your choices of things to do are plenty! HoVo on the Go-Go returns to help you decide!

A COUPLE OF MENTIONS BEFORE WE get started. Thanks to **David from Conroe** (as he is known) for lunch at **Mykonos**. He sent two gift certificates to our Executive Editor Chris Crain, after his recent gay bashing in Amsterdam. But since Crain resides in Washington, David suggested the staff of the Voice enjoy. He's sending along something that Chris can enjoy in D.C.

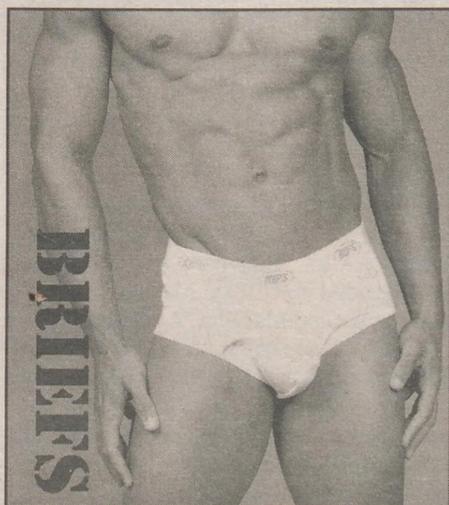
JILL JORDAN HEADS TO DALLAS this weekend for the **Miss Gay US of A Classic Pageant**, being held at S-4. She'll be representing the great state of Iowa. Iowa? However you get there, girl. Good luck, Jill!

OPENINGS AND A NOTABLE CLOSING are also the buzz for this weekend.

Club Rainbow, the lesbian bar on the curve is no more. After a recent piece on a local TV station (damn you sweeps!) reported underage drinking and other violations, the owners closed the doors. A sign says they will be back at a new location and at a later date.

MALE UWEAR, A NEW STORE located at **415 Westheimer**, next to **Crossover Gifts**, is celebrating a Grand Opening Saturday. This is the Montrose's newest shop for underwear, t-shirts, swimwear, jewelry, cologne and other fun things for men, much needed since the closing of **Basic Brothers**. Join them for snacks at Saturday's Grand Opening and register to win a \$100 gift certificate. Check out local fabulous photographer **David Lewis'** delicious picture at the top of the column! The model is **Alain Flambert**. These images will be around the store to direct customers to the various products. Whatever he's selling, HotGG is buying!

THE MOST ANTICIPATED OPENING this weekend, though, is the return of **Richs-Houston!** People are coming in from as far away as New Orleans, Dallas and Oklahoma for this long awaited event. As you all know, dance diva **Kristine W** is performing all of her number-one hits on Saturday. If you have not gotten your tickets, you better hurry. This will sell out. Hear the new sound system imported from London, see the new light show and experience the energy of hot **DJ Mark D** (XM Satellite Radio resident). All online ticket holders qualify for **express entry** privileges. Owner **Nassim Joseph**, always the



Whatever he's selling, HotGG is buying.

giver, will proudly donate a portion of door proceeds to select GLBT charitable organizations. Remember 21 and up only! Doors at 9 p.m. Dance till 5 a.m. Yes HotGG will be there giving away "Dynasty: The Complete Season One" DVD's and the Pride issue of sister publication **Genre Magazine**.

SPEAKING OF PRIDE, ITS NEXT month you know. The **PRIDE.05 Magazine Release Party** is also **Saturday**. Grab your copy of **PRIDE.05**, the official magazine of Houston's Pride Celebration, before it hits the streets. Pride Houston will be hosting the magazine release party from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. on Saturday, at **Meteor, 2306 Genesee**. Join the party (before dashing to Rich's) to visit with friends and fellow community members who are featured in **PRIDE.05**.

THIS YEAR'S PUBLICATION IS OVER 300 pages and contains information on our Houston Pride Celebration and events, spotlights on community organizations, "day in the life of" segments on people in our community, an up-to date-community resource guide of web listings, photos of last year's events and much more!

FINALLY, IF YOU ARE NOT TOO pooped to party (yeah right) finish the night off with the boyz. **The Spoiled Boyz** that is! The May after-hours party is Saturday, following the Grand Re-Opening of Rich's Houston.

Doors open 3:30 a.m. \$15 advance tickets available at **M2M Fashion** on Montrose.

@ If you have any club announcements or events, email them to jhooks@houstonvoice.com or call 713-529-8490. See you on the Go-Go!

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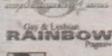
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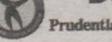
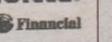
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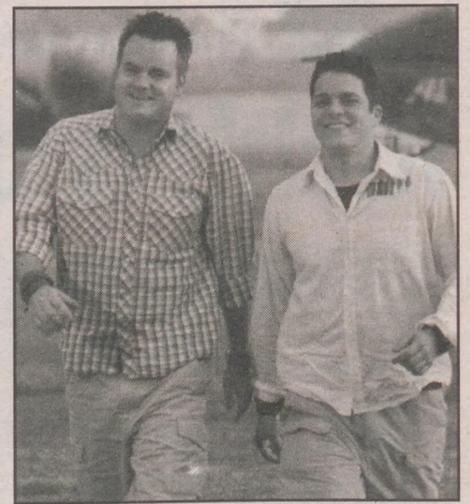

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There's a Fine Line Between Telling the Truth and Talking Trash

'Race' relations

Lynn and Alex get hitched, 'Alexander' gets slashed and Kylie gets bad news



Gay couple Lynn Warren (left) and Alex Ali, who were on the latest season of CBS' 'The Amazing Race,' are getting married in Canada.

They may not have been the first duo to cross the finish line, but gay couple LYNN WARREN and ALEX ALI, who competed on the latest season of CBS' reality show "The Amazing Race," are soon going to be hearing wedding bells. But they won't even be the first couple on the show's latest season to tie the knot.

Their bitter rivals, ROB MARIANO and AMBER BRKICH, met while competing on CBS' "Survivor" and are getting married on CBS on May 24. They came in second place on "Amazing."

Since the gay couple from West Hollywood, Calif., who placed fifth in the race, can't get married in their home state, they're heading to Canada to do so, thanks to Ottawa radio station Hot 89.9 FM.

"Lynn and I never thought we'd be able to get married ever and jumped at the chance to have our special day," Ali told the Blade in an e-mail message. "[We] are very excited and hope our family and friends can make it."

The radio station hosted interviews with each "Race" team on the morning after the episode on which they were eliminated was aired. When interviewing Warren, 30, and Ali, 22, the host joked that the pair should travel to Canada and get married legally. They jumped at the chance.

"We said we'll put it together and throw a party and would love to be involved," Rob Mise, operations manager at Hot 89.9, told Dish.

Warren and Ali are scheduled to arrive in Ottawa on Monday, May 30, for a bachelor party at a local gay club and exchange vows on the radio Wednesday, June 1.

Let's hope Lynn and Alex fare better than the last "Amazing" gay duo. Chip Arndt and Reichen Lehmkuhl, also of California, won the show's \$1 million prize in 2003, but broke up shortly after that.

Kylie's health

Gay icon Kylie Minogue announced this week that she has been diagnosed with breast cancer. Kylie is the biggest pop star in Australia and one of the biggest in England. She went platinum in the U.S. with "Fever," thanks largely to her huge gay fan base here. The song "Can't Get You Out of My Head" was ubiquitous in the clubs in 2001.

At 36, Kylie is still going strong. Dates for her hit tour "Showgirl" have been postponed in Australia and Asia while she undergoes treatment. Doctors said they are confident for a full recovery because the disease was caught early. Dish sends her best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Adding insult to injury

Dish was so sick of hearing the buzz about the gay content (or lack thereof) of OLIVER STONE's "Alexander" that by the time she saw the lousy movie about Alexander the Great it was a complete letdown.



Oliver Stone

Unfortunately, the buzz about this bisexual bomb is back.

Warner Home Video is about to release the movie, which stars COLIN FARRELL as Alexander and JARED LETO as his presumed lover Hephaestion, on DVD on Aug. 2. It will release two versions in the United States, a theatrical version (the one some of us endured on the big screen) and a "director's cut," which is usually the longer DVD version reflecting what the studio wouldn't release. But this film's cut is eight minutes shorter than the big-screen release.

Warner is claiming the DVD is "faster-paced" and more "action-packed," but some are claiming the director's cut has taken out what little gay content was in "Alexander."

Dish has learned the hard way not to trust those rumors, so against her better judgment she'll wait to watch the movie again.



Kylie Minogue

 Send comments, suggestions to Dish@houstonvoice.com

This is Matthew. He just joined us at EJ's as a Bartender Back-up specialist.



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8. EJ's Manager, Christian, is HOT, HOT, HOT: A. True
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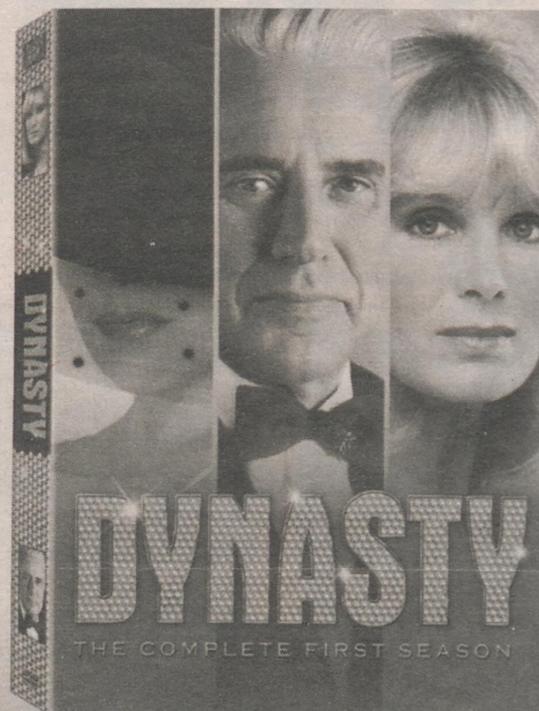
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bitch session

bitch session

I tried for three years to tell you I wasn't happy. I guess you finally see it, now that I have a new boyfriend.

TO THE PERSON COMPLAINING HE'S so tired of gay men who are self-conscious to the point of distraction: Talking about where you live, work and vacation is called carrying on a normal conversation. What the hell are we supposed to talk about?

HAVING A SECRET IDENTITY MEANS you're either a superhero or a closet-case.

WHY IS IT THAT ONCE A GUY GETS A boyfriend he has no time for anything but that boyfriend and for work? You used to have friends, too. When you break up, don't come whining to me to help you pick up the pieces!

MASCULINE, MUSCULAR, NON-SMOKER, under 40, top, no attitude, no fats or fems, 8-inches-plus, drug, disease free UB2: Where does that leave the other 98 percent of us?

IF GUYS END THEIR ONLINE CHATS with you at the mention of "five inches," then they weren't worth your time anyway!

IF ALL THE GUYS YOU FALL IN LOVE with are straight, you must be a big ol' girl.

50 CENT WANNA-BE STARTS TALKING shit about all the white faggots being assholes? I'd have lit into that jerk so damn fast he and his "boyz" would have missed it, and then I would holler for the manager to throw their trouble-making butts to the curb!

YOU PAID FOR A STRANGER'S DINNER, he kissed you — twice — isn't that enough? What did you expect: sex? It was only dinner. What a whiny little wombat you are!

HEY MISTER STRAIGHT MAN: WHY are you, being so straight and all, reading the gay paper, and do you really think you have the qualifications to judge anyone other than yourself and your own behavior?

IF YOU'RE A WHORE IN A SEX CLUB, the HIV status of other patrons shouldn't matter unless you're too stupid to use protection. In that case, you're not only a whore but a moron!

A FEW YEARS AGO, A FRIEND SAID he had "become ex-gay." I laughed and went over to his place to see the redeco-rating efforts of his "ex-gay friends." Too bad the "ex-gay ministries" don't teach their members how not to decorate like a bunch of prissy fags!

IF YOU WANT TO HANG WITH HAGS, do it at their bars! I go to gay bars to get away from the walking gashes of this world, not to be closer to them!

DAMMIT! CAN I FIND A GUY WHO ACTS straight but doesn't have a girlfriend or a kid? I am so sick of you saying you're not gay after we have sex!

TO ALL THOSE GUYS CHASING SEX with black guys: It's great that you are not judging me by the color of my skin. Just make sure to look at the color of my eyes, as in during an actual conversation.

THERE SHOULD BE A HOOK UP WEB site called Proximity because of the "distance queens" online these days. You mean to tell me you can jog five miles, swim 10 laps, and lift 200 pounds, but you can't walk for a few minutes to get laid?

SO WHAT IF I'M A PSEUDO-intellectual New York Jew who happens to be turned on by Midwestern farm boys? It doesn't make me superior, snobbish or slumming. On the contrary, they have a lot more on the ball than I do.

I AM SO SICK AND TIRED OF BEING ignored because I'm thin, a warm caring guy, and "too pretty." It's my metabolism, not a disease and I don't want to be a woman. It's ridiculous that gay men won't even look at you unless you just fell off the construction truck with a wife-beater shirt on and a beer in tow.

BITCH BOY RESPONDS: Trust me, being pretty is not your main problem.

IF ALL YOU WANNA DO ALL DAY IS SIT around, talk about how you screwed up your life and blame others, then save your breath. Who in this day and age has the time to just bitch about the things they cannot change?

BEING FAT JUST ISN'T FUN. I KNOW I just didn't wake up one day and find myself as this huge person. I should have seen the signs. But if society were different, I would be just as cute as the skinny ones.

I KEEP READING THAT GAY MEN cannot get a date unless they are under 40 and in perfect shape. I am in my mid-40s and out of shape, and yet I get cruised all of the time. I wonder what so many other gay men are doing wrong.

Editors' note: These are real bitches, sent in by real readers, about gay life's little annoyances, and the big ones, too. Got a bitch? Call 1-800-858-8088 or e-mail: bitch@expressgaynews.com

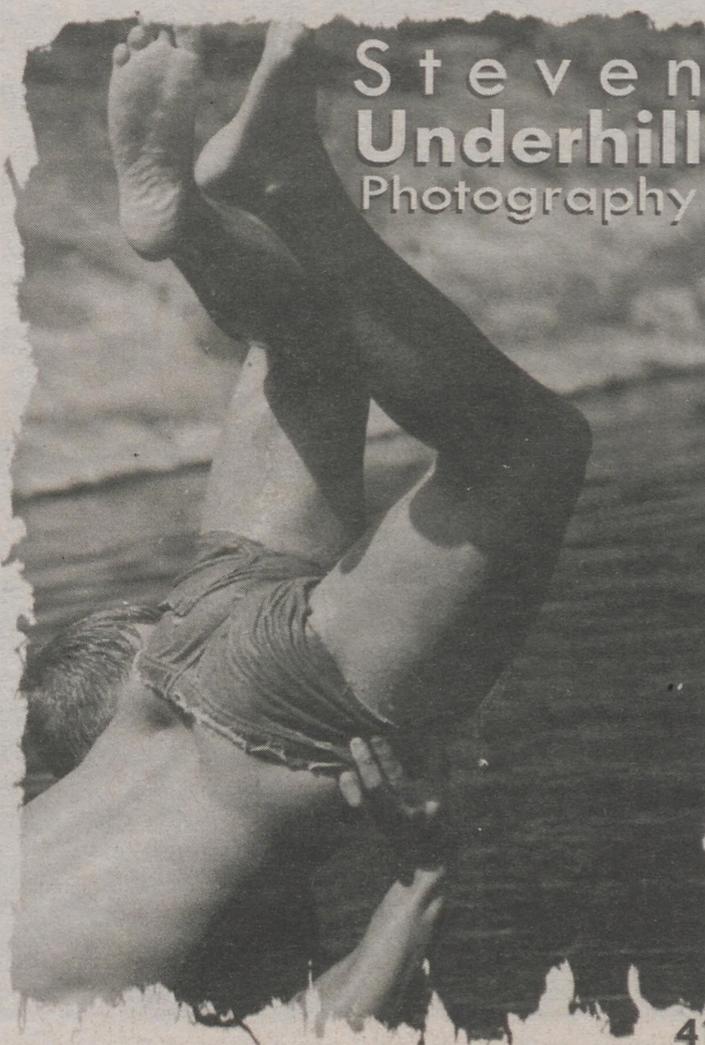
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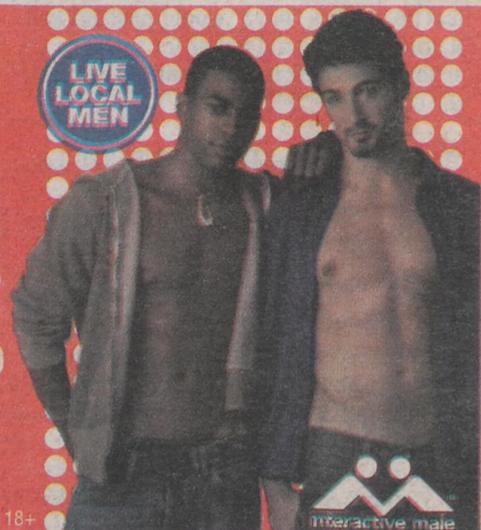
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