



punky in pink

Fierce grrl rocker Pink is alive and kicking, despite rumors to the contrary.
Page 15

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APRIL 14, 2006

GOP uses 'false promises' to lure blacks, says report

Task Force claims Republicans use gay marriage as fear factor in recruiting

By ANDREW KEEGAN

A nationwide campaign by the Republican Party urging African-American voters to "come home" to the GOP uses the "homosexual agenda" as a recruiting tool to deflect attention from the party's positions on issues that impact blacks, according to a recent report issued by the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force.

The 64-page report, "False Promises: How the Right Deploys Homophobia to Win Support from African Americans," was compiled by NGLTF policy analyst Nicholas Ray.

Ray worked for more than nine months compiling the document and received assistance from the National Black Justice Coalition, a black gay civil rights group.

Appearing before African-American leaders at a National Urban League conference in 2004, President George W. Bush urged black voters to join the Republican Party to help defend the institution of marriage.

That theme, preventing same-sex marriage, remains a primary recruiting tool for the GOP throughout the country, according to the report.

Republican National Committee Chair Ken Mehlman began courting



President Bush used a rare appearance before African-American leaders, at the 2004 convention of the National Urban League, to ask their help in defending the institution of marriage. A new report says Republicans are using the marriage issue to reach out to blacks disaffected by the GOP's position on economic and other issues. (Photo by Pablo Martinez Monsivais/AP)

black voters several years ago as part of a strategy to remind African Americans of historical ties between blacks and the GOP.

But the GOP of today is nothing like its founding fathers, said Matt Foreman, NGLTF executive director.

"It is supremely ironic and profoundly sad that this is the party of [Abraham] Lincoln, a party that once sought to unify a nation," Foreman said. "It was a party in which 'freedom' was a principle, not an empty

platitude espoused purely for political gain as is done so often by present-day Republican leaders."

Despite Republicans touting "moral values" as a major reason for black voters to join its party, the NGLTF report found that fewer than 1 percent of African Americans polled during a 2004 national survey of black registered voters were concerned with the Republican concept of a moral crisis.

Please see **GOP** on Page 4



Bunnies on the Bayou welcomes spring by spotlighting drag star turned DJ, **Lady Bunny**, at the group's annual Easter afternoon party in downtown Houston. Founder of New York City's exuberant but now-defunct Wigstock drag festival, the Lady Bunny dishes dirt and philosophizes on her blog, www.ladybunny.net.

Lady on the bayou

First lady of drag brings spins and grins to Bunnies bash

By JOEY GUERRA

WOE TO THE SOUL WHO ATTEMPTS TO MATCH wits — or wigs — with The Lady Bunny.

The New York-based performer and founder of the Wigstock drag festival has fashioned a comic career out of mocking and shocking, leaving a wake of delightful destruction in her bewigged path. Anyone and everyone is fair game.

In the course of a recent phone interview, however, La Bunny goes (relatively) easy on a trio of starlets who have crossed her path.

Please see **BUNNY** on Page 23



The **Unity Banquet** is one of the country's biggest nights for the TG community.
Local Life, Page 8

Houston's GLBT Political Caucus knows how to pick a winner. Or three of them.
News, Page 3

Alley Theatre offers an inside peek at 3 giants of the legitimate theater.
Theater, Page 19



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INSURED & BONDABLE

news in brief

HRC-Houston gala welcomes 'Star Trek,' 'Queer Eye' stars

Though the theme for Human Rights Campaign-Houston's upcoming gala, the Roaring '20s Ball, is somewhat retro in nature, a more suitable theme might be "Queer Eye for the Space Guy."

George Takei, who played Mr. Sulu on the television sci-fi classic, "Star Trek," and "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy"'s Kyan Douglas are slated as guest speakers at the group's annual dinner, scheduled April 29.

A spokesman for HRC's Coming Out Project, Takei is currently on a nationwide speaking tour through six cities, speaking about his life as a gay Japanese American. Last fall he came out publicly, announcing to the press that he and his partner Brad Altman have been together for nearly 20 years.

Douglas, the grooming guru on the Emmy-award winning "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy," will receive HRC's Humanitarian Award for his support of charitable organizations including HRC, American Foundation for AIDS Research and the B.CAUSE committee benefiting DIFFA.

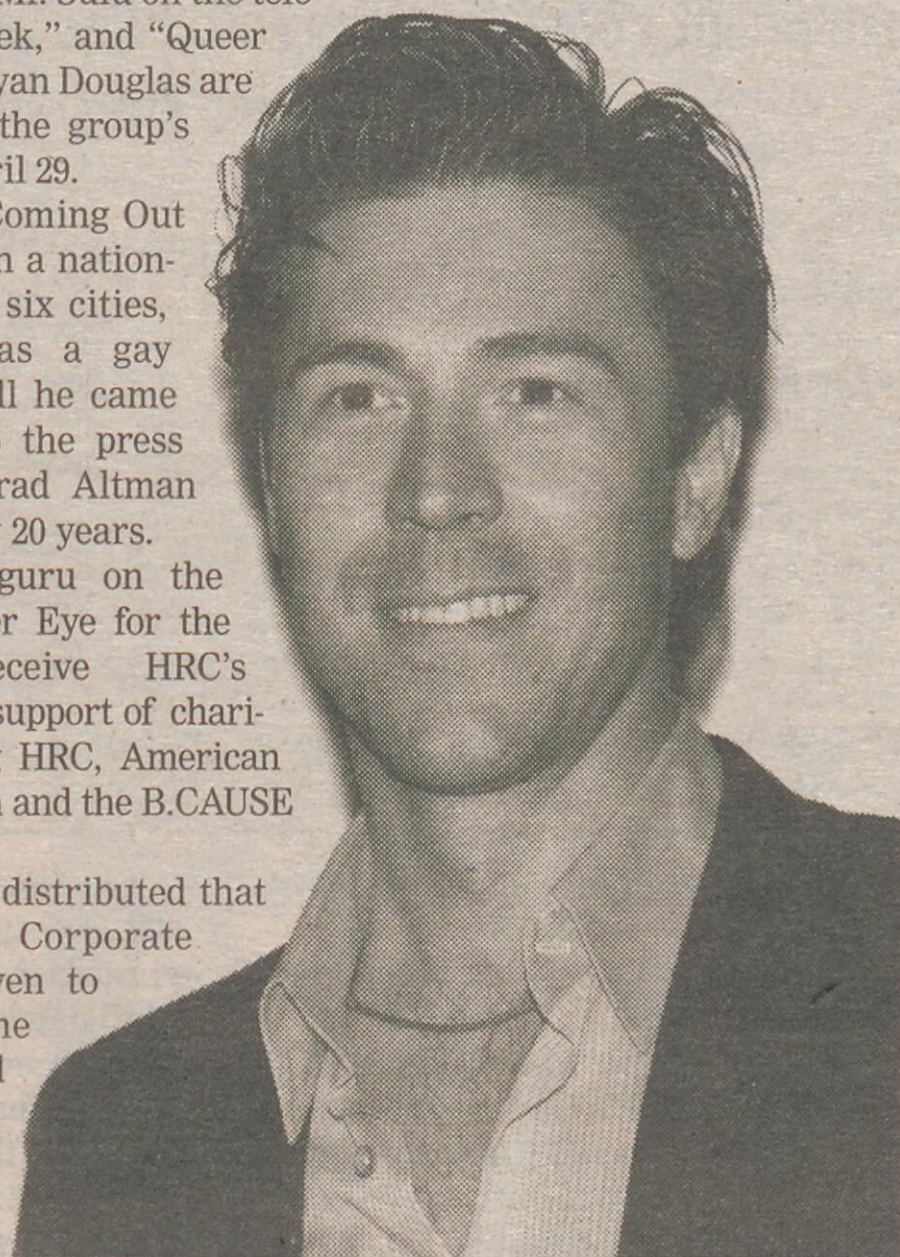
Local awards will also be distributed that evening. HRC-Houston's Corporate Equality Award will be given to British Petroleum. The Community Equality Award will be given to Former Army Specialist Tommy Cook. The John Walzell Political Equality Award will be given to Texas State Rep. Senfronia Thompson.

Three-time Grammy nominee, Oleta Adams will also be featured at the dinner.

The event, officially dubbed Roaring 20s Ball:

An Evening of Sophisticated Frivolity takes place at Hilton Americas Hotel, 1600 Lamar St. Matthew Burns, Fiona Dawson and Alton LaDay share chairperson duties for the dinner. Honorary co-chairs are Dr. Carolyn Farb and Bob Devlin, with Thomas Downing as gala governor.

HRC-Houston is in need of volunteers to assist with the evening's silent auction. To volunteer, email Galavolunteer@aol.com or phone 713-668-4601.



'Queer Eye' guy Kyan Douglas will speak at Human Rights Campaign Houston's Roaring '20s Ball, scheduled April 29. He is the author of 'Beautified: Secrets for Women to Look Great & Feel Fabulous,' a book offering women tips on how to maintain better hair care, skincare, diet, fitness and sense of spirit. (Photo by AP Photo/Jennifer Graylock)

Legacy Community Health Service adds family planning to its menu

When family planning services sought competitive bids for contracts beginning Jan. 1, Legacy Community Health Services saw the opportunity to expand the services they were providing in Houston for over 20 years.

Legacy, formerly known as Montrose Clinic, began as a Sexually Transmitted Disease clinic, later added HIV Specialty Care, and most recently added general health care services for its clients. Increasingly, the gay, lesbian, bisexual community has expressed the need for family planning services.

"Family Planning is a much needed service for the inner city areas," said Jay Slemmer, associate executive director of clinical services at Legacy. "Family Planning services will allow us to reach a larger part of the community offering preventive care."

Slemmer said the clinic's family

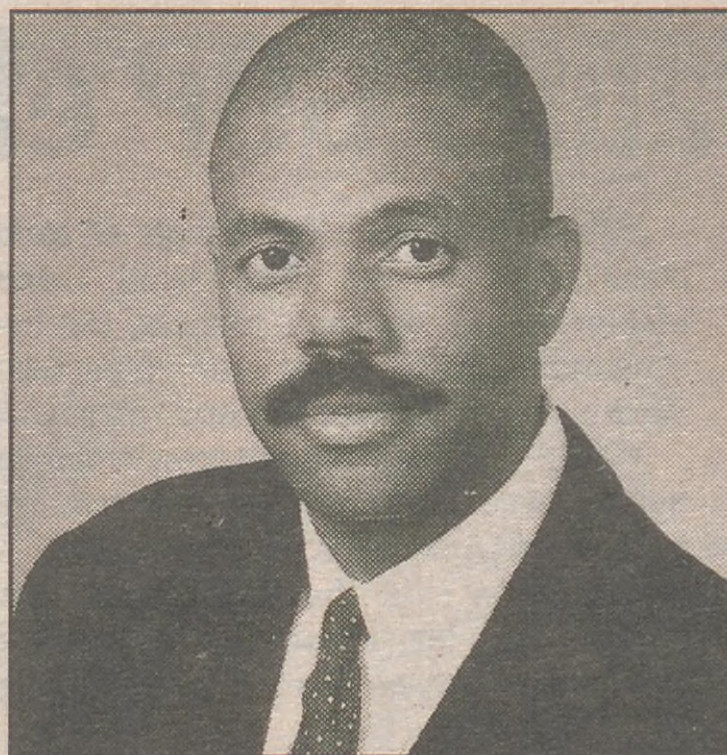
planning services will include Well-Male and Well-Female exams, Pap smears, testing and counseling for sexually transmitted diseases, birth control, condoms, counseling regarding family planning. The grant does not include abortions, surrogacy, in-vitro or prenatal care at this time, Slemmer said.

The clinic's reputation for quality care has resulted in an increasing number of heterosexual clients seeking high quality care at reasonable cost. The client mix at Legacy for 2005 was equally divided in terms of heterosexual versus gay, lesbian and bisexual clients, Legacy said based on clients who self-identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual when receiving clinic services.

Legacy Community Health Services, Inc. is located at 215 Westheimer Rd. For more information, call 713-830-3000.

From staff and wire reports

houston news



Houston GLBT Political Caucus PAC endorsed Borris Miles, who won Tuesday's run off election to represent District 146 in the Texas State Legislature. Miles beat long-time incumbent Al Edwards for the Nov. 7 ballot slot. Edwards made national headlines earlier this year by introducing legislation that would ban 'overtly, sexually suggestive' cheer routines at school-sponsored events.

It's a clean sweep

All 3 GLBT Political Caucus PAC endorsees win in run-off election

By NANCY FORD

The Houston GLBT Political Caucus PAC membership picked three out of three endorsed candidates as winners of in Houston's 2006 primary election runoff, held April 11.

"Three out of three! I'm ecstatic!" said Jack Valinski, vice president of the caucus. "We're very happy that these candidates sought our endorsement, and that our endorsement helped."

In the race for Texas State Legislature-District 146, the caucus endorsed Borris L. Miles, a Houston businessman, who defeated incumbent Rep. Al Edwards in the runoff. Edwards, a 26-year veteran of the Texas House of Representatives who is credited with founding the state's Juneteenth holiday, a commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States.

Edwards is better known in GLBT circles as a supporter of anti-gay bills related to adoption and foster care as well as Proposition 2, an amendment that writes anti-gay discrimination into the Texas state constitution.

During the endorsement process, Maria Gonzalez, HGLBTPC PAC president, called Miles a prime example of a candidate she believes will support Houston's GLBT community.

"Borris Miles is a pro-equality candidate who will fight against discrimination and ensure that all Texans are treated equally," Gonzalez said.

Miles is expected to defeat Libertarian nominee Gerald W. "Jerry" LaFleur for District 146 in the Nov. 7 election. No Republican sought the seat.

Barbara Ann Radnofsky, received the caucus' support for her U.S. Senate race, and won her bid Tuesday against Gene Kelly, a retired military lawyer.

Radnofsky won the runoff with 60 percent of the vote, becoming the first Texas Democratic woman in the state's history to win the party's U.S. Senate nomination. Radnofsky, also a lawyer, will run against Republican incumbent Kay Bailey Hutchison in November.

"That's going to be an uphill battle for Radnofsky, running against an incumbent," Valinski said.

"But the reality is, things might start shifting with how bad everything are going for the GLBT community, and every progressive community."

The caucus also endorsed runoff winner, Ted Ankrum who will now face Republican first-term Republican incumbent Michael T. McCaul in the Nov. 7 election for Texas' 10th Congressional District. Libertarian Michael Badnarik also will be on the ballot for that seat.

Valinski said there are a number of key races in November that hold special interest for the caucus. The caucus PAC will make final endorsements for the election as Nov. 7 draws closer.

"We open the endorsement process to anyone running in these races," Valinski said, indicating the group would probably make some "early endorsements," particularly in the Texas State Representative race between incumbent Martha Wong and Ellen Cohen for District 134, which encompasses West University Place, Bellaire, River Oaks, and Montrose.

The HGLBTPC meets the first Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m.

i MORE INFO

Houston GLBT Political Caucus PAC
P.O. Box 66664
Houston, TX 77266-6664
713-521-1000
www.hglbtpc.org

news

Gay report faults GOP efforts to recruit blacks

GOP, continued from Page 1

The economy and jobs ranked as most important by black voters, followed by health care, education and social security, the report stated.

'Biased' report?

Tara Wall, a spokesperson for the Republican National Committee, blasted the NGLTF report as "biased."

"This president has done more to bring blacks and whites together than any other president, including Clinton," Wall said during an interview April 10. "While we know we still have a lot of work to do to increase our share of the black vote and respond to the disparities that exist in our community, we are making great strides in the right direction."

However, according to the NGLTF report, the number of African Americans living in poverty has risen by more than 850,000 since Bush became president.

Wall disputed the number until she learned the data was compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau.

"Our message is resonating in the black community, and as a result, we're seeing a gradual increase in the number of African Americans who vote Republican, and we now have a record number of African-American Republican candidates running for office across the country," Wall answered when asked if the GOP touted moral values as a hook to gain black voters.

According to the Republican Party, Bush received 11 percent of the African-American vote in the 2004 election, compared with 8 percent in 2000. Black votes for Bush also reached double-digit figures in battleground states like Pennsylvania, Ohio and Florida, where he previously had failed to crack 10 percent.

"I believe there's a real danger of losing black votes to the GOP," said Lamell McMorris, an African-American political consultant who heads the bipartisan, Washington, D.C.-based Perennial Strategies.

"Clearly, looking at the 2004 presidential election the issue of same-sex marriage resonated with African Americans," McMorris said.

McMorris said the Republicans have tapped into a large base of black theological conservatives, particularly through church outreach.

"The GOP identified family issues as a way to entice black voters," McMorris said. "They don't need to gain every black person's vote. If they gain 20 percent it will be effective."

And, to that voter base it may not matter how Republicans fare on other issues, according to McMorris.

"It's ironic when you look at where the GOP stands on other issues, but the truth is African Americans are no longer wedded to any particular political party," he said. "The community is evolving to vote their interest."

Legislative letdown

"False Promises" compiled the voting records of top socially conservative U.S. Republican senators and House members on issues of concern to African Americans, such as civil rights and social issues.

Using "scores" calculated by several distinct organizations, including the conservative Family Research Council, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Human Rights Campaign, the report detailed a stark contrast on how conservative Republicans voted.

Republican representatives from the six states with the highest proportion of black residents — Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi and South Carolina — consistently scored high on conservative

Prominent conservatives rated low by gay, black groups

The NGLTF report compared ratings of prominent conservative lawmakers on 2004 scorecards issued by several interest groups.

	HRC	NAACP	Family Research Council	American Conservative Union
Sen. Katherine Harris (R-FL)	0	37	92	92
Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-GA)	0	6	83	96
Sen. Sam Brownback (R-KS)	0	12	100	96
Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY)	0	9	100	96
Sen. Trent Lott (R-MS)	0	6	100	96
Sen. Elizabeth Dole (NC)	0	12	100	92
Sen. Rick Santorum (R-PA)	0	6	100	96
Sen. Bill Frist (R-TN)	0	9	100	92
Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT)	0	12	100	96

Source: National Gay & Lesbian Task Force report, 'False Promises: How the Right Deploys Homophobia to Win Support from African-Americans.'

measures but low on African-American concerns, according to the report.

Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, a supporter of a federal constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage, was awarded a perfect 100 by the Family Research Council but garnered a 3 from the NAACP and a 0 from the HRC.

Sen. Saxby Chambliss of Georgia received a rating of 6 from the NAACP but scored high with the FRC with an 83.

A spokesperson for Chambliss said the NAACP rating was not neutral and the report "very opinionated."

"The senator works tirelessly on issues across the state for all citizens," said Angie Lungford. "It's disingenuous to use these ratings to sum up his work because they pick out measures they want and exclude others."

Included in Chambliss' NAACP rating was a no vote to raise the minimum wage to \$7.25, a yes vote to end preferential treatment by race in college admissions and a yes vote on banning gay adoptions in Washington, D.C.

The NAACP declined to comment on the NGLTF document, stating it does not comment on partisan reports. However, a spokesperson said the group stands behind its ranking of legislators contained in the document.

More than 100 House Republicans contained in the report averaged about a 90 percent FRC rating but achieved less than 30 percent with the NAACP.

The report also revealed that Tony Perkins, who heads the pro-Republican Family Research Council, has two connections to white supremacist organizations, including purchasing the mailing list of David Duke, a former Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard and politician from Louisiana.

Former Majority Leader Rep. Tom DeLay from Texas, who opposed portions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights of 1965, is also targeted in the report.

The National Black Republican Council did not respond to calls for comment on the NGLTF report.

Spring iniquity

Local leather group celebrates 15 years with Black Towel/Black Tie Run

This weekend, National Leather Association: Houston celebrates its 15th anniversary with its 'LUEY Weekend Spring Iniquity — Black Tie, Black Towel Run'. LUEY stands for "Let Us Entertain You."

National Leather Association: Houston is a leather and Levi organization whose members promote safe, sane and consensual behavior. The Houston chapter was formed in 1991 by co-founders, Dean Walradt and Clyde "Buzz" Davis who both passed away a few years ago.

"We have had our ups and down with membership and enthusiasm," said Orlin Cullever, advisor to NLA:H. "But this year we have some new members who want to

see our organization continue."

This year's Black Towel/Black Tie event is a first for NLA:H, though the group has sponsored events at Midtowne Spa and Club Houston during its annual Spring Iniquity celebration. The group's yearly anniversary run is a mini-LUEY celebration that travels from bar to bar with games thrown in to pique member's interest, Cullever said.

"We try to do something special on the 'big numbered' years," Cullever, a NLA:H member since 1991, said.

The celebration begins Friday, April 14 at 8 p.m. at the Ripcord with a reception by NLA, with other host clubs sponsoring one-hour receptions afterward. The Lonestar Rubber Corps has reserved the back area for a private party; admittance is granted with an official 15th anniversary run pin.

On Saturday, the group meets at Mary's, Naturally at 10 a.m. for breakfast by John "Bubbles" Dye and the Colt 45s, with receptions by Mary's host clubs.



National Leather Association: Houston board members David Bonett, left, Jody Turner, Brian Keever (president), Paul Schenck, Keith Vyvial, Daddy Rose Smith and Orlin Cullever celebrate Mardi Gras earlier this year at The Ripcord.

Saturday afternoon, it's off to the Midtowne Spa, where the group will be treated to snacks and punch provided by the new management. Though the spa is traditionally a men-only space, women are invited that afternoon but are restricted to the first floor.

Later the group travels to Hollywood Chinese Restaurant for dinner.

Awards will be presented on Saturday

MORE INFO

NLA: Houston's LUEY Weekend Spring Iniquity — Black Tie, Black Towel Run
April 14 and 15
Various times and locations
P.O. Box 66504
Houston, Texas 77266-6553
www.groups.yahoo.com/group/lueyweekend

evening at the Ripcord for club participation, farthest distance traveled to attend and "overall game," Cullever said.

"The best honor we present is the Mr. or Ms. Iniquity Award, which is presented to the person who we feel best dresses and acts the part of a leatherman or woman," he said.

NLA:H's home bar, The Ripcord as well as Mary's, Naturally and the Midtowne Spa will also receive honors.

Tickets for the weekend are \$30 and provide participants with a run pin, admission to demonstrations, food, cocktail parties and admission to the Midtowne Spa on Saturday afternoon.

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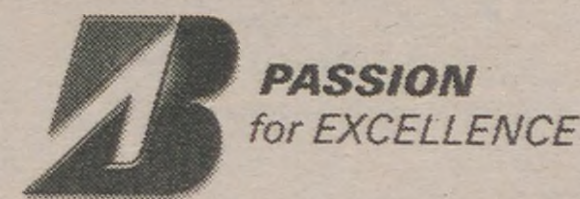
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national news

Indigo Girl's speech to church group draws fire

Some don't want lesbian musician to address United Methodist women's conference

By PENNY WEAVER

Indigo Girl and "lesbian icon" Emily Saliers remains scheduled to speak to United Methodist women next month despite objections raised by some church members.

Saliers and her father, theologian Don Saliers, are among keynote speakers invited to the United Methodist Women's Assembly in Anaheim, Calif., set for May 4-7. More than 8,000 women are expected at the event, held every four years by the church's Women's Division.

Although the Salierses were invited to speak about the 2004 book they co-wrote regarding music and spirituality, members of the Renew Network, a women's program within the church, raised objections to Emily Saliers as a keynote speaker because she is a lesbian.

L. Faye Short, president of Renew, said the group wrote a letter to Women's Division leaders asking them to rescind the invitation based on church teachings regarding homosexuality.

"Even though we wouldn't really expect that she would stand on the platform and advocate for homosexual rights, ... Ms. Saliers' public recognition as a lesbian icon puts the Women's Division in the place of endorsing the homosexual lifestyle and offending the women of the church," Short said.

But Saliers said those who oppose her appearance are a "very, very small faction."

"When I first heard about it, it hurt my feelings, you know — I'm only human," she said. "It's kind of like a series of things happen: First you're hurt and then you're pissed."

"I'm not surprised that something like this would happen, but the outpouring of support has just been outstanding. [I think it's been] therapeutic for people who wrote in with support," Saliers said. "To take something that starts out as a hurtful thing and turn it into a forum where people can speak ... for justice, that's a gift."

The United Methodist Church doctrine provides that homosexual sex is sinful but says that gays should not be discriminated against.

Kelly Martini, communications director for the Women's Division, said division leaders received 200 signatures in support of "disinviting" the Salierses, but received 1,800 signatures or letters in favor of the



Emily Saliers, half of the folk-rock duo Indigo Girls, and her father, theologian Don Saliers, remain slated to address a church group on their book about music and spirituality.

father-daughter duo's appearance.

"The reason we invited Don and Emily Saliers was because they have written a book together and they have a very powerful spiritual message and both of them have done work in line with the Women's Division issues," Martini said. "For some people this has been an issue because Emily is a lesbian, but for us we have been very clear about why we invited them, and we're not going to discriminate on who we invite."

'Change is happening'

Emily and Don Saliers co-wrote "A Song to Sing, A Life to Live: Reflections on Music as Spiritual Practice," published by Jossey-Bass in 2004.

"We wrote the book about music and how it affects our lives," Emily Saliers said. "We're there to talk about that. If [gays and the church] weren't such a hot issue right now, there wouldn't be a brouhaha over it."

Still, Saliers said she looks forward to positive changes that may come from the increase in dialogue regarding religion and gays.

"I'm grateful for the fact that it is a hot issue and that it's being talked about, and that change is actually happening, ... even if it's aimed against me," she said.

According to Short, as soon as Renew issued the letter opposing Saliers' appearance, pro-gay groups within and outside the church "have just come against our little request in great numbers."

news in brief

Gay group criticizes Dodge-Chrysler's 'fairy' ad

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. (AP) — Some gay rights advocates are raising questions about a new Dodge-Chrysler commercial that features a fairy who uses her wand to turn a tough-looking guy with a big dog into a pastel-clad man walking four small dogs on pink leashes. DaimlerChrysler AG's Chrysler Group introduced the "Anything but Cute" ad campaign last month to promote the new Dodge Caliber compact car, aimed at young buyers. One of five ads is "Too Tough," a 30-second spot that features the fairy. It was created by the Detroit office of BBDO Worldwide, part of Omnicom Group Inc. Gay advocates say the transformed male character has stereotypically gay characteristics and note that "fairy" is a derogatory term for a homosexual man. "This guy looks pretty gay to me," said Jeffrey Montgomery, executive director of the Detroit-based Triangle Foundation, a statewide gay rights group. The Commercial Closet, which monitors marketing tactics that could be offensive to gays, was more critical of the ad. "It directly finds humor with the term fairy, referring not just to the type that flies around with a magic wand, but also the universally recognizable gay stereotype of an effeminate gay man," it said in an online review of the ad. Chrysler said it has had an average number of complaints about the ad. It said the man is not intended to be gay and said the ads will keep airing.



Chrysler said that the man depicted in this ad who is transformed by a fairy is not intended to be gay and that the ads will keep airing.

U.S. man alleges UAE sheik attacked him after rebuffing his advances

NEW YORK (AP) — Silvano Orsi, a former Swisscom AG executive, walks with a limp and suffers nightmares, the result of what he calls an unprovoked assault in a five-star Swiss hotel by a tipsy Arab sheik whose brother is now ruler of the United Arab Emirates. An investigating magistrate in Geneva is deciding whether to recommend a criminal trial. Orsi said he had no idea who Sheik Fallah bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan was before they met on the evening of Aug. 19, 2003. In fact, he didn't learn his identity, he said, until he stumbled bloodied and bruised to the hotel reception desk and pleaded with staff to call the police. Orsi claims he was beaten after he rebuffed the sheik's sexual advances. At a hearing in March, the sheik acknowledged they got into a heated scuffle when he overheard someone remark that "this sheik is gay." But he insisted he never struck Orsi.

Irish prime minister backs civil partnerships for gay couples

DUBLIN, Ireland (AP) — Ireland will soon offer civil partnerships for gay couples, Prime Minister Bertie Ahern pledged April 3 as he opened new offices for the country's main gay rights group. "Sexual orientation cannot, and must not, be the basis of a second-class citizenship. Our laws have changed, and will continue to change, to reflect this principle," Ahern told an audience at Ireland's Gay & Lesbian Equality Network. Ahern said civil partnerships would be more difficult in Ireland than the United Kingdom, which approved them in December. Ireland's constitution has a clause requiring the predominantly Roman Catholic state to protect the institution of marriage, whereas the U.K., which includes neighboring Northern Ireland, has no written constitution. "This challenge, however, is one that the government is determined to meet," said Ahern, who noted that government-appointed experts would recommend options in a report expected in November.

Two gay tourists attacked in Dutch Caribbean

PHILIPSBURG, St. Maarten (AP) — Police have appealed to the public for help in the investigation into an attack on two New York journalists who were beaten with tire irons outside a bar on the Dutch side of St. Maarten island. Investigators in St. Maarten published a newspaper advertisement April 10 seeking witnesses or other information about the attack, which left the two Americans with serious head injuries. Dick Jefferson, 51, and Ryan Smith, 25, who work for CBS, were outside a bar with several friends early April 6 when three men attacked them and started hitting them with tire irons. Jefferson, a senior broadcast producer for "The CBS Evening News," said the attackers yelled anti-gay slurs at his friends earlier in the evening. Jefferson said Smith is in intensive care and may have suffered brain damage. Jefferson faulted St. Maarten authorities for not collecting witness testimony on the night of the crime or pursuing other leads.

Dalai Lama expresses concern over anti-gay discrimination

GENEVA — Participants at the XXIII World Conference of the International Lesbian & Gay Association welcomed a message of support from the Dalai Lama. The Buddhist leader expressed concern about "reports of violence and discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people" and urged "respect, tolerance and the full recognition of human rights for all" in a written statement issued to ILGA March 30. The statement was greeted by a standing ovation from participants at the conference, according to an ILGA news release. In a book published in 1996, the Dalai Lama said that Buddhist scripture advised against gay sex.

From staff and wire reports

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United we dine

Dream of unity comes true for Houston's transgender community

By DEBORAH MONCRIEF BELL

WHEN MEMBERS OF HOUSTON'S transgender community and their friends converge Saturday evening for the Unity Banquet for the 14th time, it will signal the realization of a dream.

The movement toward unity began as a visionary dream in the heart of Dr. Peggy Rudd who along with her spouse, Melanie, started one of the first organizations for cross-dressers in Houston.

"I realized how much the collective body of talented people could accomplish if they held hands and moved forward as one," Rudd said.

Seeing roadblocks among the diverse groups for those who identified as transgender, transsexual or crossdressers and the need for unity to be more effective in accomplishing their goals, Rudd began to lay the foundation with a series of articles related to unity and diversity in 1990.

As the dream began to crystallize, Rudd contacted Dante's Restaurant in Houston and set a date for the first Unity Banquet, established to honor the concept of unity and respect for human differences. Thirty-five people attended that first banquet. Thirteen years later, the event drew 225.

The Houston Transgender Unity Committee was formed in 1998 to bridge the gap between the various groups and organizations representing transgender persons in the Houston area, to promote unity among the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community, and to educate and advocate. The committee has representation from six transgender Houston area organizations.

Unity Committee co-chair Josephine Tittsworth says the group is responsible for the annual Unity Banquet, participation in the Pride Parade and Empower and other events and projects. In 2003 the HTUC estab-



Dr. Peggy Rudd, right, and her spouse, Melanie Rudd, at the 2005 Unity Banquet. Dr. Rudd was one of the founders of the annual banquet, the largest single night transgender event in the country.

lished the Peggy Rudd Transgender Scholarship Fund. Proceeds from the banquet and donations will assist the funding of the Peggy Rudd Transgender Scholarship Fund for transgender persons in their quest to attend college.

The committee will also host a fundraising dance at Meteor the first Saturday in June to raise additional funds for the scholarships. The first scholarships

will be awarded to Houston area transgender individuals in the fall of 2005.

NOTED SURGEON MARCI BOWERS, MD, will deliver the keynote address to attendees of this year's Unity Banquet, billed by organizers as the largest annual transgender gathering in the U.S.

A 1986 graduate of the University of Minnesota medical school, Dr. Bowers joined renowned surgeon Dr. Stanley Biber in 2003 and has now taken over his practice in Trinidad, Colorado. Dr. Biber, who died in January 2006, performed more than 5,000 sexual reassignment surgeries in more than 30 years. In the process, he turned the tiny Colorado town into the sex-change capital of the world.

This is the first time in history for a transsexual to head a gender team and perform the procedures. Dr. Bowers transitioned in 1997 while serving as department chairperson at Swedish Medical Center (Providence) in Seattle, was acknowledged as one of "America's Best Doctors" by the American Research Council for 2002-2003, and was recently elected to the European Academy of Sciences. During her 19 years as an obstetrician/gynecologist, she has delivered approximately 2000 babies, has served as ob/gyn department chairperson at Swedish Medical Center and as the only physician member of the Washington State midwifery Board.

AWARDS WILL BE PRESENTED TO individuals and organizations in the

community who have worked for and supported the transgender community.

British Petroleum is the recipient of this year's Champion Award, given to a non-transgender person or group proven to be the most staunch advocate or ally in the local transgender community in the past year. This year British Petroleum will be honored for their comprehensive company policy of transgender inclusion. Crafted by former employees of Shell Oil, another energy company known for its outstanding GLBT policies, BP has lived up to its motto of "going beyond," Unity Banquet organizers said.

Stephen Erich will receive the Apogee Award, given to an individual responsible for one thing or culmination of things that represent the high point of the past year for all aspects of the transgender community.

Paige Mahogany will receive the Dee McKellar Merit Award, given to a transgender person who has steadfastly stood up as a staunch advocate for the values of the transgender community.

The People's Choice Award will be given to Cindy Davis, who was determined by the Unity Committee to be the most popular, or outstanding member of the past year in Houston's transgender community.

The committee chose Brandi Williams as the recipient of its Lifetime Achievement Award, given each year to the transgender individual who has accomplished achievements over the course of years that have helped or positively impacted the entire local transgender community.



Unity Banquet keynote speaker Marci Bowers is listed among 'America's Best Physicians' and is a member-elect of the European Academy of Sciences.

MORE INFO

14th Annual Unity Banquet
Saturday, April 15, 6:30 p.m.
Westchase Hilton, 9999 Westheimer Rd.
\$50 advance tickets, Jewel's, 2404 Taft St.
or on the web. \$60 at the door
www.houstontransgenderunity.org



Individual results may vary.

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

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

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:

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

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

- **A change in the way your heart beats** may occur and could be a symptom of a heart problem.

- **Diabetes and high blood sugar** may occur in patients taking protease inhibitor medicines like REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate).
- **Yellowing of the skin and/or eyes** may occur due to increases in bilirubin levels in the blood (bilirubin is made by the liver).
- **Rash** (redness and itching) sometimes occurs in patients taking REYATAZ, most often in the first few weeks after the medicine is started, and usually goes away within two weeks with no change in treatment.
- **If you have liver disease**, including hepatitis B or C, your liver disease may get worse when you take anti-HIV medicines like REYATAZ.
- **Some patients with hemophilia** have increased bleeding problems with protease inhibitor medicines like REYATAZ.

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

Other side effects of REYATAZ taken with other anti-HIV medicines include: nausea, headache, stomach pain, vomiting, diarrhea, depression, fever, dizziness, trouble sleeping, numbness, and tingling or burning of hands or feet.

You should take REYATAZ once daily with food (a meal or snack). You should take REYATAZ and your other anti-HIV medicines exactly as instructed by your healthcare provider.

Once Daily REYATAZ® (atazanavir sulfate)

is a protease inhibitor (PI) that is taken in HIV combination therapy:

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

* Undetectable is defined as a viral load of less than 400 or 50 copies/mL (depending on the test used).
† REYATAZ in combination therapy had a 1-3% rate of moderate-to-severe diarrhea.
‡ People who have taken anti-HIV medicines before usually take REYATAZ with ritonavir once daily as part of their HIV combination therapy.

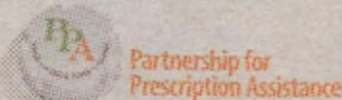
REYATAZ does not cure HIV, a serious disease, or help prevent passing HIV to others.

WWW.REYATAZ.COM

REYATAZ®
(atazanavir sulfate) 150 mg/200 mg capsules

ASK YOUR DOCTOR if REYATAZ, in HIV combination therapy, can help you fight HIV your way.

If you or someone you know needs help paying for medicine, call 1-888-4PPA-NOW (1-888-477-2669). Or go to www.pparx.org



Bristol-Myers Squibb

Please see Important Patient Information about REYATAZ on the next page.

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March 2006 F1-K0271M

PATIENT INFORMATION

Rx ONLY

REYATAZ® (RAY-ah-taz)

(generic name = atazanavir sulfate) Capsules

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

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

What is REYATAZ?

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

Does REYATAZ cure HIV or AIDS?

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

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

Who should not take REYATAZ?**Do not take REYATAZ if you:**

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

What should I tell my healthcare provider before I take REYATAZ?**Tell your healthcare provider:**

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

How should I take REYATAZ?

- **Take REYATAZ once every day exactly as instructed by your healthcare provider.** Your healthcare provider will prescribe the amount of REYATAZ that is right for you.
 - For adults who have never taken anti-HIV medicines before, the usual dose is 400 mg (two 200-mg capsules) once daily taken with food.
 - For adults who have taken anti-HIV medicines in the past, the usual dose is 300 mg (two 150-mg capsules) plus 100 mg of NORVIR® (ritonavir) once daily taken with food.
 Your dose will depend on your liver function and on the other anti-HIV medicines that you are taking. REYATAZ is always used with other anti-HIV medicines. If you are taking REYATAZ with SUSTIVA® (efavirenz) or with VIREAD® (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate), you should also be taking NORVIR® (ritonavir).
- **Always take REYATAZ with food** (a meal or snack) to help it work better. Swallow the capsules whole. **Do not open the capsules.** Take REYATAZ at the same time each day.
- **If you are taking antacids or VIDEX® (didanosine) Chewable/Dispersible Buffered Tablets, or Enteric-Coated Tablets,** take REYATAZ 2 hours before or 1 hour after these medicines.
- **If you are taking medicines for indigestion, heartburn, or ulcers such as AXID® (nizatidine), PEPCID AC® (famotidine), TAGAMET® (cimetidine), or ZANTAC® (ranitidine),** talk to your healthcare provider.
- **Do not change your dose or stop taking REYATAZ without first talking with your healthcare provider.** It is important to stay under a healthcare provider's care while taking REYATAZ.
- **When your supply of REYATAZ starts to run low,** get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy. It is important not to run out of REYATAZ. The amount of HIV in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time.
- **If you miss a dose of REYATAZ,** take it as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose at its regular time. If, however, it is within 6 hours of your next dose, do not take the missed dose. Wait and take the next dose at the regular time. Do not double the next dose. **It is important that you do not miss any doses of REYATAZ or your other anti-HIV medicines.**
- **If you take more than the prescribed dose of REYATAZ,** call your healthcare provider or poison control center right away.

Can children take REYATAZ?

REYATAZ has not been fully studied in children under 16 years of age. REYATAZ should not be used in babies under the age of 3 months.

What are the possible side effects of REYATAZ?

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

The following side effects have been reported with REYATAZ:

- **rash** (redness and itching) sometimes occurs in patients taking REYATAZ, most often in the first few weeks after the medicine is started. Rashes usually go away within 2 weeks with no change in treatment. Tell your healthcare provider if rash occurs.
- **yellowing of the skin or eyes.** These effects may be due to increases in bilirubin levels in the blood (bilirubin is made by the liver). Call your healthcare provider if your skin or the white part of your eyes turn yellow. Although these effects may not be damaging to your liver, skin, or eyes, it is important to tell your healthcare provider promptly if they occur.
- **a change in the way your heart beats (heart rhythm change).** Call your healthcare provider right away if you get dizzy or lightheaded. These could be symptoms of a heart problem.
- **diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia)** sometimes happen in patients taking protease inhibitor medicines like REYATAZ. Some patients had diabetes before taking protease inhibitors while others did not. Some patients may need changes in their diabetes medicine.
- **if you have liver disease** including hepatitis B or C, your liver disease may get worse when you take anti-HIV medicines like REYATAZ.
- **some patients with hemophilia** have increased bleeding problems with protease inhibitors like REYATAZ.
- **changes in body fat.** These changes may include an increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.

Other common side effects of REYATAZ taken with other anti-HIV medicines include nausea; headache; stomach pain; vomiting; diarrhea; depression; fever; dizziness; trouble sleeping; numbness, tingling, or burning of hands or feet; and muscle pain.

What important information should I know about taking REYATAZ (atazanavir sulfate) with other medicines*?

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

- Ergot medicines: dihydroergotamine, ergonovine, ergotamine, and methylethylergonovine such as CAFERGOT®, MIGRANAL®, D.H.E. 45®, ergotrate maleate, METHERGINE®, and others (used for migraine headaches).
- HALCION® (triazolam, used for insomnia).
- VERSED® (midazolam, used for sedation).
- ORAP® (pimozide, used for Tourette's disorder).
- PROPULSID® (cisapride, used for certain stomach problems).

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

- CAMPTOSAR® (irinotecan, used for cancer).
- CRIXIVAN® (indinavir, used for HIV infection). Both REYATAZ and CRIXIVAN sometimes cause increased levels of bilirubin in the blood.
- Cholesterol-lowering medicines MEVACOR® (lovastatin) or ZOCOR® (simvastatin).

Do not take the following medicines with REYATAZ because they may lower the amount of REYATAZ in your blood.

This may lead to an increased HIV viral load. Resistance to REYATAZ or cross-resistance to other HIV medicines may develop.

- Rifampin (also known as RIMACTANE®, RIFADIN®, RIFATER®, or RIFAMATE®, used for tuberculosis).
- St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), an herbal product sold as a dietary supplement, or products containing St. John's wort.
- "Proton-pump inhibitors" used for indigestion, heartburn, or ulcers such as AcipHex® (rabeprazole), NEXIUM® (esomeprazole), PREVACID® (lansoprazole), PRILLOSEC® (omeprazole), or PROTONIX® (pantoprazole).

Do not take the following medicine if you are taking REYATAZ and NORVIR® together.

- VFEND® (voriconazole).

The following medicines may require your healthcare provider to monitor your therapy more closely:

- CIALIS® (tadalafil), LEVITRA® (vardenafil), or VIAGRA® (sildenafil). REYATAZ may increase the chances of serious side effects that can happen with CIALIS, LEVITRA, or VIAGRA. Do not use CIALIS, LEVITRA, or VIAGRA while you are taking REYATAZ unless your healthcare provider tells you it is okay.
- LIPITOR® (atorvastatin). There is an increased chance of serious side effects if you take REYATAZ with this cholesterol-lowering medicine.
- Medicines for abnormal heart rhythm: CORDARONE® (amiodarone), lidocaine, quinidine (also known as RADIOQUIN®), QUINIDEX®, and others.
- VASCOR® (bepridil, used for chest pain).
- COUMADIN® (warfarin).
- Tricyclic antidepressants such as ELAVIL® (amitriptyline), NORPRAMIN® (desipramine), SINEQUAN® (doxepin), SURMONTIL® (trimipramine), TOFRANIL® (mipramine), or VIVACTIL® (protriptyline).
- Medicines to prevent organ transplant rejection: SANDIMMUNE® or NEORAL® (cyclosporin), RAPAMUNE® (sirolimus), or PROGRAF® (tacrolimus).
- The antidepressant trazodone (DESYREL® and others).
- Fluticasone propionate (ADVAIR®, FLONASE®, FLOVENT®), given by nose or inhaled to treat allergic symptoms or asthma. Your doctor may choose not to keep you on fluticasone, especially if you are also taking NORVIR®.

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

- FORTOVASE® (saquinavir).
- NORVIR® (ritonavir).
- SUSTIVA® (efavirenz).
- Antacids or buffered medicines.
- VIDEX® (didanosine).
- VIREAD® (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate).
- MYCOBUTIN® (rifabutin).
- Calcium channel blockers such as CARDIZEM® or TIAZAC® (diltiazem), COVERA-HS® or ISOPTIN SR® (verapamil), and others.
- BIAVIN® (clarithromycin).
- Medicines for indigestion, heartburn, or ulcers such as AXID® (nizatidine), PEPCID AC® (famotidine), TAGAMET® (cimetidine), or ZANTAC® (ranitidine).

Women who use birth control pills or "the patch" should choose a different kind of contraception. REYATAZ may affect the safety and effectiveness of birth control pills or the patch. Talk to your healthcare provider about choosing an effective contraceptive.

Remember:

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

How should I store REYATAZ?

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

General information about REYATAZ


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

This summary does not include everything there is to know about REYATAZ. Medicines are sometimes prescribed for conditions that are not mentioned in patient information leaflets. Remember, no written summary can replace careful discussion with your healthcare provider. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider or you can call 1-800-321-1335.

What are the ingredients in REYATAZ?**Active ingredient:** atazanavir sulfate

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

* VIDEX® is a registered trademark of Bristol-Myers Squibb Company. COUMADIN® and SUSTIVA® are registered trademarks of Bristol-Myers Squibb Company. DESYREL® is a registered trademark of Mead Johnson and Company. Other brands listed are the trademarks of their respective owners and are not trademarks of Bristol-Myers Squibb Company.

 Bristol-Myers Squibb Company

Princeton, NJ 08543 USA

This Patient Information Leaflet has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

1193697A1
F1-B00018-01-06Revised January 2006
Based on package insert dated January 2006

out in houston



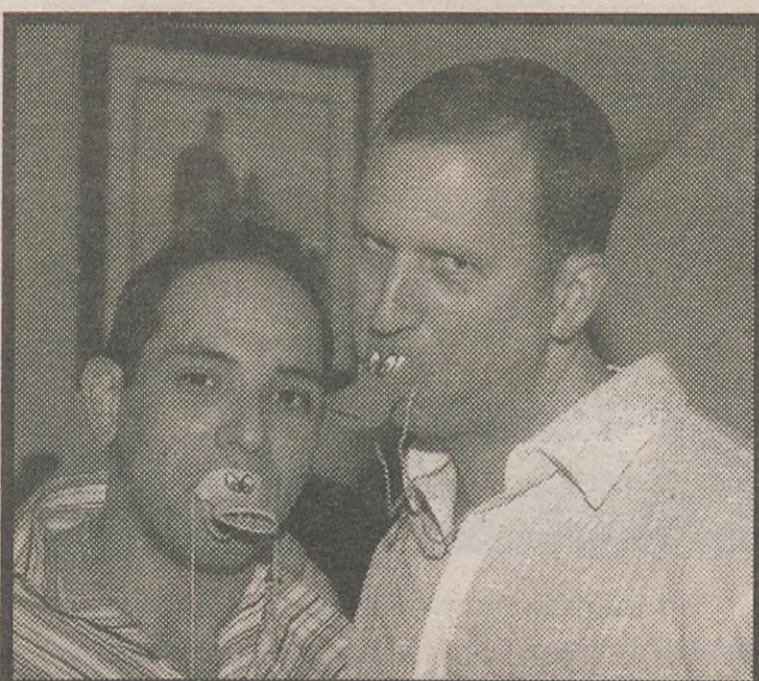
Sing out

Rick Comeaux is flanked by backup singers at the Diana Foundation's 56th annual banquet and awards presentation.



Check this out

Boy of Montrose Jerry Deweese poses with PWA Holiday Charities director Don Gill and mistress and master of ceremonies Lisa Foronda and Bob Bouton at a recent PWA Holiday Charities fundraiser held at Keys West.



Just duckie

Marc Garcia and Brad Odom pucker up at Brad's 'Rubber Duckie, You're the One' surprise birthday party.



The Wind-down

Softball enthusiasts enjoy post-game camaraderie and cocktails on the patio at E/J's. E/J's is the host bar for Montrose Softball League.



It's all about the follow-through

Pitcher Tish Ortegon concentrates on her next big play as Montrose Softball League's spring season continues at Memorial Park.

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- DWI (DISMISSED)
- Prostitution (DISMISSED)
- Early Termination of Probation (GRANTED)
- Possession of Marijuana (DISMISSED)
- Resisting Arrest (DISMISSED)
- Aggravated Assault X 2 (DISMISSED)
- Motion To Revoke Probation (PROBATION REINSTATED)

KENDRIC M. CEASER
ATTORNEY AT LAW

4300 Scotland - Houston, Texas 77007
713-796-9911 -B
kceaser@hotmail.com

EDITORIAL & PRODUCTION

Executive Editor CHRIS CRAIN

Editor NANCY FORD

Art Director ROB BOEGER

Production Manager ERIC GOINES

Graphic Designer SPENCER TOMCZAK

Graphic Designer LISA HENDERSON

Correspondents ERIC ERVIN, DYANA BAGBY, KELLY CARSON, LOU CHIBBARO, JR., MUBARAK DAHIR, MIKE FLEMING, JOHNNY HOOKS, PHIL LAPADULA, RYAN LEE, JOSHUA LYNSEN, GREG MARZULLO, BRIAN MOYLAN, KEVIN NAFF, ANDY ZEFFER, KATHERINE VOLIN, ELIZABETH WEILL-GREENBERG

Contributors DEBORAH BELL, JOEY GUERRA, J.A. CHAPMAN AND RICH ARENSCHIEDT

Photographers DALTON DEHART,

KIMBERLY THOMPSON

Online Editor STEVE KOVAL

Webmaster ARAM VARTIAN

Assistant Webmaster STEVE RYAN

SALES & ADMINISTRATION

Sales Manager

ED ALVAREZ
ealvarez@houstonvoice.com

Classified Sales / Office Administrator

JOHNNY HOOKS
jhooks@houstonvoice.com

National Advertising Representative
Rivendell Media • 212-242-6863



PUBLISHER Window Media LLC

PRESIDENT Peter Polimino

EXEC. V.P. EDITORIAL Chris Crain

ART DIRECTOR Rob Boeger

C.O.O. Mike Kitchens

C.F.O. Steve Myers

EXEC. V.P. SALES Steven Guerrini



CHARTER MEMBER

Established 1974 as the *Montrose Star*.

500 Lovett Blvd., Suite 200
Houston, Texas 77006
(713) 529-8490
Fax: (713) 529-9531
www.houstonvoice.com

Office hours: 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. weekdays

To submit a letter

Letters should be fewer than 400 words. We reserve the right to edit for content and length. We will withhold names upon request, but you must include your name and phone number for verification. Please send mail to Houston Voice, 500 Lovett Blvd., Suite 200, Houston, Texas 77006; fax (713) 529-9531 or e-mail to editor@houstonvoice.com. Opinions expressed therein do not reflect those of the *Houston Voice*.

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Forum

editorial

The emancipation of Violetta

Does the swastiki carved in the upholstery mean my car's theft was a hate crime, or just bad Fahrfeignugen?

By NANCY FORD

A

FEW TUESDAY MORNINGS ago I drove into work just as I normally do.

It was an idyllic day — a beautiful first full day of Spring. The sun was shining, the birds were singing. I

was settling into my new job here at the *Houston Voice*. Pollen, chirp-chirping and hope filled the air.

I parked my car, my cute little Volkswagen Cabrio, on the street beside my office. Because it was such an idyllic day, I left the convertible top down with nothing of value inside the car.

Long-time convertible drivers know well enough to never leave anything of value inside a convertible, whether the top is down or not, whether the doors are locked or not. I learned that lesson the hard way a few years back, losing a sentimentally priceless guitar and perfectly broken-in leather jacket through a slit slashed in the top of my locked-tight Mustang. Live and learn.

But back to now. We have a special relationship, Violetta the VW and I. When I bought her I named her Violetta because, like me, she turns purple on bright, sunny days, yet has a tendency to get kind of blue on cloudy days.

We talk a lot, Violetta and I; granted, she mostly listens. She is a pretty little thing when she is all washed and waxed. She even has a custom-made beaded necklace dangling from her rear-view mirror. It's violet, too; I knew you were wondering.

Violetta isn't new, by any means; she has plenty of miles on her and a couple of worn spots on her upholstery. But who doesn't?

After putting in a full day's work, I strode out into the waning sunlight to the spot where I had earlier left Violetta basking. I looked up and down Whitney Street for her, ready to jump in, go home and relax. But she was gone.

Stolen.

It's as though dark forces in the universe know when a car is moments away from being paid off. Or has recently been fitted with four new tires. And a catalytic converter. And a timing belt. And a water pump. And shocks. And....

JUST ONE DAY LATER MY CAR WAS found downtown near the old Enron build-



ing, mere miles from my Montrose-area office. (Will the ghosts of Enron ever stop haunting us?) After suffering considerable cosmetic damage and as-yet undetermined mechanical duress, Violetta will be returned to me within a couple weeks.

I went to the city storage lot to inspect her damage. Adding to my dismay, I found some nasty scrawlings etched into the upholstery, including an obscenity suggesting I do something with my mouth that I hadn't done since the late '70s.

Written on the seat was the woman's name "MiMi," as in "The Emancipation of MiMi". Could it be that Mariah Carey had stolen my car?

Also carved into the back seat was something that looked like a gang symbol. But since the only thing close to a gang symbol that I am familiar with is Pride Houston's annual logo, I could be wrong.

But unmistakable and far more disturbing, drawn there on the leather was a crudely fashioned swastika. No, Violetta didn't have any "gay" bumper stickers plastered on her that might antagonize local Nazis, like a rainbow flag or the ubiquitous blue-and-gold Human Rights Campaign equality trademark. Not even a Houston Comets logo. I figure, any car with me behind the steering wheel is already as gayed-up as it needs to get.

Does the swastika graffiti elevate my car napping from being a crime of mean-spiritedness and inconvenience to a full-fledged hate crime? Was the thief savvy enough to know that my multi-cultural VW, with its fine German engineering manufactured in Mexico, had hauled me to countless gay rights events and needed to be put out of activist commission?

I HAVE NO IDEA WHO TO BLAME FOR stealing my car. The cops blame drug addicts who, they said, probably intended to strip it and sell the parts for crack.

My friends blame kids on spring break, probably wanting to go for a joy ride on such an idyllic day.

HOUSTON VOICE

APRIL 14, 2006

PAGE 12

My mother blames Satan, believing he probably heard me talking earlier about what an idyllic day it was and seized the opportunity to cause me a bit of Hell.

Who knows? I only know the criminals were likely not lesbians, because whoever stole Violetta didn't know the first thing about operating a stick shift. Kids on spring break and crack addicts don't have time to step on the clutch every time they want to switch gears. And Satan wouldn't think twice about ruining a perfectly good transmission.

The true identity of the thief or thieves is likely to remain a mystery for a very long time, if not forever. I recognize that the police have far better things to do than spend valuable hours ferreting out whoever committed this heinous, despicable, most un-gay-friendly crime, even though I am now destined to drive around Montrose in a very blasé beige rental with a decidedly hard top that will never come off, regardless of how idyllic the day's weather may be.

In the past few days I have learned how the thugs probably pulled off the heist. I won't go into explicit detail as to the methods they employed, not wanting to provide instruction to some literate car thief-in-training who might be reading this column on a break between break-ins. Suffice it to say that I will now, as a matter of routine, arrange a large piece of paper or cloth or tape to cover my dashboard.

When Violetta is eventually returned to me, healthy and whole and half-repainted and good as new except for the psychic scars we are both sure to bear, I'm going to rename her Elizabeth Smart, for obvious reasons. And her top is staying up.

@ Nancy Ford is editor of the *Houston Voice* and can be reached at Nford@houstonvoice.com.



action alert

Wal-Mart can't quit 'Brokeback'

Mega-retailer sells DVD despite anti-gay group's opposition

By BO SHELL

WAL-MART IS SELLING DVD COPIES of "Brokeback Mountain" despite protests from the anti-gay American Family Association.

The bargain giant's decision to distribute DVDs of the gay cowboy love story in its 3,800-plus stores nationwide drew quick criticism from the AFA.

"It's quite obvious to anyone who shops at Wal-Mart that they're no longer the family-friendly company that they used to project in their image," Randy Sharp, director of special projects for the Tupelo Mississippi-based AFA, said on the group's website.

The AFA recently headed up boycotts against Ford Motor Company for adver-

tising in gay publications and Kraft Foods for supporting the Gay Games in Chicago. The group also claims it was behind Wal-Mart's removal from its stores of three "racy" men's magazines, Stuff, FHM and Maxim.

"It seems [that Wal-Mart is saying], 'We're going to do everything we can to make another dollar, regardless of how our consumers feel,'" Sharp said in the online article.

Wal-Mart officials said their DVD selection reflects their audience.

"We serve a broad customer base and therefore offer an expansive assortment of movie titles to meet the needs of the diverse consumers that shop our stores," said Jolanda Stewart, a corporate communications representative for Wal-Mart.

The only factor Wal-Mart considers when deciding to sell certain items is demand among consumers, another company spokesperson told Reuters in an April 5 article.

DVD sales of "Brokeback Mountain" topped 1.4 million copies on its April 4 release date, according to Universal Studios Home Entertainment.

The Arkansas-based Wal-Mart Stores Inc. ranks No. 1 on the Fortune 500 list. The chain scored 57 out of a possible 100 on the 2005 Corporate Equality Index published by the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay political group.

Wal-Mart lacks marketing, sponsorship or philanthropy aimed at gays and does not offer domestic partnership benefits for employees or include gender identity or expression in its equal employment opportunity statement. Sexual orientation is included.

THE ULTIMATE BROKEBACK FORUM, a website created by gay writer Dave

Gay painter (and former soap opera star) Thom Bierdz donated his 'Brokeback'-inspired painting to an effort to raise funds to buy DVDs of the film to donate to rural public libraries. The artist and filmmaker was the recipient of Vox/Out's 2005 'Emerging Artist of the Year Style + Design' award.



Cullen, is in the midst of a letter-writing campaign thanking Wal-Mart for carrying the DVD, and Cullen said he is doing his best to make sure patrons of rural public libraries also have access to the film.

The forum's "Missionary Project" aims to place 2,000 "Brokeback" DVDs in public libraries in the U.S. and Canada.

"Our members want to do this in order to make sure that those in rural areas have access to the DVD, so those like Jack and Ennis who live in the closet due to fear and shame might be better understood or maybe even find the DVD for themselves," Cullen said.

After about four weeks, the 3,500-member forum has donated nearly 400 copies to libraries in 26 states and two Canadian

provinces, as well as \$3,500 for the purchase and donation of more DVDs.

Cullen said about a dozen libraries have refused the donation offer, several citing the film's R rating, but none citing the film's gay themes.

Gay painter Thom Bierdz donated a \$3,500 painting of the cowboys' embrace to the group for sale or auction with proceeds going to support the forum and the DVD campaign. The campaign ends April 30.

ACTION! INFO

Wal-Mart Stores Inc.
Bentonville, AR 72716-8611
800-WAL-MART
www.walmartstores.com

American Family Association
P.O. Drawer 2440
Tupelo, MS 38803
622-844-5036
www.afa.net

Ultimate Brokeback Forum
www.davecullen.com/forum/

@ ABOUT ACTION ALERT: Action Alert is a Forum section feature that informs readers of issues for response and lobbying. Send suggestions or comments to forum@houstonvoice.com.

THE

Q
Will you be attending a religious service to commemorate Easter, or will you celebrate in a 'gayer' way?



I will be celebrating Easter with the beliefs my parents instilled in me though not attending a religious service. I will be attending a wonderful brunch with amazing friends and having great conversation. God Bless.

ROBERT GARCIA, 30
Houston
Executive Assistant



My family and I will attend church services and then spend the rest of the day laughing and having quality time together.

ADRIANNE PEREZ, 38
Security Supervisor



I am going to church with my grandmother. Happens every year.

ISAIAH SPANN, 30
Weimer, Texas



We will be traveling to Laredo to visit family and going to the lake to celebrate.

JAQUELIN CUEVAS, 27
Houston



I will be attending a Pretty in Pink brunch, then to Bunnies on the Bayou. I do hope I have a religious experience!

JOEL PENA, 30
Houston

Sound off about what's happening in your world at www.houstonvoice.com/soundoff.

Interviews and photos by Dalton DeHart

eclipse

GAY HOUSTON NIGHTLIFE, ARTS & CULTURE

www.houstonvoice.com



gay gagman

Comic Scott Kennedy is back in Texas after entertaining the troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Page 17

APRIL 14, 2006

Kicking ass and taking names

Pink blasts bimbos and Bush on fully loaded 'I'm Not Dead'

By BUCK C. COOKE

IN CASE YOU'VE BEEN LIVING under a rock, our favorite bad ass Pink is back in a very big way. After disappointing album sales for 2003's "Try This," Pink turns up the volume and has a lot to say on her new CD, "I'm Not Dead," a welcome return to the spotlight for the scrappy singer.

With a huge, enthusiastic response to the lead single "Stupid Girls" and its video of Little Miss Butchie hamming it up basically in girly-girl drag, Pink reminds fans that she is still not afraid to raise a few eyebrows — and famous ones at that. The video mocks the bimbo brigade of entertainment starlets with little pedigree and even less substance.

Directed by Dave Meyers, the video features Pink mocking the likes of Paris Hilton and her sex tape, Mary-Kate Olsen, Lindsay Lohan, and the human car wash sponge, Jessica Simpson. In addition to the buzz surrounding the video, "Stupid Girls" is an updated message of female empowerment.

Think of it as "Girl Power 2006" with lyrics like, "I'm so glad that I'll never fit in/ That will never be me/ Outcasts and girls with ambition/ That's what I want to see!"

Sell it sister, and gay boys will be all about it.

THE ALBUM DEFINITELY HAS A ROCK feel throughout, but there is variety among the tracks. "Nobody Knows" sounds like it could have been the next Dianne Warren mega-single with its uplifting message of personal empower-

ment and pop radio-friendly vibe. Pink sings the blues on "The One That Got Away," pining away for an ex she just can't get out of her head.

The highlight of the album is a slow, powerful track called "Dear Mr. President." Recorded in Norcross, the track features Georgia's own Indigo Girls.

Pink and the Girls sound amazing together with tight harmonies and great instrumentation by Amy and Emily, giving us one of the best collaborations in recent years.

In the song, the ladies go after Dubya with both barrels, criticizing his policies and alleged indiscretions from the past.

"What kind of father would take his own daughter's rights away?/ And what kind of father might hate his own daughter if she were gay?/ I can only imagine what the first lady has to say/ You've come a long way, from whiskey and cocaine!"

Girl goes balls-to-the-wall with this one, asking Dubya, "What do you feel when you look in the mirror?/ Are you proud?" and "How do you sleep at night?/ How do you walk with your head held high?"

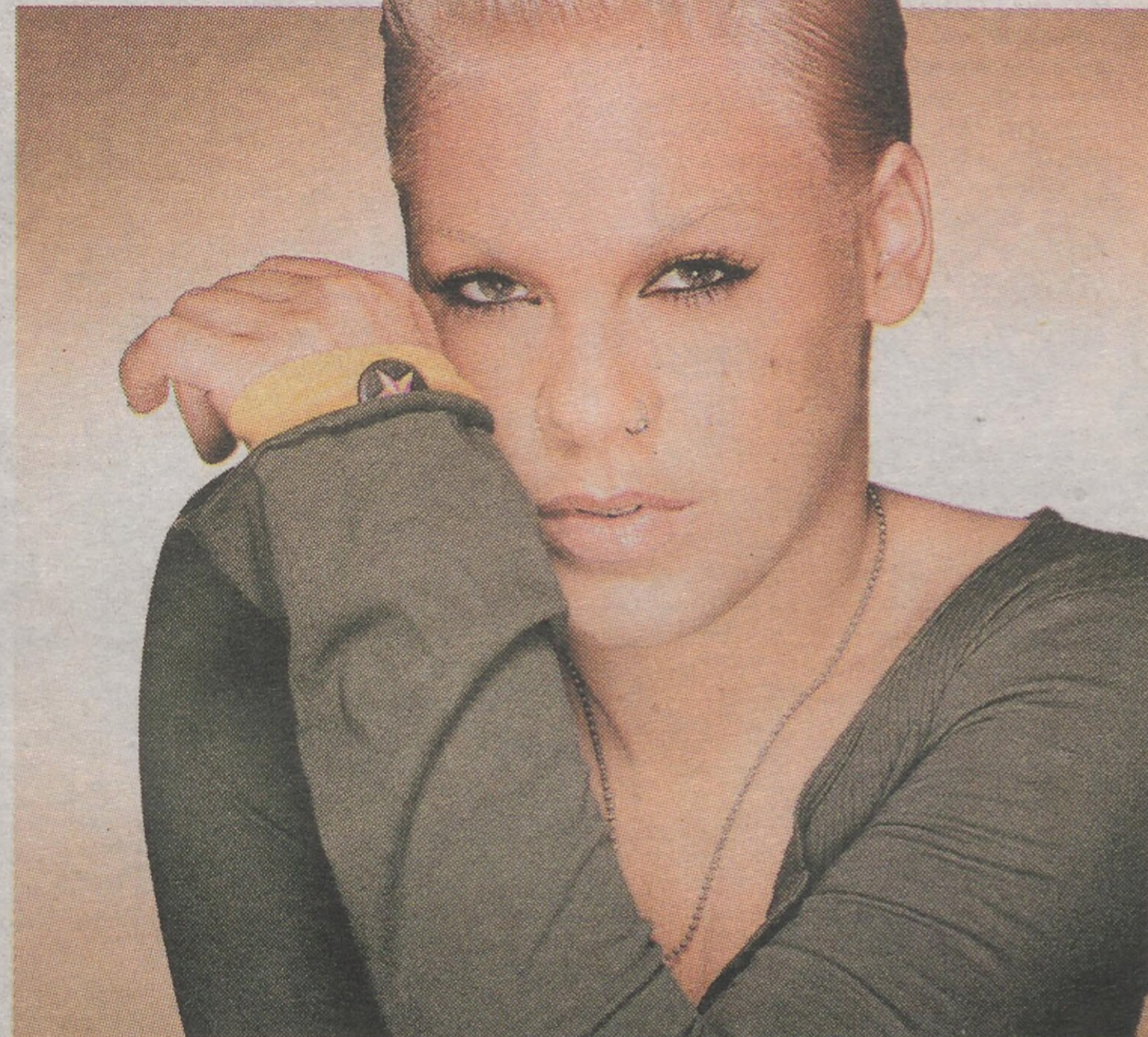
This shoot-from-the-hip style is the singer's trademark. Her style is to defy style, expectations and restrictions, and she offers up one of the best CDs so far this year on "I'm Not Dead."

SPEAKING OF RESTRICTIONS, PINK definitely does not subscribe to "women don't say ..." guidelines. She loves to cuss and does it frequently in interviews and her songs.

Several tracks are peppered with her pizzicato profanity. The way she says "fuck" just makes the word explode. Check out "Leave Me Alone (I'm Lonely)." The f-word has rarely sounded so cathartic.

There is also some strong sexual imagery on the album. Toward the end of "Stupid Girls," Pink sings, "Pretty will you fuck me girl/ Silly I'm so lucky girl/ Pull my hair I'll suck it girl/ Stupid girl."

You will not hear that on the radio! "U+Ur Hand" tells "Dickhead" where he can step off after groping Pink at the bar. Sometimes a horny, drunk guy just cannot take a hint, so Pink spells it out: "Wanna dance by myself guess you're



Pink recently found a friend and a fan in the Divine One, Ms. Bette Midler. Impressed by Pink's music, style and stage presence, Midler has offered the young star the pick of her costumes. That should make for some interesting fashion statements, especially if Pink offers Bette some of her own frocks.

out of luck/ Don't touch, back up, I'm not the one/ Buh-bye." As the title alludes, the only female companionship he can look forward to that night is Rosy Palm and her five sisters.

Pink's fourth album is her most personal work yet, right down to the final, hidden track, "I Have Seen the Rain." The song was written by her father James Moore while he was serving in Vietnam. Pink sang it with him as she grew up, and they recorded it in one take in the studio. She dedicates the song to all veterans.

It's a glimpse at the softer side of Pink, but don't blink or you'll miss it. Her lovey-dovey relationship with hubby motocross champion Carey Hart is another glimpse. Despite tabloid rumors that the two were splitting up in December, they wed at the beginning of January. In a recent in-studio appear-

ance at Atlanta's Q100, Pink gushed over Hart, very much the newlywed.

PINK DEFINITELY BRINGS HER A-GAME to "I'm Not Dead," taking turns as executive producer and a co-writer on 13 of the 14 tracks. She also recruited some serious talent in the studio, including Indigo Girls and Billy Mann, who worked with the Backstreet Boys, and Max Martin, responsible for some of Britney Spears' biggest hits.

The resulting album is a powerhouse tour of power, relationships, and politics wrapped around Pink's well loved strong vocals served with a generous side of her trademark gusto.

Unlike most albums today, "I'm Not Dead" is a hit all the way from the first track to the last. Pink is definitely back, and we couldn't be happier.

MORE INFO

'I'm Not Dead'
Pink
LaFace Records
www.pinkspage.com

DINING: If a cup of tea is your cup of tea, then Te House of Tea must be your house. Page 20

BITCH: Whether you need a shoulder to cry on or a soapbox to shout from, Bitch is here to help. Page 27

A LOVE THAT WILL NEVER GROW OLD



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Gay Houston ha-ha's

Easter weekend brings comedy to town in several incarnations

WELCOME BACK TO HOVO ON THE Go-Go!

Good Friday and Easter are upon us, meaning for some, families, food and faith. For others, it means putting together your most outrageous bunny outfits and hopping down to the Wortham Plaza for "Bunnies on the Bayou." This weekend sees not one but three huge events here: Bayou City Boys Club's "Jungle 14" weekend, "The Unity Banquet" at the Westchase Hilton and of course the aforementioned "Bunnies on the Bayou."

We even get the ultimate bunny, Ms. Lady Bunny herself, playing DJ on the bayou, after she makes an appearance at Guava Lamp on Saturday, April 15 for two shows! If you need more info on the big three, check out the following websites: www.bunnies.org; www.junglehouston.com; www.houstontransgenderunity.org.

WHAT DID HOUSTON EVER DO WITHOUT the Improv Comedy Theater, at the Marq*E Entertainment Center on the Katy Freeway? Having seen Margaret Cho and Som'more among others there, we were thrilled to learn that queer funny man Scott Kennedy is back in the good ol' U.S.A. after entertaining the troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, and will be performing at the Improv on Friday, April 14 and Saturday, April 15 for two shows at 8 and 10:30 p.m.

Scott began his comedy career in Lubbock in 1987 after a friend entered him in an amateur comedy competition. Once bitten by the comedy bug, Scott quit his real job and started touring the country. Asked if some old friends would be surprised that he is one of the stars of the Gay Comedy Jam, he responds "Not surprised that I do stand-up comedy — I was always kind of the class clown. Surprised that I'm gay? I'm sure some will be surprised. That's OK," he continues. "I hope a lot of them are surprised and come to the realization that gay people are not any different than anyone else. You grow-up with them, go to school with them, they are your friends, your family, and you may not even be aware of their sexuality. Sexuality shouldn't be an issue."

In 1998, Kennedy was a featured performer at HBO's U.S. Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen, Colorado and in 1996 he was a featured comic at the Montreal Just For Laughs Comedy Festival. His comedy is available on two CDs on the UpRoar Label: "Gay From Las Vegas" and "The Gay Comedy Jam: Freedom Tour LIVE." Kennedy tours extensively headlining comedy clubs and theaters from coast to coast and has sold-out the Riviera Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas twice! Don't miss your



Not only is Scott Kennedy one of the Gay Comedy Jam's superstars, he is also one of the founders. The Gay Comedy Jam has sold-out shows in 150 cities across the US and Canada. Catch him at the Houston Improv through April 15.

chance to catch this laugh-out-loud comedy king. The Improv is located at 7620 Katy Freeway, Space 431 (which faces the freeway) and you can get tickets and more info by calling 713-333-8800, ext. 102 or click on www.symfonnee.com/improv/houston/home/Index.aspx/.

MARY'S NATURALLY GETS IN ON the Easter action on Sunday, April 16 with a bonnet contest and bar run starting at Noon, an Easter egg hunt beginning at 1 p.m. and a high heel race at 2 p.m. Just show up at 1022 Westheimer Rd. or give them a jingle at 713-527-9669.

HAVE YOU HEARD? LONGTIME JR'S bartender George Konar has left his perch and bought the Brick's bar at 617 Fairview. Stop by and wish him well on his new venture, George's Brick's and don't forget their incredible vodka specials every Sunday.

JEFFRIES MAY STILL BE THE NEW kid on the block, but they are throwing weekly events just like the veterans. Happy hour is every day from 4 until 8 p.m., with delicious \$2 wells. Their Wednesday night "Ladies Night" has proved extremely popular maybe because they feature women dancers, guest lady bartenders and a "she-J!" Longnecks are \$2 all night and martinis are \$4 from 10 p.m. until 2 a.m. Thursdays are now called "Mixed", with DJ Josh Dupont and guest DJ's setting up in the front bar, with \$1.75 well drinks and \$4 martinis all night. Sundays are all-new with their "Frat Party Sundays" that includes \$1 keg beer on the deck from 2 until 8 p.m. with a couple of hunky beer boys helping out.

They also have a little underground party happening on Sunday nights. Don't know about it? Stop by and find out for yourself. Jeffries is at 700 Pacific St.

appts.

FRIDAY

APRIL 14

RICHARD EASTMAN'S GALLERY OPENING, the Night of the Weathervane, is 6 p.m. until 10 p.m. benefits the Weathervane Foundation and spotlighting the artwork of founder Fran Padgett along with 24 other artists. The Weathervane Foundation is dedicated to a new direction in breast cancer research. 7026 Old Katy Rd., Suite 255. Call 713-426-6669 or go to www.eastman-gallery.com or www.franpadgett.com.

SATURDAY

APRIL 15

Join the Community Center on Saturday, April 15, for QUEER BINGO! at Club 1415, 1415 California St. Doors open at 5 p.m. and games begin at 6. The standard bingo game package is \$15; game cards for special games are available for \$1 each. Cash prizes range from \$50 to \$250, with door prizes awarded throughout the evening. Marion Coleman from the Kindred Sprits Reunion Celebrations will be on hand, calling some of the games.

TUESDAY

APRIL 18

The Alley's \$19 "CHEAP THRILLS" ticket program makes low-priced tickets available for Sunday and Tuesday evening performances of every regular Alley production on the Hubbard Stage. There's no limit to the number of tickets a customer may purchase. They're available online at www.alleytheatre.org, in person at the Alley Box Office, 615 Texas Ave. or by calling 713-228-8421.

Visit The GLBT Community Center tonight for the GLBT CHAMBER BOARD MEETING in the conference room from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. or join Houston Equal Rights Alliance, in the large meeting room from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. 3400 Montrose Blvd., second floor. Parking is free for visitors to the center.

THURSDAY

APRIL 20

PRIDE HOUSTON is seeking a volunteer graphic designer to design, develop, and manage its printed material including analyzing existing production, and create innovative print concepts consistent with brand and creative standards. Call 713-529-6079 or email Jack Valinski at jack@houstonera.org.



Richard Eastman's gallery presents Fran Padgett's artwork in a Night of the Weathervane, April 14, 6 p.m. until 10 p.m.

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Playing in 'Shadow'

Alley Theatre sheds new light on Welles, Leigh and Olivier

GENIUS COMES ALIVE DURING THE first few moments of "Orson's Shadow," Austin Pendleton's sharply drawn, vividly acted re-imagining of a pivotal theatrical consensus involving a glittering group of stage folk.

The booming voice of Orson Welles literally reverberates through the rafters of the Alley Theatre's Neuhaus Stage, a potent mix of power and purpose. That set up, however, proves to be merely a wink at the perceived persona of Welles, the tortured genius behind "Citizen Kane." He is quickly brought back down to Earth.

Indeed, much of Pendleton's play is a breakdown of the myriad myths behind Welles (Wilbur Edwin Henry) and legendary actor Laurence Olivier (James Black), who reluctantly joined forces for the 1960 London premiere of Eugene Ionesco's metaphorical play, "Rhinoceros."

Welles, still reeling from various failures and hoping for a hit, agreed to direct "Rhinoceros" at the urging of influential theater critic and confidante Kenneth Tynan (Jeffrey Bean). Olivier, secretly eager to work with Welles, accepts the lead role.

Joining them onstage was British ingenue Joan Plowright (Elizabeth Bunch), also Olivier's secret lover. Watching from the wings — and struggling with a difficult to decipher mental illness — was Vivien Leigh (Elizabeth Heflin), Olivier's wife of two decades and a two-time Academy Award winner for "Gone With the Wind" and "A Streetcar Named Desire."

"Orson's Shadow" has pointed, pragmatic things to say about the fleeting nature of celebrity, the price of fame and the public's perception of seemingly perfect stars. Through their interaction, we see that everyone is riddled with insecurities and never fully satisfied with what they've achieved. They are all tragically, touchingly human.

Welles is convinced that Olivier is attempting to re-direct the play, and Oliver is unwilling or afraid to break out of the acting confines that have made him a star.



Edwin Henry as Orson Welles and Elizabeth Heflin as Vivien Leigh in the Alley Theatre production of 'Orson's Shadow.' (Photo by John Everett)

Leigh is alternately strong and frail, sexy and skittish — exposing the complex nature of a mightily misunderstood woman.

Pendleton studied old interviews and the established habits of his subjects to concoct his story, and indeed, it has the ring of truth. Nothing here ever seems forced or completely implausible.

The play's crown trio (Welles, Olivier and Leigh) has tough shoes to fill, well worn by gossip columns, film performances and countless documentaries. Each manages a fresh, vital spin on familiar characters.

Henry's Orson is an imposing, ultimately approachable oaf—a man marked by years of self-doubt and nearly swallowed by success. Henry also does an impeccable job of capturing Welles's vocal cadence.

Black is equally effective as "Larry," using intimidation and arrogance as shields for his own personality. His character breakdown as the story progresses is particularly impressive.

It is Heflin, however, who strikes the most resonant chord as screen legend Vivien Leigh. She is soulful and confident one moment, fragile and hysterical the next. It's a riveting, ultimately heart-breaking, performance, and Heflin makes every moment count.

Director David Cromer is familiar with the work, having helmed the original production at Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre in 2000 and several subsequent runs, including a long-running off-Broadway engagement. His work is impressively nimble — light when it needs to be and heavier at just the right moments.

Despite its ultimately imagined premise, "Orson's Shadow" manages to shed considerable light on not only the life of a slew of real-life legends, but on the mystical world of celebrity itself.

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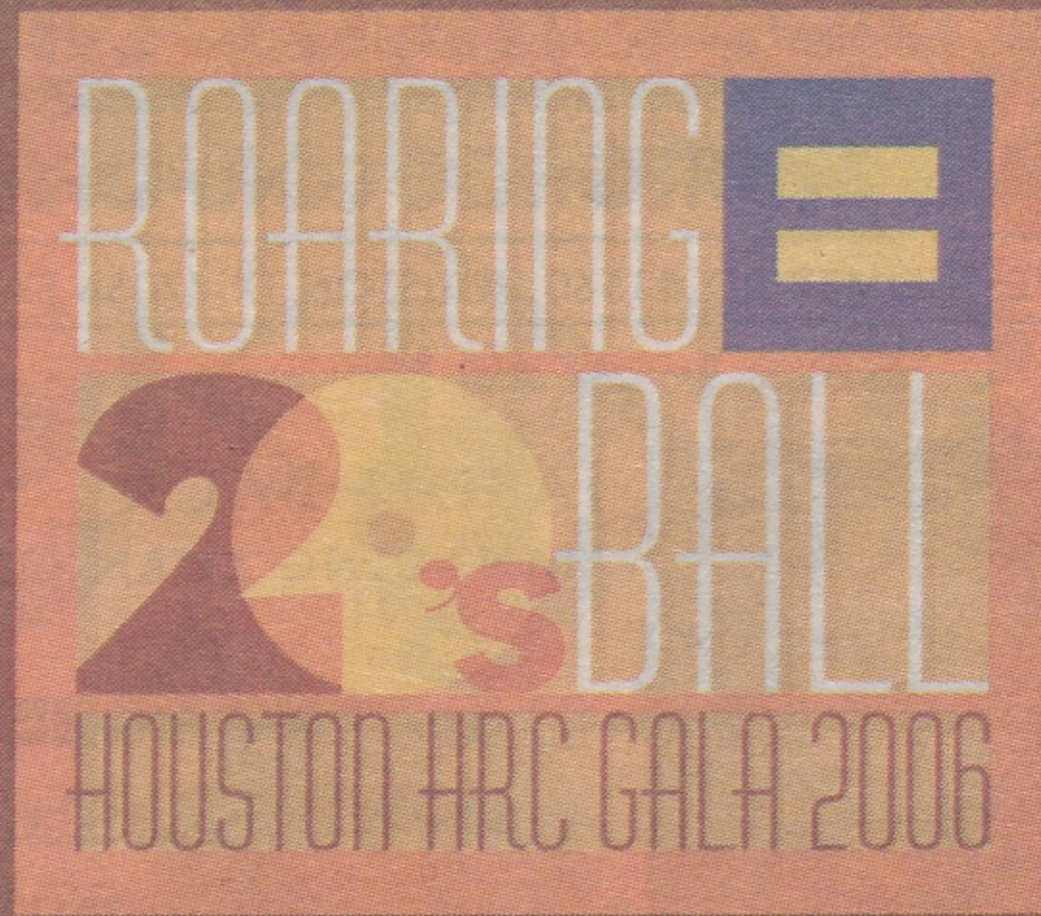


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i MORE INFO

Orson's Shadow
Tuesdays-Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.
Fridays, 8 p.m.; Saturdays, 2:30 and 8 p.m.
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Té House of Tea
provides good cup of tea
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A CUP OF TEA IS AN INVITATION TO relax. At Té House of Tea the invitation is open.

Whether pale and delicate or dark and earthy, a cup of tea is an excellent way to unwind. With the opening of Té House of Tea, Houstonians now have a place dedicated to the fine art of tea.

Owners Connie Lacobie, a native of Hong Kong, and Alyson Bell, a native of Ireland, blend both east and west in their new tea house. Light wood tables and an Asian influenced décor blend with French jazz music and shamrock-bedecked tea cozies, creating a comfortable, relaxing oasis in which to enjoy a spot of tea and a bite to eat.

At Té all teas are Fairtrade certified and organic when possible. A wide variety of tea is offered, from familiar black and green teas to rarer white teas or unusual tisanes. If you aren't sure what you're looking for, don't hesitate to ask. The owners are happy to explain any of the tea selections.

Hot tea is served by the pot, and the loose tea leaves are placed in a strainer set just inside the lid, which allows for better steeping than tea bags. Pot sizes are single, double or large enough for the table (\$2.50, \$4 and \$8). Two varieties of iced tea are offered daily. The popular strawberry hibiscus is a cheery red color, and sweet with a hint of sharpness. It's addictive.

IF YOU'RE HUNGRY, TÉ OFFERS LIGHT meals and snacks. Don't miss the curried chicken salad (\$7.50), a mixture of shredded chicken breast, almond slivers and apples in a light curry dressing. It's served over a bed of mixed greens with apple slices, cherry tomatoes, celery and a side dish of zingy apple chutney. It's a generous meal.

The soups change daily (\$2.50 and \$3.50). The simple and soothing chicken noodle soup is Asian-influenced, with glass noodles and a hint of lemongrass.

The paninis (\$5.50) are a good way to go if you're in the mood for a sandwich. Made with herbed focaccia, they're warm, gooey and delicious. The bacon, brie and tomato panini is made with a chipotle mayonnaise that sneaks up on you with a surprising bit of heat. The chicken, brie and cranberry panini combines just the right amount of sweet and tart.

Most sandwiches are available on a baguette (\$4.95) if you prefer. And all sandwiches are served with a generous side salad

topped with a tart balsamic vinaigrette.

Té is an excellent place to visit for breakfast. An authentic crepe pan in the back is the source of the delicious freshly made crepes. The ham and provolone crepe (\$2.50) is simple and light, and makes an easy, quick breakfast. Or try a scone (\$2.50) — the blueberry scone is loaded with fresh berries. For a healthier option, try the muesli (\$3.95), served with yogurt and a generous assortment of dried fruits, including apricots, raisins and figs.

Crumpet fans should make a point of stopping in to give them a try (\$2.95). Toasted and loaded with butter, they're addictive, too. They taste particularly authentic and a chat with the owner confirms that they are indeed imported from Great Britain. They're the perfect accompaniment for that cup of tea.

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Lady Bunny

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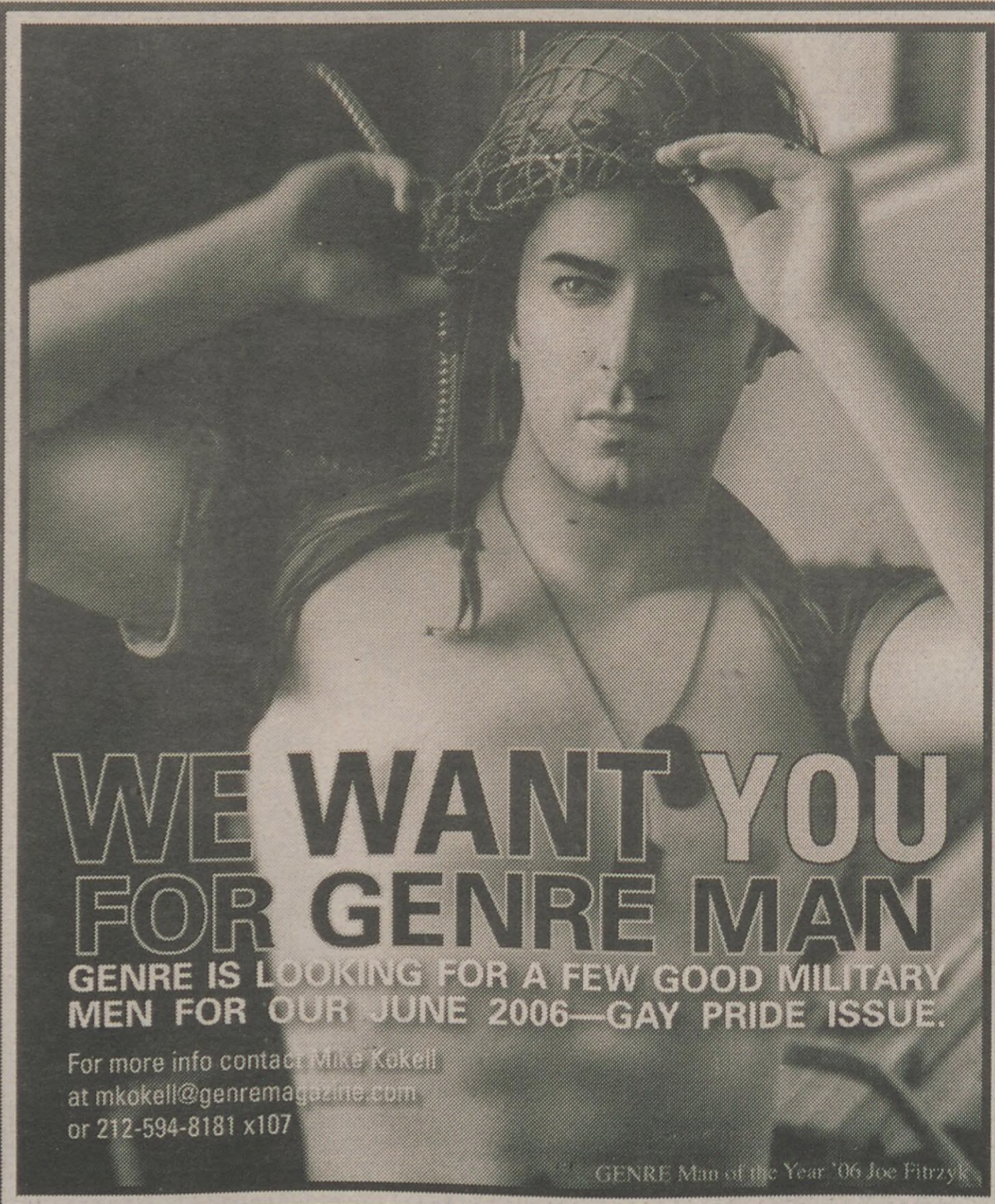
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GENRE Man of the Year '06 Joe Fitzyk

arts cover story

Bunnies on the Bayou returns to Fish Plaza

BUNNY, continued from Page 1

Britney Spears, whom she accompanied to various clubs for an MTV special: "Very sweet. I think she's probably dumb."

Pamela Anderson, who got royally roasted by Bunny and others on Comedy Central: "She's got a great sense of humor about herself."

And — in her words — Sarah "Horse-icca" Parker, who Bunny met briefly while shooting a "Sex and the City" cameo: "I do not think she's a great beauty, but ... I have never seen such radiant star power."

Bunny has little patience, however, for a certain hotel heiress, who unveiled her much-talked-about debut disc (yes, as in singing) at Miami's recent Winter Music Conference. The Lady Bunny was not amused.

"Here's this stupid Parasite Hilton ... and she gets a major-label deal, when Martha Wash doesn't have a record deal," Bunny says with a huff. "Deborah Cox does not have a record deal. Lady Bunny does not have a record deal!"

Indeed, the impossibly glamorous drag diva writes and records her own material — slinky dance-floor tracks such as Sneakin', The Samba is Waiting and You Got Me (Bumpin' Jumpin'). Samples are available at www.ladybunny.net.

She'll likely work a few of those origi-

nal tracks into her set at the 27th annual Bunnies on the Bayou, Sunday at the Wortham Center Fish Plaza in Houston. But instead of simply singing, Bunny will be spinning classic hits and new club tracks as the official event DJ.

"I had never heard of it. It should be a hoot," Bunny says of the yearly fundraiser. "I've heard great things about it."

Bunnies on the Bayou started in 1979 as a small party among friends at an apartment complex. Word quickly spread, a sound system was set up and invitations were mailed. By the early '90s, attendance had grown so much that the hosts decided to move to the outdoor plaza at downtown's Wortham Center on Buffalo Bayou.

Since its inception, Bunnies has raised more than \$500,000 for local charities. This year's beneficiaries include the AIDS Foundation Houston, Bering Omega, HATCH, the Houston GLBT Community Center, Lazarus House and Pride Houston.

THE LADY BUNNY BEGAN HONING HER DJ skills about eight years ago at parties thrown by the uber-chic Visionaire magazine. Since then, she has spun tunes at the Parisian opera house L'Opera Garnier, inside the Fendi showroom in Milan and at Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum in Times Square. There have also been gigs

at Saqs Fifth Ave. during the holidays and on the first floor of the Eiffel Tower.

Yes, the diva does it all. She'll also bring her comedy act — and her new DVD, Rated X (for X-tra Retarded) — to Guava Lamp for two shows Saturday.

Bunny admits that her DJ career was born, in some respects, out of sheer nightlife boredom.

"I used to get hired by clubs to run around with a stack of drink tickets and be 'fun.' That is the hardest job, because you've got to hear the same songs, kiss the same cheeks and act as if you're having a blast — and you're on your period — which, um, usually I'm not," Bunny deadpans.

"You kind of keep alert, and it kept me from getting drunk. I had to do something ... instead of blow guys in the bathroom and then go hit the dance floor and then go have a cocktail."

There were, however, more personal, passionate reasons behind the Lady Bunny's rise as an in-demand party DJ.

"Bit by bit, the music on main dance floors became so hard and so tripped-out that I hated it. We (the gay crowd) used to lead the taste in music. Now the music is so tripped-out and horrible, with no vocals. It's just dreadful," Bunny admits. "I have to keep up with what people like, but I'd be more likely to dance to a Mary J.

i MORE INFO

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Free
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www.ladybunny.net

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Blige hip-hop track than I would to that 5 a.m., tribal-circuit mess.

"I'm certainly not the world's greatest mixer, but I hope that I make up for it in song selection. I put on anything from I Will Survive to Cher's Believe to CeCe Peniston's Finally to some of the latest stuff. Stuff that people know and like to sing along to and bop to."

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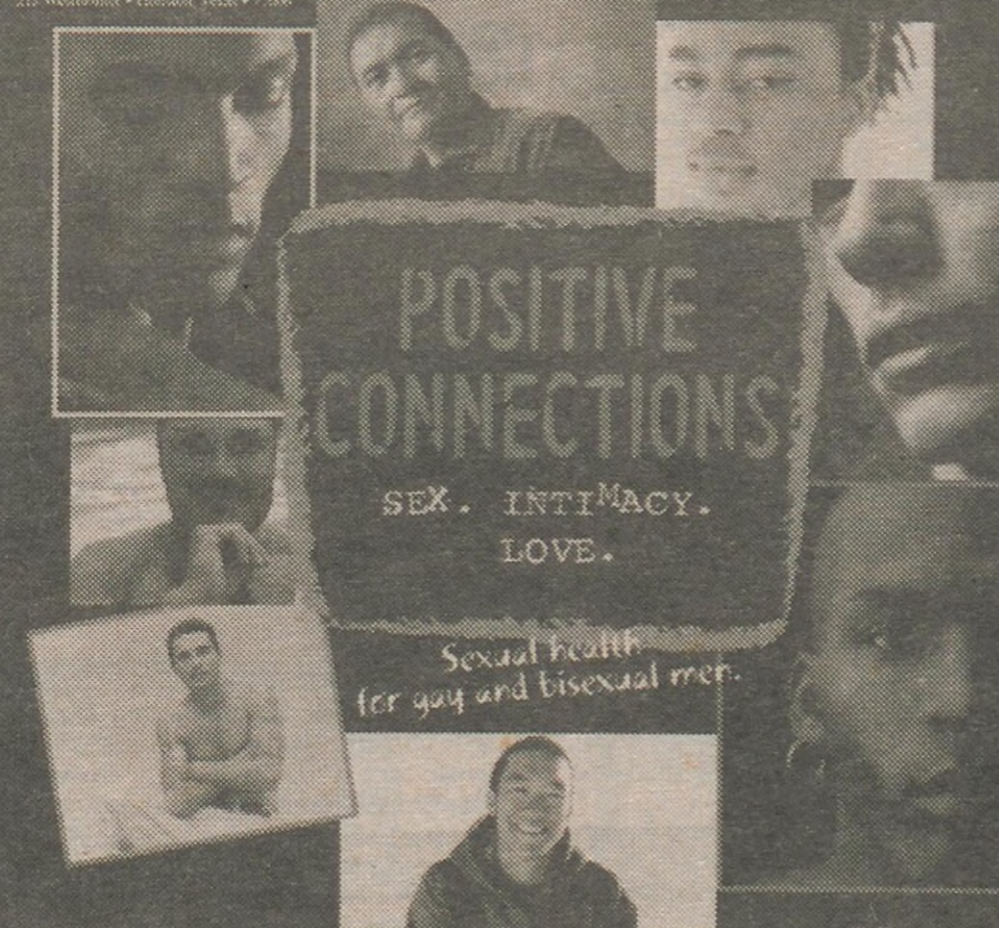
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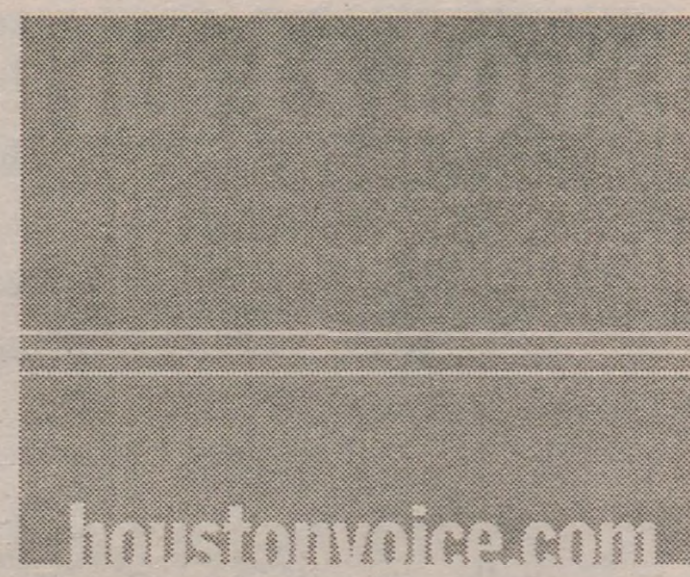
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EVEN THO WE ALREADY DISCUSSED HOW IMPORTANT THIS GIG TONIGHT IS FO' ME-- AS A GOOD BOYFRIEND, I'M STILL GONNA MEET YO' BOYS, CUZ AH KNOW IT MEANS SO MUCH T' YOU. BUT AT 10:30, MAH ASS IS OUTTA THERE!

OF COURSE, BABY. THANK YOU. I KNOW THEY'RE GONNA LOVE YOU AS MUCH AS I DO.

HEY, HEY, HEY! WELL, THERE HE IS! AH, THE GANG'S ALL HERE.

ROGER, IS THAT SOME GRAY I SEE IN YOUR BEARD?

CHUCKLE: A YALE DEAN SHOULD LOOK A BIT DISTINGUISHED. BE-SIDES, SALT 'N' PEPPA, THAT SOUNDS LIKE THE POT CALLING THE KETTLE GRAY!

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