

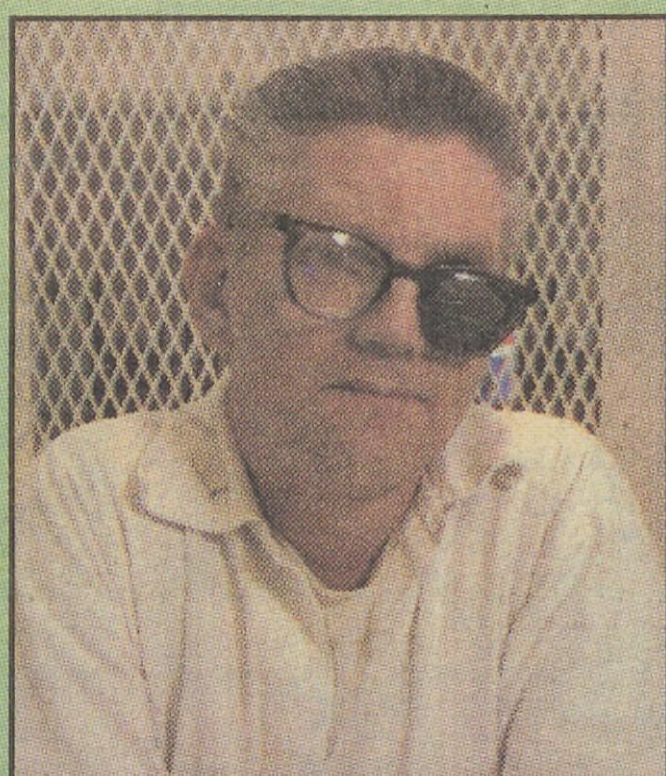


INSIDE



Houston Black Tie distributes \$129,000 to community organizations

Page 2



Full 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to examine Calvin Burdine's 'sleeping lawyer' appeal

Page 15



Theaters offer up three holiday gifts: 'Christmas on Mars,' 'Company' and 'Nutcracker'

Page 23

'Healing the Hurt'

Chase Bank helps underwrite PFLAG billboards, including ones placed in Santa Fe

BY KAY Y. DAYUS

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays of Houston has been able to keep its Billboard Campaign 2000 alive, thanks to Chase Bank who recently awarded PFLAG a grant of \$7,000 to help with the billboards and for PFLAG'S upcoming Healing the Hurt Conference.

The billboards, part of a campaign against hate, were posted at strategic locations around Houston says Jim Null, PFLAG member and writer of the grant request to Chase Bank.

Two billboards are located in Santa Fe, where there has recently been controversy over school prayer and banning of certain schoolbooks.

The Santa Fe billboards read, "Unconditional Love," and "Safe Schools." The latter is located near the Santa Fe High School.

Null says Santa Fe was chosen for a billboard, "to emphasize the message of tolerance and acceptance."

According to Sue Null, also of PFLAG,



One of the newest billboards in PFLAG Houston's advertising campaign is this one promoting 'safe schools.' The sign was placed near the high school in Santa Fe, site of recent controversies involving school prayer and book banning.

an anonymous caller who identified himself only as living in the Santa Fe area, called PFLAG's help line and left a message.

He said, "I am calling to tell you that we don't need your billboards down here. We don't like your people being in Santa Fe. I don't like what you do and I don't like having to explain you to my children."

"It looks like we've awakened a bit of controversy," Sue Null said. "They don't need our billboards? It sounds like we're desperately needed. Imagine growing up as a GLBT person in such an environment."

Not all response to the billboards is negative says Jim Null.

"We've gotten some checks from people who saw the billboards and the hits on our Web site are way up."

Particularly effective, Jim Null says, are the billboards located at U.S. Highway 59 at the Travis Street exit to downtown and one at Richmond and Tanglewilde. Null says the latter billboard is in a "wonderful location," for grabbing attention since it's at a stoplight.

Null says the aim of the billboards is to

> Continued on Page 10

Away from home for the holidays

Bummed out for the holidays? Change your (I)attitude

by D.L. GROOVER

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is the final segment in a three-part series designed to help members of the GLBT community better cope with the holiday season. Previous stories addressing the pressures of family visits and depression may be accessed on our Web site, www.houstonvoice.com.

During these festive, hectic days winding down toward Santa's nocturnal visit, visions of sugarplums are often harder and harder to hold on to. If you find yourself unable to untangle that rat's nest of blinking

colored tree lights or when you inadvertently stab yourself on a fragrant yet sticky pine bough, perhaps it's time to do what Monty Python recommends: run away, run away!

cruise is nice, Mexico beaches are nice, and Europe is cheap right now."

Yes, Mexico is a great idea. How about a private villa for Christmas? Braeswood

New Orleans is always a great gay place, but at Christmas I would say San Antonio's more fun. I like that Mexican influence, the 'feliz navidad' and all that.

—Pat Brown, Woodlake Travel agent

There's still time and even accommodations available at many national and international resorts to while away the holidays with the family of your choice.

"Someplace nice and warm," recommended Rikki Rubenstein at her own agency, Active Adventure Traveler. "A

Cruise and Travel, listed as "gay travel specialists" in the Gay and Lesbian Yellow Pages, just happens to have one in the sultry Pacific coast luxury resort of Puerto Vallarta. It's only \$3,000 a night!

"That's the special rate," laughed Paige

> Continued on Page 11

INSIDE

NEWS

National news6
 Police news12
 Health news16
 World AIDS Day photos13
 Burdine case to be reviewed15

VOICES & ECHOES

Crain: So much for 'no limits'8
 Murphy: Christmases past still haunting9
 'Ethan Green'9

OUT ON THE BAYOU

Holiday shopping Prozac19
 Theaters offer triple gifts23
 Bayou Calendar25
 Queer As Folk makes cuts26
 Time Out: Is WPFL all hype or hypocrisy28
 Community Calendar30-31
 Occasions34
 My Stars!35

CLASSIFIEDS32-33

Issue 1050



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Houston Voice
 500 Lovett Blvd., Suite 200
 Houston, TX 77006
 713-529-8490

Party with a purpose

Magnolia Christmas Party raises funds for community organizations

by KAY Y. DAYUS

It's not a fund-raiser, insist organizers, it's a private party with the emphasis on fun. But it's a party with a purpose. It's the annual Magnolia Christmas Party, and it's a little less organized, a lot more fun and a little less pretentious than many affairs that raise money for the GLBT community.

What started out as a small Christmas party for a few friends has grown into a huge circle of more than 400 friends who last year donated over \$9,000 to be shared between two local community organizations.

On Saturday, more than 400 invited guests will mingle in their best festive togs at the Magnolia Ballroom in downtown Houston. Admission is an invitation and a donation to either AIDS Foundation Houston or the Lesbian Health Initiative.

According to Justin Smith, one of the

organizers, the group has donated more than \$60,000 to AFH since 1989, and around \$5,000 to Lesbian Health Initiative, since the organization was added as a beneficiary in 1998.

The tradition began in the mid 1980s when Phil Harrison and Ben Hinton gave a small party in their home for just a few close friends. Over the years, the party grew to an overflowing crowd of friends gathering to celebrate the holidays.

By 1989, the party was too big for a house, so Harrison and Hinton, and some friends rented the historic Magnolia Ballroom and "officially started the holiday celebration we affectionately call the Magnolia Christmas Party," according to organizers.

And "in the spirit of the season, the hosts encouraged guests to generously donate to those who are less fortunate."

"At first," says Smith, "guests donated food, then food and money," all of which was given to AFH. Now, only monetary donations are requested.

Smith says planning for the party begins early in the year, but meetings are few. Each

of the 30 or so hosts has a job to do and it gets done. Each host donates a sum of money that pays for rental of the ballroom, liquor and munchies.

In the spirit of the season, the hosts encouraged guests to generously donate to those who are less fortunate.

"This way, we can donate 100 percent of the donations," Smith says.

Hosts invite about 20 to 25 friends each and so it goes or grows.

This Saturday, hosts expect their friends to show up and visit old friends, make new friends, dance to the music, have lots of fun, and most importantly contribute to good causes.

Although the creators of the event moved to Tennessee several years ago, their tradition continues. And the hosts, says Smith, are already looking ahead to next year's party.

Houston Black Tie distributes funds

Fourteen community organizations share \$129,000 raised at annual gala

by MARIA MINICUCCI

Most Houstonians are occupied with the preparation and anticipation of the holiday season. On Dec. 5, the generous spirit of Santa made an early appearance for a number of organizations in the GLBT community.

The Houston Black Tie Dinner, Inc. board hosted a festive gathering Dec. 5 to honor and distribute funds to beneficiaries of this year's Black Tie grants. The fund-raising dinner, held Nov. 11, at the George R. Brown Convention Center raised \$129,000.

Almost one hundred people representing GLBT organizations, friends and supporters of the beneficiaries arrived at the home of Lester H. Sorsby, Jr. for the awarding of funds raised at the annual dinner.

Mark Robertson, current president of the Houston Black Tie Dinner board, gave a "no frills," yet complimentary introduction to each recipient of the financial awards.

He also acknowledged the behind-the-scenes people who contributed to the success of this year's fund-raiser. He expressed public gratitude to Gail Swinney and Carlos Reyes for everything they contributed.

Fourteen organizations were this year's recipients of the Houston Black Tie Dinner, Inc. grants.



H.A.T.C.H. representatives pose with their check in the amount of \$9,260 at the Dec. 5 ceremony awarding funds raised at this year's Houston Black Tie gala. Thirteen other community organizations shared the \$129,000 raised at the annual event.

Kevin Davidson, president of Houston Area Teen Coalition for Homosexuals and Carol Petrucci, program director, accepted a grant of more than \$9,000.

"This is a great honor," Davidson said. "Of course the funds will definitely ensure that the programs will continue and that the program director can continue to identify gaps in services and actually expand our services."

"But, this is also an honor to work with other community organizations here tonight to meet the challenges GLBT communities must face."

Blake Weisser, board member for

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, accepted a grant of \$8,835, which he noted will enable the continuation of some of PFLAG's projects for the upcoming year.

"Now we can go ahead with the billboard campaign, as well as apply some of these funds to our fifth 'Healing the Hurt Conference' this Spring," Weisser said. "And, of course, all of our advocacy and education work will benefit from this generous funding."

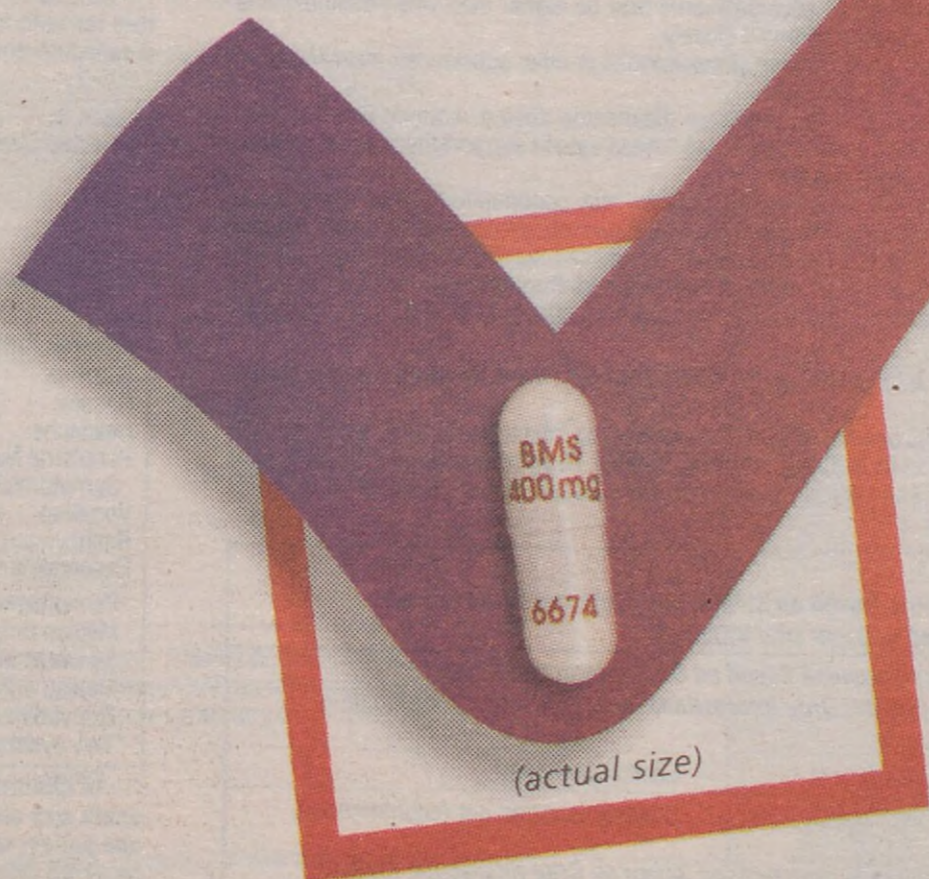
• See PFLAG story Page 1

Lucy Watson, secretary for the Lesbian Health Initiative, accepted a grant of more

> Continued on Page 14

Mission Accomplished!

Introducing
New Videx **EC**



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Doctor!

VIDEX[®] EC
(didanosine) delayed-release capsules
enteric-coated beadlets

Please see following page for brief summary of prescribing information, including boxed warnings.

VIDEX[®] EC (didanosine)

VIDEX[®] EC (didanosine) Delayed-Release Capsules
Enteric-Coated Beadlets

Brief Summary of Prescribing Information, 11/00. For complete prescribing information, please consult official package circular.

WARNING

FATAL AND NONFATAL PANCREATITIS HAVE OCCURRED DURING THERAPY WITH DIDANOSINE USED ALONE OR IN COMBINATION REGIMENS IN BOTH TREATMENT-NAIVE AND TREATMENT-EXPERIENCED PATIENTS, REGARDLESS OF DEGREE OF IMMUNOSUPPRESSION. VIDEX EC SHOULD BE SUSPENDED IN PATIENTS WITH SUSPECTED PANCREATITIS AND DISCONTINUED IN PATIENTS WITH CONFIRMED PANCREATITIS (SEE WARNINGS).

LACTIC ACIDOSIS AND SEVERE HEPATOMEGALY WITH STEATOSIS, INCLUDING FATAL CASES, HAVE BEEN REPORTED WITH THE USE OF NUCLEOSIDE ANALOGUES ALONE OR IN COMBINATION, INCLUDING DIDANOSINE AND OTHER ANTIRETROVIRALS (SEE WARNINGS).

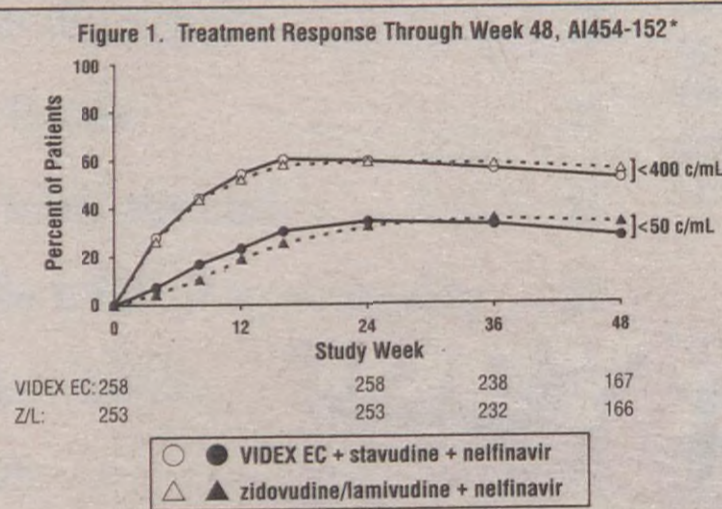
INDICATIONS AND USAGE

VIDEX EC in combination with other antiretroviral agents is indicated for the treatment of HIV-1 infection in adults whose management requires once-daily administration of didanosine or an alternative didanosine formulation. (See Clinical Studies, PRECAUTIONS: Frequency of Dosing, and DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION.)

There are limited data to date to support the long-term durability of response with a once-daily dosing regimen of didanosine.

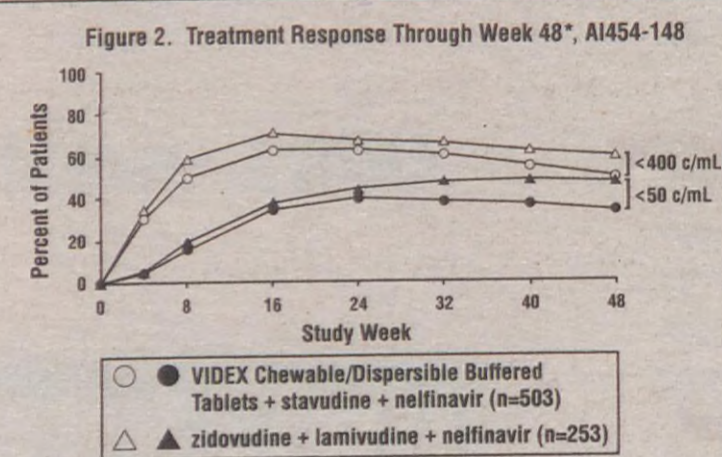
Clinical Studies: Once-daily dosing of didanosine produces a pharmacokinetic profile that is substantially different from that observed with twice-daily dosing of didanosine (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY in full prescribing information). Further, VIDEX EC and the VIDEX (didanosine) buffered formulation produce substantially different pharmacokinetic profiles when dosed once daily. Therefore, controlled clinical trials were conducted with both formulations to evaluate the safety and efficacy of once-daily dosing of didanosine. There is no evaluable long-term clinical information that directly compares the efficacy of the two once-daily didanosine formulations. A small clinical study that was conducted to address this issue was not interpretable due to the small number of patients who completed the study.

Once-Daily VIDEX EC Study: Study AI454-152 is an ongoing, 48-week, randomized, open-label study comparing VIDEX EC (400 mg once daily) plus stavudine (40 mg twice daily) plus nelfinavir (750 mg three times daily) to zidovudine (200 mg twice daily) plus lamivudine (150 mg twice daily) combination tablets plus nelfinavir (750 mg three times daily) in 511 treatment-naive patients, with a mean CD4 cell count of 411 cells/mm³ (range 39 to 1105 cells/mm³) and a mean plasma HIV-1 RNA of 4.71 log₁₀ copies/mL (range 2.8 to 6.9 log₁₀ copies/mL) at baseline. Patients were primarily males (72%) and Caucasian (53%) with a mean age of 35 years (range 18 to 73 years). The percentages of patients with HIV RNA <400 and <50 copies/mL and not meeting any criteria for treatment failure (eg, virologic failure, discontinuation for any reason, or AIDS-defining event) through 48 weeks are shown in Figure 1.



* This analysis includes all randomized patients through Week 24 and after that point is restricted to patients whose randomization date allows for 36 or 48 weeks of follow-up. The number of patients at each point is indicated below the figure.

Once-Daily VIDEX Buffered Tablet Study: Study AI454-148 was a randomized, open-label, multicenter study comparing treatment with VIDEX Chewable/Dispersible Buffered Tablets (400 mg once daily) plus stavudine (40 mg twice daily) and nelfinavir (750 mg three times daily) versus zidovudine (300 mg twice daily) plus lamivudine (150 mg twice daily) and nelfinavir (750 mg three times daily) in 756 treatment-naive patients, with a mean CD4 cell count of 368 cells/mm³ (range 80 to 1568 cells/mm³) and a mean plasma HIV-1 RNA of 4.69 log₁₀ copies/mL (range 2.6 to 5.9 log₁₀ copies/mL) at baseline. The percentages of patients with HIV RNA <400 and <50 copies/mL and not meeting any criteria for treatment failure through 48 weeks are shown in Figure 2.



* Percent of patients at each time point who have HIV RNA <400 or <50 copies/mL, are on their original study medication (except stavudine-zidovudine switches), and have not experienced an AIDS-defining event. For the differences between treatment groups at 48 weeks, p<0.05 by Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel test.

CONTRAINDICATION

VIDEX EC is contraindicated in patients with previously demonstrated clinically significant hypersensitivity to any component of the formulation.

WARNINGS

1. Pancreatitis

FATAL AND NONFATAL PANCREATITIS HAVE OCCURRED DURING THERAPY WITH DIDANOSINE USED ALONE OR IN COMBINATION REGIMENS IN BOTH TREATMENT-NAIVE AND TREATMENT-EXPERIENCED PATIENTS, REGARDLESS OF DEGREE OF IMMUNOSUPPRESSION. VIDEX EC SHOULD BE SUSPENDED IN PATIENTS WITH SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS OF PANCREATITIS AND DISCONTINUED IN PATIENTS WITH CONFIRMED PANCREATITIS. PATIENTS TREATED WITH VIDEX EC IN COMBINATION WITH STAVUDINE, WITH OR WITHOUT HYDROXYUREA, MAY BE AT INCREASED RISK FOR PANCREATITIS.

When treatment with life-sustaining drugs known to cause pancreatic toxicity is required, suspension of VIDEX EC therapy is recommended. In patients with risk factors for pancreatitis, VIDEX EC should be used with extreme caution and only if clearly indicated. Patients with advanced HIV infection, especially the elderly, are at increased risk of pancreatitis and should be followed closely. Patients with renal impairment may be at greater risk for pancreatitis if treated without dose adjustment.

The frequency of pancreatitis is dose related. In phase 3 studies with buffered formulations of didanosine, incidence ranged from 1% to 10% with doses higher than are currently recommended and 1% to 7% with recommended dose.

R ONLY

2. Lactic Acidosis/Severe Hepatomegaly with Steatosis

Lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported with the use of nucleoside analogues alone or in combination, including didanosine and other antiretrovirals. A majority of these cases have been in women. Obesity and prolonged nucleoside exposure may be risk factors. Particular caution should be exercised when administering VIDEX EC (didanosine) to any patient with known risk factors for liver disease; however, cases have also been reported in patients with no known risk factors. Treatment with VIDEX EC should be suspended in any patient who develops clinical or laboratory findings suggestive of lactic acidosis or pronounced hepatotoxicity (which may include hepatomegaly and steatosis even in the absence of marked transaminase elevations).

3. Retinal Changes and Optic Neuritis

Retinal changes and optic neuritis have been reported in patients taking didanosine. Periodic retinal examinations should be considered for patients receiving VIDEX EC. (See ADVERSE REACTIONS.)

PRECAUTIONS

Frequency of Dosing: VIDEX EC should only be administered once daily. There are no data on the use of VIDEX EC dosed more frequently than once daily.

There are limited data to support the long-term durability of response with a once-daily dosing regimen of didanosine. Therefore, the preferred didanosine dosing regimen is twice daily with a VIDEX (didanosine) buffered formulation. Once-daily dosing with VIDEX EC should be considered only for adult patients whose management requires once-daily administration of didanosine or an alternative didanosine formulation (see Clinical Studies). Consult the prescribing information for VIDEX buffered formulations and Pediatric Powder for Oral Solution for information on twice-daily dosing.

VIDEX EC should be taken on an empty stomach.

Peripheral Neuropathy: Peripheral neuropathy, manifested by numbness, tingling, or pain in the hands or feet, has been reported in patients receiving didanosine therapy. Peripheral neuropathy has occurred more frequently in patients with advanced HIV disease, in patients with a history of neuropathy, or in patients being treated with neurotoxic drug therapy, including stavudine (see ADVERSE REACTIONS).

General:

Patients with Renal Impairment: Patients with renal impairment (creatinine clearance <60 mL/min) may be at greater risk of toxicity from didanosine due to decreased drug clearance (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY in full prescribing information). A dose reduction is recommended in these patients (see DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION).

Patients with Hepatic Impairment: It is unknown if hepatic impairment significantly affects didanosine pharmacokinetics. Therefore, these patients should be monitored closely for evidence of didanosine toxicity.

Hyperuricemia: Didanosine has been associated with asymptomatic hyperuricemia; treatment suspension may be necessary if clinical measures aimed at reducing uric acid levels fail.

Information for Patients (see Patient Information Leaflet in full prescribing information): Patients should be informed that a serious toxicity of didanosine, used alone and in combination regimens, is pancreatitis, which may be fatal.

Patients should also be aware that peripheral neuropathy, manifested by numbness, tingling, or pain in hands or feet, may develop during therapy with VIDEX EC. Patients should be counseled that peripheral neuropathy occurs with greatest frequency in patients with advanced HIV disease or a history of peripheral neuropathy, and that dose modification and/or discontinuation of VIDEX EC may be required if toxicity develops.

Patients should be informed that when didanosine is used in combination with other agents with similar toxicities, the incidence of adverse events may be higher than when didanosine is used alone. These patients should be followed closely.

Patients should be cautioned about the use of medications or other substances, including alcohol, that may exacerbate VIDEX EC toxicities.

Patients should be informed that the preferred didanosine dosing regimen is twice daily with a VIDEX buffered formulation because there are limited data to support the long-term durability of response with a once-daily regimen.

VIDEX EC is not a cure for HIV infection, and patients may continue to develop HIV-associated illnesses, including opportunistic infection. Therefore, patients should remain under the care of a physician when using VIDEX EC. Patients should be advised that VIDEX EC therapy has not been shown to reduce the risk of transmission of HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination. Patients should be informed that the long-term effects of VIDEX EC are unknown at this time.

Drug Interactions (see also CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Drug Interactions in full prescribing information):

Drug interactions that have been established based on drug interaction studies are listed with the pharmacokinetic results in CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Drug Interactions (Tables 3-5) in full prescribing information. The clinical recommendations based on the results of these studies are listed in Table 1.

Table 1
Established Drug Interactions Based on Studies with Buffered Formulations of Didanosine and Expected to Occur with VIDEX EC

Drug	Effect	Clinical Comment
allopurinol	↑ didanosine concentration	Coadministration not recommended.
Alteration in Dose or Regimen Recommended Based on Drug Interaction Studies (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Drug Interactions, in full prescribing information for Magnitude of Interaction)		
Drug	Effect	Clinical Comment
ganciclovir	↑ didanosine concentration	Appropriate doses for this combination, with respect to efficacy and safety, have not been established.
methadone	↓ didanosine concentration	Appropriate doses for this combination, with respect to efficacy and safety, have not been established.

↑ indicates increase.
↓ indicates decrease.

Coadministration of VIDEX EC with drugs that are known to cause pancreatitis may increase the risk of this toxicity (see WARNINGS: Pancreatitis). Predicted drug interactions with VIDEX EC are listed in Table 2.

Table 2
Predicted Drug Interactions with VIDEX EC

Drug Class	Effect	Clinical Comment
Drugs that may cause pancreatic toxicity	↑ risk of pancreatitis	Use only with extreme caution. ^a
Neurotoxic drugs	↑ risk of neuropathy	Use with caution. ^b

^a Only if other drugs are not available and if clearly indicated. If treatment with life-sustaining drugs that cause pancreatic toxicity is required, suspension of VIDEX EC is recommended (see WARNINGS: Pancreatitis).

^b See PRECAUTIONS: Peripheral Neuropathy.

Carcinogenesis and Mutagenesis: Lifetime carcinogenicity studies were conducted in mice and rats for 22 and 24 months, respectively. In the mouse study, initial doses of 120, 800, and 1200 mg/kg/day for each sex were lowered after 8 months to 120, 210, and 210 mg/kg/day for females and 120, 300, and 600 mg/kg/day for males. The two higher doses exceeded the maximally tolerated dose in females and the high dose exceeded the maximally tolerated dose in males. The low dose in females represented 0.68-fold maximum human exposure and the intermediate dose in males represented 1.7-fold maximum human exposure based on relative AUC comparisons. In the rat study, initial doses were 100, 250, and 1000 mg/kg/day, and the high dose was lowered to 500 mg/kg/day after 18 months. The upper dose in male and female rats represented 3-fold maximum human exposure.

Didanosine induced no significant increase in neoplastic lesions in mice or rats at maximally tolerated doses.

Didanosine was positive in the following genetic toxicology assays: 1) the *Escherichia coli* tester strain WP2 uvrA bacterial mutagenicity assay; 2) the L5178Y/TK⁺ mouse lymphoma mammalian cell gene mutation assay; 3) the *in vitro* chromosomal aberrations assay in cultured

human peripheral lymphocytes; 4) the *in vitro* chromosomal aberrations assay in Chinese Hamster Lung cells; and 5) the BALB/c 3T3 *in vitro* transformation assay. No evidence of mutagenicity was observed in an Ames *Salmonella* bacterial mutagenicity assay or in rat and mouse *in vivo* micronucleus assays.

Pregnancy, Reproduction and Fertility: Pregnancy "Category B". Reproduction studies have been performed in rats and rabbits at doses up to 12 and 14.2 times the estimated human exposure (based upon plasma levels), respectively, and have revealed no evidence of impaired fertility or harm to the fetus due to didanosine. At approximately 12 times the estimated human exposure, didanosine was slightly toxic to female rats and their pups during mid and late lactation. These rats showed reduced food intake and body weight gains but the physical and functional development of the offspring was not impaired and there were no major changes in the F2 generation. A study in rats showed that didanosine and/or its metabolites are transferred to the fetus through the placenta. There are no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. Because animal reproduction studies are not always predictive of human response, this drug should be used during pregnancy only if clearly needed.

Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry: To monitor maternal-fetal outcomes of pregnant women exposed to didanosine and other antiretroviral agents, an Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry has been established. Physicians are encouraged to register patients by calling 1-800-258-4263.

Nursing Mothers: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that HIV-infected mothers not breast-feed their infants to avoid risking postnatal transmission of HIV. A study in rats showed that following oral administration, didanosine and/or its metabolites were excreted into the milk of lactating rats. It is not known if didanosine is excreted in human milk. Because of both the potential for HIV transmission and the potential for serious adverse reactions in nursing infants, mothers should be instructed not to breast-feed if they are receiving VIDEX EC (didanosine).

Pediatric Use: The safety and efficacy of VIDEX EC in pediatric patients have not been established. Please consult the complete prescribing information for VIDEX (didanosine) buffered formulations and Pediatric Powder for Oral Solution for dosage and administration of didanosine to pediatric patients.

Geriatric Use: In an Expanded Access Program using a buffered formulation of didanosine for the treatment of advanced HIV infection, patients aged 65 years and older had a higher frequency of pancreatitis (10%) than younger patients (5%) (see WARNINGS). Clinical studies of didanosine, including those for VIDEX EC, did not include sufficient numbers of subjects aged 65 years and over to determine whether they respond differently than younger subjects. Didanosine is known to be substantially excreted by the kidney, and the risk of toxic reactions to this drug may be greater in patients with impaired renal function. Because elderly patients are more likely to have decreased renal function, care should be taken in dose selection. In addition, renal function should be monitored and dosage adjustments should be made accordingly (see DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION: Dose Adjustment).

ADVERSE REACTIONS

A SERIOUS TOXICITY OF DIDANOSINE IS PANCREATITIS, WHICH MAY BE FATAL (see WARNINGS). OTHER IMPORTANT TOXICITIES INCLUDE LACTIC ACIDOSIS/SEVERE HEPATOMEGALY WITH STEATOSIS, RETINAL CHANGES AND OPTIC NEURITIS, AND PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY (see WARNINGS and PRECAUTIONS).

When didanosine is used in combination with other agents with similar toxicities, the incidence of these toxicities may be higher than when didanosine is used alone. Thus, patients treated with VIDEX EC in combination with stavudine, with or without hydroxyurea, may be at increased risk for pancreatitis, which may be fatal, and hepatotoxicity (see WARNINGS). Patients treated with VIDEX EC in combination with stavudine may also be at increased risk for peripheral neuropathy (see PRECAUTIONS).

Studies of VIDEX EC and a buffered didanosine formulation yielded comparable safety profiles for both formulations. Selected clinical adverse events that occurred in clinical studies of didanosine dosed once daily in combination with other antiretroviral agents are provided in Table 3.

Table 3
Selected Clinical Adverse Events from Combination Studies of Didanosine Dosed Once Daily

Adverse Events	AI454-152 ^a		AI454-148 ^b	
	VIDEX EC+ stavudine+ nelfinavir n=255	zidovudine/lamivudine+ nelfinavir n=250	VIDEX Buffered Tablet+ stavudine+ nelfinavir n=482	zidovudine+ lamivudine+ nelfinavir n=248
Diarrhea	54	56	70	68
Nausea	21	35	28	40
Headache	20	16	21	30
Peripheral Neurologic Symptoms/Neuropathy	20	8	26	6
Vomiting	13	18	12	14
Rash	10	10	13	16
Pancreatitis (see below)	<1	*	1	*

^a Percentages based on treated patients.

^b Median duration of treatment 43 weeks in the VIDEX EC+stavudine+nelfinavir group and 39 weeks in the zidovudine/lamivudine+nelfinavir group.

* Median duration of treatment 48 weeks.

* Zidovudine/lamivudine combination tablet.

* This event was not observed in this study arm.

In clinical trials using a buffered formulation of didanosine, pancreatitis resulting in death was observed in one patient who received didanosine plus stavudine plus nelfinavir, one patient who received didanosine plus stavudine plus indinavir, and 2 of 68 patients who received didanosine plus stavudine plus indinavir plus hydroxyurea. In an early access program, pancreatitis resulting in death was observed in one patient who received VIDEX EC plus stavudine plus hydroxyurea plus ritonavir plus indinavir plus efavirenz (see WARNINGS).

The frequency of pancreatitis is dose related. In phase 3 studies with buffered formulations of didanosine, incidence ranged from 1% to 10% with doses higher than are currently recommended and 1% to 7% with recommended dose.

Selected laboratory abnormalities that occurred in clinical studies of didanosine dosed once daily in combination with other antiretroviral agents are shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Selected Laboratory Abnormalities from Combination Studies of Didanosine Dosed Once Daily

Parameter	AI454-152 ^a		VIDEX AI454-148 ^b	
	VIDEX EC+ stavudine+ nelfinavir n=255	zidovudine/lamivudine+ nelfinavir n=250	Buffered Tablet+ stavudine+ nelfinavir n=482	zidovudine+ lamivudine+ nelfinavir n=248
SGOT (AST)	4	40	4	17
SGPT (ALT)	4	39	4	20
Lipase	3	18	<1	8
Bilirubin	<1	7	<1	3

^a Percentages based on treated patients.

^b Median duration of treatment 43 weeks in the VIDEX EC+stavudine+nelfinavir group and 39 weeks in the zidovudine/lamivudine+nelfinavir group.

* Median duration of treatment 48 weeks.

* Zidovudine/lamivudine combination tablet.

* >5 x ULN for SGOT and SGPT, ≥2.1 x ULN for lipase, and ≥2.6 x ULN for bilirubin (ULN = upper limit of normal.)

Observed during Clinical Practice:

The following events have been identified during postapproval use of didanosine buffered formulations. Because they are reported voluntarily from a population of unknown size, estimates of frequency cannot be made. These events have been chosen for inclusion due to their seriousness, frequency of reporting, causal connection to didanosine, or a combination of these factors.

Body as a Whole: abdominal pain, alopecia, anaphylactoid reaction, asthenia, chills/fever, and pain.

Digestive Disorders: anorexia, dyspepsia, and flatulence.

Exocrine Gland Disorders: pancreatitis (including fatal cases) (see WARNINGS), sialoadenitis, parotid gland enlargement, dry mouth, and dry eyes.

Hematologic Disorders: anemia, leukopenia, and thrombocytopenia.

Liver: lactic acidosis and hepatic steatosis (see WARNINGS); hepatitis and liver failure.

Metabolic Disorders: diabetes mellitus, elevated serum alkaline phosphatase level, elevated serum amylase level, elevated serum gamma-glutamyltransferase level, elevated serum uric acid level, hypoglycemia, and hyperglycemia.

Musculoskeletal Disorders- myalgia (with or without increases in creatine kinase), rhabdomyolysis including acute renal failure and hemodialysis, arthralgia, and myopathy.
Ophthalmologic Disorders- Retinal depigmentation and optic neuritis (see **WARNINGS**).

OVERDOSAGE

There is no known antidote for didanosine overdose. In phase 1 studies, in which buffered formulations of didanosine were initially administered at doses ten times the currently recommended dose, toxicities included: pancreatitis, peripheral neuropathy, diarrhea, hyperuricemia, and hepatic dysfunction. Didanosine is not dialyzable by peritoneal dialysis, although there is some clearance by hemodialysis (see **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY, Pharmacokinetics** in full prescribing information.)

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION

Dosage:

Adults- VIDEX EC (didanosine) should be administered on an empty stomach. VIDEX EC Delayed-Release Capsules should be swallowed intact.

The recommended daily dose is dependent on body weight and is administered as one capsule given on a once-daily schedule as outlined in Table 5.

Patient Weight	Dosage
≥60 kg	400 mg once daily
<60 kg	250 mg once daily

Pediatric Patients- VIDEX EC has not been studied in pediatric patients. Please consult the complete prescribing information for VIDEX (didanosine) buffered formulations and Pediatric Powder for Oral Solution for dosage and administration of didanosine to pediatric patients.

Dose Adjustment:

Clinical and laboratory signs suggestive of pancreatitis should prompt dose suspension and careful evaluation of the possibility of pancreatitis. VIDEX EC use should be discontinued in patients with confirmed pancreatitis (see **WARNINGS**).

Based on data with buffered didanosine formulations, patients with symptoms of peripheral neuropathy may tolerate a reduced dose of VIDEX EC after resolution of the symptoms of peripheral neuropathy upon drug interruption. If neuropathy recurs after resumption of VIDEX EC, permanent discontinuation of VIDEX EC should be considered.

Renal Impairment- Dosing recommendations for VIDEX EC and VIDEX buffered formulations are different for patients with renal impairment. Please consult the complete prescribing information on administration of VIDEX buffered formulations to patients with renal impairment.

In adult patients with impaired renal function, the dose of VIDEX EC should be adjusted to compensate for the slower rate of elimination. The recommended doses and dosing intervals of VIDEX EC in adult patients with renal insufficiency are presented in Table 6.

Creatinine Clearance (mL/min)	Dosage	
	≥60 kg	<60 kg
≥60	400 once daily	250 once daily
30-59	200 once daily	125 once daily
10-29	125 once daily	125 once daily
<10	125 once daily	^b

^a Based on studies using a buffered formulation of didanosine.
^b Not suitable for use in patients <60 kg with CL_{CR} <10 mL/min. An alternate formulation of didanosine should be used.

Patients Requiring Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis (CAPD) or Hemodialysis- For patients requiring CAPD or hemodialysis, follow dosing recommendations for patients with creatinine clearance less than 10 mL/min, shown in Table 6. It is not necessary to administer a supplemental dose of didanosine following hemodialysis.

Hepatic Impairment- (See **WARNINGS** and **PRECAUTIONS**.)

HOW SUPPLIED

VIDEX[®] EC (didanosine) Delayed-Release Capsules are white, opaque capsules that are packaged in bottles with child-resistant closures as described in Table 7.

125 mg capsule imprinted with BMS 125 mg 6671 in Tan	
NDC No. 0087-6671-17	30 capsules/bottle
NDC No. 0087-6671-12	60 capsules/bottle
200 mg capsule imprinted with BMS 200 mg 6672 in Green	
NDC No. 0087-6672-17	30 capsules/bottle
NDC No. 0087-6672-12	60 capsules/bottle
250 mg capsule imprinted with BMS 250 mg 6673 in Blue	
NDC No. 0087-6673-17	30 capsules/bottle
NDC No. 0087-6673-12	60 capsules/bottle
400 mg capsule imprinted with BMS 400 mg 6674 in Red	
NDC No. 0087-6674-17	30 capsules/bottle
NDC No. 0087-6674-12	60 capsules/bottle

The capsules should be stored in tightly closed containers at 25°C (77°F). Excursions between 15° and 30°C (59° and 86°F) are permitted [see USP Controlled Room Temperature].

HANDLING AND DISPOSAL

Disposal options include incineration, landfill, or sewer as dictated by specific circumstances and relevant national, state, and local regulations.

US Patent Nos: 4,861,759 and 5,616,566 (didanosine). Patent also Pending (didanosine capsules).



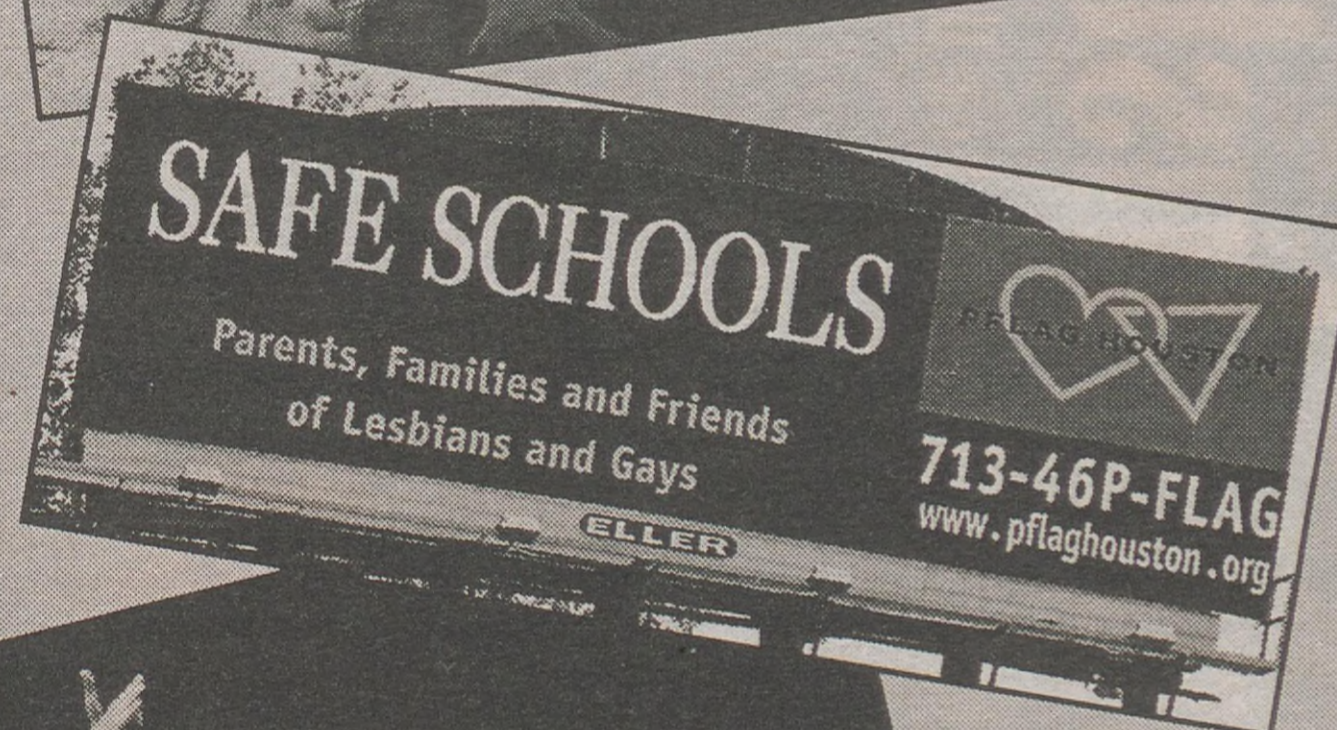
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San Francisco's Castro braces for escalation in sex shop competition

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—The main distributor of sex toys to Castro sex shops will open one of its own chain of retail stores there. Now competing with Rock Hard, Auto-Erotica, and Does Your Father Know will be Castro Gulch, a chain run by Bay Management, the distributor that provides inventory to most other stores in the city's center of gay culture and commerce. "You can't bypass Bay Management," says Patrick Batt, who owns the shop Auto Erotica. San Francisco has been an inhospitable location for several national chains, driving out Rite Aid and Home Depot stores, and forcing Pottery Barn to scale back the size of a planned store. Bay Management Chief Operating Officer Joel Kaminsky insists the local shops have nothing to fear, pointing out that if he drives out the other stores, his distributorship will suffer. "We're sensitive to their concerns and we're going to price accordingly to give them the better shot," Kaminsky said. "I think there's enough business for everyone."

Poll of 'Who's Who' teens finds improved, but mixed results on gays

OGDEN, Utah—A survey of teens who are included in the 2000 edition of "Who's Who Among American High School Students" has found significant bias against gays, but also strong support for gay marriage, the Advocate reported. The survey of 2,804 participants, ages 16 to 18 and with an A or B grade average, found that 40 percent admit to being prejudiced against gays—a higher percentage than admit to bias against any racial, ethnic or religious group. But 54 percent of the teens favor allowing same-sex couples to marry, and 78 percent said gays should be able to serve openly in the military. The results show tolerance is growing from two years ago, when just under 50 percent reported bias against gays. "I would have hoped we were long past that. I guess that's naive or wishful thinking," said Paul Krouse, founder and publisher of "Who's Who."

Conservative religious group jumps hurdle in repeal of Miami gay ordinance

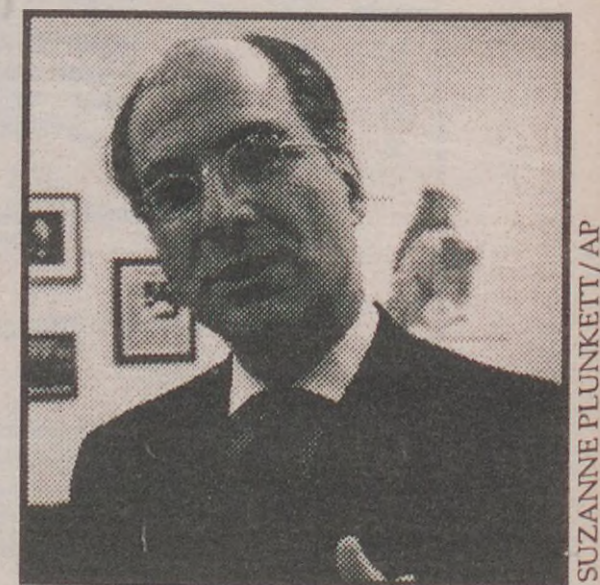
MIAMI—Minutes before their 60-day limit was to expire, a group of South Florida conservative Christians turned in what they say is almost twice the number of signatures necessary to put a Miami-Dade County gay rights ordinance on the ballot for possible repeal in 2002, the Miami Herald reported. Members of Take Back Miami-Dade County used canvassers near polling booths on Nov. 7 to gather more than 59,000 signatures, well over the four percent threshold, about 35,000, of the county's registered voters required to certify the referendum. Organizers hope to get a county-wide vote to repeal the amendment to the Miami-Dade civil rights law making it illegal to discriminate in employment, housing and public accommodation based on sexual orientation. The measure was adopted by the county commission in 1998. In 1977, county voters overturned a similar law after former beauty queen Anita Bryant led a crusade against it.

Ohio Christian camp apologizes for refusing AIDS coalition retreat

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)—A Christian camp has apologized for canceling a retreat for people with HIV and AIDS and offered to reschedule it if those attending would refrain from homosexual activity, the Ohio AIDS Coalition said. The agency accepted the apology but refused the offer to reschedule. "It's not in our mission to be in a facility that discriminates," said Kim Jackson, the coalition's executive director. Woodland Lakes Christian Camp and Retreat Center had signed a contract to host to one of the coalition's Healing Weekends, but cancelled the contract five weeks later. "There may have been a miscommunication" about cancellation of the retreat, camp officials said in a Nov. 28 statement. "Woodland Lakes Christian Camp loves all people and strives to minister to them in a Christlike manner." Several other camps have offered to provide a site for the retreat, which will be rescheduled for March.

N.Y. schools, L.A. city council take stands against Boy Scouts

NEW YORK—One of the nation's biggest cities and the school system in the country's largest city moved against the Boy Scouts of America last week for its anti-gay policies. Harold O. Levy, schools chancellor in New York City, barred public schools there from sponsoring most scouting activities, the New York Times reported. But Levy's order does not bar Scouts from meeting in school space after hours. The head of the New York Scouts chapter, Daniel R. Gasparo, said his group should not be punished because of the national organization's leadership, CNN reported. New York's Scouting programs "do not discriminate based on sexual orientation" and that his state organization had "made some progress with our national office in broadening their [anti-gay] views, Gasparo said. In Los Angeles, the City Council moved to end its relationship with the Scouts by directing city departments to review contracts with the Boy Scouts and ensure they comply with a nondiscrimination clause, the Los Angeles Times reported. "We don't have a choice, legally," said Councilman Mike Feuer. "The city shouldn't participate in a discriminatory practice or policy."



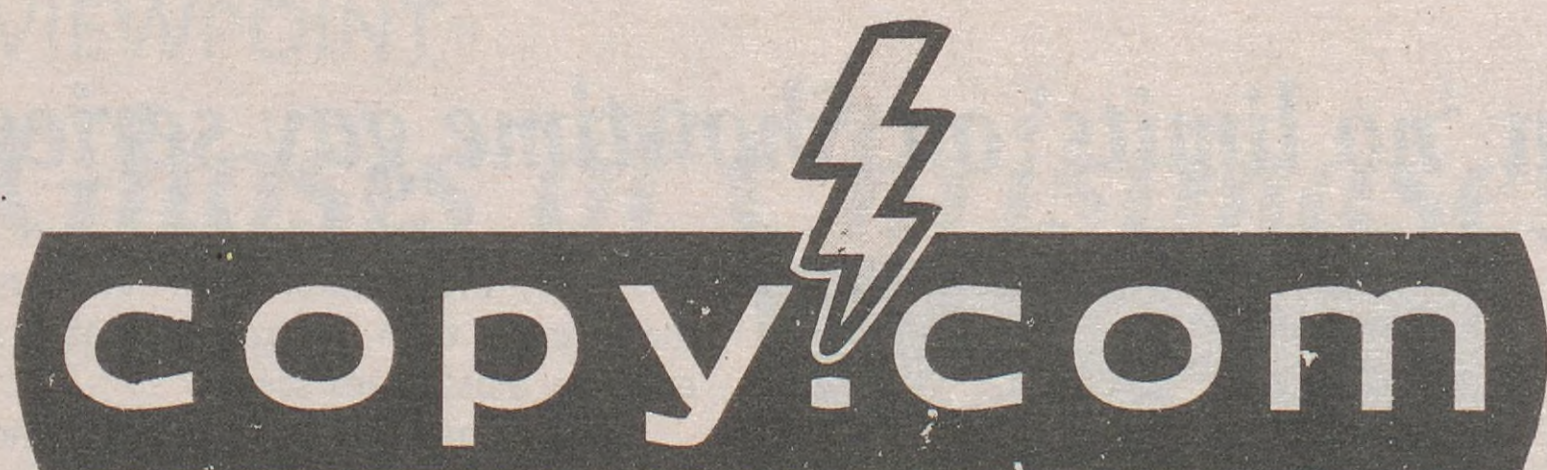
SUZANNE PLUNKETT/AP

New York Schools Chancellor Harold Levy barred schools from sponsoring Scout activities, though the organization can still use school space after hours.

—From staff and wire reports



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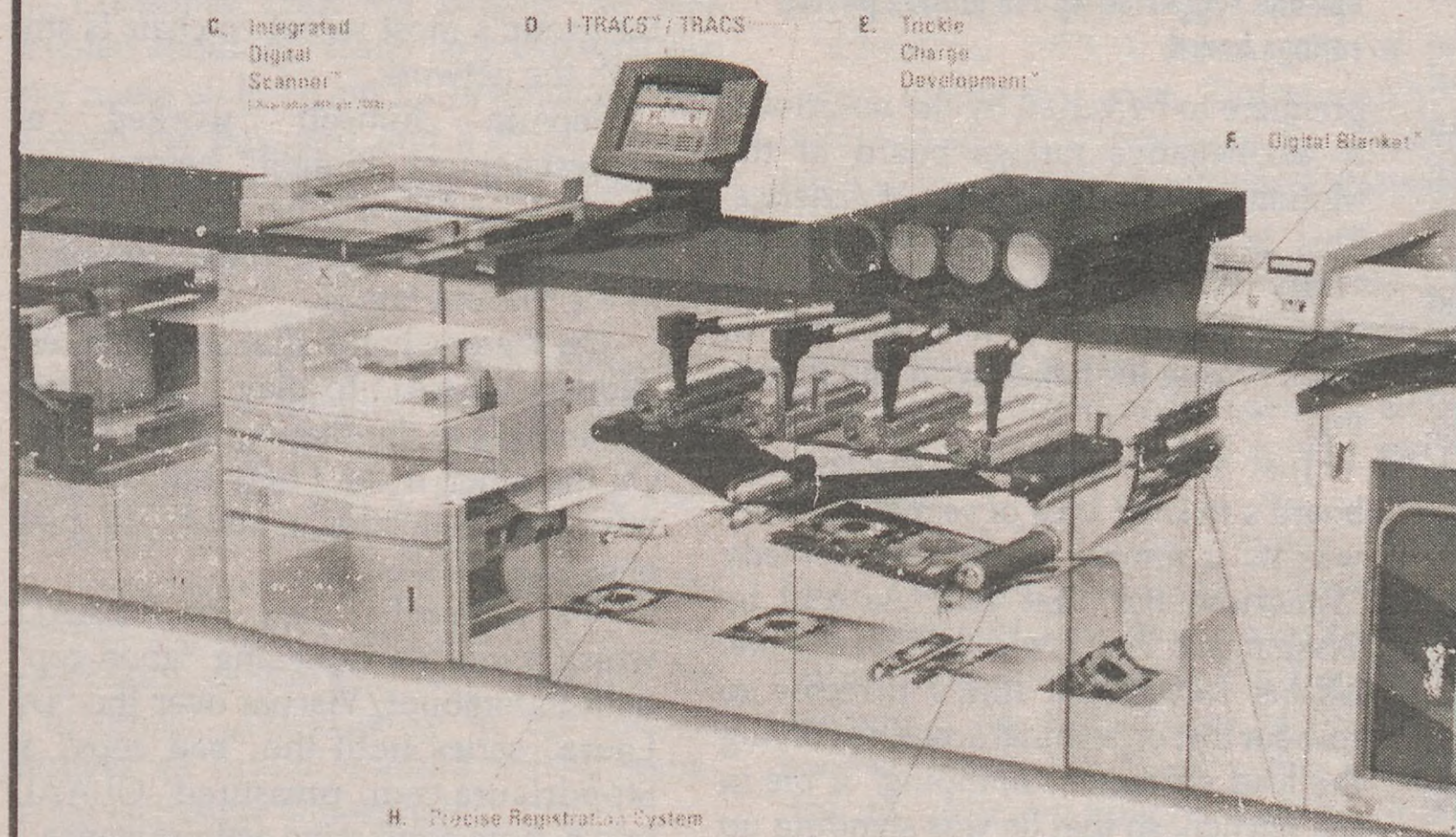
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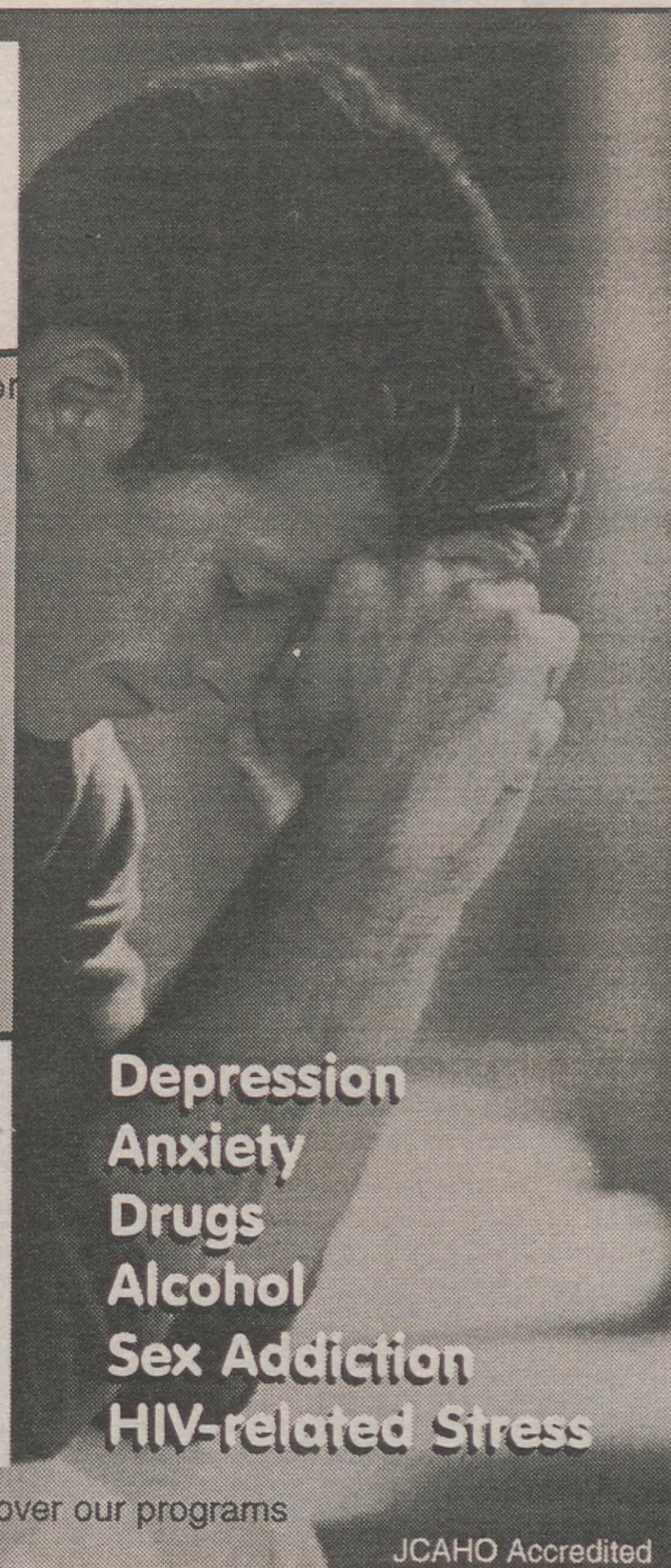
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Mike Fleming
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Editor
Wendy K. Mohon
editor@houstonvoice.com

Production
Senior Graphic Designer-Natasha Marquez
Graphic Designer-Deborah Duplant

Contributors
Rich Arenschioldt, Kay Y. Dayus,
Trayce Diskin, Earl Dittman, D.L. Groover,
Robert B. Henderson, Kathreen Lee,
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EDITORIAL

So much for 'no limits' on Showtime gay series

by CHRIS CRAIN

"Live free or die!"

That slogan, in all its ironic glory, is proudly featured on license plates in the fiercely independent state of New Hampshire. It's also the subject of a famous Supreme Court case, which took the oxymoron one step further.

It seems that one fiercely independent New Hampshire resident had a problem with the slogan and taped over it, leaving his actual license plate ID unobscured. Nonetheless, New Hampshire officials objected and had the man arrested.

The Supreme Court reminded New Hampshire that one of those freedoms they live or die for involves free speech, and that includes taping over a state motto that one citizen would rather not adopt as his own.

The executives with Showtime and its new series "Queer As Folk" could use a similar reminder about beating their chests in public while cowering to small minds in private.

For months, the network has hyped its Americanized take on the groundbreaking British drama about the lives of urban gay men as truly pushing the envelope. The series fit perfectly with the network's ubiquitous slogan: "No Limits."

In fact, the energy with which the public relations machine focused on the graphic, explicit content in "Queer As Folk" seemed designed to engender controversy. Strangely enough, the expected right-wing protests never materialized.

Just three short years after "Ellen DeGenerete" shocked the country by coming out, conservatives apparently can no longer be counted on to work themselves up into a later over even anal sex, rimming and anonymous bathroom encounters.

In yet another irony, the irate reaction Showtime expected has thus far come from the left flank. First a couple of actors from the show angered gays when they were a little too candid about their discomfort playing queer roles.

Actor Chris Potter, famous for his important work on USA Network's "Silk Stalkings," told Newsweek he didn't enjoy his love scenes as Dr. David on "Queer As Folk."

"Soon as they say cut, you spit," Potter told Newsweek. "You want to go to a strip bar or touch the makeup girls. You feel dirty. It's a tough job."

Scott Lowell, who plays homely Ted, wasn't much better. He was ashamed to tell his Pentecostal parents about his new role, so he just sends them photos from magazine stories, cutting out the text.

Then Showtime executives really stepped in it when they sent the series



Dan Lipman and Ron Cowen, executive producers of Showtime's 'Queer As Folk,' agreed to more than 20 cuts to the first episode suggested by the motion picture ratings board.

premiere to be vetted by the notoriously sex-negative ratings board of the Motion Picture Association of America. This is the same crew that slapped "Billy Elliot," a sentimental British drama about a boy who decides to trade boxing for ballet, with an "R" rating.

Just one sample of the ratings board's twisted idea of sexual morality was its treatment of the teen comedy "American Pie" last year. As told by Washington Post critic Tom Shales, the MPAA forced the film's director to reshoot the, er, seminal scene, involving the lead character "humping" a pie in the kitchen, so that he was standing up rather than lying down.

"Well, you can see how that change by the MPAA helped safeguard the moral health of the American people," observed Shales.

The more things change, the more they stay the same. Thirty years ago, the MPAA pinned a scarlet "X" rating on "Midnight Cowboy," a movie that merely suggested gay sex acts, which then went on to win the Oscar for "Best Picture."

Embarrassed, the ratings board begged "Midnight Cowboy's" director to make a cut, any cut, so that they could justify issuing a new rating for the re-edited version. The director refused and the board changed the rating to "R" anyway.

This is the institutional authority that the "No Limits" crew at Showtime and "QAF" executive producers turned to for moral guidance.

Scott Seomin, entertainment watchdog for the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, points out that the anonymous MPAA board is made up of 13 people whose only criterion is that they be parents.

They bring their own private morality into the marketplace, and as a result Showtime and "QAF" discovered some

programming limits, after all, and made more than 20 cuts to that first episode, most in sex scenes.

The finished product is certainly not lacking in graphic sex portrayals, but Shales was right to call the producers to task for caving to the whims of a ratings board that has demonstrated no authority or competence in judging gay content.

Seomin and GLAAD were surprisingly soft on Showtime, saying the cuts were minor and the series nonetheless unprecedented. Both points are true but the principle is still one worth defending.

Then again, Seomin was in no position to criticize, having consulted with the producers in the development and marketing of "QAF." To make matters more conflicted, GLAAD's executive director is a former Showtime exec and the group's most recent co-chair is still with the network.

Seomin himself worked at "Entertainment Tonight" before coming to GLAAD, a program owned by Paramount, Showtime's sister company in the Viacom family.

On the one hand, that sort of access allowed GLAAD to play a pro-active, insider role in the shaping of the series. On the other, it can't help but compromise the watchdog's ability to play objective monitor.

It's a familiar box for GLAAD, which found itself playing "good cop" with Paramount/Viacom over the "Dr. Laura" series until the "bad cops" at Stopdrlaura.com pressured GLAAD into a more aggressive activist stance.

Seomin doesn't help matters when he feels obliged to not only defend Showtime, but lash out at Shales, one of the most respected TV critics in the business, as "sensationalizing" the story.

Maybe if Seomin and GLAAD had played a consulting role in Shales' column, or if GLAAD leadership included current and former executives with the Washington Post, then Shales would have gotten off easier.

Shales was right to call Showtime on its hypocrisy, which he called "no limits unless gay people are involved and romping about in the nude."

If Showtime hadn't come with a juicy consulting bone in hand, perhaps our gay media watchdogs might have barked more loudly on the subject as well.

Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation

Scott Seomin, entertainment
media director
8455 Beverly Blvd, #305
Los Angeles, CA 90048
phone: 323.658.6775
fax: 323.658.6776
e-mail: seomin@glaad.org

INFO

VIEWPOINT

Ghosts of Christmases past are still haunting

by D.L. MURPHY

Bah, humbug.

This describes my Christmas attitude at its very best. Let me tell you about how I developed this attitude.

Christmas 1961: My parents are so excited they get us up while it is still dark to open our toys. We are then instructed not to play with the one we find most exciting until they have a chance to finish assembling it. Exhausted, my parents stumble off to bed, leaving my brother and I to play with, and destroy, that one very cool toy.

Christmas 1963: I get that bicycle I wanted so very badly. It is pink. A nightmare for a very butch eight-year-old girl. Our neighbor, my very first butch role model, helps me spray paint it red. My parents are not amused.

Christmas 1965: My parents are very excited about this really large box that has my name on it. So am I. Christmas arrives; I open the box, and find a Barbie Dream House. What exactly, were they thinking? The only way I play with dolls is to line them up and see how many I can knock down with my softball.

Somewhere around this time my mother becomes very friendly with alcohol and begins trying to be Martha Stewart. Remember now, this is long before such neuroses were socially acceptable.

The pressure is on for Christmas to be perfect. My mother goes so far as to wrap neighbors' gifts so that they "look nice for Christmas." This change in my mother imbues all future holidays with a somewhat Daliesque atmosphere.

Christmas 1967: I want books, I get clothes. Clothes my mother thought were a good idea. I am still so traumatized by the purple skirt and matching (according to my mother) pink mohair sweater that it makes me queasy to think about the rest of that school year.

Christmas 1969: Woodstock! I want records—rock and roll records. I scope out the packages under the tree and see that there really are presents that are records! Bennie Goodman and Ella Fitzgerald. I don't even know who these people are. I do, however, begin a lifelong affair with Ella.

Christmas 1971: My father takes my 1961 Ford (which I had paid for with my baby-sitting money) and puts a black and maroon snakeskin vinyl top on it. Is there anything so sad as a beloved first car, waxed to a mirror like shine, maimed beyond recognition?

Christmas 1973: I moved out of the house earlier this year. Unfortunately, I only moved six blocks away. So, I schlep back to my parents' house for Christmas, bringing my first girlfriend.

My mother decides to tango with the tree. My father is so embarrassed, he shoves 20 bucks in my pocket as he hustles us out the door. Girlfriend and I spend it all on drugs and tequila. We had a very merry Christmas.

Christmas 1979: I have moved far, far away. I am sure I am going to have peace and quiet for Christmas. Girlfriend #2 decides that this Christmas is going to be everything the Christmases of her childhood were not. I freak out when I realize that my girlfriend now reminds me of my

mother. This signals the beginning of the end for Girlfriend #2.

Christmas 1981: I am in the process of buying my first house. I am so broke there is no tree, no presents, no feast and no money to go to the bar. I expect to be really sorry for myself. I am pleasantly surprised to find myself very content to be lying on the couch, reading. I think on this and decide it will be a template for future years.

The pressure is on for Christmas to be perfect. My mother goes so far as to wrap neighbors' gifts so that they "look nice for Christmas."

Christmas 1982: Nope, not a template for future years. My parents, now retired, think the holidays are a perfect time to come visit. Girlfriend #3 tries very hard to make the best of it. The day is such a disaster that my father promises me they will never visit again. They never do.

Christmas 1985: Girlfriend #4 tells me she wants a "really traditional Christmas; you know, lots of presents, a tree, getting up early on Christmas morning, a big feast, yada, yada, yada."

Reluctantly, I agree. She gives me her "Christmas list" which contains everything from new kitchen appliances to cashmere sweaters. I spend all my time and money trying to acquire everything on the list and trying to wrap it as perfectly as my mother

would. I just about have a nervous breakdown in the process. I then realize that I am under no obligation to be my mother.

Christmas 1986 - Christmas 1997: These are wonderful Christmas years. I arrange it so I always have weekend duty at whatever plant I am working at. This allows me to ditch visits to my parents, decline invitations from my friends, and lay on the couch reading.

The only problem is the year I get so carried away with the roaring fire idea that the fire department had to come visit. I give all of the nice firefighters cookies and eggnog afterward.

Christmas 1998 and Christmas 1999: Beloved is from Buffalo, New York, and wants to go "home" for Christmas. I agree, just as long as we stay with friends and not her mother.

I find myself ass-deep in snow, shoveling, while "the girls" sit watching from the kitchen window, drinking hot chocolate. I remind myself that it is sometimes a bitch to be butch and keep shoveling. Shoveling so we can get out of the driveway to visit my mother-in-law. Why?

Christmas 2000: I am going to visit my now sober, much less neurotic mother. At best, my mother and I may finally have some Christmas peace between us. At worst, at least I won't be shoveling snow.

After all these years, and all this trauma, I can finally, finally, wish all of you a very merry Christmas. And mean it.

D.L. Murphy is a freelance writer and former Grinch. She may be reached at possumproducts@cs.com.

The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Green...

...by Eric Orner

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-aka-

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WITH YOUR LOVER'S
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(Part two)

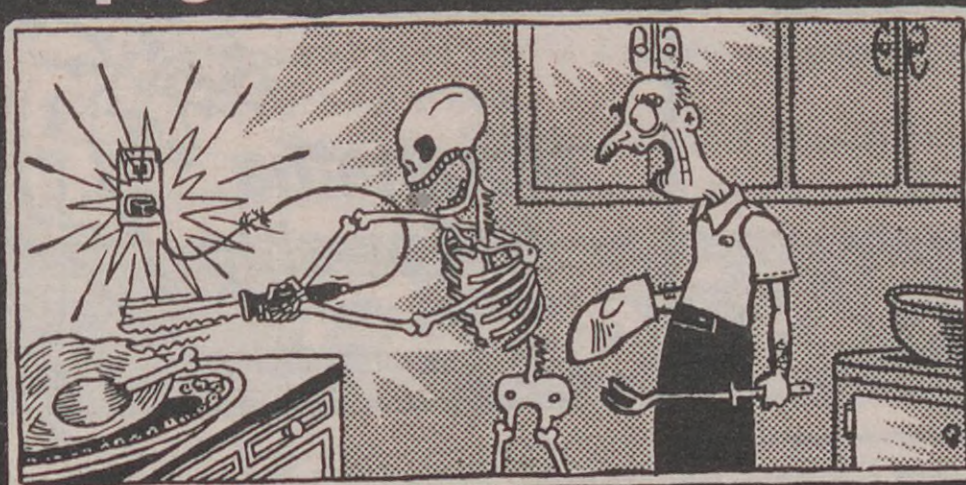
Get confused by funny family
anecdote that isn't funny.



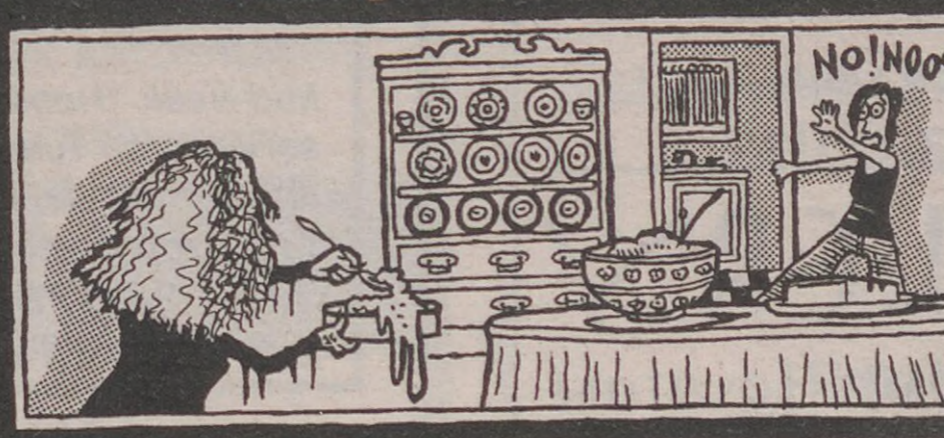
Get arm caught in insipid
guest room trundle bed.



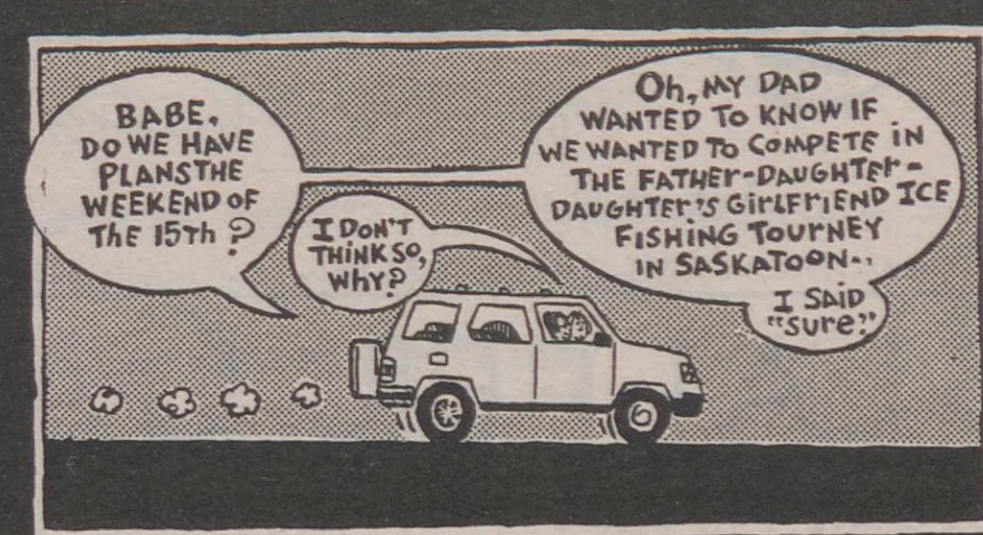
Get electrified helping gramps
plug in ancient carving knife.



Be compelled to take 2nd helping
of hideous holiday compote
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Thank God it's over. Plan revenge.



PFLAG plans conference for educators



PFLAG billboards promoting 'unconditional love' and warning that 'hate hurts' have been posted in strategic areas around Houston and in Santa Fe. Partial funding for the signs was made possible by a grant from Chase Bank. Part of the \$7,000 grant also will be used for PFLAG's planned 'Healing the Hurt' conference for educators next year.

> Continued from Page 1

"publicize PFLAG and its mission by raising public awareness about the issues of prejudice and breaking the silence about discrimination against sexual minorities."

Unfortunately, PFLAG is running out of funds to keep up the effective billboard campaign says Null. "It's very expensive and costs about \$7,500 a month."

Null says that a portion of the Chase Bank grant is to help underwrite the fifth in a series of Healing the Hurt conferences for educators, which will probably be held in the fall of next year.

The last conference, held in October 1999, was a "big success," says Null. Co-

sponsored by HISD, around 130 educators attended to listen to such topics as, "a legal update on safe schools, building on strengths of sexual minority students and a model for safe schools."

Although the conference was a success, the biggest complaint was the lack of information about minorities within the gay population, says Null.

"Most of the attendees were either African-American or Hispanic, but everybody presenting was white," he says. "Hopefully, we'll include minority issues at the next conference."

Null says PFLAG sends out notices to many schools within and around the Houston/Harris County area, but usually

We've gotten some checks from people who saw the billboards and the hits on our Web site are way up.

—Jim Null, PFLAG member

the most response comes from HISD.

"But, we had very little response from suburban schools. I guess there are no gays out there," he says with a touch of irony. "I think those schools are in denial."

Chase Bank has been very supportive of

the gay community and has awarded grants in the past to PFLAG-Houston and other area groups.

A spokesperson at Chase Bank in Houston says their mission statement forbids discrimination based on race or sexual orientation and that gay employees can be out without fear.

She said that Chase Bank has a Pride Team and is the largest corporate group in the Pride Parade.

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Gay-friendly travel agencies still have options for holiday trips

> Continued from Page 1

Peterson, who knows a special deal when she's offered one. "But it has 10 bedrooms and 11 baths, and includes all your meals," as well as 24/7 maid and kitchen service, and an unlimited open bar.

It sleeps 18, so it's not so unreasonable at \$166 per person. But can you round up a dozen and a half of your nearest and dearest to take with you, and whom you'd want to see in their bathing suits?

"So there's my suggestion. You know, right now it's so hard to find anything for the Christmas holiday. It's pretty late to be booking."

Travel agents are a resourceful lot, and Peterson quickly came up with a novel idea: go to Europe.

"Believe it or not, if you know somebody who skis, to fly to Innsbruck for seven days costs less than four days at Tahoe [Nevada's premiere ski resort.] At under \$1,400, it's an unbelievable price."

The cost includes round-trip airfare, ski lift tickets for six days, taxes and accommodations.

Although there may be rooms available, especially that private villa, Peterson didn't recommend Mexico right now because the fares are full coach, "astronomical" in her words, although the exchange rate with the peso is 10 to one. It's the getting there, not the staying, that's out of the question right now.

That problem is bypassed with finesse if you follow Mark Hoyer's advice at American Express Travel: charter a plane through Fun Jet, a private airline out of Houston.



One option for the New Year is to spend the holiday in London at the four-star Fleming's Hotel in Mayfair. Included in the package are hotel taxes, service charges, daily breakfast, a gay welcome packet, half-day London city tour, a four-day transport pass, VIP entrance to Heaven disco (one of London's hottest clubs), and the services of a local gay tour operator.

"They have their own planes. They leave on Sundays and Thursdays, which means if you go on a Thursday you have three nights, if you go on a Sunday you have four nights. Or you can go week to week, Sunday to Sunday, or Thursday to Thursday."

Fun Jet's three-, four- and seven-night packages are still available for the holiday season.

If you don't mind a non-gay cruise, Carnival cruise line offers four- or five-day

trips out of Galveston to Cozumel and Cancun. They may not be exclusively gay, but are very gay friendly, according to Hoyer.

If Mexico's just too darned hot, then he recommends Canada during Christmas.

"They have great skiing, their dollar is very, very, very good for us right now, and it's not far away."

A little closer to home would be a weekend in San Antonio with its illuminated River Walk, or even Fredericksburg, if you care to wander that far.

"If you have to have something warm, there's a gay hotel on Padre Island, the Upper Deck. I would fly down on Continental or Southwest to Brownsville. Why drive the six hours, when you can fly in one and rent a car from there? And it's just across the border from Mexico."

For Julie Wallace of Carlton Wagonlit, if it's not holiday skiing, the next best option is Jamaica. If you're looking for hot climate and hot times, you can't beat Hedonism II and III.

"They're party tours," she explained, "held in the most immaculate resorts in Jamaica. They have reciprocal privileges, where you can apply at one and then go to the other."

"Literally, it's a non-stop party, hanging from the ceiling, hanging from the walls. I'm serious. Three people go and the third person goes free. They have a thing about threes. It's kind of weird."

For Pat Brown, agent at Woodlake Travel, San Antonio is on her list with some conditions.

"I always love San Antonio at Christmas," she said. "It's absolutely delightful, but it's a very homogeneous type thing, not gay or lesbian, just a great destination. New Orleans is always a great gay place, but at Christmas I would say San Antonio's more fun. I like that Mexican influence, the 'feliz navidad' and all that."

But she came up with two once-in-a-lifetime Christmas tour alternatives from Above and Beyond, a gay travel packager out of Palm Springs.

If the mother country is more your speed, ring in the New Year in swinging London for \$1,175, double occupancy.

"That's a great price," Brown said with enthusiasm. "It's at Fleming's Hotel in Mayfair, which is a superb location."

Included are hotel taxes, service charges, daily breakfast, a gay welcome packet, half-day London city tour, a four-day transport pass, VIP entrance to Heaven disco (one of London's hottest clubs), and the services of a local gay tour operator.

"Yeah, I'll go," Brown said with a laugh.

INFO

Active Adventure Traveler, 713-666-9917
 American Express Travel, 800 W. Sam Houston Parkway, 713-365-6266
 Braeswood Travel, 24 Braeswood Square @ Chimney Rock, 713-721-4000
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Feds indict Florida man on child porn charges over explicit Web site

MIRAMAR, Fla.—A Florida man with a long record of sex and pornography convictions has been charged with unlawful production and transportation of child pornography, the Ft. Lauderdale Express-News reported. Florida law enforcement officials allege that Kevin Thelen scouted local teens to perform sex acts on his Jerkoffboys.com Web site by soliciting them at a Ft. Lauderdale nightclub that once sponsored a teen night. Acting on a tip that a 16-year-old boy had appeared nude on Thelen's website, authorities purchased a copy of Thelen's video, which depicted the boy performing oral sex on Thelen. The federal indictment charges Thelen with using minors to make pornographic material that was then sent across state lines. Thelen's lawyer called the charges "a gay witch hunt," and said that the models had misled Thelen about their ages. Thelen faces a possible life sentence if convicted on the charges.

W.V. teen's murder confession deemed admissible, judge rules

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP)—Jurors at Jared Wilson's murder trial next year will hear his confession to a West Virginia sheriff's deputy, Circuit Judge Rodney Merrifield ruled Dec. 1. Wilson, 18, "voluntarily, knowingly and intelligently" waived his right to remain silent when he was questioned after Arthur "J.R." Warren's mangled body was found alongside a West Virginia road, Merrifield wrote in a 16-page order. Wilson and David Allen Parker, 18, are charged with first-degree murder in the July 4 beating of Warren, a 26-year-old, gay black man who was an acquaintance of the teens. When a Marion County sheriff's investigator questioned Wilson about the murder, the teen said it was Parker who initiated the beating. The deputy said Wilson told him he kicked Warren only at Parker's urging. After they ran over Warren with the car, the teens went back to the house where the beating occurred to clean up blood and destroy evidence. "David threatened to beat me if I said a word," Wilson told the detective. Both teens face the possibility of life in prison if convicted in separate trials early next year.



TIMES WEST VIRGINIAN

Jurors at Jared Wilson's murder trial early next year will be allowed to hear an alleged confession Wilson made to police about the slaying of Arthur 'J.R.' Warren, a judge ruled.

Conn. lesbian gets 25-year sentence in drunken strangling of man

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP)—One of two women accused of killing a Connecticut man during a drunken argument about lesbians has been sentenced to 25 years in prison. Lisa Albert, 30, had been charged with strangling her friend, Richard Barlow, 53, with an electrical cord on March 9, 1999. Albert, who told authorities she meant to restrain but not kill Barlow, received the minimum punishment for a felony murder conviction. According to court documents, Albert told police the argument began after Barlow said he didn't understand lesbians and believed they needed to find a good man. Albert and Barlow then launched into a drunken argument after his remark about lesbians. During the struggle that followed, Albert "wrapped an electrical cord around Barlow's throat until he ... gurgled and his body went limp," prosecutors said. Murder charges against Albert's companion, Lynn Webb, 44, are pending.

Forensic evidence leads police to suspect in 20-year-old Conn. murder

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP)—After re-examining forensic evidence gathered 20 years ago, state police made an arrest in the slaying of a Connecticut man. Omar R. Ali, 48, was charged with murder and felony murder in the death of Darrell Ashton, who was found stabbed in his home in May 1980. Ashton, then a 44-year-old high school guidance counselor, was found dead by his mother and brother, who had stopped at the house to visit. The case went unsolved for two decades, despite fingerprints and palm prints at the crime scene. Discussing the case in 1980, state police said there was no sign of a struggle, and newspaper reports at the time suggested that "several members of Hartford's gay community" said Ashton likely met his killer at a gay bar. Police declined to say how they were able to link that evidence to Ali, who is being held in lieu of a \$1 million bond.

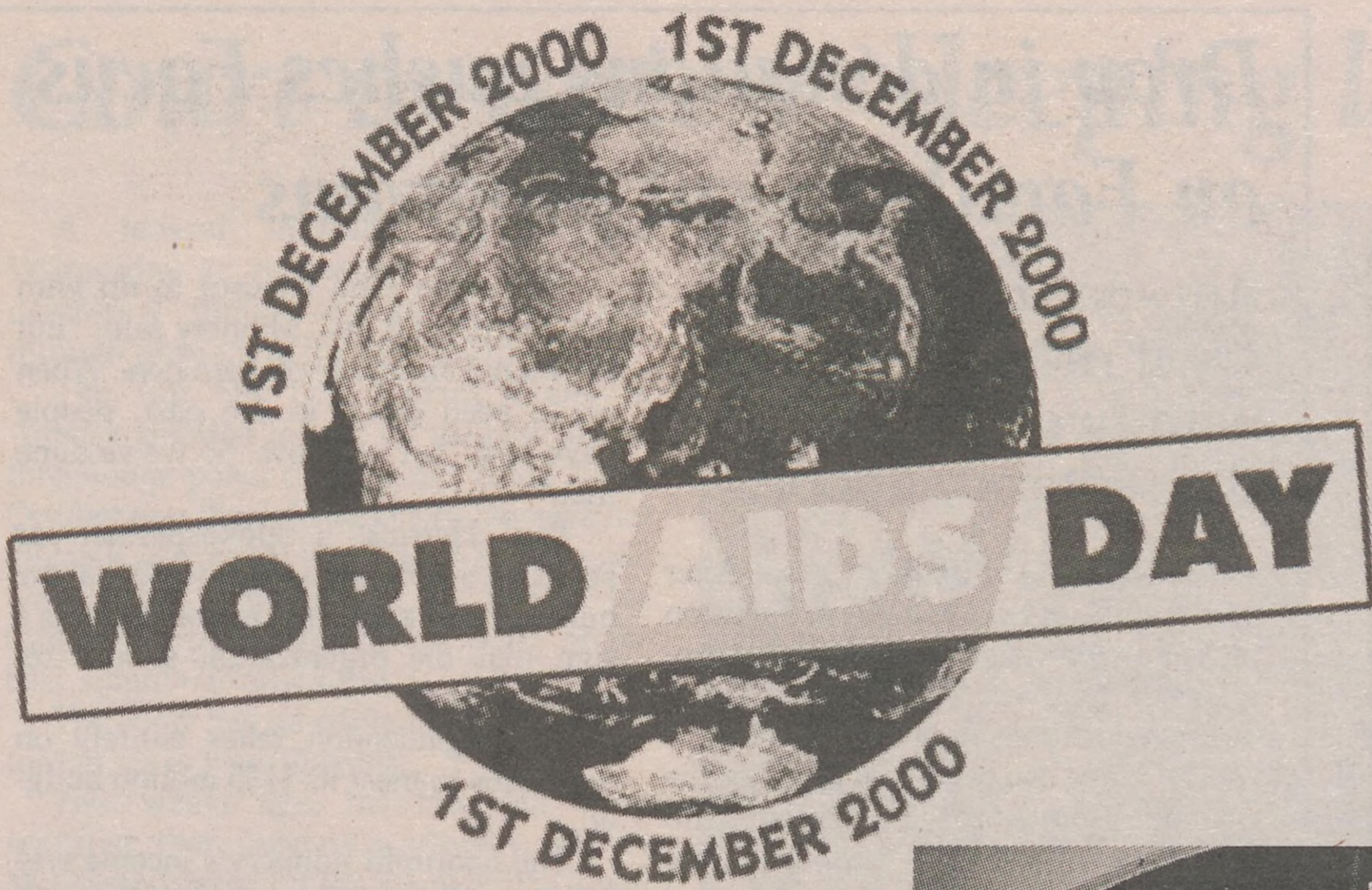
Attorney says sting unfairly targets gay men who cruise Calif. park

SANTA ANA, Calif.—A sting operation, which placed undercover officers around public restrooms in a park noted for gay male cruising, is being called discriminatory, the Los Angeles Times reported. Since June, Santa Ana police arrested 56 men in Santiago Park, where residents have long complained about gay cruising. "We owe it to the community to keep our parks free and clear of any illegal or lewd activities, especially parks where there are women and children in view of areas where these acts are occurring," Santa Ana Police Sgt. Raul Luna said. But a lawsuit seeks to toss out the charges against the remaining defendants who haven't pleaded guilty, charging that over two-thirds of the city's 1999 lewd conduct arrests involved heterosexual couples. "All groups need to be treated fairly. If you have two groups committing the same type of crimes, they should be treated in the same fashion," said Deputy Public Defender Lee Blumen, who has teamed with private lawyers in the case.

—From staff and wire reports



For more news, visit
www.houstonvoice.com



World AIDS Day, Dec. 1, was honored in a variety of ways in the Houston area. Amigos Volunteer Education Service hold a candlelight vigil, above; U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee hangs an ornament on the Tree of Remembrance, below; a 'Human Billboard' is created by more than 200 volunteers at Galveston stadium, below at left; and the NAMES Project Houston hosts a memorial panel dedication ceremony, at left.

PHOTOS BY DALTON DEHART AND ROBERT MIHOVIL



HRC, Uncommon Legacy, PFLAG among beneficiaries of Black Tie



Representatives from some of the fourteen community organizations awarded funds raised at this year's Houston Black Tie gala pose with their ceremonial checks. The organizations shared \$129,000 raised at the Nov. 11 event.

> Continued from Page 2
than \$5,500 for the organization.

"This is just fantastic and the money will definitely be used for our next Health Fair in the spring of 2001," she said.

The following is a complete list of beneficiaries of Houston Black Tie, Dinner, Inc. 2000:

Texas Human Rights Foundation, \$4,993
Uncommon Legacy Foundation, \$5,145
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center, \$5,559

Lesbian Health Initiative, \$5,560
Montrose Counseling Center, \$6,099
AssistHers, \$6,804
PWA Coalition, \$7,042
Body Positive, \$8,252
PFLAG, \$8,835
H.A.T.C.H., \$9,260
Montrose Clinic, \$10,360
Bering Omega, \$10,993
Assistance Fund, \$12,162
Gay and Lesbian Anti-Defamation League, \$28,035

DALTON DEHART

Drop in donations pushes Focus on Family to cut programs

Anti-gay group won't say if recent troubles with two officials fed the reduced support

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.—After four months of lean donations, Focus on the Family officials have put several programs on hold and asked supporters to increase donations to revive them.

The move comes just weeks after the Colorado Springs-based Christian ministry was embroiled in turmoil as the leader of its ex-gay ministry was spotted inside a Washington, D.C. gay bar and another official resigned amid allegations that he had an extra-marital affair.

James Dobson, Focus on the Family president, appealed for more money in a recent letter to the 2.4 million supporters.

Programs put on hold include improvements to the ministry's Web site, an abstinence-education initiative, a video on parenting and Arabic translations of Focus publications, said Tom Minnery, vice president of public policy.

Each of the programs will be scaled down or eliminated if donations do not increase by Jan. 15, Minnery said.

"Whatever God chooses to do with this place, we'll do," Minnery said. "But there's not an undue concern here. When we've been down in the past, people have said, 'Let us know.' So we've done that."

Paul Hetrick, a spokesperson for Focus on the Family, said Nov. 30 that the ministry sees a shortfall in donations as a sign that the organization should re-examine itself.

The organization relies entirely on donations to meet its \$135 million budget.

The nonprofit ministry's income was \$30.8 million from June through September, short of its \$31.3 million projection, Minnery said. It received \$31.6 million during the same period in 1999, he said.

He said the drop in donations was a concern because the ministry maintains cash reserves for only two to four weeks of operations.

Dobson's plea for increased donations is not unusual for a Christian ministry, said Paul Nelson, president of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, which accredits Christian groups on financial standards.

—From staff and wire reports

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Court to review 'sleeping lawyer' death penalty case

A federal appeals court agreed Wednesday to reconsider the case of a death-row inmate whose lawyer slept through portions of his 1984 murder trial.

The full 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decided to take up the case after a three-judge panel of the court ruled 2-1 in October that the defendant's rights were not violated. The panel said Calvin Burdine, 47, was unable to prove that his lawyer, Joe Cannon, slept during critical parts of the trial. Cannon is now dead.

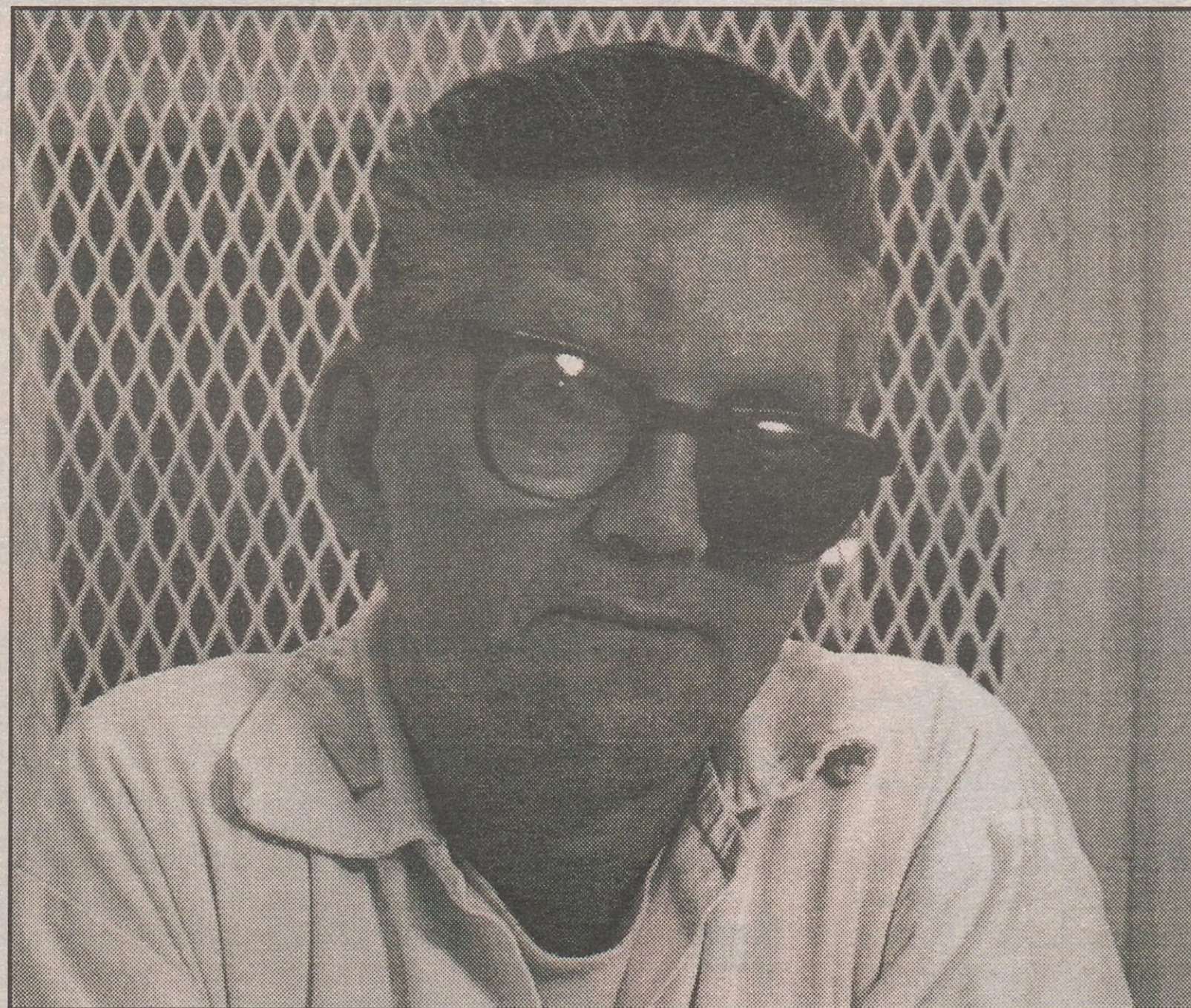
The court has scheduled oral arguments for Jan. 22 in New Orleans.

Two weeks ago, the Houston Voice reported that Burdine's attorney, Robert McGlasson asked for the full U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans to rehear his arguments that Burdine should get a new trial.

"This ruling cannot be squared with established legal principles or even basic notions of fundamental fairness and justice," McGlasson wrote in a petition asking the full 15-member appeals court to consider the case. "A sleeping lawyer is, for all intents and purposes, an absent attorney."

Texas Attorney General John Cornyn's spokeswoman, Heather Browne, agreed that the decision illustrates the gravity of the case.

Neither the trial transcript nor a 1995 evidentiary hearing—during which three jurors and a court reporter testified Cannon



Calvin Burdine

often napped for as long as 10 minutes—showed exactly when he slept, the panel majority wrote in a 40-page opinion in October.

"Worse still is the message signaled to

jurors by an attorney who is so uninvolved and disinterested in his client's case that he cannot even stay awake for the trial," McGlasson wrote in his petition. "The review provided by the panel majority cre-

ates a standard that is impossible to meet."

From death row, Burdine told the Associate Press that he is frustrated, but that the matter is out of his hands.

"There's nothing I can do about it," he said in November. "But I've never lost sight of the fact this is Texas, and anything that can happen will happen here."

Burdine's legal battles have previously included such irregularities as a missed deadline by the state, a prosecutor's gay slur and the sleeping defense lawyer who also called gays "faggots," "fairies" and "queers."

Burdine's 17 years on death row began after he was convicted of the April 1983 robbery and murder of W.T. Wise, a 50-year-old night supervisor for a security service.

Testimony showed that the pair had a gay relationship and had been living together for 3 1/2 months before a dispute caused Burdine to move out of their trailer. Burdine told police that Wise wanted him to work as a prostitute.

Some trial evidence showed that Douglas McCreight was the primary perpetrator. McCreight pleaded guilty to a lesser charge and was paroled after eight years in prison.

Earlier this year, District Judge Hittner ordered that Burdine be released after the state missed a retrial deadline, but the 5th Circuit threw out the lower court's ruling.

—From staff and wire reports

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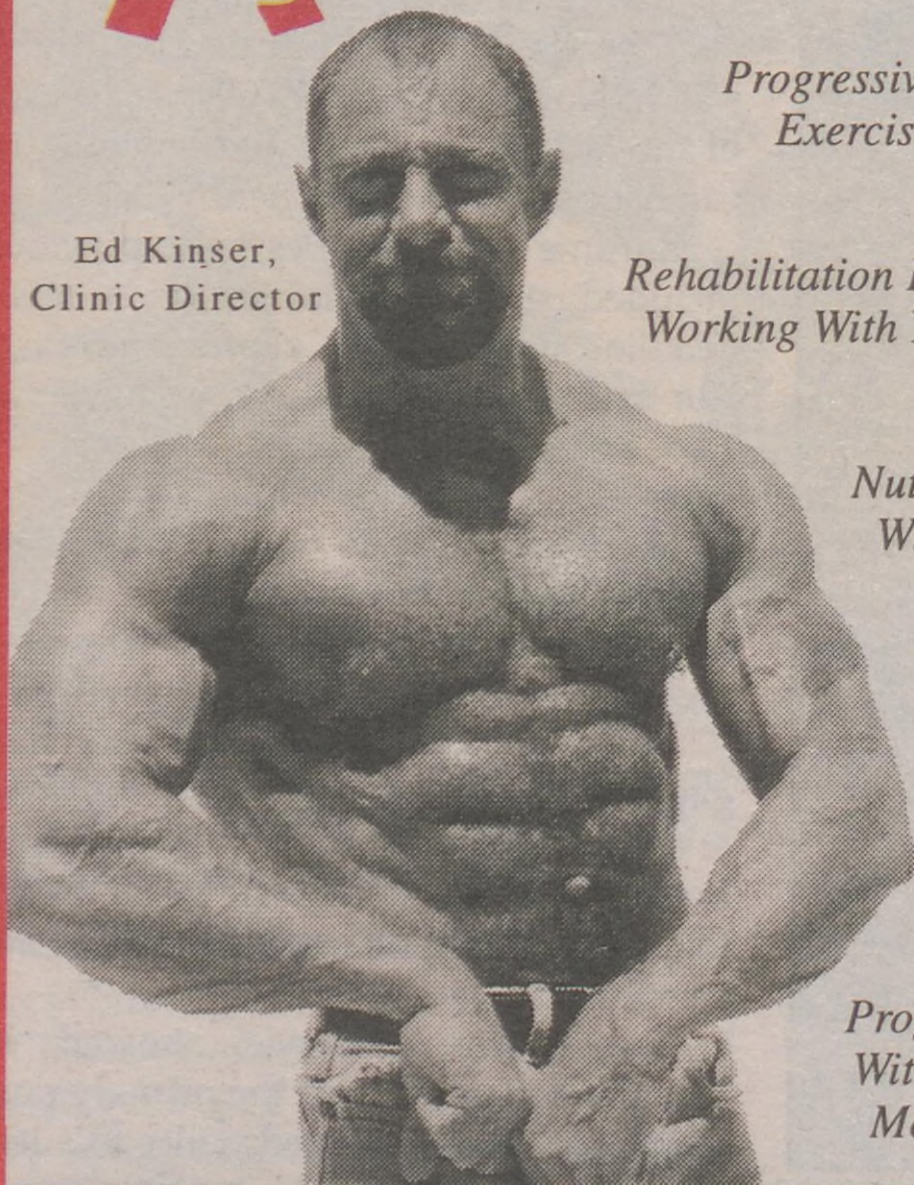
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health news

Backrooms in Paris clubs highlights AIDS trouble, health officials say

PARIS—French gay activists cite the popularity of backroom clubs in Paris as a sign of growing complacency over AIDS among French gay men, Agence France Press reported. Health experts have expressed concern at official figures released last month which showed that the decrease in the number of deaths from AIDS in France has slowed, along with a sharp rise in the number of people discovering they are HIV-positive only after AIDS symptoms appear. "For the past year we've been having to fight against 'relapse'—the refusal to use condoms—because we don't want to go again through what happened 10 years ago," said Emmanuelle Cosse, president of Paris' ACT-UP chapter, which held a rally on World AIDS Day calling for free condoms in backrooms. Gay writer and sex activist Guillaume Dustan spoke against ACT-UP's World AIDS Day rally. "The problem with condoms is that it prevents you from having a normal sexuality. ... Act-Up tells us, 'You're HIV-positive, you must wear condoms till the day you die.' Well I say no... We're not going to give it up, we've already got AIDS."

Survey shows misconceptions about transmission of AIDS still persist



A recent survey shows that some people still regard AIDS as 'a gay disease,' said Melanie Thompson, founder of the AIDS Research Consortium of Atlanta.

ATLANTA (AP)—A survey of what people know about AIDS found that four out of 10 mistakenly believe it is possible to get the disease by sharing a drinking glass or being coughed or sneezed on by an infected person. The survey, conducted for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and released Nov. 30, found that about 40 percent of the more than 5,600 participants said it was very likely, somewhat likely or only somewhat unlikely that HIV could be transmitted by sharing a glass. Slightly more—41 percent—said transmission is possible by being coughed or sneezed on by someone with the virus. In a related question, nearly 19 percent of those surveyed said they agreed with the statement, "People who got AIDS through sex or drug use have gotten what they deserve." "I think many people regarded this as a gay disease and didn't bother to educate themselves about the facts," said Melanie Thompson, founder of the AIDS Research Consortium of Atlanta. "It's an equal-opportunity disease."

Mo. university puts posters near potties to deliver health messages

ST. LOUIS (AP)—Washington University has started putting posters with health messages inside bathroom stalls in residence halls and classroom buildings. The blue-and-white posters offer tips on good eating, safer sex, safe sports, stress reduction, cold and flu prevention and responsible use of alcohol. The poster also includes a list of useful campus and off-campus telephone numbers, including the fitness center, the university police and a national AIDS hot line. Students came up with the idea when Melissa Ruwitch, the university's coordinator of health promotion and wellness, asked some of them how to distribute the posters for maximum readership. "Students said the only place people would read such information was when they were in the stall," Ruwitch said.

Rate of colon cancer drops with simple screening, long-term study says

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.—A long-term study of more than 46,000 people has found that a simple screening process could help prevent people from getting colon cancer, the New York Times reported. The test, known as fecal occult screening, looks for signs of blood in a person's stool, which can be a sign of either colon cancer or benign polyps that could become cancerous if not removed. The study, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, found that colon cancer rates dropped by 20 percent among people who took the test. People whose colon cancer was discovered in its earliest stage had a five-year survival rate of 90 percent, while only eight percent survived if the cancer was discovered at its end stages. The fecal occult screening is both less expensive and less painful than other tests doctors used to find colon cancer, like colonoscopies, sigmoidoscopies and barium enemas. Colon cancer kills an estimated 65,000 people a year, second only to lung cancer in the U.S.

MTV poll finds young people complacent, misinformed about HIV

LONDON—A survey has found that young people are misinformed about HIV and AIDS and are not using condoms to prevent transmission of the virus, Reuters reported. The survey conducted by MTV showed that 60 percent of 16- to 24-year-old MTV viewers questioned in 16 countries across Asia, Europe, Latin America and the U.S. think they should be worried about HIV/AIDS. But only 24 percent said they knew anything about the illness and only 51 percent of sexually active young people said they would never have sex without a condom. Some 30 percent of the 4,140 teens and young adults interviewed face-to-face for the poll said only people who share needles can get the HIV virus that causes AIDS; 25 percent thought only promiscuous people were in danger of infection. Sixteen percent said only gays get AIDS and 12 percent thought the virus could be transmitted through kissing.

—From staff and wire reports

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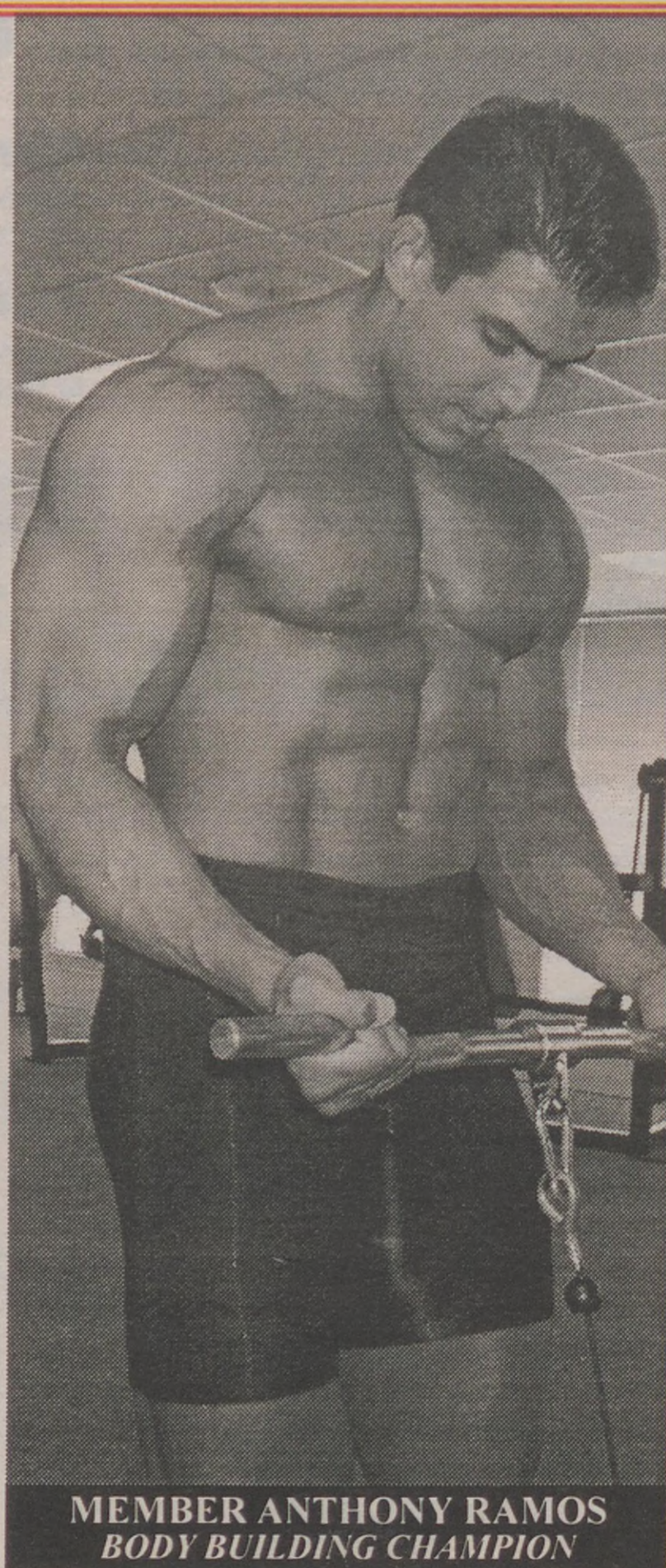
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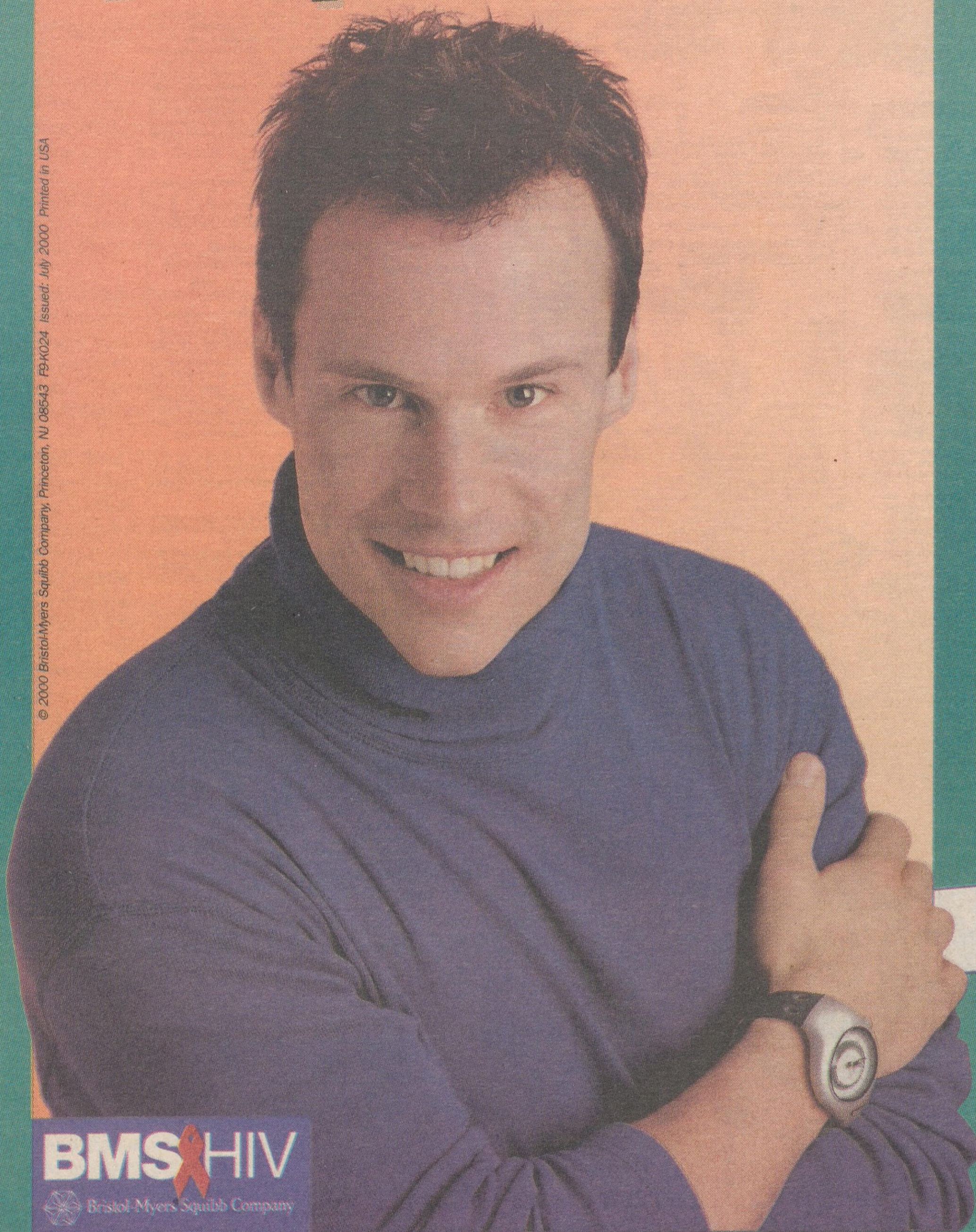


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“ ZERIT is the #1 prescribed HIV brand in combination therapy. I gotta believe it can work for me. I’m positive.”



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One small capsule twice a day with or without food

Powerful enough in combination therapy to keep viral load down⁽¹⁾



#1 prescribed HIV brand in combination therapy⁽²⁾

Generally Well Tolerated

SAFETY INFORMATION:

There have been cases of acid buildup in the blood and enlarged liver, including fatal cases. Fatal and non-fatal pancreatitis has occurred when ZERIT was part of a combination regimen that included didanosine, with or without hydroxyurea.

ZERIT may cause numbness, tingling or pain in the hands or feet (neuropathy). This risk is increased in patients with advanced HIV disease or a history of neuropathy. If this occurs, your doctor may suggest lowering the dose or stopping ZERIT to improve symptoms. Patients treated with ZERIT in combination with other medicines that may cause similar side effects may have a higher chance of developing these side effects. The most frequent side effects are nausea, diarrhea, headache, rash and neuropathy. ZERIT does not cure HIV infection or prevent passing HIV to others. ZERIT, in combination with other antiretroviral agents, is indicated for the treatment of HIV-1 infection.

1) 83% (49/59) and 49% (49/101) of patients taking ZERIT with lamivudine and didanosine had viral load undetectable at 48 weeks in an as treated and intent to treat analysis respectively. (START 1. Data on file, Bristol-Myers Squibb).
2) IMS NPA Prescription Data 4/99 - 4/00.

1-888-262-9673 (toll free) or visit www.ZERIT.com

ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT
ZERIT[®]
(stavudine) CAPSULES / POWDER FOR ORAL SOLUTION
ALSO KNOWN AS d4T

Please see the adjacent page for more information about ZERIT.

ZERIT® (stavudine)

ZERIT® (stavudine) Capsules

ZERIT® (stavudine) for Oral Solution

Brief Summary of Prescribing Information, 8/99. For complete prescribing information, please consult official package circular.

WARNING

LACTIC ACIDOSIS AND SEVERE HEPATOMEGALY WITH STEATOSIS, INCLUDING FATAL CASES, HAVE BEEN REPORTED WITH THE USE OF NUCLEOSIDE ANALOGUES ALONE OR IN COMBINATION, INCLUDING STAVUDINE AND OTHER ANTIRETROVIRALS (SEE WARNINGS).

INDICATIONS AND USAGE

ZERIT® (stavudine), in combination with other antiretroviral agents, is indicated for the treatment of HIV-1 infection (see CLINICAL STUDIES).

CLINICAL STUDIES

Combination Therapy: The combination use of ZERIT is based on the results of clinical studies in HIV-infected patients in double- and triple-combination regimens with other antiretroviral agents.

One of these studies (START 1) was a multicenter, randomized, open-label study comparing ZERIT (40 mg BID) plus lamivudine plus didanosine to zidovudine plus lamivudine plus didanosine in 202 treatment-naïve patients. Both regimens resulted in a similar magnitude of inhibition of HIV RNA levels and increases in CD4 cell counts through 48 weeks.

Monotherapy: The efficacy of ZERIT was demonstrated in a randomized, double-blind study (AI455-019, conducted 1992-1994) comparing ZERIT with zidovudine in 822 patients with a spectrum of HIV-related symptoms. The outcome in terms of progression of HIV disease and death was similar for both drugs.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

ZERIT is contraindicated in patients with clinically significant hypersensitivity to stavudine or to any of the components contained in the formulation.

WARNINGS

1. Lactic Acidosis/Severe Hepatomegaly with Steatosis: Lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported with the use of nucleoside analogues alone or in combination, including stavudine and other antiretrovirals. A majority of these cases have been in women. Obesity and prolonged nucleoside exposure may be risk factors. Particular caution should be exercised when administering ZERIT to any patient with known risk factors for liver disease; however, cases have also been reported in patients with no known risk factors. Treatment with ZERIT should be suspended in any patient who develops clinical or laboratory findings suggestive of lactic acidosis or pronounced hepatotoxicity (which may include hepatomegaly and steatosis even in the absence of marked transaminase elevations).

2. Peripheral Neuropathy: Peripheral neuropathy, manifested by numbness, tingling, or pain in the hands or feet, has been reported in patients receiving ZERIT therapy. Peripheral neuropathy has occurred more frequently in patients with advanced HIV disease, a history of neuropathy, or concurrent neurotoxic drug therapy, including didanosine (see ADVERSE REACTIONS).

PRECAUTIONS

Information for Patients: Patients should be informed that an important toxicity of ZERIT is peripheral neuropathy. Patients should be aware that peripheral neuropathy is manifested by numbness, tingling, or pain in hands or feet, and that these symptoms should be reported to their physicians. Patients should be counseled that peripheral neuropathy occurs with greatest frequency in patients who have advanced HIV disease or a history of peripheral neuropathy, and that dose modification and/or discontinuation of ZERIT may be required if toxicity develops.

Caregivers of young children receiving ZERIT therapy should be instructed regarding detection and reporting of peripheral neuropathy.

Patients should be informed that when ZERIT is used in combination with other agents with similar toxicities, the incidence of adverse events may be higher than when ZERIT is used alone. These patients should be followed closely.

Patients should be informed that ZERIT is not a cure for HIV infection, and that they may continue to acquire illnesses associated with HIV infection, including opportunistic infections. Patients should be advised to remain under the care of a physician when using ZERIT. They should be advised that ZERIT therapy has not been shown to reduce the risk of transmission of HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination. Patients should be informed that the long-term effects of ZERIT are unknown at this time.

Patients should be informed that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that HIV-infected mothers not nurse newborn infants to reduce the risk of postnatal transmission of HIV infection.

Drug Interactions: Zidovudine may competitively inhibit the intracellular phosphorylation of stavudine. Therefore, use of zidovudine in combination with ZERIT is not recommended. (See CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY.)

Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility: In 2-year carcinogenicity studies in mice and rats, stavudine was noncarcinogenic at doses which produced exposures (AUC) 39 and 168 times, respectively, human exposure at the recommended clinical dose. Benign and malignant liver tumors in mice and rats and malignant urinary bladder tumors in male rats occurred at levels of exposure 250 (mice) and 732 (rats) times human exposure at the recommended clinical dose.

Stavudine was not mutagenic in the Ames, *E. coli* reverse mutation, or the CHO/HGPRT mammalian cell forward gene mutation assays, with and without metabolic activation. Stavudine produced positive results in the *in vitro* human lymphocyte clastogenesis and mouse fibroblast assays, and in the *in vivo* mouse micronucleus test. In the *in vitro* assays, stavudine elevated the frequency of chromosome aberrations in human lymphocytes (concentrations of 25 to 250 µg/mL, without metabolic activation) and increased the frequency of transformed foci in mouse fibroblast cells (concentrations of 25 to 2500 µg/mL, with and without metabolic activation). In the *in vivo* micronucleus assay, stavudine was clastogenic in bone marrow cells following oral stavudine administration to mice at dosages of 600 to 2000 mg/kg/day for 3 days.

No evidence of impaired fertility was seen in rats with exposures (based on C_{max}) up to 216 times that observed following a clinical dosage of 1 mg/kg/day.

Pregnancy: Pregnancy Category C. Reproduction studies have been performed in rats and rabbits with exposures (based on C_{max}) up to 399 and 183 times, respectively, of that seen at a clinical dosage of 1 mg/kg/day and have revealed no evidence of teratogenicity. The incidence in fetuses of a common skeletal variation, unossified or incomplete ossification of sternbra, was increased in rats at 399 times human exposure, while no effect was observed at 216 times human exposure. A slight post-implantation loss was noted at 216 times the human exposure with no effect noted at approximately 135 times the human exposure. An increase in early rat neonatal mortality (birth to 4 days of age) occurred at 399 times the human exposure, while survival of neonates was unaffected at approximately 135 times the human exposure. A study in rats showed that stavudine is transferred to the fetus through the placenta. The concentration in fetal tissue was approximately one-half the concentration in maternal plasma. There are no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. Because animal reproduction studies are not always predictive of human response, stavudine should be used during pregnancy only if clearly needed.

Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry: To monitor maternal-fetal outcomes of pregnant women exposed to stavudine and other antiretroviral agents, an Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry has been established. Physicians are encouraged to register patients by calling (800) 258-4263.

Nursing Mothers: Studies in lactating rats demonstrated that stavudine is excreted in milk. Although it is not known whether stavudine is excreted in human milk, there exists the potential for adverse effects from stavudine in nursing infants. Mothers should be instructed to discontinue nursing if they are receiving stavudine. This instruction is consistent with the Centers for Disease Control recommendation that HIV-infected mothers not breast-feed their infants to avoid risking postnatal transmission of HIV infection.

Pediatric Use: Use of stavudine in pediatric patients is supported by evidence from adequate and well-controlled studies of stavudine in adults with additional pharmacokinetic and safety data in pediatric patients.

Rx ONLY

Adverse events that were reported to occur in 105 pediatric patients receiving ZERIT (stavudine) 2 mg/kg/day for a median of 6.4 months in study ACTG 240 were generally similar to those reported in adults.

Stavudine pharmacokinetics have been evaluated in 25 HIV-infected pediatric patients ranging in age from 5 weeks to 15 years and in weight from 2 to 43 kg after IV or oral administration of single doses and BID regimens (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY, Table 1 in full prescribing information).

ADVERSE REACTIONS

Adults: ZERIT therapy has been associated with peripheral neuropathy, which can be severe, is dose related, and occurs more frequently in patients being treated with neurotoxic drug therapy, including didanosine, in patients with advanced HIV infection, or in patients who have previously experienced peripheral neuropathy.

When ZERIT is used in combination with other agents with similar toxicities, the incidence of adverse events may be higher than when ZERIT is used alone. Patients treated with ZERIT in combination with didanosine may be at increased risk for adverse events such as pancreatitis, peripheral neuropathy, and liver function abnormalities. (See WARNINGS and PRECAUTIONS).

Selected clinical events that occurred in adult patients receiving ZERIT in a controlled monotherapy trial (Study AI455-019) are provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Selected Clinical Adverse Events in Study AI455-019^a (Monotherapy)

Adverse Events	Percent (%)	
	ZERIT (40 mg BID) (n=412)	zidovudine (200 mg TID) (n=402)
Headache	54	49
Diarrhea	50	44
Peripheral Neurologic Symptoms/Neuropathy	52	39
Rash	40	35
Nausea and Vomiting	39	44

^a Median duration of stavudine therapy = 79 weeks; median duration of zidovudine therapy = 53 weeks.

Pancreatitis was observed in three of the 412 adult patients who received ZERIT in a controlled monotherapy study.

Selected clinical adverse events that occurred in antiretroviral naïve adult patients receiving ZERIT from two controlled combination studies are provided in Table 2.

Table 2
Selected Clinical Adverse Events in START 1 and START 2^a Studies (Combination Therapy)

Adverse Events	Percent (%)			
	START 1		START 2	
	ZERIT+ lamivudine+ indinavir (n=100) ^b	zidovudine+ lamivudine+ indinavir (n=102)	ZERIT+ didanosine+ indinavir (n=102) ^b	zidovudine+ lamivudine+ indinavir (n=103)
Nausea	43	63	53	67
Diarrhea	34	16	45	39
Headache	25	26	46	37
Rash	18	13	30	18
Vomiting	18	33	30	35
Peripheral Neurologic Symptoms/Neuropathy	8	7	21	10

^a START 2 compared two triple-combination regimens in 205 treatment-naïve patients. Patients received either ZERIT (40 mg BID) plus didanosine plus indinavir or zidovudine plus lamivudine plus indinavir.

^b Duration of stavudine therapy = 48 weeks.

Pancreatitis resulting in death was observed in one patient who received ZERIT plus didanosine plus indinavir in the START 2 study.

Selected laboratory abnormalities reported in a controlled monotherapy study (Study AI455-019) are provided in Table 3.

Table 3
Selected Adult Laboratory Abnormalities in Study AI455-019^{a,b}

Parameter	Percent (%)	
	ZERIT (stavudine) (40 mg BID) (n=412)	zidovudine (200 mg TID) (n=402)
AST (SGOT) (>5.0 x ULN)	11	10
ALT (SGPT) (>5.0 x ULN)	13	11
Amylase (≥1.4 x ULN)	14	13

^a Data presented for patients for whom laboratory evaluations were performed.

^b Median duration of stavudine therapy = 79 weeks; median duration of zidovudine therapy = 53 weeks.

ULN = upper limit of normal.

Selected laboratory abnormalities reported in two controlled combination studies are provided in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4
Selected Laboratory Abnormalities in START 1 and START 2 Studies (Grades 3-4)

Parameter	Percent of Patients			
	START 1		START 2	
	ZERIT+ lamivudine+ indinavir (n=100)	zidovudine+ lamivudine+ indinavir (n=102)	ZERIT+ didanosine+ indinavir (n=102)	zidovudine+ lamivudine+ indinavir (n=103)
Bilirubin (>2.6 x ULN)	7	6	16	8
SGOT (AST) (>5 x ULN)	5	2	7	7
SGPT (ALT) (>5 x ULN)	6	2	8	5
SGT (>5 x ULN)	2	2	5	2
Lipase (>2 x ULN)	6	3	5	5
Amylase (>2 x ULN)	4	<1	8	2

ULN = upper limit of normal.

Table 5
Selected Laboratory Abnormalities in START 1 and START 2 Studies (All Grades)

Parameter	Percent (%)			
	START 1		START 2	
	ZERIT+ lamivudine+ indinavir (n=100)	zidovudine+ lamivudine+ indinavir (n=102)	ZERIT+ didanosine+ indinavir (n=102)	zidovudine+ lamivudine+ indinavir (n=103)
Total Bilirubin	65	60	68	55
SGOT (AST)	42	20	53	20
SGPT (ALT)	40	20	50	18
GGT	15	8	28	12
Lipase	27	12	26	19
Amylase	21	19	31	17

Observed During Clinical Practice: The following events have been identified during post-approval use of ZERIT (stavudine). Because they are reported voluntarily from a population of unknown size, estimates of frequency cannot be made. These events have been chosen for inclusion due to their seriousness, frequency of reporting, causal connection to ZERIT, or a combination of these factors.

Body as a Whole: abdominal pain, allergic reaction, and chills/fever.

Digestive Disorders: anorexia.

Hematologic Disorders: anemia, leukopenia, and thrombocytopenia.

Liver: lactic acidosis and hepatic steatosis (see WARNINGS), hepatitis and liver failure.

Musculoskeletal: myalgia.

Nervous: insomnia.

Pediatric Patients: Adverse reactions and serious laboratory abnormalities in pediatric patients were similar in type and frequency to those seen in adult patients.

OVERDOSAGE

Experience with adults treated with 12 to 24 times the recommended daily dosage revealed no acute toxicity. Complications of chronic overdosage include peripheral neuropathy and hepatic toxicity. Stavudine can be removed by hemodialysis; the mean \pm SD hemodialysis clearance of stavudine is 120 ± 18 mL/min. Whether stavudine is eliminated by peritoneal dialysis has not been studied.

DOSE AND ADMINISTRATION

The interval between doses of ZERIT should be 12 hours. ZERIT may be taken without regard to meals.

Adults: The recommended dose based on body weight is as follows:

40 mg twice daily for patients ≥ 60 kg.
30 mg twice daily for patients <60 kg.

Pediatrics: The recommended dose for pediatric patients weighing less than 30 kg is 1 mg/kg/dose, given every 12 hours. Pediatric patients weighing 30 kg or greater should receive the recommended adult dosage.

Dosage Adjustment: Patients should be monitored for the development of peripheral neuropathy, which is usually manifested by numbness, tingling, or pain in the feet or hands. These symptoms may be difficult to detect in young children (see WARNINGS). If these symptoms develop during treatment, stavudine therapy should be interrupted. Symptoms may resolve if therapy is withdrawn promptly. In some cases, symptoms may worsen temporarily following discontinuation of therapy. If symptoms resolve completely, patients may tolerate resumption of treatment at one-half the recommended dose.

20 mg twice daily for patients ≥ 60 kg.
15 mg twice daily for patients <60 kg.

If neuropathy recurs after resumption of ZERIT, permanent discontinuation of ZERIT should be considered.

Renal Impairment: ZERIT may be administered to adult patients with impaired renal function with adjustment in dose as shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Recommended Dosage Adjustment for Renal Impairment

Creatinine Clearance (mL/min)	Recommended ZERIT Dose by Patient Weight	
	≥ 60 kg	<60 kg
>50	40 mg every 12 hours	30 mg every 12 hours
26-50	20 mg every 12 hours	15 mg every 12 hours
10-25	20 mg every 24 hours	15 mg every 24 hours

Since urinary excretion is also a major route of elimination of stavudine in pediatric patients, the clearance of stavudine may be altered in children with renal impairment. Although there are insufficient data to recommend a specific dose adjustment of ZERIT in this patient population, a reduction in the dose and/or an increase in the interval between doses should be considered.

Hemodialysis Patients: The recommended dose is 20 mg every 24 hours (≥ 60 kg) or 15 mg every 24 hours (<60 kg), administered after the completion of hemodialysis and at the same time of day on non-dialysis days.

Method of Preparation:

ZERIT (stavudine) for Oral Solution

Prior to dispensing, the pharmacist must constitute the dry powder with purified water to a concentration of 1 mg stavudine per mL of solution, as follows:

- Add 202 mL of purified water to the container.
- Shake container vigorously until the powder dissolves completely. Constitution in this way produces 200 mL (deliverable volume) of 1 mg/mL stavudine solution. The solution may appear slightly hazy.

3. Dispense solution in original container with measuring cup provided. Instruct patient to shake the container vigorously prior to measuring each dose and to store the tightly closed container in a refrigerator, 36° to 46°F (2° to 8°C). Discard any unused portion after 30 days.

HOW SUPPLIED

ZERIT® (stavudine) Capsules are available in the following strengths and configurations of plastic bottles with child-resistant closures:

Product Strength	Capsule Shell Color	Markings on Capsule (in Black Ink)	Capsules per Bottle	NDC No.
15 mg	Light yellow & dark red	BMS 1964	60	0003-1964-01
20 mg	Light brown	BMS 1965	60	0003-1965-01
30 mg	Light orange & dark orange	BMS 1966	60	0003-1966-01
40 mg	Dark orange	BMS 1967	60	0003-1967-01

ZERIT® (stavudine) for Oral Solution is a dye-free, fruit-flavored powder that provides 1 mg of stavudine per mL of solution upon constitution with water. Directions for solution preparation are included on the product label and in the DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION section of this insert. ZERIT for Oral Solution (NDC No. 0003-1968-01) is available in child-resistant containers that provide 200 mL of solution after constitution with water.

US Patent No.: 4,978,655

Storage: ZERIT Capsules should be stored in tightly closed containers at controlled room temperature, 59° to 86°F (15° to 30°C).

ZERIT for Oral Solution should be protected from excessive moisture and stored in tightly closed containers at controlled room temperature, 59° to 86°F (15° to 30°C). After constitution, store tightly closed containers of ZERIT for Oral Solution in a refrigerator, 36° to 46°F (2° to 8°C). Discard any unused portion after 30 days.



Bristol-Myers Squibb Company
Princeton, NJ 08543
U.S.A.

Out on the Bayou

A guide for your leisure time

HOUSTON VOICE • DECEMBER 8, 2000

HOLIDAY SHOPPING CAN BE FUN... HONEST...

by ELLA TYLER and D.L. GROOVER

If the repentant Ebenezer Scrooge ever tried to buy Tiny Tim a new muffler at the Bedlam-like Galleria, he'd surely pipe up with a blunter expression than his old chestnut, "Bah, Humbug."

The parking jams, the unruly crowds, those surly clerks... anyone would turn back into a Grinch.

But we have a plan for you to sail serenely through your holiday shopping, to ease you through this dreaded chore so you can make your list, check it twice, and have it done way before Dec. 25.

The following should calm you down. Think of the following as our little gift to you—shopping Prozac.

Look through your closets and under all the beds. Both of us found things we had bought for gifts earlier in the year and put "in a safe place." They turned out to be the present for the person who's most difficult to buy for, the one who has very specific tastes.

So, blow off those dust bunnies and maybe Santa's left you a surprise you had forgotten about. It's time to clean out that closet anyway.

One of the simplest tricks of getting those presents under the tree without aging appreciatively is to ask what people would like to have. Your mother really may want a cozy flannel nightgown, not that beaded cocktail dress that caught your eye.

If anyone says, "Oh, you don't have to get me anything," slap them until they tell you what they want. Works every time.

Keep an eye out for gifts wherever you are. Ella spotted a play rug at Home Depot, which made a great present for her baby nephew. She didn't find what she went for, but the trip through all that hardware paid off.

Grocery, drug and office supply stores often have items that are suitable gifts or stocking stuffers. But please, two dozen Bic pens don't go gently into a sock hung with care.

Do not shop anywhere that advertises a "Midnight Madness" sale or "Marathon Shopping Hours." The frenzied crowds will elbow you out of the way with greater force than Charles Barkley.

If the parking lot is full, don't stop, even if you find a parking place. All those empty cars once held all those people who are crammed into that store, now crazed and mad as hell that one more body has managed to crowd into their private space. You will be killed.

Here are some of our favorite venues in and around the Montrose. Shopping here will bring smiles and warm feelings of good cheer. This giddiness might even fool Santa into thinking you've been good the past year.

The mini mall of Westheimer Center at 1214-1232 Westheimer is a gay shopper's mecca.

RADIO SHACK has a large selection of children's electronic toys that beep and squeal and usually drive the adults batty after the first hour. Here you can find a tele-

phone with great big numbers on it for Granny, and enough batteries to start your car. Because it's a national chain, it's a great place to buy gifts for those out-of-towners on your list. With a receipt, items can be exchanged at any Radio Shack in the U.S., so when Granny decides to stick with her black clunky dial phone that weighs as much as Gramps, she can take back that push button one without any hassle.

Speaking of batteries, the pouty, sultry **EROTIC CABARET**, has sexy clothes, toys and naughty paraphernalia that are not for the faint of heart, nor your maiden aunt who wears support hose and sensible shoes. If you want to make a definite impression or let someone know exactly what you want for Christmas, here's your chance. Sit on Santa's lap, indeed.

At the other end of this tiny plaza, **BASIC BROTHERS** lures the club kids with silver hot pants and Rocket jeans. Any generation-X or Y kid, sex optional, would be happy indeed to have some article of clothing from the Brothers' hip and fine collection.

Ella admired a "Martha Inside" apron, while David knew exactly who was getting the "Bitch" and "Princess"-inscribed sweat socks. Basic Brothers gives a 15 percent discount off any item when you bring something for the Stone Soup pantry, and it's also a collection point for toys for children with AIDS. Now, that's the holiday spirit.

Your next stop? Want a gift for a "Body by God, Brains by Mattel" type? You don't have to admit anything, just try **M 2 M** at 3400 Montrose.

Want a lava lamp for your stoned roommate? How about a funky coyote fixture in cool neon for that cool unmarried uncle? Or a video of the original British series "Queer as Folk" for yourself? They all can be found across the street of Westheimer Center at **LIGHTBULBS UNLIMITED**, **BLOCKBUSTER** and **CROSSROADS**.

Shopping bags too heavy? You're at the center of Houston's gay little world. Take a break at **CHANCES** or **MARY'S**, have yourself a flavored coffee at the café in Crossroads while you eyeball the guys, or play a round of pool at **SLICK WILLIE'S**.

Now that Whole Foods has moved up and on, the little mall at the intersection of Shepherd and West Alabama has plenty of parking and plenty of neat stuff for everyone on your expanding list. **BOOKSTOP** and **CACTUS** are open until 11 p.m. for pre-ye purchases of good reads and good hears; **WILDERNESS** is open until 9 p.m. for those butch friends who need canteens and compasses; and nearby there's **RECORD RACK**, attuned to alternative music for that punk on your list; and **FLY HIGH LITTLE BUNNY** (our favorite store name in the uni-

> Continued on Page 24

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PROVEN POWER FOR HIV

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Because he works out to stay focused and strong

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Shon G., Atlanta

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ONE TABLET TWICE A DAY

2 powerful anti-HIV medicines in one tablet, taken twice a day with or without food

SAFETY INFORMATION

- Make sure to see your doctor regularly because serious side effects can occur, such as muscle damage and a decrease in red and white blood cells
- A buildup of acid in the blood and an enlarged liver, including fatal cases, have been seen
- The most frequent side effects are headache, upset stomach, malaise or fatigue, and runny nose
- Low risk of fat wasting, tingling or burning in the hands and feet, or problems with the pancreas

*Scott-Levin, Source Prescription Audit (retail pharmacies), January to June 2000.
[†]Roche Amplicor HIV-1 MONITOR[®] Test.

CALL 1-800-760-3311 for information or visit our Web site at www.TreatHIV.com



Glaxo Wellcome
HIV Division

Please see Brief Summary for COMBIVIR on the adjacent page.

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CBV436R0

November 2000

BRIEF SUMMARY

COMBIVIR® Tablets (lamivudine/zidovudine tablets)

The following is a brief summary only; see full prescribing information for complete product information.

WARNING: ZIDOVUDINE, ONE OF THE TWO ACTIVE INGREDIENTS IN COMBIVIR, HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH HEMATOLOGIC TOXICITY INCLUDING NEUTROPENIA AND SEVERE ANEMIA, PARTICULARLY IN PATIENTS WITH ADVANCED HIV DISEASE (SEE WARNINGS). PROLONGED USE OF ZIDOVUDINE HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH SYMPTOMATIC MYOPATHY. LACTIC ACIDOSIS AND SEVERE HEPATOMEGALY WITH STEATOSIS, INCLUDING FATAL CASES, HAVE BEEN REPORTED WITH THE USE OF NUCLEOSIDE ANALOGUES ALONE OR IN COMBINATION, INCLUDING LAMIVUDINE, ZIDOVUDINE, AND OTHER ANTIRETROVIRALS (SEE WARNINGS).

INDICATIONS AND USAGE: COMBIVIR in combination with other antiretroviral agents is indicated for the treatment of HIV infection.

Description of Clinical Studies: COMBIVIR: There have been no clinical trials conducted with COMBIVIR. See CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY for information about bioequivalence. One COMBIVIR Tablet given twice a day is an alternative regimen to EPIVIR Tablets 150 mg twice a day plus RETROVIR 600 mg per day in divided doses.

Lamivudine Plus Zidovudine: The NUCB3007 (CAESAR) study was conducted using EPIVIR 150-mg Tablets (150 mg b.i.d.) and RETROVIR 100-mg Capsules (2 x 100 mg t.i.d.). CAESAR was a multicenter, double-blind, placebo-controlled study comparing continued current therapy (zidovudine alone (62% of patients) or zidovudine with didanosine or zalcitabine (38% of patients)) to the addition of EPIVIR or EPIVIR plus an investigational non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor, randomized 1:2:1. A total of 1816 HIV-infected adults with 25 to 250 (median 122) CD4 cells/mm³ at baseline were enrolled; median age was 36 years, 87% were male, 84% were nucleoside-experienced, and 16% were therapy-naïve. The median duration on study was 12 months. Results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of Patients (%) With At Least One HIV Disease-Progression Event or Death

Endpoint	Current Therapy (n = 460)	EPIVIR plus Current Therapy (n = 896)	EPIVIR plus a NNRTI* plus Current Therapy (n = 460)
HIV progression or death	90 (19.6%)	86 (9.6%)	41 (8.9%)
Death	27 (5.9%)	23 (2.6%)	14 (3.0%)

*An investigational non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor not approved in the United States.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: COMBIVIR Tablets are contraindicated in patients with previously demonstrated clinically significant hypersensitivity to any of the components of the product.

WARNINGS: COMBIVIR is a fixed-dose combination of lamivudine and zidovudine. Ordinarily, COMBIVIR should not be administered concomitantly with either lamivudine or zidovudine.

The complete prescribing information for all agents being considered for use with COMBIVIR should be consulted before combination therapy with COMBIVIR is initiated.

Bone Marrow Suppression: COMBIVIR should be used with caution in patients who have bone marrow compromise evidenced by granulocyte count <1000 cells/mm³ or hemoglobin <9.5 g/dL (see ADVERSE REACTIONS).

Frequent blood counts are strongly recommended in patients with advanced HIV disease who are treated with COMBIVIR. For HIV-infected individuals and patients with asymptomatic or early HIV disease, periodic blood counts are recommended.

Lactic Acidosis/Severe Hepatomegaly with Steatosis: Lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported with the use of nucleoside analogues alone or in combination, including lamivudine, zidovudine, and other antiretrovirals. A majority of these cases have been in women. Obesity and prolonged nucleoside exposure may be risk factors. Particular caution should be exercised when administering COMBIVIR to any patient with known risk factors for liver disease; however, cases have also been reported in patients with no known risk factors. Treatment with COMBIVIR should be suspended in any patient who develops clinical or laboratory findings suggestive of lactic acidosis or pronounced hepatotoxicity (which may include hepatomegaly and steatosis even in the absence of marked transaminase elevations).

Myopathy: Myopathy and myositis, with pathological changes similar to that produced by HIV disease, have been associated with prolonged use of zidovudine, and therefore may occur with therapy with COMBIVIR.

PRECAUTIONS:

Patients With HIV and Hepatitis B Virus Coinfection: In clinical trials and postmarketing experience, some patients with HIV infection who have chronic liver disease due to hepatitis B virus infection experienced clinical or laboratory evidence of recurrent hepatitis upon discontinuation of lamivudine. Consequences may be more severe in patients with decompensated liver disease.

Patients With Impaired Renal Function: Reduction of the dosages of lamivudine and zidovudine is recommended for patients with impaired renal function. Patients with creatinine clearance <50 mL/min should not receive COMBIVIR.

Information for Patients: COMBIVIR is not a cure for HIV infection and patients may continue to experience illnesses associated with HIV infection, including opportunistic infections. Patients should be advised that the use of COMBIVIR has not been shown to reduce the risk of transmission of HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination. Patients should be informed that the major toxicities of COMBIVIR are neutropenia and/or anemia. They should be told of the extreme importance of having their blood counts followed closely while on therapy, especially for patients with advanced HIV disease. Patients should be advised of the importance of taking COMBIVIR as it is prescribed.

Drug Interactions: Coadministration of ganciclovir, interferon-alpha, and other bone marrow suppressive or cytotoxic agents may increase the hematologic toxicity of zidovudine (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY section of full prescribing information).

Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, and Impairment of Fertility: Carcinogenicity:

Lamivudine: Lamivudine long-term carcinogenicity studies in mice and rats showed no evidence of carcinogenic potential at exposures up to 10 times (mice) and 58 times (rats) those observed in humans at the recommended therapeutic dose.

Zidovudine: Zidovudine was administered orally at three dosage levels to separate groups of mice and rats (60 females and 60 males in each group). Initial single daily doses were 30, 60, and 120 mg/kg per day in mice and 80, 220, and 600 mg/kg per day in rats. The doses in mice were reduced to 20, 30, and 40 mg/kg per day after day 90 because of treatment-related anemia, whereas in rats only the high dose was reduced to 450 mg/kg per day on day 91 and then to 300 mg/kg per day on day 279.

In mice, seven late-appearing (after 19 months) vaginal neoplasms (five nonmetastasizing squamous cell carcinomas, one squamous cell papilloma, and one squamous polyp) occurred in animals given the highest dose. One late-appearing squamous cell papilloma occurred in the vagina of a middle-dose animal. No vaginal tumors were found at the lowest dose.

In rats, two late-appearing (after 20 months), nonmetastasizing vaginal squamous cell carcinomas occurred in animals given the highest dose. No vaginal tumors occurred at the low or middle dose in rats. No other drug-related tumors were observed in either sex of either species.

At doses that produced tumors in mice and rats, the estimated drug exposure (as measured by AUC) was approximately three times (mouse) and 24 times (rat) the estimated human exposure at the recommended therapeutic dose of 100 mg every 4 hours.

Two transplacental carcinogenicity studies were conducted in mice. One study administered zidovudine at doses of 20 mg/kg per day or 40 mg/kg per day from gestation day 10 through parturition and lactation with dosing continuing in offspring for 24 months postnatally. The doses of zidovudine employed in this study produced zidovudine exposures approximately three times the estimated human exposure at recommended doses. After 24 months, at the highest dose, an increase in incidence of vaginal tumors was noted with no increase in tumors in the liver or lung or any other organ in either gender. These findings are consistent with results of the standard oral carcinogenicity study in mice, as described earlier. A second study administered zidovudine at maximum tolerated doses of 12.5 mg/day or 25 mg/day (~1000 mg/kg nonpregnant body weight or ~450 mg/kg of term body weight) to pregnant mice from days 12 through 18 of gestation. There was an increase in the number of tumors in the lung, liver, and female reproductive tracts in the offspring of mice receiving the higher dose level of zidovudine.

It is not known how predictive the results of rodent carcinogenicity studies may be for humans.

Mutagenicity: Lamivudine: Lamivudine was negative in a microbial mutagenicity screen, in an in vitro cell transformation assay, in a rat micronucleus test, in a rat bone marrow cytogenetic assay, and in an assay for unscheduled DNA synthesis in rat liver. It was mutagenic in a L5178Y/TK⁺ mouse lymphoma assay and clastogenic in a cytogenetic assay using cultured human lymphocytes.

Zidovudine: Zidovudine was mutagenic in a L5178Y/TK⁺ mouse lymphoma assay, positive in an in vitro cell transformation assay, clastogenic in a cytogenetic assay using cultured human lymphocytes, and positive in mouse and rat micronucleus tests after repeated doses. It was negative in a cytogenetic study in rats given a single dose.

Impairment of Fertility: Lamivudine: In a study of reproductive performance, lamivudine, administered to male and female rats at doses up to 130 times the usual adult dose based on body surface area considerations, revealed no evidence of impaired fertility (judged by conception rates) and no effect on the survival, growth, and development to weaning of the offspring.

Zidovudine: Zidovudine, administered to male and female rats at doses up to 7 times the usual adult dose based on body surface area considerations, had no effect on fertility judged by conception rates.

Pregnancy: Pregnancy Category C.

Reference: 1. Hammer SM, Squires KE, Hughes MD, et al. A controlled trial of two nucleoside analogues plus indinavir in persons with human immunodeficiency virus infection and CD4 cell counts of 200 per cubic millimeter or less. *N Engl J Med.* 1997;337:725-733.

COMBIVIR® Tablets (lamivudine/zidovudine tablets)

COMBIVIR: There are no adequate and well-controlled studies of COMBIVIR in pregnant women. Reproduction studies with lamivudine and zidovudine have been performed in animals (see Lamivudine and Zidovudine sections below). COMBIVIR should be used during pregnancy only if the potential benefits outweigh the risks.

Lamivudine: Reproduction studies with orally administered lamivudine have been performed in rats and rabbits at 130 and 60 times, respectively, the usual adult dose (based on relative body surface area) and have revealed no evidence of teratogenicity. Some evidence of early embryolethality was seen in the rabbit at doses similar to those produced by the usual adult dose and higher, but there was no indication of this effect in the rat at orally administered doses up to 130 times the usual adult dose. Studies in pregnant rats and rabbits showed that lamivudine is transferred to the fetus through the placenta.

Zidovudine: Reproduction studies with orally administered zidovudine in the rat and in the rabbit at doses up to 500 mg/kg per day revealed no evidence of teratogenicity with zidovudine. Zidovudine treatment resulted in embryofetal toxicity as evidenced by an increase in the incidence of fetal resorptions in rats given 150 or 450 mg/kg per day and rabbits given 500 mg/kg per day. The doses used in the teratology studies resulted in peak zidovudine plasma concentrations (after one-half of the daily dose) in rats 66 to 226 times, and in rabbits 12 to 87 times, mean steady-state peak human plasma concentrations (after one-sixth of the daily dose) achieved with the recommended daily dose (100 mg every 4 hours). In an additional teratology study in rats, a dose of 3000 mg/kg per day (very near the oral median lethal dose in rats of 3683 mg/kg) caused marked maternal toxicity and an increase in the incidence of fetal malformations. This dose resulted in peak zidovudine plasma concentrations 350 times peak human plasma concentrations. No evidence of teratogenicity was seen in this experiment at doses of 600 mg/kg per day or less. Two rodent carcinogenicity studies were conducted (see Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility).

Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry: To monitor maternal-fetal outcomes of pregnant women exposed to COMBIVIR and other antiretroviral agents, an Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry has been established. Physicians are encouraged to register patients by calling 1-800-258-4263.

Nursing Mothers: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that HIV-infected mothers not breastfeed their infants to avoid risking postnatal transmission of HIV infection.

COMBIVIR: Zidovudine is excreted in breast milk (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Pharmacokinetics: Nursing Mothers subsection of full prescribing information); however, no data are available on COMBIVIR or lamivudine. Therefore, there is a potential for adverse effects in nursing infants. Mothers should be instructed not to breastfeed if they are receiving COMBIVIR.

Pediatric Use: COMBIVIR should not be administered to pediatric patients less than 12 years of age because it is a fixed-dose combination that cannot be adjusted for this patient population.

ADVERSE REACTIONS:

Lamivudine Plus Zidovudine Administered As Separate Formulations: In four randomized, controlled trials of EPIVIR 300 mg per day plus RETROVIR 600 mg per day, the following selected clinical and laboratory adverse events were observed (see Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2. Selected Clinical Adverse Events (>5% Frequency) in Four Controlled Clinical Trials With EPIVIR 300 mg/day and RETROVIR 600 mg/day

Adverse Event	EPIVIR plus RETROVIR (n = 251)
Body as a whole	
Headache	35%
Malaise & fatigue	27%
Fever or chills	10%
Digestive	
Nausea	33%
Diarrhea	18%
Nausea & vomiting	13%
Anorexia and/or decreased appetite	10%
Abdominal pain	9%
Abdominal cramps	6%
Dyspepsia	5%
Nervous system	
Neuropathy	12%
Insomnia & other sleep disorders	11%
Dizziness	10%
Depressive disorders	9%
Respiratory	
Nasal signs & symptoms	20%
Cough	18%
Skin	
Skin rashes	9%
Musculoskeletal	
Musculoskeletal pain	12%
Myalgia	8%
Arthralgia	5%

Pancreatitis was observed in three of the 656 adult patients (<0.5%) who received EPIVIR in controlled clinical trials. Selected laboratory abnormalities observed during therapy are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Frequencies of Selected Laboratory Abnormalities Among Adults in Four Controlled Clinical Trials of EPIVIR 300 mg/day plus RETROVIR 600 mg/day*

Test (Abnormal Level)	EPIVIR plus RETROVIR % (n)
Neutropenia (ANC <750/mm ³)	7.2% (237)
Anemia (Hgb <8.0 g/dL)	2.9% (241)
Thrombocytopenia (platelets <50,000/mm ³)	0.4% (240)
ALT (>5.0 x ULN)	3.7% (241)
AST (>5.0 x ULN)	1.7% (241)
Bilirubin (>2.5 x ULN)	0.8% (241)
Amylase (>2.0 x ULN)	4.2% (72)

ULN = Upper limit of normal.

ANC = Absolute neutrophil count.

n = Number of patients assessed.

*Frequencies of these laboratory abnormalities were higher in patients with mild laboratory abnormalities at baseline.

Observed During Clinical Practice: In addition to adverse events reported from clinical trials, the following events have been identified during post-approval use of EPIVIR and/or RETROVIR. Because they are reported voluntarily from a population of unknown size, estimates of frequency cannot be made. These events have been chosen for inclusion due to a combination of their seriousness, frequency of reporting, or potential causal connection to EPIVIR and/or RETROVIR.

Endocrine and Metabolic: Hyperglycemia.

General: Sensitization reactions (including anaphylaxis), vasculitis.

Hepatobiliary Tract and Pancreas: Lactic acidosis and hepatic steatosis (see WARNINGS), pancreatitis.

Musculoskeletal: Muscle weakness, CPK elevation, rhabdomyolysis.

Nervous: Seizures.

Skin: Alopecia, erythema multiforme, Stevens-Johnson syndrome, urticaria.

OVERDOSAGE:

COMBIVIR: There is no known antidote for COMBIVIR.

Lamivudine: One case of an adult ingesting 6 grams of lamivudine was reported; there were no clinical signs or symptoms noted and hematologic tests remained normal. It is not known whether lamivudine can be removed by peritoneal dialysis or hemodialysis.

Zidovudine: Acute overdoses of zidovudine have been reported in pediatric patients and adults. These involved exposures up to 50 grams. The only consistent findings were nausea and vomiting. Other reported occurrences included headache, dizziness, drowsiness, lethargy, confusion, and one report of a grand mal seizure. Hematologic changes were transient. All patients recovered. Hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis appear to have a negligible effect on the removal of zidovudine while elimination of its primary metabolite, GZDV, is enhanced.

DOSE AND ADMINISTRATION: The recommended oral dose of COMBIVIR for adults and adolescents (at least 12 years of age) is one tablet (containing 150 mg of lamivudine and 300 mg of zidovudine) twice daily.

Dose Adjustment: Because it is a fixed-dose combination, COMBIVIR should not be prescribed for patients requiring dosage adjustment such as those with reduced renal function (creatinine clearance <50 mL/min) or those experiencing dose-limiting adverse events.

GlaxoWellcome

Glaxo Wellcome Inc.
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Lamivudine is manufactured under agreement from BioChem Pharma Inc.
Laval, Quebec, Canada

US Patent Nos. 5,047,407; 4,818,538; 4,828,838; 4,724,232; 4,833,130; 4,837,208 and 5,859,021

January 2000/RL-794

On Stage

THEATER REVIEWS

Have yourself a merry little Christmas

Three fabulous holiday gifts from Houston's theaters

by D.L. GROOVER

Playwright Harry Kondoleon is dead. He died from AIDS six years ago. He was 39.

It's a terrible loss that we will never again hear that distinctive theatrical voice of his, one that can only be called Kondoleonesque: real yet poetic, bitter and piercing, humane and demonic, strange and brutal.

To say that a staging of a Harry Kondoleon drama is rare would be an understatement, so we are exceedingly grateful for Ashland St. Theatre Co.'s current mounting of his blistering **CHRISTMAS ON MARS**. That this production is a riveting, sterling powerhouse account is also something for which to be grateful.



Sheryl Croix gives Byron Norton a slap in Ashland's production of Harry Kondoleon's 'Christmas on Mars.'

"Christmas" is, at all times, unreal yet truthful, perverse yet sane, sadistic yet tender. It is a play unlike any you've ever sat through.

Forcefully directed by Travis Ammons and set in a blinding white-hot unfurnished apartment with gigantic checkerboard floor and skewed Caligari-like window and door frames, "Christmas on Mars" blasts you out of this world with amazing theatricality.

At the end, the stage is littered with torn wrapping paper, a beat-up Christmas tree, a grownup finding solace inside a baby's crib, Mother weeping and laughing on the floor over her self delusions, a headless doll, and a puddle of amniotic fluid.

How the detritus got there represents Kondoleon's brilliant map of the human heart. All we have to do is follow its trail of blood, tears, and laughter. A cherished Christmas present indeed from all at Ashland St. Theater Co.

'Company'

Stephen Sondheim and George Furth's classic musical from 1970, **COMPANY**, arrives from Stages Repertory Theatre professionally wrapped, festooned with Broadway savvy, and guaranteed to please any and all show queens on your list.

Bracing and potent as a vodka stinger, this oh-so-sophisticated Tony award-winning dissection of personal relationships and matrimony's "sorry/grateful" dichoto-

my receives loving treatment.

But let's put one issue to bed once and for all: Bobby IS gay. For all the noodling around the issue that Sondheim & Company have done since the original production, Bobby screams gay while the authors skirt the issue like a prudish Scotsman in a gale.



Richard Calvert, Tom Prior, Beach Vickers, Ilich Guardiola, Jimmy F. Phillips and Hal Spencer appear in Stages production of 'Company,' playing through Dec. 31.

We know why he can't commit, the gay authors know why but don't admit it, so how can the poor actor get a handle on this guy?

Ilich Guardiola is a trifle too laid back even for Bobby. He smudges the edges. It's not his fault Bobby's unformed; as written, he's the shadow not the light source.

The updating from the '70s original doesn't help matters, but it does throw into relief all his bitter, confused and soigné married friends.

They're the company we keep, and the ones we remember: Connie Cooper's incandescent and increasingly more drunk Joanne with her searing "Ladies Who Lunch," Deborah Hope's achingly funny Amy whose tongue-twisting patter song "Getting Married Today" stops the show between her shrieks and sighs; Joanne Bonasso's multi-faceted triptych interpretation of Bobby's three-in-one girlfriends.

'The Nutcracker'

Glittering as a snow-flocked pine on a crisp winter day, yet warm and toasty as a hot toddy, the Houston Ballet brings Tchaikovsky's perennial holiday favorite, **THE NUTCRACKER**, to children of all ages.



Lucas Priolo portrays the Nutcracker Prince in the holiday classic, 'The Nutcracker,' presented by the Houston Ballet.

The "oohs and aahs" elicited from the wide-eyed audience at the matinee performance I attended were well deserved. So I will appropriate critical responses from Jane, the

well-dressed young girl in black patent Mary Janes, velvet dress, with hair pulled into a wanna-be ballerina's bun who was sitting behind me in rapt, but unquiet attention.

When the snow began falling, Sharon Teague's iced perfection as Snow Queen brought Jane to distraction, and she confused her with the Sugar Plum Fairy.

"I know why the Sugar Plum Fairy's costume takes a long time to put on," she whispered knowingly to her mom. "She wears so many skirts."

The many layers of tulle of Teague's tutu didn't hamper a lovely rendition of this cool beauty who whirls around the Snowflakes as if on ice skates, partnered by the masculine and solid Nutcracker Prince of Lucas Priolo.

When the curtain rose on the Land of the Sweets with its flying cooks, Jane was giddy at the spectacle spread out before her like a candy banquet.

"She lives in a castle that's sweet because she's made out of sugar," Jane stated with absolute sureness when the Sugar Plum Fairy did appear. A more apt description of Julie Gumbinner in the role would be hard to come by.

During the divertissements, Jane was reduced to one-word assessments, owing to

the dazzling display of the dancers. Perrin Ballard's stratospheric leaps as Russian Gopak brought forth "fantastic." Tyann Clement as a prize-winning Flower with Arkadiy Orohovskiy as her partner elicited a "cool," while the sexy, sinuous Arabian Dance performed by Sally Rojas and Damian Schwiethale was rendered by "neat."

At the conclusion of this sumptuous balletic parade, Jane said, "I had a good time." So will you.

INFO

'Christmas On Mars'

Through December
Ashland St. Theatre Co., 2610 Ashland
713-426-3019

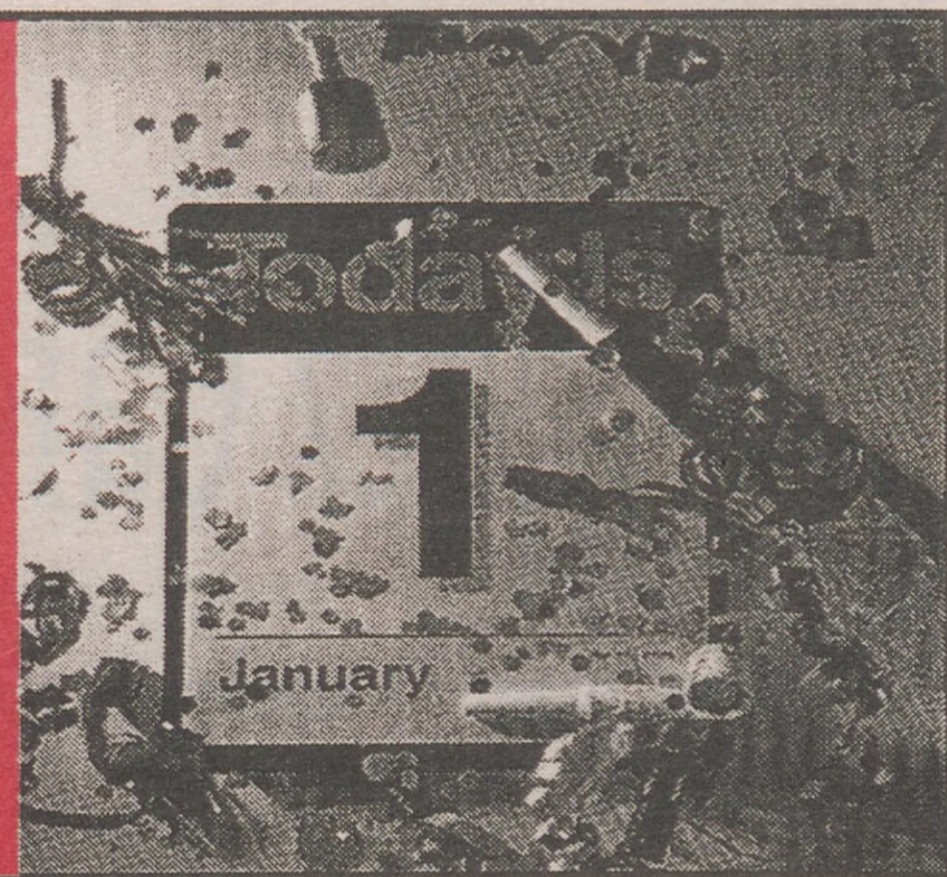
'Company'

Through Dec. 31
Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen
Parkway @ Waugh and D'Amico
713-527-8243

'The Nutcracker'

Through Dec. 30
Houston Ballet, Wortham Theater
Center
713-227-ARTS

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TAKE THE STRESS OUT OF HOLIDAY SHOPPING

> Continued from Page 19

verse) that sells distinctive one-of-a-kind silver jewelry is open until 9 p.m.

Housed in a great old white limestone building at 1009 Missouri, **HOME & LOFT ESSENTIALS** deserves a stop just to admire the façade. More impressive, however, is what's displayed inside—a high-end tchotchky emporium for those with a New York lifestyle.

Somebody on your list needs to be made-over, and what better way than with an Essentials' essential: soothing interior fountains of natural stone and copper, lotions and fragrant soaps fit for Poppaea's bath, votive candles in scents of grapefruit/vanilla, sconces and tile plaques, garden urns in pressed tin. Their hours are most accommodating: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday; 12-6 p.m. Sunday. Fabulous, darrhling, just fabulous.

Nearby at 2611 Grant, next door to Baba Yega's, is the '60s-redux **WILD EARTH HERBS**, a little piece of Big Sur navel gazing in the Kingdom. Just seeing the chemist jars of bulk dried plants, herbal teas and essential oils, or the Indian crystals aligned in peace with the solar system, or the Buddhist sand sculptures makes one start to trip out and mumble "peace."

Give the stressed one on your list an

aura video reading, or a few hours of chair massage, and you'll be called a very cool Claus. Far out, Santa, baby.

The home accessories at **CITIES**, 1905 Westheimer, are certified as "urban chic," which makes this a great place for gifts when the pressure is on to demonstrate your good taste.

Some grown ups write Santa asking for real jewelry. **I.W. MARKS**, 3841 Bellaire Blvd, a truly fabulous jewelry store, is the only place to go. The selection is wide and the staff is pleasant and helpful.

Ella went in wearing sweats, without any jewelry, even a watch, and was promptly offered help. Perhaps they saw her as a challenge. The wares tempted even her.

LUCIA'S GARDEN, 2942 Virginia, is where the Mother Goddess reigns supreme. Anything you ever wanted to know about the primal woman can be answered here. That makes it the perfect place to buy things for the lesbians on your list.

Lucia carries an encyclopedic collection of books and gifts about women's spirituality, all-knowingness, and general we-

rule-the-world-don't-ever-forget-it, as well as distinctive plants and herbs. Hail to thee, Great Mother.

A cornucopia of Mexican folk art tumbles out at your feet at **CORAZON FAIR TRADE ARTS & CRAFTS**, 2318 Waugh @ Fairview. Tin ware ornaments, which inspired Ella's prickly pear wreath from last week's "Homefront" column, can be picked up for much less than the cost of a margarita.

And don't overlook the unisex, chic straw hats for that clothes horse you're shopping for or those decorative Technicolor kites in fantastic pirate ship designs or that beaded curtain for that let's play "Casablanca" wannabe, or the child's rocking chair painted with the face of Frida Kahlo (scary, but comfortable).

Certainly, there's a horny guy on your list who would absolutely love you for at least the next 12 months if you give him a calendar arrayed with glamour photographs of muscle-hunk Carl Hardwick or hand-

some bear Steve Kelso. You can get these guys cheap, unlike in real life, from **HOLLYWOOD FOOD STORE**, 2501 Montrose, your one-stop for gay decals, bumper stickers, rainbow accoutrements of all kinds, and inexpensive porn. Stuff your friends' stockings, and maybe your own, too.

Here's the ultimate reduce-the-stress tip: **EXPRESS MAIL** will deliver on Christmas day! And the post office at **INTERCONTINENTAL AIRPORT** is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. At night, it is only a 25-minute drive from Montrose—which beats standing in line for the same amount of time.

To get there, take I-45 North, exit at Beltway 8 and go right, go left onto JFK, and turn left at the sign that says "Cargo Mail Exit."


This is just before the sign for terminal A. This will be Will Clayton Parkway and the post office is the first building on the right. The phone number is 281-443-2582.

Being the shoppers par-excellence that we are, we have both finished our necessary holiday shopping without trekking through acres of screwball parking, without standing endlessly in a line that moves at glacier pace, and did most of it on Sundays.

Follow our advice, and you, too, can banish the old Scrooge shopping attitude. Oh, yes, happy holidays.



LIVE AT



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Jazz Café

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"must check
out" venue...
—Mark Goebel,
Eclipse Magazine

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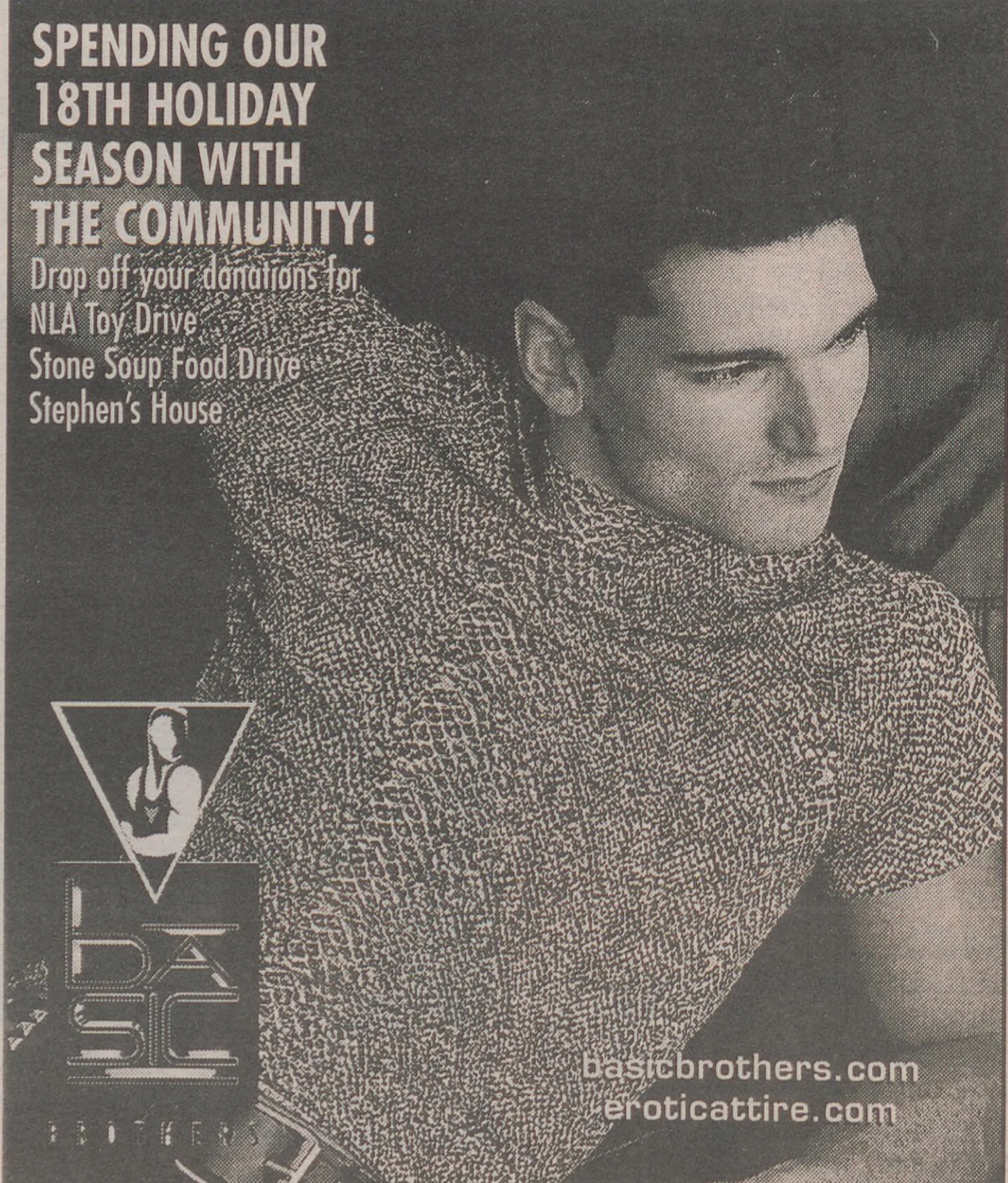
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Bayou Calendar

Margaret Cho

Comedian Cho brings her politically incorrect, and very funny, foul mouth to the Laff Stop.

Thursday, Dec. 14, 8 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, Dec. 15 & 16, 8 and 10:30 p.m.

Laff Stop,
1952 W. Gray
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Margaret Cho

Five Easy Pieces

Before filmmaker Bob Rafelson fell

apart with "Black Widow," "Man Trouble," and "Erotica," he at least made one film at the beginning of his career for which he will be remembered. Borrowing from the Europeans with a heavy overlay of melancholy and ennui, "Five Easy Pieces" was one of American cinema's first art films. It catapulted Jack Nicholson to stardom. As a talented concert pianist who gives it all up to be more real, he's incredibly good, not at all the cartoon actor he's become. Youthful and vibrant, full of life force, artfully confused: much like the movie.

Sunday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m.
MFAH, 1001 Bissonnet
713-639-7300

The Many Faces Of Randall Jobe

Anyone who has touched Jeff Stryker's prodigious claim to fame has got to have stories to tell. That Jobe has also appeared most winningly in "Boys in the Band," "Love, Valour, Compassion!" and as the voice of Audrey in "Little Shop of Horrors," as well as being the preeminent bartender at JR's and the promotions director for Charles Armstrong,

knows where the skeletons are buried. He's probably helped bury some. Every Wednesday night, Mr. Jobe appears in "a cabaret of sorts" at the gay-owned Red Cat Jazz Café. Check out the talented Mr. Jobe and this new nifty addition to downtown.

Every Wednesday night @ 10 p.m.
Red Cat Jazz Café, 924 Congress
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DateMax

This is dating for a cause. Progressive Voters in Action (PVA) hosts this holiday social at Prague for single gay men. Mingle and meet guys who can actually carry a conversation farther than "do you come here often?" Maybe, "Is that a pocketful of pregnant chads in your pocket, or are you just glad to see me?" They're mixing for a good purpose: raising money for PVA, a political organization that fights for GLBT civil rights in Houston.

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Showtime cuts 'Queer as Folk' to satisfy ratings board

Media critic assails show's producers for changes made at behest of movie ratings board

by MATTHEW A. HENNIE

The premium cable network that bills itself as having "no limits" apparently did when it came to the Sunday debut of its most provocative show yet.

Showtime's much-anticipated, and in some gay circles much-celebrated, "Queer as Folk" aired its two-hour premiere on Dec. 3, a debut that was mostly trumpeted by television critics across the country for its no-holds-barred take on gay life.

But the show's premiere didn't come off without a hitch.

Washington Post critic Tom Shales assailed executives of the new drama series in a Nov. 30 column for submitting the show to outside censors and making more than 20 separate cuts to the first episode before it aired.

Others criticized "Queer as Folk" for focusing too much on anonymous sex, painting an ambitious picture of gay life in Pittsburgh, where the show is set, and having some actors who are less than comfortable doing gay for pay on national television.

Showtime spared no expense in rolling out the show, pumping an estimated \$10 million into an ad campaign that began back in April to create buzz first in the gay community, then expanding it to a wider audience.

The blitz included parties in 20 major cities, posters in gay neighborhoods, one million slick brochures in a direct mail campaign, ads in newspaper and magazines aimed at gays, including this newspaper, posters in gay bars and free merchandise touting the show and its clever "coming out" tagline.

But with the promotional campaign in full swing, Showtime executives tethered their "no limits" attitude by voluntarily submitting the show's pilot—twice—to the Motion Picture Association of America, which typically only rates movies going into theatrical distribution.

The network, according to programming chief Jerry Offsay, had "no obligation" to submit it for a rating and no obligation to make the cuts once the ratings board proposed them, Shales wrote.

"[Showtime] is a network that viewers must choose to receive. To add a resounding note of irony to the situation, it advertises itself, relentlessly, as the channel of 'no limits,'" Shales wrote. "Apparently that's actually 'no limits' unless gay people are involved and romping about in the nude."

The MPAA first slapped the show with the equivalent of an NC-17 rating and a list of suggested changes to reduce that to an R. The show's executives made some, disregarded others and submitted the show again. It received an NC-17 rating again and Showtime made additional alterations, Shales wrote.

Showtime and its supporters said the changes were minor snips and that the network has voluntarily submitted programs in

the past. For a motion picture, an NC-17 rating drastically reduces the chance for commercial success.

Shales said the network has an informal agreement with cable operators not to show any movies with NC-17 ratings and decided to apply the same standard to its own original programming.

But the MPAA ratings system has come under increasing scrutiny for its unequal treatment of movies with gay themes, and its demand to tame sex scenes while graphic violence goes untouched.



Producers of Showtime's 'Queer as Folk' have come under some criticism for making more than 20 cuts to the first episode after voluntarily submitting it to a movie ratings board.

Nonetheless, Scott Seomin, entertainment media director for the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, defended Showtime's actions while criticizing the MPAA for its sometimes less-than-gay-friendly approach to movie ratings.

"The MPAA has historically been unfair in holding gay films to harder rules than straight films, but I don't think they did that with 'Queer as Folk,'" Seomin said. "The very minor cuts that were made from the pilot episode were mere seconds and frankly, the cuts that were requested and that were made were similar to ones that they cut to get an R rating for straight programming."

Seomin said Shales' column took a "sensationalistic" look at Showtime's actions with the MPAA.

Seomin and GLAAD have close ties to Showtime and "Queer as Folk." Seomin consulted with the show's executive producers, offering suggestions on how to improve its depiction of gay characters, and coached some of its straight lead actors on how to deal with the press and questions about their sexual orientation and gay issues.

Joan Garry, GLAAD's executive director, spent seven years as a vice president with Showtime before joining the gay media watchdog. Gene Falk, who recently stepped down as GLAAD's board co-chair, is also a Showtime executive.

But that experience inside the industry brings access, which pays off in improving gay-positive shows like "Queer as Folk" or combating others, like Paramount's "Dr. Laura" TV show, Seomin said. Viacom owns both Paramount and Showtime.

"We are a media organization and in order to be effective, we have staff that works in the media," he said. "Viacom is a huge entity. If we didn't have anyone under that umbrella, we wouldn't be effective."



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Eating Out

RESTAURANT REVIEW

No, Picnic

Interesting concept fails to follow through

by TRAYCE DISKIN

Call me a literalist, but when I first walked through the glass doors of PICNIC, I immediately lamented the freezing weather. Not a great season for a place centered on the notion of order it, pack it up, and eat it outside.

Inside, the sandwich shop displays a cool, spring-like minimalism—cement floors, long, lacquered picnic tables, and pastel blue walls except for a few shelves, the beaten-metal magazine rack and a poster for the classic film of the same name.

The shelves offer picnic bags and baskets and T-shirts with the shop's colorful logo in blocks of melon, mint green and creamy lavender. Although there are a few smaller tables by the window, the two long, hulking picnic tables smack in the center of the room make Picnic seem more like a place for waiting, rather than dining.

Perhaps that's the point, but with the sun-drenched windows and great space, why not be both things to all people—a charming lunch cafe and take-out counter?

Don't get too comfy, the interior whispers, just order the food and go. Picnic's menu isn't incredibly innovative or diverse, but it does include the hearty staples appropriate for lunch on the lawn. It's somewhat limited list of eight standard sandwiches—chicken salad, tuna, smoky turkey, pastrami, pork tenderloin, grilled veggies, roast beef and ham and Swiss, is jazzed up only a little by the "Create Your Own Sandwich Option" which includes little more than the same meats, cheeses, and condiments.

The sandwiches range from \$8-\$9, and include chips, pickle and dessert. Sandwiches alone cost \$6-\$7

As I waited for two take-out sandwiches, one particular afternoon, the image of the \$7 tuna sandwich loomed in my head—extra thick herbed bread, brilliantly red tomato slabs, chunks of fresh white meat. When I looked into my brown paper bag, however, I was as disappointed as a school kid in the lunch room finding himself faced once again with mom's same old flat, insipid sandwich.

Okay, well maybe that's being a little dramatic, but for the price, the size was downright insulting. Each half of the narrow stubs of sourdough held about a scoop of tuna each. That's fine, I thought—I'd rather be wowed by quality over quantity any day.

The tuna was fresh, and the basil mayo added a unique, piquant flavor. But for the price, why not add a little twist? Ultra-fresh veggies? A little more tuna? Some heft?

The Chargrilled Veggie Sandwich suffered similarly, although the grilled portabellas

were delightfully juicy and smoky, and the goat cheese added a richness complimented by the tender, well-marinated peppers.

The accompanying orzo salad wasn't overly greasy, but the portions again were too minimalist for the item to impress. Unless you're willing to fork over a few extra dollars for virtually nothing in return, I suggest sticking with the soups and bakery items.

The Soups of the Day (\$3.95/bowl) range from Cream of Portabella Mushroom—a velvety, luscious snack in itself, to the aromatic Tomato Fennel.

The coffee drinks are also solid and exquisitely brewed. The Chai Latte (\$2.50) and Cinnamon Hazelnut (\$1.50) put Starbucks to shame.



Picnic functions as a full bakery with more than 10 types of breads (from Jewish Rye to Shiner Bock Beer Bread) and nearly 20 varieties of pastries and desserts. If anything redeemed my less-than-successful lunch, it was the fabulously tasty scones (\$1.50).

In fact, one should not drive down Bissonnet without making it a point to pick up a few Chocolate Raspberry Scones, with chunks of milk chocolate and ripe-to-bursting berries. The Cranberry Scones are equally as moist, fresh and fruity.

As I drove off in my car, addictively breaking off scone corners with one hand and steering with the other, I tried to picture myself buying into Picnic's concept. Would I grab a few friends and make it a point (on a much fairer day) to stop in for sandwiches, and head over to the Menil lawn or a Sculpture Garden bench?

Compelling idea, I concluded, but I think I'll be spending my picnic dollars, if I spend them at all, on baked goods and coffee instead.

FOOD FILE

PICNIC
1928 Bissonnet
713.524.0201

Food: 🍞🍞🍞
Service: 🍞🍞🍞🍞
Value: 🍞🍞
Scene: 🍞🍞🍞

- ☐ Opt for bread, water at home
- ☐☐ OK, if you really must
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Time Out

SPORTS COLUMN

WPFL: Hype or hypocrisy?

Houston Energy is pushing hard for support in queer community, yet refuses to address issue of lesbians on the team

by D.L. MURPHY

I keep trying to like the Woman's Professional Football League, especially our local team, the Houston Energy. What's so disappointing is that the behavior of the Houston Energy organization makes it impossible to even tolerate their presence in our community, much less be a loyal fan.

My early requests for interviews went unanswered. These people did not even forward stock press packages. Okay, I thought, they're just getting started and are not yet organized; I'll do my own research.

What I found was less than positive and I duly reported here what I found. This was not the most enthusiastic column I've ever written.

Undaunted, and wanting to believe that the founders' history of failed businesses and lawsuits for failure to pay coaches and sponsors does not impact the current organization. I kept trying to talk to people involved with the Houston Energy.

Requests for interviews continued to be unanswered. Players told me they were not allowed to talk to the press.

So, cut to Empower, the GLBT community's large annual trade show. The Houston Energy had a booth. The people staffing the booth refused to talk about anything other than the team's schedule, team merchandise and ticket prices.

When asked point blank if they were gay or if any of the players were gay, they stated they were "not allowed to talk about that."

So what the hell were they doing at a queer trade show? The obvious—trying to get the support of the GLBT community.

Next, off to the bar. Again, the Houston Energy was there. They were selling tickets and merchandise.

I talked to the team personnel there. These women had obviously been carefully coached on how to "dance the little side step" whenever I raised the lesbian issue. So, if they are so afraid of the word "lesbian," what the hell were they doing in a bar full of dykes?

Again, trying to get the support of the GLBT community.

My questions made the woman very nervous, and they frantically (I am not exaggerating) steered me toward Robin Howington, the Houston Energy's owner.

I told Howington that I was a freelance writer and would like to interview her, her organization's spokesperson or some of the players. I was carefully questioned as to the publications I wrote for; Howington showed some interest only when I named one in which the Houston Energy advertises.

I asked why my previous requests for interviews had been ignored. I asked again about "the gay thing." I asked again for an interview. Howington's only response was to take my name and phone number.

I still have not heard a thing from the Houston Energy organization.

Okay, off to the Web site. I click on "Press Releases." This area of the site simply states "coming soon..."—the same thing it says every time I check it. Why are these people so closed mouth?

The Houston Energy had a booth at Empower. The people staffing the booth refused to talk about anything other than the team's schedule, team merchandise and ticket prices. So what the hell were they doing at a queer trade show?

What, exactly, don't they want us to know?

I am frustrated beyond belief. The Houston Energy attends our events, sells their stuff in our bars, advertises in our publications, and then freaks out whenever the "L" word comes up. And we are stupid enough to buy tickets.

We all know that dyke baiting exists both in and outside women's sports. And we "understand" that the Houston Energy is worried about their organization's "image." But enough is enough.

The WPFL is trying to define a new paradigm for women's sports. Part of this paradigm must be that being queer has nothing to do with an athlete's or a team's performance.

We need to help them understand how important this is. We need to clearly and in large numbers let the organization know that so long as they act like we are "the love that dare not speak its name" we will not support them. We will not buy tickets to their games. We will not attend these games even if given tickets. We will not purchase or wear their merchandise. We will not welcome them in our space.

If you want our support, here is what we want. We want you to talk to the queer press, even those pesky freelancers (most of us are). We want you to be matter of fact that some of your players are lesbian (do the math) and that their private life is no concern of yours.

We want you to respect the right of individual players to come out publicly if they are comfortable doing so. We want you to let your players talk to lesbians without fear.

But what we really want is for you to stop acting like there is something wrong with being lesbian.

Out in Music

MUSIC
REVIEW

Give the gift of queer music

This holiday season there's plenty of artists to choose from in the gay and lesbian music scene

By MARGARET COBLE

It's always such a scramble at this time of year. The gathering of presents for friends, family, co-workers and significant others can be so stressful during the holiday season. Music is always a great gift idea, but how do you figure out what to get everyone?

Need a little help? Here's a few suggestions you might not have seen on the super-mega-discount store shelves that shouldn't be missed. If you can't track 'em down at the mall, check with your local queer bookstore or independent music shop, or order online at queer-friendly retailers like Ladyslipper.org, Goldenrod.com, and/or CDBaby.com.

For the jazz lover on your list, you can't find two stronger new releases than that of Milwaukee based duo **MRS. FUN** and Chicago's critically acclaimed Patricia Barber. Mrs. Fun's "Funsville," on Indigo Girl Amy Ray's Daemon label, is an improvisational jazz delight from beginning to end.

Recorded live one afternoon in the studio, "Funsville" is fresh, fun, quirky and danceable, an hour of funky jazz fusion that aptly captures the band's spontaneity and energy, not to mention skilled musicianship. No vocals, no overdubs, no pre-conceived structure—just Connie Grauer on keyboards and Kim Zick on drums. (Daemonrecords.com)

PATRICIA BARBER's "Nightclub," on the other hand, is a long-awaited collection of traditional jazz vocal standards from the iconoclastic pianist who is considered by many critics to be one of the freshest artists working in jazz today. From "Bye Bye Blackbird" to "Summer Samba" to "So In Love," openly lesbian Barber sets a smoky jazz club vibe, delivering 12 sultry, anything-but-traditional covers which frequently appear in her live performances. (Premonitionrecords.com)

Despite its title, openly queer digital composer/producer **TERRE THAEMLITZ's** double CD set "Fagjazz" isn't exactly jazz—it's more dance oriented, while remaining thoroughly experimental. Unlike the more heady, abstract ambient work Thaemlitz has become noted for, "Fagjazz" culls some of his most melodic and accessible electronic soundscapes, most of which have never been available on CD.

From the delicate ambience of the opening "Pretty Mouth (He's Got One)" to the deep jazzy house of "Deep Space Probe" and "Thirty Shades of Grey" to the abstract drum and bass of "Turtleneck," "Fagjazz" is mesmerizing—a must have for anyone who appreciates electronic music that makes you think. (Comatonse.com)

In the realm of more commercial dance

fare, there's a handful of recently released mixed sets by openly gay DJs that warrant mention. DJ king **JUNIOR VASQUEZ's**



Junior Vasquez

"Twilo Volume One" (Virgin) comes to mind, for the serious New York house lovers, as well as recent editions of 4 Play Records' "Circuit Sessions" series by DJs **BARRY HARRIS** (of Thunderpuss fame) and **MANNY LEHMAN**. All are filled with the year's best club and circuit party favorites, capturing each DJ's style with continuous beat mixed sets. (4Playrecords.com)

If rap is more what you're looking for, New Orleans' bounce artist **KATEY RED's** "Y2-Katey (The Millennium Sissy)" might make for a fun offering. Signed by New Orleans superstar DJ Jubilee, the openly queer, cross-dressing Katey Red has earned a surprisingly large following in the notoriously homophobic southern rap scene.

With explicit party songs like "Tidy Bop," "Nasty Roundup," and "Melpomene Block Party," "Y2-Katey" isn't some Mystical or Juvenile copycat attempt—it's the real thing. (Takeforecords.com)

On the complete other end of the musical spectrum, Nashville country-folk duo **Y'All** serve up a great collection of their back catalog on "Y'Allology: 1992-1998." If you didn't get a chance to catch the cross dressing couple on their recent southeast tour, this CD will serve as an excellent introduction to their old time country sound—but next time, don't miss them live! A retrospective of toe-tapping favorites from their formative years in New York City, culled from early studio recordings, radio appearances and live shows, "Y'Allology" features such tongue in cheek ditties as "Queen Of The Rodeo" and "The Egg Man," as well as gospel-influenced cuts like "Gotta Be A Big Man." (Luckygreendress.com)

Also on the acoustic folk continuum is a



recent release by Maryland-based singer/songwriter **STEVEN GELLMAN** entitled "Return To Summer Lake." Often referred to as a gay male version of the Indigo Girls, due to his melodic acoustic guitar based blend of folk-pop, Gellman's follow-up to 1997's "Photobook" isn't quite as strong, but is still solidly written, performed, and produced, featuring a fuller, accordion-heavy band sound. With back-up vocals by Sonia Rutstein of Disappear Fear fame, songs like "A Little Bit Fine" and "Second Chance" stand out. (Hiddenpoet.com)

Margaret Coble welcomes reader feedback at DJMags2000@aol.com.

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After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM. 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. 713-526-5738.
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Dignity mass. 7:30 p.m. for gay Catholics. 713-880-2872.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Rosary 8 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama. 713-528-6665.
Houston Chain Gang Bicycle Club. Call for ride locations. 713-863-1860.
Houston Wrestling Club. Practice. 1:30 p.m. 713-453-7406.
Rainbow Fishing Club. Meeting. 713-526-7070.
Houston Faerie Circle. Meeting. 2 p.m. 713-533-0150.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Southwest Center. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. 281-633-2555 & Conroe 936-441-1614.
Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours noon to 4 p.m. • Montrose Writer's Project. 3 to 4:30 p.m. • Volunteer's Meeting at noon. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-528-3818.
Houston Outdoor Group. Holiday party. 713-522-7809.
Breakfast at the Kolbe Project. 713-861-1800.
Classic Chassis Car Club. Holiday party. 713-797-8615.
Season's Readings. Noon. Houston Read Commission. 713-297-6282.
Gulf Coast Transgender Community. Meeting. 713-780-4282.
AssistHers. Volunteer Reception. 713-521-4628.

sunday, december 10

Common Group (formerly New Hope Christian Center) Worship Service. 11 a.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.
Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals meets. 713-942-7002.
Rainbow Riders. A bicycle club for women. 713-869-1686.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Holy Rite Eucharist I 7:45 a.m.; Holy Rite Eucharist II 8:55 a.m.; Education hour 10 a.m.; Choral Eucharist 11 a.m. 713-528-6665.
Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Church. Service. 6:30 p.m. 713-528-6756.
Resurrection MCC. Services. 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10 a.m. Youth Sunday School 11:15 a.m. Handbell Choir rehearsal 1:30 p.m. 713-861-9149.
Grace Lutheran Church. Sunday school for all ages 9 a.m. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-528-3269.
Community Gospel. Service at 11 a.m. & 7 p.m. Sunday School for children 10 a.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
Houston Mission Church. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-529-8225.
Covenant Church, Ecumenical, Liberal Baptist. Service 9:30 a.m. & education hour 11 a.m. 713-668-8830.
Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Services at 8:30 a.m. & 10:50 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 713-526-1017.

The Women's Group. Meeting & Discussion. 10:45 a.m. 713-529-8571.
Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 502 Church St. Service 10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.
First Congregational Church (Memorial). Service at 11 a.m. Christian Education. 11:30 p.m. 713-468-9543 or fcc-houston.org.
Unitarian Fellowship of Houston. Adult forum 10 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 713-686-5876.
Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation: Adult discussion 9:45 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.
First Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:30 & 11:30 a.m. Brunch available 10:30 a.m. 713-526-5200. church@firstuu.org.
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours 2 to 4 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3418.
Houston Area Bears. Holiday party. www.houstonareabears.com. 713-867-9123.

monday, december 11

Gay Fathers/Fathers First. Support group. 8 p.m. www.GayFathers-Houston.org or 281-505-1788.
Frost Eye Clinic. Free eye exams for people with HIV. 713-830-3000.
HIV testing. STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 1 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. 713-626-2837.
Kolbe Project. Eucharist 7:30 p.m. 713-861-1800.
Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 936-441-1614.
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.
Lesbian & Gay Voices Radio Show. 8 to 10 p.m. KPFT 90.1. 713-529-1223.
AIDS Mastery. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
Grief & Divorce Support Groups. 7 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017, Ext. 208.
gayDAR. Wellness community. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-526-1017, Ext. 211.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours from 6 to 9 p.m. • Black Lesbian & Gay Coalition meeting. 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

tuesday, december 12

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Club Houston. 713-830-3000.
Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-524-0439.
Bering Support Network. Lunch Bunch Gang 11 a.m. 713-526-1017.
Gay Men's Process Group. 7 p.m. 3316 Mt. Vernon. 713-526-8390.

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calendar

Men's Network. Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual men. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.

Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.

Lambda Skating Club skates. 8 p.m. Tradewinds. Skating Rink. 713-410-7215.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Lesbian Island Association meeting. 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

Classic Chassis Car Club. Officer's meeting. 713-797-8615.

Houston Gay & Lesbian Parents. Support group. 713-284-4939.

wednesday, december 13

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. 2015 Thomas Street 713-793-4026.

STD Exams & treatment. HIV Testing. Free. AVES. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Mary's, Venture-N & EJ's. 713-830-3000.

BiNet Houston. 7:30 p.m. Social meeting. 713-467-4380

Women's Network. Montrose Counseling Center Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual women. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.

Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 936-441-1614.

Project: Caesar. Workshops. AFH. 3203 Wesleyan. 713-623-6796.

Out Skate Rollerskating Club. 8 to 10 p.m. 8075 Cook Road. 281-933-5818.

Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. 7 p.m. 713-880-0670.

Bible Study. Noon & 6:30 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal. 713-526-6665. Spiritual Uplift service. 7 p.m. Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Resurrection MCC. 713-861-9149.

Freelance Art Classes by Kermit Eisenhut for HIV+ individuals. 1 to 4 p.m. Lunch provided. 713-523-9530.

Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.

Lesbian Literature Discussion Group. 7 p.m. 713-523-3037.

Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal. 1307 Yale. 713-527-0931. www.houstonprideband.org.

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. Various Support Groups 7 p.m. 713-526-1017.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Free HIV testing by the Montrose Clinic 6 to 9 p.m. • 713-524-3818.

Self-Hypnosis & Technology. Demonstrations. 713-932-7224.

thursday, december 14

Gay Men's Chorus of Houston. Open rehearsal. 7 p.m. 713-521-7464.

Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. 7 p.m. 713-880-0670.

Hep C Recovery. Support Group. 6:30 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017. Ext. 211.

STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Toyz Disco. 713-830-3000.

Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.

FrontRunners. Running Club. 6:30 p.m. 713-522-8021.

HIV Art Course Program. 1 to 4 p.m. Kermit Eisenhut. 713-524-9530.

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

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

HIV Testing. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

Bi-Net Houston. Women's Social. 713-467-4380.

Lesbian & Gay Immigration Rights Task Force. Meeting. 8 p.m. www.lgirtf-houston@egroups.com. 409-927-1705.

Positive Singles. Social. 713-807-7304.

friday, december 15

Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (H.A.T.C.H.) Meeting. 713-942-7002.

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. Rich's. 713-830-3000.

STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.

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

Q-Patrol walks the streets. 9 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.

Kolbe Project. Morning Prayer. 10 a.m. 713-861-1800.

Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.

Positive Art Workshop. 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Patrick Palmer. 713-526-1118.

Lesbian and Gay Voices. KPFT 90.1 FM. 7 p.m. 713-526-5738.

Mishpachet Alizim Shabbat Services. 8 p.m. 713-748-7079.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

To list an event, call Carolyn Roberts at 713-529-8490, fax at 713-529-9531, or e-mail editor@houstonvoice.com. Deadline is Friday at 5 p.m.

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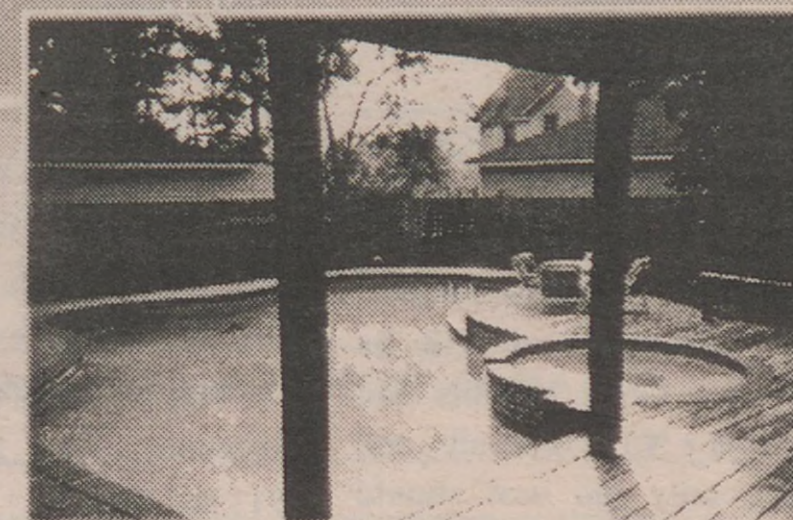
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ASHLAND ST. THEATRE CO.

HOLDING AUDITIONS
Ashland St. Theatre Co. will be holding auditions for the world premiere of *The Standing Wave* by Kahan James on Saturday and Sunday, December 16 and 17 from 11 am to 2 pm • This hip and sexy comedy about twenty-somethings looking for love and some guidelines for their sexual identities will run in March of 2001 • Director Lisa Marie Singerman is looking for one male and two females in their early to mid twenties • Call 713.861.1728 for information.

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Volunteers needed for research study using hand-held computer at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. Free nicotine patches! Call 713-792-2265

BAY AREA GAYS

Is a new social group in the greater Clear Lake area for "young-ish" gay men (ages 20-40) • Call 281.488.0537
Ryan Idol's Latest Video and Web-Site Premiere at <http://RyanIdol.com>

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Youth Empowerment Advocates of Houston, an outreach center for homeless youth, is seeking the following donations: Clothing • Hygiene supplies • Towels • Books • Videos • Backpacks • Call Brian Jones 713.523.9324

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IN PERSON: Bring completed order form with payment to Houston Voice offices (M-F, 9-5:30 pm) 500 Lovett, suite 200. **BY MAIL:** Mail completed order form with payment to Houston Voice Classifieds, 500 Lovett, Suite 200, Houston, TX., 77006. **BY PHONE:** Call in with completed order form to 713-529-8490. **BY FAX:** Fax completed order form and credit card information to Classifieds 713-529-9531. **BY E-MAIL:** feedback@houstonvoice.com
AD POLICY: Houston Voice reserves the right to edit, reclassify or reject ads not meeting Houston Voice standards. No refunds for early cancellation. Misprints: Houston Voice is not responsible for misprints appearing after first week. Check ads promptly.

Deadline for ad submission is: MONDAY at 12 NOON

1 PICK YOUR CATEGORY

FREE: Call for guidelines
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 ___ Volunteers
 ___ Non-Profit Organizations
 *First 20 words

INDIVIDUAL RATE \$7:
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2 WRITE YOUR AD
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CATEGORY: _____ **# OF ISSUES:** _____

Giant or Bold Headline – Not to exceed 14 characters and spaces

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TEXT: _____

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Signature _____

Occasions

Big birthday hugs to former *Houston Voice* Steve Kerbo on Dec. 8.

"When I grow up, I want to be a gay anthropologist," says Brian on his Dec. 9 birthday.

Rusty S. of the CCCC motors has a birthday on Dec. 9.



This is Denise, a 14-week-old female domestic short haired kitty. She is very rambunctious, active and loves to cuddle.

To adopt Denise, call the Houston Humane Society at 713-434-5555 or e-mail pr@houstonhumane.org.

The *Houston Voice* welcomes your special occasions. Send e-mail to croberts@houstonvoice.com. Fax: 713-529-9531. Mail: Occasions, *Houston Voice*, 500 Lovett Blvd., Suite 200, Houston, Texas 77006. Please include a telephone number so occasions can be verified and considered for publication.

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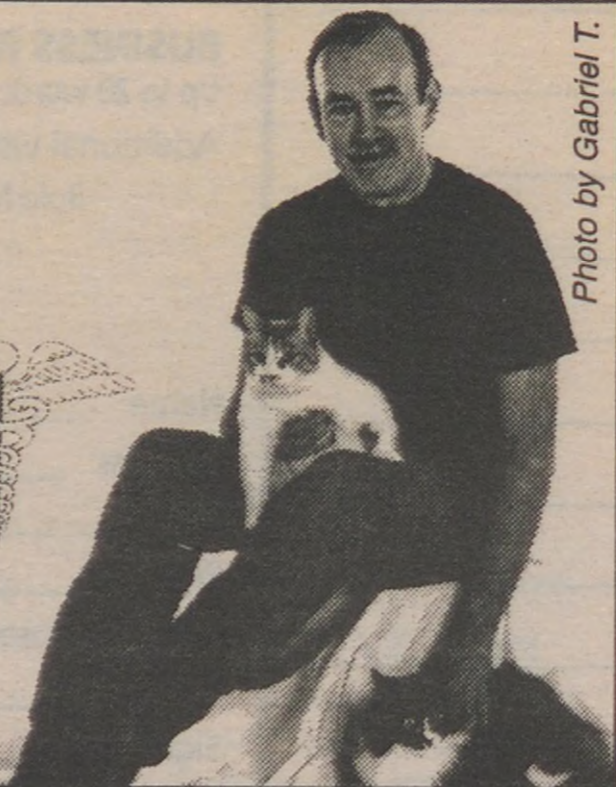
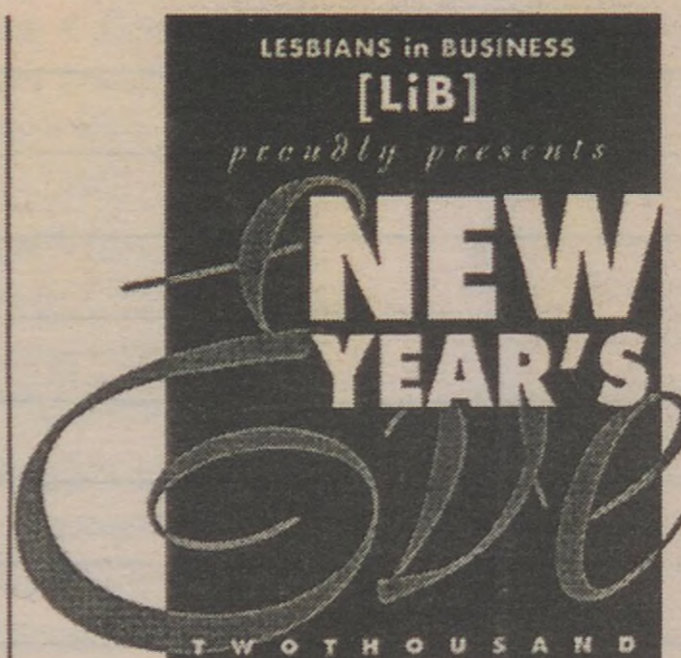


Photo by Gabriel T.

1213 Hermann Dr., Suite 430 • 713-520-0653



The women of LiB invite you to their annual New Year's party
8:00 pm, Sunday, December 31, 2000
Renaissance Hotel • 6 Greenway Plaza
\$55.00 reserved seating only; seating is limited
Expanded dinner & buffet including champagne toast (non-alcoholic available)
\$75.00 special room rate
for room reservations call 713.629.1200 by December 21st & mention the LiB Dance
for tickets, reservations or information, call the LiB info line at 713.529.0077
tickets available at Basic Brothers
reserved tables available by mail; PO Box 66748 Houston, Texas 77266
(must be postmarked by 12/24)

www.libhouston.org

My Stars!

by JILL DEARMAN

YOUR WEEKLY HOROSCOPE



December 8 - 15



ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Put all your cynicism aside during mid-December. Get back in touch with your lost idealism and reclaim your life, babe. If you can focus on one project that means the most to you, you can create something amazing before the new year. A Taurus can help you stay on track.



TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

Romance could heat up for you as winter approaches. You will have to fight the urge to pull back out of fear and confusion. Instead of trying to pigeon-hole yourself, try expressing how different you are. A Sag is intrigued by you. If only you were as intrigued by yourself!



GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

The Sun in your opposite sign (combined with the full moon in Gemini on Dec. 11) could make you a little nervous, but rest assured, life will calm down. Spend some time alone rethinking your love life before you make any ultimatums. An Aries gets more turned on the longer the wait.



CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

Stay the course in a romantic relationship, even if you're not sure where it's going. Don't let old ghosts destroy what you have now. You can get a lot more done in mid-December if you avoid annoying people who bore you! Stick close to a Virgo who's always entertaining.



LEO (JULY 24 - AUG. 23)

Your charisma level is high, and you could bowl someone over with it if you're not a careful. The energy you put into a passionate new affair comes back to you two-fold, sweetie. The Sun, Mercury, and Pluto are all lining up to remind you that every experience you have should be larger than life. A Scorpio's huge personality can match yours.



VIRGO (AUG. 24 - SEPT. 23)

When it comes to a family or home situation, you may have to just jump in feet first. Pluto is stirring up your "fight or flight" instincts. You may need to get down and meditate or pursue some kind of practice that makes you feel whole. Meditate on a Gemini, too, while you're at it.



LIBRA (SEPT. 24 - OCT. 23)

Mars in your sign is giving you some extra energy, which should certainly help your stamina in the sack, sweetie. The more you express directly, the better results you get across the board, but do pace yourself when it comes to work matters. Your butchness could threaten your boss—and a fellow Libra.



SCORPIO (OCT. 24 - NOV. 22)

If you've been working hard to get more money and security, don't forget about the rest of your life, sweetie. A disappointment in love is actually a chance for you to go after what you really want and need. A Pisces is just being wishy washy. It's up to you to stay focused.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 23 - DEC. 22)

While the Sun, Mercury, and Jupiter are all favoring you, there's no need to be defensive, honey lamb. Stop waiting for someone else to give you permission to do what you know you are going to do anyway! Make an effort to concentrate on the little things. A Taurus wants to see you take charge.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 23 - JAN. 20)

You're luckier now than you realize, dear, so drag your mouth out of the gutter. (But do drag a Scorpio into the gutter, just to get down and dirty.) You don't have to rush through all the good parts in romance and other areas of your life during mid-December. Take your time.



AQUARIUS (JAN. 21 - FEB. 19)

Romance is more important than your petty worries, sweetie. It's better to make a decision, even if you're not absolutely 100 percent sure, than to make like Hamlet and procrastinate, procrastinate, procrastinate. Another Aquarius wants you—now.



PISCES (FEB. 20 - MARCH 20)

This is the right time for you to assert your sexiness and your personality. Be a little cautious with money; you'll soon have bigger and better fish to fry, and you'll want to have some dough in your pocket then. A Cancer will know how to spend it.

Jill Dearman is the author of "Queer Astrology for Men" and "Queer Astrology for Women." For information on charts and consultations, call 212-841-0177 or e-mail QScopes@aol.com.

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