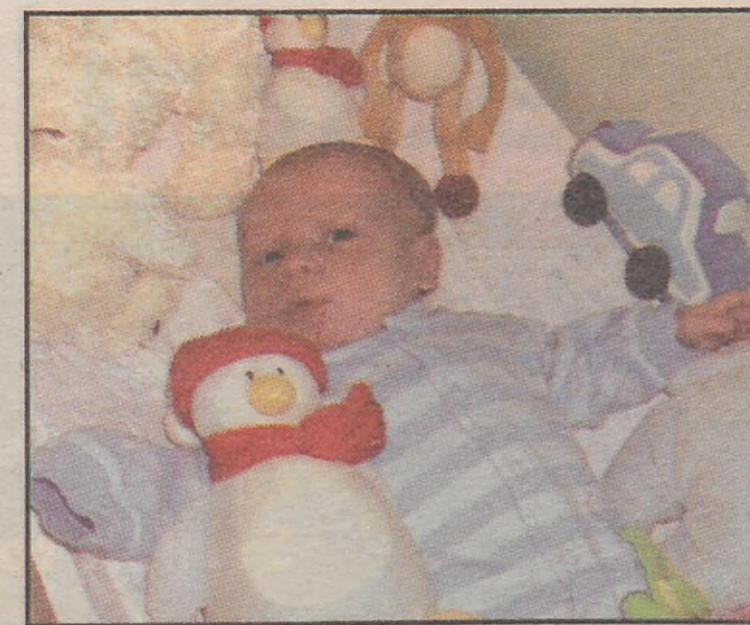


DJ dad

Nationally known DJ David Knapp joins the ranks of gay parents while still spinning on the circuit.
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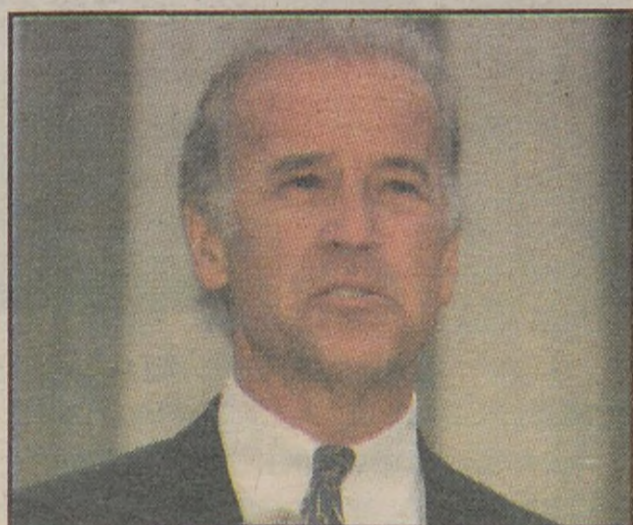


INSIDE



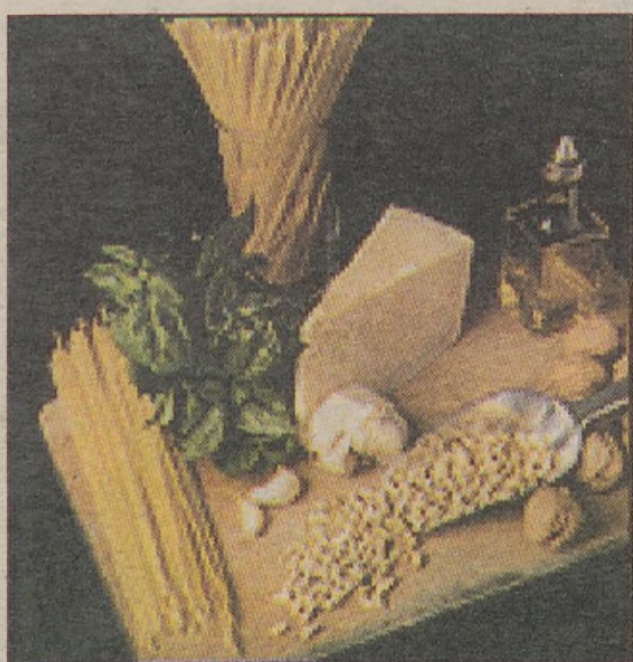
Faisal Alam, founder of the gay Islamic group Al-Fatiha, said a democratic Iraq may not have much effect on gay Iraqis.

Page 8



Sen. Joe Biden (D-Del.) said the RAVE Act passed by Congress is aimed at event promoters who 'knowingly' allow drug use.

Page 4



Nundini Food Store's deli is an unexpected delight with memorable Italian sandwiches.

Page 20

TX Senate passes DOMA

Measure that activists call 'slap in the face' to gay Texans next up for a House vote

By PENNY WEAVER

A Texas Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) is close to becoming law after receiving Senate approval this week.

The full Texas Senate passed Senate Bill 7 on Tuesday, and the proposal now goes to the Texas House of Representatives. The measure would prohibit the state from recognizing same-sex civil unions or marriages performed in other states.

"It's nothing more than a slap in the face to the LGBT community of this state," said Randall Ellis, executive director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas (LGRL). "The passage of DOMA by the Texas Senate illustrates a fact that gays and lesbians know all too well: Texas discriminates.

"Gays and lesbians are denied literally



Sen. Jeff Wentworth (left), R-San Antonio, said his Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) bill — approved by the full Senate on Tuesday — is designed to 'encourage and protect' traditional marriage between one man and one woman. One senator argued that Wentworth's DOMA bill is unnecessary, pointing out that Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott (right) recently said that current Texas law does not recognize civil unions issued in any jurisdiction.

hundreds upon hundreds of rights and privileges — everything from tax exemptions to hospital visitation rights," Ellis added.

Originally filed as S.B. 630, the measure

was re-filed by Sen. Jeff Wentworth, R-San Antonio, at the request of Lt. Gov. David

Please see TX DOMA on Page 3

Intersexed novel, priest scandal garner Pulitzers

Awards have history of nods to gay authors, subjects

By MIKE FLEMING

Two 2003 winners of the coveted Pulitzer Prizes that were announced April 7 touch on gay and transgender issues, highlighting the awards' increasingly progressive record supporting excellence in journalism, literature, music and drama regardless of the sexual orientation or gender identity of its topics or authors.

"Middlesex" by Jeffrey Eugenides, which follows a family across eight generations through the eyes of an intersexed narrator, won the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. The Boston Globe won the award for Public Service Journalism for its coverage of last year's Catholic priest sexual abuse scandal.

"Middlesex" tells the story of a Greek-American family from the perspective of a protagonist first called Callie, then called Cal, who has genitals of both sexes, was raised as a girl and later identifies as male.

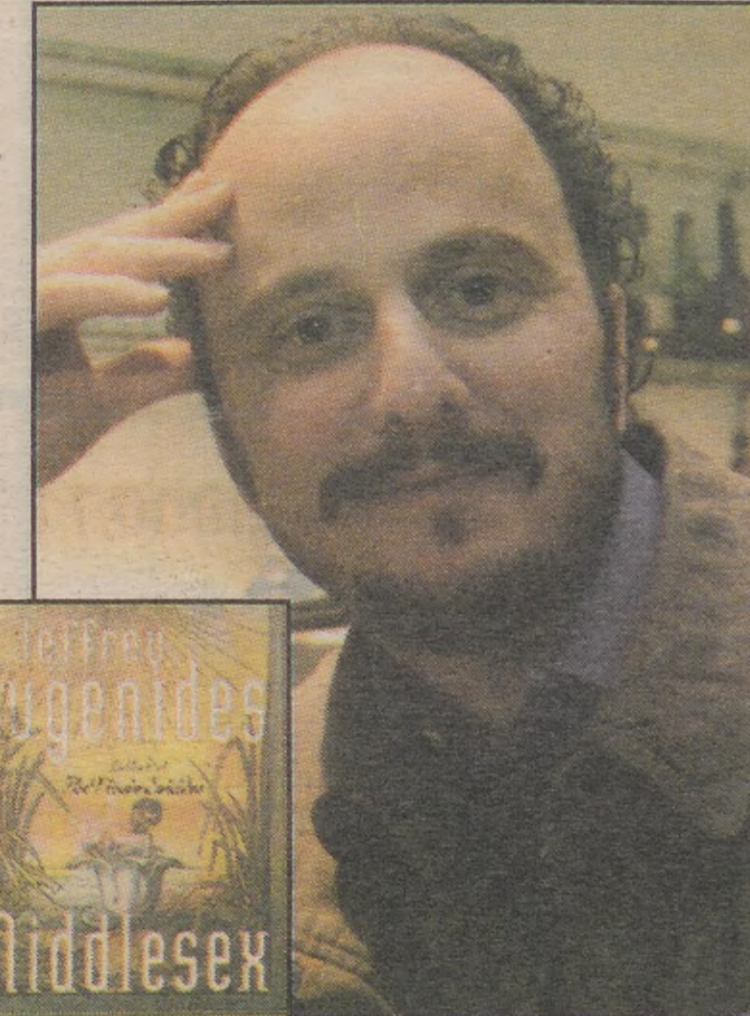
"I take things that are a little bit freaky, and I de-freak them," Eugenides told National Public Radio. "This story, when you read it, becoming a hermaphrodite is not something that we all don't experience. It's really closer to what everyone feels in puberty and what everybody feels growing up. It's sort of a symbolic story for ... an experience that is very common to all of us."

Eugenides, a heterosexual biological male, is also a National Book Critics Circle Finalist and a Transgendered Fiction Finalist for the Lambda Literary Awards, which focuses recognition each year on books with gay or transgender subject matter.

The "Lammys" are scheduled to be awarded May 29 in Los Angeles.

The Boston Globe won its Pulitzer for "courageous, comprehensive coverage of sexual abuse by priests, an effort that pierced secrecy, stirred local, national and international reaction and produced changes in the Roman Catholic Church," according to a statement from the Pulitzer board.

Please see PULITZER on Page 5



Author Jeffrey Eugenides won his first Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for 'Middlesex,' an eight-generation family saga told from the perspective of an intersexed narrator who changes his gender identity halfway through the book. (Photo by Petr David Jousek/AP)

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local news

House panel already has OK'd its own DOMA

TX DOMA, continued from Page 1

Dewhurst, according to Ellis. That was a strategic move to allow the bill to be assigned a lower number, indicating a higher priority, Ellis said.

Wentworth has said S.B. 7 is essential to clarify existing law. Texas currently limits the issue of marriage licenses to people of the opposite sex but the state does not specifically address other "civil unions," the senator said.

"I believe Texas should adopt as its public policy that traditional marriage is between one man and one woman, and that this state should not recognize civil unions entered into in Vermont and possibly other states in the future," Wentworth told the Houston Chronicle.

Vermont is the only state that recognizes same-sex civil unions. Since Vermont approved its bill in 2000, lawmakers in five states — California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Rhode Island and Washington — have introduced civil union legislation, according to the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force.

On the other hand, 36 states across the country have enacted laws in recent years that limit legal recognition of marriages to heterosexual couples.

"Clearly the point of the bill is to encourage and protect the institution that is fundamental to our whole society and that is traditional marriage," Wentworth said.

"People talk about discrimination as though it were a bad thing," he said in defending the bill. "It is something we do all the time."

Wentworth said the bill does not diminish "my feeling of respect and even love for friends and acquaintances and people that I know who are gay. I have great respect for those people," he said. "This bill has nothing to do with that."

Two other senators challenged Wentworth, the Chronicle reported.

"Some people would say this is just mean-spirited," said Sen. John Whitmire, D-Houston, the newspaper reported. "It's directed at elements of our society that most of whom just want to be left alone, go to work,



Randall Ellis, executive director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, said bills such as the state Defense of Marriage Act show that Texas discriminates.



Texas Senators Gonzalo Barrientos (left), D-Austin, and John Whitmire, D-Houston, challenged the Senate's DOMA. Barrientos said, 'Because of little ol' Vermont, big ol' Texas has to pass this piece of legislation?'



Texas Senators Rodney Ellis (left) and Mario Gallegos, both Democrats and both from Houston, were among those who voted against the DOMA approved by the state Senate this week.

pay taxes and not create problems for anyone.

"You've introduced legislation that speaks to their lifestyle, tries to change a law that doesn't need changing," he added.

Sen. Gonzalo Barrientos, D-Austin, said, "Because of little ol' Vermont, big ol' Texas has to pass this piece of legislation?" the Chronicle reported.

Whitmire pointed out that Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott, citing existing law, recently persuaded a Beaumont judge to reverse his decision granting a divorce to two men who had been joined in a Vermont civil union. Abbott argued that Texas law "does [not] recognize civil unions established in other jurisdictions."

"Your law is not necessary," Whitmire told Wentworth, the Chronicle reported.

But Wentworth argued that the attorney general does not write state law.

"Only the Legislature may do that, and that's what this bill does," Wentworth said, according to the Chronicle. "It sets state policy."

The Senate DOMA passed on a vote of 22-7, with "no" votes cast by Democrats Whitmire, Barrientos, Rodney Ellis and Mario Gallegos of Houston, Eliot Shapleigh of El Paso, Royce West of Dallas and Judith Zaffirini of Laredo.

Federal legislation already allows states to refuse to honor same-sex unions.

Congress approved and President Bill Clinton signed the federal Defense of Marriage Act in 1996 to prohibit federal recognition of gay marriages. DOMA also purports to grant states the right not to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states.

The federal law also creates a definition of marriage as a "legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife."

Last session, a Texas Defense of Marriage Act was passed out of the Senate, but failed to make it out of committee in the House, LGRL officials noted. Lobbyists contend that the shift in the balance of power in the House after the November elections increases the possibility of this session's bill passing both chambers of the Legislature.

S.B. 7's House companion, House Bill 38, already has been approved by the House Committee on State Affairs. Authored by Rep. Warren Chisum, R-Pampa, H.B. 38 soon will be scheduled for a vote by the full Texas House of Representatives.

Ellis said he has doubts whether the Texas DOMA would hold up to U.S. Supreme Court scrutiny in the coming years if it did become law, according to a LGRL press release.

"In 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down laws that prohibited interracial marriages, because they deprived individuals of the fundamental right to marry," Ellis said. "This bill clearly violates the fundamental rights of gays and lesbians."

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

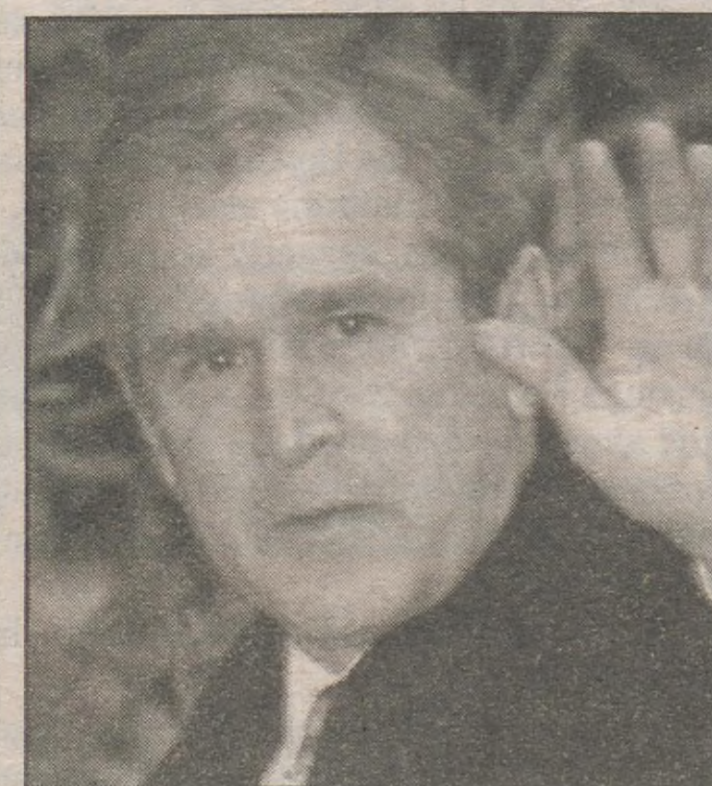
MORE INFO

Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas
P.O. Box 2340
Austin, TX 78768
512-474-5475
www.lgrrl.org

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RAVE ACT: President George W. Bush has said he will sign an anti-drug bill that gay events promoters say could curb popular circuit parties. Page 4.



UNDER FIRE: Rev. Steve Van Kuiken is on trial for shunning Presbyterian ban on gay marriages. Page 6.



VIEWPOINT: Columnist Mubarak Dahir says regime change in Iraq does not necessarily translate to greater freedom for gays. Page 12.

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national news

Congress passes bill targeting rave scene

'Chilling effect' on circuit parties feared, opponent says

By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

WASHINGTON — An anti-drug bill that gay and straight event promoters say could subject them to criminal prosecution for drug offenses committed by their customers passed in the House and Senate on April 10 by overwhelming margins.

The legislation, formerly known as the RAVE Act and later renamed the Illicit Drug Anti-Proliferation Act, sailed through Congress with little public notice and almost no debate after a House-Senate conference committee on April 8 attached the bill to the popular Child Abduction Prevention Act.

President Bush said he plans to sign the legislation.

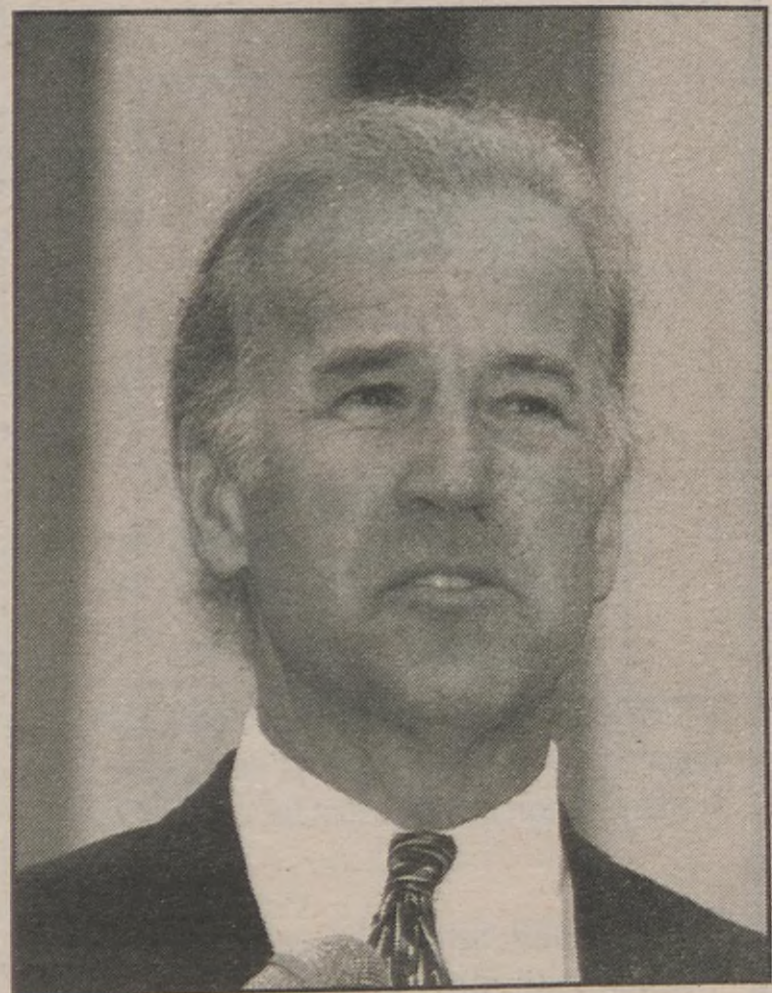
Gay event promoters, including organizers of gay circuit parties, have warned that the anti-drug bill could subject them to criminal penalties and stiff civil fines, a development, they said, that could prompt them to consider discontinuing the popular circuit parties.

Circuit events have long served as fundraisers for gay civil rights causes and AIDS organizations.

The bill broadens the scope of an existing federal law, known as the Crack House Act, which gives the federal government authority to criminally prosecute owners of properties in which drug use and distribution occurs.

The new legislation authorizes federal prosecution of organizers or promoters of one-time events, such as circuit parties or rave events, in which alleged drug use or distribution occurs. The bill also allows federal authorities to file civil charges against event promoters who allegedly allow drug activity at their events.

Critics have said the civil offense



Sen. Joe Biden (D-Del.) said the bill is aimed at unscrupulous event promoters or club owners who 'knowingly' allow, encourage or promote drug use and sales on their premises. (Photo by AP)

clause in the bill could be used to bankrupt promoters because they could be ordered to pay a \$250,000 fine for each charge filed against them. Civil charges require a lower threshold of evidence than criminal charges, making it easier for prosecutors to obtain a conviction.

"It is important to remember that this legislation punishes business owners and event producers and sponsors for the actions of event attendees, despite their efforts to discourage or prevent illegal drug use," said gay event promoter Mark Lee.

"Essentially there is no way for special event producers or circuit events to adequately protect themselves or their events from possible prosecution under the terms of the law," he said.

Lee said he was especially concerned that the law allows authorities to use "harm-reduction" efforts by circuit party promoters as evidence of the promoter's "knowledge" that drug use is occurring at these events. Promoters of the D.C. Cherry Party, for example, have provided medical services and drug information literature for their patrons, services that Lee fears could be used against event promoters by an overzealous prosecutor.

'This legislation punishes business owners and event producers and sponsors for the actions of event attendees, despite their efforts to discourage or prevent illegal drug use.'

—Gay event promoter Mark Lee

Unscrupulous promoters targeted

Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.), the author and chief sponsor of the Illicit Drug Anti-Proliferation Act, has denied the legislation would harm legitimate nightclubs or events. Biden said the measure is aimed at unscrupulous event promoters or club owners who "knowingly" allow, encourage or promote drug use and sales on their premises.

Biden noted that the club drug ecstasy is widely used in nightclubs that offer rave music as well as at one-time events that bill themselves as rave parties.

While disputing assertions by the ACLU and rave party enthusiasts that his bill would violate First Amendment protection of free expression by singling out a specific type of music, Biden nevertheless agreed to remove the term "RAVE" from the bill's title, which was an acronym for Reducing Americans' Vulnerability to Ecstasy.

Biden also deleted from the bill a preamble or "findings" section that linked the distribution of glow sticks, the sale of bottled water, and the offering of air conditioned "chill rooms" by event promoters as potential evidence that the events were encouraging the use or sale of ecstasy on



William McColl, national affairs director of the Drug Policy Alliance, which lobbied against the RAVE Act, said the legislation could embolden federal prosecutors to target gay circuit parties as well as rave music events for drug investigations, creating a 'chilling effect' for party organizers.

their premises.

The ACLU and a coalition of disc jockeys, musicians, rave enthusiasts, and club and event promoters that opposed the legislation argued that the "findings" section was especially unfair because it stigmatized what they called a legitimate form of music and entertainment enjoyed by large numbers of Americans.

The child abduction measure, known as the Amber Alert bill, establishes a national, federally funded alert system to help local law enforcement agencies and the FBI rescue abducted children.

The bill received overwhelming bipartisan support, making it difficult for opponents of the Illicit Drug Anti-Proliferation Act to persuade colleagues to vote against the combined legislation.

The Senate passed the combined measure by a vote of 98 to 0. The House passed the legislation by a vote of 400 to 25, with eight members not voting and two members voting "present."

'Overly punitive'

U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), who is gay, was among 25 House members to vote against the Amber Alert bill. Frank, who voted for an earlier version of the alert measure, said the Republican-controlled conference committee's decision to add the RAVE Act to the bill prompted him to vote against it last week.

Frank called the former RAVE Act and its new incarnation another example of the nation's "overly punitive approach to drug use," which he dubbed "counterproductive."

Opponents would have been able to line up many more votes against the mea-

sure had Republican leaders allowed it to reach the House floor as a freestanding bill, Frank said.

The other two openly gay members of the House — Reps. Jim Kolbe (R-Ariz.) and Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.) — voted for the combined bill.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), who also voted against the Amber Alert bill, opposed a decision by the conference committee to attach several unrelated bills to the measure, in addition to the RAVE Act, turning the measure into a "Christmas tree" bill for ultra conservative causes, according to a Nadler spokesperson.

William McColl, director of national affairs for the Drug Policy Alliance, a group that lobbied against the RAVE Act, said the version that Congress passed last week is broadly worded. He said the legislation will likely embolden federal prosecutors to cite the use of glow sticks and chill rooms as grounds for launching a drug investigation into rave or circuit parties.

McColl added that prosecutors might also consider the practice of circuit party organizers to arrange for paramedics and private ambulances to be present outside circuit party locations as evidence that the organizers are aware of and condone the use of illegal drugs at such events.

Circuit party organizers have said they do not approve of drug use but feel duty-bound to have emergency medical teams available in case patrons of the events become seriously ill from a drug overdose, a development that sometimes occurs at circuit parties.

The Illicit Drug Anti-Proliferation Act, as passed by Congress, prohibits "an individual from knowingly opening, maintaining, managing, controlling, renting, leasing, making available for use, or profiting from any place for the purpose of manufacturing, distributing, or using any controlled substance."

McColl credited Reps. Robert Scott (D-Va.) and John Conyers (D-Mich.) with strongly opposing efforts by the conference committee to add the illicit drug measure to the Amber alert bill.

"Unfortunately, they were outvoted and RAVE Act provisions did become part of the bill," McColl said.

The Amber Alert system is named after 9-year-old Amber Hagerman of Arlington, Texas, who was kidnapped and murdered in 1996. The system, which has already been adopted in various forms by 39 states, uses media broadcasts, highway road signs, and law enforcement announcements to instantly disseminate information about child abductions.

MORE INFO

Drug Policy Alliance
925 15th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
202-216-0035
www.drugpolicy.org

national news

Gay issues touched on in Pulitzer wins

PULITZER, continued from Page 1

Gay playwright edged out

Two plays by gay writers were 2003 finalists in the Drama category but did not win the Pulitzer. Edward Albee, a Houston resident who is the single most recognized gay Pulitzer winner in history, and Richard Greenberg were the finalists who bowed to "Anna in the Tropics" by Nilo Cruz.

"Take Me Out," Greenberg's fictional tale of a star Major League Baseball player who comes out as gay, follows a string of the writer's popular plays that tackle gay subject matter.

When the awards were announced, Greenberg didn't expect to win and went to Yankee Stadium for opening day amid a new passion for baseball that inspired the play, according to the Chicago Sun-Times.

"I was planning to leave my cell phone at home, because I didn't want anything to

ruin the day," Greenberg told the paper. "But my agent made it very clear that I just couldn't do that."

Greenberg said that he was "really not at all convinced" that he would win anyway.

"Anna in the Tropics" also edged out Albee's "The Goat or Who is Sylvia?" — the writer's fifth finalist nod for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. He has walked away with awards three times — in 1967 for "A Delicate Balance," in 1975 for "Seascape" and in 1994 for "Three Tall Women."

In a controversial decision, Albee's most famous play was recommended by a jury for a Pulitzer but didn't become a finalist.

"In 1963, the Drama jury nominated Edward Albee's 'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?,' but the board found the script insufficiently 'uplifting,' a complaint that related to arguments over sexual permissiveness and rough dialogue," according to Seymour Topping, administrator of the

Pulitzer Prizes until 2002.

As is its purview, the board elected not to offer a 1963 award in Drama despite the jury's recommendation of Albee for the award.

The panel sometimes chooses not to give awards in all of its 21 categories.

Not 'captive to popular inclinations'

The Pulitzer Prizes Board reviews recommendations from expert panels of jurors in any given category. Board members only vote on works they have read or seen performed.

"Over the years, the Pulitzer board has at times been targeted by critics for awards made or not made," Topping said. "Controversies also have arisen over decisions made by the board counter to the advice of juries. ... The board has not been captive to popular inclinations."

The Pulitzer Board, a collection of professors at Columbia University's Joseph Pulitzer School of Journalism as well as newspaper executives and scholars from around the country, has grown less conservative on social issues, Topping said.

The contrast between the views of the board against Albee in 1963 and a sweeping win for another gay playwright points up the difference, he said.

"In 1993, the prize went to Tony Kushner's 'Angels in America: Millennium Approaches,' a play that dealt with problems of homosexuality and AIDS and whose script was replete with obscenities," Topping said.

The list of gay Pulitzer winners probably started with the 1923 Pulitzer Prize for a Novel to "One of Ours" by Willa Cather, whose lesbian inclinations were proven by scholars after her death.

After Albee, the most recognizable name on the list of gay winners is Tennessee Williams, who won two Pulitzer Prizes for Drama: "A Streetcar Named Desire" in 1948 and "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" in 1955.

The 1980s and '90s saw a surge in gay winners as news coverage and arts dealt with the AIDS epidemic. The Pulitzer Prize Board has recognized 14 Journalism winners for coverage of AIDS issues since 1985, and the Drama prize in 1993 was dominated by AIDS plays. Kushner's "Angels in America" won out over "The Destiny of Me" by Larry Kramer.

The '90s also saw an uptick on the winner's list for other gay issues and gay writers. Four Journalism prizes for gay topics went out, including articles on civil unions, gay male culture and domestic partner benefits.

Terrence McNally's "A Perfect Ganesh," Jonathan Larson's "Rent" and Atlanta resident Margaret Edson's "Wit" all pulled Pulitzers for Drama in the '90s. Michael Cunningham's "The Hours" won the prize for Fiction in 1999.

In 2000, gay former Village Voice reporter Mark Schoofs won for International Reporting on AIDS in Africa.

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The Pulitzers' gay history

The Pulitzer Prizes has a history of recognizing gay writers and topics in its 86-year history. A partial list:

1923
Novel (Winner)
"One of Ours"
by Willa Cather

(Photo by AP)

1948
Drama (Winner)
"A Streetcar Named Desire"
by Tennessee Williams

1955
Drama (Winner)
"Cat on a Hot Tin Roof"
by Tennessee Williams

1967
Drama (Winner)
"A Delicate Balance"
by Edward Albee

(Photo by AP)

1975
Drama (Winner)
"Seascape"
by Edward Albee

1985
Drama (Winner)
"Sunday in the Park With George"
Music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

1993
Drama (Winner)
"Angels in America: Millennium Approaches"
by Tony Kushner

Drama (Finalist)
"The Destiny of Me"
by Larry Kramer

1994
Drama (Winner)
"Three Tall Women"
by Edward Albee

Drama (Finalist)
"A Perfect Ganesh"
by Terrence McNally

1995
Poetry (Finalist)
"Cosmopolitan Greetings: Poems 1986-1992"
Allen Ginsberg

(Photo by Susan Ragan/AP)

1996
Drama (Winner)
"Rent"
by Jonathan Larson

1999
Drama (Winner)
"Wit"
by Margaret Edson

(Photo by Cindy Sproul)

1999
Fiction (Winner)
"The Hours"
by Michael Cunningham

(Photo by Brad Fowler/AP)

2000
International Reporting (Winner)
"AIDS in Africa" series
by Mark Schoofs

(Photo courtesy the Wall Street Journal)

2001
Drama (Finalist)
"The Play About the Baby"
by Edward Albee

2003
Drama (Finalist)
"The Goat or Who is Sylvia"
by Edward Albee

Drama (Finalist)
"Take Me Out"
Richard Greenberg

(Graphic by John Nail)

national news

Minister tried for marrying, ordaining gays

Presbyterian Church could be on brink of 'crisis,' minister says

By CHRISTOPHER SEELY

CINCINNATI — The Cincinnati Presbytery held court April 8 to try Rev. Stephen Van Kuiken on charges of ignoring church rules and marrying same-sex couples and ordaining gay men and lesbians as deacons by elders in Mount Auburn Presbyterian Church, where he serves as pastor.

A verdict is expected no later than April 22, according to Martha Sexton, chair of the seven-member judicial commission that presided over the trial.

Van Kuiken submitted a written statement at the trial outlining his defiance of church law, freely admitting guilt to the charges brought against him. The pastor cited Martin Luther King, Jr.'s doctrine that breaking an unjust law and being willing to pay the price is the highest respect for the law, according to the statement.

"Disobeying these unjust provisions is necessary for reform and progress in the [Presbyterian Church (USA)]. Instead of avoiding the conflict that is in our denomination, we need to continually and openly address the root causes of our conflict," Van Kuiken wrote.



Dozens of people, including members of Soulforce, turned out to support Rev. Van Kuiken during his trial April 8, but none of them were allowed to watch the legal proceedings before the Cincinnati Presbytery. (Photo by AP)

At trial, a prosecuting committee presented charges filed by an investigative committee that accused Van Kuiken of ordaining and marrying gay men and lesbians in violation of the Book of Order of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church.

According to the church code, gays can be ordained as deacons or elders in the church only if they do not admit to having sex, in or out of a relationship. Heterosexual married

couples are not required to be celibate.

"It's a double standard," Van Kuiken said in an interview with Southern Voice this week. "Gay people can't be married. Any gay person in a committed relationship is, by definition, excluded from being an ordained leader of the church."

Until the year 2000, Mount Auburn was known to perform holy union ceremonies using the same liturgy as it would use for

heterosexual couples, Van Kuiken said.

Jennifer and Cheryl McKettrick were the first same-sex couple that Van Kuiken united in Mount Auburn, and the couple started attending the church because of its gay-friendly reputation.

Mount Auburn issued a "Statement of Inclusive Ordination" for 11 consecutive years declaring that "gays and lesbians are part of God's good creation."

"We didn't come to Mount Auburn because it was Presbyterian," Cheryl McKettrick said. "We came because of what it stands for. It was important for us to have a religious ceremony in front of our friends and family in a sanctuary."

But marriages such as McKettrick's put Van Kuiken in violation of church code because he equated same-sex unions with heterosexual marriages.

The church code does not place an ironclad ban on gay "holy unions," but a ruling in 2000 by the church's General Assembly Judicial Commission decreed that same-sex unions are acceptable only if "they are not considered the same as a marriage ceremony."

Crisis in the church

Paul Rolf Jensen, an attorney, filed the disciplinary case against Van Kuiken on

Please see PRESBYTERIAN TRIAL on Page 7



Gospel Explosion

APRIL 23-27

DENNIS & EVELYN SCHAVE, GLENN BAKER,
DOUG CLANTON, & SAM KADER





Community Gospel

communitygospel.org

national news

Gay marriages could lead to pastor's removal

PRESBYTERIAN TRIAL, continued from Page 6

March 13, 2002, on behalf of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church of Newport Beach, Calif.

An elder anywhere in the U.S. may file a disciplinary case, according to Michael Adee, national field organizer for More Light Presbyterians and gay elder at the First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe, N.M.

More Light Presbyterians, a national group that strives for the full participation of gays in the Presbyterian Church, monitors constitutional wrangling and works with ministers and congregations to be gay inclusive.

Adee said that more than two dozen cases similar to Van Kuiken's are on file, the majority brought by Jensen.

"This is a remarkable invitation for the Presbyterian Church to remove prejudice and bigotry that exists," Adee said.

But Alexander Metherell, an ordained elder at St. Andrew's in California and Jensen's neighbor, views the current state of affairs in the church as a result of misinterpretation of scripture through a "secular lens" and a meltdown of traditional church values.

Metherell called for a special assembly of the church's leaders last year to confront the "breakdown of the constitution of the church." But the call for action was not granted by Rev. Fahed Abu-Akel, the



Rev. Steve Van Kuiken, tried last week on charges of ignoring the ban on gay marriages in the Presbyterian Church (USA), awaits a verdict that could remove him from the ministry. (Photo by AP)

elected moderator of the 2.5-million member church and an Atlanta, Ga., pastor.

"There is definitely a constitutional crisis of the church," Metherell said. "If this judicial commission finds him not guilty they ... will effectively be shredding the entire constitution."

Adee argues that the Presbyterian tradition calls for unity and not for the uni-

formity that Metherell and Jensen seek to maintain through court trials and special assemblies, he said.

"If someone else's personal life is not harmful to anyone else, it is not anyone else's business," Adee said.

Hurdle to gay integration?

For groups like More Light Presbyterians that attempt to work within the confines of the church's constitution to enact change, Van Kuiken's outright defiance of church law can be problematic, said Chris Glaser, gay Presbyterian author of "Coming Out to God" and "Uncommon Calling."

"We are all chained at the hip and if one decided to jump over the cliff, he or she would pull everyone with them," Glaser said.

Gay-friendly church groups "are afraid [Van Kuiken's trial] will have deleterious effects on us all," he added.

Glaser began working to integrate gays into the Presbyterian Church nearly 30 years ago, when the predecessor group to More Light Presbyterians formed in 1974.

If Van Kuiken's trial ends with a guilty verdict, the church court could redefine the code to be more restrictive in allowing gay men and lesbians to become elders or deacons, Glaser said.

"The more ambiguous the language, the better off we are," he said.

Rev. Harold Porter, pastor emeritus at Mount Auburn, follows the More Light movement method of working from within for change "just like gays have to attempt to become first class citizens of the U.S. without leaving the U.S.," he said.

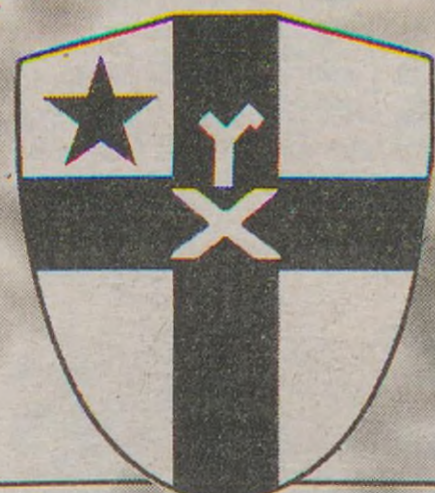
Porter has a case pending for performing a holy union service years ago when he served as the church's pastor. He said he does not plan to see the case to trial or to make the same bold statement made by Van Kuiken.

"I'm mostly concerned with trying to work within the constitution, although I'm fully in agreement with the theological attitudes of Steve Van Kuiken," he said.

If Van Kuiken is found guilty by a two-thirds vote, the Cincinnati judicial commission can punish him with public rebuke, temporary suspension and removal from the ministry. Van Kuiken can appeal the decision.

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national news

Saddam's fall may mean little for gays in Iraq

Scant lobbying for gay rights in post-war Iraq by U.S. activists

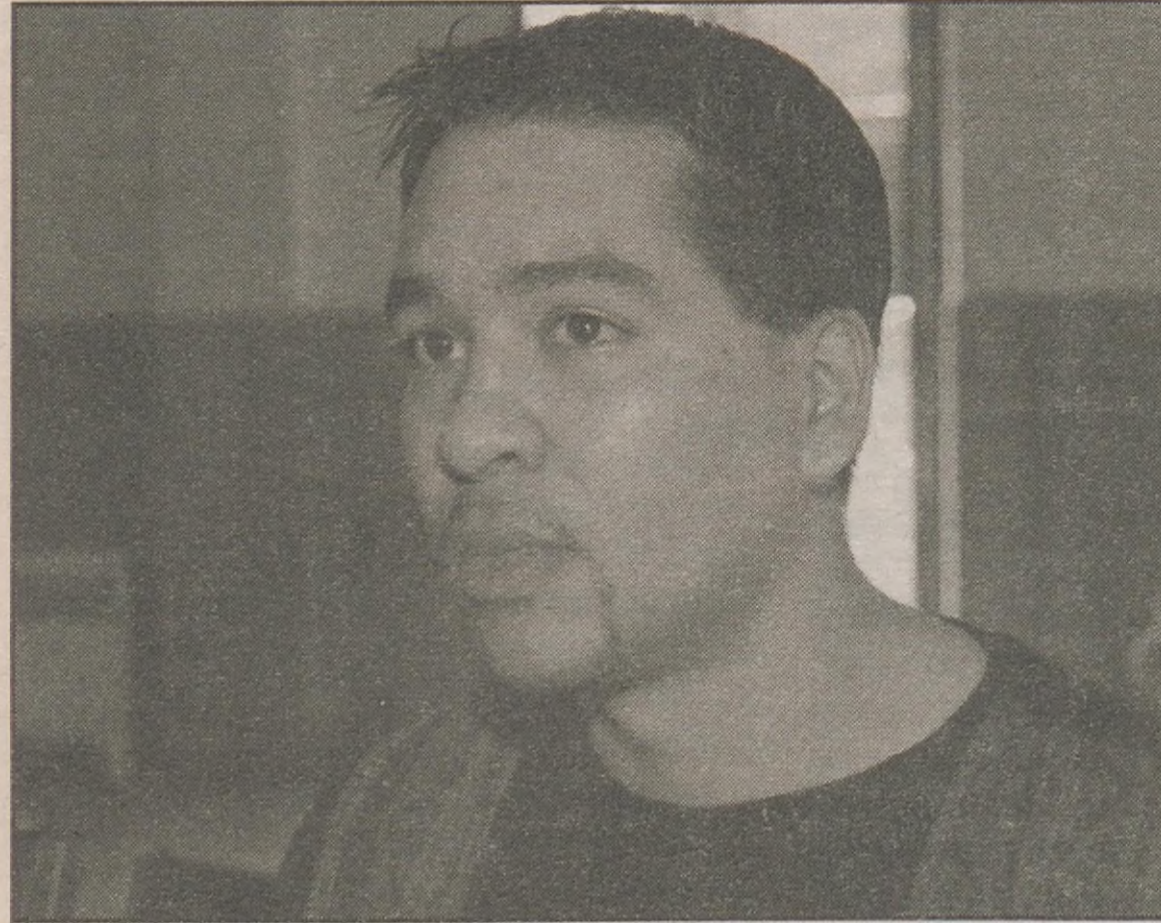
By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

As Iraqi community and exile leaders met this week in Iraq to map plans for a new government, officials with gay civil rights groups in the U.S. said they have no immediate plans to lobby the federal government or Iraqis for gay rights protections in the post-Saddam Iraq.

"In the absence of existing groups contacting us for assistance, we are reluctant to get involved with our moral guns blazing," said Sara Moore, an official with the San Francisco-based International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission.

Moore, like representatives of several other U.S. gay civil rights groups, said IGLHRC strongly supports the creation of a democratic, pluralistic government in Iraq and believes democratic institutions are the best means to achieve human rights protections for gays and other minorities in Iraq.

But Moore said IGLHRC would not become involved in Iraq's quest to form a new government unless gays in that coun-



Faisal Alam, founder of the gay Islamic group Al-Fatiha, said his group favors a democratic Iraq as a means of improving conditions for gay Iraqis, but warned that many Iraqi leaders are suspicious of U.S. intentions in the country. (File photo by Clint Steib)

try contact IGLHRC and ask for assistance.

The Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay civil rights group, limits its work to domestic U.S. policies pertaining to gays and will not take a position on a post-war government in Iraq, said HRC spokesperson David Smith.

Sheri Lunn, a spokesperson for the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, which opposed U.S. military action in Iraq, did not respond by press time.

Faisal Alam, founder of the gay Islamic group Al-Fatiha, and Ramzi Zakharia, an official with the Gay & Lesbian Arab

Society, both based in the U.S., said their groups also favor a democratic Iraqi government as a means of improving the lives of gay Iraqis. But the two cautioned that large numbers of Iraqi civic and religious leaders are suspicious of U.S. motives for invading Iraq.

Zakharia said that large anti-American demonstrations this week in Baghdad and the city of Nasiriya raise concerns that U.S.-led efforts to form a new government in Iraq could backfire by strengthening the hands of anti-gay Shiite clerics.

"Saddam, however bad he was, had a

secular government," Zakharia said. "Now we seem to be going from that to a religious type government. And that is not good for gays and other minorities in Iraq."

Amnesty to push for reforms

Amnesty International, while steering clear of issues surrounding the U.S. invasion of Iraq, plans to seize on the collapse of Iraq's government to push hard for human rights reforms, Amnesty spokesperson Alistair Hodgett said.

Hodgett said Amnesty, which advocates for human rights for gays and other minorities in countries throughout the world, is seeking U.S. permission to dispatch members of its staff to Iraq as soon as possible to begin assessing the status of human rights in the war torn country.

He said that, among other things, Amnesty would push for inclusion of human rights protections in the framework of the interim Iraqi government that Iraqi leaders are expected to develop over the next several months.

"We will speak out, as we did in Afghanistan, to use this window of opportunity to ask a new government to put in place protections for the rights of women and minorities," Hodgett said.

Although the U.S. government has no

Please see GAYS IN IRAQ on Page 9

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national news

May be too soon to address gay issues in Iraq

GAYS IN IRAQ, continued from Page 8

official position on gay rights in Iraq, Secretary of State Colin Powell and the Bush administration believe a democratic government in Iraq will lead to human rights protections for "all people," according to State Department spokesperson Jo Anne Prokopowicz.

"The State Department will monitor the new Iraqi government's record on human rights along with the human rights records of countries around the globe," Prokopowicz said, as part of the department's Congressional mandate to prepare annual human rights reports for countries receiving U.S. foreign aid.

Too soon for gay rights

An official with the Iraqi National Congress, a U.S.-backed Iraqi exile group that hopes to play a key role in a future government in Iraq, said his organization is urging international human rights groups such as Amnesty International to come to Iraq to monitor human rights issues.

But the official, Mazin Youssef, the IRC's U.S. West Coast representative, said his organization has no position on gay rights in Iraq.

"That becomes more of a touchy situation," he said. "It will take a few more years before we can address that question."

Youssef said Hussein decreed a law in the early 1970s that made both homosexual acts and incest capital offenses punishable by death. He said he doesn't know if anyone was actually executed in Iraq under the law.

The Iraqi National Congress, Youssef said, is calling for a democratic, secular government for Iraq. The INC and other Iraqi exile groups have said a secular state is needed to prevent radical Shiite clerics from forming a repressive religious state like Iran, where gays and other minorities are persecuted.

"We feel religion should be respected but not integrated into the state," Youssef said.

Zakharia said many Iraqis view the INC as a "stooge" of the U.S. government and would never support the organization or its leader, Ahmad Chalabi, whom the U.S. brought to Iraq last week on a military transport plane.

"Unfortunately, for gays, I don't see much change coming in Iraq," Zakharia said. "Change must occur through a truly grass roots democracy, not from a top-down government imposed by the United States."

Gay journalist and Arab American Mubarak Dahir, who writes commentaries for the gay press, said he shares Zakharia's pessimism over the prospects for meaningful improvements for gays in Iraq.

"To think any government change in the short term will secure the rights of gays and lesbians in Iraq is unbelievably naïve," Dahir said. "In the Middle East, it's the family unit that dictates the direction of a country."

Dahir, who travels frequently to the Middle East, said families and tribal communities in Arab countries have widely differing views about democracy and individual rights. He said the U.S. lacks credibility among pro-democracy Arabs who see the U.S. backing repressive regimes in countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which openly persecute gays, while claiming to favor democracy in Iraq.

"They think all of this talk of the U.S. being the big democratizer of the Middle East is a lot of baloney," Dahir said.

Youssef, of the Iraqi National Congress, disputes Dahir and Zakharia's assessment of the Iraqi people. He said a large portion of the Iraqi population viewed the U.S. invasion as a necessary evil to rid the country of Saddam and his despised Baath Party henchmen, who were responsible for the imprisonment and murder of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis.

"You can't say for a fact that all Iraqis oppose our group," Youssef said. "People who are happy with the liberation of Iraq would rather see someone close to the U.S. be in charge. We lobbied the U.S. to help liberate Iraq."

Moore, of the IGLHRC, said the group's longstanding policy has been to become involved in gay issues in a country after gay residents seek the group's help.

"We put out action alerts only after someone on the ground informs us of a problem," she said.

Moore said IGLHRC has not received any requests from gay Iraqis, although it routinely receives requests for help from gays in other Middle Eastern countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt. Most of the requests come via e-mail, she said.

One of the group's greatest concerns, Moore said, is that it not impose a "Western import" of sexual orientation on gays with cultures that differ greatly from that of the U.S. and other Western nations.

"Our top priority is not to seem like we are importing Western values on indigenous peoples," she said.

But Moore added, "It is everyone's hope that we can help to establish a representative democracy in a country like Iraq, which has never had this before."

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around the nation

Rocker has new contract, eyes return to Major League Baseball

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — John Rocker, the former Atlanta, Cleveland and Texas relief pitcher, hopes his new contract with the Tampa Bay Devil Rays will lead to his return to Major League Baseball. "I'm not really here to focus on the past. I really want to move forward," said Rocker, who played for the Atlanta Braves when he made insensitive remarks about minorities, gays and others in a 1999 Sports Illustrated article. "I'm definitely a much different, much better person now than I used to be," he said. Rocker signed with the Devil Rays on April 10 and was assigned to Triple-A Durham. He said he hopes to be pitching in the majors in a month. Devil Rays General Manager Chuck LaMar, who was in the Braves' front office when Rocker signed with Atlanta, said the team "is not condoning any bad actions, whether it be John Rocker or anybody else. It is the past." In the Sports Illustrated article, Rocker said he didn't want to ride the New York subway and have to sit "next to some queer with AIDS." Rocker also apologized last summer after allegedly calling gays "fruitcakes" during an altercation at a restaurant in Dallas.



Relief pitcher John Rocker's troubled career may be on the rebound. He signed with the Tampa Bay Devil Rays earlier this month. (Photo by AP)

Ill. judge denies trans man custody of child

CHICAGO (AP) — A judge ruled April 8 a transgender man can't have custody of a 10-year-old because the man was born a woman and has no standing to seek custody of the boy. Cook County Circuit Judge Gerald Bender granted the mother sole custody of the boy. The couple, unidentified for the child's protection, married in 1985 without disclosing that the groom was born a woman and underwent hormone therapy but still had female genitals. The mother became pregnant through artificial insemination. In his 13-page opinion, Bender said he could not violate state law, which does not recognize same-sex marriages. But because the boy has established a bond with his father, the judge ordered continued visitation for the child. County Public Guardian Patrick Murphy, representing the child, contended that gender and marriage are irrelevant to a boy who accepts and loves his father. "Of course we will appeal it," Murphy said.

Planned AIDS memorial in L.A. sparks controversy

LOS ANGELES — A planned AIDS memorial in northeast Los Angeles sparked protests that some say are based in homophobia, the Los Angeles Times reported. The City Council is scheduled to consider this week a proposal by The Wall/Las Memorias that has won approval from the Recreation & Parks Commission. It would create a 9,000 square foot memorial with eight panels, including six with art and two with names of people who have died of AIDS. The mostly publicly funded memorial would also feature benches, a rose garden and a path. While environmentalists have opposed the plan because it would be created from existing parkland, new fliers signed by the Coalition to Save Lincoln Park claim that an organization of "Latino gay men has been covertly trying to make a monument to themselves" and the memorial could cause children to visit the group's Web site,

where they "will not only read about the gay lifestyle but will also see invitations to participate in gay pool parties."


Key West to display mile-long, three-ton rainbow flag

KEY WEST, Fla. (AP) — The artist who created the rainbow flag is sewing a 11/4-mile long, 16-foot-wide version of the internationally recognized gay pride symbol to be unfurled in Key West on June 15, the final day of the city's upcoming PrideFest festival. Gilbert Baker's mammoth creation is to be displayed along the entire length of Duval Street, the island's main thoroughfare. Baker created the original rainbow flag in San Francisco 25 years ago. "Some of my friends call me the Betsy Ross of the gay community," Baker said. The Key West flag commemorates the 25th anniversary of the original rainbow flag's creation. Its debut will also kick off rainbow flag anniversary events around America. Sections of the banner are to travel to 100 cities. Baker, a San Francisco resident, estimates the full flag will weigh more than three tons.

Calif. lesbian couple sues over country club rules

SAN DIEGO — Despite registering as domestic partners in San Diego and California, B. Koebke and Kendall French, lesbian partners for 10 years, are not treated as spouses at the pricey Bernardo Heights Country Club. The couple has sued the golf club, arguing Koebke's \$700-per-month membership should entitle her partner to receive the full playing privileges awarded to spouses, according to the Los Angeles Times. The club said its bylaws restrict the memberships to "the member's legal spouse." A lower court dismissed the lawsuit in June, but the couple has appealed, charging the club has violated a California law barring discrimination in public businesses. "Basically, they don't want gays," Koebke said.

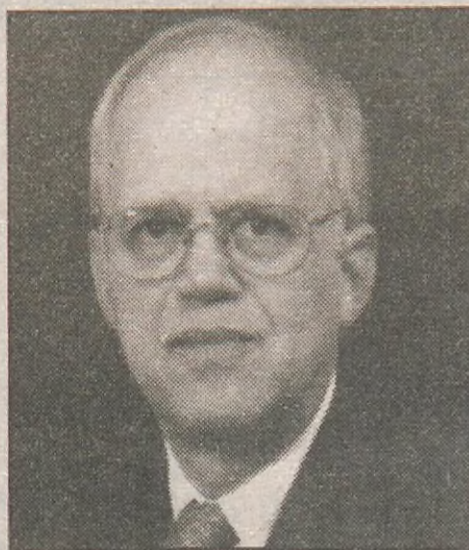
From staff and wire reports



medical report

Syphilis prevention outreach targets Calif. circuit party

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. — State STD prevention educators will target the White Party with a new campaign designed to curb the spread of syphilis, according to the Bay Area Reporter. Dan Wohlfeiler, a spokesperson for the state health agency, said patrons at the massive gay circuit party, set for April 17-21, will receive a simple message: "Get tested, get tested, get tested." The non-profit Desert AIDS Project plans to distribute 10,000 safer sex kits containing condoms and STD testing information at the event. Health officials are concerned about a rise in syphilis cases that may be fueled by men who have sex with men. Cases rose 63 percent among white men and 50 percent for Latino men, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, and continued increasing last year. "There's clearly a resumption of risk behavior," said Harold Jaffee, director of the CDC's National Center for HIV, STD & TB Prevention.



Harold Jaffee, director of the CDC's National Center for HIV, STD & TB Prevention, said a 'resumption of risk behavior' is fueling a national rise in syphilis cases. (Photo courtesy CDC)

Half of AIDS deaths at Texas hospital weren't taking meds

DALLAS (AP) — Nearly half of HIV-infected patients who died at Parkland Hospital from 1999 to 2000 were not taking antiviral medications, a finding that surprised researchers at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. Dr. Mamta Jain, lead author of the study published April 8 in the journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, said he was startled that so few patients were taking advantage of HIV therapy because they need not have insurance to receive HIV medications at Parkland. The study, which also compared the number of HIV-related deaths in 1995 to those in 1999 and 2000, showed a significant drop consistent with a nationwide decline that followed the release in 1996 of highly active antiretroviral therapy medications. Jain said many patients in the study were prescribed HIV therapy but chose not to take the medications. Others were diagnosed too late to be prescribed drugs. Most of the patients not taking medications were African-American or Hispanic.

Dispute may force AIDS patients out of Va. clinic

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — Hundreds of impoverished AIDS patients could have to find new doctors within the next week because of a contract dispute between the city and physicians at Eastern Virginia Medical School. The impending crisis stems from the way health care for uninsured patients is administered. Because of the high number of people infected, the region is eligible for money provided by the federal Ryan White Act, which pays for medical care for patients with no other insurance. Shirley Tyree, the city employee in charge of Ryan White funds, said EVMS uses a billing method that is not allowed by the federal government. Dr. Edward C. Oldfield III, director of the infectious disease division at EVMS, said he has billed the city the same way for three years. He contends there is nothing in federal law that prohibits from doing so. EVMS sent letters to its patients Monday notifying them care may no longer be available. EVMS treats about 1,200 AIDS patients, including 400 through the Ryan White program.

End of smoking settlement could hurt gay programs

WASHINGTON — The probable end of payments under the massive settlement agreement signed by tobacco companies has some gay health advocates worried about cuts to programs aimed at preventing gays from smoking, according to the American Legacy Foundation. The foundation received its fifth and likely last payment from the Master Settlement Agreement's National Public Education Fund earlier this month. The foundation is so far the only national group to use the funds to target gays, who it says "have much higher smoking rates than the general population." Payments under other parts of the settlement will continue for five more years, but the NPEF accounted for 80 percent of Legacy Foundation's funding and most of the money for the gay programs. Cheryl Heaton, American Legacy Foundation president and CEO, called on the tobacco companies to continue the funding "not because they're required to but because it's the just thing to do."

Patients in developing world get 'recycled' HIV drugs

MANHATTAN, N.Y. — A group called AIDS for AIDS takes HIV medications donated by patients in the United States and Canada and distributes them to people with HIV in the developing world, Reuters Health reported. The "recycled" drugs come from patients who died, changed their treatments or are temporarily stopping taking the drugs, under doctors' supervision, to give their bodies a reprieve from side effects. "If I can take half as much therapy, and give the other half of that therapy to someone in South America or Haiti, then for the same amount of money two lives are being saved instead of one," said Mike Barr, a participant in the program that serves 520 people in Africa, the Caribbean and Central and South America. Clients receive a medical assessment and HIV activists and educators "who are making a difference in their countries" get priority, according to Jesus Aguais, who founded the program in 1996.

From staff and wire reports

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Executive Editor CHRIS CRAIN

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editor@houstonvoice.com

Production BONNIE NAUGLE, JOEY CAROLINO

Correspondents: LOU CHIBBARO JR., LAURA DOUGLAS-BROWN, MIKE FLEMING, MATTHEW HENNIE, BRIAN MOYLAN, KEVIN NAFF, JENNIFER SMITH, RHONDA SMITH, STEVE WEINSTEIN

Contributors J.A. CHAPMAN, MATTHEW FORKE, ARJAN TIMMERMANS, TAMARA ADRINE-DAVIS

Photographers DALTON DEHART, KIMBERLY THOMPSON

Webmaster JED DEMPSEY

SALES & ADMINISTRATIONGeneral Manager DANIEL EMERICH
demerich@houstonvoice.comAccount Executives
BRETT CULLUM - bcullum@houstonvoice.com

DONNA HULL - dhull@houstonvoice.com

BRIAN MARTIN - bmartin@houstonvoice.com

National Advertising Representative
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Issue 1173

Forum

HOUSTON VOICE

APRIL 18, 2003

PAGE 12

viewpoint

Toppling Saddam won't free gays

Gay hawks like to claim that regime change in Iraq will mean greater freedom for gays, but that's not the case even within our own military.

By MUBARAK DAHIR

GAY MEN AND LESBIANS who endorse the war in and occupation of Iraq — and possible future military action against other countries like Syria — need to stop using the guise of caring about the plight of gay Arabs to rationalize their support. It's an argument fraught with emotional manipulation, hypocrisy, intellectual dishonesty and factual error.

Even the most dovish opponents of military intervention in Iraq rightly concede that there were plenty of reasons to topple Saddam Hussein and his government. He was a harsh and brutal dictator, and it is near impossible to find anyone who is sorry to see the rogue gone.

Gay and lesbian proponents of the war and the occupation should stick to this core truth when arguing their case. Invoking the supposed freeing of gay Iraqis actually weakens their position.

THE TRUTH IS THAT THE PLIGHT OF gay and lesbian Iraqis — just like that of gay and lesbian Afghans — will change little under whatever new government is installed.

There is no denying that gays in Iraq and other Arab countries are persecuted. But the forces of oppression that keep them down in the Arab world are complex, and cannot be altered by simple "regime change." Religion, tradition, culture, family pressures, ignorance of the contemporary understandings of modern psychology and other factors make life extremely difficult for gay Iraqis and those in other Arab nations.

To believe that life for gay Iraqis will be better — or different in any real way — than it was under Saddam Hussein is willfully naïve. The social, religious and cultural forces that oppress gay Iraqis will not have changed one iota under a

new government.

Furthermore, the line that invading Iraq, and now possibly Syria, will "free" gay people there is heaped in hypocrisy. The forces that are supposedly emancipating our downtrodden gay Iraqi brethren are themselves hyper-homophobic. How can anyone seriously argue that the United States military is an instrument for gay liberation?

From there, the layers of hypocrisy only deepen.

But the most infuriating hypocrisy to the claim that we are invading foreign countries in the interest of freeing gay people is the way we treat gay Arabs and gay Muslims here in the United States.

Gay hawks mouth the mantra of gay liberation in Iraq and Syria, and go to lengths to point out how oppressive those regimes are to homosexuals. Yet what about other neighboring countries that border Iraq?

Saudi Arabia is probably the most socially backward nation in the world, run by unsavory dictators who are infamous for their suppression of freedoms. Saudi Arabia even allegedly executes openly gay people. If ever there was an argument for overthrowing a country, Saudi Arabia should take the prize.

But the Saudi leaders — who are sitting on what is by far the world's largest oil reserve — are our political allies. Hush, then, any talk of invading them.

And what about Egypt? Right now, the

Egyptian government is carrying out a choreographed crackdown on gay men in that country, arresting and jailing dozens through entrapment, Internet stings, informants and possibly even telephone wire-tappings.

International human rights groups have documented torture, threats and beatings against gay Egyptians. Even our own government has spoken up against the outrageous persecution.

But are gay hawks urging that we send the Marines to Cairo to "liberate" the gay men suffering there? Hardly.

BUT THE MOST INFURIATING HYPOCRISY to the claim that we are invading foreign countries in the interest of freeing gay people is the way we treat gay Arabs and gay Muslims here in the United States.

Most gay Arabs and gay Muslims in this country come here specifically seeking the incredible social freedom to be gay that they would never have at home. But particularly since the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, gay Arabs and gay Muslims have felt under attack here, even from other gays.

I have been personally spared most of that prejudice. Though I was born in Jerusalem to a Palestinian father, I had an American mother, and I was primarily raised in this country. I don't have dark skin or an accent or any of the other tell-tale signs of my Arab heritage, other than my name.

But in the past two years, and particularly as the propaganda on the Iraq war went into overdrive, I know from friends and colleagues and dozens of sources I've interviewed that gay Americans have often been prejudiced and unwelcoming to Arabs and Muslims living here.

To talk about "liberating" gay Iraqis in Baghdad while we mistreat gay Arabs and Muslims in our own midst is just too much to stomach.

@ Mubarak Dahir is a syndicated columnist living in New York City and can be reached at MubarakDah@aol.com.



viewpoint LESLIE ROBINSON



I didn't let on that our tennis team was all-gay. If our opponents knew, would their onlooking husbands express disgust, or suggest a party after the match?

Lesbian love on the court

AFTER MORE THAN 20 YEARS AWAY from competitive tennis, I was recently convinced to join a team. An all-lesbian team. I thought I'd died and gone to Wimbledon.

Actually, what I really like about playing on this team, called the Seattle Tennis Alliance, is that it's fun, not the competitive win-or-commit-ritual-disembowelment stuff I remember from high school. That we're all gay is simply a nice bonus.

That we're all gay also injects a note of drama when we face other teams.

Take what happened a few days ago during our first match. As my doubles partner, Victoria, and I walked onto the court, one of our opponents asked what the Seattle Tennis Alliance is.

Though eight feet apart, Victoria and I exchanged a glance quicker than you can say "grand slam."

In doubles when a player chooses not to hit the ball and leaves it for her partner to hit, she yells, "Yours!" Victoria's eyes said, "Yours!"

I blurted out something factual but vague for which Victoria would later tease me. I did not mention that those of us on the team all have something in common, and it ain't a special fondness

for the crosscourt forehand.

In the one fat second I'd been given to decide how to answer, I'd felt a bulge of anxiety in my stomach that seemed to encompass all the possible reactions of the other team.

Would they be horrified that they were facing off against dykes? Would they be dumbfounded that packs of us roam about freely like this? Would they be embarrassed to know we're all women-lovers? Would they giggle?

Would the news travel from court to court under the guise of picking up balls? Would their onlooking husbands express disgust, or suggest a little party after the match?

OF COURSE, IT'S POSSIBLE they would have had no reaction, or a positive one, or that some of them were gay, but tell it to my stomach. Compounding the anxiety was the realization that if I outed Victoria and myself to these two women, I'd be outing our whole team.

So in that moment I opted for a jumbo-sized lie of omission.



Only later did it dawn on me that telling them we're lesbians might have had advantages. For a start, they might have assumed we were terrific athletes — Martinas, one and all.

We lost the match. Obviously we could have used a little intimidation.

Afterwards we adjourned to a Mexican restaurant for a postmortem and margaritas. When I told my teammates about my predicament — to out or not to out — one player suggested we make out on the court with our doubles partner. Or grab our partner's butt at an opportune time. Like when we're losing.

This opens up a raft of possibilities. Just before serving, I might yell to Victoria at the net, "Sweetheart, let's have a baby!" Ace!

Or when the other team is lining up to serve, she could turn to me and bellow, "How could you hurt me like that? How

could you sleep with Susan? Look at her over on court 3, pretending you two didn't do the nasty last night! I don't care if she is on our team, I want her to lose! And you better keep your head low. No telling where I might hit this return of serve!"

The wide-eyed stares from across the net would be worth it all by themselves, never mind that the opponent's serve would wind up in the Puget Sound.

After we left the restaurant, I realized we hadn't come to a group decision on what to say the next time any of us is asked about our team. This will not do.

It's all my body can handle to be playing tennis again after so many years. I decline to put it through these other contortions as well.

@ Leslie Robinson is a Seattle-based freelance writer and can be reached online at www.GeneralGayety.com.

Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel



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on the record

"Some GOP leaders seem intent on cutting off their right arm in order to reach out with their left. This is foolish and will not go unnoticed by the party's conservative grassroots."

Robert Knight, director of Concerned Women of America's Culture & Family Institute, on the appearance by Republican National Committee Chair Marc Racicot before the Human Rights Campaign (Culture & Family Report, April 9)

"It would be like Al Gore meeting with the John Birch Society."

Knight, further opining on Racicot's HRC appearance (Washington Post, April 11)

"Have You Had Sex with Colin Farrell Yet?"

The provocative headline on a recent story in Details magazine about "Phone Booth" star Colin Farrell, which the New York Post found "odd" for a "non-gay" men's magazine (Details, April issue)

"What is Maer [Roshan] getting his panties in a twist about? Details is a magazine for men — all men. I'm not going to get caught up in a whole butcher-thou stand-off with the cookie-cutter men's magazines. Those other books are squeamish about running stories with any gay content; Details isn't. So, what's the big deal?"

Dan Peres, editor of Details magazine, reacting to a gossip item by editor Maer Roshan in the newly launched Radar magazine, alleging that Peres has turned Details into a "fey" men's magazine (New York Post, April 11)

"We're not talking about locker-room patting-on-the-butt. We're talking about behavior that's really extreme. And it's not in the locker room. It's in the workplace."

Deborah Zalesne, law professor at the City University of New York, on a recent rash of lawsuits alleging same-sex sexual harassment (Oregonian, Portland, Ore., April 6)

"There is one extremely famous Hollywood actor who's gay and doesn't like being in the same room as me."

Gay actor Sir Ian McKellan, in an interview with a British gay magazine (Attitude, April 7)

"We don't know much about Shakespeare's private life. He was certainly married, and I think he had four children. But once they were born, he left his wife in Stratford and came to work in London. Did he sleep with another man? On the balance of things I would say, 'Yes.'"

McKellan, speculating on the Bard's sexual orientation (Attitude, April 7)

"I found my voice in the eyes of my children. I just want you to know that you are looking at a miracle now. I am living that picket fence. ... No more lies."

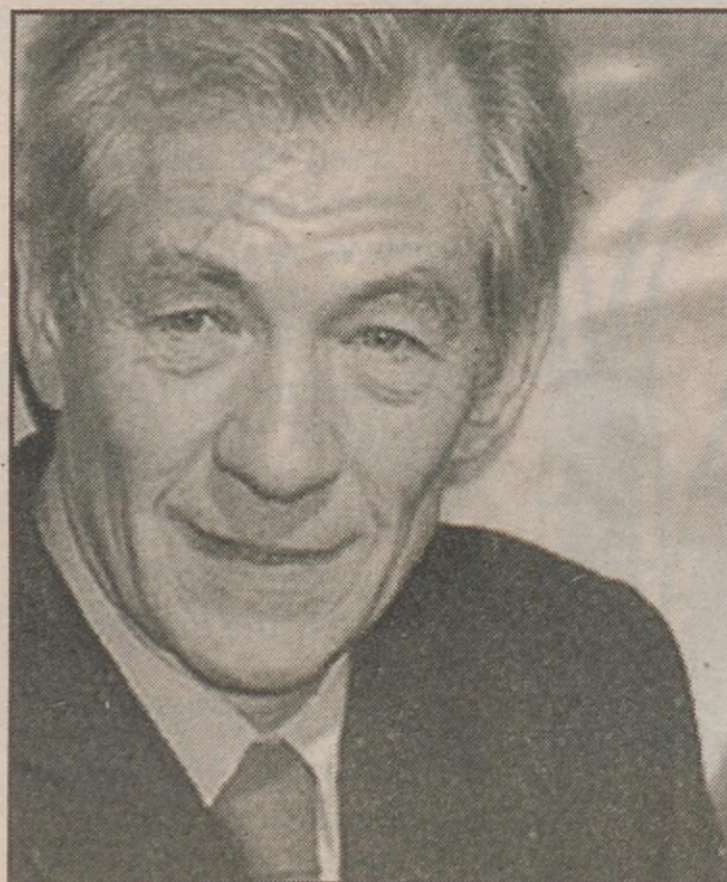
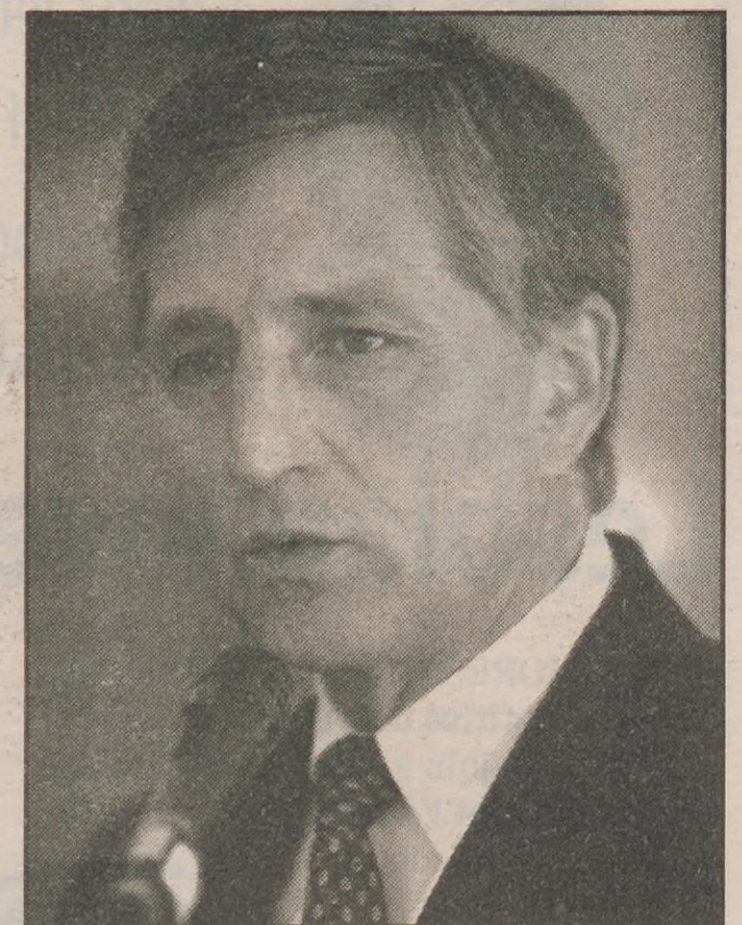
Former NFL player Esera Tualo, speaking to 100 students at Indiana University (Bloomington Herald-Times, April 9)

"I'm taping 'Cher' and watching 'Idol.' That'll show 'em!'"

An irate Internet posting by a gay TV viewer, angered by a decision by NBC to air two "Will & Grace" with Cher episodes opposite Fox's "American Idol" finals

"Kelli Carpenter, Rosie O'Donnell's life partner, has legally changed her last name to O'Donnell. The two celebrated by eating out."

Comedian Tina Fey on "Weekend Update" (NBC's "Saturday Night Live," April 5)



BOOKS: New book set during the Harlem Renaissance tries to shed light on gay life while focusing on A'Lelia Walker. Page 19.

FILM: Now on DVD, 'The Children's Hour' and 'Victim' offer compelling reminders of past cinematic repression. Page 17.



HOUSTON VOICE
APRIL 18, 2003
PAGE 15

Out on the Bayou

DJ daddy



By STEVE WEINSTEIN

THE RUMORS BEGAN CIRCULATING during last month's Winter Party. DJ David Knapp would not be appearing at the after party; another DJ would be subbing for him.

Several hundred miles away from the crowds partying on the makeshift dance floor on the sands of Miami Beach, Knapp and his partner, Scott Bell, were in a hospital room in Ashville, N.C., where they were awaiting the birth of their son. In a few minutes, they would be cradling Ryan Belknap, and David Knapp — one of the most prominent DJs in the club world — would enter the ever-increasing legions of gay parents.

Knapp's odyssey began when he first began seeing Bell. "Seeing" is the operative word here, because the two have known each other for seven years but in "When Harry Met Sally" fashion, the two only began a relationship three years ago.

Knapp was then living in Miami and not long after, moved to New York. He has since relocated yet again, this time to Atlanta, where Bell lives.

Using Atlanta as a base, Knapp travels nearly every weekend for his club gigs. Originally trained as a lawyer (he passed the bar and can practice in Florida), the native Californian Knapp established his reputation in the hothouse club scene of Miami's South Beach.

The White Party, which he played annually, helped solidify his standing as one of the hottest DJs on the circuit. More and more gigs in New York's competitive club scene initiated the move there. He now spins around the country and the world, including a 2000 tour of Japan.

IN NOVEMBER 2001, KNAPP WAS IDLY LOOKING through Creative Loafing, a local alternative weekly, and saw an ad for a meeting to learn about open adoption. He and Bell intrigued enough to attend an April 2002 mandatory two-day workshop.

There, they learned how rigorous the process would be and the difficult choices involved. One of

Superstar spinner David Knapp had it all — but he wanted something more. Meet son Ryan.

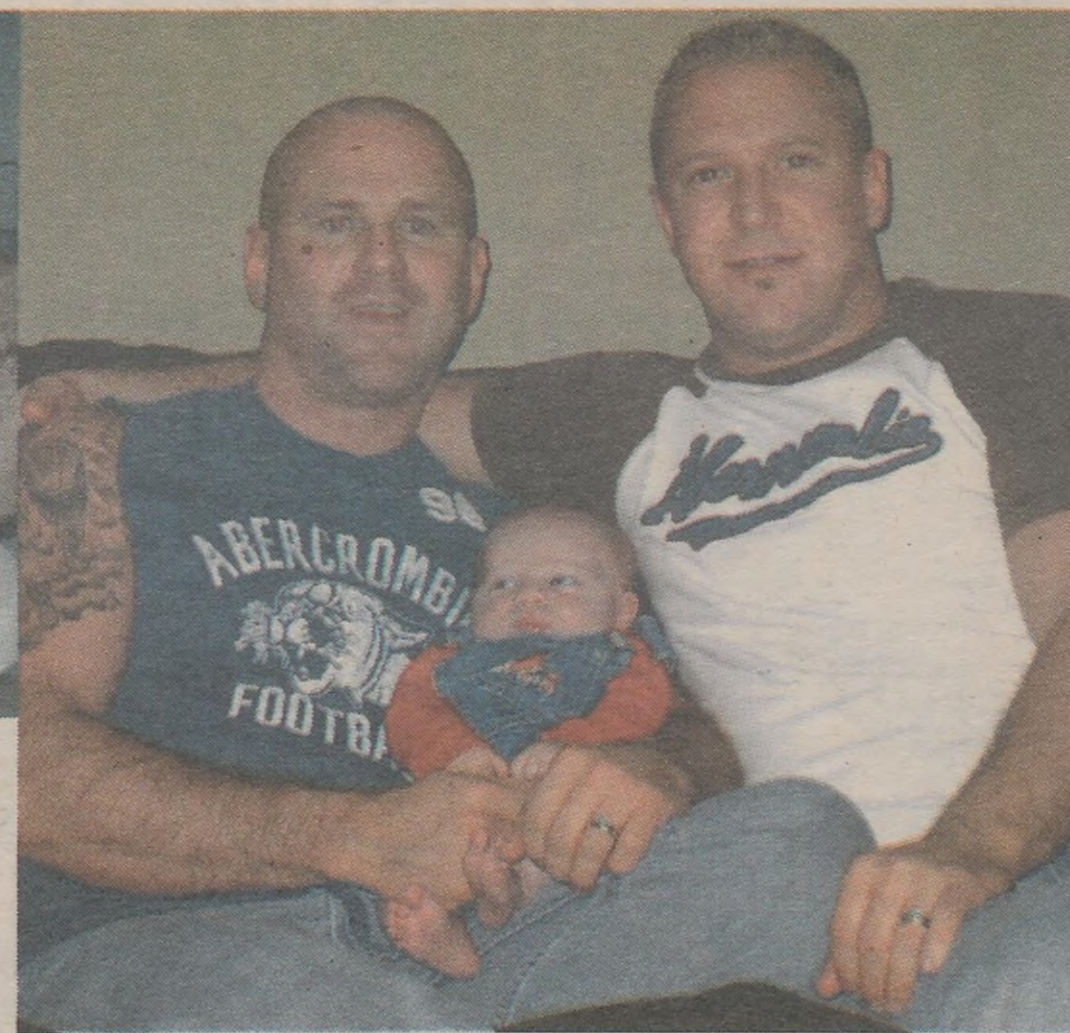


the most difficult would be deciding how much contact to allow the mother or whether to reveal the birth mother to their child.

The two decided they were ready to become co-dads and signed a contract. The entire process ends up costing somewhere between \$10,000 and \$15,000, including lawyers' fees. But, Knapp adds, he is eligible for a \$10,000 rolling tax credit. If two people are willing to take a child who is a ward of the state, they can even receive a subsidy worth hundreds of dollars a month until the child is 18 (although the child probably has suffered some emotional or physical abuse along the way).

"My mom's a social worker," Knapp says. "I learned some things from her. She counseled us a little bit. And inspired us, too."

Ironically, according to Knapp, in Georgia, gay co-parent adoptions have managed to fly under the radar of conservative state legislators. "We can both petition for adoption," he says. "Some states don't allow



it. In Georgia, there's no law forbidding or allowing it. So you find a friendly judge, with the help of a good lawyer. Adoptions are sealed, so legislators will never know how many gay adoptions go through. As long as no law is on the books, there are no statistics."

Even so, one person is listed as the principal caregiver, the other — Knapp, in this instance — the secondary.

AFTER PAYING THE CONTRACT FEE, SOCIAL workers came to visit. The couple had to sign a stack of papers. Did they smoke? Was there a gun in

Please see DJ DADDY on Page 16

out on the bayou

Famed DJ joins ranks of country's gay parents

DJ DADDY, continued from Page 15

the home? Had the cats been vaccinated?

Next came a "Dear Birth Mother" letter: a one-page note to prospective moms with text and pasted-on photos. After numerous rewrites, the letter was sent out to agencies and put on a Web site.

Eight days later, they got their first contact, a woman in Hawaii. They met her and it seemed a done deal, but she pulled out. Knapp suspects that she might have put the germ of an idea into her own gay brother to adopt.

How did people in the agency and the mothers-to-be react to a gay couple? Knapp says everyone was completely supportive. "We got e-mails from people saying their daughter would be such a princess having two dads," Knapp says. "A woman was so impressed with us, she offered to donate an egg" — but not to carry the child to term.

Still, they were devastated. Then, a week later, a woman in North Carolina e-mailed them. "We talked to her for three days," Knapp recalls. They met in Charlotte, where they took her to lunch and, wisely it turns out, gave her dog lots of attention.

The woman was an animal lover who spoiled her dog. They were accepted as the parents of her child-to-be.

She was due to give birth on March 1. But, as babies often do, this one took his time. On March 9, the day of the Winter Party, she went into labor. "I had to make



a choice," Knapp says. "I wanted to be there for the birth of my son."

RATHER THAN A DETRIMENT TO HIS FATHERHOOD, the insane hours a DJ keeps has actually been a godsend. Bell works a 9-to-5 job at Atlanta Medical Hospital as a cardio tech, so Knapp stays at home weekdays. On weekends, while

he's flying to his gigs, Bell becomes Dad.

How are people in the child-free universe of gay clubs reacting to Knapp's new status? "If you went into the straight club world, a lot of people who bartend, DJ and work the door have kids already," he says. "In the gay world, there's an extra disconnect, just because they're not used to it." DJ Victor Calderone is probably the

best-known example of a dad, but party promoter Johnny Chisholm is also gay.

He hopes that he and Bell will even be able to step onto the dance floor once in a while. "I think parents lead by example," Knapp says. "They should still live their lives. I saw my parents socializing in the community and having lots of friends. We wouldn't give everything up."

He looks forward to Ryan being old enough to take him along when Dad spins at Gay Disney.

For now, Knapp is at the top of his game, and he has no intention of quitting the turntables. He does, however, harbor a fantasy of practicing adoption law to gay couples in Florida when the legislature there gets around to amending its laws banning gay-couple adoption.

Mostly, he hopes to lead by setting an example. Ryan Belknap's last name, by the way, reflects Daddy David's mixture of artistry and practicality: Not wanting to saddle Ryan with the burden of a hyphenated surname, the two men agreed on a hybrid. Since then, Knapp has been researching "Belknap" and has found it is the result of the joining of two clans in Ireland.

MORE INFO
 Independant Adoption Center
 www.aic.org

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film MATTHEW FORKE



Now on DVD, 'The Children's Hour,' 'Victim' offer compelling reminders of past cinematic repression.

Gay cinema, circa 1961

TASKED WITH PROTECTING THE public morality, the stringent Motion Picture Production Code was an almighty and powerful force in the motion picture industry for many years. Refusal of the Code's seal of approval could doom a film's distribution chances and box-office success. Subversive filmmakers beware.

But by the early '60s, successful adult fare such as "Suddenly Last Summer" and "Psycho" stretched the limits of what the Code deemed "appropriate" viewing. Suggestions of sex and violence were fine, to a degree, but open discussion of homosexuality was still a big no-no. Case in point: Basil Dearden's "Victim" and William Wyler's "The Children's Hour," both of which are now available on DVD.

"Victim" is a British film starring Dirk Bogarde as Melville Farr, a respected London barrister who's married but hiding a questionable past. A handsome and popular British movie star, it was undeniably brave of Bogarde to play one of the cinema's first openly gay lead characters. In 1961 — or even 1981 — most actors of his stature, if not all, would have treated the part as if it were radioactive.

The plot is fairly straightforward. Farr's former lover, "Boy" Barrett (Peter McEnrey) commits suicide after police suspect he's a target of a blackmail ring. At the time, Britain's harsh laws against homosexuality made closeted gays an easy target for blackmail.

Farr must decide whether or not to help the police, knowing that exposure may very well cost him his career and marriage.

Some may quibble with the ending, but "Victim" is a solid, well-written and acted thriller — and far ahead of its time in its clinical discussion of homosexuality. In fact, the film helped bring attention to the antiquated laws that condemned this "social problem," eventually leading to their abolition.

Viewers today can only imagine the ulcers it must have given American censors back in 1961, when "Victim" was denied Code approval and surely suffered at the box office as a result.

LESS PROGRESSIVE, AT LEAST BY comparison, is Wyler's "The Children's Hour" adapted by Lillian Hellmann from her play of the same name. Here we see Audrey Hepburn and Shirley MacLaine as schoolteachers accused of having "sinful sexual knowledge" of one another — a lie told by a vindictive student.

The film is an affecting drama, skillfully shot and acted. But it's sometimes frustrating to watch, as if the filmmakers go so far out of their way trying to create a



Due to now archaic film rules, Audrey Hepburn (left) and Shirley McClain dared not speak the name of their forbidden love in 'The Children's Hour,' but the DVD is required viewing for its history lesson.

"tasteful" story about homosexuality that today it feels cowardly and insincere.

And that flaw is a direct result of the Code, which restricted audiences from hearing words like "homosexuality," "lesbian" or "gay." In their place, we get "this thing," "it" or "a great, awful lie."

At one point, Audrey Hepburn uses the word "lovers." Hopefully, viewers don't go to the bathroom during that particular scene, or they may find themselves hopelessly lost as to what the film is actually about.

And what exactly is "sinful sexual knowledge" of each other? Sharing tips on oral sex? Just say it, for heaven's sake.

WHAT SADDENS ME THE MOST IS THE tragic decision of one major character near the end of the film. Every time I see it I want to yell at the screen, "It's not that bad! Move to the city! Trust me!"

But unfortunately, the Code wins for the last time, and the one "guilty" character is forced to pay dearly for her sin.

Both films are presented in their original wide-screen version, and both include their original theatrical trailer. Sound is presented in a satisfactory mono track.

A nice bonus, "Victim" includes a vintage 20-minute interview with Bogarde at the time of the film's release, plus a linear essay. As drama or as social history, these films are required viewing.

MORE INFO

'Victim'
Home Vision Entertainment
DVD Retail \$19.95

'The Children's Hour'
MGM Home Entertainment
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Farewell tour and 'Best Of' compilation
remind fans of remarkable career that
makes parting such sweet sorrow.

Goodbye, Cher!

CHER ONCE AGAIN EMERGES FROM her time capsule with another concert tour and greatest hits record. Viciously enduring and infectiously appealing, this gay icon simply seems to be indestructible.

Her fine sense for hit potential, provocative style and empowering persona has fascinated audiences for almost 40 years — despite mixed rumors and truth about plastic surgery, outrageous fashion and cheesy infomercials.

The diva, 57, is said to be finally ready to retire in peace and is on her "Farewell" stadium tour. Last week, she released "The Very Best of Cher" greatest hits compilation in conjunction with the tour.

The singer put together a collection of 21 songs that take listeners through all phases of her career — from pop folk singer in the '60s to disco chick in the '70s and from rock vixen in the '80s to gay club diva in the '90s.

The compilation not only includes solo hits but also "The Beat Goes On" and "I Got You Babe," two of her first and greatest hits with first husband Sonny Bono in the mid '60s.

WHILE STILL MARRIED TO SONNY, Cher struck gold as a solo artist in the late '60s and early '70s. Songs from that era included the cover of Bob Dylan's "All I Want To Do," "Bang, Bang (My Baby Shot Me Down)" and "Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves," which debuted at number one and marked the singer's artistic maturity just as the couple's TV show reigned supreme in the ratings.

Cher wasted no time after she broke off her personal and business partnership with Sonny in 1974 to pursue her own career in music, television and film. Her second number one smash "Half Breed" from 1973 is also featured on this CD.

"Half Breed" highlights Cher's trademark vocals and Snuff Garrett's rocky production. The singer's chart triumphs in the '70s continued with "Dark Lady," which also appears here.

The compilation album doesn't miss the singer's disco phase in the late '70s with the flaming "Take Me Home," which bears a slight resemblance to some of her big club hits in the '90s when it comes to melody and message.

CHER RESURFACED ON THE MUSIC scene after a successful turn in movies with a string of pop rock hits in the '80s. She again redefined herself with hits like



World famous and indestructible diva Cher calls it quits after 40 years in the public eye with a final tour and a new CD. (Photo by Michael Lavine/cher.com)

"I Found Someone," "If I Could Turn Back Time," "Save Up All Your Tears" and her duet with Peter Cetera on "After All."

She shunned the spotlight for a few years and made another miraculous comeback in the late '90s with her global sensation "Believe," which became the best-selling achievement of her career. Follow up songs such as "Strong Enough" and party anthem "All or Nothing" are on the compilation as well.

As a bonus, the CD includes radio-friendly remixes of "One by One" (by gay DJ Junior Vasquez) and "A Different Kind Of Love Song," which is revamped by Rodney Jerkins into an infatuating techno tune.

The CD booklet includes full-color photos and detailed booklet notes from famed Rolling Stone writer and MTV News host Kurt Loder, who concludes that the most attractive aspect of Cher's career is her "utter lack of naked show-biz ambition."

With "The Very Best of Cher," the diva presents her fans the ultimate swan song, a worthy testament of her diverse and remarkable music career. She leaves fans a rich musical legacy and tabloid gossip history that will keep us entertained for many years to come.

i MORE INFO

'The Very Best of Cher'
Warner/MCA/Geffen, 2003
www.cher.com

books TAMARA ADRINE-DAVIS

Ben Neihart's effort to shed light on the life of A'Lelia Walker offers speculation about what gay life was like during Harlem Renaissance.

Mixing fact and fiction

THE PROBLEM WITH "HISTORICAL fiction" is that it is often difficult to tell where history begins and fiction ends. This is a major drawback with novelist Bob Neihart's "urban historical," "Rough Amusements: The True Story of A'Lelia Walker, Patroness of the Harlem Renaissance's Down-Low Culture."

The book's title claims to be a factual account of the life of the daughter of Madam C.J. Walker, who made a fortune selling black hair care products to women in the days before beauty shops. Her estate reportedly was worth more than \$1 million when she died in 1919, making her daughter, A'Lelia, who was 24 at the time, one of the country's richest black women.

Neihart's book centers around A'Lelia Walker and "The Faggots Ball," an infamous Harlem drag ball held during the '20s. In addition to black gay partygoers, white gays would also attend.

A'Lelia was something of a party girl who counted among her circle of friends such luminaries as poet Langston Hughes, socialite and heiress Mayme White, artist Harold Jackman, Vanity Fair social critic Carl Van Vechten and writer Richard Bruce Nugent.

"People routinely referred to her as stupid, as ugly, as boring, as superficial," Neihart said in a recent telephone interview.

"I think she had an incredibly playful sense of humor, and was genuinely interested in the arts that she followed, and was quite a genius at self-promotion," he said. "And that worked out well with her mother's business."

Such rich, lively and complex characters of the Jazz Age could make for serious and fascinating study. But "Rough Amusements" misses the mark because it involves the author's speculation about people and events for which there is very little historic record.

Nevertheless, the seminal work on the Walker family, "On Her Own Ground: The Life & Times of Madam C.J. Walker," by A'Lelia Bundles, a family descendant, does not mention much about A'Lelia Walker. And few of her personal letters remain, leaving Neihart to draw on the papers and work of A'Lelia's contemporaries to fill in the blanks.

SOME READERS MIGHT OBJECT TO Neihart, a white writer, interpreting events and speculating about black American icons. But Neihart defends his actions.

"There's a lot of historical fiction, or speculative narrative history, that re-imagines conversations," he said. "So I



In 'Rough Amusement,' Ben Neihart uses the literary device of historical fiction to fill in the blanks about the life of black socialite A'Lelia Walker.

really didn't think it would be offensive."

He said he tried to follow the "cadences of voice" that he found in writings by Hughes and others. He compared what he did with "Rough Amusements" to Truman Capote's "In Cold Blood" and "The Executioner's Song" by Norman Mailer. It also is similar, he said, to Edmund Morris's historical novel, "Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan."

Any speculation about A'Lelia Walker's sexual orientation is left unanswered. The book provides no proof and the author found little else to help.

But in "Rough Amusements," he mentions A'Lelia's close friendship with Mayme White. A most revealing scene plays out at a New Jersey resort when A'Lelia is on her deathbed.

"In the bedroom they shared, Mayme asked A'Lelia, 'Baby, what's wrong?'" Neihart writes.

"I'm so glad you're here, Mayme," A'Lelia replies. "Look at me. I've had everything I wanted in life. I just didn't have it long enough."

A'Lelia died of an apparent stroke the next morning.

Despite such morsels, "Rough Amusements" isn't about A'Lelia Walker as much as it is speculation about black gay culture during the Harlem Renaissance.

i FOR MORE INFO

'Rough Amusements: The True Story of A'Lelia Walker, Patroness of the Harlem Renaissance's Down-Low Culture'
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The Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League (SMYAL)-- a 501c3 youth center offering support and coaching to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning youth in Washington DC metro area is seeking an **executive director** to assume overall financial and operational management of the organization and is responsible for implementing the strategic plan developed by the Board. ED will be strong and collaborative leader with a proven track record in staff supervision, budgeting and financial management and fundraising. Resumes due by May 6, 2003. Competitive salary and benefits. Email edsearch@smyal.org for position description and application guidelines.



You can still sell your life insurance policy for cash.

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dining J.A. CHAPMAN

Nundini and its delicious Italian sandwiches a pleasant surprise

Expect the unexpected

EVERY SO OFTEN WHEN I'M RESEARCHING new restaurants, I come across an unexpected gem. That's what happened when I walked into the Nundini Food Store. I'd noticed their red sign advertising Italian food and gelato for some time, but never stopped in.

One day recently, the sign offered a free gelato with meal purchase. That was it. I had to go see what this place was all about.

As I pulled into the parking lot of the rather uninspiring industrial office park on North Shepherd just past White Oak Bayou, I wondered what kind of place would be here, just on the edge of such a busy thoroughfare. A couple of tables with umbrellas on the deck by the front door seemed pleasant enough, but I still didn't know what to expect.

I opened the door and walked into a funky mix of an imported food store, Italian deli, gelato and pastry shop. I wasn't even sure where to order, but headed to the deli in the back. A sumptuous assortment of Italian meats and cheeses, along with bowls of olives, peppers, and salads filled the cooler, while meats and cheeses made of foam hung overhead. It seemed strangely authentic and contrived at the same time.

The simple menu is on a white board and offers salads for \$5.95 and panini for \$6.95. That includes a bag of chips and a 12-ounce drink, plus the free small gelato. It seemed like a pretty good deal to me. I ordered the muffaletta and took a look around the place while I waited.

THE SHELVES BY THE DOOR DISPLAY A respectable selection of Italian foods like pastas, and olive oils. Incongruously, they also contain a large assortment of ceramic serving dishes. The middle of the large space holds about seven chunky dark wood tables that seem right out of an old Steak and Ale. The drink coolers flank the tables on one side and on the other sit the pastry display cases holding cannoli, imported Italian cakes, and an assortment of Greek favorites.

The gelato and sorbet are next to the pastry case, and in the back are more shelves with Italian cookies and chocolates. It's a fun place to peruse and you might even want to pick up an item or two.

Eventually my muffaletta was ready, and I took a seat at one of those clunky tables. The round bread was thick with a chunky olive mix and generous servings of excellent quality ham, provolone, mortadella and salami. It was toasted just enough to melt the cheese, creating a warm, delicious sandwich. If it wasn't quite up to New Orleans' Central Grocery quality, it was a reasonable approximation. I'd opted for a side of pasta salad instead of the chips, and found it to be a tasty combination of penne pasta with yellow peppers, black olives and sun-dried tomatoes.

When I finished my sandwich, I headed for the gelato case, which boasted about 10 different flavors. You get two scoops in a small serving, and after tasting all of them, I settled on the chocolate and a coffee and caramel mix. Wow! Rich, delicious and bursting with flavor, the gelato was a real luxury. I knew I'd be back.



And return I did, to try the Italian salad — mixed greens with roasted peppers, cucumbers, olives, onions and the best feta cheese I've had in ages. Okay, so the dressings are in little packets and there isn't much selection; I can work with that. Most of their deli business is take-out, so they're geared in that direction.

The prosciutto and mozzarella panini was excellent. Fresh, crusty bread so good I asked where it came from (it's flown in daily from an Italian bakery in Dallas) is lightly toasted, and the high quality prosciutto and mozzarella blend perfectly together. I can also recommend the tuna salad panini, a mix of tuna, onions, egg and sun-dried tomatoes again on that fabulous bread.

AFTER SEVERAL VISITS, I WAS STILL uncertain what this little shop and restaurant was all about. The food was quite good, but the space devoted to the deli and tables was only about half of the large room. So I decided to ask. Marion Jones, the general manager, told me that most of their business was gelato, which they sell to various restaurants around town. The space was originally designed to be a showroom to demonstrate their products for chefs, and they added the deli and other items as they went along.

So I guess that explained it. The deli was something of an afterthought. Well, it's a delicious gem of an afterthought. The Nundini Food Store offers some of the best Italian sandwiches in town, and their gelato is a real treat. It's funny how the best food can be hidden in the most unexpected places. I guess that's part of the fun.

Nundini Food Store
500 North Shepherd
Houston, TX 77007
713-861-6331
<http://www.nundinifood.com/>

Food: ●●●●●
Service: ●●●●●
Value: ●●●●●
Scene: ●●●●●

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

community calendar

SATURDAY, APRIL 19

Annual Retrovirus AIDS Update. 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Keynote speaker is Shannon Schrader, MD. Co-hosts are Houston Buyers Club, Montrose Clinic, Ryan White Planning Council, Thomas Street Clinic and Houston Area Community Services (HACS). Holiday Inn Select at Kirby and Highway 59.

Houston Area Bears. Social. 9 p.m. Mary's, 1022 Westheimer. H.A.B., 713-867-9123.

Houston Outdoor Group. Bird watching on High Island. Jeff, 713-729-5072. HOGline: 713-KAMPOUT.

EVERY SATURDAY

All-Spanish Worship Service/Noche Espiritual. 6 p.m. Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, 2026 W. 11th. 713-303-3409 or 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.

Houston Wrestling Club. Practice. 1:30 p.m. 713-453-7406.

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.

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. Drop-in, noon-5 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

SUNDAY, APRIL 20

EVERY SUNDAY

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, 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.

GLOBAL. Gay Lesbian Or Bisexual Alliance. University of Houston GLBT student group meeting, 2 p.m. at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.uh.edu/~global. E-mail: global@bayou.uh.edu.

Grace Assembly Church. Gay/gay-affirming congregation. 11 a.m. service. 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leo1@easttexas.net.

Grace Lutheran Church. Sunday school for all ages 9 a.m. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-528-3269.

Houston Roughnecks Rugby Club. Practice from 4-6 p.m. For more information, log on to www.roughnecksrugby.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. 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: PoznBuff@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, 10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.

Unitarian Fellowship of Houston. Adult forum, 10 a.m. Service, 11 a.m. 713-686-5876.

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in, 2-6 p.m. • GLBT Community Church with Rev. Melissa Wood: Bible study, 10-10:45 a.m., worship 11 a.m. www.geocities.com/glbtc • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

MONDAY, APRIL 21

Houston Outdoor Group. Pre-camp meeting for Enchanted Rock Campout from April 25-27. 7 p.m. Café Express on Kirby between Alabama and Richmond. Howard K., 713-528-6174. HOGline: 713-KAMPOUT.

EVERY MONDAY

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

Free HIV Testing. Houston Area Community Services. 9 a.m.-noon at Joseph-Hines Clinic, 1710 West 25th St. 713-526-0555, ext. 231, 227 or 226.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m.-midnight. Keys West. 713-830-3000.

Frost Eye Clinic. Free eye exams for people with HIV. 713-830-3000.

Gay Bowling Leagues. 9 p.m. Palace Lanes, Bellaire Blvd. 713-861-1187.

Gay Fathers/Fathers First. Support group. 8-9:30 p.m. Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Tom, 713-726-8736.

Grace Assembly Church. Gay/gay-affirming congregation. 7 p.m. aerobics class. 567 Cedar Grove, Livingston, Texas, 77351. 936-646-7214. E-mail: leo1@easttexas.net.

Grief & Divorce Support Groups. 7 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017, ext. 208.

Houston Roughnecks Rugby Club. Practice from 6:30-8:30 p.m. For more information, log on to www.roughnecksrugby.org.

Kolbe Project. Eucharist 7:30 p.m. 713-861-1800.

Lambda Center. Alcoholics Anonymous. 8 p.m. Beginners' 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. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

TUESDAY, APRIL 22

Houston Area Bears. Dineout at Hooters on Kirby, 6:30 p.m. H.A.B., 713-867-9123.

EVERY TUESDAY

Bering Support Network. Lunch Bunch Gang, 11 a.m. 713-526-1017.

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

Free HIV Testing. Houston Area Community Services. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Joseph-Hines Clinic, 1710 West 25th St. 713-526-0555, ext. 231, 227 or 226.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m.-midnight at Club Houston. Also 4-8 p.m. at 611 Club, 611 Hyde Park. 713-830-3000.

Gay youth. New program for young gay males, ages 18-29. 7 p.m. 614 Avondale. 713-533-9786.

GLBT Pentecostals. Bible study, prayer, 7 p.m. in the Heights. For info: 936-931-3761; e-mail: www.Wgb1947@cs.com.

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. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • Lesbian Coming Out Group, 7 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23

Center for AIDS. Women's mixer, 7 p.m. 1407 Hawthorne. 713-527-8210.

EVERY WEDNESDAY

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.

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 9 p.m.-midnight at Ripcord, 10 pm-1 am at EJs 10 pm-1 am at Midtowne Spa. 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.

Gay Bowling Leagues. 6:30 p.m. Palace Lanes, 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@easttexas.net.

Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal, 7-9 p.m. 1307 Yale. 713-528-4379.

Houston Roughnecks Rugby Club. Practice from 6:30-8:30 p.m. For more information, log on to www.roughnecksrugby.org.

Houston Tennis Club. 7:00-9 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. Drop-in, 2-9 p.m. • Free HIV testing, counseling, 6-9 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

THURSDAY, APRIL 24

EVERY THURSDAY

BiNet Houston. Group for bisexuals; everyone welcome. 7:30 p.m. Hobbit Café, 2240 Portsmouth. www.flash.net/~bihouse. 713-467-4380.

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

Community Gospel. Service. 7:30 p.m. 713-880-9235. www.communitygospel.org.

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. 4-8 p.m. at The Outpost; 8 p.m.-midnight at Brazos River Bottom and Cousins; 10 pm-1 am at Toyz Disco. 713-830-3000.

Free HIV Testing. 7-9 p.m. at All Star News, 3415 Katy Freeway. Health clinic with free testing for HIV and syphilis. 713-869-7878.

FrontRunners. Running club. 6:30 p.m. 713-522-8021. Web site: http://homeswbell.net/latathon/houfr.htm. E-mail: latathon@swbell.net.

Gay Bowling Leagues. 9 p.m. Palace Lanes, Bellaire Blvd. 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 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@easttexas.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.

Spanish Charla Conversation Group. Café Agora, 7 p.m. E-mail: charlahouston@msn.com. 713-416-7203.

Women's Clinic. Montrose Clinic. 713-830-3000.

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop in 2-9 p.m. • Montrose Writers' Project, 10 a.m. • Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus Board of Trustees meeting, 7 p.m. • Monthly volunteer meeting, 7 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

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Women's Clinic. Montrose Clinic. 713-830-3000.

appts

a weekly guide to arts & entertainment activities

Q Puzzle

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"Not-Yet-Ready-for-Straight-Time Players"

Across

- Gets hard
- Davis of "Querelle"
- Like "Sweet Bird of Youth"?
- William of "Kiss of the Spider Woman"
- Anna, to Jodie
- White Party Beach
- Lake traveled by Ohio ferries
- Debtors' letters
- 1950 Barbara Stanwyck flick "_____ of Her Own"
- "The Ambiguously Gay Duo" creator
- "Let's _____" (song of 63-Across)
- Lawyers' things
- Arena for GLSEN
- Poles for your first mate?
- Atkins, who played Woolf on Broadway
- Soft in the head
- "Gay Hitler" actor
- Spread it and lick it
- Milk, so to speak
- Double affirmative, to a Salamanca sissy
- "Janet Reno" actor
- Photographer Corinne
- Oakland tight end, e.g.
- "Will & Grace" first did this in 1998

- Singer Sumac
- Third notes, in "The Sound of Music"
- Hello from Madonna's grandparents
- "The Girl with No Gaydar" actress
- Supporter for Cassatt
- Theocritus creation
- Songwriter Porter
- Anal insert from a UFO?
- Perform a decorator's task
- Pink and lavender
- Son of Uranus
- Had carnal relations with
- Greek love

- Anais, lover of Henry and June
- Org. with olive drab hankies?
- Queer one
- Not a dress size for Edna Turnblad
- Flirted
- Lennox of the Eurythmics
- Margolyes of "The Age of Innocence"
- Earhart of the air
- Steve May and others
- Money from a queen's father, e.g.
- Karel Capek play
- Land of Lev.
- "_____ Me, Feel Me" (song from "Tommy")
- Gershick's "Gay _____ Girls"
- Lesbian couple, e.g.
- Sean and Debra's costar
- Shagged in the valley?
- One with a tricky tongue
- Linus of "Priest"
- Evade, as duty
- J. Edgar's assistant
- "Queen of Country" McEntire
- "Exit to _____" (Rosie flick)
- Madonna's Blonde Ambition, e.g.
- African queen
- Nazi Rudolph
- Emissions-watching org.
- Michelangelo's output
- Finn's fifth

Down

- Antony of "Shakespeare in Love"
- Current Amsterdam currency
- Hulburt Creek to Russian Riv.
- Well-hung ones beneath jockeys
- Like Eddie Izzard
- What a chicken hawk may raid
- Kramer, to Yale
- Ferro's "The Family of Max _____"
- Result of a lick on the head, perhaps
- One of Bernstein's strings
- Norma McCorvey's memoir "_____ Roe"
- Source of "Health Care Needs of Gay Men and Lesbians"

Answers on Page 22

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My Stars!

April 18 — 24



ARIES (March 21 to April 20)

The Sun moves forcefully forward in your money house this week, so get your books in order, baby — no excuses! 'Tis the season to work extra hard so you can enjoy a super chill summer. Romantically, your libido is in overdrive, especially where another Aries is concerned.



TAURUS (April 21 to May 20)

Now that the planets are moving in your direction, honey, I suggest you get your act together. You've had enough abrupt changes recently. Focus on success and stability over the long haul. A Pisces is totally focused on your pleasure. Be a little greedy!!



GEMINI (May 21 to June 21)

It's not the time to cry over spilled milk (or over-vermouthered martinis), sweetie. Instead, do some heavy meditation on what you really need and desire for a happy future. You are literally creating your own reality now. Fantasize about a Virgo and see what happens.



CANCER (June 22 to July 22)

You may be able to see the people and key events in your life with more objectivity than usual during this cycle. Yes, you're still a mood-driven emotional mess (with a brilliant method to your madness), but a breakthrough in your perspective could help you to improve your life radically. A Leo can guide you.



LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22)

Your career moves into high gear when the Sun joins Mercury in the success sector of your chart after the 20th. Power is an aphrodisiac and is sure to turn on a Pisces. Be ambitious in your love life as well as your work life. Go after the prize with added gusto, doll.



VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22)

Consider furthering your education, dear Virgo. If you pursue a subject that you're obsessed with it could lead you in all sorts of exciting directions. Get out of your own rut! A thrilling new romantic cycle begins in late April. Shimmy up to a sexy Scorpio.



LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22)

Direct Saturn in your house of adventure suggests that it's time to be a little bit bolder with members of the same sex. And if you're having the same old kind of sex with a Gemini, liven up the routine! Keep your integrity on the work front. Shady temptations aren't worth the risk.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21)

Your love life needs your attention, sweetie. If you've been obsessed with power and work, it's time to send some of that intense energy back into your heart and other key body parts. A Libra wants more than just a night of fun with you. Figure out what you want, and then take the leap.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21)

You've been more than a little obsessed with the drama of your love life lately, but now it's time to focus on work and more low-key matters. Build your career success one day at a time. Don't worry ... your romantic life can be sweet and very sexy if you just slow down. A Taurus can show you how.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19)

Take new steps to take care of your body, sweetheart, while Saturn is in the health sector of your chart. Your worrying nature has gotten the best of you. It's time you made Zen your friend. A Libra could help you with your heavy breathing exercises.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18)


It's all right to shamelessly demand attention for a little while. Venus is pushing you into the limelight, so take the stage, diva. A fellow Aquarius has a love-hate relationship with you — just the kind you love! At work, your charm gets you far, so turn it on, kid.



PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20)

Venus' transit through your house of serious relationships could make you feel sexy, vulnerable, powerful, and mystically inspired all at the same time. You're a whirling dervish of emotion, and that's just the way a Gemini likes you. Be a protective force for a friend in need.

Jill Dearman is the author of the best-selling "Queer Astrology for Men" and "Queer Astrology for Women" (both from St. Martin's Griffin). For information on charts and consultations, call 212-841-0177 or e-mail QScopes@aol.com.

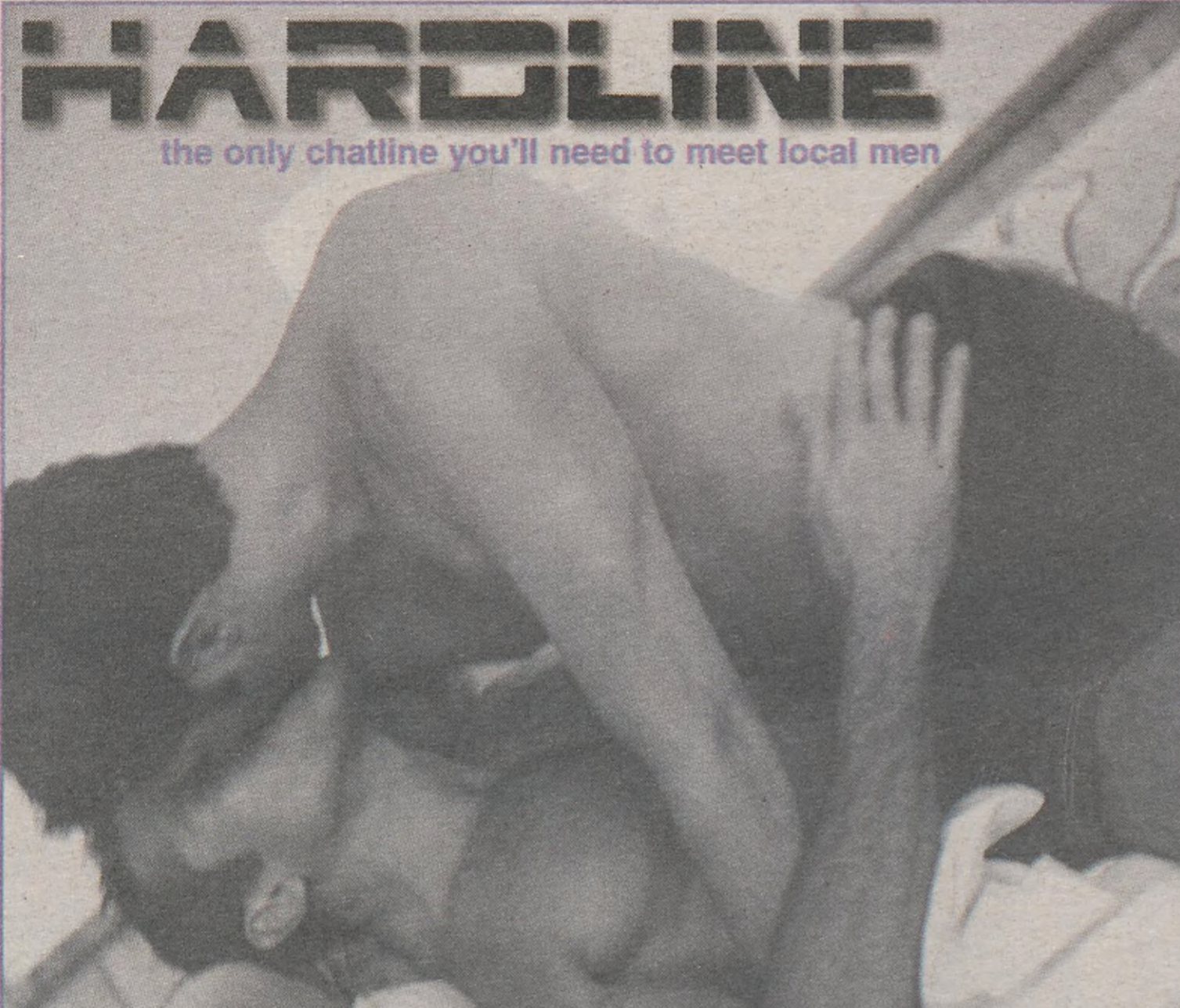


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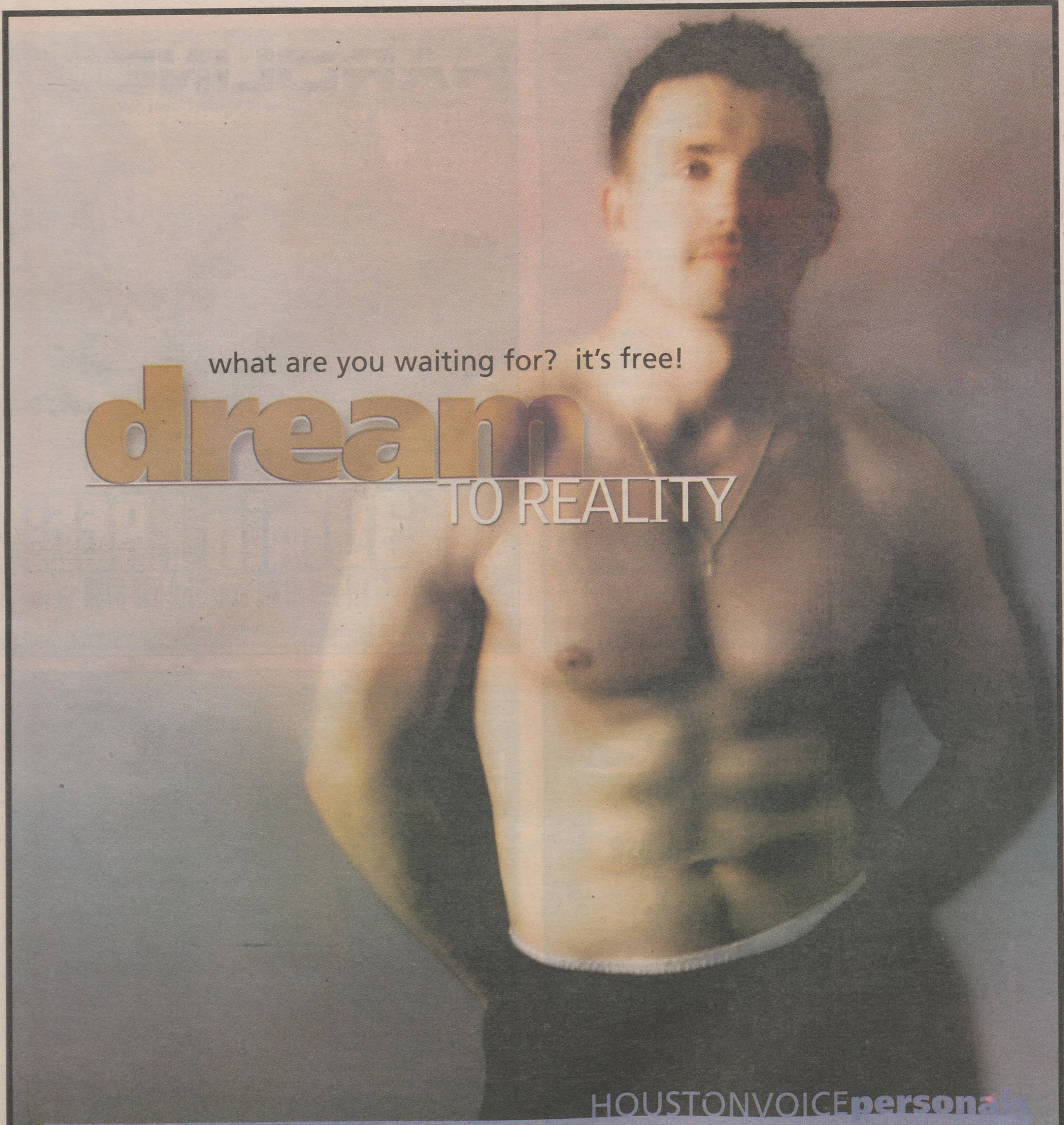
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